



PHOTO BY BRENDAN CAVANAUGH

Westminster High School and orchestra director Mark Lortz, right, performs with co-director Brian Drake on their “native” instruments, percussion and trumpet. Lortz was named among the top 50 directors in the nation by School Band & Orchestra, but says his collaboration with Drake is truly a “50-50 split.”

Education Notes

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National honor is high note for band director



Mark Lortz, band and orchestra director at Westminster High School, was recently recognized as one of the “50 Directors Who Make a Difference” for 2006 by School Band & Orchestra, a national music education trade publication.

One music educator from each state is selected to be highlighted in the December issue of the publication, and Lortz was selected for Maryland.

He said he was “shocked” by the award and credited his co-director, **Brian Drake**, with the success of the Westminster program.

“It’s a 50-50 split here,” Lortz said. “(The award) is for the program, as opposed to just one person.”

Lortz has taught at Westminster High School for 11 years, and directs the orchestra, concert and marching bands, percussion ensemble, color guard and electronic and computer music program.

He said that there are 175 students in the Westminster High instrumental music program.

During Lortz’s tenure, the school’s music

department has received awards from the Music Educators National Conference and the Maryland Music Educators Association for exemplary music programs. The marching band has also won titles at numerous regional band competitions.

Lortz earned degrees from The Peabody Conservatory of Music, majoring in percussion performance, music education and composition.

He has performed in concert halls throughout the United States with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Yamaha Performing Ensemble, The Dallas Brass, the New York Pops Orchestra and in other various concert and theatrical productions.

Got school news? Call Heidi at 410-386-0334 or e-mail her at hschroeder@patuxent.com.

Westminster band director honored in magazine

By **ASHLEY REAMS**
ADVOCATE STAFF WRITER

Since Mark Lortz became band director at Westminster High School 10 years ago, he and co-director Brian Drake have led student music groups in the school's Instrumental Music Program to competitions where they've received state, regional and national recognition.

Now, Lortz is getting some recognition of his own.

In December, he was acknowledged as one of the "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" for 2006 by *School Band and Orchestra*, a national music education magazine. One teacher from each state is included in the annual feature, which has been running for nine years, according to Christian Wissmuller, editor of the publication.

"It's just a thrill," Lortz said of the recognition. "I'm blown away."

Wissmuller said the magazine keeps a running tally of notable band directors throughout the year. It picks a few from each state who have been singled out by respected state organizations, then narrows the list down to one from each state, he said.

The Westminster High School Instrumental Music Program is comprised of the orchestra, the concert, jazz, symphonic and marching bands, the percussion and wind ensembles, the color guard, music history, music theory and the electronic and computer music program.

During Lortz's tenure, the program has received a resume full of awards from the Music Educators National Conference, the Maryland Music Educators Association, the Bands of America and the Tournament of Bands, to name a few organizations. In 2005 and 2006, the program was selected as a Grammy Signature School finalist by the Grammy Foundation. A \$25,000 grand prize is awarded to one school, and WHS is still waiting to see if it will be named the winner for 2006, Lortz said.

But Lortz isn't taking all the credit for those honors. He's quick to point out that Drake, who began teaching at the school six years ago, has contributed to at least half of the



LORTZ

program's success.

WHS is the only high school in the county with two directors, he said, because its program is so large.

Lortz and Drake said they meet every day to discuss each ensemble's progress and what they can do to help the students improve.

They estimated they work separately about 75 percent of the time because they split each ensemble into two groups, and each one leads a group. After a predetermined period of time, they switch groups.

This technique has several advantages, they said. Because they're working with smaller groups, they have the opportunity to give their attention to individual students.

Please see **Lortz, 22**

BASKET BINGO
Available for the Weekend Only

DATES: Friday, Feb. 9 & 10, 2007
at Westminster High School
from 6:30pm to 9:00pm
(2006 & 2007 Winner)

PRIZES: \$1000 cash & \$500 cash
Prize money is split
half between 1st & 2nd

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Carroll County Times Presents

2007 Cupid's ARROW

Thank You for 50 Years of Memories and Good Luck to With All My Warm Wishes,

Thomas & Mary McNamee

Sweet Jean,

Thank you for 50 years of memories and good luck to With All My Warm Wishes,

Love, Melissa

Happy Valentine's Day Mike!

