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**Chef remembers his homeland and Irish dishes**  
TASTE - PAGE B5

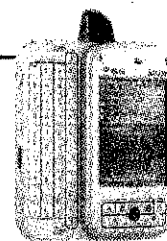
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**A GREAT DAY TO BE IRISH**



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TECH SAVVY - PAGE B1

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**THURSDAY**  
March 16, 2006

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TOM HAWLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Charles Pickering lays slices of teriyaki steak over napa cabbage as he prepares an Asian salad in his kitchen.

## Palate pleaser

Councilman's culinary studies fulfill longtime dream

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Wearing a white chef coat, Charles Pickering walks onto the second-story balcony of his Westland condominium to check the teriyaki-marinated flank steak he is grilling.

It's enough to make the stomach rumble, this steak seasoned with soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, fresh ginger root, crushed cayenne pepper flakes and Asian toasted sesame oil.

Bringing it to his kitchen, Pickering cuts it into thin slices. He places napa cabbage — mixed with toasted Ramen noodles, scallions and a sweet Asian dressing — onto a plate. He sprinkles on slivers of almonds and carefully lays steak strips across the salad.

For the finishing touches, he

tops the salad with mandarin orange slices arranged like a flower, and he places shiitake mushrooms around the perimeter. Finally, he sprinkles sesame seeds over the salad.

Meet Charles Pickering, the cook.

Sure, he's a seasoned politician, one who's been grilled a few times by his foes. But as a former mayor and longtime city councilman whose political career began in 1982, his goose still isn't cooked.

It's no wonder, if Pickering's recipe for political success is as finely crafted as his grilled teriyaki flank steak Asian salad.

"I've always loved cooking," Pickering said.

When the real estate market slowed, Pickering, a Realtor, had

PLEASE SEE PICKERING, A4

### COOKBOOK FEATURES LOCAL 'CHEFS'

Westland City Councilman Charles Pickering is one of many cooks who contributed recipes for a new cookbook, *Cooking With Friends*, compiled by local historians.

The cookbook is on sale 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesdays and 1-4 p.m., Saturdays at the Westland Historical Museum, or Felton Farmhouse, on Wayne Road north of Cherry Hill. Compiled by the Friends of the Westland Historical Museum, the book sells for \$10. It contains 295 recipes from 134 contributors. Proceeds will be used to help renovate the city's historic buildings.

The book includes historical information, helpful hints and delves into five categories: soups and salads; vegetables; meats and main dishes; breads and cakes; and cookies and other desserts.

For more information, call Ruth Dale at (734) 425-1955.

## New choice

Wayne-Westland looks to add students with intra-county program

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools has decided to open the doors to its elementary schools to students living outside the district.

The school board Monday evening approved an administration recommendation to accept enrollment in the district's kindergarten-fifth-grade program beginning with the 2006-07 school year.

"There will be room for a limited number of students based on the grade level number of seats not filled," Superintendent Greg Baracy told the school board. "This is an effort to maximize the efficiency of our buildings and raise revenue for the district so we will be able to maintain our programs for students."

The district hopes to raise much-needed revenue as well as stabilize its student enrollment with schools of choice and its recently approved an all-day kindergarten program.

Wayne-Westland lost more than 200 students this year primarily at the elementary level. Some of that loss was to the neighboring Garden City Public Schools which instituted an intra-county school of choice program two years ago to boost its enrollment.

The district's four middle schools and two high schools currently have full enrollment and are not included in the nonresident schools of choice. However, its alternative education program at the Tinkham Center is open to nonresidents.

Wayne-Westland has offered an internal school of choice program for its kindergarten-eighth-grade enrollment for many years, and it won't be until after the elementary program's April registration deadline that school

officials will have an idea of the number of empty seats in the its elementary schools.

"Once that's complete we'll have a better handle for applications for intra-county schools of choice," said Deputy Superintendent Charlotte Sherman. "We have a committee developing the guidelines."

Trustee Cindy Schofield questioned what would happen in schools that may face an overcrowding situation.

"If we accept children from outside out boundaries and then have additional children move into the district, will those children be sent back to their district or will we have to hire another teacher?" she asked.

"The parent will have a choice of schools, but the district will assign the buildings," Sherman said. "If at count date, there's overcrowding, the first to have to change schools will be the person who is new to the school because of the intra-county program."

Baracy added that "once we accept these out-of-district students, they will be ours until they graduate."

"This program will require an annual resolution and whether or not we decide to continue doing it, these students will be ours," he said.

Trustee Steve Becher questioned what would happen if schools experienced an influx of new students in their area and was assured that "our students will get first priority."

"A child who applies from outside the (school) attendance boundaries won't be guaranteed that school," Sherman said. "We will ask for first, second and third choices and try to accommodate them."

She added that once a child is accepted, his or her siblings would have priority over other applicants.

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

## Restaurant closing called sign of state's weak economy

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Lone Star Steakhouse closed its Westland restaurant Sunday, as Michigan's weak economy continues to affect local businesses.

While disappointed over yet another vacancy, Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said there are some indications that Westland is fighting back.

Lone Star officials didn't notify city leaders that the Westland restaurant, on Ford Road at Central City Parkway, was on its list of several closings.

"They did not give us a heads up on that," Cicirelli said Tuesday, adding later, "Lone Star had kind of struggled

for awhile, and I'm not sure of the reasons. We're sorry to see it go."

Lori Brist, Westland Chamber of Commerce president, said representatives of several local restaurants have indicated that business has dropped off.

"They're seeing a little bit of a decline in traffic," she said. "I think it's a sign of what's happening with the economy. People don't have the money to eat out as much as they used to."

Pricier restaurants may be hit particularly hard as people who do eat out are looking to spend less, Brist said.

Restaurants aside, Brist pointed to other troubling economic signs. Pier 1 Imports and Mervyn's department store have closed in the city's core retail

district, joining the old Best Buy, MedMax, Sam's Club, Service Merchandise, Quo Vadis theater and Kids "R" Us. Even so, Westland Shopping Center continues to thrive, drawing customers from neighboring communities, Brist said.

Cicirelli pointed to some encouraging signs:

- Target plans to begin its expansion this spring into the former Kids "R" Us store on Warren Road.
- A grocery store is expected to occupy the old Wayne-Westland YMCA site on Wayne Road at Bayview.
- One potential tenant has indicated a preliminary interest in moving into the old Service Merchandise building

near the mall.

"We're out there tracking down these people and telling them to come to Westland," Cicirelli said.

Brist held out hope that Cicirelli will soon fill an economic development director position that has been vacant for several years. Planning Director Bruce Thompson has been handling many of those duties.

"He is doing a good job with the best of his ability with the time that he has to devote to it, but it's time we had someone working on economic development full time," Brist said.

Cicirelli had hoped recently to announce a new economic development director, but he chose to stay put

after he was given a better offer at his current job. She is now talking with another candidate. While filling the post will be helpful, Cicirelli said, it will not be a panacea to a sluggish economy.

"I don't think these places have closed because we don't have an economic development director," she said.

Although the mayor was disappointed that Lone Star closed, she said the prime Ford Road location should, ultimately, be appealing to other businesses.

A Lone Star employee in Westland referred questions to company headquarters in Wichita, Kan., but corporate officials hadn't returned phone calls by Wednesday afternoon.

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Volume 41  
Number 84



**GOOD WINS AGAIN**

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**Coming Sunday on the PINK page**

Beautiful bejeweled compacts on display at Neiman Marcus



## Web 'mall' aids police unit

Shop to help a cop. That could be the theme of a new Web site that helps the Westland Police Department's motorcycle unit. "We set up a Web shopping mall to help raise funds to buy much-needed equipment for the police bikes," Officer Matt Bobby announced. To visit the site, go online to [www.motorcopmall.com](http://www.motorcopmall.com). "Our motor unit receives 50 percent of the profits from each sale," Bobby said in a statement he issued about the Web mall.

