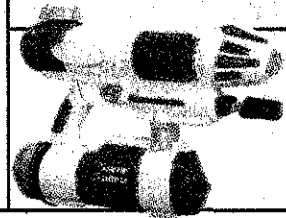


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OBSERVER LIFE, SECTION C

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Flowers, not bricks attract attention

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Wonder what those purple flowers are that are being planted in the city's streetscape area? Just ask Bruce Thompson, he knows.

The city's planning director has been peppered with phone calls about the flowers, an annual called Salvia May Night.

"I anticipated getting calls from people as they started putting in the pavers, but the most calls I've gotten are, 'What are those flowers? I want them for my garden,'" he said.

Contractors have begun installing the red brick pavers at the corners of Ford and Wayne Road and Ford and Carlson and landscapers are planting flowers as the \$2.8 million streetscape project nears completion.

"It's certainly made a big improvement," said Mayor Sandra Cicirelli. "It's made the area look much nicer."

The project has taken close to a year to complete, much of it due to the involvement of the Michigan Department of Transportation and Wayne County.

MDOT has standards that had to be followed and one of those prevented the city from having the pavers installed between Nov. 1 and May 1. As a result, the city had to install temporary sidewalks.

Thompson anticipates the work being completed by the end of this week and the final walk-through done within the month.

The project has included the installation of new streetlights, traffic light arms, new sidewalks with the paver accents at the

PLEASE SEE DDA, A5



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Going for gold

Mindy Rader encourages one of her campers to take a shot during the Wheelin Peelin' Fun Camp she recently put on at Central City Park. The afterschool camp for special needs students from John Glenn High School and the Livonia Skills Center was her Girl Scout Gold Award project. For more on the camp, see Page A3.

As planned

Officials eye mid-June start
of Cooper School demolition

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Livonia school officials will have a better idea Monday as to how much it will cost to tear down the old Cooper School on Ann Arbor Trail east of Middlebelt.

That's when bids are due related to school's demolition and removal of debris, including the contents of the multi-story building.

"I'm excited," said Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli. "Our goal is to have the work start as soon as the kids are out of school and it looks like we'll be able to do as we planned."

An estimated 12-14 bidders turned out for a walk-through of the building on May 25. A meeting was held in the parking lot to explain the particulars of the bid specifications. Because power has been shut off to the building following two fires, they were asked to bring their own flashlights.

Interested bidders had until Friday to submit questions about the project. Their bids are due Monday. How many that are submitted will be reviewed for price and the ability to handle the project, said former Livonia mayor Jack Kirksey who is working with local officials on the project.

"We've asked them to bid on the total job and to itemize how much it will cost to remove the contents," Kirksey said. "They have to see how they get the stuff out of the building and determine what type of landfill will be needed for what."

The bids will be reviewed by a school board committee before being presented to the full board, most likely at its June 13 meeting. If there is no controversy about the bid and only one company, Kirksey said it's likely the contractor will be "let in early to assess the site."

According to Kirksey, the type of landfill needed will depend on the contents. A Type 1 landfill would be needed for environmentally challenged - contaminated - items and Type 2 which is a general, all-purpose landfill. The cost will be many times greater, if the items need to go to a Type 1 landfill, he said.

"We've tried to isolate those things that are hazardous because of the two fires," said Kirksey. "We do expect the price to come about average - \$200,000-\$300,000 - for the demolition, but it will be interesting to see how much they add on to get the materials out of the building."

The demolition should start in mid-June and be done by August before students return to the school.

The old Cooper School was closed in 1991 and the land fenced off after it was determined that the site, a former dump, was contaminated. The school district has received a \$1.4 million grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the city of Westland has received a \$1 million loan that will pay for the cleanup efforts.

Both Kirksey and Cicirelli stressed that every safety precaution will be taken, "nothing will be rushed" in regard to the demolition.

PLEASE SEE COOPER, A4

Wayward car injures 2 women, damages 2 cars

Two Westland women were injured, one critically, when they were struck by a car while leaving the Meijer store at Newburgh and Warren Thursday afternoon.

The accident happened at 3:49 p.m. by the east entrance of the store. The driver, an 88-year-old Livonia man, told police he was backing out of a parking spot when he lost control of his car.

Police said the vehicle, which was in reverse, spun counterclockwise, striking an 82-year-old woman. She was transported to Garden City Hospital and then taken to the

University of Michigan Hospital where she was listed in critical condition Friday.

The car then struck a trash bin in front of the store's east entrance and hit a 49-year-old woman. She also was treated for her injuries at the hospital.

The car backed over a concrete block, holding a stop sign, and came to rest on the hood of a parked car, but not before striking another vehicle.

Police said there appeared to be no mechanical problems with the Livonia man's car. They were still talking to witnesses as of Friday.

Participants walk the walk for Relay event

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT



FILE PHOTO

Joe Lobaito and daughter Shane walked the walk around Central City Park in the 2004 Westland Relay for Life fund-raiser.

It will look more like a party than a fund-raiser when more than 400 people converge on Central City Park to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

A full entertainment roster begins at 10 a.m., Saturday, June 11, and ends at 10 a.m., Sunday, June 12, during the Westland Relay For Life program.

"Tell everyone to come out," said Lynette Hobyak, a Westland resident and a co-chair of the Westland event. "It's a lot of fun." Communities across the country will host similar fund-raisers for the ACS. Teams of between 10 and 25 volunteers sponsor money-making events and each team is asked to have at least one person walking, or carrying the baton for their team, during a 24-hour period.

In Westland volunteers will set up tents around the park as they take turns walking the nine-tenths of a mile park track.

The park will be packed with everything from a moonwalk to

PLEASE SEE RELAY, A4

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Coming Thursday in Filter

Surf's Up: The Great Lakes State is home to a growing number of water parks. Get in on the fun!



Catholic Central set to move on after 27 'temporary' years in Redford

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Nothing but the sound of silence filled the halls of Catholic Central High School Friday, the final day for students in Redford Township.

Final exams were in full swing until about 11:30 a.m. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors sat folded over their tests, two seats away from their classmates, and awaiting the bell that would signal summer vacation.

On July 18, staff will make the official move to Catholic Central's new and permanent home in Novi. Until then, boxes will be packed and summer school classes will run on schedule, according to Dan Collins, director of admissions and public relations.

For students like John Mizzi, the move is a highly anticipated one.

Soon to be a sophomore, Mizzi said he's really looking forward to attending school in a brand new building. The Plymouth resident expects he'll travel about the same distance he does now to get to school. Mizzi is anxious to see the new classrooms, gymnasium and indoor track.

"I think everyone is really looking forward to it, really anxious," he said. "CC is an awesome school. I feel privileged to be able to go here."

Livonia resident Chris Harding will be a senior at the school.

He too is anticipating his last year in the new location — one that will include a home football field and basketball court.

The Redford school, formerly Marshall Junior High, was never meant to be Catholic Central's permanent location when the lease was signed in 1978.

It was actually Catholic Central's fifth location, and the first outside of Detroit's boundaries.

The school was established by the Basilian Fathers in 1928.

FOLLOWING THE STUDENTS
Catholic Central purchased

the property it had been leasing from South Redford Schools in 1988. Still, administrators and students never felt 14200 Breakfast Drive would be their final destination.

