

**Inside**  
**Filter**  
 Laughing in the face of Winter

**Cold is cool**  
 Give yourself a lift, discover Michigan's ski resorts.  
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**Observer TASTE**

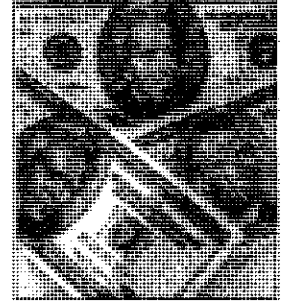
**Get started**  
 Oats are more than just hot cereal.  
 SECTION D

**Memo**

**Toys and trains**  
 SS. Simon & Jude Church's usher club will sponsor a buy-and-swap toys and trains show noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, at the church hall, 32500 Palmer, one mile west of Merriman.  
 Admission is \$2 per person and \$4 per family. There will be 200 dealer tables available at \$10 each. To reserve a table, call (734) 595-8327.  
 Dealers will begin setting up at 9 a.m. on the day of the show.

**Open house**  
 St. Damian Catholic School in Westland will have an open house 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 11, for its preschool programs for children ages 3-4. The open house also will be for the kindergarten program.  
 The school is at 29891 Joy. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

**Helping seniors**  
 Volunteers are being sought by the Westland senior citizen Friendship Center to help low- to moderate-income seniors prepare their 2004 federal and state income tax forms.  
 A limited number of computers will be provided to assist in the preparation, although personal laptops may be brought to the cen-



ter. Software will be provided.  
 Training classes for volunteers will be offered at the Maplewood Senior Center in Garden City during the week of Jan. 10.  
 Training materials will be provided, and an open-book IRS-approved test must be passed.  
 For more information or to sign up, call (734) 722-7628 or (734) 455-8381.

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**Council OKs administrative pay hike**

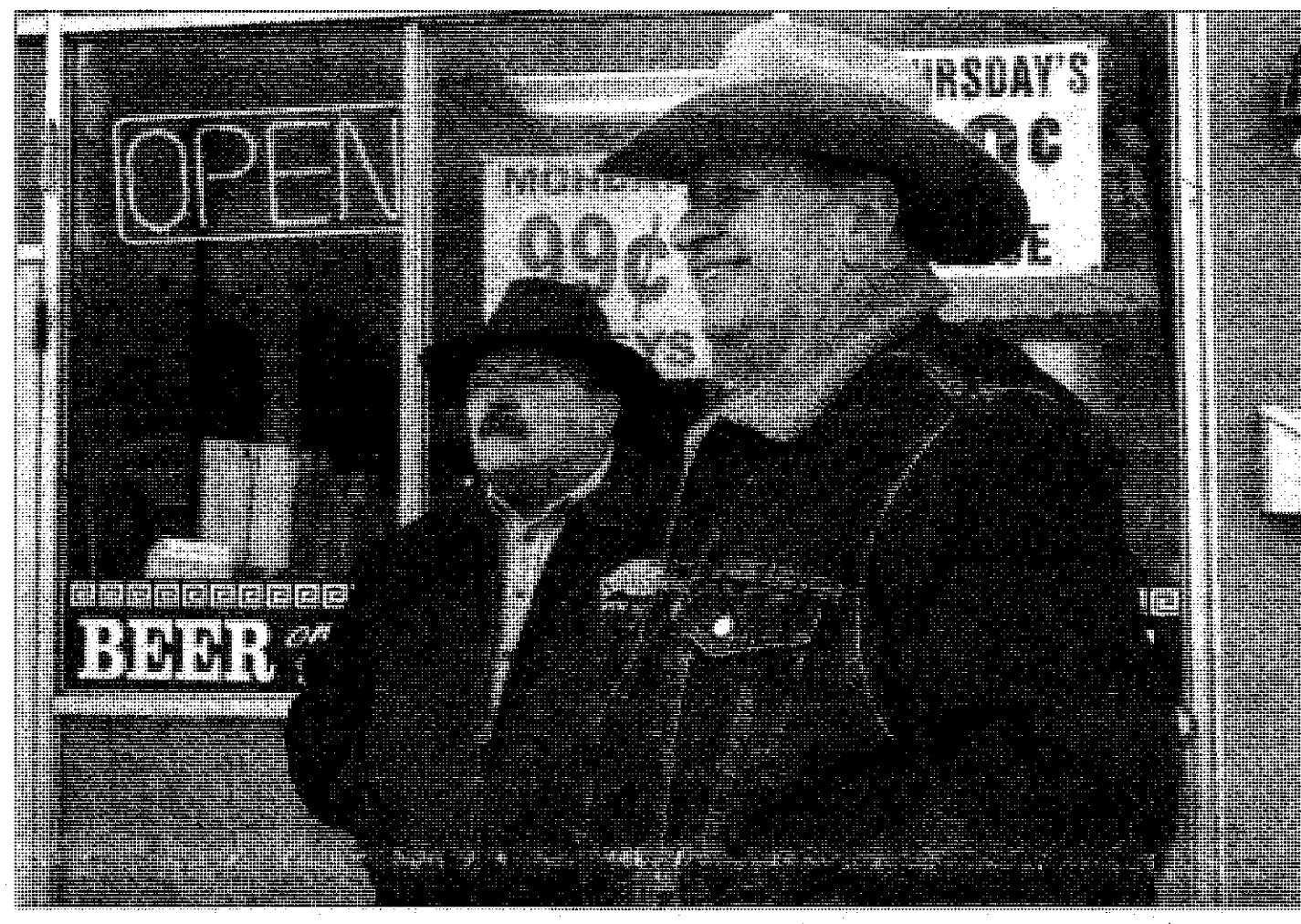
BY DARRELL CLEM  
 STAFF WRITER  
 Westland City Councilman Richard LeBlanc has accused city administration officials of wrongly implying that department heads didn't get a salary increase for three years.  
 "It's flat-out incorrect," he said Monday, during a council session.  
 Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and Personnel Director Keith Madden acknowledged Monday that department heads received a 3-percent salary increase in January 2003 and a 2-percent pay hike in July 2004.  
 LeBlanc charged that earlier state-

ments, made during a Dec. 20 council meeting, implied that the directors hadn't received a salary increase for three years. He criticized administration officials for "a lot of miscommunication."  
 In response, Cicirelli said department heads haven't asked for their own salary increases during the three-year period. The pay raises went into effect only because the city has a clause that says appointed directors will automatically get pay increases that are received by city unions.  
 "They get the same as the unions," Cicirelli said.  
 Salaries for department heads and other appointed officials currently range

from \$35,715 for an administrative secretary to \$84,035 for the highest-paid jobs, including police and fire chiefs.  
 Despite the controversy Monday, all seven council members, including LeBlanc, supported a new pay plan for 20 employees who are department heads or other appointees. The latest plan will give directors a 0.5 percent salary increase in July.  
 Some council members defended the pay increases that department heads have received since January 2003, despite financial difficulties that are only expected to worsen with a new round of state-shared revenue cuts.  
 Councilman William Wild said he

would oppose any efforts to thwart department head salary increases that are automatically tied to union wage hikes.  
 "These are some of the hardest-working people in the city," he said.  
 Wild defended directors as doubling up on their duties, and he said the city could lose talented officials unless salaries remain somewhat competitive.  
 "We do have some good people," Wild said, "and the last thing we would want to do is have them out there looking for new jobs."  
 Councilman James Godbout noted

PLEASE SEE PAY, A4



Joe Milkovich (left) and Andy Spisak have swapped talking on police radios for the spinning classic country music on AM radio's WSDS.  
 PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**On the air**  
 DJs bring classic country to the 'burbs'

BY LEANNE ROGERS  
 STAFF WRITER  
 During their careers as police officers, Joe Milkovich and Andy Spisak were accustomed to talking over radios.  
 These days, both can be heard on the airwaves by a lot wider audience - and they get to play classic country music. Milkovich and Spisak are part-time disc jockeys on WSDS radio, 1480 AM on your radio dial.  
 "If people discover classic country, they'll stay. You really need to be a radio listener to find us on AM radio," said Spisak, 70, a retired Westland police officer.  
 "The nice thing is, we're not playing to any set age. People in their 20s and people in their 60s will call (with requests). I talked to one guy who said he heard Hank Williams perform in person," said Milkovich, 55, who retired from the Garden City Police Department.  
 Both men had a long interest in being radio disc jockeys. Spisak, who uses the on-air name Andy Barron, first worked in radio while serving in the Army in 1958.  
 "I wasn't able to get a radio job when I

got out and in 1960, I joined the Wayne Police Department," said Spisak, who later was among the first officers hired when the Westland Police Department was formed.  
 From 1963-66, Spisak was on the air at radio station WYSI, the Superior Township-based station that is now WSDS.  
 "When the radio station opened, I did top 20 rock 'n' roll - the Barron's Blast," said Spisak, adding Barron was his grandmother's maiden name.  
 While with the Westland Police Department, Spisak had two stints as deputy mayor under Tom Taylor and Charles "Trav" Griffin which didn't leave much time for radio. He also worked for Westland's 18th District Court before returning to WSDS in 2000.  
 "I do other stuff - I serve papers for the court. I keep busy," said Spisak, who is heard 2-4 p.m. Monday through Thursday.  
 Similarly, Milkovich said as a young man he'd wanted to go into radio, but wasn't able to find a job. At 18, he was playing records at dances around



An retiree, Andy Spisak (left) and Joe Milkovich are doing something they'd hoped to do as young men - be radio disc jockeys.

