

8/28

Public Schools of Westland

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WESTLAND Observer

SUNDAY
August 28, 2005

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Back to school

Schools get smooth start, fuel bills soar

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Wayne-Westland schools started a new academic year Thursday with no major glitches, but officials already predict that high fuel costs will strain the district's transportation budget.

"All the feedback we've gotten from the schools has been very positive," said Charlotte Sherman, deputy superintendent of educational services.

Students seemed to find the right buses without any major snafus, and officials reported no serious problems with transportation routes.

"The transportation department was pleased with the first day," Sherman said. "There are always challenges with transportation, but they think things went very well."

One huge bus-related challenge this year will be paying for soaring fuel costs, said Gary Martin, deputy superintendent of business services.

"There's no doubt it will have an

impact on us," he said.

The district had budgeted \$250,000 for fuel costs this school year, but that was before prices started soaring.

"We're probably going to be close to \$400,000," Martin said, meaning that the school board may face budget amendments of \$150,000.

Fuel costs last year also came in higher than expected with the district spending \$300,000 - about \$70,000 more than had been budgeted.

Wayne County school officials are trying to organize a consortium of local districts that could combine their fuel-buying resources and potentially get a better deal, Martin said.

Either way, the district will pay whatever is required to get students to school.

"We try as best as we can to consolidate routes," Martin said.

In another new development this year, teachers making their roll calls have started recording attendance on computers.

"We think it went very well,"

Sherman said, adding that first-day attendance appeared to be about 98 percent of the district's students.

Some teachers in grades six through 12 also will start recording student grades on computers this year, sporadically implementing a program that Sherman said will become mandatory in all classes next school year.

"We had about 400 teachers from the secondary level who had voluntary training this summer, and they will be training the other teachers," Sherman said.

The computer software will automatically average student grades, she said, "but we'll still have report cards. That part won't change."

The district has projected an enrollment of about 13,300 students this year, Sherman said. That would be down about 200 pupils from last year's count.

However, she cautioned, "We really won't have solid numbers until after Labor Day."

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PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kindergartners start new life at school

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Sheila Underwood wanted nothing more than to accompany her 5-year-old daughter, Jocelyn, to her first day of kindergarten at Madison Elementary School.

Instead, the Westland mother ended up in labor early Thursday, giving birth to new son Jamison just hours before Jocelyn started school.

"She was sitting there going into labor and saying how she was going to miss Jocelyn's first



Lacie Morgan, 5, smiles for her mother on the first day of kindergarten at Madison Elementary School.

Jocelyn Underwood, 5, hangs onto her grandfather, Jerry Judkins, on her first day of kindergarten.

Last-minute addition of adult ESL classes worries grade school parents

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

The relocation of Livonia Public Schools' English as a Second Language adult program from its former home at Dickinson Center into two elementary schools, and the lack of communication about the shift, spurred concern among parents.

Just days before the start of the school year, one of those parents, Joy

Orlich, transferred her second grader from Washington Elementary to another school after she discovered two adult ESL classes would be offered there during regular school hours.

"I just did not feel safe putting my child in that environment," she said.

It wasn't an easy decision to make, she said. Orlich called it "disheartening" to take her child away from her friends and

home school.

"It's like trying to pick between a rock and a hard place," she said Thursday.

The ESL program was moved to Washington and Johnson elementary schools after the district agreed to lease its former home, Dickinson Center, to The Academy of Broadcast Arts. That lease is expected to bring in \$1 million a year for five

PLEASE SEE WORRIES, A4

Pizza delivery worker robbed at gunpoint

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland police are seeking tips to help them solve an armed holdup that happened Tuesday night, when two bandits wearing Halloween masks robbed a pizza delivery worker.

No shots were fired and no one was injured during the robbery that occurred when a bogus pizza order was called in for Ravenscrest Condominiums, on Newburgh Road south of Marquette, police Sgt. David Heater said.

"Someone called in an order to an address on Ravenscrest Lane, and when the delivery driver arrived he was immediately

approached by two male suspects wearing Halloween masks," he said. "He never even got out of his car. They ran up to the driver's door."

"One of the perpetrators did have a gun," Heater said. "He pointed it at the driver's head and demanded money. They also took the driver's cell phone."

The bandits fled on foot after robbing the Toarmina's Pizza driver of \$21. Heater said delivery workers usually carry little money because they are easy targets for robberies.

"Typically, for that reason they don't carry a lot of money," he said. "Most of the pizza places caution their drivers not to carry much

money on them."

The Toarmina's worker drove to the Westland police station, less than two miles away, after he was robbed.

The Ravenscrest address used for the pizza order is a legitimate address, Heater said, but police don't believe the resident had any involvement in the robbery.

"Both suspects were wearing Halloween masks, so we've got nothing on them other than there were two males," Heater said.

Anyone who has information about the robbery is urged to call the Westland Police Department at (734) 722-9600.

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INDEX

APARTMENTS	E8
AUTOMOTIVE	F2
CROSSWORD PUZZLE	E5
COMMUNITY LIFE	C1
HEALTH	C6
JOBS	D2
NEW HOMES	E2
OBITUARIES	C4
PERSPECTIVES	A7
REAL ESTATE	E4
SERVICE GUIDE	E9
SPORTS	B1

Coming Thursday in Filter

Jazz jam
The Detroit International Jazz Festival returns bigger and better

8.6/8

State report card: Livonia schools earn A's, B's, 1 C

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Like any A and B student, Livonia Public Schools earned a report card with some bragging rights, according to the Michigan Department of Education.

The school district, which serves northern Westland, received the final word on the state's Education Yes! Report Card grades Aug. 16, coming in with 12 A's, 15 B's and one C. "We did do relatively well," said Supt. Randy Liepa. "It's a rather complex, confusing process."

Making the A-list this year were Adams, Buchanan, Cass, Hoover, Hull, Kennedy, Roosevelt, Tyler, Washington and Webster elementary schools, and Frost and Holmes middle schools.

