





# Blood drive Dec. 28 at library.

The Westland library is sponsoring an American Red Cross blood drive 2-8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 28, at the library on Central City Parkway between Warren and Ford. Residents of Westland and surrounding communities are urged to call (800) GIVE-LIFE to schedule a donation appointment.

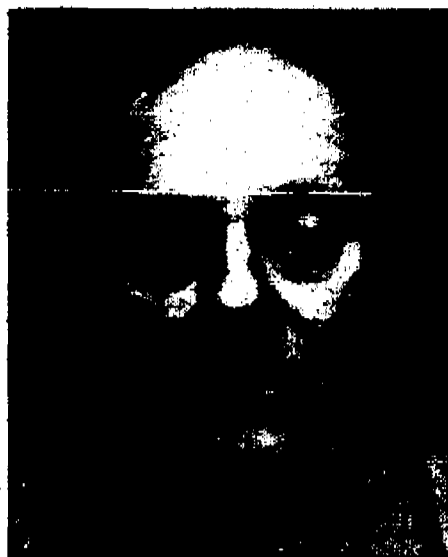
During the holidays, the number of blood donations in the community decreases, due to school closings, business shutdowns and vacations, but the need for blood remains.

"With the advent of the holidays, each of us should take the time to internalize what we have and what we stand for in our individual communities," said Westland Deputy Mayor George Gillies.

"Let us have the strength and compassion to give to those who really are in need."

Donating blood is a life-saving gift, one of the most precious gifts a healthy person can give. A donation could mean a lifetime of memories to someone in need.

Donating blood is safe, easy and relatively painless. The entire process, which takes little more than an hour, includes registration, a brief medical history, a mini-physical, and the donation. To be eligible, one must be 17 years of age or older, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in general good health.



Deputy Mayor George Gillies

# Jaycees planning Jan. 15 party

The Westland Jaycees 41st President Party Celebration will be held 6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, at Joy Manor, on Joy east of Middlebelt in Westland.

Dinner, beverages and dancing will be included. Participants are looking for

## CLUBS

past Westland Jaycee members to attend. Price is \$15 before Dec. 29, \$20 after. For information, call (734) 480-4984.

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POINTS OF VIEW

Good memories carry editor into retirement

It has been an interesting 33 1/2 years as an Observer Newspapers community editor.

In reflecting on the eve of my retirement next week, I can recall clearly numerous events, personalities and issues.

I came to Westland at a good time, although it was technically in the last 10 days of township government.

As I typically ask public officials or high-profile employees when they retire, I will follow the same pattern.

Challenges facing the community. Those range from the community's public image, how residents feel about their city, the rapid growth in housing, retail business, industrial parks and municipal services and structures.

Also as challenging was the Wayne-Westland Community Schools, which at one point went through superintendents as fast as kids go through notebooks.

The school board meetings, sitting next to my Westland Eagle competition, Gail McKnight, who traded in her reporter's notebook for district judge's robe.

The annual Memorial Day parades. The creation of the historical commission and the various museum locations. The Westland Summer Festival



LEONARD POGER

I would like to thank the many public officials, City Hall and school secretaries for their many courtesies, and the numerous families who opened their doors for me to talk about their accomplishments as well as sharing their grief a day or two after a tragedy.

Pageant and Jaycees' Junior Miss pageants and the exciting coverage of Glenn High School and Principal Frank Higgins and the early years of Timothy Dyer's administration before he fell from grace.

Lightning-speed coverage of a Big Boy Restaurant fire on a Thursday morning to get the story and photos in Thursday afternoon's edition.

Growth of Westland Center and the challenges which threatened its success because of rapid retail growth in Canton Township.

The residential developments in all areas of the city.

Dealing with Gene McKinney, a former Associated Newspapers' managing editor who was later elected city councilman and mayor.

Watching the community's pride when President Clinton came to John Glenn High School in the 1996 campaign.

The First Citizen community ser-

vice award, which I initiated in 1986 with the cooperation of the Chamber of Commerce.

The city's mayors, all with different skills, outlooks, life experiences, and techniques of dealing with the council, community groups and the general public.

In winding up my community newspaper career of nearly 42 years, most of that with the Observer, I would like to thank the many public officials, City Hall and school secretaries for their many courtesies, and the numerous families who opened their doors for me to talk about their accomplishments as well as sharing their grief a day or two after a tragedy.

