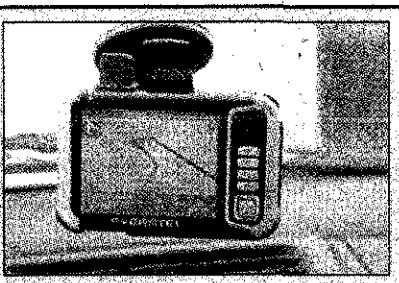


**GPS navigation systems mature**  
TECH SAVVY - D1



**POW WOW**  
Annual Native American Festival captures Thanksgiving spirit.  
FILTER - INSERTED SECTION



**Yeohlee wraps up warmth**  
PINK Page - D4



119  
**THURSDAY**  
November 9, 2006

**WESTLAND Observer**

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**Park's closing raises questions**

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Georgia Becker of Westland is worried that she and her family may have been exposed to dangerous levels of lead in Central City Park. She and her late husband, Howard, helped build a children's play structure in the park, and twice they slept on the ground overnight during the cancer-fighting fundraiser Relay for Life. The Beckers gave birthday parties for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the park. "Children all play in the dirt," Georgia Becker said. The park, a former dump site, was closed abruptly Saturday after earlier soil tests, ordered by Wayne County officials, revealed elevated levels of lead and other contaminants.

"That's just scary," Becker said, adding that she and other family members plan to get tested for possible exposure to lead.

The issue has raised questions about how long Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and others knew about the problem — and why nothing was done sooner.

Cicirelli has said that a letter from the county in 2002 hinted at the need to possibly clean up the park. But, she said Tuesday that county officials didn't draw city leaders into talks until earlier this year.

That's not good enough for Becker.

"How dare our mayor or any administration hide something as horrendous as lead in our soil," she said.

Except for a paved walking path along the park's perimeter, the entire park was ordered closed Saturday by Cicirelli.

Cicirelli called the closing precautionary and temporary until it can be determined what cleanup efforts may be needed at the park, used by thousands of people each year for soccer, baseball and such events as Relay for Life.

The closing of the county-owned park, southwest of Ford and Carlson near the city's government complex, was publicly announced Monday night during a Westland City Council meeting by Cicirelli, who was accompanied by Northville environmental attorney James G. Fausone.

"It's not an emergency situation," Fausone told the *Observer* after the meeting.

Earlier in the day, Cicirelli said when contacted at her office that neither the county nor the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality had forced the city to close the park.

"No one has ever said to us that this is a dangerous site," Cicirelli said.

PLEASE SEE PARK, A4

**Anderson's 'journey' lands him in Senate**



Glenn Anderson is greeted by Patty Linna (right) and many other supporters at the Democratic Party in Livonia where he waited until after midnight to claim the 6th State Senate District seat from incumbent Laura Toy.

PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Toy voted out after 26 years in elective office**

BY MATT JACHMAN AND DAVE VARGA  
STAFF WRITERS

Glenn Anderson walked the Michigan Senate's 6th District for so long, he told supporters early Wednesday, he's seen the trees green up and their leaves change colors.

Those months of campaigning paid off Tuesday for the Westland Democrat, as he won a squeaky-close state Senate race against incumbent Republican Laura Toy.

Anderson, a term-limited state representative from Westland, edged Toy, of Livonia, in the district, which is made up of Livonia, Redford Township, Garden City and Westland.

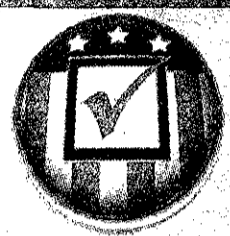
"I think we have a new state senator. I guess I'm going ...," Anderson said, pausing to acknowledge rising cheers and applause, as he announced his win just after midnight at the Quality Inn on Plymouth Road. The victory was a highlight during local Democrats' celebration of wins for their party.

"It's just been incredible. What a journey it's been," Anderson said.

Anderson, a former Westland City Council member, took just under 51 percent of the nearly 97,500 votes cast in the race, totaling 49,492 votes. Toy, who rose to prominence in Livonia city politics and has held elected office

PLEASE SEE ANDERSON, A4

**ELECTION 2006**



The totals represent how voters in the Westland Observer readership area voted in Tuesday's General Election. The overall winner is denoted by a ✓.

<b>U.S. Senate</b>	
✓ R - Michael Bouchard	9,004
✓ D - Debbie Stabenow (I)	17,586
<b>11th U.S. House</b>	
✓ R - Thaddeus McCotter (I)	10,056
D - Tony Trupiano	14,383
<b>Governor</b>	
✓ R - Dick DeVos	9,720
✓ D - Jennifer Granholm (I)	17,118
<b>Secretary of State</b>	
✓ R - Terri Lynn Land (I)	12,938
D - Carmella Sabaugh	13,048
<b>Attorney General</b>	
✓ R - Mike Cox (I)	13,029
D - Amos Williams	12,846
<b>State Prop 1 (recreation fund)</b>	
✓ Yes	21,015
No	4,225
<b>State Prop 2 (civil rights)</b>	
✓ Yes	15,444
No	10,974
<b>State Prop 3 (dove hunting)</b>	
✓ Yes	7,446
No	18,705
<b>State Prop 4 (eminent domain)</b>	
✓ Yes	19,923
No	5,925
<b>State Prop 5 (school funding)</b>	
✓ Yes	10,584
No	15,005
<b>6th State Senate</b>	
✓ D - Glenn Anderson	17,343
R - Laura Toy (I)	9,323
<b>18th State House</b>	
R - Sam Durante	6,298
✓ D - Richard LeBlanc	19,065
<b>County Executive</b>	
✓ D - Robert Ficano (I)	19,833
R - Ramon J. Patrick	6,195
<b>12th County Commission</b>	
✓ D - Kay Beard (I)	19,422
<b>18th District Court</b>	
✓ Sandra Cicirelli	17,006
Jennifer Thor	5,226

**LeBlanc: Creating jobs to be his top priority**

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

After soaring to victory over two opponents in Tuesday's 18th District state House race, Democrat Richard LeBlanc said efforts to create new jobs will be his top priority in Lansing.

"People have been affected in a very bad way by the economy," LeBlanc, 48, said. "We

need to do what we can to prop up our citizens through job creation."

On the campaign trail, LeBlanc encountered a \$13-an-hour worker who hasn't had a pay raise in 14 years and whose family has no health insurance. That, LeBlanc said, must change.

LeBlanc sailed easily to a

PLEASE SEE LEBLANC, A4



It was all smiles for Richard LeBlanc as he shared his victory with his mother, Jackie LeBlanc-Murphy (left), and his wife, Cheryl, at the AMVETS Hall in Westland.

**Judge sentences teen to 12 years in prison**

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Westland teen and star athlete Jeremy Peer was sentenced Wednesday to 12 years in prison for driving off a Florida road, killing a woman, injuring her husband and leaving the scene.

Peer, an 18-year-old Livonia Franklin High graduate, learned his fate when he was sentenced by Bay County Circuit Judge Dedee S. Costello.

Under Florida law, Peer won't be eligible for release until he serves just over 10 years in prison, said Joe Grammer, Florida assistant state attorney.

Peer's sentencing came after a Florida jury in October convicted him on charges of leaving the scene of an accident with a death. The accident, which occurred April 17



Jeremy Peer

during a spring break trip in Panama City Beach, resulted in the death of 33-year-old Colleen Martin and injury of her husband, Monty.

Testimony during Peer's trial indicated that he drank beer and several shots of alcohol prior to the accident.

Peer could have received a 15-year prison term.

He had started attending Adrian College, where he was on the football team, before he was convicted Oct. 25 and jailed pending his sentencing.

After serving his prison time, Peer will remain on probation for three years, Grammer said. The probation will include a ban on driving, an order not to drink alco-

Peer's sentencing came after a Florida jury in October convicted him on charges of leaving the scene of an accident with a death. The accident occurred April 17 during a spring break trip in Panama City Beach.

hol, and a \$10,000 fine.

"Peer's father and sister spoke at sentencing, and Peer's attorney provided a packet of 22 letters in support of leniency," according to a statement issued by Grammer's office.

The judge also heard a statement from Colleen Martin's mother and

received letters from Martin's two sisters.

Peer drove off Front Beach Road about 10 p.m. April 17 and was arrested a couple hours later, when an alert hotel employee saw the damaged vehicle and notified authorities.

Peer has denied drinking alcohol on the night of the accident.

Witness Steven Wolfe testified that he saw Peer's vehicle veer off the road and strike Colleen Martin, who was thrown onto the hood of the Jeep Commander.

Wolfe testified that Peer hit his brakes and that he drove over Martin after she was flung from the vehicle.

Wolfe said Peer stopped in a nearby parking lot before leaving the scene.

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**Coming Sunday in Health**  
Nov. 16 is the date for the annual Great American Smokeout, a time to encourage stop smoking efforts.



John Glenn's Jacob Jefferson as Jimmy (from left), Angelo Settler as Mr. Oswald and Jeremiah Austin as Bill rehearse their lines in preparation for this weekend's production of 'Here Comes the Brides.'

PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## Glenn thespians stage 'Here Comes the Brides'

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

There's plenty to laugh about when a young man ends up with three "brides" in the John Glenn High School Theatrical Guild's production of *Here Comes the Brides* this weekend.

"I chose this play three years ago, but waited for the right cast and the right opportunity," director Sheri Grove said. "It has two male leads. That's a rare commodity, so I waited until I had two real strong guys who could work with each other and pull off the comedy."

Performances will be at 7 p.m. this evening through Saturday in the high school auditorium. Tickets cost \$5 for students and \$7 for adults and are available at the door.

Playing the male leads are Jacob Jefferson as Jimmy Took and Jeremiah Austin as his roommate, Bill.

The play centers on Jimmy, who tries to get his girlfriend Madge, played by Ashley Johnson, to pose as his wife for his wealthy Uncle Dan, played by Aaron Hurst.

Madge refuses, so Jimmy tries to get a nearsighted neighbor, Mr. Oswald, played by Angelo Settler, and then his roommate to play the part. Confusion reigns when Jimmy finds himself trying to



Caitlin Burns plays Lady Macbeth and Julie Flacks is Ms. McDaniel in the John Glenn High School Theatrical Guild's production of 'Here Comes the Brides.'

keep Uncle Dan from meeting his three "brides."

Also appearing in the production is Megan Walker as Aunt Ellen, Amber Fernitz as Peg Westfield, Melanie DeView as Mrs. Duvall-Smythe, Dayna Krushlin as "Bubbles" Duvall, Caitlin Burns as Lady Macbeth and Julie Flacks as Ms. McDaniel.

The cast features 11 veteran thespians, all juniors and seniors, and is one of the smallest casts in many years, Grove said.

"What this did was limit our ability to offer roles to underclassmen," she said. "Usually, we offer them smaller parts to get their feet wet. I like to get incoming freshmen and sophomores

involved because they're our building blocks, but this cast was so suited to this play."

Joining Grove in the director's chair is Belinda Walakonis-Semak.

Technical director is Dan Fowler, with Sarah Drum as stage manager and Tomatook Rogers as assistant stage manager.

DeView and Johnson are pulling double duty as assistant directors. Both seniors completed an essay about why they wanted to fill the spot.

This is Johnson's fourth production.

"It's the next step in theater and I thought it would be fun," Johnson said. "I get to see both sides — from the director's side and the cast

side." This is DeView's second play. A soccer player with a spring season, she has been limited to being in the fall plays.

"I've been in drama class since I was a sophomore, this is something I like to do on the side," she said, adding that "it's really fun and I'm able to figure out I did something wrong."

The troupe has been in rehearsals for five weeks with the crunch coming this week with dress rehearsals Monday and Tuesday evenings and performances for middle school students and senior citizens Wednesday in advance of opening night.

Monday the cast worked around crew members hanging pictures on the walls of the set and working on getting two wall sconces to stay lit.

In addition to Drum and Rogers, the crew includes Kelly Dodson, Jackie Garrett, Breanna Luckett, Hayley Orzech, Jeff Pringle, Aimee Sexton, Chelsey Young, Jessica Dotson, Mason Eubank, Sam Hatfield, Amanda Mirabitor, Lauren Orzech and April Thomas.

"It always comes together miraculously," Grove said.

smason@hometownlife.com  
(734) 953-2112

## 100 years and counting

### Westland centenarian described as 'amazing'

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

It's the dawn of a new day from Joan Boles who woke up this morning a "young" 100 years old.

Born in 1906, Boles isn't letting the century mark slow her down. She'll continue to care for herself, enjoy shopping and write in her journals.

"She's great, she never gives up, she always keeps busy," said her daughter Judy Wilson. "She still goes dancing, still crochets. She has emphysema, but she's like she's in her 60s. She's amazing."

Boles was born in Baltimore, Md., and as a young woman attended Bryant and Stratton National Business College where she studied business. She also studied journalism through the William Randolph Hearst newspaper organization.

"She writes novels" said Wilson of Westland. "I've read some of them and they're pretty good. She keeps saying 'if I could only get them published some day, maybe in my next 100 years.'"

"Her dream is to some day have them published."

She also worked for the U.S. Army at Fort George Meade in Maryland as a medical secretary and as the secretary for the archivist for the state of Maryland.

She was 40 when she moved to Michigan. Her last job was with the Michigan Arthritis Foundation.

"My dad died when I was four and she worked two to three jobs," Wilson recalled.

In addition to Wilson, Boles has a son living in Florida, six grandchildren and five great-



Joan Boles

grandchildren. Two of her great-grandchildren, ages 7 and 9, call her "mom-mom" and understand what being 100 means. Boles glosses over

that, she likes the name because it contains mom, Wilson said.

Boles spends her days making afghans, cooking, reading and shopping. One of her favorite activities is shopping with her two granddaughters April and Julie.

"She has good taste in clothes," said Wilson. "Once in awhile she gets crazy with the colors and we have to tone her down. When styles change, she takes every piece of her clothes and sews by hand to alter them."

"She already has her outfit picked out for her party."

She also loves parties and never misses the opportunity to get up and dance. She will party on Saturday at Station 885 in Plymouth. Twenty family members and friends will be on hand for the festivities, but Wilson expects there will be others stopping by to congratulate her on her longevity.

Wilson has spent time tracking down good wishes for the birthday girl and one was a card from President and Mrs. George Bush. She found it pretty exciting.

"I always try to find her things like that," Wilson said. "She deserves that for her first 100 years. Now we'll see what she does for the next 100 years."

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

## Library host performance of classic dance of India

People interested in dance can see one of the oldest of all classical dance forms in India during a program at the William P. Faust Public Library on Monday, Nov. 13.

Students from the Natyakala Dance Academy and instructor, Venky Lakshmanan will perform the Bharatanatyam. Lakshmanan trained and received many medals in her native country of India.

The Bharatanatyam is known for its grace, purity and tenderness.

It is one of the most popular and widely performed dance styles in India and is practiced by male and female dancers all

over the country.

The dance is the manifestation of the south Indian idea of the celebration of the eternal universe through the celebration of the beauty of the material body. The movements of an authentic Bharatanatyam dancer are said to resemble the movements of a dancing flame.

The library program will feature colorful costumes and traditional music.

The dance performance is free of charge and no registration is needed.

The library is on Central City Parkway north of Ford. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

## WESTLAND Observer

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### HOW TO REACH US

**Susan Rosiek**  
Executive Editor  
(734) 953-2100  
srosiek@hometownlife.com

**Hugh Gallagher**  
Managing Editor  
(734) 953-2149  
hgallagher@hometownlife.com

**Sue Mason**  
Community Editor  
(734) 953-2112  
smason@hometownlife.com

**Jeannie Parent**  
Retail Sales Manager  
(734) 953-2177  
jparent@hometownlife.com

**Cathy White**  
Retail Advertising Rep.  
(734) 953-2073  
cwhite@hometownlife.com

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Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Sunday 8 a.m. to noon

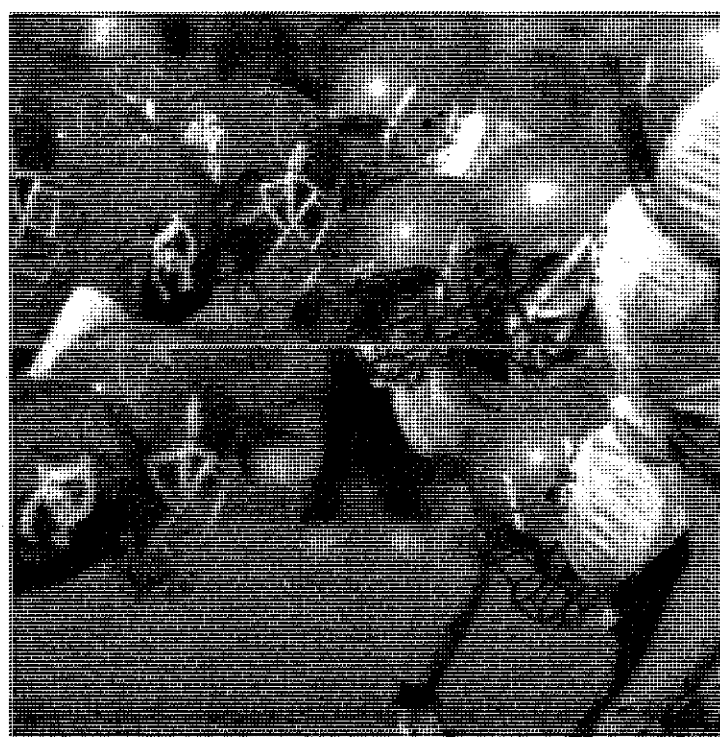
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		6 Month	\$54.45
		3 Month	\$27.25

### POSTAL PERIODICAL REQUIREMENTS

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

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TO ALL CREDITORS\*  
\*whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Alice M. Maloney, who lived at 7789 Terri Drive, Westland, Michigan, died August 29, 2008.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Patricia A. Rockafellow of 5055 Corvallis Drive, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, named trustee within 4 months of the date of publication of this notice.

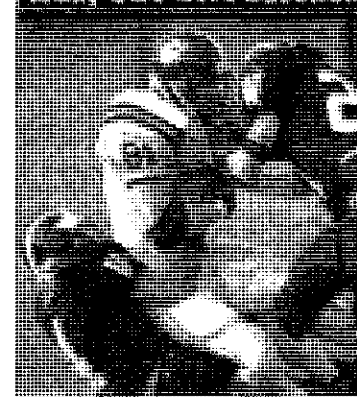
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# Beard says more jobs a goal for new term

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Kay Beard, unopposed Tuesday as she clinched her 15th consecutive term as a Wayne County commissioner, could relax and joke.

"If I don't win," she said, "something's terribly wrong."

Indeed. Despite a few token write-in votes, Beard captured 98.6 percent of totals from Westland, Inkster and south Livonia.

Beard, D-Westland, received 32,501 votes compared to 456 for write-in candidates in the 12th District.

Beard, 85, will start her new two-year term with her top goal of trying to push for job growth in Wayne County.

"The economy just shadows everything," she said.

Beard was unopposed in Tuesday's election after beating Democratic challenger Vernell Massey in the Aug. 8 primary. She didn't have to campaign to retain her seat Tuesday.