Coming in with solid B's were: Cleveland, Coolidge, Cooper, Garfield, Grant, Johnson, McKinley, Nankin Mills, Randolph and Taylor elementary schools, Emerson and Riley middle schools and all three high schools; Churchill, Franklin and Stevenson.

Only Hayes Elementary School earned a C. According to the report card, the grade was largely due to a drop in MEAP scores at Hayes and the resulting failure to progress to the designated improvement level in 2004-2005.

"Although Hayes did receive a C grade for the Education Yes! Report Card, we are pleased with the progress we are making," said Linda Minsterman, principal. "We do have an extensive school improvement plan and it has resulted in progress."

Charlotte Worthen, director of instruction, said the state-designed grading process rests on a familiar letter scale of A, B, C, D and F. Grades for school buildings are based largely on students' performance on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests. Two-thirds of the grade hinges on the average MEAP scores over three years, along with the measure of achievement change on the tests. The final third of the grade is based on a self-assessment process which accounts for teacher training, school facilities, curriculum alignment and more.

From those components, scores are calculated and categorized into letter grades.

At the same time, the federal government released results of adequate yearly progress, or

AYP, for public school districts. It is another facet of the No Child Left Behind Act and is primarily based on meeting annual performance goals on math and English Language Arts MEAP tests. Those targets increase incrementally each year.

By 2014, NCLB requires all students to perform at one of the two highest levels of the MEAP exam, denoted as meets or exceeds state's standards. To meet AYP school districts must also maintain an attendance rate of 85 percent or higher at the elementary and middle school levels, and a student graduation rate of 80 percent or higher in high schools.

Also, 95 percent of all students must take the MEAP exam. Failure to meet any one of those requirements can cost a district its AYP status.

Then, calculations are repeated for subgroups of students. A subgroup is composed of 30 or more students in one school who fall into a particular category - including students of a specific race, having a disability, limited English proficiency or those who are economically disadvantaged. "Each subgroup also needs to meet the criteria," said Worthen.

Not only did each Livonia Public school make AYP, but the district as a whole also achieved the status.

Rob Freeman, trustee, noted that over the years those AYP objectives will continue to rise. The percentages of attendance rates and graduation rates will increase as soon as 2008.

Board President Dan Lessard commended administrators for their efforts. He also said looking ahead to 2014, it's hard to believe it will be possible for any district to achieve the 100 percent goal of students performing at the highest levels of the MEAP.

"One student and we have become a failure," Lessard said. "To me, it's a recipe for disaster... It creates unrealistic expectations."

Administrators reiterated that these are only a few ways of measuring student's success. The district also accounts for classroom work, and state and local benchmark testing, for example.

"These are just two measures in regard to how students are doing in school," said Liepa. "We look at a lot of different things and try and paint a picture of how we are doing."

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Back-to-school health checks help show off center

As youngsters head back to school, it's time to get them health physicals and even dental checkups. Spectrum Human Services Child Center on Joy Road west of Inkster held an open house Wednesday offering those services free Wednesday.

About 50 youngsters from the area joined those youngsters who attend the 24-hour day care operation at the child center to be examined by Livonia Dr. Todd Marcus and dentist Dr. Mike Swedo, who both donated their time that day.

"We're a nonprofit," explained Barbara Fowkes, chief operating officer of Spectrum's Child Center, "and it always seems like we're stretching out our hands and needing help and support. This was one way to give back to the community."

The child center opened in January of 2004. It's able to take in 80 children at one time and it's one of the few in the area that operates day and night, allowing single mothers or parents who work afternoons and evenings a place for child care, according to Roger Swanger, president and CEO of the child center's parent corporation, Spectrum Human Services.

The corporation also pro-



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dr. Todd Marcus of Livonia, who volunteered his time, examines the throat of Michael Tessmer, 5, a kindergartner at Nankin Mills, with mother Jodie Tessmer looking on during the Spectrum Community Services Child Center health fair Wednesday.

vides juvenile justice detention facilities and group homes and independent living arrangements for developmentally disabled youth and adults. Its child center offers full-time, part-time and drop-in

child care at various rates. Fowkes noted that this health checkup program was directed to let the community know what it offers. "...To get our name out there. We've had a difficult time trying to get our

message out to people," she said. Spectrum Human Services Child Center is at 28303 Joy Road. Phone number is (734) 458-8736.

AROUND WESTLAND

New postal hours

The Westland Post Office is extending its hours to make it easier to ship packages.

Starting Sept. 6, the Post Office will be open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

"We want to make using the Post Office quick, easy and convenient for our customers," Postmaster Charles Quinn said. "This is just another way we're working to better meet our customer shopping and mailing needs."

The Westland Post Office also recently installed an Automated Postal Center, which works much like an automated teller machine and allows customers to buy stamps or mail packages using a credit or debit card.

For more information about postal services, visit the U.S. Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com.

Food drive

Skateland West, 37550 Cherry Hill, will have a canned food drive to help local families in need this upcoming holiday season. The food drive will start Sunday, Sept. 11, and continue every Sunday through December during Skateland's 1:30-3:30 p.m. skating session.

Every skater who brings a canned good will get in for \$1, compared to regular admission of \$3.50.

Skate rental and inline rental are separate. All canned goods will be donated to The Salvation Army.

For more information call (734) 326-2802.

Rah, rah

The Westland Stars Cheer & Dance Team will have tryouts 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29, at the Bailey Recreation

Center. In the meantime, cheerleading clinics will be offered 6-8:30 p.m. on Sept. 8, 15 and 22, also at the Bailey Center, behind Westland City Hall on Ford Road east of Newburgh.

The program costs \$5 per class or \$25 per month. Coaches will be Wayne-Westland teacher and former cheerleader Toni Lay, former high school dancer and college cheerleader Keri Morton and Junior Olympic champion dancer and high school cheerleader Jillian Wehrheim.