"In every case, we've moved closer to the center of our student population," said the Rev. Richard Ranalletti, principal. Catholic Central has about 950 students enrolled currently and draws 80 percent of them from areas west of Redford, especially Plymouth, Canton, Northville and Novi.

That was one of several considerations when the decision was made to build and move, rather than renovate or expand.

Over the almost three decades spent in Redford, the facility wasn't changed much. Collins said the gym was expanded, as was the weight room. And eight portable classrooms were added in 1998. When outdated technology became an issue though, Collins said: "We knew we needed something to happen."

That's when the school's alumni stepped in, providing the needed financial support to build a new school.

As a result, Ranalletti said tuition costs will not change next year. There will be no financial impact to students.

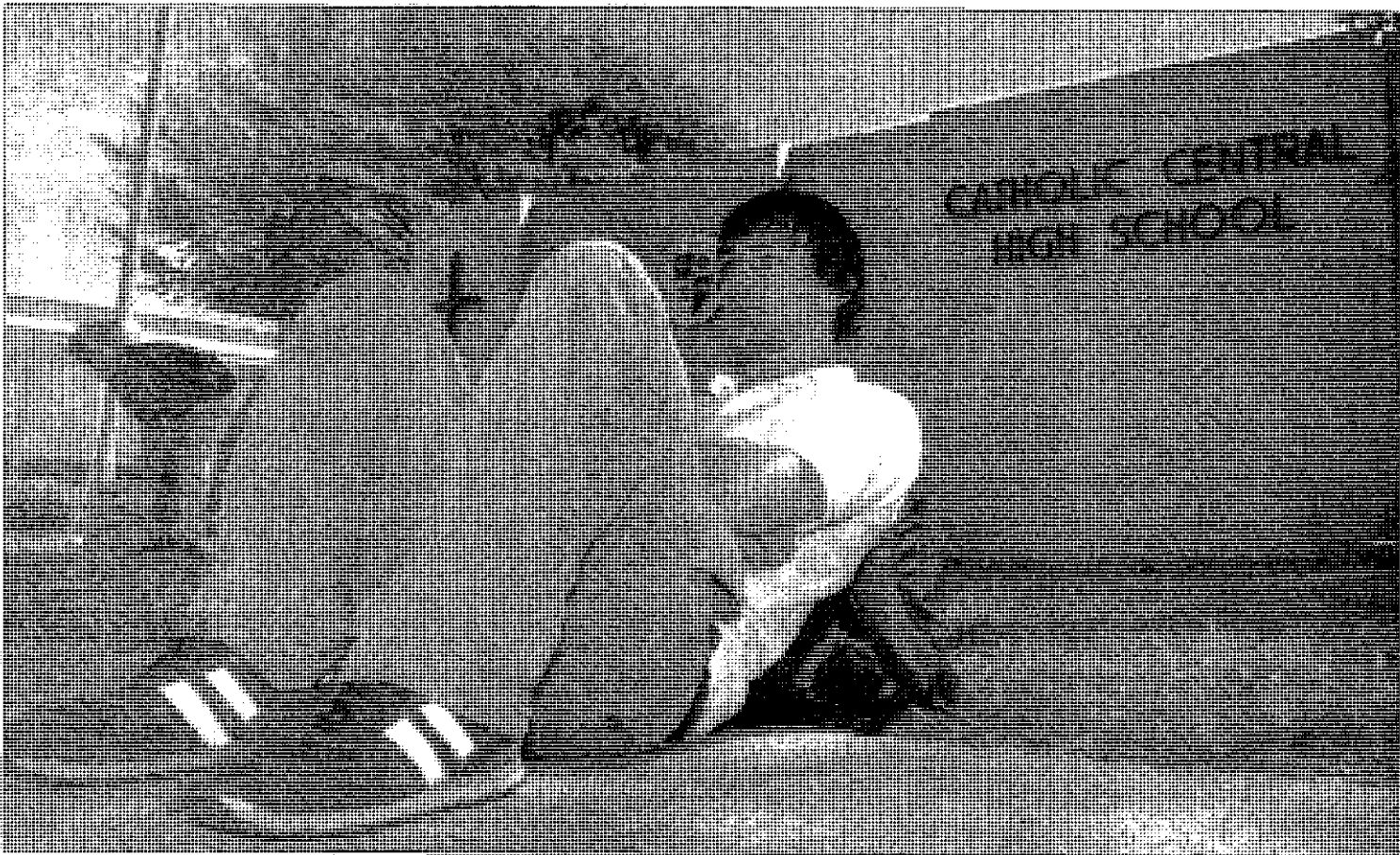
The Rev. Richard Elmer, president of the school, worked with a developer named Frank Pellerito, who agreed to donate 60 acres of land in Novi for the project. "Without his donation, this wouldn't have been possible," said Collins.

ALUMNI CONNECTION

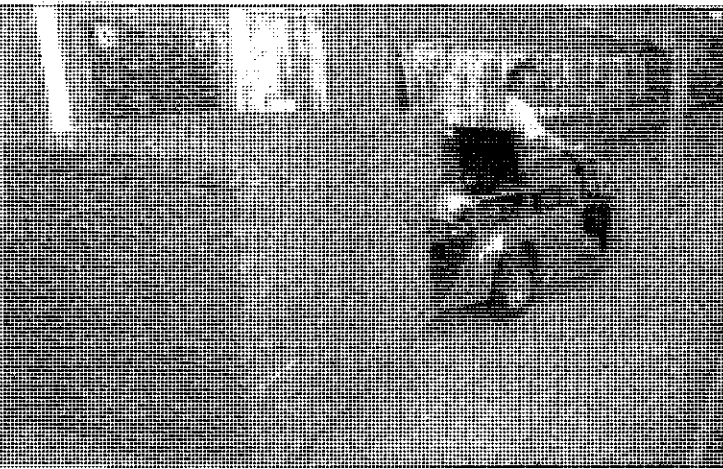
Architect John Argenta, a 1959 Catholic Central graduate, designed the new school. Doing so gave him a chance to re-envision his alma mater from the ground up.

The project broke ground on Sept. 7, 2003, and will be ready for the first day of school, Aug. 15, 2005.

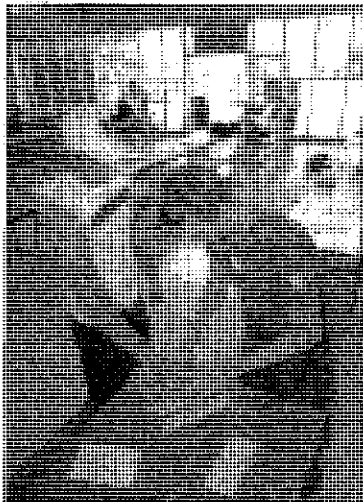
For the first time, Catholic Central will have its own football field, giving true meaning to the term "home game." The school will have its own chapel, which seats 300, rather than using a converted classroom



After the last final on the last day of school at Catholic Central freshman Mike Mamut waits for a ride home. He lives in Milford so the school's new Novi location will allow a little more time for sleep come fall semester.



Gary Zalewski pulls a big load of packing cartons ready to be filled. Packing is starting at Catholic Central High School, which will relocate from Redford to Novi by July.



