

WILLIAM P. FAUST  
Public Library of Westland

Hospitals approach diversity differently

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Father Bingo

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SUNDAY  
January 8, 2006

# WESTLAND Observer

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## City is likely to stay with current hauler

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Huge financial savings will likely convince Westland city leaders to retain its longtime trash-hauling company, despite some homeowner complaints about shoddy service, officials said.

Staying with Midwestern Sanitation - historically known as Painter & Ruthenberg - would minimally save Westland some \$1.2 million on a five-year contract, city council President William Wild said Thursday.

"I think it's the best way to go because of the way the bids came in," he said. "From a financial standpoint, it makes the best sense."

Midwestern Sanitation has lost work in several communities - most recently Northville Township, officials conceded. Still, the company has priced its garbage pickup services substantially lower than competitors Republic and Waste Management.

Midwestern's bid of \$5.90 for each stop its workers make was, cumulatively, much cheaper than Republic's \$6.61 and Waste Management's \$7.12, Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said.

The trash-hauling contract

will be studied during a council session scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, at Westland City Hall. A formal vote is expected that same evening during a 7 p.m. business meeting.

Both meetings are open to the public.

Wild and Cicirelli serve on a five-member committee that decided unanimously to urge the seven-member council to approve a five-year contract with Midwestern. Others serving on the panel include Westland Public Services Director Tom Wilson and Councilmen James Godbout and Charles Pickering.

"The recommendation will be for Midwestern," Cicirelli confirmed Thursday.

Responding to questions by telephone, Wild predicted that a council majority will approve Midwestern's low bid.

The committee and City Attorney Angelo Plakas' office will propose a five-year agreement that would essentially force Midwestern to shape up or potentially have its contract terminated.

"We're going to stiffen the penalties ... so that we have a hammer over their head," Cicirelli said.

PLEASE SEE TRASH, A5



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Claire Mueller of Westland and her son Peter, 4, play with their new snowman tic-tac-toe game, which they made at the Westland Library as part of the kids happenings Tuesday afternoon.



### Crafty good time

Parents didn't have to wonder what to do with their children during the second week of the schools' Christmas break. The William P. Faust Library had a slew of activities designed to entertain youngsters. Emma Grace, 6, a first-grader at Madison Elementary, and her sister Jackie, 3, were among kids attending a workshop to make a play Snowman Tic-Tac-Toe. While they made their game boards, Claire Mueller of Westland and her son Peter, 4, played the game. Youngsters also had the opportunity to make thank you notes, perfect for saying thanks for their presents, and snowman pin, as well as do a Make It Take It Craft. Families also were invited to bring their favorite board games for a Family Game Day.

## New system to improve water meters

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Westland city leaders plan to implement a new water meter-reading system this year that officials say will improve efficiency and reduce costs.

A new mechanism will be placed on water meters to allow city workers to quickly pass by and obtain readings by using a hand-held, electronic device,

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said. The new system will reduce the time it takes to obtain water meter readings, she said. The change will allow the city to accomplish the job with one worker rather than three, thereby saving money, she said.

No employees will be laid off, Cicirelli said. Rather, they will be shifted to other duties to fill positions left vacant by workers who retired or quit their jobs.

"We have some vacancies," Cicirelli said. City leaders appear to agree that the new meter-reading system will ultimately save money. However, Councilman Richard LeBlanc has criticized the method of paying for the changeover.

The city will issue bonds up to \$2.8 million for the project. And, although

PLEASE SEE METERS, A5

## Anti-Legacy group hires an attorney

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

Citizens for Livonia's Future recently hired an attorney to assist in a potential recall of trustees on the Livonia Public Schools Board of Education, and other legal action.

Mayer Morganroth will represent the Citizens for Livonia's Future in an attempt to seek legal action and to pursue a recall of five school board members. They include board president Dan Lessard, and trustees Rob Freeman, Cynthia Markarian, Lynda Scheel and Kevin Whitehead. Trustee Joanne Morgan is up for reelection in May, so she will not be part of the recall. And Tom Bailey cast the sole vote opposed to the plan.

Morganroth's clients have included assisted suicide doctor Jack Kevorkian.

"He's a pretty high-profile

attorney," said Holly Burr, a member of Citizens for Livonia's Future.

She said Morganroth will look over recall petition language before it is submitted to Wayne County for approval.

The grassroots organization is seeking community members who would be willing to circulate petitions in the school district, should those documents be approved by an elections commission. Burr said the group is receiving support.

"I get e-mails daily through the Web site," said Burr, who runs www.citizensforlivoniasfuture.com. "People are giving money. They want to help with the recall."

Citizens for Livonia's Future will host an open, community meeting from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11, at St. Mary's Community Room, 18200 Merriman Road in Livonia.

## Detroit's Napoleon highlights MLK event

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Former Detroit Police Chief Benny Napoleon will be the keynote speaker this year during the city of Westland's ceremony honoring the late civil rights pioneer Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The observance will occur at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 16, at Annapolis Park Church of Christ, on the

southeast corner of Annapolis and Henry Ruff on the city's southeast side.

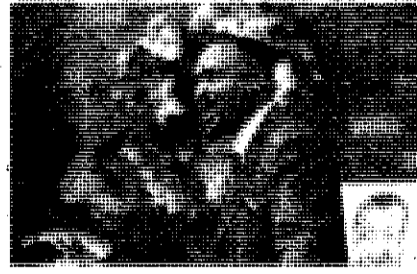
"We're very excited that Benny Napoleon will be the keynote speaker," Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said.

For the second year, the ceremony will be inside a vast church located in a predominantly African-American neighborhood where residents, in their own way, helped blaze a trail for equality.

In the 1950s, the Annapolis Park subdivision became one of the first U.S. suburban communities mostly settled by blacks. What's more, local residents have launched an effort with state officials to secure a historic marker for the neighborhood.

The observance of King's birthday - always on the third Monday in January -

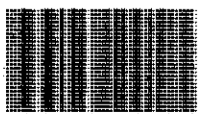
PLEASE SEE KING DAY, A5



FILE PHOTO

The Rev. Terrance McClain will see his church, Annapolis Park Church of Christ, host the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremony again this year.

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**Coming Thursday in Filter**

**DETROIT FEBRUARY 8, 2006**

**Super Bowl Glitz & Glamor**  
There are many parties happening - from the Hawaiian Tropic Girl events to elbow rubbing with Detroit celebrities.



