







Wayne-Westland School Superintendent Greg Baracy and school board President Frederick Weaver were on hand to congratulate the staff of Patchin Elementary School which earned the district's Golden Apple Award.



It's all smiles for the staff at Walker-Winter Elementary School in Canton which received the Wayne-Westland school district's Lighthouse School Award.

**AWARDS**

FROM PAGE A1

Award for making steady, significant gains during a three-year period on MEAP test scores.

Wayne-Westland school officials celebrated the victories last Monday by giving each of the two schools a \$10,000 prize, a banner and a

plaque honoring their achievements. Superintendent Greg Baracy praised Walker-Winter's staff for helping students rise above their counterparts statewide on MEAP scores. "It is among the highest performing schools in the state of Michigan," Baracy said Monday, during a school board meeting. Walker-Winter Principal Pauline Koulouberis, accompanied by some of her staff

members, smiled as she attributed the school's success to all of its employees. "It takes everybody to sustain high achievement," she said. Baracy noted that Patchin made an overall 60-point gain in MEAP test scores. "That is a tremendous feat," he said. Patchin Principal Molly Funk, also joined by some of her staff, said her school will wisely spend the \$10,000 it earned.

"We're excited to see what the award can do for the students and staff at Patchin - and where it can take them in the next few years," Funk said. The district has continued to single out schools for significant achievement even though Baracy said the state has cut grant dollars for buildings that make enormous strides to improve their MEAP scores. dclcm@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

**AUDIT**

FROM PAGE A1

Under the plan, current funding for K-16 education would jump by \$565 million, and then the state would be forced to allocate yearly increases that would keep pace with inflation. Critics say Proposal 5 could force state officials to siphon

**Critics say Proposal 5 could force state officials to siphon money from other areas...**

money from other areas, such as public safety, to pay for education. But school officials view the measure as a way of ensuring that legislators keep good on their pledge to properly fund education. Baracy voiced concerns that Wayne-Westland could soon be forced to start cutting into programs unless its budget decline is reversed.

For years, he has warned that state officials need to address school funding shortfalls, but he said legislators have failed in their responsibility to pay for education. "If the state wants a world-class educational system," he said, "it will have to fund it like a world-class educational system."

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## Making silence leads to drug use recovery movement

I'd like to thank Diane Montes for her efforts in planning and facilitating Save Our Youth Taskforce meetings, but did an even better job planning the meeting. She created a safe and respectful space for people to share their experiences and views.

I spent most of my youth in Livonia and neighboring communities. I used drugs and alcohol for the first time at age 11, developed serious problems by high school, and hit bottom by age 19. This taskforce has been badly needed for a long time. This month I'll celebrate 16 years in recovery. In those years my family relationships have since been healed, I have a satisfying career helping people recover, and I have a wonderful family of my own. As someone with personal and professional experience with addiction, I'd like to offer a few points of perspective on what this recovery faces.

First, something is not always better than nothing. The history of substance abuse prevention is full of programs that makes adults feel good about doing something, but under closer scrutiny they had little impact and in some cases had a negative impact. For example, a recent study found that viewing anti-drug television ads by the Office of National Drug Control was correlated with increased drug use. It appears that many of the programs created the perception that young people use marijuana at higher rates than they actually do. They changed the viewer's perception of what is "normal" among their peers and many people tend to base decisions on what they believe is normal. This isn't to say that prevention is not worthwhile, the focus here is to choose prevention strategies carefully, monitor their impact, and make adjustments as needed.

Second, addiction is a chronic illness. Like many people experience a transitional change that leads to stable recovery on their first attempt, this is always the case. Like other chronic illnesses, the path to stable recovery is often rocky and not always assured. The good news is that more than 600 scientific papers have concluded that treatment works and consistently find outcomes that compare favorably to hypertension, type

II diabetes and asthma. Third, we appear to be at the end (I hope) of a period in which addiction has been radically recriminalized and demedicalized. In response to the rise of crack cocaine in the 1980s, incarceration rates for drug crimes have skyrocketed.

Federal prison inmates whose most serious conviction was a drug crime rose from 4,749 in 1980 to 77,867 in 2004 (a 1,540 percent increase). In state prisons, they rose from 19,000 in 1980 to 246,100 in 2001 (a 1,195 percent increase), in jails they rose from 20,420 in 1983 to 155,249 in 2002 (a 660 percent increase). In addition, the average term drug offenders entering prison could expect to serve rose from an average 30 months to 66 months from 1986 to 1999 (a 120 percent increase).