# Chamber, foundation sponsor derby night

## Nominations sought for annual awards

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

It'll be a race to the finish line, so to speak, as the Westland Chamber of Commerce and Westland Community Foundation join in hosting "Run for the Roses" Friday, April 21.

The event will serve as a fund-raiser for the Community Foundation and as the chamber's 10th annual Spring Gala. "We're really excited to be partnering with the foundation," said chamber President and CEO Lori Brist. "We've never had the opportunity to do something with them and we're really looking forward to it."

The night at the "races" will be held at the Hellenic Cultural Center on Joy in Westland. The fun will start at 6 p.m. with cocktails and the opening of the silent auction, followed by a strolling dinner, derby entrance, prizes and open bar. Tickets are \$60 per person.

### 'FUN EVENT'

"It's a great, fun event," said foundation president Glenn Shaw Jr. "We're tickled to death to be able to join with the chamber because it's such a good active group. We both

have good followings and we're both hoping for a good turnout."

According to Shaw, betting and prize "money" will be tickets that at the end of the evening can be used to try and win prizes like a trip to the Kentucky Derby. The winner will be treated to lodging and tickets to the derby.

The prize was offered at the foundation's last derby party and was a big hit with the winners, Shaw said.

"The people who won the last time said they had a ball," he added.

This is the second time the foundation has hosted a derby night. The last event two years ago netted \$20,000 that goes for scholarships and to help the Salvation Army Wayne-Westland Corps.

For the chamber, the event marks a change of venue for the spring awards programs which had been held at Joey's Comedy Castle in Livonia the past several years.

At 6:30 p.m., recipients of the 2006 First Citizen Award, sponsored by the Westland Observer and the Westland Chamber of Commerce, and the 2006 Business Person of the Year Award will be honored.

Started in 1986, the First

Citizen Award is intended to honor a person who has contributed to the quality of life in the community and made Westland a better place in which to live, work or play.

Individuals or organization may nominate a person for the award. Local residency isn't required, and people currently holding or seeking public office aren't eligible.

Nominations should outline the individual's service, including its impact on the Westland community, length of time and offices held.

### DISTINGUISHED GROUP

The winner will join such honorees as the 2005 recipient Gary Bulson, Reasther Everett, the late Joseph F. Benyo, Jo Johnson and Margaret Harlow.

The deadline for submitting nominations is 4 p.m. Monday, April 10. For more information, call Observer Editor Sue Mason at (734) 953-2112.

The Business Person of the Year Award was established to recognize an active member of the chamber who stands above the rest.

Nominees must own, manage or do business in Westland. They cannot be an elected official.

Nominations should include information about the individ-

ual's community and professional involvement, awards or recognitions received and other pertinent information.

Last year's recipient was Jeffrey Kavanaugh, a Westland police officer and Realtor.

The deadline for submitting Business Person of the Year nominations also is 4 p.m. Monday, April 21. For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

Nominations for First Citizen and the Business Person of the Year Award can be sent to the Westland Chamber of Commerce, 36900 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185. They also can be submitted by fax at (734) 326-6040.

A third honor that had been a part of the spring program, the Joseph F. Benyo Scholarship, will be presented to a deserving student at the chamber's May awards luncheon. The scholarship recognizes a high school student who is pursuing an art, imaging or photographic career.

The chamber also will honor longtime businesses who are celebrating five years and up as members of the organization.

"We're really looking forward to something new," said Brist. "With the Restaurant Rally and Taste Fest growing, we're hoping to for 300-400 people. We're hoping for a fun night."

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

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# Westland man races to help fight leukemia

A Westland man, preparing for a 26.2-mile marathon to help the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, is planning a fund-raising dinner to boost his campaign.

Terry Osborne, 21, is training for the marathon in Anchorage, Alaska, along with Jill Younce, also 21, of Ann Arbor, according to LLS spokesman Patrick Strait.

Osborne and Younce, part of LLS's Team in Training program, have committed to raising \$4,500 each before the marathon in June. The money will be used for blood cancer

research and patient care.

They have organized a fund-raising dinner 6-11 p.m. Friday, March 24, at Joy Manor, 28999 Joy Road east of Middlebelt, in Westland. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$25 for children 8 and younger.

The fund-raiser will help the fight against leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma. Strait issued a statement saying that 75 percent of every dollar raised by marathon trainers will go back to the LLS's mission.

In return, the Team in Training program will pay for

their transportation costs to and from the event, including airfare, accommodations, entry fees and pre- and post-marathon parties.

The dinner will include door prizes, a silent auction of sports memorabilia provided by Fanzone at Westland Shopping Center, and entertainment provided by Metro Entertainment DJ Service. All proceeds from the dinner will go to the LLS.

For more information or to reserve a seat at the dinner, call Osborne at (734) 377-8640. Donations to Osborne and Younce also may be made by

going online to [www.active.com/donate/tntmi/osborne](http://www.active.com/donate/tntmi/osborne) or [www.active.com/donate/tntmi/jyounce](http://www.active.com/donate/tntmi/jyounce), according to Strait.

The LLS is based in White Plains, N.Y., and is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research and providing education and patient services. It was founded in 1949 and has provided more than \$358 million for research, according to a statement issued by Strait. Call the LLS at (800) 456-5413 or go online to [www.LLS.org/MI](http://www.LLS.org/MI).

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# Doggone it

## Hope for quick placement doesn't materialize for neglected dog

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

What started out as a day of hope and promise for a dog named Duncan ended on a somber note. The possibly abused and neglected dog will remain in the care of the Michigan Humane Society awhile longer after he reacted negatively to newspaper.

"We need to spend more time with him so we can figure out some of his personal traits," said Amy Popp, MHS media and marketing coordinator. "We need to re-evaluate him and have him spend time with one of our behaviorists."

Duncan, a 5-6-year-old possible cockapoo, became available for adoption Tuesday. At least four families were at the center before 10 a.m. hoping to take the dog home. They were attracted to him after seeing a report on Channel 7 News last week.

### FOUND AT SHELTER

Shelter manager Marcy Sieggreen found the dog tied to the surrender door of the Berman Center for Animal Care in Westland when she came to work on March 8.

From a distance, she wasn't sure if it was one or two animals left there, but as she walked across the parking lot, she realized that the mass of fur was actually a very, very matted Duncan.

"We think he's a cockapoo," said Sieggreen, who called in a professional groomer to

remove the matted fur that covered the dog's body and stretched out eight-10 inches from each of his paws.

"Despite all the mats and the condition we found him in, he had no medical problems, no ear infections."

It took the groomer from Grooming By Nancy in Westland two days to remove the fur. Sieggreen estimates that five pounds of matted hair was removed.

"It was a very time-consuming process because we didn't know what we'd find," she said. "Little by little, she shaved off the mats and cut the mats on his feet piece by piece. There was a lot of fecal matter and urine wrapped up in it."

Not knowing anything about Duncan other than he doesn't like loud noise and sudden movement — both are enough to make him shake — they were looking for a quiet, patient home.

"We want someone who will be able to work with him," she said Tuesday morning. "It's hard to predict the circumstances he came from. We're not even sure if he's house-broken."

The TV report generated phone calls to MHS at the Berman Center. After Duncan was neutered on Monday, he became available for adoption, and it was Alison Davis of West

Bloomfield who was first in line. She was sure she and her husband and 9-year-old son could provide a good home for Duncan.

"I have a fairly quiet



Named Duncan by workers at the Berman Center for Animal Care, this dog, believed to be a cockapoo was so badly matted that all of his fur needed to be removed.

home," she assured shelter workers. "I saw him on TV and he was so adorable and obviously they want him to have the best home."

Sure that he was the dog for her family, Davis left the center shortly after 10 a.m., assuring workers she would be back with her son, so they could meet him and he could meet the dog.

She had a change of heart and called, saying she wouldn't return, said Popp. Her decision opened the door for Mera Pety to adopt Duncan.