PLEASE SEE DJs, A4

**Association owes arena \$75,000 in unpaid fees**

BY DARRELL CLEM  
 STAFF WRITER  
 Amid a controversy over city ice arena rates, the Westland Hockey Association has failed to pay \$75,000 it owes for using the facility, local officials said.  
 "It is close to \$80,000 that they owe us right now, and we will be going after that," said Westland Parks and Recreation Director Robert Kosowski said.  
 His comments came Monday during a Westland City Council meeting, under questioning from Councilman William Wild.  
 The hockey association owes about \$75,000 for using the arena on Wildwood near Hunter from October through December, Kosowski said.  
 City officials hope to meet with hockey association leaders to resolve the issue, and Kosowski indicated that some penalties may be assessed for late payment of bills.  
 Moreover, Kosowski said Wednesday that the hockey association may be blocked from using the facility unless it pays its bills by the end of January.  
 "That would be my stance," he said.  
 Hockey association President Kristopher Simonian said the bills weren't paid due to what he called "discrepancies in invoices." He said the organization had been billed for some ice arena time that it didn't use.  
 "We're not in the habit of paying invoices that aren't correct," Simonian said Wednesday. As long as the city has cleared up the discrepancies, he said, the bills will be paid.  
 Simonian has criticized city officials for imposing a \$20-an-hour rate hike that pushed rates to \$160 last year. He said the rate hike has placed a financial hardship on the organization and caused some members to leave.  
 City officials have defended the rate hikes, saying financial losses at the arena amounted to \$375,000 during the last two years, alone.  
 The ice arena is named after hockey star Mike Modano, a Westland native and Dallas Stars player.  
 dclcm@oe.hometown.com | (734) 953-2110

**New Year's accident hurts 3 people**

A 22-year-old Garden City man was in critical condition following a two-car, head-on collision that happened about 1:45 a.m. Saturday in Westland.  
 Police Sgt. Dan Karrick said alcohol is believed to have contributed to the accident, which occurred on Warren west of Central City Parkway.  
 The Garden City man was driving a 1995 Ford Escort the wrong way in the westbound lanes of Warren when he struck a 1992 Ford Tempo, Officer Tom Lessnau said in a statement issued by the

Westland Police Department's traffic bureau.  
 Police officials wouldn't release the identity of the man, who was flown by medical helicopter to the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. He remained in critical condition early this week.  
 The Garden City man is accused of hitting a tempo carrying a 36-year-old Wayne man and a 22-year-old female passenger who lives in Westland.  
 The people in the Tempo were taken to Garden City Hospital and treated for minor injuries.

**The accident snarled traffic in the Warren-Central City Parkway area.**  
 The accident snarled traffic in the Warren-Central City Parkway area until authorities managed to get the roadways cleared, Karrick said. The investigation was continuing this week.

Coming Sunday in PINK

Face it!  
 Signature facials from three local spas.

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# Local students send holiday hurricane help for victims in Florida

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

For the students at West Elementary School in Arcadia, Fla., Christmas came early, thanks to a group of their counterparts at Schweitzer Elementary School in Westland.

Known as the MP45GH, the students collected 57 boxes of school supplies, clothing, toys and games for students at the school, that was torn apart during Hurricane Charley on Aug. 14.

It started with an idea by one student, fifth-grader Jessica Hensley, and grew into an effort that filled an entire truck.

"We were talking about current events and natural disasters," said teacher Kathleen Pearce. "We were talking about hurricanes and their effects on the United States, especially Florida. When Jessica came to me and said she'd like to do something for the survivors."

"I like helping people," said Jessica who turned 10 on Dec. 29. "It's hard to explain, but it makes me feel good."

Pearce presented the Jessica's idea to the 26 students in her class, and in true democratic fashion they voted on what they wanted to do. Pearce contacted a friend, Ryan Patrick, who teaches at West Elementary, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The students organized themselves as the MP45GH - Mrs. Pearce's Fourth-Fifth Grade Helpers - to set up committees to cover all aspects of the collection drive. They even voted to give up their recesses rather than use learning time to work on the project which they did every Monday and Tuesday for two months.

The 5Ws (Who, What, Why, When, Where) committee created the timeline for the project. It decided who to invite to

participate, when the items would be sent, where they would go and what would be collected.

"The group decided on the school supplies and clothing plus toys and games that could be Christmas presents," said Pearce. "They figured the parents were worrying more about having shelter than about Christmas."

The Communications committee, which Jessica served on, decided how the project would be promoted to the rest of the student body. Members created posters for the hallways, made a flier to go home and made a brief presentation to each class.

"They felt it would have more impact if the students knew what that little piece of paper meant," Pearce said.

The Transportation committee had to find a way to get the items to Florida. One student knew someone who worked for Allied Moving Services, who in turn talked to their boss who arranged for the delivery free of charge.

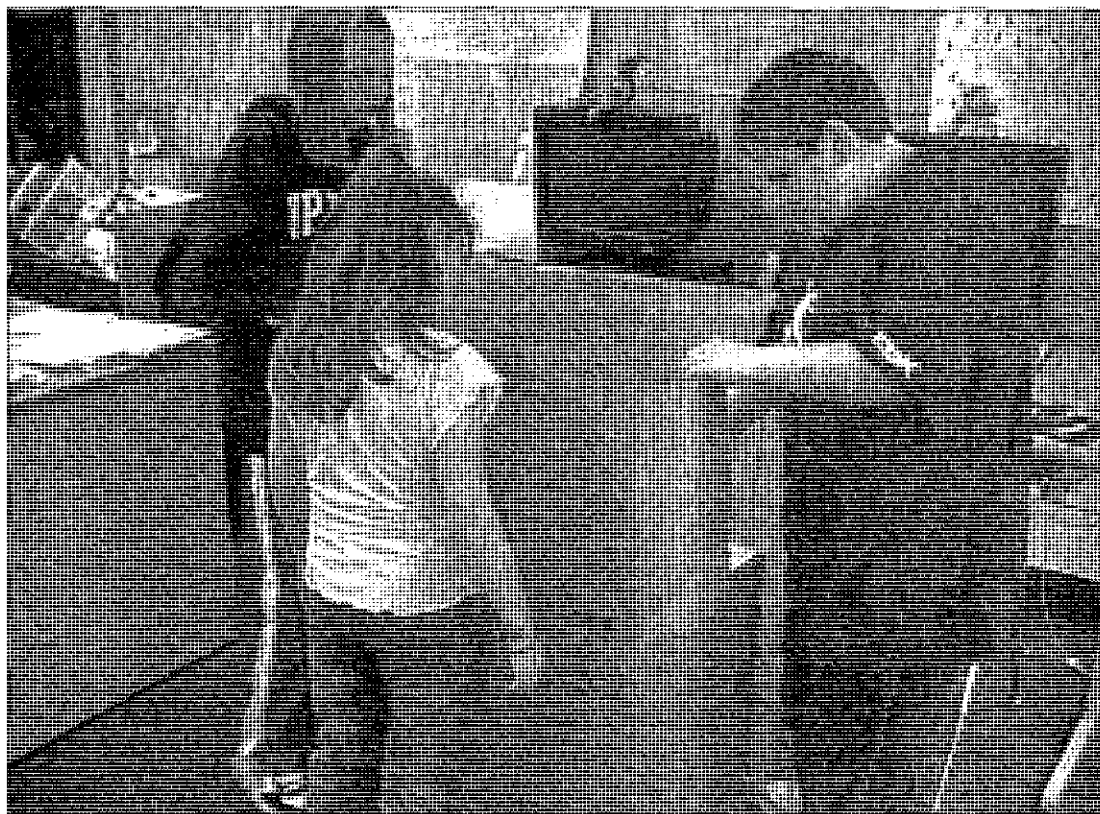
The Delivery committee assembled the 3-foot by 2-foot by 2-foot boxes, then the entire class packed and labeled the boxes.

"They did everything," said Pearce. "The only thing I did was copy the flier. They did so good. They taped up the ends and refolded everything they put in the boxes."