While incarceration rates have risen, access to treatment has dramatically decreased. Twenty years ago just about every community hospital in the area had addiction treatment units and many had adolescent treatment units. Almost all of these are gone today and most health plans severely limit access to treatment my imposing coverage limits and high copayments. Health care spending on addiction treatment fell over 73 percent from 1992 to 2001 - this was a period where annual double digit increases in spending are the norm.

Fourth, concerned family members and recovering people are crucial to advocacy efforts to challenge stigma and change social policy. History teaches us that when professional treatment systems collapse, recovering people and loved ones affected by addiction will rise up to create new systems to support recovery and challenge the beliefs that led to demedicalization and recriminalization.

Most people would be surprised to learn that there were relatively large recovery movements and treatment systems in the late 1800s.

By the time prohibition was passed, these systems were destroyed, only to be reborn 20 years later by a new movement of recovering people and their families.

Over the last several years, communities of people affected by addiction have banded together to address these problems. I'd like to thank Diane Montes and the Montes family for breaking the silence and creating conditions for such a movement in Livonia.

Jason Schwartz is a Livonia resident and clinical director of Dawn Farm.

## Rotarians reach out to bring life-sustaining water to all

As residents of the "Great Lakes State," it is easy to take safe, clean drinking water for granted. A simple turn of the faucet brings a cheap, unlimited supply of water for drinking, cooking, laundry and watering lawns.

That is why the following statistics from Rotary International and the Centers for Disease Control boggle my mind, and break my heart.

Consider:



Joe Bauman

- One in three people in the developing world do not have access to safe drinking water.
  - 1.7 million deaths each year (est.) are caused by unsafe water.
  - An estimated 30,000 children die each week from illnesses linked to unsafe drinking water.
- How can it be that in a world so rich, and in a land of such plenty, such a tragedy is allowed to continue to exist? Because for most of us, the untold suffering is out of

sight, happening in third-world countries far from our borders and out of the camera lens of the mass media.

But not all is lost. A worldwide effort is under way, spearheaded by Rotary's 1.3 million members belonging to more than 32,000 clubs in 171 countries to ensure that children everywhere have safe, clean and life-giving water available to them.

Rotary clubs everywhere are raising money and partnering with clubs in developing countries to design and install bio-sand filters to make existing water sources safe to drink, and construct deep wells to bring new sources of water to the surface.

One of the more ambitious undertakings is taking place right here in Oakland County. The 80 professional men and women that comprise the Birmingham Rotary Club have partnered with a Rotary club in the Philippines to construct an entire water system to serve a village on the outskirts of Manila.

When completed, the 10 artesian deep wells will bring life-sustaining water to more than 2,600 households and nearly 16,000 people.

Currently, villagers in the Bagong Silang region rely on water being trucked into the village by the local government and have to purchase it on a daily basis.

The stagnant water is responsible for a number of illnesses and diseases caused by parasites and other water-borne contaminants. Local Rotarians have tried to convince the local government to improve the situation, but have been told there is no money to construct the wells.

The Birmingham Rotary Club - of which I am a member and proud to play a small role in the effort - has pledged to raise \$21,000 to pay for the construction of the 10 wells. The local Rotary Club has secured the land where the wells will be built, and has also agreed to help residents pay for electricity and maintenance of the wells. It is a real team effort in the true spirit of Rotary and its motto of "Service above Self."

While the Birmingham Rotarians are spearheading the effort, they are not selfish in taking credit for it. In other words, they need help raising the cash.

Rotary Clubs from surrounding communities are being invited to join in the fund-raising effort; grants from the international Rotary Foundation are being sought, and a 50-50 raffle is being conducted in conjunction with a wine tasting dinner scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 8 at the Birmingham Athletic Club.

In addition to the "official" fund-raisers, anyone who wants to help make a real difference in the lives of these underprivileged children and their families can do so by simply writing a check in any amount to the Birmingham Rotary Endowment Fund, and mailing it to the club in care of The Community House, 380 S. Bates, Birmingham 48009.

Donations of \$100 or more enters the donor into the 50-50 raffle with a grand prize of up to \$12,500 cash if the maximum 250 tickets are sold.

