

Remembering John Paul II

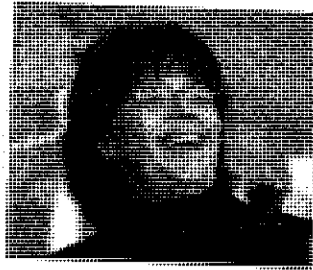
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For laughs

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OBSERVER LIFE, SECTION C



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PINK PAGE, C8

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Mayor plans upbeat message for state of city

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER



Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli will deliver an upbeat message Wednesday during her fourth State of the City address - the last of her first mayoral term.

"We had another great year here in the city of Westland," she told the *Observer* on Friday. "We

had a lot of successes in the last 12 months, and we're excited about the next year.

"The state of Westland," she said, "is very strong."

Cicirelli, who made history four years ago when she became the first woman elected as Westland mayor, has invited the public to attend her annual State of the City address.

Her speech will start about 6 p.m. Wednesday at the senior citizen Friendship Center, on Newburgh Road south of Ford. Refreshments will be served at 5:30 p.m.

Cicirelli didn't divulge all the contents of her speech, but she will refer to how the city has weathered a tough economic year despite state revenue cuts.

"We're really proud of the fact that we haven't had to have layoffs or cut services," she said.

Her State of the City address will come just days after she proposed a new budget to the Westland City Council, which will have its first-round talks about the spending plan at 7 p.m. Monday at City Hall.

Under the new, \$56 million budget, the city

would start its fiscal year July 1 with a \$1.3 million general fund surplus - up from \$200,000 early in Cicirelli's mayoral term. By next June, she said, the surplus is expected to grow to \$1.5 million.

Cicirelli attributed the improved financial picture to careful spending, saying her administration has been proactive in responding to state revenue cuts.

Cicirelli, who plans to seek a second four-year

PLEASE SEE MAYOR, A4

A Blue Ribbon day



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kathleen Straus (left), president, Michigan State Board of Education, presents the Michigan Blue Ribbon Award to Edison Elementary School Principal Barbara Hastings as part of a special ceremony Thursday at the school. The Westland school was one of 34 schools in the state to receive the award this year. For more on the ceremony, see Page A4.

'Edison is the best in the land'

Students, staff receive state Blue Ribbon School award

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Edison first-grader Austin Blosssey (left) reacts after all the hands went up on how many schools there are in the state of Michigan. Along with fellow students Heidi Bird (second from left to right), Alicia West and Jordan Williams, he helped state school board President Kathleen Straus show how many schools earned the prestigious award.

State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus decided the best way to illustrate just how prestigious the Michigan Blue Ribbon Award is was through the students.

So she had four Edison Elementary students stand in front of their schoolmates, hands and 34 fingers held high. Then she asked the rest of the students to hold their hands up. The first group represented schools receiving the award this year, the larger group was the state's 3,500 schools.

"The state board determined that it wanted to recognize excellence," she said. "We want all schools to excel and you set the example for other schools. I commend you and I'm very proud of you."

Straus and fellow board member Elizabeth Bauer were at the Westland school Thursday afternoon to present Principal Barbara Hastings, her staff and students with the Blue Ribbon Award, one of 34 given out this year.

"I plan to hang around a long time in life to

see you succeed," Bauer told the students. "Whatever you can dream, you can do. You can give, then receive. Be hopeful, have courage and stick to it."

"It makes me very proud as a parent," said Edison parent Wendi Schlacht who watched Hastings accept the blue glass award from Straus. "It's a special honor and I think the kids see that, too. I think they realize they're attending an exceptional school."

Schlacht was among parents, educators, city officials and state lawmakers who packed the school's gymnasium for the ceremony that included musical performances by the third-, fourth- and fifth-graders and the reading of two essays about being a Blue Ribbon school by their authors, fifth-graders Crystal Warra and Rijad Ajdarpasic.

Secretary of the Edison PTO, Schlacht has two children, a kindergartner and fourth-grader at Edison, as well as a preschooler at the Stottemyer Early Childhood and Family Development Center.

"Our kids are so lucky to be here with this

PLEASE SEE AWARD, A4

Rider finds self in the right spot to save senior

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Patrick Kobylarz didn't expect to become a hero when he set out for an early morning bicycle ride while vacationing at Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky.

Before his three children awoke, Kobylarz rode down a long trail toward the Green River, stopping to talk with an elderly couple who asked where they could join a park tour.

Kobylarz, 45, motioned up the hill and then rode off, only to again encounter the elderly couple - this time in distress - on his return trip. The man, in his 70s, had fallen down a slope and was bleeding from his head and hands.

Kobylarz, assisted by another helper, tried to get the injured man up the hill, but he told them that he needed to rest.

Kobylarz didn't realize that the injured man had a heart problem until he found a vial of nitroglycerin that he had dropped during his tumble down the hill.

"He took one of the pills and, a minute or two later, he took another pill," Kobylarz said, recalling the March 30 incident.

As Kobylarz started looking for eyeglasses that the injured man had lost, the senior suddenly slumped to the ground and stopped breathing.

"I put my hand over his heart, and there was no heartbeat," Kobylarz recalled. "I looked again at his chest and listened for breathing. There was none."

In a rescue confirmed Friday by the Mammoth Cave park ranger's office, Kobylarz gave the injured man mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and CPR.

"He still was not breathing," Kobylarz said. "I took another breath and continued with the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and CPR. I believe that after the third breath, he started to breathe again."

The injured man identified himself only as Gary and said he and his wife were visiting from St. Paul, Minn. He started telling Kobylarz and his helper about his children and grandchildren.

Paramedics soon arrived and gave oxygen to the

PLEASE SEE HERO, A4



Life saver Patrick Kobylarz poses for a photograph with his three children - Julie, 15, Jacob, 12, and Ryan, 9 - in Mammoth Cave.

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'The kind of boss you love'

Late pontiff inspired Polish-born St. Michael pastor to be not afraid

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

The Rev. Gregory Tokarski like millions of other Catholics planned to watch the funeral of Pope John Paul II in the wee hours of Friday morning. He planned to give up a few hours of sleep for the man who to the Polish people, "was like Moses was to the Jews."

"I couldn't sleep the night he died," said Tokarski. "It felt like I'd lost someone important to me. I'm a priest and he was my boss, but he was the kind of boss you love."

Unlike the millions who made a pilgrimage to Rome to honor the late prelate, he decided to stay home and be with the members of St. Michael Catholic Church in Livonia.

Tokarski spent some 13 years studying and teaching classical languages at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. While there, he concelebrated Mass with the pope. Born in Poland, he credits Pope John Paul II's visit to his homeland in 1979 as his inspiration to become a priest.

"It was the beginning of a vocation; it was a long process, but the seed was thrown that year," said Tokarski. "His example attracted us, especially in Poland where we couldn't worship in public. He came and told us not to be afraid."

The pope's message came at a time when Poland was still a Communist country. At school, teachers taught their students that God did not exist, but at home people prayed and believed.



It was mixture of emotions when the Rev. Gregory Tokarski (center) and his mother met with Pope John Paul II following a Mass at the pope's summer residence in Castel Gandolfo.