Alex Campbell and Brad Nadeau prepare to turn in their textbooks on the last day of school at Catholic Central. Both Farmington Hills residents will return to the school, in its new Novi location come fall.

that fits 40. "It was exciting," said Argenta, "something that came from the heart."

Ranalletti said the graduating seniors experienced the feeling that "you can't come back home" because the build-

ing itself will be razed to make way for residential development.

"There is a real feeling of loss," Ranalletti said.

He called Redford a "great place to be," and said the township has been very supportive

it," said Collins, a 1984 graduate. "It was supposed to be a temporary stay anyway."

He compared that to the sense of ownership he already feels is connected to the new building, because it was made possible by alumni.

This will mark the second school moving day for Latin teacher Michael Rossi. He's been with Catholic Central since 1976 and said he's feeling "a little bittersweet" about the relocation. What's kept him at the school for so much of his career?

The behavior of his students, and overall atmosphere, he said.

"They are very well-disciplined boys who are equally focused on athletics and academics. The staff and students are very friendly and make it a comfortable, pleasant place to work."

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DEATHS

- B
William Barnett, 76, of Plymouth, died May 29.
- D
Lewis A. Deamer, of Westland, died May 28.
- E
Sydney England, 80, of Rochester, died May 25.
- J
Janet Heldt Jopke, 62, of Troy, died June 1.
- P
Elizabeth (Libby) Kingsbury Phillips, 88, formerly of Plymouth, died June 1.
- S
Sarah Silver, 95, died May 24.
Norbert E. Smitley, 77, died June 2.
- T
Donald A. Thomson, of Garden City, died May 30.
- W
William M. Wilson, 72, of Westland, died May 29.

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Going for the Gold

Scout's passion for kids comes through in service project

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

If you're a high school senior, the time after Easter break generally involves counting down the days to graduation.

For Mindy Rader, the countdown was a week-long after-school camp she was staging at Central City Park. Rader, who graduated Saturday from John Glenn High School, put on the camp for seven special needs students, five from John Glenn and two who attend the Skills Center in Livonia, in her quest for gold — the Girl Scouts' Gold Award.

"I went to a Gold Award ceremony and one of the Scouts said you need to do something that means something to you," Rader said. "My passion is music and kids."

The Gold Award is the highest award presented in Girl Scouting, and Rader's choice of an afterschool camp as her community service project reflects her decision to become a special education teacher.

It took her four months to organize the camp and, with the help of family, friends and the Westland Civitans, she was able to offer campers sports, arts and crafts and snacks.



John Glenn student Angel Irvin goes for the score at Wheelin' Peelin' Fun Camp.

They looked around the park's walking track for two plastic eggs, five marbles and two small army men and picked up two pieces of trash as part of a scavenger hunt, made candy necklaces and decorated cakes.

"I made 12 cakes and a dozen cupcakes," Rader said. "I work at a banquet hall and took the mixes to work and made them while on my break."

They shot hoops at the park's outdoor basketball courts, where even wheelchair-bound campers got the chance to score points shooting baskets into ground-level oversized plastic tubs.

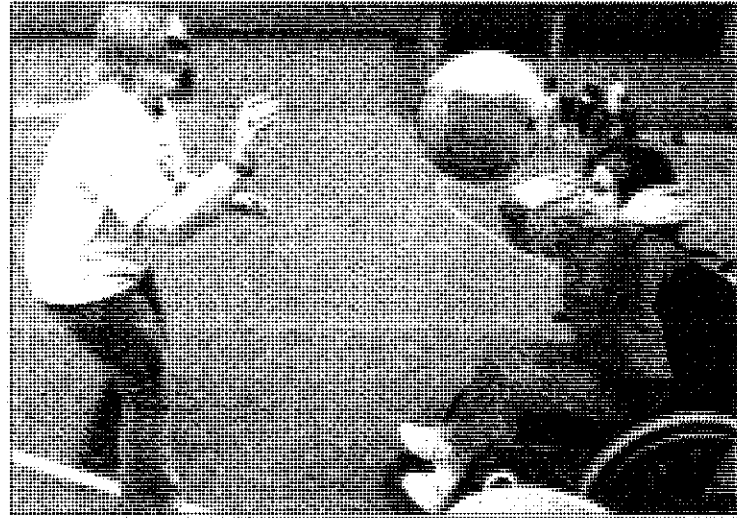
She lined up adults to serve as nurses to be at the camp each day. One of them was Cathy Bailey, a paraprofessional in the Wayne-Westland Community Schools.

"I'm here because I love the

kids," she said. "It's fun, and I don't want to miss the fun."

Rader got monetary support for the camp from Carolyn McInnis of Pilot Car Services and the Civitans, who helped pay for the T-shirts campers and staffers wore during the week. The Civitans used the money collected from candy box sales.

"It was a perfect opportunity," Civitan Marlene Dean Doran said. "We can only use



Mindy Rader (left) plays basketball with Jill Erickson during a visit to the outdoor basketball courts.

the money for projects like this."

Scouts who receive the Gold Award must earn awards in leadership, career and challenge in addition to doing a project that gets the community and her peers involved.

"She's doing a super job," said Phyllis Partain, her Gold Award adviser. "It's a huge undertaking, but she has the experience and the resources. She recruited volunteers from the (Glenn) band, National Honor Society and from the community."

Rader was attracted to Girl Scouts as a third-grader at P.D. Graham Elementary. She said she got hooked after spending the night in a mall with the Scouts.

As a ninth-grader, she traveled to England with the Huron Valley Girl Scout Council, went whitewater rafting in Pennsylvania, caving in Indiana, attended the international scout camp in Dorchester, England, and visited the East Coast three times.

A member of Girl Scout Troop 900 in Canton, Rader also has worked at a camp in Missouri in 2002 and leaves June 11 to work for two months at a camp in Maryland, where "I'll actually get paid," she said.

She credits her cousin who was born with spina bifida

with pricking her interest in special education. When she finishes her camp work, she'll return to attend Schoolcraft College full time and Madonna University part time. She already has credits from both institutions for classes she has taken while attending John Glenn High School.

Two very special people who have been behind Rader from the beginning are her parents Ray and Mary. They also lent a hand with the camp.

"I think she's done a marvelous job," Mary said. "I tell her, 'You can do it, and we're here to back you up.'"

"Whatever she wants to do, we do it," Ray added. "We've been doing that ever since I can remember ... from P.D. Graham to Stevenson and now here."

Even though Rader is completing her work on the Gold Award this year, she will have to wait until May 2006 to receive it. The Huron Valley Council holds only one Gold Award ceremony each year and that was held last month.

As for her project ... "I felt overwhelmed about it, but when I started talking about the camp, I realized I could do it," she said. "I got a majority of my skills through the Girl Scouts."

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RELAY

FROM PAGE A1

a dunk tank, a tethered hot air balloon, a kiddie train and constant musical entertainment in an effort to keep the crowds awake and enthused.

"It's sort of like a mini-carnival, and we're also fund-raising for American Cancer Society," Hobyak added.

Five bands will take turns on stage beginning with country music by The Bruce Reid Band at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, followed by alternative music by Face Hit Floor at 2:30 p.m., oldies music by Floyd Brothers at 5:30 p.m., Beatle imitators Backbeats at 7:30

p.m. and top 40 music by Crossover at 11 p.m.