For more information call (734) 722-7620.

Blood drive

The Bova VFW Post 9885 will host a blood drive 2-8 p.m. Monday, Aug. 29, at the post hall, 6440 N. Hix, Westland.

Walk-in-ins are welcome, although appointments are strongly recommended.

Due to the large number of afternoon appointments at the June blood drive, some walk-ins had to be turned away.

To schedule an appointment, call the post at (734) 728-3231, post surgeon Terry Dana at (517) 521-5646 or blood drive chairman Larry Tebor at (734) 377-8329 and leave your name, telephone number and desired appointment time.

All donors will be placed in a drawing for three free games of bowling at Vision Lanes on Ford Road in Westland.

Preschool sign-ups

The Willow Creek Co-op Preschool is now enrolling for the 2005-2006 school year. It offers parent-tot and two-, three- and four-year programs. Call (734) 326-0078.

Rewards program

Shoppers at Westland Shopping Center have until

today (Sunday) to take advantage of the back-to-school cotton promotion that offers the opportunity to receive \$25 towards the purchase of a new pair of denim jeans.

While supplies last, shoppers need only present receipts from cotton merchandise purchases totaling \$200 or more to the Westland Customer Information Booth to receive the \$25 mall certificate good towards a new pair of jeans.

The shopping center is at Warren and Wayne Road in Westland. For more information, call the Customer Information Center at (734) 421-0291.

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 LFDDean@aol.com.

5th Annual Benefit

Keith's Muffler & Brakes will hold its fifth annual car and motorcycle show for the benefit of the American Cancer Society and breast cancer research at 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 4, at the Westland Auto Mall, 1208 N. Wayne Road, Westland.

In addition to cars, trucks and motorcycles on display, there will be a 50/50 raffle, music, hot dogs, pop and popcorn available.

The benefit starts at 10 a.m. For more information, call (734) 722-7900.

Helping out

Members of Grange 389 will be helping the Plymouth Oddfellows with a fund-raiser and membership drive Friday-Saturday, Sept. 9-10.

Friday evening, the organization will be holding a spaghetti dinner 5-7 p.m. at the Oddfellows Hall, 344 Elizabeth, Plymouth.

And on Saturday, they will be selling fresh doughnuts 9-11 a.m. and holding a flea market 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The cost is \$35 for a 10-by-10-foot space.

For more information, call Sharon at (734) 722-4857.

Medicare seminar

Bruce Kaufman, the president of Supplemental Health Benefits Agency, and Stacy Smith, consultant pharmacist with Specialized Pharmacy Services, will speak about Medicare Part D in a program offered by Westland Convalescent Center on Thursday, Sept. 22.

The topics answer such questions as what is Medicare Part D, who is eligible, how can seniors can save up to 75 percent or more on prescription drug medications and when can seniors start using this program.

Participants also will learn how the federal government subsidy will eliminate monthly premium payments and what EPIC is and how will it affect their income.

The program will be 2:30-4:00 p.m. at the convalescent center, 6137 W. Warren, between Wayne and Central City Parkway in Westland.

People interested in attending can call Judy Bianchi at (734) 728-6100 to sign up.

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Planetdance the culmination of a dream for local dancer

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

There was never much doubt in Jeni Toby's mind what she wanted to do when she grew up. Ever since she was 12, the Westland woman had dreamed about owning her own dance studio. About a year ago, she decided it was time to take a chance, to spread her wings and fly, as she puts it. And she opened Planetdance in Canton.

After graduating from John Glenn High School in 1995, Toby did come to a crossroads of sorts. Having danced since she was a young child, Toby had some aspirations of becoming a professional dancer. But the dream of a studio was also never far from her mind.

"It was either go out to Los Angeles and try to make it as a professional dancer, or open my own studio. There's a million people with the same idea of going out to L.A., just like there's a million people who want to open their own studio," said Toby, 28. "I guess for me it was a matter of timing. It was time for me to spread my wings and fly. I figured if I didn't try I would have asked 'what if' the rest of my life. So I did it."

Located on Lilley, just south of Joy, Planetdance has grown over the course of the last year. Toby said about 100 dancers currently use the studio, and she is in the midst of fall registration.

Getting started wasn't easy, however. Toby said she brought a number of dancers with her from another studio in Garden City, and they went door to door, delivering fliers to residents in the area, letting them know about the new studio.

Toby attributes the studio's success to the fact that she brings in renowned dance instructors from all over the country, and that there is a certain spirit at the studio, something her dancers echo.

Molly Howard, 16, of Canton, is one of the studio's top dancers, and has done well in national competitions. Howard has danced at many



Jeni Toby of Westland opened Planetdance in Canton about a year ago.

Located on Lilley, just south of Joy, Planetdance has grown over the course of the last year. Toby said about 100 dancers currently use the studio.

studios, but thinks Planetdance is the best because of the atmosphere.

"We have people come in from all over, like L.A. and other places. It's a good learning experience for us," said Howard, who hopes to someday dance professionally.

Sandy Meyerhoff, whose 8-year-old daughter, Katie, dances at the studio, said it was the spirit factor that attracted them to Planetdance. Katie had been at a rival studio and competed against Toby's dancers. Both mother and daughter noticed the exemplary conduct of the Planetdance dancers.

"I just remember them cheering for all the competi-



Angie Regiani, shown here leading a jazz dance class, is one of five instructors at Planetdance in Canton.

tors," said Sandy Meyerhoff, a Garden City resident. "Basically all the girls were nice and supportive of all the other dancers. That said a lot to us when we were looking for another studio. It is a much nicer atmosphere here."

For Toby, teaching is a "labor of love." She knows she will never get rich, but the bonding experience with her students more than makes up for it.

"I love dance, and the art of it. When you're on the stage, you are your own person. I see a difference in our kids when they are under the lights. They become themselves."

Planetdance has five levels of age classifications, beginning with mini to 7 years old. Toby says a number of different styles of dance are taught, including jazz, tap, ballet, lyrical, and hip-hop.

