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Group: Rec plan is solution to park contamination

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

An unwavering citizens group has rekindled its push for a vast recreation complex in Westland, calling the need greater than ever after learning that Central City Park is contaminated.

The group, Citizens for Frontier Park (CFP), proposed two years ago that city officials use land west of the park for a 30-acre complex with

such amenities as baseball diamonds, soccer fields, an indoor pool, a two-sheet ice arena, picnic pavilions, basketball courts and walking trails.

After learning that city and county officials kept quiet for years about elevated levels of lead in Central City Park — specifically in the ball diamonds and soccer fields — CFP proponents are worried that children will have no sufficient place to play their games.

They have proposed what they consider a

viable, long-range solution to address the contamination problem and move ahead with Frontier Park, and they believe government officials should move quickly.

"The county and city owe the residents something," said Todd Kangas, among three Westland Youth Athletic Association past presidents who unveiled their latest vision to the *Observer*.

Kangas and former WYAA presidents Mark Rodriguez and Keith DeMolay said the city and county should consider paving over the contami-

nated ball diamonds and creating a playing court for special-needs athletes. They also said officials could pave the existing soccer fields and use the area for a parking lot.

Moreover, they believe that an 18-year-old land agreement between the county and the city already contains language that would allow officials to use property west of Central City Park for Frontier Park.

PLEASE SEE PARK, A3



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ivan and Dorothy Love hold one of 126 kittens that they have helped foster for the Michigan Humane Society's Berman Center for Animal Care.

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Cat whisperer MHS volunteer provides four-legged fostering for kittens

When Ivan and Dorothy Love's daughter died in an automobile accident in May 2005, the Livonia couple found solace in hugging their kittens.

And when Ivan was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer in December 2005, it was the kittens he held when he was upset.

"In February (2006), I had surgery, 38 rounds of radiation and now hormone therapy," Ivan said. "The kittens helped me through this a lot more than they can ever know."

That "they" is the staff at the Michigan Humane Society's Berman Center for Animal Care in Westland. Ivan has been a MHS volunteer since 2001 and for the past two years has, with the help of his wife, fostered kittens.

"We've fostered 126 kittens and haven't adopted one yet, so I guess that's pretty amazing," said Ivan who has had a positive outcome of his cancer treatment.

Ivan retired from Ford

Motor Company in March 1999 and turned to working at the MHS's old shelter in Westland "after everything on the honey do list was done."

He went one day a week to the shelter, working exclusively with the cats. He happened to be at the clinic when a woman brought in a cat and four kittens just five weeks old. He volunteered to take them home and raise them.

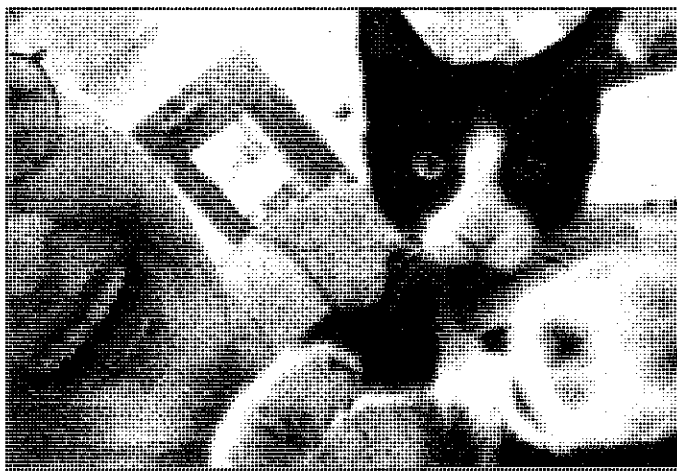
"After I experienced numb toes from diabetes, it got hard to clean those old cages, so I started doing this," said Ivan.

"The rule was that we can foster as long as we don't keep one," added Dorothy.

According to Dorothy, her husband has a way with the kittens, a knack that has earned him the nickname of the Cat Whisperer.

He is experienced in dealing with a variety of pet ailments — fleas, upper respiratory infections and parasites — and nursing kittens back to health. He has sat up with young kittens, feeding them with an eye dropper, slept in

PLEASE SEE KITTENS, A4



Dorothy Love can't resist giving a hug to a wide-eyed kitten in the Berman Center's adoption section.

Detroit woman faces hearing on charges stemming from fire

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Detroit woman is facing a court hearing today on charges of trying to kill three people by setting fire to the front door area of their Westland apartment.

Keli Angelique Coleman, 28, is accused of dousing the area with gasoline and starting a fire after mistakenly believing that the residents had her 4-year-old child, police said.

Coleman and the child's father have had differences, police said, and the Willow Creek apartment, on Newburgh south of Ford, is occupied by the father's mother.

Coleman is facing a hearing today in Westland's 18th District Court on three counts of assault with intent to murder and one count of arson of an occupied building.

Three people inside the apartment escaped injury during the fire, which erupted around 11 a.m.

Dec. 26 and mostly damaged the front door area. The child was not inside the residence, police said.

Coleman was jailed on a \$100,000 cash or surety bond after her arrest. Her hearing today is expected to determine whether she will have to stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

If convicted, she could face penalties ranging up to life in prison.

The incident happened on Oakview Lane in the Willow Creek complex. When police arrived, they saw two people screaming from a second-story unit, and a mattress had been thrown from the apartment, according to police reports.

A police officer kicked in the front door and, with help from an occupant, put out the fire, according to police reports. The officer then helped the three people leave the apartment.

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Senate names Anderson to Appropriations panel

State Sen.-elect Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, has been chosen to serve on the Senate Appropriations Committee in the new state legislature.

The committee makes important decisions about which projects and services the government will fund.

"Michigan continues to face extremely difficult budget challenges," Anderson said. "Our goal must be to live within our means, while protecting critical services and investing in our communities. It will not be easy, but I am confident we can work in a bipartisan way to do what is best for the 6th District and the entire state."

Anderson, the first state senator from Westland ever selected to serve on the appropriations committee, was also appointed to four appropriations subcommittees, including economic development, transportation, higher education and general government.

"Improving our economy, tackling transportation issues and securing funding for higher education are important to this community, and I will use my new role to be a strong voice for us in Lansing," Anderson said.

Anderson was elected in November to serve as the state senator for the 6th District, which includes Livonia, Garden City, Redford Township, and Westland. He defeated former state Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia.

Previously, Anderson served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives and as a member of the Westland City Council.

He will be sworn in to office at the Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 10.



Anderson

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Coming Sunday in Health



This week's combined edition, the martial arts and yoga.



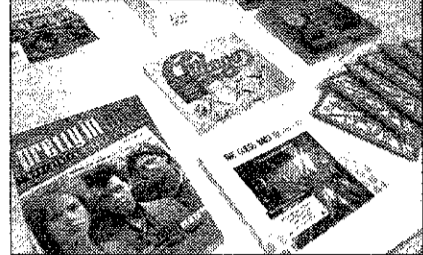
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Radio show gives gifts a 2nd chance

Christmas came twice for people who attended a local radio station's "regifting" party in Livonia Wednesday.

Ginny Hay of Dearborn brought four unwanted gifts to the party Wednesday morning at Burton Manor where Dick Purtan and Purtan's People hosted a remote broadcast for WOMC-FM.

About 50 people attended, hoping to trade up in the after-Christmas gift exchange.



People brought a wide range of unwanted presents — including books, DVDs and CDs — to the WOMC-FM regifting party, where they could trade for a better title, or a more useful item.

Hay brought bath towels, a foam snowman, a candy dish shaped like a bear and a stained glass candleholder.

She walked away with the seventh season of "MacGyver" on DVD, Mannheim Steamroller CDs, a cheese tray and a small angel calendar.

"Either I'll keep it for myself or I'll regift it," Hay said about the calendar.

One man, apparently not a hockey fan, brought an autographed Darren McCarty puck.

"He made some little girl who wanted it very happy," said Amy Berlin, WOMC promotions assistant.

The man took home the nine-part video of "Baseball: A Film by Ken Burns," which Purtan himself didn't want.

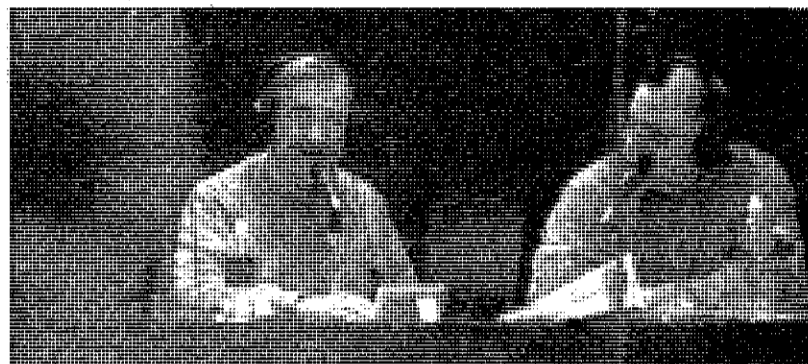
Unclaimed gifts were to be donated to Grace Centers of Hope, a Pontiac charity.

by Rebecca Jones



PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alex Molnar, 13, of Redford and his mother, Deanna, looked over the gifts turned in at the WOMC-FM regifting party Wednesday at Burton Manor. Participants could swap an unwanted gift for something they liked better.



Radio show host Dick Purtan (left) and personality Big Al Muskavito, along with the rest of Purtan's People, broadcast live Wednesday from Burton Manor during the WOMC-FM regifting party.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

MARY TODD LINCOLN

Few would disagree that Abraham Lincoln remains among the United States' most revered and iconic Presidents. Our national fascination with the 16th president, his administration and assassination, spills over to his charismatic First Lady, Mary Todd. This past Dec. 13 marked the 188th anniversary of her birth (in 1818).

Mary Todd was daughter to a prominent slave-holding family in Lexington, Ky., a fact that would prompt controversy during the Civil War, when relatives fought for the Confederacy. Before marrying Lincoln, she seriously considered the attentions of Stephen Douglas, his Democratic rival for President in 1860.

Southern debutante to ardent abolitionist, beau to Douglas but married Lincoln: This duality is all over Mary's biography. She was self-involved: Mary was roundly criticized for overspending public funds to redecorate the White House, and indeed continued to have what would now be considered a "shopping problem" throughout her life.

And yet she was selflessly sacrificial, too, anonymously visiting and caring for the sick and dying Union soldiers who flooded Washington hospitals from Civil War battles in the East.