### Musical ambassador

Staff Sgt. Christopher Blossom, a 1997 graduate of Canton High School, was one of the featured soloists in the United States Army Field Band's Christmas concert. He is shown here during his solo performance. The concert was to be broadcast on the Armed Forces cable network for all service men and women. Blossom won the prestigious Plymouth Symphony Scholarship in high school and he won first place at the Fishoff World Saxophone Quartet competition in 2001. Christopher is the son of Dave and Becky Blossom of Canton, and grandson of Donald and Doris Allen of Livonia.

## Ink company opens, accounting firm expands, Supercuts arrives

### SUPERCUTS NEARBY

Redford Township recently welcomed the newest location of Supercuts, a hair salon specializing in fashionable hair styles at affordable prices.

No appointments are necessary at Supercuts, and services start around \$13. Salon services are available to men, women and children. Professional styling products by Paul Mitchell, American Crew, Biolage, Nioxin, Tigi and more are available for sale.

"Redford promises to be a great location for Supercuts," said Fouad Berry, owner. "Our stylists are trained to perform quality cuts that give clients the latest styles. We also offer hair coloring services and products - all at a great price."

Supercuts is located at 15132 Inkster Road, in the Park Plaza shopping center near Five Mile in Redford Township. For information, call (313) 255-3400.

### CPA FIRM EXPANDS

The Livonia accounting firm of Criss, Wilmarth & Parr recently acquired Robert J. Stoner & Associates, Inc., a Belleville-based business. Despite the change, the Stoner name, location, staff and services are all expected to remain the same.

After 38 years, founder Robert Stoner decided to sell his business, which specializes in payroll services, small business accounting, financial advice, business tax returns, corporate accounting and more.

"It is time for me to retire and after a thorough search, I have found a buyer that will stay true to my business values," he said. "The Criss, Wilmarth and Parr firm will easily merge with ours and I am confident that it will be a smooth transition."

"The work they do is very similar to ours and they work well with our clients and staff."

Denise Wilmarth, a partner in the accounting firm of Criss, Wilmarth & Parr, CPAs in Livonia,

will take over day-to-day operations of the business.

"We want to assure the existing clients that their business remains in good hands and they will deal with same staff that they have worked with throughout the years," Wilmarth said.

Stoner & Associates is located at 152 Main St. in Belleville. For more information, call (734) 697-8000.

### RAPID REFILL



Rapid Refill Ink, a growing national company, opened its first Michigan location earlier this month in Livonia. The expansion is part of a plan to open 16 stores in metro Detroit and surrounding areas by 2008.

Scott Takacs, a former technical director for NovaStar, will handle the area expansion over the next three years. Rapid Refill Ink, based in Oregon, specializes in re-manufacturing and selling inkjet and laser toner cartridges.

The company's dedication to recycling and the environment is reflected in the stores themselves. Walls are constructed of wheat stock. Countertops are made from compressed sunflower seeds.

Rapid Refill Ink allows customers to exchange used ink cartridges for pre-filled cartridges. Drop boxes are available, and offer a 24-hour turnaround, but the Livonia store does not usually require a wait.

After opening the first store in 2002, company executives expect to expand to more than 1,000 locations throughout the United States by 2009.

Rapid Refill Ink is at 17394 Haggerty Road in Livonia. For details, call (734) 464-4466 or visit the Web www.rapidrefillink.com.

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

## YWCA seeks new staff for programs

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.

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MADE FRESH DAILY	Boneless • Lean • Center Cut CHUCK ROAST <b>\$2.59</b> lb.	SECOND WEEK N. Y. STRIP STEAKS <b>\$4.79</b> lb.
Ground Beef from GROUND SIRLOIN <b>\$2.39</b> Any Size Pkg. lb.	USDA GRADE A	KOWALSKI Oven Basted TURKEY <b>\$4.09</b> lb.
CORN FED SELECT BEEF	Boneless • Lean • Butterfly PORK CHOPS <b>\$2.89</b> lb.	KRAKUS POLISH HAM <b>\$3.99</b> lb.
Boneless • Lean • Center Cut CHUCK ROAST <b>\$2.59</b> lb.	USDA GRADE A	LIPARI • White • Yellow American Cheese <b>\$2.99</b> lb.
MOCK CITY CHICKEN LEGS <b>\$1.99</b> lb.	Boneless • Lean • Butterfly PORK CHOPS <b>\$2.89</b> lb.	USDA GRADE A
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\$4.00 per person includes instruction, open skate time, snack and skate rental. Roller skates are available starting at size 6 juvenile and larger. Every Wednesday on a continuing basis. No registration is necessary, just drop in. Children learn balance, the Hokey Pokey, Chicken Dance and other games with children's music. Parents, strollers and children six or under welcome. No experience needed.

**Learn To Skate Beginner Session**  
Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
\$4.00 per person includes a 20-minute class, open skate time and standard rental. Every Saturday on a continuing basis. No registration is necessary, just drop in. Learn the basics of roller skating on quad or inline skates. No experience needed. No age requirements.

**Basic Roller Skating Class**  
Saturday 10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
\$35.00 for 5 weeks includes rentals. Starting dates below.  
Date I - 01/14/06 Date II - 02/18/06 Date III - 03/25/06.  
Learn balance, skating forward, backward, starting, shopping and turning on quad or inline skates. No experience needed. Five and older. Register at Riverside Arena.

**Introduction to Speed Skating**  
Saturday 1:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.  
\$35.00 for 5 weeks includes rentals. Starting dates below.  
Date I - 01/14/06 Date II - 02/18/06 Date III - 03/25/06.  
Learn the basics of speed skating, starting, passing and conditioning. This speed class requires experience, Basic Class skill level and helmet. Register at Riverside Arena.

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# Company offers cures for home heating blues

BY KURT KUBAN  
STAFF WRITER

By now, most Michigan consumers have figured out natural gas prices are shooting through the roof. Literally.

According to Donna Napolitano, who owns Mechanical Energy Systems, Inc. of Canton, the reason natural gas prices have nearly tripled is because there is such a great demand for it here in Michigan. The state imports about three quarters of the natural gas used by residents and businesses. She says one of the main reasons we have such a high demand is because we waste a lot of energy.

In the home, for example, heat is wasted through leaky windows, and, yes, insufficiently insulated walls and roofs.

"Over the holidays people told me they were receiving their utility bills for last month, and the shock set in when they were anywhere from \$300 to \$600," she said.