Planetdance is located at 7281 N. Lilley in Canton. For more information, call the studio at (734) 414-0641, or visit its Web site at www.planetdancestudio.com.

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Times:

5K Run: 8 a.m. at the Ten Mile Road entrance

10K Run: 8:45 a.m. at the Ten Mile Road entrance

1-Mile Fun Walk: 9 a.m. at the front gates.

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Frozen drink gets red hot

Breeze Freeze rides healthy wave of success

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

When Chester Mazzoni's son wanted to start a frozen drink company a few years ago, Mazzoni staked him to enough money to get him started. But when Dad saw how the company — Breeze Freeze — was doing selling the same kind of frozen drinks everyone else has and did some research into other ways of doing it, he jumped in knowing the company could do better.

Results since then certainly bear him out. Starting from scratch in Canton Township five years ago, Breeze Freeze now has more than a dozen franchisees and some 400 accounts, enough growth to force Mazzoni to move into a new facility in Plymouth Township.

"The first six months, we were doing sugar water ... the same thing everyone's got," said Mazzoni, a Canton resident who owns a medical software company and is semi-retired. "I told them we're going to do it right."

Doing it right meant shifting to a drink that's 100 percent fruit juice, has 100 percent Vitamin C and contains no added sugars.

Doing it right also meant building up not only the list of franchisees and accounts, but also adding school districts as places to get Breeze Freeze out. The company now has drinks in Plymouth-Canton, Livonia and Hartland, and some 300 other districts in Michigan and as far away as Florida and Connecticut.

"Parents and administrators want to teach kids to be a little healthier, and (Breeze Freeze) is a healthy drink," Mazzoni said. "There's also talk about taking carbonated drinks out of schools, and someone has to fill that void."

Part of what has helped Breeze Freeze grow the way it



Chester Mazzoni, owner of Breeze Freeze in Plymouth, pours out a Blue Raspberry frozen fruit drink in the company's Plymouth Township office. Mazzoni said he hopes to add 100 accounts by year's end, and another 300-400 next year.

has is what Mazzoni calls a unique arrangement with its accounts. Rather than leasing the necessary machinery and then paying for service, Breeze Freeze actually sells the machinery — including arrangements for service — to store owners.

The price of the machinery is a little higher, Mazzoni explained, but the store owners aren't paying for service.

"Store owners like that because it's saving them hundreds of dollars in service, down time and lost revenue," Mazzoni said. "They don't mind paying a little more for the product if they get that kind of service."

How much has the business grown? Mazzoni expects another 100 franchisees by year's end, and is aiming at 300-400 more next year.

The quality of the drink is its own selling point, and Breeze Freeze took advantage of an untapped market, according to the firm's national sales director.

"There was nobody doing 100-percent fruit juice," said

Pat Janssen, who has been selling frozen drinks for more than 10 years. "Everything was sugar water. The industry needed some better products."

From its humble beginnings in a small Canton building, Breeze Freeze moved into a 15,000-square-foot headquarters on Concept Drive. The company manufactures its own product, and another 261 locations want Breeze Freeze products.

"We wanted to design and build our own building," said Mazzoni, who grew up in Dearborn and moved to Canton in 1978. "(But) This place will be too small for us in 18 months."

It's all happening pretty quickly, and faster than the owners ever thought it would. Breeze Freeze started out as a company owned by Mazzoni's son, Chet, and a friend.

Chet Mazzoni, the company's national service director, said he never really considered the idea of growth when he was getting started, and he's surprised the company has taken off the way it has.

Foundation aims to help vets

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

Matt Niemiec and Bud Bailey, at first glance, have nothing in common.

Niemiec is just 22 years old. Bailey is more than twice that age. Niemiec's energy is apparent as his rapid speech is punctuated with fast hand gestures. Bailey says he's grown tired. The only thing the two seem to have in common is that Niemiec wants to give his friend a little help and Bailey says he honestly wouldn't mind that at all.

Niemiec explained, sitting at the kitchen table in Bailey's Canton mobile home, how he started the United States Soldiers Foundation, a non-profit to help raise money for veterans.

"I knew I had to do something. We spend money every day to help people in other countries, and I want there to be some way to help our own," he said.

The foundation will help veterans who are having a tough time making it, but will also help raise money for equipment and supplies for training and service, and he hopes that there will be by the end of this year enough money for scholarships, Niemiec said.

At the same time, Niemiec was getting to know Bailey. Bailey is a veteran who served in the Navy from 1964-1966.

Today he's totally disabled, following a heart attack and open heart surgery 12 years ago.

"I haven't worried too much about how I live. I've been just trying to survive," he said. Bailey has been able to work a little here and there - a few hours at the pizza place that Niemiec owned until he sold it a few months ago, and every now and then as an umpire at baseball games - but mainly he and his wife have had to try to make do with his \$800 monthly social security checks.

Niemiec thinks no one who has served the country should have to live the way Bailey lives.

The idea came to Niemiec and a coworker, Jeff Barnette, about a year ago.

Niemiec's father is a civil engineer and went to Iraq for six months. He came home with stories about the country and the war and the hardships the soldiers endure while in service.

The fund-raising has been going slowly, and so far the foundation has raised just about \$2,000 - mainly from bottle drives and car washes. But Niemiec is thinking big. He's developing advertising and marketing ideas which he believes will help the foundation, and ultimately, Bailey.

Niemiec is not discouraged by the challenges of starting an unknown foundation, and instead looks to the future.

"You have to start somewhere," he said.

Contact Matt Niemiec at (313) 529-1180.

cmarshall@oe.hometownlife.com
(734) 459-2700

WORRIES

FROM PAGE A1
years. "It's a money issue," said Orlich. "For me, it's a security issue."

All of the Livonia Public School programs stationed at Dickinson were moved out of the building in July. In addition to ESL, which is a facet of Adult and Continuing Education, the shift affected the Shared Time Program, Community Education, and building leases like the Visual Arts Association of Livonia.

