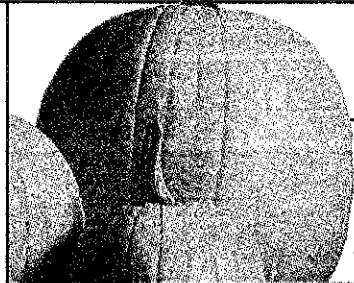




**U2** brings its sold out tour to the Palace  
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Tricky Halloween dishes to dress up your table - TASTE, PAGE B10

Great rooms and home theaters  
 Fabulous FURNITURE 2005 Section B

# WESTLAND Observer

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Family fun



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Novak, 3, of Westland reacts as one of the goats from the Whispering Pines Animal Kingdom petting zoo takes a cone from him during Turn Off the Violence night at the Bailey Recreation Center. For more photos see Page A6.

## Families turn out for Turn off the Violence

Hundreds of Westland families turned off violent television programs and video games last Thursday, enjoying a night out together. In all, 1,700 people attended the city's 11th annual Turn Off the Violence program at the Bailey Recreation Center. "It was great to see all the kids and families out there," Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said. "This is certainly one of the best turnouts we've had." "We had a big crowd everywhere," added recreation program Supervisor Margaret Martin. "The weather was absolutely perfect and for this we are thankful." Families enjoyed pumpkin-decorating, an animal show, a magic show and physical fitness challenges like football catch and barrel racing

as part of the Step Up to Health initiative that was added to the program this year. Ventriquoist Richard Paul also drew crowds for his two shows - "Duck Sense for Kids - No Bully Club" - offering helpful tips and suggestions on how to stop teasing and put an end to violence. "He was wonderful," said Martin. "His shows were very interactive, so he had a lot of people coming out of the audience." The Wayne County Sheriff's Department brought several of their horses and vehicles and representatives of the Westland Police and Fire departments also were there, distributing



Megan Prough of Westland and Avery Wilson of Wayne (right) take part in the barrel race, sponsored by Dad's Athletic Club of Westland, at the Turn Off the Violence.

PLEASE SEE FAMILIES, A6

## Rats!

### Residents ask city for help with rodent infestation

BY DARRELL CLEM  
 STAFF WRITER

A rat problem is escalating in a central Westland neighborhood long plagued by rodents, residents told city leaders Monday.

Concerns raised by residents of Dowling, near Ford and Newburgh, prompted Mayor Sandra Cicirelli to order city ordinance officers into the neighborhood to ticket those who refuse to clean up their property.

Pleading for help during a Westland City Council meeting, Dowling resident Heike Curylo described the horror of driving along Ford Road on Monday and suddenly noticing that a live rat had gotten inside her car.

Curylo told city leaders that she almost had an accident. "I am still shaking from the rat in my car," she said.

Dowling resident Daniel Beadle indicated that the rat problem has become widespread in the neighborhood, not far from Westland's city government complex. He said he had to kick a rat off his porch Monday morning while having his coffee outside.

"We do have a problem when they start jumping up on your porch," Beadle said.

Dowling residents last year complained about a rat infestation in their neighborhood. Their complaints had subsided after city officials issued tickets to force homeowners to clean up property that harbored rodents. The city ticketed some homeowners and at least one business, Knockouts Bar & Grill, for a Dumpster area that needed cleaning up.

Cicirelli pledged Monday that city workers will again canvass the neighborhood and, if necessary, issue a new round of tickets.

Councilman Michael Kehrer warned that the problem will persist unless property owners cooperate.

"We need to eliminate the food and shelter (for rats) from 100 percent of the people who live in that neighborhood," he said.

Curylo told city leaders that her yard and others have numerous rat burrows.

"I have hole after hole in my back yard," she said, pleading with city officials to "do something."

Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt suggested that the city consider hiring a rodent specialist to analyze neighborhoods and recommend steps to fix the problem.

"Enough is enough," she said, adding later, "We owe it to our residents to get a hold on this terrible problem."

Graunstadt voiced disgust after hearing of Curylo's rat-in-the-car experience.

"What a horrible thing to be driving in your car - and a rat," she said. "That's sick. It's bad enough to see one in your back yard."

Curylo, meanwhile, also said some city officials should be more sensitive to the problem. She said she was treated rudely on the phone by one administration official - a charge that prompted a response from the mayor.

"I apologize if you were treated rudely," Cicirelli told Curylo. "I don't tolerate that in my administration."

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## Stottlemyer: Budget, rezoning development are top issues

BY DARRELL CLEM  
 STAFF WRITER

Westland City Council incumbent Robert Stottlemyer cited the city budget, economic development and careful rezoning as the top three issues facing elected leaders.

Stottlemyer, 69, is seeking to defend his council seat in the Nov. 8 election after five years of experience, most recently a two-year elected term. He is one of eight candidates competing for four seats. The job pays \$12,150 a year.

On the budget, Stottlemyer said the city has weathered tough economic times but must remain vigilant.

"We don't know if or when the state may decide to keep or come for more of our tax dollars," he said. "We must continue to fight for our fair share of state-shared revenues."

On economic development, he said



Stottlemyer

the city must retain businesses and promote them with government cable programs, such as *Our Town on the Road*.

"As for new growth," Stottlemyer said, "our vacant land is at a premium. Vacant buildings should be strongly marketed. ... Rezoning should not be done lightly or hastily, giving in to developers just to fill a vacant piece of property."

He concluded, "We must guide new development in a way that is beneficial to the city."

Stottlemyer, a retired Westland firefighter, has been married for 49 years and has four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He is a Wayne Memorial High

PLEASE SEE STOTTEMYER, A6

Westland  
**ELECTION**  
**2005**

MEET YOUR CANDIDATES

In today's Observer, we conclude a series about the eight candidates competing for four seats in the Nov. 8 Westland City Council race. Voters will choose among four incumbents - Cheryl Graunstadt, Michael Kehrer, Charles Pickering and Robert Stottlemyer - and four challengers: Normie June Brazier, Lori Brist, James Davis and Robert Thomas. The top three vote-getters will earn four-year terms. Fourth-place finisher will win a two-year term.

## Thomas: City needs to protect shared revenue, build tax base

BY DARRELL CLEM  
 STAFF WRITER

Westland City Council candidate Robert Thomas cited as his top three issues the need to protect state-shared revenue, increase the local tax base and promote Westland in positive ways.

Thomas, 55, is seeking his first council term. He was Westland's longest-serving mayor at 12 years, before he stepped down four years ago.

Thomas is one of eight candidates campaigning for a \$12,150-a-year council seat in the Nov. 8 election. Voters will fill four council seats.

Referring to his top three issues, Thomas said the city has lost more than \$5 million in state-shared revenue. He said only a portion of that revenue is constitutionally protected.

"My solution would be to continue to ask for a constitutional amend-



Thomas

ment to protect more of our state-shared revenue," Thomas said.

"Second, Proposal A has seriously reduced the revenue that the city needs to operate. We need to bring more tax base into the community."

"Third," he said, "we all have to work together to keep our city in a positive light. We have to give people a reason to move to Westland and give developers a reason to want to build in Westland (in order) to build up our overall tax base."

Thomas, who is married, is a Wayne Memorial High School graduate who worked for two decades for the city's public services department before he was elected mayor. He

PLEASE SEE THOMAS, A6

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 Volume 41  
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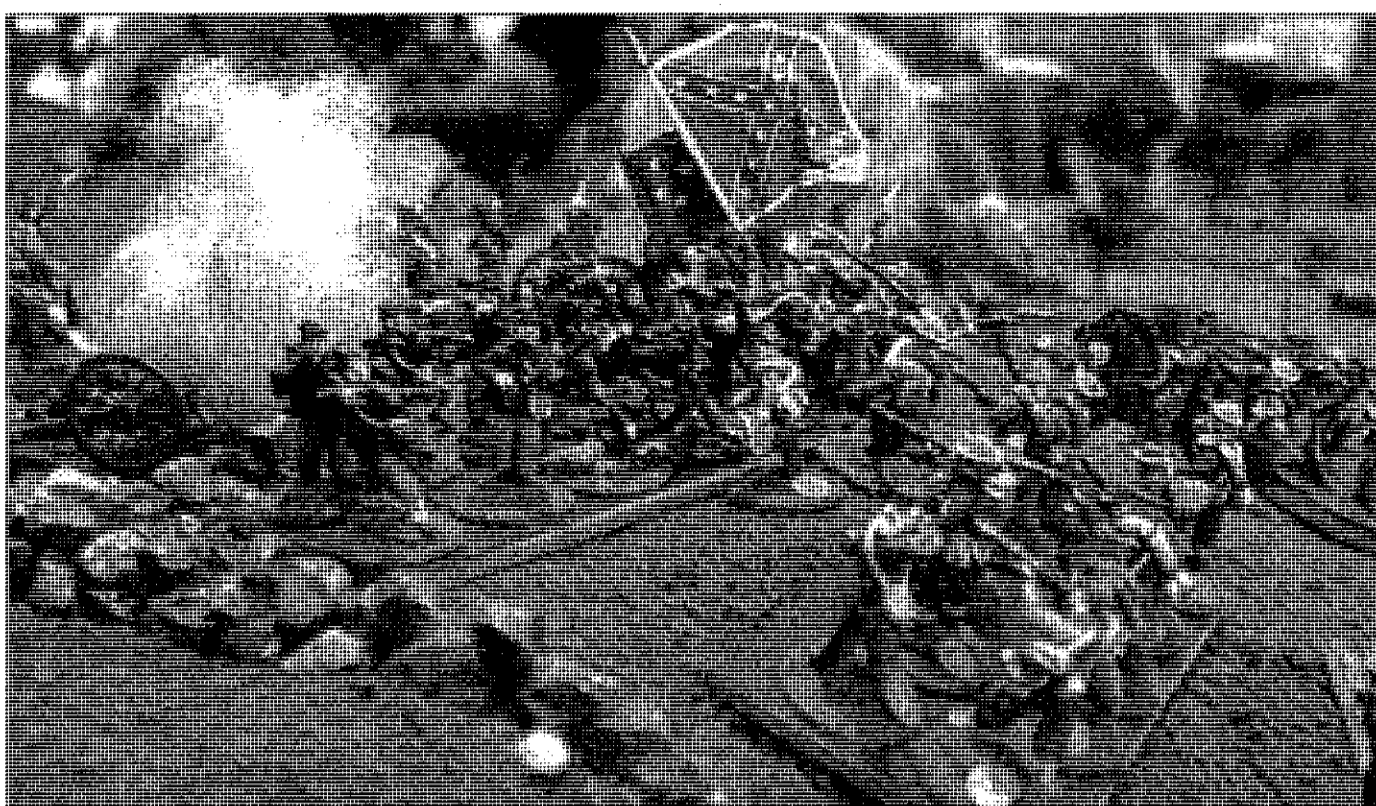
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**Coming Sunday**  
 in PINK

Cynthia LaMaide weaves yarn and fabric for sexy style



Confederate forces charge Union defenses in this recreation of Devil's Den at Gettysburg.

## Gamers recreate great battles on tabletops

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER

On Saturday, the British naval forces of Horatio Nelson will confront Napoleon's navy again — 200 years and a day after the famous Battle of Trafalgar.

This time the ships will be about an inch long, the Atlantic will be blue felt and the firepower of the guns and wind directions will be determined by a roll of dice. And this time Nelson's Day of Destiny might be his ruin. Miniature game enthusiasts will gather from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22, for "Pro or Con.2005" at the University of Michigan's Fairlane Center, 19000 Hubbard Drive, Dearborn. Doors open at 8 a.m. Admission is \$10. No one under 16 is admitted without an adult.

For Mark Magdowski of Garden City, the chance to change history is one of the appeals of military gaming. "I can change the course of history," he said. "A lot of the games play out as they happened, but there are a lot of times where you can see if you can change history."

