

Prep football Week 1 results, highlights



SPORTS - SECTION B



SIDS walk gives couple a chance to grieve lost son

HOMETOWNLIFE - SECTION C



As children return to school, many are burdened by anxieties

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Search begins for new library director

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland library officials have hired an Ohio-based consulting firm to lead a national search for a new library director. The library board's vote to hire Corbus Library Consultants for \$9,000 came Wednesday, three months after the firing of former Director John Patane. "To get the right person for this job, it's going to be money well spent," board Vice President Debbie Costello said.

What do you think about this story?
E-mail your responses to smason@hometownlife.com.

When reached by telephone on Thursday, consulting firm president Larry Corbus told the *Observer* that the search will likely take four to six months. Corbus estimated that he has led 40-50 such searches. Library officials have indicated the new director will be paid \$65,000 to \$83,000. Patane, 60, was being paid \$70,000 a year.

In a 3-2 decision, the board fired him in May amid accusations he improperly deleted patron fines, used a library credit card, proposed pay raises beyond approved levels and filled jobs without advertising them. Patane became the second library director fired within a two-year period. His predecessor, Sandra Wilson, also lost the support of a library board majority. Some board critics have said the firings could make it difficult to find a top-notch director, but Costello said Corbus has broad experience in matching libraries and directors.

"This is what he does," she said. "He is a one-man consulting firm. He has many years of experience doing this." Ultimately, Corbus will help the board narrow its field of candidates to those few who will be called in for interviews. "We don't have a firm timeline by which time we want to have someone on the job," Costello said. "The focus is more on making sure we get the right person." Corbus already has talked with library employees. Costello said residents also are encouraged to write down their ideas of what they want in

a new director and to submit them in a suggestion box inside the library, on Central City Parkway between Warren and Ford. Meanwhile, Costello said the library has continued operating smoothly despite the absence of a director. "Considering we don't have a director, it's going amazingly well," she said. "The staff is incredible, and they are the reason the library is what it is. It's the gem of the city. Any library director would be lucky to work with this staff." dclcm@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110



Greg Miller (from left), Tiffany Boyer, Jeanette Russell, Sharon Phillips and Linda Leary have several things in common. They're all longtime employees of Buddy's Pizza in Livonia.

VFW raises cash with its M*A*S*H* ... Olympic games

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Calling all M*A*S*H* characters. Surely somewhere in Westland there's a Hawkeye Pierce, Radar O'Reilly, Hot Lips Houlihan or even a Corporal Klinger. Modeled after the old television show and movie, the M*A*S*H* Olympics are coming to Westland for a charity fundraiser. Get ready for races with wheelchairs, hospital gurneys, crutches and bedpans filled with what organizers call a urine-looking substance — OK, beer. The Bova VFW Post 9885, on Hix Road south of Warren, will

host the event at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, to raise money for Wayne-Westland Special Olympics and World Medical Relief, a Detroit-based organization that helps impoverished veterans. "We're looking for teams to compete," said Joseph L. "Larry" Tebor, Bova post commander. Trophies will be awarded to first-place teams in each event, but the main trophy — a gold-painted bedpan — will go to the team that accumulates the most points. Already, Westland City Councilman James Godbout has issued a challenge, saying he is helping organize a team that may be hard to beat.

PLEASE SEE GAMES, A4

Livonia schools earn high marks from state

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public Schools earned mostly A's and B's last week, when the state released its 2006 School Report Card data. The report, made public Thursday, included letter grades for each school and Adequate Yearly Progress status — a requirement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The district, which serves the northern part of Westland, had scores that included 18 "A" schools, 9 "B" schools and one "C" school. "I think it's a positive for our school district and our schools," said Sheila Alles, director of academic services for the district. "It showcases outstanding academic achievement in our

schools. It's definitely something to be proud of." Jay Young, director of community relations, agreed. "It's a positive thing going into a new school year," he said. School begins in the district on Sept. 6. Coming in at the top of the report card with "A" grades were: Adams, Buchanan, Cass, Cooper, Grant, Hoover, Hull, Johnson, Kennedy, Nankin Mills, Randolph, Roosevelt, Taylor, Tyler, Washington and Webster elementary schools, Holmes and Riley middle schools. The "B" schools included: Cleveland, Coolidge, Garfield, Hayes and McKinley elementary schools, Emerson and Frost middle schools and Churchill

PLEASE SEE MARKS, A4

A short reason for longtime employment

Camaraderie, family atmosphere keep them at Buddy's

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER



Tiffany Boyer of Westland has to admit the best part of her job is tasting what she makes. Her co-workers call her a super salad maker, but she also whips up a mean spaghetti sauce and soups. Not her own recipes, mind you, but good just the same. "I don't know who comes up with the recipes, but they're delicious, like the tortilla soup," said Boyer. "It's spicy and has zing. We serve it with chips and it's become quite popular." Boyer is just one of a host of workers at the Buddy's Restaurant and Pizzeria on Plymouth Road in Livonia who work to keep the chain one of the nation's five best pizza places as determined by the Food Network.


