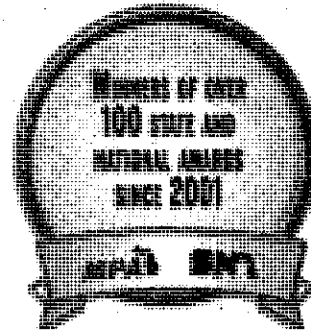


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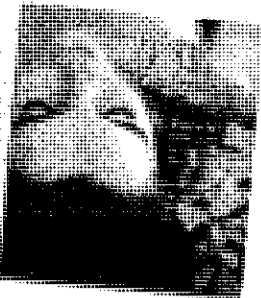
SUNDAY
January 9, 2005
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VOLUME 40 NUMBER 65

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Inside



Face It!
Signature facials from
three local spas.
This week in PINK

Observer LIFE



Buff in a blitz
Twenty-minute workouts
three times a week get
men fit.

SECTION C

HEALTH

Give blood
Ernie Harwell says do
your part by giving
blood. **PAGE C8**

Memo

Flea market

VFW Harris-Kehrer Post 3323 will have an indoor flea market noon to 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 21, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 22. Vendors who want to sell items can lease a table for \$15 on Friday and \$25 on Saturday. However, food and beverage items are not to be sold. For more information, call Robert Campbell at (734) 595-6008 or Richard Eberhart at (734) 812-7978.

Surplus food

The city of Westland will distribute surplus federal food 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 20, at the Dorsey Community Center for residents who live north of Michigan Avenue. Residents south of the avenue always pick up their commodities on the third Monday of the month at St. James United Methodist Church, 30055 Annapolis, between Henry Ruff and Middlebelt roads. Senior citizens living in Taylor Towers will pick up their food at the towers but should contact the building manager for the day of distribution. Food for the month of January will include corn flakes cereal, powdered milk and frozen strawberries. Call the Dorsey Center hotline at (734) 595-0366.

Study session

The Westland City Council has scheduled a study session for 6 p.m. Monday to discuss new computers for city offices. The council will be hearing from a technology committee that studied computer needs. The meeting will be held at Westland City Hall, on Ford Road east of Newburgh.

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City gets creative to fund projects

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Hoping to improve athletic programs for children, Westland city leaders are turning to fund-raising efforts as state and local dollars become increasingly scarce for recreation programs. "We need to be creative," Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said Friday. "We're trying other avenues."

To that end, local officials have initiated two major fund-raising projects. The latest, called Operation Grand Slam, is intended to raise money for field lighting for Little League ball diamonds at Thomas H. Brown Central City Park. While two softball diamonds mostly used by adults have lights for evening games, two Little League fields on the north side of Central City Park can't be used after dark.

"It's a good experience for kids to play under the lights," said Westland Parks & Recreation Director Robert Kosowski. City leaders initiated Operation Grand Slam just weeks ago, and Kosowski said officials will likely need to accumulate about \$110,000 to light up the Little League fields. While state dollars and corporate grants will be sought, officials also know that they will have to rely on local dona-

tions to make the project succeed. "It's extremely important during these years of having tight budgets," Cicirelli said. As of now, city leaders have raised only \$1,000, although Operation Grand Slam is in its infancy. A second project, Kicks for Kids, has raised about \$30,000 for a soccer com-

PLEASE SEE PROJECTS, A5



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

There's no day like a snow day

A blanket of fresh snow was all Jack Emery, 7, of Westland needed to try out his new snowboard on a hill along Hines Drive. Watching him were his father, Ron, (standing behind him) and his mother, Cathy.

City moves MLK event to Annapolis Park Church site

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

For the first time, Westland's celebration of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday will be taken into a church, in a predominantly African-American neighborhood on the city's southeast side. Mayor Sandra Cicirelli has announced that this year's observance will start at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 17, at Annapolis Park Church of Christ. Past ceremonies have occurred at city buildings, such as the public library and senior citizen Friendship Center. Some residents consider it significant that King, a minister, will be honored this year inside a church. "It's what we would like to have seen in the beginning. This is what it was all about," said Reaster Everett, who served on a King holiday planning committee. "I feel comfortable knowing that we're having it in a church. We will try anything to make this a better event," she said. "I'm hoping we can start a



McClain

tradition that everybody feels comfortable with." Debra Fowlkes, former Wayne-Westland school board president, will again serve as mistress of ceremonies, and John Glenn High School's JROTC program will lead a procession carrying flags of countries around the world. The keynote speaker will be Wayne-Westland school board trustee Terrance McClain, who is minister of Annapolis Park Church of Christ. He will read an imaginary letter from King. "The premise is what I believe he would say to us if he were alive today," McClain said. "It's based on occurrences in his life, his mission and his teachings while he was alive." Several churches will be involved in this year's observance. Prayers will be led by the Rev. David Powell and

PLEASE SEE MLK, A5

Deadline for MLK poster contest is Wednesday

Local students are encouraged to enter a poster contest in honor of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The contest is being sponsored by Community Media, the company of city cable station WLND Director Craig Welkenbach. Elementary and high school students are urged to draw, paint or create some kind of poster using a poster board about 2-by-3 feet in size. On the back of the poster, students should include their name, address, home phone number, school and grade. Posters may be dropped off at WLND, 33455 W. Warren, east of Wayne Road. They may be dropped off 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Wednesday. Posters also may be dropped off at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford, behind Westland City Hall. They may be dropped off 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. today (Sunday) or 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Wednesday. The deadline for entering is Wednesday. Winners must be able to attend the Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 17, at Annapolis Park Church of Christ. The first-place winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate to Westland Shopping Center. Second- and third-place winners will receive \$50, and there will be \$25 prizes for three students who receive honorable mention.

Wheel good

2 students win in auto show contest

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Chris Banaszak has Steve Paulsen to thank for the \$500 he recently put in his savings account. Paulsen, who teaches graphic design at the William D. Ford Career Technical Center in Westland, didn't like Banaszak's first design so the 12th-grader came up with a different one that

ended up winning a first place in the 17th annual North American International Auto Show poster contest. "I showed him this and he liked it and showed me ways to do it better," said Banaszak of his poster that has the interior of a car as its background. "It was difficult because the photograph was taken so as not to tell the type of car." The posters had to have an auto-

motive-related theme and make reference to the auto show which opens to the public Saturday, Jan. 15, at Cobo Center in Detroit. More than 340 students participated in the contest. The top honor - the \$1,000 Chairman's Award - went to Alex Hoover, an 11th-grader at the General Motors Technical

PLEASE SEE CONTEST, A5



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chris Banaszak, a student at William Ford Career Technical Center shows off his first-place North American International Auto Show poster which placed first among the 11th-grade entries.

Ice sculptor has 'coolest' job around

BY LUANNE BERK
CORRESPONDENT

Ted Wakar considers himself the local "show-off" of the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular.

Wakar, a Canton resident and a regular carver at the annual festival, appreciates having the event near his home.

"It's my home court," Wakar said. "I find a certain comfort level as a competitor with it being close by. The other thing about Plymouth is I get to show off for family and friends. Even as much as 10 years ago, the family would stand around and listen to spectators. They are almost like 'groupies' who like to watch because we each have our own individual style."

Wakar has even talked to other sculptors (of wood or metal) who come to the festival to gain inspiration for their own work.

"That personal excitement is a big factor that motivates us as carvers," said Wakar, who pointed out carvers don't do the show for the money. "I make about three times as much doing work for a wedding reception or a hotel event as I do at these [events]."

Wakar grew up in Westland and has lived in Canton for about 15 years. When he started carving ice, he was one of just a few in the area. Like many in the profession, he studied culinary arts at Schoolcraft College, where he obtained an associates degree in culinary arts, along with the certification as an Executive Chef, which comes from a combination of training, experience, and, ultimately, specialized testing in order to be certified.

His experience includes working as a chef in the Ford Motor Company World Headquarters executive penthouse for 15 years, at a time when Ford had their own food service, and included their own staff of chefs.