"I didn't do a lot of fund-raising," she said. "I didn't want to get in the way of people who needed



Beard

to raise money." Beard hasn't faced a serious challenge since the early 1990s. She even trounced former Westland Mayor Robert Thomas two years ago, in a race that some political insiders mistakenly believed would be close.

On the job front, Beard held out hope for the development of land in the Pinnacle Aeropark business and technology park, just south of Detroit Metro Airport. Beard also voiced hope that the auto industry will rebound from difficult times.

"We live and die by the auto companies in this area in Michigan," she said.

Beard pledged to continue working hard for the county and her constituents.

"I'm very grateful to the people for their continuing support, and I feel a real sense of responsibility in trying to do a good job on their behalf," she said.

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

# Cicirelli begins transition to district judge

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

After winning a landslide victory in Tuesday's election, Sandra Cicirelli will move swiftly toward her transition from mayor to Westland 18th District Court judge.

She will attend a mandatory school for new judges in Lansing, and she will spend time sitting on the bench with retiring Judge Gail McKnight to see how she handles her job.

"I'm very excited," Cicirelli said Tuesday night, after trouncing opponent Jennifer Thor to clinch a six-year judicial term. "Ever since I went to law school, I remember thinking that someday I would like to be a judge."

Cicirelli, 54, will start her \$138,272-a-year job on Jan. 1 after capturing 76 percent of vote totals compared to Thor's nearly 24 percent.

Cicirelli accumulated 17,006 votes to Thor's 5,226 in a Westland election that had a 46.7 percent turnout.

"I feel fantastic and very honored that the residents who have supported me in all my other elections have supported me again," Cicirelli said, celebrating with supporters inside the city's Friendship Center. "I'm very grateful."

An 11th-hour controversy involving allegations that Cicirelli kept quiet about contaminants in Central City Park didn't appear to hurt her campaign.

Cicirelli attributed her huge victory to her record of service as a former Westland City Council member and as



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli hands out pencils shaped like gavels to voters at two precincts at Madison Elementary Tuesday. Holding one of the pencils is Ross Price, 6, who was there with his parents, Ricardo and Jonelle, and brother Ryan, 8.

mayor. She will leave her mayoral job after serving one year of her second four-year term.

"The people know and trust me," Cicirelli said Tuesday night, also citing her courtroom experience in criminal, civil and appellate matters.

Thor, contacted at her home Tuesday night, described herself as pleased with her showing as a first-time candidate.

"I am amazed and grateful for all the support that everyone showed me, considering that I was an unknown," she said.

Now that she has gained

some name recognition, Thor confirmed that she will consider a bid to replace Westland District Judge C. Charles Bokos when he retires in two years.

"I haven't made that decision yet, but I am leaning toward it," she said.

Cicirelli, who marked her 21st anniversary as an attorney this month, hugged McKnight during her victory celebration. McKnight said she has invited Cicirelli to sit with her on the bench when she has time.

"It just makes for an easier transition," McKnight said. "I look forward as a friend to assisting her with the transi-

tion. I know she's going to do a good job."

Under city charter rules, Westland City Council President William Wild will assume the mayor's position when Cicirelli leaves. He is expected to serve at least until the next round of city elections next November.

Cicirelli pledged to help Wild prepare for the job, and Wild said he is ready for it.

"I'm prepared to step in," he said Wednesday, "and I'm looking forward to sitting down with the mayor and starting the transition period."

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

# Woman to stand trial in fatal accident case

A Westland woman has been ordered bound over for trial on a charge killing a pedestrian while driving drunk.

Cheryl Weilnau, 42, waived her preliminary examination Tuesday on a charge of operating under the influence of liquor causing death, a 15-year felony. Weilnau continued to be held in lieu of \$20,000 cash bond.

Redford 17th District Court Judge Charlotte Wirth handled the case which had been transferred from Westland after the district court judges recused themselves since Weilnau is related to a Westland Police

officer. Weilnau is charged with being intoxicated when her vehicle struck Andre Thomas LaFaive as he walked east-bound in the curb lane of Ford east of Wayne Road in the early hours of Oct. 28.

A Westland resident, LaFaive was reported to have suffered severe head injuries after being struck by the vehicle. He was initially taken to Garden City Hospital, then transported to the University of Michigan Hospital where he died.

Wayne County Circuit Court arraignment for Weilnau has been scheduled for Nov. 21.



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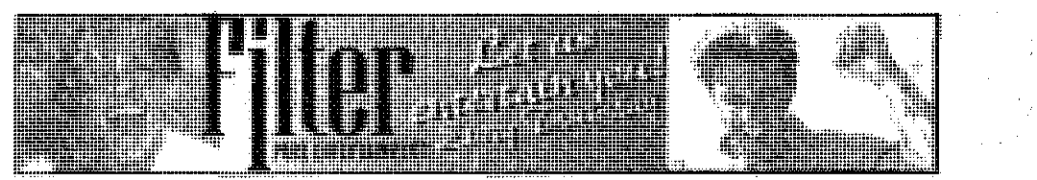
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## LEBLANC

FROM PAGE A1  
two-year term by capturing 73 percent of vote totals in the Westland district, compared to 24.1 percent for Republican Sam Durante and 2.8 percent for U.S. Taxpayers candidate Harold Dunn.

In raw numbers, LeBlanc garnered 19,065 votes to Durante's 6,298 and Dunn's 710, in unofficial tallies. LeBlanc will succeed state Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, who won a state Senate seat.

LeBlanc - a Ford Motor Co. staffer, nine-year Westland City Council member and former Wayne-Westland school board trustee - celebrated victory Tuesday with a large crowd of supporters inside the AMVETS Post 171 on Merriman Road.

"I think Richard LeBlanc knows the views of the working class," said Bill Johnson, United Auto Workers Local 900 plant chairman of the Wayne Assembly Plant. "He has always had the best interest of his constituents at heart."

LeBlanc's mother, Jackie LeBlanc-Murphy, beamed with pride as her son commanded an early lead in vote totals. In all, 46.7 percent of Westland's 58,826 voters cast ballots.

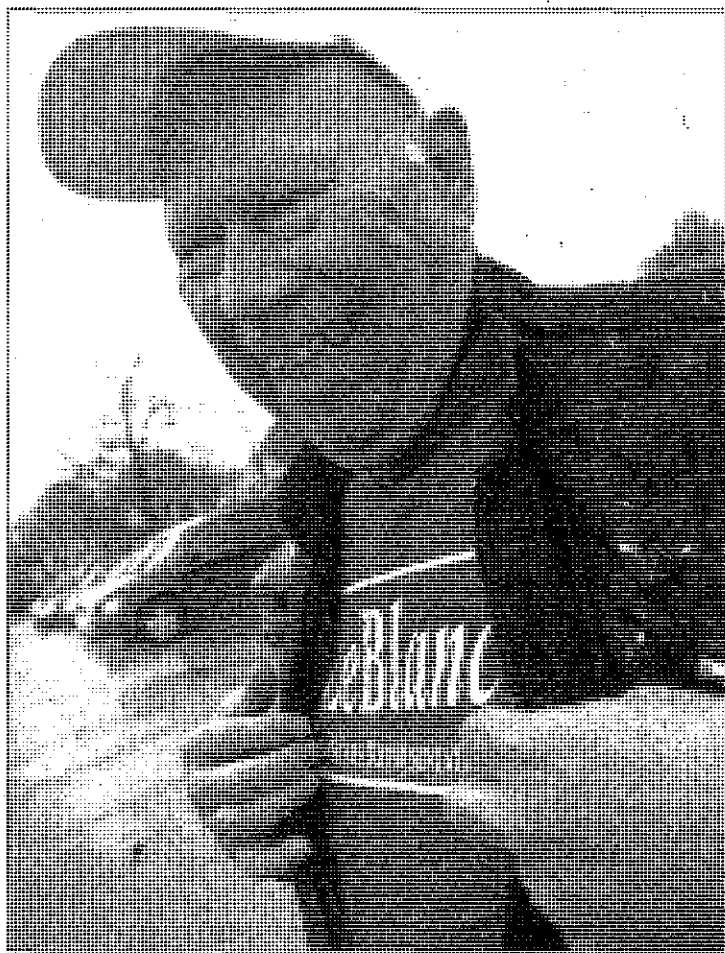
"I've always been proud of Richard, and I've always said that every mother should have a son like him," she said. "He accomplishes his goals, and much of the thanks goes to his wife, Cheryl, for allowing him to do it."

LeBlanc-Murphy said she had expected a landslide victory for LeBlanc because of his untiring commitment to Westland.

"Westland won this election," she said.

LeBlanc also credited his supporters who have followed him during his entire political career, and he attributed his sweeping victory to his consistency in representing them.

"They know what to expect. They know that I'll be there for



Tom Yanity, volunteer for Richard LeBlanc's campaign, proudly shows his support outside the precincts at Madison Elementary.

them," he said.

LeBlanc campaigned through Election Day even though many political insiders viewed the race as over when he won the August primary in the 18th District - a longtime Democratic stronghold.

"I really did expect to win, and I expected that voters would support my candidacy by a substantial margin," LeBlanc said Tuesday night.

LeBlanc cited jobs and economic growth as top priorities that need addressing in Lansing.

"I realize that I'll be one fish in a much larger sea in Lansing, but what I want for Westland will not change," he said.

LeBlanc will start his new \$79,650-a-year job on Jan. 1.

He will leave behind a City Council vacancy that will be filled by a council appointment.

Tuesday night, Durante confirmed that he will seek LeBlanc's council seat.

As vote totals came in Tuesday, Durante said that "if LeBlanc wins, then I will go after his seat on the City Council. I was a relatively unknown candidate when I ran for the House seat, but I want to serve the people of Westland in one capacity or another."

Durante said he won't challenge LeBlanc in two years as long as LeBlanc works hard to represent the 18th District.

"If he doesn't," Durante said, "then I will run again."

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## ANDERSON

FROM PAGE A1  
for 26 years, took 47,590 votes.

Viewed as an underdog until recently, Anderson said economic issues gave him an edge with voters.

He supported the 21st Century Jobs Fund, an effort to diversify the state's economy, while Toy did not. "I knew we had to do something innovative," he said.

Toy, who called Anderson Wednesday morning to congratulate him, said she knew the election would be close. She took Livonia by a comfortable margin, but won barely one-third of the Westland vote and also lost in Garden City and Redford.

"We didn't expect to win Westland. He did very well

there. I don't think it's anything we did personally, my staff or my supporters," she said by phone Wednesday.

Toy said national politics had an effect on her race.

"There was a lot of discord out there from the federal level," she said. "Instead of a person thing going on, it was a party thing."

Both candidates were the targets of negative campaign fliers and television ads. Toy said she heard complaints about what some viewed as race-baiting ads.

"So many of these things come from the state party and there's so much coming fast and furious," she said. She said she hadn't seen many of the mailers. "You don't have any control over it, so help me God."

Said Anderson of the attack

tactics: "We didn't initiate that." Anderson offered thanks to family members, campaign staff members and volunteers in brief remarks at the Quality Inn.

Later, he said the new state Legislature will focus on improving Michigan's sagging economy. The state's Democratic governor, Jennifer Granholm, was elected to a second term Tuesday, and the party also gained a majority of seats in the state House of Representatives.

"We're going to be able to do some innovative things to turn Michigan around," Anderson said.

Toy, who co-owns Cardwell Florist in Livonia, said she plans to stay active after catching up on her rest. "There are other opportunities out there," she said.

## PARK

FROM PAGE A1  
Even some council members confirmed they hadn't been officially notified in writing of the park's closing until late Monday afternoon, mere hours before the meeting.

"I was kind of upset about it," Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt said. "I don't like to be kept in the dark."

Graunstadt, known for her strong stance on environmental issues, asked, "Who in the city knew what - and when?" She first learned of the situation from the media.

Cicirelli and Fausone insisted that no one who used the park would likely have been threatened by lead, which Fausone said was found on such areas as the western ballfields.

Cicirelli's announcement Monday came on the eve of an election in which she won a judicial seat in Westland 18th District Court.

Tim Bailey, president of the Wayne-Westland Soccer League, told the *Observer* on Monday that he hadn't received any advance notice of the situation. He had placed a call to Westland Parks and Recreation Director Robert Kosowski.

Barring any direct notification from city officials, he said Monday afternoon, "I cannot make a statement or quote my opinion."

After Monday's meeting, Cicirelli and Fausone confirmed that the county once used the park area as a dump site and that soil tests have been conducted several times over the years. Cicirelli didn't pinpoint any specific report that led to the park's closing.

She confirmed that more soil tests will be done, and she said the city will work with county and MDEQ officials to arrange any cleanup efforts, which she said will be the county's responsibility.

During the meeting, Councilman Michael Kehrer said he only learned of the park's closing Monday.

"It was news to me when I saw the signs and got the letter in my (mail) box" at City Hall, he said.

On Tuesday, council President William Wild said he first learned of a possible problem late last week, when the mayor told him that she would be closing the park. He said she told him that the council would get more information Monday.

Another councilman, Robert Stottlemeyer, said, "This is something we've got to watch carefully," adding that any cleanup efforts must be done properly in a popular park used by children.

Councilman Charles Pickering chastised Graunstadt for not calling the mayor's office after she was contacted by reporters.

"I feel secure in that the administration is on top of the situation," Pickering said.

Wild called the park's closing "an administra-



Barricades block off a parking lot of the east side of Central City Park which was closed Saturday amid reports of findings of levels of lead in the popular recreational site.

tive decision," but he said the council will be involved in what happens. He said a council study session will be called to discuss the issue.

On Tuesday, Graunstadt said Cicirelli should have called a meeting with council members as soon as she learned that the park was contaminated.

"Now we're playing catchup," Graunstadt said. "I really have this suspicion when we're not being brought into the process of something of this magnitude."

Wild said that, if there is a contamination problem that needs to be addressed, "we are going to fix it."

Fausone said the park was studied by strict standards more typically used to evaluate a residential area.

"People who used the ballpark shouldn't be very worried about this," he said after Monday's meeting.

Fausone added that children shouldn't be in danger unless they regularly ingested contaminated soil or came into almost-daily contact by skin.

Potential cleanup efforts, he said, could be as simple as topping the contaminated soil with fresh dirt or hauling away some dirt from the park.

With the soccer and baseball seasons ending, Cicirelli said this seemed like the time to close the park and seek remedies.

"We want the problem defined quickly and to get it taken care of," she said.

Meanwhile, the Wayne County Health Department confirmed Wednesday that lead testing for children and adults is provided at no cost. The closest office is at 33030 Van Born Road in Wayne. The phone number is (734) 727-7100.

More information about services also can be found by going online to www.waynecounty.com.

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**Vets Day program**

The Harris Kehrer VFW Post 3323 will present a Veterans Day ceremony at 11 a.m. Saturday at the post, 1055 S. Wayne Road at Avondale in Westland.

The ceremony will be followed by a luncheon in the post's club room.

The post also is hold a craft show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18. Tables are available at \$25 each. For more information, contact Richard Eberhart at (734) 812-7978.

And the post is starting off the holiday season with a Red Cross blood drive 1-7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 24. Call the post at 721-9876.

**Annual bazaar**

The Village of Westland will hold its annual bazaar and bake sale 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at the senior community at 32001 Cherry Hill, west of Merriman, in Westland.

**Scrapbooking event**

Scrapbookers and picture people are invited to Another Hot Crop! and Holiday Open House 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 25 at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford.

Sponsored by the Westland Jaycees, the event allows scrapbookers the time and space to devote to their scrapbooks and pick up new ideas, tips and techniques. Non-scrapbookers and beginners can learn how to preserve their memories and photos.

The cost is \$35 for the all day crop. It includes lunch and dinner, goody bag, cropping space and much more. Album supplies and tools will be available for purchase.

The event will benefit the Westland Fire Department which is raising money to purchase a thermal imager.

For more information or to reserve a spot, call Lisa Graham at (734) 718-5705 or contact her by e-mail at Lisa.Graham@sbcglobal.net.

**Craft show**

VFW Post 3323 and its Ladies Auxiliary is holding a holiday craft show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at the post, 1055 S. Wayne Road, Westland. There will be a snack bar, and vendors are still needed. Call Rich at (812) 734-7978.

**Poker tournament**

The Westland Jaycees will hold a two-day Texas Hold 'Em Tournament Friday-Saturday, Nov. 10-11, at the Bailey Recreation Center on Ford west of Wayne Road. The tournament will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday, and the top 21 players will return on Sunday for a chance at the \$1,000 top prize.

Spots in the tournament are available at the door and through pre-registration. Registration cost is \$80.

There also will be a Vegas Room available both nights. Vegas Room games include Roulette, Big Wheel, Blackjack, 7 Card and Let it Ride. Food and beverages also will be available.

For more information, call (734) 226-0400.

**Pancake breakfast**

Westland Civitan Club will hold an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast at 8-10 a.m. Saturday at Applebee's Restaurant on Warren at Central City Parkway in Westland.

Breakfast includes pancakes, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee, tea or milk. Tickets are \$6 each with children age 3 and under free. Proceeds will be used for ongoing community projects that enhance the quality of life for those in the Westland community who are physically and mentally challenged.

**Poker game**

The St. Theodore's Men's Club will hold at Texas Hold 'Em poker game 7-11:30 p.m.

Friday in the church social hall, 8200 N. Wayne Road, Westland.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. Refreshments will be available and there also will be a 50/50 raffle. Players must be at least age 18 to play and age 21 to drink. Top prize will be \$500.

The cost is a \$40 buy in and only 110 tickets will be sold in advance. No tickets will be available at the door. For tickets, call Mary at the parish office at (734) 425-4421, voice mail No. 10 or Ken at (734) 634-4898.

**Holiday helpers**

Community Hospice is seeking volunteers to help with its Tree of Memories holiday fund-

raiser. Activities include setting up Christmas trees at local businesses, assembling mail pieces, and collecting donations at the Westland Shopping Center exhibit.

No experience necessary, just a desire to help others facing terminal illness. Training will be provided. For more information, call Vicki at (734) 522-4244.

**Attention, shoppers**

Westland Shopping Center and Macy's will sponsor a half-day "shopping extravaganza" starting at 9 a.m. Friday, Nov. 17, at the mall. The cost is \$25, and the event is open to the first 100 people who respond. The event is being presented by the

Westland Chamber of Commerce.

Guests will report to Macy's for a continental breakfast provided by Panera Bread and a holiday make-up presentation by Clinique.

The day will continue with shopping for holiday gifts at participating merchants. Every participant will receive discounts and giveaways at certain stores. The day will end at 1 p.m. at Lakeshore Grill with lunch and door prize drawings.

To sign up or for more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

**Euchre games**

Friday Night Euchre/Pinochle Card Parties

start at 7:30 p.m. at St. Bernardine Parish in Westland. Doors open at 7 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 Nov. 17, Dec. 1, 15, Jan. 7, 5, 12, 26 and Feb. 2, 9, 16. For more information, call (734) 427-5150.