Before the event, volunteers sell luminaria bags that are bought in memory of someone who has died from cancer or to honor a cancer survivor. At 10 p.m., Saturday volunteers light candles in the bags and participants will walk silently around the track lit only by the small white glow of the candles.

Last year Westland volunteers raised \$87,000 and this year ACS has set their goal at \$92,292.

Hobyak's team is sponsoring a motorcycle run that will travel, with police escorts, through Westland to South Lyon and

back to Westland on June 11. Drivers are asked to donate \$20 each and the riders are asked to pay \$10 each.

Westland Jaycees also are working on a number of activities, like tug of war and kick ball games to keep the volunteers motivated.

"In 24 hours you have a lot of people to keep active and awake," said Hobyak who has been involved with the ACS fund-raiser for nearly a decade.

Some teams are raising money before the event with various programs, like a bowling night, bake sale, Mother's Day flower sale, garage sales or allowing employees to wear

jeans to work on a Friday for a fee.

"I just got involved, because someone asked me to and I've been involved ever since," Hobyak said. "Everyone knows someone who has had cancer. It's one of those things that you do, because you want to. My mother had cancer and died from it 1 1/2 years ago."

This is the fifth year Westland has sponsored a Relay For Life event, according to Megan Holt, American Cancer Society community development director.

Relay For Life was launched in 1985 and by last year, the program had grown to 4,500

Relay For Life events across the country. Nationwide the Relay For Life raised \$305 million in 2004.

Each community may offer different activities and hold the relay on a different day, but each event lasts 24 hours. They all begin at 10 a.m. on a Saturday and end at 10 a.m. Sunday, Holt said.

The American Cancer Society is the national community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy and service.

"We spend our money on research, education, advocacy and providing services, like rides to treatments and support groups, to patients and families," Holt added.

"Westland has great community support. We definitely want to let people know that they're invited to come to Central City Park Saturday and Sunday to

support the community of Westland in their fight against cancer."

The Westland Relay Web site, www.acsevents.org/relay/mi/westland, explains that the most common question asked of ACS volunteers is, "Why do you do this?"

"How do you explain the story of the newly diagnosed cancer patient who attends a Relay and meets another cancer survivor who has faced the same disease and triumphed?" the Web site reads. "How do you explain that at Relay a caregiver can talk to the only other person who could possibly understand this journey - another caregiver? These and other people who've been touched by cancer have found at Relay what you have found - HOPE."

If you want to make an online donation to the American Cancer Society or to get involved in the Relay For Life event in Westland go to the Web site, www.acsevents.org/relay/mi/westland.



**CITY OF GARDEN CITY
ORDINANCE A 05-009
ANNUAL BUDGET ORDINANCE**

An Ordinance to provide revenue for municipal purposes for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005, by adopting a budget and appropriations. Whereas, the City Manager has submitted to the City Council a proposed budget upon which a public hearing has been held on **May 9, 2005**, as required by Article VI, Section 6.06(B) of the Charter of the City of Garden City;

Therefore, be it ordained that there is hereby appropriated for said fiscal year the amounts set forth in the following tabulations which, pursuant to the "Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act" (M.C.L.A. 141.421 et. Seq.)

Be it further ordained by the Mayor and Councilmembers of the City of Garden City that the Annual Budget of the City for the period from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, as summarized below, representing the various budgetary centers of the FY06 Annual Budget as defined by P.A. 621 of 1978, as last amended, be and the same is hereby adopted.

General Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
General Property Taxes	11,051,279.00	Mayor & Council	50,710.00
Business Licenses/Permits	25,000.00	21st District Court 729,823.00	
Non-Business Licenses/Permits	10,000.00	City Administration/Personnel	387,482.00
State Shared Revenues	4,119,226.00	Clerk Treasurer	852,492.00
Grants - Local Units	81,297.00	Non-Departmental	5,569,910.00
Charges for Services	776,995.00	Police	4,305,522.00
Fines and Forfeits	445,000.00	Fire	2,041,879.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	583,300.00	Building & Protective Inspections	
Contributions/Public Enterprises	200,000.00	Dept. of Public Services	2,146,364.00
Contributions/Other Funds	760,000.00	Parks & Recreation	737,013.00
		Boards & Commissions	78,190.00
		Debt Service	1,152,712.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 18,052,097.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 18,052,097.00

Major Street Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Gas & Weight Tax	1,222,321.00	Expenditures	3,026,380.00
Interest on Investments	30,000.00	Increase in Fund Balance	81,000.00
Decrease in Fund Balance	1,855,059.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 3,107,380.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 3,107,380.00

Local Street Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Gas & Weight Tax	516,867.00	Expenditures	792,000.00
Transfer - Major Streets	405,580.00	Debt Service	148,875.00
Interest on Investments	2,000.00		
Decrease in Fund Balance	16,428.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 940,875.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 940,875.00

911 Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Revenues	110,000.00	Expenditures	0.00
Interest	500.00	Transfer to General Fund	180,000.00
Decrease in Fund Balance	70,000.00	Increase Fund Balance	500.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 180,500.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 180,500.00

Cable Franchise FEG Fee			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Payments by Cable Companies	18,075.00	Expenditures	23,075.00
Use of Fund Balance	5,000.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 23,075.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 23,075.00

Community Development Block Grant Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
County Grant Transfer	219,000.00	Salaries	42,250.00
Rehab Funding		Housing Rehab	50,000.00
		ADA Compliance	0.00
		Administration	0.00
		Planning expenditures/facility improve	126,750.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 219,000.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 219,000.00

Rehabilitation Revolving Fund			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Repayments of Loans	30,000.00	Housing Rehabilitation	30,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 30,000.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 30,000.00

Building Department			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Transfer from Other Fund	157,421.00	Personnel	488,641.00
Permits/Inspections	421,200.00	Operating/Services	5,450.00
Planning / Zoning Fee's	11,600.00	Capital Outlay	2,000.00
Rental Inspections	15,000.00	Prof / Tech	109,130.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 605,221.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 605,221.00

Police Drug Forfeiture Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Confiscations	0.00	Expenditures	20,200.00
Use of Fund Balance	20,000.00		
Interest	200.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 20,200.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 20,200.00

Incinerator Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Property Tax Levy	497,980.00	Increase Fund Balance	149,020.00
Personal Property Tax Levy	22,407.00	Incinerator Debt Service	372,367.00
Interest on Investments	2,000.00	Tax Tribunal Refund	1,000.00
Use of Fund Balance	0.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 522,387.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 522,387.00

Capital Improvements Projects Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Use of Fund Balance	0.00	Expenditures	150,500.00
Transfer - General Fund	150,000.00		
Interest Earnings	500.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 150,500.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 150,500.00

Water & Sewer Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Water/Sewer Revenue	6,819,344.00	Expenditures	8,243,664.00
Other Revenue	634,233.00		
Decrease Retained Earnings	790,087.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 8,243,664.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 8,243,664.00

Downtown Development Authority			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Incremental Property Tax Revenue	345,000.00	Development Projects	278,002.00
Use of Fund Balance	906,868.00	Administration	881,968.00
Interest on Investments	25,000.00	Debt Service	185,898.00
Misc Revenue	69,000.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 1,345,868.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,345,868.00

Library Fund Summary			
Revenues		Expenditures	
Transfer from General Fund	200,000.00	Personnel	251,333.00
Fee's / Fines	54,789.00	Operating/Services	3,900.00
Grant's / Aid	30,000.00	Capital Outlay	19,350.00
Interest	2,000.00	Prof / Tech	41,700.00
Use of Fund Balance	29,494.00		
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 316,283.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 316,283.00

ALL FUNDS			
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 33,737,050.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 33,757,050.00

Public Hearing: May 9, 2005
Resolution #05-05-388
Adopted: May 23, 2005

Publish: June 5, 2005

JAYLEE LYNCH,
Mayor
ALLYSON M. BETTIS,
Treasurer/City Clerk

CE0839624

COOPER

FROM PAGE A1

There will be air quality monitors in and around the school site and at the new Cooper School across the street throughout the entire process to check for problems.