The Rev. Gregory Tokarski of St. Michael Parish has many fond memories of Pope John Paul II.

"The wind blew and blew his vestment up over his face," Tokarski recalled. "He felt around and uncovered his face and told the people the wind was the Holy Spirit and that

the Holy Spirit is with them, don't be afraid."

Tokarski and his brother Stan, who also is a priest and is at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, became members of what was called the papa's boys movement, young men who met every week to read the pope's letters and writings.

They were attracted to him because of his way of doing things, his way of meeting people.

"His message was 'I respect you, you have value, you have dignity as God's children,'" he said. "After his visit, everyone talked about what he said and were not afraid."

During his time in Rome - he was sent there by his superior in 1989 - Tokarski saw the pope on several occasions, including a Mass at the pope's summer residence in Castel Gandolfo. He was there with his mother and the pope came over to talk to them.

"My mother asked for a blessing for her family, she has eight children," said Tokarski. "He didn't want to leave, he wanted to talk. My mother was crying, I was smiling and he kept looking to each of us."

"I was a simple priest with my mother and his attention was with us and we knew that."

'JOHN PAUL THE GREAT'

He also saw some of the pope's humorous side, his spinning his cane in a Chaplinesque way and using it to conduct the Polish choir that had been at the Mass. He also recalls a member of the Spanish Guard telling him that, especially in his early years, he would tug on the guard's clothing to get them to smile and laugh.

John Paul, he said, had a "charming personality."

"Every picture you see of him, you see his kindness and humanity," he said. "I wish the political leaders could be like him, but for the priests, they should be like him. He wasn't about theology. He would go forward and meet people and you could see God's presence in him."

Tokarski believes the pope will become known as John Paul the Great, especially with him being called that by a cardinal during a service earlier last week.

He also believes whomever is selected as the next pope "will have no choice," but to continue what John Paul has done, but in his own way.

"I feel lucky to live in such wonderful times," said Tokarski. "I was born after the war and everything was unchanged until the Pope John Paul. Now everything has changed. His name will be eternal. He will become an object of our praise."

"He will be remembered as John Paul the Great."

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Custodians get high marks for their work and contributions

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public Schools' custodial staff earned praise, and shared it during a recent school board meeting.

One building supervisor and two custodians from Kennedy Elementary School were recognized with the district-wide Team Effort Award, thanks to Principal Heidi Frazer-Cherry.

"Quite simply there is no wish too great, no request seen as insurmountable, no task left undone by this team at the end of the day," wrote Frazer-Cherry in her nomination of Dale Yanka, Marion Broyles and Dave LeClair.

"They make our school a home away from home." All three staff members were present Monday when Trustee Joanne Morgan presented the award and commented: "Livonia has an amazing custodial staff."

Frazer-Cherry quoted Ernest Hemingway while thanking her staff. She said they work together to create "a clean, well-lighted place" everyday. In addition, she noted their dedication to the students, and "willingness to lend a hand."

"They always seem to know when a child is in need of a little extra attention," she said. "They give a smile or a wave."

"This is for all you do to make Kennedy an outstanding place for students to learn and work."

Moments later, Tim Beswetherick took the podium to share his support of the school district, with a dollar sign attached.

As president of Livonia's non-teaching Local 118 for

Michigan's American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, he represents custodians, maintenance workers, cooks, transportation workers and other non-teaching employees in the district. Beswetherick has been a district employee for 10 years.

"Local 118 members are constantly in support of this board and the district," he said.

Beswetherick backed his words with a \$1,000 donation to the LPS Foundation that he hopes will be a start to support school programs in danger of looming budget cuts.

He took advantage of a payroll deduction to make that donation and said "I am asking all my membership to do the same."

Beswetherick, who lives in Redford Township, estimated if every member of the union contributed just \$1 per pay period, they could raise \$12,000 for the district in one year.

He said he's sending out information in a newsletter, and it's timely.

"We know cuts are coming," he said. "The money is not there."

In addition, his membership is reaching out to Gov. Jennifer Granholm in support of additional funding for public education.

Trustee Rob Freeman commended Beswetherick for the donation, adding, "It's wonderful of you and your organization."

For more information about the LPS Foundation, contact the district at (734) 744-2500.

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SHARING THE SPIRIT

Tokarski recalls a Mass the pope celebrated in Gdansk. A million people showed up and when the service ended, everyone was quiet and nobody moved. It was so quiet, he said, that "you could even hear their hearts beat."



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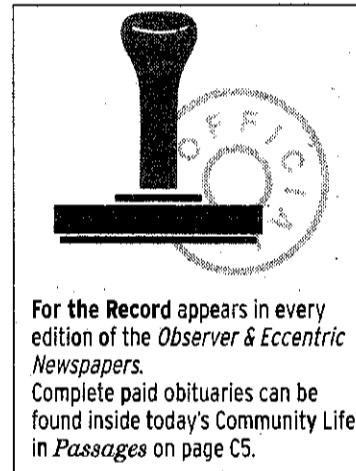
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FOR THE RECORD

DEATHS

- A**
Millie Aronson, 77, of Garden City, died March 18.
- B**
Nelle P. Ballinger, 106, of Belleville, Ill., died April 5.
Ronald R. Barnett, 72, of Rochester, died April 3.
Marie (Wadkins) Boughton, 81, of Farmington Hills, died March 14.
Dorothea L. Brong, 90, of Troy, died March 29.
- C**
Betty Lorena Clark, 67, of Taylor, died April 5.
Carmela V. Connery, 72, of Rochester Hills, died April 1.
- D**
Francis William Donehue, of Livonia, died April 2.
- F**
Elizabeth S. Fay, 95, of Rochester Hills, died April 5.
John J. Fodermaier Jr., 90, of San Antonio, died April 7.
- G**
Sharon A. Griffith, 54, of Livonia,



For the Record appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Community Life in *Passages* on page C5.

- died April 4.
- H**
Herman Heintz, of Livonia, died April 3.
Louise I. Humer, 83, of Lake Orion, died March 29.
- J**
Alvina Conn Jahns, 76, of Rochester Hills, died March 28.
Kenneth A. Johnstone, 98, of Troy, died April 1.

- L**
Marian E. Lange, 91, of Plymouth, died April 4.
Jack Lawson, 78, of Westland, died March 31.
Virginia J. Lillie, of Westland, died April 4.
- M**
Ibrahim (Abe) Madany, 74, of Farmington, died March 31.
- S**
Ruby Elizabeth Salmon, 94, of Canton, died April 7.
Esther Leora Shattuck, 99, of Plymouth, died April 3.
Floyd G. Sims, 81, died April 1.
Jessica A. Susalla, 15, of Rochester, died April 1.
Michelle Swanderski, 53, of Farmington Hills, died April 3.
- T**
Emma Thorold, 88, formerly of Westland, died March 27.
Norman E. Trudeau, 84, of Leonard, died March 30.
- Y**
Roberta Jean Nichols Yakel, 73, of Plymouth, died April 3.

