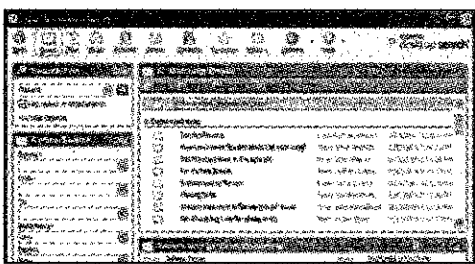


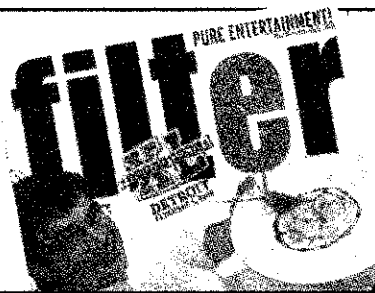
New Year's resolutions to keep your PC safe and sound

AT HOME, PAGE B1



Super chefs
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Feeling your oats

TASTE - PAGE B5



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Lineup brings skaters to arena

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

When Joe Burton took over as manager of the Mike Modano Ice Arena several months ago, he knew he needed to increase revenue. A better bottom line could mean more money to make improvements at the arena - named after the Westland native, former Livonia Franklin High School student and Dallas Stars player.

So the professional hockey player has taken a shot at boosting business by putting on a five-day-a-week schedule of clinics, open skating and drop-in hockey during the two-week Christmas break.

"We're trying things now to see if they work, so we can have them in the spring and summer when more ice time is available," said Burton.

While some of the offerings drew few skaters, the numbers for the three daytime open skating sessions drew a good crowd and even with classes resuming in the Livonia school district this week, the numbers were still good.

"We had 78 skaters, adults and children, last Tuesday, 72 last Thursday and 50 on Friday, and we had 50 today (Tuesday)," Burton said. "That's high numbers for us."

The lineup included two senior open skating sessions, a stick and puck program



You have to start some place and for future Red Wing Tyler Styrk it was ice skating with his mom, Karen Styrk, during open skating time at Westland's Mike Modano Ice Arena.

PLEASE SEE ARENA, A3

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

On the rise

Detroit's water rate hike isn't what city officials had wanted

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland residents could see their water bills increase nearly 6 percent in July - if city officials decide to offset a rate hike imposed by Detroit.

Westland is expecting a 5.9 percent rate increase from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department for the budget year that starts July 1.

"I would have loved to see an increase that was less than that - maybe even in the 3 percent range - but I am very pleased that we are not like some communities like Garden City, which is getting hit with a 19 percent increase," Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said.

The city also will likely face a sewer rate increase starting July 1.

That amount isn't yet known, but Finance Director Steve Smith said it could be 6 or 7 percent.

The water rate increase would

cost a typical household, which uses 22,000 gallons of water each two-month billing cycle, about \$10.56 a year, Smith said. That amount breaks down to \$1.76 every two months.

It may not seem like much, but Cicirelli said any increase only adds to other rising costs, such as home heating bills.

"It's still a blow to the family budget," she said.

City officials in Westland and elsewhere are expected to continue protesting rate hikes imposed by Detroit, partly because the increases are tied to water usage on one of the hottest days of last year, Cicirelli said.

"It's so arbitrary," she said.

Currently, Westland's combined water-sewer rate is \$5.29 per thousand gallons.

City leaders haven't decided whether to pass on the Detroit rate hike to local water customers, although it has been standard practice most years.

dclem@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

Council picks Wild, Pickering to fill leadership posts

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A divided Westland City Council, facing what is often a routine decision, had a laborious time Tuesday choosing new officers to lead the seven-member body.

The process began smoothly enough with Councilman William Wild narrowly winning the presidency in a 4-3 vote.

But it took 10 rounds of voting before Councilman Charles Pickering finally emerged as the second-in-command president pro tem.

Pickering's selection came after five council members - James Godbout, Cheryl Graunstadt, Michael Kehrer, Richard LeBlanc and Robert Stottlemeyer - failed to get the votes they needed to become president pro tem.

Pickering called the deliberations potentially historic and said he couldn't remember a time when every single council member, barring the new president, received nominations for the pro tem position.

While rumors had circulated that Wild would be the new president, it became clear Tuesday that council members hadn't reached a behind-the-scenes consensus for the pro tem post.

"You saw group dynamics in



Wild



Pickering

action tonight - very openly, in fact," Pickering said.

Although the decision wasn't an easy one, it also wasn't marked by bitter debate, personal insults or mudslinging. Rather, the process remained civil.

Some council members received repeated nominations for the pro tem position - Kehrer led the pack with three - only to face rejection by a council majority.

Wild remarked later that he didn't believe the situation indicated troubled relations among council members.

"I think it shows there were a lot of good candidates," he said.

Wild, in his fifth year on the council, replaced former President Pickering for a two-year term after a council majority rejected Graunstadt for the top spot.

Wild received votes from himself, Godbout, Kehrer and Pickering. He was opposed by

PLEASE SEE COUNCIL, A3

Council OKs pay plan for directors

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland city department heads received a 3 percent salary increase Jan. 1, pushing their top pay to \$86,988.

Other than the salary increase, which mirrored pay raises received by city unions, little else will change for department heads under a new wage-and-benefits plan recommended by Mayor Sandra Cicirelli.

The salary increase already had been decided, but other provisions of the pay plan won approval Tuesday in a 6-1 vote by the Westland City Council.

The new pay plan applies to 21 employees who serve in Cicirelli's administration. The salary range for those jobs is \$42,227 to \$86,988, including top-paid positions of police and fire chiefs, finance director, city assessor and public services director.

Four officials - the police and fire

chiefs, the deputy fire chief and the public services director - will continue to have their vehicles provided by the city.

The remaining employees receive a car allowance, which will increase from \$1,800 to \$2,000. That amounts to \$200 more a year, or \$3.85 a week.

"I think each and every one of the people involved deserve it," Cicirelli said.

The only other car reimbursement received by department heads is a mileage stipend when they make trips of more than 60 miles while on city business.

Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt cast the lone dissenting vote against the new pay plan, saying she couldn't support an increase in the car allowance. She said residents shouldn't be expected to pick up the tab - small though it is - amid tough economic times.

"I cannot be supportive of giving over another \$200," Graunstadt said,

adding that the money could be better used toward the city's heating bills.

The latest pay plan contained only one other significant change - boosting Housing/Community Development Director James Gilbert's salary from \$78,289 to \$82,638.

The salary increase was made possible by moving Gilbert's position higher on the pay scale.

Gilbert is a Westland resident who has worked for the city for 25 years, and no one on the council disputed that his salary should be increased.

Cicirelli indicated that she didn't want to risk losing Gilbert to a higher-paying community.

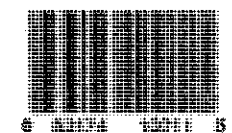
"We need to keep him here, quite frankly," she said.

Councilman Charles Pickering was among those who embraced the new pay plan.

"I think it's a very fair pay plan," he said.

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Volume 41
Number 64



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Coming Sunday on the PINK page



Makeup tip from NARS Senior Stylist

Skipping Christmas?

Not exactly, but husband/wife Super Bowl XL volunteers keeping busy

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYSBY
CORRESPONDENT

The Christmas tree didn't get fully decorated and the refrigerator wasn't well-stocked during the holiday season, but for Sean and Amy Krabach of Redford Township, these weren't priorities. The upcoming Super Bowl XL has taken up most of this couple's time during the past year and they're enjoying the effort given to this major Detroit showcase event.

Sean, who is the event development manager of the Detroit Sports Commission, a division of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, has been on loan to the Detroit Super Bowl XL Host Committee.

