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Check your oil - TASTE, PAGE B7

THURSDAY
August 11, 2005

WESTLAND Observer

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What happened?



The fire at the EQ Resource Recovery plant in Romulus sent bolts of fire and smoke hundreds of feet into the air Tuesday night.

Company searches for answers to devastating fire

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

For more stories and photos, please see
Pages A3 and C6.

The full story of Tuesday night's explosion and the future of EQ Resource Recovery won't be known until national and state officials and managers figure out why it happened.

The goal, according to Dan Gilbert, EQ's director of communications, is to get the business "back up to where it was."

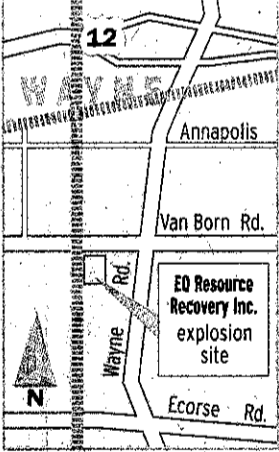
"It will take a significant amount of time and a significant amount of money to pick everything up and get it back together," said Gilbert. "Obviously, this is not something we like to see happen. We take safety seriously."

EQ officials are at a loss to explain

what happened. Once the Romulus Fire Department says it is safe to enter the complex on Van Born west of Wayne Road, they will begin the task of piecing it together.

"The eight people (employees on site at the time) said they heard sounds, smelled smells and then an alarm went off," Gilbert said. "We'll take what they said and our ability to get on site and develop clues."

PLEASE SEE EXPLOSION, A3



County's senior loan closet offers temporary aids

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Wayne County senior citizens who need temporary medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, canes and blood-pressure monitors, can now borrow supplies through a Westland-based program.

The Wayne County Loan Closet has opened inside a building on the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Merriman Road that's named after longtime county Commissioner Kay Beard, D-Westland.

"I'm really pleased that this has been started," Beard said Monday. "This is another wonderful add-on to the good programs that are already there."

The loan closet will complement other services, such as a senior day care program that helps family members who need to handle business or run errands.

"Caretakers are able to get things done and know that their loved ones are in good hands," Beard said.

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano announced the loan closet program that stocks an array of donated items, including walkers, canes, scooters, wheelchairs, crutches, leg lifts, bath chairs and rails, adult toilet seats, blood-pressure and blood-sugar monitors, and other equipment and supplies.

"The loan closet is designed to be a convenience for our residents," Ficano said, in a prepared statement. "Wayne County has a growing senior population, and many live on a fixed income that might make it difficult to purchase or rent the items they need for daily living."

Although other organizations may offer similar services, Beard said the loan closet is much closer to home for area seniors.

And, it's free. "That's the best part, because sometimes that equipment is very expensive," she said.

The loan closet is open weekdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Kay Beard Building, 30712 Michigan Ave.

Items will be loaned on a first-come, first-serve basis. The loan closet also will accept donations of medical equipment. For more information, call (734) 727-7373.

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

The loan closet is open weekdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Kay Beard Building, 30712 Michigan Ave.

Retired general warns of terrorist scenario

BY DOUG JOHNSON
CORRESPONDENT

A nuclear attack by terrorists in the United States is "unthinkable but not unlikely," according to a retired Army general who spoke to about 200 peace activists and interested citizens Tuesday night at a Livonia church.

Three peace activist groups sponsored the special talk concerning nuclear non-proliferation Tuesday evening at Unity Church of Livonia. The talk also marked the 60th anniversary of the atomic bomb being dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

For audience member Clara Lawrence of Redford the event was very informative. "This is something the public must be aware of... the issue has been hidden because of the war. It is a crucial issue that has gotten

buried," she said.

Linda Lieder, secretary of Citizens for Peace, and a Westland resident, agreed.

"What strikes me the most is the proliferation of nuclear weapons that are uncontained. That is scary in the time of terrorism."

The speaker at the event was retired Lt. Gen. Robert Gard, a West Point grad who has served in Germany, Vietnam, Korea and with the Department of Defense.

"Is this scenario (nuclear attacks) far-fetched? Al-Qaida has said it is their duty to obtain nuclear weapons and to use them," Gard said. "We must deny terrorists access to nuclear weapons."

Gard, whose extensive military background is bolstered by master's and doctorate degrees from Harvard, is a senior military fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington, D.C.

Gard said that 95 percent of the nuclear weapons outside of the United States are in Russia and "most do not even have rudimentary security." One estimate is that there are 20,000 warheads in Russia, he said.

"All we see is lethargy and indifference in the effort to nail down Russia's weapons. ... Our executive branch is not dealing with this problem," Gard said.

We must give this "global cleanout" the priority it deserves, "so terrorists can't get them." He said the rhetoric about reducing nuclear threats from unattended Russian warheads has not been matched by federal dollars.

Gard spoke for about 25 minutes then took several questions from the audience. On terror in general, Gard said foreign policy, especially with the Middle East and Israel, is real-

PLEASE SEE GENERAL, A5



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

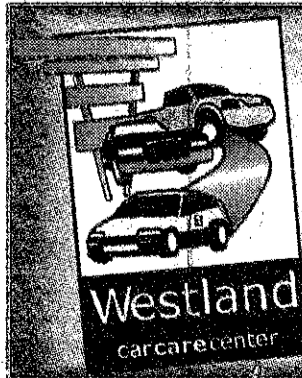
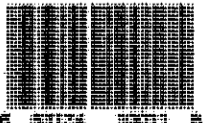
It's baaaack!

Westland John Glenn High School's football were so charged up for the start of practice, they came raring out onto the field after a break Monday. The gridders had two practice sessions on opening day of high school football season.

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Coming Sunday on the PINK Page



Exclusive interview with Fashion designer, Carlos Miele

AROUND WESTLAND

Surplus food

The City of Westland will be distributing surplus federal food to eligible residents north of Michigan Avenue 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 18, at the Dorsey Community.

Residents living south of Michigan Avenue should pick up their commodities on the third Monday of the month at St. James United Methodist Church at 30055 Annapolis between Henry Ruff and Middlebelt.

Senior citizens living in Taylor Towers can pick up their food at the apartment building. Contact the building manager for the distribution date.

This month residents will receive bakery mix, peaches and peanut butter through the program administered by the Wayne County Office of Nutrition Services.

For more information, call the Dorsey Center surplus food hotline at (734) 595-0366.

Extreme Car Wash

The Westland John Glenn High School boys and girls cross country team will have a free car wash 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12, at the corner of Cheery Hill and Venoy.

All donations will benefit the teams' annual trip to Petoskey to race in the Petoskey Invitational in September.

MS fund-raiser

Walking With Faith Inc. is partnering with Carrabba's Italian Grill in a Sunday, Aug. 28, fund-raiser to benefit for Multiple Sclerosis.

The luncheon benefit will be 2-4 p.m. at the restaurant, 1900 N. Haggerty Road, Canton. Cost will be \$25 per person for a lunch that includes salad, chicken marsala, grilled breaded shrimp and scallops with lemon butter sauce, pasta, beverage and dessert - a fudge brownie topped with Kahlua, chocolate mousse, whipped cream and a chocolate sauce.

Tickets are available by calling Alicia Harris at (313) 999-5259.