The collection drive was so successful, that the collection point had to be moved from Pearce's classroom to the art room.

The students also "did a beautiful card" that Pearce enlarged, and that, too, was sent to students at West Elementary.

"They want to keep in touch," said Pearce said. "They want the people to call or write and keep up the contact all year long."



Holland Boerje, Marissa Kujat and Andrew Potter work as a team in getting the boxes ready for packing.

Allied picked up the boxes on Dec. 1 and they arrived in Arcadia on Dec. 9.

Patrick called Pearce to say that they had received the shipment and that it was being organized so that it would benefit families with the most needs.

When the project was done, Pearce surveyed the students to see what they thought about it and if they would like to do another one. Many said yes to another project and put down some ideas. Many said they learned about teamwork. Their responses were insightful.

"We pulled from each other's strengths," said Mikey Acerrano.

"I learned how good it feels to help others and to give," said Brandon Marable.

"I learned that helping other people is awesome and wonderful and a spectacular feeling," said Holland Boertje. "It also taught me that there's no 'I' in team which means things are easier to do as a team and not solo."

Jessica is glad she gave up her recesses for the project and admits that her idea created a mess in both classrooms.

"But my parents are proud of me for thinking of other people," said.

smason@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 953-2112

# 1 injured, 1 arrested in fight

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A fight involving alcohol, escalated Saturday when a Westland woman drove a car toward another woman, pinning her against the side of house, police said.

The incident happened about 2:25 a.m. on Delton Court, near Wildwood and Palmer, and it left the victim with a broken right leg, police Sgt. Steve Borisch said. The accused assailant drove off but was captured and arrested less than a mile away, when the 1999 Ford Taurus she was driving was struck by another car at the Wayne-Palmer intersection, according to police reports.

Authorities arriving at Delton Court found the victim lying on the ground. They also found a broken-out storm door to the residence and saw tire marks leading up to the house.

The assailant, according to the reports, had argued with others at the party and had thrown a chair through the kitchen window. She then went outside.

The victim, a 33-year-old Dearborn Heights woman, was attacked with the car when she went outside to confront the assailant, a 37-year-old Westland woman, according to authorities. The attacker, described as drunk, fled the scene but was hit by another drunken driver in a 1990 Ford Mustang at the Wayne-Palmer intersection, police said. Police arrested both women for driving drunk, Borisch said.

The woman involved in the assault on Delton Court has been arraigned in Westland 18th District Court on charges of assault with intent to do great bodily harm (less than murder) and failing to stop at the scene of a personal injury accident.

Judge Gail McKnight set a \$25,000/10 percent bond and ordered the woman to return to court Jan. 13 for a preliminary hearing that will decide whether she should face trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.



Elliott Arnold, Emily Morgan and Matthew Castaldini strike a pose with the boxes before taking on the job of filling them with the donated items.



Andrea Garner (from left) Nicholas Sypher, Mercedes Johnson and Cody Borg were among the students who worked on the project.

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# WC3 computer classes pair seniors citizens with youth

Playing card games and passing notes is certainly not acceptable classroom behavior, unless you are a senior citizen participating in ExperienceSeniorPower.

Seniors enrolled in the inter-generational computer skills building program practice their newfound skills by e-mailing friends, family and each other.

They also will learn how to master the mouse by participating in a rousing game of Solitaire.

Computer labs at the Western Campus of Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) are open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Wednesday from for seniors wanting to begin to develop or hone additional computer skills.

The classes teach seniors everything from basic keyboarding, computer technology, e-mail, photo scanning and uploading photos to mastering Microsoft Word and Excel, Microsoft Windows and surfing the Internet, utilizing on-line forums, on-line shopping and Internet safety and security.

Seniors pay just a one-time workbook fee of \$31.79.

"If seniors get stuck, there's always someone to lend a hand," said Tony Fama, founder of Maria Madeline Project Inc. and its ESP programming.

The lab is staffed by an instructor and several WCCCD work study students, which

gives the program the inter-generational component so important to Fama.

The idea for ESP, Fama said, came from the close relationship he had with his mother and grandmother while growing up.

The experience, he said, made him realize how much each generation can learn from the other and the importance of respect.

"The idea really is to teach our youth to respect and honor our seniors and for our seniors to become grandparents or mentors to our youth," he said.

Fama chose to partner with WCCCD after meeting Michael Dotson, WCCCD senior associate vice-chancellor for administration and finance.

"Working with Mike has been a joy. He really is focused on bridging intergenerational relationships which is essential to our corporate ideal," Fama said. "Between Mike and Chancellor Curtis Ivery, I know the college is certainly on the same page as we are - and that is to celebrate the lives of our seniors."

Since its inception in March 1999, ESP has about 10,000 subscribers in 18 states.

All subscribers, he said, have a voice in the program and on the contents of the Web site, ExperienceSeniorPower.com, which is available to all seniors and features discussion forums, health news, resources and other items of interest to the senior set.

Fama said he receives a lot of

feedback from seniors through evaluation forms as well as his company e-mail account.

"We encourage them to keep in touch so we can make sure the seniors are happy," he said, adding he has incorporated a number of their suggestions into the Web site, including a poetry page.

Dotson said WCCCD set up the program in Fama's vision by creating a low-key environment where seniors can ask questions and readily get answers.

"It's a nice intimate setting where a senior who has very limited skills can learn to use a mouse while another is being assisted with e-mail," Dotson said. "The seniors don't have to be on the same page at the same time."

"Many of the seniors are more interested in computer basics and they very quickly move into learning about other things on the computer such as sending photos and building their biography that they share on the Web site with seniors across the country."

Seniors have the option of coming to class whenever they like during the four-hour class time and staying as long as they wish.

"We don't want them locked into a time," Dotson said.

ExperienceSeniorPower classes are offered at Wayne County Community College District's Western Campus at 9555 Haggerty Road in Belleville. To enroll or for more information, call (734) 697-5180.



## First arrival

The first baby of the New Year at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia also was a first for her parents. Natalie Jo Lynn Starasinich, born at 1:07 a.m. Jan. 1, is the first child of Joseph and Lindsay Starasinich of Westland. The infant weighed 6 pounds, 9 ounces. Her due date was Christmas Day, but she decided to come on New Year's Day, said her proud father. Natalie was delivered by Dr. M.H. Neal. The Starasinich family received a handmade quilt and other gifts from the Birthing Center staff at St. Mary Mercy for the birth of their new baby.

## CLARIFICATION

### Services set for Tyler Townsend

A story in the Jan. 2 issue of the Observer should have identified Laura Toy as a state senator.

In addition, a story in the Dec. 30 issue on the \$20,000 donation by the Friends of Greenmead in support of the historical park mistakenly identified the original location of the Alexander Blue House.

Before it was moved to Greenmead in 1987, the home was located on Middlebelt north of Schoolcraft.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Friday at Hillside Cemetery in Belleville for 6-year-old Tyler Townsend.

Tyler was born on Aug. 1, 1998, and died on Jan. 2, 2005.

The youngster had been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in July and given just six months to live by doctors.

He had been undergoing radiation treatment at the University of Michigan Hospital when his health began to decline rapidly.

He eventually was moved to Arbor Hospice where he died in his mother's arms Tuesday night.

Friends had organized numerous fund-raisers to help pay

expenses after his mother cut back on her work with Sunshine Cleaning Service in Ann Arbor to be with her son.

"I just loved that child, he was the center of my sunshine," said his mother, Tammie. "He's my angel baby."

Visitation is 1-8 p.m. today at the Higginson-Neal Funeral Home, 209 Main St., Belleville.

Called Tyzilla by his mother and family friend, he is survived by his mother, Tammie Townsend, and his father, John Hubbard, and grandparents Orville and Anita Townsend and Winston and Edna Hubbard.

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Dan Stavale, President Equity Enhancement Specialist, L.L.C.

Most Americans who are concerned about preparing for retirement are lured into contributing pre-tax dollars into 401K plans or tax-deductible contributions into IRA's. Such "Qualified Plans" only give you tax-favored advantages during the contribution and accumulation phase of your retirement account. What about the most important phases - when you withdraw the money for retirement income or transfer any remaining funds to your heirs? Has anyone told you "The rest of the story?"

A Michigan couple filing a joint tax return with a taxable income in excess of \$56,800 will be in a 29% marginal tax bracket. If they were fortunate enough to both qualify for deductible contributions to their IRAs, they would save \$1160 a year in taxes on a total contribution of \$4000 a year. However, most retirees will pay back every dollar to Uncle Sam that they saved in taxes in the first 18-24 months of their retirement. In fact, the average retired couple will pay 8 - 12 times the taxes during their retirement years than the taxes they saved during their contribution/accumulation years.