Love, Melissa

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Carroll County Times

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Deadline Feb. 9th at 3pm

Fourth-graders awarded for anti-drug posters

By LOIS SZYMANSKI
SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

Fourth-grade students from 21 Carroll County elementary schools took part in a class on drug awareness taught by the Maryland State Police's Youth Intervention Task Force during the fall.

Afterward, they were invited to put their artistic skills to work in a Tragedy is Only a Drug Away poster contest.

The top three entries from each school were selected by a panel of judges to represent their schools at an awards ceremony recently at Winters Mill High School.

Program organizer trooper David Keller said this contest and the drug awareness it promotes are important.

"As a police officer, I can tell you that statistically, most crime we deal with revolves around drugs and drug addiction," he said. "If we took addiction out of society, some police officers would have to find another line of work."

There were more than 300 people in attendance at Winters Mill High School, mostly the children and their friends and families, but Keller said several school principals and health teachers turned out, too.

"We make it a big deal because this is the students' commitment to live a drug-free life," he said.

Keller said even though all the posters were the same size and pertained to the topic of drugs, they were diverse.

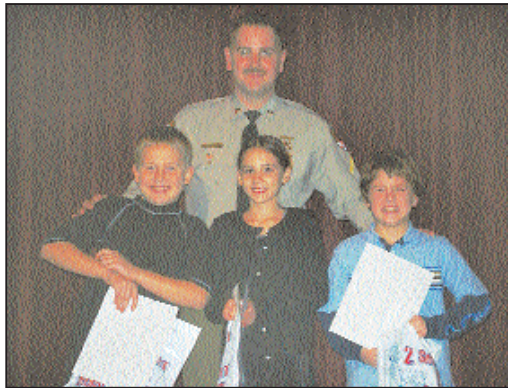
One showed a darkened lung, and several depicted tombstones or cars wrecked into trees or other cars.

Nine-year-old Chloe Schreuer, from Westminster Elementary School, had a poster with a picture of tobacco, a cigarette and a bottle of alcohol. She had bold circles with lines through them over each picture. On the bottom, she wrote, "Don't do drugs," and, "Drugs can hurt you if you take too much."

"It took me about two days to do it," Chloe said. "I didn't really think I was going to win!"

Nine-year-old Logan Keller, of Charles Carroll Elementary, used marker for his poster.

"Mine was a light bulb that was shining, and it said, 'I have a bright idea. Tragedy is only a



LOIS SZYMANSKI PHOTO

From left, drug awareness poster winners from Charles Carroll Elementary School: Michael Rodriguez, third place; Hannah Gibbons, second place; and Logan Keller, first place. Trooper Dave Keller, of the Maryland State Police, is also pictured and is a member of the Youth Intervention Task Force. He was the instructor of the drug awareness class offered at Charles Carroll Elementary School.

drug away. Say no drugs."

Logan's class had just completed a unit on electricity, and that gave him the idea for his poster.

Hannah Gibbons, from Charles Carroll, said her poster had two people on it.

"One side had a person with black lungs smoking a cigarette," she said. "On the other side was a person with pink lungs that was healthy."

Hannah said she was surprised when she won second place.

Judging the contest was difficult, Keller admitted.

"We look for a degree of creativity," he said. "Some have more creativity; others are very

artistic. The best artistically is not necessarily the best overall. Creativity in presenting the concept is most important."

Molly Pickard, of Spring Garden Elementary, was the county winner, but the winners of the contest all walked

Please see **Posters, 23**



Lortz From page 21

Lortz is a percussion specialist, while Drake is a brass specialist, so Lortz can help drum players who are having trouble, and Drake can help the trumpet players improve their sounds.

"With two of us, we can play off each other's strengths and weaknesses," Lortz said.

They also invite instrumental specialists and clinicians to the school to work with students during class time. On Jan. 30, a bassoon specialist came to the school to privately meet with two bassoon players in the symphonic band.