CLOSE TO HOME

She's also among a select group at the store that have two things in common — they've all worked there for at least 10 years and they all live in Westland. Boyer's been there 10 years and admits she doesn't see herself as a 20-year employee, especially since she's studying to be a nurse. She admits she's picked up some cooking tips from LaVerne Hatchett, who creates most of the Buddy's recipes and uses them at home. "It's a family style," she said. "It's my home away from home." Greg Miller has reached and exceeded that 20-year milestone. He's been working behind the scenes since 1984. He was working at another business when his brother, Chris, got him in the Livonia store.

He's a member of the pizza line, baking and cutting the pizzas and making sure they go to the right place. He's also a pretty popular guy in the morning when he makes a pizza to test the oven. Someone has to eat his creation and it's his co-workers. "It's still good after all these years," he said of the job, admitting that when he hired in, he didn't expect to be there 22 years. "It was a good opportunity. It's steady work, no layoffs. I'll always work in this industry." Linda Leary started a year before Miller. Hired as a waitress, she also has worked as a bartender during her 23 years there. "It's fun," she said. "When they hired me, I was married and I needed a part-time job. Now I'm a single mom and I'm


PLEASE SEE BUDDY'S, A4

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Coming Thursday

Pontiac will be the place to be Labor Day weekend, as that city features a fantastic party of music, art and food.

Ethics code, 'gag order' get new look

BY DAVE VARGA
STAFF WRITER

When Livonia schools Trustee Tom Bailey voted on a contract including a pay raise for the district's paraprofessionals, his wife got a pay raise.

Bailey's wife is a part-time paraprofessional at Emerson Elementary and he brought up his recent vote during a board discussion of the school board members' Code of Ethics at a meeting Monday.

A portion of that code says, "Board members in all situations refrain from using their position on the Board of Education for personal and/or family gain of any nature."

"It never even dawned on me" that the vote could be considered personal gain, Bailey said. "Should I have abstained? Maybe, I probably should have."

Bailey said his wife's job had

LIVONIA SCHOOLS

been reduced from seven-tenths of full-time to four-tenths, and she'd lost her benefits. Still, he apologized to the public and said he "would certainly bow out in the future."

Several fellow board members told Bailey that, rather than abstaining, he should vote on such contracts.

"The MASB (Michigan Association of School Boards) assured me it's not a problem," said Trustee Cynthia Markarian, whose husband also works for the district. "As a board, we set parameters for negotiations but we're not involved in negotiating strategy."

She noted that there are checks and balances, since the contract covers so many other people and that each board member is only one of seven

who vote.

Trustee Rob Freeman said the policy would prohibit any board member from trying to curry favor or a job for their spouse. Voting on a contract covering a group of employees was different. Trustees "have the responsibility to vote on the issue. I would encourage you to vote," he told Bailey.

'GAG ORDER' REWRITE

On another board policy issue — the board vision that could be read to restrict board members from speaking publicly on issues — trustees agreed that paragraph should be rewritten.

It currently says: "I will be an advocate for the board, not a spokesperson, using the following definition: an advocate addresses the public statements that have been supported by the board, while a spokesperson addresses items and issues that have not yet

been formally addressed by the board. The board president and superintendent will act as the board's spokespersons."

Markarian asked the item to be clarified.

"It just made it seem like it was a gag order, which is not what it was meant to be at all," she said.

Trustee Kevin Whitehead said the idea is to realize that board members, even when they say "in my opinion," can give some people the impression they're acting as a spokesperson or that something has been "discussed and decided." This policy makes a delineation.

"This makes it sound like, you know, shut up," said Trustee Steve King, "And I won't shut up."

Freeman agreed that he also didn't like the sound of that paragraph, "sounding like a gag."

INFORMATION CENTRAL

Dog Days of Summer

The Dog Days of Summer are typically the hottest and most humid times of the year. They are a phenomenon of the northern hemisphere, and they usually fall between July and early September, but the actual days vary greatly from region to region.

The term itself was coined by the Ancient Romans, who called these days "canicular dies" (days of the dogs) after the constellation of Canis Major within which Sirius (The Dog Star) is found. As the hottest and most humid days of summer generally coincided with the period when Sirius rose/set with the sun, they believed that heat from Sirius was increasing the heat of the sun (from Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia).

Practically speaking it means we only have a few more days to feel relaxed before school starts and all the busyness begins. So spend a few hours relaxing and reading a good book.

The William P. Faust Public Library of Westland has many shelves of good leisure reading, but if you don't have a favorite author try the new fiction shelves straight ahead as you walk in.

A few suggestions are:
Can't Wait to Get to Heaven by Fannie Flagg - a humorous story set in a small Missouri town.

Beach Road - James Patterson's newest thriller.

Prodigal Summer by Barbara Kingsolver - A summer story set on a farm in Appalachia.

The Water Dancers by Terry Gamble - A Lake Michigan summer story.

Taking Care of Cleo by Bill Broder - An historical novel set in Prohibition

times on Lake Michigan.
Leeway Cottage by Beth Richardson Gutcheon - A story set in a summer resort in Maine.