The Pro or Con miniature games club meets weekly to fight the real battles of history and imaginary battles of fantasy on tables set with elaborate landscaping and meticulously detailed soldiers, armory, buildings and

ships. The 15 members come from throughout western Wayne County and from as far away as northern Oakland County. The invitational meeting Saturday will attract about 200 gamers from Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

Mike Erisman of Westland has been the club president for 15 years.

"I've always been a history buff. From high school I always liked the military, but never went in because of health reasons," he said.

Each week, he and other club members host battles in their homes, setting up the battlefields and array of forces as they were in history.

"I like being able to recreate a battle with pieces," Erisman said. "We have a scenario and can lay out road for road and building for building how it played."

Magdowski said he began playing military board games as a teenager.

"About 20 years ago, I saw them doing miniatures and I liked how you could dress up the table with figures and buildings. It had a more three-dimensional feeling," he said.

Magdowski specializes in the Civil War period and, like other gamers, does a lot of reading and research on the battles he recreates.

"It's a period of history I

always liked," he said. "My parents took me to Gettysburg when I was a kid. Also, the battles were in the United States."

For Erisman, it's World War II that fascinates him. He also enjoys medieval and Viking games, but he said the historical importance of World War II, combined with the array of air, land and sea forces, makes it the most interesting.

Erisman, facilities manager at Christian Day School, said he believes military games are a good way to learn history.

"We try to get kids involved in this and can teach them history," he said. "If we don't learn history, we are condemned to repeat it."

John Holcomb of Lake Orion, the club treasurer and Web master (proorcon.net), began playing Risk and other board games as cheap entertainment when he was in college and then "graduated" to the more sophisticated miniature games.

"We use maps, historical maps. In Gettysburg, we use photos, artists renderings," he said.

After a board is set, battle is engaged with the throw of dice.

Each action is assigned a specific number, but there are modifiers that take into account subtle shifts in power. Each game has a dif-

ferent set of rules and values, often modified by the game moderator.

"For instance, a German Tiger tank was superior to a Sherman tank, but Sherman tanks were more reliable and wouldn't wear out," Erisman said. "You have a basic roll and then you have modifiers for different situations."

And sometimes it's a bit like Vegas. "The dice can be really good for you or really bad," Magdowski said.

A game is usually set up to last about three hours, but Erisman said some games may be extended for several meetings or members will gather on a Saturday for a longer game.

On Oct. 23, the special "Pro or Con.2005" will be divided into three sessions. The first session, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., will feature games based on battles ranging from the Richard the Lion Hearts Crusade to the Black Hawk Down incident at Mogadishu. The second session, 2-6 p.m., includes battles from ancient Rome, the Civil War and a Viking raid to three World War II battles. The third session an auto racing game, the 100 Years War and a Samurai battle.

In addition to the game action, the event will feature a dealers area, a flea market, a raffle and a concessions stand.

## Observer wins press awards

The Westland Observer won a third place award for sports column writing in this year's Michigan Press Association Better Newspaper Contest.

Livonia/Westland sports editor Brad Emons won third place honors for best sports column. The judges wrote: "All of these did what a column is supposed to do, express an opinion emphatically and with factual and emotional backup."

"The O&E staff is honored to be recognized for our local news content and our commitment to community journalism," said Susan Rosiek, executive editor of the newspaper group.

"Staff members are committed to producing the best in local news, features and sports for our readers every Thursday and Sunday," added Rosiek.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers swept the general excellence category for circulation Class A. Judges cited the O&E winning editions for strong layout and design, local news, good writing and local news content.

The Birmingham Eccentric took first place followed by the West Bloomfield Eccentric in second and the Redford Observer in third place. The Canton Observer, edited by Kurt Kuban, received an honorable mention. Dave Varga edits the Redford edition, while Greg Kowalski and Larry Ruehlen edit the Birmingham and West Bloomfield editions, respectively.

The Livonia Observer also won a first place award for design. In honoring the work of page designer Jennifer Foley, the judges wrote: "Great use of pictures ..."

Other O&E award winners included:

■ LeAnne Rogers, first place, spot news, Garden City Observer.

■ Kurt Kuban, second place feature story, Canton Observer.

■ Brad Kadrich, second place, local columnist, Plymouth Observer.

■ Dave Varga, second place editorial writing, Redford Observer.

■ Tom Hawley, third place for news picture, Redford Observer.

■ Ed Wright, first place for sports column and sports feature, Plymouth/Canton Observers.

■ Stephanie Tardy, third place design, Troy Eccentric.

■ John Stormzand, third place for feature picture, Rochester Eccentric.

■ Dan Stickrad, second place for sports writing, North Oakland Eccentrics.

■ Mike Rosenbaum, third place for sports feature, Southfield Eccentric.

■ Jim Toth, first place for sports section, Troy Eccentric.

■ Sandra Armbruster, third place, editorial writing, Troy Eccentric.

■ Larry McKee, first place for picture story, Birmingham Eccentric.

■ Greg Kowalski, Birmingham Eccentric, first place, editorial pages.

■ Greg Kowalski, honorable mention, local columnist.

■ Wayne Peal, Southfield Eccentric, second place, editorial pages

■ Sandra Armbruster, Troy Eccentric, honorable mention, editorial pages.

■ Susan Steinmueller, third place, lifestyle pages.

The Rochester Eccentric took first place for best special section for "24 Hours: A Glimpse of Greater Rochester," a photo story which captured the greater Rochester area in May 2004.

More than 138 Michigan newspapers submitted some 4,500 entries in the contest

## Go to elementary schools tonight

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

### LIVONIA SCHOOLS

Rumors continue to fly surrounding the future of Livonia Public Schools. Parents in the school district are eager to find out if their own child's school might close or if redistricting will impact their family next school year.

Answers to those questions and more are expected today, Oct. 20, across Livonia and northern Westland. The district's demographics committee has — over the past year — examined ways to cut costs and maintain programs in the district. The group has looked at options including closing schools, altering attendance boundaries and reconfiguring grades. Their findings will be presented tonight.

"These meetings are intended to disseminate the committee's work and the best proposal they have arrived at," said Jay Young, director of community relations. "It's very important anyone associated with the school district attend in person or watch it on cable."

The informational meetings are set to run from 7-8 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 20, at all elementary schools in the district.

They will also be aired on LPS TV, which is Channel 15 for Bright House and Wide Open West subscribers and Channel 19 for Comcast subscribers.

Those who plan to attend should not expect an opportunity for questions and answers. Instead, visitors will be asked to fill out a feedback form, or send responses to an e-mail address. The committee will use this information to refine its proposal before it is shared with the Board of Education.

Upcoming meetings on the topic will be as follows:

■ 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1 — Informational meetings at Frost Middle School, Franklin and Stevenson high schools.

■ 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 14 — The Demographics Committee will present a proposal to the Livonia Public Schools Board of Education, 15125 Farmington Road.

■ 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21 — A public hearing will be held at the board meeting, 15125 Farmington Road.

A recommendation is expected to be presented to the Board of Education by the year's end. scasola@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 953-2054

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Circulation/Customer Service ..... 1-866-88-PAPER (866-887-2737)  
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### POSTAL PERIODICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Westland Observer - Publication NO. USPS 663-530 Published every Thursday and Sunday. Periodical postage is paid at Livonia, Michigan 48150.

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THE GOLD STANDARD IN SELF STORAGE

# City gets spirit with events for Halloween

Things that go bump in the night are making their presence known as Westland residents get ready for Halloween.

And there's plenty of things to do that are spooky and not so spooky to get into the spirit. For youngsters and the faint-of-heart, try the annual Halloween Walk Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 27-29. Youngsters also will meet some friendly Halloween creatures in the forest during the walk, sponsored by the Westland Parks and Recreation Department, Westland Civitan Club, Dad's Athletic Club of Westland and the Westland Breakfast Lions Club.

Families will be guided on a walk through Central City Park where they'll meet the Neighbors of the Forest, including Little Bo Peep, the Friendly Troll and many others.

The a non-scary, guided tour event created for younger children. Kids are encouraged to wear their costumes. Proceeds generated from this event benefit the Fun-4-All Fund that enables children from financially stressed families to participate in our various programs.

Tours start every 10 minutes, beginning at 6:30 p.m., and run through 9 p.m. The program runs rain or shine. If there is rain, tours will take place inside the Bailey Center, 36651 Ford.

Pre-registration is required, a tickets are available at the Bailey Center. The cost is \$3 per person.

The Westland Jaycees is spooking up the neighborhood with their haunted house in the east parking lot of the Bailey Recreation Center.

Ghouls, ghosts and screams await older children, teens and adults 7 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday and 7-10:30 p.m. Sunday-Thursday.

A special Friendly Haunted House event is planned for Saturday, Oct. 22. The haunted house will open one hour earlier to provide a friendly monster night for smaller children.

For more information, call (734) 637-8415. Kids also can get spooky with Mad Science of Oakland and Macomb Counties, in a Friday, Oct. 28, program sponsored by the Westland Parks and Recreation Department.

Count Eggbert and Countess Eggberta will be at the Bailey Center for a special science and magic show that includes the melting wicked witch, bubbling potions, flying eyeballs, spider web cotton candy, hover craft demo, vortex generators and more. And kids will need to watch for foggy dry-ice storms, bubbling potions, giant balls floating in midair, flashy reactions that go poof.

The show for kids age 10 years of age and under is 6:15-7:30 p.m., and there will be a show for those 7 years of age and up 7:45-9 p.m.



Youngsters gather around a bubbling cauldron during a Halloween Walk in Westland.

Cost is \$5 per person. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. For more information, call Mad Science of Oakland and Macomb Counties at (248) 293-0983 or e-mail them at madsocioakland@yahoo.com.

And for adults, the Wayne Ford Civic League is hosting its annual Halloween Bash at 8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 29, at the hall, 645 N. Wayne Road.

The bash, which runs until 2 a.m., includes spook-tacular sounds, dancing and karaoke. There will be first-, second- and third-place cash prizes for the best costumes. Winners to be announced at the witching hour of midnight.

Tickets for this B.Y.O.B. event are \$20 for individuals and \$35 for couples. Price includes all-you-can-eat buffet dinner, beer and snacks. Tickets are available by calling (734) 728-5010. Participants must be 21 or older to attend.

The Civic League also is hosting a Halloween Senior Dinner Dance at noon Sunday, Oct. 23rd. There will be spook-tacular sounds and dancing to the music of Solitaire.

Price includes buffet dinner, beer and wine. There will be first-, second- and third-place cash prizes for the best costumes. Winners to be announced at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members. Tickets are available at the door. Call (734) 728-5010 for more information. Participants must be 60 years or older to attend.

# Catherine's kicks off Toys for Tots

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

While most folks are thinking about kids and Halloween, the staff of the Catherine's clothing store is thinking about kids and Christmas.

The plus size women's clothing store at 34764 Warren at Wayne Road is offering a day of fashion, food and fun Saturday to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots program.

"What started out as a little thing has turned into a big thing," said store manager Judy Colorite.

The event runs 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and includes a fashion show and drawings for a variety of prizes.

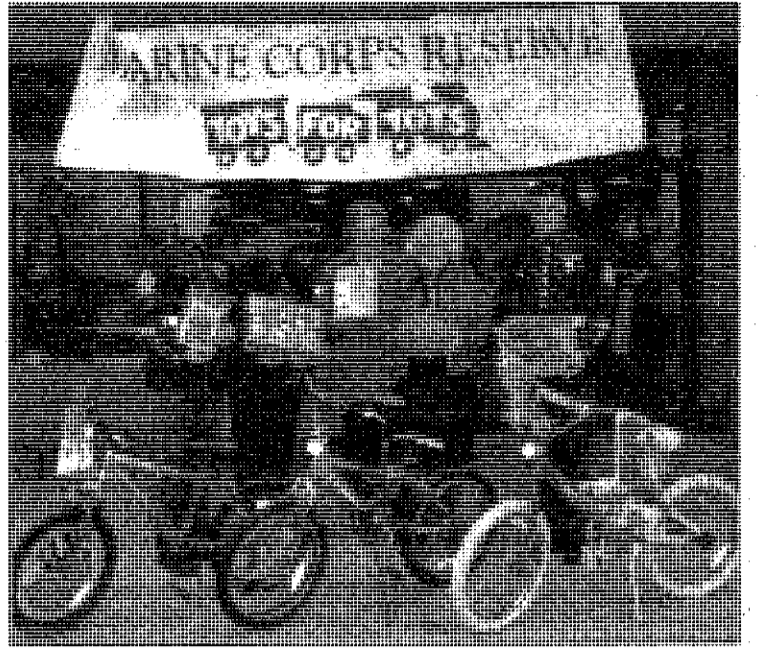
For every new unwrapped toy brought to the store, people will receive a ticket for the hourly drawings.