Mary's life, her marriage and her husband's Presidency are fascinating topics. Materials at the library tell the story. Start with Jean Baker's *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography*, or the WGBH PBS documentary *Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House Divided*.

You might continue to the many excellent records of her husband's life and work — Pulitzer Prize-winning history Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. It has much to say about Mary Todd's ambition and its role in Lincoln's bid for the Presidency, and *Lincoln's Speeches and Writings, 1859-1865* includes some tantalizing glimpses into Lincoln's mind toward Mary and his children (one letter to her from the summer of 1863 displays his constant concern for his youngest surviving son; it consists of just two sentences: "Think you better put Tad's pistol away. I had an ugly dream about him.").

And there have been two novels in the last two years about Mary — Barbara Hambly's 2005 *The Emancipator's Wife* and Janis Cooke Newman's 2006 *Mary: A Novel*.

Lincoln's legacy, of course, belongs to the entire nation, and there is a wealth of material online about Mary Todd and The Great Emancipator. Northern Illinois University curates the Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project at lincoln.lib.niu.edu.

You can search for documents relating to Mary Todd at the Library of Congress's American Memory Project (memory.loc.gov; some 300+ letters, telegrams, and more are archived there). The privately funded Lincoln Institute maintains a detailed Mary Todd biography at its website, Mr. Lincoln's White House (www.mrlincolnswhitehouse.org).

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

ACHIEVERS

A Westland apartment community, Fountain Park Apartments, managed by The Brody Companies is the winner of the 2006 Best Overall Star Community Award.

The biggest and most prestigious of the GLASTAR awards, it's given each year to the best apartment community in the state of Michigan at the Property Management Association of Michigan's awards held recently at the Kellogg Center at Michigan State University.

The honor follows recognition in 2005 as the Apartment Association of Michigan Property of the Year Award, Leasing Professional of the Year, Maintenance Supervisor of the Year and Best Decorated Model awards.

The recognition honors the office staff of resident manager **Sharon Tyler**, assistant manager **Krystal Hamilton**, leasing professional **Stacie Rikard**, leasing consultant **Crystal Slavanish** and administrative help, **Sylvia Belanger**. The maintenance service team at Fountain Park is lead by supervisor **Howard Goraj** and includes **Richard Cetnarowski**, **Maurice Delihue**, **Chris Currie**, **Dan Oaks** and **Keith Immel**.

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Livonia's U.S. Marine band vet performs at Ford funeral

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

Far from the standard image of a Marine, members of "The President's Own" U.S. Marine band don't carry guns and don't get posted to war zones. But their regular assignment, to be wherever the music must swell perfectly and majestically, takes them all over the country and the world.

Master Gunnery Sgt. Lisa Kadala, a 1979 Churchill High graduate, is the principal clarinetist for the band and a member since 1985.

She performed Tuesday with the rest of the band at the state funeral for former President Gerald Ford in Washington D.C.

"It was a beautiful service," she said. "It was an honor to be a part of such a significant event, to hear the speakers, the choir and the pipe organ."

In February, she will have been in the band 22 years.

She marched in President Reagan's funeral procession and has marched in all five inaugurations since joining.

She plays funerals in Arlington National Cemetery, as well as weekly performances at the capital's Marine barracks.

"Every week is different," Kadala said. "We play outdoors in the summer on the Capitol Grounds and the Monument Grounds. We march at the Marine barracks every Friday night with the drill teams."

Kadala, whose parents still live in Livonia, went through an audition very similar to the auditions for major symphony orchestras — playing for a panel while obscured behind a wall so judges must choose their players based on their playing and nothing else.

She's proud of the group she performs with.

"I work with the most terrific musicians," Kadala said. "We spend a lot of time together traveling, playing the White



Master Gunnery Sgt. Lisa Kadala plays with the Marine Band at President Gerald Ford's funeral this week. The Livonia native is the first woman to be the principal clarinetist of the band.

'Every week is different. We play outdoors in the summer on the Capitol Grounds and the Monument Grounds. We march at the Marine barracks every Friday night with the drill teams.'

Master Gunnery Sgt. Lisa Kadala

House, going on tours, playing concerts."

The largest playing group, the full band, is 65 musicians. The smallest groups are 20 to 25 musicians.

She lives in Alexandria, Va., with her husband, a civilian employee of the Department of the Navy.

She said she's thinking of retiring once she's put in 26 years, to coincide with her husband's retirement.

Kadala's parents, James and Eunice Mitchell, still live in Livonia. Her mother said she still keeps a laminated copy of the 1985 *Observer* story of her daughter's acceptance into the Marine Band.

"She's done some outstanding things," Mitchell said. "She was the first female concert mistress, that means she sets the pitch for the band. She was also the first female clarinet section leader."

Kadala's mother said a lot has changed since her daughter was a shy, quiet stu-

dent at Webster Elementary.

"She's very dedicated to her music," Mitchell said. "She's very proud to serve her country in this capacity."

To become a member of "The President's Own," an individual must pass the audition/interview and meet the physical and mental criteria for enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps, according to Marine Public Affairs Specialist Staff Sgt. Rachel Ghadiali.

The person also must be a U.S. citizen in order to obtain the top secret security clearance with Category III White House access that is a prerequisite for duty with "The President's Own."

"Marines in 'The President's Own' are among the most expert musicians and professionals in the world and are recruited from renowned colleges, universities and conservatories worldwide," Ghadiali said.

The band was started in 1798 by an act of Congress with the single charge of providing music for the president. The band is the country's oldest professional musical organization and has performed for every sitting president since Thomas Jefferson.

Comprising the United States Marine Band, the Marine Chamber Orchestra and the Marine Chamber Ensembles, they perform regularly at the White House and at more than 500 public events every year.

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Cardboard box bass is big hit in Nashville

For the inventor of the Bogdon Box Bass, a cardboard upright bass, a trip to Nashville meant more than just seeing the sights.

It meant rubbing elbows with guitar vendors, selling everything from a classic Kay electric upright bass selling for \$2,200 to vintage acoustic guitars for \$1,200, performing with bands at the Nashville Crossroads Bar and finding a business owner to see the box bass.

"We sold a few Bogdon Box Bases, we played onstage with a country band in Nashville, we met a few new friends, and we bonded as bands do when bands are on the road," Chris Badynee wrote about the experience.

The Westland resident was in the country music capital last month to market his Bogdon Box Bass at the Music City Winter Guitar Show.

The Bogdon Box Bass in kit form for \$49.95 and is made of cardboard, that can be plugged in and made electric. Assembly requires a screwdriver, hot glue gun, packing tape and a knife.

A late arrival at the show site, Tennessee State Fair Sports Arena, Badynee attracted stares as he carted in six of his cardboard box basses. By the time the show ended, he had regulars visiting his booth, and even had one vendor buy one and set it next to his \$23,000 custom guitar display.

"I looked around to see if someone brought the box bass and just left it there," he stated. "I asked the vendor who the box bass belonged to and he said, 'Me, I bought that.' I was floored, speechless, embarrassed."

"He was a 'Gibson Luthier.' I looked at his display of gorgeous woods, beautiful artwork carvings, and gold plated hardware."

Badynee also meet up with a luthier from Waterford, Charlie Coen, whose electric guitars and hand-wound pickups are world class. They talked about music, gigging, guitars, and "of course," the resonance factor within corrugated cardboard." By the time they were done, Coen offered to sell the box bass in his store.

Badynee and his partners also enjoyed the Nashville music scene with friend Deb Ziemis, a country singer/songwriter, her husband and son, jamming with musicians at several bars and in front of several bars where bouncers chased him away because "I looked like I was pan-handling."

At one stop, the Nashville Crossroads Bar, he went onto the stage with the band, Carl D. and The 100 Proof Band.

"I slapped the hell outta my box bass as we played Johnny Cash's I Walk The Line, and the box bass sounded as sweet as sweet can sound," Badynee. "That was the most fun I've ever had improvising anywhere. We jammed as if it were New Years Eve."

The trip was everything Badynee had hoped for.

"Everything felt perfect," he stated. "We were happy, exhilarated and exhausted."

For more information about the Bogdon Box Bass, visit the Web site, www.bogdonmusic.com.

PARK

FROM PAGE A1

"There are more reasons now to move forward boldly with this plan than there ever has been," Kangas said.

CFP leaders have done research which they said indicates that not just Central City Park — but the bulk of land stretching west from the park to Newburgh Road — was included in the 1978 lease agreement.

They provided copies of documents that describe the land as being south of Ford Road, east of Newburgh, north of Marquette and west of Carlson — an area that encompasses Central City Park and property to the west.

The documents also indicate that the land should be used for park and recreational purposes.

But City Attorney Angelo Plakas has raised questions about the lease agreement, saying it included some attached exhibits that are missing. Those exhibits, he said, could cast doubt on the status of land west of Central City Park.

Plakas said his research, including talks with former

Mayor Tom Taylor indicates that only Central City Park was included in the 1978 lease agreement, although he couldn't say with certainty without having access to the exhibits.

Plakas said he has checked with various offices in the city and county, and no one appears to have the missing exhibits. That is troubling to CFP leaders.

"The whole thing is baffling," Kangas said.

CFP leaders hope to talk with county officials to see what is their interpretation of the 1978 lease agreement.

Regardless, Plakas said he doubted that Frontier Park could be built before the city-county lease expires in late 2008. Any potential agreement to use land west of Central City Park would likely be better handled by starting fresh — if city and county officials deem the plan workable, he said.

Frontier Park leaders have had a lukewarm response, at best, from local elected officials as they seek support for their project.

The plan would almost certainly require some type of tax increase, and former Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said last July

that "people out there are really struggling, and it might be difficult to get a (tax) passed."

CFP leaders have said they believe they could win community support for a tax increase, perhaps 1 mill or less. They have indicated they might ultimately circulate petitions to have the issue placed on an election ballot.

"We're trying to do something positive for the city," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez, Kangas and DeMolay voiced concerns that potential new residents will shy away from moving to Westland as recreation options dwindle for children.

CFP leaders also fear that if they back away from their proposal, land west of Central City Park — land that is presumably not contaminated — could be developed for non-recreation purposes.

They believe that part of the funding for Frontier Park could come from a quarter-mill county tax that is specifically designated for parks and recreation.

"We still envision this as a need for the city — a great plan for the city," Kangas said.