**Praise and worship**

Westwood Community Church holds praise and worship services at 10 a.m. Sundays at 6500 N. Wayne Road at Hunter in Westland. The church also offers a children's church and nursery. For more information, call (734) 254-0093.

**Pancake breakfast**

The Westland senior Friendship Center holds an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast 8:30-11 a.m. the second Thursday of the month at the center on Newburgh south of Ford.

The cost \$4 per person for buttermilk or multi-grain pancakes, coffee, juice, low fat milk, sausage and bacon. Sugar free syrup will be available.

**Bingo**

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

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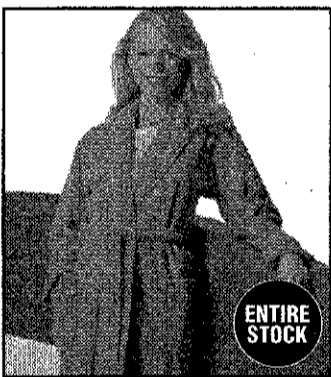
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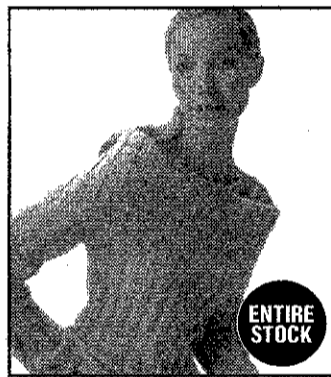
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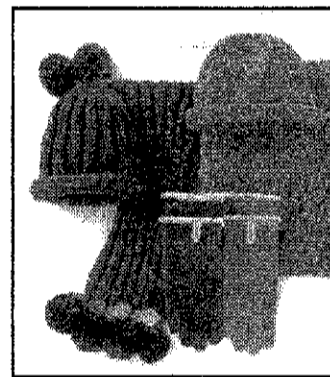
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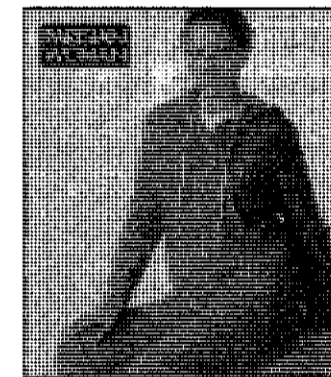
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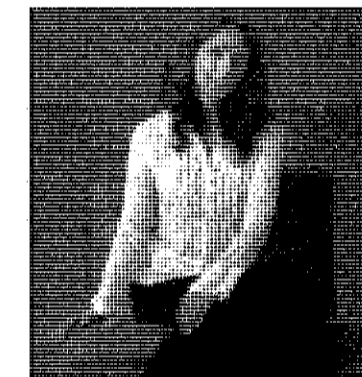
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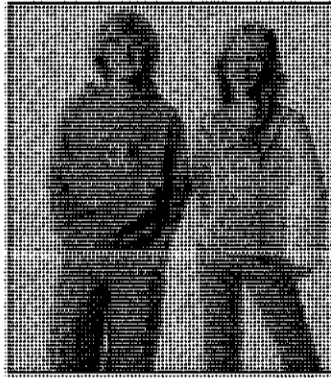
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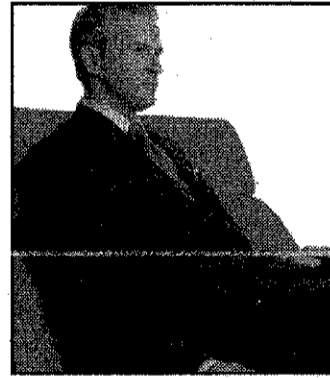
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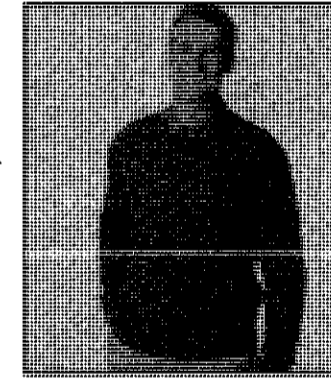
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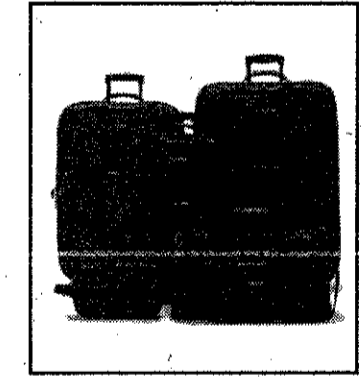
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Listings for the Community Calendar should be submitted in writing. They can be mailed to Sue Mason at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, by fax at (734) 591-7279 or by e-mail at smason@oe.homecomm.net. For more information, call (734) 953-2112.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**'Capturing ancestors'**  
The Western Wayne County Genealogical Society will be meeting at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, at the Livonia Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road, in Livonia. Speaker Susan Vitali will discuss "Capturing Your Ancestors Through Photos and Journaling." At 6:30 p.m., a session will cover online book catalogs available through the library. Guests are welcome. The group's Web site is www.rootsweb.com/~miwccgs. Contact Margie (734) 522-4050.

**Civil War roundtable**  
The Abraham Lincoln Civil War Round Table hosts Jerry Maxwell 8 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16. An instructor at Michigan State University, Maxwell has been a lecturer/presenter of historical subjects since 1972. His topic will be "Six Heroes of Shiloh." The meeting is at 8 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Museum, 155 S. Main in downtown Plymouth. The public is invited; admission is free. For more information call (734) 459-7324.

**Crafters needed**  
Crafters are needed for the 18th annual juried arts and crafts show Saturday, Nov. 18, at Sts. Peter and Paul Church Hall, 750 N. Beech Daly, Dearborn Heights. For more information, call Virginia or Deb at (734) 522-9653 or (248) 348-6823.

**Rummage sale**  
A rummage sale benefiting Motor City Youth Brass Band will be held 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, at VFW Post 345, 27345 Schoolcraft, just east of Inkster Road, Redford. Clothing, toys, small appliances and other household items will be available for sale. Refreshments also will be sold. Tables also are available for rent tables for \$25. Funds raised will support the newly developed youth brass band program under the auspices of Motor City Brass Band. For more information, or to register for a rental table, contact Laurie at motorcitybrassband@yahoo.com.

**New Year's Eve party**  
Urban Singles presents "Ring in the New Year," with live entertainment from Jimmy Howard and Company Sunday, Dec. 31. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; the party goes until 1 a.m. The party takes place at the Livonia Elks,

31117 Plymouth Road in Livonia (between Merriman and Middlebelt). Tickets are \$50 per person until Dec. 8; \$60 after Dec. 8, and cover dinner and beverage. Dinner is served at 7:30 p.m. Overnight accommodations will be available. Deadline for tickets is Friday, Dec. 22. For more information, call Linda, (734) 507-9173, or Mary Ann, (734) 654-0115.

**BINGO**

**VFW Bingo**  
Veterans of Foreign Wars 3323 Auxiliary has bingo 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 1055 S. Wayne Road, Westland. There is a snack bar. The post has bingo at 1 p.m. every Sunday at the same place. Call (734) 326-3323.

**St. Mel Church**  
Bingo begins at 6:45 p.m. Fridays in St. Mel Church activities building, on Inkster Road north of Warren. Doors open at 4 p.m. Food is available.

**Shamrock Bingo**  
Bingo begins at 11 a.m. Wednesdays at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 35100 Van Born, east of Wayne Road in Wayne. Doors open at 9 a.m. Food is available. Proceeds go to charity. Call (734) 728-3020.

**K of C Bingo**  
Pope John XXIII Assembly of the Knights of Columbus Council 1536 hosts bingo games at 6:45 p.m. Thursdays. The games are in the Livonia Elks Lodge, 31117 Plymouth Road, one block east of Merriman in Livonia. Call (734) 425-2246.

**FOR SENIORS**

**Friendship Center**  
The Senior Resources Department (Friendship Center), 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland, offers a variety of programs for older adults. The Web site www.ci.westland.mi.us offers more information. Call (734) 722-7632.

**Senior dinners**  
The Wayne Ford Civic League hosts Senior Dinner Dances with live entertainment several times each month for couples and singles 50 years and older. The cost is \$8 donation for members of the league and \$10 donation for non-members. All dances start at noon and run until 3:30 p.m. Meals include beer, wine, and fountain pop. For information and schedules, call (734) 728-5010

**Crochet & Knit**  
A crochet and knit group meets 9:30 a.m. every Friday at the Friendship Center on Newburgh near Marquette. Beverly Kaminski is the instructor. Participants should bring a type "G" crochet hook. Those interested can sign up at the center's front desk or call (734) 722-7632.

**Visually Impaired**

The Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) support group meets 12:30 p.m. every Friday at the Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland. Participants share information and meet others. Those interested in joining can be scheduled on a bus route for transportation. For information, call (734) 722-7632.

**Hearing checks**

Every third Tuesday of each month, a representative from Personalized Hearing Care of Westland will check and clean hearing aids free, 2-3 p.m. by appointment only. Call (734) 722-7632 for more information.

**Exercise**

Simply Jazzercise is designed for exercisers older than 50. The program provides a low to moderate workout. The exercise improves strength, flexibility, balance, posture, coordination and cardiovascular endurance. It incorporates simple dance routines with walking or jogging patterns and resistance exercises. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Light weights and an exercise mat are suggested. Classes are 10:15 a.m. Monday, 5 p.m. Wednesday, 10:15 a.m. Friday, at \$3 per person per class. Sign up at the front desk at the Westland Friendship Center or call (734) 722-7632.

**Travel Group**

The Friendship Travel Group meets 1 p.m. the second Friday of each month (unless a large event is scheduled) in the Westland Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh. Programs include celebration of birthdays, door prizes, description of new classes or programs, speakers from tour companies, overview of day/ overnight trips and refreshments. Call (734) 722-7632.

**Dyer Center**

The Wayne-Westland school district's Dyer Senior Adult Center offers activities Monday-Thursday at the center, on Marquette between Wayne and Newburgh roads. Mondays, Senior Chorus at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, arts, crafts and needlework at 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, kitchen band, 10 a.m.; bingo at 1 p.m.; Thursdays, ceramics, arts, crafts at 9:30 a.m.

**ORGANIZATIONS**

**Toastmasters**

The Westland Easy Talkers Toastmasters Club can help people overcome their fear of speaking in front of people by teaching public speaking in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. The club meets at 6:30 p.m. Thursday evenings at Denny's Restaurant, 7725 Wayne Road at Cowan. For more information, call John Elbe at (734) 414-3401 or Curt

Gottlieb at (734) 525-8445.

**Vietnam Vets**

The Plymouth-Canton Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 528, meet at 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of every month at the Plymouth VFW Post 6695, on S. Mill Street, just north of Ann Arbor Road. If you served in the U.S. military between 1964 and 1975, even, if not, "in country" ( combat zone ) you are still eligible to become a member. Visit the Web site at www.mihometown.com/oe/Plymouth CantonVVA for more information.

**Friends of library**

The Friends of the William P. Faust Public Library organization meets at 2 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the library, 6123 Central City Parkway. Call (734) 326-6123. Meetings last about one hour and are open to the public. The group also holds a book sale during regular library hours at the library.

**In Harmony**

The Wayne Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society meets at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays at Kirk of Our Savior Presbyterian Church, 36660 Cherry Hill, west of Wayne Road, Westland. Gentlemen interested in the chapter's Renaissance Chorus or who enjoy quartetting can call membership chairman Bob Wolf at (734) 421-1652, or attend a rehearsal.

**Civil Air Patrol**

Emergency service is just one of the congressionally mandated missions of the Civil Air Patrol, which includes ground and air search-and-rescue operations. The Civil Air Patrol, which is the official U.S. Air Force auxiliary, is made up of civilian volunteers. To learn more about CAP or training as an air crew or ground team member, contact the Willow Run Composite Squadron (MI-260). Call Capt. Dane Hansen, deputy commander/recruiter, at (734) 485-3021 or visit the Web site www.members.home.net/capliberators/.

**Habitat help**

The Western Wayne affiliate of Habitat for Humanity is seeking volunteers to help with building homes, office duties and fund-raising. No experience necessary. Training will be provided. For information, call (734) 459-7744.

**Veteran's Haven**

Veteran's Haven operates a car, boat, camper and real estate donation program. Donations are tax-deductible. For information, call (734) 728-0527. Food is distributed to veterans once a month throughout the month and there is a supplemental food program 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays. The Veteran Haven's Outreach Center 4924 S. Wayne Road two blocks south of Annapolis in Wayne. Any honorably discharged Veteran that is in need or

homeless and wants a better quality of life can call (734) 728-0527.

**Pet-A-Pet**

The Pet-A-Pet animal visitation program provides pet therapy with the help of volunteers. Pets should be friendly, well-behaved and must have current vaccinations. There is a \$5 membership fee. Volunteer opportunities are available at Hope Nursing Care Center, 6:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month (Marie Johnson, (734) 326-1200), and Marquette House, 10:30 a.m. the second Wednesday of the month (Lorna Johnson, (734) 425-1681). There are also openings at Garden City Hospital, 3 p.m. the fourth Thursday of the month (Stacy Sulda, (734) 458-4392).

**Zonta Club**

The Zonta Club of Northwest Wayne County, a service club to advance the status of women, meets every month on the fourth Monday at the Holiday Inn, Livonia. For more information, call Pat Harris at (734) 420-2920

**Franklin PTSA**

The Franklin High School PTSA is seeking members. Membership is open to those who care about the schools and the community. Members need not have a student in the school. Price is \$3 for students, \$5 for adults. Checks should be made payable to Franklin PTSA and sent to 31000 Joy, Livonia MI 48150.

**Tutorial program**

A tutoring program for students is offered at the Salvation Army Wayne-Westland Corps Community Center, 2300 Venoy in Westland. The program, 3:45-5:15 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays, is for students 9 and older in Wayne, Westland and Romulus. For information on participating or volunteering, call Tyrone Peterson, (734) 722-3660. Tutors need to have at least a high school education.

**FOR YOUR HEALTH**

**Eating Disorders**

Get help, get real information and real expectations, at an eating disorder support group which meets 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday in the auditorium of Garden City Hospital, 6245 Inkster Road, Garden City. All meetings are closed - for people of all ages with eating disorders and are free of charge. Family and friends support is on the second Wednesday of the month while parents support is on the fourth Wednesday of the month. For more information, call Darlene at (734) 324-3089.

**Advocacy group**

The Wayne-Westland Alliance for the Mentally Ill, a self-help and advocacy group, meets at 7 p.m. the first and third Thursday of the month at St.

John's Episcopal Church, 555 S. Wayne Road, at Bayview, Westland. For more information, call (734) 362-8825.

**TOPS**

TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Wednesday at St. John's Episcopal Church, 555 S. Wayne Road, Westland. Weigh-in is 6:30-7:15 p.m., with the meeting 7:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, call Rosalie at (734) 728-0299.

**Menopause & More**

A Menopause & More support group for women meets 7-9 p.m. the first Wednesday of the month in Classroom 2 of the west addition of the Marian Women Center of St. Mary Mercy Hospital, 36475 Five Mile, Livonia. No registration is necessary, and the group is free of charge. For more information, call (734) 655-1100.

**Support group**

A support group for people with chronic illness meets on Fridays every other week, at the Westside Mental Health Services, 32932 W. Warren, Suite 103, Westland. The support group is a service of Awareness Counseling Services. There is a \$10 for each meeting which will be facilitated by a professional. For more information, call (734) 513-8295 or (313) 562-2800.

**AIM**

Anxiety or panic attacks? AIM (Agoraphobics In Motion) meets at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at Faith Lutheran Church, 30000 Five Mile, between Middlebelt and Merriman in Livonia. AIM is a support group for those working on recovery from anxiety disorder or phobias. Call (248) 547-0400.

**Childbirth classes**

Garden City Hospital, on Inkster Road at Maplewood, is sponsoring classes for parents of newborns, weekend childbirth instruction, a refresher childbirth education course and a new support group for expectant teens. For information on programs, call (734) 458-4330.

**Childbirth Association**

Classes for childbirth preparation are offered at several Wayne County locations. Morning and evening classes are available. Registering new classes every month. Newborn care classes and Cesarean birth preparation are also offered. Call (734) 459-7477.

**Fibromyalgia**

The Garden City area chapter of the Great Lakes Fibromyalgia and CFS Association Support Group meets 1-3 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at Merriman Road Baptist Church on Merriman south of Ford. There are guest speakers and discussion on a variety of topics. There is no membership fee, however a small donation is greatly appreciated. Call Tina Wing at (734) 338-2226 or Lucy Rowley at (734) 462-1768.



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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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## Huron Valley High hosts Choral Fest

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

Some 150 high school students from as far away as Washington State and Phoenix, Ariz., will be in Westland this weekend, participating in the Eastern Regional Choral Fest.

Nine high schools belonging to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will present two concerts as part of the event, hosted by Huron Valley Lutheran High School on Cowan in Westland.

"This is the first time we've gotten to host it," said Amy Helwig of Huron Valley High. "We didn't have the facilities before, now we have the gymnasium."

The choral groups will present a pops concert at 7 p.m. Friday at the school. Everything from Broadway show tunes to 1970s music will be performed by students in a show filled with choreography and costumes.

Most of the nine high schools will perform two songs during their seven-minute segments for the performance, which is "more entertaining," according to Helwig.

On Saturday, the teens will be divided into two choruses which will spend the day rehearsing songs for a sacred music concert that will be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday.

"Our theme is 'Praise His Name,' and it should be an uplifting concert," Helwig said.

Both concerts are free and open to the public. A free will offering will be accepted to offset the costs of hosting the

choral fest, Helwig said.

Volunteers are helping to make the event a success. A group of women will be coming in to prepare lunch and dinner for the students.

Churches like St. John's and Our Saviour in Westland, St. Paul and Peace Lutheran in Livonia, Lola Park in Redford and St. Peter in Plymouth, are providing host families for the weekend.

Hosting the regional choral fest is not only exciting for the school, but for parents. The festival is held at schools around the country and in many instances parents aren't able to attend.

Last year's festival was in Minnesota and Helwig and a few others were able to attend. With it being held in Michigan, parents from participating high schools from the west side of the state have already been calling about accommodations.

"This is a treat for parents," Helwig said.

The Huron Valley choral group has been rehearsing during school, on weekend and two evenings a week in preparation for the festival. Helwig's daughter is a member of the choral group.

It won't be all music for the kids. A highlight for the students will be Saturday evening when they will enjoy the amenities of Summit on the Park recreation center in Canton.

Huron Valley Lutheran High School is located on Cowan east of Wayne Road in Westland. For more information, call the school at (734) 525-0160.

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

## 'Craft'ing a new identity Laurel building a natural for crafters market

BY BRAD KADRICH  
STAFF WRITER

Since her husband, Don, died earlier this year, Kay Wurm has been searching for ways to make a going concern out of the building that housed the family business, Laurel Furniture.

Now she thinks she's found it.

Wurm has opened Holiday Crafters Market, a showcase for vendors who make home-made, hand-made crafts. Wurm opened the market last weekend to a smattering of customers, and is confident subsequent weekends — the market will be open in November and December — will bring even more people as the holidays near.

