



Chef's favorite tailgating recipes - D1



Art in the Park

9/11 anniversary a reminder to be prepared
OUR VIEWS - A10

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Jeremy Peer

Peer has Sept. 25 trial date

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland teen Jeremy Peer's trial has been scheduled for Sept. 25 in Florida on charges he drove off a Panama City Beach road, killed a woman, injured her husband and fled the scene. Peer's trial will come after the star athlete graduated last spring from Livonia Franklin High School and started attending Adrian College, where he is playing football as a defensive back. Barring any sudden developments, Peer, 18, will stand trial on charges of leaving the scene of an April 17 accident that killed Colleen Martin, 33, and injured her husband, Montey, as they walked alongside the road. Peer's trial date was confirmed Tuesday by Joe Grammer, deputy chief assistant state attorney for Florida. Earlier, Panama City Beach police officials had indicated they were awaiting toxicology results for Peer - a process they said could take months. On Tuesday, however, Grammer said authorities aren't expecting such a report because Peer wasn't arrested for several hours after the accident, meaning the results wouldn't show whether he had been drinking. Peer's mother has emphatically denied that her son was drinking when the accident

PLEASE SEE PEER, A5

Underage sex case ends with guilty plea

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Westland man will spend 20-40 years in prison for having sex with underage boys and videotaping it. Daniel Eric Greene, 39, will be formally sentenced Sept. 22, but authorities Monday confirmed the punishment he will receive. "At first blush, the thought that rushes into my head is that justice has been served," Westland Police Chief Daniel Pfannes said. "This man will no longer be able to victimize our children, and our streets are safer." Greene's sentencing will come after he pleaded no contest last week to charges of first- and second-degree criminal sexual conduct and child sexually abusive activity.

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

The latest developments brought a swift resolution to charges that surfaced in May against Greene, who was accused of having sex with three boys and making videos of it. Greene's decision to enter into a plea agreement with prosecutors came as no surprise to Westland police Sgt. Debra Mathews, who investigated the allegations. "There's absolutely no defense when you're starring in a video with boys and you're sexually molesting

them," she said. Greene pleaded no contest to five of 33 sex-related charges against him, according to a clerk for Wayne County Circuit Judge Craig Strong, who presided over the case. In addition to his 20- to 40-year sentence, Greene will receive a two-year prison term on a felony firearms charge. Police found a gun that he had in his possession illegally, but Mathews said it wasn't used against the boys. The charges against Greene stemmed from allegations he had sex with two boys who, along with their mother, lived at his house in the Palmer-Hambleton area east of Wayne Road.

PLEASE SEE GUILTY, A5

On the road again

HOG chapter ready for 12th installment of popular Toy Run

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

A throaty rumble will fill the air around the Westland civic center complex Sunday, Sept. 24, as motorcyclists take to the road for the Motor City Chapter of the Harley Owners Group's annual Toy Run. Some 300 riders are expected to turn out for the 12th annual installment of the benefit that this year will collect toys and raise money for the Westland Community Foundation. "It's always an exciting event, everyone looks forward to it," said Larry Telling, director of the Motor City Chapter. "It ensures that local kids get a good Christmas." The ride will start in the parking lot next to the Westland City Hall on Ford Road south of Wayne Road. Registration will be 10 a.m. to noon, with the ride slated to begin at 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$10 per bike plus a new unwrapped toy and \$15 without a toy. "Last year we got close to 200 toys and raised another \$2,000 in cash," Telling said. "We're looking for this year to be even better." The ride will be escorted by the



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Thirteen-month-old Benjamin Sparks might not understand what the presents are all about, but his grandfather, Joe Willim of Livonia does. It's time for the 12th annual Toy Ride, sponsored by the Motor City chapter of the Harley Owners Group.

Westland Police and will travel along Ford, Newburgh and Ann Arbor Trail to Hines Drive and Inkster before ending at Joy Manor in the north end of Westland. There participants will be served pizza, spaghetti and soft drinks and have a chance at having the highest bid in a silent auction. Member Joe Willim of Livonia credits former chapter director Dave Higgins with putting the ride together 12 years ago, and since his departure, members have kept it going. "It's one of the easiest rides to promote, everyone wants to do it because it's for the kids," Willim said. "We have a group

of ladies coming from Flint, we get a lot of riders out of Oakland County. We have members all the way around here." Telling can't say enough about the support the ride receives from the city, from allowing the organization to use the parking lot as the staging area to providing police escorts who work with the ride's road captains. "The support is absolutely wonderful," Telling said. "Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, (Police) Chief Dan Pfannes, Officer Pat Corby ... they support us 100 percent. Everyone has a good time, and we couldn't do that without their help." Willim agrees.

"They've done so much for us," he said. "I think the police officers get a kick out of doing it. They're like us, they're there to help the kids." And while the ride is sponsored by the Motor City HOG Chapter, it doesn't mean only Harley-Davidson motorcycles are allowed. "All bikes are welcome, and we encourage all bikes to attend," Telling said. "All they have to do is show up the day of the event." For more information about the Motor City HOG Chapter, visit its Web site at www.motorcityhog.com.

Westland man faces hearing in child pornography case

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Westland man has been charged with downloading child pornographic images of prepubescent girls from his laptop computer. John Kevin Spry, 50, was arraigned Saturday after police earlier raided his home on Glen, near Wayne Road, and found numerous

child porn images that he had burned onto CDs, police Sgt. Debra Mathews said. Spry, a single man employed as an electrician, was charged with one count of child sexually abusive activity, three counts of having child sexually abusive material and one count of marijuana possession. He was arraigned by Westland 18th District Magistrate Donald

Vandersloot and jailed on a \$100,000/10 percent bond, meaning he would have to post \$10,000 for his release. Vandersloot entered a not-guilty plea for Spry and ordered him back in court Sept. 21 for a preliminary hearing that will determine whether he should stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court. If convicted, the defendant could

face penalties ranging up to 20 years in prison, Mathews said. Police received an undisclosed tip that Spry had child porn on his laptop computer, but he wasn't at home when officers went to his house earlier this month, Mathews said. Officers rapped the door of Spry's home, went inside and seized alleged evidence against him, Mathews said. The suspect called

police when he returned and found that his home had been broken into, she said. "Officers went out and put him under arrest," she said. Spry's case is only the latest of several this year in which Westland police have made arrests involving child pornography or abuse. dclem@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

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Volume 42
Number 32

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Coming Sunday in Health

Great progress has been made in treating AIDS and there is promise of an eventual cure.

Families walk to help find cure for life-threatening PKD

BY ARLENE FUNKE
CORRESPONDENT

Many people know Molly Williams as the general manager of George Matick Chevrolet and leader in the Redford Township Chamber of Commerce.

Others have met her through her volunteer work with children's and school issues. She's friendly and enthusiastic.

But few know that in the body of this 33-year-old woman lurks a life-threatening disorder called polycystic kidney disease (PKD). Williams' mother and brother also have the disease, which causes kidney failure and other health problems.

Williams is the Detroit chapter coordinator for the PKD Foundation, which is sponsoring a fund-raising walk Saturday, Sept. 16, at Rotary Park in Livonia.

"I like to be involved and proactive," said Williams, a 1991 graduate of Groves High School in Birmingham. "I'm doing this for my mom."

Williams lives in Northville with her husband, Bob, and their daughters, Elizabeth, 3, and Alexandra, 1.

"People are going to be surprised," Williams said. "I don't talk about (the disease)."

Rotary Park is located on Six Mile Road between Merriman and Farmington roads.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the 2.5-mile walk begins at 10. The fee is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under.

PKD is a characterized by fluid-filled cysts which grow in the kidneys, eventually overpowering healthy tissue and causing organ failure. PKD can also cause cysts in the liver and other complications. Often, PKD affects several members in a family.

According to the PKD Foundation, 600,000 Americans suffer from PKD.

There is no cure. Many people have no symptoms until the kidneys fail, at which time patients must undergo dialysis or go on a waiting list for a transplanted



Molly Williams, shown at George Matick Chevrolet in Redford where she works, is living with polycystic kidney disease. A fund-raising walk to help find a cure will be Saturday, Sept. 16, at Rotary Park in Livonia.

organ. "There is a 50-50 chance my kids could be affected," said Williams, who was pregnant with her first child when diagnosed. "I believe they are going to find a cure. If I didn't, I wouldn't have had two children."

Molly's mother, Nancy Meyer, underwent a successful kidney transplant in her 50s. Later, her liver became affected. While exploring a possible liver transplant, Molly and her brother, Bill Meyer, were tested as donor candidates. That's when the siblings were diagnosed with PKD. Another sister has not yet been tested to see if she, too, has the disease.

Currently, Nancy Meyer is doing well with her transplanted kidney and living in Northville. She did not have the liver transplant. Bill, who is in his 20s, lives in New York. Molly manages high blood pressure (a complication of PKD) with medication, and watches her diet.

"I try to live a healthy lifestyle," she said. "I feel very blessed."

Since being diagnosed, Williams has continued in her career and served as president of the Redford Township Chamber of Commerce. She is the current chamber treasurer.

She has taken part in South Redford School District fund-raising projects and served as a

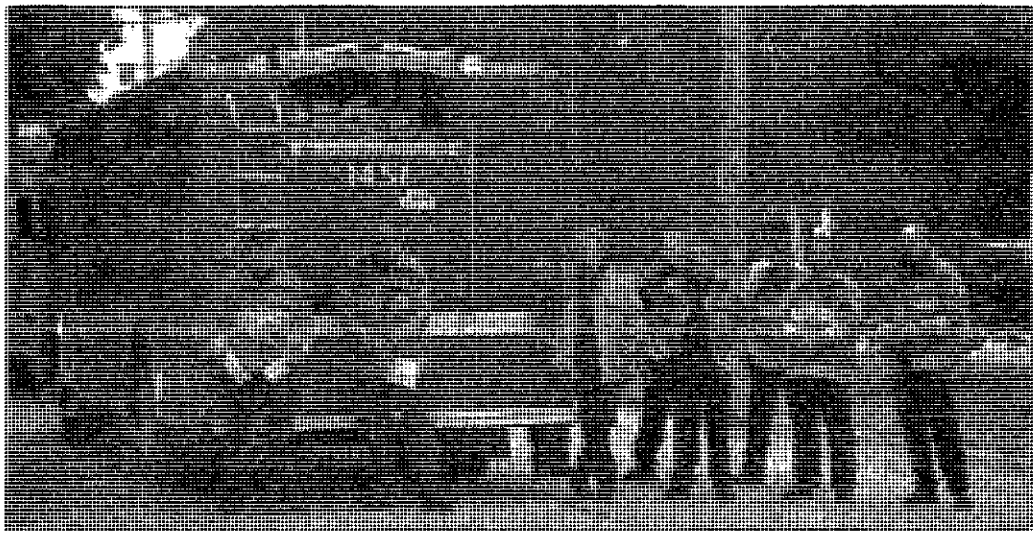
board member for Redford's Commission on Children's Issues. As chapter coordinator of the PKD Foundation, she keeps meetings "upbeat and educational."

Coordinating the Sept. 16 Walk are Marie Newton of Livonia, and her daughter-in-law, Roxane Newton of Royal Oak. Organizers hope to raise \$30,000. For information, contact Roxane Newton at rnewton92@yahoo.com or call (248) 632-1328.