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Westlander faces trial in Internet case

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Westland man who teaches in Linden Community Schools will face trial amid accusations he used the Internet to try to meet a teenager for sex.

Michael Lee Phillips, 28, faces trial in Wayne County Circuit Court on charges of child sexually abusive activity and using a computer to commit a crime.

He was ordered to stand trial Wednesday after he gave up his right to a preliminary hearing in Southfield 46th District Court.

Authorities have accused Phillips of trying to meet a teenager in Southfield, where he was arrested on March 31.

Late last week, Phillips remained jailed in Oakland County in lieu of a \$25,000 cash bond, according to a jail spokeswoman.

Phillips was arrested by investigators from the Michigan Attorney General Child & Public Protection Unit. Authorities posed as a teenager and arranged to meet with him, office spokeswoman Allison Pierce confirmed.

Phillips could face penalties ranging up to 20 years in prison, if convicted. A not-guilty plea has been placed in his court file as he awaits trial.

Phillips teaches in Linden Community Schools, according to the Attorney General's Office. An attempt was made Thursday to speak with district officials about his job status and about the district's policy for handling such matters, but a telephone call wasn't returned.

Attorney General Michael Cox issued a statement saying that his office's Child & Public Protection Unit has made 29 arrests and that undercover investigators "are making

Michigan safer for our children."

Citizens can learn more about Internet predators and can report potential suspects by going online at www.michigan.gov/ag and clicking on a link, Report Internet Abuses Against Children.

Citizens also may report such matters by calling (734) 525-4151.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General's Web site provides 10 safety rules for children using the Internet.

■ Always ask for parental permission before using a full name, address, telephone number or school name on the Internet.

■ Children who see something online that is wrong or that makes them feel uncomfortable should tell their parents or guardian.

■ Youngsters who feel uncomfortable about a message shouldn't respond to it.

■ Never give out a credit card number or password.

■ Don't put a personal picture on the Internet without parental permission.

■ Beware when offered gifts or money by someone online.

■ Never reveal residency to anyone offering gifts.

■ Don't arrange a meeting with someone who has been met online unless given approval by parents or a guardian, who also should accompany children for such meetings.

■ Talk with parents to set up rules for going online. Decide with them the best time of day for such activity, the length of time to use the Internet, and the appropriate areas to visit.

■ Get to know "online friends" just like any other friend. That is, make sure that parents know and trust such friends before giving out any personal information by e-mail.

Lessard: Keep district land, administrator

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Daniel Lessard has served nine years on the Livonia Board of Education, and he isn't ready to stop yet.

The 70-year-old Michigan Bell retiree raised three children and has spent 27 years in Livonia. Prior to living here, he also served on the school board for East Detroit Public Schools for two years.

"I think I still have something to offer," Lessard said of his decision to run for re-election. "If that stops, that day I'll walk away. I still have the energy."

Lessard said he's dedicated and committed to the work, and he has a history of experience to prove it. He's earned extensive certification through the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Lessard recently defended the school board's position on holding — and paying for — a special millage election in February. He said he supported that decision because it gave the district a chance to go back to voters if the millage didn't pass. "It gave



Lessard

us the opportunity to start planning," he said. "We have to have our budget in by the end of June."

When it comes to the budget, Lessard does not support cuts to administration. "A train this big has got to have people driving it," he said.

Problems lie with the high cost of health care, he said: "It's eating us up. We need to do something about it."

Lessard said until now, the cuts have been barely noticeable around the school district, though board members have been able to slice out millions of dollars. "Those days are pretty much gone," he said, adding that the Legislature must now fix problems with school funding.

"It's not my job," he said. "It's theirs."

Lessard said if the budget weren't at issue, he'd like to see a SAFE specialist — now called an elementary student



assistance provider — at every elementary school. It was among the reductions made previously due to the district's budget.

He's a strong supporter of the neighborhood schools concept, but said under some circumstances the district may have to close another school. He referred to the Demographics Committee, which will recommend how best to deal with a dropping enrollment issue in relation to district schools. At a previous candidate forum, Lessard said he had been a parent when his children's school closed. He understands what it's like, but also said it may be necessary under current financial restrictions.

Lessard raised concerns about No Child Left Behind legislation and the use of the MEAP tests in schools. In

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of candidate profiles for Livonia Public Schools Board of Education candidates. District voters will elect two people to four-year terms in the Tuesday, May 3, election.

higher-performing districts, he questioned: "Are the kids learning what they need to succeed? Or are they just trying to pass the test?"

When it comes to vacant property, like the land that once housed Bryant, he wants to maintain it. Lessard said they don't know what the future holds. Should the district experience growth, it would be too costly to buy property.

"Bryant is one of the few places we have left where we could put a secondary school," he said. "We just can't sell that off."

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District 'lassoes' class of 2018 at roundup

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools has put out the call for parents and their toddlers to come to school on Wednesday, April 12. That's the day school officials hope to "lasso" members of the Class of 2018.

Each of the district's 17 elementary schools will host a roundup 9-10 a.m. for students who must be five years old by Dec. 1 to be register for the 2005-2006 school year.

At the roundup, parents will have an opportunity to meet the principal, teachers and literacy teacher in one room, while their children will get introduced to a kindergarten classroom.

The children will receive a school T-shirt as well as a backpack filled with school supplies, including several children's books, an ABC chart and activity book, personal white board with dry erase marker, printing chart, crayons, scissors and glue stick. The seniors at the Dyer Senior Center pack the backpacks for the Roundup.

There also will be a folder for parents, filled with such things as a what parents can do as well as a list of summertime activities to prepare children for school and summertime report card that shows what

kindergartners know.

Parents who want to complete the enrollment process during the roundup will need to complete the district's registration card, and bring in a health appraisal/immunization card, birth certificate with raised seal and proof of residency, if there is no other family member attending a Wayne-Westland school.

Parents can prove residency with three written documents — utility bills, the purchase agreement for a home or a letter from the homeowner or landlord, if renting.

For youngsters who are eligi-

ble by age, but may not be ready for kindergarten developmentally, the district has a Young Fives program offered half day magnet programs at Kettering and Schweitzer schools. Enrollment is limited, and parents must provide their own.

Parents who can't attend the morning roundup will be able to register their children for school between 6 and 7 p.m. that day.

Parents uncertain which school to report to can call the district at (734) 419-2096 for more information and locations.

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Clyde Smith to host spring open house

Celebrating 171 years in business, Clyde Smith & Sons nursery will have a spring open house 2-3 p.m. Saturday, April 23.

The business is located at 8000 Newburgh Road.

Community volunteers, master composters and the Wayne County Gardener Association will present free seminars.

The event will be sponsored by the Westland Rouge Education Project in coopera-

tion with the Wayne County Department of Environment.

Topics will include secrets of the soil; soil-testing; earth-friendly fertilizers; making compost the easy way; the benefits of compost; and how to use compost in home landscaping.

Those planning to attend the event are asked to register in advance by calling (734) 425-1434 or by e-mailing LFDean@aol.com.

Workshop offers common sense tips on lawn care

Common-sense tips for lawn and landscape care will be offered during a free workshop sponsored by the city of Westland.