"We're just trying to give the kids other enrichment," Lortz said.

WHS senior Laura Bock has been a member of WHS's Instrumental Music Program since her freshman year, participating in the marching and symphonic bands, orchestra and wind ensemble. She was also the drum major for the marching band.

She said Lortz is a dedicated teacher.

"He definitely puts a lot of effort in his job when he doesn't have to," she said. "He's always willing to go out of his way to help his students. He really cares about this program and the kids that are in it."

Lortz, who lives in Owings Mills, is also a composer and writes music for professional and school ensembles. This year, he

"You teach because you want to, not because you have to."

Mark Lortz
band director,
Westminster High School

won a composition competition in Alabama, and he'll travel to the University of Alabama this week to conduct guest lectures and seminars as a composer in residence. The Alabama All State Orchestra will also play his piece, "Deus ex Machina," he said.

Lortz said he hopes his inclusion in *School Band and Orchestra* will help him in obtaining music writing opportunities, as well as help WHS's Instrumental Music Program achieve more national exposure.

He said he loves being a teacher.

"You teach because you want to, not because you have to," he said. "I like seeing the kids come from nothing to something."

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No stodgy ensemble, Dallas Brass has holiday chutzpah



JEFF KACZMARCZYK
ON MUSIC

Elevated high above the stage decorated with huge wreaths and dozens of poinsettias, the Symphonic Chorus sang masterfully on Randol Bass' "Christmas Ornaments," originally commissioned and premiered several years ago by the chorus.

Several carols within the suite were particularly exquisite. The medieval-flavored "Personent Hodie" was majestic, and the tender "Coventry Carol," with the 140-voice choir accompanied by little more than harp, was beautiful.

But the meaningful carol "What Child is This?" was the climax of the work. Beginning softly with the first verse, associate conductor John Varineau carefully added tension and volume with each repeat until the fourth verse exploded in a cascade of sound that practically shook the auditorium.

Varineau took the "Carol of the Bells" a bit too fast, but he capably led the chorus and orchestra through a bit of schtick and a tough arrangement of "The 12 Days of



PRESS PHOTO

see DALLAS, B2 Dallas Brass performs with the Grand Rapids Symphony in DeVos Hall Thursday night.

Like surprises on Christmas morning, there was something for everyone — and plenty of it — at Thursday's Old Kent Holiday Pops with the Grand Rapids Symphony.

Unexpected visitors and a performance that departed more than once from the printed program kept audience and performers on their toes during the DeVos Hall performance featuring the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus and the Dallas ensemble.

One of the biggest surprises of all was the unexpected premiere of David Ott's "Christmas Festive Overture."

DALLAS Ensemble was at its best when not playing holiday tunes

CONTINUED FROM B1

Christmas" to close the piece.

The chorus joined the orchestra in the second half for Ott's "Christmas Festive Overture," a work that seems to be still in progress. Though skillfully orchestrated, the melodic content is less impressive, and the composition saddles the chorus with an unpoetic text. The work, lasting about five minutes, seemed to lack a structural sense of development and final resolution. The chorus didn't enter until near the end, sang briefly and the work, surprisingly, was over.

The Dallas Brass, nothing like a stodgy old brass quintet, entertained one and all with their musical chutzpah. Armed with a constantly changing array of brass instruments, the sextet both enchanted and entertained the audience with solid musical skills coupled with a touch of humor.

Ironically for a Christmas concert, they were at their best playing anything but holiday music. Some of the Dallas Brass' finest performances came courtesy of two jazz standards. Trumpeter Charles Lazarus delivered a sassy muted lead to Clyde McCoy's "Sugar Blues," backed Matt Peterson on flugelhorn and Michael Levine and Jeff Thomas on trombones, wildly vibrating their tones in mock imitation of a saxophone section.