"We are trying to raise money to find a cure for this disease," Marie Newton said. "There are so many complications. Because it is a hereditary disease it keeps being passed down."

Marie Newton's husband, Richard, their son, Michael, and daughter, Christine, all have PKD. Richard is 68, Michael and Christine are in their 30s. Two other grown children do not have the disease. Roxane is married to Michael.

Richard Newton, a certified public accountant and financial planner, was diagnosed with PKD when he was an adolescent. He had a kidney transplant at age 45. Over the years, he has suffered frequent infections, and has had lengthy hospitalizations for various problems. Marie Newton is grateful for the care her husband has received at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor.



Members of the Westland Fire Department in their turnout gear participated in the ceremony that honored those who died on 9/11 as well as this city's first responders.

500 turn out for 9/11 ceremony

Nearly 500 people remembered the 9/11 terrorist attacks during a solemn ceremony Sunday outside Westland City Hall.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church and School sponsored the event, which featured patriotic songs performed by choirs from St. Matthew and Lutheran High School Westland.

The event also honored police officers and firefighters. Church pastors and elected officials also addressed the crowd during the ceremony that came one day before the 9/11 anniversary.

St. Matthew third-grade teacher Jane Gusé, an organizer, said she was pleased that so many people attended the ceremony considering that "it was quite chilly outside."

This year marked the second year that St. Matthew Church and School sponsored a 9/11 memorial event.



Members of the Lutheran High School Westland Chamber Choir perform 'Show Me Thy Ways' during the 9/11 remembrance ceremony.

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3rd Course: (Choose 1 of the following)
Eggs Benedict - Canadian Bacon • 6 oz. Tenderloin Tips with Whipped Potatoes and Seasoned Vegetables
Linguini Pomodoro • Pork Medallions with an Apple Brandy Blue Cheese Sauce • Char-grilled Salmon Laced with Asparagus, Lump Crab Meat and Béarnaise sauce

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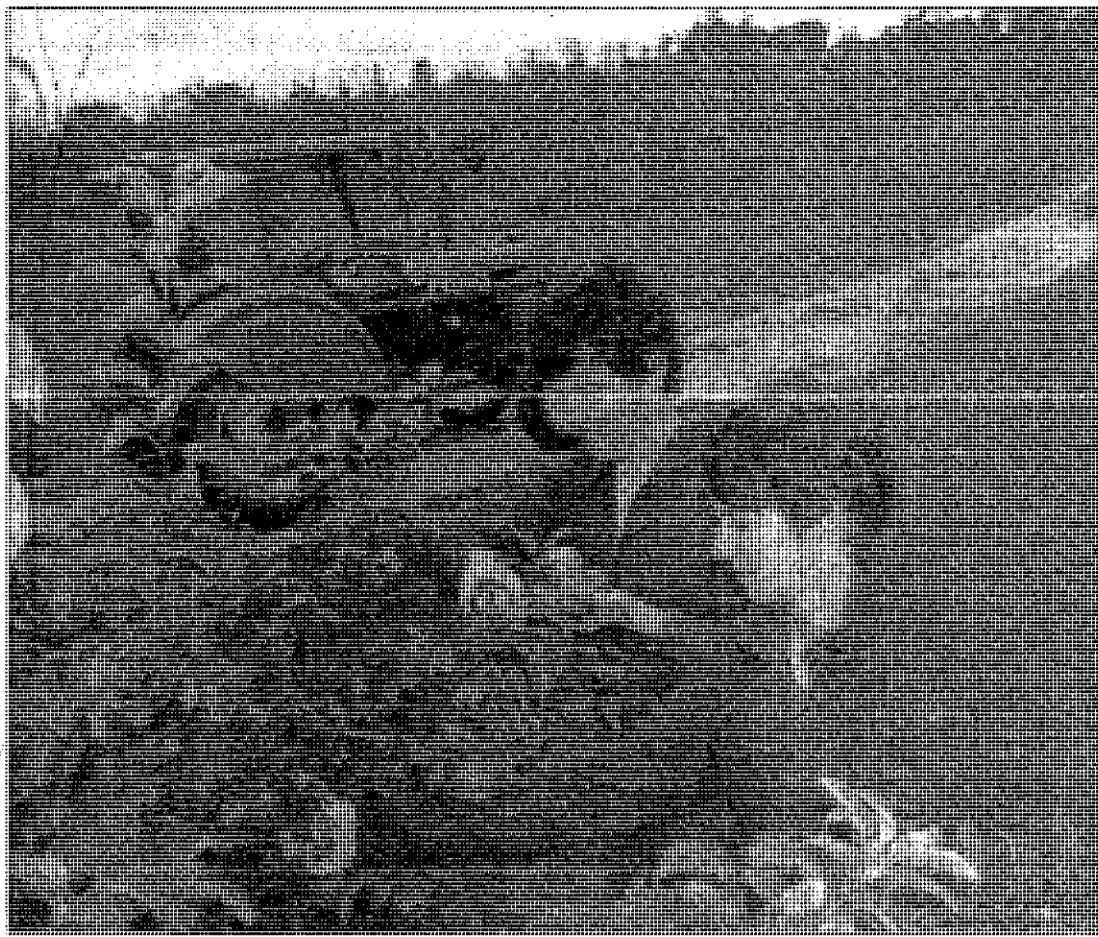
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Silver lining

Plymouth Orchards marks its 25th anniversary with pride



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alex Fox and Christopher Forster pick a few apples at Plymouth Orchards, which isn't a U-pick facility for apples.



Manager Mary Krause powders doughnuts at Plymouth Orchards.

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Fall and cider mills just seem to go together, and for 25 years now Plymouth Orchards & Cider Mill has been the place to visit for local people.

"I think it's the owners and the pride they take in this place," manager Mary Krause said of owners David and Mary Emmett, who live on the site between Napier and Godfredson on Warren, just over the county line in Washtenaw County. Great customers are key as well, and successive generations have come to the cider mill over the years.

"It feels like home to a lot of people," said Canton resident Krause. "I think they feel good when they come out here."

One recent customer was Charles Allen of Westland, who was buying cider and doughnuts.

"This is my first time," he said. "I stumbled on it looking for a shortcut to work."

The M-14 road construction brought Allen in, and he likes what he found.

"It's great," said Allen who

with his wife has two children, ages 2½ and 4½. "It's close ... bring the kids back. I think they would enjoy it any day. Friendly people."

MILESTONE MARKED

Plymouth Orchards is marking its 25th anniversary this fall, and this Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 16-17, there'll be a number of activities, including music with Johnny Z. 1-4 p.m. both days. Krause points to the antique wagon and suggests visitors bring a camera for fall photos. It's too early for pumpkins, but Sunday there will be wagon rides all day at \$3 per person and free for children age 3 and under.

David Emmett and his wife are glad they own the cider mill and don't plan to sell, even as the surrounding area gets built up.

"It was a dairy farm before that," David Emmett said of their buying the property. "We decided we needed a cider mill in order to sell the products locally. We learned farming the hard way. We made lots of mistakes."

These days, businessman

Emmett does a lot of charitable work and owns R.J. Helicopters. His wife had worked in the past as a dental hygienist and neither had a strong agriculture background.

"We've pretty much decided we like the lifestyle," he said. "We're not anxious to move. It's been a great way to raise kids."

None of the couple's three children are in the business. Their son is a builder, one daughter runs a nonprofit in Oregon and the other daughter is a professional mountain biker. The kids range in age from 28 to 34 and there's one grandchild on the way.

The 25th anniversary kind of snuck up on the Plymouth Orchards folks this year.

"We started adding it up and realized we had a 25th anniversary coming," David Emmett said. "The community's been very good, supportive." They find Plymouth Orchards offers an educational experience with its farm animals and picnic tables.

"It's become an afternoon experience as opposed to a quick in and out," he said, adding there are fewer cider mills in

southeastern Michigan than in the past.

Each year, some 22,000 schoolkids visit Plymouth Orchards. Krause, who's going on her sixth season at Plymouth Orchards, started out teaching school groups.

"My husband had retired and Mary (Emmett) was looking for someone to prune trees," said Krause, who spent 15 years as a vehicle scheduling analyst at Ford Motor. She loves her job, and gets to work with her husband. The couple has four kids ages 18, 15, 13 and 12.

"It's been kind of a family affair," she said, explaining the Krause kids have worked at Plymouth Orchards and her mom made the curtains. She didn't have a strong farming background either, although she spent summers growing up at a grandparents' farm around Kansas City, Mo.

"I want to be outside and I want to do physical stuff all the

time," Krause said.

Plymouth Orchards is open September through November to customers, but staff works much of the year. After the season, three people prune trees to the end of January, and return in mid-March to make fields ready.

"A lot of mowing goes on, the painting goes on," Krause said. Plymouth Orchards gets some high school student workers. "We have a lot of moms," she said. "It helps pay for their Christmas presents."

The main store on Warren is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week in September and October. November hours there are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

The main store closes for the season only Nov. 5, but the farm market on Ann Arbor Road stays open through the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Farm market hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily September through November.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

- **Who:** Plymouth Orchards
- **Where:** Warren, between Napier and Godfredson
- **What:** Anniversary event, featuring wagon rides and music
- **When:** Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 16-17
- **Features:** Open September through November; main store on Warren is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week in September-October; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in November; Farm market on Ann Arbor Road open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Thanksgiving
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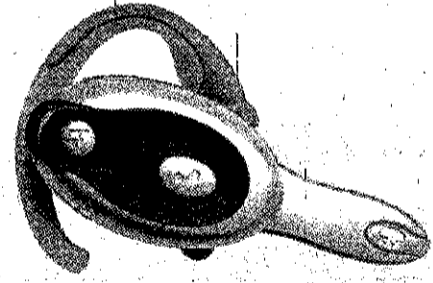
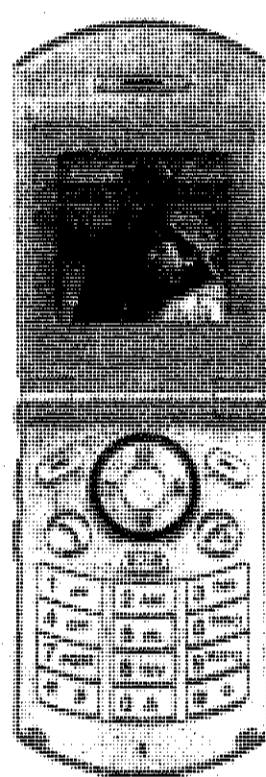
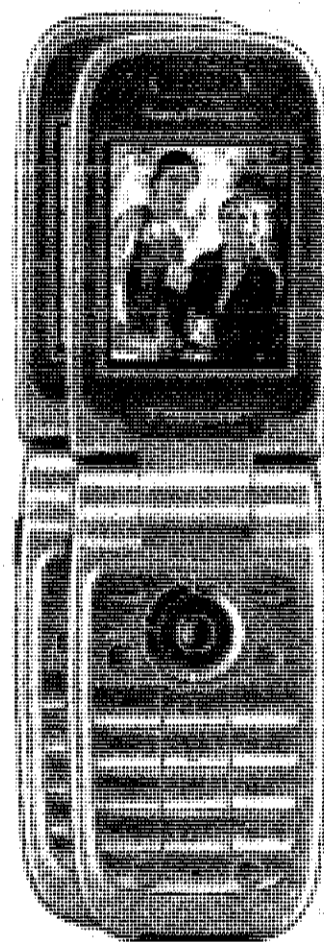
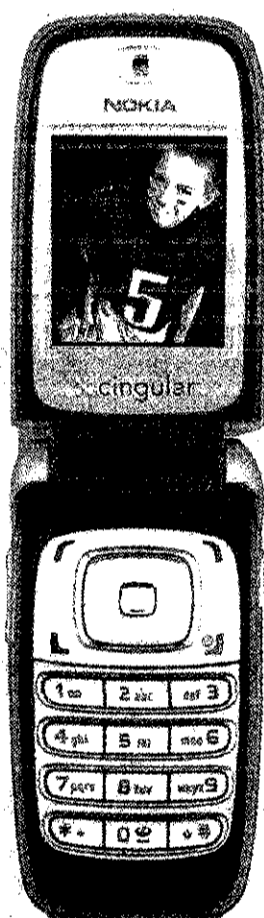
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PEER

FROM PAGE A1

occurred during a spring break trip. She has since said the family will have no further comment at the advice of Peer's defense attorney.