"I like older dogs," she said. "I lost a dog three years ago. He was a greyhound we got from the race tracks. He was an older dog."

### RE-EVALUATION

Pety did take Duncan home, but his reaction to her picking up newspaper to clean up a mess he had made in the house prompted MHS workers to bring him back to the shelter for re-evaluation.

"Obviously, we want to do what we can for him," Popp said. "We had done the standard tests and he passed. Now we need to do more."

While Duncan was neglected, Sieggreen is glad that whomever had him brought



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mera Pety of Lincoln Park (left) and Alison Davis of West Bloomfield were the first in line Tuesday morning to adopt Duncan at the Michigan Humane Society's Berman Center for Animal Care in Westland.

him to the shelter.

"If someone gets to the point where they can't take care of the animal, they need to hand it off to someone who can," she said. "Obviously, it's good to have more information about the animal than we have about Duncan so we can get them into a loving home as quick as possible."

She also is appreciative of the interest in adopting Duncan. Those people who showed up to adopt him only to be disappointed heard about the other 50 dogs and cats currently available for adoption.

"If this isn't the right one, we have a lot of other animals available to go to good, loving homes," Sieggreen said.

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TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A closely shaved Duncan stands quietly while being petted by Mera Pety.

# Man charged after shooting ex-girlfriend with BB gun

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Westland man opened fire with a BB gun inside his home Friday evening, injuring his ex-girlfriend and her brother, police said.

Both victims refused medical treatment following the 8 p.m. shootings in the 38600 block of Milton, near Cherry Hill and John Hix roads, police Sgt. James Dexter said.

The incident happened when the ex-girlfriend went to the accused shooter's home to pick up their 18-month-old daughter, who is in her custody, Dexter said. The father had

been baby-sitting the child. "They got into an argument. He pulled out a BB gun and shot the ex-girlfriend twice — once in the left thigh and once in the face," Dexter said.

The child's mother ran upstairs as her brother, who had been waiting on the porch, entered the house, according to statements made to police. He, in turn, was shot twice in the face, Dexter said.

"Both victims refused medical attention," he said.

Someone inside the house called police, who arrived and arrested the 19-year-old father. The suspect turned over a BB handgun that he had hidden in

the rafters of his basement, Dexter said.

The father was arraigned Sunday on two counts of felonious assault and jailed in lieu of a \$10,000/10 percent bond. He would have to post \$1,000 for his release.

A not guilty plea was placed on record for him, and he was ordered to appear in Westland 18th District Court for a March 23 hearing that will determine whether he should stand trial.

If convicted, he could face penalties ranging up to four years in prison. The defendant has no prior police record, Dexter said.

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

### DEATHS

- A**
- L. Jeffery Allen**  
Allen, 50, of Auburn Hills, died March 1.
  - Dr. Vilas L. Allen**  
Allen, 82, of Northville, died March 12.
  - Kathleen Andrushko**  
Andrushko, 87, of Rochester Hills, died March 7.
  - Evelyn P. Axford**  
Axford, 93, of Rochester, died Feb. 18.
- B**
- Bobby D. Beale**  
Beale, 73, of Lake Orion, died Feb. 22.
  - Melissa R. Berels**

- Berels, 27, of New Baltimore, died Feb. 16.**
- Scott R. Berels**  
Berels, 27, of New Baltimore, died Feb. 16.
- Edward A. Bevan**  
Bevan, 76, of Rochester Hills, died March 11.
- Joan Bonomo**  
Bonomo, 91, of Rochester Hills, died Feb. 20.
- Barbara L. Bushnell**  
Bushnell, 62, died March 13.

- E**
- Richard A. Eckley**  
Eckley, 47, of Roseville, died Feb. 21.
  - Vernon Carl Eisenhardt**  
Eisenhardt, 77, of South Branch, formerly of Clarkston, died March 12.
- F**
- Sharon K. Fulks**  
Fulks, 66, of Bruce Township, formerly of Shelby Township, died March 1.
- Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in Passages on page C8.

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<b>Driscoll's California Strawberries</b> \$1.99 lb. Great with Blackened Catfish	<b>Texas Grapefruit</b> \$2.99 5 lb. bag	<b>Tomatoes On The Vine</b> 2 lbs. / \$5.00 \$2.50 / lb. Red & Ripe
<b>Trincherio Family Sauvignon Blanc '03</b> \$9.99 750 ml. Great balance of citrus and grass flavors!	<b>Tipperary Irish Cheddar Extra Sharp Cheese</b> \$6.59 lb. "Great with a Pint of Ale!"	<b>Bogie Phantom '03</b> \$19.99 750 ml. This limited release blend sells out quickly!
<b>Joe's Pickles</b> 2/\$6.00 32 oz. jar Hill Bozo Dill, Dill Spoons, Bread & Butter, & Hot Mix	<b>Brick Cheese</b> \$3.09 lb. Great on Crackers & Sandwiches	<b>Joe's Canned Tomatoes</b> 2/\$3.00 15oz. can Diced, Crushed & Whole
<b>Edy's Family Favorite Ice Cream</b> 2/\$6.00 56 oz. ctn. A Variety of All Natural Flavors!	<b>Dairy Fresh Butter</b> 2/\$5.00 \$2.50 each	<b>Bareman's Gallon Milk All Varieties</b> 2/\$4.00 \$2.00 ea. All Varieties

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**PICKERING**

FROM PAGE A1

the time to fulfill a longtime dream by returning to college in January of last year to start earning his associate degree in culinary arts.

He attends Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills, where his late wife, Suzanne, worked as a counselor. He learns alongside students barely out of high school, although some are closer to his age, 63.

"I like going there because it takes me out of the city, out of government and out of politics," Pickering said. "It puts me with people who enjoy what I enjoy — cooking."

He started his hobby in the early 1970s, when his wife worked full time and their two daughters, Terri and Leigh, were young schoolchildren. He used to watch *The Galloping Gourmet* on television.

"I kind of patterned my cooking after him," Pickering said.

Now a grandfather of five, he still likes to cook for the daughters and their families, especially during outings to a lakeside home near Jackson. His dishes get rave reviews from daughter Terri's husband, Jeff Saenz.

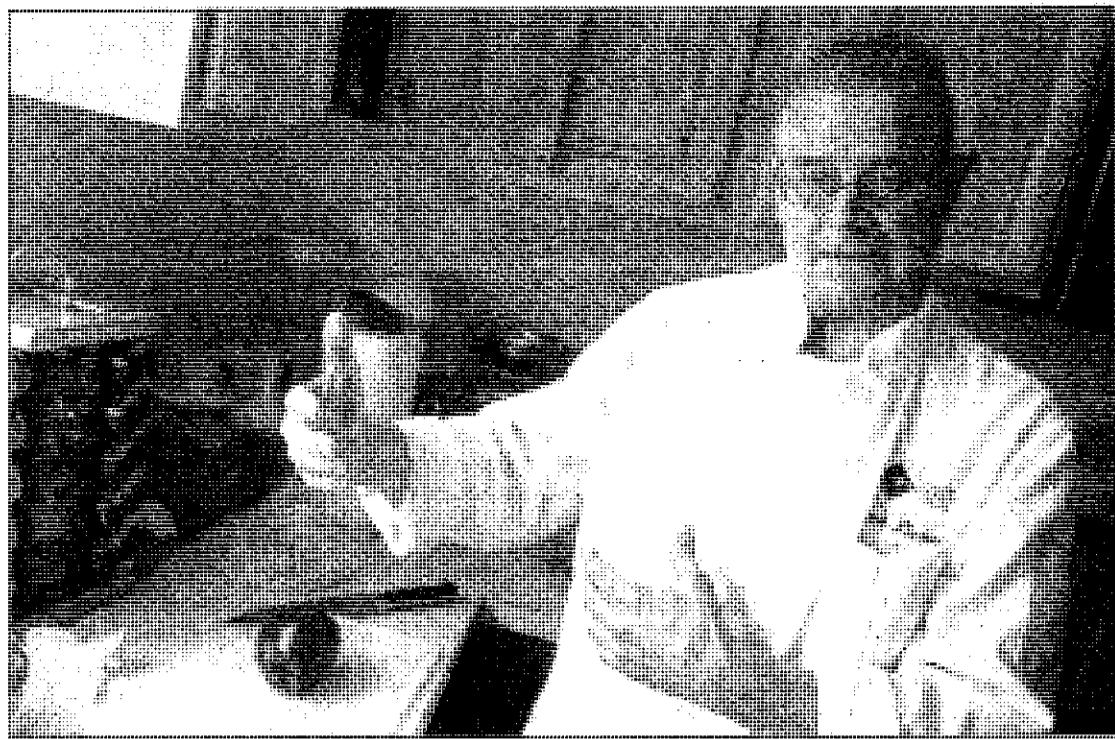
"He makes a Thai shrimp salad that's just phenomenal," Saenz said. "His steaks are always incredible. And his pork tenderloin is out of this world."