His wife Amy, who is co-owner of a vending machine and office coffee company (MacK's Vending), serves as a super captain, a volunteer management position, for the host committee.

Meetings and more meetings have been how this couple, both 34 and married for nine years, have spent and are spending their days and nights.

"Our goal, individually and together, has been to help metro Detroit put on a great sports event that will not

only run smoothly, but will show the world how outstanding our city and our citizens are," said Sean. "With lots of planning, hard work and more than 8,000 volunteers, we're doing just that."

A REAL TEAM

Volunteering and working hard isn't something new to Sean, a Northern Michigan University alumnus, and Amy, an environmental science graduate of Michigan State University.

"When I was involved with the Clean Water Act, Sean helped me clean up beaches," Amy said. And, she added, when Sean held a position in communications and public relations for Michigan Metro Girl Scouts, she helped him with a number of volunteer activities. "It was only natural to put Amy to work for this basically all-female organization," said Sean with a laugh.

According to the Krabachs, they have always helped each other in whatever endeavors they have been involved in. And, they agreed, they work well together.

Their ability to work together was first tested when they worked for a traveling carnival one summer while they were in college. "We spent the summer work-

ing the concession stand at various county fairs throughout Michigan and discovered that we made a pretty good team," Sean said.

This husband-and-wife team is now totally focused on Detroit Super Bowl XL. One of Sean's main responsibilities for the event is overseeing NFL Experience, an interactive theme park for visitors to be held from Wednesday through Sunday (Feb. 1-5) at Cobo Hall. Amy, besides providing support for her husband with this effort, will serve as a "floating" super captain, whose role is to be available to handle unexpected contingencies should they arise.

"And they will arise," she said. "No matter how thorough the planning, there will be times when volunteers are needed to handle special tasks. My job is to enlist the best volunteers to make sure that unexpected details are taken care of and done well."

More specifically, according to this super captain, she is charged with doing whatever needs to be done during the week-long activity leading up to the actual Super Bowl game on Feb. 5.

COUNTDOWN TO SBXL

The Krabachs are now going full-speed as "crunch



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Amy and Sean Krabach wear the vest and shirt they'll don as volunteers during Super Bowl XL.

time" has arrived for the host committee and its volunteers. Sean works 12- to 14-hour days and Amy is also putting in a great deal of time to assure that their part in the effort is being accomplished.

"This craziness is why there's such little food in the refrigerator," said Amy. "I can't remember the last time we've had a meal together at home."

Another consequence of their busy Super Bowl schedules is the limited time available for their pets — a cat and a very spoiled golden retriever.

"Luckily, the Super Bowl is

a winter event," said Sean. "We were able to spend some time at our cottage on Fawn Island, near Marine City, and on our boat this past summer."

Sean was also able to help patrol Michigan waters at such events as Detroit's Freedom Festival, including the fireworks, as a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Although being a part of Super Bowl XL has required some sacrifices — "We haven't had time thus far this season to ski," Sean said — they both added that they have gained so much from their involvement.

"We have met such wonderful people and have gotten to know them well during the many training meetings held throughout the past year," they said. "In addition to having lots of fun, we have all become a part of a great team with the goal of putting on a world-class event."

And the couple's combined enthusiasm has been contagious. Many of their friends and relatives have volunteered to help with the event.

"Even my parents are coming in each day for five days from Port Huron to volunteer," Sean said.

St. Raphael School hosts 2 open houses

Parents can get a look at a new computer lab, meet teachers and take a student-guided tour during two open house events at St. Raphael Catholic School this month.

For parents of preschoolers, there will be a Kindergarten Sneak Peak 9:30-10:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 20, while the all school (kindergarten-eighth grade) open house will be 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29.

There will be refreshments and gifts for the

children at both events, with classroom activities and information booths highlighting the school's educational and extracurricular activities planned for the Jan. 29 open house.

Founded in 1936, the school offers half and full-day kindergarten, bus service and a latchkey program, along with sports, scouting, youth and community service programs.

Students at St. Raphael get weekly hands-on instruction in the new computer lab which opened in the fall of 2005.

St. Raphael School is at 31500 Beechwood at Merriman north of Ford Road, Garden City.

To reserve a spot for either of the open houses, call (734) 425-9771, or visit www.straphael-gc.org.

Volunteers sought for foster care board

Volunteers are being sought to serve on the Wayne County Foster Care Review Board.

The Michigan Legislature established the Foster Care Review Board Program in 1984 in an effort to improve children's foster care programs through the state utilizing citizen review boards.

The five to seven member boards meet one day each month to review a representative sample of the cases of children who have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care due to abuse or neglect.

At these reviews, board members interview parents, foster parents, caseworkers, attorneys, and other interested parties who may be involved in planning for the ward.

Advisory recommendations are formulated and mailed to the court, child welfare agency, prosecuting attorney, parents, and other interested parties.

The purpose of the review is to insure that all agencies, including the court, have established a plan for the ward and progress is being made toward achieving permanency, and that the children are being well cared for while in the foster care system.

The Foster Care Review Boards are comprised of citizens who reflect a broad cross section of their communities.

The program is seeking volunteers who have demonstrated leadership in other settings. Minorities and men are especially encouraged to apply. Employees of the Family

Independence Agency, family court, or private child placement agencies are prohibited by law to serve on Foster Care Review Boards.

Each volunteer who is selected must attend a mandatory two-day orientation training in Lansing on April 6-7.

Also, board members attend yearly training which is held in different locations throughout the state. Expenses for training are reimbursed.

Anyone interested in becoming a Foster Care Review Board member should call (313) 972-3280 for an application.

The deadline for receiving applications is Feb. 15 with interviews of prospective candidates taking place in February and early March.



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PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Damon Morton and Maryam Diaab help son Damon Morton Jr. learn how to ice skate.

ARENA

FROM PAGE A1

that brought out both kids and fathers and sons who worked on their stick handling and shooting.

There also were scoring and checking clinics for PeeWee/Bantam and Mites/Squirts hockey players. Only six players showed up last week for the PeeWee/Bantam clinic, so Burton ran it like a private lesson. But the Mite/Squirt clinic drew a crowd of 25 players.

The plan is to offer a similar lineup during the schools' midwinter recess in late February-early March, Burton said.

Much of the arena's current ice time is used by the Westland Hockey Association, but come the spring and summer, time will be available to offer different programs, including a two-week hockey school the end of July.

"A couple of things we're doing now, we'll try in the summer, but we have to make sure they're cost effective," he added.

The arena offers open skating noon-1:45 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1-2:20 p.m. Saturdays. It also offers birthday party packages as part of the open skating program.

Saturday is the most popular session for the parties. For parents who want to



Rachel Huffman and Samantha Herper help Samantha's cousin, Shyann Walker, get around the ice rink.

bring their own food, the arena offers open skating for \$2.50 per person and skate rental for \$2 and the second-floor room available for \$15 per hour. If the arena provides the food - hot dogs, chips and beverage - the cost is \$6 per child plus room rental.

"It's only during open skating, so that's not private, but they get the room to themselves," Burton said.

Burton has a list of things he'd like to do at the arena. His list includes redoing the lobby, its flooring and the rink's boards.

He hopes that with new programs the arena can break even and then get more funding.

But to add programs now,

Burton would have to see if the hockey association would give up a few hours, but he'd only do that, if the new program would generate enough money to offset association fees.

"We're guaranteed \$160 an hour from the association for ice time, so it's hard to justify if we aren't able to make the same money," he said. "It's a challenge, but we're keeping it looking good, keeping the low prices and keeping it clean."