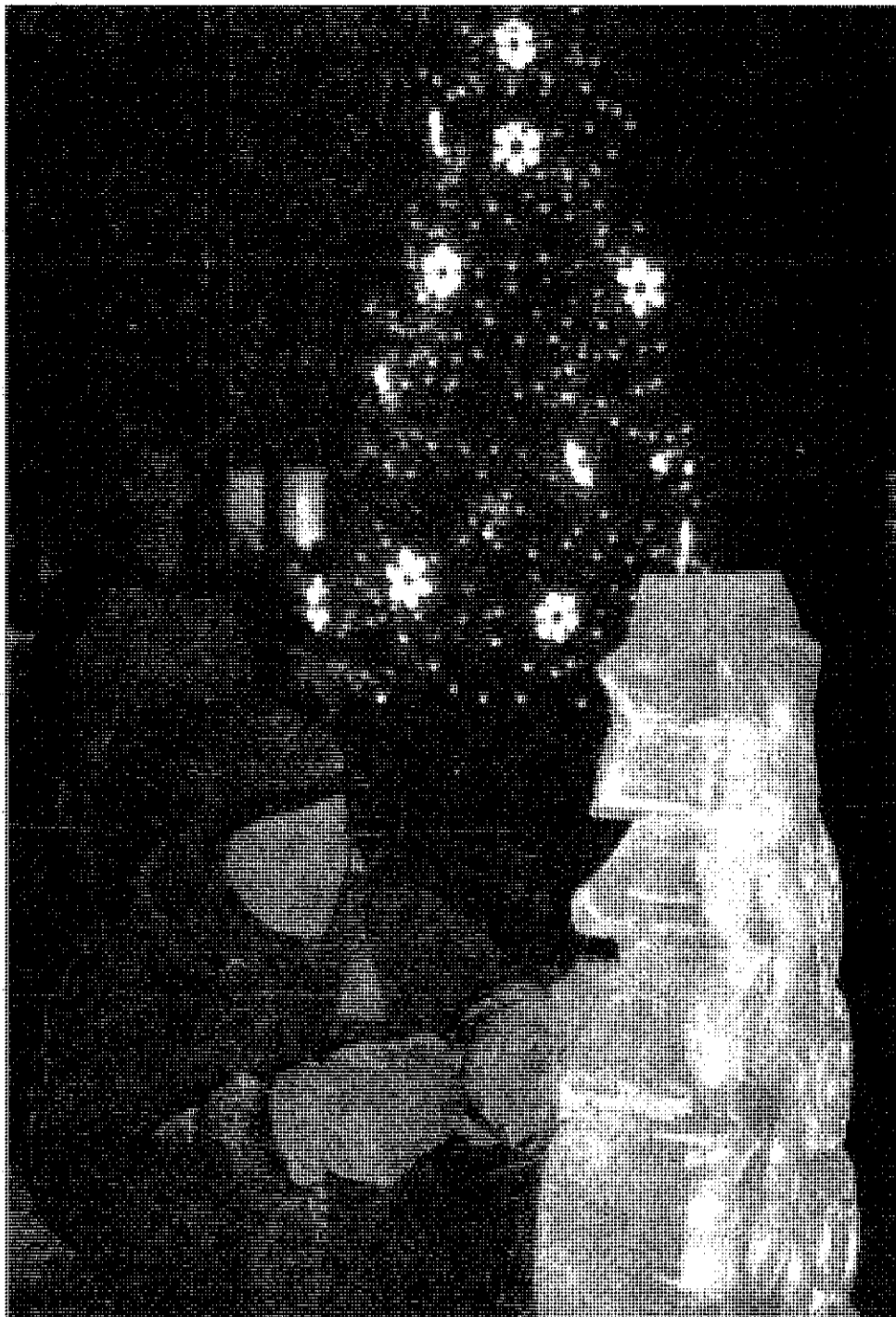
When Ford decided to change their staffing, which included cutting Wakar's position, it was a difficult transition, but now he sees it was the opportunity he needed to pursue his dreams. Soon after that career change, he began working as an ice carver in a more serious capacity, and has continued down that successful path for years.

ICY ADDICTION

Now, Wakar considers ice carving an "addiction," as do many other carvers. The carvers talk amongst themselves — there is a great sense of camaraderie in the profession.

Originally, it was considered "carving," but in the last 10 years, after adapting and pulling in other tools that other artisans use, it's considered "sculpting," and the ice "sculptors" feel they can hold their own with other sculptors out there.

"Give us a little bit of time and a little bit of ice and we can do just about anything," said Wakar, who said he also likes to work with wood sometimes, just for fun.



JIM JAGDFELD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Canton resident Ted Wakar, shown here working on a Christmas tree sculpture, loves the interaction with spectators that happens during the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular.

He enjoys making walking sticks and staffs out of wood. However, Wakar said making a profit from wood carving would be very difficult because it takes him about 10 hours to make something significant out of wood.

So, he sticks to the ice sculpting and, with his connections as a chef, rarely has trouble finding work.

"There are more chefs in the market than ice sculptors," Wakar said.

FESTIVAL EVOLUTION

Wakar has won the competition in Plymouth a couple of times individually, and as part of a team. This year features an amateur competition which will include a number of culinary colleges, including Schoolcraft, as well as some local high schools.

Wakar has seen the festival go through some evolutions.

"I've been doing this a long time," he said. "It's nice to see the art form fostered. I grew up as a carver there [Schoolcraft College], and it's nice to see others grow up there."

(Fellow sculptor) Tajana (Raukar) was also a Schoolcraft student. Because Schoolcraft is supported by all these local communities, they work together."

Ted also participates in professional competitions in Frankenmuth and Milford. He said he "likes competing in the team competitions because you get more time, more ice, and the camaraderie of working together."

Wakar also appreciates the international competitions because, "It's wonderful to take my family to international locations." For example, he competed at the Olympics in Nagano, Japan. The ice sculpting competition there was part of the arts and culture Olympic event — not an actual Olympic event — but nevertheless a real competition for ice carvers.

But for Wakar, the interaction with the spectators is still the best part of the show.

"Last year, I carved a big John Deere tractor," Wakar said. "I had lots of people who were in their 60s who told me, 'My dad used to have one of those, and they would go on to tell their personal story. Many of the spectators have some kind of connection to the sculpture, and I get to talk about my kids, which was actually why I did the tractor in the first place, for my 6-year-old. It is the coolest job in town.'"

The Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular, which is held in Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth, begins Jan. 17 and runs through Jan. 23.

Livonia school district seeks 3 tax renewals

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 22, voters within the Livonia Public School district will have a decision to make regarding the value of their public education.

The school district is seeking a renewal of three millages. Though the total, 1.75 mills, would remain exactly the same, it could cost taxpayers a bit more.

To participate in the upcoming election, voters must be registered with the city clerk by 5 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 24. Those interested in voting by absentee ballot may apply now. Absentee ballots will be mailed out beginning Feb. 8, according to Jay Young, director of communications for the school district.

The renewals affect the non-homestead and hold harmless millages which expire in December 2006 and the sinking fund which runs out in 2005.

The total millage rate would remain the same as the one voters approved in 2000, but a change in the way the three millages would be distributed could allow the district to collect more money, about 0.12 mills more.

Supt. Randy Liepa estimated the cost to a taxpayer with a home valued at \$200,000 would add up to about \$12 a year.

Though the election is just over one month away, district officials have been working to get the word out about the renewals since late October.

Young said a 17-week communication plan was put into place last fall. Lisa Levesque, director of finance, wrote an article for the district's December newsletter, the *Dialogue*, which detailed all three millage renewals — and what that income means to Livonia Public Schools.

In addition, Young said, information can be found on the district's Web site and in future brochures and mailings.

"We're also putting together a video we taped with the superintendent," he said. "We can run that on cable. It discusses the millage and what it includes."

That video will likely make the rounds at PTA meetings, school functions and staff meetings beginning as early as next

week. How do the millage renewals break down?

Levesque said the district plans to levy the full authorized amount, 18 mills, on nonhomestead operating taxes rather than the amount it has been levying on businesses, which is 17.9568 mills.

Furthermore, the district plans to reduce the hold harmless operating millage for homeowners by 0.12 mills, while increasing its sinking fund by that same amount.

This change reflects the actual amount the district is authorized to and has been levying from its hold harmless millage, all along — 0.63 mills. While that millage would be reduced from 0.75 mills, the difference of 0.12 mills would be added to the current 1-mill sinking fund. This change would allow for more funding for major repairs and maintenance throughout the district.

With the additional 0.12 mills placed into the sinking fund, rather than the hold harmless millage where it cannot be levied, the district could collect about \$700,000 more to spend on projects like replacing roofing, boilers, doors or paving property.

A recent communitywide survey, completed by the independent School Public Relations Consultant Services, showed early support for these millage renewals.

Young said the survey revealed six out of 10 district voters would be in favor of the nonhomestead millage renewal, and about 73 percent of public school parents would vote yes on the proposition to alter the hold harmless and sinking fund millages.

School officials saw that as a good sign for the district late last year.

"You're not going into the election with a large opposition to overcome," said Young. "We don't see any opposition. It's a renewal."

The millages account for 24 percent of the district's total budget.

For more information and ballot language on these two proposals, see the district's Web site at <http://www.livonia.k12.mi.us/>.

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Residents win trips in O&E, MTL contest

Nancy Reimenschneider of Plymouth is the winner of a seven-day trip for two to Cancun courtesy of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers* and Worry Free Vacations/MLT Vacations Inc. Reimenschneider was the grand prize winner of the word search travel contest which ended Dec. 6. She wins airfare and hotel accommodations for two at the OMNI Cancun Hotel and Villas in Mexico. Eight weekly winners each will receive a three-day trip for two to Las Vegas (airfare, hotel and car rental).

- Weekly winners are:
- Week 1: Cheryl Berling of Farmington Hills
 - Week 2: Rekha S. Doshi of Farmington Hills
 - Week 3: Mary Urbanski of Livonia
 - Week 4: Peggy Harris of Detroit
 - Week 5: Romaine Leshuk of Redford Township
 - Week 6: Shirley Evoe of Troy
 - Week 7: Julie Way of Canton Township
 - Week 8: Norah Cranston of Westland

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Compassion, dedication make teachers winners

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

Compassion, dedication and an ability to inspire are the hallmarks of local educators recently named teacher of the year.

Kathy Koszegi, a fourth-grade teacher at St. Dunstan in Garden City, and Louise Hopping, a middle school teacher at St. Mel Catholic School in Dearborn Heights, have been named Teachers of the Year by the Bova Engineers VFW Post 9985. And both have gone on to win VFW district titles.

Hopping explains that teachers don't always know how they've affected students until someone is grown and returns to show their appreciation.

"All of a sudden someone will walk in from 15 years ago and say, 'Do you remember when you said this or that? It really made a difference,'" she said.

Koszegi also has affected a lot of lives in the 21 years she has been teaching.

Like Adam Clark, an 11-year-old Livonia resident in the fifth grade at St. Dunstan's. Koszegi was his teacher in first grade.

"She was one of the best teachers I ever had," Clark said. "She wouldn't let you give up. She would just keep pushing you and I thought that was the best that a teacher could do."

"Even when you're in trouble with her it's still like she's acting like your mother or something. So, it's comfortable being around her."