Walking With Faith is a team of more than 100 volunteers who raise money toward ending the devastating effects of MS.

Take off

A program called "Katherine Stinson: the Flying Schoolgirl" has been scheduled for 1 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12, at the Wayne Public Library.

Stinson had many firsts in her seven-year flying career, including being the first to fly

solo at night and the first pilot to perform skywriting. She was instrumental in establishing a flight school.

The program is free. To reserve a seat call (734) 721-7832 by Aug. 11.

Golf outing

The Wayne-Westland Junior Miss Scholarship Program will host its annual golf outing on Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Gateway Golf Club.

The outing will have a scramble format with an 8 a.m. shotgun start. It includes 18 holes of golf with a cart, hot dog on the turn, door prizes and a barbecue dinner, catered by Chef Tony Paquette.

The cost is \$100 per golfer. Sponsorships also are available. For information, call Dennis Hermatz at (734) 728-6151.

All proceeds will go to the Wayne-Westland Junior Miss Scholarship Program, a 501c3 not-profit organization.

Gardening program

The William P. Faust Public Library will host a program on earth friendly gardening 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 30, at the library, 6123 Central City Parkway north of Ford.

The speakers will be garden consultants Nancy Szerlag and Jeff Ball who will cover such topics as perennial flowers for falls, mulches and compost, managing weeds without chemicals and landscape design ideas.

The program is free and sponsored by the City of Westland. To register, call (734) 467-3198 weekdays or register by e-mail at LFDean@aol.com.

For the health of it

The Westland Chamber of Commerce will have its annual Health & Business Expo 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 27, at Westland Shopping Center.

As the major sponsor, the mall will offer health and business participants an opportunity to display their goods and services in a high-traffic environment.

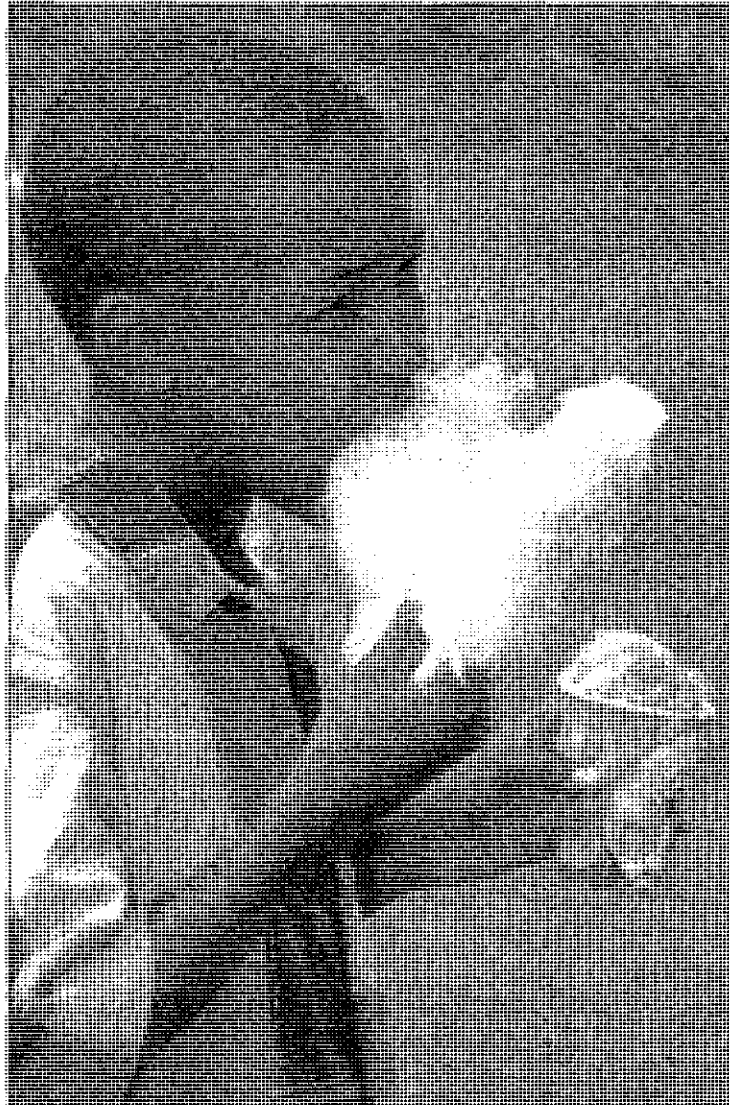
Others involved include Nancy Barrons, business sponsor from Standard Federal Bank, and St. Mary Hospital, health sponsor.

Organizers are looking for business and health-care providers to participate in this year's event. Tables are \$125 for chamber members, \$175 for non-members and \$75 for non-profit groups.

For more information or to reserve a spot, call (734) 326-7222.

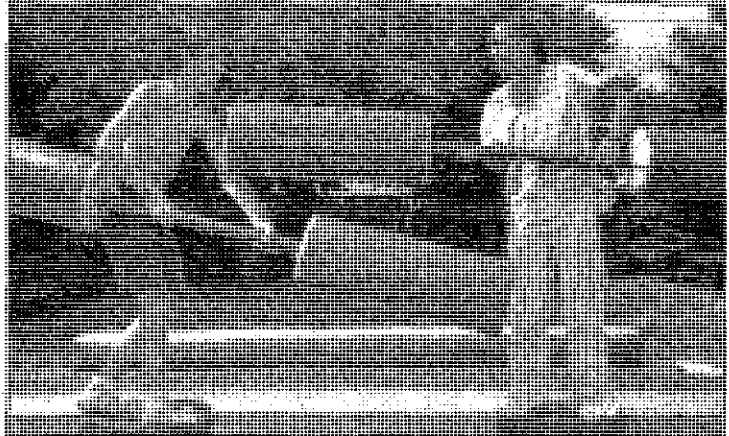


Nick Coulson is almost 90 years old, but he walked over to see the block party at the Salvation Army.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Aaron King enjoys cotton candy and a snow cone at the block party.



Nathan Kunze and Amanda Owens try to knock each other off their stands on one of inflatables provided by Bobby's Bouncers.

Salvation Army shows support

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Christopher Clarke, 7, of Westland didn't mind taking a break from the fun at the Salvation Army block party Saturday. Basketball was his favorite.

"And I won a lot of candy for basketball," the Kettering Elementary third-grader said. "My pocket's already full."

The annual event drew a crowd Saturday afternoon and evening to the Wayne-Westland corps on Venoy. Games, hot dogs and other treats and Christian music were featured.

"I'm here with my grandson," said Antionette Black of Detroit, watching her 8-year-old grandson shoot hoops. "I think it's nice. He loves coming here. I think we're going to be here all day."

Black, a Wayne State University graduate student in information technology, liked that the event is family-oriented. Her grandson is in day camp at the Salvation Army.

Capt. Matt O'Neil, who leads the local Salvation Army with wife Mindie, had prayed for good weather, and God was listening.

"You can't ask for anything better than this," he said. "It's going great. We've got tons of volunteers here."

There were five bands with Christian music, and bicycles were given away courtesy of Target and other community supporters. Bobby's Bouncers was on hand with the ever-popular inflatables, with O'Neil even taking a turn on an inflatable calling for competition between two people with padded sticks.