"We're trying to make a happy Christmas for our crafters, and for our customers, too," Wurm said.

She said the idea sprung out of her hopes of having the building, which housed Laurel Furniture until it went out of business earlier this year, pay for itself. Since her husband's

death, Wurm has tried various ideas, including parking cars for Fall Festival.

None had worked with any great success, but then a friend, Sharon Strebbling, hit upon an idea for turning the building into a mall for crafters.

"I was doing some crafting next door and I saw what she was doing," said Strebbling, a Westland resident originally from Plymouth. "I told her, 'You can do more with this building than that. We'll open a craft market.'"

Wurm went about posting flyers, but was struggling to find crafters willing to rent space. Another crafting friend, Sharon Voge of Belleville, knew why: Wurm was charging too much money for not enough space.

Voge, a veteran crafter who has marketed products at Farmer's Markets in Northville and downtown Plymouth, helped Wurm design a new flyer — and a better approach.

"The weather has been bad this year, and we needed something indoors to get us through



Author Julie Fairfield Fellicelli is selling her own book and books by other local authors. Those authors will be on hand to sign books.

until Christmas," Voge said. "There is a lot of foot traffic around here. It's a wonderful area for crafters."

At least 15 crafters seem to agree, signing up to be part of Holiday Crafters Market. The market is open noon to 8 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays, through December. Nearly all of the crafts on hand are hand-made and home-made.

And, while the first weekend wasn't quite as prosperous as

they'd have liked, hopes remain high for the rest of the weekends.

"The first weekend was a little slow, but you expect that the first week," Strebbling admitted. "We know it'll get better. Plymouth attracts a lot of people."

The Laurel Furniture building is located at 584 W. Ann Arbor Trail. For more information about the market, call (734) 461-2721.

bkadrich@hometownlife.com | (734) 459-2700

## Enrollment still open for McKinley Preschool

McKinley Cooperative Preschool is accepting new students for the 2006 school year until Dec. 1.

"Preschool is becoming increasingly important," said teacher Carol Miles, who has been with McKinley for 23 years. Her primary goal is to instill a love of school while preparing students for kindergarten.

There are group activities, songs, story time, play time and individualized learning time, during the two-hour sessions which typically have one adult for every three children.

"Because we help in the classroom at least once a

month, we get to know Mrs. Miles personally, as well as the other children and parents," said Tracey Griffith, a former teacher who has been involved in McKinley Co-op for the past four years.

McKinley is non-profit, state licensed, and managed by a board of elected parents. The toddler, three-year-old and four-year-old classes are still open. An additional kindergarten enrichment session also is available on Fridays for four year olds.

For more information, please call (734) 729-7222 or visit the McKinley Web site at [www.mckinleypreschool.org](http://www.mckinleypreschool.org).

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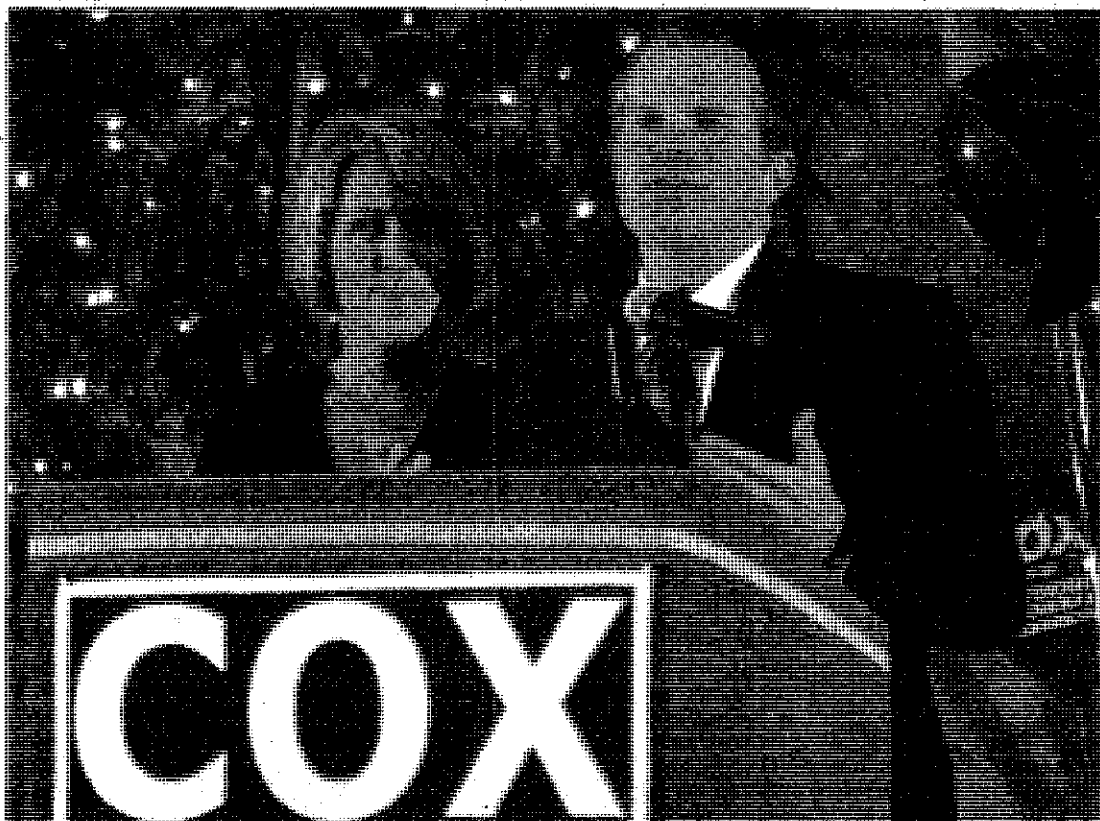
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TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mike Cox and his wife Laura congratulate his supporters at the Republican campaign party at Laurel Manor Tuesday night.

## State voters retain Cox, Land

BY DAN WEST  
STAFF WRITER

On Election Day four years ago, Mike Cox was biting his nails at 11 p.m. as he awaited results from his tight attorney general's race against Gary Peters. It wasn't until nearly noon the next day that Cox was able to declare victory.

At 11 p.m. Tuesday, Cox was sipping beer and receiving congratulations from supporters at Laurel Manor after learning he earned another four-year term as Michigan's top law-enforcement official. The Livonia Republican collected about 53 percent of the statewide vote Tuesday to defeat Grosse Pointe Democrat Amos Williams.

"It was great to learn I won on Tuesday night as opposed to Wednesday morning," Cox said. "I'm grateful and humbled with the voters giving me another term."

In the campaign, Cox talked about his office's efforts that yielded more child support payments for more children, settlement funds for the state, consumer protections and arrests of Internet predators. He said he felt that resume impressed voters.

"In this race, the voters said they are happy to be seeing results over rhetoric," Cox said. "They like it when you are able to do what you said you were going to do."

In his next four years in office, Cox vows to improve on the programs and efforts he started in his first term while igniting more public education programs, such as giving Michigan residents easy resources to shop for more affordable prescription drugs.

Meanwhile, Terry Lynn Land also won re-election as Michigan's Secretary of State after collecting some 56 per-



Land

cent of the vote in her race against Democratic Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh.

Land, a Byron Center Republican, said her efforts to improve customer service at the branch offices satisfied voters who kept her in office.

"I'm very excited," Lynn said. "The people wanted shorter lines and more options. I think we gave them the results they wanted."

In her next term, she wants to continue plans to modernize branch offices by offering more automated services that allow people to take care of their business quickly.

Land added she wants to finish up on legislation that will allow all voters to fill out absentee ballots without stating a reason and start a voting preregistration program for 16-year-olds.

"This will allow them to register to vote when they apply for a driver's license," Land said. "Sometimes it is difficult for an 18-year-old to register to vote because they go to college."

Since Gov. Jennifer Granholm winning re-election, term limits will force her out of office in 2010. Political pundits said Cox and Land will be among the names mentioned as possible Republican candidates for that open seat in four years.

On Tuesday, Cox said a gubernatorial run is not on his mind.

"I'm not thinking about 2010," Cox said. "I have a job I love as the state's attorney general. I just want to savor this moment."

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

## Local voters follow state trend on ballot proposals

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

While most people's attention Election Day was focused on races for the U.S. Senate and who would occupy the governor's mansion, five statewide ballot initiatives also were decided. And local voters pretty much followed the statewide trend.

Voters overwhelmingly approved a resolution to dedicate the budgets for the Department of Natural Resources and state recreation by a margin of 80 percent to 19 percent. The margin of victory was almost as wide in Wayne County, with a vote of 75 to 24 percent in favor of protecting those revenues.

Proposal 2, which would ban affirmative action programs in college admission was passed by county voters 59 to 40 percent. Wayne County voters voted against the measure 59 to 41 percent.

Southern Oakland County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Director James Ralph said he was "very disappointed" with the outcome of the vote.

"I don't know what happened," he said. "Some people say it was the ballot language, others said there wasn't enough voter education. Maybe it was that people don't understand what affirmative action is."

A clear majority in Oakland and Wayne counties, 72 and 76 percent respectively, voted against creating a new hunting season for mourning doves. Director of the Committee to Keep Doves Protected Julie Baker said state residents weren't going to approve shooting songbirds.

"Protecting mourning doves as songbirds is part of Michigan values," she said.

Voters also approved overwhelmingly a measure that would restrict the state's use of eminent domain by a 78 to 21 percent margin in Oakland County and a 69 to 30 percent margin in Wayne County.

Proposal 5, which would establish mandatory funding levels for public education, was rejected by a margin of 64 to 35 percent. The measure was far closer in Wayne County, where the spread was 57 percent against to 42 percent approving.

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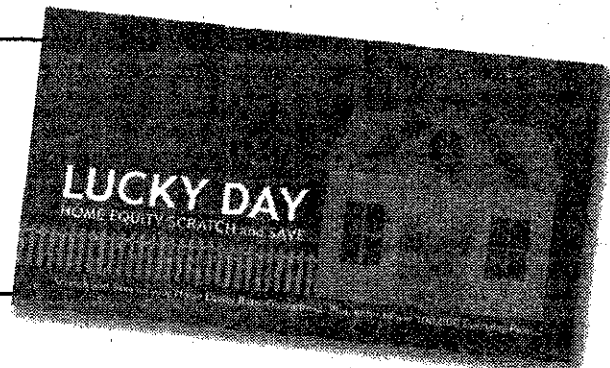
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OUR VIEWS

## Mayor drops ball on park problem

There are similarities between the former Cooper School site and Central City Park. Both are in Westland, both are former dump sites and both are contaminated sites.

It's the difference in the response to the problems that concerns us. When the contamination was found at Cooper School, the Livonia Public Schools moved students, shuttered the building and fenced off the 37-acre site. Fifteen years later, the land is just now being remediated for redevelopment.

Central City Park is now closed. Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said it's temporary and precautionary, so more testing can be done and a remediation plan developed. She also has stated, in a newspaper interview, she became aware of the problem earlier this year and would have closed the park had someone told her to do that.

We don't buy that explanation. As mayor of the city, she is responsible for the health and safety of the residents. Even if it was just this year that she found out about the contamination — which we find highly unlikely since, during her time in office, Wayne County (which owns the land, which the city leases for park space) has filed at least four plans with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to clean up the site — why did she wait until now, just days before the newspaper article was published?

The mayor has shown strong leadership in getting the Cooper School site cleaned up and on the track for redevelopment, but we believe she dropped the ball on Central City Park. It would have been better to be proactive on behalf of the adults and children who frequent the park than wait for someone to tell her to close it. We also believe that she should have made her decision known immediately to the city council and to residents. She is cable-TV savvy and could have used it as a means of getting the word out. As it stands, the signs around the park are a milquetoast announcement in comparison to the contamination problem.

Now that the problem is public, we hope the mayor and council will take the steps necessary to secure the park property and press Wayne County and the MDEQ for a quick resolution. Central City Park is the city's premier recreation site. It needs to be fixed and fixed quickly.

## Fair China trade could benefit all

China has been a hot topic in this year's gubernatorial election.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm attacked her opponent Dick DeVos for setting up a facility in China after laying off workers in Michigan. DeVos cried unfair; the two things weren't related. As a business leader, he owed it to his company to expand to Asia and China required that he manufacture in that country.

The truth is that business opportunities with China can be and should be a two-way street. This past week, General Motors Chairman Rick Wagoner has been in Shanghai touting the success that GM has had with its Chinese production and sales. The Automation Alley International Business Center is on two-week trade mission, which began Nov. 1, involving several Oakland County companies.

On Wednesday, Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano led a trade delegation to China, following on a successful trip last year that resulted in an agreement with the Chinese company, the Tempo Group, to build a research and development facility in Canton.

On this trip, through Nov. 21, Ficano's group will be promoting import/export opportunities, opening a Wayne County office in Chongqing, holding meetings between Wayne County Port and Airport Authority representatives and Chinese leaders and working on exchange programs involving Plymouth-Canton Schools, Detroit Schools and Henry Ford Community College.

Representatives from Schoolcraft College traveled to China earlier this year to investigate setting up satellite teaching opportunities for the school's acclaimed culinary arts program.

Despite her concerns about DeVos, Granholm has made several trips to Asia to promote Michigan business. Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson has also traveled to Asia, Europe and Mexico in pursuit of economic opportunities.

We live in a global economy. We can not afford not to recognize that to succeed we must compete and we must reach out to the largest market in the world.

The real argument isn't about whether or not we become involved in the global economy. We have no choice. The argument is whether we compete on more equitable terms.

If an American company or a foreign company can operate in a foreign country without paying fair wages, taking responsibility for worker safety or providing health benefits, that's a problem. If there is a serious currency imbalance or a tariff imbalance, that's a problem. If a country consistently violates human rights, that's a problem.

It is essential for Ficano and other leaders to go to China. But it is equally important that they insist on fair trade principles that will improve life in China and in Michigan.



LETTERS

### Abortion - society's No. 1 evil

In responding to the letter, entitled *Legislating their beliefs*, let me first say, hooray for the girl who requested prayers for individuals who condone capital punishment against the innocent — i.e., abortion on demand. As far as I am concerned, we don't hear enough from the pulpit about the number one evil in our society — the destruction of pre-born children. That would fall under "Thou shall not kill."

However, the right to life issue is essentially a civil rights issue. Abortion is a crime against humanity. The "personally opposed to but ..." abortion advocates are double-talkers. You can't be personally opposed to an evil, yet condone its existence.

I respect and admire those who stand up for the innocent unborn children. Since the legalization of abortion, close to 50 million pre-born babies have been destroyed. Studies show that the emotional toll on the mothers who lost their children to abortion is devastating. Also devastating is the loss to society. Many of these lost children would now be adults contributing to society.

Margaret Reilly  
Westland

### LPS sweeps issues under rug

Serious issues in LPS are being swept under the rug. Our district is in serious trouble. While all other districts around us have given us an idea of what the enrollment numbers are, our administrators have remained silent.

Inkster, Wayne-Westland and Northville, just to name a few, all had gains in enrollment. This is what is most disturbing: From the little info LPS is willing to give, and from impromptu school counts from class lists, it looks as if LPS will lose upward of 400 students this year alone! At the same time, Plymouth-Canton expects to gain upward of 400 students! That tells you that you cannot blame the economy.

LPS budgeted for a loss of 160 students. Those extra 240 lost students wipe out any possible savings, and put us in even worse shape. No one who has a bus rider needs to be told about the busing nightmare. Everyone needs to be told that there is a drug problem. As a desperately concerned parent, I am begging LPS to stop sweeping things under the rug and "acting" like you are communicating. Let's find solutions as a community before we lose another 600 students next year.

James Dawes  
Livonia

### Are we up to drug war?

Preventative education is one key to fighting teen drug use. Years ago, I was educated about drugs through the DARE program in Livonia Public Schools. One time. In fact, it was so long ago I do not even recall what grade it was in or what I was taught. Although it is possible for grade-schoolers to use drugs, is it really a reasonable age to educate them on life-altering decisions that they most likely will not encounter until high school or later? Furthermore, it is realistic to expect these children to remember and apply this education later in life?

The federal government's stance on drug use is zero-tolerance. However, young people don't like limits, and they don't like being told what to do with their lives. Therefore, it may be more beneficial to give

detailed information about how drugs can affect one's body and future. Studies have shown that prevention programs focused on both increasing protective factors (i.e. improving self-esteem and parental support) and reducing risk factors are best at decreasing drug use.

Even though Livonia has preventative education strategies, are they even up to date with current drug trends? In 2006, despite a reported national decline in illicit drug use by eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders, the use of cocaine and heroin has remained stable and prescription drug abuse is rising. Cocaine and heroin in Livonia? Indeed, these drugs have already touched the lives of many in our community.

What can Livonia do to improve their prevention efforts? First, prevention programs proven to be effective should be employed in public schools. Although it may be unrealistic to fund, this education should span the length of the child's education. Second, a realistic assessment of current drug trends should be used to focus programs. Third, prevention programs should include promoting resilience in the child and reducing factors that could increase drug use. Finally, parent and community support through education and participation is essential.

A valiant and noteworthy effort has been put forth by a small section of our community to assemble a drug task force. But in order for drug use in Livonia teens to change, I think a revolution in the mindset of our community needs to occur. To do so, Livonia must empower its teens through the dissemination of factual information, community support and an open system of communication.

Holly Borchardt  
Livonia

### Drive electric

Does anyone remember the War on Drugs and Nancy Reagan's pithy and succinct slogan: "Just say No"?

Is it over? Did we win? Yet we follow the same course to failure now by again funding the enemy. I am tired of the insanity of buying Middle Eastern oil wherein the money is laundered and again given to jihadists.

The success of this war rests in alternative technologies, and General Motors has refused to resurrect the electric car. That little car can clean up the air, destroy Middle Eastern economies and wealth and restore GM and Ford to what they need to be.

Yet domestic auto companies sit on their hands and blame everyone else. I hope auto management has the wherewithal to put the EV1 back into production soon because if Honda or Toyota get there first it will be the death knell for the American auto industry. Are you listening?

Joseph Bonfiglio  
Bloomfield Hills

### Unfair listing

The disproportionate and erroneous publicity surrounding the Sex Offenders Registry is unfair and unjust, not only to those on it, but to their families.

The biggest and scariest myth being perpetuated is that "sex offender" is the same as "pedophile." That is just not true. All reg-

istered sex offenders are not pedophiles. I am greatly concerned and saddened that any politician would use such scare propaganda to gain public office.

Margaret Betts  
Farmington Hills

### We're not stupid

John Kerry has tried to make excuses for his very insulting remarks about our U.S. military during a speech at a college about education. He is trying to make people believe that he "botched" a joke about our president, and that he would never malign the troops.

That is a lie. This senator has a long history of contempt and disdain for our military, dating all the way back to 1971. He returned from Vietnam with false testimony before Congress about U.S. soldiers committing horrendous acts against civilians. In 2005, in a television interview, he falsely claimed that U.S. soldiers were "terrorizing" children and women in their homes in Iraq.