The Mike Modano Ice Arena is on Wildwood just south of Hunter. For more information, call at (734) 729-4560.

smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112

Frost Middle School students build on robot competition

Frost Middle School students recently competed in regional and state Lego League robot competitions - under the moniker the Frost Phantoms.

Participating with more than 4,500 other teams nationwide, the Frost seventh- and eighth-grade teams of students have been working for months on their projects.

The First Lego League represents a partnership between FIRST and the LEGO Group which uses science and technology to provide hands-on experimentation for students. Participants build their own robots and use them to compete in an event specifically designed for their age group.

Frost students participated in a warm-up competition in November, according to Carim Calkins, a Frost science teacher who worked with the teams. There, the seventh-grade team won an award for quality of research. Then, both teams headed to a regional competition on Saturday, Dec. 3, at Monroe High School in Monroe.

The eighth-graders, Team 4236, earned a regional trophy for innovative solution to a problem. The seventh-graders, Team 4124, took home a trophy for highest overall score; they went on to compete at the state tournament on Dec. 10, but the team did not win an award at the Novi event. Teams may include up to 10 students, Calkins said. Designers build a robot out of

Designers build a robot out of Legos using no more than three motors and one RCX, the programmable brick that transforms models into robots.

Legos using no more than three motors and one RCX, the programmable brick that transforms models into robots.

Then, team programmers use either the Robotics Invention System 2.0 or Robolab 2.5 software to write programs. Researchers determine a problem related to the topic for the competition, and work toward a solution. Then, they create a presentation based around that problem and solution. The public relations group shares the news about what their team has accomplished.

Seventh-grade team members were Matthew Armstrong, Eric McRae, Patrick Tremel, Darren Chen, Brij Patel, Evran Ural, Ben Johnson, Carl Rayford, Linus Ziemba; eighth-graders were Jeff Davenport, Joseph Foley, Sheng Jiang, Mike Peterman, Joey Carlini, Kelvin Deng, Bryce Morgan, Victoria Knieriem and Brigette Sikora.

Celeste Tremel served as head coach, and was assisted by former head coach Ron Picard, and parent John Armstrong. High school mentors included Andy Picard and Kyle Mireles.

COUNCIL

FROM PAGE A1

Graunstadt, LeBlanc and Stottlemeyer.

Wild, 37-year-old owner of the automotive recycling firm of Scrap Busters Auto & Truck Parts, cited three top issues he said the council will face this year - approving a new trash-hauling contract, protecting

the city budget and guarding against cuts in state-shared revenue.

"I look forward to the professional challenge of running the meetings," Wild said after he was chosen as president.

Pickering, stepping down as president after four years, commended Wild's selection.

"I know that Councilman Wild is going to do an excellent

job, and I'm looking forward to him being president of the city council," Pickering said.

Council positions are part-time.

The president receives \$13,359 a year, followed by the president pro tem at \$12,754 and other council members at \$12,150.

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AROUND WESTLAND

Training program

Train To End Stroke, a marathon training program offered by the American Stroke Association, will hold an information session at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 7, at the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland, 6123 Central City Parkway.

This program is designed for people who want to get in shape, travel and raise money for a good cause. Choose to walk or run a full or half marathon in San Diego or Kona, Hawaii. All fitness levels are welcome. Additional information sessions are scheduled in January.

For more information call (248) 827-4214 or visit the Web site at strokeassociation.org.

Help wanted

The YWCA of Western Wayne County is looking for several new staff members and volunteers to join their team and help the youth in the community.

Several openings are available to work directly with youth through in school and after school support groups. Latch key leaders also are needed.

Support group leaders need a minimum of a bachelor's degree in social work, education or psychology. Latchkey leaders must have previous experience working with children.

For more information about job openings, volunteering, or any other programs or services offered by the YWCA of Western Wayne County, call (313) 561-4110.

Legion meets

American Legion Westland Post 251 meets at 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of every month at the Westland V.F.W. Post 3323 at Wayne Road and Avondale just north of Palmer Road.

Membership is open to all veterans, providing they meet the eligibility dates. For information call 734-326-2607.

The Post 251 also will be presenting their Blue Star Banner to families who have a member currently serving in the Armed Forces.

The banner will be presented at the Westland City Council meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6.

Families in the Westland and Canton areas who have members currently serving in the Armed Forces to contact the post at (734) 326-2607 for more information.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Men's Club is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Jan. 6, 13 and 27 and Feb. 3, 17 and 24, at the church,

southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

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.

Singers needed

Do you like singing religious music, Kirk of Our Savior on Cherry Hill west of Wayne Road, Westland, is looking for singers for its adult (ages 13 and up) traditional choir.

All Christian faiths and all voice ranges are welcome.

Rehearsals are at 7 p.m. Thursdays. For more information, call Tim at (734) 718-8733 or the church at (734) 728-1088.

Car donations

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 veteransinfo.org on the Internet.

Free guides

Westland residents can request a free copy of the Michigan Consumer Protection Resource Guide, said state Senator Laura M. Toy, R-Livonia.

"This guide is a valuable source of information for all Michiganders," Sen. Toy said. "Being an informed consumer is the first line of defense against fraud, and knowing your legal rights and where to turn for help if you need it are equally important if you encounter a consumer-related problem."

The guide contains helpful information about mail order shopping, consumer credit, contracts and warranties, as well as consumer rights laws and automobile insurance and repair.

The booklet was prepared by the Michigan Legislature and also contains a nine-page directory of contact information for various state, federal, local and nonprofit agencies titled, "Where to Go For Help."

To obtain a free copy, residents of the 6th Senate District should contact Sen. Toy's office at (517) 373-1707.

Individuals who need assistance with a consumer-related problem can also contact the Michigan Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free at (877) 765-8388.

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A
Gregory H. Amey
 Amey, 51, of Canton, died Dec. 27.

B
Nancy Keyes Babcock
 Babcock, 76, of Ithaca, N.Y., died Dec. 23.

Margaret "Peg" Barnes
 Barnes, 81, of Livonia, died Dec. 28.

Carol Ann (nee Schulz) Boyd
 Boyd, 65, of Farmington Hills.

Richard "Rick" Buchanan
 Buchanan, 49, of Dallas, Texas, formerly of Garden City, died Dec. 6.

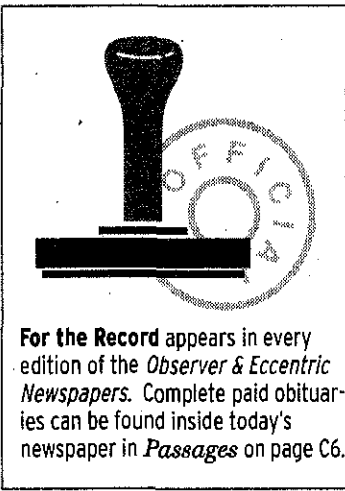
C
William "Skip" Coatsworth
 Coatsworth, 55, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 27.

E
John Elliot
 Elliot, 72, of Phoenix, Ariz., formerly of Plymouth, died Dec. 31.

John R. (Jack) Etherington Sr.
 Etherington, 71, of Westland, died Jan. 2.

G
James J. Gilbert
 Gilbert, 91, of Plymouth, died Jan. 2.

H
Yolanda E. (Lana) Hanrahan
 Hanrahan, 82, of Bloomfield Hills, died Dec. 13.



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 C6.

Dec. 26.
Charlotte E. Hegwood
 Hegwood, 90, of Bellevue, died Jan. 2.

L
Flavelle M. (nee Wood) Landry
 Landry, 94, formerly of Bloomfield Hills, died Jan. 2.

M
Frank Joseph Malinowski
 Malinowski, 92, died Dec. 27.

Rosemary Therese (Schultz) Martin
 Martin, 66, formerly of Farmington Hills, died Dec. 13.