In retirement, Leonard Poger will continue his studies to obtain a University of Michigan-Dearborn bachelor's degree, hopefully in four years. His new e-mail address after Jan. 15 will be Leonard@poger.net.

Letters to the editor help to tell story of community

Attentive readers of this column know that my regular practice is to solicit responses to it - delighted, outraged, whatever - either by phone or e-mail.

I've always felt that letters to the editor are an essential, vital part of a hometown paper. As a columnist, I consider it an obligation to print reader reactions to what I write.

So over the years I've tried to make sure our editors welcome letters to the editor and tell readers how best to submit them for publication.

Imagine my surprise, then, at receiving a letter the other day unlike any I have received in my entire 35

years in this business. 'Apparently, the policy of your newspaper is to print all letters to the editor short of the use of blasphemy or false accusation... I find it extremely unusual that any newspaper would print all letters to the editor. I am not aware of any other newspaper with this policy...

'My father used to write letters to the Bay City Times and Detroit Free Press and would occasionally have one printed. However, 80 percent of whatever he wrote ended up on the floor of the editor's office.'

'My correspondent is absolutely right. In most of the big city papers, something like 80 percent of the letters to the editor that are submitted wind up on the floor of the editor's office. That's one of the things that distinguishes a hometown community newspaper like this one from our big city brethren.'

As set out in our mission statement, one of our fundamental business purposes is to 'nurture the communities we serve.' As we understand it, nurturing a community involves doing everything we can to make the hometowns we serve good places for folks to live. We consider our newspa-



PHIL POWER

I've got to admit here my correspondent has a point. In any community, there are always a handful of people who are regularly sore about one thing or another. Some people call them gadflies, others style them 'community malcontents.' Such people are often regular - some would say 'obsessive' - letter writers, often repetitively on the same subject.

pers to be part of the community rather than standing apart, and so we feel that printing as many letters to

the editor as we can helps the paper perform a useful function as a community forum.

But the letter I received went on to make another point.

'The problem that this printing all letters received causes is that community malcontents can be extremely abrasive and counterproductive to the operation of a city. It is very difficult to maintain staff morale when the newspaper continually allows the proliferation of personal attacks and insults to become weekly reading... I would think that the newspaper has some responsibility to limit the access of chronic complainers to the letters page.'

I've got to admit here my correspondent has a point. In any community, there are always a handful of people who are regularly sore about one thing or another. Some people call them gadflies, others style them 'community malcontents.' Such people are often regular - some would say 'obsessive' - letter writers, often repetitively on the same subject.

Here's where the nuanced understanding and judgment of a hometown newspaper editor comes in. Most editors believe - rightly, in my view

that community gadflies may be a pain in the butt, but providing them a forum is an important aspect of nurturing a community. And most editors know there's a difference between a gadfly and a chronic troublemaker who has an ax to grind.

That's why we try regularly to print gadfly letters and to refrain from printing troublemaker letters that insult or slander individuals. A good hometown editor knows the people involved and is in a position to make informed judgments about the kinds of letters that deserve publication and the kinds that do not.

Editors on big city papers simply cannot have that kind of intimate understanding of individual hometowns and the folks who live there. That's why it's so satisfying to publish the kinds of newspapers we do. To nurture the hometowns we serve.

Phil Power is chairman of Home-Town Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He also has your comments either by phone at 734-953-2947. E-mail: 188@homecom.net

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Countdown To Christmas... Save 10-30% advertisement for dolls and accessories.

20%-75% off Entire Stock advertisement for Tiding Collectibles, Inc.

Why Spend Another Holiday Alone? advertisement for The Grand Court retirement community.

How Many Days? advertisement for M.B. Jewelry Design & Mfg. Ltd. featuring watches.

# Protect yourself against high charges on 900 calls

You will be billed for all calls you make to a 900 number.

900-number calls are never without charges. Over the last decade 900-number calls have grown into a worldwide multi-billion-dollar industry. So, before making this type of call, understand that:

■ There will be a charge - it is not a toll free call

■ There is no regulation of rates for such calls

■ Rates are set by the owners of the number and/or the information service you call.