The fact is, there is much residential consumers can do at home to lesson the blow of higher natural gas prices. And that's where Napolitano comes in. Mechanical Energy Systems, which she owns with her husband, Joe, installs a number of energy saving products, including high efficiency furnaces and water heaters.

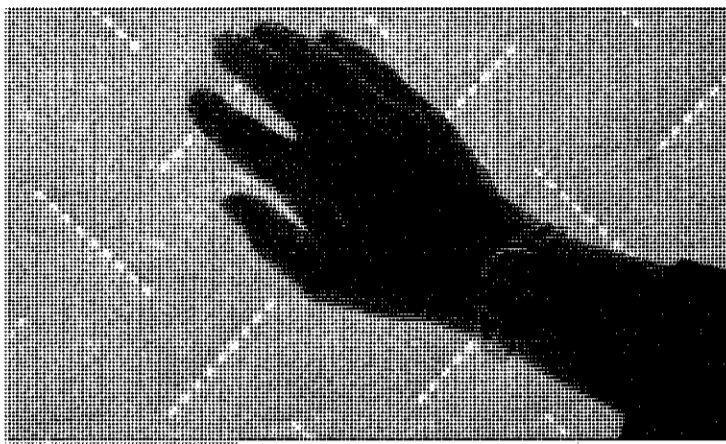
The Napolitanos, who live in Canton, also specialize in installing alternative energy sources, including solar products, which can be an important investment for consumers who want to save money in the long run. For example, solar hot air panels installed on the outside of a home, which harness energy from the sun, can heat a home during the spring and fall, and assist a furnace in the winter.

Another good way to utilize solar power is to install a solar water heating system, which runs about \$7,000 to install. However, Napolitano said the units typically pay for themselves within four years, especially for families with teenage children, and last 30 years.

"When you have an average size family, it costs about \$60-70 per month to heat your water," she said. "It's essentially



Donna Napolitano, who owns Mechanical Energy Systems in Canton, explains how an active solar collector can help reduce heating bills.



One of the products that consumers can install to save on heating costs at home is a window quilt, which reduces the amount of heat lost through windows.

free with a solar unit. We have all this free energy out there. My advice is use it. I call myself a harvester. We have the technology and equipment. Let's harvest it."

Even if you don't want to go the solar or alternative energy route, Napolitano said most people could save big money by upgrading their furnace to a 90 percent efficiency furnace.

"If someone hasn't changed their furnace in 25-30 years, they are probably running at 60 percent efficiency, which means 60-cents of every dollar is used

to heat the house. The rest is going out the chimney," she said. "You can save 35 percent on your heating bills by installing a more efficient furnace."

Typically, she said it costs about \$3,000-3,500 to upgrade to such a furnace.

For those people who don't have that kind of money to spend on upgrades, the best thing they can do is use conservation measures such as adding insulation in the ceiling or walls, and making sure windows and doors are sealed up properly. She also said fireplaces are very

inefficient, because all the heat is being sucked up the flue when it is open.

"The thing that people need to realize is that there are many things people can do. The first is conservation," Napolitano said. "Simple measures can make a difference."

However, she said there are some federal tax incentives out there for people to invest in solar or alternative energy sources. A new Web site ([www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org)) from the Tax Incentives Assistance Project (TIAP), which is a coalition of public interest nonprofit organizations, aims to help individuals and businesses cut their federal tax bills and their energy bills in 2006 and 2007 by becoming more energy efficient. The site provides information on valuable new federal income tax incentives in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct).

Under the new law, consumers and businesses can receive tax incentives for specific energy efficiency upgrades to homes and commercial buildings such as upgrades to home insulation and windows and commercial building lighting

## Reduce heating costs with actions at home

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, which is a nonprofit organization promoting energy efficiency, has put out the Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings, which lists a number of things people can do at home to reduce the use of natural gas.

Here's a simple checklist of ideas for people to save money.

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands.
- Check if your water heater has an insulating blanket. An insulating blanket will pay for itself in one year or less.
- Either upgrade or rope caulk very leaky windows. It may be time to replace them with energy-efficient models or to boost their efficiency with weatherstripping and storm windows.
- Crawl into your attic or crawlspace and inspect for insulation. Is there any? How much? Also, if your walls aren't insulated, have an insulation contractor blow cellulose into the walls.
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.
- Seal up the largest air leaks in your house — the ones that whistle on windy days, or feel drafty. The worst culprits are usually not windows and doors, but utility

cut-throughs for pipes ("plumbing penetrations"), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets. Better yet, hire an energy auditor with a blower door to point out where the worst cracks are. All the little, invisible cracks and holes may add up to as much as an open window or door, without you ever knowing it.

- Install a clock thermostat to set your thermostat back automatically at night.
- Schedule an energy audit (ask your utility company or state energy office) for more expert advice on your home as a whole.
- Replace aging, inefficient appliances. Even if the appliance has a few useful years left, replacing it with a top-efficiency model is generally a good investment.
- Clean or replace furnace filters monthly.
- Close your storm windows or install temporary shrink-wrap storm window kits

The Consumer Guide: Condensed Online Version, which offers additional tips and more detailed information on heating and cooling systems, water heaters, windows, appliances, lighting, and much more, is featured on the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's Web site at <http://acee.org/consumer-guide/mostenef.htm>.

improvements. In addition, the law includes tax credits for energy-saving technologies such as hybrid vehicles, appliances, heating and cooling systems, solar energy systems, and high-efficiency new home and commercial building construction.

For more information about the products Mechanical Energy Systems, Inc. has to offer, check out the Canton company's Web site at [www.by-solar.com](http://www.by-solar.com) or call (734) 453-6746.

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# Unsung heroes

## House moms lend helping hands to students at Leader Dogs for the Blind

Roxanne MacLeod grew up watching Leader Dogs train with their new owners in downtown Rochester.

She has seen the green and white Leader Dog buses drive through town and noticed instructors and their four-legged students.

"I knew there was something there that I could do," she said, describing her interest in the school. The lifelong resident and former school custodian realized a dream when she applied and was hired onto the school's residence staff as a house mom earlier this year.