Governor Granholm and Sen. Stabenow, both Democrats, have both publicly defended Mr. Kerry, as have many in the so-called "mainstream" media. They claim he would never say anything bad about our military people. They also try to deflect with the non-sequitur "John Kerry is not on any ballot this year."

I have news for all of you: President Bush is also not on any ballot this year, yet it seems every Democrat in every race across the country is trying to run against the president. Mr. Kerry even tried to use the president as his excuse.

This history of contempt and hatred of everything military has been a part of much, if not most, of the Democrat party since the Vietnam era. They claim to support the troops, but not the mission. Would you say you support the U-M football team, but you don't want them to win any bowl game? Would you say you support your child, but you don't want them to succeed?

Do they really think the American electorate is stupid enough believe these lame excuses? Are we stupid enough to elect any Democrat to any office, during this unprecedented time of real danger to our very existence? I hope and pray that we are not.

R. George Vinocur  
Farmington Hills

### SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

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

"I'm being fined and charged with stuff I didn't even do. I'm disappointed that I have to do all this on my own when somebody else played a part in it, and she gets to walk off scot-free."

— Joleen Krueger, about the not guilty verdict in the Westland Summer Festival stabbing incident

**WESTLAND Observer**  
PUBLISHED THURSDAY AND SUNDAY

**GANNETT**

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Richard Aginian - Publisher Emeritus

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.

# 'Globalization 101': It's time for coherent national policy

One only need to tune into the race for governor to get an introduction to the politics of globalization. The tit for tat, or the "he said she said" going on between Gov. Granholm and challenger Dick DeVos over who is going to create jobs here in Michigan and who is going to ship jobs to China is like watching a Ping Pong match with Michigan's workers stuck in the middle!

Is globalization a good or bad thing for Michigan? The voters will ultimately decide which political stance they wish to believe.

In many ways, the governor's race to be determined Nov. 7 will be a vote for whose world view Michigan wishes to tie its future to.



Tom Watkins

Do we embrace globalization or seek protectionism?

Can we create a level playing field for competition with our global adversaries and partners or will we just keep losing good middle-class jobs?

Can any governor really stem the job losses brought about by globalization and technological advances or is it beyond his/her control? If not, what can they do to make globalization benefit our state?

The word globalization generates a visceral emotional response.

Some view it as a way to grow our economy in Michigan and across America and believe no local or state politician is going to slow it down or stop it. Some see it as a way to entice international investment and job creation. And still others charge that it is "unfair," "not playing on a level playing field," "creating inequities" and "exploiting third-world workers."

For those that have lost a job recently and see foreign competition as the culprit, globalization becomes a bogeyman and can be viewed with anger, fear and hostility.

Others simply proclaim that it is inevitable and irreversible and believe the only question is how we make it work for Michigan's workers and our collective future.

Two local politicians are embracing globalization and making it work for their citizens.

L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County executive, recently returned from Sweden. Automation Alley, a group he created which has grown to include others in southeast Michigan, is off to China on a trade mission after the November election.

Meanwhile, Wayne County Executive Bob Ficano and his economic development czar, Mulugetta Birru, have developed an aggressive China agenda that has already promised more than 200 highly paid Chinese-backed jobs in Wayne County.

Ficano has established three offices in China and is looking to make trade with China a two-way street. Ficano is also off to China in mid-November looking for additional Chinese investment in Wayne County. Building bridges for trade and investment is a winning strategy regardless of your position on globalization.

While Ficano's and Patterson's efforts are laudable, there is a need for a coherent national and statewide plan to tap into China's profitable global vein in a way that benefits our workers.

What leader has the right set of experiences to position Michigan to compete on the global stage?

Is it enough to "go anywhere and do anything — and fight for jobs" or does having actual business experience creating jobs and wealth globally (think GM and Ford) while scaling back unprofitable domestic operations matter?

"Globalization is no longer a theory; it is a reality," said Kenichi Ohmae in his book, *The Next Global Stage: Challenges and Opportunities in our Borderless World*.

He goes on, "It (globalization) is going to grow stronger rather than weaker. It will feed on its own strengths. It is irresistible, and it is determined to have an impact on everybody — businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats, but, most importantly, on ordinary citizens. There is no use complaining about it or wishing it to go away. People will have to learn to live with it."

Ohmae sees the global economy in its infancy with tremendous growth potential for developed and undeveloped countries alike. He sees excessive world capital "looking for opportunities to breed."

Michigan — if it believes Ohmae's world view — needs to explore how it can tap into the hundreds of billions of dollars the Chinese hold in trade imbalance and tilt the world to have some of that cash, through investment and trade return to our state. We need to create an environment for foreign capital to breed and grow here.

If it were not for the Chinese investment in our nation's bond market, interest rates for our homes and cars would be significantly higher. We need a strategy to have a marriage between the Great Wall of China and the Great Lake State of Michigan that will benefit both peoples. Currently, there is no such strategy.

However, there are alternative world views that do not paint such a rosy picture for Michigan or America. U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) is described as "one of America's leading voices calling for a change in the economic and trade policies that have resulted in shipping American jobs overseas, undercutting our farmers and workers, and creating a mountain of trade debt that threatens our country's future" on the back flap of his recent book: *Take This Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed and Brain-dead Politics Are Selling Out America*. Dorgan believes we have "mortgaged our fortunes, our principles, and our way of life." He sees a global economy as an anchor on the American economy, rather than a sail.

Dorgan takes on Tom Friedman, the best-selling author of *The World Is Flat*, and says, "That's just flat wrong!" He goes on to say that our trade agreements aren't fair and outsourcing American jobs hurts our country.

As the world turns, Michigan, America and each of us individually need to strive to turn ourselves, our region, state and nation into an innovative, entrepreneurial brain bank that the world wishes to tap. It is our human capital that will make the globalization work for us.

Michigan will succeed when we are exporting knowledge, creativity and innovation on the world stage. That is a tune that the world will dance to!

Tom Watkins is a business and education consultant. He served as state superintendent of schools 2001-05 and as president and CEO of the Economic Council of Palm Beach County, Fla., 1996-2001. Read his internationally recognized report: *The New Education (R)evolution* at [www.nacol.org](http://www.nacol.org). He can be reached at [tdwatkins@aol.com](mailto:tdwatkins@aol.com).

# Wage disparity figures are, without a doubt, real

I was a working mother. My mother was a working mother and my daughter-in-law is a working mother.

The three of us also have this in common: To help support our children, we've all taken jobs that didn't pay very well and came with no benefits, but offered some scheduling flexibility. And we are statistics in the latest war on working women.



Joni Hubred-Golden

Earlier this year, the Institute for Women's Policy Research released figures that show Michigan women earn 67 cents compared to every dollar earned by men.

Over and over again, I have heard people dispute or simply dismiss those figures.

The argument goes like this: Women themselves cause the 67-cent difference, because so many choose to leave the work force to raise their children. And besides, the salaries being compared are for jobs no reasonable person would consider equal.

Well, yes and no. The 67-cent figure is supported with studies conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research. IWPR regularly examines conditions in all 50 states and reports on the status of American women and the challenges they face on a variety of fronts, from Social Security to wage parity.

Without question, women have made great strides in the work world.

Women have broken into the corporate board room, into the ranks of management. Women serve at every level of government and in the military.

Still, women's wages fall behind those earned by men. According to IWPR, the figure stands at 75 cents on the dollar nationwide and 67 cents in Michigan. Even taking the

"motherhood factor" into account does little to improve our position.

The IWPR's study concluded factors like work history and even education explain less than half the earnings gap.

What troubles me most, though, is that anyone would make such an argument in the first place, as though it is perfectly acceptable for women to suffer a loss in wages for reasons men do not.

Yes, women are more likely to take certain jobs with more flexible hours that allow us to care for our families. Yes, women are more likely to leave the workplace to care for children. But if our society truly values motherhood, why are women penalized for it?

Why do women who choose motherhood so often suffer wage and position penalties when they return to the workplace?

Why do major corporations place such strenuous, time-consuming and family-unfriendly demands on those who wish to achieve the highest positions? Why don't more employers make accommodations for parents that allow them to care for their families and still earn a decent living?

The gender gap in wages will continue so long as the world of business is less than friendly to working families.

This isn't a feminist issue, it's an American issue.

And it's high time we did something more about it than fighting over whether the statistics about working women are real.

As a mother who once juggled three jobs to support her children and a writer who has spoken with scores of Michigan women struggling to make their way in this world, I can tell you they sure look real to me.

Joni Hubred-Golden is a Farmington resident who publishes Michigan Women's Forum, an electronic magazine devoted to informing and inspiring Michigan women, at [forum-online.info](http://forum-online.info).

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# Santa Arrives...

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# McCotter prepares to caucus with the minority

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter won re-election Tuesday but will be a member of the House minority in January for the first time since being elected to Congress in 2002.

Republican McCotter defeated Democratic candidate Tony Trupiano, while across the country Democrats were able to regain control of the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time since 1994.

McCotter defeated Trupiano by about 54 percent to 43 percent with minority party candidates John Tatar of the Libertarian Party and Charles Tackett of the United Taxpayers Party far behind with less than 2 percent each.

"This represents the worst environment for Republicans since Watergate," McCotter said Tuesday night.

He said a failure by Republicans to "articulate the times we live in" combined with charges of corruption and scandal contributed to the party's loss of power in the House of Representatives.

## DEMS WIN OTHER SEATS

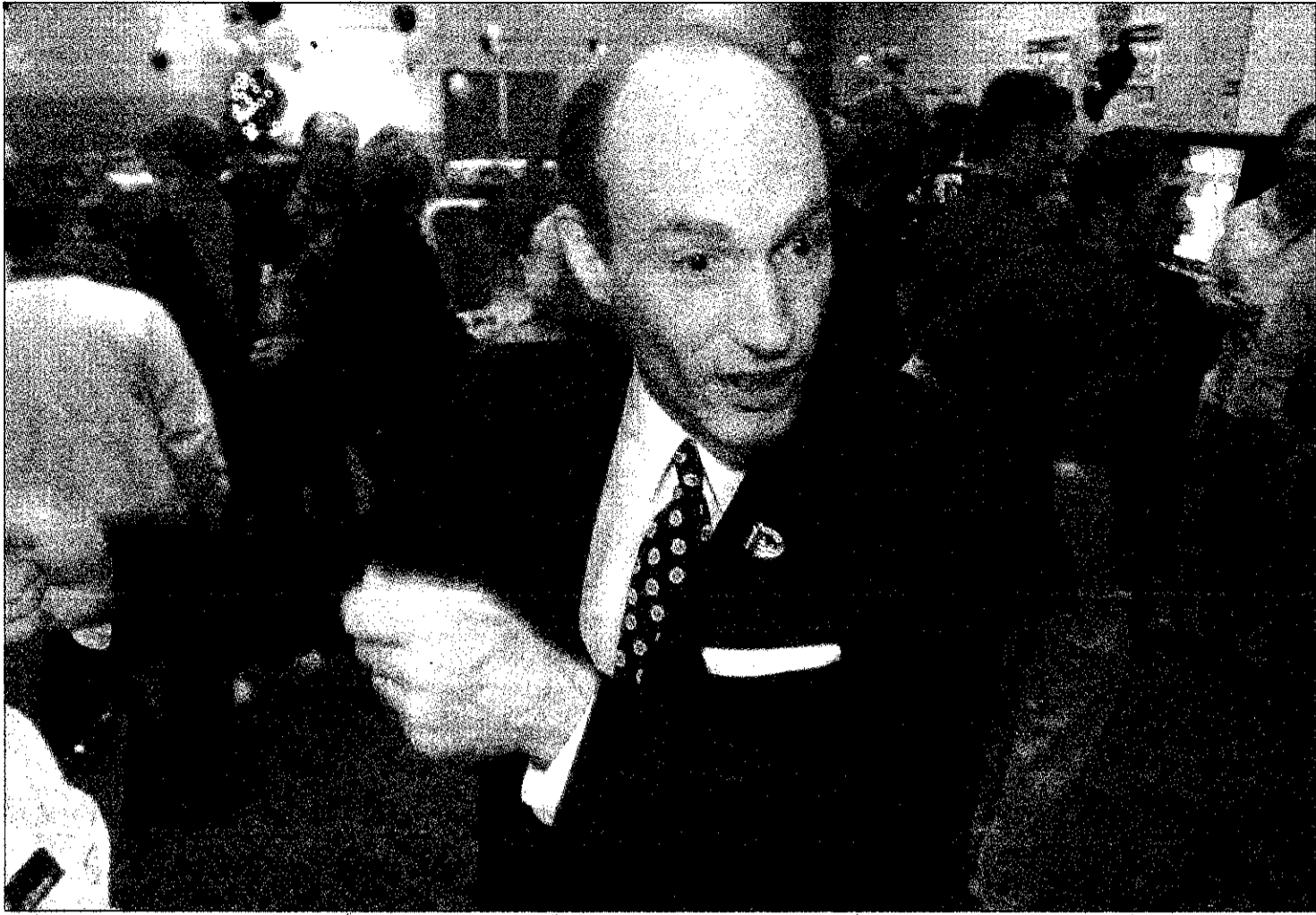
Democrats picked up 27 seats to give them a 228-196 majority in the House with 11 undecided as of Wednesday afternoon. Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California is expected to be elected the next Speaker of the House. On Wednesday, Democrats were also primed to take control of the Senate depending on the outcome of the closely contested Virginia race between Republican George Allen and Democrat Jim Webb.

Though never being in the minority in Congress, McCotter said Wednesday that his experience as part of a two- or three-person minority on the Wayne County Commission was good training for being in the minority.

"I owe a thank you to my colleagues on the Wayne County Commission for an exemplary experience of working in a minority," he said.

McCotter said a lot will depend on the Democratic leadership, which is now responsible for setting the legislative agenda. He said there will also be major changes in the Republican leadership. He said Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert will not stay on as a minority leader and the jockeying will begin for the delegation's five leadership positions.

"It's important for both parties to pay attention to the problems of the country," he said.



U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter listens for an update on numbers as he talks to some of his supporters at his campaign party at Laurel Manor Tuesday night.

TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## 11TH DISTRICT VOTE

Unofficial vote totals with all precincts reporting:  
Thaddeus McCotter (R) 144,177  
Tony Trupiano (D) 108,890  
John Tatar (L) 4,343  
Charles Tackett (UST) 3,542

He said if the parties go to extremes it will not serve the country. Voters have voted for divided government but with the expectation that they would work together, he said.

McCotter said the election was about getting out the base vote.

"The Democratic base was more energized than the Republican base," McCotter said. "In close seats, the Democratic spike killed it."

He said many moderate Republican incumbents, especially in the northeast, lost because not enough conservative voters went to the polls, while there was a spike in Democratic voters. He said that's why Grunholm "spiked and DeVos tanked."

McCotter said he expects to



11th U.S. House candidate Tony Trupiano gathers his son Dominic, 13, and his wife, Anne, before going back to the democratic headquarters after making an appearance at the Democratic Party gathering at the Quality Inn in Livonia.

TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

maintain his committee assignments on budget and international relations, though

it's really up to the Democratic leadership to determine the makeup of the committees.

## TRUPIANO 'EMPOWERED'

On Tuesday night, when the early returns suggested a close election, Tony Trupiano rallied his supporters at an election night gathering at the Quality Inn in Livonia. On Wednesday morning, he was still in an upbeat mood.

"I'm more empowered than I have ever been," he said.

The former radio talk show host and media consultant said he engaged more people in the 11th District to participate in a Democratic congressional campaign than ever before.

Trupiano said he hopes that the new Democratic Congress will "have an agenda that moves us forward."

He said there needs to be more attention paid to domestic issues. He said the new Congress will probably be able to reach an agreement on immigration reform as they are more supportive of the president's posi-

## Ficano cruises to win in county executive race

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano was ready to leave for a trip to China Wednesday, assured that he had cruised to victory for a second term as the county's chief executive officer.

Democrat Ficano of Livonia took 80 percent of the vote Tuesday, easily defeating Detroit Republican candidate Ramon J. Patrick.

In the unofficial vote, with all precincts reporting, Ficano had 492,297 votes to 120,106 votes for Patrick.

Ficano had only token opposition for the Democratic nomination as well, in sharp contrast to the election four years ago following the retirement of longtime county executive Ed McNamara. In that election Ficano faced stiff competition from former Detroit Police Chief Bennie Napoleon and Sharon McPhail.

tion than the outgoing Republican-controlled Congress.

"We need to hold the Iraqi people to honor their promise to self govern," he said.

But Trupiano was skeptical. He said the Democrats need to learn to compromise.

"I hope the Democrats find a way to lead," he said.

"Democrats say they will lead from the middle, but I don't know what that means. If we spend the next two years running for president, I may join the Green Party."

Trupiano said he will take a few days to assess his situation and that he has no definite plans, except one. He said that Wednesday night he would be having dinner at a local barbecue restaurant, keeping a promise to his son that no matter how the election came out the family would gather for his son's birthday dinner at his favorite restaurant.

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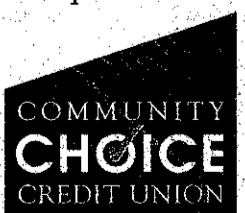
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# Granholm takes Oakland County on her way to re-election

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

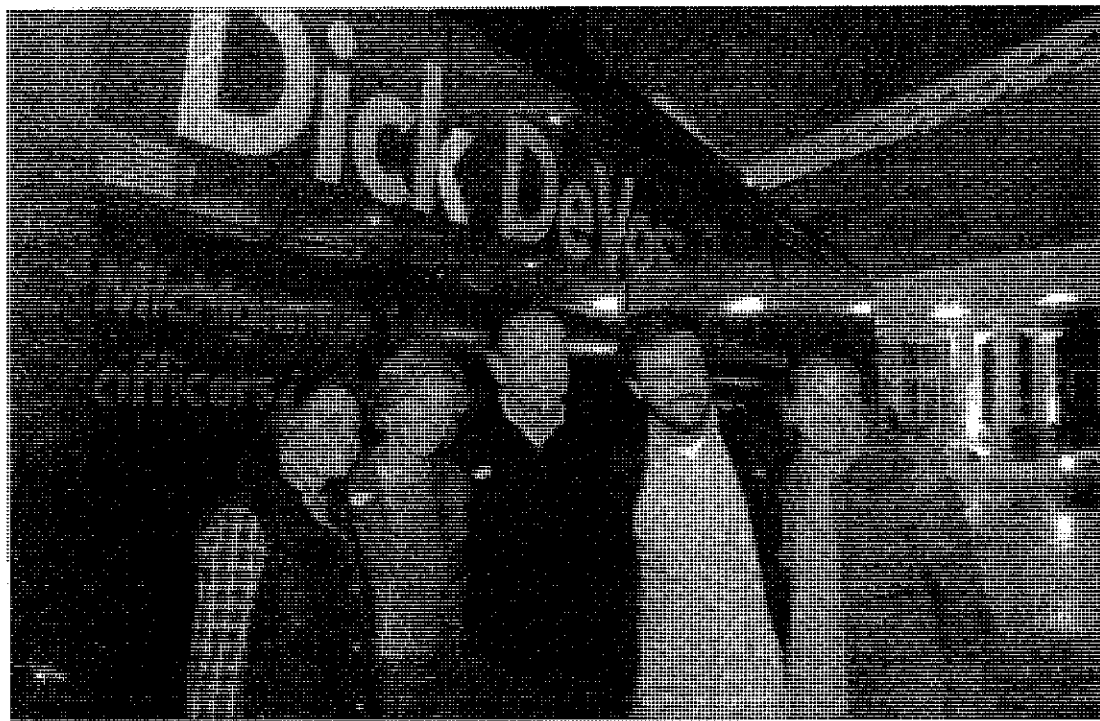
The conventional wisdom is party strongholds deliver for a party's hopefuls, but Republican-heavy Oakland County kept up its tradition of bucking political expectations by snubbing the GOP's gubernatorial hopeful.

