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By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

Col. James E. Bean holds the rapt attention of students at a party in his honor at Springfield's Lee High School.

## Ex-POW Is Star Attraction at Lee High

By Jay Mathews

Washington Post Staff Writer

What started as a teacher's modest attempt yesterday to awaken interest in the classic tale, "The Swiss Family Robinson," ended with waves of wide-eyed students at Springfield's Lee High School keeping a returned POW talking for four solid hours.

"Everybody's getting into the act," said Dorothea Hruby, an English teacher, as another self-invited class stuffed itself into her classroom where Air Force Col. James E. Bean was speaking.

"Some of the least responsive students we have are so exuberant they don't know what to do," said Mrs. Hruby, who invited Bean to speak on "survival" as part of a unit on "The Swiss Family Robinson."

Bean, a crew-cut, lean 49-year-old veteran of five years

in Hanoi prisons, seemed to enjoy the attention he was getting from the more than 500 Lee students who crowded the room during four class periods.

He thumped a sleeping senior on the back ("Better wake up son, a war might start while you're sleeping"), and shook hands vigorously with a long-haired young man wearing an old army jacket and said to him: "How you doing there, soldier?"

There were no hostile questions. When a student asked his opinion of "amnesty for draft dodgers," Bean said he didn't think those who opposed American policies should enjoy American life. Then he added:

"And as for those who visited our enemy in his capital, I think they should be delivered with their backs strapped to 175-pound bombs, and that includes our ex-attorney

See BEAN, D2, Col. 4



**THE NEW LOOK**—Alexandria has completed the planting of 68 scarlet oak trees along the median of a two-block stretch of Washington

Street at its intersection with King. It was the final touch to a year-long beautification program for the area. New brick sidewalks,

gutter and added for the section in city planning and

By Hal

## *Ex-POW Is Star Attraction at Lee High*

**BEAN, From D1**

general and that movie star." His reference was to Ramsey Clark and Jane Fonda, and the audience cheered and applauded.

"Not everyone is as red, white and blue as I would like them to be," Mrs. Hruby said, "and I was surprised to see there was no dissent."

Instead, students showered Bean with gifts at an after-school reception in the library attended by more than 200 people. Bean received a clock, an engraved plaque and an engraved pen, a gift certificate from a local restaurant and a huge cake frosted by one of Mrs. Hruby's students to resemble an American flag.

The enthusiastic student response at Lee, Bean said,

was no different from the response he has received during more than a score of talks to church groups, softball league associations and school commencements since his Feb. 14 release by North Vietnam. A Department of Defense spokesman reported yesterday a continuing deluge of requests for POW speakers from local groups.

Bean told the students he was still thirsty from the first 22 months of his captivity when he got only two cups of water a day, but he managed to keep talking most of the day, sipping only occasionally from a cup of coffee.

Repeating himself to successive waves of students also apparently didn't bother him. In prison, he told the students, he did a lot of things over and over. "It took me an hour to fold a blanket," he said. "I wasn't going anywhere and I didn't have anything else to do."