Belle Ruin by Martha Grimes - A mystery set in a summer resort.

High Country Fall by Margaret Maron - A summer mystery set in North Carolina.

The Lake, the River and the Other Lake by Steve Amick - A psychological thriller set in Michigan.

Historical fiction will transport a reader to another place and time, perfect for summer reading. Try *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende or *Zorro, the Legend Begins* also by Allende. *Glimmering Girls: A Novel of the Fifties* by Merrill Joan Gerber transports readers back to life in the 1950s.

If you have not read the classic *Cold Sassy Tree* by Olive Ann Burns, a historical novel set in the country in Georgia, summer would be a great time to read this wonderful book.

Don't forget, try something new by browsing our New Fiction section for recent arrivals in the library, or ask a librarian for a suggestion. Enjoy the Dog Days of Summer!


Internet 201: 7 p.m. August 30. An inside look at Internet search engines. No registration or fee required.

Sept. 5: Library resumes Fall hours:

10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and noon-5 p.m. Sunday.

Information Central is compiled by Marilyn Kwik, at the William P. Faust Public Library, 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

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Fishing fine for city's 7th annual derby

There was a time when Westland parks and recreation officials thought they would have to cancel the Fishing Derby, but Mother Nature had a different idea.

The morning showers stopped in time to register youngsters and start the seventh annual event on time.

Sixty-two kids participated in the derby, held Aug. 19, in weather that was "perfect" for fishing, said Margaret Martin, parks and recreation program supervisor.

"The fish were biting like maniacs," she said. "We've never had kids in the contest catch more than 20 fish like we did this year."

The derby was held at Friendship Lake in Central City Park, and the number of young fishermen was a comfortable number for the event, Martin said.

"We usually sell out at about 75, anymore than that makes it too crowded around the lake and then the fishing isn't fun anymore," she added.

This year there also were enough raffle prizes that every contestant received one. The prizes included books for children under age 5, and Concrete Jungle skate park bottles, T-shirts and passes as well as passes to the Bailey Center pool for older children. Three youngsters won the grand prizes of fishing poles.

Among the not so surprising things to happen was Jennifer Drum winning a plaque. She's won either first- or third-place in her age group every year we have been running the fishing derby. She was also the first child to show up at registration.

As for the event ... "It was incredible and spectacular," she added.

The top fishermen were:

Ages 5 and under - Mary Biasutto, 5, was first with 16 fish, followed by Connor Kelley, 4, with 15 fish, and Joshua Andres, 4, and Gabriel Nelson, 3, who tied for third with 10 fish each.

Ages 6-7 - First was Ashley Darden, 6, with 12 fish, followed by a second-place tie between Eric Mullins, 6, and Dylan Schweninger, 7, both with nine fish. Third place also was tie between Madison Moss, 7, and Cole Nelson, 6, who both caught six fish.

Ages 8-9 - First was Derek Osenroth, 8, with 21 fish, followed by a second-place tie between Zachary Prysedale, 8, and Cole Sanlor, 9, both with 20 fish. In third was Tim Bolinger, 8, 15 fish.

Ages 10-14 - First was Andre Samborski, 14, with 27 fish, followed by Caleb Samborski, 12, with 19 fish and Jennifer Drum, 12, with 16 fish.

Martin had a special thank you for Perpetual Praise Ministries which sponsored the hot dog lunch and the Westland Fire Department which provided the first aid services.



Youngsters worked as quickly as they could to catch fish from Friendship Lake during the seventh annual fishing derby.



Some of the winners of the derby show off their plaques, or in the case of grand prize winners, their fishing poles, following the awards ceremony.



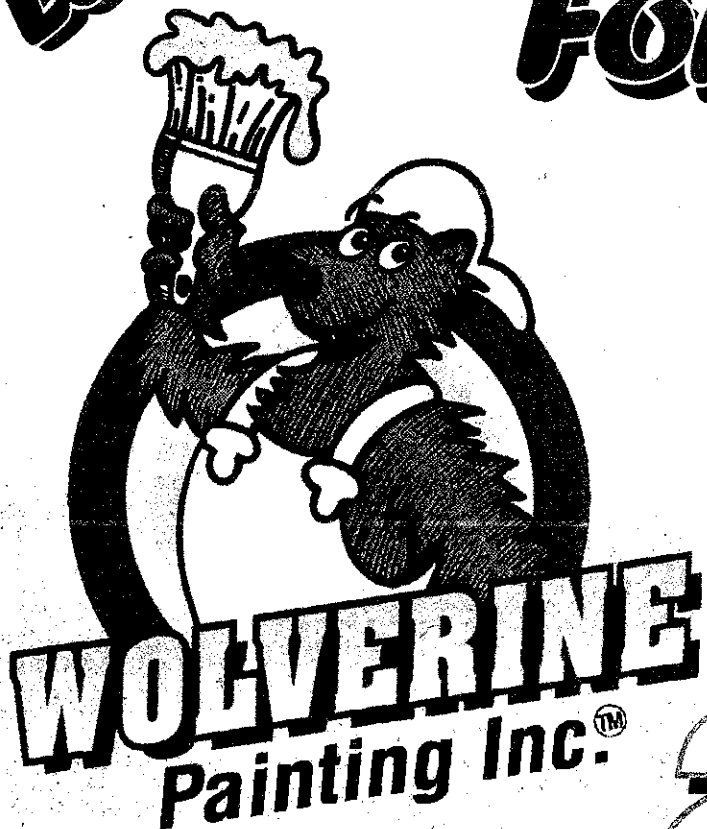
Youngsters had different techniques for catching and landing their fish.