"Basically there was space available (at Washington and Johnson), where there wasn't any room at the high schools or middle schools," said Jay Young, director of community relations for the district.

Young said any vacant classrooms throughout the district were needed to accommodate programs formerly housed at Dickinson.

Shannon Colby the mother of a fifth grader at Washington said she too questions the move, especially given the small size of the school building and the proximity of ESL students to elementary school children.

building will wear a brightly-colored identifying button, which is similar to the procedure for school visitors who must wear a badge and check in at the office.

The original relocation plan involved moving ESL classes to Holmes Middle School, but increased enrollment this year prevented that option.

Administrators then looked to Johnson Elementary which has a similar floor plan to Holmes and a wing of space not used by students.

A teacher's workroom, PTA room and custodial space was used at Johnson to accommodate the ESL program.

The ESL classroom at Johnson will be located in an area apart from the K-6 population. At Washington, the adjoining ESL classrooms will have a separate set of restrooms. They are located near upper elementary classrooms on the west side of the building.

"We'll do what it takes to accommodate the school and be good neighbors," said Young.

The starting times will be staggered, Young said, so that elementary students should be in their classrooms and traffic cleared before ESL students arrive.

At any given time, up to 60 ESL students may attend classes at Washington, and up to 30 may attend class at Johnson.

Another parent, Debbie Cameron, and Colby complained that the district and school hadn't told parents far enough in advance about the changes. "My concern is, why

wasn't it communicated to the parents?" Cameron said.

Young said the move was not definite until earlier this month. Washington Elementary did not have a new principal in place until last week, Young said, so the information wasn't shared sooner. Letters to parents at both schools are on the way, he said.

Warren Frazer, formerly a Buchanan Elementary principal, has come out of retirement to take over Washington after Charlotte Worthen joined the central office staff as director of instruction.

"The Dickinson move had to be done quickly," reiterated Young. The move began for most Dickinson programs in late June, at the end of last school year.

Both Washington and Johnson elementary schools will have ESL teachers on hand on the first day of school - Monday, Aug. 29 - to answer any questions or concerns about the relocated program.

The program offers beginner and advanced classes in the morning and evening hours at Washington, while intermediate classes are held morning, afternoon and evening at Johnson.

Young noted that the relocation could foster cross-cultural learning opportunities for students.

"I view it as a positive experience," said Young. "We'll take every precaution to make sure everyone is secure and safe."

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"They can't pre-screen everybody," said Colby. "They're not going to do that. As parents, all we can do is hope that these people don't have a history of problems with kids."

Young said the adult ESL students entering either elementary

schools will wear a brightly-colored identifying button, which is similar to the procedure for school visitors who must wear a badge and check in at the office.

Another parent, Debbie Cameron, and Colby complained that the district and school hadn't told parents far enough in advance about the changes. "My concern is, why

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The Grodman family of West Bloomfield - Scott, Karyn, Adam, 10, and Jared, 12 - are doing their part to find a cure for diabetes.

Family raises funds to help find cure for Type I diabetes

BY SARA CALLENDER
STAFF WRITER

Jared Grodman barely notices the palm-sized device attached to his belt loop.

"I always have it on, so I'm pretty much used to it," the 12-year-old West Bloomfield youngster said of his pump that automatically shoots insulin under his skin when needed. "I even sleep with it on. I only notice it when I roll over on it."

Jared and his brother, Adam, 10, have been insulin-dependent nearly their whole lives. At 15 months, they were diagnosed with Type I diabetes, the most dangerous form of the disease.

While the boys rarely complain, their parents are doing their part to wipe out the metabolic disorder characterized when the pancreas stop producing insulin. Scott and Karyn Grodman founded the Grodman Cure Foundation in 1999 to raise money to find a cure for the diabetes and other childhood diseases.

Today, the foundation's total is nearing the \$1 million mark, with more fund-raisers in the works.

"This came about because of our own kids, but hopefully we're helping so many more," Scott Grodman said. "We want to help find out how to prevent any more children from getting it."

Finding a cure for diabetes is a must, the Grodman said. About 16 million people in the U.S. have diabetes - one of the most common, chronic and potentially debilitating diseases around. Diabetes kills 180,000 Americans annually and is the leading cause of blindness, kidney failure and amputations.

The Grodman crusade began with a neighborhood jog with 50 people raising \$1,500 for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and has grown leaps and bounds since then. At last year's fun run, Gov. Jennifer Granholm honored the foundation for its commitment to curing the disease.

This year, however, the Grodman's are putting the fun run on the back burner to try something different.

"The fun run has been very successful, and we're very thankful for everyone who participated and supported us," Scott said. "But we have a connection to Super Bowl tickets, so we want to have a raffle. We're also planning on raffling a car lease."

Funds raised by the foundation have been used to purchase laboratory equipment and supplies. The foundation also donates \$200,000 annually to Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Jared and his brother, Adam, 10, have been insulin-dependent nearly their whole lives.

The Grodman's weren't prepared for Jared's diagnosis in 1994. Born a healthy baby, Karyn began noticing Jared had an excessive thirst and was irritable at age 1.

"Diabetes doesn't exist in our family," Karyn said. "I was a new mom. I had no idea what was going on. I was really scared."

Scott Grodman, a podiatrist and surgeon who specializes in diabetic foot care at offices in Taylor and Ferndale, said diabetes is triggered by something in the environment, like a virus. Doctors told the Grodman's the odds of having two children with diabetes were very rare. Adam was also born healthy in 1995 but was diagnosed a short time later.

"Once a sibling is diagnosed, it becomes a hereditary factor," Scott said. "Finding the link between those things is the key."

Jared and Adam are both healthy and enjoy participating in sports like baseball, football and basketball.

Diabetes can be easily be controlled with a balanced diet and medication. They check their blood sugar often - even at school - by pricking their finger and count carbs before every meal.