Pickering hopes to earn his associate degree by the end of this year, an achievement that will allow him to become a certified cook with the American Culinary Federation. His grades have been all A's and B's.

He may continue his education, although he's not sure he'll become a master chef. That would take years.

"I would like to get some experience in a restaurant, though," he said.

Pickering also is considering working part time as a personal chef for hire, mostly for small dinner parties. As such, he would take his culinary skills to someone else's kitchen, prepare the food and serve it. He will get a taste of that



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Offering tips in the kitchen, Charles Pickering is as passionate about cooking as he is about politics.

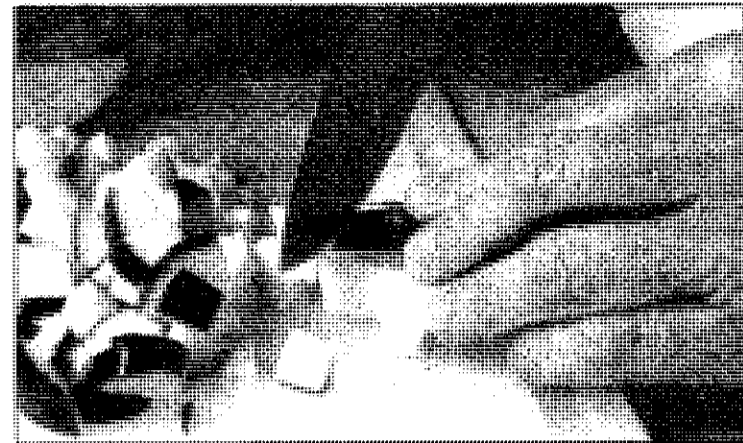
this spring when he cooks in Assistant City Attorney Mark McConnell's kitchen. McConnell became the high bidder when Pickering auctioned an evening of his cooking services as part of a Westland Rotary Club fundraiser.

It may speak volumes that McConnell was the high bidder, considering that he had earlier tried Pickering's cooking.

No matter what he cooks, Pickering tries to choose ingredients with a mixture of textures, colors and tastes.

"I think presentation is very important," he said.

Lately, Pickering has started



Charles Pickering, who at 63 is earning his associate degree in culinary arts, chops an apple for a dish he is preparing in his kitchen.

honing his skills with sweets. His teriyaki steak salad was followed by a dessert of chocolate mousse with raspberries.

While some people are strangers to the kitchen, Pickering is visibly at ease there. As he chops scallions, he jokes when a comment is made about how quickly he uses a sharp knife.

"I specialize in beef tips, not fingertips," he said.

More seriously, he said, "I find cooking relaxing. To me, cooking is like reading a book for other people. It's my release."

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**Charles Pickering also is considering working part time as a personal chef for hire, mostly for small dinner parties. As such, he would take his culinary skills to someone else's kitchen, prepare the food and serve it.**

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## AROUND WESTLAND

## Coffee Hour

State Rep. Glenn S. Anderson, D-Westland, will have his next local coffee hour 9-10:30 a.m. for Monday, March 20, at the Westland Big Boy Restaurant, 6360 N. Wayne Road at Hunter.

Citizens are welcome to discuss issues and/or concerns. Anderson holds local coffee hours the third Monday of each month.

## Business networking

"Breaking the Boundaries," an after-hours networking event sponsored by the West Suburban Area Chambers of Commerce, is scheduled for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 22, at Burton Manor in Livonia. The cost is \$10 per person and includes hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

The event will feature combined speed networking with area chambers, including Westland, Garden City, Dearborn Heights, Wayne, Redford, Livonia, Farmington, Southfield, Dearborn, Canton, Plymouth, Novi, Northville and others.

Reservations must be made by Thursday, March 16, by calling the Westland chamber office at (734) 326-7222.

## Memorial fund-raiser

Enjoy lunch or dinner at UNO Chicago Grill, 7525 Wayne Road, Westland, Wednesday March 29, and help raise money for the Dale Freese Memorial Scholarship Fund.

A fund-raiser is planned for 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the restaurant. Patrons can have 20 percent of their check to go to the Dale Freese Memorial Fund when they present special donation certificates.

The certificates are available at Norman's Market, 1546 S. Wayne Road north of Palmer. For more information, call (734) 721-6770.

## 'Historic' dining

Max & Erma's in Westland will sponsor a fund-raiser to help with the restoration of the historic Octagon House located on Westland Historical Museum property on Wayne Road north of Cherry Hill.

The restaurant, on the southwest corner of Warren and Newburgh roads, will donate 20 percent of its proceeds from lunch and dinner sales on Wednesday, March 22.

A Max & Erma's manager said Wednesday that anyone wanting to help may tell the server that they are there to support the fund-raiser. Also, those who want to fill out a flier to designate a portion of their bill for the fund-raiser may go to City Hall, the senior citizen Friendship Center, the Bailey Recreation Center or the senior Dyer Center, or call local historians Georgia Becker at (734) 728-1605 or Jo Johnson at (734) 522-3918.

## Spring bazaar

Edison Elementary is holding a Spring Bazaar and Art Show 6-9 p.m. Thursday, April 6. There will be 25 vendors, a bake sale with eating area, baby-sitting with crafts for the kids and an art show featuring students' artwork throughout the halls.

## Membership month

If you're interested in community citizenship, the opportunity to serve, growth and development, cultural awareness and nice people, then the Wayne Rotary Club wants to hear from you. The club is extending an invitation to people who live or work within the community to join the club as part of its Membership Month. People interested in joining can call Art Quintal at (734) 722-8925.

## Bunny bowl

Children will have a chance to bowl with the Easter Bunny 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 1, at Town & Country Bowling Alley, at Wayne and Avondale.

Cost is \$7, and children must have adult supervision. The cost includes one game of bowling and shoes, one slice of pizza or one hot dog, and pop. Tickets may be purchased by calling (734) 722-6478.

The event is being sponsored by junior and youth members of Grange No. 389. Part of the proceeds will go to AAA Crisis Pregnancy Center.

## Senior dinner

The Wayne Ford Civic League is offering a dinner for seniors noon to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 19, at the league hall, 1645 N. Wayne Road, Westland. The price is \$8 for members and \$10 for nonmembers for a buffet dinner with beer, wine, pop, and dancing to live entertainment. The event is for people age 60 and older. Call (734) 728-5010 for more information.

## Author speaks

The Education Commission at St. Simon and Jude Catholic Church in Westland will host a presentation by nationally known author Angela Bonavoglia at 7 p.m. Friday, March 17, at the church, 32500 Palmer.

Bonavoglia wrote *Good Catholic Girls*, a book about how women are leading the fight to change the Catholic Church. Her talk is open to the public.

## Quilt Show

The Plymouth/Westland Grange 389 is holding its fourth annual spring quilt show, workshop and classes 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 22, at the senior Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland.