"I think we have the best job if you want to know the truth,"

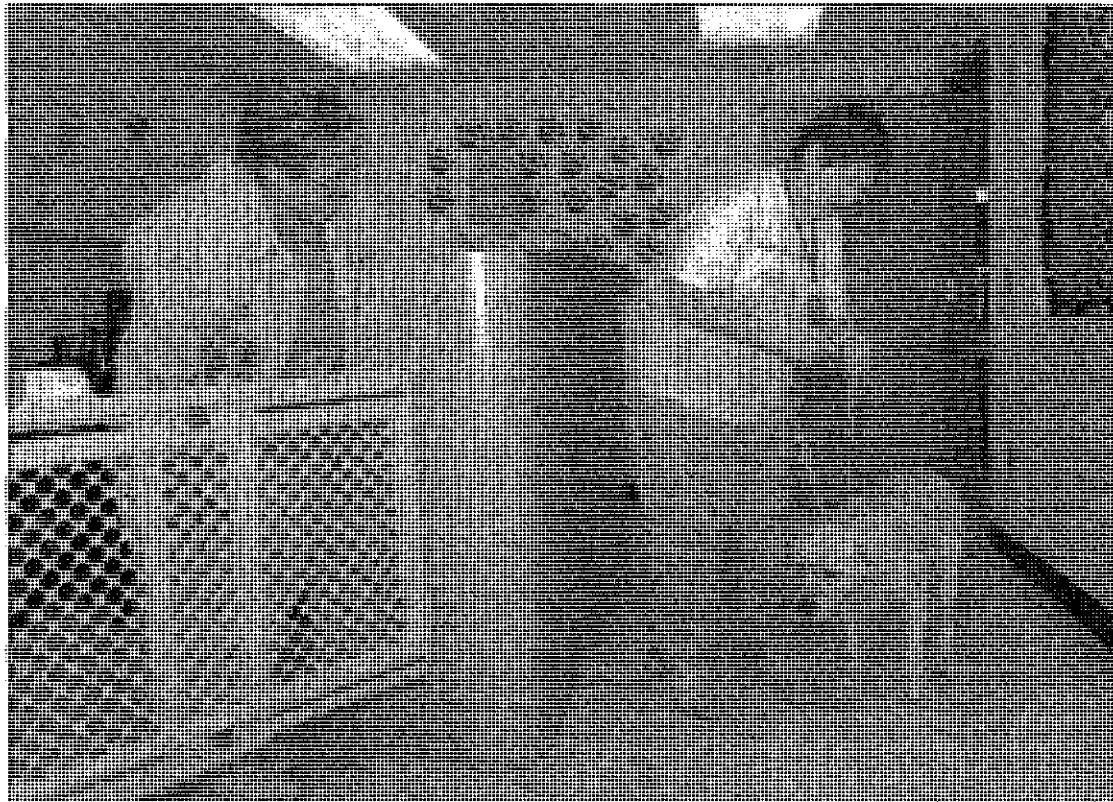
said MacLeod, one of 12 residence staff members at the Rochester Hills-based facility. "Upstairs does all the paperwork and the instructors work with the dogs, but we get to be with the students."

"The house mothers are always here through all of the classes. We get to know all of the students. I've been fortunate to be here the first night they arrive at the school and the change in them from Sunday to Wednesday when they get their dogs is totally different. They and their dogs are a team. It's a whole new life."

House moms like MacLeod

help students ease into their new lives in small but important ways.

They freshen their rooms each day, launder their towels, keep the coffee pot filled, restock the souvenir shop and vending machines, take students to medical appointments, shopping and respond to their phone calls. At least one house mom stays the night when students are housed in the school dorm. Leader Dogs for the Blind takes about 13 classes of up to 24 students a year. After a training class leaves on a Thursday, the residence staff has two days to thoroughly clean each dorm



JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Vickie Welbaum and her dog, Bekah, a 3-year-old female Labrador retriever, just picked up mail from Kim Roggatz, a service staff member at Leader Dogs for the Blind.

room and to prepare for the next class that arrives on Sunday.

### ESSENTIAL TASKS

"Leader Dog is an excellent organization. They do everything they can to make you physically comfortable so you can concentrate on your dog," said Vicki Welbaum, of Evansville, Ind., who returned home recently with her third Leader Dog, Bekah, a yellow Lab.

"That's why house moms are so important. They help with vital needs that blind people can't do, especially being away from home."

Pat Paterno, media relations manager, calls the residence staff unsung heroes who work behind the scenes, helping with a myriad details at the school.

"We are like moms to them. If they need anything, this is where they come," said staff supervisor Pam Ihrke of Oxford.

Ihrke, whose aunt worked as a house mom, joined the residence staff 15 years ago. She has worked the night shift, day shifts, weekends and now supervises the staff.

"It's very rewarding. It makes you feel good because of

the positive results. You meet a lot of different kinds of people from all over the world," she said.

### LITTLE EXTRAS

The staff organizes a pizza party and a bingo night for each for each class. They also plan birthday parties and keep a library stocked with books on tape and Braille items, as well as cupboards filled with "just about anything they need," Ihrke noted.

When Jack Vincent of Utica, N.Y., bumped into a tree while walking in the area, the house moms had first aid items at hand.

"We have good assistance here. The house moms take care of anything here. They help us with phone calls and read mail for us," Vincent said. He returned home with his fourth guide dog - but his first from Leader Dogs for the Blind. Vincent, who is married, works for the Association for the Blind in his hometown and repairs recreational vehicles on the side.

Welbaum works as an application registration clerk for a county agency in Evansville. She praised the house moms for being attentive without being condescending.

"If a dog has an accident in the hallway, they go and clean it up. And they don't do it begrudgingly," she added.

### ON THE GO

Welbaum also was impressed by the staff's ability to multitask during a recent Saturday night bingo. Two house moms on duty called numbers, served refreshments, answered questions and read bingo cards for several of the 20-plus players, half of whom only spoke Spanish.

"This was all going on at one time. They did an excellent job. They were full of stamina," Welbaum said.

Rhonda Kurkowski, a six-year house mom from Oxford, recently spent an entire day keeping a student company at the hospital. The student had fractured her elbow and wanted a friendly face nearby.

"We make doctors appointments for them and get prescriptions. There's something new every day."

Kurkowski, whose mother worked as a house mom, says she has learned to deal with new situations on the job.

"Things come up and you just handle it," she said, adding "You've got to have a lot of common sense to work here."

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TRASH

FROM PAGE A1

Midwestern also will be forced to use trucks in Westland that are no more than 5 years old, the mayor said.

The company came under heavy fire last year amid complaints by some residents of late trash pickup, rude workers and garbage trucks that leaked fluids in city neighborhoods.

"We're going to make sure that we address their concerns," Cicirelli said.

Some residents have defended Inkster-based Midwestern and urged city officials not to abandon the company.