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BUDDY'S

FROM PAGE A1

working more than ever." "Linda's got a lot of regulars who enjoy coming in to see her," added manager Jeanette Russell, who's worked for Buddy's since 1993. "We just hired her daughter, so she's following in her mother's footsteps." Russell did five weeks of training at the Buddy's store in Dearborn before coming to the Livonia store.

FRIENDS AT WORK

Working at the restaurant for so many years has fostered a sense of camaraderie, she said.

"We have cliques and they're different ages, but it's not unusual for them to leave work and all go to the bar," she said. "It's a very close staff that works together. You usually don't see that."

Another longtimer is Sharon Phillips, who started out with Buddy's 17-18 years ago. She began as an assistant manager at the store on Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills, did a few years at the Livonia store and opened one in Dearborn before returning to Livonia as its general manager three years ago.

"I had worked previously as a manager for another restaurant, but Buddy's is the best," she said. "Their flexibility is wonderful. We get a percent-

age of the gift card sales to do fun things with the employees. We've taken them bowling, had a Christmas party at Joy Manor. They allow us to do a lot of things you normally couldn't do."

But the thing she likes most as a manager is that there's "always an answer at the end of the phone."

"It's kind of nice as opposed to sink or swim," she said.

There's another longtime employee, Cookie Cicerelli, who also hails from Westland, but jury duty kept her from chiming in. But no matter, her colleagues covered all the bases.

"Another crazy thing you see when you've been in a job in the same place for so long is

you see your former co-workers come back," said Leary. "They never go away, they just leave for the 'real world.'"

How long they will stay, the group doesn't really know, except for Boyer, but they can take heart in the fact that their employer has been around a bit longer. Buddy's is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

The business started as a blind pig in Detroit in 1939, but it was in 1946 that the name and the food were connected. That's when the original Sicilian pizza was introduced at the original location at Conant and Six Mile in Detroit, which remains open.

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MARKS

FROM PAGE A1

and Stevenson high schools. Franklin High School came in lowest with a "C."

The district also met its overall AYP requirement, which states that all public schools must meet or exceed academic standards set by the state, including a graduation rate for high school students and an attendance rate for elementary and middle school students.

Alles said the original report mistakenly showed that the district's middle schools failed to meet that requirement - due to a miscalculation of the per-

centage of students with limited English proficiency who took the middle school MEAP test. The district was granted its appeal on this matter.

Alles said: "They had incorrectly counted the students."

Letter grades and AYP status depend heavily upon student performance on the reading and mathematics portions of state standardized Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests. At least 95 percent of all students must take the tests, which are given from grades 3-8 and 11.

"I am pleased with our overall student achievement and school performance," said Alles. "This is only one picture of student performance. It is

one piece of information that allows us to focus on continuous improvement."

Staff members across the district will use the MEAP scores and information as part of their School Improvement Team efforts to "incorporate strategies and help students be more successful," Alles said.

With the district undergoing changes from the Legacy Initiative - which involves closing seven buildings - school officials are working with the Department of Education and discussing next year's requirements of NCLB and the state's Education Yes! mandates. The programs require districts to show continued improvement each year.

Because elementary students across the district are in the process of relocating from K-6 schools to either K-4 lower or 5-6 upper elementary buildings, the state has so far agreed to allow Livonia Public Schools to "start over" the process of tracking its AYP progress. The student population - and their MEAP scores - will be redistributed from now closed elementary or middle schools to a new configuration of buildings.

Still, Alles said, the current information shows that "our teachers are doing a good job teaching and our principals are providing valuable instructional leadership."

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GAMES

FROM PAGE A1

"It's a good event that raises money for worthwhile causes, and it sounded like a fun thing to do," he said.

Godbout became involved through his work with local veterans when The Moving Wall - a smaller version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial - came here for the Westland Summer Festival.

Teams will pay a \$20 entry fee, but Godbout indicated that efforts will be made to contribute more money.

Each team must have three men and three women, all adults, and any organization or business may become a sponsor.

For more information, call the Bova post at (734) 728-

3231 or Tebor at (734) 377-8329.

World Medical Relief will donate the medical equipment used for the M*A*S*H-inspired races.

The event will be outside the Bova post, and spectators are welcome. Everyone who attends is encouraged to dress up as a M*A*S*H character, and a first-place prize will be awarded for best costume.

The races will happen "rain or shine," Tebor said, but a tent will be set up to help keep the crowd dry in the event of rain.

Donations will be accepted throughout the day. Businesses, organizations and individuals who want to give also may do so by sending checks or money orders to Bova Post 9885, 9440 Hix Road, Westland, MI 48185. Write M*A*S*H Olympics in the memo section.