One of the original IRA/401K tenets held that deferring tax until retirement was advantageous because funds would likely be taxed at a lower rate. That is no longer universal true. You may well spend retirement in the same or higher bracket if you accumulate a respectable retirement nest egg. In fact, tax rates will likely rise in the future. So why postpone the inevitable and compound the tax problems?

Is there a way to "Have your cake and eat it too?" Through proper planning, a homeowner may safely utilize an equity retirement plan that may provide tax advantages during the contribution and accumulation years, but more importantly, you may enjoy tax-free income during the retirement years and transfer any remaining funds to your heirs tax-free. This strategy can increase your net spendable retirement income by as much as 50%!

To understand how to determine if participation in a Roth IRA, traditional IRA or 401K plans is wise in your circumstances, Equity Enhancement Specialist, L.L.C. is conducting an educational seminar entitled, "Common Sense Strategies for Successful Equity Management." It will be held on Wednesday, January 12, 2005 from 7:00-10:00 p.m. at The Sheraton Detroit Novi, located at 2111 Haggerty Rd., Novi, MI 48375. There is easy access from I-275 8 Mile exit with plenty of parking.

This education seminar is taught nationally at a normal tuition of \$100.00. However, Metropolitan Detroit homeowners are cordially invited to attend this presentation at no charge. For guaranteed seating, please RSVP at 248-357-0848.

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## DJS

FROM PAGE A1

Garden City.

"I owe my police career to Boots Bell — they hired him instead of me," said Milkovich, whose on-air name is Joe Michaels. "I went into police work which was really my first choice. I started doing this in June. Andy and I were talking. I found out he was on the radio. I met with (station owner) George Koch. He put me on the air — I'm still on the air."

The appeal of being a disc jockey, Milkovich said, is that it's fun and he gets to play music he grew up listening to while growing up in West Virginia.

"It brings back a lot of fond memories of growing up. It also gets my critics who say I can't talk without swearing off my back," said Milkovich, known for his colorful language and ever-present cigar. "It's the only two hours a week I don't swear."

Located in a fairly remote area, WSDS — the call letters stand for We Serve Detroit Suburbs — has been a country western station since Koch's father purchased it in 1968.

"My father improved the signal in 1985 and now you can get us all over — out to Pontiac and Howell," said Koch. "It had been a 500-watt daytime station."

If pressed, Koch might go on the air himself occasionally.

"I don't have the talent of these two, they're great. It's been a lot of work training them," Koch said.

Although the radio station can use CDs and tapes, during his show Spisak was cueing up songs on vinyl, including one of his own recordings.

The disc jockeys have a cheat sheet they work from on their music selections and take requests, but it's pretty much up to them what they want to play within the classic country genre.

"We still pretty much pick what we want to play. We don't play anything too modern. We will play some Toby Keith and George Strait," said Milkovich, whose favorites include Faron Young, Webb Pierce and Hank Williams. "You can't say country music without Hank Williams ... and Andy Barron."

The problem with a lot of newer country music, Milkovich said, is that the cuts getting a lot of radio airplay aren't classic country style.

"Some of those artists have good old feel country songs on their albums, but that's not what gets played on the radio," he said.

Like Spisak, Milkovich works another job. You can find him working a court officer in Westland several days a week.

"I'll do this (being a disc jockey) as long as it's fun. When it quits being fun, I'm gone," he said.

Spisak agreed. "That's one of the joys of being old enough," he said.

**WSDS-AM** — "Where Country and Western Collide" — is at 1480 AM, but also can be heard via the Internet at [www.wsdst1480.com](http://www.wsdst1480.com).

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## Class aims at stage hopefuls

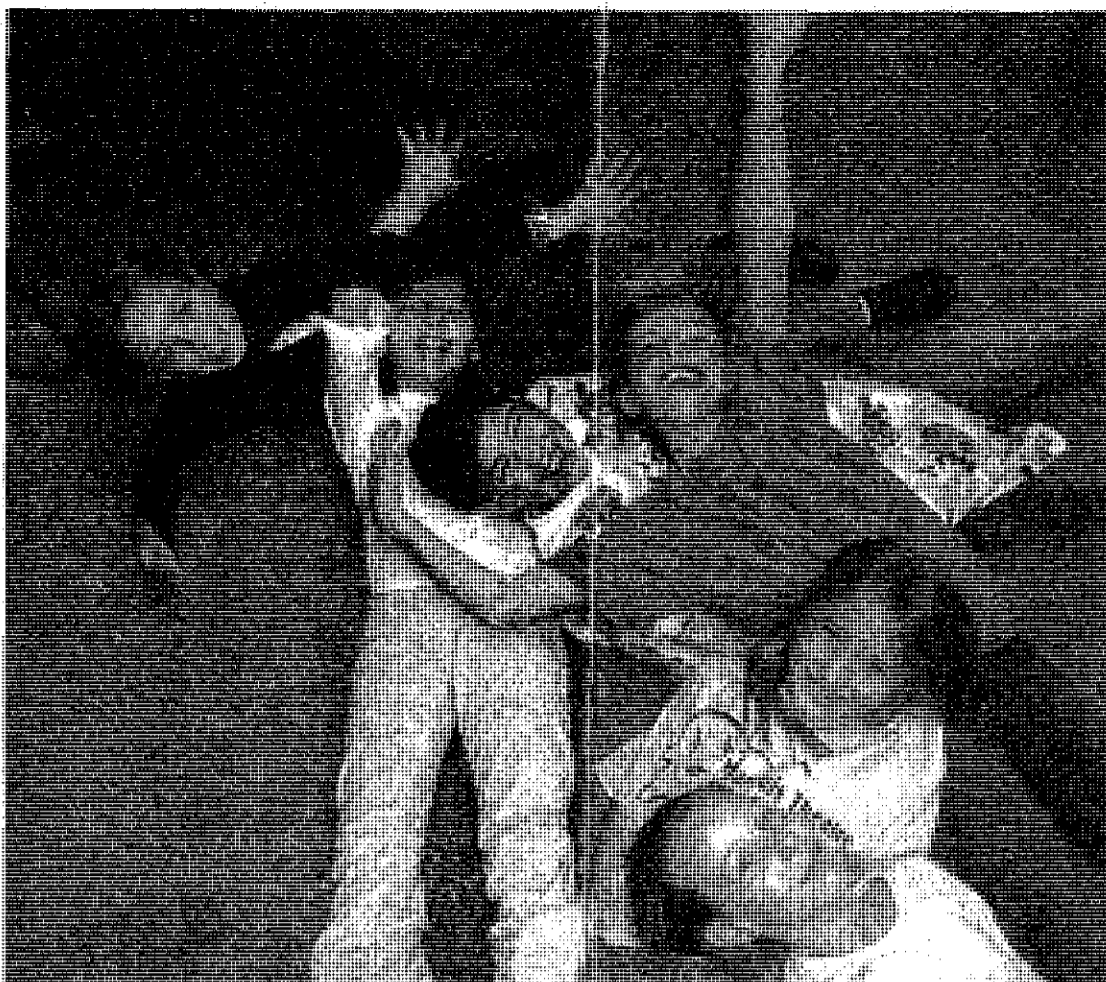
Have you ever wondered how actors learn the skills that enable them to be successful on stage?

The Plymouth Community Arts Council and the Plymouth Uptown Players Theater Group is offering teen drama for aspiring actors ages 12-18, and PUPs in Training for those ages 5-11.

Auditions, blocking scenes and character development through games, improvisation and short skits will help young actors start or continue on their way to being in the theater.

Classes meet on Wednesday evenings beginning Jan. 26, and run for eight weeks. The cost is \$80 for PCAC members and \$90 for nonmembers.

For more information or to register for class, call the PCAC at (734) 416-4278.



Actors in the Plymouth Uptown Players after an exercise teaching them to project their voices and work on their timing.

## PAY

FROM PAGE A1

that the salary increases, when averaged out, amount to little more than 1 percent a year for recent years — an amount that he called "far from being extravagant."

The latest pay plan for department heads contains new language that will reduce health care benefits for any new hires. The rule won't apply to current directors.

Administration officials have said the automatic pay increase clause went into effect years ago to ensure that department heads don't fall behind the salaries of their subordinates.

In another development, Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt proposed Monday that longevity pay be eliminated for department heads who are hired in the future. The annual payout is \$100 for every year worked for the city.

"We're here to watch the money," Graunstadt said. "We-

know the situation in terms of funding."

However, Cicirelli said during another portion of the meeting that a new audit showed the city with \$1.2 million in its general fund as of last June — much higher than the \$200,000 that had been projected.