On one gloomy note for environmentalists, officials said it's unlikely that the city will seriously pursue any curbside recycling program until 2007.

That issue, Wild said, will likely receive more attention when the city is relieved of some debt. Specifically, the debt is linked to a monofil where ash was once taken from a now-closed Central Wayne County Sanitation Authority incinerator that burned Westland's trash.

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

METERS

FROM PAGE A1

LeBlanc joined his council colleagues last Tuesday in approving the plan, he said it could have been avoided.

LeBlanc contended that the project could have been paid from the city's water-sewer fund without incurring additional interest rates - if the city hadn't partially depleted that fund.

LeBlanc criticized earlier decisions that shifted \$6.3 million within the last two years from the water-sewer fund to the city's general fund.

That decision left the water-sewer fund with \$3.5 million as of the last audit.

On Thursday, Cicirelli confirmed that the transfer allowed the city to pay for certain equipment purchases and also helped the city weather budget problems.

Still, LeBlanc said the money intended for the water-sewer fund should have remained there - a move that he said would have paid for the new meter-reading system without issuing bonds.

He said he still voted to support the issuing of bonds because there may now be no other way to pay for the new meter-reading system. He indicated that to dip into the water-sewer fund now could essentially wipe it out.

Cicirelli has indicated that it's still possible the city may be able to use some cash and not bond for the full \$2.8 million.

Moreover, she said she is hopeful that the project's cost will come in lower.

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KING DAY

FROM PAGE A1

drew a large crowd last year to Annapolis Park Church of Christ. Many considered it the best event the city has sponsored to honor King, who was shot dead on April 4, 1968, outside the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn.

Last year, Annapolis Park Church of Christ's minister, the Rev. Terrance McClain, gave a crowd-rousing tribute to King.

The church's choir, called PUSH (Pray Until Something Happens), will be among the performers, and the city will display posters that local children made in King's honor.

"It's going to be hard to top last year's program," Cicirelli said, "but I think we'll have another program that's equal to that program."

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# St. Mary Mercy, McDonald's team up to fight child obesity

St. Mary Mercy Hospital and McDonald's are joining together to raise public awareness about the growing childhood obesity epidemic.

"Fit Kids 4 Life: Raising Fit Kids In A Fast World" will be held 6:30- 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, in the Community Room of Westland Shopping Center, Wayne Road at Warren, Westland.

"Obesity in children is a serious issue with many health and social consequences that often continue into adulthood," said Katie Dooley of St. Mary Mercy Hospital.

"Implementing prevention options and gaining a better understanding of treatment for children is important to controlling their future health.

"Many parents are justly concerned about their child's weight and how it affects them. Our event, ("Raising Fit Kids in a Fast World") will offer great health and fitness ideas for them."

The program will feature Joe Piscatella, president of the Institute for Fitness and

Health, and St. Mary Mercy Hospital physicians and health educators who will be available to address specific questions from participants.

Other organizations participating in the program include the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Livonia and Plymouth Family YMCAs, Livonia Parks and Recreation, and other health and fitness organizations, offering a wealth of information to help families promote kids' healthy living.

Piscatella is a nationally recognized expert and best-selling author who provides information and strategies for out-of-time parents along with easy-to-implement strategies to teach children healthy exercise and eating habits. He teaches parents how to motivate kids to be physically active, how to limit television and video viewing, and how to make fast food a friend.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 12 percent of Michigan high school students are overweight. Obesity, espe-

cially among children, is a serious threat to the nation's health. In fact, not only could obesity take years off of the lives of today's children, the World Bank estimates the cost at 12 percent of the nation's health care budget.\*

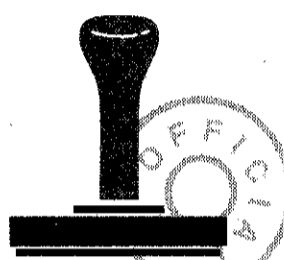
McDonald's, with a menu that includes Premium Salads and Fruit 'n Yogurt Parfaits, recognizes the importance of the fast food chain's involvement in helping parents guide children toward healthier daily routines.

"At McDonald's, we offer customers healthy menu options designed to meet the customer's taste and nutrition goals," said Willie Blue, regional marketing supervisor of the McDonald's Michigan region.

This event is free of charge and is intended for adults, such as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or guardians. For more information and to register, call St. Mary Mercy Hospital at (734) 655.8950, or visit the hospital Web site at www.stmarymercy.org.