Information services offer telephone callers the opportunity to obtain a wide variety of telephone programs that provide recorded or live information and entertainment. Chat lines, psychic advice, stock market updates, sports information, to name a few, are the types of information services available through 900 numbers. These services are valued by some consumers. Unfortunately, there are some telephone scams operating through 900 numbers and other information service numbers.

It doesn't matter who dialed the 900 number a minor, a guest or someone working in your home the call will be billed to the telephone number of a call's origination and the billed party will be responsible for paying the charges. These 900-number service providers are usually unable to verify authorization or the age of callers and are not required to do so. The rates they charge are not regulated by anyone!

How can you protect yourself from unwanted charges when calling a 900 number?

■ Be aware that charges are always incurred when you participate in a program offered through a 900 number, even if the 900 call was originally accessed through a toll free number. Listen to the introductory message and hang up promptly if you decide you are not interested in the service or do not want to pay the charges given. The introductory message must state that callers under 18 must obtain parental permission. Also, 900-number call providers are prohibited from advertising or marketing to children under 12 years old unless the services are educational in nature.

■ Do not confuse 900 numbers with 800, 888, or other toll free numbers. 900 numbers ARE NOT toll free. There is always a charge for a 900-number call.

■ Some deceptive advertisements urge consumers to call a 900 number by offering free gifts or prizes. Be wary of ads that don't provide much detail about what is offered or the cost. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true.

■ Consider having your local telephone company place a 900-number block on your telephone line if you do not want 900-number calls placed from your telephone. In Michigan, there is no charge for 900 blocking. By law, blocking must be offered by all telephone service providers in Michigan. Contact your local and long-distance telephone companies about the availability of blocks for international or toll calls.

(However, be aware that it may be possible to dial around blocks by dialing a regular long distance phone number, 800 access numbers, or an international toll number to another

country.) Blocks to international calls are available through your long-distance provider.

■ Review your telephone bills carefully each month. Keep in mind also that while calls to 900 numbers must be listed separately on your bill, calls to a service provider in a foreign country may not be designated as such. They frequently appear as a very expensive international or calling card call.

Who can help you with a com-

plaint?

First, you should attempt to resolve your dispute directly with the telephone company, information provider, or billing entity. Follow up all conversations with the provider in writing and keep a copy for your records. 900-number charges are almost never the result of tampering or equipment malfunction and, in any case, proving anything of this nature is extremely difficult.

■ Your local telephone company is under no obligation to remove charges where tampering or equipment malfunction is only suspected or when it is difficult for you to accept that someone in your family made the call.

■ The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has no authority to order 900-number charges removed from a telephone bill.

Local telephone companies can revert charges back to the origi-

nator of the 900 service, although this does not prevent the originator from taking direct collection action against the customer. Also, your local telephone service cannot be terminated for non-payment of 900-number charges; however, account balances may be referred to a collection agency. If you are unsuccessful in resolving a 900-number call dispute, contact:

Michigan Public Service Commission Enforcement Bureau Communications/Service Quality Section Consumer Complaints 6545 Mercantile Way Mail Stop 1600A2 Lansing, MI 48909 or Michigan Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division, P.O. Box 30213, Lansing, MI 48909, www.ag.state.mi.us (Describe the problem and send a copy of the bill)

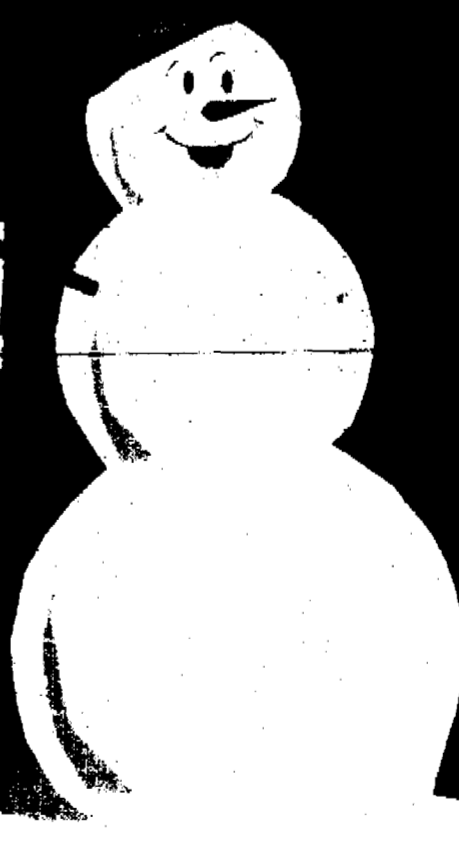
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- Woven & Knit Sportshirts
- Athletic Apparel & Accessories