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STEVENSON HONOR ROLL

Named to the honor roll for the first marking period at Stevenson Middle School were:

Ashley Abbott, Susan Abbott, Michael Acerrano, Adedamola Adebisi, Keith Agee, Arika Agnew, Sean Albarán, Shannon Alcodray, Sydney Alioto, Omar Alkatie, Samia Alkatie, Cody Allen, Kali Aloisi, Marissa Alvarez, Nathan Alvord, Shane Anderson, Brittany Arledge, Josiah Ault, Michael Babler, Mary Bache, Megan Bache, Hali Baker, Kirstin Baker, Seth Baker.

Julie Bancroft, Juliana Bangura, Ashley Barker, Justin Bean, Samantha Begdorian, Jack Begley, Amelia Bennett, Sidney Bennett, Andrew Benyo, Jessica Berg, Caylyn Best, Troy Beverley, Courtney Billings, Brandon Bleau, Hailey Blevins, Jeffery Bogedain, Casey Bone, Morgan Bone, Cody Borg, Zachary Bower, Dillon Bowies, Shelby Bray, Trudi Brothers, Aaron Brown.

Aljah Brown, Codie Buege, Jordan Buford, JalyN Bulls, John Burger, Erica Burzlaff, Brenna Bush, Avery Byrom, Kameron Caldwell, Roxhensa Cami, Adrian Carey, Ashley Carey, Kendall Carter, Matthew Castaldini, Servina Ceno, Martha Cerda, Jacob Charron, Quintin Cheek, Sunroop Cheema, Ashley Christensen, Tasha Christensen, De'Janae Clark, Brittany Cobb.

Jared Coleman, Marisa Colosimo, Ashley Compton, Jordyn Coniam, Ashley Conley, Amanda Cook, Dylan Cook, Kendra Cornish, Brandon Coulter, Javon Crocker, Erin D'Arcy, Ian D'Arcy, Michael Dalton, Laura Darnell, Mona Darwish, Briana Davis, James Decker, Delani Derr, Tessa Diaz, Charity Dillard, Tyler Dingman, Alana Doe, Tyler Donbrock, Zachery Donbrock.

Carolyn Doyle, Alexander Driessche, Nickolas Duncan, Anthony Dunn, Corey Ellis, Megan Emery, Alysia Escobar, Erica Escobar, Natalie Escobar, Janette Evans, Brianna Everett, Emily Everett, Tanae Ewing, Wadie Farah, Brooke Femat, Jacob Ferguson, Shelby Fitzgerald, Karl Fletcher, Audra Flores, Luis Flores, Jessica Fontana, Travis Fontana, Chelsey Foster.

Zachary Franklin, Alex Fucik, Alexis Gagleard, Chloe Garbacz, Dylan Gartz, Tristan Gellert, Allyson Gibbs, Alec Gibson, Joseph Gierak, Katelyn Gierak, Alexa Girouard, Breanna Glasson, Breann Graca, Brooke Graham, Meghan Grainger, Joelle Green,

Lauren Green, Mashon Green, Sherry Green, Ashley Guldner, Eric Haase, Alexandra Hamlett, Christopher Hammel.

Matthew Hansen, Tiffany Harris, Austin Hartford, Meghan Hartman, Christopher Hatch, Marissa Hay, Taylor Hayton, Jessica Hensley, Megan Hernandez, Jamie Higgs, Jasmine Hitt, Madison Hodgkins, Natalie Hogue, Brandi Holbrook, Brooklyn Holbrook, David Hopkins, Katie Horton, Kerri Horton, Alannah Houston, Bryn Houston, Ediana Hoxhallari.

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Tammy Wilson, Melanie Winekoff, Evan Woody, Halie Woody, Larry Wright, Reynard Wright, Sherae Wurster and Kelsie Yax.

TRW gift boosts reading, tech programs

BY REBECCA JONES
STAFF WRITER

The reading and technology curriculums in Livonia Public Schools will get a boost, with a \$5,000 gift from the TRW Foundation.

John Wilkerson, senior communication manager at TRW Automotive, presented the check at a recent school board meeting. It is the seventh consecutive year the corporation has given to LPS, bringing the total to \$45,000.

"When I give a gift to Livonia Public Schools, it is an investment. It is money that is well-spent. It is making an impact on teachers lives," Wilkerson said.

The money will be used for elementary literacy and applied technology in the middle school

professional development program.

Last year's gift bought books and teaching resources for elementary schools. That effort will continue.

At the middle schools, funding will be used to purchase software and provide lessons that demonstrate the connection between technology and curriculum and the work world.

A new pilot program will also get underway teaching middle school students skills that make good employees, such as perseverance, responsibility and integrity.

"These programs would not be possible without TRW's funding," said Donna McDowell, coordinator of communications and partnerships. "This is corporate citizenship at its best."

TRW, which has 200 locations including Livonia, has donated \$100 million to the communities where it has plants.

"It goes a lot deeper than a monetary gift," Wilkerson said. "What we're doing here is building a base ... it continues to build year on year."

Although the auto industry is experiencing tough economic times, Wilkerson added, "I sure hope to be back again next year with another gift."

In addition to financial generosity, TRW has encouraged employee participation in LPS's teacher-business education program, McDowell said. Employees also volunteer time for needy families in the district.

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KITTENS

FROM PAGE A1

the spare bedroom for three days with a ailing kitten tucked under his arm, and has been able to socialize a group of kittens the shelter determined were feral.

"When you foster, you have to look at it from the standpoint that you have to socialize them and take care of their illnesses," Ivan said. "Most have upper respiratory illnesses, so you have to know how to deal with the medicine."

"It's impossible for him to walk into the kitchen without being followed by four kittens," Dorothy added. "When he naps, the kittens are sleeping on his chest."

The Loves keep the kittens in the breezeway of their home for two days to make sure they use a litter box, then they introduce them to their two cats, Midnight, age 5, and Katie, age 15 and blind. They describe Midnight as the uncle, saying he licks and cleans the kittens. Katie, however, growls.

"She tells them I'm the queen, leave me alone," Ivan said.

While the MHS provides supplies to care for the kittens, Ivan prefers to buy his

'We've had a lot of fun with them. The last 1 1/2 years since we lost our daughter, they've been more of a therapy for us than we've been for them.'

Ivan Love

own. He has nine litter boxes, four of which are top-of-the-line electric litter boxes, for his "guests" and serves them Tasty Treats at meal time.

Katie is the first to be fed, followed by the kittens. Midnight will come in and wake him at 5:30 a.m. Ignoring him is good for a kitty hit, Ivan said.

"They get spoiled rotten," Dorothy said.

"It's like having kids, only we have four to nine kids at a time," Ivan said.

Age and weight determine how long the kittens stay with the Loves. The general rule is that the kittens must be eight weeks old and weigh two pounds, the minimum required for spaying and neutering, to become available for adoption. They did have a pair of calico cats that they turned in at 10 weeks who still weighed on 1 1/2 pounds.

The Loves at first hesitated to name the kittens, figuring

that they would end up keeping them, if they did. They now do and none of their guests have the same name.

"We have two kittens that look like twins, so we call them Pete and Repeat," Dorothy said.

So committed to their fostering, the Loves plan their vacations around the kittens.

And they're proud of what they've accomplished with the kittens, pointing out that theirs are "first picks" when they become available for adoption. Three kittens in one litter had homes before they came back to the shelter, and one orange cat ended up being adopted by a clinic worker.

Fostering the kittens is important to MHS, and Ivan, who just turned 69, figures he has another 20 years, and will have kittens "as long as I'm physically able."

But the Loves say the work is just as important to them.

"We've had a lot of fun with them" Ivan said. "The last 1 1/2 years since we lost our daughter, they've been more of a therapy for us than we've been for them."

"No matter how sad we are, you just have to laugh when you see what they do," Dorothy added.

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Volunteers important part of work at MHS

Volunteers are an integral part of what the Michigan Humane Society does for homeless and unwanted animals.

Volunteer opportunities include doing adoption center animal care and serving as greeters/adoption assistants, online Pets Program writers and photographers and in-shelter dog trainers.

MHS also has an urgent need for foster families to temporarily house animals, providing them extra care and love so they can ultimately be adopted into good homes.

Volunteers foster animals which cannot immediately be placed for adoption but are considered highly adoptable. The animals may be injured, ill, too young to be adopted, or animals who have been abused and are in need of extended care.

Once the animals are healthy, they are either returned to the adoption center and placed for adoption or kept in the foster home and placed on Petfinder until they are adopted.

People interested in being foster parents can contact Janell Timko at (248) 799-7400, Ext. 136, or by e-mail at jimtko@michiganhumane.org.

MHS requires volunteers be at least 14 years old. Those between 14-17 years of age must be accompanied by an adult mentor who is at least 25 years of age every time he or she volunteers. They also must be willing to make a minimum six-month commitment, attend the general orientation and any other required training, depending on the volunteer position.

For more information on volunteering, visit the Michigan Humane Society Web site at www.michiganhumane.org.

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Toys and Trains

Ss. Simon and Jude Church's Ushers Club will sponsor a Toys and Train Show noon-4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7, the church hall at 32500 Palmer, west of Merriman. Admission is \$2 per person, \$4 per family. Food and beverages are available. Parking is free.

There will be approximately 130 dealer tables available at \$10 each. To reserve a dealer table, call Norm at (734) 595-8327. Dealer setup is 9 a.m. on the day of the show.

In concert

The Wisconsin Lutheran College Concert Band will be in concert at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7, at Huron Valley Lutheran High School in Westland.

The performance is part of the band's 2007 Vigil's Keep Midwest Tour. The band will appear with the Huron Valley Lutheran High School Concert Band.

Under the direction of Professor Terry Treuden, the 60-piece concert band will perform a variety of works, including *Allegro Barbaro* by Béla Bartók and arranged by Tom Wallace, *An American Elegy* by Frank Ticheli and directed by student conductor David Neubauer, *Suite on Celtic Folk Songs* by Tomohiro Tatebe, *Madrigalum* by Philip Sparke, *The National Game* by John Philip Sousa and arranged by Keith Brion and *Vigils Keep*

Society holds youth music competition

Wayne-Westland students interested in music have until Monday, Jan. 22, to apply for the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society's Youth Artist Competition.

The competition will take place on Sunday, Feb. 4, at Evola Music, 7170 N. Haggerty, Canton.

The competition is composed of three divisions - senior instrumental for grades 10-12, senior piano for grades 10-12 and junior combined for grades 7-9.

Applicants must be piano, band or orchestra students living in the Wayne-Westland school district. The competition also is open to students in the Clarenceville, Livonia, Northville, Novi, Plymouth-Canton and Van Buren school districts.

Members of the Celebration Youth Orchestra or students at Evola Music also are eligible.