These are tough times in our state. The auto industry is slumping, home sales are in the tank and the unemployment rate is at or near the highest in the country. Asking people to give money to help children who look different from most of us and live in a place that few have ever visited is no easy task.

In the past week, this newspaper's editorial board interviewed the two major party candidates for governor in next month's elections. As part of the interviews, I asked Republican challenger Dick DeVos to comment on a report that estimated more than \$60 million will be spent just on the governor's race alone, which is unprecedented in our state's history.

DeVos seemed irritated at the question, saying what I was really asking was for him to justify spending so much of his personal fortune on the campaign.

He went on to explain he had to spend lots of money early on to build his name recognition, and then had to continue to spend to combat all of the cash that was pouring into Gov. Jennifer Granholm's political war chest from all over the country. Mr. DeVos has every right to spend his money as he sees fit, and there is no questioning he and his family's long and proud history of philanthropy in the state. A quick trip to the Grand Rapids area is proof of how his family has used its good fortune (and fortunes) to improve the quality of life in their home community.

Still, as I sat in that interview with the thought of this clean water project swirling in the back of my mind, I couldn't help but think that if we can spend more than \$60 million to elect a governor, should it really be so hard to raise \$20,000 to bring health, hope and happiness to so many innocent children.

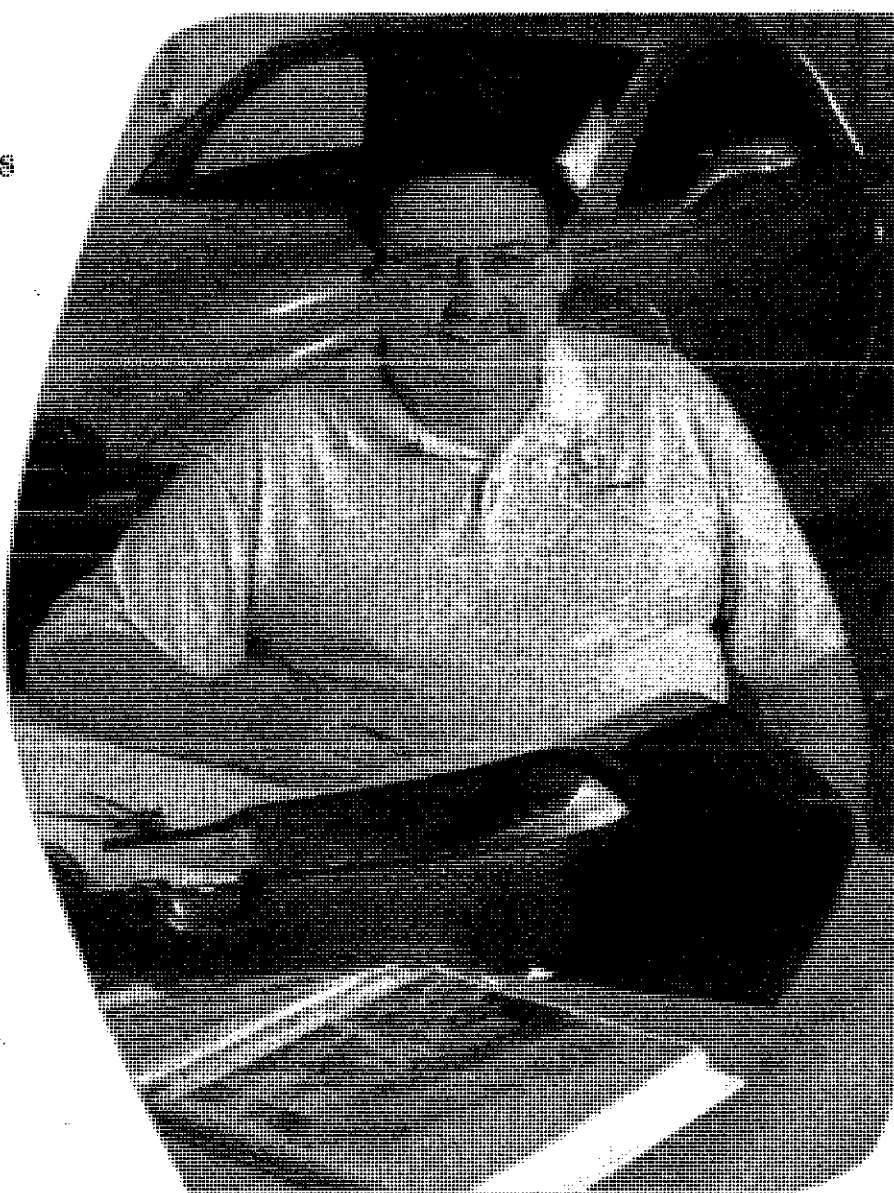
Joe Bauman is managing editor of the *Eccentric Newspapers*. To learn more about the Philippines clean water initiative, e-mail him at [jbauman@hometownlife.com](mailto:jbauman@hometownlife.com) or call (248) 901-2563.