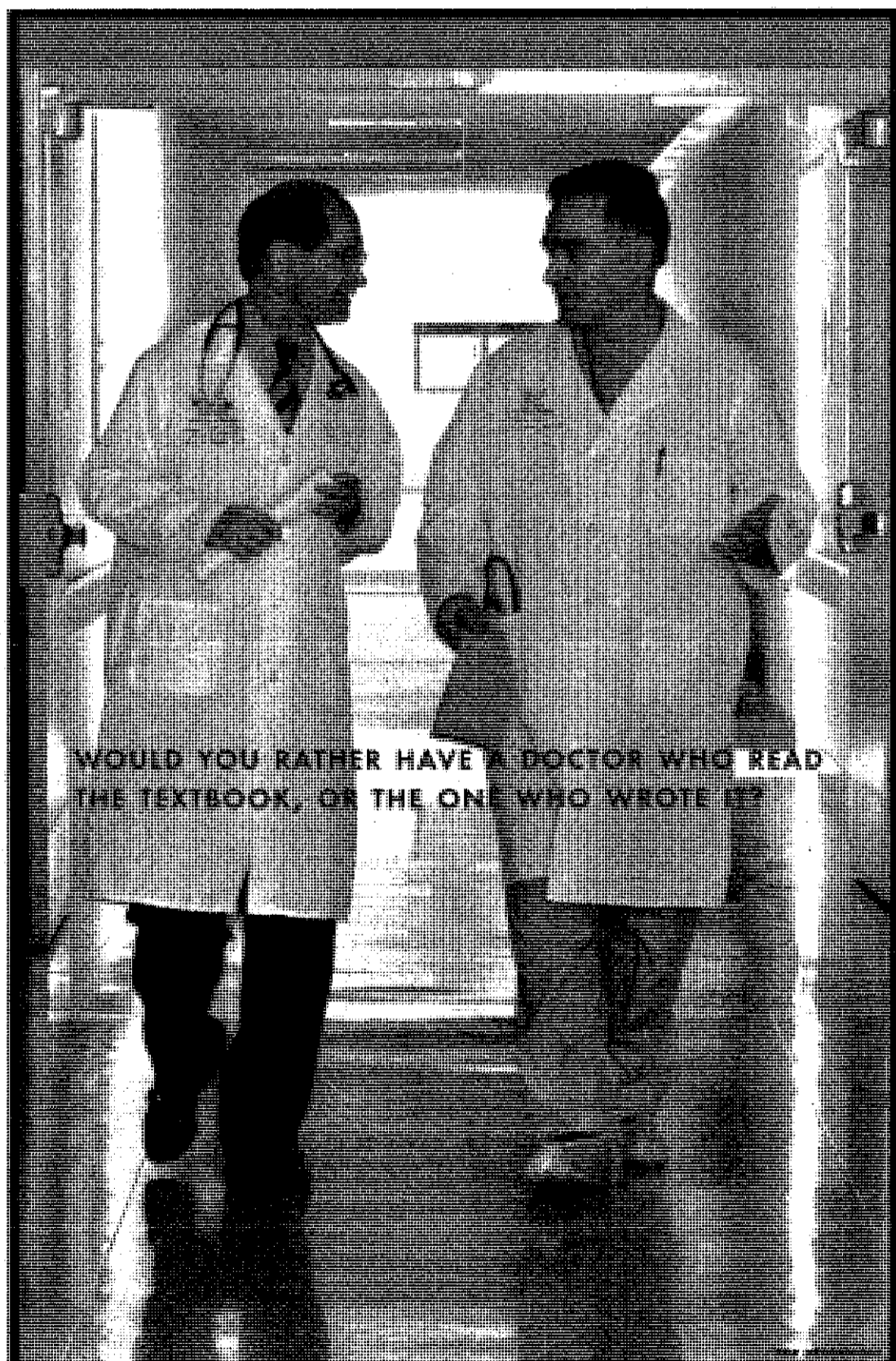
- A  
Virginia Pool Andreae  
Andreae, 87, of Bloomfield Hills, died Jan. 4.
- B  
June A. Bartley  
Bartley, 64, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 29.  
Isabel Bowman  
Bowman, 96, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 27.  
Dorothy M. Brown  
Brown, 64, of Auburn Hills, died Dec. 27.
- E  
Margaret D. Erickson  
Erickson, 94, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 31.
- G  
Melvina F. Gies  
Gies, 96, of Farmington Hills, died Jan. 3.  
Elmer J. "Al" Grund  
Grund, 89, of Rochester, died Dec. 27.

- H  
Viola M. Harrington  
Harrington, 93, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 21.  
Douglas Howard  
Howard, 94, of Farmington Hills, died Dec. 21.
- K  
Matthew C. Kell  
Kell, 36, of Rochester Hills, died Dec. 25.
- L  
Clifford H. Lawrence  
Lawrence, 83, died Jan. 3.  
Frances E. Lee  
Lee, 84, of Livonia, died Jan. 4.
- M  
Bettie M. Maynard  
Maynard, 77, of Addison Township, died Dec. 22.



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 C4.

- Daniel C. McGee-Cheshire  
McGee-Cheshire, 37, died Dec. 24.
- Thelma M. Michalka  
Michalka, 83, of Rochester, died Dec. 8.
- Robert M. Owens  
Owens, 21, formerly of Livonia, died Dec. 23.



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### Spaghetti dinner

The Westland Youth Athletic Association U14 Lightning softball team will hold a fundraiser spaghetti dinner 4-7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29, at the AMVETS Hall, 1711 Merriman, Westland. Cost is \$7 for all you can eat. There also will be a raffle, drawings and bake sale.

### Merry and bright

Oakwood Healthcare System sponsored the fifth annual Oakwood holiday program to benefit the students and families served by the Oakwood Lincoln/Jefferson-Barns Healthcare Center in Westland Dec. 21.

Oakwood employees adopted families from the community and provided holiday gifts to the children. The gifts included handmade fleece blankets, pajamas, mittens, hats, socks, slippers, games, toys, towels and washcloths.

The Lincoln/Jefferson-Barns Healthcare Center is a school-based clinic established in 1997 with the mission to "improve and maintain the overall health and well-being of the

children and families in the community."

The school is located in an area where many residents face challenges, such as lack of insurance, transportation and financial hardships. Each year, hundreds of children and their families receive health education and primary care from the center, which logged 1,362 visits in 2004.

### 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.

### Las Vegas Party

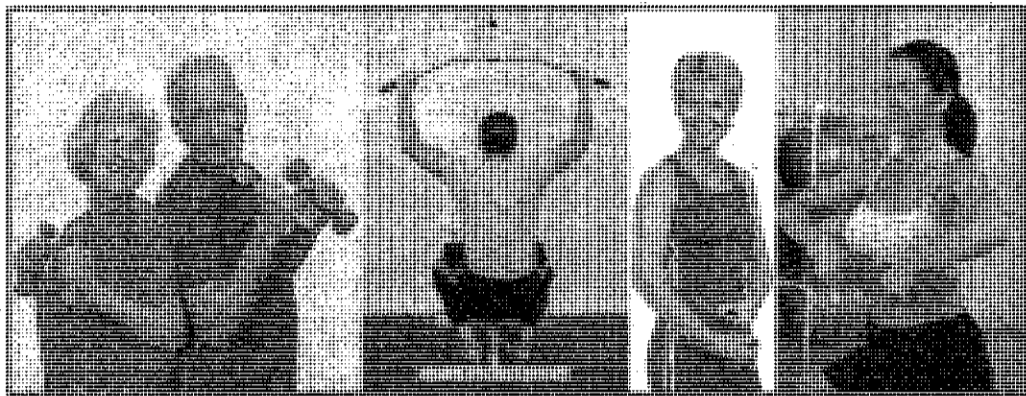
St. Bernardine Men's Club is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Jan. 13 and 27 and Feb. 3, 17 and 24, at the church, southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

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.



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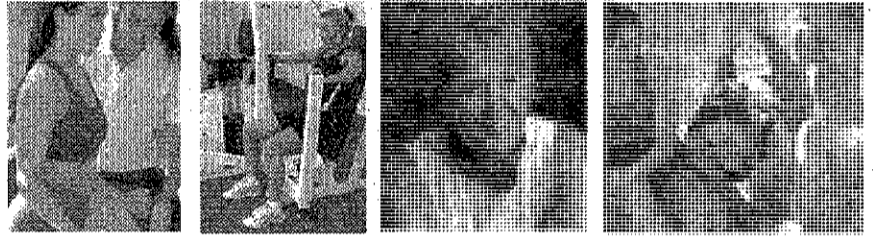


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# Drive to let voters decide will also make voters wait

Voters this coming November might want to take an iPod or a book with them to the polls. They may be facing a long wait as their fellow voters plow through a never-ending ballot.