"If anything threatens the quality of the air, we'll halt operations," Kirksey said.

And while the demolition is taking place, planning will continue on Phase II, the rehabilitation of the site. The plan will need to be approved by the MDEQ.

"Phase I is only the demolition of the school and the removal of the debris," said Cicirelli. "We have to test the soil beneath the school in order to draft Phase II."

Cicirelli is pleased Phase I received such quick approval from the MDEQ and expects it to be the same for Phase II. The reason, she said, is the

close working relationship with the agency.

"We hold meetings every month for all the players including the DEQ, it's been involved in the process all along," she added.

As part of preparations for the Phase II, soil borings will be done, including where the new buildings will be located on the property. Southfield-based Jonna Companies has proposed building a senior apartment complex, a medical building, outpatient surgical center and golf driving range on the 37-acre site.

Cicirelli is hopeful construction can begin on the site "sometime next year."

"Even though it's vacant, once the debris is gone, it will look nice," she added. "That's going to improve the overall aesthetics of the area. Certainly, it's long overdue."

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



**CITY OF GARDEN CITY
Notice of Filing Deadline**

To all potential candidates for Mayor and City Council, who seek office with the City of Garden City at the November 8th, 2005 Election, the filing deadline for nominating petitions is:

**Tuesday, June 14, 2005
before 4:00 p.m.**

Allyson M. Bettis
City Clerk
City of Garden City, Michigan

Publish: June 2 & 5, 2005

CE0839687

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE
CITY OF GARDEN CITY
COUNTY OF WAYNE, MICHIGAN
ON ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET FOR
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006**

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS IN THE CITY OF GARDEN CITY:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Education of the School District of the City of Garden City, County of Wayne, Michigan, will hold a public hearing on Monday, the 13th day of June, 2005, at 6:30 p.m., at the Garden City Middle School Media Center, 1851 Radcliff, Garden City, Michigan, to consider the approval and adoption of the operating budget of the School District of the City of Garden City for the fiscal year of 2005-2006.

Copies of the proposed budget are on file with the Business Office at the Garden City Public Schools' Administrative Service Center, 1851 Radcliff, Garden City, Michigan, for inspection during regular business hours. At the public hearing, all citizens, taxpayers, and property owners of the City of Garden City, shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard in regard to the approval of the proposed budget. **The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed budget will be a subject of this hearing.**

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education of the School District of the City of Garden City, County of Wayne, Michigan.

ROY WATTS, Secretary
GARDEN CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Publish: June 5, 2005

CE0932709

Police investigate train-truck collision

Police are investigating an early evening accident involving a train and Ford Ranger pickup truck Tuesday at the railroad crossing on Hix between Florence and Ford.

A 20-year-old Westland man, a passenger in the truck, was injured when he was ejected from the vehicle after it was struck by the westbound train at about 8 p.m.

According to Westland Police Officer Patrick Corby, the truck, driven by a 20-year-old Garden City man, was attempting to cross the railroad grade when the truck was struck by the train on the passenger side.

The collision spun the truck around and pushed the vehicle off the road about 30 feet from the crossing.

The train, which was traveling at slow rate of speed, was able to stop within 700 feet of the accident, Corby said.

The railroad crossing doesn't have guard rails, but does have flashing red lights.

Witnesses told police the lights were working at the time of the accident.

Drive-thru holdup

Police are investigating a statement of an employee of

CRIME WATCH

the McDonald's who claimed he was robbed at gunpoint while working the drive-thru window at restaurant at 31355 Joy Tuesday afternoon.

The employee told police that a white male in 20s pulled up to the window and demanded money. The teen said he lifted the tray in the cash register and removed an unknown amount of \$20 bills that he handed out the window to the suspect.

The youth, who described the man as wearing a blue baseball cap and white T-shirt and as having his nose pierced between his eyes, said the driver fled the restaurant in a black four-door vehicle with a white license, possibly Canadian.

McDonald's officials also were reviewing a surveillance tape of the drive-thru area.

Larceny from vehicle

A 20-year-old Westland man has been charged with aggravated assault and larceny from a vehicle, stemming from an altercation behind the Game Stop, 7044 N. Wayne Road, Tuesday.

According to police, the suspect hit a 23-year-old Livonia

The collision spun the truck around and pushed the vehicle off the road about 30 feet from the crossing.

man in the head with a tire iron and removed \$20 from his car after the victim refused to take him to a home in Detroit.

He is being held en lieu of a \$50,000/10 percent bond and faces a June 9 preliminary hearing on the charges, both misdemeanors.

Boat set on fire

A resident of the 1400 block of Venoy was awakened early Thursday morning by a woman who knocked on his door and told him his 19-foot boat was on fire.

The incident happened around 3 a.m.

The man said he had heard nothing and knew of no reason why someone would want to damage the boat, a 1983 Rinker. The loss is estimated at \$3,500.

Assault with a gun

A disgruntled party goer is being blamed for shooting up a car and home on the 28000 block of McDonald early Monday morning.

A woman living at the home told police that there had been a party at the house and that the suspect, a 30-year-old black male, had left, but returned around 1 a.m. after it had broken up.

She said he asked to come back into the house, but she told him to go home and closed the door.

She said she believed the suspect may have gone to his car, got a gun and shot it into the air, until she heard from her boyfriend called from work to have her check the home after discovering his car had been hit by gun shots.

The woman did and found a bullet hole on the east side of the house. According to police, the bullet, which penetrate the wall but broke up, was where the damaged vehicle had been parked.

Top seniors receive Rotary scholarships

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

With college tuition climbing, support such as Westland Rotary scholarships becomes more important than ever.

Rotary has given scholarships again this year to several deserving Wayne-Westland students.

"It is very difficult to pick winners," said club President Margaret Harlow, noting the accomplishments of the candidates. "We're glad to be able to pick these young people."

Each student received \$1,500, said Don Douglass, scholarship chairman. Wayne Memorial High graduating senior Amanda Dye, daughter of William and Pamela Dye, will study biomedical engineering at the University of Michigan.

Honoree Christopher Chatterton of the William D. Ford Career Technical Center is a student at Wayne Memorial and son of Michael and Susan Chatterton. The graduating senior's plans are to attend Schoolcraft College and then Ferris State University to study automation/welding and fabri-

cation/robotics. John Glenn High graduating senior Sachiben A. Patel, daughter of Ashok and Pina Patel, will study pre-medicine at the University of Michigan. All three of those students are Westland residents.