Koszegi was nominated by Anna Maslij, who teaches with Koszegi at St. Dunstan's.

PROMOTES VALUES

Nodding toward a poster on a board listing the core democratic values in the back of the room, Maslij said that's how she conducts her life and her classroom. The values promote truth, popular sovereignty, diversity, patriotism, constitutional good, common good, justice, equality and individual rights.

"She carries out those values in her discipline program," Maslij added. "She stresses the individual being in her classroom, the individual needs, individual wants and individual feelings."

By doing this each child feels special, Maslij said.

"Teaching is all about modeling," Koszegi said. "Kids pay much more



Louise Hopping (left), a teacher at St. Mel's School and a VFW Middle School Teacher of the Year, tests student Kayla Niczgod on the recitation of the Declaration of Independence.

attention to what they see us doing than what we tell them to do. They learn to respect themselves by listening to me respect them. I have a strong belief in God and I believe it's important to model that. Catholic schools are one of the places I can do that. It's not financially rewarding and if I didn't have a husband who worked at Ford Motor Company with a pension, I probably couldn't make that choice."

Serving as a role model is just as important as imparting facts, she added.

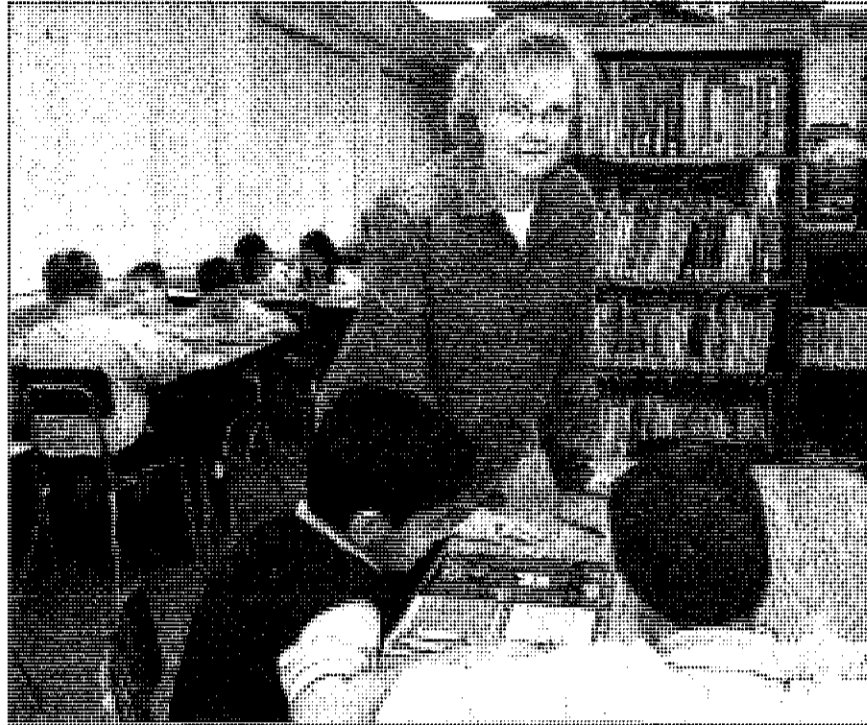
"Recently, I've noticed more families are stressed," Koszegi, a Westland resident, explained. "Two parents are working and there are fewer grandparents who live nearby to help. We're teaching more about conduct, behavior and values than in the past. Today's kids don't spend a lot of time with their parents. Parents feel that loss, but the economy is such that they have to work."

Hopping agrees that children reflect what they see and the media, she said, shows a lot of violence whether it's reporting fights in public settings, like the recent brawl at the Palace of Auburn Hills or in movies, like *Spider-Man*.

"Some of their childlike naiveté is gone," Hopping said. "They're exposed to a lot more."

Koszegi was shocked to learn she won the recognition.

"I work hard to be good, but I think there are other equally good teachers,"



St. Dunstan School teacher Kathy Koszegi stresses the individual being in her classroom, the individual needs, individual wants and individual feelings in her classroom, according to fellow teacher Anna Maslij, who nominated her for VFW Teacher of the Year.

she said, adding that at first she thought Maslij was being honored, because she's such an effective and caring teacher.

Laughter is the most important element in a classroom, Koszegi said.

"I think you need to laugh," she said. "We do that a lot in this class. I proba-

bly I feel less stress, because laughter reduces stress."

So, she tells jokes and interesting stories about people in history. She says her goal is to help students develop positive feelings about themselves, because children who feel good about themselves will accomplish a lot.

"One of the rewards of being a teacher is that kids definitely keep you young," said Hopping, a St. Mel's teacher for 16 years. "It's refreshing to see when they see something new and it keeps it new for you. Kids have so much energy, they like to have fun and they're fun to be around."

Hopping makes the lessons come alive in a lot of ways, but mostly by being innovative and stepping away from the norm, like playing guitar music to the students, according to Thomas Deschaine, who retired from teaching in June from John Glenn High School.

He won the VFW state Teacher of the Year award for the high school level last year. His wife works as a teacher at St. Mel's.

"(Hopping is) a very dedicated, outstanding and enthusiastic teacher," he said. "She goes to work excited every morning. She's really into programs that teach kids values, morals and respect for veterans."

For instance, every year she invites veterans to the school and gives students a chance to ask them questions.

"Students learn about war and the veterans get to share the things they want to talk about," he said, adding that Hopping also asks students to write letters to service people who are on active duty.

Hopping also built a memorial garden on St. Mel's property.

"She inspires her kids through music so it's not just a boring lesson kind of classroom," Deschaine said, pointing to Hopping's published books that outline activities for teaching history. "Instead of telling them to sit back, shut up and take notes, she really tries to get her students involved. I'm really very proud she won district and hopefully she'll go on to win state."

Hopping, a Northville resident, said she always tries to give her students the best she has to offer.

"I love my job and I love my kids," Hopping said. "I try real hard to make even the most mundane grammar lesson interesting and to develop in them a love for learning. I hope they see a dedicated person, someone who is very caring and someone who cares about important things, like country, family and God. And someone who is in their corner even if they mess up."

There are no requirements to nominate teachers for these VFW awards, according to Chuck Butler, VFW teacher of the year award district chair.

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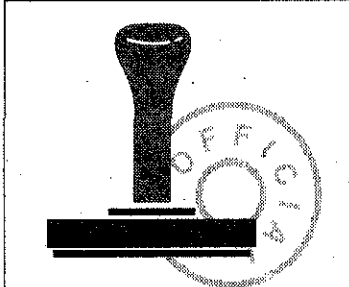
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DEATHS

B
Danny Glenn Baske died Dec. 30. James Wellington Bushway III, 58, of Westland, died Dec. 25.
C
Richard A. Cassidy, 72, of Davisburg, died Jan. 4. Kristin Marie Clark, 22, died Jan. 4.
G
Donald H. Gramlich, 85, of Redford, died Jan. 5.
H
David J. Heiser, 43, died Dec. 28.
J
Keith A. Jones, 21, of California, formerly of Redford, died. Emil Joseph, 90, died Dec. 23.
K
Mary V. Kenny, of Westland, died Jan. 4. William "Billy" J. Kirby, 44, of Livonia, died Jan. 4.
L
Hazel M. Laswell, 86, of Farmington, died Dec. 25.
P
Robert Plantholt, 83, of Brookings, Ore., died Dec. 27.
R
Robert C. Rigley, 81, died Dec. 14.
S
Virginia P. Smalis, 82, of Farmington Hills, died Jan. 5.



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

They are not going to be used or sold to generate mailing lists. They will always remain private. If you change your e-mail address at any time, just keep the library updated so that you can always be informed of requests or overdue items in a timely manner.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

As of Jan. 1 the Public Library of Westland began notifying patrons, via e-mail, when their requests are ready to be picked up. It also is advising patrons if they have overdue items. Instead of having to wait several days for a paper mail notice to be generated and arrive in your regular mail, you can now know immediately that a desired item is available for you.

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

RECREATION

The following programs are offered through the Westland Parks and Recreation Department at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford Road. For more information, call (734) 722-7620.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

Karate
Discover the Shotokan style of karate with instructor Tony Valvona. Learn a form of self-defense that helps build self-confidence and self-discipline while improving fitness, coordination and flexibility. For additional information, call Valvona at (248) 348-8752.

City of Westland. There also is a \$25 First Year Club Registration, payable to Tony Valvona. Uniforms are free to new beginners only (all sizes in stock).

Young American Self-Defense

This fun course is designed for self-defense purposes only and covers the Stranger Danger Technique. Safety papers will be handed out weekly. Basic through black belt levels are taught by certified black belt instructors. Awards and promotions are included throughout the program.

The age level is 4-15 years of age. Session 2 is Feb. 7-May 16, no class March 28. Times are 6:30-7:15 p.m. for ages 4-6, 7:15-8 p.m. for ages 7-9 and 8-8:45 p.m. for ages 10 and up. Cost is \$5 per student per day, \$70 for entire session. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required.

For more information call 616-538-2888 or e-mail at mel.ycoa@attbi.com.

Lil' Dragons Martial Arts

Lil' Dragons teaches respect, discipline, confidence, flexibility, balance, coordination, self-control, cooperation, health, fun fitness and stranger awareness. The new program provides fun, high energy classes designed especially for 5-7-year-olds. These classes are 30 minutes long.

Half-hour classes for 8-10-year-olds as well as hour-long classes for those 11 years and older and adults are available. Classes are available 5:30-6 p.m. for Lil' Dragons (cost \$25 per month and \$25 uniform fee), 6-6:30 p.m. karate for 8-10-year-olds (cost \$25 per month and \$25 uniform fee) and 5:30-6:30 p.m. ages 11 and up, including adults (cost \$35 per month and \$25 uniform fee).