In addition to voting for U.S. senator, U.S. House member, governor, attorney general, secretary of state, state legislators, county officials and the always obscure judicial seats, they may also be deciding on more than half a dozen ballot issues.

The same people who wail about the sanctity of legislative decisions in court proceedings are often behind ballot measures that wouldn't stand a chance of getting approved in a legislature.

They are also the same people who like to play semantics and declare that we live in a "republic" not a "democracy," and then deplore decisions made by representative bodies.

The popularity of initiatives and referendums in recent years has been a boon to advertising agencies, petition-gathering companies and political consultants. Its value for sound government and intelligent discussion of public issues is another matter. Debate by crude, loud, misleading and out-right deceptive advertising has dumbed down public discourse. Rather than being a fine example of pure democracy, these campaigns become an object lesson in public manipulation.

While we are often frustrated by the political wheeling and dealing in Lansing and Washington, legislators are often guided by a wealth of background information, historical precedent and negotiated compromises that keep them from acting too rashly or too far outside the mainstream. Initiative campaigns are ruled by emotional and sometimes dishonest appeals that are often checked only by counter emotional appeals. It's hard to make a strong argument and present a detailed position in a 30-second soundbite. And, unfortunately, soundbites have a greater impact than more detailed newspaper stories.

Of course, referendums and initiatives do have their place in the public forum. The 1963 state Constitution reads, "The people reserve to themselves the power to propose laws and to enact and reject laws, called the initiative, and the power to approve and reject laws enacted by the legislature, called the referendum. The power of the initiative extends only to laws which the legislature may enact under this constitution."

Sometimes public vote is the only way to overcome entrenched special interests. Sometimes constitutions do need to be amended. Sometimes public vote does create an honest debate over a controversial issue.

So what might voters have to look forward to in the coming election?

At the top of the list, of course, is the affirmative action proposal. The proposal would amend the state Constitution to "ban affirmative action programs that give preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin." The Board of Canvassers has twice rejected the petition but has been ordered by the State Court of Appeals to meet again to certify the petition and proposal language by Jan. 20. Some board members have argued that the petition circulators deceived people about the intent of the proposal.

The language does suggest a bold move to eliminate "discrimination" and as one paid petition gatherer told me "the leader of the campaign is an African American." That would be Ward Connerly of California. But this is an example of a complex issue that will be reduced to angry soundbites or deceptive language that never address the history of discrimination in this state, the position of the University of Michigan (and the Armed Forces, most unions and many corporations) and the nuance of last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision that makes the proposal nothing more than divisive mischief.

Another Supreme Court decision has also given rise to an initiative on "eminent domain." In ruling that New London, Conn., had a right to use eminent domain to clear a site for a private development, the court set off a firestorm on the issue of property rights. Conservatives were offended that the court would make it easier for the government to take private property and liberals were offended that the court's liberals would write the decision that favored developers over the working class residents of the New London neighborhood. Talk about strange bedfellows.

In its decision, the court challenged state legislatures to examine its eminent domain laws and cited a recent Michigan Supreme Court decision against Wayne County's use of eminent domain for the Pinnacle Aeropark project as an example of how to balance property rights against public benefit.

But again this is a serious issue that will be reduced to a soundbite, with that irritating voice heard it seems on all of these ads intoning, "They are trying to take YOUR property away!"

Other issues that may get on the ballot include creating a dove hunting season, allowing defendants to request a jury where 50 percent of the jurors "are identical in racial appearance" to the defendant, providing minimum funding increases for schools tied to a price index, and an anti-abortion proposal that grants rights of due process to a "person" at conception.

Let the noise begin.

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



Hugh Gallagher

# Horror of crime extends beyond Detroit's limits

A Detroit Cody High School student was walking home from a local branch of the Detroit Public Library when she was raped and stabbed to death this past week. Seeing her grieving family on the TV news made me sad and angry. My husband, who grew up in Detroit until his early teens, said "No one should have to live that way" as images of her grieving relatives flashed across the screen in our living room Wednesday night.

I went online the next morning to try to find out more about the victim, her name, age, year in school, maybe even her plans following high school graduation. It was tough to find much information, however, as so many young people have been killed in Detroit that one stabbing death doesn't seem to merit much mention.

A call to the Detroit Police Department revealed she was 16. Her name's not being released. "We're receiving calls but no one's been apprehended," a department spokeswoman said Friday afternoon.

Detroit police received the call Jan. 1 at 10:45 p.m. but are uncertain of the exact time of the crime. Those with information are urged to call Detroit homicide at (313) 596-2260 or Crime Stoppers at (800) SPEAK-UP.

Clementine Barfield of Detroit founded Save Our Sons and Daughters in 1987 following the shooting death of one of her sons, age 16. SOSAD closed about a year ago in part due to budget cuts and debts, along with IRS questions about finances. I remembered reading about Barfield having grown weary of fighting the good fight for crime victims in Detroit, as so many continued to be killed year after year.

In Plymouth where I live, we don't give a lot of thought to letting kids walk home from the library, unless maybe the weather's too cold. That Cody High student should have enjoyed the same freedom, to be able to walk from her library home without fear of her safety.

My husband, 49, still speaks fondly of his west side Detroit neighborhood, near the old Catholic Central and Sinai Hospital. Friendships made during those years have endured. Like so many other white families, they moved (to Livonia) in the late 1960s.

Black families have followed in more recent years, seeking better schools for their children and better housing. Certainly crime is a factor in decisions to

The reality is Detroit's not so far away and the brutal death of a teen on a cold January day affects us all. Our racially divided region continues to grapple with crime, which extends beyond Detroit's boundaries.

The 1967 riots were a defining moment, but nearly 40 years later our region still struggles.

The reality is Detroit's not so far away and the brutal death of a teen on a cold January day affects us all. Our racially divided region continues to grapple with crime, which extends beyond Detroit's boundaries.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer spent 23 years with the Detroit Police Department, leaving in 1985. He remembers well the toll of that work.

"We certainly see it in the suburbs," said Dwyer. "No one is immune from this type of violence. That's a concern today as far as the increase in violence."