Tom Smith, executive director of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, will be the featured speaker during the workshop, scheduled for 7-8:30 p.m. Monday, April 25, at the city's Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh.

Registration will start at 6:30 p.m.

Topics will include achieving your goals for low-maintenance landscapes; how plants grow; soil testing for nutrients; earth-friendly fertilizers; lawn care that's safe for the Rouge

River; managing weeds without pesticides; and native wildflowers. Smith also will answer audience questions.

Smith has expertise with turfgrass management, landscape planning and maintenance, native plants and more. He teaches university and community college courses and is a regular speaker at local gardening events.

Smith received his master's degree from Michigan State University.

Register in advance by calling the Westland Community Relations Department at (734) 467-3198 or by e-mailing to LFDean@aol.com.

AWARD

FROM PAGE A1

staff," she added. "It's an honor and a privilege to have our kids attend here."

The program started off with a video presentation of the students and staff of Edison School. Quiet at first, students began to call out the names of staff and fellow students they knew, the loudest call coming when Hastings' face flashed on the screen.

Hastings pointed out that the requirements for the award span five of the six years she has been principal at Edison and acknowledged the work of the students and staff.

"Our goal is to make a difference every day in the lives of the students," she said. "And you have given your personal best everyday to create excellence."

Superintendent Greg Baracy said the program was a time to celebrate and reflect on the school's extraordinary accomplishment.

"I'd like to thank the entire Edison community for their total commitment to academic excellence," he said. "You have developed a school culture that promotes academic excellence and student achievement. You have accomplished what few schools in the state have accomplished or will accomplish in the future. Because of you we are here celebrating your success."

The Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Program was established in 1982 to recognize schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence and significant academic improvement over five years.

It's awarded to schools based on academic achievement, accreditation, school organization and culture, student focus and support, curriculum, quality teaching, and family and community partnerships with the school.

Edison School had to complete a comprehensive report of the key criteria for school effectiveness that serves as a basis for an extensive assessment of their building and programs.

Baracy lauded the support-



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Third-, fourth- and fifth-graders entertained guests with songs like "Lend a Helping Hand" and "My Personal Code."

ive and collaborative effort of the staff and parents and thanked them and the students for all of their "hard work and extra effort to excel and succeed."

"It's an excellent job done," he said. "Continue to do that and remember Edison's song. If you do that, great things will come your way."

A table outside the gymnasium displayed the other accolades the school received from Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, the Westland City Council, City Clerk Elaine DeHart, State Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, and Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia.

Serving as a backdrop was a display of the student essays and individual blue ribbons students had made, listing what they consider the best things about their school.

According to Straus, the 34 Blue Ribbon Awards given out this year are the most ever given at one time. Most years, the schools meeting the requirements number 8-15, she said.

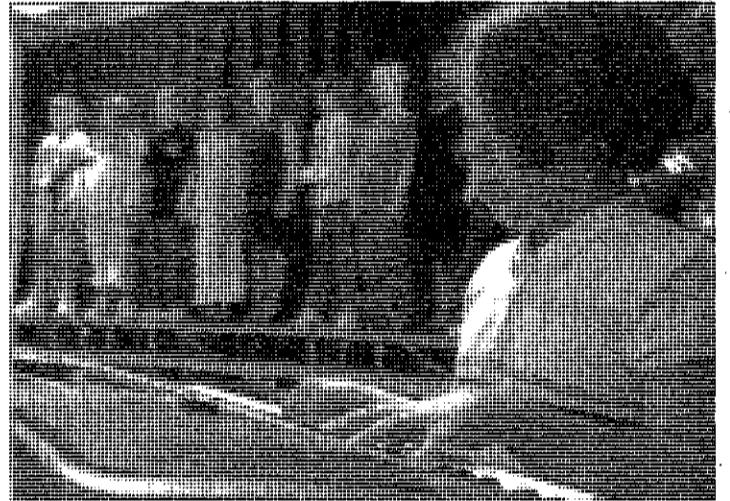
And the presentations she is making around the state "help to renew and recharge" the state school board, she added.

"We want high standards because we want them to achieve," she said. "If they are taught well and motivated well, I think the kids can do it and they do."

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Edison second-grade teacher Maria Jagalla gives the thumbs up to students in the choir after their performance.



Fourth-grader Katelin Smith provide piano selections between the choir performances at the blue ribbon program at Edison Elementary.

HERO

FROM PAGE A1

injured man. He was taken to a hospital, and it was later learned that he was recovering.

While still near the slope, the injured man thanked Kobylarz and his helper.

"Gary said he thought we were angels. Maybe we were for a day," Kobylarz said.

It wasn't the first time that Kobylarz has gained public attention. In 2002, he was honored as Westland Father of the Year during Mayor Sandra Cicirelli's State of the City address.

Kobylarz and his wife, Kathi, have three children: Julie, 15,

Jacob, 12, and Ryan, 9 - all of whom attend Livonia Public Schools.

Referring to the rescue, Kobylarz said, "This was an experience I will never forget. There were a lot of circumstances that led me to that very spot that morning.

"I guess it was just not time for Gary to leave us, and God put me there for a reason," Kobylarz said. "I hope that Gary enjoys his life for as long as God gives him, and I know that I will carry this memory for the rest of my life. It will help me appreciate the time I have."

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MAYOR

FROM PAGE A1

term this fall, unveiled some of the highlights of her latest blueprint for the city:

■ Under her budget, water-sewer rates would increase only 4 cents per 1,000 gallons, from \$5.25 to \$5.29. That will cover a 4-cent increase that Detroit is passing on to Westland.

"That's good news for our residents," the mayor said, noting that Detroit and Wayne County typically pass on higher rates.

■ She has proposed restoring the position of economic development director, which she earlier eliminated as a cost-cutting measure. The

duties have since been handled by Planning Director Bruce Thompson.

"Bruce has done a remarkable job," Cicirelli said. "But he needs some help."

■ She has proposed reducing the garbage-disposal tax paid by residents by a quarter-mill - a move that would put a few extra dollars in local pocket-books.

"We will still explore curbside recycling," Cicirelli said.

■ She has proposed buying 10 new police cars, four small trucks for the building department, and a salt truck and two pickups for the public service department. She also has suggested refurbishing two emergency medical vehicles.

During her State of the City address, Cicirelli will unveil

plans for some new city programs, and she also will honor six people: Mother of the Year Yvette Marie Mays; Father of the Year Joseph Patrick Buda; Teacher of the Year Anthony Lee Paquette, a chef at the William D. Ford Career

Technical Center; High School Senior of the Year Kimberly Mary Hagelthorn of John Glenn High School; Senior Citizen of the Year for Leadership Mary Rickkers; and Senior Citizen of the Year for Service Patricia Barr.

Cicirelli said her State of the City will focus on how Westland has remained strong despite financial difficulties.

"It's going to be a real positive message," she said.

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Our team of professional, clockwise: Jan, Brenda, Linda, Chaz, Cheryl, Sazan (not pictured: Audrea)

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We would like to take this time to offer his clients our services at In-Style.

Once again, our deepest sympathy to Patricia and Family.