"Community outreach, in a Christian perspective to bring people to God's kingdom" was the reason for Saturday's event, he said. "We're just trying to support the community."

Summer staffer Nikki Catala, 18, of Westland was helping out. The recent Wayne Memorial High graduate's mom, Margaret Gaster, is the Salvation Army caseworker.

"I just love coming out here and seeing the kids have fun," Catala said. "It's just a good feeling. A lot of people love music. I just think it brings in everybody."

Volunteer Janet Wood of Westland was handling her duties capably.

"I got the bean bag toss," she said. "I wish I knew how to juggle them."

She's trying to get more involved with the Salvation Army, noting having four children makes that challenging.

"We're trying to bring more people in and praise God," she said of the block party.

Stephanie Wood, no relation, is a city of Westland housing commission staffer and Westland resident.

"The Salvation Army's been my church for over a year now," she said. She volunteers with the Sunbeams youth group, tutoring and has done day camp.

Stephanie Wood cited the church's visits to nursing homes at Easter and Christmas with gifts.

"I think it's great," she said of Saturday's fun. "It's good for the kids to come out and do something safe."

People learn about Salvation Army services, she added, and kids are steered in the right direction.

April Clarke, Christopher's mom, helped coordinate the event, including lining up bands. She's a church member and volunteer.

"I think it's awesome," she said of the party. "It's a great way to get out to the community. I'm glad it's not raining. The heat I can handle."

More than 350 people attended, O'Neil reported Tuesday.

"We were really happy," he said, adding that the block party ran past 7:30 p.m. Some 500 hot dogs were served. Organizers ran out of food and had to get more.

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EXPLOSION

FROM PAGE A1

EXPLOSIONS HEARD

The explosions and subsequent fire broke out after 9 p.m. in the tank farm where dirty purged paint solvents are stored. Explosions were heard throughout the evening, and an adjoining drum building, where 55-gallon drums of material are taken in, was "significantly affected" by the fire, Gilbert said.

Potentially hazardous fumes from the inferno drove hundreds of nearby residents from their homes.

The facility, which has been there since the 1960s and was bought by The Environmental Quality Co. in 1986, recycles paint solvents for the automobile industry and propylene glycol used in the deicing of airplanes, and handles oil and waste water treatment. The recycling of used paint solvents and deicing liquids is the plant's major operations.

EQ's 50 employees were given Wednesday off, and Gilbert said every effort will be made to keep as many working as possible. It also will work with its customers to meet their needs.

One customer that is watching the situation closely is Detroit Metro Airport, which has been selling its spent deicing liquid to EQ for five years.

"We are very concerned," said airport spokesman Michael Conway. "We literally have to wait until the smoke clears. We'll have to find a storage area until EQ is up and running again, but we have enough time to develop a contingency."

According to Conway, the airport, for five consecutive years, has recycled more deicer than any airport in the world. Part of that success is because of the facility's close proximity to EQ.

"EQ is an excellent company and has done an excellent job of recycling the deicing liquid," said Conway.

"They have been a loyal and valued partner in our endeavor to be a worldwide leader in recycling."

The explosions and fire didn't impact flights in and out of the airport, although Conway did spend the first few minutes after it happened determining that it hadn't been a plane crash as reported by a local radio station.

While EQ comes to the airport to retrieve the used deicer from special deicing pads, it was the airport that went to EQ Tuesday night. Conway said the airport's mobile command truck, some officers and a foam truck responded to the emergency as part of the Western Wayne Mutual Aid Association.

HELPING TO RESPOND

In fact, help came from as close as the city of Wayne to as far away as Farmington Hills. The department is in Oakland County, but participates in the Western Wayne Mutual Aid Association.

'Probably the idea of a terrorist attack entered many minds at some point, but early on people became comfortable that this was an equipment malfunction or isolated incident.'

John Roach
Wayne County Sheriff spokesman

Deputy Chief Kevin Bersche said two fire inspectors from the Hills department responded to the scene as part of the 12-community mutual aid team. Inspectors Mike Kish and Steve Biebel were still at the scene on Wednesday morning.

Westland firefighters were among the hazardous materials team members that did air monitoring in Westland, Wayne and Garden City, said Westland Fire Chief Michael Reddy.

Westland also had its emergency operation center on standby at Cit Hall, and the Bailey Recreation Center and the senior citizen Friendship Center were ready to accept evacuees, although the facilities ultimately weren't needed.

"We instructed any residents who called 9-1-1 to close their window, turn off their air conditioners and stay inside," Reddy said. "But our area was not directly involved. We weren't in any contaminated zone or hazardous zone. However, we were prepared, and the city was ready to react."

A trio of Livonia firefighters - Shadd Whitehead, Mike Magda and Jon Unruh - worked overnight and into Wednesday morning at the explosion site as part of the hazmat team.

The department also was prepared to send trucks and equipment to Columbus if called, but there was enough mutual aid help provided by fire agencies closest to the plant, according to Livonia Fire Marshal Andrew Walker.

WORRIES ARISE

The fire may well be the largest such incident to happen in Wayne County, said John Roach, Wayne County Sheriff spokesman. There have been lesser incidents at the Fermi II nuclear power plant in Monroe County and a fuel refinery fire Downriver, but nothing like this.

"Probably the idea of a terrorist attack entered many minds at some point, but early on people became comfortable that this was an equipment malfunction or isolated incident," he said.

"We're going to figure out what happened and put those things in place so it doesn't happen again," EQ's Gilbert said.

Staff writers Darrell Clem, Stacy Jenkins and Dan West contributed to this story.

Evacuees grateful for shelter, but eager to get back home

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Tired after a sleepless night in an emergency shelter, 75-year-old Pearl Pancake anxiously waited Wednesday morning to return to the Wayne home she evacuated during a chemical plant explosion in her neighborhood.

She lost her husband of 31 years, Tony, in May, and now this.

"I want to go home and see how Baby, my little poodle, is doing," Pancake said. "She hasn't been the same since I lost my husband."

"And I have to get home so I can go to church tonight," she added. "I don't miss church."

Pancake spent the night at Wayne Memorial High School's Stockmeyer Auditorium with two of her friends and neighbors, Imogene Williams, 80, and Vera Cannon, 83.

"I'm glad we had someplace to go," said Williams, holding a cup of coffee and a bagel that the Westland-based Salvation Army brought to the shelter. "We've had good treatment and good food."

GRANDCHILDREN COME ALONG

Williams had three great-grandchildren at her house Tuesday night when explosions ripped through EQ Resource Recovery Inc., just a half-mile from her home.

Her car was in the repair shop, but she and her little ones escaped with Pancake.

"My great-grandchildren were so glad to see Pearl. They just love her, and they were worried about her," Williams said, choking back tears. "I was nervous. I was in shock."

Unlike Pancake and Williams, Cannon managed to rest a little during the night.

"I slept on a cot with a blanket. I must have slept two or three hours," she said.

HUNDREDS SEEK SHELTER

Wayne-Westland Salvation Army Capt. Matthew O'Neil,



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wayne residents Vera Cannon, 83 (left to right), Imogene Williams, 80, and Pearl Pancake, 75, spent the night at Wayne Memorial High School's Stockmeyer Auditorium after evacuating their homes due to the nearby chemical fire.

standing outside of a mobile canteen where he was serving food Wednesday morning, estimated that 200-300 people sought shelter at Stockmeyer Auditorium. Some evacuees spent the night in hotels.