MUSICREVIEW

DALLAS BRASS and Grand Rapids Symphony with Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus, under direction of associate conductor John Varineau, Thursday evening in DeVos Hall. The Old Kent Holiday Pops concerts continue at 8 p.m. today and Saturday, plus 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

But the showstopper that easily could have been the closing number came with the Benny Goodman standard "Sing, Sing, Sing," featuring Peterson imitating Harry James' leads and Lazarus doing his best impression of Goodman's clarinet on piccolo trumpet. Apart from fine music-making, the musicians' antics made the performance exciting as they strolled to one corner of the stage for a chorus, then scampering to the other side for another verse. Percussionist Mark Lortz, all too often hidden behind a drum set further hidden by the conductor, took center stage with an impressive display of virtuosity on the marimba with Dmitri Kabalevsky's "Comedian's Gallop." Lortz is an entertaining performer who gives a satisfying show.

In the second half, trumpeters Michael Bowman and Charley Lea, trombonists Ava Ordman and John Meyer and tubist Monty Burch, all from the orchestra, joined Dallas Brass for a brief classical work, Giovanni

Gabrielli's Canzon Septimi Toni No. 2. Playing from the top of the choir risers at the back of the stage, the 10 musicians gave a rich and delightfully nuanced performance of the Renaissance work.

No one can say the Dallas Brass didn't earn their day's pay on Thursday, as they also played five separate medleys of seasonal tunes, for a total of 21 Christmas Carols — including a handful that were repeated either by the Symphony Chorus or in the audience sing-along that opened the second half of the program.

Certainly holiday music is what makes a holiday show, but the medleys were the weakest part of the Dallas Brass's show. The touches of choreography, technical wizardry and beer-hall bombast that made tubist John Wasson's arrangements of Tchaikovsky's Neapolitan Dance and Offenbach's Cancan dance from "Gaiete Parisienne" such delights were nowhere to be found on Wasson's Christmas medleys.

The arrangements, which hardly differed from the familiar melodies and harmonies, offered little challenge to the performers' musical skills, while giving little opportunity to really be entertaining.

Considering the night's entertainment went on for more than two hours, the Dallas Brass could easily lose two or three of the medleys and still put on a great show.

Brass ensemble has the right mix for 'pops' success

By **ROBERT MINER**

Times Leader Correspondent

WILKES-BARRE — With a sound as big as the state of Texas, the Dallas Brass delivered a program featuring something for almost everyone on Saturday night at the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts.

The ensemble performed — sometimes alone and sometimes with the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic — as part of the orchestra's "Pops" concerts series.

The orchestra, under the direction of Hugh Keelan, got the concert off to a great start with a snappy rendering of Otto Nicolai's overture to "The Merry Wives of Windsor," a piece that included a lively, Mendelssohn-like scherzo and a carefree waltz.

The Dallas Brass — made up of two trombonists, two trumpeters, a tuba player and a percussionist — delivered a rousing rendition of "American Fanfare," a work composed by the ensemble's arranger, John Wasson, who is also the arranger for the Dallas Cowboys Band.

For the serious music lover, the group offered a poignant rendering of a brass arrangement of "My Spirit Be Joyful," from J.S. Bach's "Cantata No. 146."

Dallas Brass percussionist Mark Lortz thrilled the near-capacity audience with a virtuoso performance on xylophone in the ensemble's setting of the jolly "Galap" from Dmitri Kabalevsky's "The Comedians."

The entire ensemble shone in its harmonious rendering of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Neopolitan Dance." And the orchestra offered a rich interpretation of Wasson's "A Texas Portrait," a piece that painted vivid pictures of dawn, an endless sky, a cityscape and twilight.

The orchestra and brass ensemble brought the first half of the program to a rousing conclusion with a medley of George M.

REVIEW:

Music

Cohan tunes that included "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "You're a Grand Old Flag."

The audience got an earlier-than-usual hearing of one of its favorites, John Philip Sousa's "Liberty Bell March," a work that the philharmonic performs every year during the pyrotechnical celebration at Kirby Park on the Fourth of July, when guest conductor Christopher N. Breiseth, president of Wilkes University, led the orchestra, as part of the "Conductor's Challenge" fundraiser.

Just before taking the podium, Breiseth jokingly said, "It's a real pleasure to be here. I only hope that the people from Wilkes' music, dance and theater department will still talk to me next week."