Chaz



Secret's out

Livonia Churchill presents 'The Secret Garden,' 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, April 14-16, in the Carli Auditorium, 8900 Newburgh Road. Playing the part of Mary Lennox is Rachel Glodo (left to right), Chelsea Rourke is Martha, Vinnie Roberts is Dickon, Mike Migliore is Archibald Craven, and Laurie Kuhlman plays Lily. Tickets are on sale now for \$10 adults, \$9 seniors, and \$6 for students. Call (734) 744-2650, Ext. 70177.

PLACES AND FACES

String Fling

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools will host its annual Spring String Fling concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Stockmeyer Auditorium adjacent to Wayne Memorial High School, 3001 Fourth St., Wayne.

The concert is free and includes string instrumental students and symphony orchestras from Wayne Memorial and John Glenn High school and the four middle schools.

Historic fashions

Local historians will sponsor an "old-time" fashion show and luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday to raise money to help repair the city's historic Octagon House.

The cost is \$12 per person. The event will be held at the Bailey Recreation Center, behind City Hall on Ford Road. The show will be held in memory of the late Howard Becker, who was a supporter of the Octagon House.

For more information or to inquire about tickets, call (734) 729-1605, (734) 522-3918 or (734) 729-2953.

Night Off

Parents looking for an evening out should circle Friday, April 22, and June 3.

Those nights the Westland Parks and Recreation Department and Hoops Stars Basketball and Academic Tutoring will offer Parents' Night Off.

Parents can leave their children at the Bailey Recreation Center 6-10 p.m. both evenings and enjoy a night out while the kids enjoy a pizza dinner (chips and a beverage included) and two activities. The choices include basketball, cheerleading, math games and arts and crafts, and kids can choose the same activity for both sessions.

The event is for children in first through eighth-grades and cost \$20 for one child per night off or \$35 per child for both. Register by April 19 for the first night off and by May 30 for the June 30 program at the Bailey Recreation Center, 3351 Ford.

For more information, call Ron Levin at (248) 496-3268.

Spring bazaar

The Edison Elementary PTO will have its Spring Bazaar 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 20.

The bazaar will feature a collection of 25 vendors, mostly direct-sell businesses like Tupperware, DK Books and Party-Lite candles along with a few cash-and-carry vendors selling jewelry, denim purses, stamped greeting cards and other fun items. There will also be a bake sale held in conjunction with the bazaar, which will be held in the gym.

No children will be allowed in the gym, however, baby-sitting will be available. Edison School is at 34505 Hunter, Westland.

Golf outing

The Westland Rotary Club will hold a Centennial Golf Celebration Thursday, May 26, at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills in Salem Township. The outing will have a scramble format and 11 a.m. shotgun start. It includes 18 holes of golf, lunch and beverages at the turn, door prizes and a filet mignon dinner and banquet.

The costs is \$160 per golfer or \$600 for a foursome.

Sponsorships also are available. For more information, call Dr. Kim Shunkwiler at (734) 728-5533, Tom North at (734) 421-1300, Todd Blevins at (734) 425-7766 or Capt. Matt O'Neil at (734) 722-3660.

To register, send a check, payable to Westland Rotary to the Rotary Golf Outing, Shunkwiler Chiropractic Health Center, 5978 N. Wayne Road, Westland, MI 48185. Proceeds will benefit the Salvation Army and Westland Rotary charities.

Appreciation lunch

Westland Shopping Center is sponsoring the Westland Chamber of Commerce's Administrative Professionals Appreciation Luncheon 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 27, at Johnny Carino's, 35613 Warren, Westland.

The cost is \$15 for employers and \$20 for administrative professionals. The cost includes lunch and dessert and a personalized appreciation gift for the administrative professional.

For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-6040.

Big band concert

The music of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller and modern jazz will be featured when the 15-piece Paul Keller Orchestra performs 7 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at O'Leary Auditorium.

Tickets are \$16 per person and the proceeds benefit community projects by Garden City Rotary and the Garden City Foundation for Educational Excellence.

Get tickets in advance at the Garden City Schools central office or from Peggy Sexton at American Speedy Printing on Ford. Tickets also will be available at the door.

Let's hear a cheer

The Westland Stars Cheer and Dance Team is offering three clinics in April in advance of tryouts slated for 6-8 p.m. Thursday, May 5.

The clinics will be 6-8:30 p.m. Thursdays, April 14, 21 and 28, in the multipurpose room of the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford, behind Westland City Hall.

Everything you need to know will be taught at the clinics. If you are interested come dressed to work out (no jeans) and bring water (no pop or food).

The coaches are Toni Lay, a Wayne-Westland school teacher with 22 years of coaching experience and former cheerleader; Keri Morten, a former high school dancer and college cheerleader, and Jillian Wehrheim, a Junior Olympic champion dancer and high school cheerleader.

The program is \$5 per class or \$25 per month. The Stars also will have a summer camp at Oakland University. All members will be invited to attend.

Poker Tournament

The Westland Jaycees is sponsoring a Texas Holdem Tournament and Vegas Night Saturday, April 16, at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford.

The tournament starts promptly at 6 p.m. and runs until 11 p.m. Pre-register by mail by April 1 for \$40. Send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to the Westland Jaycees, P.O. Box

85191, Westland, MI 48185. Register at the door for \$50, beginning at 4:30 p.m. There will be no rebuy-ins during the tournament.

The Vegas Night will open at 7 p.m. and include blackjack, Let It Ride, Holdem and seven-card poker. Food, beer and pop also will be available.

For more information, call (734) 228-0400 or by e-mail at wholdem@yahoo.com.

Vendor fair

St. Damian Church is inviting parishioners and their friends who have home-based businesses to participate in a vendor fair 1-4 p.m. Saturday, April 30, at the church on Joy Road east of Merriman.

Vendors that will have exhibits and/or products include Arbonne International, Logenberger, Princess House Crystal, DK Books, Pampered Chef and Party Light & Creative Memories.

For more information, call Ritaanne Felczak Otto at (734) 425-8970.

Parent seminar

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools' Family Resource Center in collaboration with Hegira Prevention is offering a parent seminar on Positive Discipline 5-6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 5, 12 and 19, at Vandenberg Elementary School, 32101 Stellwagen, Wayne.

The seminar will cover the difference between punishment and discipline, how parenting styles affect how children learn and more. Each participant will receive a copy of Jane Nelson's *Positive Discipline*.

Participants can attend one session or all three. For more information, call (734) 419-2709.

Off and running

North Brothers Ford and the City of Westland are sponsoring the seventh annual 5K Fun Run and Walk Saturday, May 14, for the benefit of the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Runners and walkers collect donation in advance of the race/walk which will start at 9 a.m. at the Bailey Recreation Center. Prizes and recognition will be awarded to the top three females and top three males in seven age groups - ages 1-10, 11-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 and over.

The pre-registration deadline is May 7 and T-shirts are guaranteed for all registered by that date. The registration fee is \$12 for students age 18 and under and \$15 for adults. After May 7, the fee is \$18. Registration starts at 8 a.m. on race day.