The prizes include Catherine's gift cards and gift certificates for Applebee's, Red Robin, Max and Erma's, Golden Corral, Papa Romano's, Famous Dave's BBQ, Marco's Fine Wine and Deli, Outback Steak House of Livonia, Baker's Square of Westland and Livonia, Flower King in Livonia, passes to Laser Tag of Westland, and arrangement from Flower Cents in Redford and movies tickets from Emagine Theater in Canton.

This is the third time the store has held the event. It first came last October and was followed by another in December. They were so successful, the story has now become an official Toys for Tots participant, according to employee Linda Rankin.

"We collected 500 toys last year," said Rankin, who's been a Toys for Tots volunteer for 15 years. "The day of our first show we had two boxes and we must have emptied them 12 times."

Customers will do informal modeling throughout the store from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and



FILE PHOTO

One customer donated bicycles during the October 2004 Toys for Tots program at Catherine's Plus Sizes in Westland. Showing them off were Marine Staff Sgt. Leon Belden (from left), assistant Cheryl Armstrong, sales associate Linda Rankin, store manager Judi Colorite and Sgt. Matthew Howe.

there also will be a bake sale with the money raised going to purchase toys for older children ages 10-12. Last year's bake sale raised \$300, some of it coming as donations from customers who didn't have an unwrapped toy.

"We're trying to get it going for the older kids who tend to get left out," said Rankin. "People see Toys for Tots and end up buying for tots."

And the amount of money raised will get a boost from the Catherine's store in Novi which will have a bake sale and add its proceeds to what raised at the Westland store, Colorite said.

Representatives of the U.S. Marine Corps also will be on hand to talk with customers about the program and help with parcels.

"Our customers enjoyed speaking with the Marines and even the men who came with their wives," said Colorite. "It turned out to be a delightful thing to do and now we're

caught up in it. "I told my husband now I know what I want to do when I retire ... Toys for Tots."

The Toys for Tots program got its start in 1947 in Los Angeles, Calif., when a group of Marine Corps reservists collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children. Now the official activity of the Marine Corps Reserves, Toys for Tots distributed 15 million toys to 6.5 million needy children in 2003.

Catherine's will have its Toys for Tots boxes out through Dec. 5, when the store will have a second day of fashion, fun and food.

"It's another opportunity for us to give back to the community that gives so much to us," said Colorite.

Catherine's is in the Westland Crossings shopping center at Warren and Wayne Road in Westland. For more information, call (734) 422-2527.

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\* Prices are per person, per night and based on double occupancy and subject to availability. Some restrictions may apply.

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<p><b>Michigan Red Delicious Apples</b> <b>69¢</b> lb.</p>	<p><b>Golden Ripe Pineapples</b> <b>\$3.99</b> lb. Whole, cut or core</p>	<p><b>Michigan Golden Delicious Apples</b> <b>69¢</b> lb.</p>
<p><b>Jack O'Lantern Pumpkins</b> <b>\$4.99</b> ea.</p>	<p><b>Halloween Ornamental Polished Gourds &amp; Mini Pumpkins</b> <b>99¢</b> lb.</p>	<p><b>Pie Pumpkins</b> <b>99¢</b> ea.</p>
<p><b>Samuel Adams Octoberfest Beer</b> <b>\$7.99</b> 6 pk.</p>	<p><b>Emmentaler Swiss</b> <b>\$5.99</b> lb. Excellent for sandwiches, fondue &amp; more. Delicious with wine &amp; beer!</p>	<p><b>Buffalo Bills Pumpkin Ale</b> <b>\$7.99</b> 6 pk.</p>
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# Pastor impressed with hope in Hurricane Katrina's wake

BY BRAD KADRICH  
STAFF WRITER

Maj. Bill Hogg thought he'd seen some pretty bad stuff when he responded last year to Mobile, Ala., in the wake of Hurricane Ivan.

But to twist an old phrase, Hogg, commander of the Plymouth Salvation Army, hadn't seen anything yet.

Hogg, back from a two-week pastoral visit to the Hurricane Katrina-ravaged Gulf Coast, said the damage caused by Ivan bore no comparison to the havoc wreaked by Katrina.

"I had seen destruction last year in Mobile, but this was much, much worse," said Hogg, one of four Salvation Army officers from southeast

**There was also something else that struck the officers, a determination among the victims to not dwell on what had happened to themselves, but instead focus on helping others.**

Michigan dispatched to Biloxi and Gulfport, Miss. "It's going to be 18 months, maybe two years at least before some things will come back."

The Michigan contingent was sent to the Salvation Army's command headquarters in Biloxi, but their actual work was more in Gulfport, some 20 minutes away.

They were sent on pastoral duty to provide emotional and spiritual care, and Hogg said there was plenty of need. He said they talked to "hundreds of people" daily, most who chose to ride out the hurricane rather than evacuate.

"The story was basically the same for a lot of them," Hogg said. "Some were saying, 'I don't know why I stayed. Next time I hear the word evacuate, I'm gone.'"

Hogg told the story of one man forced by rising water to climb a tree and hang on. As the water receded, he made his way down the tree. When it was over, he discovered he'd ridden out the storm some 38 feet in the air.

"The first question we asked him was, 'Do you believe in



Plymouth Salvation Army Maj. Bill Hogg estimated damage to the Gulf Coast would take "18 months to two years" to fix.

God?" Hogg recalled. "He said, 'I didn't before, but I do now. I did a lot of praying at the top of that tree.'"

The mission was the first exposure to a disaster of this magnitude for Capt. Matthew O'Neil, pastor of the church at the Wayne-Westland Salvation Army. O'Neil said although there was plenty of frustration, there was also a lot of hope.

"There were a lot of people who just wanted to tell their story, some who had come back for the first time to see their property, to see their home," O'Neil said. "There was a lot of frustration because things weren't happening fast enough, and some just needed to vent."

Hogg estimated some 60 percent of Biloxi will have to be rebuilt. What wasn't destroyed, he said, will have to be refortified. The word of the approach of Hurricane Rita spread more fear, although the storm did little more than dump rain on the area, Hogg said.

There was also something else that struck the officers, a determination among the victims to not dwell on what had



Salvation Army officers from southeast Michigan, including Maj. Bill Hogg of Plymouth and Capt. Matthew O'Neil of Wayne-Westland, met with victims at this help center in Gulfport.

happened to themselves, but instead focus on helping others.

"We're talking a 90-mile long, mile-wide stretch of nothing but destruction," O'Neil said. "We were down there to help them, (but) the awesome thing was people were asking how they could help us. It's almost unexplainable."

The resiliency of the human

spirit touched the officers the most. "A lot of people who had literally lost everything were working to help others get back to what you could call 'normal,'" Hogg said. "Even after all they'd been through, they still had hope and faith. To me, that was an awesome feeling."

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## INFORMATION CENTRAL

It's time to be fo' real, get a clue, and tell it like it is. Anything to do with being real will fly during Teen Read Week now through Saturday at the William P. Faust Public Library for sixth-12th graders.

Submit a rave review of a nonfiction book or a biography this week and the best written will win a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble.

How well do you know urban legends? Test your knowledge by answering true or false to ten urban legends on display in the Young Adult area. No spiders in the hairdo. These are brain teasers and if you answer correctly, you win a prize!

Are you camera happy? Then create a movie about "getting real" and enter it into our "Make Your Own Movie Contest." It must be original and true. It may or may not use audio. It can last from 1-10 minutes. Be creative and have fun! This is your chance to make a statement.

All entries will be aired on Westland's cable channel and the winner will receive a \$100 Best Buy gift certificate! Pick up a registration packet at the Reference Desk.

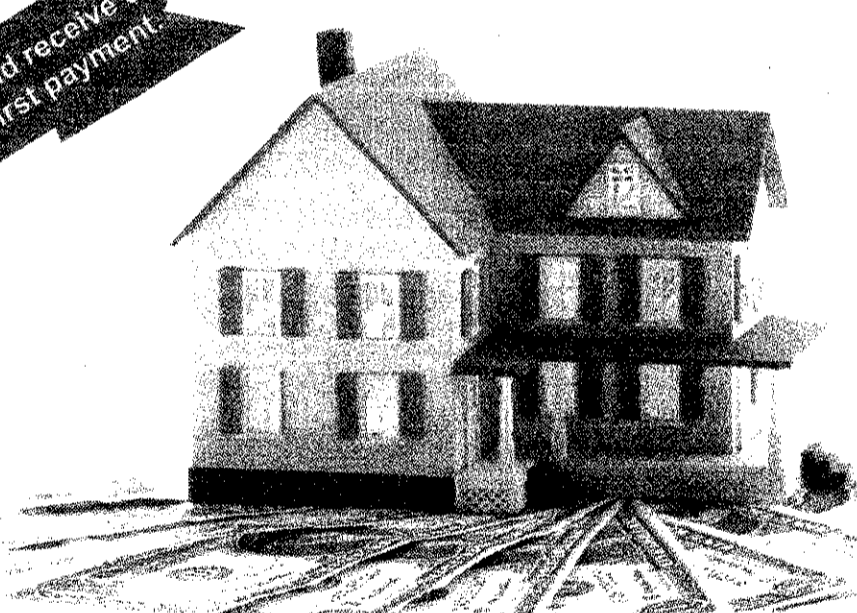
This Teen Read Week also features our first-ever Library Lock-In, open only to Teen Advisory Board members (seventh grade and above). Teens who submitted an essay had the opportunity to win a chance to spend the night in the Library on Saturday night. Got questions? Call the library at (734) 326-6123 to get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

Microsoft Word for Beginners: 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 22. No registration required.

Preschool Fair: 7-8 p.m. Monday, Nov. 7. Do you have a child about to enter preschool? Learn more about area preschools at our Preschool Fair. Several area preschools will have their representatives available to relay information and answer your questions. No registration required. Call the Children's Services Department for more information at (734) 326-6123.

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

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**For the Record** appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric* Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in *Passages* on page C10.

<p><b>B</b></p> <p><b>Timothy L. Baldwin</b> Baldwin, 67, died Aug. 27.</p> <p><b>Jerome N. Bixman</b> Bixman, 79, died Oct. 11.</p> <p><b>Mary Jean Bondy</b> Bondy, 79, of Royal Oak, formerly of Livonia, died Oct. 17.</p> <p><b>C</b></p> <p><b>Eleanor D. Crane</b> Crane, of Bloomfield Hills, died Friday, Oct. 14.</p> <p><b>D</b></p> <p><b>Alfred Meigs Davock</b> Davock, 93, died Oct. 11.</p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>James Clayton Hayes</b> Hayes, 79, of Waterford, died Oct. 16.</p> <p><b>Richard Kenneth Hersh</b> Hersh, 72, of Plymouth, died Oct. 12.</p> <p><b>Clinton Robert Hogan</b> Hogan, 58, of Howell, died Oct. 16.</p> <p><b>Ruth B. Vanden Heuvel</b> Heuvel, 74, of Farmington, died Oct. 16.</p> <p><b>J</b></p> <p><b>Pearl C. Janke</b> Janke, 64, died Oct. 18.</p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>Nicholas T. Markes</b> Markes, died Oct. 15.</p> <p><b>R</b></p> <p><b>Grace Martha Rowe</b> Rowe, 92, of Birmingham, died Oct. 13.</p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p><b>Eleanor Sandey</b></p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Michael A. Tucci</b> Tucci, formerly of Birmingham, died Oct. 16.</p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>James E. Watson, M.D.</b> Watson, 76, of Beverly Hills, died Oct. 13.</p> <p><b>Y</b></p> <p><b>Carolyn Collins Young</b> Young died Oct. 13.</p>
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AROUND WESTLAND

Fall concert

Wayne Memorial High School Instrumental music students will present their Fall Concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, in the high school's Stockmeyer Auditorium. The concert will include all bands and orchestra.