The distribution of scholarship funds for the first-place winners in each division is senior instrumental, \$500; senior piano, \$500, and junior combined, \$250. If applicable, honorable mentions also will be acknowledged.

Applications, available through the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society, are due on or before Jan. 22. Past participants are encouraged to reapply, however, musicians are eligible to win only one first prize award in each division. Winners may have the opportunity to perform with the PSO and Orchestra Canton. Applicants must be available to perform at the competition.

For an application and/or further information, call Ellen Elliott at (734) 451-2112, or by e-mail at ellen@plymouthsymphony.org. Applications also are available on the Plymouth Symphony Web site at www.plymouthsymphony.org.

The Plymouth Canton Symphony Society is a non-profit organization.

by Julie Giroux.

The concert is free and open to the public. Huron Valley Lutheran High School is at 33740 Cowan, east of Wayne Road, Westland, Michigan. For more information, call (734) 525-0160.

Bowling benefit

Veteran's Haven and Towne & Country Lanes will hold a Bowling for Homeless Veterans benefit 12:30-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, at the bowling alley at 1100 S. Wayne Road, Westland.

The cost will be \$20 per person which includes three games of bowling, shoe rental and raffie ticket for drawings going on

throughout the event.

Veteran's Haven and Towne & Country Lanes are dedicated to combating the problem of homelessness among veterans. With more than 500,000 veterans homeless at any given time in this country and nearly 5,000 homeless veterans in the Detroit metropolitan area, a serious problem exists. Veteran's Haven has assisted more than 10,000 veterans since its inception, providing food, clothing, counseling, job connections, transportation and supportive/transitional housing to disadvantaged, homeless and needy Veterans.

For more information on how to help or about Veteran's Haven,

visit the Web site at www.vet-shaveninfo.org or call (734) 728-0527.

Book group

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Discussion Group at the William P. Faust Public Library will be poring over the pages of *Variable Star* by Robert Heinlein and Spider Robinson when it meets at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31, in meeting room A.

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

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 and includes refreshments, snacks and cash prizes. A 50/50 raffle also is available. The scheduled dates are Jan. 7, 5, 12, 26 and Feb. 2, 9, 16.

For more information, call (734) 427-5150.

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.

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 multigrain pancakes, coffee, juice, lowfat milk, sausage and bacon. Sugar-free syrup will be available.

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OUR VIEWS

State must deal with tax problem

Gov. Jennifer Granholm sounded positive notes Monday in her second inaugural address.

In the election, Granholm was challenged by a well-financed campaign by businessman Dick DeVos. The state's continuing economic problems made her vulnerable, but voters were willing to give her another chance.

In her address, Granholm said that Michigan is uniquely challenged, but "will rise to meet the challenge because it's who we are and it's who we will be."

Those are fine sentiments, but Granholm and the state Legislature need a strong political will to do what needs to be done to both stimulate the state's lagging, auto-dominated economy while preserving the state's necessary public services.

At the top of the agenda immediately is finding a way to replace most, if not all, of the revenue that will be lost when the Single Business Tax expires late this year. But the state has a more fundamental problem. The state's budget is structurally unbalanced. The state doesn't take in enough revenue to meet its obligations.

The governor and the state Legislature need to move boldly to address the broader issues of the state's tax structure, beyond finding an appropriate business tax to replace the \$1.9 billion of revenue from the SBT.

This will include some more trimming of state government, but here the options are limited. The state has commitments to K-12 education, higher education, environmental protection, land management, public safety, roads, health care and many other services that are vital to providing an attractive environment for economic growth. Inefficiencies exist in state government as they do in private business, but in some areas cutbacks have already hurt services at the state and local levels of government.

Granholm has said that being a "lame-duck" governor will be liberating. The question is whether it will liberating enough for her to push through a tax plan that will include tax increases for some segments and may include taxes that will have an impact on everyone.

No one likes to pay taxes and no one likes to have state services cut. That's the problem.

Any change in the tax structure also has to balance the state's revenue needs with providing a tax environment that is attractive to businesses, especially the new, cutting-edge technology businesses that the state is trying to lure from other states.

But studies show that low taxes are only one of many factors that businesses look at when choosing to locate facilities. Good state and local government services, good roads and other transportation, a healthy environment, top universities and recreational opportunities are also high on the list.

This is a challenge and an opportunity to set the state on a solid footing for the future.

Nation owes debt to our own Gerald Ford

Michigan's only president returned home Wednesday to be buried in his boyhood hometown of Grand Rapids. The private ceremony for former President Gerald R. Ford capped a week of remembrances and tributes for the nation's 38th commander in chief.

While Ford's brief, two-year presidency was anything but normal, it appears certain that his legacy finally will focus on how he helped heal a troubled nation instead of how he pardoned a disgraced president.

Ford oftentimes was referred to as the "accidental president," who aspired politically to be Speaker of the House, but instead was thrust into the White House as a result of the Watergate scandal and subsequent resignation of then-President Richard Nixon.

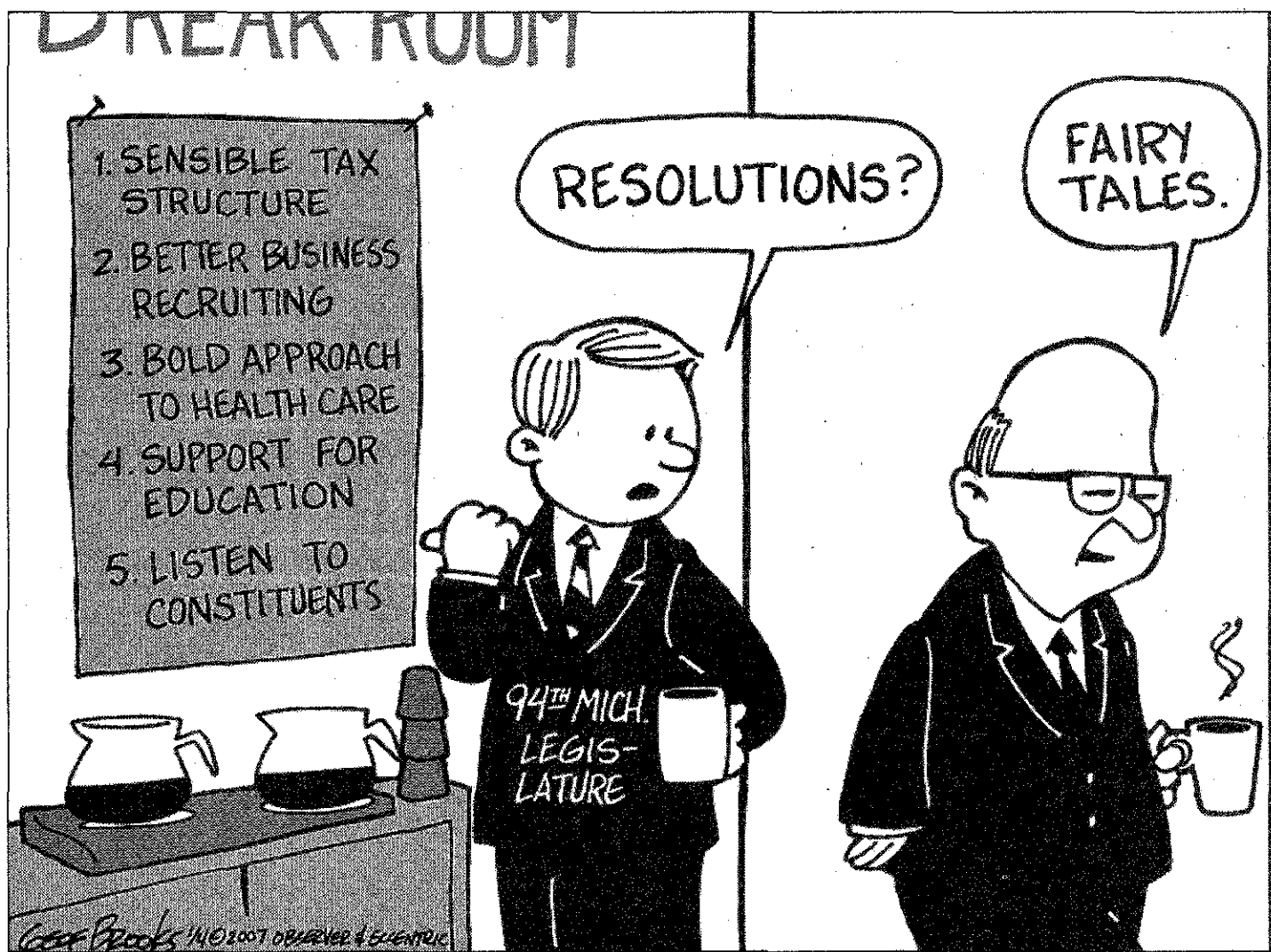
And while Ford was vilified by many for his pardon of Nixon, which likely ended his political career, even many of his staunchest critics at the time now admit that Ford was correct in ending the country's "long, national nightmare."

Politicians today could learn a lot from President Ford. He put the good of the country ahead of his own interests and served the state of Michigan well as both a member of Congress for more than 20 years and as president.

Words like honest, honorable, straightforward, warm and noble have been used over and over this past week to describe Gerald R. Ford. These are words not usually used to describe politicians today.

Although he moved to California many years ago, President Ford never forgot his roots, or his alma mater, the University of Michigan, where he starred on the football team. He returned to the state many times, and always spoke fondly of his years at the university. It seems fitting that the U-M marching band was scheduled to play *Hail to the Victors* at the final funeral service Wednesday in Grand Rapids.

President Ford was living testimony that nice guys can finish first, and that we can all benefit from a dose of humility from time to time.



LETTERS

Require a paper ballot

I join the call for a paper ballot for every vote cast in America. It is time for Congress to finally pass an election reform bill in which the American people can have confidence.

Any such legislation must require a paper ballot — not a "paper trail" nor a "paper record" — for every vote cast.

Please make this a top priority in the upcoming legislative session.

Ronnie Sullivan
Westland

Story disappoints Brownies

I read the article, "Kids' homemade ornaments decorate trees," in the Dec. 17 edition of the *Observer*. It was a very nice article.

As the troop leader for P.D. Graham Brownie Troop 14, I was quite disappointed to see that there was no mention of our troop at this event. I would be remiss, if I didn't write the *Observer* and let them know.

I'm sure the Brownies and their families are wondering why our troop wasn't mentioned, as am I. Our Brownie girls and their parents had such a wonderful time decorating the tree, meeting Mayor Cicirelli, visiting Santa Claus, making crafts, and enjoying cookies and hot chocolate. We were some of the last to leave that evening.