Classes are at the Bailey Recreation Center. For more information, call (248) 348-8752.

Pottery for kids and teens
Learn the basics of pottery with instructor Shirley Moore. This class will focus on hand-made pottery items, such as pinch pots, coil pots and small sculptures. Your teacher will help guide you in picking out a project that is special to your interests and skill level. Once you have created your project in clay, you will be able to stain or glaze your chosen piece before taking it home.

The program is for those age 3 and up and is geared towards a variety of skill levels. Time is 5-6 p.m. Cost is \$30 per person for residents and \$33 per person for non-residents. There is a \$2 supply fee paid to the teacher at each class. The supplies include clay, glazes, stains and firing costs.

Sessions are Monday, Jan. 24-Feb. 28, 2005 (pre-register by Jan. 20) and Monday, March 7-April 11 (pre-register by March 3).

Gymnastics

Kids will love learning progressive skills that will encourage self-confidence and coordination. The classes provide fun in a friendly environment where children can learn to do gymnastic stunts safely. Students should wear loose clothing such as leotards, shorts, etc. Choose the class that best fits your child's needs. Classes are four weeks long unless otherwise stated.

■ Parent/Tot - For children ages 2-3 with no experience who would still need a parent with them in order to participate. Hours are 4:43-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Resident cost is \$15 per student with parent, non-resident cost \$18 per student with parent.

■ Pre-school - For children ages 3-5 who do not need parental interaction during class. Hours are 4:30-5:15 p.m. Tuesdays. Resident cost is \$18 per student one day a week and \$30 per student two days a week; non-resident cost is \$21 per student one day a week and \$33 per student two days a week.

■ Beginner - Children ages 6-9 with no experience. Hours are 5:15-6:16 p.m. Cost is \$25 for residents and \$28 for non-residents. Session dates are Feb. 1-March 3 (no class Feb. 8 and 10), March 8-April 7 (no class March 29 and 31) and April 12-May 5.

ADULT CLASSES

Aerobics with M&N Studios
Drop in on this class for a fun aerobic workout. Wear comfortable clothes and athletic shoes. This is a low-impact workout and each class offers a variety of activities.

Class is offered 6:30-7:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Cost is \$3 per class resident, \$4 per class non-resident.

Aerobic/Kickboxing
Join Fitness Factory for this motivating and fun exercise program. This heart-healthy class will get your heart rate moving with easy-to-follow moves and all your favorite music hits.

Also included are kickboxing combinations for everyone, even those new to this workout craze. Bring a mat or towel and weights for the body conditioning part of this class. For more information call (248) 353-2885. Students may register after class has begun.

Classes are 5:30-6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and run for eight weeks. Join class anytime during the session; prices will be prorated. Cost is \$48 one day a week; \$79 two days a week; \$7 drop in.

Aerobics and Cardio Kickboxing
Learn the basics of kickboxing while having a fun, cardio workout with martial arts master and professional kick-boxer Tim Formigan. This workout is designed to burn 700-800 calories per hour. These are real kick-boxing movements so this will provide a better workout than step aerobics. The movements that are taught can also be used for self-defense training.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing with athletic shoes and bring water, you will perspire.

The class is for all levels and for those 15 years and up. Middle school students may attend, if accompanied by a parent and with the instructor's permission. Classes are 5:45-6:45 p.m. or 7-8:00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays on an ongoing basis. Beginner orientation 15 minutes before each class. Cost is \$5 per person per class.

Belly Dancing

The beginner class will cover both traditional and contemporary techniques for the adult beginner. No prior dance training is required. All skill levels are welcome. This class promises to provide the opportunity for the artistic expression of the feminine spirit. Students who do not feel ready for the experienced class are invited to enroll for Session 2 or the beginner's class. All classes are six weeks long.

Class time is 6:30-7:30 p.m. Cost is \$45 resident and \$48 non-resident. Contact the instructor at (734)-422-1246 for dates.

The experienced class is for students who have previous belly dancing experience. This class promises to continue your dance experience in a fun atmosphere. Students may choose to be in a recital.

Class time is 7:30-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$45 resident and \$48 non-resident for six-week session and \$23 resident, \$26 non-resident for three-week sessions. Contact the instructor at (734)-422-1246 for dates.

Belly Dancing Discipline

The discipline class is an optional, additional class that will run only 30 minutes in length and be taught as an extension of the dance technique class. Focus will be on specific skills that require more discipline and a higher level of achievement, including drills and conditioning exercises as needed, such as abdominal exercises to tone and prepare muscles for undulation or timed sets to build stamina. Course of study will be announced at the beginning of each session.

Kung Fu

The course will provide you with the basics of one of the most highly effective martial arts ever developed. No physical requirements are needed. Known for its directness, simplicity and efficiency, Wing Chun is a form of self-defense that can be learned by anyone. Your strength, flexibility and stamina will definitely improve. Advancement will be available for continuing students.

Class is for adults, 18 years and older. It's offered 7:30-9 p.m. Mondays. Cost is \$60 for an eight-week course. Contact the instructor for dates or for more information. Call 734-626-2202.

Tai Chi

Discover the secrets of the physical well being and spiritual serenity with the ancient Chinese art of Tai Chi. Your instructor will help you release the accumulated stresses of modern life under the benevolent influence of these gentle movements.

Class is for adults, middle school and high school students welcome with instructor's permission. It's ongoing and offered 10-11 a.m. or 8-9 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Cost is \$5 per person per class.

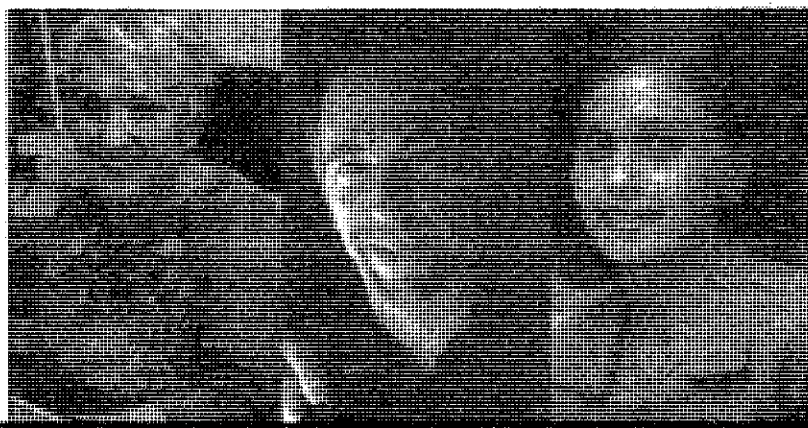
Yoga
The perfect class for beginners, you learn breathing and relaxation techniques, improve energy, flexibility and muscular strength through a well-chosen variety of yoga poses. You will leave class feeling peaceful! Remember to bring a yoga mat and dress in comfortable workout clothes.

The class is for adults and is offered Jan. 24-Feb. 28 (pre-register by Jan. 21), March 7-April 11 (pre-register by March 4) and April 18-May 23 (pre-register by April 15). Class time is 7:30-8:50 p.m. Mondays. Cost is \$36 resident and \$39 non-resident.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

- City of Westland
Mayor's Office - (734) 467-3200, mail mayor@ci.westland.mi.us
18th District Court - (734) 595-8720
Assessment - (734) 467-3160, e-mail assessor@ci.westland.mi.us
Building Department - (734) 467-3210, e-mail building@ci.westland.mi.us
CATV/Community Relations - (734) 467-3198, e-mail cabletv@ci.westland.mi.us
City Attorney - (734) 421-5510, e-mail inquiry@plakasandassociates.com
City Clerk - (734) 467-3185, e-mail clerksof@ci.westland.mi.us
Elections and Vital Records - (734) 467-3187, e-mail clerksof@ci.westland.mi.us
Zoning Board of Appeals - (734) 467-3186, e-mail clerksof@ci.westland.mi.us
Community Development - (734) 595-0288
Downtown Development Authority - (734) 467-3220, e-mail info@westland-dda.com
Engineering Division - (734) 467-3239
Finance - (734) 467-3172, e-mail finance@ci.westland.mi.us
Management Information Systems - (734) 467-7952
Purchasing - (734) 467-3204, e-mail purchasing@ci.westland.mi.us
Tax Information - (734) 467-3172, e-mail finance@ci.westland.mi.us
Water Billing - (734) 467-3176, e-mail finance@ci.westland.mi.us
Fire - (734) 467-3201, e-mail firedept@ci.westland.mi.us
Fire Education - (734) 467-3182
Fire Marshal - (734) 467-3261
Fire Prevention - (734) 467-3251
Historical Museum - (734) 326-1110
Nankin Transit Authority - (734) 729-2710
Parks and Recreation - (734) 722-7620, e-mail parks@ci.westland.mi.us
Golf Course - (734) 721-6660
Mike Modano Arena - (734) 729-4560
Therapeutic Program - (734) 722-7620
Personnel - (734) 467-3263, e-mail personnel@ci.westland.mi.us

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CONTEST

FROM PAGE A1

Academy and Stoney Creek High School.

Banaszak took first place among 12th-graders, while Nick Byars, also a graphic design student at the Ford Career Technical Center, received \$100 for his third-place finish among 11th-graders.