Peer's arrest came after a motel employee saw the damaged vehicle in a parking lot and notified police, who had been looking for a hit-and-run suspect, police said.

If convicted, Peer could face penalties ranging up to 15 years in prison.

Peer was a Livonia Franklin star athlete involved in football, basketball and track. He has been described by school

football coach Chris Kelbert as a model student who had earned an academic scholarship to Adrian College.

Friends and relatives of the Martins have said through e-mails to the *Observer* that those who sympathize with Peer have lost sight of the fact that Colleen Martin was killed and her husband injured.

However, for now they have declined interviews.

The Martins had moved to Florida from their native Pennsylvania to start a business because they had visited the Panama City Beach area and wanted to make it their home.

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

Thousands expected for Passport to Safety

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

Laurel Park Place Mall will turn into a festival of safety instruction and fun activities for children Saturday as part of the third annual Passport to Safety event.

A reported 10,000 children and adults poured into the mall at Six Mile and Newburgh last year for the program coordinated by the mall, Livonia fire and police departments, and numerous other supporting agencies and businesses. Organizers expect the similar-size crowd during this Saturday's program that's scheduled to run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"Parents are always looking for ways to keep their children safe and this will help them learn how to do that with topics that are appropriate," said Livonia police Sgt. Jeff Teeter. "We'll have displays and fun activities set up all throughout the mall."

There are eight stations of instruction and other activities that are geared for elementary school children, however, there are some elements that should prove helpful for adults and teenagers, Teeter said. Livonia and Michigan State police experts will present computer crimes demonstrations for people of all ages.

The experts, Teeter said, will talk about the controversial My

Space Web site and how to be on the look out for Internet predators and scams.

"These experts will be available to answer questions as computer crimes continue to be a big concern for all of us," Teeter said.

Firefighters will show kids how to escape a burning house. Youngsters will also have an opportunity to have their picture taken while wearing fire gear by a professional photographer.

Other safety instruction stations will focus on dealing with strangers, responses to choking and poisoning, 911 telephone training and safety techniques for riding bicycles and enjoying water activities.

Entertainment highlights will include an appearance by a race car driven by NASCAR's Kasey Kahne, a display sponsored by the Cheryl Bowker Allstate Agency in Livonia. Children can jump in a bounce house, meet Sponge Bob Square Pants and receive free goodies.

Other organizations supporting the event include the Wayne County Sheriff's marine officers, personnel from St. Mary Mercy Hospital and St. John Community Health, Bright House Networks, Livonia Parks and Recreation, Alpha Stamping, Rock Financial and Care Choices.

dwest@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2109

GUILTY

FROM PAGE A1

Greene met the boys, ages 12 and 14, through a Salvation Army adopt-a-family Christmas program, and he offered their mother a place to rent, police Lt. James Ridener has said.

"He bought them gifts for Christmas," Ridener said in May.

The boys had second-story bedrooms near Greene's room while their mother had a room downstairs. The accusations against Greene involved oral sex, fondling and the making of sexually explicit videos, authorities said.

Greene was charged after the boys came forward with allegations against him.

Police seized hundreds of child pornographic materials from a hidden room that Ridener said was disguised by

a secret closet door.

Greene also faced charges stemming from accusations he had sex with a boy at Greene's former residence on Avondale near Merriman from January 2002 to December 2005, starting when the boy was 13.

Greene, who used to run American Power Wash on South Wayne Road, had been active in some local business and civic groups.

Police now believe that Greene took the initiative to place himself in close contact with young boys, such as working in concessions at the baseball diamonds in Central City Park.

Even before the latest charges surfaced, authorities said Greene had been placed on the state's sex offender list for an earlier incident in which he was accused of fondling a boy in Wayne.

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

Stars cheer team holds clinic and tryouts

Westland Stars Cheerleading and Dance Team is looking for girls interested in learning to do jazz, hip-hop, prop, kick, lyrical dance and pompon, as well as cheer, chant and stunt.

The Stars offer two teams - varsity and junior varsity - are for boys and girls who are in the fifth-eighth grades and ages 10-14. The meet September through June at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. The cost is \$5 per class or \$20 per month,

plus a \$20 uniform deposit.

The teams are hosting clinics 6-8:30 p.m., this evening (Sept. 14) and Thursday, Sept. 21, in advance of tryouts 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 28.

The Stars varsity team does in five competitions per season, and members also participate in the recital at the end of the year. There are extra expenses for costumes and competition fees. Spots fill up quickly, so don't hesitate to sign up. The cost is \$215

per season.

The junior varsity squad competes in two events per year and also does a recital at the end of the year. There may be extra expenses depending on what competitions the team chooses. The cost is \$190 per season.

The Stars practice in the multi-purpose room of the Bailey Center. Kids interested in joining should come dressed to work out - no jeans, no belly shirts - and bring water or a

water bottle.


The coaches include Toni Lay who has 23 years of coaching experience and is a former dancer, Shannon Barrett who has five years of coaching experience and also is former dancer and Jill Wehrheim, a current high school cheerleader and former Star member.

Registration can be completed at the Bailey Recreation Center. Parent information sheets also are available.

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HEALTH ALERT:

Heart Disease and Erectile Dysfunction

The latest research shows that coronary artery risk factors are significantly associated with erectile dysfunction (ED). That means if you have heart disease, chances are you may be suffering from ED.

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Jimmy John's holds grand opening party

Jimmy John's, a gourmet sandwich shop, has announced a grand opening party at its Westland location.

The party will be 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16, near the northeast corner of Ford Road and Central City Parkway.

The company issued a statement saying the event will include discounts on some subs and such prizes as an iPod, party platters and Jimmy John's apparel.

Also, the Michigan Masons will sponsor a program allowing children to receive an identification kit and have their profiles set up for the Michigan Child Identification Program.

Jimmy John's in Westland is a 46-seat, 16-employee restaurant that opened in April but is just having its official celebration.

The store is open 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily and offers delivery service to the immediate area.

The company was started in 1983 by 19-year-old Jimmy John Liautaud in a converted garage in Charleston, Ill. In 23 years, it has grown to more than 430 locations in more than 34 states.

For more information, go online to www.jimmyjohns.com or contact the store at (734) 405-2500.

Orin Jewelers hosts debut of Patricia Daunis collection

Orin Jewelers will host the Michigan debut of nationally acclaimed jewelry designer Patricia Daunis' latest collection, The Atuk Collection.

Daunis will visit Orin Jewelers' Garden City showroom at 29317 Ford Road from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15, and Orin Jewelers' Northville showroom at 101 E. Main St. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16; and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17.

The Atuk Collection is designed in 18-karat gold, 14-karat gold and sterling silver. These unique designs were born at an artists' retreat that Daunis attended in October 2005.

"I participated in a retreat at Haystack, an internationally recognized design school on the coast of Maine, and our mission was to develop innovative concepts," Daunis said. "I met an artist in the fiber department who taught me about the techniques she uses and I combined those techniques with my metal work to create these new designs."

Daunis has received the DeBeers Diamonds Today Award and numerous awards from the World Gold Council, *Accent Magazine* and the Jewelers of America.

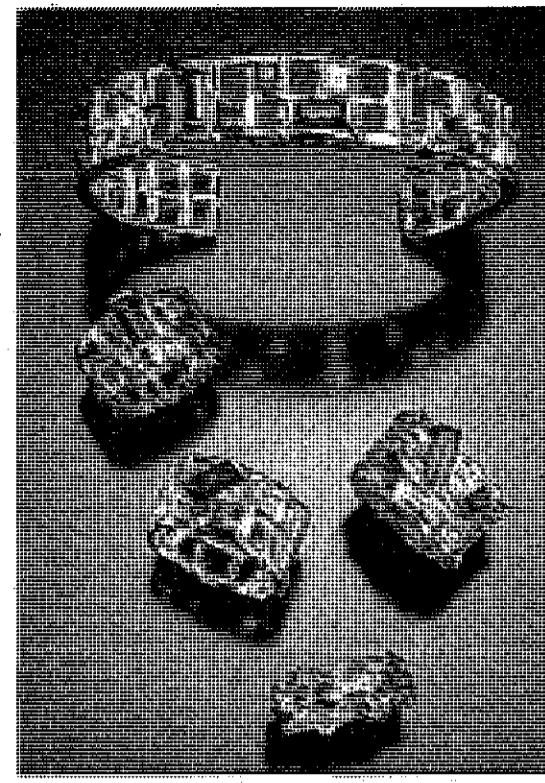
She also has authored several articles on factors that determine what style of jewelry women should wear, including face shape, clothing choices and lifestyle.

During her visits to Orin Jewelers showrooms, Daunis will conduct individual consultations, making recommendations on earrings, necklace lengths and other jewelry choices.

"It's like playing dress-up," Daunis said. "We get all the jewelry out and play ... just like we did when we were little girls and got into our mother's jewelry."

The free consultations take about 30 minutes, and Daunis recommends booking an appointment through Orin Jewelers.

In addition to the Atuk Collection, Daunis will showcase her Family Collection. Clients can work with Daunis individually to create a ring,



Patricia Daunis' Family Collection features individually created ring, pendant or bracelet designs using birthstones "because every family is one-of-a-kind."

pendant or bracelet design using birthstones.

"These are so wonderful. Each piece is a unique design, because every family is one-of-a-kind," Daunis said.

Founded in 1933, Orin Jewelers is recognized locally for its diverse selection of jewelry fashions and quality diamonds, as well as its knowledgeable staff and superior customer service.

For more information, call Orin Jewelers at (734) 422-7030 or visit www.orinjewelers.com.

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Teens honored for art, poetry

Heads up, Maya Angelou. There's a group of teens in Westland who have earned honors for their mastery of the art of poetry.

The teens are winners of the seventh annual Teen Poetry Contest, sponsored by the Friends of the Public Library of Westland. In the Middle School Division, Crystal Rosales was first, followed by Megan Lohn, second, and Jael Gardiner, third. Receiving an honorable mention was Darren Anderegg.