Safety first in using alternative heat sources

With experts predicting that heating costs will be higher for most families this winter, the prospect of using alternative heating sources - wood stoves, space heaters and fireplaces - is more tempting than ever.

But alternative heating may carry some additional safety risks for Westland residents.

Of the 45,500 home heating fires reported to the nation's fire departments in 2002, 68 percent involved fireplaces, space heaters and chimneys, according to the latest figures available from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Alternative heating also was associated with 85 percent of the 220 fatalities associated with home heating fires, including 46 percent for portable space heaters, 28 percent for wood stoves and other fixed space heaters, and 11 percent for fireplaces and chimneys.

"Alternative heating can save money, but be sure the savings don't translate into a fire in your home," warned John Drengenberg, manager of Consumer Affairs for Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the not-for-profit safety testing organization. "Many of us too often focus on cutting expenses while overlooking basic safety steps that could prevent a tragedy and the emotional costs associated."

To help reduce the injuries

and property damage that occur every year from alternative heating, a few simple safety precautions should be followed.

"Cooking stoves, gas ovens and grills should never be used for heating a room or home," Drengenberg said. "That's not what they were designed for and there are too many other options out there that are safer."

A popular alternative is space heaters. But be sure to use it the right way. Space heaters were associated with nearly three-quarters of heating fires resulting in deaths, the leading cause being a space heater operating too close to combustibles, such as draperies, clothing and furniture.

For a safer operation of portable space heaters, UL offers these safety tips:

■ Keep all space heaters at least 3 feet away from household combustibles.

■ Use space heaters only as a supplementary source of heat. These devices are not intended to replace the home's heating system.

■ Do not use extension cords with space heaters unless absolutely necessary. If you must use an extension cord, be sure that the cord is marked "12-gauge" or "14-gauge."

■ Inspect the heater's cord periodically. Do not use a heater with a damaged cord.

■ Check periodically for a secure plug/outlet fit. If the plug becomes very hot, the outlet may need to be replaced by a qualified technician.

■ Heaters should be placed on a flat, level surface. Do not place heaters on furniture since they may fall and dislodge or break parts in the heater.

■ Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, do not use in damp, wet areas.

■ Look for the UL Mark on your electric heater. This means representative samples of the appliance have met UL's stringent safety standards.

■ If you have a liquid-fueled space heater, use only the fuel recommended by the manufacturer. The wrong fuel could burn hotter than the equipment was designed for and cause a serious fire.

■ When refueling, turn off the heater and let it cool down completely before adding fuel.

■ Before you buy a kerosene heater, check with your local fire department to ensure that it is legal.

Other heating alternatives have a different set of safety considerations.

Fireplace and chimney fires are mostly caused by a buildup of flammable creosote, the product of wood smoke and moisture. To prevent this, wood and coal stoves, fire-

places, chimneys and chimney connectors should be inspected annually by a professional and cleaned as often as inspections suggest.

It's just as important to burn properly seasoned wood. Wood that is green has more moisture and is likely to smolder, leading to more creosote buildup. Also, make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from flying into the room, and allow fireplace and wood ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container.

Furnaces also should be inspected and serviced annually. Homeowners, however, can change or clean the furnace filter themselves. Combustible materials, such as paint thinners or gasoline, should never be used nor stored near the furnace.

Finally, the best defense is a good offense. Install smoke alarms to warn of a fire, but also have carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in the home to warn about faulty furnace, fireplace and oven flues or any other venting problems and inadequacies.

Check existing alarms to ensure they are in working order. Replace the batteries once a year.

"Between the cold and the cost of heating, there will be enough discomfort this winter," Drengenberg said. "You needn't add to the suffering with a preventable home fire."

WESTLAND Observer

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Publish: January 5, 2006

Cheer for the
 hometown
 read today's
SPORTS
 section

Auditions are Jan. 14 for Lions Clubs Band

The Lions Clubs of Michigan are seeking area high school students to participate in their annual All-State Band program.

The Internationally acclaimed youth activity has represented the Lions of Michigan for nearly 30 years at the International Association of Lions Clubs International Convention. Since its inception, the Lions of Michigan All-State Band has had more 300 Michigan communities represented by area musicians.

"Our program strives to provide our members with musical and sociological growth, travel and education and exposure to serving those less fortunate, the motto of Lions Clubs," said Roger Weyersberg, director.

He added that the Lions Band program is developed to compliment the students' own music program and to return them as "improved performers through excellent music litera-

ture and high-quality instruction."

"We also strive to have the students return as better leaders in their own program," said Weyersberg.

The band program seeks individuals of all performance levels, including visual and drill teams. The band will conduct its annual auditions on Saturday, Jan. 14, at Haslett High School.

It will hold a rehearsal week-end in April and May and, prior to departing on its 10-day tour, the band will hold band camp at Michigan State University June 22-25.

This year's band tour will take students to Gettysburg, Hershey and Philadelphia, Pa., Boston and Salem, Mass., and Cleveland, Ohio.

"Our tour is directed by the location of the International Association Convention, which is scheduled for Boston June 29-July 4," said Brian Shepard, chief executive officer of the Lions Band Program.

Past tours have taken the band to such locations as Hong Kong, Tokyo, Sidney, Beijing and Honolulu.

"The band has provided past students with travel experiences that many may never have had a chance to do otherwise," Shepard said.

Performances include such venues as hospitals or public parks. The band also will perform in the International Parade and have an opportunity to perform in a mass band concert with other Lions Band programs attending the convention.

Students are responsible for their portion of the tour cost. Students pay for no administrative cost of the program. This year's tour cost is \$1,875. The tour cost includes all meals, including rehearsal weekends, lodging, and transportation while on tour and travel uniforms.

For more tour information or an application visit the Web site at

www.lionsofmi.com/pages/all_state_band.htm, call (517) 887-6640, Ext. 13/15 or send an e-mail to lions@acd.net.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization. The Lions of Michigan All State Band Charities, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Organization.

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Local cable channel reaching out to Middle East, world

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

It's a new name and new mission for the former TV Orient, the Southfield-based television operation which remains North America's only Arabic-interest cable network.

The new name, MBN America, reflects the network's increased coverage area and its desire to "build a bridge" between Arabic communities in the U.S. and throughout the world.

"We are available everywhere in North America, in the U.S.,

Canada and Mexico," CEO and President Wally Jadan said of its current position on Comcast digital cable — Channel 667 locally. Radio broadcasts are also available on 690-AM.

The network is also negotiating to expand its coverage by satellite into the Middle East, as well as northern Africa and southern Europe within the coming year.

Though two-thirds of its current programs are broadcast in Arabic languages, that, too, will change.

"We are working toward being 50/50 in English," Jadan

said. Its planned live coverage of the Dec. 15 Iraqi elections, complete with reaction from the metro area, is hoped to be seen as a breakthrough event for the newly-renamed network.

Serving more than 550,000 people of Middle Eastern descent in metro Detroit, and an estimated 3.5 million throughout the continent, MBN America hopes to someday become as much a cable staple as Univision, the Latin American cable network.

"That's our goal, we will be full service with not only news,

but entertainment programming, sports, movies and fashion as well," Jadan said.

Making the task especially challenging, he noted, is the fact that the Arabic world is made up of people from a variety of ethnic groups, each with its own perspectives on issues, and own language.

"Sometimes, I will send three different reporters to cover a story," Jadan said.

The network seeks to highlight the role of Arab Americans in U.S. society, a role he says is often misinterpreted by Arabic media outlets.

"People in Arabic countries hear how we're isolated here and that's not the case," Jadan said. "We're active in our communities, we're involved."

To that end, its home community is very much interested in keeping MBN America.