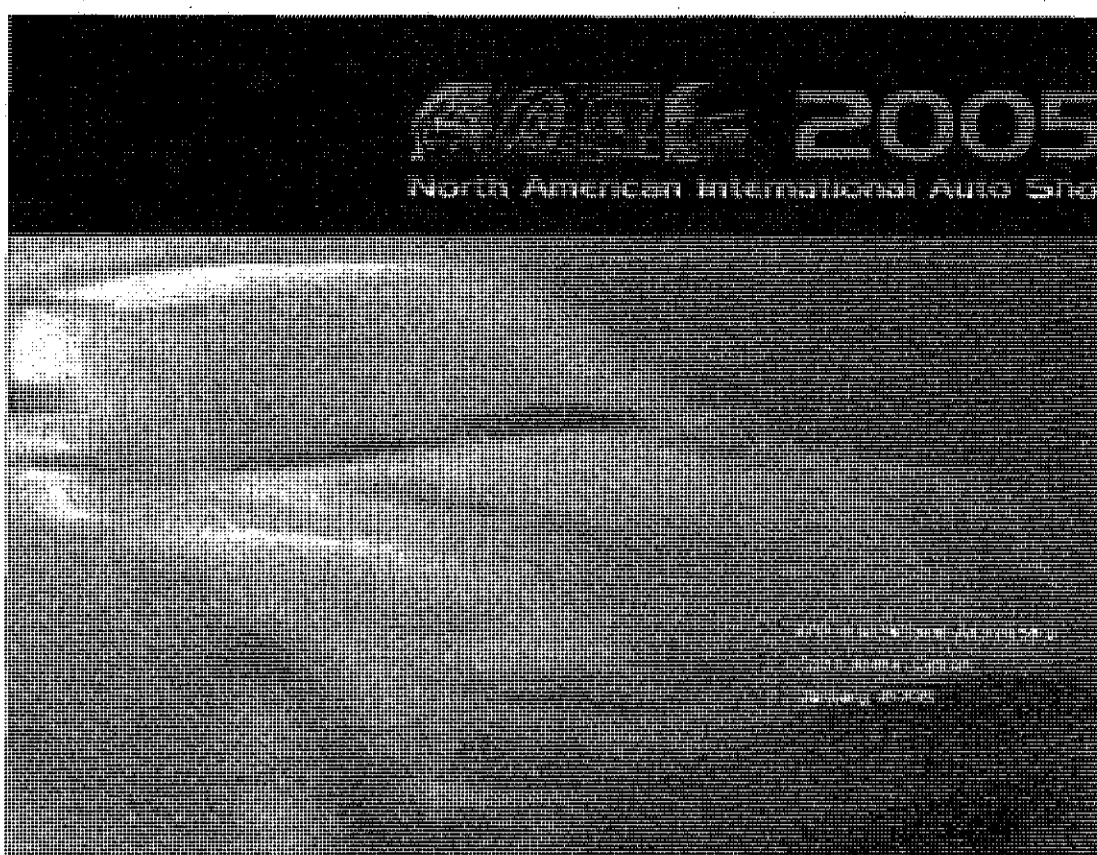
"I thought I stood a chance of finishing in the top five, but I didn't think I'd win," said Banaszak. "When my teacher told me I had won, I thought he was lying. I finally believed it with both my teacher telling me and a letter I got a few days later."

"All of them were really good, anyone of them could have won," said Paulsen of the 12 entries generated by his students. "Ninety-five percent are second-year graphics students who entered the contest, so we were limited in what we could win because there were only four spots."

Banaszak estimates he spent seven to nine hours working on the poster which features an overlay of bars he made that fade from black to white, single color photos of automobile parts and information about the show.

Also a student of John Glenn High School, where he's a member of the Junior ROTC program, Banaszak is planning to take graphic design through the Army, where the skills are used to create posters and advertising campaigns.

In addition to the cash prize,



Nick Byars won a third-place honor for his auto show poster.

he also received two tickets to the auto show and a plaque that's already hanging up in his bedroom. The front end of a car that fades from yellow, orange, red to purple and blue dominates Nick Byars' posters. A black bar above it includes elements of a car's exterior and interior along with information about the show.

Banaszak's and Byars' posters will be displayed with the other winners at the Automotive Youth Educational Systems Exhibit that will be downstairs in Cobo's Michigan

Hall during the public show which runs through Jan. 23.

This is the fourth year Paulsen's students have entered the contest which went from roughly 40 entries five years ago to around 347 this year. He likes student contests like this one because it's juried by professional design people.

"We look for contests with professionals," he said. "We try to enter as many as we can. It's so important for them to do real jobs as opposed to the things I throw out to them.

They learn that they won't succeed if they don't follow the rules."

Paulsen has praise for the metro Detroit auto dealers who support the contest and other activities for students during the auto show.

"They need to be told that it's so great they sponsor this," said Paulsen. "They put out a lot of money, and the prizes are great. You don't get that with a lot of contests. They're first class."

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

PROJECTS

FROM PAGE A1

plex that local officials hope to build at Curtis Woods Park, on Palmer west of Wayne Road.

In all, the city will need to raise nearly \$300,000, but officials still are hoping that the bulk of the money will come from a state grant.

Even so, local leaders will need to raise about \$65,000 in order to qualify for any state grants, which are becoming increasingly scarce. Kosowski said he believes the local dollars can be raised - if only state officials will provide money.

"All we need is for them to come through," he said.

For Operation Grand Slam, local officials are allowing companies to buy banners that will be placed around the adult softball fields and, ultimately,

around the Little League diamonds.

"The banners would go on the light poles on the softball diamonds now and be transferred later to the Little League fields, once the new lights are up," Kosowski said.

Companies can pay \$250 to \$400 for a year of advertising, he said, but renewal costs will be cheaper.

Anyone who wants to donate to Operation Grand Slam or Kicks for Kids can call (734) 722-7620 and ask for Kosowski or Deputy Director Lesa Blackburn.

Checks also may be sent to the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185. They should be made out to City of Westland - Operation Grand Slam or City of Westland - Kicks for Kids.

dclcm@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 953-2110

MLK

FROM PAGE A1

Deborah Smith of the Warren Road Light & Life Church.

Musical selections will be performed by the Annapolis Park Church of Christ PUSH (Pray Until Something Happens) Choir, which is an a cappella group, and by the People's Community Baptist Church Sanctuary Choir.

The entire audience will participate in singing *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, which is considered the black national anthem. Mayor Cicirelli and Westland City Council President Charles Pickering also will address the audience.

City officials are trying to spur interest in the program by sending out fliers, promoting announcements in churches and spreading the word through local schools.

To get to Annapolis Park Church of Christ, take Middlebelt Road south to Annapolis and turn right. The church is on the southeast cor-

ner of Annapolis and Henry Ruff roads.

In another development, the city council adopted a proclamation Monday in honor of King, whose birthday is celebrated on the third Monday of January.

In part, the proclamation notes King's non-violent public crusade for civil rights; his efforts to end segregation and unfair hiring practices; his famous *I Have A Dream* speech; and his winning of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The proclamation also quotes one of King's famous lines from the speech: "I have been to the mountain top ... I may not get to the Promised Land with you, but I want you to know that we, as a people, will"

King was shot dead April 4, 1968, outside a motel in Memphis, Tenn., where he was to lead a march of sanitation workers protesting low wages and poor working conditions. He was 39.

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Hospital stages tsunami collection drive

Representatives of the American Red Cross and Salvation Army will be at Garden City Hospital Wednesday, Jan. 12, to accept monetary donations to help the victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami in Southeast Asia.

Residents will be able to make donations of cash or checks between 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the lobby of hospital at 6245 Inkster Road. Receipts will be provided for tax purposes.

According to Mitch Nimmoor, the hospital's vice president of human resources, employees had expressed an interest in having the hospital coordinate a program to help the victims of the tsunami disaster area.

"They asked about donating household items, canned goods and/or money," said Nimmoor, who contacted the Red Cross, Salvation Army and UNICEF, three major organizations that respond to

Residents will be able to make donations of cash or checks between 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the lobby of hospital at 6245 Inkster Road.

tragedies of this type. "All of them told me that due to the large volume of materials donated at the onset of the disaster, they are overwhelmed with logistic issues, such as storage and shipping of these goods."

"They said they would welcome any amount of funds our people would care to donate."

The Salvation Army also will continue to accept donations of household items, clothes, etc., at their local Thrift Store dropoffs.

Nimmoor added that UNICEF could not guarantee that they will have representatives at the hospital.

"Their headquarters are in New York and the volunteers they have in the Detroit area are extremely busy," Nimmoor said. "They'll make every effort to send a representative."

If UNICEF can't make it, people can still make donations with checks made payable to that agency and a designation on the check that it is intended for the Tsunami victims relief project.

The Human Resources will gather up the checks and mail them to UNICEF.

Nimmoor stressed that UNICEF donations should be in the form of checks, not cash.

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Westland man finishes ALERT basic training

Jared Anders, the 18-year-old son of Mark and Esther Anders of Westland, recently completed Phase One of the Air Land Emergency Resource Team (ALERT) training program at the International ALERT Academy.

Located in Big Sandy, Texas, ALERT is a 49-week training and service program for Christian young men. Beginning with a military-style basic training, moving on to emergency response training, and completing with advanced training in disaster relief and vocational skills, the ALERT Program strives to instill in young men foundational disciplines, positive character qualities, and a mind-set of service to God and others.

Anders successfully completed nine weeks of basic training, which includes the pressures of a military-style "boot camp." The focus of basic training is on intense spiritual, physical, and mental training that requires the young men to continually depend upon God and to serve one another.

This training included wilderness hiking, physical exercise, basic living skills, memorization of Scripture, and learning respect for authority

builds the disciplines necessary for service.

Anders and his teammates began their training at 4:30 a.m. daily with a one-hour personal devotion time, followed by physical training as a unit. Morning classes focused on character qualities, evangelism, communication skills and Biblical principles.