In the High School Division,

Grace Anderson was first, Rebekah Parrish second and Marissa Flores third. Jill Goryca received an honorable mention.

Twenty-two teens entered the contest as part of the teen summer reading program at the library.

The program also included a Teen Art Contest which had a theme of "Under the Sea." Winners received a movie pass, compliments of Showcase Cinemas - Westland.

The winners were Julie Kobylarz, creativity; Dayna

Anderegg, interpretation of theme; Renee Goryca and Victoria Parker, originality; Megan Lohn and Julie Kobylarz, time and effort involved, and Katie Markham, inspires thought.

The art contest attracted 32 entries. Helping make the Teen Summer Reading Program a success were the sponsors - the Friends of the Public Library of Westland, Showcase Cinemas - Westland, Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe, Sport-Way of Westland, Comic Archives and Laserquest.

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'Our society will come out on top'

Five years after her daughter was killed in 9/11 attacks, Pat Whalen is hopeful about future

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

Somewhere deep in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Spain, a bottle holds a note. The note is to whomever finds it and wants to read about Patricia Whalen's daughter, Meredith.

Though Whalen doesn't say exactly what's in the letter, it's about her oldest child, who on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, was at work early on the 93rd floor of the north tower at the World Trade Center. She never saw it coming when a plane crashed into the building, killing her and 35 of her colleagues at Fred Alger Management Inc., who were also at work at 8:46 a.m.

But Meredith's story isn't really all about the way she died. It's more about the way she lived and what she left behind.

Meredith Whalen, a 1996 Plymouth Salem graduate, was working as a research analyst. She had just turned 23, and was a recent graduate from the University of Michigan's business

school. Her employer had called her a "rising star," and she was already making a name for herself in the international business world.

She was finally able to afford to enjoy one of her passions (which she likely inherited from her mother) - travel. Whalen and her daughter were scheduled to take a cruise from Barcelona just days after Sept. 11, 2001. Meredith was proud to be able to pay for her and her mother to go, Whalen said.

But that didn't happen. "I finally took that trip with my sister," Whalen said.

And on the trip in 2004, she asked the bartender on the cruise ship for an empty bottle. She wrote a letter about her daughter, put it inside the bottle, and threw it from the rear of the ship into the water.

"I know you're not supposed to do that but I was thinking it would be something if someone found it and learned about my Meredith," Whalen said.

Whalen prefers to look at most things in the same hopeful manner, she

said. She knows that the aftermath of Sept. 11 has been deeply felt by people around the world, and that United States citizens are divided in opinions about war and terror and the current presidential administration.

"But I can't dwell on that," she said. "In the long haul our society will come out on top. I like to think that the evils in this world will disappear ... I do pity (Meredith's) killers, as crazy as that sounds. I don't know if it's forgiveness, but I do think they were misguided when they took her life."

Monday, on the five-year anniversary of her daughter's death, Whalen was in Lansing.

"We found out last fall that the city of Lansing had erected a memorial in a park two blocks from the Capitol," she said. Nineteen Michigan families who lost loved ones on Sept. 11 have placed personalized memorial bricks there, and there was a small ceremony in Lansing that afternoon, which Whalen will attend.

Later this autumn, a tree and granite marker will be placed on the grounds of



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pat Whalen lost her daughter, Meredith, in the 9/11 terrorist attack.

the state Capitol.

"That took a lot of effort, actually," Whalen said. "In fact, another tree had to die before we could get approval to plant a tree there."

Scholarships in Meredith's name - one at the University of Michigan, and one through the Canton Community Foundation - were set up shortly after her death, and Whalen thinks of them as a way to ensure that her daughter won't be forgotten.

It's keeping the memory of Meredith alive that brings Whalen to the tele-

phone when reporters make their perennial calls on the anniversary of that tragic Tuesday in 2001. And the memory is what made Whalen want to ask that bartender on the cruise she had planned to take with her daughter if perhaps she could have an empty bottle.

As for the message, it could be adrift in the ocean. Or the bottle could have smashed on the rocks, Whalen said. But she prefers to think something else.

"In my mind it could be out there, waiting for someone to read it."

AROUND WESTLAND

Vegas Night

The Westland Jaycees will be sponsoring a Vegas Night on Saturday, Sept. 16, at American Legion Post 32, 9318 Newburgh, Livonia. Doors will be open 7 p.m. to midnight. There will be Vegas night favorites such as Black Jack, Let it Ride, 7 Card Stud, Texas Hold 'Em tables and Roulette.

The Westland Jaycees are a local organization dedicated to training young leaders through community service. The Westland Jaycees have been responsible for past events such as the Patriot Day ceremony, Tribute to The Stars, and the annual Easter Egg Scramble.

They have also worked with other organizations like the Women of Westland on events such as '50s with a Mission. Proceeds from this event will be used to continue running quality events such as these.

For more information on the Westland Jaycees, call (734) 226-0400 or visit the Jaycees Web site at www.westland-jaycees.org.

Kicks 4 Kids

UNO Chicago Grill is joining with Kicks for Kids in a fundraiser to benefit the construction of a soccer complex at Curtis Wood Park on Palmer west of Wayne Road.

The restaurant, located in Wayne Road in front of Westland Shopping Center, will donate 20 percent of food purchase through 9 p.m. this evening (Sept. 14) to the Kicks 4 Kids Project at Curtis Woods.

Participants need to present a coupon, available at all city buildings, when they pay for their order to get the 20 percent contribution. More information is available by calling the Westland Parks and Recreation Department at (734) 722-7620.

Bingo

The Dyer Senior Center invites residents to play Bingo at 1 p.m. Wednesday at the center, 36745 Marquette, Westland. For more information, call Mary Browe at (734) 419-2020.

Garage sale

Ss. Simon and Jude Church will have a garage sale 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15, at the church, 32500 Palmer east of Venoy, Westland. There will be a \$2 a bag sale starting at 4 p.m. Large items will sell for \$2 at the bag sale.

Open enrollment

McKinley Cooperative Preschool, a non-profit, non-sectarian and non-discriminatory organization owned and operated by parents and licensed by the State of Michigan, offers a three-year-old and four-year-old preschool program and a toddler/parent program for two-year olds. The program is offered at 6500 N. Wayne Road, Westland. For information call (734) 729-7222 or visit the McKinley Cooperative Preschool Web site at

www.mckinleypreschool.org.

Euchre returns

Friday Night Euchre/Pinochle Card Parties are back at St. Bernardine Parish in Westland.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and play starts at 7:30 p.m. No partner is needed. Admission is \$5 admission includes refreshments, snacks and cash prizes. A 50/50 raffle also is available.

The scheduled dates are Sept. 15, 29, Oct. 6, 13, 27, Nov. 3, 17, Dec. 1, 15, Jan. 7, 5 12, 26 and Feb. 2, 9, 16.

St. Bernardine Parish is on the southwest corner of Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland. For more information, call (734) 427-5150.

Fall seminars

Barson's Greenhouse is offering a series of free fall seminars on winterizing ponds and constructing new ponds

The winterizing seminar, which focuses on preparing the pond for cold weather, will be offered at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16 and 30, 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 17 and Oct. 1, and at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20.

The pond construction, providing information on all you'll need to build a pond, will be offered at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16 and 30.

Barson's Greenhouse is at 6414 Merriman south of Warren. For more information, call (734) 421-5959.

Yard-craft sale

Watch for the big, big tents on Saturday, Sept. 16, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 37775 Palmer, Westland.

The church will be holding a yard, craft, etc. sale 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring household items, miscellaneous items and specialty items like Avon, candles, tools, houseplants and crafts of all kinds. There also will be a \$1 a bag used clothing sale inside the church, a food court to get refreshments, and a special drawing for two elephants!

All money raised will be donated to area organizations to be used to help people in our community. In the past, the church has made donations to the Salvation Army, Wayne County Family Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, World Hunger (Crop Walk), St. Mary's Outreach Center and John Bolde Food Depot and Trinity Lutheran Church, its mission partner, as well as provide Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets to Adam Junior High families.

Internet safety

St. Matthew Lutheran Church and School in Westland will sponsor an Internet safety class at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20.

The class will be for older students and for parents who may want information on how to keep their children safe online. It will provide information on what information youngsters should avoid putting online. The class is free and open to the public. The school/church are at 5885 N. Venoy.

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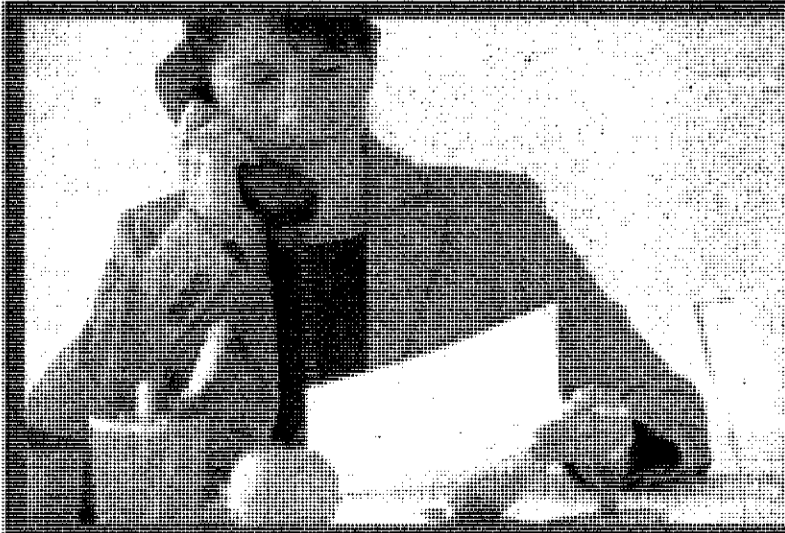
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Land touts good customer service in re-election bid

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

Depending on how the race between Jennifer Granholm and Dick DeVos ends in November, Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land is definitely looking to the governor's seat four, or eight, years from now.

"Like I told the Grumpies, at the time of the end of my second term I'll be 50 and that's very young, I've decided, so I have a few more races in me," she said. "We'll find what we can do next. I really like public service. I've lived in Michigan all my life and don't intend to move. It's something I'm looking at."

Land left a meeting Tuesday with the Grumpies to meet with *Observer & Eccentric* editors. The Grumpies are an informal group of frequent writers of strongly opinionated letters to newspaper editors. It was her first experience with the group and she said she enjoyed their company.

The Republican incumbent was out promoting her bid for re-election and talking about changes she's initiated in voting, campaign finance and management of the department. She faces Democrat Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh in the Nov. 7 election.

"Customer service was my campaign promise and what we ran on," she said. "Not just on the branch office side of getting your licenses and getting your plates, but on the election side, to make it easier to vote. ... I believe in public service, I enjoy it and I've done it all my life."

Land points to implementation of the federal Help



Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land met with *Observer & Eccentric* editors.

America Vote Act as a major accomplishment of her first term in office. Under Land, Michigan moved this year to a uniform optical scan voting system, replacing numerous systems adapted by counties or local communities. Also, new voting equipment was used in the August primary to allow the disabled to vote in private for the first time.

Land said her local experience as Kent County clerk was helpful in working with clerks across the state and reassuring them that the changes could be implemented.

"I couldn't have been as successful as I've been if I didn't have that relationship with local clerks. I've been there," she said.