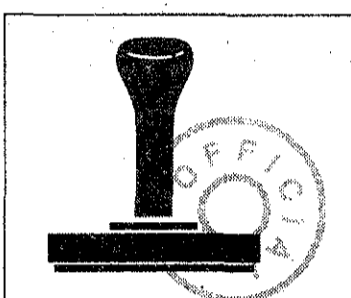
The improved financial picture came amid spending cuts and efforts to leave some jobs unfilled, the mayor said.

Graunstadt and LeBlanc supported eliminating the longevity pay for future hires, but their colleagues refused to go along with the proposal.

Meanwhile, salaries for Cicirelli, council members and City Clerk Eileen DeHart are expected to be discussed early in the year by the Local Officers Compensation Commission, which recommends any salary changes for elected officials. It isn't known what, if any, pay raises will be proposed for elected officials.

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## FOR THE RECORD



**For the Record** appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Sports section in *Passages* on page C7.

**T**  
David J. Trainor, 67, died Dec. 24.  
**W**  
Dennis J. Wittkop, 53, of Westland, formerly of Dundee, died Jan. 2.  
Winnifred I. Wolfe, 85, of Plymouth, died Dec. 30.  
Mary Jane (nee Gerbig) Wolford-Hughes, 84, died Dec. 20.  
Elizabeth Ann Wyrick, 72, of Clarkston, died Jan. 2.

### INFORMATION CENTRAL

Entropy. That's the state into which everything falls when left on its own: a state of disorder, disrepair and disarray. It can happen anywhere — your desk, your finances, your mind, your closet, your kitchen sink.

I know when I leave my dishes on their own, I end up with a sink full of entropy.

Fighting entropy starts with getting organized, and January is National "Get Organized" Month, the perfect time to straighten things up for the coming year. The library can help.

If your house is a disaster zone, you have a range of options. Try turning to Dan Aslett's *Not for Packrats Only, Clutter Free!* or Martha Stewart's *Good Things for Organizing* for suggestions on getting your stuff in order. Stephanie Schur reveals the "secrets of a professional organizer" in her video, *How to Organize Your Home*.

Once you've got your home under control, branch out and organize the rest of your world. Bill Adler Jr. covers all kinds of flotsam and jetsam in *Outwitting Clutter*, and Liz Davenport gives you a six-step process for creating *Order from Chaos*.

Donna Smallin makes it easy with *The One-Minute Organizer*, and Marilyn Byfield Paul, recognizing that *It's Hard to Make a Difference When You Can't Find Your Keys*, outlines her "path to becoming truly organized."

Maybe you need to get your finances in order?

David and Tom Gardner of The Motley Fool offer their *Personal Finance Workbook*, which they describe as a "foolproof way to organize your cash." Or you may appreciate the wisdom of experience. The *Wall Street Journal*, Ernst & Young and Charles Schwab all

publish guides to personal finance. If you get really ambitious, how about exploring some new ways of looking at order and organization?

Dr. Edward Burger has released a DVD of his lectures on the orderly science of mathematics called *The Joy of Thinking: The Beauty and Power of Classical Mathematical Ideas*.

And of course, the library itself is founded on principles of organization. Try Matthew Battles' wonderful *Library: An Unquiet History* for an introduction. Call the library at (734) 326-6123.

**Teen Advisory Board:** Meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 11.

Help out at the Library by doing cool stuff like choosing books, planning programs, doing displays and selecting prizes for the Young Adult Department. Come join the Teen Advisory Board and make the library an awesome place for teen. Refreshments will be served. Call Rori at (734) 326-6123 to sign up.

The William P. Faust Public Library is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

### RECYCLING

Westland's Recycling Center, located behind the Economic Growth Center at 37095 Marquette, is open all year for Westland residents only. Hours of operation through March 31 are 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. The center is closed on Sunday and holidays year round.

The center accepts:  
■ Clean newspaper stacked neatly, 6-15 inches high, tied with twine, or packed into paper bags. Papers must be dry, no mold. NO junk mail, catalogs, magazines or phone books, office paper, computer paper or cardboard accepted.  
■ Plastics (#1 or #2) drink jugs and colored laundry detergent-type jugs (HDPE No. 2 and PET No. 1) that are cleaned and washed out. No lids, no plastic bags, no caustic material (such as drain cleaner) containers and no oil or antifreeze containers are accepted.  
■ Cans — aluminum (WON'T stick to a magnet) cans only — no scrap metal, out-of-state beverage cans with no Michigan deposit.

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Molly Mackler, 12, of Livonia auditions for a part in Paper Bag Productions' show 'Alice in Wonderland.' Director C.J. Nodus (left) listens as she reads her lines.

## Youngsters set sights on role of 'Alice in Wonderland'

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

Boys and girls shuffled into Livonia Mall Tuesday in hopes of nabbing a lead role in the upcoming Livonia Youththeater and Paperbag Production's version of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Auditions were held at the performance space based inside the mall at Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads. Competition was scarce at the start, around 4 p.m., but quickly began to pick up.

Several students from Tyler Elementary School showed up to sing and to read lines. Among them were Barbara Scupholm, who is 8, and her sister Elizabeth, age 5 1/2. Barbara was a newcomer to the tryouts and her preparation was simple. "Just do your best," she said.

Her sister Elizabeth said she "did do a little play at my class, but we didn't say much."

She's hoping for more lines and a place in the *Alice* cast this time though. Elizabeth is hardly shy on stage.

"I liked it because all the people were watching me and they were taking pictures," she said.

Meghan Knorp, 6, said she too loves that attention. Meghan was recently cast in the last production, *Babes in Toyland*, along with her sister 8-year-old Alex Knorp.

They agreed that auditions are "not very scary" and the shows are all about one thing - having fun.

"It's not serious," Meghan said. "You just want to have fun."

She admitted being cast in a play like those at Livonia Youththeater does take some work.

"It takes a lot of rehearsals. You have to look at the script a few times and think you can do it."

For brother-and-sister team Andrew and



Eight-year-old Alex Knorp of Livonia gives a sincere look while auditioning for the upcoming 'Alice in Wonderland' show.

Madelyn Buckshaw, auditions have become quite comfortable.

Madelyn, 8, brings along her American Girl doll for luck.

And Andrew has been in so many shows at the theater he sounds likely to be cast again - after his ear-catching audition.

Parents of the would-be actors spoke highly of the theater, calling it a good opportunity for local youngsters.

"It's really good for their self-confidence," said Lois Scupholm of Livonia.

And Chris Knorp said this is the second performance for both of her girls.

"They absolutely love coming here," she said.

"They feel great about themselves. It's been a good experience."

For more information about Livonia Youththeater or Paperbag Productions, call (586) 344-7774.

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## Cycle shop owner had wild ride

BY KEVIN BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

Motorcycle-builder extraordinaire Eric Gorges and his Voodoo Choppers crew are back and busy in Rochester after an autumn road trip filmed for the cable TV Discovery Channel series *Biker Build-Off*.

Because the episode doesn't air until February, Gorges, 33, can't say who won. The Discovery Channel also won't allow photos to be taken of the motorcycle he and his crew built for the show.

But even if Gorges didn't win, he had a wild ride.

The shop owner, who's also featured in the December 2004 issue of *Midwest Motorcyclist*, ate barbecue in a back alley Memphis, Tenn. bar, and judged a bikini contest with opponent Cory Ness, a veteran chopper builder from Dublin, Calif.

At the end of the trip Oct. 5 in Alabama, "We had like 200,000 people," Gorges said.

"There were so many people that we had police escorts. We were treated like rock stars. I never signed so many autographs before."

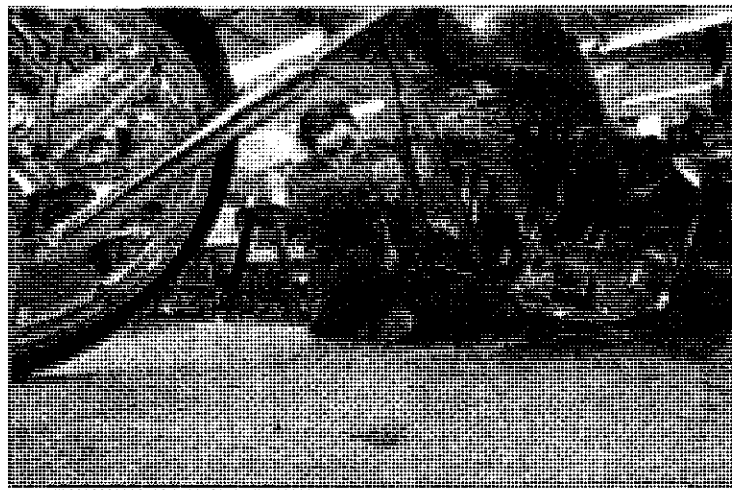
Gorges and Voodoo Choppers were discovered by series producer Hugh King at a motorcycle show in North Carolina. The Discovery Channel show is in its fourth season.