Troop 14 is a new troop at P.D. Graham Elementary as of October 2006, so perhaps that is why we went unnoticed. We have 16 Brownies and welcome more to join us at any time.

Troop members include Leader Laurel Peterson, co-leaders Laura Franklin and Leigh Rogiero, treasurer Amy Cizauskas, Cookie Mom Becky Knaub, Brownies Faith Allen, Hannah Cizauskas, Hailey Doyle, Bridget Ebert, Chloe Franklin, Leah Hailey, Kaily Kiedrowski, Viktorya Knaub, Kaylan Kolasa, Makaylah Liddell, Caitlynn Lumley, Tessa Milne, Emily Orsette, Nicole Owens, Brianna Rogiero and Julia Sutton.

Laurel Peterson
Northville

Volunteer deserves honor

Virginia Braun, a longtime community volunteer, was appointed to the Westland Historical Commission in 1983 and has served an impressive 23 consecutive years. She announced her retirement from the commission and at the last City Council meeting was presented a certificate of appreciation by Councilman Charles Pickering who had appointed her 23 years ago at which time he was mayor. Much to her surprise she received a standing ovation by all of those in attendance.

Eleven months in the year the Historical Commission holds a monthly meeting. Only in the last five years has the commission been compensated for those. A majority of the Historical Commissioners give up Saturday afternoons to hold open house at the museum site to see that the buildings, including the archives, are available to the public.

Let us honor a volunteer who has worn two hats for historic preservation in our community for 18 years, for Virginia joined the Friends of the Museum at the onset of that organization in 1988. She has always had impeccable standards on preservation and supports preservation for all of

Westland's historic structures.

She has said the high point of her 23 years was serving as chairperson of the Perrinsville School Restoration Committee. She was appointed by Thomas H. Brown who at the time was chairman of the commission.

Virginia persevered for seven years as chair, at which time the restoration was completed and a dedication was held in 1997. She still has her little blue notebook in which notes were kept on restoration of the 1856 schoolhouse.

Since restoration of the historic school Virginia has been in charge of scheduling school classes, seeing that the schoolroom is cleaned before and after visitations, opening and closing the schoolhouse for not only school classes, but for the Sunday open house held in the spring and summer months.

Another time Virginia undertook the task of tracing two misplaced gravestones that had been turned in at the museum complex. One had been found along Hix Road by a jogger, and the other had been buried in a back yard until one day a man decided to dig up a stone that was always in the way in his garden area. Appreciation was expressed by two neighboring communities for return of the missing stones.

With her expertise in genealogy, she lectured a few genealogy classes at the museum to let the public know what resources were available in the Museum Archives. Because of lack of space at the museum, she gave genealogy classes at the library.

Virginia has served on many, many committees. She was one of four members of the Perrinsville School Teachers Manual, researching materials not only for reading, writing, and arithmetic, but songs, games, geography, etc., so a teacher would have a manual to authentically plan an 1890's day at the one-room schoolhouse in Westland.

She was one of the inventory committee members who helped with the first inventory of accessions at the museum after 19 years of collecting items donated to the museum. Just this year she served on three important committees.

On the textile committee, she was one of four people who gave a total of some 500 hours to sew in permanent tags into textile accessions. She stepped up to the plate for the cookbook fund-raiser and the *Cooking With Friends* cookbook was a success.

For annual Flea Market fund-raisers the past three years held on the grounds of the one-room schoolhouse, she was not only a committee member, but rounded up numerous relatives who helped the day of the sale.

All of these activities are just a drop in the bucket of her endeavors. I will treasure the years that I have shared with Virginia on the Westland Historical Commission and the Friends of the Westland Historical Museum. She has brought pride to the community by all she has accomplished on the two historical groups.

Thank you, Virginia Braun.

Ruth Dale
Westland

Toy sounds like sore loser

I was slightly amused by the recent op-ed column by outgoing state Sen. Laura Toy. There were two clear messages from the former senator. One is that she is a sore loser. While she complains about the nega-

tive attacks by her opponent, she is silent about her state Republican Party's winner of the senate election, Glenn Anderson.

Toy suggests that the attack against her was unfair because it singled a small percentage of the thousands of votes cast by a senator. Well, Ms. Toy, the same argument can be made by Mr. Anderson who was singled out by the state Republican Party during the campaign for a few votes out of the thousands he cast as a state representative.

On another level, it is clear that Ms. Toy is trying to seek another political office. She has served as a community college trustee, city council member, state representative and state senator. Maybe it's time to give politics a rest. Or will the Republican Party find a place for her as a staff member somewhere in the state legislature?

As I have said before in *Observer* letters, the term limits amendment to the state Constitution doesn't really limit an individual's opportunities to run for office since a person typically moves from one public position to another, usually without a hitch.

Leonard Fogar
Westland

Common ground

An illustration of the universality and commonality of the monotheistic faiths — namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in the order of their creation — is the fact that as a high school girl in Israel I used to sing in our school choir the famous Hallelujah chorus from Handel's Messiah with no inking on our part that this is not a Jewish song but a Christian song and a staple of the Christmas-New Year's period. We sang it in our native Hebrew and the words were praise to God, the creator and king of the universe and I can easily hear it sung in Arabic as praise to the same God who is called Allah by an Islamic choir.

With all due respect to the individual traditions of each and every of the three Abrahamic religions, a close examination would reveal that the commonalities between them far exceed the differences, and there is nothing like the Christmas season of peace on earth and goodwill to mankind to implement these beautiful shared values.

Rachel Kapen
West Bloomfield

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

"The fire marshal's office in no way wants to give the impression that just because someone has a mental illness they will start a fire or cause a problem. We know that most of the patients live very normal lives and cause no problem."

Westland Fire Capt. Colleen Pennington about Neighborhood Service Organization using an apartment at Hunters West

WESTLAND Observer
PUBLISHED THURSDAY AND SUNDAY

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

LETTERS

Formal investigation needed

I attended the public study session on the Central City Park contamination issue. The MDEQ passed out a flyer which was helpful. I think additional copies are available at the City Clerk's office. I recommend that the residents go to the MDEQ Web site and look up "Due Care" Requirements. This was mentioned in the MDEQ flyer.

Section 20107a of Part 201 of Act 451 "requires that owners and operators (city of Westland) take due care measures to ensure that existing contamination on a property does not cause unacceptable risks and is not exacerbated. An owner (Wayne County) or operator (city of Westland) of a site of environmental contamination must prevent exacerbation of the existing contamination ... examples of exacerbation include ... soil goes off-site from blowing winds (how about a ballfield?)."

"Owners/operators must exercise due care by undertaking response activities that are necessary to prevent unacceptable exposures to contamination. ... The existing contamination must be evaluated to determine if the people using or working at the property would be exposed to contamination at levels above the appropriate criteria. ... An owner/operator must take reasonable precautions or steps needed to prevent exposure to an unacceptable risk for a third party ... e.g., neighborhood kids playing in a vacant industrial yard that has direct contact hazards (ballfields?)."

The Due Care Rules require notification within 45 days of becoming the owner/operator or of having knowledge of the conditions. "Persons required to provide notice under Section 21309z(3) of Act 451. Owners/Operators must take reasonable precautions against the reasonably foreseeable acts or omissions of a third party. Also, the owner/operator must prevent unacceptable human exposure ... in a manner that protects the public health and safety."

I now ask every resident, taxpayer and voter of Westland: Was the law followed? Reread the press coverage, read the MDEQ documents and check the dates. Did your mayor order the park closed within 45 days? Did your mayor notify residents? Did your mayor put up a barrier to prevent exposure or entrance onto the site? What about the directors? Did they follow the law?

In addition, there is 7.3.1 Due Diligence and 7.3.2 Baseline Environmental Assessments. The city of Westland and Wayne County are required by law to test the soils and water of Central City Park. So were tests already done for the water and soil outside of those done by the DEQ? Interesting thing to find out.

What is the environmental testing plan for our parks? Who oversees it? Ponds and water in public parks should be regularly tested. Time for an investigation. Wouldn't our planning director also play into this with the soil issue? Or our department of public works director? Let the finger pointing begin.

The buck stops at our mayor and if directors are not being leaders and offering push back, it is time to clean house. If the law isn't understood, followed or enforced, wouldn't that be negligence? Will our City Council step up to the plate and follow the City Charter and ordinances in this regard? After all, that's the law. Will they follow the law? Will they contact the attorney general's office directly for an investigation? Wouldn't that be the prudent thing to do? Are they not elected to represent the residents?

Our city ordinance under Section 2.5 says that records shall be at all times subject to inspection by any member of the Council, or by any person employed or designated by the Council for that purpose. All such books, papers, records, files and accounts shall be kept in such place as may be designated by the Council.

The City Charter clearly spells out that the mayor, City Council and others are responsible for the health and safety of the residents. Our water and soil is a health and safety issue. The Due Diligence Law clearly states this. Not notifying the people ... hmmm. The fact that the planning director, parks director, city attorney and others knew about the contamination elevates this issue, doesn't it? It is a violation of the City Charter, city ordinances, public trust and other related laws. Seems to me if one is a director they should know the laws that relate to that position.

Citizens of Westland, contact the DEQ and see if they are going to investigate and file a violation notice. Take the legal steps. Have we been violated? Our water, land and the air we breathe must be held with the highest respect of protection. Residents must be valued. The City Charter and ordinances must be enforced or they mean nothing. Is it up to you and I to contact the appropriate parties for the enforcement of these laws? Will the City Council contact the attorney general? Will they vote to initiate a formal investigation? Stay tuned ...

Michael Smith
Westland

Accommodations for what

Recently I was made aware of an Iraqi vet who needed our help by Roger Kehrier, senior vice commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. I won't use names for obvious

reason, I will use only initials, but I wanted to make the public aware how the system works, even when you're trying to simplify matters and help. The MOPH will be sending this family a \$1,000 check from its welfare fund.

Roger made contact with E.D., a social worker at the Detroit VA, to inquire about this vet who was being treated there and waiting to be transported to the Indianapolis VA for further treatment.

His wife and three children wanted to accompany and visit their father for Christmas week. This vet was a combat engineer and injured when a girder snapped and made him a quadriplegic. E.D. did not make contact with Roger for over a week. Finally, they talked and we thought this matter was well under way until today.