The Michigan Legislature also consolidated elections and placed responsibility for school elections with local and county clerks for the first time.

'HUGE THING'

"That was a huge thing for

clerks. I told the Grumpies when you see a local clerk, give them a hug. They've had a heck of a couple of years," she said. "The federal government had never been involved in elections and all of a sudden the federal government has said, you have to have one sys-

tem throughout the state, it has to be connected, you have to have a disability component."

The Automark system used for disabled voters had never been used in an election before, Land said. She said her options were limited in choosing a system from among only three election equipment vendors.

"We went with Automark and worked with the disability community. We 'practiced' with an election in August and some of them did not work, there's no doubt about it, they did not work and the ones that didn't were pulled and new ones put in," she said.

But, she added, overall the system was successful and disabled voters were grateful.

CONSOLIDATED OFFICES

Land also consolidated the Secretary of State offices during her first term, reducing the number of branch offices from 173 to 154 and creating Super and Plus centers. Many

transactions can also be done online.

"We did this without laying anyone off," she said.

She said staff reductions were all through attrition.

"Some people had to move. We worked with the UAW, our union, and they understood that," she said.

Operations in Lansing were also consolidated to one building from five separate sites.

Land said she supports voter IDs, but would like to have the driver's license used as the ID.

"Driver's licenses now have a swipe on the back and I proposed and am proposing and working with the Legislature, but not all can see the vision, that you use your driver's license as your voter card," she said.

She said voters could swipe their card and their registration information would come up automatically on a computer rather than having them go through the slow process of

having a poll worker check their books. She suggests that the program be voluntary because others would switch to the card once they see how efficiently it works. She said free voter cards would be given to non-drivers.

Land also supports early voting as it's been done in other states.

"What they've found in most states that have done this is that with a two-week window, they've found 50 percent of voters have already voted, reducing the cost on election day. You don't need as many people," she said.

Land has advocated a common ID card to enter Canada rather than a passport as suggested by the Homeland Security Department.

On campaign finance reform, Land supports "real time" disclosure. Under the system, donations would be posted as soon as the donation was deposited rather than having candidates file periodic campaign reports.

Storytellers at library

The Detroit Story League presents its 24th annual Storytelling Festival Friday-Saturday, Sept. 15-16, at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, east of Farmington Road.

The festival features nationally known tellers Donald Davis and Linda Gorham, and includes adult and family performances plus workshops.

For more information, call Yvonne Healy at (810) 225-2204 or Barbara Schutzgruber at (734) 761-5118.

The tellers give a concert for adults and teens at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15. A family performance for children and adults takes place 4 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 16. Davis and Gorham, along with local Detroit Story League members, will be teaching educational workshops on Saturday.

Davis, a North Carolina teller, is a former minister. His tall tales are known for stretching the truth until it groans.

Gorham, a Chicago resident, bases her material on contemporary life and African-American heritage.

Detroit Story League members have been spinning their tales since 1912. They are available to tell stories at schools and organizations. For more information, visit www.DetroitStorytelling.com.

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Metroparks break ground for aquatic center

The Huron-Clinton Metroparks have begun construction of Turtle Cove Aquatic Center at Lower Huron Metropark in Van Buren Township.

Once completed, the \$9.4 million facility will feature two water slides, an activity pool, a lazy river and waterspray area. The shallow section of the pool will have a zero-depth entry and water play features, such as ground sprays for children; the deeper end will have a lap

swimming area. Slides, sprays and dumping bucket of water will be the focal point of the waterspray area. Turtle Cove will be able to accommodate up to 1,400 people.

The largest redevelopment project undertaken by the Metroparks, Turtle Cove will replace the swimming pool at Lower Huron, which opened in 1958. The existing pool will stay open for the 2007 summer season until the new facility is completed, projected for 2008.

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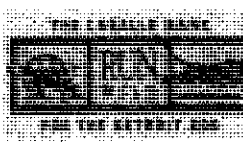
Guests can enjoy a midweek Mission Point stay (Sunday through Thursday) for just \$79 per person, double occupancy. Or weekends from just \$89 per person, double occupancy. Round trip ferry tickets and luggage charges.

*Rates are subject to limited availability and limited inventory. Minimal nights stay restrictions may apply on certain dates.



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OUR VIEWS

Put safety first this school year

Unless you live in a cave, it's hard not to know that school is back in session in Westland. The flashing red lights of school buses picking up flocks of kids at bus stops, even more making the walk to and from school each day, they're the most obvious signs of a new school year.

With traffic around schools increased tenfold, now is the time to focus on safety, both by students and by drivers.

Motorists need to be alert with school buses on the road. The flashing red lights mean to stop to the rear of the bus and wait until they go off before putting the pedal to the metal.

For parents who drive their kids to school, be a clock watcher. Set a time to leave and stick to it. Don't wait until the last minute, allow an adequate time to get there. Not only does it eliminate stress on you and your kids, it also eliminates the potential for accidents.

Follow your school's traffic pattern rules in dropping off and picking up students and reduce your speed when you enter a school zone. Zipping in and out of a parking lot or along the street by a school can be a recipe for disaster, especially with younger children around.

If you park at the curb or in the lot, double check your surroundings before backing up. Little kids are hard to see, so be extra vigilant. Never double-park, and don't let your child out of a vehicle that is not next to the curb.

At elementary schools, watch for youngsters who must cross driveways to get to the buildings. Follow the directions of crossing guards. The red-and-white stop sign they're holding means just what it says ... Stop.

If your child walks or rides a bicycle to school, remember they, too, face a wide variety of decision-making situations and dangers.

For walkers, remind them to look all ways — left, right, behind and front — when crossing a street and obey all traffic signals and the crossing guard. Never cross the street against a light, even if they don't see any traffic coming.

If they ride their bike to school, remind them to walk it through intersections and never cross in the middle of a street.

Using common sense and following the rules can only help make the 2006-07 school year a safe one for all concerned.

9/11 anniversary a reminder to be ready

Our nation is observing the five-year anniversary this week of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 innocent Americans in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

The memorial services and other events — as well as the recently thwarted terrorist plan to blow up planes flying to the United States from London — are reminders we need to be prepared.

Not coincidentally, September is National Preparedness Month. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is asking families, businesses and organizations this month to take the necessary steps to be ready in the event of another terrorist attack or other emergency.

Other emergencies include severe weather like tornadoes, power and water interruptions like those that occurred during the blackout of August 2003, and pandemic flu outbreaks. The action plan includes four steps:

- **Get a kit** — Get a kit of emergency supplies that will allow you and your family to survive for at least three days. The kit should include basic items like water, food, battery-powered radio, flashlight and first-aid kit. Don't forget prescription medications and be sure to check the kit every six months.

- **Make a plan** — Plan in advance what you and your family will do in an emergency. Your plan should include an out-of-state friend who everyone in your family can call to say where they're at. During a disaster, it's often easier to make a long-distance phone call. The plan should also include meeting places in case of evacuation. Make sure to practice the plan.

- **Be informed** — Learn more about different threats that could affect your community and appropriate responses to them, as well as emergency plans that have been established in your area.

- **Get involved** — Get training in first aid and emergency response and get involved in preparing your community. Citizen Corps provides residents with opportunities to prepare, train and support local emergency responders. For more information or to find your local Citizen Corps Council, visit www.citizen corps.gov.

For more information, such as a complete list of recommended supplies and suggestions for making a plan, go to www.ready.gov or www.redcross.org.



LETTERS

Protect your health

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed nonskin cancer among men in America, hitting one man in six. This year, more than 234,460 men will learn that they will have the disease, and an estimated 27,350 men will lose their lives to it.

Prostate cancer goes beyond the men who are diagnosed because families are devastated when they lose their fathers, grandfathers, uncles and brothers. And African American families are disproportionately affected due to African American men having higher rates of prostate cancer diagnosis and death than men of other racial or ethnic groups in the United States.

It should also be remembered that the disease can strike younger men, too; almost one-third of prostate cancer occurs in men under age 65 during their prime working years.

Early detection is critical to coping with this complex disease that does not have a "one size fits all" treatment regimen for diagnosed men. It is for this reason that I am joining with the Mayor's Coalition for Prostate Cancer Awareness and Education, an initiative that emphasizes informed decision making on screening and treatment. Conducted by the United States Conference on Mayors, of which I am a member, the coalition is part of an overall Cancer Awareness Program through which mayors are promoting education and early detection.

The Conference on Mayors is promoting September as National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, during which men are urged to consult their physicians, clinics, public health officials and advocacy organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, about prostate cancer and, whenever appropriate, to get screened for the disease.

I hope that the men of the city of Westland will become informed about prostate cancer and take the necessary steps to protect their health. Remember, the life you save may be your own.

Sandra A. Cicirelli
mayor, city of Westland

Get your facts straight

To the veterans, readers and citizens in Westland and surrounding communities, freedom of speech is a great gift that was given to all of us by the founders of this country under the Constitution that has been fought for and protected by millions of vets from all wars.

I'm a Vietnam vet, as are other board members of Veterans Haven. I think we might have contributed our two cents to help lift up and protect this right for all Americans. On Sept. 7, a letter was posted in the *Observer* by the VFW Romanowski Post 6896 Commander John Welchman misstating some information and facts regarding our organization. I had a phone conversation with Mr. Welchman to explain our concern and position regarding his letter at the VFW Hall. I explained I didn't understand his reasoning for mentioning Veterans Haven in such a negative overtone as "not" receiving any of these funds from the Wall Committee. I/we think it's great that this committee wants to give the money to the VA Hospitals in Detroit and Ann Arbor. We never asked for or expected anything from these people.

I didn't realize Mr. Welchman was such

a powerful individual who apparently thinks he represents thousands of fellow veterans, merchants and even the City Council as he mentioned in his letter. Last June, Sam Corrado approached us with a fund-raising idea for the organization. We agreed and saw no more disrespect in this ad that was placed in his paper, then was exhibited by the location of the "Wall" next to a carnival to celebrate July 4 and the 40th anniversary of the birth of Westland as a city.

I know the "Wall" is usually set up in a serene, quiet setting so people can reflect on the loss of their loved ones and friends. I have been to the "Wall" in Washington D.C. twice to pay my respects to friends and brothers lost in this war and have made it a point to visit the "Wall" when it came to Belleville, Canton, Yankee Air Force Museum and Westland this year.

Sam Corrado is a businessman who has raised money for many causes and charities. In his paper, he explains that money will be donated to us from Dillon's Jewelry as well as other businesses in Westland from sales over this holiday weekend celebration. It was not his or anyone else's intention to dishonor or disrespect our veterans in any way, shape or form.

Sam has explained to me the motives and people behind this smear letter. As usual, these assassins want to throw spears and take shots at individuals wanting to do good and not come out from behind the bushes and confront the people they have a problem with head on to see both sides of an issue. It is easier to stay hidden and use a "poison pen" from a distance.

All we saw was an avenue, an opportunity to raise money to help operate our center so we can continue to provide food, clothing, shelter, counseling, vehicles, jobs and medical equipment "free" to the thousands of veterans we have helped over the last 12 years.