With 562 of Oakland's 590 precincts counted Wednesday morning, Gov. Jennifer Granholm bested challenger Dick DeVos by a 53-45 percent margin.

In Wayne County, the governor's lead over her challenger was more stark. Granholm took 70 percent of the vote to DeVos' 28 percent.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson said it's not that county voters don't like Republicans — quite the contrary — but there were other factors in play.

"Republicans kept the county commission. The majority has shrunk, but it's still controlled by



The DeVos family, Dick and Betsy, with children Andrea, Rick and Elissa, pose for a final photo of the campaign, at Plymouth Township's NorthRidge Church 15 minutes before the polls closed.

Republicans," Patterson said. "But on the state level there was a virulent anti-Bush sen-

timent. This has happened before. There's a disconnect between the local level and

the state level. I can't explain it." He said there's a



Granholm

Republican Party and a Democratic Party in Oakland County, but a third group of independents — a group that likes to split

tickets when the mood suits it — might be the biggest party in the county.

"I believe (the results) were a reaction to Bush, the war in Iraq, the economy and Republican Party scandals," he said. "It was a perfect storm."

After speaking to DeVos by phone from her election night headquarters at the Renaissance Center in Detroit, Granholm struck a triumphant tone.

"The future of Michigan is being celebrated tonight," Granholm told a cheering crowd. "It's been a vote for hope and not for fear."

She lavished thanks on her family, campaign staff, cabinet and the state workers she

said helped to push her over the top against DeVos. She indicated that big changes are in the offing.

"We are zealous about transforming the state," Granholm said. "This is the triumph of hope."

Michigan Republican Party Research and Communications Director Sarah Anderson said the Grand Rapids businessman was broadsided by an anti-Republican wave that cost the party control of the U.S. House of Representatives, several governorships and possibly control of the U.S. Senate, depending on how two outstanding races pan out.

"There's going to be a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking and reflection," Anderson said. "But we're going to gear up for 2008. We had a phenomenal grassroots effort. We're going to learn what we can and press on."

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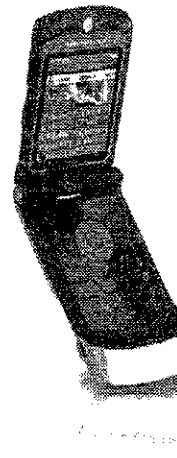
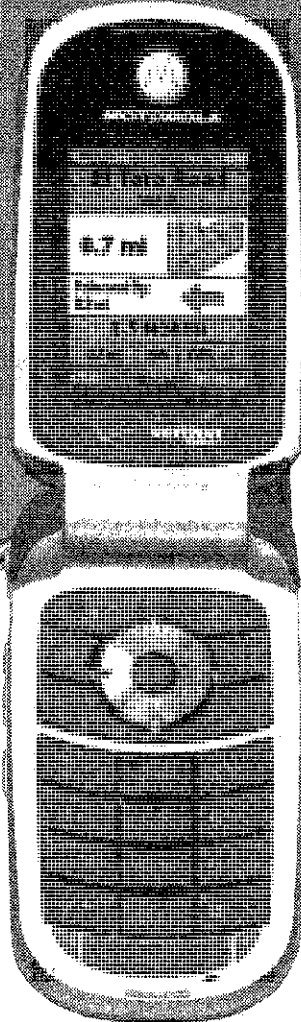
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## Bouchard swallowed by anti-GOP national tide

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER



Stabenow



Bouchard

Snappy commercials and private fund-raising visits by President George W. Bush couldn't tip the balance for Sheriff Michael Bouchard in his race to unseat U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow. The force of a national anti-GOP sentiment doomed his campaign.

Research and communications director for the Michigan Republican Party Sarah Anderson said Bouchard was caught up in a climate that hurt anyone with an "R" after their name.

"There's nothing we could have done differently," she said. "This has been a horrible climate for Republicans and not something about Bouchard or (gubernatorial candidate) Dick DeVos. They're phenomenal candidates and phenomenal human beings. Nationally, we didn't have a prayer."

With nearly all Oakland County precincts reporting, Bouchard only garnered 45 percent of the county's votes to Stabenow's 52 percent. In Wayne County, the gulf between the two was more pronounced with Bouchard receiving only 27 percent to the incumbent's 71 percent.

Stabenow communications director Brent Colburn said the win was a conjunction of the right candidate at the right time. "She has a record of results for the nation and Michigan," he said. "The win is also about people being tired of the direction the administration is taking the country."

At an election night reception at the Centerpoint Marriott in Pontiac, the Republican Party faithful gathered for what

turned out to be a night of disappointments. Almost as soon as they learned the national tide was turning against the GOP, Senate candidate Bouchard acknowledged the fight was over shortly after 11 p.m.

"The numbers are not looking good," he said. He said he got into the race to make a difference and thanked those supporters who opened their "hearts, wallets and homes" to him during the campaign.

"I have a job with the greatest people in the state," Bouchard said. "My biggest sadness is that I feel that I've let a lot of you down who worked so hard."

In a special acknowledgment to the youngest members of his campaign staff, he urged them to stay involved in politics despite all of the negative aspects of modern political campaigns.

County Executive L. Brooks Patterson noted that it's not uncommon for Oakland County voters — considered to be solidly Republican in local races — to snub GOP hopefuls in national and statewide races. He said Tuesday's losses were a referendum on the Bush administration, the war in Iraq, Republican scandals and a state economy that just won't get better.

"I'm not making excuses," Patterson said. "We got our ass kicked."

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## Ficano leads 2nd trade mission to China

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano is leading a trade delegation to four cities in China Nov. 8 through Nov. 21. The four cities – Chongqing, Wuhan, Nanjing and Beijing – are very strong in manufacturing and production of automobiles and parts and also are economic centers in their regions.

"Wayne County is global in its aggressive efforts to attract jobs and investment to the region," said Executive Ficano, who headed his first trade mission to China in 2005. "China is experiencing unprecedented growth in the areas of manufacturing and R & D and Wayne County, with its skilled technical and research and development workforce and expertise, is the likely place for China business development and growth."

The Wayne County delegation will visit local governments, tour Ford facilities, host seminars and have one-on-one meetings with prospective business partners, automotive suppliers, financial and educational institutions, service firms, trading companies and government agents of China.

Wayne County also will participate in the 2006 China International Sub-contracting Fair and the 9th Beijing International Automobile Exhibition to promote awareness for the local region and companies.

The county's 2005 trade mission produced several results:



Ficano

■ A signed Business Partnership Agreement with the governments of Wuhan, Nanjing and Chongqing to promote trade and investment between Wayne County companies and businesses in those cities, and encourage cultural and educational exchange.

■ A major investment by a Chinese company from Beijing, the Tempo Group. The Tempo Group, through its subsidiary, Century Automotives, will open an R & D facility in Wayne County.

■ Several companies that participated as delegates in 2005 have opened offices in Chongqing and established business relationships.

■ Wayne County is currently assisting six Chinese companies to network with potential customers here, open distribution and servicing centers and recruit staff.

"Last year we were very successful in our trade mission to China and this year we will aggressively pursue opportunities that benefit Wayne County, the region and the State of Michigan," said Ficano. "It is our intent through this trade mission to recruit companies from our region and match them with potential business partners in the four cities we will be visiting."

This year, the delegation's agenda includes:

■ Wayne County will host business information seminars in Chongqing, Nanjing and Beijing to encourage investment and link with companies for import/export opportunities.

■ Wayne County will host a booth at the Sub-contracting Fair in Beijing to promote linking with U.S. companies for import and export.

■ Wayne County will open an office in Chongqing.

■ The Wayne County Port Authority and Airport Authority will meet with Chinese leadership on cargo logistics for airport and river-transport distribution.

■ An educational cultural exchange is being developed with Plymouth-Canton Schools. Discussions are underway with Detroit Public Schools and other educational institutions.

■ Henry Ford Community College delegates are interested in a training exchange of vocational and technical skills in areas such as auto repair and nursing.

The 2006 China Trade Mission is sponsored by the Wayne County Greater Economic Development Council. The Detroit Regional Economic Partnership, the Detroit Chinese Business Association, the U.S. Department of Commerce and Ford Motor Company are supporting this year's trade mission.

## 'GO-GIRL' program open to seventh-grade girls

Wayne State University's "GO-GIRL" (Gaining Options-Girls Investigate Real Life) program, designed to boost mathematics skills and generate confidence in seventh-grade girls, is accepting applications for the winter semester.

The 10-week Saturday program, hosted by Wayne State's College of Education, will launch the winter semester in January 2007. GO-GIRL is

free and open to a limited number of seventh-grade female students.

Middle school students interested in participating at Wayne State can visit [www.gogirls.wayne.edu](http://www.gogirls.wayne.edu) and download application forms. The application deadline is Thursday, Dec. 15. More information about the GO-GIRL project is available by contacting Professor Sally Roberts, faculty adviser, via e-mail at



[s.k.roberts@wayne.edu](mailto:s.k.roberts@wayne.edu).

Since its inception in 2002, GO-GIRL has helped more than 200 middle school girls from public and private schools in the Detroit metropolitan area develop mathematical confidence, skills and conceptual understanding by integrating mathematics and social science research into a single-sex, technology-rich environment supported by university student mentors.

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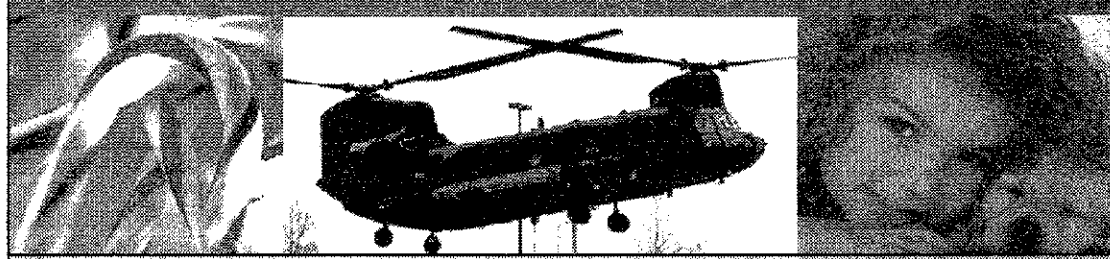
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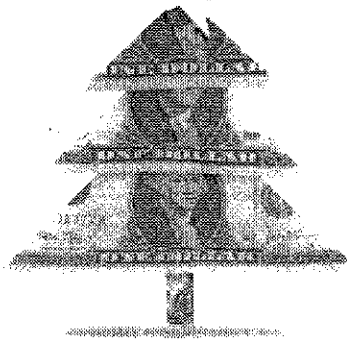


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## Commission approves Frankel Pinnacle project

The Wayne County Commission Thursday unanimously approved an agreement between Wayne County and developer Stuart Frankel to develop up to 150 acres of land in the Pinnacle Aeropark business and technology park near Detroit.

In the first public-private partnership for Pinnacle, Troy developer Frankel is expected to begin the project next year with construction of an office building of at least 50,000

square feet and/or a distribution and logistics center of at least 200,000 square feet.

Frankel's plans for development include offices, research and development, industrial, warehouse and distribution facilities on county-owned land near Interstate 275 and Sibley Road in Huron Township.

The county will provide \$7 million in infrastructure improvements and road construction, \$6 million of which

will be covered by federal grants. Infrastructure work is expected to begin next spring.

"The development will spur further economic development, improve the business climate in the region and create sustainable jobs," said Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano. "We are pleased that the commission unanimously voted to approve the plans to develop the first concrete step at the Pinnacle site."

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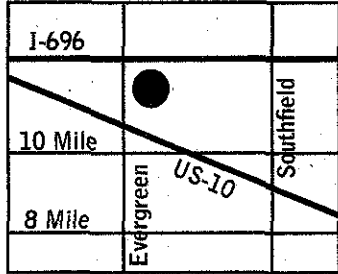
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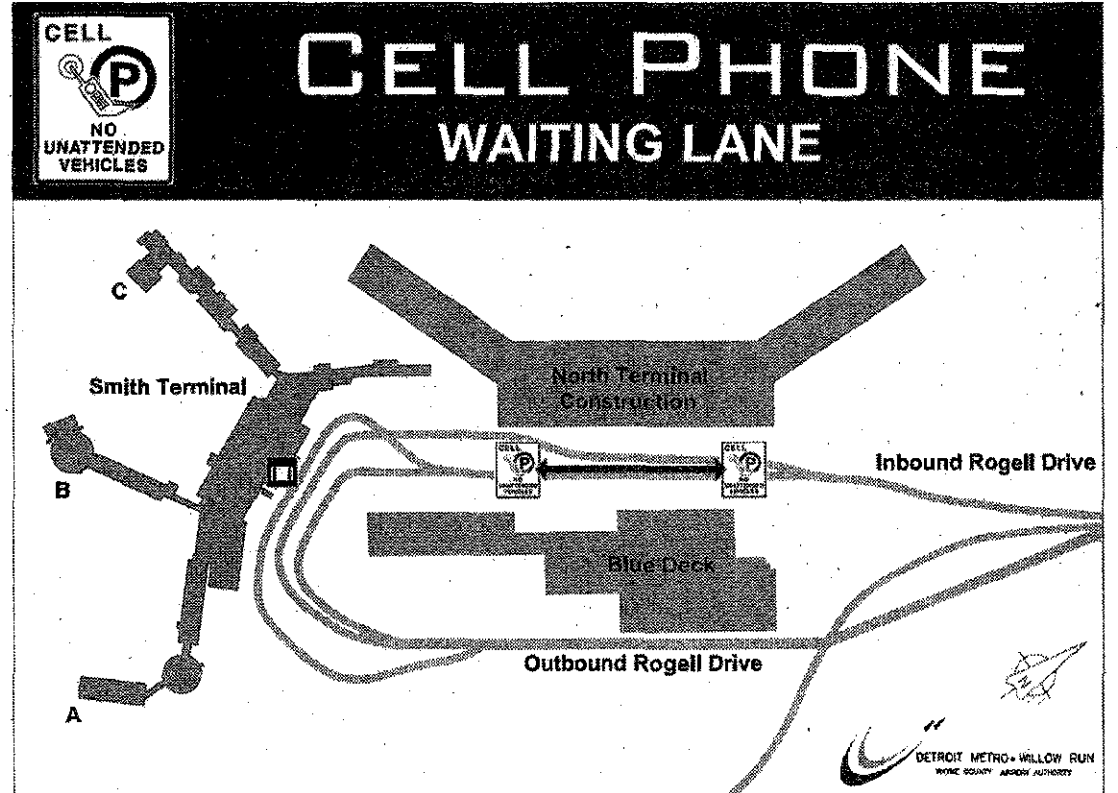
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## Cell phone waiting lane opens near Smith Terminal

The Wayne County Airport Authority has opened a cell phone waiting lane near the Smith Terminal at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) to help alleviate vehicle congestion at the arrivals curb.

"Airport management has always said that curb fronts are for active loading and unloading only, but many people drive up to the curb to wait for arriving passengers who are not ready at the curb," said WCAA CEO Lester Robinson. "These lingering vehicles create traffic congestion and cause security concerns. Airport Police have no choice but to direct them away from the curb."

The cell phone waiting lane helps to resolve that problem. Once an arriving passenger is at the curb with their luggage, they can contact their ride on their cell phone and be picked up within a minute.

The cell phone waiting lane is located on inbound Rogell across from the north terminal construction site. To find it, follow the signs to Smith Terminal arrivals. Just past the point where the departures (upper) level lane veers off to the right, you will see the lane on the right, designated by a wide white stripe and cell phone signs. There is enough space to comfortably accommodate at least 30 vehicles.

"We still recommend that the best way to pick up an arriving passenger is to park in short term parking and meet your party at the bag claim

device," said Robinson. "Then you can help them with their luggage to the parking spot or curb."

The cell phone waiting lane is in an area which causes no security concerns, however, motorists must remain with their vehicles. Unattended vehicles may be ticketed and towed.

"The objective of establishing this lane is to reduce curb front and roadway congestion caused by vehicles circling repeatedly when the arriving party is later than expected," said Robinson. "We are currently exploring property on the south end of the airport for a more convenient waiting area for the McNamara Terminal."

Approximately three dozen US airports offer some sort of cell phone waiting area.

## McNamara concessions win national contest

The McNamara Terminal at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) has emerged as a clear winner in the 2006 Airport's Council International - North America (ACI-NA) Excellence in Concessions Contest.

The airport and its concessions operators recently received recognition in ACI-NA's 2006 Richard A. Griesbach Excellence in Airport Concessions Contest, by finishing first place among large North American airports in the categories of Best Food & Beverage Program and Best Retail Specialty Program. Memphis International Airport received the overall Griesbach Award of Excellence in the contest.

"We are extremely proud of our McNamara Terminal concessions program and all the hard working employees that have made it so successful, and we are honored to be recognized among our industry peers at ACI-NA," said Lester Robinson Wayne County Airport Authority CEO.

"Since the McNamara Terminal opened, our concessions management team and operators have worked extremely hard to listen to our customers, add new and innovative store and restaurant concepts, and create one of the best airport concession pro-

grams in the world."

Detroit Metro Airport's award-winning McNamara Terminal concession program is known by travelers and across the industry for its large diverse offering of airport stores and restaurants that appeal to all travelers. From familiar national brands like Brooks Brothers, Tumi Luggage, Max and Erma's and Starbucks, to local favorites like the Motown Music Review, GM Store, Pangborn Design Collection, Mediterranean Grill, and PizzaPapalis, kid-friendly concepts like PB&J, Twist & Shout Pretzel and KidZoo, and more.

The McNamara Terminal houses nearly 90 stores and restaurants and recognized an increase of more than 33% in its concession sales per enplaned passenger in 2005, the highest one-year percentage increase of any of the top 50 revenue producing airports as reported by Airport Revenue News. In addition to the recent awards from ACI-NA for Best Food & Beverage and Best Retail Programs in 2006, the McNamara Terminal also received ACI-NA's Best Retail Program Award in 2004, and was recognized by Airport Revenue News as the Best Overall Single Terminal Concessions Program in 2004.

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If you want to submit an item for the religion calendar, fax it to (734) 591-7279 or write: Religion Calendar, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. The deadline for an announcement to appear in the Thursday edition is noon Monday.