For more information, contact Erin Jackson at North Brothers Ford at (734) 524-1232. Registrations can be sent to her attention at the dealership, 33300 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185. Checks should be made payable to North Brothers Ford.

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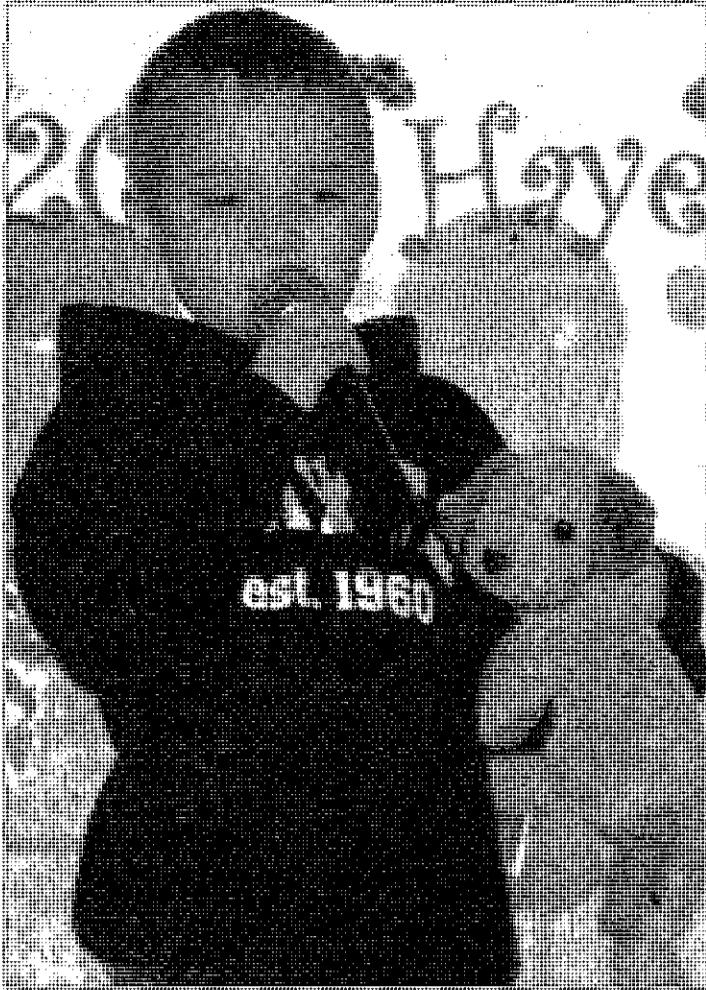
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The prop was appropriate for Liam Murphy who sang 'Snuggle Puppy' during the talent show.



PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ensemble performance

A group of Hayes Elementary students perform 'Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah' during a recent talent show at Hayes Elementary School in Westland.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

Ready for a week of fun, prizes, and celebration?

Come to the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland during National Library Week, April 10-16, and "Get into your game @ your Library."

First Inning: Teen Pizza and Movie Party - 1-4 p.m. Sunday, April 10. Sixth-12th-graders are invited to come watch *A League of Their Own* (rated PG), share pizza with friends, and possibly win some great door prizes. Register at the Reference Desk.

Second Inning: Sport and Craft Storytime - 7 p.m. Monday, April 11. This special family storytime will have a sports theme and include a fun craft.

Third Inning: Get into your game - Nutrition - 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 12. Whether for day-to-day activities or for a favorite sport, we all want to get the most out of our day.

Sherril Isaak, a dietitian and educator from St. Mary Mercy Hospital, will offer helpful suggestions to improve your diet and strengthen your performance. Register at the Reference Desk.

Fourth Inning: Experience Old-Time Baseball - 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 13. Come see baseball as it was played in the 1880s.

Jim Johnson, a member of the Greenfield Village Lah-De-Dahs, will speak on the history of the game. The presentation will include a slide show and a display of old equipment. Register at the Reference Desk.

Fifth Inning: Internet 101 - 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 14. For the very beginner. Come discover how to get started surfing the Net.

Sixth Inning: Tigers Mascot PAWS - 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16. Kids of all ages are invited to come meet PAWS, the official mascot of the Detroit Tigers. He'll act out the famous poem "Casey at the Bat" and demonstrate his fabulous cheers. Free tickets available at the Reception Desk.

Seventh Inning: Teen Art Contest.

Eighth Inning: Trivia Contest.

Ninth Inning: Kids' Tiger Raffle.

Prizes will be awarded. Pick up details at the library anytime. Contest prizes generously sponsored by The Friends of the Public Library of Westland, Dick's Sporting Goods, Famous Dave's, Fan Zone, Little Caesar's Pizza, Mancino's Pizza & Grinders, Max & Erma's, Panera Bread, Play Ball Sports, and Red Robin.

Ernie Harwell and Alan Trammell have teamed up with Michigan's public libraries this year. Half of the proceeds from sales of upper deck box tickets to the May 15 Detroit Tigers' game at Comerica Park will go to a special library fund. Support the library by cheering the Tigers on against the Anaheim Angels.

For more information on ticket sales or National Library Week activities, call the Library at (734) 326-6123. Go, Tigers!

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

Estate planning pros say Schiavo case forces people to take hard look at future

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

Though the Terri Schiavo case involves complex legal, moral and ethical issues, estate planning professionals say its lesson is clear.

"If you don't plan for your future, the government will do it for you," said Victor Potapenko, managing partner of the Southfield-based Estate Planning Institute.

Recent headlines involving the late Schiavo, a brain-damaged Florida woman at the center of a feeding tube controversy which reached the highest levels of government, speak to the need to express wishes clearly and in writing.

"It's not just about financial planning, either," said Stuart Kay, an EPI specialist in senior planning.

Despite that, an estimated 70 percent of all Americans are intestate - having neither a will nor any other documents to express their wishes, either financially or in terms of medical care.

Even though wills are the most common form of estate planning, other options also exist.

"The problem with wills is that they are public documents and subject to review in probate court," Kay said.

"Items such as a revocable living trust are much more private and, except in a few specific instances cannot be challenged. For many people they could be a better way to go."

EPI is not the only local firm providing estate planning services. Nor is any one plan right for all people.

For its part, EPI conducts a

number of one-hour seminars throughout metro Detroit.

Of the 30 or so people who typically attend each seminar, EPI staff members acknowledge only about three will eventually come in to create a plan.

"It's not something people do right away," certified senior estate planner Donna Beauregard said. "It does take a lot of thought."

But professionals agree all Michigan adults should have a plan in place.

As the Schiavo case has shown, financial planning itself might not be enough.

In medical cases, Michigan residents have the right to establish both durable power of attorney and create a living will.

designates, in advance and in writing, an individual to make medical decisions on your behalf should you become unable to make them on your own. In a living will, individuals can outline specifically and in advance their desires concerning their preferences in medical treatment.

Both documents are simple to fill out and even available online, particularly at the state bar association Web site www.michbar.org, though professionals strongly suggest individuals consult with an attorney in completing the forms.

"There are specific requirements regarding witnesses," Kay said. "Whatever you do, it's important you follow the law."