"Southfield prides itself on its diversity and on the fact that it's the broadcast center for metro Detroit — we have everyone but WDIV (Channel 4)," said Mayor Brenda Lawrence, whose serves on the network's advisory board. "So, naturally, we're very interested in helping MBN stay in Southfield."

For now, that won't be an issue. Jadan says the network will remain at its Southfield Road studios for the time being. Long-range plans, he added, call for a "two- to two-and-one-half-acre site" to accommodate modernized studios and equipment.

The name change and expanded role comes at a time when Al-Jazeera, the Arabic-language network based in Qatar, is reportedly planning expanded English-language broadcasts. Other Arabic networks might follow.

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Law offers tax break for creating jobs

State Sen. Laura M. Toy, R-Livonia, has seen two bills she sponsored become law.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed Senate Bill 910, sponsored by Toy, which will provide a one-time tax credit to businesses that bring jobs into Michigan. Toy's legislation was one of eight bills signed this week to provide \$600 million in tax relief to struggling manufacturers in the state.

"This is an important part of our efforts to strengthen Michigan's economy and bring jobs to our state," said Toy, who serves as vice chair of the Senate Commerce and Labor

Committee. "In the new global economy we can't afford to stand still. Businesses are finding themselves needing to change to stay competitive. The state also must make some meaningful changes if it wants to retain and create jobs and attract new companies."

Public Act 293 of 2005 establishes a 100-percent new investment credit which will be given for personal property taxes paid on property directly related to jobs transferred to Michigan in 2007 and 2008.

Transferred jobs would include high technology or manufacturing jobs that were located in a different state or country in the immediately preceding tax year that have been moved to Michigan.

The governor praised Sen. Toy's bill and others in the package by saying "this legislation provides needed incentives for Michigan companies to invest in their facilities, create new jobs, and consolidate operations here."

Earlier this month, the governor also signed Senate Bill 654, sponsored by Toy, which makes the unlawful purchase of public property by a public servant a felony punishable by up to one year imprisonment.

To assist municipalities selling residential property, legislation was recently passed that allows non-elected public employees to buy up to four parcels from their employer. The city of Detroit for example, owns approximately

40,000 tax-foreclosed parcels and employs about 16,000 people, none of whom could legally buy any of these parcels prior to the change in law.

Toy's bill is the companion to this legislation and sets penalties for anyone who might try to abuse the change and violate the public trust.

"The new law will help local governments sell excess property while also giving hard working civil servants the opportunity to become home owners in the communities they serve," Toy said. "Yet, my legislation also provides a strong deterrent to any type of impropriety."

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OUR VIEWS

Cooperation key to better future

As we begin a new year, we renew our commitment to a core set of issues vital to the suburban communities that we serve.

It has been difficult to find the resources to address these issues as Michigan, and southeast Michigan in particular, has been mired in an economic slump. But this state continues to be rich in natural and human resources that hold promise for a better future, if we work together to address these issues without the usual political rhetoric that seems to continually dampen progress in our state.

We have outlined four key areas that we return to on a regular basis in these editorial pages: education, the environment, the economy and city-suburban relations. In the months ahead, we'll be discussing these issues in greater detail and in reference to impending debate and legislation. Today, we'd like to present an overview of our perspective on these important concerns.

■ **Education:** Under the state constitution, education is primarily the responsibility of the state government. The passage of Proposal A, shifting the majority of school funding from local property taxes to the state sales tax, increased the state's role in funding education and the federal No Child Left Behind Act has increased the state's role in setting educational goals.

While we value the important role of local school boards and administrators, we understand the need to set and maintain high educational standards. We have long supported state testing that helps school districts evaluate the effectiveness of their programs against national and state standards. But we also believe that the state and local school districts need to work together in creating a curriculum that is both challenging and varied enough to meet the different needs of students.

While the state does not currently set a mandatory curriculum, it does provide an outline for districts to use. We support the recent proposals of Mike Flanagan, the state superintendent of public instruction, to increase the math and science requirements for graduation.

The state is committed to funding schools first, but work is needed to keep the funding equitable without penalizing districts for providing a quality educational environment. We also need to keep funding consistent, even in difficult economic times when sales tax revenue declines.

■ **The environment:** Michigan is the key Great Lakes State. The state's economic future rests on its unique position, touching four of the five Great Lakes. We have only begun to protect this vital resource from those who look on this fresh water resource as a profit center. The lakes are a resource for water, fishing, transport and recreation. They are in danger from both ecological dangers — from invasive species to toxic runoff — and from politicians eager to drain water to other areas of the country.

Protecting the lakes is the major environmental issue in the years ahead, but we also have an obligation to protect the land. In this area, sprawl continues to be an issue and a problem. We have designed the metro Detroit area to sprawl along several freeways, moving farther from an urban center.

We support efforts to revive the Detroit Area Regional Transit Authority as a first step toward a true regional transit system. We support infill projects, high-density subdivisions similar to the Cherry Hill development in Canton and development of viable "downtown" shopping districts.

While the disposal of waste needs long-term investigation, we join area legislators in supporting strong restrictions on the importation of waste from Canada.

■ **The economy:** Gov. Jennifer Granholm and the state Legislature have been engaged in a philosophical debate over who should receive tax benefits and how much.

Both sides understand that some incentive is necessary to attract businesses to this state rather than to other states or foreign countries. Both understand a need to redirect the state's economic focus without abandoning the auto industry that has been its key business for 100 years.

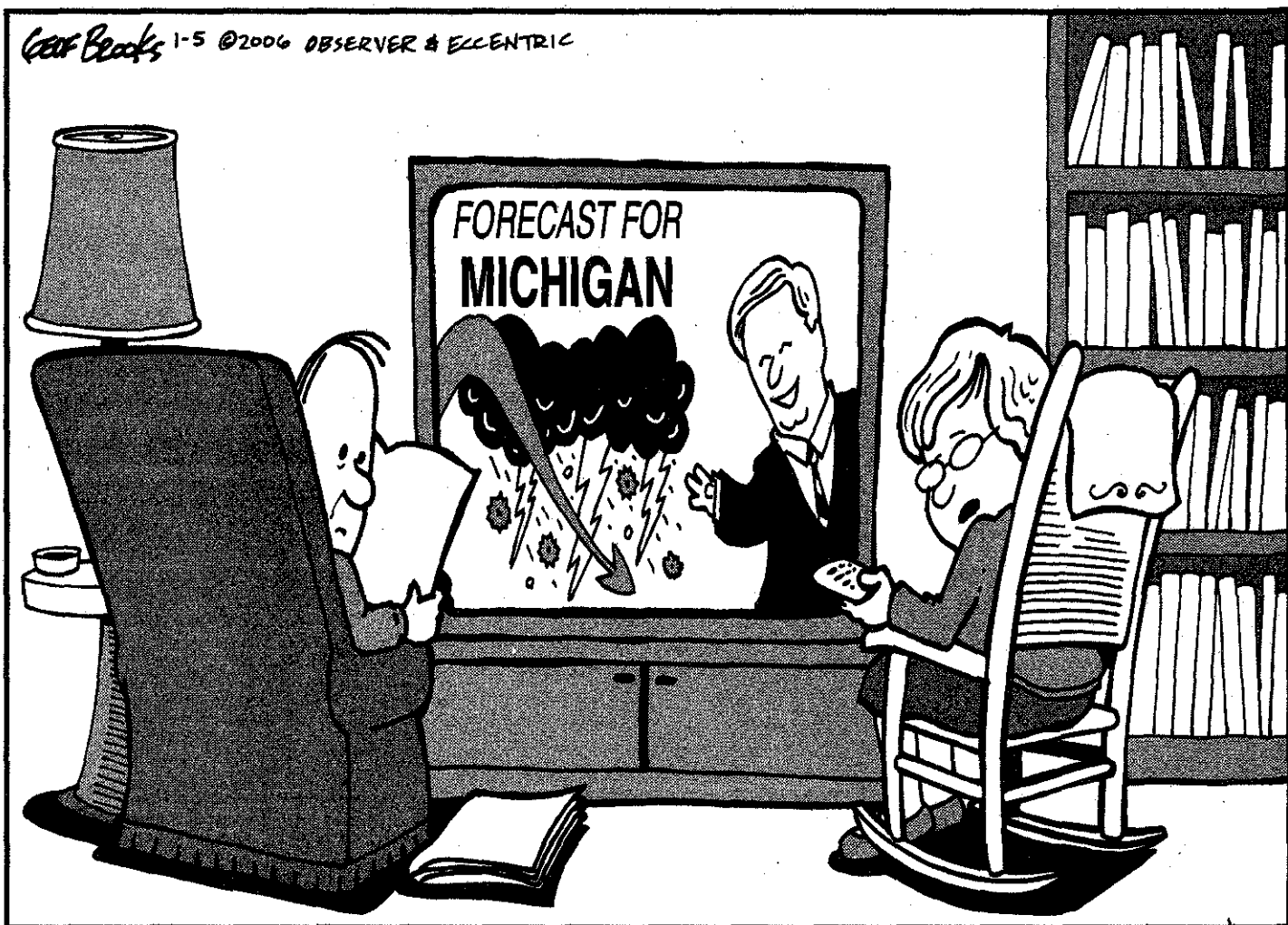
We have the educational, intellectual and natural resource capital; what we seem to lack is the political cooperation and courage to move forward in a way that will benefit the state to everyone's credit.