"He had seen some of the work we did for other builders," Gorges said. "He asked if I wanted to do a show. He thought it was really unique, the fact that we make everything ourselves."

"We hand-make probably 90 percent of everything in house; the front ends, frames, oil tanks, exhaust systems, controls - there isn't anything somebody asked me to make that I haven't been able to," Gorges said.

In keeping with the show's premise, Gorges and his crew had only 90 hours to build a chopper from scratch, before they were off on the road trip.

His core building team included Steve Broyles of Stevenson Cycle of Wayne, bringing his engine skills; Kevin Verkest, a Harrison



Eric Gorges works on a cycle at his Rochester business, Voodoo Choppers. He'll be featured on the Feb. 22 broadcast of the Discovery Channel show, 'Biker Build-Off.'

Township fabricator; and Drew Gilbey of Rochester Hills.

"Normally bikes take eight to 12 months to build. You're trying to do this with cameras around you all the time; we worked around the clock. I think the biggest thing I took out of the whole experience was the amount of work you can do if you really concentrate."

Gorges said he was eager for the road trip. "When you own a small business you don't get a chance to do a lot of long-distance riding."

The trek began Sept. 29 in Huntsville, Ala. The riders traveled 220 miles west to Memphis.

"It's really cool but it's sort of difficult to concentrate on riding when they've got this camera floating around next to you, and cameras on wands in front of you. It's surreal," Gorges said.

"You can't really ride at their speed. Sometimes they want you to go slow so they can get different shots. Some helicopter shots are really cool."

The next leg took the riders 280 miles northwest through the Ozark Mountains to Branson, Mo. "It was great

weather, awesome roads, really nice people," Gorges said. "We had a great trip; absolutely no problems with the bikes."

The last leg of the trip took them 120 miles south to Fayetteville, Ark., where the public voted on the bikes at The 5th Annual Bikes, Blues and BBQ Motorcycle Rally & Music Festival Oct. 2

"We spent the last day riding a lot of twisty roads and stopped at a place called Eureka Springs. Cory and I opened up a bar there."

The two were given swords to cut a ribbon for a grand opening ceremony. Gorges said he also enjoyed the fact that Arkansas has no helmet law.

The motorcycle builders from Michigan were not paid for the show, but some meals were complimentary. "It's just an honor to do the show," Gorges said. Of his opponent, "I have a lot of respect for Cory and his family," Gorges said.

For more information about Voodoo Choppers, visit [www.voodoochoppers.com](http://www.voodoochoppers.com). For more information about the show *Biker Build-Off*, visit [www.discovery.com](http://www.discovery.com).

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## OUR VIEWS

# Police Web site is a good crime tool

What Fox did for John Walsh and his *America's Most Wanted* is what the Westland Police Department hopes the Internet will do for its local version.

The police department has created a link on the city's Web site to show surveillance photos of suspects involved in local crimes in hopes of getting tips from the public to help investigators solve crimes.

People surfing the Internet, be they local residents or someone in Katmandu, will be able to access the list.

The suspects lack the notoriety of those featured on the FBI's Most Wanted list that hang on post office walls or those Walsh featured on his show over the years — a man involved in two bank robberies, a purse snatcher and a shoplifter — but a crime is a crime, and every little bit of information can help close these cases.

The Internet got its start in the 1960s and 40 years later, people have become comfortable with using it. Everyone from the federal government on down to the folks at city hall have turned to the Internet to get the word out or to make filling out forms, accessing services easier for residents, so it's only logical that it has now become a tool for law enforcement.

The Web site may not have the glitz and glamour of a television show, but as we see it, it's a win-win situation for the police department. There are millions of Web sites offering information and products, so why not devote one to getting the bad guys?

We congratulate the police department for its innovation, and encourage residents to log on to the Web site — [www.ci.westland.mi.us/services/police.html](http://www.ci.westland.mi.us/services/police.html) — and click on Westland's Most Wanted to see if they might have a tip for police.

Who knows, that little bit of information may be enough to solve a crime and even land the tipster a nice reward.

# Auto show still critical to region

Later this month, the eyes of the world — or at least the auto world — will be firmly focused on Detroit as the Motor City plays host to the 2005 North American International Auto Show.

From the early days of Henry Ford through the 1970s, there was no disputing that Detroit was the auto capital of the world. Everyone who was anyone in the business was here, making the region an economic force.

The Detroit area, while it didn't have the Golden Gate Bridge or New York's Statue of Liberty, had something else: It was truly the place that put the world on wheels.

And while there is no denying Detroit's continuing importance to the automobile industry, much has changed since the 1980s to a point where the auto show itself is in danger of being marginalized.

A global economy has seen the emergence of automakers with headquarters in Korea, Japan and other burgeoning countries. There are reports that India is positioning itself to become the next motor capital. And last week, it was announced a new car company based in China is readying to crash our shores with new and innovative cars.

There has been a lot of talk about how Michigan's economy is too dependent on the auto sector, and we need to diversify our economic base. That may be true, but we also should not turn our backs on the industry that has supported our region for nearly 100 years.

So enjoy the auto show. Revel in the new makes and models. Support local charities by attending the black-tie preview gala.

And, if the time is right, take the plunge and order that new car or truck. It's what keeps Michigan's economic engine running.



## Taxes not whole issue

Your Dec. 30 editorial "To improve economy, lower business taxes" is well-intentioned, but falls into the same trap most tax policies have in recent years.

You assume there is a level that Michigan can reduce its business tax that would make our manufacturers competitive with their counterparts in other countries. The reality is that business taxes could be reduced to zero and Michigan corporations still would not be able to compete with companies overseas that can get away with paying their workers 55 cents an hour.

Lowering business taxes represents only one approach to addressing the problem of competing in a global economy. Instead, we should be looking at how we can preserve our industrial base and create more such good-paying and high-tech jobs.

In the past, political leaders were willing to make an investment in America's future. They spent the tax money necessary to upgrade the education of a whole generation through the G.I. Bill and to build a national highway system to transport materials, people and finished products.

This investment of tax dollars laid the basis for the boom that took place after World War II.

We don't have the privilege of being the major economic power in the world as we were back then, but investment by government is still needed to make Michigan and America economically successful. Businesses cannot — and will not — take on the task of building the country's infrastructure.

We need to get over the notion, prevailing in recent years, that taxes are only a drain on the economy. Public spending can be an asset. Ours is a mixed economy and government investment is essential to our country's prosperity.

Where would business be if government hadn't been there to educate their workforce, build and maintain public thoroughfares, invent the Internet, fund research and development that creates new products and processes, guarantee the integrity of stock and bond markets, assure the safety of the products we buy and, hopefully, someday provide the single-payer health care system that will lower costs for everybody?

Have we really improved our economy if we lower taxes and public services, as well as wages and worker benefits, to the level of a Third World country? The goal should not be to compete over how low we can go, but how high we can reach.

Sam Stark  
Southfield

## America must do more

I recently became very enthused when I read that \$2 billion has been pledged to help the victims of the devastating tsunami. In the midst of so much pain and suffering, a person can only be hoping and praying for every life that was affected by this terrible tragedy.

Although in matters of life and death, monetary issues barely affect a conscious mind, it is very evident that modern soci-

eties must rely on financial courtesies to pull out of such tragedies. To me this is a tragedy in itself.

I used the term "financial courtesies," because of the simple reason that a great majority (not all) of the money donated is purely political. For example, Japan has donated more money (\$500 million) than the richest country in the world (U.S. \$350 million). If we were being humane, we would do our duty to humanity and help out, over and above all other nations, because we are America.

Events like the tsunami take precedent over all economic, political or friendly ties between nations, for people who live within in these nations are not our enemies, they are simply citizens, who occasionally live under evil regimes, but they are still good humans, who simply want to live.

Therefore, it is our duty — not our privilege, our duty — to make sure that the people affected by the tsunami have every chance possible to live.

As an extremely patriotic American, who does not take for granted what his nation has provided for him, I believe we must step up and put all political motives behind us.

For the sake of humanity, the true universal link among all peoples, America needs to take a more responsible role in this tragedy, thus illustrating the respect it has to the Asian community affected, its people, itself, and most importantly, all of humanity.

Brad L. Dizik  
Farmington Hills

## Red Cross explanation

A recent *New York Times* article had information about an unauthorized release of the International Committee of the Red Cross' report on detainees in Guantanamo Bay. It gave details alleging violations of the Geneva Conventions.

In response to this article, I would like to take this opportunity to explain the role of the Red Cross internationally.

The international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has two operating functions embracing seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

The movement's two independent organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, operate and are funded independently.

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the exclusive humanitarian mission of the International Committee is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence from all nations and to provide them with assistance. It bases its work on the Geneva Conventions.