There will be classes in hand appliqué (cost is \$25) and techniques for a peony and vine wall hanging (cost is \$55), as well as a special quilt project for children (cost is \$6). Pre-register by April 19.

There will be a demonstration of yarns and new products by Hancock Fabrics and a display of quilts. Velda Kirby of Make It Sew will speak at a quilt luncheon that costs \$10.

For \$1, people can enter quilts to be judged in such categories as antique, mixed technique, mixed medium, single technique, group quilting, quilted clothing, wall hanging and unfinished top.

Admission is \$1 in advance and \$2 at the door. For more information, call Sharon Strebbling at (734) 722-4857 after 6 p.m.

## Art Auction

The Wayne Rotary Club and Wayne Parks and Recreation Department are sponsoring an Art Auction, featuring art in all media and price ranges. It will be Friday, March 24, at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe, Wayne.

There will be a preview at 6:30 p.m., followed by the auction at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person which includes door prizes, silent auction, wine and cheese, hors d'oeuvres, dessert and coffee and cash bar.

Proceeds will benefit the Playscape for Rotary Park No. 1. For tickets or for more information, call (734) 721-7400.

## Free seminar

Vickey Foley, marketing director and development, and Penny Thomas, director of social service, both with Community Hospice, will explain advanced directives, at a free seminar at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 25, in Meeting Room A/B of the Westland public library, 6123 Central City Parkway.

Sometimes called living wills, advanced directives are documents which state a person's wishes on such things as extreme measures, feeding tubes and ventilators.

Bonnie Hilberer, an advanced planning funeral professional with Vermeulen Funeral Homes, also will be there to explain options for funeral preplanning.

For more information, call the library at (734) 326-6123.

## 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.

## Friends' cookbook benefits village park

The cookbooks, *Cooking with Friends*, sponsored by Friends of the Westland Historical Museum, have arrived from the printers and are on sale for the unbelievably low price of \$10.

You not only get 295 fabulous recipes from Westland kitchens, but an attractively presented, spiral bound book with artist's renderings of all the city owned historical buildings.

They are going fast, so don't delay in getting your copy. They would make a great gift.

The cookbooks may be purchased at the Helen C. Brown Westland Historical Museum, 857 N. Wayne Road, between Cherry Hill and Marquette, 11 a.m. to 2

p.m. Wednesdays and 1-4 p.m. Saturdays during March.

At the same time, you may want to pick up a special coupon for lunch or dinner March 22 at Max & Erma's on Newburgh Road at Warren.

Twenty percent of your order will be donated to the Historic Village Park. Coupons also are available at the Bailey Center, City Hall, the Friendship Center and the Dyer Center.

The historic one-room Perrinsville School on Warren Road near Merriman will once again be available for school class visits beginning in April. Children will experience a day at school as it used to be.

The school was built in 1856 and is a fine example of a typical one-room school

of that period and also one of few remaining in the state of Michigan. You may have seen it featured recently in the newspaper, authentically restored to the 1890s time period by the Perrinsville Restoration Committee with support from the Friends of the Westland Museum and Historical Commission.

Encourage your child's teacher to call the Westland Historic Village Park office at (734) 326-1110 and set a date to visit. This is a fine opportunity to expose your child to a meaningful bit of history that is available in only a few communities.

Call Connie Wagenschutz at (734) 522-0438 or contact her by e-mail at conwag@juno.com with your questions or comment.

## Local youngsters receive storybooks from Toy

Elementary schools throughout Garden City, Livonia, Redford and Westland have received books thanks to a donation from a local legislator in honor of "March is Reading Month."

"Reading to our young people is so important," said State

Sen. Laura Toy, (R-Livonia) who will read to students in local elementary schools throughout the month. "More than just expanding vocabularies, reading can expand minds."

Donated were copies of *Lighthouse Fireflies*, which

tells the story of a young boy who realizes the true meaning of friendship and self-sacrifice through his flickering firefly friends.

The author Anne Margaret Lewis and illustrator Mary Frey are both Michigan natives.

"This is a delightful story that I hope will quickly become a favorite in the school library," Toy said. "I am happy to make it available to the children of the 6th district."

The books donated by Toy were not paid for at taxpayers expense.

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## OUR VIEWS

### Seniors' can-do is worth following

They don't have children of their own in the schools, but that doesn't get in the way of seniors at the Dyer Senior Center.

Three times a year, they gather to address the Wayne-Westland Community Schools' *Connections* newsletter. They work the front desk, they answer telephones, they do fund-raising and register members for different trips. They help out at monthly spaghetti dinner fund-raisers that help support their program.

And if you listen to Tess Clark, the Big Three automakers could learn a thing or two from this group which, in assembly-line fashion, fills some 1,000 backpacks that are given to future students during the Kindergarten Roundup.

The Dyer Center seniors are "very efficient and know how to get the job done," she says.

And they do all that with nary a complaint. Granted, there was some friendly ribbing by quality control at the backpack stuffing event last week, but most everything they do is because they want to do it.

We could list any number of descriptives why they do it. It keeps them busy, makes them feel like a kid again, makes them feel good. But in this out-with-the-old-and-in-with-the-new society, it's nice to see such senior involvement. It's volunteerism at its finest.

It may be the case of the chicken and the egg and which came first as to who got this volunteerism up and running — the seniors themselves or center director Mary Browe. But no matter, it is a little-known secret ingredient that benefits the schools and the local community.

We all have our own idea of what our golden years will be like — no more work, just rest and relaxation. The seniors at the Dyer Center are rewriting that page. They keep busy, keep active and, best of all, help the Wayne-Westland Community Schools.

Our hats are off to seniors — all seniors — who give of their time and energy to make their schools and community a better place to live. The bar they have set is a high one and, hopefully, the "boomers" will be up to the challenge and follow in their footsteps.

### Legislature must act on SBT alternative

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson has stirred the pot with his petition drive for a ballot proposal to repeal the Single Business Tax in October 2007, two years before it is scheduled to expire.

The SBT has become the chosen whipping post for Michigan's faltering economy. A chorus of Republicans and Democrats have raised their voices against the SBT, but there is little agreement on how to replace the \$1.9 billion in revenue that the tax brings to our already financially challenged state government. That's about 20 percent of the state's general fund.

Last week, the House Tax Policy Committee approved a bill to end the SBT by 2007 without offering an alternative tax. The full House is expected to vote this week. The vote was along party lines, with all Republicans supporting it and all Democrats opposed.