Irving Berlin crowd-pleasers such as "Always," "Alexander's Rag Time Band," "What'll I Do?" "Easter Parade" and "Puttin' on the Ritz" made up the bulk of the second half of the program.

And when Keelan faced the audience with his stick on "God Bless America," many began to sing. Bravos and a standing ovation followed.

The orchestra and brass ensemble reciprocated with a big, Texas-sized encore, Louis Prima's rousing "Sing, Sing, Sing," a piece made famous by the Benny Goodman Quartet.

The arrangement featured an elaborate percussion solo by Lortz that brought the house down. During his solo, the brass players made their way throughout the house performing in the aisles. One trombonist hurried up the steps and into the balcony and still had enough breath to play his instrument.

The audience, however, was left breathless.

The Scranton Times

M. Clementia
(en) Asklar

ary 18, 1999

Clementia (Helen)
Sisters of St. Cyril
as died Thursday at
Retirement Home
Illness.

26, 1911, daughter
seph and Maria Kol-
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Trinity School, St.
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St. Cyril Academy,
e entered religious
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lived as a novice on
She professed her
religion on Aug. 18,
Sacred Heart, Dan-
final vows on Aug.

la bachelor's degree
wood College and
elementary and jun-
ior high school teacher and a
principal in parochial
schools for 20 years. She taught
at St. Cyril Acad-
emy for 10 years. Her teaching
career took her to the archdio-
ocese of New York, Phil-
adelphia, the dioceses of
Connecticut, Harrisburg
and Scranton. While in the
diocese, she taught at
Plymouth; St. John
the Baptist; Sacred
Heart-Barre; St. John Ne-
vill; and St. Jo-
seph. She served as
parish nurse at St. John Nepomu-
k.

She was a member of the congregation
and held administrative responsibil-
ity superior for 18
years. She received a Catholic
Certificate from
the Institute of Amer-
ican School of
Church Music for many
years of service in poverty

Dallas Brass Sextet Sounds Fine at Center

BY DON THOMPSON
THE SCRANTON TIMES

With sounds as staunch and sure-footed as a drove of Texas Longhorns, the Dallas Brass charged into the Scranton Cultural Center on Friday evening.

But this was no frenzied rush or overrun. For in its wake was a polished offering of instrumental finery.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic in its February "Pops" program also showcased: a "Tribute to Irving Berlin"; a Sousa march conducted by guest performer, Dr. Edward Boehm of Keystone College who met a fund-raising challenge; and other pieces by Bach, Nicolai, Kabalevsky and Wasson.

The Dallas Brass sextet (though looking very different from their pictures in the program booklet) is made up of two trombones, two trumpets, a tuba and a percussionist. They played skillfully and with aplomb.

Their cup mouthpieces seemed to make the high notes sharper and rich in overtones. At the same time, those same mouthpieces exhibited softened sounds with low tones.

The Philharmonic opened the evening's program with Nicolai's, "The Merry Wives of Windsor Overture." They were in fine form.

The Dallas Brass then entered with a rousing work by Wasson titled, "American Fanfare." The only drawback was a bit too much percussion.

In the Bach cantata piece, "My Spirit Be Joyful," the tubaist



JOHNSON BACHMAN / THE SCRANTON TIMES

Edward Boehm, Ph.D., president of Keystone College, looks the part as the guest conductor for Friday night's Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic Pops performance of "A Tribute to Irving Berlin" at the Scranton Cultural Center.

showed much flexibility though this is not one of Bach's most interesting works.

John Wasson, arranger for the Dallas Brass, also contributed "A Texas Portrait." It was played very well but it sounded like bits of a lot of other pieces.

One work very much appreciated by the audience was Tchaikovsky's "Neopolitan Dance." Here the trumpeters were at the top of their form. They were mellow.

REVIEW

Sousa's "Liberty Bell March" conducted by Dr. Boehm was fun to watch and to hear. Kudos for a valiant effort by Edward Boehm and to the professionalism of the members of the Philharmonic. It was Sousa himself who said, "a march should make a man with a wooden leg step out."