No other member of the Red Cross Movement, including the American Red Cross, has this unique and challenging role.

The Geneva Conventions, which apply to all armed conflicts, require that all detainees and prisoners of war (POWs) be visited by the independent International Committee to help assure the world that their treatment is humane. They visit detainees of every

nationality, including American service members.

For example, the International Committee visited the three American servicemen held in a Serbian prison during the Kosovo conflict and arranged for them to send messages to their families back home.

During the Gulf War, the International Committee met with 55 U.S. POWs as well as POWs from the UK, France, Germany, and Italy. Its reports are provided to the holding government only, on a confidential basis.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which includes the American Red Cross and societies in 149 other countries, promotes humanitarian principles and values, provides disaster response and disaster preparedness education, and meets specific health and safety concerns in the community.

Members of this organization are known for their response to large scale natural and man-made disasters caused by hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks and more.

Here at home, the Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross provided disaster relief in times of crisis at an average of four home fires every day and helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

One of our most active services is supporting U.S. troops and their families by providing emergency messages to U.S. armed forces based overseas from family members here in southeast Michigan and other support services.

We operate an office at Selfridge Air National Guard base in addition to our headquarters in Detroit, where our military programs experienced a 16 percent increase within the past year.

We greatly appreciate the generosity of the entire southeast Michigan community. Your financial contributions to the American Red Cross and the Southeastern Michigan Chapter play a significant role in helping our country and our community remain safe and prepared.

To learn more about your American Red Cross, visit [www.semredcross.org](http://www.semredcross.org) or call (313) 833-4440.

James J. Laverty  
American Red Cross

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## QUOTABLE

"I think that Michigan is still feeling the effects of a slow economy. We do have more individuals seeking assistance from the food assistance program to feed their families and meet their needs."

— Maureen Sorbet, spokeswoman for the Michigan Family Independence Agency, speaking about the number of Wayne County households seeking food assistance in state fiscal year 2004

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# Legislators must take an honest approach to budget

Happy New Year, everybody. Just in case you thought dishonesty in life is something new, consider that more than 2,000 years ago, the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes was said to have spent much time wandering around Athens in broad daylight, carrying a lantern and searching in vain for an honest man.

Yet if Diogenes were alive and in Lansing with his lantern today, he would need lots of extra batteries. There don't seem to be many honest folks these days in our state capital. The politicians are not being honest about our finances — or maybe they're all just scared of blurring out the truth, which is that the emperor is getting more naked by the day.

Consider: Michigan has experienced \$1 billion or more budget shortfalls in each of the past three fiscal years. This year's budget already looks out of whack by something like \$400 million, and best estimates are that next year's spending plan (which begins Oct. 1) will be another \$1 billion-plus in the red.

How come? What to do? Diogenes, shine that lantern! Most legislators proclaim in public that we have to cut state spending — without ever saying what exactly they would cut, since that would inevitably get someone mad. Various special interest groups — teachers, prison guards, city managers, you name 'em — say we've got to cut spending, sure, but certainly not by slashing their own little patch of happiness.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce says we've got to cut taxes even more than we have to improve the business climate. Naturally, business leaders never address the problem of how to make up for the lost revenue, or what will happen when the money that buys essential state services disappears.

On and on it goes. Fingers are being pointed left, right and center, in an endless circle. Diogenes would have despaired ... unless he was fortunate enough to come across Tom Clay, director of state affairs for the Citizens Research Council of Michigan.

CRC is a nonprofit research outfit that is widely recognized as both non-partisan and enormously expert. Clay is a quiet, unassuming type who worked on state budgets under both Republican and Democratic governors for decades and probably knows as much as anybody about how our state's finances work.

He was the keynote speaker at a forum put on by CRC in November. The bottom line: "Under current policies of taxation and spending, the Michigan general fund structural (i.e. chronic, built-in) deficit that became evident in fiscal year 2000-01 will continue to grow into the future, even given a reasonably optimistic economic outlook."

The cause has to do both with the structure of state spending and the nature of the state's tax system. Expenditures on Medicaid (the joint state-federal program to pay for health and long-term care for poor residents) and the state's prison system are

growing rapidly — and uncontrollably. Even with zero increase in state spending on all the other programs, the built-in cost increases for Medicaid and corrections all by themselves will cause general fund spending to grow faster than tax revenue, even in good economic times. In other words, we are doomed to spend more than we take in. Hence the chronic "structural" deficit.

As to taxes, most that support the general fund are relatively inelastic, that is they do not grow at the same rate as the economy. "In the 1990s it became evident that tax revenues did not keep up with increases in personal income, and now that personal income is down as a result of the recession and loss of manufacturing jobs, tax revenue is down even further," Clay said.

"A structural deficit of this nature is not going away without policy changes," he added. "The state has been able to continue to support general fund programs over the last five fiscal years by using \$6.5 billion in non-recurring resources. The recurring revenues simply have not been there and will not be adequate in the future without significant changes in tax and expenditure policy."

What Clay is saying in plain English is that the state for five years has resorted to a bunch of one-time financial gimmicks to stave off Armageddon — using up rainy day funds, increasing fees, changing dates of tax collections and other accounting trickery. The \$6.5 billion stash that was in the piggy bank has now been all used up.

And folks — whether Lansing types or ordinary citizens — are going to have to confront an emerging budget crisis. We have no choice; we are facing billions in red ink. The only way to accomplish this is to get serious about cutting spending, by increasing taxes or by both.

That's what the light of Diogenes' lamp reveals, and the hope is that a few bright shining hard facts will help bring even less-than-honest men to the realization that things have to change big-time.

In one positive development, Clay presented this material to newly elected state representatives at a meeting in Lansing last month. "Frankly, I was encouraged at the reaction of the new legislators. They're understanding the facts and they're concerned — much more now than they were two years ago at a similar meeting," he told me.

Finally, I too have found that some people in Lansing are discussing this situation — in private, of course — with the seriousness it deserves. But we don't have much time to get our house in order. "We're already behind the eight-ball with respect to other states," Clay said, "and if we don't fix this problem pretty soon the future is going to be pretty gloomy."

As we ought to know by now, there is a terrible price to be paid for ignoring a coming tidal wave.

Phil Power is the chairman of the board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2047 or at ppower@homecomm.net.



Phil Power

# 'Spirit of Michigan State' is graduate's labor of love

This is bound to be a big year for Michigan State University, which last week inaugurated its first woman president, Lou Anna Simon, and which will spend all year celebrating its 150th anniversary.

University of Michigan fans will privately mutter, "so what?" After all, U-M has had a woman president for several years and was founded long before. Ann Arbor has more money, more prestige and, at least temporarily, a better football team. And like MSU, Ann Arbor has its own loyal corps of alumni.

But what they don't have is Bloomfield Hills' Bruce McCristal, who has just written and published the best comprehensive history of any of the state's universities. *The Spirit of Michigan State* is not only a useful reference book, it is an absolutely beautiful one: coffee-table sized, lavishly illustrated, organized in chronological order, with little capsule stories and biographies.

"This was my retirement project," laughed a trim McCristal, who looks considerably younger than a man graduated from the East Lansing campus half a century ago. Actually, he was essentially weaned on the campus. His father, King McCristal, arrived in East Lansing as a professor of health and physical education in 1937 before Bruce entered kindergarten. Michigan State College, as it was then called, was essentially still a small agricultural school.

But in the years after World War II, it rapidly expanded into a mega-university, largely due to the shrewd planning of President John Hannah, who realized hordes of returning World War II veterans would want to go to college, and that if he built an athletic program, a great university might follow.

Watching MSU expand before his eyes was a shaping experience for Bruce McCristal, who went on to serve as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force and then to have a distinguished career in public relations, much of it at General Motors, where he ended his career as director of worldwide employee communications. When he left the corporation in 1992, he immersed himself in the MSU archives.

There, he spent "hundreds and hundreds of hours." There was a previous history of MSU, published by the school for its centennial in 1955. It was illustrated mainly with small black-and-white photos of men in

suits, and was written in a suitably dry fashion by a history professor.

*The Spirit of Michigan State* is anything but that. Similarly illustrated books of its size tend to sell for about \$75; this one retails for \$49.95, but they'll reduce that by \$10 if you order it from the Web site, www.spiritofmichiganstate.com.

When I first saw it, I assumed it had been heavily subsidized by MSU and published by the campus press. It was neither. The MSU Press had other projects in motion, "so I learned how to become a publisher," McCristal laughed. So he paid to have the book typeset in Arizona and printed in, of all places, China, and then started selling them. He doesn't want to talk about what this set him back, but there isn't the slightest chance he will recoup his investment; he is donating every dollar to MSU.

U-M may have Arthur Miller among its alums, but when it comes to writerly devotion, it's hard to imagine that they can top MSU's Homer. What was his favorite Spartan anecdote? "Hard to say," but one great one is a little secret story of how the school got to be a football powerhouse.