It all comes down to planning, Karyn said.

"You just have to always be prepared," she said. "They have learned responsibility at a young age. They have to be careful all the time. Other than that, they're normal boys."

Although the boys make the best of the situation, it took Karyn more time to adjust.

"This has been their life for as long as they can remember," Karyn said. "As a mom, I wanted my kids to be healthy. I was worried. If you talked to me six years ago, I would have told you I was afraid to leave the house. I was afraid something would happen. Now the kids spend the night with their friends. I know I have to let them live their lives."

For information about the Grodman Cure Foundation, call (248) 360-6425.

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KINDERGARTEN

FROM PAGE A1

day of school," said Craig Wright, Underwood's fiancé. "She was crying."

Wright, Jocelyn's grandmother Mimi DeFranceschi and other family members stood outside of Madison's doors and waited for kindergarten teacher Manneetta Erspamer to welcome her afternoon class into the building.

"Jocelyn was very excited about coming to school," her grandmother said. "She's doing real good."

Although Jocelyn was eager to see her new brother, she had other life-changing developments on her mind just before she and other kindergartners started filing down the hallway to Erspamer's classroom.

Even though she hadn't yet had her first kindergarten assignment, Jocelyn already had formed an opinion about school.

"I like it," she said.

And what did she want to do there? "Play."



Madison Elementary kindergarten teacher Manneetta Erspamer talks with her students and parents to help determine which children get picked up and which ones ride the bus after school.

Erspamer warmly welcomed her students, including twins Aaron and Mackenzie Brown, 5. Their mother, Sandy Brown,

seemed relieved that her children weren't upset about starting school.

"They're not crying or anything," she said.

Aaron and Mackenzie's grandmother, Lavonda Robinette, held a camcorder and filmed the young ones as they walked down the hallway



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kindergartner Stephany Roibu, 5, gets hugs from her mother, Ela Roibu, before going into Madison Elementary School on her first day of afternoon kindergarten.

to their classroom. "This is a big day for them," Robinette said. "I'm taping every moment of it." Parents didn't get to go inside Erspamer's classroom. Instead, they stood outside of the room and peered through the glass as their children settled in, with few tears.

Erspamer's first order of business was to give name tags to all of her students. "I have to learn all of your names," she said. With that, the new school year - and a new life - had begun.

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Andrew Humenay, Plaintiff
v.
Shannon Humenay, Defendant
CASE NO. 05-2545-DM
SUMMONS

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/s/ Mike Bryanton
County Clerk

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Publish: August 21, 28 & September 4, 2005

Fall cosmetics event set

Crazy for cosmetics? Livonia's Parisian store at Laurel Park Place will host **TREND**, a cosmetics seminar featuring the latest in fall colors and styles for early risers.

Makeup mavens must register and arrive early as the event is set for 8-10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, at the Livonia store. Tickets cost \$15 and are available at any cosmetics counter prior to the event.

The seminar includes a continental breakfast and tips featuring the newest trends in fall beauty and fashion.

What's in Store

Learn to create sparkling eyes, ultra-glossy lips or creamy blushing cheeks. Update your makeup bag or revamp that fall wardrobe. Gifts and prize giveaways are included.

East entrance doors will open at 7:45 a.m. Sept. 10 for those who register. Beauty consultation appointments will be honored from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Parisian is at Six Mile and Newburgh in Livonia. Call the store at (734) 953-7500.

Stephanie Angelyn Casola writes about new and changing businesses for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. E-mail tips on your new, favorite Wayne County shop to scasola@oe.homecomm.net or call (734) 953-2054.

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Conflict 'over there' stirs passions in our community

This is the story of two men. They are both young, intelligent, passionate, convinced of the moral rightness of their positions.

They possess a similar self-assurance, an ability to articulate their views with conviction and an encyclopedic recitation of information.

They both live in Chicago. In a sensible world, they'd be friends.

But one is an Israeli, the other is a Palestinian.

Several weeks ago, I wrote a column about a meeting arranged for area journalists by the Palestinian Office-Michigan.

Two speakers argued that the American media gives more coverage to Israel and misrepresents the Palestinian position. Ali Abunimah, a Chicago-based writer with family in Palestine, presented an impassioned talk on his view of the history of Palestinian-Israeli relations since 1948 and the coverage of their conflict by the American media.

In the column, I supported the basic position that Americans need to know and understand the many conflicting views on this complex situation. For various historic and cultural reasons, American media probably do present a predominantly "pro-Israeli" view, though many American Jews and Israelis are as equally critical of certain American media that they feel is pro-Arab.

The column drew the expected letters of support from people in the Arab community and criticism from the Jewish community, most polite but some suggesting "anti-Semitism" in my comments.

Allan Gale, assistant director of the Jewish Community Council in Bloomfield Hills, called to say that if I presented one point of view, I should also present the other point of view. As the column said, we do not cover international news, but when speakers from Israel come to our communities, we cover them. When Palestinian speakers are in the community, we cover them. In this case, I used the meeting as a column subject, an opportunity to discuss the problems of trying to deal with such a complicated subject in a community newspaper that has both Jewish and Arab readers, but no foreign correspondents.

Gale asked if I was willing to meet with someone who could present the Israeli view. I said I was open to meeting with anyone.

A few weeks later, Gale brought Andy David, deputy counsel general of the Consulate General of Israel in Chicago, to visit the office. This was a couple of weeks before Israel's evacuation of Israelis from settlements in the Gaza

strip and West Bank.

The similarities between David and Abunimah struck me immediately. It has also hit me over the last several months just how much this conflict "over there" is stirring up strong emotions here, especially as Israel has moved toward the dismantling of Jewish settlements in the Gaza.

David argues that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's controversial decision favoring disengagement was essential to break the deadlock and move forward on the "two-nation" solution. David said the late Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat was a block to reaching a "compromise" that would guarantee the "peace and security" that Israel wants. He said the "problem" hasn't been with the Palestinian people, but with their leadership.