**for children**

- Rudolph Apparel, Plush Toys & Accessories
- Girls' Tops & Bottoms
- Boys' Tops & Bottoms
- Outerwear
- Athletic & Team Apparel

**shoes**

- Athletic Footwear
- Women's Booties
- Evening Shoes

**for home**

- Bedding
- Sheets
- Lamps
- "Very Rudolph Christmas" CD Collection
- Home Towne Express Collectibles
- Animated Dancing Rudolph

**Essays sought on improving voter turnout**

(PRNewswire) - Wayne County Commissioner George Cushingberry announced recently the kick-off of his annual civic literacy scholarship contest for high school and college students. Participants must write a two-page essay and submit their entries by the March 17, 2000 deadline.

The topic for the 2000 contest - "How Can the Races Work Together to Improve Voter Turnout?" - challenges students to examine participation by different ethnic groups. Entries must contain a bibliography and two full pages of double-spaced text in a font no larger than 12 point. The contest is open to students in the area served by SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Students can contact Commissioner Cushingberry for more information at 313-224-0942.



\*Original prices reflect offering prices which may not have resulted in actual sales. Percentages of represent savings on original prices. Intermediate markdowns may have been taken on original prices. Reductions on original priced merchandise effective until stock is depleted. Selection of clearance items varies by store. Clearance includes selected styles only and is limited to stock on hand. Does not include entire line. Cannot be applied to prior purchases. Jewelry available only at JCPenney stores with Fine Jewelry Dept.













**HOCKEY**

**Whalers enjoy Erie experience; win pair**

It shaping up like a happy holiday — at least for the Plymouth Whalers.

The Whalers traveled to the Erie Otters last weekend for a pair of Ontario Hockey League games. Such trips in the past have been roads to disaster, but this one wasn't.

The Whalers used fast starts in both games to walk away with a pair of wins, beating the Otters 6-4 Friday and 4-3 Saturday.

The two wins pushed Plymouth's record to 18-14-3 (40 points); good for third place in the OHL's West Division. The Windsor Spitfires and Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds are tied for first in the West with 46 points.

Erie remained in second place in the OHL's Midwest Division with a 15-16-1 record (32 points).

Rob Zepp backstopped both wins for the Whalers, making 31 saves in Friday's win and 20 more on Saturday. Adam Munroe started in goal in both

games for Erie.

On Friday, Plymouth almost let a 4-1 lead after one period get away. Stephen Weiss and Tomas Kurka put the Whalers up 2-0 with 11:34 of the first period elapsed; after Erie's Michael Rupp narrowed the gap to 2-1 with 4:02 left in the first; George Nistas and Eric Gooldy pushed Plymouth's lead to 4-1.

Gooldy finished the period with a goal and two assists, while Nistas and Kurka had a goal and an assist in the period.

However, Erie came battling back in the second period, getting another goal from Rupp and two more from Nikita Alexeev and Carlo Colaiacovo, respectively, to knot the score at 4-apiece.

Steven Morris got the game-winning goal for the Whalers with 13:53 of the third period elapsed, assisted by Kris Vernarsky. Kevin Holdridge's empty-net goal with 51 seconds remaining iced the victory. Holdridge col-

**OHL HOCKEY**

lected a goal and an assist in the victory.

Saturday's game was similar, with the Whalers again taking the lead (they never trailed all weekend against Erie) on first-period goals by Weiss (his 10th of the season) and Kurka (his 17th). Erie's Rupp narrowed the gap to 2-1 late in the opening period.

However, Weiss' second goal of the game — he also had an assist — pushed Plymouth's lead to 3-1 through two periods. Rupp, who scored all three of the Otters' goals in the game and five of their seven over the weekend, trimmed Plymouth's lead to 3-2 with a power-play goal at 3:16 of the third period.

But Jon Billy converted a pass from Nistas at the 10:22 juncture and the Whalers were again

up by two, 4-2 — which made Rupp's third goal, scored with just nine seconds left in the game, inconsequential.