The last part of the evening's program was given in honor of that genius, Irving Berlin, who was called "Izzy" throughout his youth.

Favorites such as "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Always," "Easter Parade," and "What'll I Do," were performed. They were all great audience pleasers.

The writer William Watson in his poem, "The Things That Are More Excellent," said: Though dark, O God, Thy course and track, I think Thou must at least have meant That nought which lives should wholly lack The things that are more excellent.

Ah! It was indeed a delectable and excellent time with the Dallas Brass and the Philharmonic.

SEMIQUAVERS

● Irving Berlin voluntarily signed over the royalties of "God Bless America" to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America.

● The name tuba was introduced by the Romans as a signal horn used in the fields.

● There is on Broadway a revival of the Irving Berlin musical play, "Annie Get Your Gun." It stars Bernadette Peters.

● The brasses in an orchestra had their origin as signaling instruments of the Middle Ages.

Pops, Brass present flawless show

By PHIL HUNT

Special writer, *The Oregonian*

The Benny Goodman classic, "Sing, Sing, Sing," brought down the house not once but twice Sunday afternoon before a capacity audience at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. It was a program of classics mixed with heavy swing, featuring the Dallas Brass with the Oregon Symphony Pops under the baton of Apo Hsu, assistant conductor.

The Dallas Brass proved equally at home in a Bach cantata, a Tchaikovsky dance and a Gabrielli canzonni as they did in a fanfare, a delightful Irving Berlin medley, and the heavy swing closer.

In addition, the group's lead trumpet, Charles Lazarus, joined with the Oregon Symphony in a flawless reading as soloist in the third movement of Franz Joseph Haydn's Trumpet Concerto.

The orchestra and the visitors performed two interesting compositions by tuba player John Wasson, "American Fanfare" and "A Texas Portrait," a kind of overture with the sounds of a movie score.

It was Wasson's arrangement of a

MUSIC REVIEW

Oregon Symphony Pops

GUEST ARTISTS: Dallas Brass

WHERE: Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

REPEATS: 8 p.m. Monday, Tuesday

TICKETS: \$16-\$36 (228-1353)

"Tribute to Irving Berlin" that provided opportunities for all of the sextet's members to shine — including trombonists Michael Levine and Jeff Thomas, trumpeters Lazarus and Matt Peterson, Wasson and percussionist Mark Lortz.

Levine, who is the founder and director of the group, demonstrated a Tommy Dorsey-like tone with Berlin's "Always," and joined with Thomas in a trombone duet for "Easter Parade."

Lazarus and Peterson had fun with "Alexander's Ragtime Band" and were a joyful duo in the famed Ethel Merman number, "You're Not Sick, You're Just in Love." But their most exciting time came in the Goodman classic, "Sing, Sing, Sing,"

repeated as an encore with Peterson imitating Harry James' screaming top trills while Lazarus produced Goodman's clarinet licks on a piccolo trumpet.

The man who really stopped the show was the brass ensemble's drummer, Mark Lortz, in a Gene Krupa drumming frenzy.

The program repeats at 8 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.

Dallas Brass

A first-rate brass ensemble, the Dallas Brass, which the Washington Performing Arts Society presented at the Kennedy Center Sunday night, needs to tell its master of ceremonies to pipe down. Michael Levine, the lead trombonist as well as the emcee in question, prattled on, calling Irving Berlin "one of America's most profound musicians" and sharing his feelings on playing his first Concert Hall engagement.

That aside, the evening was lively and accomplished, divided about equally between the lighter classics and some even lighter pop, including a lovely cover of the Streisand "Broadway Album" chart of Bernstein's "Somewhere." The percussionist, Mark Lortz, raised a splendid clatter in the xylophone part of Kabalevsky's "Galop" from "The Comedians"; trumpeters Charles Lazarus and Matt Peterson could have toppled the walls of Jericho with their Vivaldi concerto; and all six players joined in a handsome Duke Ellington set. The Dallas Brass can play, beautifully and in a wide variety of styles. T —Mark Adamo