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DEATHS

- B**
Floyd L. Bennett
Bennett, 82, died Aug. 24.
Pvt. Joseph Robert Blake
Blake died Aug. 17.
Isabel Laird Buchanan
Buchanan, 101, formerly of Birmingham, died Aug. 20.
- D**
Karl Allen Darnell
Darnell, 53, died Aug. 24.
- E**
August Forest Evens
Evens, 85, of Bellevue, Fla., died Aug. 21.
- G**
John B. Gaffield
Gaffield, 86, of Plymouth, died Aug. 23.
Carole L. Gail
Gail, 62, of Canton, died July 27.
Betty Jean Gladchun
Gladchun, 80, formerly of Birmingham and Plymouth, died Aug. 23.

Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in Passages on page C4.

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GROWING PAINS

Growing pains do not exist. When a child complains of leg pains or aching in the joints, the explanation as growing pains will not suffice.

Bone growth occurs at rest, and while a parent may state that the child is growing like a weed, such is not the case. Growth comes in small increments, while the child is sleeping and is not associated with leg, back or arm pain. Nor can a parent wave off the pain as coming from tendons or ligaments stretched because of rapid growth. Bone growth is not that fast to cause tendon or ligament strain.

A child who complains of bone aches needs a doctor's evaluation. The causes of bone aching include injury, disruption of the balance in calcium and phosphorous metabolism, forms of childhood leukemia, or inflammation in keeping with a form of juvenile arthritis. Rarely infection is the reason for the night pain.

At times, no reason is found. The child is experiencing a phase in personal development that the child associates with night time fear. The pain acts as a way of providing attention for a concern the child does not or cannot explain. In these instances, the child's gait and play are unchanged, fever is not present, and the appearance of the pain is variable. Days or weeks may go by with the child voicing no complaints.

In short, "growing pains" need attention. Watch the child for changes in activity, onset of limping, loss of appetite, or continuing complaints of aching. If any of these changes occur, the child needs a doctor's appointment.

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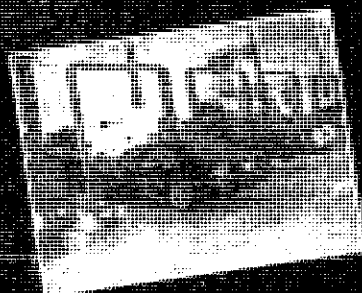
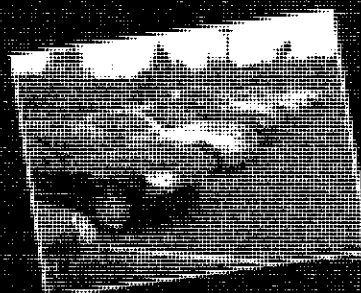
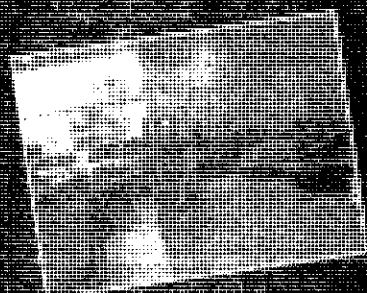
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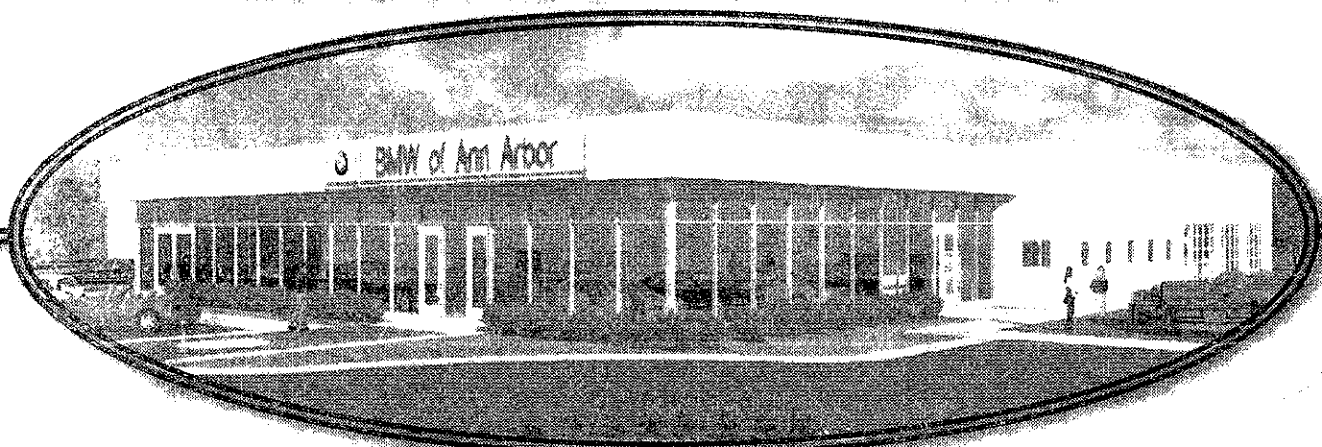
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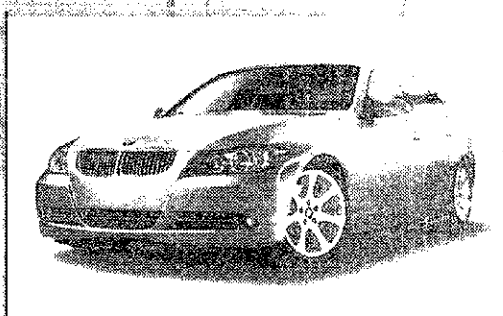
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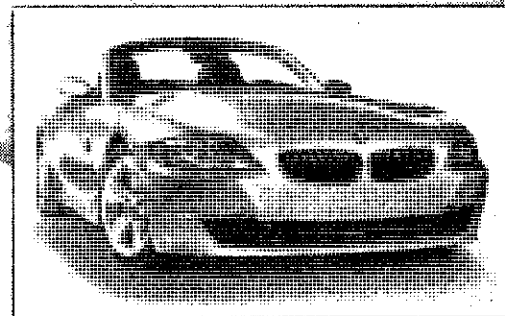