O'Neil urged anyone who wants to donate to help offset emergency expenses to call (877) SAL-MICH.

Lisa Stubbe, 27, and six of her family members slept overnight in her Dodge van. They refused to pay \$149 for a hotel room they checked on, and Stubbe couldn't take her dog, Pepsi, into an emergency shelter.

"It was rough trying to sleep," the Wayne resident said, standing outside of Stockmeyer Auditorium, where her family ate food brought in by McDonald's.

Stubbe's fiancé, 32-year-old Doug Dagley, rode his bicycle toward the chemical plant after the explosion rocked the Wayne neighborhood.

"There was black stuff all over the ground," he said.

"It wasn't like soot. It was

chunks of black stuff. People were everywhere."

Stubbe's mother, 51-year-old Liz Stubbe, was visiting from St. Cloud, Fla., with her fiancé, Dan Zapico, when she saw the explosion from their motor home.

"That explosion is etched in my mind forever," Liz Stubbe said. "I thought a plane had gone down. I heard a big noise before the explosion, and then there was this big ball of flames. It was very loud."

As of Wednesday afternoon, the Stubbes still hadn't received permission to return to their neighborhood.

"We're all tired," Lisa Stubbe said. "We just want to go home, but we can't."

They waited, like Pancake and others.

"I'm worried about Baby," Pancake said of her poodle. "She doesn't eat dog food. You know what I feed her? Bologna. I cut it up for her. I know she's probably hungry."

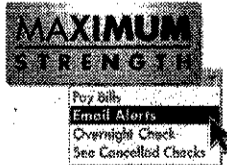
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Actors use history to build their church

Petticoat Ladies re-enact lives of famous women



Dressed as their characters are Petticoat Ladies Gini Miles of Garden City, Wanda Jarvis of Dearborn, Caroline Bersano of Garden City, Gail Smalley of Garden City, Vera Siefers of Redford and Denise Salo of Dearborn Heights. Also in the troupe are Debbie Eleson of Inkster, Jackie Zopff of Plymouth and Virginia Zawila of Garden City.

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

Don't be fooled by the lacy dresses, flower hats and fluffy undergarments, the Petticoat Ladies from the Garden City Presbyterian Church are far from demure and passive.

Performing short vignettes replicating the lives of the unheralded women of the Victorian age, these feisty church ladies turned thespians are performing historical re-enactments about heroic women who are often forgotten in classrooms.

They're hoping the performances will draw more members to their church on Middlebelt south of Ford Road.

"We're not taught about these women in history classes and when you start looking at their lives, they did a lot," said Debbie Eleson, who transforms into a perfect Mary Todd Lincoln from a string of flowers on her head to the glove mitts on her hands. "We're teaching, but we're learning along the way."



Caroline Bersano of Garden City and Denise Salo of Dearborn Heights chat as members of the Petticoat Ladies enter Garden City Presbyterian Church.

The Petticoat Ladies morphed from performing every year at the church's Victorian Tea to become a serious performing troupe that has received scores of invitations throughout the state.

The group, with a only a few changes over the years, formed 11 years ago when women in the church decided to dress up in period costume at the church's first Victorian Tea.

Two years ago, a guest at the tea asked if they would perform for her church and they've taken their show on the road ever since.

audience who have had a terrible day and we make them smile."

POPULAR ACT

Their most popular act is "First Ladies," but they also perform "Women of the West," "Queen Victoria's Daughters" and "Sisterhood of the Theater."

Dressed in outfits that have been closely matched to what the women they are portraying would wear, these local actresses stand up and speak in the first person, telling the life stories of their stage personas.

The actresses research everything they can get their hands on to learn about their character from going online to seeking out history books and even comic books. Eleson learned she and Mary Todd Lincoln had a lot in common, including the fact that they were both Presbyterian.

"I have taken on a crusade for Mary, because I think she got a bum wrap," Eleson said. "People hate Mary, because they heard things that she was crazy and she wasn't."

"Sometimes I feel her crying out to have her story told," Eleson believes Mary Todd Lincoln may have been diabetic and was likely bipolar, which "could have been treated with a pill."

"I am Abigail Powers Fillmore," Jarvis begins her monologue. She goes on to tell how she was the first first lady who worked outside the home. Fillmore was a teacher and established the first library in the White House.

"I realized there was no library in the White House and I thought, 'Well, we have to change this,'" said Jarvis, 78. "It's fun to get up in front of the audience and ham it up."

She has longed to perform since she was a little girl in Detroit and knocked on radio station doors for a chance to sing on air.

People in the audiences inevitably say, "I learned things I didn't know," Eleson said.

The act also includes comments from a narrator who provides historical timelines, with interesting inventions that were developed at the time the person being portrayed lived.

Some of the women make their clothes. Others search out specialty items, cameos, shawls and parasols at the Salvation Army, resale shops, the Northville Victorian Festival and Civil War re-enactments.

The impact of the performances on the audiences is immense. One audience member told Smalley, "I don't like history, but you almost made me like it."

The Petticoat Ladies work for free, but they say they get a lot in return.

"It's a good feeling knowing you have people who are of like mind, who share love of God, love of each other, love of history and love of country," Salo said.

To book the Petticoat Ladies, call Gail Smalley at (734) 422-2463.

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Pooches can pen essays for prizes

Everyone always talks about how dogs are "man's best friend."

Well, now's the time for them to prove it. The pooch that pens the most persuasive essay on the topic, "Why my owner is the best pet person in Detroit," will win his or her human friend a dream prize package that includes:

■ The chance to throw out the first pitch before the Tigers-Oakland A's game on Aug. 23 (Bark in the Park Night).

■ Tickets for two to watch a future game from a corporate suite at Comerica Park with former Tiger star Milt Wilcox.

The prizes won't be too shabby for the winning dog either. In addition to being the guest of honor at the Bark in the Park game, the dog that sends in the winning essay will receive one year's supply of Purina Pro Plan Dog Food and a \$100 gift certificate good for any purchase at Pet Supplies "Plus." Nestle Purina Pet Care and Pet Supplies "Plus" will also donate \$100 to the Michigan Animal Adoption

Network in the winning dog's name.

Since we all know that dogs can't write, people are invited to translate their pets' words and put them down on paper. To enter, contestants just have to describe in 100 words or less why their dog's human companion is "the best pet lover in Detroit," and send their entries to Bark in the Park Contest c/o Fucini Productions, P.O. Box 251507, West Bloomfield, MI 48325. Name, address and phone number must be included with every entry.

Contestants are urged to use their creativity. Being the "best lover," can involve many different things, from the way a dog's tummy is scratched, to the way a pet was adopted or rescued, to the way a person does volunteer work on behalf of animals.

All entries must be post-marked by midnight Aug. 12. The winner will be notified by phone by Tuesday, Aug. 16. For a complete set of contest rules, visitors can log on to www.pet-suppliesplus.com and click on What's New at Pet Supplies "Plus."

Community foundation awards 10 scholarships

Ten high school graduates are on the receiving end of scholarships from the Westland Community Foundation.