Durable power of attorney

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Students, photographer bring flashes of inspiration

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Students at Cooper and Buchanan elementary schools recently brought home disposable cameras as a homework assignment.

About 70 students from each school were chosen to participate in the Eyes of a Child photography program - a joint effort between Livonia Public Schools, Laurel Park Place, and photographer Monte Nagler. Costco donated the cameras and developing, and Ritz Camera at Laurel Park will mount the final photos for an April showing at the mall.

Nagler gave presentations on photography to each class this week, encouraging students to use their creativity behind the lens.

He discussed basic concepts like keeping the subject of the photo off-center; framing the image, using lead-in lines to

draw the eye toward the subject; and moving in close, all to improve the quality of their pictures.

"You have a lot of imagination," he told Jim Considine's class at Cooper Elementary Tuesday. Nagler handed out a camera to each student and instructed them to "take two weeks and do a little at a time, using different subjects."

Johnathan Gearin, 11, had already decided he'd like to take pictures of the woods, a dock and a river behind his house. Classmate Danielle Smith said she'll be taking her camera with her on a trip to Wisconsin.

"It's really nice to take pictures," she said. "It's nice to go to different places."

For Marissa Myrold, dogs and other animals are likely to become photography subjects. And William Emeigh said he can't wait to catch some skating wipeouts on film.

Cooper Principal Ann Kalec chose fifth

graders for the project - incorporating two larger and two smaller classes of students. Considine's class was just one of those.

"It helps with reading and visualization," he said of the photography project.

"They're very excited about it." The students will spend Spring Break with their cameras, and then return them April 4 for developing. Nagler will then choose the best photo taken by each student and he'll have about two weeks to transform each personal best shot into a professionally-mounted 8-by-10.

Beginning April 27, the students' work will go on display beside Nagler's photography in the Parisian court at Laurel Park Place.

This marks the fifth year of the program with Livonia Public Schools.

Jay Young, director of community relations, said two schools are chosen each year to participate. He said students benefit from their involvement.

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Cassis' run for governor a long shot, not hopeless

Nancy Cassis was back in her hometown in upstate New York sometime in the 1980s when she bumped into her old high school government teacher, the one who had made a big difference in her life.

Beaming, she told him that she had not only become a teacher herself, she had just been elected to the Novi City Council. Old Ed Cassidy looked at her. "So when are you going to run for governor?" he said.

The answer is now, though Cassidy, alas, didn't live to see it. Now a state senator from a fast-growing part of Oakland County, the state's most affluent area, Nancy Cassis, at 61 a staunch, if tiny, Republican with piercing blue eyes, thinks Michigan needs a woman governor. Just not the one we've got.

"Governor (Jennifer) Granholm is trying to play catchup after failing to provide leadership for her first two years in office," she said.

"The state needs a governor who will make the tough choices and who will cut spending and cut taxes so we can create new jobs. I will provide that strong leadership."

Most regard her candidacy as a long shot. Michigan Republicans, unlike Democrats, normally prefer picking candidates by quiet consensus to bruising primary struggles, and the consensus seems to be settling on Dick DeVos, heir to the Amway fortune and husband of former state party chair Betsy DeVos.

Many Republicans like DeVos in part because, as one put it succinctly, "he has more money than God," and can self-fund a campaign for governor, leaving party fund-raisers free to concentrate on raising the millions they'll need to mount a challenge to U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow.

Nancy Cunningham Cassis isn't willing to accept that. True, she isn't fabulously wealthy; she was a school psychologist before entering politics, and her second husband, Victor Cassis, is a retired restaurant owner. Together, they've raised a mere \$35,000 so far. Yet she isn't willing to accept the odds.

Her political hero, former Gov. John Engler, she notes, didn't accept them either. "He was always bold, and that's what I admired about him." Nobody gave Engler any better chance of winning the 1990 gubernatorial election than they give Cassis now. Yet he did, and she intends to.

No two people could look less alike; she is 5-foot-3 and has a merry, somewhat elfin aspect, together with an accent that, even after a quarter-century in Michigan, says New York. Engler, was, well, big and often dour.

But there are a couple of interesting things that may be going for her.

Yet politically, she says, they are twins. "Like John, I've got the legislative experience to get things done," she says. And she insists that when people figure out who she is, she will have a real shot both at the nomination, and at beating Granholm a year from this November.

That may be a long shot. But there are a couple of interesting things that may be going for her. While DeVos is unquestionably better known, his wife was a controversial state party chair who many think was eased out after the party failed to meet expectations in last November's elections.

The DeVos couple were also the main movers behind a campaign to replace public education funding with state-issued vouchers, which went down to a landslide defeat and earned DeVos the enmity of public school teachers.

There also has long been a split between west Michigan, where DeVos is from, and southeast Michigan, where more of the voters, including Cassis, live. There are also those who are a bit leery of Amway, the giant controversial retailer which is the source of the DeVos fortune.

Cassis proudly points to one poll showing that despite low name recognition, she trails the governor only 44 percent to 38 percent, while DeVos lags behind by 47 percent to 32 percent in a similar matchup.

Yet her campaign may have its own contradictions. Cassis vows to cut taxes and spending, but also says she would do more for education, two promises that don't seem to mesh. Though she is touting an "Early Learning Initiative" for kids at the earliest levels, she isn't talking much about new money.

There is general agreement that Michigan schools at all levels are facing a severe financial crisis, higher education in particular. Many, including some Republicans, fear that if this isn't addressed, the state's long-term ability to compete economically may be irreparably damaged.

The Cassis campaign has yet to address any of this, though it isn't clear that the Granholm administration has either. "We (Michigan) have to make real hard choices, and we've been avoiding them," Cassis says. You don't have to be a supporter of hers, or her ideas, to suspect that is absolutely right.

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Jack Lessenberry

It's National Library Week, time to check out a book for freedom

The theme of this year's National Library Week, April 10-16, is Something for Everyone @your Library.

When local governments begin to feel a pinch, libraries become vulnerable. But the recent trend toward independent district libraries has generally shown that when residents are asked to pony up some of their tax dollars to support the library they do.

Libraries are the communications heart of a good community.

It isn't just a collection of books. As the slogan proclaims, it is a place with something for everyone and also a place that provides something essential to a free society.

Let's start with books. We now have super-bookstores conveniently located throughout the metro area. Good places to buy a book or a CD and get a cup of primo coffee (with a cinnamon scone). I go there myself and enjoy the experience.

But no one can afford to buy every book. Without a public library, only those with means would have access to all the books they need to read. In the earliest days of the republic, it was understood that libraries and the promotion of literacy were keys to developing a working democracy.

The idea was, and is, that the more people know, the better citizens they'll be. We know that there is something for everyone @the library, but sometimes we need to remind ourselves how important it is.

Parents know what a good library means for their students who need to do a report on the ancient Mayans or Einstein's theory of relativity, which aren't in most family libraries.

But, of course, books are old school. It's a whole new communications ballgame. And guess what? The libraries were on the field before any other players.