Dwyer cites unemployment, drugs and casino gambling as factors. He agreed dealing with such crimes takes a toll on police.

"Law enforcement have families too. They have sons and daughters, husbands and wives. We are compassionate and we do have grief."

He talked with one of his department's dispatchers who was upset about a child drowning. Another officer was first on the scene when a man who'd returned from Las Vegas killed his pregnant wife and children.

Dwyer emphasizes that public involvement is what police and prosecutors need to fight crime. "We need that help from the public. We always have and always will." He's pleased with such efforts as Crime Stoppers, which offers rewards for anonymous tips leading to solving of crimes.

A recent news report cited deadly violence in Saginaw, as even outstate communities see their share of crime. Thinking of urban violence as only a Detroit problem, won't do anything to bring about a reduction in crime.

May the teen from Cody, who died all too soon, rest in peace and may she and her family find the justice they deserve.

Julie Brown of Plymouth Township is presentation editor of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. She can be reached at (734) 953-2111 or via e-mail at jcbrown@hometownlife.com.



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# Senate primary full of intrigue

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

Political handicappers have framed the upcoming primary election for Republican U.S. Senate candidacy as a race between two men, but depending on which way the wind blows, the third man might come from behind and create a three-way horse race.

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, the Rev. Keith Butler and Jerry Zandstra are in the race to be the Republican challenger to U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow next year. The primary vote will be held Aug. 8.

Oakland County GOP Executive Committee member John Bowker said the primary is going to be a race worth watching. There are a lot of different elements that make the race hard to handicap.

"Bouchard has the ability to draw voters, he's got excellent name recognition and ability to raise funds," he said. "He's got a history of victories in Oakland County."

But, he said, it's his history that's going to hurt him. Bowker said the in-and-out nature of Bouchard's candidacy (he dropped out of the senatorial race in the summer, citing health reasons) puts a lot of members of the party in a difficult position.

"Those who were with him initially put their support behind Butler," Bowker said. "Now he's back in and that's distressed some people."

Butler, on the other hand, has the ability to pull votes in Grand Rapids, Lansing, Detroit and Flint - areas with significant minority populations - and could be a real boon for the Republican ticket as a whole.

"That's not to say that blacks are necessarily going to vote for a black candidate," he said, "but conservative black



Bouchard



Butler



Zandstra

Democrats could cross over for him and pull votes from Stabenow."

Zandstra, he said, could be the spoiler for Butler in terms of the religious conservative vote. He said Zandstra could beat Butler, but not Bouchard. A bruising primary, however, could leave any of the three candidates unable to take on a sitting senator come November.

The 9th Congressional District Republicans held a senatorial candidate forum earlier this month. All three candidates came out for the "Showdown in Motown" to air their views on topics topical and abstract. The group's chairman, Glenn Clark, said there was something for everyone.

"If you like GM cars, you're going to walk into a Chevy dealership and find something you can drive off in," he said. "Butler was very strong on social issues, Bouchard on law and order and Zandstra was strong on economic issues."

Unfortunately, he said, it's going to come down to who has the money to spread their message to the voters. If that's the case, he said Bouchard and Butler are going to be the contenders. Zandstra hasn't got a track record here and is going to have to settle for dark horse status.

That could change. "He's well-spoken, he's probably the smartest guy in the race," Clark said. "If he's able to get on radio and TV while Bouchard and Butler are slugging it out, he could swoop in and take the race."

Whatever happens, he said the candidate who wins the primary will be the one who takes on the mantle of The Gipper.

"The people who win Republican primaries in Michigan are those who articulate conservative social and economic visions for America," Clark said. "Long gone are the left-of-center Republicans. (President Ronald) Reagan cast a long shadow and Republicans like his principles; less taxation and traditional family values. Like a bird, you have to have both of those wings to fly."

What they all need to do, Bowker said, is keep their distance from President George W. Bush and Republicans currently in Washington.

"He should not be invited to the state and not mentioned in the race," he said. "Between the budget and Iraq, he's a liability. Conservatives are dissatisfied with the drunken sailor spending in Washington and Bush hasn't vetoed any of that."

He said the winning strategy in Michigan is keeping it local and that means focusing in on jobs.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, a veteran of

several political campaigns including a run for governor, said whoever comes out of the primary had better be ready for a real fight against Stabenow.

"Bouchard looks like the leader, he's in a very visible position," he said. "He's going to have to raise about \$20 million to counter Stabenow, because she's going to have that much and some change. If he can't do that, he should get out of the race now."

While he concedes that Stabenow will benefit from Bush's unpopularity, he said she's got enough baggage of her own she'll need to counter.

"We're still seeing Canadian trash coming over the bridge, prescription drug costs are still out of sight, we're not getting our fair share of transportation funds," Patterson said. "Those are areas she said she'd deliver on and she hasn't."

The three-way primary, he said, could be a good thing for the candidates because it's a good dry run for their organizations to work out the kinks and get in shape for the real contest in November. Provided, that is, that whoever emerges as the Republican candidate hasn't been savaged in the process.

"If there's an absolute blood-letting, that would be different," Patterson said. "I don't think it will be."

# School new hires will get background checks

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

Rules that went into effect at the beginning of the year will place new requirements on school districts to do extensive background checks on every person on the payroll.

The requirements, which apply to all schools, public and private, call for every employee to be fingerprinted for a criminal background check. Any employee convicted of an offense requiring registration as a sex offender may not be hired for any job.

But that isn't the extent of the legislation, it also has requirements for prospective hires that are found to be convicted of crimes not sexually related. Employees who are convicted of other felony offenses that do not require registration on that list would have to be approved by a district's superintendent and school board in writing.

Further, any school employee charged with a

crime of any kind would have to report to the Michigan Department of Education within three days of arraignment or be charged with another misdemeanor or felony as applicable to the original arraignment.

Margaret Trimmer-Hartley, communications director for the Michigan Education Association, said the teachers' union is behind efforts to guarantee the best hires possible.

What the MEA is concerned about, she said, is what could be done with information gleaned from a background check. There are legitimate concerns about the accuracy of state records and if the wrong information gets out about a teacher, there are few ways to clear a person's name.

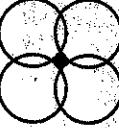
Wrong information, she said, can be generated in a number of ways.

Trimmer-Hartley said the MEA would stand firm that the cost of the fingerprinting program would not be borne by the teachers themselves.

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