Seven received \$1,000 scholarships, while three received \$500 scholarships. The recipients, who attended high school in Wayne, Westland or Livonia, received their checks during the foundation's annual Christmas in July fund-raiser last month.

Receiving the awards were: ■ Jennifer Marie Adkins - A graduate of Wayne Memorial, she received a \$1,000 scholarship. She plans to attend Schoolcraft College and looking at a career in electronic technology-biomedical engineering.

While at Wayne High, she received an Academic Letter and Electronic Class Award, competed in Skills USA, was a parent-teacher conferences volunteer, and involved in the German Club, Yearbook and DECA.

■ Jennifer Kristine Dotson - A graduate of John Glenn High School, she received a \$1,000 scholarship. She plans to attend Henry Ford Community College to study to be a registered nurse.

While at John Glenn, she was stage manager and Thespian secretary, president of the Health Occupations Students of America chapter and member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society.

■ Kristina Kay Hall - A graduate of John Glenn and the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, she received a \$1,000 scholarship. She plans to attend Schoolcraft College to study to be a registered nurse.

While at John Glenn, she was on the honor roll, was student of the month at the career technical center and received an Honor Award from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

■ Jon Claude LeFaive - A graduate of Lutheran High School Westland, he received a \$1,000 scholarship. He plans to attend Washtenaw Community College to study

photography and media. While at Lutheran High, he was inducted into the National Honor Society.

■ Brandon James Russell - A graduate of Wayne High and the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, he received a \$1,000 scholarship. He plans to attend the Lincoln Technical Institute in Indianapolis, Ind., where he will study to be an electronics systems technician.

While at Wayne High and the career technical center, he had perfect attendance and was involved with the robotics team. He also placed first in Skills USA competition.

■ Jónellé Dante Smith - A graduate of Wayne High and the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, she received a \$1,000 scholarship. She plans to study to be a registered nurse. She also was president (2004-05) and secretary (2003-04) of the Health Occupations Students of America chapter.

■ Samantha Jean Woodby - A graduate of Wayne High and the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, she received a \$1,000 scholarship. She plans to attend Washtenaw Community College to study photography.

She won two awards for photographs in the National Scholastics Scholarship Competition.

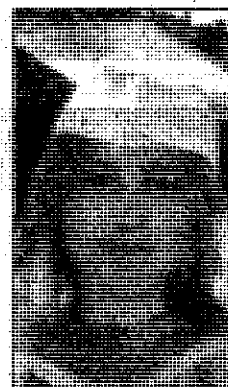
■ Karissa Ann Morgan - A graduate of Livonia Churchill High School, she received a \$500 scholarship. She plans to attend Grand Valley State University to study art and design with a minor in communications.

During her time at Churchill High, she was president of the Student Body, Junior Class and Sophomore Class, and active in the Spirit Club, S.A.D.D., German Club, school newspaper and yearbook staff.

She also was the float building chairperson for two years, hall decoration chairperson, prom fashion show chairperson and religious education instructor. She also received the Youth Making a Difference Award, Fine Arts Festival Award, was a Homecoming Court, and was named to the honor roll.



Jennifer Adkins



Jennifer Dotson



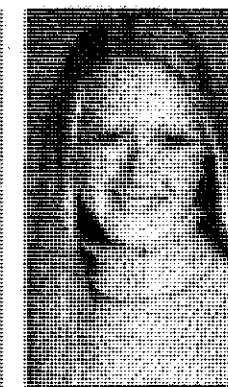
Kristina Hall



Jon LeFaive



Samantha Woodby



Karissa Morgan



Christina Polsgrove



Garrett Radford



Brandon Russell

■ Christina Dawnmarie Polsgrove - A graduate of Livonia Franklin High School, she plans to attend Baker College to study marketing.

While at Franklin, she was on the academic honor roll and in DECA state competition. She was a member of the girls varsity tennis team, the Upward Bound program, Art Club, French Club and Math Club. She also received an Eastern Michigan University Certificate of Achievement.

■ Garrett J. Radford - A graduate of Livonia Franklin High School, he plans to attend Michigan State University to study computer engineering.

While at Franklin, he was captain of the varsity hockey team, a bell ringer for the Salvation Army, Gleaners Food Bank volunteer, canned food drive volunteer and Detroit Red Wings concession stand volunteer.

The Westland Community Foundation is made up of community and business leaders who raise money through the foundation's annual Spring Ball and Christmas in July events to sponsor scholarships as well as donate money and matching grants to local organizations like the Salvation Army and Family Resource Center.

GENERAL

FROM PAGE A1

ly the "third rail" in American politics, "not Social Security."

Gard admitted America must maintain some nuclear weapons as a deterrent and to meet treaty obligations but that "we do not need 10,000 such weapons."

The Army veteran said that the issue of cleaning up nuclear weapons had "manifest obstacles" but that we could not leave it to the "guys in Washington."

"Disagreement with the federal government is not unpatriotic ... it is, in a sense, the highest form of patriotism."

How easy would it be to get small nuclear weapons into the

country? Very, according to Gard.

"We can't keep bales of marijuana out of this country. How can we keep a small weapon the size of a grapefruit out?"

The three sponsoring groups Tuesday night included Peace Action of Michigan, Swords Into Plowshares Peace Center and Gallery in Detroit, and the Livonia-based Citizens for Peace. The Citizens for Peace group is loosely organized around Michigan's 11th Congressional District and includes members from Livonia, Redford, Garden City, Westland, Plymouth and Canton. Starting at 6:30 p.m. there was a display of peace signs by marchers at Middlebelt Road and Five Mile Road near the church.

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OUR VIEWS

City must address DDA's frustrations

The Downtown Development Authority is not a city entity prone to making headlines, but it has in the past few weeks, first with the appointment of Sylvia Kozorosky-Wiacek, followed by the announcement that two longtime members — Kim Shunkwiler and Doug North — are resigning.

There is no indication as to why North is resigning, but Shunkwiler, chairman of the DDA board for nine years, is leaving out of frustration, saying the board "got cut off at the knees by the powers that be," referring to how city officials past and present have used the DDA's captured tax money.

The DDA board steers economic development along the Ford and Wayne road commercial corridors, using the captured tax revenue to help pay for things like the recently completed streetscape. By and large, it does its work quietly outside the limelight.

Kozorosky-Wiacek's appointment may have slipped by quietly had it not been for the brouhaha she found herself in five years ago. At the time the director of the senior Friendship Center, she retired amid controversy over the use of a van supplied for city use to make daytime trips to Motor City Casino.

It was a given that the circumstances of her departure from city employment would be brought up. There was acknowledgment of what she did for the city's senior program, but it came with the proverbial but — she "broke a public trust."

It doesn't appear that Kozorosky-Wiacek's appointment was the cause of these latest resignations. Shunkwiler has said he is OK with it, but stressed that the board itself is frustrated.

While we believe Kozorosky-Wiacek should be given the opportunity to serve, we believe city officials need to listen to what Shunkwiler has said. The loss of one or two longtime board members isn't critical, but if more members resign, it could leave the city with a grand plan and a DDA board lacking the experience to make it happen.

Now is the best time to address the issues the board has and resolve them, and we hope city leaders will do that before forging ahead with more appointments.

Redistricting panel offers a better way

They call it gerrymandering.