■ **City-suburban relations:** The divide between Detroit and its suburbs has been called a de facto apartheid. This area has been called the most racially divided urban area in the United States. Detroit was named this year as the poorest major city in the country.

In recent months, we have seen controversies over mass transit and commercial development devolve into arguments over race. Racial incidents have been reported in several suburban communities and Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick acknowledged that race played a part in his re-election.

In a talk before *Observer & Eccentric* editorial staffers, Kilpatrick also said it was important to bridge the gap that separates our communities without relinquishing the city's stake in the region.

This balance will be hard to maintain, but is important to understand as we move toward more regional planning and projects.



"These economists think they know everything."

LETTERS

A loss of integrity

Many office employees I meet today are concerned about the current state of business. In Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, California, Florida and elsewhere, office workers are asking why business is so cutthroat and insensitive to employees and their needs. The layoffs, benefit reductions and other labor troubles are a huge worry.

The new improved attitude in business started a short time ago with Newt Gingrich during Reagan's administration. The "in your face" tirades of these officials replaced dialogues and conversations of political discussions and the exercise of democracy and oozed into business discussions and management decisions of how to treat employees as well. The greed and power wielding over employees became acceptable behavior.

The courteous and respectful treatment of customers and suppliers declined to tolerance of their existence and be viewed as an obstruction to higher profits. Along with the decline of tolerance, the "us against them" working relationships of employees and employers flourished. Soon, employees will have to profess to be Republican to work in a business.

The irony is those who are asking why business has lost integrity are Bush and right-wing supporters. How could a company behave his way? Most see the corporate practices as isolated instead of a business trend assisted by a corrupt business practice and a morally bankrupt administration.

The current business practices are fostered by this administration and its business allies. The worker is a liability for the company, not asset. Any way a company can reduce the costs of its employees will be done to increase profits and increase payout to executives and board members. Legislation protecting workers from unfair treatment is being reduced or eliminated.

I remember the story of a man going to the doctor complaining that his head hurt when he pounded it on a wall. The doctor's solution was simply quit pounding his head on the wall. Today's group of Bush supporters are arrogant, rude and quite surly. But will they ever stop pounding their head on the wall?

Allan Biber
Westland

Bill would hurt poor

Please stop this budget bill. If any of you congressman has ever gone to sleep hungry, you would understand how wrong this bill is. I would be willing to bet, little Georgie has never been without food or access to a doctor in his whole miserable life. He has no respect for life or nature. His fate is sealed. Are you willing to follow him down? Please stop his shameless acts on the poor.

Steven Johnston
Westland

Column on the money

Hugh Gallagher's column about the government's penchant for over-reaching

in terrorism investigations is right on the money. ("In fight for freedom at home, librarians take a lead position," Dec. 18, 2005.) When Mr. Gallagher says, "Sacrificing freedom for safety is a poor bargain," he echoes the sentiments of one of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who said, "Those who would give up Essential Liberty to purchase a little Temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

It's particularly disturbing that Rep. Thaddeus McCotter voted to renew the Patriot Act in its current form, despite his own misgivings about the legislation. Michigan's 11th District needs a representative who puts American ideals before his party leadership's agenda. Mr. McCotter with his vote proved the party matters more than people. Shame on him.

Tony Trupiano
Dearborn Heights
Democratic candidate for Michigan's 11th District House seat

It's backward

No cruelty budget, no social service cuts, rescind tax cuts to the wealthy instead. I think it's both deplorable and disgusting that the Bush administration chooses to give tax cuts to the very wealthy and to their big corporate donors, leaving the most vulnerable in society to fend for themselves.

Prime example was Hurricane Katrina, the death, the devastation, the despair. We watched in horror as our fellow citizens drowned, did without food and water, died waiting for help to arrive. Now our government wants to make further cuts to our veterans, to our elderly, to the poor and to everyone in between. It's obvious they don't care about the average American citizen and this country of ours.

Morally, it's wrong and cruel and not the America we once were proud of, not what our founding fathers nor countless vets fought for. Leave veterans benefits, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, alone. Rescind tax cuts to the wealthy instead.

Linda Frost
Farmington

Fast food epidemic

Today's children are overwhelmed with choices from countless fast food chains and unfortunately, it shows. According to the American Heart Association's statistical source book on obesity, in the United States, approximately 30 percent of children ages 6-11 are considered overweight.

There's no doubt in my mind that fast food is one of the major contributors to this epidemic.

Between 1970 and 1980, the number of fast-food outlets in the United States increased from about 30,000 to 140,000 and sales increased by about 300 percent.

Being a mother of four boys I feel that it's my duty to protect my children from an unhealthy future. So I've committed to a couple of simple household rules that I feel will make a long-term impact. Trips to fast-food restaurants are a rare

occasion and soda-pop is a treat rather than a daily beverage. It may not seem like much but it cuts down on a lot of fat and sugar in their diets.

I think it's important to let children know that choosing good food will make them feel better and live longer. What's the old saying? You are what you eat. Children today are living proof of that.

It's also important to remember that children learn by example. Parents need to show off their own good choices which, in the long-run, will serve a dual purpose — good health for parents and children.

Shari Davidek
Livonia

Check it out

To all you older folks out there on Social Security and Medicare: I'm one of you and I know how costly medical insurance can be. Big deductibles, big co-pays. It's a crying shame. Here's one solution that might interest you.

Check this out for yourselves. I'm not an insurance expert, but I used to be an HMO account executive.

Ever hear of Michigan Farm Bureau? How about Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan? You can look up their phone numbers for yourselves. These two companies have teamed up to offer folks like you and me a powerful, yet relatively inexpensive comprehensive medical supplement to Medicare.

To get this supplement, you must become a Michigan Farm Bureau member. I think it costs about \$40 a year. Members are eligible to enroll in BCBS of Michigan, which can eliminate altogether medical co-pays, and existing medical problems are covered, with the exception of end-stage renal disease. No physicals, either, that is, a physical exam is not required to enroll.