David and Abunimah, of course, see history through two different prisms, each real to them. The other view of "history" is tinder to flare up old resentments about the meaning of "occupation," "refugees," "land confiscation," "historic claims."

Both say they support the "two-nation" solution, but the boundaries and conditions of those nations are still matters of contention.

"Israel does not want control over thousands and tens of thousands of Palestinians," David said.

David is cautiously optimistic about the new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, usually called Abu Mazin. Abbas has been called "moderate" in comparison to Arafat.

"We don't know if he's more of a moderate and it doesn't matter if he's more of a moderate, the question is if he is a pragmatic person, willing to give up part of his dream as we are willing to give up part of our dream of the biblical Israel," David said.

David had strong views on suicide bombers and the constant violence that ordinary citizens face in Israel. He said the idea that "desperation" drives young people to become suicide bombers is wrong. He believes these young people are being used as pawns by terrorists, who know exactly how to create the most damage with the sophisticated bombs these young people carry.

As David argues, such violence needs to stop. As Abunimah argues, Israel needs to show restraint in its use of power and also control violence on its side.

Here we can only watch and hope that both sides work out a "two-nation" solution that provides real opportunity, stability, justice, peace, freedom and mutual respect. In a sensible world ...

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Hugh Gallagher

Schools - not state - should set starting dates

Happily, our corner of Michigan is bucking the national trend, which sees more and more school districts starting school before Labor Day.

Maybe it's because we've been there, done that, ahead of much of the nation. And we've learned from the experience.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that about three-fourths of the nation's public schools now start before Sept. 1. *The New York Times* reports that surveys by Market Data Retrieval, an education research company, found that the number of public schools starting last fall's academic year before Sept.

1 rose 11 percent, compared to those starting before Sept. 1 a decade earlier.

By contrast, 10 of Oakland County's 26 school districts will start classes after Labor Day, compared to four a year ago. Berkley, Bloomfield Hills, Clarenceville, Clarkston, Hazel Park, Holly, Huron Valley, South Lyon, Walled Lake and West Bloomfield all begin school Sept. 6.

There are several different reasons for the later starts, says Danelle Gittus, public relations specialist for the Oakland Intermediate School District.

For some, it's a move to save money.

For others, "They see the Michigan Legislature moving in that direction and they're doing it now so it doesn't become an issue," she said. "All really try to respond to their communities' needs."

Michigan is like 41 other states in which local school districts are in charge of their school calendars. It is a bargained item, negotiated with their local teachers union.

But that right could be in danger. The Michigan House of Representatives recently passed H.B. 4308, requiring schools to open after Labor Day. It has been referred to the Senate Economic Development Committee.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm hasn't taken a position on the bill, reports her press secretary, Liz Boyd. "We're not inclined to support bills on traditionally local issues," Boyd told me. "This has only gone through one House. It has many more steps. She (the governor) does have concerns about it."

The Michigan tourism lobby has been after the Legislature to act for years. It was not content with a 1999 compromise requiring school districts to offer at least a four-day Labor Day weekend.

Dan Musser, president of the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, recently testified before a state legislative committee. He maintained that over 15 years, "We have seen a decrease

of a little over 25 percent in revenues from the time Aug. 18 to Aug. 31."

My own late-August experience at the Homestead in the Leelanau Peninsula a few years back supports his stance. It was relatively quiet. Most of the children were preschoolers. And the activities center that the resort ran for children of patrons using their facilities was shut down.

But sometimes what goes around comes around. And that may be just what is happening in Michigan — without the need for the Legislature to act.

Walled Lake, Oakland County's largest school district, has been in the forefront of the move to the post-Labor Day school start. Last year, Walled Lake schools opened the day after Labor Day, as they will again this year.

Walled Lake approached it as part of a cost-cutting move that shaved two weeks off its 2004-05 school year. It also included increasing school days by 12 minutes and reducing the number of half-days.

Bloomfield Hills had a different reason. "Our parents have said they would like to have the summer extended to have more time with their children," said Jennifer Woliung, community relations manager for the Bloomfield Hills Public Schools. "This is our first year and we certainly are going to look at it carefully. We've had both supportive and negative reactions."

West Bloomfield schools had a third reason. The district, located smack between Walled Lake and Bloomfield Hills, admittedly bent to the peer pressure.

"Quite frankly, when Walled Lake did it a year ago and Bloomfield Hills came up with it for this year, it caused a lot of conversation," said Steve Wasko, West Bloomfield's assistant superintendent of community relations. "In the longer term, it might create some cost savings, but that wasn't why we did it."

"We communicated it widely and added some late summer programming though community education. We feel this will serve our community well."

By contrast, the Legislature's proposed one-size-fits-all approach ignores the varying needs of individual school districts.

Michigan tourism is all-important, but its success rests on a number of factors. The price of gas comes to mind.

State lawmakers should pull back on the school start issue. It makes a lot more sense to let it resolve itself, one school district at a time.

Judith Doner Berne, a West Bloomfield resident, is a former managing editor of the *Eccentric Newspapers*. You are welcome to comment by e-mail to jberne@att.net or to the editor of this newspaper.



Judy Berne

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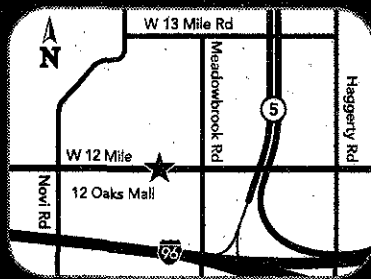
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County budget includes some job cuts, benefit changes

Following what Commissioner Phil Cavanagh, D-Redford, called "the toughest" budget meetings he's ever had to sit through, the Wayne County Commission unanimously approved a \$2.1 billion 2005-06 fiscal year county budget at its full board meeting Thursday.

"There was not a lot of revenue to work with," Cavanagh said.