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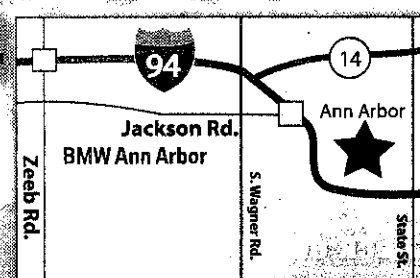
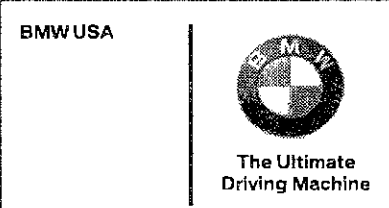
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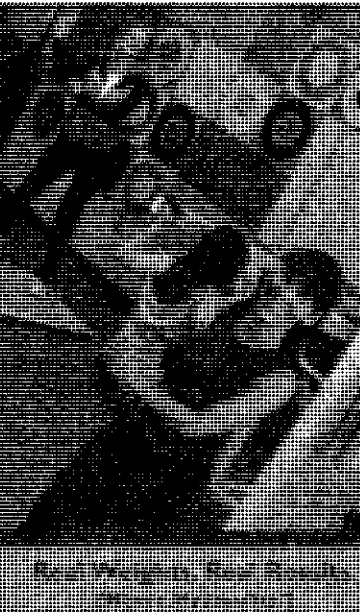
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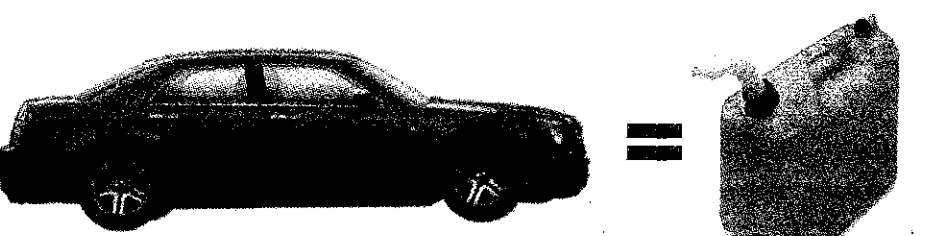
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For Tigers fans, this became a summer of love

An old friend came back this summer — much needed, if almost forgotten.

Of course, I'm talking about Tigers baseball.

More than almost any other institution, the Detroit Tigers were once the glue which held our sprawling, fractious region together. They were that again this summer — just when it was needed most.

This was a hot, angry, uncomfortable summer and not just with regard to the weather.

Here in metro Detroit, many of us, from auto workers to flight attendants to school teachers, either lost our jobs or worried we soon would. The world was no better what with the continuing conflict in Iraq and new conflict in Israel and Lebanon, three countries where many of us have loved ones.

Yet, despite those very real tragedies and regardless of what happens this fall, this will also be remembered as the summer when metro Detroiters enjoyed a renewed romance with the local baseball team.

It was once like that every summer, whether the Tigers were contenders or not. One remembers plenty of warm, long ago nights when the voices of broadcasters Ernie Harwell and Paul Carey drifted out into the street — welcome, if invisible, guests in every passing car.

It's not that the times, or the Tigers, were always good. But even when things weren't they gave us something to share no matter what our race, religion or culture, no matter whether we lived above or below Eight Mile Road, and no matter which of the Big Three automakers helped put food on our families' tables.

When times were good for the Tigers they were really, really good for us, too. One remembers the way the car horns spontaneously blared and fireworks erupted the second outfielder Larry Herndon caught the ball which ended the 1984 World Series. Or the way old Tiger Stadium shook to its foundation after home-grown pitcher Frank Tanana shut out the Toronto Blue Jays in that playoff-clinching, end-of-the-season game in 1987.

They were moments, which, rationally, shouldn't matter at all. Emotionally, however, they gave us a sense of place, a sense of belonging — and that mattered a lot.