Roger contacted us and explained the story that accommodation for the family was needed for approximately 17 days — Christmas week and six additional weekends thereafter. We were more than willing to help. To get this ball rolling, considering E.D. was MIA, Roger contacted volunteer services at the VA in Detroit and spoke to W.S., who I also know and have dealt with on various issues for more than 10 years. W.S. understood the story and contacted M.W. in Indianapolis at the VA to locate a nice hotel/motel for the family's stay.

He had located a Comfort Inn that was more than willing to accommodate this family's needs with a suite, food, grocery shopping, swimming pool and transportation for wherever they needed to go. The VA Hospital is approximately six miles from this location. The cost per night was \$69, and this hotel was very willing to keep the price low for all vets' families that might have the same needs.

Today, E.D. called me and informed me that he has made his own arrangements at a place called The Residence on the Canal at \$93 per night.

I explained that I needed to talk to the vet's wife to confirm and get the paperwork we need for our files, showing the money had been expended for wounded vets. Well, E.D. told me he wanted to act as a liaison between the family and us, I still explained that I needed to talk to Mrs. W.

Apparently, no one was real concerned about contacting us and making this a done deal, so I could call the hotel and lock up these accommodations for the family. I hadn't heard from anyone.

This afternoon I called the director's office at the Detroit VA and explained the story to his assistant.

She told me she would find out what's going on and get back with me. Well, she

called me back on a conference call with E.D. on the line.

I explained to both that my concern was that all arrangements were made up until yesterday and all I needed to do was talk to the wife.

I went on to explain that I was not pleased that E.D. went behind the backs of Roger, W.S., M.W. and myself and made his own deal at this other resort. After all our time and effort, the deal was going up in smoke. This little venture would of cost \$1,173 at the Comfort Inn and \$1,581 at The Residence on the Canal.

This is the part that I like. Considering I explained that we will be more than willing to confirm reservations for Mrs. W and her family at this Comfort Inn, I was asked by the director's assistant and E.D. if our offer to help this family was still good.

I told them yes, but at the Comfort Inn. I was then informed by both of these individuals that Mrs. W. has the right to pick where she and the family wants to stay. Not on our nickel! To conclude our phone conversation, I told both that I would make my final decision after I speak to Mrs. W., if she ever calls me.

This is why Veterans Haven, along with Sandra Cicirelli, Bob Stottlemeyer and many others, volunteered time and effort to raise money to help the wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Not once, but twice, in 2005, we had "The Back to the '40s Dinner/Dance" and the Lee Greenwood concert. We have the funds to help all wounded vets that qualify and have an immediate need.

But we will not be foolish spending this money on perks along the way, trying to help and do something good.

We will be good stewards of this cash in our account set aside for these types of situations.

If our goodwill and gestures to help are rejected because more is expected than we are willing to logically give, I'm sorry. Perhaps, Mrs. W. will find accommodations at Salvation Army more to her liking. We can't win for losing!

Unfortunately, the vet can only communicate by blinking his eyes, so he is out of the box in making any decisions. He has enough problems.

Sounds to me like the family wants to go on a vacation and, at the same time, if they have time, visit their father. Perhaps, I'm wrong. I truly hope so.

Vince Berna
director
Veterans Haven Inc.
vetshaveninfo.org

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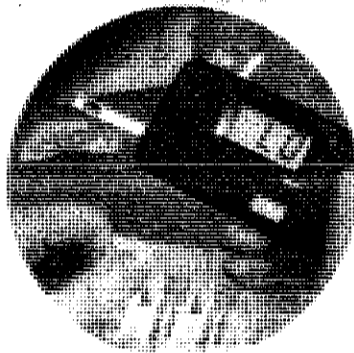


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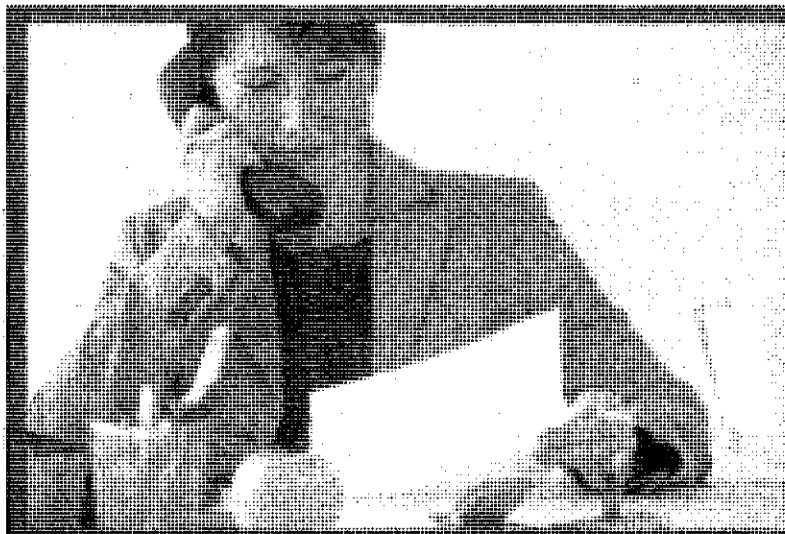
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Health lectures

Dr. Carol A. Fischer, a member of the Doctor's Speaker Bureau will present "The 5 Secrets to Permanent Weight Loss" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Contours Express, 6558 N. Wayne Road, Westland. Learn why diets won't work, ways to avoid weight gain, how to lose weight with diet/nutrition and exercise and what to eat to lose weight. There is no charge for class, however, seating is limited. Call (734) 425-8588 for reservation.

Fischer also will present "Weight Loss 101" at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, and a lecture on "Depression and Sleep Disorders" at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 29, both at the Alfred Noble Library, 32901 Plymouth Road, Livonia. In "Weight Loss 101," learn what, when and how to eat, how to avoid adult onset Diabetes and how to reduce your chance of breast cancer by 70 percent. The depression program will cover reasons why you may suffer from such symptoms feeling depressed or living without sleep and offer information on natural alternatives to pharmaceuticals. There is no charge for classes, however, seating is limited. Call (734) 425-8588 for reservation.

Treatment lecture

Dr. William H. Karl of the Doctor's Speaker Bureau will discuss "Treating Thyroid Disorders Naturally" at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at the Civic Center Library in Livonia. If you suffer from hair loss, cold hands or feet, stubborn weight gain, or unwanted pain, there may be help. Learn hidden reasons behind these health concerns and the safe natural, effective alternatives to naturally help yourself. There is no charge for classes, however, seating is limited. Call (734) 425-8588 for reservation.

Explore Girl Scouting

Girls ages 5-17 can discover how much Girl Scouts has to offer all. Scouting isn't just about camping and cookies anymore. Girls learn a lot about themselves and the world around them, form lasting friendships, become more confident, independent, helpful and resourceful. Through Girl Scouting, girls learn the importance of community service and challenge themselves and develop value systems they use the rest of their lives. See what Girl Scouts has to offer. Call (800) 49-SCOUT (497-2688.)

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 3-3:30 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, descrip-

tion 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/PlymouthCantonVVA 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 reg-

ular 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.

Zonta Club

The Zonta Club of Northwest Wayne

County, a service club to advance the status of women, meets every month 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.

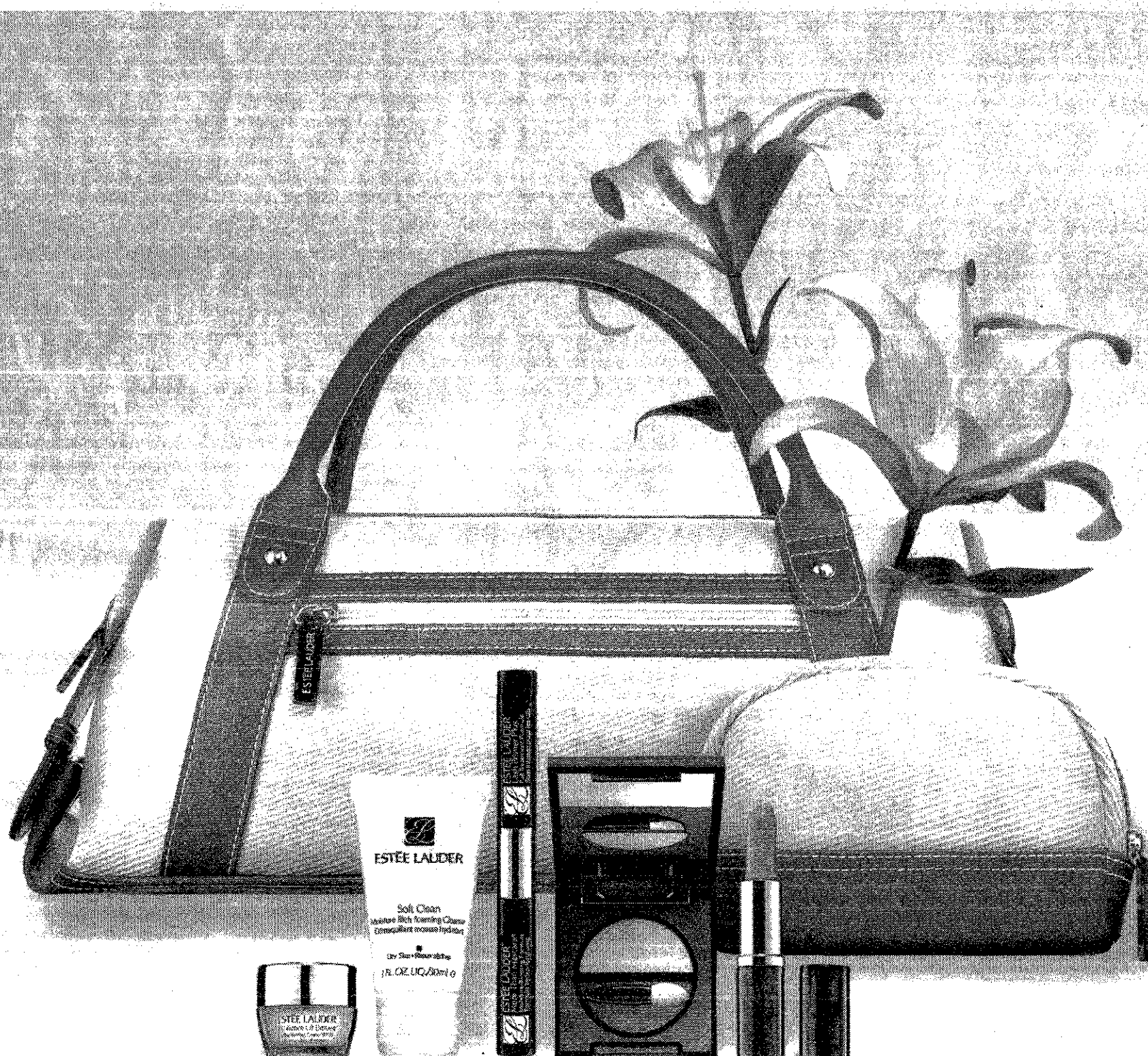
Members need not have a student in the school. Price is \$3 for students, \$5 for adults. Checks should be made payable to Franklin PTSA and sent to 31000 Joy, Livonia MI 48150.