The public is welcome. The admission is free.

Final tally

A rock concert staged Sept. 25 in Westland to help Hurricane Katrina victims has netted \$11,600.

Dean Boucher, president of Musicians for Relief, was accompanied by other organizers Monday as he turned over a check during a Westland City Council meeting.

The group also gave city officials framed pictures of the 12-hour concert, which had low attendance due to heavy rains.

After the concert, Boucher had predicted that the amount raised was \$6,000 to \$8,000. On Monday, however, he said the amount was \$11,600 after expenses.

Several bands including

Rare Earth played the concert in Central City Park.

Job well done

Two former leaders who helped to fuel redevelopment along the commercial corridors of Ford and Wayne roads were honored Monday for their work to spruce up Westland.

Local businessmen Kim Shunkwiler and Doug North - former members of the city's Downtown Development Authority board of directors - were recognized for their efforts during a Westland City Council meeting.

North couldn't attend, but Shunkwiler accepted their awards from Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and Councilman William Wild. The mayor praised the men who stepped down earlier this year, after serving since 1996.

The DDA has led projects ranging from new, decorative street lights to convincing businesses to spruce up their facades.

Town Hall

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli will have her next Town Hall meet-

ing at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27, at Hayes Elementary School, 30600 Louise, south of Ann Arbor Trail and east of Merriman. All residents are welcome to make comments or ask questions of Cicirelli and her administration.

Mark your calendars

As a fund-raiser for the VA Hospital and PAC projects, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Harris Kehrer VFW Post 3323 will be host a psychic fair with readings by Mystiques West 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 22.

On Saturday, Oct. 29 the auxiliary will conduct a chili cook-off and bake sale auction at 5:30 p.m. at the post at 1055 S. Wayne Road. Westland. Call (734) 721-9879 after 5 p.m. for more information.

On Saturday, Nov. 5 and 19, the auxiliary will be holding marathon bingos noon to 5 p.m.

Candy check

Halloween may be several weeks off, but parents concerned about their kids' candy can get it checked at 18th

District Court Halloween night, Oct. 31. The checks will be done 6:30-20 p.m. at the court, 36675 Ford, behind the police station. For more information, call (734) 595-8720.

Car donation

People with a car to donate can give it to Veterans Haven. The organization is accepting cars, running or not running, that are given to veterans to provide them with transportation to work, school of medical needs.

To date, the agency has given away more than 250 vehicles and three fully furnished mobile homes to needy veterans. To donate, call Veterans Haven at (734) 728-0527 or go to vetshaveninfo.org on the Internet.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Church is having a Las Vegas Party 8 p.m. to midnight Friday, Oct. 21, at the church, located on the southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

There will be blackjack, table games, hourly raffles and non-

smoking Blackjack rooms. Admission will be \$7 and includes food (hot dogs, potato salad), pop and potato chips. Beer available at \$1 per glass. For more information, call (734) 427-5150.

St. Bernardine Men's Club also is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, Dec. 16, Jan. 6, Jan. 13, Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.

Participants don't need a partner to play. Snacks and soft drinks are included in the \$5 charge. Games start at 7:30 p.m.

Craft show tables

Tables and/or space is still available for an indoor fall craft show Saturday, Nov. 19, at the Wayne Ford Civic League, 1645 N. Wayne Road, Westland. Tables and/or space costs \$35 for a 12-foot table/area. Electricity is an additional \$5. Call (734) 728-5010 and speak with Terri for more information.

Table rental is available at the cost of \$20 for the annual St. Theodore Confraternity of Christian Women's craft show

Saturday, Oct. 22.

The show will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Social Hall, 8200 Wayne Road, Westland. Call Mary at (734) 425-4421 (voice mail #10) to reserve a table.

Crafters are needed for the annual Holiday craft show at Hawthorne Valley on Nov. 27. For information, call Sue or Paul at (734) 844-3128.

Crafters are still needed for the 19th annual Delta Kappa Gamma juried show on Saturday, Oct. 15. The show will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at West Middle School, 44401 W. Ann Arbor Trail in Plymouth Township. Call Jan at (734) 844-1707 or e-mail to theways@comcast.net for more information.

Edison Elementary will have its Holiday Bazaar 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16, at the school, 34505 Hunter at Wildwood, Westland. There will be 25 vendors, door prizes and bake sale. Admission is \$2. Children will not be allowed in the show area, however, there will be baby-sitting and crafts for available. Proceeds will benefit the Edison PTO.

Back Pain?

Westland, MI - According to a recently released back pain relief report, most back pain sufferers have no idea how to eliminate their pain. Some use heat, other ice. From sleeping on the floor, to pillows underneath the legs, back pain relief techniques vary. But thanks to a free report, local back pain sufferers finally know exactly what to do. To get a copy of the free "Back Pain Relief Report", call toll-free, 1-888-744-2225. (Toll-free, 24 hour recorded message)

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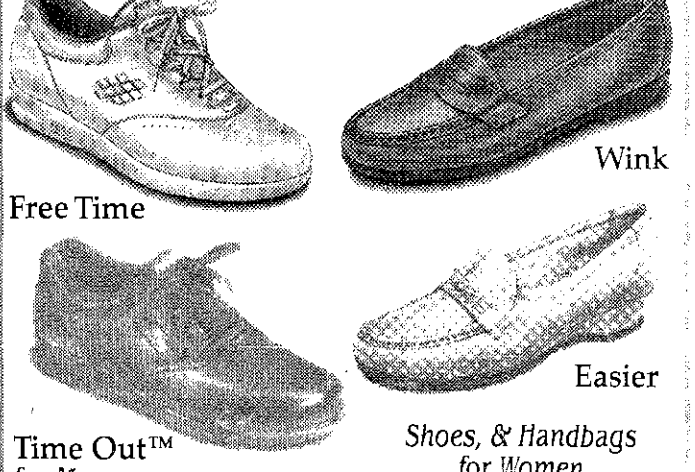
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**FAMILIES**

FROM PAGE A1

prizes, donated by Westland McDonald's stores, for kids who turned in their signed pledges to turn off the violence.

According to Parks and Recreation Director Robert Kosowski, the event was set up as a midway this year with families able to move from activity to activity.

"It was really well done," said, praising the involvement of the Westland Rotary, Civitan and Dads clubs as well as the Westland Jaycees and Martin.

"What a great job Margaret did," he said. "A lot of people said how cool it was."

Westland City Councilman Richard LeBlanc commended organizers, including Parks and Recreation Director Robert Kosowski, for such a successful evening.

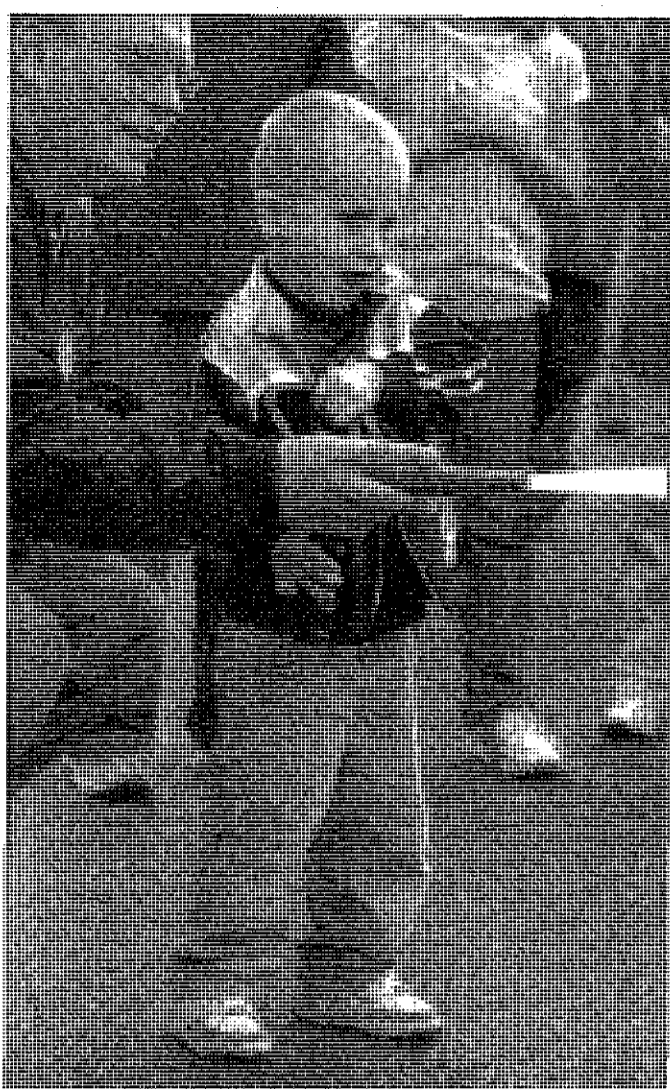
"It was a wonderful event," LeBlanc said.

Many teens attended this year to take advantage of open skating at the city's Concrete Jungle skate park.

"We saw lots of children and the inclusion of the skate park brought out more teenagers than in the past," Cicirelli said. "It was good to see so many teenagers there."

Turn Off the Violence is part of a national campaign aimed at getting families to shun violence and seek activities they can enjoy together. It's one of three-four activities offered each year for families and promoted through the Mayor's Task Force on Substance Abuse and Violence. The task force's goal is to educate the community about the detrimental effects of substance abuse and violence and provide and coordinate activities that help create a drug-, alcohol- and violence-free lifestyle among youth.

"This is traditionally a night that we offer so that parents can turn off television and bring their children and enjoy wholesome activities as a family," added Cicirelli. "I appreciate all the support we received from various community organizations and businesses that make this evening possible."



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Carson Hayes, 3, of Westland, with the help of Westland Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshall Chris Szpara sprays the fire hose, one of the many activities families enjoyed during the 11th annual Turn Off the Violence Night last week.



Annie Butterbaugh, 7, decorated her pumpkin at the pumpkin patch, sponsored by the Grange 389.

**STOTTLEMYER**

FROM PAGE A1

School graduate.

He chaired the city's ethics committee and co-founded S.P.A.R.K. (Sports, Parks and Recreation for Kids) Inc. He has been involved with the city's skate park, many fundraisers, as council liaison with the Downtown Development Authority, the Detroit Parade Co., the Michigan State Fair and Goodfellows. He initiated a Wayne County garden program and was a former 4-H leader with older youth.

Here's how Stottlemeyer responded to other questions posed by the *Observer*:  
**Why are you running for a Westland City Council seat, and what are your best qualifications?**

This city is important to me and my family. I have lived and worked in Westland for 64 years and have a knowledge of how the city functions both now and in the past. I have five years of council experience and would like to continue using the knowledge and experience that I gained to benefit the city and its residents.

**If the city's financial position were to worsen and budget cuts became necessary, how would you trim spending?**

Going to our citizens for increased taxes should be a last resort. We, as a city, would need to avoid wasteful spend-

ing and work to find ways to stretch our dollars; apply for any grants that might be available; look at non-essential programs that would not greatly affect the residents if reduction or elimination is necessary. Before considering layoffs we should look at trimming services, such as leaf pick up; analyze cost of supplying bags versus pick up with vacuum; usage of city vehicles; pay freezes; etc., as examples.

**What can be done to attract new businesses and new residents to Westland?**

Review the restrictions or requirements placed on new construction or businesses - signage, building materials, colors, etc. Coordination between affected departments and contractors has shortened the process and time it takes to get from initial interest to completion of a project. We should always strive to be business friendly, and develop and enforce ordinances that will help maintain a clean attractive city while giving businesses some leeway for individuality.