The Tigers didn't go away in the two decades since then, but they didn't give us too many moments like that, either.

Eventually, even the diehards (like me)

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stopped caring and the next generation didn't want to know. The Pistons, Red Wings and Lions (at least two of them more consistently successful) long ago challenged the hold the Tigers once held over our hearts and minds.

That changed this summer, maybe for good, maybe just for the moment.

For a lot of us, a period of adjustment lingers even with this rekindled romance.

Ty Cobb's statue may sit outside Comerica Park, but old, now-shuttered, Tiger Stadium is still home to his ghost, and the Babe's and the light tower struck by Reggie Jackson's massive All Star Game home run in 1971.

Even current broadcasters Jim Price and Dan Dickerson, enjoyable as they can be, are no match for Ernie and Paul — and, to their credit, they'd be the first to tell you so.

Still, that's nostalgia and, no matter how hard and self-consciously major league baseball tries to market its past, nostalgia must give way to fresh memories, fresh moments.

That point was made during one recent, harrowing trip down yet another clogged, construction-barrel-cluttered Detroit freeway.

"Hey, papa," called out my 6-year-old, heretofore NASCAR fan, son. "Let's put the ballgame on."

My old friend — and his new friend — was back and life did seem a little better all the way home.

Wayne Peal is editor of the *Southfield Eccentric*. You can write him at 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009, send him e-mail at wpeal@hometownlife.com or send him a fax at (248) 644-1314.



Wayne Peal

No easy answers for drug problem in city and suburbs

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick created a stir last year when he told the Detroit Economic Club, "In Birmingham, in Bloomfield Hills and all these places, they do more meth, they do more ecstasy and they do more acid than all the schools in the city of Detroit put together."

At the time Kilpatrick was in the middle of what seemed to be a tight race for mayor against Freman Hendrix. The comment during a debate with Hendrix was meant to be provocative. It was meant to tweak the nose of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and smack back at all those stereotypes about the drug-addled youth of Detroit.

It was also meant to bolster Kilpatrick's image as the true black defender of Detroit with Hendrix cast as the suburb's candidate.

The comment drew the usual umbrage of local officials. Kilpatrick got what he wanted in the exchange and, of course, in the election. It wasn't that close a contest after all.

While the quote was as Patterson said "irresponsible" and full of political hyperbole, it was also a reminder that the drug problem does exist in the suburbs.

That was driven home recently in Livonia with a number of what police suspect are heroin-related deaths. Wayne County in general has been plagued by the ready availability of a deadly combination of heroin and the painkiller Fentanyl.

As a newspaper, it is our job to report the news, no matter how unpleasant.

Our *Livonia Observer* ran a story by reporter Dan West on the death of Brian Montes, a 19-year-old student at Michigan State University, who died of a suspected heroin overdose in June.

His family courageously shared their story, their anguish about a son they knew had become withdrawn but did not suspect he was using heroin.

"It was such a shock to us because we had no idea he was using heroin until the police told us," said his mother, Diane Montes, a youth minister at St. Genevieve Catholic Church.

Police say heroin is relatively cheap now. It can be cut many times and still pack a punch. It is being used by some instead of the more expensive cocaine.

If Kilpatrick's comments have a bit of truth in them, beyond the nasty politics, it is that drug addicts don't look a certain way. They

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don't all come from a certain background. They don't all hang on the street or travel in gangs. Nor do they all pass a needle in a restroom or a fraternity house.

They come from great homes with loving parents and from broken homes with no parents. They come from poverty where they commit any crime to feed their habit and they come from affluence and secretly spend their money to escape their boredom through drugs. They are brilliant and dull, black and white, and most of them know where it can end and still they keep doing it.

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Sadly, many addicts don't think they have a problem. While they are taking, they aren't likely to listen either to preaching or cold science. They tend to be self-absorbed and selfish.

That's the tough part. We hope we are doing the right thing by exposing this problem, but it's unlikely we can make a difference. There are too many reasons why and none of them fit into any of our easy assumptions.

We moralize, we legalize, but we rarely get to the nub of things.

In Dan West's story he quotes a haunting poem written by Brian Montes that speaks to the insight Montes had into his own situation: "I am above sleep/So long as there are substances/To abuse and friends/Who look the other way."

The best we can do is try not to look the other way. But neither can we blame ourselves when someone else makes so dangerous a choice.