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. Call Tyrone Peterson, (734) 722-3660. Tutors need to have at least a high school education.

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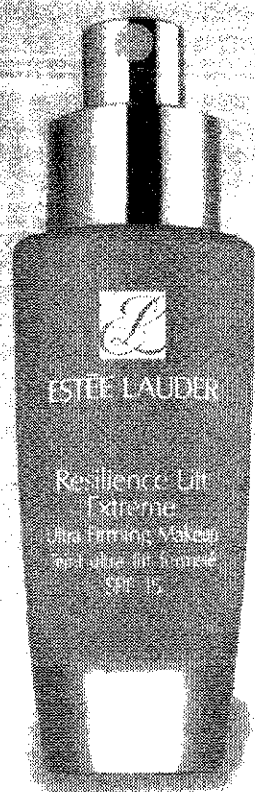
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MU women split in Vegas Classic

Madonna University's women's basketball team showed last weekend that all rallies aren't created equally, with late comebacks earning just a 1-1 record at the Las Vegas Classic held at Sierra Vista High School.

On Friday, the Crusaders nearly fought back all the way from a 22-point halftime deficit before suffering a 92-82 setback to South Dakota Tech.

But things turned out better the next day, with MU erasing an 11-point second-half deficit to defeat NAIA-DI Campbellsville (Ky.) 67-60.

The victory improved the Crusaders' record to 5-10.

Lindsay Klemmer (Salem) scored 24 points, knocking down three late free throws to give Madonna a 62-60 lead.

The Crusaders' defense clamped down from there, with another Plymouth Salem alum, Alyssa Guerin, canning

three foul shots and Klemmer hitting two more.

Guerin tallied nine points, as did Cali Crawford. Contributing 15 points was Stephanie Piotrowski.

Klemmer and Christie Carrico pulled down eight and six rebounds, respectively.

For Campbellsville (8-8), Julija Ilic scored 23 points while Priscilla Alves added 14.

Against South Dakota Tech (10-5) on Saturday, Carrico spearheaded Madonna's furious comeback bid with 16 of her game-high 25 points coming in the final 20 minutes.

The two-day tournament marked the season debut for Klemmer, who was ruled ineligible for the first half of the schedule. She scored 18 points and registered four steals against Campbellsville.

Piotrowski chipped in with 16 points while Guerin tallied 14.

SCHOOLCRAFT 83, ALPENA 49: On Dec. 20, Schoolcraft College scored early and scored often against host Alpena in a Michigan Community College Athletic Association-Eastern Conference women's basketball game.

The Lady Ocelots rolled out to a 51-19 halftime lead, while improving to 10-2 overall and 3-0 in the conference.

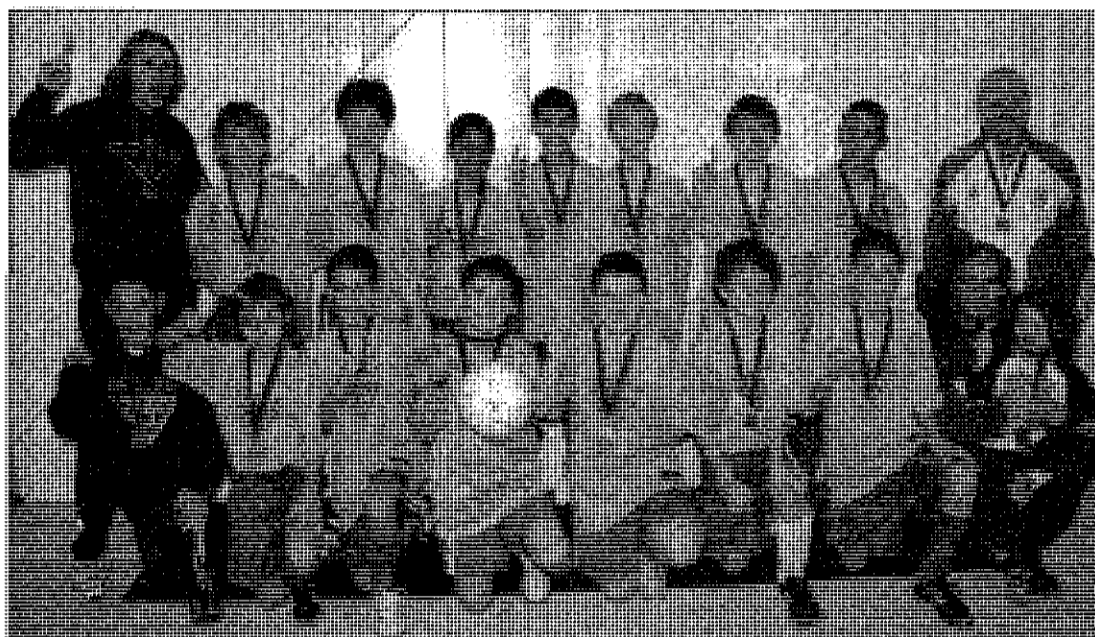
Pacing the Schoolcraft onslaught was sophomore forward Ashley Sibby, who tallied 16 points.

She was one of four Lady Ocelots to reach double digits in scoring. Others included sophomore forward-center Maricka Seay (13 points), freshman forward Janelle Harris (12 points) and sophomore center Lauren Braun (10 points).

Ten of 11 Schoolcraft players scored.

Harris and Seay led in rebounding, with 11 and 10, respectively, while freshman guard Brittney Ivey chipped in with six assists.

For Alpena (1-9, 0-3), Regina Robinson tallied 11 points while Tanya Domke had 10 points and eight rebounds.



Soccer champs

The Waza FC '95 Boys Blue soccer team, currently ranked No. 2 in the state, won the National Indoor Championship Detroit Regional Tournament Dec. 3 at Total Soccer in Fraser. Waza 95 Blue defeated the following teams: No. 3-ranked FC Nova (3-2), No. 4 Michigan Wolves (4-2), No. 1 Michigan Future Stars (5-3) and No. 5 Vardar Stars Elite (4-2). The win qualifies the team for the National Indoor Championship Tournament to be played the last weekend in February at Total Soccer in Wixom and Fraser. Waza '95 Blue played up an age bracket during the fall season and captured the Western Suburban Soccer League Under-13 Division I. Members of the Waza FC '95 Boys Blue soccer team are (front row, left to right) Matt McAuliffe, Livonia; Colin Warner, Northville; Danny Meltzer, Commerce; Aaron Krupa, Ann Arbor; Tommy O'Connor, Farmington Hills; Jason Carmack, Saline; Matt Wilson, Novi; Waza FC Club President Mario Scicluna, Valentino Scicluna, Livonia; (back row, left to right) coach Chris King, Livonia; Trevor Nessel, Novi; Alex Arlin, Farmington Hills; David Braxton, West Bloomfield; Brent Winkler, Farmington Hills; Ron Basin, Farmington Hills; Ian Fox, Redford; Donald Payne, Ypsilanti; and Rocco Mitkov, Canton. Not pictured is Connor Shennan of Plymouth.



Indoor champs

On Dec. 3, the under-8 Waza girls' team captured a regional tournament to qualify for the National Indoor Tournament scheduled for late February in Wixom and Fraser. Waza defeated the Michigan Burn for the second time in the finals, along with wins over the Future Stars and Gators. Members of the Waza squad include (front row, from left): Danielle Kluz, Sterling Heights; Mariah Smythe, Novi; Julianna Ulla, Northville; Emily McGuire, Livonia; Elena Lippert, Northville; Jennifer Richmond, Plymouth; Haylee Renick, Belleville; (back row, from left) Karen Roggenkamp, Farmington Hills; Katarina Santavy, Belleville; Tara Ariin, Farmington Hills; Emily Debolski, Livonia; Madeleine Lucus, Plymouth; Natalie Nowicki, Plymouth; Mollie Barnard, Wixom; (far back) coach Mario Scicluna and son Valentino.



Cage winners

The St. Genevieve JV2 girls' basketball team recently captured their first-ever title at the St. Robert Bellarmine Thanksgiving Tournament. Team members include: Natalie Aguirre, Cheryl Setlock, Delaney Vida, Erin Young, Dominique Poliacchio, Laura Nemes, Rebecca Lobb, Lauren Tschirhart, Laquasha Kane, Antonia Ramon, Wrenna Werden and Sara Allmacher. The coaching staff includes Tom Young, Ramsey Abdulbaki and Kevin Allmacher.

YEAR IN REVIEW

FROM PAGE B1

■ Livonia Stevenson's 24-game unbeaten streak in hockey is snapped by Dearborn Unified, 4-3, in double overtime in the regional. The Spartans finished 23-2-1 overall.

April

■ Brandie Reamy, 12, of Livonia, rolls a 300 game in the Sunday Youth Travel Classic at Country Lanes. She becomes the youngest ever to bowl a sanctioned perfect game.

May

■ Canton edges Churchill, 64-63, to win the 32nd annual Observerland Relays boys track and field title.

■ The three Farmington schools — Harrison, North Farmington and Farmington — turn down an invitation to rejoin the Western Lakes Activities Association.

■ The Madonna University baseball team comes within three outs of going to the NAIA World Series after losing 7-6 to St. Xavier (Ill.) in the Heartland Super Regional. The Crusaders finish the year 35-21 overall.

June

■ Churchill sophomore Shannon Warner shoots 69-67 to earn medalist honors at the Division 1 girls golf state finals held at Michigan State University's Forest Akers (East Course). She wins the tournament by a whopping 11 strokes.

■ Stevenson's 4 x 100-meter relay team of Nana Adomako, Kevin Murawski, Brian Chandler and Pat Clasgens wins the Division 1 state title at East Kentwood with a time of 42.79.

■ Two Livonians, defenseman Mark Mitera (University of Michigan) and forward Erik Condra (Notre Dame), go in the National Hockey League draft. Mitera is a first-round pick of the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, while Condra is the sixth-round choice of the Ottawa Senators.

■ John Glenn's softball team

forfeits in the Division 1 district tourney at Birmingham Seaholm because it cannot field enough players.