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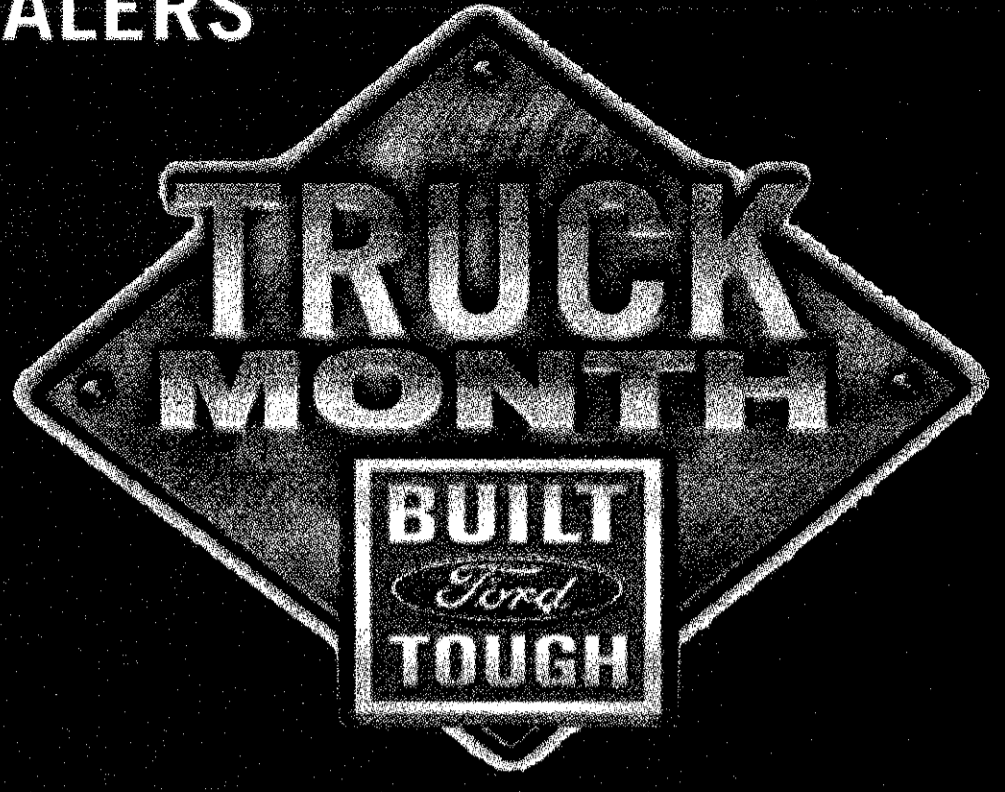
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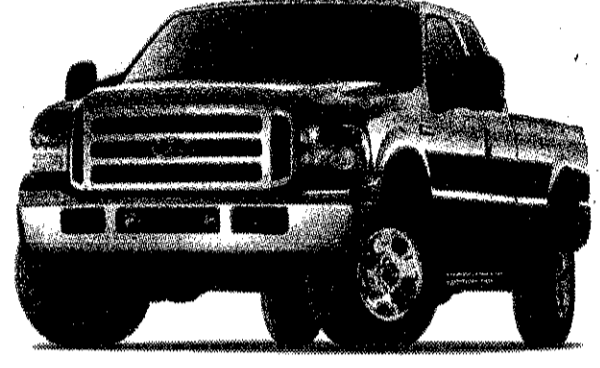