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Hugh Gallagher

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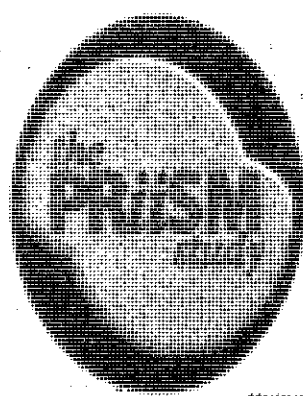
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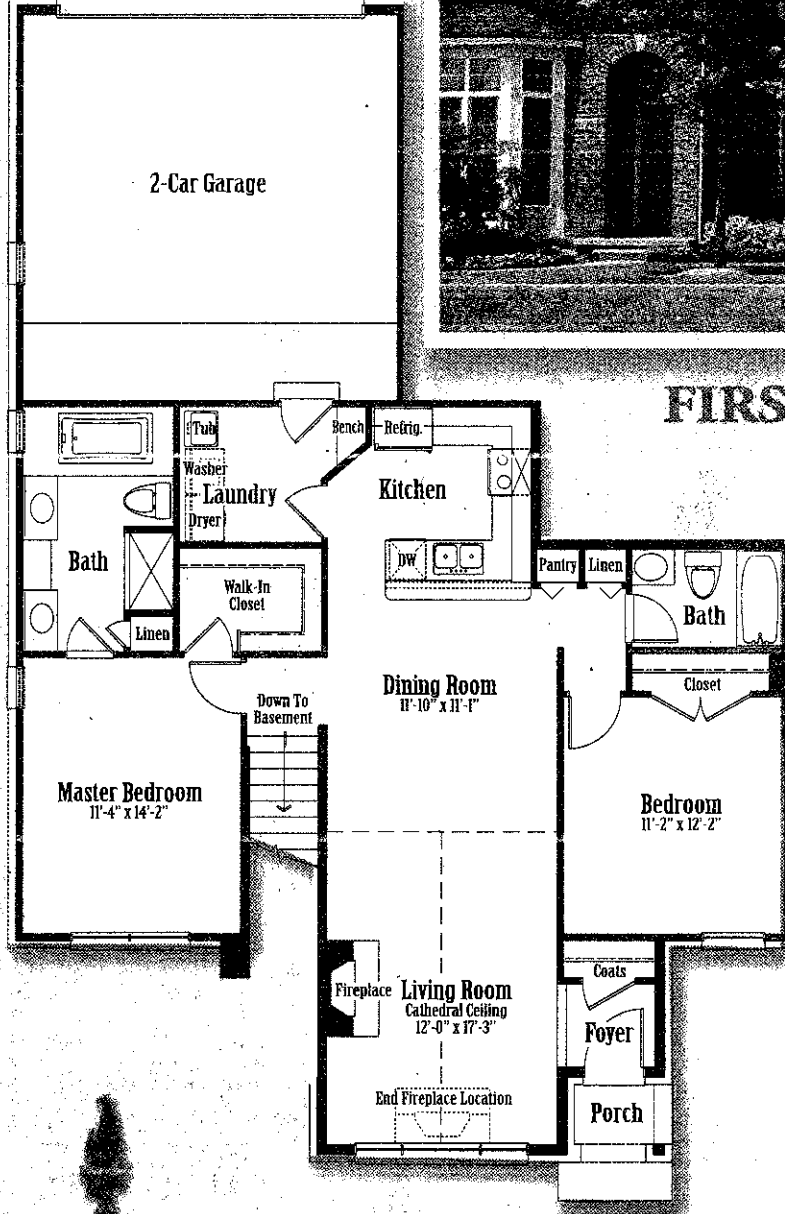
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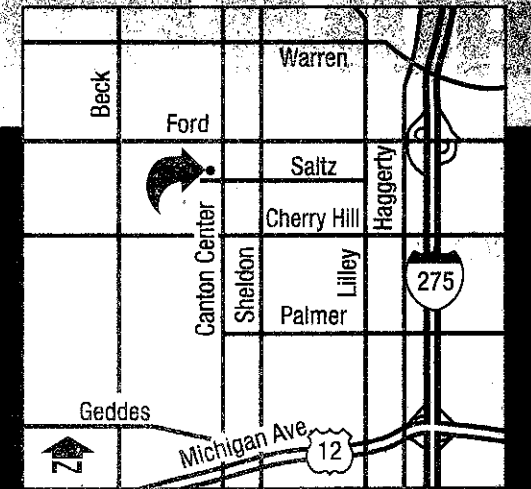
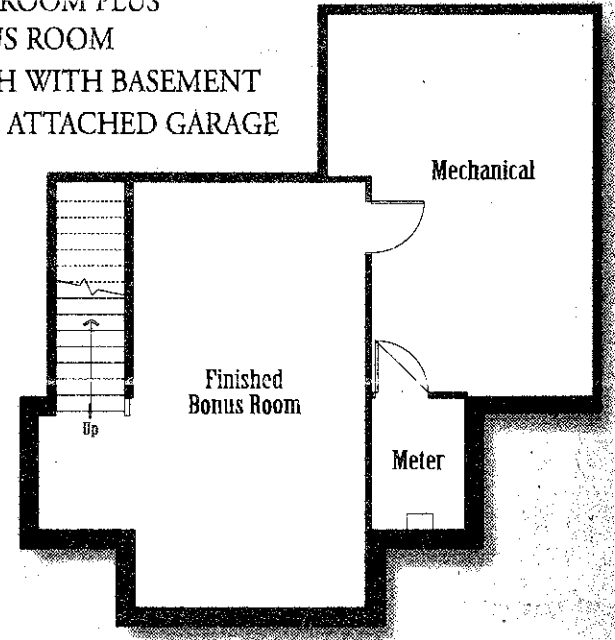
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