During World War II, Hannah badly wanted to get into the Big Ten, but knew he'd have to prove State could play with the big boys. So he enlisted then-Michigan Gov. Harry Kelly in an effort to persuade Notre Dame's president to agree to play a regular series with the Spartans. "This was at the height of World War II, during rationing, and Mrs. Kelly pulled three priceless steaks out of the freezer." Meat matters. Notre Dame started coming to East Lansing, and State got into the Big Ten.

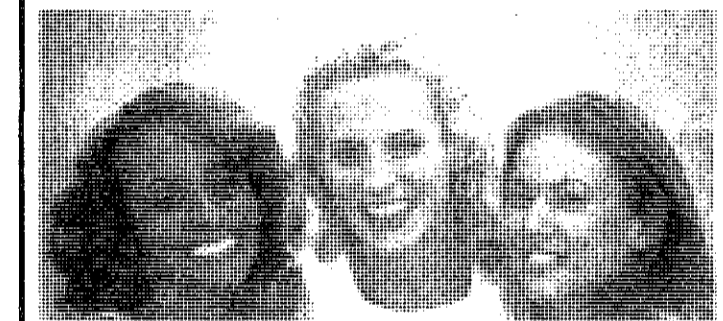
Blanchard for Democratic Party chairman? Some people scoffed at the news that former Gov. Jim Blanchard was interested in being the next Democratic national chairman. But the idea may not be so far-fetched. Blanchard, now a well-connected Washington lawyer, is broadly acceptable to all factions. He is energetic, in a good position to be an honest broker and, perhaps most important, is not a candidate for president. Howard Dean, perhaps the front-runner for the chairmanship, clearly wants to run again. Insiders say Blanchard would love the job, which will be filled in February, but won't formally run unless he thinks he has a good chance of winning and has solid support from the nation's Democratic governors.

Jack Lessenberry is editorial vice president of HomeTown Communications. He can be reached by phone at (248) 901-2561 or by e-mail at jlessenberry@homecomm.net.



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- the legal preparations that must be made before it's too late
- how to plan to maximize your independence, control and protect your assets and your family from nursing home costs.

**Saturday, January 8th, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
Livonia Recreation Center, 15100 Hubbard, corner of Hubbard and 5 Mile  
**Guest Speaker Kelley Fulkerson,**  
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**Wednesday, January 19th, 7:00 PM - 9 PM**  
**Saturday, January 22nd, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
Southfield Public Library, 26300 Evergreen Rd.  
**Guest speaker Jean Barnas,** Education and Training Coordinator, Alzheimer's Association

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# Southeast Michigan population grows by 1.5 percent

The seven-county region of southeast Michigan closes 2004 with an estimated population of 4,907,319, according to figures released by SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

This new estimate represents a 1.5 percent increase in population (or an average of 44 persons per day) since the 2000 census. The population growth rate of Southeast Michigan is estimated to be less than one-third of the nation's growth rate.

The region's fastest growing county, in percentage terms,

since the 2000 census is Livingston County. During that time it grew 14.8 percent, from a population of 156,951 in 2000 to a current estimated population of 180,233.

The county gaining the greatest number of people is Macomb County, which added 37,829 residents since the 2000 census.

Population figures from 1900 show the population of Southeast Michigan at 582,236.

Among Southeast Michigan communities Macomb Township grew the most since

the 2000 census, adding more than 19,000 people, and ending 2004 with an estimated population of 69,509. (Note: Macomb Township's population at the 1990 census was 22,714). Since the 2000 census, Macomb Township's population has increased nearly 38 percent. Canton Township, Brownstown Township and Chesterfield Township also experienced significant growth during this time period, each adding 5,000-7,200 residents. Other fast-growing communities in Southeast Michigan, in terms of percentage increase

since the 2000 census, include Saline Township (Washtenaw County; 55 percent), New Haven (Macomb County; 46 percent); and New Baltimore (Macomb County; 46 percent).

The number of households in Southeast Michigan has grown 3.4 percent since the 2000 census, more than twice as fast as the population. Households are growing at a faster rate than the population primarily because of the aging population and increasing percentage of one and two person households.

There were 1,845,218 households counted in the 2000 census; the region closes 2004 with an estimated 1,907,924 households. Macomb Township has added 6,768 households since the 2000 census (more than 10 percent of the region's total gain in households) and now has an estimated 23,714 households. Canton Township added 3,849 households and Sterling Heights added 2,727 households.

In southeast Michigan, there was an estimated 2.53 persons per household as the close of

2004. Livingston County has the highest persons per household at 2.73; Washtenaw County, at 2.37, is the lowest.

"These estimates show that the pace of growth for the region has slowed in the last several years, but in some communities it continues to be strong," said Paul Tait, executive director of SEMCOG.

Population and household figures for all counties and communities in Southeast Michigan as updated monthly on SEMCOG's Web site - www.semco.org.

## Law gives grandparents visiting rights

Gov. Jennifer Granholm Tuesday signed into law legislation that clarifies the legal rights for grandparents and parents. The new legislation is intended to address constitutional questions raised when the Michigan Supreme Court struck down the state's grandparenting statute in *DeRose v. DeRose*.

"Our state's prosperity rests in the strength of its families," said Granholm. "By safeguarding the ability of grandparents in Michigan to spend time with their grandchildren, as well as providing the tools to determine the best interests of our children, we are helping to strengthen Michigan families."

The new law amends the Child Custody Act by establishing a grandparent's ability to seek a grandparenting time order under appropriate circumstances. It also establishes guidelines regarding who is eligible to request such an order and under what conditions, while keeping the best interests of the child in mind.

A grandparent can seek grandparenting time if:

- The grandchild's parents are divorced, or are in the process of divorce, separation or annulment.

- The grandchild's parent is deceased and is the son/daughter of the grandparent.

- The grandchild's parents have never been married, are not cohabitating, and the father's paternity has been established.

- The child is placed outside the home or legal custody of the child has been given to someone other than a parent (unless the child was adopted by someone other than a stepparent).

- within the year prior to seeking grandparenting time, the grandparent provided an established custodial environment for the grandchild.

The new law will take immediate effect.

## Conservation District plans annual meeting

The annual meeting of the Wayne County Conservation District will be 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 12, at 5454 Venoy Road, Wayne.

The meeting is open to the public.

Conservation Districts is a local entity of state government that is responsible for providing leadership in conservation and wise use of soil, water and related natural resources.

Conservation districts were organized to provide for the conservation of the natural resources of the state.

Jessica Simons, natural resources specialist, and Steven Olds, district conservationist, are scheduled to speak.

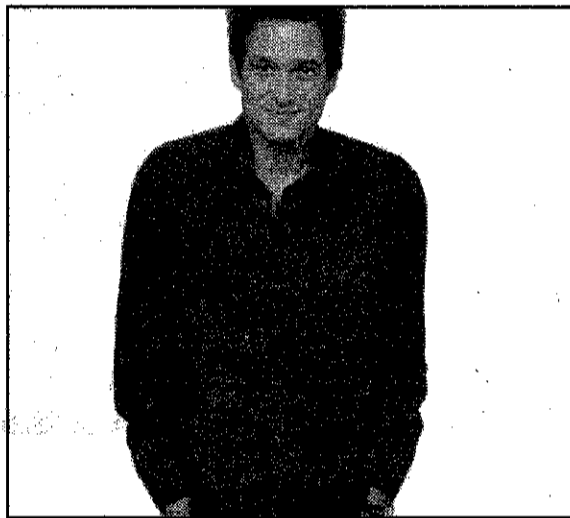
Simons is helping with the emerald ash borer issue. Olds is an expert on recent farm legislation.

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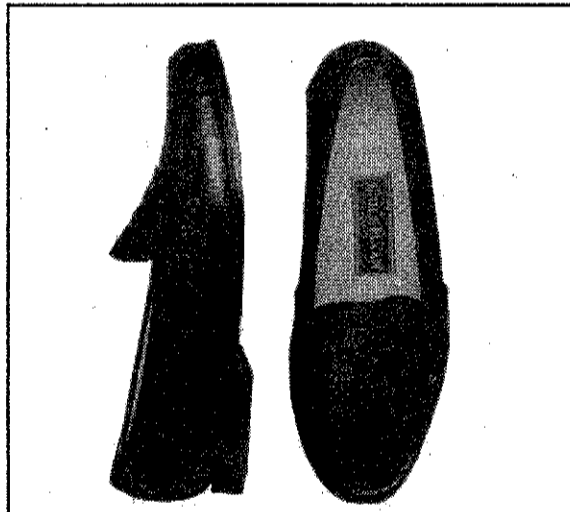
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