NOVEMBER

**Crafts and more**  
Christmas gifts, jewelry, attic treasures, bake sale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Nov. 3-4, at Redford Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 10000 Beech Daly. Lunch is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Proceeds benefit mission and church programs. Call (313) 937-3170.

**Laugh out loud**  
With comedian Thor Ramsey at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, at Ward Presbyterian Church, Ward Presbyterian Church, Northville. Tickets \$5, advance purchase recommended. Free child care provided. Ramsey has appeared on A&E network and was a semifinalist in Comedy Central's Laugh Riots competition. He presently hosts the syndicated family-friendly comedy series,

**Bananas.** Call (248) 374-5920.

**Haiti dinner buffet**  
At 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, at First United Methodist Church, 209 Washtenaw at Washington, Ypsilanti. Donation is \$18 adults, \$8 children age 11 and under. A benefit for The Haiti School Project, a plan to build and improve schools in northern Haiti. For information and tickets, call (313) 278-4849.

**Monthly dance**  
Presented by Bethany Suburban West, a Catholic organization providing peer support for the divorced and separated of all faiths, 8 p.m. to midnight (doors open at 7:30 p.m.) Saturday, Nov. 4, at St. Robert Bellarmine, 27101 W. Chicago at Inkster Road. Cost is \$10 and includes refreshments. For information, call (734) 261-5716.

**Vegetarian holiday testing**  
At 11 a.m., 12:45 p.m. or 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 5, at Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist School Gymnasium on Haggerty, north of Five Mile, Plymouth. Reserved tickets at \$14 adults, \$5 ages 6-12. Call (734) 459-0472. Make checks payable to Metro SDA School and send to Holiday

Tasting, 695 N. Ridge Road, Canton, MI 48187-4635.

**Fundamentalism**  
A Pastoral Concern. In biblical times the Word in the Scriptures was alive and applied to every situation. Fundamentalism freezes the Word at the time it was written. The pastoral challenge is to make the scriptural Word alive in every age, culture, and social situation. This two-part series will critique fundamentalism's approach to the Scriptural Word. David J. Conrad, Director of Faith Formation, presents Part One: A Descriptive Definition of Fundamentalism, Fundamentalism as a Theological, Pastoral, Social, Personal, and Evangelical Challenge 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 8. Part Two: An extended analysis of the theology of Fundamentalism, and the Catholic Church's understanding of the topics in question 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15, in the Fellowship Hall (church building), St. Aidan Catholic Church, 17500 Farmington Road, north of Six Mile Road, Livonia. Call (734) 425-5950.

**Hymn festival**

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church opens its 2006-2007 Concert Series at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10, with a very special Hymn Festival led by noted Lutheran musician David Cherwen, director of the National Lutheran Choir based out of Minneapolis, and leader in the use of organ improvisation. Choirs from area congregations will be participating in the event which is open to the public with a free will offering being taken. Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church is at 14175 Farmington Road, north of I-96 at exit 174, Livonia. For more information, call Mark Lohmeyer, music director, at (734) 522-6830.

**Singles event**  
Cards, games and potluck presented by Bethany Suburban West, a Catholic organization providing peer support for the divorced and separated of all faiths, Friday, Nov. 10, at St. Linus Activity Center, 6466 Evangeline, Dearborn Heights. For details, call Michele at (313) 996-8644.

**Crafters wanted**  
Show is from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, at Community Free Will Baptist Church, 33031 Cherry Hill, west of Venoy, Westland. Table rental is \$20. Mail registration fee by check or money order to Community Free Will Baptist Church, P.O. Box 851349, Westland, MI 48186. For more information, call Marge at (734) 729-2578 or Jean at (734) 421-0733.

**Bethany gathering**  
Bethany Suburban West, a Catholic organization providing peer support for the divorced and separated of all faiths, is gathering to hear Air Margaritaville play on Saturday, Nov. 11, at the Last Lap Cafe, 27758 Warren, Westland. Call (734) 513-9479 for details.

**Military service tribute**  
Garden City Presbyterian Church has designated Sunday, Nov. 12 the day to honor all Veterans of Military Service and those currently serving, begins at 10 a.m. with an Honor Guard leading in a procession of veterans who are encouraged to wear their uniforms, medals and ribbons. Fellowship hour follows the worship. Childcare available. Youth Sunday School also at 10 a.m. Everyone welcome. The church is at 1841 Middlebelt, one block south of Ford Road. Handicap accessible. All veterans are invited to come and participate in the service. Call (734) 421-7620.

**Classical Bells concert**  
Michigan's premier handbell ensemble presents a Raise the Roof with a concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, 30900 W. Six Mile, Livonia. The performance also features Choralation and Joseph Daniel, organist. Tickets are \$10 at the door. Groups of 20 or more, call (734) 414-9940. All proceeds benefit the Fellowship Hall building fund. For more information, call St. Matthew's church at (734) 422-6038.

**Bagpipe entertainment**  
During St. Andrew's Day Dinner on Sunday, Nov. 12, The St. Andrew's Bagpipe Band will also perform during the worship service, at St. James Presbyterian Church, 25350 W. Six Mile, Redford. Tickets for the dinner are \$10 for adults, \$5 children ages 4-11, under age four are free. Call (313) 534-7730 for reservations.

**Thanksgiving bingo party**  
Doors open at 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, at Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church and Hellenic Center, 36375 Joy, Westland. Cost is \$8 for admission. Must be age 18 or older to play. Prizes include all of the Thanksgiving necessities including turkeys, hams, basket of plenty. Hall phone is (734) 525-3550.

**SOUEL**  
Students Of Upper Elementary Activity Night from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, at St. Aidan Catholic Church Activity Center, 17500 Farmington Road, north of Six Mile Road, Livonia. The theme is pirates. There is a best-dressed pirate prize. Pillage the free pizza and ice cream. For fifth- and sixth-graders (feel free to bring a friend). No registration required. Contact David Conrad at (734) 425-5950.

**Breakfast meeting**  
Monthly meeting for Bethany Suburban West, a Catholic organization providing peer support for the divorced and separated of all faiths, 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, at Leon's Family Dining, 30149 Ford Road, Garden City. All separated, divorced and singles welcome. For details, call (734) 513-9479.

**Sisterhood luncheon**  
For paid-up members of Congregation Beit Kodesh Sisterhood at 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, Canton Harry Sturm will delight with a concert of traditional Jewish melodies. Members are requested to bring in new, unopened toiletries to be donated to a local charity. For information on membership or to RSVP, call (248) 477-8974.

**Hanukkah gift shop**  
Congregation Beit Kodesh Sisterhood Hanukkah/Judaic gift shop opens from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sundays beginning Nov. 19 and continues to Dec. 10. Selection includes holiday gift wrap, chocolate coins, dreidels, candles, electric and traditional menorahs and many Judaic gift items. Congregation Beit Kodesh is located at 31840 W. Seven Mile, Livonia.

**Thanksgiving choir festival**

More than 100 voices will join in celebrating Thanksgiving with a music festival featuring choral anthems accompanied by brass, handbells and organ as well as an audience sing-along of familiar Thanksgiving hymns at 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, at First United Methodist Church, 45201 North Territorial, one mile east of Beck, Plymouth. Participating choirs are from First United, Our Lady of Good Counsel, First Presbyterian, St. John's Episcopal, and First Baptist. Brass players from the Plymouth Community Band led by Carl Battishill will add to the festivities. Admission is free but an offering will be received to benefit a local charity. Call (734) 453-5280.

**Messiah**  
4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 26, at the historic Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 9844 Woodbridge at Trowbridge, Detroit. The concert is performed by the Archdiocesan Chorus and orchestra. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at door. Call (313) 865-6300, ext. 227 or visit www.aod.online and click on calendar.

**Blood drive**  
Red Cross blood drive 2-8 p.m. Monday, Nov. 27, at St. John's Episcopal Church, 574 South Sheldon, Plymouth. Call Carolyn Libeau at (734) 455-5395 to make an appointment of just drop in.

**Christmas Hope tour**  
Featuring NewSong and Todd Agnew with special guest Rachel Lampa, also author Donna VanLiere Tuesday, Nov. 28, at Faith Lutheran Church, 37635 Dequindre, Troy. Tickets are \$18 advance, \$20 at door. Call (248) 627-5800 or (888) 627-5808.

**Worship service**  
All are welcome to attend 11 a.m. worship service Sundays, at Good Shepherd Reformed Church, 6500 N. Wayne at Hunter, Westland. Join us at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in November and December as Pastor Louise Monacelli introduces The Jesus Experience, a series of videos offering insight into the people and situations God used to expand the church around the world. For more information, call (734) 721-0800.

**Bridging the holidays**  
A program designed to help families work through the holidays and special occasions without their loved one, includes a small memorial 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 29, at St. Cletus Catholic Church, 26256 Ryan, Warren.

Winter memorial 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, at Best Western Hotel, 16999 South Laurel Park Drive, Livonia. Come to honor and celebrate the lives of your loved one. All programs are non-denominational. No charge. RSVP requested by Nov. 27, at (800) 770-9859. Refreshments provided.

ence with special emphasis given to the voice and experience of the poor and marginalized. You will visit martyr sites, grassroots organizations, a rural community, and hear speakers on the history, politics, and economy of El Salvador. For details, call coordinator Richard Dahlke at (734) 455-6474.

**ONGOING**

**Worship service**  
At 10:30 a.m. Sundays at New Beginnings United Methodist Church, 16175 Delaware at Puritan, Redford. Congregation is hearing lessons from I Peter. For more information, call (313) 255-6330.

**Adult literacy classes**  
Available for those wishing to improve their reading and writing skills. Open to adults age 18 and over. Trained tutors available for day and evening hours. Call (734) 421-0472. Leave your name and phone number and someone will be in contact with you.

**Ladies Bible studies**  
Began Tuesday, Sept. 12, at Detroit First Church of the Nazarene, 21260 Haggerty, Northville. Call (248) 348-7600.

Women of the Word offer the Life Change Study of the book of Genesis by NavPress from 9:30-11:15 a.m. (\$15 registration fee includes interdenominational materials and free child care for ages through 12, and a study of the Patriarchs by Beth Moor from 6:45-8:15 p.m. (\$20 fee and no child care).

**Personal ministry**  
Due Season Christian Church is a non-denominational, multicultural, full gospel church that offers Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. and Tuesday night Bible study at 7:15 p.m. Services are currently held at Stevenson High School on Six Mile, west of Farmington Road, Livonia. All are welcome. For information, call (248) 960-8063 or visit www.DueSeason.org.

**Farmington Women Aglow**  
Meets from 5-8 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month at the Farmington Community Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile. For more information, call Linda Boone at (248) 476-1053.

**Bible and playtime**  
For moms and tots began 10-11 a.m. Wednesdays at Vineyard Church of Farmington Hills 29200 Shilawasee (by Middlebelt and Nine Mile). No charge. For information, call (248) 766-0143.

**Scripture studies**  
From 7-8:30 p.m. Mondays in the lower level of Our Lady of Loretto Church, Six Mile and Beech Daly, Redford. Call (313) 534-9000.

**TOPS**  
Stands for Take Off Pounds Sensibly, the group meets at 7 p.m. every Thursday evening at St. Thomas a Becket Church, 555 S. Lilley, Canton. Weigh-in is from 6:15-6:55 p.m. It is a weight support group that encourages members to lose weight sensibly and keep it off. For more information, call Mary at (734) 934-1328.

**Learner's Bible study**  
At 7 p.m. Mondays, in Room A101 at Ward Presbyterian Church, 40000 W. Six Mile, Northville. Call (248) 374-5920.

**Church service**  
Loving God by loving people, meets at 10 a.m. Sunday at Westwood Community Church, 6500 N. Wayne Road at Hunter, Westland. Doughnuts and coffee served. Call (734) 254-0093.

**Senior activities**  
Gathering for seniors 50 years and older at 11:30 a.m. on the third Friday of every month at Riverside Park Church of God, 11771 Newburgh at Plymouth, Livonia. For more information, call (734) 464-0990. Put together a salad dish and come out and meet other seniors. Lunch is served followed by fellowship with some games and stories.

**Church activities**  
St. James Presbyterian Church offers a Thursday dinner at 6 p.m. for \$5 prepared by Susan Navarro, The Cookie Lady, followed by Bible study at 7 p.m. and Chancel Choir rehearsal at 8 p.m. Thrift store is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday; 10 a.m. women's study group second Saturday of the month; and Sunday worship at 10 a.m. (nursery available) and children's class at 10:15 a.m. at 25350 W. Six Mile, Redford. Call (313) 534-7730.

**Eucharistic adoration**  
The monthly program of Parish Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration continues the third Wednesday of each month at St. Michael's Church of Livonia, corner of Plymouth and Hubbard roads. The church will be open for worship from 10 a.m. until the 7 p.m. Benediction service. For information, call (734) 261-5331.

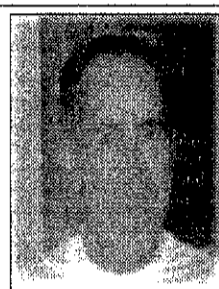
**Worship services**  
All are welcome to attend worship service at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Five Mile and Inkster roads, Livonia. Service is held at 10 a.m. every Sunday with an education hour for all ages at 9 a.m. Call (734) 422-1470.

**Unity of Livonia**  
Services at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sundays at 28660 Five Mile, between Middlebelt and Inkster roads. Call (734) 421-1760.

**Shabbat services**  
The doors of Congregation Beit Kodesh, a Conservative synagogue at 31840 W. Seven Mile, between Farmington and Merriman, Livonia, are open to the Jewish community of southeastern Michigan. Call (248) 477-8974.

Passages

Obituaries, Memorials, Remembrances  
1-800-579-7355 ♦ fax: 734-953-2232  
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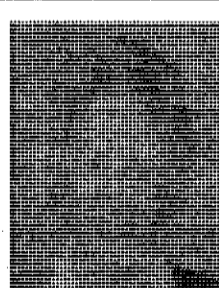


**BILL E. LINDLEY**  
Age 76, November 3, 2006. Beloved companion of Midge Wilson, Loving Father to Randy (Claudia), Joseph (Alice), Troy (Sarah) and Dawn. Caring Step-father to Bob, Rick, Jeff and Scott Terberg. Grandfather and Great-grandfather to many.

**JOSEPH S. DAIEK**  
Age 87, November 4, 2006. Husband of Loretta. View obituary & share memories at: www.DesmondFuneralHome.com

**JULIE MARION GROFF**  
passed away 10-29-06. Beloved sister of John, Jim, and Jeff. Preceded in death by her parents, Sidney & Marion (Robinson) Groff. Dearest Aunt to many nieces & nephews. Julie, a former nurse, graduated from Bentley High in 1971. Special thanks and praise to Julie's care worker, Cindy who went above and beyond. A gathering of family & friends will take place at Julie's "little brothers" home in White Lake Twp. on 11-11-06.

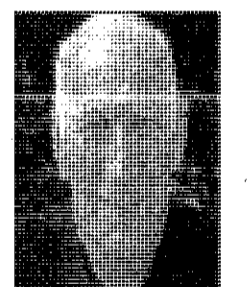
**MARIETTA KILLIAN REID**  
Age 89 of Bloomfield, MI died Tuesday, November 7th. Wife of Robert, mother of Richard, Christopher, Robert and the late Daniel and Matthew. Five grandchildren: Michael, Brenna, Elliot, Clark, and Carolina. Sister of the late Esther Armstrong. Memorial services at Christ Church Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, MI, Tuesday, November 14th, 11am. Family service at White Chapel Cemetery, Troy, MI, November: 11th 2pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions to Christ Church Cranbrook or charity of your choice.



**MARY H. HENNE**  
Age 84 of Birmingham, Michigan, died November 6, 2006. Born in Minneapolis, MN she attended Principia College, Elmhurst IL in 1944 where she received her Bachelor of Arts, and Oakland Community College in 1979 and received her Associate Degree in Nursing. She served in the Navy from 1944-46 in Philadelphia and the New York Naval Shipyards as a Lt. (jg) USNR. She was a housewife who was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, MI; a member of the Piety Hill Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; and in the North Woodward Branch of Kappa Kappa Gamma Alumnae Association. She was also a co-chairman from 1999-2001 of the 70+ Ski Club, Midwest Division. She was also involved in WAVES National, Unit SEM #101, Michigan Society of Mayflower Descendants, and the Volunteer Service Committee, Beaumont Hospital. She is survived by her husband, Richard E. Henne; two daughters, Mary (Art) Goyeau and Susan (John) Margie; grandchildren, Corinne, Amy, James and Thomas; and brother, Cecil Hurd. Memorial service at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Thursday, Nov. 9, 2006 at 11 AM. Burial in Bethlehem Memorial Cemetery, Ann Arbor, will be private.

**EDGAR BOWLING BENNETT**  
Age 81, formerly of Birmingham, MI, beloved husband of Maggie Bennett, passed away on Friday, November 3, 2006. Born in Richmond, Virginia, he was the son of Floyd Sheddard and Maye Bowling Bennett. Mr. Bennett was a graduate of Duke University and Harvard Business School, and a veteran of the United States Navy. He converted to the Catholic faith in 1953. He raised his family in Birmingham, Michigan while an employee of Ford Motor Company. Surviving are his wife of 50 years, Maggie Bennett; his children, Edgar B. Bennett, Jr., Anne Bennett Clarke, and Stephen F. Bennett; and his granddaughters, Robin and Krista Clarke. Funeral services will be held at 11 am at St. Paul The Apostle Church in Seneca, SC. Memorials may be made to The National Parkinson Foundation.

**PATRICIA ANN RICCOBONO**  
Age 75, of Sebring, passed away at The Florida Hospital on October 31, 2006, following a courageous battle with cancer. She was born June 6, 1931, in Tampa, FL, to Charles and Nellie (Lannon) Patrick and moved to Florida in October 2003, from Commerce, MI. She was self-employed as an author and painter. She was a member of Eastern Star, Red Hat, Delta Chorale, National Federation of Press Women. She was an accomplished painter and author, having published a novel and various poems; singer and soloist. Pat is survived by her husband, Angelo Riccobono; daughters, Devany Villencourt (Kin); Dan Unik-Todd (Cliff); Dani Unik-Osbom (Rick); son, Dean Unik (Tom); five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. A memorial service was conducted on Wednesday, November 8, 2006. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society.