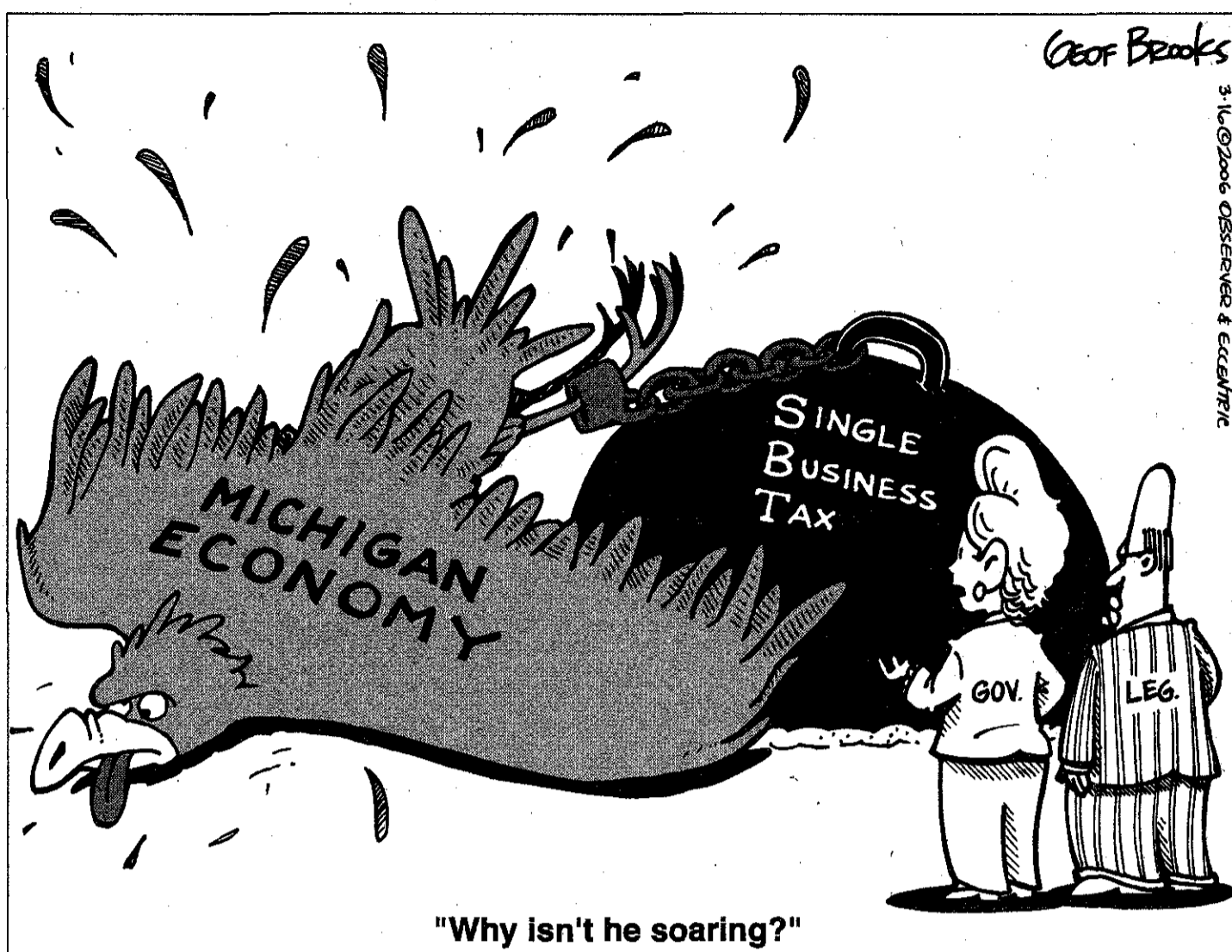
Gov. Jennifer Granholm has said she will veto any legislation that does not include an alternative tax.

Ironically, the SBT was passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. William Milliken in 1977 to simplify taxes and stabilize the state's revenue stream. It replaced seven business taxes. While the SBT is the second highest business tax in the country, Michigan ranks in the middle among states in overall taxes on business. The biggest tax burden for businesses is property taxes, while the SBT represents only 14 percent of total business tax. Twenty-five percent of Michigan businesses do not pay the SBT.

Opponents of the tax argue that the SBT is a job killer because payroll is part of the tax calculation. The SBT is a value-added tax that levies on payroll, fringe benefits, gross income and some company assets. Opponents argue that it is difficult to calculate and unfair because it is levied even when a business fails to make a profit. In 2002, the state Legislature voted to repeal the tax after 2009.

We believe something needs to replace the SBT. The governor is right that the state can ill afford to lose 20 percent of its general fund and the bill approved in the House committee is more political grandstanding than leadership.

It is the duty of the state Legislature to wrestle with this problem and find an acceptable tax alternative that will help stimulate the economy without shifting the burden of taxation on those less able to pay. We believe members need to act now, before an initiative is placed on the ballot that will eliminate the tax without a clear direction on how to retain some of that lost revenue.



### Leave water where it is

I believe that Great Lakes water should stay where it is because we in Michigan have the job to fight to keep our natural resources in check. And also, the lakes are already low, and if we allow it to be diverted, we may all have to pay a terrible price later on. So please stop any and all plans to pump our water to other parts of the country.

Rayburn Garren  
Westland

### Support legislation

Recently, both the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives passed my legislation to bring accountability to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

Nearly three years ago to the day (March 19, 2003), the governor was presented with similar legislation, which she vetoed. Legal concerns raised by the governor in her veto message of that legislation are addressed and corrected in Senate Bill 372 and the Senate is poised to send SB 372 to the governor's desk next week.

SB 372 would create a mechanism to provide necessary review and oversight of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department's rate setting and contracting practices for all of the residents it serves.

The economic realities that face our state do not have geographical boundaries. Just as the Detroit City Council is concerned about the affordability of water rates for its low-income residents, someone must begin to address this exact same concern for the low-income and fixed-income households in communities throughout the region.

Furthermore, all citizens "regardless of income or address" deserve water rates that are fair and just.

Please join me in urging the governor to sign SB 372 into law to give all of the residents of southeast Michigan the voice they deserve. Call, write, fax, or e-mail the governor's office and let her know that you support this important legislation and encourage her to do what is best for all Michigan residents.

Laura M. Toy  
state Senate, 6th District

### Candidates to support

Now that the political campaign season is once more upon us and both parties are flooding us with surveys along with requests for financial support, I'd like to tell them this:

I often support lawmakers in regions and states where I can't vote because I believe in the policies for which they stand. I like their voting records. I can't vote for them, but they can vote for me.

The surveys I receive seem to be neatly stacked with issues with which I, as a Republican or a Democrat, would agree; the same old fare reheated. These surveys ask me to check the following — (1) I strongly agree, (2) I agree or (3) I disagree. Here are the statements I'd like to see:

- Ending perpetual starvation in

### LETTERS

many African countries should be one of the deepest concerns of the modern world.

The trafficking in women and children as sex slaves here and across the world is one of the most serious terrorism problems of our time.

The federal government should be speaking out against the flood of pornography and violence available to children and adults on every electronic media.

Childhood obesity is the most serious health problem facing our country today and it could be greatly ameliorated by restoring physical education and recess to all public schools across the country.

The U.S. Congress should strongly support the two bills before the Homeland Security Committee (S1756 in the Senate and HR3760 in the House) to establish a cabinet level Department of Peace to advise the president and all other Cabinet members in conflict resolution here at home and abroad.

If these are your ideals in your elected office, believe me you have my vote.

Shirley Gumina  
Garden City

### Cheney is hypocrite

So, the day that Vice President Dick Cheney shot Harry Whittington was one of the worst days of his life. What about the day he sent American servicemen and women to Iraq to die for a lie? How does that stack up on the scale of bad days?

Cheney's and Bush's hypocrisy and lack of principles take my breath away. They purport to support our Constitution while doing their level best to destroy the freedoms it protects through illegal wire taps, illegal detentions, the abolition of free speech and the intermingling of religion and government. They purport to promote democracy while undermining free elections if they don't like the result (even here in the U.S. — remember who really won in 2000?).

Those who wield power should look into their hearts before they take actions that affect other people's lives. It's easy for someone like Bush or Cheney to send someone else's child to die so they and their wealthy friends can make even more money from oil. It's easy for them to pretend (perhaps even to themselves) that their motives are pure.

But as Cheney just found out, it's not quite so easy when it's your own hand pulling the trigger.

Rachel McCormack  
Canton

### Region needs light rail

Sometimes the tube can be enlightening. For example, regarding the Super Bowl, I heard Gov. Granholm state: "Detroit just has to find a way to keep people coming downtown." Well one way is light rail which can only improve Detroit's image as one of the most racially polarized cities, as well as save a lot of gas and road wear. It would be a good idea to complete the original plan of looping the people mover to Pontiac. During the Super Bowl, Detroit's buses

were shamefully inadequate resulting in long waits. In 1982, when the game was held in Pontiac's Silverdome, team players were stuck in gridlock. Considering the megabucks spent for one single day, and the goodwill it generated for Motown, imagine what a light rail connection from Detroit to Pontiac could mean for both cities that share a too familiar history. Before what today they would call the Detroit "insurgency," railroad commuter cars attracted the entire county of Oakland to visit Hudson's, Tiger Stadium, the Masonic, etc.