The Whalers are now idle until next Tuesday, when they host Erie in a 3 p.m. game. On Thursday, they play the Kitchener Rangers at 7:30 p.m. at Compuware Arena.

**Ambassadors win 2**

A strong second period saved the Compuware Ambassadors last Friday.

Trailing 3-2 after one period, the Ambassadors netted three second-period goals en route to a 5-4 victory over the St. Louis Sting in a North American Hockey League game at Compuware Arena.

Steve Jackson got the eventual game-winner for the Ambassadors and Marc Nurrington scored twice.

On Saturday, the Ambassadors improved their home-ice

record to 9-3 with an 8-2 triumph over the Sting. Todd Bentley scored his first-ever NAHL hattrick; he also had an assist.

Tom Fortunate made 19 stops in collecting his fifth win in goal for Compuware, which stayed

atop the NAHL's East Division with a 19-8-1 (39 points), tied with the Soo Kewadin Casino Indians (18-7-3, 39 points).

Those two teams meet in a divisional showdown at 6:35 p.m. tonight at Compuware Arena.

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**Outdoor Calendar**

(To submit items for consideration in the Observer & Eccentric's Outdoor Calendar send information to: *Outdoors*, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax information to (248) 644-1314.

**SEASON/DATES**

**BASS**  
Bass season closes Dec. 31.

**DEER**  
The late archery season runs through Jan. 2 statewide. A late antlerless-only firearms season runs through Jan. 2 on private and public land in Deer Management Unit 452. A late antlerless-only firearms season runs through Jan. 2 on most private land in the Lower Peninsula.

**GROUSE**  
A special late grouse season runs through Jan. 1 in the Lower Peninsula.

**RABBIT**  
Rabbit season runs through March 31 statewide.

**SQUIRREL**  
Squirrel season runs through Jan. 1 statewide.

**CLASSES/CLINICS**

**FLY TYING**  
Hook Line & Sinker bait shop in Lake Orion will hold fly tying classes every Wednesday and Thursday until the beginning of ice fishing season. Call (248) 814-9216 for more information.

**ROD BUILDING**  
Hook Line & Sinker bait shop in Lake Orion will hold fishing rod building classes every Wednesday and Thursday until the beginning of ice fishing season. Call (248) 814-9216 for more information.

**FLY TYING**  
Paint Creek Outfitters in Rochester offers a variety of fly tying classes for beginners and advanced tyers. Call (248) 650-0440 for more information or to make a reservation for an upcoming class.

**MORE FLY TYING**  
River Bend Sport Shop in Southfield offers fly tying classes for beginners, intermediate and advanced tyers. Classes will be held at various times. For more information and to register call (248) 350-8484 or (248) 591-3474.

**SHOWS**

**SILVERDOME BOAT, SPORT AND FISHING**  
The 17th annual Silverdome Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will be held Feb. 2-6 at the Pontiac Silverdome. The show features over 300 manufacturers, fishing tackle, fishing trips, charter captains, virtual fishing, trout ponds, seminars, casting demonstrations and more. Show hours are 3-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 2 and 3; 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 4; 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. Admission is \$7 adult, \$3 for children ages 6-14 and children under five will be admitted free.

**DETROIT BOAT, SPORT AND FISHING SHOW**  
The 42nd annual Detroit Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will be held Feb. 12-20 at Cobo Center

The show features the 2000 premiere showing of new model boats, motors, trailers, accessories and more. Some 1,000 boats will be available for viewing including fishing boats, ski boats, pontoons, cruisers, inflatables, personal watercrafts, canoes and kayaks.

**SPORTFISHING EXPO**  
The 12th annual Greater Detroit Sportfishing and Travel Expo is

set for Thursday through Sunday, March 2-5, at the Palace of Auburn Hills. An all-star lineup of seminar speakers is already scheduled. The show also features exhibitors, merchandise booths, casting and fishing activities and more. Show hours are 4-9:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, March 2-3; 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Saturday, March 4; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, March 5.

Admission is \$7.75 for adults, \$3.50 for children ages 6-12 and children age 5 and under will be admitted free.

**SPRING BOATING EXPO**  
The 8th Annual Spring Boating Expo is scheduled for March 16-19 at the Novi Expo Center. The show features some 200 exhibitors with new boats and watercrafts, motors, trailers, docks, accessories and more.