My BCBS policy costs about \$269 for three months. You can go to any doctor or any hospital. But, don't take my word for it. Check it out for yourselves. No, it does not cover prescription meds.

Kenneth Kem
Farmington Hill

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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QUOTABLE

"I thought the bids came back about how we expected them to, based on what we've seen in other communities."

— Westland Councilman William Wild, about the three bids received for a new five-year trash hauling contract

WESTLAND
Observer

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

Dusting off the state's crystal ball for 2006

Straws in the wind as we make the turn into the new year ...

■ "Demography is history," the experts say. That's a bit cloudy, but basically means that a state's or a nation's future is profoundly determined by the size and nature of its population. In Michigan's case, the demographic trends that will determine what happens to our state in the long run will start becoming clear in 2006.

First glimpses are not encouraging. The auto industry is scaling back and closing plants. Michigan's total auto employment is still 223,000, but that's down



Phil Power

79,000 from a decade ago. That means that one out of every four 1996 auto jobs has disappeared. Blue-collar workers are especially feeling the pinch, finding jobs outside the industry and often moving out of state. That's especially true for younger workers, who can't see much of a future in the auto industry — or elsewhere — here.

This also means that Michigan's population growth will likely continue to lag other states. Overall, we have grown by only 1.8 percent since 2000, which puts us 42nd among the states.

Keep this trend up, and we'll lose another seat in the U.S. House of Representatives — and the political clout that goes with it — after the 2010 census. (We've already lost four seats since 1980.)

The big question has to do with the education and skill level of those who stay. It's clear the manufacturing jobs of the future — like those at the DaimlerChrysler engine plant in Monroe or the Toyota tech center near Ann Arbor — will require post-high school credentials.

But the quality of Michigan's workforce overall lags behind other states — the consequence of a culture that assumed that any high school dropout could get a good paying job at the auto plants.

■ The domestic auto industry will continue to shrink, of course, bringing the toughest economic times to Michigan in living memory.

David Cole, the head of the Center for Automotive Research and the ranking independent expert on the industry, thinks the chance of a strike at the now-bankrupt Delphi bringing General Motors down is less than 20 percent. I hope he's right.

It's a funny feeling, though, to realize that to a large degree the economic fate of Michigan depends on decisions to be made by only three people: GM's Rick Wagoner, Delphi Corp's Steve Miller and the United Auto Workers' Ron Gettelfinger. They may not be able to save our economy, but they could destroy it with a few bad moves.

You have to hope they're all as sane and smart as they appear.

■ Some hopeful signs are on the horizon, though. State Supt. of Instruction Mike Flanagan has recommended a seriously beefed-up curriculum for Michigan schools.

The state Board of Education has endorsed the idea, but it has to get through the Legislature to become effective this year. I'd be surprised if our political masters actually stepped forward this year, but stranger things have happened. With a newly elected school board taking over in Detroit, I doubt anything of any substance will happen in what certainly is the most crisis-ridden district in the state.

And by mid-March, parts of six communities in Oakland County will be hooked up for widespread wireless Internet access in homes, cars, stores, parks and anywhere else. By the end of 2007, all 910 square miles of the county will be online for wireless.

County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, the moving force behind this leap forward, says it's "history in the making." What puzzles me is why, if our political masters are so fired up about fixing Michigan's economy, they don't push a program like this statewide.

■ Which brings us to business taxes. Gov. Jennifer Granholm, House Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Novi, and Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Grandville, have all agreed that Michigan's business tax structure badly needs to be simplified and restructured.

Granholm proposed a fairly substantial program early last year, but it languished amid partisan sniping. And the tax changes passed at the end of last year were marginal, at best.

Personally, I think a radical program is called for: repeal the Single Business Tax and replace it by extending the sales tax to services while reducing the 6 percent rate. But don't hold your breath. Unless I am happily wrong, the political system is sufficiently broken to ensure nothing substantive or far-reaching will happen, even though this state is literally fighting for its economic life.

■ With the failure of the political system over the past few years, you can expect a whole bunch of measures to be placed directly on the November ballot, bypassing a paralyzed Legislature with "citizen-based" (i.e. special interest-financed) initiatives.

A partial list includes: bans on abortion, dove hunting and affirmative action; raising the minimum wage; hiring preferences for veterans; guaranteeing funding increases for schools; strengthening private property rights; and relaxing legislative term limits.

California leads the nation in this, a trend much criticized by political scientists as replacing representative democracy with direct vote by an uninformed and easily manipulated electorate.

"Californiaocracy," however, is the inevitable outcome of a political system that is dysfunctional and out of touch with the big concerns of real people. We need to change this — and my new year's wish for us all is that we figure out how.

Happy New Year!

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.

The good, the bad and the ugly of 2005 — and what it means for 2006

I want to share with you some thoughts about 2005 and to look ahead to the new year.

Beginning with the more encouraging news, Congress finally passed two major pieces of legislation that have been held up for years — the highway bill and the energy bill. The long-delayed highway bill will provide \$1.123 billion annually for transportation projects in Michigan and will create 61,500 new jobs across the state. U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and I also won approval of \$100 million in funding for Michigan's Highway Projects of Regional and National Significance. We also made some modest progress on Michigan's



Carl Levin

return on the gas taxes we send to Washington.

While far from perfect, the energy bill will encourage investment in infrastructure and alternative energy technologies, improve the reliability of our electricity supply, and improve energy efficiency and conservation. We need to do much more. Early next year, I will introduce legislation that would invest significantly greater federal resources in areas such as hybrid engines, advanced batteries, advanced clean diesel and fuel cells that could lead to revolutionary breakthroughs in automotive technology.

Michigan won a significant victory this year when the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommended expanding the functions of the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command at the Detroit Arsenal in Macomb County. The Defense Department's new Joint Ground Vehicle Center of Excellence at the Arsenal will be a great economic asset to Michigan, our automotive community, and will make a contribution to the defense of our nation.

The other good news this year was a few things that did not happen. The Bush administration began the year proposing far-reaching and unwise changes to Social Security. But the American people said clearly that they do not want this critical and successful program weakened or privatized. We have also so far resisted the administration's insistence on repealing the estate tax, which would largely benefit only a small minority of the wealthiest Americans at a huge cost to the treasury.

The budget picture overall was dismal. The deficit for this year was \$319 billion. The national debt has climbed above \$8 trillion. And the interest on that debt was 14 percent of the federal government's spend-

ing. The administration and the majority in Congress continue to insist on more tax cuts mostly benefiting the richest among us and budget cuts that fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable Americans.

We also continued this year to lose manufacturing jobs. In the past five years, we have lost 2.9 million domestic manufacturing jobs, including 214,000 jobs in Michigan. I am very disappointed that the Bush administration has not acted to deal with this crisis. Within the Michigan congressional delegation, there is bipartisan agreement on several steps we should take — we need to end currency manipulation by our trading partners, open export markets blocked by trade barriers, make other countries play by the rules, and lower catastrophic health care costs to make businesses more competitive.

We should offer significant tax credits to encourage the development of advanced technologies and support existing programs at the Department of Commerce, including the Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the Advanced Technology Program, instead of cutting or ending them as the administration proposes.

I am hopeful that Congress will put the creation of manufacturing jobs in 2006 at the top of a broader agenda more in line with the priorities of the American people. That agenda should also include reducing the federal deficit; investing in education; improving access to health care and reducing its costs; protecting the environment, including the Great Lakes; improving our response to natural disasters; and strengthening our defenses against terrorist attacks.