At that time, there were major stores on Saginaw and Huron. As of this date, both Pontiac and Detroit are mired in the stone age of mass transit; more advanced in countries we consider belonging to the third world. If the "feds" could spend billions in Boston on a single tunnel, just a minor example of government waste today, why cannot a light rail be completed on Woodward to help bring a future to what we once proudly called the Arsenal of Democracy and the heart of the industry that made both towns famous. L. Brooks, what is your opinion?

Ron Wolf  
West Bloomfield

### Support research

Regarding Michigan's current limits on development of embryonic stem cells, and the debate about rescinding those limits.

I have read numerous comments that adult stem cells have been proven effective medical solutions, but embryonic stem cells have yet to demonstrate any therapeutic benefit, therefore there is no need to investigate embryonic stem cells further.

Regardless of my position (which is probably obvious), I must disagree with the logic. It is comparable to saying that no cure for cancer (or whatever) has been discovered yet, so let's quit there.

In fact, it's comparable to the logic of "intelligent design" supporters — that once we reach an obstacle, let's just stop and depend solely on fate/faith.

Steve Silverstein  
West Bloomfield

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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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**Observer**

PUBLISHED THURSDAY AND SUNDAY

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### QUOTABLE

"We're really disappointed. It does affect our children. It affects our whole community. I don't think (the board) listened to a majority of our concerns."

— Melanie Beaudoin, a Livonia school district parent, about a judge's refusal to grant an injunction against the Legacy Initiative

# Center for Michigan's goal is to set agenda for recovery

Michigan is in a profound state of crisis. And a few of us are finally trying something new in an effort to do something about it. I'll explain more soon, but first, here's a hard look at reality. Most people don't yet realize how serious our situation is.

Basic manufacturing, the traditional core of our economy, is hemorrhaging jobs — jobs that will never return. Our largest employers — Ford, General Motors and much of the automotive supply chain — are losing market share and money. Some, like Delphi, are flirting with bankruptcy.

The city of Detroit and the Detroit public schools are on the brink of insolvency. Our unemployment rate tops the nation, month after month.

And our family income has plummeted.

Today's economic crisis is quite different from the periodic tough times we've faced in the past. It's the result of uncontrollable changes in the way the world economy works. This has been aggravated in the case of the auto industry by a cost and labor-management business model that simply can no longer be sustained in the era of the global village.

Nobody who understands what is going on thinks this crisis can be resolved simply by an upturn in auto sales. Instead, the state needs to adopt a far-reaching and broadly acceptable economic policy agenda to help us get through our time of troubles, and to set in place the groundwork for a better economy and a brighter future for us and our families.

Sadly, however, Michigan's political system has proven largely paralyzed, preoccupied with partisan squabbles, and unable or unwilling to develop comprehensive solutions to our problems.

How come? Simply, Michigan politics today are dysfunctional for three reasons:

■ **First, partisanship.** The coming election is succeeding in bringing out the worst in everybody. The Republican-dominated Legislature is hell-bent on making sure nothing happens to help the state that Gov. Jennifer Granholm can claim credit for, regardless of what happens to the rest of us in Michigan. Yet the governor's office isn't much better. When not consumed by political paranoia, it is fixated on micromanaging the various departments of state government for Granholm's political advantage.

■ **Second, ideologues.** Traditionally, Michigan politics depended on moderate civic leadership that, when all was said and done, would work across the partisan divide to develop and implement practical solutions to problems. But over the past decade, ideologues — particularly of the hard right, but also the semi-socialist left — have hijacked the political system.

■ **Third, well-funded single interests, coupled with term limits.** Aggressive and wealthy interest groups



Phil Power

buy "face time" with legislators through their campaign contributions. And term-limited lawmakers lack the experience, information and perspective to resist.

Moreover, knowing they'll soon be booted out of their present positions, they've got their eyes fixed on the next job they want to run for. What that means is that holding the hand out for campaign contributions has become Lansing's most highly developed reflex.

The overall result is a growing alienation between most voters, who occupy the middle of the road, and an increasingly partisan and ideological political class. This has contributed to the public perception that at our time of crisis our political system is essentially broken.

What we're getting these days from our political leaders is an odd combination of harsh rhetoric and failure to do anything other than pussyfoot around our greatest problems. This helps nobody.

So some of us have decided to do something about it. We're starting a "think-and-do tank," which we call The Center for Michigan.

You can learn much more about the Center at [www.thecenterformichigan.net](http://www.thecenterformichigan.net). Briefly, however, it will have two basic missions that feed upon and reinforce each other. It will assist in developing a broadly acceptable, high-impact, practical strategic agenda for the rebirth of our economy. And it will work to make our politics more civil, less ideological and more effective by re-energizing Michigan's bipartisan civic leadership and countless thousands of moderate grass-roots voters.

The Center will have a definite stance in the sensible center. It will be non-ideological, muscularly moderate and anything but weak. The Center is not interested in fighting the battles of the past — management vs. labor, city vs. suburb, white vs. black, east side vs. west side. Instead, it is aimed at rallying moderates who have brains, courage and backbone.

The Center's first initiative was a conference held this week, co-sponsored with the Center for State, Local and Urban Politics at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.

A cross-section of Michigan's civic, business and labor leadership gathered to consider "Where Do We Go From Here?" in attempting to develop a broadly acceptable economic agenda for the state.

As one of the founders of The Center, I am saddened and appalled at the economic disintegration of what was once — and can and should be again — one of the most beautiful, rich and successful states in the union. Our situation is dire and brings to mind the famous observation that all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men and women to do nothing.

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](mailto:ppower@hcnnet.com). He is also chairman of The Center for Michigan. For more information go to [www.thecenterformichigan.net](http://www.thecenterformichigan.net).

# Mark my words — our first woman president will be a soccer player

I am convinced our country will elect a woman president by 2032.

Strangely, that thought occurred to me while watching a recent national indoor soccer tournament in Wixom.

The girls on the field couldn't have been more than 10. Sweat poured from their foreheads as they jostled for position. Elbows swung and struck ribs. Goalies dove into boards without regard for personal safety in an attempt to preserve victory for their team. These were not the little girls of my youth. They were super girls, seemingly capable of just about anything if only the world would

give them a chance. Unfortunately, they won't get the chance to be president until approximately 2032 due to the age requirement of the office. Of course, the big day could happen in 2008 like some pundits are predicting, perhaps leaving those girls on the soccer field with the task of curing cancer or blazing a trail to Mars.

Foreign countries have elected woman leaders for decades, so why not the U.S.?

Historians believe Margaret Thatcher did a commendable job as British prime minister and German Chancellor Angela Merkel is off to a good start.

In this country, grassroots organizations are sprouting up all over with the shared goal of electing a woman president. The notion of supporting women due to the fundamental difference of having two X chromosomes seems ridiculous at first, but is it?

With apologies to Cleopatra and Catherine the Great, men have basically run the show on Earth for thousands of years and have done a pretty lousy job.

Men have mercurial tempers that translate into the bad habit of blowing each other up when disagreements arise.

Women are tough, too, but would they be as quick to send soldiers to war?

Something tells me they'd do a little more talking and a little less fighting.

Many Americans, however, believe a woman would be less capable during times of war.

In 1984, vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro was asked whether she could push the button to launch a nuclear attack. Male candidates escaped similar questions because few voters doubt a man's ability to wage war.

Despite those concerns, Web sites are



Larry Ruehlen

With apologies to Cleopatra and Catherine the Great, men have basically run the show on Earth for thousands of years and have done a pretty lousy job. Men have mercurial tempers that translate into the bad habit of blowing each other up when disagreements arise.

sprouting up touting potential candidates from U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton. Those are the obvious choices, but six more are also being promoted by The White House Project — a group pushing for the election of a woman president in 2008. Also on the group's list are Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Maine Sen. Olympia Snowe, Maine Sen. Susan Collins, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano and Texas Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison.

The credentials and accomplishments of the group are impressive.