Angela Susan Hastings of Canton, a John Glenn graduating senior and daughter of Michael and Freda Hastings, received a scholarship as well.

Douglass, a retired John Glenn administrator, gives a scholarship each year to a student going into elementary education to honor his late wife, Arlene, who taught in Wayne-Westland. Hastings will study education at Grand Valley State University.

"Rotary supports education for the young people of the community," Douglass said of the club scholarships, which have been given for a number of years. The students and their families attended a Thursday, June 2, luncheon at Joy Manor in Westland at which they were honored. Harlow thanked community members who support club fund-raisers, making the scholarships and other projects a reality.

DDA

FROM PAGE A1

intersections, decorative walls and landscaping.

"I anticipate the project will come in under budget, but we won't know until we do the walk-through," Thompson said. "Bids for the arms came in under budget, but because we couldn't get the pavers in before winter, we had to put in the temporary sidewalks."

The project is finishing up in the nick of time. The Downtown Development Authority which provided \$2.4 million of the money needed for the project approved its budget for 2005. The remaining

\$400,000 came from a grant. "The next meeting the DDA and the mayor will focus on the next project," Thompson said. "They have minimum of \$800,000, but if the streetscape comes in below budget, they could have more to spend. They could decide to continue the streetscape or some other project."

And it appears the streetscape work may be spurring other businesses to spruce up their areas. One spot is the southwest corner of the Ford-Wayne Road intersection. Owners of the strip mall have pulled a demolition permit to tear down all but the portion of building occupied by Big Lots. What they plan to do after that,

Thompson isn't sure of at this time. He's waiting to get a site plan.

"I think it's directly related to the streetscape," he said. "A streetscape makes the community look good and makes businesses want to come to the community. It's doing exactly that."

"It's really good news," added Ciorelli. "And if you go down Wayne Road, other businesses are getting involved, like the Mobil station (at Wayne Road and Palmer). The streetscape has made a big difference."

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MISS DIG helps prevent gas line mishaps

The early summer months in Michigan are always a welcome relief after a harsh winter. The nights are pleasantly cool, the days are bright and warm, and the landscape everywhere blooms with little colored flags? From a distance, those dots of color gently swaying in the breeze could be mistaken for tulips, but they serve a much more serious and important purpose.

They are staking flags placed there by utility companies to mark the location of underground utility lines. Every hour, someone in Michigan damages a buried utility line through careless digging, causing service interruptions and sometimes even injury or death. Those markers are there

DIG SAFELY GUIDELINES:

1. Contact MISS DIG by phone at (800) 482-7171 or online at www.missdig.org. It's fast. It's totally free. And it's the law.
2. Wait until the flags are raised. You must wait at least three business days to give local utilities time to do their work.
3. Expose utility lines by hand digging. Dig by hand to expose underground utility lines before using power equipment.
4. Respect the flags. Be aware of underground facilities, even if you're not working near them.

to keep that from happening and should never be tampered with or moved.

Costly and potentially dangerous incidents can be avoided with a simple phone call to the MISS DIG System, a free service that coordinates with Michigan utilities to mark the approximate locations of underground lines and pipes. Unfortunately, this news still has not reached many home gardening and landscaping enthusiasts.

According to industry sources, an increasing percentage of dig-in damages come from landscaping projects. Most damage prevention experts agree that part of the problem is the mistaken assumption by many homeowners that utility lines are buried far below the surface.

"We are noticing a rise in the number of damages due to landscaping projects," said Darryl Ellington, damage prevention process manager for DTE Energy. "Many people might think I'm not going that deep, but they can misjudge very easily."

Michigan law requires that an area be staked and lines exposed by hand before any digging with power equipment occurs. The law applies to everyone, from large construction companies putting up high rises to homeowners involved in do-it-yourself projects.

Cutting through service lines can be dangerous. "It's not very hard to ignite that gas - a metal shovel head hitting a rock can spark," explained John Roberts, a damage prevention leader for Consumers Energy. "All new residential services now have plastic lines," he added. "If cut by accident,



Professional landscaper Cliff Both, owner of Authentic Lawn & Tree in Cedar, Michigan, had a close encounter with a buried gas line early in his career that convinced him of the dangers of unsafe digging. He now calls MISS DIG to request staking before starting any job.

the static electricity in the plastic can also ignite the gas."

Captain Doug Van Wormer of the Bridgeport Township Fire Department in Saginaw County is familiar with broken gas lines. The most recent incident took place last summer when a homeowner attempted to remove a tree stump from his property by pulling it out with a chain attached to his pick-up truck. The homeowner severed an inch-wide natural gas line as he dislodged the

stump because the roots of the tree had become entangled with the pipe.

According to Van Wormer, Bridgeport Township firefighters had to evacuate nearby homes and close off an adjacent road for 90 minutes until Consumers Energy workers were able to fix the leak. The homeowner had not called MISS DIG to have his lines located before starting the project.

Cutting through service lines

can damage your wallet as well. According to Dave Savoy, a Consumers Energy claims manager, dig-in incidents involving their utility lines cause about \$750,000 of damage every year. Mishaps have been caused by everything from using power augers to installing sprinkler systems.

"A claim can run a couple thousand dollars per incident," he said. "If you're digging without first staking and hand-exposing, you can be responsible for the cost of repairs."

The costs for damaging an underground line can be more than monetary. When emergency response teams are occupied with avoidable incidents like broken utility lines, it can hamper their ability to respond to other calls. "A lot of fire departments rely on part-time personnel because of budget constraints," Van Wormer explained. "When we're tied up on a utility call, it puts people at risk if there is another emergency."

Van Wormer's advice to homeowners with landscape projects? "It's always better to be safe. Make the call to MISS DIG - it's free and it protects you and others."

As part of their efforts to spread the word about safe digging, a coalition of Michigan utilities and MISS DIG sponsor Raise The Flags, a public education campaign that has significantly reduce overall damages to underground utilities in the state since its introduction five years ago. (40 percent for the gas division of Consumers Energy; 26 percent and 19 percent respectively for the electric and gas divisions of DTE.)

The program is supported by

WHAT FLAG COLORS MEAN

- Red - Electric
- Orange - Telephone; Cable TV
- Yellow - Gas and Oil
- Green - Storm Drains
- Blue - Water Systems
- Brown - Sewer Systems
- Pink - Surveying

an annual communications campaign that has included billboard advertising along major highways, newspaper and magazine articles, print advertising in trade publications, and public service announcements on television and radio stations throughout the state.

From utility providers to emergency response teams to professional landscapers, the message is the same: Better safe than sorry. Call MISS DIG before you dig. "Our goal is to work with the public and educate them on what they need to do for their own safety and the safety of others," explained Kathleen Fournier, CEO and executive director of MISS DIG. "The call is free, the service is free and, in the end, it will save you time, money and maybe even your life."

Homeowners can request free staking through MISS DIG by phoning 1 (800) 482-7171 or online at www.missdig.org. You must allow three business days for staking to be completed. The MISS DIG System is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for emergency and non-emergency requests.

Arthritis Today

JOSEPH J. WEISS, M.D. RHEUMATOLOGY
18829 Farmington Road
Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone: (248) 478-7860



UPDATE ON FIBROMYALGIA

Many physicians feel that fibromyalgia has several components. One aspect of the condition is muscle pain, another is depression. Recent research in fibromyalgia indicates that physicians must continue to focus on the muscle and tendon aspects of the disease.