Afternoons were spent in more classes and/or projects which emphasized personal motivation, diligent teamwork, respect for authority, and practical skills, such as land navigation, ropes and knots, wilderness survival and first aid.

Anders was one of 62 young men who completed this training and received an award in scripture memory, personal excellence and cadet membership.

He will continue with emergency response training, which involves specialized instruction in counseling, disaster response, basic fire fighting, high-angle rescue, public speaking, emergency medicine, search and rescue, working with a chain saw and search-and-recovery diving. He also will participate in disaster relief, rescue work and service projects as opportunities arise.



Jared Anders

The final phase of ALERT is advanced training, which offers concentrated training in trades and valuable skills, including aircraft maintenance, auto body, auto mechanics, aviation, construction, emergency medicine, emergency services operations, law enforcement, leadership and management and service response team training.

That training enables the young men to support their present or future ministry, to be assets to their future employers and to be valuable members of their communities.

WAYNE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL HONOR ROLL

Named to the second honor roll of the 2004-2005 school year at Wayne Memorial High School are:

Amanda Abulawi, Nur Abulawi, Terry Ackman, Amanda Adams, Jennifer Adkins, Wendy Adkins, Ammer Ahmad, Zohalb Ahmad, Jason Alifred, Jamie Altman, Jessica Amburgey, Jennifer Anderson, Melanie Anderson, Justin Archie, Allison Areeda, Mark Arnold, Kimberly Artuso, Autumn Askev, Cynthia Aslanian, Rachel Atkins, Ashley Atterberry, John Ayers.

Amanda Bailey, Anthony Bailey, April Bailey, Kelsey Baker, Cara Ball, Stephanie Balla, Jessica Barrett, Rachael Barton, Jacob Bauder, Jeremiah Bauder, Jamie Bauer, Joshua Bayer, Rachel Bayer, Michael Beach, Melanie Beard, Crystal Beaver, Monica Beeson, Katherine Bellenir, Hailey Benton, Angela Berthet, Ryan Bird, Fawna Black-Cicotte.

Christopher Blair, Jessica Blanchard, Kaitlin Blanchard, Lester Blankenship, Kimberly Blessing, Cameo Bond, Joseph Bonett, Shayna Bono, Lisa Booterbaugh, Danielle Borg, Nicole Bouren, Ashley Bowman, Jennifer Bowser, Joshua Boyce, Adrielle Bradford, Joshua Bradley, Brittany Bradley, Justin Brammer, Christina Brenner, Bruce Brewer, Michelle Brewer.

Nicole Bronson, Cory Brooks, Daniel Brooks, Taylor Brooks, Britney Brown, Rickelle Brown, Rickeshia Brown, Amber Browne, Katie Brumfield, Whitney Bryan, James Bryant, Amy Burbary, Daryl Burleson, Brett Burns, Corisa Butler, Dakota Butler, Rena Butler, Brooke Cabe, Casey Cahill, Chelsea Cahill, Corey Campbell, Elizabeth Campbell, Ashley Candy, James Capraro, Jorge Carmelo, Danielle Camerilo, Amber Carver, Steven Cates, Jennifer Cecil, Benjamin Chalupka, Christopher Chatterton, Shawn Chavis, Jonathan Choate, Teal Christoffersen, John Cipolletti, Lorina Clardy, Robin Clarke, Varney Clarke, Jessica Clos, Rebecca Clos, D'Arcy Colaianne, Michael Cole, Justin Collop, James Congdon, Jonathan Contreras, Karen Contreras, Charles Cooney, Chelsea Cooney, Timothy Cornett, Thomas Craig, Matthew Cretens, Daniel Crummev, Andrew Crushshon, Micah Cryderman, Ruth Cuevas, Linette Cuevas-Zuniga, Christina Curtis, Terry Curtis, David Czerwinski, Laura D'Arcy, Dale Dahiberg, Joseph Dalzell, Patrick Dani, Heather Daniels, Stephanie Davidson.

Alivia Davis, David Davis, Dean Davis, Mark Davis, Michael Davis, Oriana Davis, Tirrell Davis, Jennifer Dawson, Amber Day, Nick Dayton, Brittany Demaray, Katie-Lyn Dennis, Christopher Dewaelsche, Briana Dewyer, Kyra Dewyer, Desart Dinkollari, Erin Dinkollari, Erica Dishon, Kelly Doerr, Sean Doerr, Kevin Dombrowski, Amy Dore, Andrew Doss, Jordan Dottor, David Draper, Kelsey Drennen, Justin Dubose, Amy Dunham, Amanda Dye, Tynikka Edwards, Danyelle Elswick, Kevin Erdmann, Kyle Erdmann, Javeair Ester, Beonica Evans, Kherre Fairbanks, Paula Farnstrom, Jessica Fellows, Jeremy Ferrack, Tanya Fielhauer, Amanda Fill.

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Grassmyer, Michelle Grassmyer, Angel Graybill, Mason Green, Jennifer Greenshields.

Meridith Griggs, Kiera Grimes, Brandon Guenther, Justin Guenther, Thomas Gunther, Jennifer Gutherie, Kyle Haendel, Jennifer Halaberda, Tracey Halaberda, Christina Haley, Heather Haley, Chase Hampton, Lindsey Hampton, Kathryn Hansen, Logan Harbeck, Cory Harden, Elizabeth Hardy, Roberta Hardy, Latonya Harmon, Darrin Harper, Heather Harper.

Kevin Harrington, James Harris, Jamie Harris, Kelly Harris, Ramond Harris II, Austin Hassen, Stephanie Hatto, Ashton Hay, Jessica Hendershott, Alyssa Hendricks, Alysa Henning, Heather Henning, Elyse Henry, Jessica Hensley, Ryan Herbst, Andrew Hermatz, Crystal Herndon, Brooke Hester, Christopher Hilger, John Hill III, Courtney Hinton.

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Brandon Tesner, Anitha Thomas, Heather Thomas, Kristara Thompson, Kayleigh Thorne, Angelique Thornton, Kristy Thullen, Lindsay Thurman, Melanie Tibai, Elizabeth Tolliver, David Toms, Daniel Torok, Samantha Trevis, Kathryn Trudeau, Jena Trudell, Bobbie Turner, Erica Turner, Wendy Turner, Kristi Tyler, Jacob Ulch, Daniel Ursem, Klye Vacheresse.

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Kenneth Wilber, Ashley Wilkie, Ryan Willey, Evan Williams, Hughlan Williams, Marissa Williams, Amy Willingham, Jessica Wimberly, Melissa Wincher, Scottie Wise, Amanda Wohlfell, Samantha Woodby, Donald Woodman, Steven Woodruff, Jamie Woolford, Jo Woolfork, Andrew Zadigian, Brian Zilka, Jack Zimmerman and Maritza Zuniga-Jasso.

HURON VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

Huron Valley Lutheran High School in Westland has posted its honor roll for the first semester marking period.

Receiving highest honors for grade point averages between 3.75 and 4.0 were:

■ Seniors Crystal Brandt Westland; Tavis Greene, Monroe; Keri Koch, Monroe; Nicole Sweet, Westland, and Philip Wendland, Plymouth.

■ Juniors Jacob Ficken, Garden City; Jeremy Freimark, Monroe; Michael Nocella, Monroe, and Lindsey Pyle, Monroe.

■ Sophomore Amanda Gruenewald, New Hudson.

■ Freshmen Lauren Adlof, Canton; Colin Beerbower, Livonia, and Katie Kipfmiller, Flat Rock.

Receiving honors for grade point averages between 3.0 and 3.74 were:

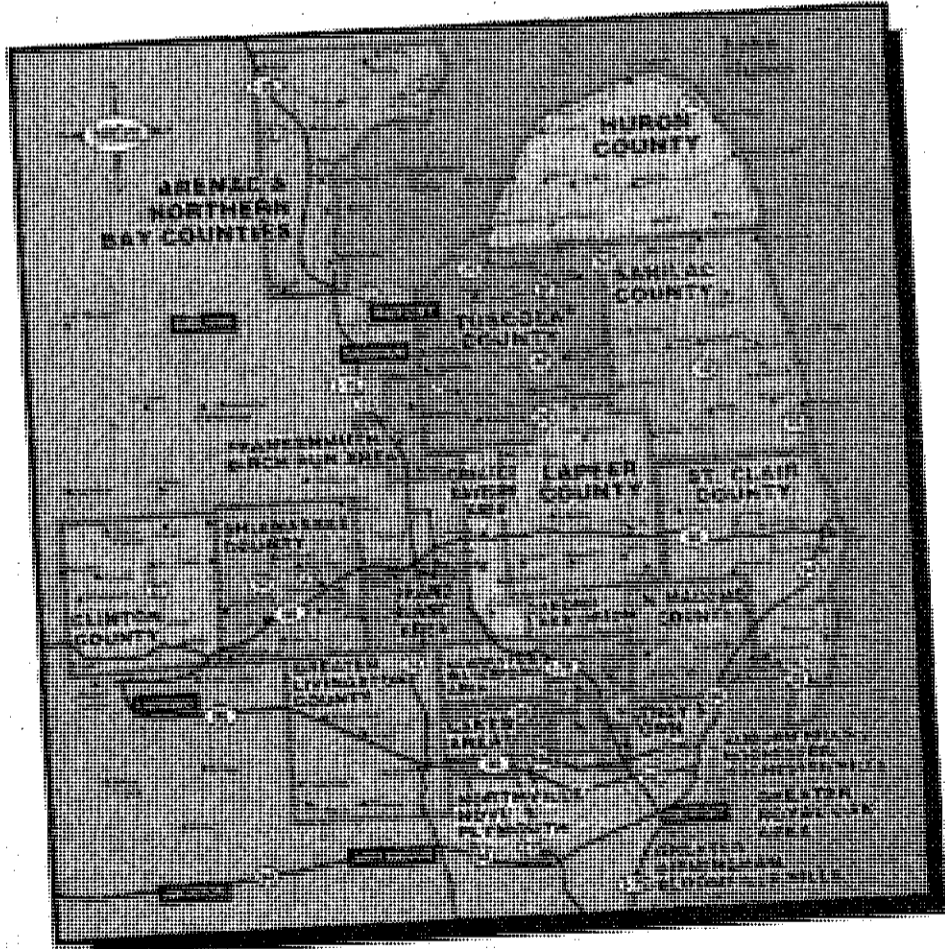
■ Seniors Justine Smith, Westland, and Matthew Stockdale, Westland.