**Many residents say the city needs to be cleaned up, and a new blight ordinance has been approved to help with that. Will it work, and how long will it be before residents notice a difference?**

I believe the new blight ordinance will help by lessening the costly and time-consuming

legal channels and shortening the time needed for demolition and cleanup of properties. This is not meant to hurt our homeowners, but to be used as a tool to help us rid the city of eyesores and unsafe buildings, therefore benefiting all of us. The efforts for this cleanup should not be limited to the central core of the city but to all areas. I can't determine at this time how long it will be before residents will notice a difference.

**How would you rate the city of Westland for the services it provides to residents - poor, average, above average or excellent? What improvements or changes need to be made?**

Westland is a great city - a place to put down roots and raise a family. We are above average, with much to offer our residents and visitors - public safety; city services; strong parks and recreation programs; churches and schools; shopping and restaurants; community activities; senior programs; homes to meet all needs and income levels.

We must continually work to keep what we have. We need to hold tight reigns on our available funds but as the economy recovers - giving the city increased funds - other projects could be considered giving first priority to filling police and fire vacancies.

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**THOMAS**

FROM PAGE A1

chaired the Conference of Western Wayne for two years.

Here's how Thomas responded to other questions posed by the *Observer*:

**Why are you running for a Westland City Council seat and what are your best qualifications?**

I want to be part of the decision-making process to move our city forward in a financially secure manner. I want Westland to continue to be "the Place to Be."

I feel that I have the qualifications necessary to be a good council member. I was fortunate to serve as the full-time mayor of Westland for 12 consecutive years and I put together 12 consecutive budgets, all balanced and with a surplus.

As mayor, I had to work with all the department heads of the city and in doing so I learned how those departments worked and what they needed.

**If the city's financial position were to worsen and budget cuts became necessary, how would you trim spending?**

The major portion of the city's budget is for personnel. However, the first thing I would look at is equipment to see if what is being requested is absolutely necessary. I would then look at personnel and see if there are any positions that

are not absolutely essential for the safe operation of our city.

I would look at any and all ways to trim spending before cutting essential positions. The city cannot spend more than it has each year. That is why increasing the tax base for our city is so important.

**What can be done to attract new businesses and new residents to Westland?**

I began the phrase, "Westland - the Place to Be." We did that to project an image of an up-and-coming community that provides good service and is a great place to live, work and grow. We have to give people and developers a reason to come to Westland.

We have to remain positive and project a good image. We have to make it easier for developers to build here. We should take another look at our ordinances and building codes concerning density and streamline our system so that it is easier to build in Westland than in other cities.

**Many residents say the city needs to be cleaned up, and a new blight ordinance has been approved to help with that. Will it work, and how long will it be before residents notice a difference?**

The biggest problem with enforcing blight ordinances is being able to follow up. I would suggest we break the city up into 20 sections. I would then suggest we have an

ordinance officer go from section one to section 20, spending one week in each section. That way, the ordinance officer can pinpoint the real problem people.

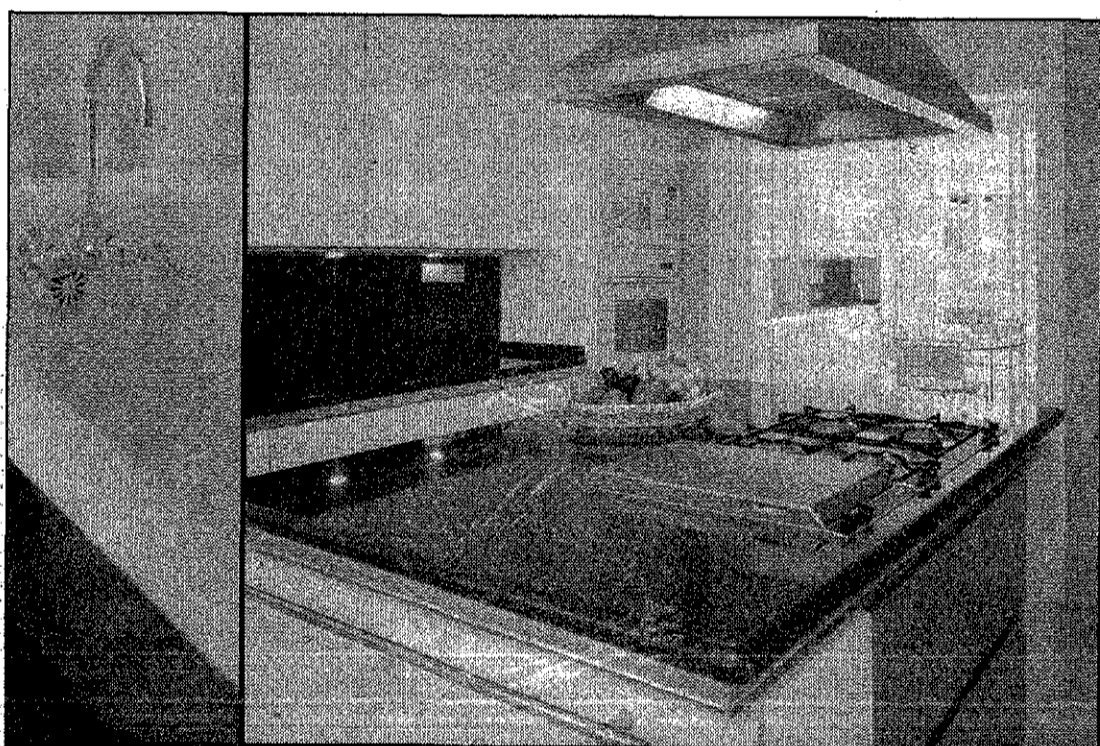
The other weeks during the year would allow the officer to work on the severe cases and follow up. We need to give the court the necessary information so that they can prosecute these cases and hand out maximum penalties for the worst violators.

**How would you rate the city of Westland for the services it provides to residents - poor, average, above average or excellent? What improvements or changes need to be made?**

Above average. I always believe there is room for improvement. Basic city services and police and fire services are very important to residents. We need to have good service to attract new residents.

We have more than 300 city employees, and we need each of them to act as ambassadors of goodwill when working for residents. One good experience between a resident and a city employee or official, and that resident will tell a dozen people. One bad experience and a resident will tell 100 people. We need to provide as much service as possible but also project a positive image.

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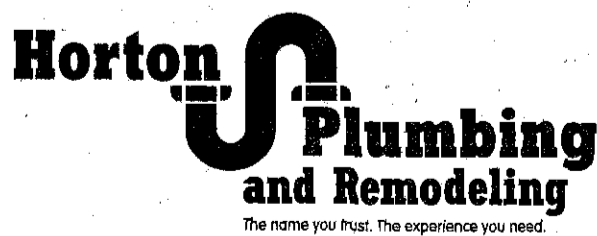


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# Students take a walk for ADA

Lucy Hoblack and the other teachers and students at St. Mary Catholic School don't mind shooting for the sky.

Over the past two years, students at the Wayne school raised \$7,113 and \$8,491 for diabetes research, programs and advocacy through the American Diabetes Association's School Walk for Diabetes.

This fall, their plan is to raise \$10,000 to help in the fight against diabetes.

"All of the teachers have given the kids their extreme promises to help raise the funds," said Hoblack, who teaches kindergarten at the 275-student school at 34516 W. Michigan Avenue, Wayne.

School Walk for Diabetes is an educational fund-raising program of the American Diabetes Association. It promotes community service, school spirit and healthy living to students. The events are held indoors and outdoors throughout the school year. All students can participate in School Walk for Diabetes, regardless of physical or learning abilities.

Schools that raise \$1,000 or more earn gift certificates for physical education and school medical supplies through US-Games. Students also learn about diabetes and how to make healthy choices through classroom lessons and activities.

On Friday, Oct. 28, St. Mary students will walk - by grade level - through the school. Kindergarten through third-grade will walk from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Fourth-fifth-graders will walk from 1:30-2:30 p.m., while sixth-eighth grades will walk from 1:45-2:45 p.m.

St. Mary Catholic School has been one of the top fund-raisers in School Walk for Diabetes, according to Randee Loberman, ADA market manager and School Walk coordi-

**School Walk for Diabetes is an educational fund-raising program of the American Diabetes Association. It promotes community service, school spirit and healthy living to students. The events are held indoors and outdoors throughout the school year.**

nator. "They've done a great job in getting the community involved," Loberman said. "Better yet, students are learning more about diabetes and healthy living."

A nurse came to a kindergarten class last year and spoke to the students about diabetes. The school librarian also puts on diabetes education for students. Hoblack said getting the business community and neighbors involved with School Walk for Diabetes is a key. Students in the school live in a number of nearby communities, like Wayne, Westland, Belleville, Canton, Dearborn Heights and Romulus.

"We all know someone who has diabetes, whether it's a grandparent, neighbor, mother or father," Hoblack said. "Last year, our top individual fundraiser - a second-grader - brought in \$239 in pledges. Less than a month later she was diagnosed with diabetes."

Anyone wishing to donate to the ADA's School Walk for Diabetes at St. Mary Catholic School can call the school at (734) 721-1240 or the American Diabetes Association at (888) DIABETES.

For more information about the ADA, its events and programs, visit the ADA Web site at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).



County Connection Chorus

## County chorus offers free 6-week program

The County Connection Chorus, a 40-member women's singing group from Ypsilanti, will be hosting a free six-week, holiday harmony chorus for women in the community interested in learning more about singing a cappella music and performing in the community.

Women of all musical backgrounds are encouraged to attend. There is no

audition process. Sight-reading is not required and learning tapes and section rehearsals will be used to learn music.

The sessions will be held from 7-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Nov. 1-Dec. 6, at the UAW Hall at 8975 Textile Road, Ypsilanti.

Women interested in signing up can contact Jennifer Jones at (734) 480-8843, or send an e-mail to

[chorus@countyconnectionchorus.org](mailto:chorus@countyconnectionchorus.org).

County Connection is a non-profit, award-winning chorus affiliated with Sweet Adelines International, a worldwide singing organization for women. Members of the chorus represent 16 communities, including Wayne and Westland, and five Michigan counties. Visit the Web site at [www.countyconnectionchorus.org](http://www.countyconnectionchorus.org).

## Dash for Health benefits uninsured

Outdoor enthusiasts can bike, walk, run, stroll down the new connector trail of Hines Drive and help the uninsured in a Dash for Health Saturday, Oct. 29.

Z.I.A.D Healthcare for the Underserved Inc. and Rouge River Gateway Partners will conduct the Dash for Health that begins and ends at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and follow the connector trail through Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Inkster, Garden City and Westland and back to the university.

Participants can go as far or as little of the length as they wish with a maximum of 20 miles. The \$20 fee includes a

Dash for Health T-shirt.

Dash for Health is part of a celebration of Environment and Health. Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and other elected officials and special guests will inaugurate the new connector and celebrate at a ceremony at UM-D at noon. There will be free food and beverage available.

The Wayne County Public Health Department also will be on hand to enroll children in MI Child, a healthcare program for low income families.

Following the Dash for Health, Z.I.A.D. Healthcare will host a child and adult Halloween parties.

The children's party will be held at the Karas House in Redford while the adult party will be a Halloween Masquerade Dinner Dance at the Burton Manor in Livonia.

Profits from the events will benefit the uninsured 45,000,000 Americans are uninsured.

ZIAD Healthcare for the Underserved Inc., is a non-

profit helping the uninsured with primary healthcare. Partnering in the Dash for Health will be Blue Care Network as well as the Governor's Office of Community and Faith Based Initiatives.

For more information and to register for Dash for Health or learn more about the program and parties, go to [www.ziad-healthcare.org](http://www.ziad-healthcare.org) and click on Dash for Health or call Julie at (734) 347-1462.