The study found that the presence of depression had little effect on the pain associated with fibromyalgia. The corollary was that treating depression did little to decrease the muscle and tendon discomfort associated with fibromyalgia.

This finding is a two edged sword for physicians. On the one hand, treatment - using antidepressants - is not likely to help so physicians have lost a possible therapy. On the other hand a doctor will not need to undertake the careful titration of dosage needed when treating someone with fibromyalgia. It is well known that the sensitivity to stimuli in fibromyalgia goes beyond heat, cold, air conditioning etc. and extends to medication. For that reason, doctors need to use small amounts of medications such as Elavil and Flexeril, that otherwise seem inadequate when compared with recommendations in therapy manuals.

Where this recent research leaves physicians is that we must depend on what we used in the past to treat fibromyalgia: activity and rest. Early morning exercise sufficient to bring up a sweat combined with short periods of rest, not more than 20 minutes, during the day remains the treatment of choice for fibromyalgia. Given findings of side effects on familiar medications, this therapy may be a model for the future, not a residual from the old days.

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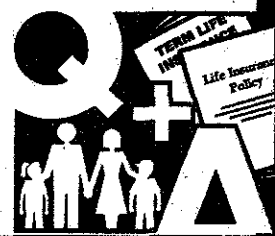
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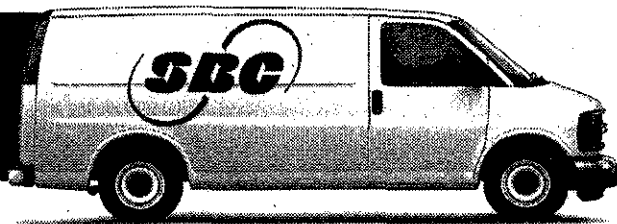
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PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Show time

Tara Carlin adjusts Shelby Fitzgerald's hat as they and the rest of their group get ready to perform YMCA for P.D. Graham Elementary's recent Talent Show. The school gymnasium doubled as the stage and it was standing room only for the one-night performance.



It was a full gymnasium as P.D. Graham Elementary School families and friends gather to watch the 2005 Talent Show Monday night.



Kaylee Taucher gives the audience a quick look as she performs her dance routine to 'Gorgeous.' Some 200 students participated in the recent talent show.

PLACES AND FACES

Rummage sale

The Village of Westland will have its annual rummage sale 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday, June 10, at the village on Cherry Hill just west of Merriman. Furniture, pottery, pictures and clothes will be sold during the fund-raising event.

Camping guides

Westland residents who are considering spending some of their summer vacation camping may want to consider contacting State Rep. Glenn S. Anderson's office for a free copy of the 2005 Michigan Campground Directory.

The directory, published annually by the Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds, includes a wealth of information on camping facilities across the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of the Great Lakes State.

These publications will be available at the Westland Public Library, the Westland City Hall, Westland Camping Center at 1475 S. Newburgh and Feister RV Center, 37401 Ford.

Constituents also can have a copy sent to their home, if they call Anderson's legislative office toll-free at (888) 833-8494.

Blood drive

The Bova VFW Post 9885 will hold an American Red Cross blood drive 2-8 p.m. Monday, June 27, at the post hall, 6440 N. Hix, Westland. To make a blood donation appointment, call the post at (734) 728-3231, the post surgeon Terry Dana at (517) 521-5646 or blood drive chairman Larry Tebor at (734) 377-8329, or (734) 261-2807 and leave your name, telephone number and desired time of appointment. Walk-ins are welcome.

All donors will be entered in a drawing for three free games of bowling at Vision Lanes in Westland.

Outdoor concert

The annual Emerson Middle School outdoor band concert will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 7, at the Wilson Barn at the corner of West Chicago and Middlebelt.

The concert is free of charge and will be held at the school in case of inclement weather. The school is at 29100 W. Chicago.

School openings

St. Damian Preschool still has openings available for 4-year-olds in the afternoon session (noon - 3 p.m.) and for 3-

year-olds in the morning session (9-11 a.m.). Summer hours are from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday through Thursday.

St. Damian is at 29891 Joy, Westland. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

Skating party

Walking with Faith Inc., a team of more than 100 walkers and volunteers who walk in the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walks, will hold a "Kids FUN - RAISE for Multiple Sclerosis" skating party 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 16, at Skate Land West, 37550 Cherry Hill, Westland.

The cost will be \$10 per person with rentals of \$1.50 for roller skates and \$5 for inline skates. There will be 50/50 raffles, and a PSP raffle. Tickets cost \$1 each or 3 for \$5.

For more information, call Alecia Harris at (313) 999-5259.

Summer program

Westland Bowl in association with the Westland Parks and Recreation Department will offer free bowling for kids now through Aug. 20.

Kids up to 18 years of age will be able to bowl one free game per day during summer hours with a participation card, available at the bowling center, 5940 N. Wayne Road.

The centers also is offering a free family bonus package on Saturdays.

For more information, call Westland Bowl at (734) 722-7570.

Buffet and comedy

Royal Oak Township native, Crystal Parker will perform her feisty stand-up comedy act at Marvaso's Italian Grille in Westland, Michigan on Saturday, June 18.

Parker, known on the comedy circuit as Crystal P., has been doing stand-up comedy, "sass with class," providing laughter without all of the profanity. Her goal is to get her audience to really think about current events or just everyday living.

Subject matter ranges from relationships, sports, modeling, and pets to a night at the club. Crystal P. said her motto is, "I want to bring love 'n laughter into your life!"

Showtime is 9:30 p.m. Also appearing with Crystal P. will be Cool Aide of Detroit. Crystal P.

Marvaso's Italian Grille is at 6569 N. Wayne Road, Westland. Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling (734) 405-5222 for more information.

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Basketball Camps
Livonia Public Schools Community Ed
Holmes Middle School (9:00 to 3:00)
Session #1: Monday, June 27th to Thursday, June 30th. Course #7854
Session #2: Tuesday, July 5th to Friday, July 8th. Course #7856
To Register Call (734) 744-2602. (Deadline June 10th)

Livonia Recreation Center (15100 Hubbard)
Monday, July 11th to Friday, July 15th (9:00 to 2:00)
To Register Call (734) 466-2900. Activity #4541.463 (Deadline July 8th)

Bailey Recreation Center (Westland, Ford Road)
Session #1: Monday, July 18th to Friday, July 22nd
Session #2: Monday, Aug 1st to Friday, Aug 5th (9:00 to 3:00)
To Register Call (734) 722-7620. (Deadline July 15th)

Cheerleading Camp
Holmes Middle School (12:00 to 3:00)
Session #1: June 27th to June 30th
Session #2: July 5th to July 8th
To Register Call Livonia Public School Community Ed at (734) 744-2602. (Deadline June 10th)

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
Livonia Recreation Center
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Mass transit in the suburbs might seem like an oxymoron

Empty buses. Nothing clogs the arteries of suburban taxpayers like the sight of empty buses — gas-guzzling empty buses, buses going back and forth to places nobody wants to go with nobody on them.