Libraries were the first to hook up to the Internet and to feed the Internet. They are once again a source for the Internet and major advocates for the free distribution of information. Libraries are also a major training facility, dedicated to getting children, senior citizens and active adults into the online swim.

Go into any library and you'll see every seat in front of a computer filled with someone soaking up the information.

CDs, DVDs and any other new electronic means of information storage are available also at our libraries. While video stores were offering the latest releases, libraries were building collections of classic films, first on videotape and then on DVD.

Libraries also have professional librarians. I'm a bit prejudiced on this subject as my wife is a



The puppet theater in the new Redford Library. The new library is an example of how much we support our libraries and all the things they provide, for children and adults.

librarian with a fierce dedication to the concept of the library as a key ingredient to our First Amendment freedoms and the free flow of any and all ideas.

Librarians are in the vanguard on protecting First Amendment rights because they know how vital free information is. They are trained to find information, make sense of the information they find and package that information for maximum value. This is probably the one aspect of the library that doesn't get the promotion it deserves. But it is growing more and more significant for local businesses they need to understand a shrinking world economy and their place in it. Librarians have that information on their fingertips.

In Livonia, closing the library's two local branches is still on the table as a cost-saving effort. In Farmington, the library is seeking a separate millage in the face of cuts by Farmington and Farmington Hills. Other libraries are also at risk of being short-funded or closed.

But time and time again, the residents of our communities rally to support our public libraries. A new facility in Redford, a relatively new library in Westland, a recent addition to the Canton library and a relatively new Plymouth library are all strong indications that we know there is something for everyone @our libraries.

This is the week to show our support. Check it out.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the Observer Newspapers. He can be reached by e-mail at hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net, by phone at (734) 953-2149 or by fax at (734) 591-7279.



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Skill Center prepares students for life

BY RUSS HAMMOND
CORRESPONDENT

For nearly 20 years, the Western Wayne Skill Center (WWSC) in Westland has been teaching life and job skills to young adults ages 14 to 26 who are developmentally disabled. The program is funded by Wayne County through the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, with the school portion of WWSC administered by the Livonia Public Schools.

The 75 students in the program have mild cognitive impairment, which means they have a significant intellectual disability which limits their success in academic settings. WWSC doesn't focus on academics, but instead teaches skills for daily living.

"We teach our students to be good citizens and good family members," said Al DiPaolo, principal of WWSC. "We also teach employment skills."

DiPaolo, who has been principal at WWSC for five years, said that students in the program attend Churchill High School from grades nine through 12 and then attend classes at WWSC after that. They may stay at the Center until they are 26 years old.

"Most states only train their students until they are 21 years old," DiPaolo said. "In Michigan, they can stay until they are 26."

'EXCELLENT PROGRAM'

Don Nicholson's son Edward will stay at WWSC until he's 26, he'll be 22 in September.

Nicholson, of Westland, said his son is autistic and has been in the program nearly five years.



Working in the school greenhouse, Steve Psaila judges whether a plant is dry before he waters it.

"WWSC is an excellent program, my son loves it," Nicholson said. "Edward has progressed through many classes."

He added that his son has also improved his way of reacting in public.

Joe Jones, 24 of Redford, is also a student at WWSC. His mother, Betsy McRae, said that her son has been in the program for five years. Before he was at WWSC, he attended Redford Union High, but stopped attending in 12th grade.

"I'm very satisfied with the program," McRae said. "Joe loves the different classes, he gets different work experiences."

McRae said that WWSC teaches the students important skills such as how to handle themselves on the job and grooming.

"These are important issues," she said.

Joe works at a restaurant every Saturday and also works

a few days a week at the Westland Public Library.

"Right now the school has him working on his resume," McRae said. "Eventually he wants to move out and have control of his life."

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

DiPaolo and his staff teach skills through demonstrations and hands-on experiences. The Center, which is a former elementary school, is designed more like a workplace than a school.

DiPaolo said that there are several "micro-enterprises" at the Center that show students how to work at, and run, a small business.

He said that the school store is run entirely by students, but supervised by the teaching staff.

"They go to Sam's Club and buy the stock for the store and stock the shelves," DiPaolo said. "They run everything."

There is also a student-run laundry where they wash sheets, towels and quilts for a fee. Recently, the Center sent out a letter to local high school athletic departments asking if they could wash their towels.

In addition to working at the Center's small businesses, students from WWSC also have onsite classrooms at several retail locations throughout Western Wayne County.

"We have an offsite location at J.C. Penney in Westland Mall," DiPaolo said. "The students do retail assistance, such as stocking shelves and hanging and folding clothes."

DiPaolo said that WWSC recently set up an offsite classroom at the Meijer store on Middlebelt Road in Livonia. The students spend half the

day at the store bagging, dusting and stocking shelves.

"The offsite locations offer wonderful learning opportunities for the students," DiPaolo said. "The businesses have been very welcoming to us and the students."

According to DiPaolo, 12 school districts send their students to WWSC including Garden City, Wayne/Westland, South Redford and Redford Union.

At CHS, students are part of the general population.

Although they aren't in regular academic classes, they still use lockers, pass from class to class and eat in the cafeteria. They are not as segregated as many special education students have been in the past.

HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

"The main point of being at Churchill is so that the students can get the high school experience," said special education teacher, Valerie Hatcher. "The kids in the program go to assemblies, have their own lockers and go to prom."

She added that the seniors attend graduation with a cap and gown and take part in the ceremony right along with the general education students.

Hatcher said that during their freshman and sophomore years at CHS, WWSC students are enrolled in Life Role classes. The classes are broken down into four units - worker, family, recreational and community.

In the worker unit, students are taught what they need to do when they have a job. Hatcher said that the students visit various stores and businesses in the area and observe people working. During their



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Paraprofessional Kathy Ziefinski works with student John Strobl in the Skill Center's kitchen.

sophomore year, the students do custodial work at Westland Mall.

The family unit covers household chores and other jobs and responsibilities that take place in the home.

Hatcher noted that she tries to cover this just before the holiday season so that students can lend a hand around the house.

The recreational and leisure unit shows the students that there is more to do with their free time than watch television. The students put together puzzles, play board games, play miniature golf, go bowling and take trips to cider mills.

Visits to the police station, post office and library are some of the activities that take place in the community unit.

"We've also visited the fire station and learned about fire safety," Hatcher said. "We like to get the students out as much as possible."

They also participate in gym, art and music, tend to plants in a greenhouse and spend time in the computer lab. The music and art classes are at Franklin High School. Hatcher

said that the juniors go to Stevenson High School for physical education, microwave cooking and to work in the greenhouse.

"The staff and students at Stevenson have been so welcoming," Hatcher said.

According to Carolyn Bradford, program specialist and supervisor at CHS, this is the first year that other high schools have been used.

"It's a wonderful thing to expand to other high schools," Bradford said. "We've talked about it for a few years and decided to finally do it last year."

Bradford said that the expansion into the two additional high schools is part of the general scheme of things at both CHS and WWSC.

Bradford said that by attending classes at both locations, the students get the life skills they need to be successful in the job world.

"We want them to be as independent as they can be - to get a job and live on their own," she said. "We want them to enjoy life to its fullest."

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