I wonder how many vets Mr. Welchman and the VFW Post he represents have helped with these same immediate everyday living needs from within their post? Many veterans organizations, businesses and individuals have and continue to support us and the good work we do 365 days a year to help veterans. For this we are thankful and very appreciative. We have invited many people from all groups and organizations to come down to our center and actually see what we do; not many have taken us up on this invitation.

I say this with much pride: We are "vets helping vets," not just words. Our deeds prove what we're all about. We don't just show up on veterans holidays or events wearing our badges and hats when there is a parade to attend, a photo op or grandstanding to be had for one's personal gain. We help veterans everyday in every way possible, and more and more services are coming down the pike to benefit these individuals that served this great country of ours.

In closing, please let me say this: Mr. Welchman, the next time you feel this strong about any particular issue, please by all means use your right of freedom of speech to express your views. But might I suggest getting your facts straight before doing so. If you would like to discuss this matter with me, I can be reached at (734) 728-0527 or can I extend a personal invitation to you to visit our center. To learn more about Veterans Haven, please visit us on the Internet at vethaveninfo.org.

Vince Berna
president, Veterans Haven

DeVos is just like Bush

The election campaign for Michigan governor is well under way, and the Republican candidate is emerging quite like a Bush clone. The silver spoon boy wonder claims he is an outsider to politics, just as George W. Bush. Closer examination reveals he and his family have been and continue to be the behind-the-scene movers and shakers of the Republican Party, just as George W. Bush.

Mr. DeVos is well immersed in the Republican Party and is very much an insider. In fact, it could be said that there is no one within Mr. DeVos' social circle who is not a Republican Party member. He claims he wants to move Michigan in another direction, but tells little of the direction he would move the state, just as George W. Bush. One can only infer his direction would be to increase the burden on working Americans and increase his wealth and his patron Republicans.

Shortly after Gov. Granholm introduced the state budget, candidate DeVos attacked the plan put forward, stating that it was not good for Michigan. Yet when asked what would be his plan, he replied, "I don't have anything specific." He has continued to attack the governor on education proposals, funding and spending, yet provides little information on his plan. DeVos has yet to propose any governing issue of substance, very much Bush-like on the campaign trail. He has stated that he will eliminate the Single Business Tax in Michigan and, along with his Republican peers in Michigan government, has not responsibly proposed a solution to the shortfall.

Mr. DeVos has also avoided any questions that would challenge his ability to lead. Much like the Bush campaign, every group he has stood before has been Republican hack supporters having no mind to question a Republican candidate, very un-American-like and very Bush-like. Calls to his campaign office state he has no scheduled appearances. He has continued to cite his business experience as advantageous to govern this state, with no government service. This great state of Michigan does not need a Bush to govern its highest office. This state needs a governor meeting the challenges to move the state forward and unburden its middle class, not enrich the few wealthy Republicans. And most of all, this state needs a governor working together with all of its citizens, not hiding from them, not celebrating failure as all Republicans are doing today.

Frances Meese
Westland

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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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QUOTABLE

"That speaks highly of the hard work our teachers and administrators are doing in the schools and in the classrooms. It means we met the threshold of the No Child Left Behind legislation, which is not easy to do."

- School Superintendent Greg Baracy about all Wayne-Westland schools making adequate yearly progress

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

K-16 ballot proposal another ploy to gut state's treasury

As you flip through the channels these days, you're likely to see ads featuring cherubic and hopeful faces in classrooms, with an announcer solemnly intoning phrases like, "We cannot compete in a global economy unless we dramatically improve education."

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? It's an attempt to sell you on the so-called "K-16" initiative that will appear on the November ballot.

If passed, K-16 would require the state of Michigan to provide annual funding increases to match inflation to local public elementary, middle and high schools, intermediate school districts, community colleges and universities.

Early polls show solid support: 65 percent in favor, 25 percent opposed, 10 percent not sure.

But unfortunately, the amendment isn't really about teaching at all. Instead, it's mostly about requiring taxpayers to pick up the rapidly increasing costs of school employee pensions.

Called by its proper name, stripped of all the cynically misleading verbiage, K-16 really should be renamed "No school retiree left behind." And should this turkey pass, K-16 would have two extremely bad consequences for Michigan.

First, it would take the pressure off local school officials, school boards and local voters by shifting responsibility for tough financial decisions to the state government.

Second, most of the new dollars K-16 is supposed to produce for kids' education will be gobbled up by school employee pensions.

What we are really looking at is a shell game. Yet it is one with a powerful come-on. The spin revolves around the superficially attractive idea that schools, community colleges and universities should be guaranteed annual increases equivalent to at least the inflation rate. (Now about 3 percent.) The suggestion is that the money will go to more teachers, smaller classes and so forth.

But that's not where most of it would go.

The biggest allocation comes from clever language that caps local districts' contributions to pensions for retired teachers and school employees. Mind you, it doesn't cap the pensions — just what the local folks will have to pay.

Who pays for the uncapped increases in pension costs?

The state, meaning you, the taxpayer.

Back in July, the Senate Fiscal Agency, the bean-counting arm of the state Senate, estimated a first-year total price tag of \$566 million if the K-16 measure were approved. Of this, \$372 million (nearly two-thirds of the total!) would go directly to school retirement funds. Nobody I've talked to, including supporters of the K-16 proposal, disputes this analysis, by the way.

The reason school boards, superintendents and teacher unions are so hell-bent on shifting

so much of their local liabilities to the state is because costs of retiree health care and pension benefits are eating them alive. In 1991, the cost of school retiree pensions and health care equaled about 11 percent of school payrolls statewide. Today, the retiree cost is 17 percent and growing rapidly. According to projections by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Citizens Research Council of Michigan, for every dollar paid to working school employees in 2020, the taxpayers will have to fork over 32 cents for retiree health care and pensions.

It's not as though this problem should have surprised anyone paying attention. Back in 2004, then-state school Supt. Tom Watkins warned the state Board of Education that "Combining increased pension contributions and health benefit costs for working employees leaves little room for increased spending directed to teaching and learning, even if the economy improves."

Citizens Research Council also suggested — fruitlessly, it turns out — a bunch of reforms at the local level that would help blunt the problem. These included lowering pension benefits for all new employees, greatly tightening costly early retirement benefits, increasing employee contributions for pension and health care and greatly tightening rules for retiree health care.

But nothing happened and the way it now stands, a Michigan school employee can work as few as five years to qualify for full health benefits upon retirement!

Even the few remaining optimists at the United Auto Workers union, not to mention the automakers, would turn white at that kind of juicy perk.

In fact, even some of the proponents of K-16 admit in private that they never expected the measure to wind up on the ballot.

They figured they could put enough public pressure on the Legislature and governor to get them to cave in without resorting to an initiative. Remember, they turned out nearly 12,000 demonstrators on the Capitol grounds for the purpose last June.

But neither Gov. Jennifer Granholm or the Legislature buckled, if only because it would be terribly irresponsible to require unending, built-in inflation increases for anything, even education.

So where does leave us?

Only with the familiar, sickening feeling that once again, entrenched special interests are sneakily trying to snag public financing for a juicy perk, one that no private sector company can afford. And this time, they have the gall to pretend it's all for the kids.

For shame!

Phil Power is the founder of The Center for Michigan, a moderate think-and-do tank based in Ann Arbor. The opinions expressed here are his own and do not represent official policy positions of The Center for Michigan. He welcomes comments at ppower@hcnnet.com.



Phil Power

Patriotism in post-9/11 world: Remembering those who died

As a kid, I remember the license plate game we'd play on long trips up north. Being the youngest in the back seat, I was at a disadvantage. I had to sit in the middle — on the hump, as we called it — because I had the shortest legs.

My kids haven't had to fill their time that way, what with portable DVDs, CD players, Game Boys and PSPs to play. But there was a time on Saturday, when my daughter started counting to while away the time on a trip home from the sausage store. She didn't count license plates, she counted flags — American flags.

As we headed down Ford Road from east Dearborn, she started counting — one, two, three. By the time we hit Inkster Road she was nearing 40 flags, and by the time we turned

onto Wayne Road she was topping 80, although I think she missed the one painted on the side of the vacuum cleaner store.

When she got home, she offered her opinion of her game. "Mom," she said, "the car dealers really like to fly the flag."

I had to agree. The number of homes and businesses flying the flag paled in comparison to the flags that flapped in the breeze from flagpoles, light poles and even car antennas at auto dealerships. It was indeed an impressive display of patriotism.

It made me think back to the days after 9/11 when anything and everything red, white and blue was hot, and the hottest commodity was the flag. It seemed like everyone was flying one. They hung on poles. They hung in windows. They flew from car windows and makeshift poles in the beds of pickup trucks. They were even draped across the outstretched arms of Jesus Christ in front of the A. Mateja Church Supply Store in Garden City.

The hottest photograph in town was the one of New York City firefighters, covered in dust, hoisting a flag on a pole over the ruins of the World Trade Center just hours after the North and South towers collapsed. It looked so much like the photograph of the U.S. Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima in World War II, another global conflict we were dragged into when Pearl Harbor was attacked on Dec. 7, 1941.

No matter what our politics and beliefs were before 9/11, we were united as one afterward as we struggled to understand what happened. Our motto was "United We Stand," and waving the flag was how we showed it.

My kids were too young to understand 9/11, although I remember my son, then a first-grader, telling me the day after that some bad men flew planes into a building and they fell down. I didn't shield him and my daughter from what was playing out across the airwaves, there was

Like just about everyone else, we flew the flag after 9/11. We started small, with a couple of flags tucked in behind the mailbox, graduated to a wall-mounted flagpole when we finally found one, and progressed to a real, honest-to-goodness flagpole.

no need to. They were too engrossed in *Rugrats* and the like on their favorite cable channels.

But five years later, they are more in tune with what happened. My son, who groans at the thought of watching the news, actually got up and turned up the volume to hear, over his sister's chatter, the story of a man who escaped, with the help of firefighters, from the Marriott Hotel that day.

The louder sound got my daughter's attention and she, too, stopped to listen to the man who was told as he ran from the building to not look up at the towers. It was kind of like the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Had he looked, he would have stopped and stared and most likely would have been too close when the first tower fell.

Like just about everyone else, we flew the flag after 9/11. We started small, with a couple of flags tucked in behind the mailbox, graduated to a wall-mounted flagpole when we finally found one, and progressed to a real, honest-to-goodness flagpole.

My daughter is usually the one who asks when we're going to put out our holiday decorations, but she hasn't had to ask about the flag. We've been flying one ever since that day.

Today, there's not as many flags flying, but does that mean we are any less patriotic? I don't think so.

I think Americans tend to be low-key about flag waving. We have yet to get comfortable with who we are in the global scheme of things. Even with the missteps since 9/11, we remain the greatest nation on earth. Our allegiance to our flag and country is strong. We don't need to wave a flag about that.

But we should wave the flag. We need to wave it to show the world that even though we are the target of those who want to see us destroyed, we will not cower in fear.

Most of all, we need to wave it to remind us of those who died on 9/11 and those who have died in this war on terror. Waving the flag is the least we can do for those who have paid the ultimate price for being an American.



Sue Mason

Sue Mason is the editor of the *Westland and Garden City Observer* newspapers. If you have a comment, send it to her at smason@hometownlife.com.