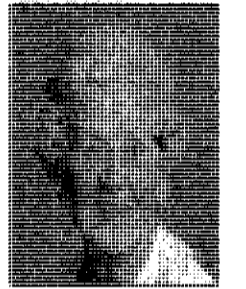


**BILLY D. WAITS**  
Age 68, of Linden, died Monday, November 6, 2006, at his residence. Funeral services will be held 10am Friday, November 10, 2006, at Sharp Silver Lake Road, Fenton. Brother, Watson Allen officiating. Burial in Parkview Memorial, Livonia. Visitation will be held at the funeral home from 1-4pm and 6-9pm Thursday. Those desiring may make contributions to the American Cancer Society. Bill was born March 6, 1938, in Paragould, AR, the son of Model (Waits) Leedy. He married Linda J. Grobbin March 14, 1959, in Dearborn Heights. He owned and operated two B & L Shell service stations in Livonia and the B & L Speed-E-Marts in Whitmore Lake and Columbiaville. He was a member of the Taylor Moose Lodge. Surviving are his wife, Linda; three daughters, Donna Waits and Eric Wien of Garden City, Sheri Waits of Brighton, Debbie and husband Rick Broadrick of Livonia; three granddaughters, Teri, Megan and Melanie; great grandson, Nathan; step-father Bob and wife Marty Leedy of Florida; two brothers, Clencie and wife Roseann Waits of South Carolina and John and wife Gayle King of Livonia; sister, Michelle and husband Ed Sciberas of Houghton Lake; many nieces and nephews; special cousins, Conley and Neva Ray of New Boston and Ben and Peggy Moore of Maybabe and many other cousins. He was preceded in death by his mother, Modell Leedy. Friends may share an online condolence or share a tribute at www.sharpfuneralhomes.com

**MARK S. TROHER**  
Age 43, of Canton. Formerly of Livonia. Suddenly passed away on November 7, 2006. Survived by his parents, Steve and Roberta; brothers Mike (Lori) and Tom (Athena) and sister Julie. Uncle to Stephen, Michelle, Nick and Vince. Also survived by many other family and friends. Visitation Sunday Nov. 12th, 2-9pm at Zionek Funeral Home, 8809 Wayne Rd. at Joy, Livonia. Vigil Service at 7pm. Funeral Monday, Nov. 13, 2006. Instate 9:30am at St. Theodore Catholic Church, 8200 N. Wayne Rd., Westland until 10am. Mass.



**SHAWN ANN LINE**  
12-02-1963 - 10-30-2006  
In loving memory of our best friend Shawn Ann Line. No farewell words were spoken, no time to say good bye, you were gone before we knew it, and only God knows why. You left us precious memories, your love is still our guide, though we cannot see you, you are always by our side. We'll miss you always. Love, Chuck and Denise



**IN MEMORIAM OF ELEANOR ELIZABETH BUTLER**  
As a lifelong resident in the Detroit area, Eleanor lived in Southfield the past 40 years. She attended Central High School in Detroit and the Detroit Business University. Her first job was at Ford Motor Company as a secretary. When she married Harold Butler in August of 1938, it was against the rules for married women to work for the company, so she chose to devote her life to being a loving wife and mother for their two daughters. Harold was the Managing Editor of the Ford Times and a noted Detroit travel writer and author. Eleanor and Harold traveled the world to find their stories, visiting most of the U.S., Canada, Europe, the Caribbean, China, and South America. In their 64 years of marriage, they went on 22 cruises. During the summer months, they commuted to a log cabin in White Cloud, MI built by Eleanor's father, Ora Davis. Eleanor was born to Ora Davis and Alice (Obits) Davis on December 3, 1913 in Grand Rapids, MI. She recalls at age 5 trying tin cans to a string with her cousin, Max Reynolds, and running up and down the street in 1918 to celebrate the end of World War I. The family moved to Detroit when Eleanor was 6 years old. She was a life-long, devoted member of Mt. Hope Congregational Church in Livonia. Eleanor was 92 years old and passed away on November 5, 2006. She is survived by her daughter Joyce Butler Musto and granddaughter Kathleen Musto of Hawaii. Eleanor was preceded in death by her husband Harold and daughter Beverly. Visitation will be held at Manns-Ferguson Funeral Home, 17000 Middlebelt in Livonia on Sunday, November 12, 2006 from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Services will be held on Monday, November 13, 2006 at 10:30 am at Mt. Hope Congregational Church, 30330 Schoolcraft in Livonia. Graveside services will be held at Maple Grove Cemetery, 804 N. Division Avenue in Fremont, Michigan at 11:00 am on Tuesday, November 14, 2006. Memorial donations may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association or Mt. Hope Congregational Church.

**JOHN R. "JACK" WADSWORTH**  
Age 61, died Sunday, October 29, 2006, in Conroe, Texas. A memorial service will be held at 5pm Sunday, November 12, 2006, at the Gregory Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 15800 Graves Road, Gregory, Michigan.



**WILLIAM H. MANSFIELD**  
Age 88, beloved husband of Mary Ellen, died October 27 in Asheville, NC. Bill, formerly of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, was a Certified Life Underwriter with The Equitable Life Insurance Society of the United States (AXA) for 60 years. He was born in Syracuse and raised in Buffalo, NY, the son of George and Leila Mansfield, and the youngest of their five children. A graduate of Michigan State University, he was a member of the school's first NCAA championship team (cross country). He was also Michigan State's Best Scholar-Athlete 1936 - 1940. During World War II, Capt. Mansfield served as a pilot instructor with the Army Air Corps. After the war, he moved to Detroit, Michigan, and joined the Equitable. He was a nationally ranked salesman, a member of their Million Dollar Roundtable, and a motivational speaker. Bill and his first wife, the late Anne Doyle, had one daughter, Kathleen (Jeffrey) Choi. They had two grandchildren, Rodney M. (Kristine) Choi and Elizabeth (Daniel) Hebert, and five great-grandchildren: Mark and Kelly Choi, Jeffrey, Grace, and Nicholas Hebert. He is also survived by his wife Mary Ellen (Constantine), brother Phillip Mansfield, and numerous nieces and nephews. A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, November 15, 2006, at 1pm, in the chapel of Williams Funeral Home. Interment will follow in the Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery with Military Honors provided by the Buncombe County Veterans Council Memorial Team. The family will receive friends from 12pm on Wednesday until the time of service. Donations in Mr. Mansfield's memory may be made to the charity of your choice.

**OBITUARY POLICY**

The first five "billed" lines of an obituary are published at no cost. All additional lines will be charged at \$4 per line. You may place a picture of your loved one for an additional cost of only \$6. Symbolic emblems may be included at no cost (example: American Flags, religious symbols, etc.)

Deadlines:  
Friday 4:30 PM for Sunday  
Wednesday Noon for Thursday  
*Obituaries received after these deadlines will be placed in the next available issue.*

e-mail your obit to: [oeobits@hometownlife.com](mailto:oeobits@hometownlife.com) or fax to: Attn: Obits c/o Charlotte Wilson 734-953-2232 For more information call: Charlotte Wilson 734-953-2070 or Liz Kelsor 734-953-2067 or toll free 866-818-7653 ask for Char or Liz

# PIRGIM: Money talks in elections

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

The nation is locked in a controversial war, scandals financial and sexual have rocked the U.S. House of Representatives for months and the president hasn't seen approval numbers on the good side of 40 in more than a year - yet studies show none of these factors is as compelling in an election year as the amount of money a candidate has to spend.

The Public Interest Research Group in Michigan, an Ann Arbor-based nonprofit organization, has published a report that says campaign spending and fund raising are the best predictors of who will win at the ballot box.

PIRGIM Public Interest associate David Pettit admitted that the concept of money driving an American election should come as a surprise to no one. Still, he said people might not be aware of just how much a determining factor campaign funding is.

"It's not new news," he said. "But with elections so hotly contested and so many contentious issues before the voters, money is the deciding factor. Money trumps everything."

And since money is the deciding factor, he said, the people giving the money are the ones making the decisions. The PIRGIM report showed that .27 percent of the voting population donates 82 percent of all individual contributions to campaigns and individual donations are the bulk of all campaign donations.

The survey went further to say that 92 percent of the time, the candidate who raises the most money is the one that wins the primary and that only 10 percent of general election races are truly competitive.

"Aside from the fact that it undermines democracy, it means that 1 percent of the voting population determines who wins the primary," he said. "It's not just voters who feel apathetic, there are so many barriers to entry into a race that if you don't know any millionaires, running for office is difficult."

Oakland County Republican Party Executive Director Diane Harnish disagreed.

"It's the way money is spent and what the candidate says that gets you elected," she said. "Look at (Democratic presidential candidate Michael) Dukakis in 1998. No amount of money could get rid of that picture of him in the tank."

Oakland County Democratic Party chairman David Woodward said changing campaign finance laws would help more people get into politics.

"Over half the members of the U.S. Senate are millionaires," he said. "The amount of cash needed for TV ads is rising exponentially and we're not getting the best candidates coming forward."

He said there is always a cry for campaign finance reform and lawmakers from both parties may decry the effect of cash on elections, but that doesn't mean the well-heeled can't make their intentions known.

"Money will always find a way," Woodward said.

Of course, he said there's no getting elected to anything without campaign funds, but that doesn't mean it can override message and the candidates themselves in the voting booth.

Pettit said the solution is an old one - publicly financed elections. The question that follows is just as old, he said, but the argument for public financing is valid considering all the other costs attached to the current method of campaign finance.

"Studies show it could be \$2 billion to finance campaigns," he said. "That seems like a lot, but when you consider there's \$64 billion in earmarks in federal appropriations bills, \$2 billion seems affordable."

Harnish said public funding of campaigns was not necessary.

alundberg@oe.homecomm.net | (248) 901-2536

# Firefighters train in donated house



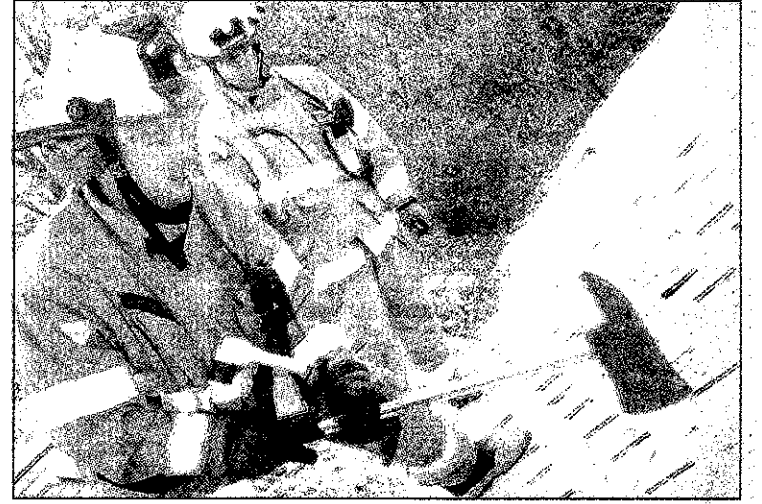
Livonia firefighters make their way along a rooftop during training a training exercise Monday afternoon.

Livonia Fire & Rescue firefighters used a donated house on Ann Arbor Trail near Newburgh last week and this week to get in some training exercises.

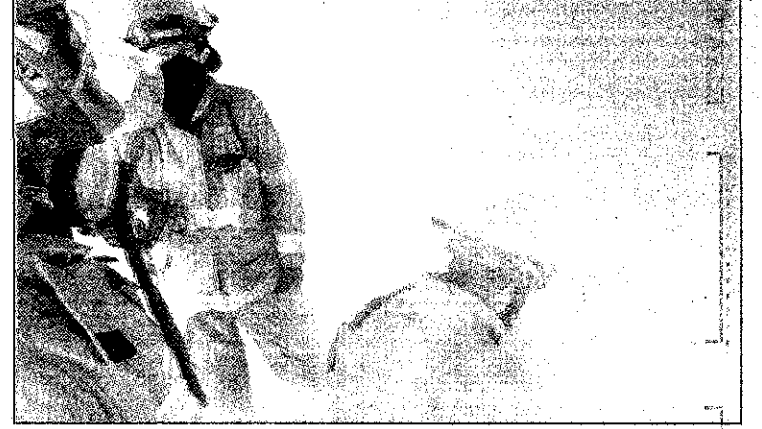
The sessions, repeated twice a day over four days to cover all the firefighters, included practice on oper-

ating generators and radios at the scene of a working fire.

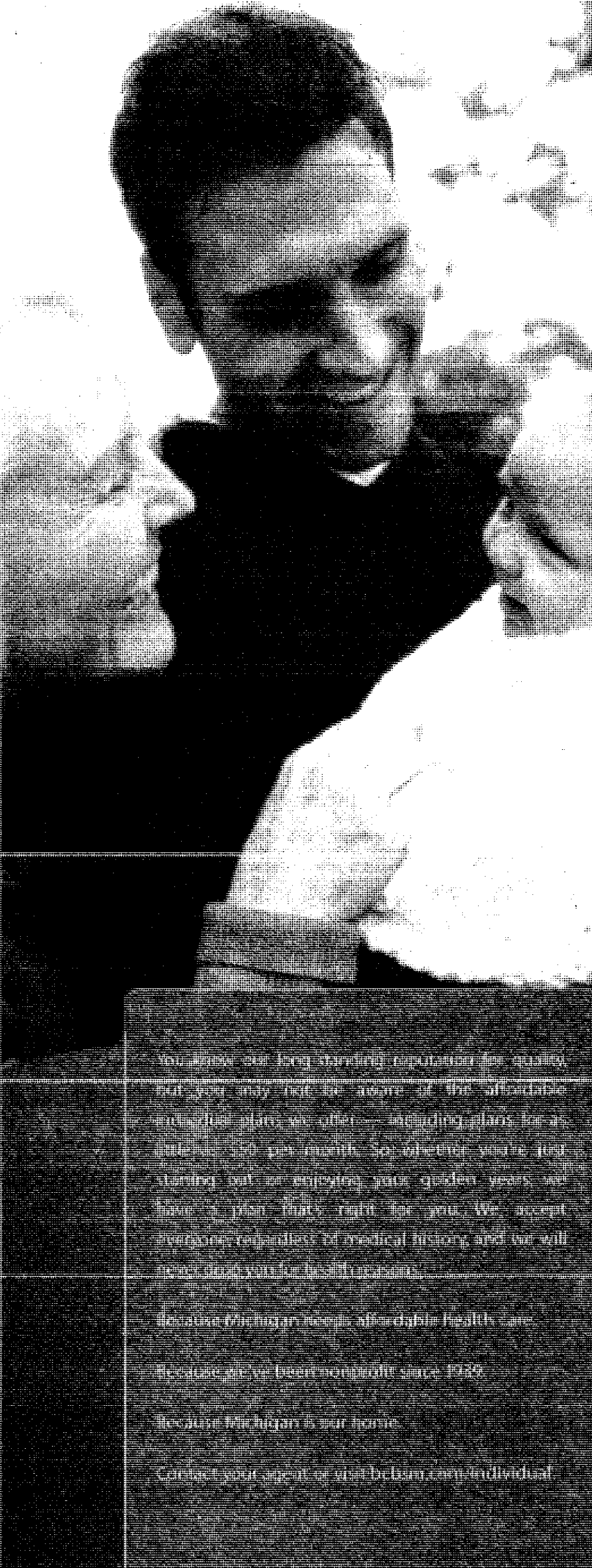
Firefighters also went on the roof to work on techniques for ventilating a roof during a fire. Inside the house that was filled with smoke, they practiced using a thermal imaging camera to move around.



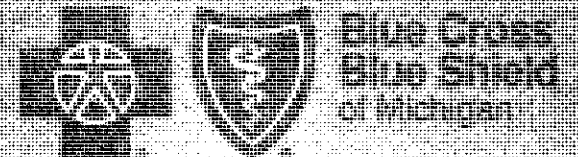
Livonia firefighters Jim Naif, left, and Matt Bernells practice sounding along the rooftop to locate the studs, an important factor when ventilating a roof.



Livonia firefighters make their way into a smoke-filled house during a training exercise Monday afternoon.



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To mail copy: The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or Fax to (734) 953-2121



# This beady-eyed beauty eats trees

I've got a new neighbor. Her nocturnal ways captured my respect the day after we met. I love her presence. Some claim a beast has invaded my land. "Neighbor" or "invader," she's a beady-eyed beauty, with a weird nose and strange ears that close when she plunges underwater, very large hind feet with fully webbed and



**Michigan Naturally**  
Jonathan Schechter

clawed toes, dexterous hand-like front paws, huge incisors in front of lips that seal up

tight and an amazingly muscular tail coated with leathery scales. She is every naturalist's dream. She first appeared in mid-October. Well, at least that's when I discovered the first tree blocking my backwoods trail. Ever since, shortly after dusk she (I'm just guessing female — she is so meticulous in her work) slips silently out of the

swamp, crawls up on land like the prehistoric beast she is and leaves a very big bite on the landscape. Early November is more than the season of the last falling leaves. It is also the season of falling trees for northern latitude beavers. Just like you and I go on shopping frenzies, if we know a big storm is brewing, beavers go on land "shopping sojourns" to shop and create underwater food caches before ice locks in lakes. Fail in that mission — they die.

My Brandon Township lowlands, down beyond my barn, down past the oaks and shag-bark hickory, a land rich with ruffed grouse, wild turkey and the occasional coyote, have become a supermarket of delights for North America's largest rodent. And beavers are big.

They can easily weigh up to 60 pounds. (The only larger rodent in the world is the capybara of South America, which can top the scales at 150 pounds.) And these hungry omnivores need wetland habitat that includes trees such as aspen and cottonwood. Beaver are not at all uncommon in parts of Oakland County. Just ask the DNR. Some residents "freak out" when this native tail-slapping resident appears on "their" all-sports lake.

Most friends who have seen my beaver pictures act as if something is wrong: "What are you going to do about it?" "It" being the beaver. But Lucy Lucas, of Waterford's Turtle Creek Farms — a woman with passion for wildlife and kids — became ecstatic. "Save those chewed logs for me!" Next summer I'll make sure her day campers at her nature camp will be ogling real beaver souvenirs: chopped logs and pointy stumps. Not to worry, Lucy.

Contrary to myth, beaver do not eat wood. They fell trees and strip outer bark to get to the nutritious cambium layer. And the branches that are dragged back to the swamp are wedged into the muddy bottom, adjacent to the lodge: Food for winter meals.

After shivering miserably near dusk in an icy cold rain while out on beaver patrol, I finally discovered the lodge. This impressive structure, protruding maybe four feet above the water, was almost obscured from shore by shrubs. But in the lodge, I knew the beaver or beavers, were warm and cozy, protected from predators doing what beavers have done every since the last great glacial retreat. Preparing for winter and snuggling. I walked away cold and wet but happy, recalling a phrase penned by David Thompson, a Canadian fur trader and geographer who trekked about Saskatchewan right after the American Revolution. He wrote something akin to our continent "belonging to just two races, man and beaver" with the beavers in the lowlands and humans occupying the highlands. Little did he know that beavers would remain the best non-union dam builders of our land. Even today.

Jonathan Schechter writes on nature's way in Michigan. E-mail him at oaknature@aol.com.

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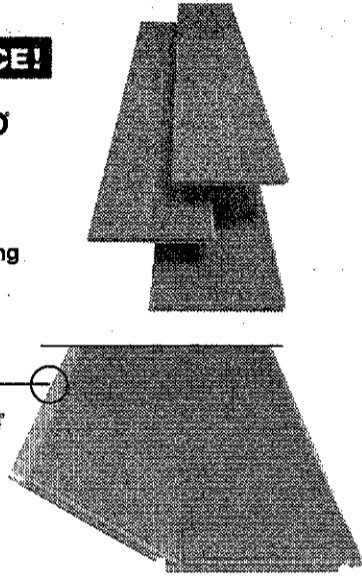


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