Rice graduated high school at 15, earned a doctorate in her early 20s and is currently one of the most influential members of the president's cabinet.

Franklin took office as mayor of Atlanta in 2001 facing an \$82 million deficit and a crumbling sewer system. She tackled both problems and routinely makes the list of the top mayors in the country.

If our sons and daughters are still dying trying to bring democracy to Iraq in 2008, a woman could very likely be elected president on an anti-war message.

If the war is over by then and the nation's economy is doing well, the timing for electing a woman president would be wrong. Dramatic change occurs in time of crisis, not when things are going well.

That brings me back to the original thought of electing a woman president in 2032. By that time, those 10-year-old girls I watched playing soccer at the national indoor tournament will be old enough to be president. I have no doubt one of them will have the leadership and toughness to do the job.

Larry Ruehlen is community editor of the *West Bloomfield Eccentric*. He can be reached at (248) 901-2556.

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# Counties will meet on key area issues

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

Representatives from Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties and the City of Detroit will sit down for a powwow this month to talk about those issues that affect the population of the region as a whole.

The Tri-County Summit will meet at the Glen Oaks Country Club, 30500 13 Mile Road, starting with a press conference at 11:45 a.m. March 20. The event is not open to the public.

Oakland County Board of Commissioners' Senior Analyst Sheryl Mitchell said the summit will center around three areas of interest to the three counties and the City of Detroit: Mental health, infrastructure and transportation.

Mental health, she said, is something the entire region has to come to terms with. "They're going to look at emergency response planning," Mitchell said. "In an emergency, people can miss their medications and not be able to

cope with the situation."

Another issue germane to the topic is jail overcrowding, something the region is struggling with. She said the summit will discuss what options communities have for dealing with mental illness outside of a jail environment.

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation will head up a talk on traffic and road issues and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments will discuss sprawl and its effects on infrastructure. She said the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department will likely be discussed.

"It's going to be roads, water, sewer and their increasing costs," Mitchell said. "With the older cities and their aging infrastructures, water is definitely part of that."

Wayne County Commission Chairwoman Jewel Ware said committees have been meeting over the past few months to identify those areas where the communities have similar (or identical) challenges in meeting their constitutionally-man-

dated duties. Finding common ground on those duties will make everyone's jobs easier.

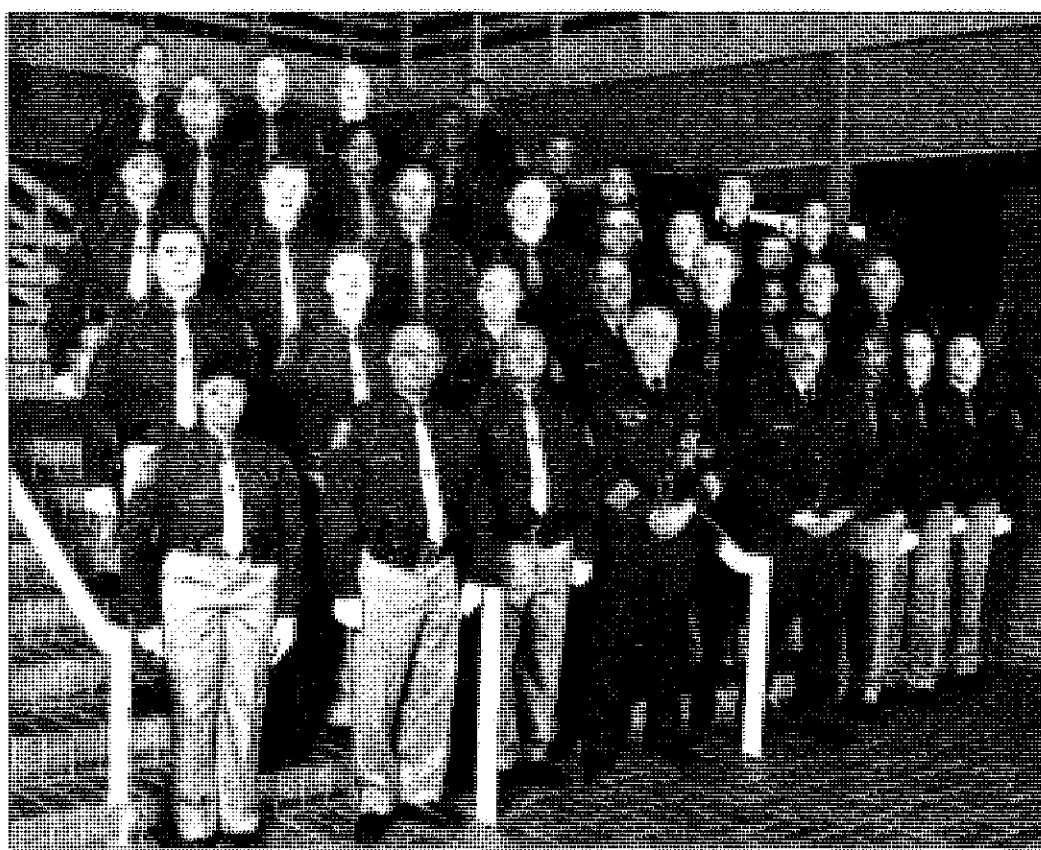
"This is a great opportunity to find ways to work together," Ware said.

What won't be on the docket at the summit are some of the more divisive issues between the counties, or more accurately, between the counties and Detroit. Oakland County Commission Chairman Bill Bullard Jr. said those talks should come later.

"We're hoping to start a dialog to enable us to address the common issues with the three counties and the city, not deal with the contentious issues like Cobo," he said. "We've chosen issues where we have common ground."

Bullard said the summit, which has not met since 1999, is something they're trying to put back together and the weightier issues will have to wait. Later, when everyone is more accustomed to a regular dialog, some of the harder issues can get time on the floor.

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## Sheriff swears new deputies

Wayne County Sheriff Warren C. Evans (front row-center) is surrounded by members of his command staff and graduates of the Sheriff's Training Academy Class of February 2006. On Friday, Feb. 24, Evans swore in these 30 new deputies who successfully completed 17 rigorous weeks of training. Now that they are sworn officers, these men and women will have the opportunity to leave their jail positions in favor of one of the Sheriff Office's many specialty units.

## Friends of Rouge holds Rescue kickoff

The Friends of the Rouge will hold its Rouge Rescue 2006 Site Coordinator Kick-Off meeting 1:30-3 p.m. Thursday, March 23, at the University of Michigan Dearborn's Environmental Interpretive Center, Room 119, 4901 Evergreen Road, Dearborn.

The non-profit environmental organization, Friends of the Rouge, is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. They are encouraging citizens in all of the 48 communities in the Rouge River watershed to participate in Rouge Rescue on June 3, 2006.

"We really want to celebrate our volunteers' efforts over the past 20 years and thought how much better can it get than to have a project going on in each of our 48 communities! — So if

anyone out there in the watershed is reading this and wants to take on a site, they could attend this kick off, it's going to be great" said Kathy Milberg, development coordinator for Friends of the Rouge. Some of the activities being planned at sites this year will include trash and debris removal, invasive species removal, woody debris management, native species plant installations, nature walks, bird box building, trail revitalization, storm drain marking, and many others.

Carolyn McCaughey, executive director for Friends of the Rouge, said she hopes to get as many communities as possible involved.

"We believe the more participation we get on Rouge Rescue Day, the more it will encourage future stewardship for this

wonderful natural resource," she said. "In addition, as we get more and more communities involved we will show a prime example of how partnering and collaborative efforts can be successful."

In 1986, the Rouge River was designated by the federal government as one of the major polluters of the Great Lakes.

Friends of the Rouge was incorporated in 1986 as a 501(c)3 organization in order to assist in the Rouge River Project by conducting public outreach programs and educating local citizens about our watershed and the impact that their actions have on its health.

For information, go to the Web site [www.therouge.org](http://www.therouge.org). To join, contact the organization by March 22.



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