In 1812, Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry carved out a salamander-shaped congressional district to suit his political ends and gave birth to a popular form of political manipulation.

Every 10 years, the majority party in the state Legislature gets to redraw district lines to guarantee that it will remain the majority party in the state Legislature and in the congressional delegation. It's as American as apple pie.

But state Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, thinks there is a better way. He has introduced a resolution in support of a state constitutional amendment to create a special redistricting commission.

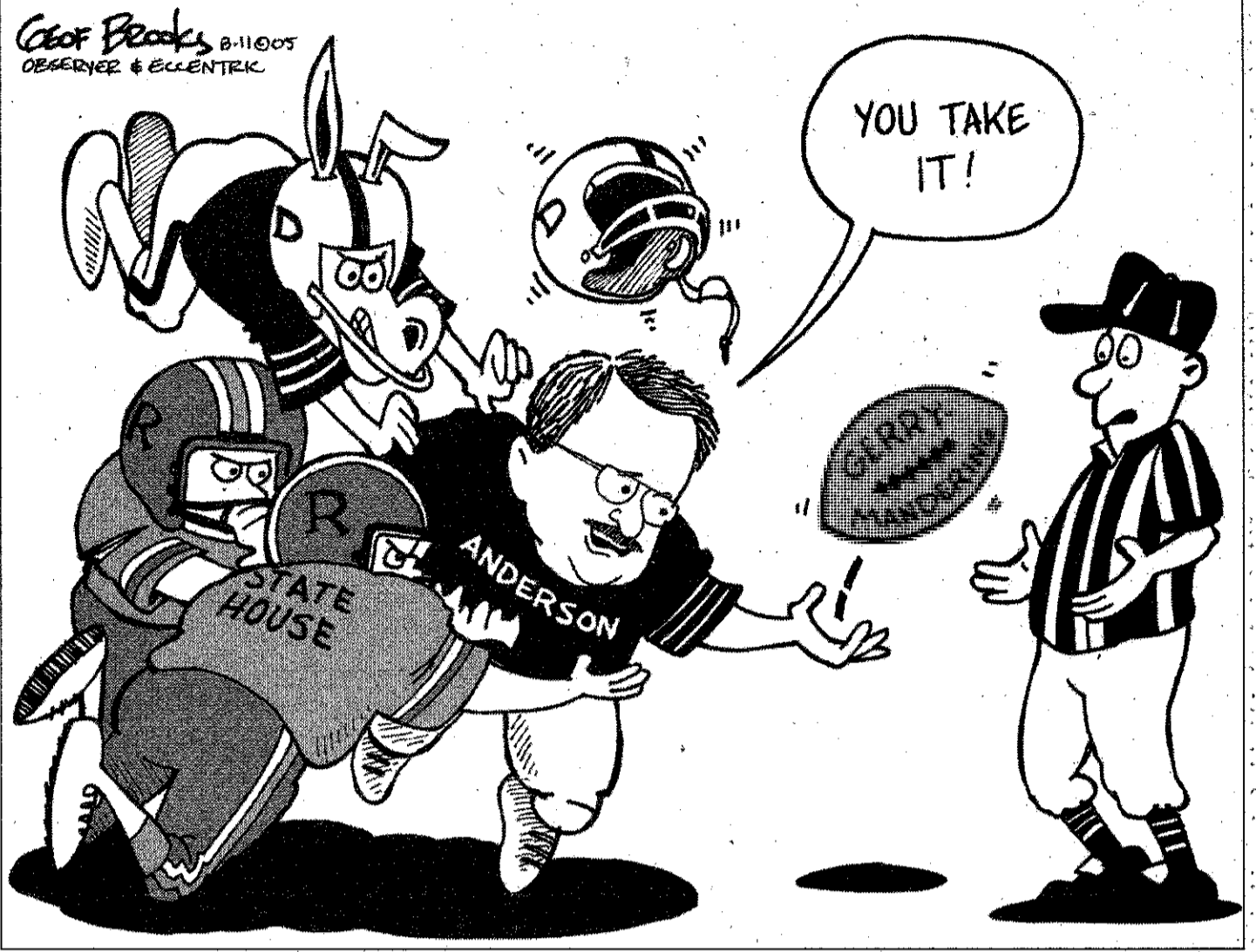
The U.S. Constitution requires redistricting after every decennial census. Under Anderson's proposal, a nine-member panel rather than the state Legislature would redraw boundaries for federal, state and county districts based on population changes. The panel would consist of four members appointed by the Republican Party, four by the Democratic Party and a ninth member selected by the other eight members.

In a column for the *Observer & Eccentric*, Anderson notes that "since the current redistricting plan was adopted by the Michigan Legislature, no congressional election has been decided by a margin of less than 16 percent. Nationally, Common Cause found that in the 2004 Congressional election: more than 85 percent of House incumbents won by landslide majorities of more than 60 percent; only seven incumbents, of 399 running, lost their seats, a 98.2 percent re-election rate; outside of Texas, where a mid-cycle Republican redistricting effort led to the defeat of four targeted incumbent Democrats, only three incumbents lost their seats.

Both parties take advantage of this geographic manipulation to keep themselves in power, to protect particular candidates and to punish others.

While Anderson's approach is no guarantee of impartiality, it does take the process out of strictly partisan interests and allows for more competitive political districts.

We're skeptical that the party in power would be willing to give up its control over redistricting, but in the name of true democracy we support Anderson's resolution.



Applaud DDA appointment

I am writing in response to a recent "letter" published in the *Observer* citing reasons for protesting the appointment of a former employee of the city of Westland to the DDA board.

The author of this letter says "nobody then or now denies the past accomplishments of this new appointee." The author then goes on to say this very competent person should not accept the appointment because of a grievous judgment error made while employed by the city of Westland. According to this letter, we should forget the fact this person can enhance the business of the DDA, thus giving the city of Westland the very best possible representation on this very important board.

Tell me, those who sit in judgment, what punishment is enough? You indicate in your letter that a high price must be paid for this violation of public trust. Humiliation in private and public life, bringing shame and heartbreak to family and friends, when is enough enough?

How righteous you sound in your letter. Your letter goes on to say "most of us know that there are limitations set on people who seek certain positions after they have committed certain improprieties." Enlighten me. What limitations are set on forgiveness?

The letter writer's final comment, "this last act far overshadows all of this person's previous achievements," is simply mean-spirited. Contributions to the city of Westland made by this person are enormous and cannot be denied, even by the letter writer.

Your letter then gets political, stating of the seven incumbent council members, you would endorse only one, "the independent one." (Wonder what that second council member did to offend you?) That is your right. It is certainly my right to agree with you in this instance and state that the "standard 5-2 voting which continues to plague our city" is indeed a shame.

However, a distinct difference is that I will vote to *not* retain the two council members that seem to intentionally vote "no" on proposals that would only enhance life in the city of Westland. It is a good political strategy, since they have obviously convinced people such as the letter writer that they are "independent"

These two council members should vote on issues that come before them after they have asked themselves the question: Is this proposal good for the city of Westland and its residents and only then voting as they were elected to do, in the best interests of the city, *not* their own personal feelings or thoughts of their own political future.

Getting back to the new appointee to the DDA board of Westland, we must ask ourselves, is it in the best interest of our city to applaud the appointment of this very competent person to the DDA board. I think so.