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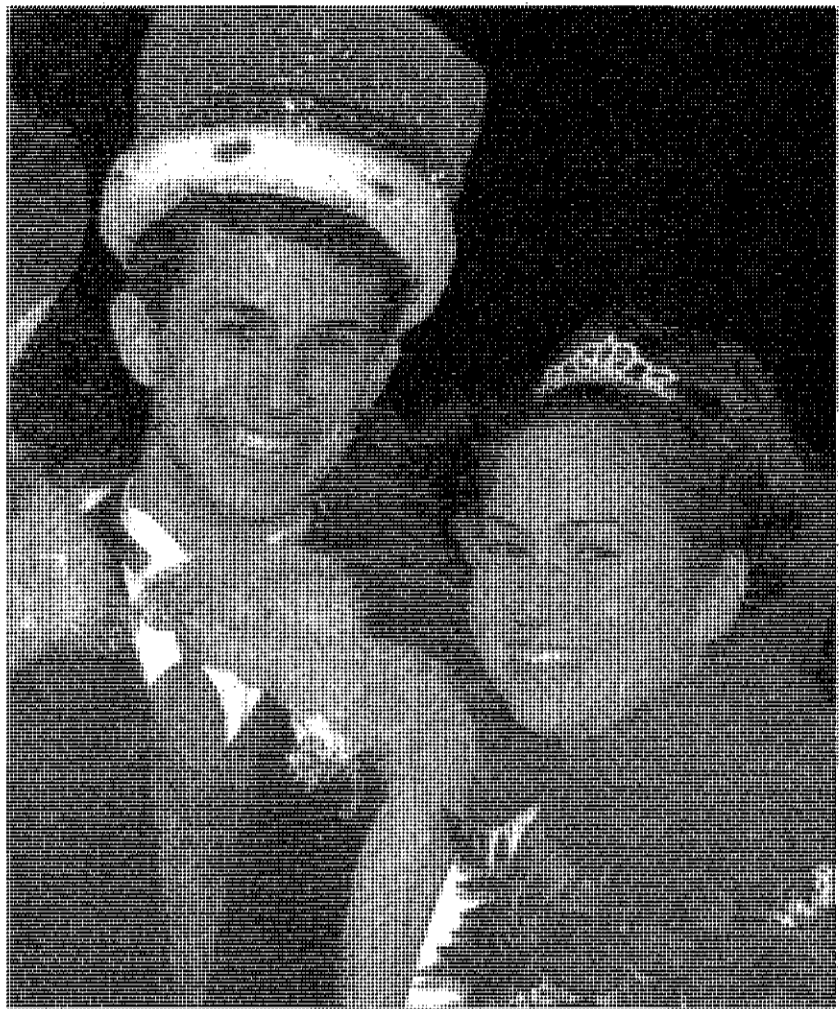
Hometown Observer & Eccentric



TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Charger in charge

Churchill senior and marching band drum major Tyler Hauck leads the band through its performance during Thursday's pep rally at the school.



During Churchill High School's recent Homecoming celebration, the king and queen were crowned. This year's royal couple were Matt Hawthorne and Karen Freeman.

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

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Swim classes

The Wayne Aquatic Area, 4635 Howe, Wayne, will accept registration for the Fall II Swimming Lessons Oct. 24-29. Lessons begin the week of Nov. 1. The cost is \$42 for residents and \$55 for non-residents. Private lessons also are available. Call (734) 721-7400 for more information.

#### Craft show

Reserve a table now for the Wayne Senior Activity Center pre-holiday arts and crafts show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, at the senior center, 35000 Sims, Wayne. Cost is \$25 per table, electricity provided. For more information, call Lucy at (734) 721-7460.

#### Basketball clinics

The Westland Parks and Recreation Department and Hoops Stars Basketball will sponsor a six-week Hoops Stars Basketball Clinic 5:30-6:30 p.m. Nov. 8-Dec. 6 at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. The clinic is for youngsters ages 7-13 and in grades 1-8. Participants will learn the fundamentals of basketball, such as dribbling, passing, shooting and defense. There also will be challenging games and drills and an opportunity to play in a 5-on-5 full court game. Kids need to bring a water bottle and wear comfortable clothing and athletic shoes. The clinic costs \$42 for residents and \$45 for non-residents. Register at the Bailey Center. For more information, call Ron Levin at (248) 496-3268.

#### Drama and dance

The Westland Therapeutic Recreation Program and the Shoe String Theatre are offering a drama and movement program for children with special needs. The class will be 5-6 p.m. Fridays Nov. 4-Dec. 16. Each week there will be a different theme based on a children's story. Drama, music, movement and dance will teach youngsters gross motor, listening and focusing skills while letting children use their imaginations. The class will be held at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. Cost is \$30 for residents and \$31 for non-residents. Scholarships are available for Westland residents. For more information, call (734) 722-7620.

#### Halloween Walk

Tickets are on sale for the 17th annual Halloween Walk at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe. The Halloween Walk will be held Wednesday, Oct. 26, through Thursday, Oct. 27, at Atwood Park. Guided walks every 15 minutes and ending with cider and doughnuts. The walk is not a haunted house and is geared for the whole family. Children under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Cost is \$4 for residents and \$4.50 for non-residents. Children age 2 and under are free. Call (734) 721-7400 for more information.

#### Starfish programs

Starfish Family Services Great Parents, Great Start teachers help prepare children, ages 2-4 years for preschool and school in their own home. Fun, learning activities help children grow and learn and parents learn tips, too. The program is open to families in western Wayne County, if they qualify. Call (734) 595-0411, Ext. 104, for more information.

Starfish also has an ongoing, free Pregnancy Support Group, offering pregnant women a chance to talk with other pregnant women, meet with a prenatal nurse, hear baby's heart beat and learn about nutrition, pain management and other topics. Groups to be held in Wayne, Westland and Inkster areas. To register, (734) 595-0411, Ext. 104.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### FOR SENIORS

#### Friendship Center

The Senior Resources Department (Friendship Center), 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland, offers a variety of programs for older adults. The Web site [www.ci.westland.mi.us](http://www.ci.westland.mi.us) offers more information. Call (734) 722-7632.

#### Crochet & Knit

A crochet and knit group meets 9:30 a.m. every Thursday at the Friendship Center on Newburgh near Marquette. Beverly Kaminski is the instructor. Participants should bring a type "G" crochet hook. Those interested can sign up at the center's front desk or call (734) 722-7632.

#### Visually Impaired

The Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) support group meets 12:30 p.m. every Friday at the Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland. Participants share information and meet others. Those interested in joining can be scheduled on a bus route for transportation. Call (734) 722-7632.

#### Choir

The Senior Choir, under the leadership of Robert Cassidy, is open to those who like to sing. It meets 9:30 a.m. Thursday. For information, call the Friendship Center, (734) 722-7632.

#### Hearing checks

Every third Tuesday of each month, a representative from Personalized Hearing Care of Westland will check and clean hearing aids free, 2-3 p.m. by appointment only. Call (734) 722-7632 for more information.

#### Exercise

Simply Jazzercise is designed for exercisers older than 40. The program provides a low to moderate workout. The exercise improves strength, flexibility, balance, posture, coordination and cardiovascular endurance. It incorporates simple dance routines with walking or jogging patterns and resistance exercises. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Light weights and an exercise mat are suggested. Classes are 10:15 a.m. Monday, 5 p.m. Wednesday, 10:15 a.m. Friday, at \$3 per person per class. Sign up at the front desk at the Westland Friendship Center or call (734) 722-7632.

#### Travel Group

The Friendship Travel Group meets 1 p.m. the second Friday of each month (unless a large event is scheduled) in the Westland Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh. Programs include celebration of birthdays, door prizes, description of new classes or programs, speakers from tour companies, overview of day/overnight trips and refreshments. Call (734) 722-7632.

#### Dyer Center

The Wayne-Westland school district's Oyer Senior Adult Center offers activities Monday-Thursday at the center, on Marquette between Wayne and Newburgh roads. Mondays, Senior Chorus at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, arts, crafts and needlework at 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, kitchen band, 10 a.m., bingo at 1 p.m.; Thursdays, ceramics, arts, crafts at 9:30 a.m. Organizations

#### Vietnam Vets

The Plymouth-Canton Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 528, meet at 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of every month at the Plymouth VFW Post 6695, on S. Mill Street, just north of Ann Arbor Road. If you served in the U.S. military between 1964 and 1975, even, if not, "in country" (combat zone) you are still eligible to become a member. Visit the Web site at [www.mihometown.com/oe/PlymouthCantonVVA](http://www.mihometown.com/oe/PlymouthCantonVVA) for more information.

#### Friends of library

The Friends of the William P. Faust Public Library organization meets at 2 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the library, 6123 Central City Parkway, Call (734) 326-6123. Meetings last about one hour and are open to the public. The group also holds a book sale during regular library hours at the library.

### In Harmony

The Wayne Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society meets at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Kirk of Our Savior Presbyterian Church, 36660 Cherry Hill, west of Wayne Road, Westland. Gentlemen interested in the chapter's Renaissance Chorus or who enjoy quartetting can call membership chairman Bob Wolf at (734) 421-1652, or attend a rehearsal.

### Civil Air Patrol

Emergency service is just one of the congressionally mandated missions of the Civil Air Patrol, which includes ground and air search-and-rescue operations.

The Civil Air Patrol, which is the official U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is made up of civilian volunteers.

To learn more about CAP or training as an air crew or ground team member, contact the Willow Run Composite Squadron (MI-260). Call Capt. Dane Hansen, deputy commander/recruiter, at (734) 485-3021 or visit the Web site [www.members.home.net/capliberators/](http://www.members.home.net/capliberators/).

### Habitat help

The Western Wayne affiliate of Habitat for Humanity is seeking volunteers to help with building homes, office duties and fund-raising. No experience necessary. Training will be provided. For information, call (734) 459-7744.

### Veteran's Haven

Veteran's Haven operates a car, boat, camper and real estate-donation program. Donations are tax-deductible. For information, call (734) 728-0527. Food is distributed to veterans once a month throughout the month and there is a supplemental food program 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays. The Veteran Haven's Outreach Center, 4924 S. Wayne Road two blocks south of Annapolis in Wayne. Any honorably discharged Veteran that is in need or homeless and wants a better quality of life can call (734) 728-0527.

### Pet-A-Pet

The Pet-A-Pet animal visitation program provides pet therapy with the help of volunteers. Pets should be friendly, well-behaved and must have current vaccinations. There is a \$5 membership fee. Volunteer opportunities are available at Hope Nursing Care Center, 6:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month (Marie Johnson, (734) 326-1200), and Marquette House, 10:30 a.m. the second Wednesday of the month (Lorna Johnson, (734) 425-1681). There are also openings at Garden City Hospital, 3 p.m. the fourth Thursday of the month (Stacy Suida, (734) 458-4392).

### Zonta Club

The Zonta Club of Northwest Wayne County, a service club to advance the status of women, meets every month on the fourth Monday at the Holiday Inn, Livonia. For more information, call Pat Harris at (734) 420-2920.

### Franklin PTSA

The Franklin High School PTSA is seeking members. Membership is open to those who care about the schools and the community. Members need not have a student in the school. Price is \$3 for students, \$5 for adults. Checks should be made payable to Franklin PTSA and sent to 31000 Joy, Livonia MI 48150.

### Tutoring program

A tutoring program for students is offered at the Salvation Army Wayne-Westland Corps Community Center, 2300 Venoy in Westland. The program, 3:45-5:15 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, is for students 9 and older in Wayne, Westland and Romulus. For information on participating or volunteering, call Tyrone Peterson, (734) 722-3660. Tutors need to have at least a high school education.

### M.O.M.S.

M.O.M.S. Club of Canton/Westland is a nonprofit support group for stay-at-home mothers. There are weekly events, Mom's Night Out, age-oriented play groups and more. For information, call Wendy, (734) 398-6957.

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# Business consultant enters 11th District race

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER

Small business consultant Ray Raczkowski of Novi announced Monday that he will be a candidate for the Democratic nomination in the 11th Congressional District.