Commissioner Kay Beard, D-Westland, said the Ways and Means Committee "worked extremely hard this year" to get the budget done.

"The budget is a living document," she said. "There's not a meeting where we don't make an adjustment to the budget. It's a constant juggling act."

Wayne County Executive Robert A. Ficano praised the commission for its hard work on the budget in the midst of poor economic conditions and huge cuts by the federal and state governments.

"For three straight years, we made salary cuts, eliminated waste, and streamlined operations. This year, we reached the painful point of layoffs, which everyone always hopes to avoid," he said. "Unfortunately, we have only to look around us to see that Wayne County is not alone in trying to navigate as steadily as possible

through some very rough waters. I applaud the commission for working with my Administration to make the tough decisions we needed to make."

The budget will save 35 union jobs in the county's roads division that were previously recommended to be eliminated. In addition, the budget includes new initiatives that are designed to cut expenses and generate additional revenues.

"This has been a painful budget process, but my colleagues and I have worked diligently to minimize the pain and set the groundwork for future fiscal stability and economic growth," said Jewel Ware, chair of the commission.

According to Commissioner Bernard Parker, chair of the Commission's Ways & Means Committee, 109 full-time and 92 seasonal jobs in the roads division were to be cut because of budget shortfalls. But 35 jobs were preserved when the Commission identified road maintenance contracts that could be cancelled. "We identified ways that jobs could be saved by having county workers mow grass or sweep streets instead of outsourcing these functions," Parker said. "We were hoping not to have any layoffs, but that isn't the reality of

According to Commissioner Bernard Parker, chair of the Commission's Ways & Means Committee, 109 full-time and 92 seasonal jobs in the roads division were to be cut because of budget shortfalls.

today's economic conditions."

One of the county's biggest budget challenges continues to be the rising health care costs for employees.

Cavanagh said he is proud of the leadership he took in proposing an across the board \$10 copay on prescriptions and a 20 percent copay for health insurance premiums. The commissioners approved the prescription copay and a 10 percent copay for the health insurance premium for non-union employees.

County retirees will now be required to pay a \$10 co-pay for prescription

drugs. This will result in a savings of \$1 million during the coming year. A special hardship provision will be put in place for those retirees who fall below certain income levels.

The commission also has recommended that non-union employees begin contributing to their medical insurance coverage.

In fiscal year 05-06, the county expects to save \$227,500 by having 449 non-union employees contribute 10 percent of their cost of health and dental coverage. Average monthly premiums will range from \$45 for an individual up to \$125 for a family.

The 2005-06 budget also includes investments in new initiatives.

The Children & Family Services department will invest \$600,000 on crime prevention and conflict management services for at-risk youth. The county's Community Management System agencies also will receive a \$2.4 million funding increase to cover increased costs associated with housing abused and neglected children.

"The investment we make today in our children will save the county millions and millions of dollars in future years," Parker said.

Other elements of the budget are

designed to create efficiencies or help generate new economic opportunities. These elements include:

■ A \$315,000 copier/center at the County Clerk's office that will significantly reduce the county's photocopying costs.

■ \$1,086,500 for a housing rehabilitation program that will help stabilize and sustain neighborhoods.

■ \$300,000 to open One Stop Business Centers at two Wayne County Community College District campuses to promote economic growth.

■ \$140,000 for a Tourism & Convention staff position to help market Wayne County to generate new tax revenues that can be invested in County services.

■ \$250,000 for a Grant Development strategy to identify new sources of public, private and foundation funds to support county programs.

■ \$116,250 to create a Jail Medical Billing Specialist position to increase the amount of health care reimbursements the county is entitled to for treating inmates.

The budget will go into effect on Oct. 1.

Lawrence offers popular weekend M.B.A. at Schoolcraft

Lawrence Technological University will launch its popular Weekend Master of Business Administration program Sept. 21 on the Schoolcraft College campus, according to Charles M. Chambers, Lawrence Tech president.

"We're delighted to partner with Schoolcraft College to make it more convenient for westsiders to earn Lawrence Tech's Weekend MBA," Chambers said. "The program is designed for experienced managers seeking to develop interpersonal, managerial, and leadership skills in preparation for advancement to executive-level positions.

In just two years of Saturday classes, students can earn a Lawrence Tech MBA close to home."

Classes will meet in the VisTaTech Center on the north side of Schoolcraft's campus.

"We are pleased and delighted to welcome Lawrence Tech to Schoolcraft," said Conway A. Jeffress, Schoolcraft president. "This is the first agreement, of what we hope to be many, with four-year institutions that will be tremendously beneficial to students."

"This new agreement with Lawrence Tech is part of that effort to make education more accessible to students by virtue of our central location, in an atmosphere that was built to facilitate learning," Jeffress said.

To learn more about Lawrence Tech's program, interested students are encouraged to attend one of the open houses Thursday, Sept. 8; and Tuesday, Sept. 13, in the Strategic Bay Room (VT425), Schoolcraft College VisTaTech Center.

The graduate application fees will be waived for those attending the open house.

An Important Message for Medicare Beneficiaries

In 2003, Congress passed the Medicare Modernization Act—legislation that will take full effect in 2006. Many of you have expressed concern over how this act will affect your Medicare coverage.

The short answer is, it's up to you. The Medicare Modernization Act is not a mandate—it simply provides choices.

- It does not eliminate or reduce your Medicare benefits
- It is not a "privatization" of Medicare
- You have a choice of options, including your current coverage
- For the first time, prescription drug coverage is offered

In the coming months, you'll be hearing a lot about Medicare options from a number of sources, including private health care companies. Before making any decisions, we encourage you to get the facts through one of the following unbiased resources:

- 1-800-MEDICARE (TTY#: 1-877-486-2048), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or www.medicare.gov—a federal government resource
- 1-800-803-7174, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. ET, Mon.–Fri., or www.mymmap.org—the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program
- Your local Area Agency on Aging

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