■ Juniors Matthew Frisco, Farmington; Erik Gruenewald, New Hudson; Brittany Hickman, Monroe; Adam Kipfmiller, Flat Rock; Zachary Mousseau, Milford; Vincent Pelligrino, Livonia, and Brad Schmidt Livonia.

■ Sophomores Tod Bartholomew, Wayne; Melissa Bergemann, Farmington Hills; Erin Henkel, Canton; Scott Hoff, Livonia, and Grant Wood, Westland.

■ Freshmen Emily Helwig, Livonia; Ryan Jones, Westland; Brandy Nocella, Monroe; Robert Russ, Belleville; Catherine St. John, Farmington, and Kathryn Strauch, Livonia.

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Waiting and wondering

She looks forward to husband's homecoming

Cold-weather campout

planned for women

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

BY MATT JACHMAN
STAFF WRITER

War-time is always difficult, particularly for military wives like Nicole Zsuzsics.

The former Canton resident's husband, Allen "Zeus" Zsuzsics, is aboard the U.S.S. Harry Truman, a Navy aircraft carrier that is currently somewhere off the coast of Iraq.

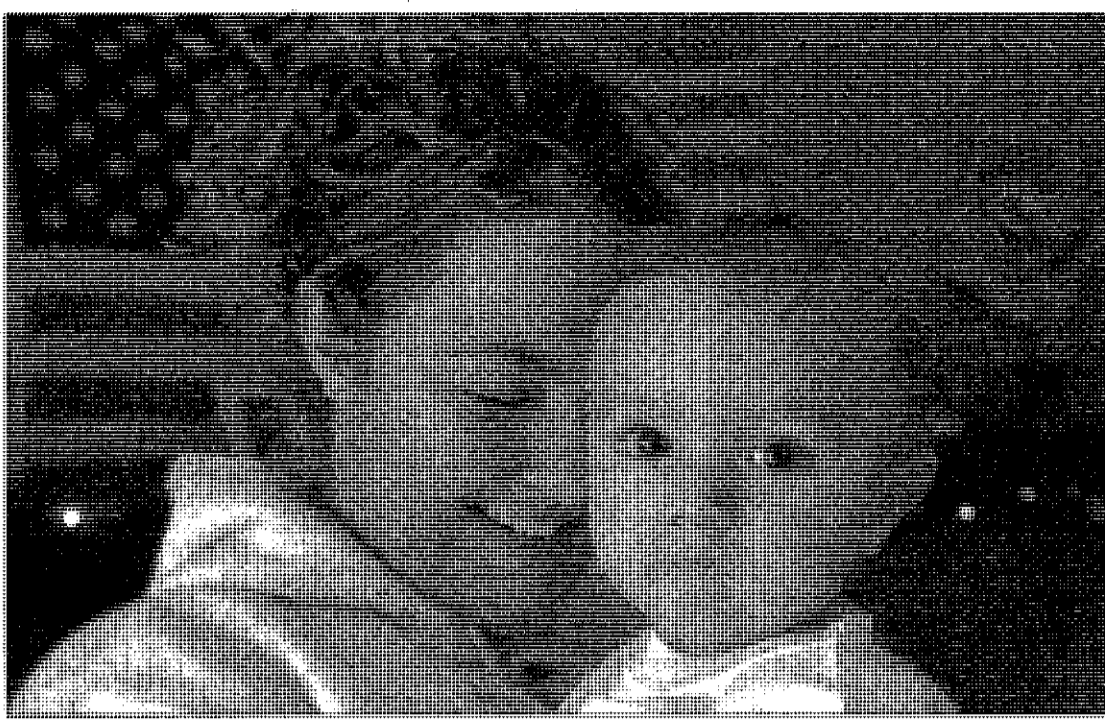
Rather than pine away the days worrying about her husband's fate, Zsuzsics, 22, has started an organization called Operation Morale, which is dedicated to helping the sailors aboard the Truman fight their worst fears: loneliness and being forgotten.

Through the organization, people can write letters to sailors and send them cards or other care packages, which Zsuzsics says go a long way to make them feel appreciated. Many of the sailors are looking for pen pals, to help keep them connected to back home.

"Their worst fear is to be forgotten. There's so many guys that don't get any letters at all. My husband wrote me one time that I needed to do something about it, so I started Operation Morale," Zsuzsics said.

Zsuzsics, formerly Nicole Kline, graduated from Plymouth Salem in 2000 and now lives in Chesapeake, Va. She married her husband in October 2003, after the two became acquainted through an online military pen pal service. Currently she is in Canton visiting her mother, Denise Kline.

Nicole said she usually gets daily e-mails from her husband, who steals away every chance he gets to find out about news from home, especially about the couple's 8-month-old son, Brady.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nicole Zsuzsics, here with her 8-month-old son, Brady, is looking forward to the return of her husband, Allen ("Zeus") Zsuzsics, a U.S. Naval officer aboard the U.S.S. Harry Truman somewhere off the coast of Iraq.

day, so he doesn't get much of a chance to use e-mail. I never get more than a paragraph at a time, but at least he can tell me he's OK," she said.

Every once in a while, her husband gets access to a telephone and calls home, but because of the time difference, Nicole said the calls usually come early in the morning. "Most of the time he calls it's 2 or 3 in the morning. I wake up the next morning wondering if I really talked to him or not," she said.

Zsuzsics said communication from home is so vital for any sailor or soldier in wartime, especially because many of them don't have family to think about or with whom to keep in touch.

"Some people don't have anybody and are sitting on ships wondering if anyone even

knows they are there," she said. "Our point with Operation Morale is to make them aware that everyone does know they are there and that we care about them."

Allen Zsuzsics, who is from Kansas, said it makes such a difference for the sailors when they receive letters from home, whether it is from someone they know or not.

"It's nice to know that people still think and care about us out here. Being away from your family is so hard, especially over the holidays. I miss my wife and baby so much. When we get mail and packages from random Americans telling us how much we're appreciated, it makes being gone a little easier," he said. Nicole said she is counting down the days when her husband returns from his six-month tour, though she

understands it could end up being longer depending on what happens in the near future. War is never exact.

"I'm just like everyone else. I'll probably find out about four days before he arrives home. But we're really hoping for six months, which means he will be home in early April," she said.

Those interested in sending letters or cards through Operation Morale can send them to: Operation Morale, 813 Hughes Ave., Chesapeake, VA, 23324. Zsuzsics said people can include a return address, because many sailors like to write return letters.

For more information about the group, call Zsuzsics at (757) 543-2808 or visit the group's Web site at www.operation-morale.homestead.com.

kkuban@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 459-2700

Women who are interested in outdoor winter recreation but don't know where to get started can learn winter survival skills and try cold-weather camping at Independence Oaks, an Oakland County park in Clarkston, later this month.

Redford's Department of Parks and Recreation is working with Oakland County's parks department to offer the two-day event for women only.

"Women sometimes feel intimidated, or they feel like they just don't know enough to get out and do these types of things," said Derenda Howard, an Oakland County Parks recreation specialist. A women-only group can get participants more relaxed, Howard said. Women at similar events in the past have been able to connect with each other based on their interest in the outdoors, she said.

The event is Saturday, Jan. 22, and Sunday, Jan. 23. The fee is \$55, which includes workshops, materials, meals and lodging, though the campout is optional.

Gibson School hosts open house

Gibson School for Gifted Students invites the public to attend its Winter Open House on Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Now in its 32nd year, Gibson School serves intellectually gifted students from 21 communities in Oakland, Livingston, Wayne and Washtenaw counties. Gibson's school-aged gifted program is open to children between the ages of 5 and 14.

Gibson also offers a child development center for preschool children ages 2 1/2 to 5,

Campers are required to bring appropriate clothing and a sleeping bag.

The program began in 2003 and, so far, two fall-weather events have been held at another park, Howard said. A winter event planned for early last year was canceled because of a sudden thaw.

Howard said most participants are beginners, and often married women who are interested in camping and outdoor recreation but have husbands who aren't.

The weekend will feature two major workshops - one on gearing up for winter and another on winter camping and outdoor survival - and a choice of workshops on other winter pastimes, including ice-fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking.

Campers must provide their own transportation to Independence Oaks.

The registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 14, and no refunds will be given after that date. Register at Redford's recreation office inside the Redford Ice Arena, 12400 Beech Daly, south of Schoolcraft Road. Call (313) 387-2650.

CLUBS IN ACTION

Listings for Clubs in Action should be submitted in writing. They can be mailed to Sue Mason at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, by fax at (734) 591-7279 or by e-mail at smason@oe.homecomm.net. For more information, call (734) 953-2112.