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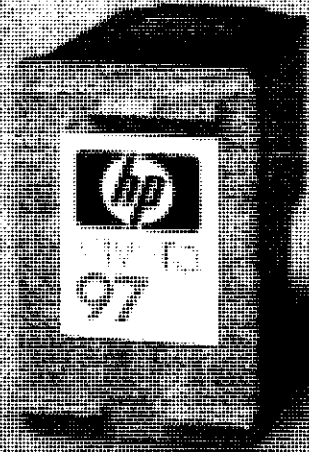
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Rotary International seeks team participants

Rotary club members of Oakland, Macomb, Livingston and Washtenaw Counties in Michigan and Kent County in Ontario are seeking four outstanding professionals to visit Thailand from Feb. 21, 2007, to March 20, 2007, as part of the Group Study Exchange program of The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.

Through the program, teams of young professionals from two different countries exchange visits. For four weeks, team members experience the way of life, customs, and vocational practices of another country, while sharing information about their homeland.

The purpose of the program is to promote international understanding and goodwill through personal connection. While abroad, team members stay in Rotarians' homes and have the opportunity to meet their

professional counterparts. They also give presentations to Rotary clubs and other groups about their home country.

The Rotary Foundation pays for round-trip airfare, and Rotary club members in the host country provide meals, lodging, and group travel in their district. Team members pay for personal and incidental expenses.

Young adults between the ages of 25 and 40 who are interested in applying should be employed full-time in a business or profession. Applicants must live or be employed in Macomb, Oakland, Livingston or Washtenaw Counties in Michigan or Kent County in Ontario. For an application, please contact Rotarian Judy Garver at (248) 977-9588 or e-mail: judygarver2000@yahoo.com. Applications are due by Sept. 22.

Area traffic crashes down significantly

Southeast Michigan experienced over 7,600 fewer traffic crashes in 2005 than in 2004, and nearly 14,000 fewer than in 2003, according to 2005 Southeast Michigan Traffic Crash Facts, a report released by SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. The report contains important statistical information about all traffic crashes reported in Southeast Michigan in 2005, and also focuses on injury traffic crashes, fatal traffic crashes, alcohol-involved traffic crashes, vehicle-deer crashes, young driver traffic crashes, elderly driver traffic crashes, and truck/bus traffic crashes.

Sections at the end of the report contain data about safety-belt use and holiday traffic crashes. The main objective of this report is to provide useful data to aid local communities in their efforts to improve traffic safety.

In 2005, there were a total of 157,284 crashes (resulting in 43,680 injuries and 391 fatalities) in Southeast Michigan, down from 164,900 crashes in 2004 and 171,105 in 2003. The seven-county regional totals represent 45 percent of the total crashes in the State of Michigan. The state total was 350,838 for 2005, down from 2004's total of 373,028.

The crash rate – the number of traffic crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) – decreased in the region. The overall crash rate in Southeast Michigan was 323 crashes per 100 million VMT in 2005, down from 346 crashes per 100 million VMT in 2004, despite the fact that vehicle miles traveled increased from 47.7 billion miles in 2004 to 48.7 billion miles in 2005.

The report analyzes all traffic crashes by county; severity; crash type; age and gender of driver; rate of crash involvement by age group; and by month, day, and hour. Highlights include:

The number of reported fatal crashes per 100 million VMT continued to dip below one in Southeast Michigan to 0.74 crashes per 100 million VMT, and decreased in the State of Michigan to 1.04 crashes per 100 million VMT for the 10th consecutive year.

Nearly 88 percent of belted drivers escaped injury altogether when involved in a crash; only 60 percent of non-belted drivers suffered no injuries at all. Drivers in the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups were least likely to use restraints; more than twice as many males as females were not wearing their safety belts at the time of a crash.

Crashes involving alcohol totaled 5,442 in 2005. In Southeast Michigan, 3.5 percent of all traffic crashes involved alcohol, but nearly 35 percent of fatal traffic crashes involved alcohol consumption.

There were 360 fatal traffic crashes in Southeast Michigan in 2005, killing 391 people. Continuing the trend from 2003, Southeast Michigan saw a decrease in the number of fatal traffic crashes in 2005. Fatal traffic crashes and traffic-crash fatalities also decreased in the state as a whole.

Crashes involving elderly drivers (those age 65 and older) in Southeast Michigan have decreased every year since 1996. In 2005, there were 17,957 crashes involving elderly drivers — 11.4 percent of all crashes involved an elderly driver. The hour with more elderly crashes than any other hour was between 3-4 p.m.; unlike all traffic crashes, those involving elderly drivers did not have a morning peak (see Figure 12 in report).

The complete report, 2005 Southeast Michigan Traffic Crash Facts, is available from SEMCOG Information Services, (313) 961-4266, or can be downloaded in PDF from SEMCOG's Web site — www.semco.org.

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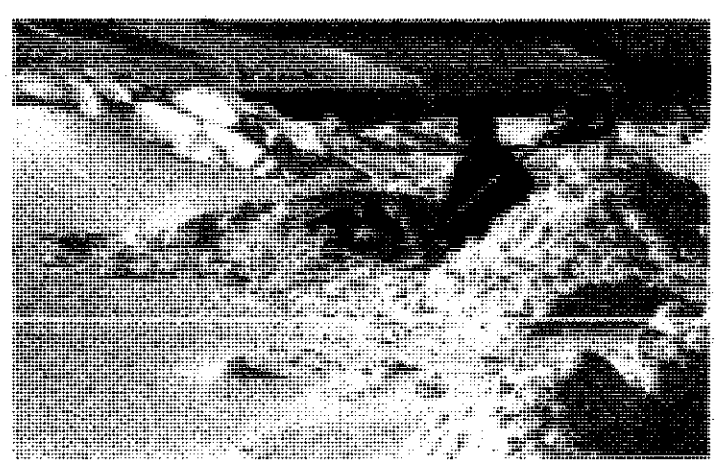
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SWM, 66, tall, thin, Scorpio, N/S, seeks WF, 60-68, N/S, old-fashioned, slim, fit, humorous, possible romance.
SBM, 46, looking for that special person for LTR, someone who enjoys walks, movies, sporting events, cuddling at home. Please be shapely, independent and know what you want in life.
SWM, 47, 6'2", 200lbs, muscular, athletic, brown/blue, degreed, outgoing personality, enjoys outdoors, workout, new activities, seeks friendly SF, age/location open.
SWM, 71, N/S, widowed, 5'8", 150lbs, young at heart, enjoys outdoors, cooking, dining out, traveling, seeks slim, petite female, 62-70, N/S.
DWM, 45, 5'9", 140lbs, father, N/S, ND, employed, honest and fun, likes music, movies, bowling, family/friends, more. Looking for SWF with similar interests and qualities.
SWM, 23, 5'10", 150lbs, brown/brown, looking for a fun, easygoing, sweet lady under 150lbs, to share talks, dates, friendship and then who knows?
WM, 58, tall, slim, good-looking, would like to meet a nice, sweet, kind woman to go out with and see what happens from there.
SBM, 26, 5'9", average build, Virgo, smoker, outgoing, adventurous, seeks BF, 35-45, smoker, laid back, open-minded, for LTR.
SBM, 24, 6', chocolate skin, hazel eyes, 180lbs, HWP, likes good conversation, seeks cool, laid-back, down to earth, honest female, 24-30, for friendship, and more.
SBM, 20, 5'8", 150lbs, dark complexion, athletic build, well-groomed, seeks woman, 18-26, N/S, for friendship, and more.
SBM, 32, 5'7", 165lbs, average build, brown/brown, seeks mature, respectful, independent BF, 18+, for friendship, and more.
SWM, 66, 5'9", slim build, youthful, 160lbs, seeks WF 40-61, N/S, for friendship, possible romance.
SWM, 46, 160lbs, 5'11", brown/hazel, adventurous, down to earth, smoker, likes Harley's, movies, seeks WF 40-47, for friendship, and more.
WM, 59, 5'8", 170lbs, dark/blue, looking for an attractive woman to go out and have a good time with. Age open.
SWPM, 54, 5'11", 170lbs, trim, Aquarius, N/S, likes music, art, golf, landscapes, architecture seeks W/PF, 44-60, attractive, fit, active, financially secure, intelligent, possible LTR.
Brash, outspoken, attractive, educated, trim, salt and pepper businessman, 54, NW suburbs, seeks liberal lady, whose interests include art, architecture, classical, jazz, good conversation, 46-56.
SWM, 49, average build, Italian, heart of gold, Virgo, N/S, seeks WF, 45-55, with a nice build, ready for LTR. Serious replies only.
SBM, 52, 5'8", 185lbs, looking for a medium to full-figured SBF 46-54. Someone who is worldly, nice, loves to laugh and just enjoying life to the fullest.
SWM, 66, 5'6", 150lbs, manufacturer's representative, Libra, N/S, works out, enjoys movies, restaurants, and summer festivals. Seeking SWF, 50-65, N/S. Shirley, please call back.
SBM, 58, 5'8", medium brown complexion, brown eyes, mustache, medium build, 190lbs, enjoys fishing, movies, music, sports, dining, cooking, travel. Seeking A loving lady for friendship and more.
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I-696 crash ties up traffic, no major injuries result

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

A torrential rainstorm may have caused a chain reaction accident on westbound I-696 Wednesday involving 30 to 40 vehicles but resulting in no serious injuries.

The accident started around 3 p.m. between Drake and Halsted in Farmington Hills as rain began to pour in the area. Cars began to skid into each other.

Kristina Baumgarten of Walled Lake walked off the freeway as her car was one of

several being towed away.

"I stopped to avoid the accident, I saw a car swerve out and then crash, crash, crash. My car was turned around and crashed into a ditch," she said. "When I got out I had to climb through the passenger seat."

Tom Ufer said that he was in the shoulder as a Ford F150 struck him and a woman told him that he went airborne in his Audi.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said it was fortunate that there were no serious injuries.

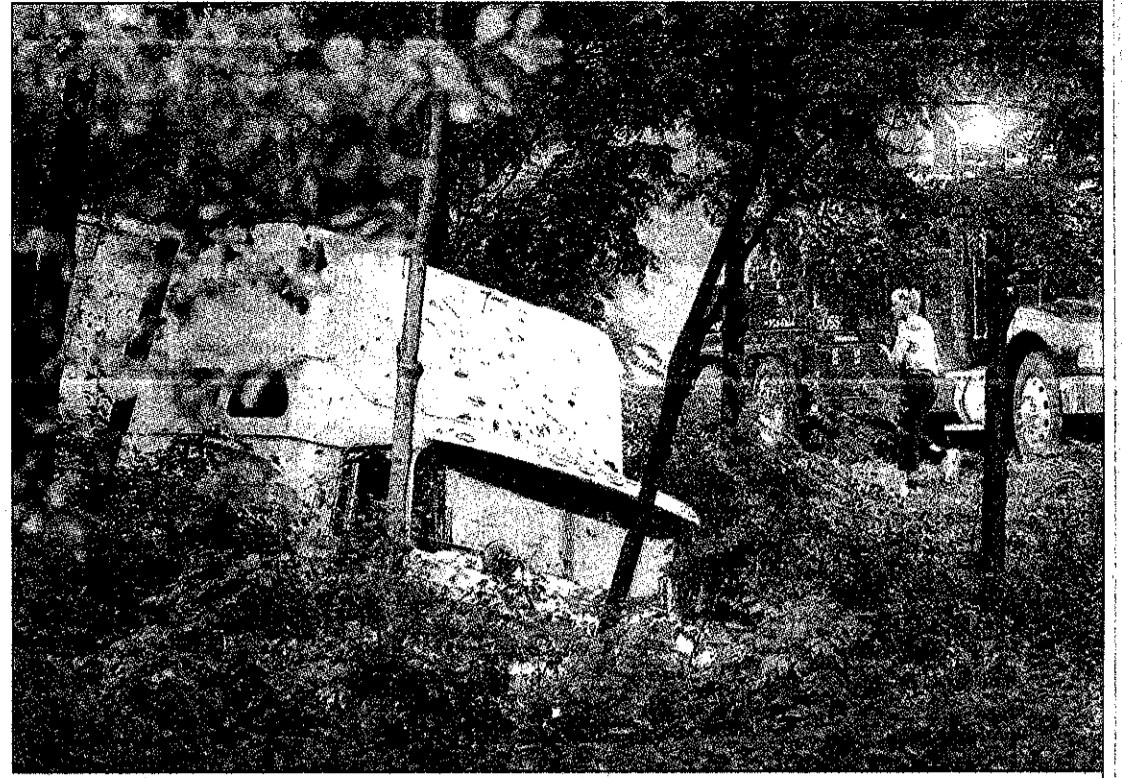
"One lady who is six months pregnant was taken to Botsford Hospital with very minor injuries," he said.