Talk show host Tony Trupiano of Dearborn Heights announced his candidacy last week.

The winner of the Democratic primary will likely face incumbent Republican Thaddeus McCotter, who hasn't formally announced whether he will seek a third term.

"Our current congressman is doing a lousy job," Raczkowski said Monday. "We'd have to give him an E on education, energy, the economy and the environment. He just hasn't performed."

For the last five years, Raczkowski, 51, has been a consultant on improving small



Raczkowski

businesses. He studied engineering at Michigan State University, worked in the construction industry and worked with several auto suppliers including General Electric, Bosch and Eaton Corp. in advanced manufacturing and process improvements.

Raczkowski said he has been able to work with union and management and would bring those skills to Congress. He said many of the management methodologies he uses such as Six Sigma could be successfully used in Congress.

"The automobile industry has been socked. What we need is to be getting them to work," he said. "I know how to do that, get more business and jobs. Tony doesn't know how to do that and McCotter

doesn't know. I have a game plan to get back our economy."

Raczkowski hasn't served in government. He said he decided to run for Congress because the issues he's interested in "can't be addressed at the state level."

Raczkowski said he has been meeting with union leaders and party officials. He said he has found supporters but that the Democratic Congressional Candidate Committee has decided not to endorse in the primary.

Raczkowski is the father of two sons.

The 11th Congressional District extends from Highland and White Lake townships in western Oakland County to Van Buren Township in western Wayne County and includes Livonia, Redford Township, Garden City, Westland, Plymouth, Plymouth Township and Canton Township.

# Norwegians celebrate centennial

Pork loin and salmon will receive "gourmet makeovers" on Oct. 21, at a gala honoring 100 years of Norwegian independence, and the 80th anniversary of the Norwegian Club of Detroit.

The gala starts at 6 p.m. at the VisTaTech Center of Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty, Livonia, between Six Mile and Seven Mile Roads.

The keynote speaker is Erling Rimestad, Counselor for Press and Cultural Affairs at the Norwegian Embassy, Washington D.C.

Space is limited. Dinner reservations can be made by mailing a \$45 check or money order, payable to: "Norwegian Club of Michigan" to the following address: Norwegian Club of Michigan, 26017 Concord, Huntington Woods, MI 48070

Huntington Woods resident Dennis Flessland, Honorary Consul of Norway to Michigan and chairman of the event, recently met with Schoolcraft College



Mustard and thyme-smoked pork loin served with roasted garlic mashed potatoes, creamed cabbage, green beans, topped with a lingonberry brown sauce, and beet chips.

VisTaTech Center's chef Aaron Cook to preview the food preparation.

According to Flessland, "The smoked pork loin entree will be a very popular entree. I am very impressed with what Chef Aaron has done to this traditional meal."

Chef Aaron describes this entree as "A mustard and thyme smoked pork loin served with roasted garlic mashed potatoes, creamed

cabbage, green beans, topped with a lingonberry brown sauce, and beet chips. I'm using many traditional Norwegian meats and root vegetables. We will also serve a salad using herring, and later, traditional rice pudding for dessert. Some traditionalists will be delightfully surprised to see what we will offer for this special dinner!"

Chef Aaron will offer an alternative entree choice: Salmon rubbed with shrimp paste, crusted with potato, presented with braised kale, cauliflower, and a horseradish butter sauce.

This event is part of the 2005 centennial celebration to honor the special relationship that exists between the United States and Norway.

The United States was one of the first countries in 1905 to acknowledge Norway's sovereign status, and cultural and economic ties have grown strong between the two democracies during 100 years of interaction. In 1905, Norway achieved full independence from Sweden.

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OUR VIEWS

## Who we support for mayor, council

In just over two weeks time, Westland voters will decide who will represent them in city government. They will pick a mayor from between incumbent Sandra Cicirelli and challenger Elenor Swistak and four council members from eight candidates — incumbents Cheryl Graunstadt, Michael Kehrer, Charles Pickering and Robert Stottlemeyer and challengers Normie June Brazier, Lori Brist, James Davis and Robert Thomas.

Each candidate has his or her own perspective of what is important for the city and its residents and what they believe makes them the best person for the job at hand. In reading their responses to questionnaires provided by the *Observer* and in listening to what they had to say in face-to-face interviews of which all but one candidate — Mr. Davis — participated, we believe that residents should re-elect **Sandra Cicirelli** as mayor and **Cheryl Graunstadt, Charles Pickering, Robert Stottlemeyer** and **Lori Brist** for city council.

The past four years have been difficult for the city. In 2002, when Cicirelli took over as mayor, the city was short on cash and long on problems. With the skills of an expert seamstress, she has trimmed city expenses without sacrificing city services and, as a result, the city now has money in the bank.

She is a strong, capable leader and is well-versed in steering Westland through the never-ending economic problems that are affecting the state as well as the city.

In the city council race, we believe that Graunstadt has served the city well. She stands by her convictions, which can leave her on the losing end of an issue, but as an independent, she has become the council watchdog, asking tough questions and pressing for their answers.

Pickering is seeking another council term after having served since 1988, other than a nearly three-year hiatus. He knows the ins and outs of city government, and has proven himself as a leader, especially in restoring order and civility to meetings in the aftermath of the council resignations and recalls earlier this decade.

Stottlemeyer also has proven himself as a member of council, listening and acting on what he believes is the best interest of his constituents. He knows Westland, and when he speaks, he speaks from the heart. His relationship with the city goes back to before it became a city and his love of the community is apparent in the projects he gets involved in like those benefitting the S.P.A.R.K. Foundation — Sports, Parks and Recreation for Kids — and the nation's Wounded Warriors.

Brist has a knowledge of the community that goes far beyond serving on local boards and commissions. As chamber president and CEO, she has experience working with the business community and in promoting the city to residents and neighboring communities.

We believe the time she spent at the Michigan Political Leadership Program at Michigan State University has given her the tools to be an effective council member. However, we believe that, if elected to council, she should focus on that job and consider scaling back her involvement in the Downtown Development Authority and the Tax Increment Finance Authority. She also may need to delegate some chamber work that could be perceived as a conflict.

We urge voters to take the time to go to the polls on Election Day, Nov. 8, and vote for **Sandra Cicirelli** for mayor and **Cheryl Graunstadt, Charles Pickering, Robert Stottlemeyer** and **Lori Brist** for city council.

## Creative punishment will free up jail space

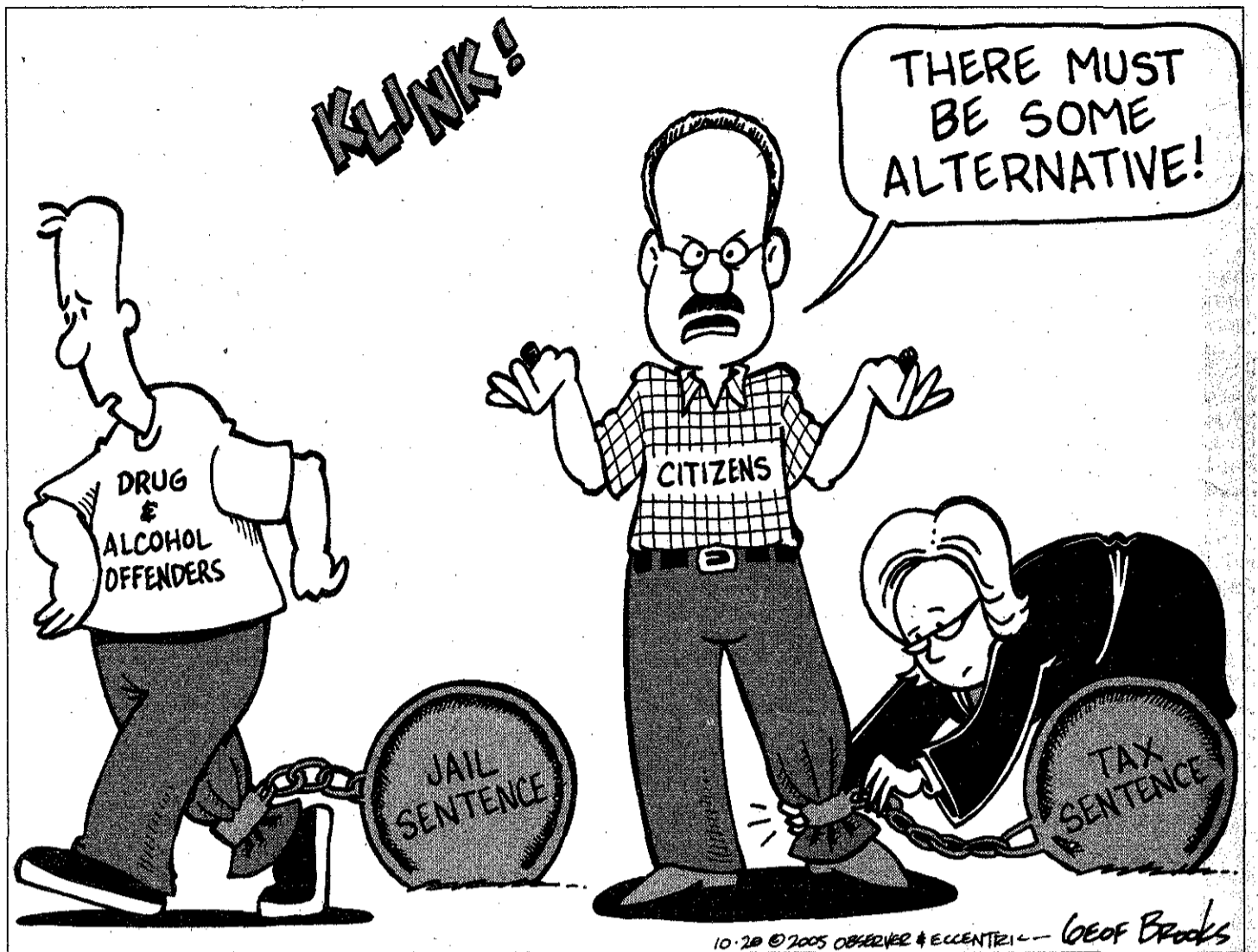
Hundreds of shoplifters, drug users, traffic offenders and embezzlers who should be locked up in Oakland County Jail are roaming free because there isn't enough space to keep them there.

Since August, two groups of non-violent offenders were ordered released because of overcrowding.

Oakland isn't the only county whose jail is bursting with prisoners. Macomb County released non-violent prisoners in July and August, while Wayne County typically releases hundreds each month.

These offenders are considered non-dangerous because they committed crimes against property and not people. But they haven't finishing paying their debts to society and are back on the streets before judges planned. It's unlikely many of them have been rehabilitated.

While judges make more use of alternative sentences, voters can do their part by having realistic expectations. Alternative sentences are often better options for non-violent offenders.



LETTERS

### Thanks for coverage

I saw and read the story, "32nd Degree Masons sponsor walk to benefit Learning Center," with the photo of Westland Mayor Cicirelli presenting the proclamation recognizing October as Dyslexia Awareness Month in the Sunday, Oct. 9, issue of the *Westland Observer*.

Thank you very much. It was well done and looked very nice. We certainly do appreciate your efforts, and having the article run in the newspaper before our Walk to Help Children with Dyslexia on Oct. 16.

Thanks again for your good work and support.

**Corbin Elliott**  
32nd Degree Masons  
of the Valley of Detroit

### With whose approval?

Association endorsements? Since when? With whose approval? Are condominiums places of residence? Public residences? Places of employment?

Who gave condominium directors the power to represent us by endorsing political candidates for office? Is this legal?

Upon reading the letter to the editor in the last *Westland Observer* by the Westland Condominium Directors Organization endorsing local political candidates, we want the public to know that they do not in any way represent us. We are not certain that what they did was legal.

We don't know what their particular Condominium Association Master Deeds allow them in their respective condominiums, but our states very clearly the powers and duties of the board of directors. This very legal document states "The board of directors shall have the powers and duties necessary for the administration of the affairs of the condominium..."

Since when is endorsing political candidates an affair of the condominium?