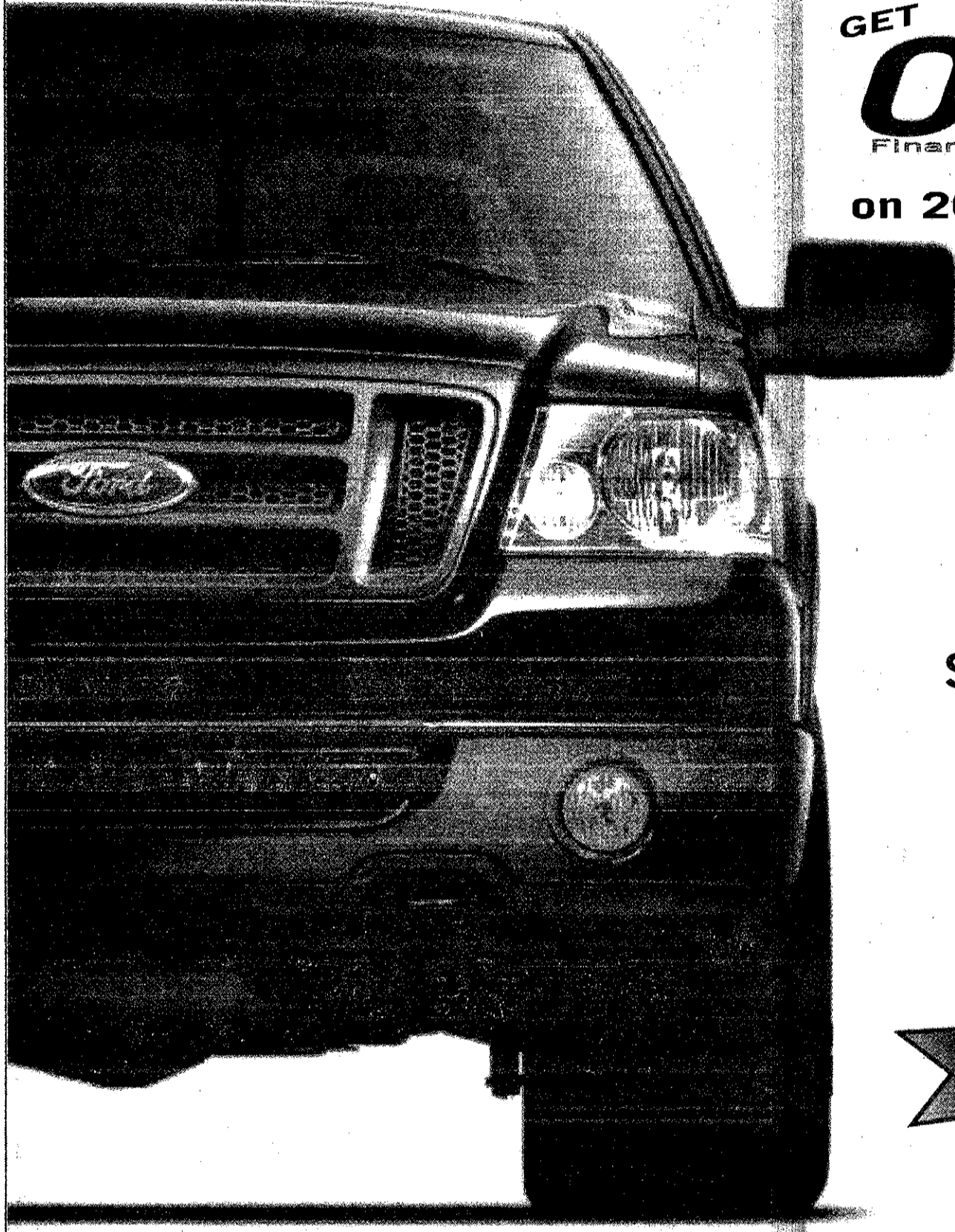
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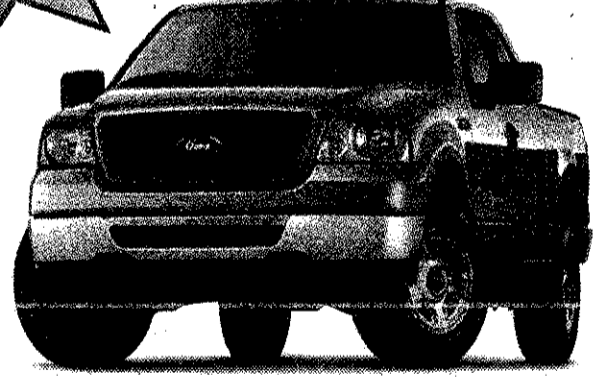
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