So is it any wonder that Livonia officials are contemplating a ballot proposal that would lead to ending the city's participation in the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation — SMART. To many of the city's political leaders and many residents, participation in the system is anything but smart. They argue, and SMART figures confirm, that less than 1 percent of Livonia's residents even use the buses.



Hugh Gallagher

The proposal would substitute some of the money that now goes to SMART for a local transportation program for the elderly and disabled and still leave money for city programs and a tiny tax break. This would probably be, in lieu of a Headlee Amendment override, a — gasp! — tax increase.

In a cliché of the moment, the issue seems like a no-brainer. Ditch it, tell SMART to take a hike, Livonia doesn't need your stinkin' buses.

But, of course, these things are never simple. In a time when local governments are stressed to the limit and revenues are hard to come by, this proposal seems attractive.

Taxpayers are right to be suspicious of paying for a service that few people in the community use, especially when those few local residents can be served by a cheaper, local system.

Mass transit is always a contentious issue in the greater Detroit area. The Motor City had every reason to promote road building and the use of the private automobile over bus, streetcar and train systems. At one time a vigorous interurban system linked towns as far west as Ann Arbor and as far north as Flint to the city. Streetcars served the near suburbs and the city until the last cars ground to a halt in Highland Park in the late 1950s. Detroit never developed the elevated train systems and subways of New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago and Toronto.

As the city of Detroit became less and less a focal point for the region and activity spread in many directions, it became harder and harder to design a bus system that served a coherent pattern. Two separate bus services developed, one to serve the city, the other to serve the suburbs. When Michael Duggan was placed in charge of SMART, he empha-

sized its role in taking city workers to their jobs in the suburbs and that is still seen as SMART's primary function. It also takes city residents to the kind of shopping that isn't available to them in the city.

Many proponents of the plan to end Livonia's participation in SMART point to the demise of Wonderland as another reason why SMART doesn't serve enough people to be worthwhile.

As in almost all discussions of Detroit issues, some people see a racial component to all of this. The buses bring black residents of the city to the predominantly white suburbs and that, some say, is what's really behind the proposal. That conveniently dismisses all the logical, non-racial arguments that have been put forward without answering them.

But those kind of racial tensions still fester. Adolf Mongo, a consultant to the beleaguered Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, made some disparaging remarks about Livonia on Frank Beckman's WJR radio show. He said Livonia police officers shoot at African-Americans and that's why they don't feel safe in the suburbs. Livonia Mayor Jack Engebretson leaped to his city's defense, saying officers had fired their weapons only twice in 20 years, only once involving an African-American.

Mongo's comments were misplaced, politically motivated and in Beckman's words "way over the top." But they show how race can be used and abused to cloud every issue.

A better argument for mass transit is that we all need to look to the future. We need to decide now what kind of urban area we want. Do we want cleaner air, do we want lively urban centers, do we want a master plan that makes sense? Other major cities, cities that still have lively downtowns and interesting and vital neighborhoods, also have intelligent mass transit systems.

Detroit mayoral candidate Freman Hendrix has been touting a light rail system for Woodward and others have suggested a light rail link from downtown to the airport. Other plans have called for articulated buses with express lanes and improved train service linking Ann Arbor, Lansing, Flint, Grand Rapids and Detroit.

It's not just transportation, it's transportation in the overall planning for our future as an urban center.

As one of the largest suburbs with vital, intelligent, active residents, Livonia shouldn't be backing out, it should be taking a leadership role toward that better future for all of us.

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

I'm positive that cynicism can be overcome with time

Hello, everybody. My name is Bill.

And — I'm a ... cynic. There. I've admitted it. In public. That's always the first step in trying to overcome these types of obsessions, right?

I haven't always been cynical. I didn't wake up one morning with a scowl on my face and an attitude. Like most any kind of personality trait, it developed over time, slowly through the years, until all the evidence pointed to one inescapable fact: I sound just like my father.

There's an old saying that a pessimist sees the glass as half-empty, while an optimist sees the same glass as half-full.

A cynic will point out that the water is lukewarm.

Look at it another way. A pessimist sees things and asks, "Why?" An optimist sees things and asks, "Why not?"

A cynic sees things and blurts out, "What the —?!"

Now don't get me wrong. I still like to think of myself as a

fun-loving guy. My wife and kids love me (I hope), my friends enjoy my company (I think) and my co-workers couldn't imagine life without me (I wish). I still greet each sunrise with the thought that, no matter how bad the day might turn out, it beats the alternative.

But it seems I've reached a point in life where virtually any situation or circumstance can elicit nothing but cynicism from me in response. As the Four Tops once famously put it: "I can't help myself."

Of course, nothing in this world happens in a vacuum. If my persona has reached the tipping point in relation to cynicism, it hasn't been without good reason. For example:

It's easy to be cynical when, despite the fact every auto insurance policy written in the state carries a surcharge from the Michigan Catastrophic Claims Association to cover under- and uninsured motorists (scheduled to be \$141.70 for fiscal year 2005-06), I was never asked for my proof of insurance when renewing my license tabs earlier this month.

It's not too hard to be cynical when you discover that the idiot charged in the May 2 traffic accident in Farmington Hills that left a mother and her two sons dead is getting credit for jail time served while he's recovering from his injuries in Beaumont Hospital — simply because he's under round-the-clock guard by Oakland County Sheriff's deputies (at taxpayer expense, of course).

And it's difficult not to be cynical while reading every day of the carnage in Iraq, the budget morass in Lansing and the impending school system collapse in Detroit and realize that still barely half the people in this country care enough to vote in any given election.

Being an admitted cynic does have its advan-

However, today is a new day. I've taken the first step in beating my problem by admitting I have one. From here on out, I will try to look at the world in a more positive light and not simply see the worst that human nature has to offer.

tags. For instance, I never allow myself to get sucked into the fervor surrounding the Detroit Lions at the beginning of every new season. Nope, I say to myself. Don't buy the hype. They haven't disappointed me yet.

Likewise, it didn't take an "investigative report" for me to believe that — gasp! — the voting on *American Idol* might not be on the up and up. A hardened cynic like me saw that one from the start.

However, today is a new day. I've taken the first step in beating my problem by admitting I have one. From here on out, I will try to look at the world in a more positive light and not simply see the worst that human nature has to offer.

With that in mind, I'm hoping in the coming weeks and months to use this space to examine the issues that matter to readers like you. Because, despite my battle with cynicism, I suspect we share more in common than we have differences.

I'm a lifelong metro Detroiter, actually born in the city. As I mentioned, I have a wife and two children, attend church on (most) Sundays and have refinanced three times in the last five years to try to take advantage of whatever meager savings I can.

We go out to eat far too often, spend most of our weekends in fall and spring at various soccer fields and can't quite figure out just where in the hell those ants are getting in the house.

I can name the presidents in order, can fit all my tools in one (small) toolbox and think Guinness should be part of the food pyramid.

See what I mean?

So if you'll bear with me, I'm going to take this new outlook on life one day at a time. I can't promise it'll be a smooth journey — certain things just leave me shaking my head (cell phones in cars, *Star Wars*, NHL owners and players). All I can do is my best ... and hope that it's enough for all you cynics out there.

Bill Emerick is a copy editor for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. He'll gladly accept positive feedback at bill@oe.homecomm.net.

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