And, if a non-board of director represents a condominium at a non-condo related meeting, they even have less power to represent the residents of a condominium in the political area. They had no right to represent us in any endorsement of political candidates. What is becoming of our people entrusted with certain powers and who go ahead and usurp those powers?

Our board of directors of our condominium is empowered only to care for the affairs of the condominium, to which they were legally elected by the association members. Nobody else can represent us, legally.

Even though we agree with the endorsement of some of the listed candidates, we are questioning the legality of this type of representation. Powers of the board of directors are clearly defined in the binding legal document for each condominium association. Those clearly state that the board of directors is empowered only in matters directly related to the affairs of the condominium.

If those who wrote the letter were only representing themselves, fine. They

should not use the banner of the Westland Condominium Directors Organization. They should be very clear in stating that these are only their personal endorsements. We are appalled at what we feel is the license some people take with their offices.

**James and Mary Murphy**  
Westland

### Shouldn't ignore Sheehan

I agree with Susan Horwitz's letter in the *Observer* paper. More people should get involved so government doesn't get away with problems like that. Shame on President Bush for ignoring Cindy Sheehan. He could have at least talked to her.

**Betty Savage**  
Westland

### Disgusted with service

We are disgusted with the poor example of garbage removal that we currently are getting in Westland. The trucks leak diesel fuel, transmission fluid and other liquids required to make the vehicle operate. These leaks are appearing all over our streets and being tracked into our homes, not to mention on our pets' feet as we cross the street with them.

Complaints have been called into the mayor's office and photos have been promptly e-mailed to the mayor's secretary of the Mayor. Nothing we do seems to have any effect.

We have been told that it is in the contract of the garbage hauling company that if they spill any trash they must pick it up and, if they or their trucks leak any products on the ground, it must be cleaned up properly.

Their truck leaked diesel fuel three weeks ago. We called it in; nothing was done to clean it up. The stains are still on the streets. This is dangerous. We are still waiting.

The older ladies in our neighborhood are out sweeping up the trash with little brooms and dust pans after the trucks have supposedly picked up our trash (and left a lot on the ground behind them).

This should not have to happen. We do not get paid to pick up the trash, so why should we clean up after them. It is their responsibility to properly pick up and dispose of the trash.

This Monday we saw the yard waste truck go right by our house, leaving our compost can untouched. Then the garbage truck came by and got our trash, heaving our can to the opposite side of the drive, while placing everyone else's can back nicely in its original place. Then the yard waste truck came by again and still neglected to empty our compost can. Very nice service we have, huh? ... NOT!

The citizens of Westland deserve to have a decent garbage removal service that actually removes the garbage and doesn't leave a trail behind them. The current company needs to go!

**Mark and Trudy Mosley**  
Westland

### Bush pushing religion

Once again the Bush administration manipulates words to disguise an ideology, which is leading the U.S. toward a theocracy. Bush advocates teaching this "theory" with the theory of evolution in public school science classes. The president is endorsing efforts by Christian conservatives to give "creationism" (and) "intelligent design" equal standing.

The National Academy of Sciences and the American Association for Advancement of Science are opposed to teaching religion in these classes. According to a conservative columnist, "The problem with intelligent-design theory is not that it is false but that it is not falsifiable: Not being susceptible to contradicting evidence, it is not a testable hypothesis. Hence it is not a scientific but a creedal tenet — a matter of faith, unsuited to a public school's science curriculum."

Americans must be aware of this effort and other to destroy the wall between separation of church and state. In Odessa, Texas and in other public schools across the country, Bible study courses are being taught that promote a fundamentalist Christian view and violates religious freedom. The Texas Freedom Network, which includes clergy of several faiths, said the course offered by the Greensboro, N.C.-based National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools is full of errors and dubious research.

The first amendment to the Constitution states: "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Yet the executive branch through its policies continues to disregard these words.

**Hannah Provence Donigan**  
Commerce

### SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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WESTLAND  
**Observer**

PUBLISHED THURSDAY AND SUNDAY

GANNETT

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Community Editor

**Marty Carry**  
Advertising Director

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Managing Editor

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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.

QUOTABLE

"Kayla is scared that something is going to happen to her daddy. She is having a hard time. And Kyler says he doesn't like his daddy being sick."

— Stacy Suess, about her children coping with their father Duane's battling cancer of the head and neck

## Dingell harkens back to days when civility ruled

What do you call a guy who has become a legend in his own time, is 6 feet, 3 inches tall, has a reputation as a tough guy, has been around forever and knows everybody?

You'd start out by calling him "sir." At least that's what I call Congressman John Dingell, who on Dec. 13 will celebrate 50 years in the House of Representatives. He already is the third longest serving member in U.S. history. (If he is still in Congress in March 2009, he'll be the longest serving ever.)

There was a big celebration in Dearborn honoring Dingell last weekend, with his fellow Democrats, Gov. Jennifer Granholm and Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, joining a cast of friends and supporters.

And there will be a formal tribute later this month in Washington with Vice President Dick Cheney and former President Bill Clinton joining other luminaries on the guest list.

The first time I met John Dingell was in November 1964. I had just been hired by a newly elected congressman, Paul H. Todd Jr. from Kalamazoo, to run his Washington office. There was a reception for newly elected members from Michigan in some grand room in the Capitol, and even then Dingell stood out as having the greatest presence in the room.

He had barely started his career in Congress — he was elected for the first time in 1955, beating 13 others for the seat his father had held until his untimely death. But even then he carried a certain aura of ferocity, strength and uncommon common sense.

Dingell's reputation at that time was that of a sensible tough guy, happy to be a partisan Democrat, but prepared to work with the Republican opposition when there was a deal to be cut.

I remember he gave my boss, a fellow Democrat, great advice time after time: "Do what's right; play tough, but play fair; get respected for what you know, because it's better to be respected than merely liked."

I saw him again in the late 1980s, when he had become chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Largely through the force of his personality, he was turning the committee into the most powerful on Capitol Hill. Something like 40 percent of all legislation that went to the House floor did so through Dingell's committee.

The *National Journal*, the authoritative publication on Congress, once claimed that Dingell claimed jurisdiction over anything that "moved, burned or was sold." He was called "Mr. Chairman" for good reason, and when he stalked into a crowded room it was as though the Red Sea was parting.

His power was diluted after the Republicans won control of the House in 1994. Not so his

majestic presence.

I had a long conversation with Dingell several days ago. What stands out, I wanted to know, after nearly 50 years in Congress?

"The goodness of the people that I served, their loyalty, kindness, decency, patience. How hard they work, how much they love their country, how hard they try to make their communities better. This applies to the huge swath of people I've known for so many years: black, white, Arabs, Republicans, Democrats, urban, suburban, rural."

What's it like today in the Congress, compared with the way it was when you started out? "Our system works best on collegiality, compromise and cooperation. There's very little of that nowadays. Today everybody wants openness, but we're now so open that we can't function."

"When I was chairman, we'd have a hearing. Then we'd go into a side room, close the doors, take our coats off and fight like hell. But the result was almost invariably a bipartisan bill, one that could pass with an overwhelming vote from the middle."

How come things are so different? "It's partly changes in the society. In the old days, when you went down to Washington you stayed there because you couldn't afford to go back and forth to your district. As a result, members of Congress got to know each other, their families."

"They'd socialize after work. They developed a store of goodwill, great friendships that helped make things happen even through the politics were tough. That's gone now. And the House now is mostly run by the Republican leadership. They're hard right and aren't interested in compromises."

Dingell hasn't merely served for a long, long time, he's been at the core of many of the greatest legislative achievements of our times. He wrote most of the Endangered Species Act, introduced domestic content legislation that required Japanese auto manufacturers to produce parts in the United States and was the main force behind the Clean Air Act.

What advice would he give to young politicians? "The biggest trouble is not in doing right; it's in knowing what's right. If you know right, you'll do right, and you won't have anything to worry about."

At the end of our conversation, I asked how John Dingell would like to be remembered. "As a monument for sanity and effectiveness," he replied with barely a pause.

We have the great good fortune to be represented in Washington by a living legend. The sad thing is that people of the caliber of John Dingell don't get to do what they do best very much these days, when our politics have been hijacked by ideologues of both the right and the left.

Phil Power is a longtime observer of politics, economics and education issues in Michigan. He would be pleased to hear from readers at ppower@hcnnet.com.



Phil Power

## Laws must protect teens from their own bad judgment

I didn't know the young woman on the witness stand. I don't know her middle name, if she has a pet or even the last four digits in her phone number. Yet I know the details of the day she lost her virginity. And I know she deserved better than what she got.

The woman, now 20 years old, testified in Wayne County Circuit Court that when she was a student at Agape Christian Academy, her principal Clark Sexton had victimized her. He said it was a consensual sexual relationship between legal adults.

Sexton was acquitted of four charges of criminal sexual conduct. That's not to say he's innocent — just that defense attorney Paul Clark had succeeded in creating enough reasonable doubt to keep the jury from convicting Sexton. Paul Clark even admitted that.

She said he began pursuing her when she was in the eighth grade, but he said she was older than that. The two had sexual intercourse when she was 16 — a fact that the young woman and Sexton never disagreed upon. The issue that brought them to court was whether inappropriate touching began before she was 16, when she had by Michigan law reached the age of consent.

From the first day of that trial, in my mind the case was never about whether or not Sexton was a criminal. Wrong is wrong, and students should be off-limits for sex in the minds of their educators.

Sexton had told her he loved her, she testified. And she said that she had told him she loved him. And she probably did. But the first time a girl falls in love, and the first time she explores her sexuality, she deserves to make that journey with a boy who can offer her his class ring, can take her out for pizza, to dances and can call her at odd hours of the day and night, rather than calling and hanging up. That was the secret cue she and Sexton had to indicate he wanted to meet her in a parking lot, where the two would sit in his car or his truck and sometimes would

Teenagers are not known for stellar judgment and such laws protect them from their own bad judgment. And of course, the bad judgment of those trusted educators who view the classroom as a dating pool.

have sex.

Had Sexton met the girl after 2003, the case would have been much clearer. Michigan law in 2003 raised the age of consent to 18 in the case of teacher-student relationships.

I asked two men about the law change — my father, with whom I almost always agree, and State Rep. Bob Gosselin, R-Troy, with whom I infrequently agree. But on this issue, Gosselin and I agreed that it should be against the law for any K-12 teacher to have a sexual relationship with a student.

My father, who was for 35 years a public school teacher, disagreed, arguing that singling out one population — teachers — is wrong. Some of the half dozen states which prohibit teacher-student relationships also frequently raise the bar for other persons of authority, such as police officers and the clergy.

But I happen to think that we do hold K-12 educators to a higher standard than our other neighbors, which is the reason my father would not even have a cocktail in a bar in our hometown, and if he ever saw a movie with a rating stronger than PG, he'd head to a nearby town, rather than go to the theater just blocks from our home.

Teenagers are not known for stellar judgment and such laws protect them from their own bad judgment. And of course, the bad judgment of those trusted educators who view the classroom as a dating pool.

Carol Marshall is a staff writer for the *Canton Observer*. She may be reached by e-mail at cmarshall@oe.homecomm.net, or by phone at (734) 459-2700.



Carol Marshall



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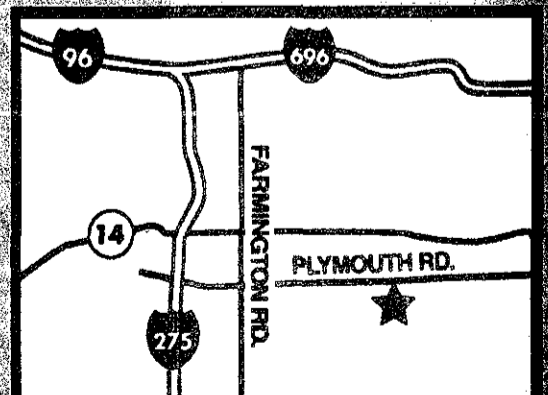
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