Dwyer said the Farmington Hills Police Department worked closely with the Michigan State Police to move vehicles off to the shoulder and open up two lanes of the three-lane freeway.

"The scene looked like a war zone, we were fortunate we



Tom Ufer of Ann Arbor looks over his Audi after he was hooked up to a tow on I-696 Wednesday afternoon.



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A woman truck driver took evasive action and turned her truck onto the shoulder of I-696 to avoid plowing into other cars.

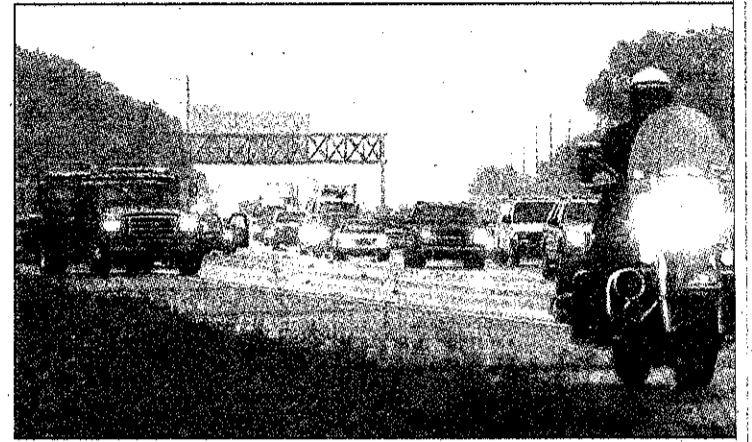
didn't have fatalities," he said.

The quick thinking of a woman truck driver prevented a more serious situation. The driver crashed her semi on to the shoulder.

"A lot of credit has to be given to that semi driver for taking evasive driving action to avoid plowing into other vehicles," Dwyer said.

Dwyer said the accident backed up traffic for seven miles. Traffic was moving again within an hour and a half.

The accident attracted the attention of people along the route.



Traffic began to move on I-696 around 4:15 p.m. after quick work by Farmington Hills and Michigan State Police

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Area high school students and their families can investigate the programs of approximately 65 colleges and universities during Schoolcraft College's annual College Night on Wednesday, Oct. 4. The event is free and open to the community.

The schools, primarily from Michigan and the Midwest, will be on hand to answer questions and provide information on degrees, fields of study, admission requirements, cost and extracurricular activities. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Physical Education Building on the

Livonia campus and continues until 8:30 p.m.

A sample of in-state schools attending includes Michigan State University, Central, Western, Northern and Eastern Michigan universities, Adrian and Albion colleges, Ferris State, the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and Dearborn campuses, Lawrence Tech, and Wayne State University.

City Year Detroit and four branches of the military also will be on hand.

For more information, call the Schoolcraft Office of Admissions at (734) 462-4426.

Company offers free business seminar

Every other month, hundreds of business and sales professionals from across metro Detroit gather at a local theater to exchange ideas, network, and learn new methods for outselling the competition, increasing productivity, and staying motivated.

Although these individuals come from a variety of business sectors - real estate, mortgage, construction, automotive and others - they all have one thing in common: Each is a member of The Yes! Network.

Entrepreneur Michael Jeffreys developed a vision for The Yes! Network in 1988 with the idea of providing a place for positive-minded people to learn, grow and change with the times. The objective, he explained, was to help members maintain a sharp, competitive edge in the business world.

"A person who is committed to success in business knows that continuous learning is essential," said Jeffreys.

"Whether you're getting new ideas, reminding yourself of something you've forgotten, hearing a different perspective on an old idea, or just coming for a healthy dose of motivation now and then, it's absolutely essential to keep your mind sharp."

Jeffreys seems to take his own advice, and recently celebrated the organization's 18th anniversary. In recognition of the event, The Yes! Network is offering complimentary tickets to its Sept. 19 evening event, a seminar designed especially for individuals in management or leadership positions.

Renowned speaker Don Hutson, who consults with companies such as 3M,

Motorola, Sony, and Target, will deliver two-and-a-half hours of information on effective leadership skills and techniques that can be applied to managing a large company, a small business or a busy family.

"Over the years, it's really been the managers who have fueled our business by inviting us in to discuss the benefits of Yes! membership," said Jeffreys, who still maintains an active role as the company's president. "This is our opportunity to give something back to the Detroit business community."

Here's how the Yes! Network works: Every other month, Jeffreys brings a nationally recognized business trainer in to share his or her best ideas with Yes! members. Attendees are provided with a note guide to help remember all the information they hear, and, since most successful speakers inject a good deal of storytelling and humor into their presentation, most participants find themselves laughing and having a good time while they learn, he said.

Members are also invited to take part in a one-hour networking session before each event, professionally facilitated by Local Business Network, in which they have the opportunity to form valuable new contacts and alliances, both personal and professional.

All seminars are held at the United Artist/Regal Commerce Stadium 14 in Walled Lake. Call all (248) 383-2000, Ext. 204, to reserve your complimentary seats.

For more information on The Yes! Network, visit www.yesmidwest.com,

Perfect fit

Teen models grandmother's wedding dress at 50th anniversary party

BY SUSAN STEINMUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Maxine and Bruce Smiley could not have been more delighted when at their 50th anniversary party, their granddaughter modeled Maxine's wedding dress.

"It fit her like it was made for her," Maxine Smiley said of Michelle Smiley, 15, of Canton. "It was a highlight of the party."

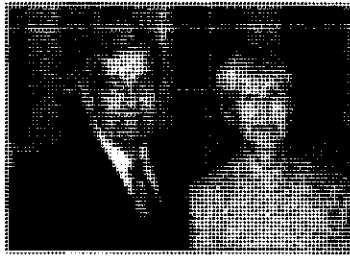
"It was amazing," said Bruce Smiley. "I think everybody was just joyous."

It brought back fond memories, too.

"I had six bridal showers. They did those things then," reminisced Maxine Smiley.

She still has a newspaper clipping of one of the showers. It details how she received an unusual bridal gift - a life-sized mannequin bride wearing a wedding dress made of white crepe paper and lace doilies. It came with a bucket of useful cleaning items such as a floor mop and scrub brush and a poem.

"A bride would be insulted today," she said. But then, it was much appreciated. "The scrub bucket was and is the only one I have ever used."



Bruce and Maxine Smiley of Beverly Hills are pictured at their 50th wedding anniversary party.

The party was held at The Community House in Birmingham on July 23. It was hosted by their children Robert (Laurie) Smiley of Canton, Mary Kay (Dan) Mohan of Madison Heights and Thomas (Elizabeth) Smiley of Valrico, Fla. Some 100 guests included their eight grandchildren, seven of their nine wedding party participants, and relatives and friends from "near and far."

Michelle found out earlier this year that her grandmother still had her wedding dress, which was in pristine condition. She said she was not really surprised her grandmother had kept it because "she keeps a lot of things."

"I liked all the lace on it, and there are buttons on the back, all the way up."

When she tried it on, "we

were both really excited that it fit." Michelle decided to model it at the party, along with her grandmother's bridal going-away outfit, a two-piece black-and-copper plaid suit with "bracelet" sleeves, which end above the wrist. Both were bought at Arthur's in Pontiac, a leading fashion retailer at the time, said Smiley.

They all helped prepare the clothes for the occasion.

At the party, many guests asked Michelle if she might wear the dress at her own wedding some day. But she said "I'm not really planning my wedding right now."

The Smileys were married on Sept. 8, 1956 at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham. It was Bruce Smiley's family church; she joined that year. They are still active members.

On their actual anniversary on Friday, they celebrated in their traditional way, by dining alone together. This year they went to Mitchell's Fish Market - Birmingham.

Maxine Miller of Pontiac

and Bruce Smiley of Birmingham, a graduate of General Motors Institute, now Kettering University, started dating while both worked at GMC Truck and Coach in Pontiac.

"I married at 24. I was the last one of my group from high school to get married," she said.

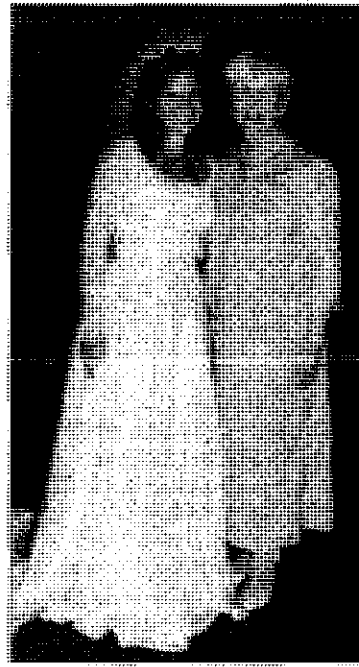
Maxine Smiley worked until she had her first child, Robert, in 1959. Bruce Smiley went into advertising at Campbell-Ewald, from where he retired.

Their first house, a \$13,000 brick ranch, was in Drayton Plains, now Waterford. They moved back to the Birmingham area for the school system, and are 41-year residents of Beverly Hills.

Both enjoyed raising their family and relish being a grandparent.

Maxine Smiley's traditions include hosting her grandchildren at her house every year to make Christmas cookies to take home. And, whenever they stay overnight, she serves them a Sanders hot fudge sundae before bed.

Bruce Smiley says his nickname "Geezer," given to him by Michelle, is "an accepted term



Michelle Smiley, 15, models her delighted grandmother Maxine Smiley's wedding dress.



Bruce and Maxine Smiley are pictured on their wedding day, Sept. 8, 1956, at the First United Methodist Church in Birmingham.

their cottage up north. They also are both very involved with The Community House. Bruce Smiley is a member of the Senior Men's Club of Birmingham there; she is a board member and former president of The Community House Senior Women's Club.

Today, Grandparents Day, both are undoubtedly giving thanks for their children and grandchildren - as they are for them.

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