T.O.P.S.
Take Off Pounds Sensibly No. M128, a support group for sensible weight loss, meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Good Shepherd Reformed Church, Wayne Road and Hunter in Westland. Call Jackie at (734) 722-7225.

n Take Off Pounds Sensibly No. M153 meets at 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays at St. John Episcopal Church, 555 S. Wayne Road, Westland. Call (734) 721-5023. Call Rosalie at (734) 728-0299 for more information.

Toastmasters
The Westland Easy Talkers Toastmasters Club No. 6694 (formerly Holy Smokemasters) teaches public speaking at the club's weekly meetings 6:30 p.m. Thursdays at Denny's Restaurant, 7725 N. Wayne Road, next to Westland Shopping Center. Call John Elbe at (734) 414-3401 noon to 8 p.m.

n The Dearborn Dynamic Toastmasters meets 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the Hawthorne Valley Country Club, 7300 N. Merriman in Westland. For information, visit www.toastmasters.org.

■ Toastmasters International meets 7 p.m. every first and third Monday of

the month at St. John Episcopal Church, on Sheldon in Plymouth. Guests are welcome, and there is no pressure to speak. Call (734) 459-0715 for information.

Genealogical society
The Western Wayne County Genealogical Society meets the third Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center on Farmington Road, south of Five Mile. Beginning genealogy and computer classes start at 6:30 p.m. Guests are welcome.

Hospital retirees
The Oakwood-Annapolis Retirees meet at 1 p.m. the first Monday of the month at Oakwood Hospital Annapolis Center, Venoy at Howe in Wayne. All Oakwood Retirees are welcome to attend.

Silver Strings Dulcimer
Musicians and listeners are welcome to stop by and visit a traditional music jam 7-9 p.m. the first and third Thursday of the month at Good Hope Lutheran Church, 28680 Cherry Hill, Garden City. Acoustic instruments include hammered and mountain dulcimer, guitar, banjo, fiddle, harmonica, concertina, autoharp, recorder, penny-whistle, ukulele and upright bass. Call (734) 482-2902 or check out the Web site at http://geocities.com/ssdsociety.

Westland Rotary
The Westland Rotary Club meets 12:15 p.m. Thursdays at Joy Manor, 28999 Joy, east of Middlebelt in Westland.

Do You Have An IRA or 401 K? You May Be Getting Trapped Free Yourself Now!

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.



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

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Public transit advocates take baby steps to a better system

There's a famous Detroit legend that a rising young General Motors executive was once fired for taking the bus to work. Whether or not that actually happened, public transportation has been about as welcome in the Motor City as Baptist missionaries in Mecca. Detroit is the cathedral city of the private car, where the highest feast days are the North American International Auto Show, this year Jan. 15-23.

Yet there are hundreds of thousands of Detroiters who can't afford a car. Trouble is, there is really no reliable public transportation system, either. Today, that auto executive might have a hard time getting to work at all on a bus.

"I am 52 years old, but if you subtract the time spent waiting for buses, I'm more like 40," said Marcia Yakes, who is disabled, unemployed and has to rely on an increasingly inadequate bus system.

However, she isn't just complaining; she's doing something. She is a board member of a fast-growing group called TRU — Transportation Riders United — whose purpose is to "improve transportation access and mobility in greater Detroit," which really means better public transit.

"We are living in a place that is fundamentally sick, when it comes to addressing the transportation needs of its citizens," said fellow board member Francis Grunow, the executive director of a historic preservation group.

To an outsider, it may seem simply astonishing how bad Detroit's public transportation is. The city and suburbs have separate bus systems which are not only not integrated, there is no one place anyone can go to get both schedules.

Yakes once had a job working for a suburban McDonald's. She could navigate both bus systems to get there. But when her shift ended, she either needed to find a ride or walk six miles to find a bus that would get her home to midtown Detroit. Eventually, she quit.

TRU is not all inner-city residents. Its president is Robert Prud'homme, an architect who lives in Ferndale. Lawrence Hands, who runs an environmental consulting firm and lives in upscale Grosse Pointe Park, is the treasurer and sheltering spirit; TRU is headquartered in his offices in the magnificent Guardian Building, a famous art deco skyscraper.

The actual founder, however, was his son, Stephen, who at the age of 14 presented a paper arguing for better transit service at a forum attended by then-Vice President Al Gore. "He convinced us we needed an organization," his father said. For the first several years, his mother, Karen Kendrick-Hands, ran it. Now, TRU has assembled a diverse board, and is advertising for a full-time executive director with fund-raising abilities. (Steven, now 20, is a junior at Kenyon College, and plans to become an urban planner.)



Jack Lessenberry

Currently, TRU is continuing to lobby both bus systems to do a better job at serving the public and informing them about bus schedules. However, in the long run, it thinks buses won't be enough.

To be fair, what the group has done so far are baby steps. It successfully helped reverse a plan to widen I-75 north of Detroit. It helped lobby the governor to create DARTA, the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority, something that is, however, still largely a shell.

It has formed alliances with other anti-sprawl groups and proposed an interesting plan to bring back the trolley cars that were a fixture in downtown Detroit until 1956.

Currently, TRU is continuing to lobby both bus systems to do a better job at serving the public and informing them about bus schedules. However, in the long run, it thinks buses won't be enough.

Prud'homme, like most or all of his fellow TRU members, would like to see a light-rail system connecting Detroit and the suburbs. "You could do what's essentially needed for \$2 billion, I think," he said, as fellow member Patty Fedewa, a federal labor attorney, nodded in agreement.

Unfortunately, there has never been much support in Lansing for mass transit of any kind, and city and suburban leaders have been more interested in bashing each other than cooperating. The state is facing a perennial major budget crisis, and no money is likely to be available for any initiatives.

TRU leaders believe that is short-sighted. They note a number of studies that have noted that there are thousands of jobs in the suburbs which could be filled by city dwellers who desperately need them — if they could just get there.

This month will be a key one for TRU. On Tuesday, Jan. 25, it is holding a public meeting at its Detroit headquarters to try to help develop a vision and an agenda for what the group should do next.

What is clear, Prud'homme said, was that something has to be done. Several weeks ago, he came out of his parking garage and saw a beautiful gleaming bus shelter unlike any in Detroit. He was transfixed.

He walked toward it — and was stopped. It wasn't real. It was a set for a new Stephen Spielberg movie about a post-nuclear Los Angeles. "I guess that even after the apocalypse they had a better transportation system than we do now," he said, laughing.

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.

Schoolcraft's president sees Cherry report as positive step

Once upon a time, Michigan was the Emerald City. Jobs were at the end of the yellow brick road leading to Detroit, where wages were higher and job security was solid.

Even with its cyclical ups and downs, the auto industry provided several generations with healthy pay checks. Many fathers encouraged their sons to get a union card and get a job at GM, Ford or Chrysler.

Those were the days and now they're over. Michigan has fallen behind other states economically. Not enough young students are preparing themselves for the new high-tech, entrepreneurial economy. We lag behind other large states in the number of young people pursuing post-secondary education and in retaining the students who do get degrees.

At the end of December, Gov. Jennifer Granholm released the findings of the Lt. Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth. Lt. Gov. John Cherry and his commission were assigned to make recommendations toward three goals: "Double the percentage of residents who attain postsecondary degrees or other credentials that link them to success in Michigan's new economy; improve the alignment of Michigan's institutions of higher education with emerging employment opportunities in the state's economy; and build a dynamic workforce of employees who have the talents and skills needed for success in the 21st century."

Schoolcraft President Conway Jeffers says the report is a positive step in the right direction. Jeffers served on a commission task force on realizing the economic benefits of education. "When looking at research at the University of Michigan, Wayne State or Michigan State, there was a major emphasis on turning those results of research into commercial products, whether the university handles it or private industry, to not cloister knowledge away without realizing economic return," he said.

Many of the 19 key recommendations of the commission concern community colleges, which are both bridges to a higher education and training centers for in-demand technical positions.

A particular concern is transfer of credits. The commission urges community colleges and baccalaureate colleges to work together at removing the obstacles.

"If the state's goal is to increase the number of people with college degrees, we shouldn't be engaged in a process that slows that down," Jeffers said.

He said colleges are often inconsistent, with some departments accepting credits while others don't. Some colleges also balk at taking dual enrollment credits earned by high school students from the community college. The commission encourages more of these programs that help acclimate high school students to college work. Jeffers said they are important in helping students get through the first year of college.

The Michigan Community College Association urged that the commission's original goal to promote four-year degrees be modified instead to promote all postsecondary education that improves a person's economic capacity.

"When you look at the mission statements of a college, typically most colleges have large and grandiose statements," he said. "Ours was more to the point, to increase the intellectual and economic capacity of our clientele."

He said colleges have to meet real economic needs. "Everything requires social and financial utility," he said. "We need to have that at the start and not discover it at the end of the process. Whether you're a welder or a poet, you need to make a living."

The Cherry Commission puts a similar high priority on the economic outcome of education by recommending that colleges be monitored for their ability to match programs with job need.

But while emphasizing the importance of economic reality to a college program, Jeffers said he doesn't underestimate the value of a traditional liberal arts education. "Liberal arts was an opportunity to explore many things you could do," he said.

A liberal arts beginning allows a student to choose a vocation. "Graduate schools are totally vocational," he said. "You take liberal arts education and say I like teaching or science or engineering and now I'm going to be a scientist or engineer. I look at community colleges as little graduate schools, not vocational schools."

For that reason, Jeffers said the associate's degree is still "viable," turning out many fully qualified job applicants for a number of good-paying positions such as teaching and computer work. He said the college needs to develop flexible programs in which students can return regularly and build on the skills they have as technology and job availability demand.

"You want to use college as a permanent lifelong resource, a more complicated library to go to," he said.

Now the problem is finding the funding and the political will to follow through.

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