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\*For Cash Back, you must take retail delivery from participating dealer stock by 1/3/00. Not available with special GMAC finance or lease offers. †Example based on survey. Each dealer sets its own price. Your payments may vary. Blazer payments based on 2000 Chevrolet Blazer 4-Door 4WD with MSRP of \$28,570; 36 monthly payments total \$10,548. Silverado payments based on 2000 Chevrolet Silverado 4WD Extended Cab with MSRP of \$28,056; 36 monthly payments total \$12,204. S-10 payments based on 2000 Chevrolet S-10 2WD Extended Cab with MSRP of \$17,615; 36 monthly payments total \$5,724. Option to purchase at lease end for an amount to be determined at lease signing. GMAC must approve lease. Available only to residents of MI, MN, WI and select counties in IL, IN, IA, KY, MO, NE, NY, ND, OH, PA, SD and WV. You must take retail delivery from participating dealer stock by 1/3/00 for Blazer and by 1/14/00 for Silverado and S-10. Mileage charge of \$.20/mile over 36,000 miles. Lessee pays for maintenance, repair and excess wear. If lease terminates early, lessee is liable for all unpaid monthly payments. Payments may be higher in some states. Not available with customer cash offers. \*\*For APR offer, Length of finance contract is limited. GMAC must approve lease. Dealer financial participation may affect consumer cost.

††Available only to qualified GM Employees and eligible family members who are residents of MI, MN, WI and select counties in IL, IN, IA, KY, MO, NE, NY, ND, OH, PA, SD and WV. Blazer payments are for a 2000 Chevrolet Blazer 4-Door, 4WD with MSRP of \$28,570; 36 monthly payments total \$7,884. Silverado payments are for a 2000 Chevrolet Silverado 4WD Extended Cab with MSRP of \$28,053; 36 monthly payments total \$9,252. S-10 payments are for a 2000 Chevrolet S-10 2WD Extended Cab with MSRP of \$17,666; 36 monthly payments total \$4,824. Option to purchase at lease end for an amount to be determined at lease signing. GMAC must approve lease. You must take retail delivery from participating dealer stock by 1/3/00. Mileage charge of \$.20/mile over 36,000 miles. Lessee pays for maintenance, repair and excess wear. If lease terminates early, lessee is liable for all unpaid monthly payments. Payments may be higher in some states. Not available with customer cash offers. All current GM-S program rules and restrictions apply. ©1999 GM Corp. Buckle up, America! 1-800-950-2438













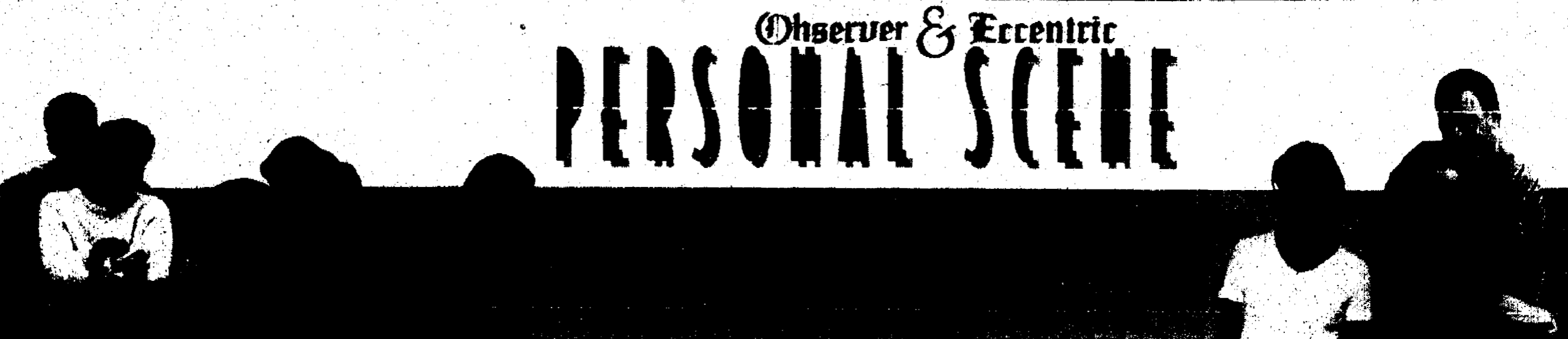








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