Barbara Palmer
Westland

Mixed emotions

I experienced the Livonia Board of Education meeting for the second time Monday, Aug. 1. It was an interesting as well as an enlightening to say the least. My emotions went from proud to defeated.

LETTERS

Grant Elementary is experiencing a problem with overcrowded classes and children being bused to another school due to overcrowding. It was heartwarming to see the mothers who try to do the best for the children on a daily basis, go in front of the board to express their feelings and ask for assistance. They were respectful in their pleas, but made it clear they had done their research and wanted answers.

While the board repeatedly assured the parents they appreciated their concerns and was glad they had come to the board to express them, there was little they could do on a local level to change the class sizes and overflow issue.

My problem at the meeting was not with the board. My problem was with the appointed staff seated next to the board. Mr. Hosman, Ms. Lisa Levesque and Mr. Smith seemed to be having a staff meeting, drinking Diet Coke, laughing and talking with each other and turning their backs to the board and audience.

This went on during the entire citizen response session. Is this what we are teaching our children? Did Mr. Hosman tolerate that behavior in the schools he worked in? I still can not believe the disrespect shown to all of the parents that spoke.

My husband and I are both graduates of Livonia schools and that is why we were very happy we were able to move to this district for my daughter's high school years. As I heard at the meeting, many of those parents of Grant children also were raised in Livonia and have returned to give their children the same experience. They just did not know what that experience would be.

As far as Riley Baty being sent away from Grant due to the overflow, I can not believe that you leave no room in a classroom for a registered child in that school. Is Riley being punished because he is not ready for first grade? How do you explain to a 6-year-old that your school does not want you any more, but *maybe* if you do better and *maybe* if there is room you can come back?

My hat's off to the parents of Grant Elementary. They not only came together to make their voices heard, they came to the aid of their children, coming out of their comfort zone to do what was right for not only their children, but the community as a whole. I only hope that the dedicated parents remain a part of the public school system and are not forced to look elsewhere to educate their children. This would be a loss for us all.

Sandi Miller
Westland

Why a brick exterior?

What is wrong with the Westland City Council? Can anyone tell me why everything has to be brick? With all the vacant buildings and with new construction they are outpricing it so that no one will remodel or build in the city.

Not only does everything have to be brick, but I've learned that those crazy islands in the parking lot are mandatory per them. I don't know about anyone else, but to me they are nothing but a pain. If you park your car next to them either you or your passenger has to stand up on them to get out of the car.

In winter if it snows I know the snow plowers must love these. How do you move

that plow around the islands and still miss the handicap poles? Maybe that's why all the snow ends up in the handicap spot instead of the back of the lot where few, if any, park and this at a time when handicapped people need the spots the most.

Looking good is not only in the eye of the beholder, it isn't always practical. And why are these things considered attractive? It's a building, it's a parking lot. We've already lost business or slowed it down because certain people don't like the colors of a building. If the owner of the business doesn't think the colors will work, do you think they really would paint it these colors just to lose business? I don't think so.

Wake up and enjoy the colors before it's too late.

Judy McKinney
Westland

Thanks for circus story

Kudos to Darrell Clem for telling readers about the controversy surrounding the Royal Hanneford Circus ("League's circus attracts crowds and protesters," 7/31/05). The U.S. Department of Agriculture has cited Royal Hanneford numerous times for failure to provide veterinary care and meet minimum space requirements.

Big cats, elephants and other exotic animals have injured or killed several individuals in numerous attacks at circuses, zoos, roadside exhibits, and breeding facilities. Since 1990, big cats have killed at least 53 people and injured 180 and rampages by captive elephants have resulted in 65 human deaths and more than 130 human injuries. The Royal Hanneford Circus endangered public safety when an elephant rampaged during a performance, causing spectators to run for cover.

It is no surprise when frustrated animals rebel and try to escape. In captivity, animals are trained to perform with bullhooks, whips and electric prods.

Innovative, animal-free circuses, such as Cirque du Soleil, Flying High Circus, Moscow State Circus, Circus of the Kids and New Pickle Circus, dazzle audiences with human acrobatics and performances that are truly worthy of awe and admiration. Please visit Circuses.com for a complete list of cruelty-free circuses.

Heather Moore
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

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QUOTABLE

"It just got to the point where it was very frustrating. I took it seriously. We had some great plans. We just got cut off at the knees by the powers that be."

— Kim Shunkwiler, about his resignation from Westland's Downtown Development Authority board

WESTLAND
Observer

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

LETTERS

Transit is for the masses

I am ashamed of suburban communities that seem to be afraid of mass transit. Yes, Detroit has problems; one of the biggest is that it is the most segregated city in America. Perhaps by not having a mass transit system these suburban communities can continue to isolate themselves from the city. Yet we must remember that Compuware, DTE Energy, EDS, General Motors, Little Caesar's, SBC and many other corporations employ thousands downtown while still thousands more go to the city to be entertained by baseball, casinos, clubs, expositions, fireworks, football, museums, restaurants and theaters.

Universities and colleges serve the entire state, not just those who live close to campus or can afford automobile transportation. Even as suburban communities continue to sprawl (run) away from Detroit, they fight mass transit systems and even the automobile alternatives such as the building of freeways (M-5 for example) as if afraid of easy access from Detroit.

For the past two years, I have been riding (sometimes crowded) buses with many professionals in and out of the city to western Wayne County. So unlike the politicians who sit in their suburban local offices and pretend that only the handicapped or poor need mass transportation, I feel contempt and frustration. They do not see the reality of life for most nor do they seem to care. A local van driving elderly or handicapped to a local doctor's office is noble, but a far cry from meeting the needs of the residents and will have little effect on revitalizing the city of Detroit and our Michigan economy.

If these communities are afraid of the power that Detroit may get or may misuse from a metro mass transit system, it is time for them to step forward to help shape and manage the mass transit system not cover and run.

We all have a right and a responsibility to create an easy access environment for all the residents of southeast Michigan. Whether we like it or not, we all live here and we all need mobility.

Richard Frownfelter
Canton

Lawmaker lacks vision

Rep. Gosselin's comments regarding regional mass transit (Courts call strike three, Aug. 4) are almost as delusional as they are archaic.

Mass transit provides mobility to those who lack the private means to do so, in the process maximizing the human capital and economic fortune of a region. However, contrary to Mr. Gosselin's suggestions, mass transit must be a public service since market forces, unburdened by red tape and reg-

ulations, will not see to the transportation needs of the poor and elderly, because the private sector will not risk money on an investment that requires extraordinary initial costs, has no history of profits and is heavily dependent on low-income demographics.

We can't deny that suburban sprawl has left metro Detroit with a widely dispersed population. However, recent light rail projects, such as FasTracks in Denver, have shown that a new system can spur development around them, becoming the new corridors of commerce and residency in a region.

Even though this may seem like a far-fetched scenario in southeast Michigan, recent trends such as aging baby boomers leaving behind the hassles of home ownership for condominium communities, as well as suburbs placing greater emphasis on main street/downtown developments (including Plymouth, Royal Oak, Dearborn and West Bloomfield, among others), have made metro Detroit prime for a rapid transit system that will interlink walkable communities with the region's attractions, international airport and centers of commerce.