As we make these investments here at home, we also need to change course in Iraq to improve the chance of success there. At this writing, the war has cost more than 2,150 American lives and nearly a half trillion dollars. Our troops are performing heroically, and we are all grateful for their service. Our military leaders tell us, however, that there is no purely military solution without a political solution in Iraq. The Dec. 15 election in Iraq was encouraging, but we do not yet know if the elections will ultimately be a step forward. Over the next four months, the period they have set for themselves, the Iraqis must amend their constitution to make it a unifying document that has the support of all major groups in Iraq. For our part, we need to send the clear message to the Iraqis that unless they get their political house in order we will consider an expedited timetable for the reduction of our forces. Carl Levin is the senior U.S. senator from Michigan.

Close & Save

Close heat registers in rooms you don't use this winter — such as spare bedrooms, basements and storage areas. It's a simple and effective way to reduce natural gas use, and it can lower your home heating costs.

The cost of natural gas to heat your home will be higher this winter. So there's no better time to begin conserving energy than now. For tips on how to reduce natural gas consumption and for information on financial assistance for low-income families, visit consumersenergy.com/energyanswers. Or call 800-477-5050. A customer service representative is ready to help.

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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.hometownlife.com. For more information, call (734) 953-2112.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Train show SS. Simon and Jude Church's ushers club will sponsor a buy and swap toys and trains show noon-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15, at the church hall at 32500 Palmer Road, one mile west of Merriman. Food and beverages are available. Admission is \$2 per person, \$4 per family. There are approximately 125 dealer tables available at \$10 each. To reserve a table, call (734) 595-8327. Dealer set-up begins at 9 a.m. on the day of the show.

Open house St. Damian Catholic School will be holding a Preschool-Kindergarten Open House on 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. The school offers three-four-year-old preschool and three and five full day kindergarten. Registration will be accepted for the 2006-2007 school year at this time. St. Damian is at 29891 Joy Road, Westland. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

K-grams Gymnastics Night K-grams, Inc. (Kids Programs) invites your family to the Fourth Annual K-grams Gymnastics Night at the University of Michigan women's gymnastics meet against the Ohio State Buckeyes. Local families are invited to join more than 1,000 elementary students from K-grams, fans, students, and mentors, as we cheer on the teams and engage in fun for the whole family. The meet is scheduled for Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor.

K-grams will also have special raffles and prizes for all children in attendance. Just by attending K-grams Gym Night, you will help raise money for mentoring and literacy programs in K-5 schools. K-grams has partnered with Comcast, which will donate \$1 to kids programs for each person who walks through the door. Admission is free with a university ID, and \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. For more information, visit the group's Web site at www.kgrams.org/gym, or send an e-mail to gym@kgrams.org.

Audition notice The Dearborn Heights Civic Theatre is holding auditions for Once on This Island at 7 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Jan. 9-10, at Berwyn Center 26155 Richardson, Dearborn Heights. Once on This Island is an highly original and theatrical Caribbean adaptation of the popular fairy tale, The Little Mermaid. It will be presented March 31 and April 1, 7 and 8. Dance auditions will include a short dance that will be taught prior to small group auditions. For music auditions, participants should be prepared

to sing a piece that best displays their vocal ability. An accompanist will be provided for those with sheet, however, a compact disc with vocal track removed or singing a cappella also is acceptable. For more information, visit the web site at www.dhctstage.org/onceonthisisland/.

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.

Rec classes

The Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will offer its second winter session of home school physical education and swim program 1-3 p.m. Jan. 9-Feb. 22.

The Wayne Aquatic Area winter II Learn to Swim registration is going on now through Jan. 7. Classes being the week of Jan. 9. Cost is \$31 for residents and \$41 for non-residents. Private lessons are available. A new Masters swimming program for those ages 16 and older and coached by Chrissy Robert, head health and wellness trainer, will have practices 7-8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 9 and Jan. 23, and 4-5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19 and Feb. 2. The program offers organized workouts. Cost is \$5 for residents and \$6 for non-residents. Call (734) 721-7400 for more information.

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 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. For information, call (734) 722-7632.

portation. For information, 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 Dyer 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.mhometown.com/oe/PlymouthCantonVA 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 quaterning 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/.

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 seek-

ing 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.

Tutorial 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.

FOR YOUR HEALTH

TOPS

TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Wednesday at St. John's Episcopal Church, 555 S. Wayne Road, Westland. Weigh-in is 6:30-7:15 p.m., with the meeting 7:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, call Rosalie at (734) 728-0299.

Menopause & More

A Menopause & More support group for women meets 7-9 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month in Classroom 2 of the west addition of the Marian Women Center of St. Mary Mercy Hospital, 36475 Five Mile, Livonia. No registration is necessary, and the group is free of charge. For more information, call (734) 655-1100.

Support group

A support group for people with chronic illness meets on Fridays every other week, at the Westside Mental Health Services, 32932 W. Warren, Suite 103, Westland. The support group is a service of Awareness Counseling Services. There is a \$10 for each meeting which will be facilitated by a professional. For more information, call (734) 513-8295 or (313) 562-2800.

AIM

Anxiety or panic attacks? AIM (Agoraphobics in Motion) meets at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at Faith Lutheran Church, 30000 Five Mile, between Middlebelt and Merriman in Livonia. AIM is a support group for those working on recovery from anxiety disorder or phobias. Call (248) 547-0400.

Grief support

Angela Hospice offers ongoing grief

support groups every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. All groups are free of charge and open to the community. Call bereavement coordinator Ruth Favor at Angela Hospice, (734) 464-7810.

Childbirth classes

Garden City Hospital, on Inkster Road at Maplewood, is sponsoring classes for parents of newborns, weekend childbirth instruction, a refresher childbirth education course and a new support group for expectant teens. For information on programs, call (734) 458-4330.

Childbirth Association

Classes for childbirth preparation are offered at several Wayne County locations. Morning and evening classes are available. Registering new classes every month. Newborn care classes and Cesarean birth preparation are also offered. Call (734) 459-7477.

Fibromyalgia

The Garden City area chapter of the Great Lakes Fibromyalgia and CFS Association Support Group meets 1-3 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at Merriman Road Baptist Church on Merriman south of Ford. There are guest speakers and discussion on a variety of topics. There is no membership fee, however a small donation is greatly appreciated. Call Tina Wing at (734) 338-2226 or Lucy Rowley at (734) 462-1768.

HISTORIC

Pioneer trek

The Nankin Township Pioneer Trek has been designed to introduce travelers to the history of the area. Travelers will visit sites that affected the development of Westland as a community. Those who complete the trek will receive an embroidered patch. To start the trek, first visit the Westland Historical Museum and pick up a packet. The museum is at 857 N. Wayne Road and is open 1-4 p.m. Saturdays, except before a holiday. The trek is sponsored by the Westland Historical Commission and the Friends of the Westland Museum. For information, call (734) 326-1110.

Friends of Eloise

The Friends of Eloise group meets 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month in the dining room of the Kay Beard Building, on Michigan between Middlebelt and Merriman. All are welcome. Call Jo Johnson, (734) 522-3918.

Friends of Museum

Friends of the Westland Historical Museum meet at 7 p.m. each month except December at the Collins House, located at the museum complex, 857 N. Wayne Road. Call Jim Franklin at (734) 595-8119. Everyone is welcome.

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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, others 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.

Herniated Disc Technology Discovered by NASA Scientists Ann Arbor - A new free report has recently been released that reveals how breakthrough medical technology is offering new hope for sciatica sufferers. Discover how research has proven non-surgical decompression 86% successful in treating debilitating back pain.

URGENT CONSUMER BULLETIN Interest Rates Are Going Up !!! February 1st the new head of the Federal Reserve takes over! First on his agenda is to arrest inflation by restricting consumer credit! That means a dramatic rise in your interest rates!