To suggest that only "inbred" and "protectionist" unions and politicians want a comprehensive mass transit system in metro Detroit shows Mr. Gosselin doesn't truly understand the problems facing this region. I recently moved back to Detroit after living overseas for the past two years, only to find that nearly all of my college classmates had relocated to the likes of Boston, Chicago and Seattle, where the job markets are fierce and expenses are exorbitant, but the quality of life is high.

Mass transit is more than a public service; it represents a significant factor in the quality of life of a city. For Detroit to retain, and attract, the young educated population that will fuel our white-collar economy in the 21st century, we must invest in projects that re-energize our work force and economy.

The cost of transportation in Detroit is higher than in nearly any other major city in the nation because we have never been serious about creating an alternative to the 20 percent drain on our incomes that car maintenance and rising gas prices represent. It is time for our civic and industrial leaders to put partisan politics and the city vs. suburban animosity of old behind them, and take action on mass transit before our region falls farther behind the rest of the nation.

Unfortunately, it is quite obvious that Mr. Gosselin and his like-minded colleagues are neither serious nor forward-thinking enough to find the regional solutions necessary to usher southeast Michigan into the 21st century.

Sean Mann
Livonia

Our communities must evolve in order to survive

There is an old adage that if your organization is standing still or not moving forward, then you are really going backward. In today's fast-paced world, this is certainly true. We can also apply this to our local communities. If they are not changing or redeveloping, then they are at best standing still or more likely moving backward.

After some time, the community loses vitality and people move out. Fortunately, this is not the case in our suburban communities. Witness all the commercial development, residential improvements, new and "infill" housing and infrastructure improvements which are taking place. Two communities as examples are Birmingham and Livonia.



Richard
Aginlan

In Birmingham, the list is extensive. It includes Booth Park, redevelopment of the Jacobson's store, the condominiums and commercial development on Eaton, the Rail District, the condominium conversion of

Birmingham Place, the proposed changes in the Triangle District plus many residential housing improvements. All private development.

The city has not stood idly by. The projects under way or planned include Shain Park changes, the Adams Road Bridge replacement, Southfield Road repaving, other local street projects plus the changes at Old Woodward, Woodward and Lincoln to make a safer intersection.

Livonia is another community that is continuing to change and redevelop. Wonderland Mall is undergoing a transformation. A new Target, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart and other stores are proposed. The site of the Mai-Kai Theatre, which underwent several transformations, all failed, is now busy with residential housing. An entrepreneur took a chance and is successful. This is in addition to the road projects, new housing, remodeling of existing housing plus residential infill.

Other communities are seeing similar development. In Southfield, condominiums sprouted around the Town Center and City Center — an area which is rapidly becoming a wonderful hub for the city. Fast-growing Canton is getting the area's first IKEA. Drugstores seem to sprout on every corner. West Bloomfield is looking at creating a "downtown." Luxury homes continue to be built in Rochester Hills.

Sure, there are some problems. The area continues to lose manufacturing jobs. The automotive industry and the supplier base are in trouble. Proposal A isn't working and

needs to be changed. It's devastating our schools and trapping people in their homes.

Look beyond the problems and you see no shortage of optimistic store owners, builders and developers willing to take a risk, otherwise we would not see all of this development. Banks continue to lend money for this development. If they didn't believe in the area, why would they continue to lend money to all of these developers? All are very positive signs for the future.

There are the naysayers who say no development is good development. Or others who ask: "What's wrong with the status quo?" Each community has had its share.

Each community has to evolve, develop and reinvent itself if it is going to be a healthy location for families to stay and businesses to flourish. If there is no development or regeneration, then a community dies. No one wants to live there, businesses will not locate there and sooner rather than later we have empty fields, vacant storefronts and dilapidated houses. We are left with a city government with no tax base and it too is then in trouble.

There are also naysayers who also don't like the businesses that locate in a community. In Livonia, there is some objection to Wal-Mart. That is another story, but given the choices, an empty and vacant corner or a thriving revitalized shopping center, I would take the latter.

An excellent example is the southeast corner of Telegraph and 12 Mile Road in Southfield. It was a dying center in a good location. Remember Crowley's Department store? It was located there.

After several years of neglect with a troubled store base, the owners redeveloped the center and it is now anchored by Meijer and Lowe's. From all outward appearances the center is thriving. The same thing can happen to Wonderland Mall.

City growth and development does cause some inconvenience. Repaving roads and replacing sewers are not glamorous projects and can make the daily commute to work or shopping a challenge.

We have to look beyond the short-term inconvenience and see the vision of our city leaders, the entrepreneurs and the developers.

At the end of the day, responsible development, municipal or private, is better than no development. Remember, if you are not growing and changing, in today's world, you are moving backward. The results of stagnation and moving backward are not pretty and that's something no one wants.

Richard Aginlan is president and publisher of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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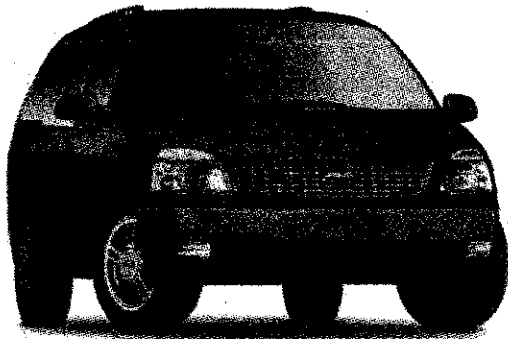
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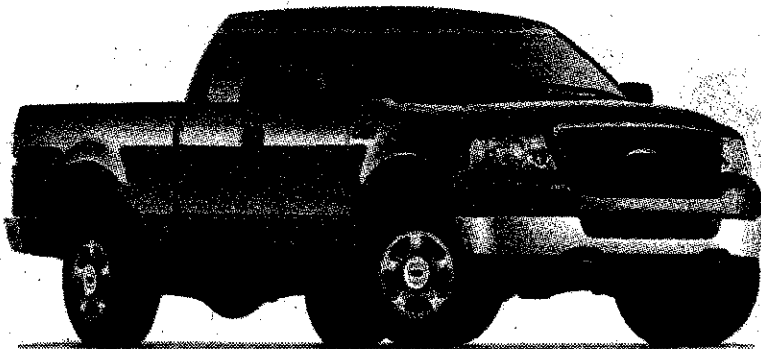
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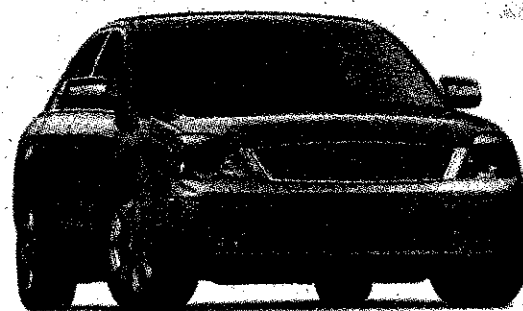
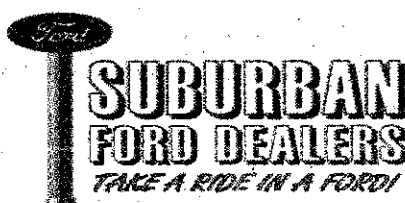
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