■ Lutheran High Westland's Ron Gentz ends his girls basketball coaching career with a record of 221-134 in 14 seasons.

July

■ Paul Soucy, 67, of Livonia, wins the 2006 Ringside Boxing National Championship in Kansas City, Mo., in the masters division (ages 55-75) at 167 pounds.

■ Mark Zathez steps down as MU women's soccer coach. He is replaced by Paul Thomas.

August

■ Jim Omietanski of Livonia repeats as O&E men's golf champion.

■ Bob Lulek, who guided Livonia Ladywood to three straight Division 2 state quarterfinal berths in softball, is fired. He was 184-152 in 10 seasons. He was recently hired as the varsity coach at Novi.

■ The Michigan Synchro Masters, who train a Schoolcraft College and are coached by Joyce Lindemann, capture the FINA World Aquatic Masters Team title in Palo Alto, Calif.

■ The Michigan Bucks, led by owner and Livonia native Dan Duggan, capture the Premier Development League championship in Laredo, Texas.

September

■ The undefeated 1955 Clarenceville High football team stages a reunion at the Trojans' Metro Conference game against Hamtramck.

October

■ The Stevenson girls tennis team earns a trip to the Division 1 state finals in Midland after finishing third in the regional.

■ Greg Ambrose is named new athletic director at Wayne Memorial H.S., replacing Dewie Cole.

■ Madonna University women's volleyball coach Jerry Abraham earns his record 800th victory and now ranks second all time in the NAIA.

■ Three-time Olympian and former gold medal swimmer

Sheila Taormina, 37, wins her first U.S. National Modern Pentathlon title with 5,176 points in Colorado Springs, Colo.

November

■ Stevenson's boys soccer team knocks off four top-10 ranked teams and reaches the Division 1 state final before losing to Traverse City West, 1-0, on University of Maryland recruit Casey Townsend's goal. The Spartans finished the year at 18-3-4 overall.

■ The Churchill girls cross country team places runner up in the Division 1 state finals at MIS in Brooklyn, losing on a sixth-runner tiebreaker to Rochester Adams after the two teams each scored 112 points. Coach Sue Tatro's squad boasted four All-State runners.

■ Both the Madonna and Schoolcraft College women's soccer teams earn trips to the nationals. Schoolcraft finishes seventh in the NJCAA Division II tournament in Scottsdale, Ariz., and goes 36-7 on the year. MU goes 38-5 after dropping all three matches in Columbia, Mo.

December

■ The varsity boys and girls bowling squads at John Glenn and Wayne high schools launch their inaugural seasons.

■ A proposed scheduling agreement/merger between the Western Lakes and Kensington Valley conferences falls through on a vote of the KVC principals. The WLAA extends invitations to both Novi and West Bloomfield to make it a 14-team league.

■ Livonia gymnastics defines as mandated by the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Livonia Blue edges Livonia Red, 142.55-142.35, in a season-opening meet before a packed house at Churchill H.S.

■ Bill Tolsted, who won 174-29-20 in 10 seasons, steps down after guiding the Lady Ocelots to a berth in the NJCAA Division I national women's soccer tournament.

2007?

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Playoff time: And once again the Detroit

Do you remember the last time the Detroit Lions went to the postseason? It's now seven years ago. Bobby Ross coached the team to an 8-8 record and backed into a playoff spot against the Washington Redskins. The game was in D.C., where the Lions had never won. On Jan. 8, 2000, they didn't win there again.

The 'Skins pounded the Lions that day 27-13 in front of more than 79,000 people. They have played at Washington 20 times and lost all 20.

At least they didn't lose to Washington this year.

For the seventh year in a row, the Lions will be watching the NFL playoffs at home. Their 39-31 win over Dallas to end the season only took them out of the running for the top overall pick in the April draft. Oakland now gets that pick, while the Lions choose second.



Mark Wilson

The Cowboys blew their chance at winning the NFC East with that loss last Sunday. Dallas coach Bill Parcells sounded like a man who had just lost his best friend.

"I can't tell you how disappointed I am," Parcells said to reporters. "This is the low point for me in a long time."

Yeah, losing to the Lions will do that to you. Losing to the Lions in Texas was even more shocking. The Cowboys are getting ready for a trip to Seattle for the NFC wild card game. Two Super Bowl-winning coaches, Parcells and Mike Holmgren, will square off. "Our record isn't what we had hoped, but there's something about 9-7 being a lot better than 8-8 even though it's just one game,"

Holmgren said after the Seahawks beat Tampa last weekend.

Just 11 months ago, Holmgren brought his team to Ford Field for Super Bowl XL. At least the Seahawks made it back in. The champion Steelers weren't so fortunate. Despite a win over Cincinnati, Pittsburgh ended up 8-8 and missed out on a chance to defend its title.

Seattle finished the year losing three of the last four. Dallas ended the year losing three of the last four. These are two teams playing some bad football that will meet Saturday night at Qwest Field. The Cowboys' defense has allowed 132 points in the last four games. That's an average of 33 points a game in the last month. As we saw against the Lions, the 'Boys just can't stop anyone.

"We are definitely going in backward from the way we wanted to," Cowboys quarterback

Tony Romo said after the loss to the Lions.

The other wild card game in the NFC has the Giants playing in Philadelphia. The Eagles ended up as East champs with Jeff Garcia playing a stellar quarterback in place of the injured Donovan McNabb. It just hasn't looked like the same Garcia who replaced Joey Harrington in a Lions' uniform last season. Garcia is 5-1 since replacing McNabb.

"We expected to come out and earn the NFC East championship, but we were able to coast," Garcia said to reporters following Philly's win over Atlanta last Sunday. It gave the Eagles a 10-6 mark for 2006. Very few would have thought that possible once McNabb was lost for the year.

Garcia threw three passes only Sunday. Once it was announced on the big screen at Lincoln Financial Field that the Lions had upset the

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it Lions are on the outside looking in

Cowboys, coach Andy Reid pulled his starters out. Backup guys went in and still beat Michael Vick and the Falcons.

The Eagles are rolling and — don't laugh — but Garcia is the reason why.

"This is just the first step," Eagles linebacker Jeremiah Trotter said. "We want the big one."

The "big one" would be Super Bowl XLI in Miami. Philadelphia may be the best choice to come out of the NFC. The Chicago Bears look horrible lately and the Saints were just 5-5 in their last 10 games. New Orleans may still be too fresh to be considered a Super Bowl favorite.

Garcia gives Philly a bona fide veteran presence under center. The Eagles have won their last five and the game against Eli Manning and the Giants is at home. Tiki Barber was unreal in what could be his final regular season game.

He rushed for 234 yards and three touchdowns in the Giants' win over Washington. Barber has said he will retire once this season is over.

"We won a game and got into the playoffs," Giants coach Tom Coughlin said. "Is that good enough?"

Coughlin was referring to keeping his job with the Giants. His act has grown thin in New York and rumors swirled that he was out if he didn't make the playoffs. Now, the hot rumor is that he must at least get to the NFC championship game to assure his return.

In the AFC, it all starts with New England. The Patriots are playoff-tested and Super Bowl-ready. Tom Brady and Bill Belichick simply know how to do it. A fourth trip to the "big one" in the last six years is not out of the question. They are at home and play the upstart Jets. There is no love lost between Belichick

and his protégé, Eric Mangini. The latter has done a masterful job getting the sad-sack Jets into the playoffs a year after they were 4-12.

"I'm hoping for a few more of those Gatorade showers," said Mangini, who finished his first year as head coach with 10 wins.

Kansas City goes to Indianapolis in the other AFC wild card game. If Tony Dungy doesn't get the Colts into the Super Bowl this year, he might as well just give up. Peyton Manning still had a terrific year despite losing four of his last seven games. He threw for more than 200 yards in 14 of his 16 contests. His 4,400 yards passing and 31 touchdowns with just nine interceptions would be MVP numbers in most other years.

"The idea, obviously, is to be playing some of your best football in January," Manning said.

LaDarian Tomlinson will prevent Manning

from any MVP notions. The Chargers and the Ravens have the byes from the first round of the playoffs. The Colts will face the Chiefs on Saturday afternoon in Indy.

"Some people in the locker room suggest that my father (Lamar) had a hand in that win (on Sunday)," said Clark Hunt, the son of the legendary K.C. owner who passed away three weeks ago. Larry Johnson set an NFL record with 416 rushing attempts this season.

So the playoffs begin. I like Philly, Seattle, New England and Indy to move on to Week 2. It's just too bad that, once again, the Lions will be like us ... watching from their sofas this weekend.

Mark Wilson is a former Associated Press and Michigan Association of Broadcasters Michigan Sportscenter of the Year. He lives in West Bloomfield.



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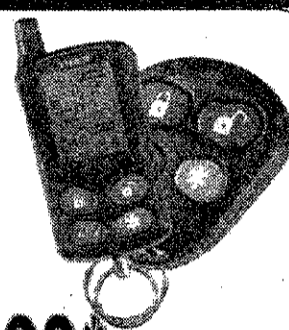


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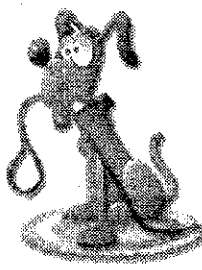
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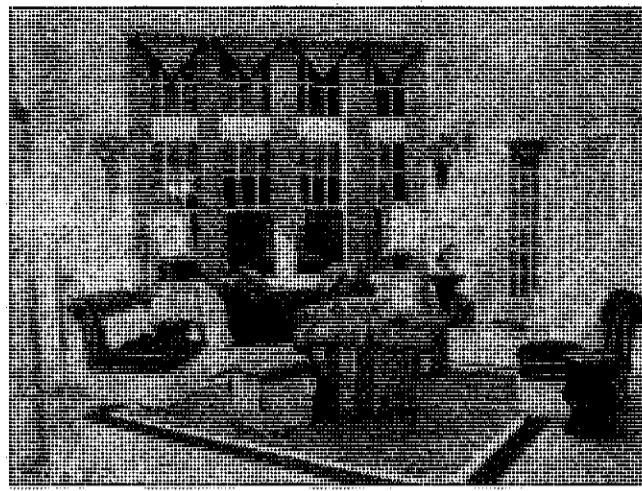
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From russet to clay, modern colors look natural and comforting, particularly when compared to the jewel-toned burgundy or navy blue hues made popular in the 1990s.



Debra Volanski, of Debra Designs in Canton, combines warm earthtones in a playful way to create this artistic living room.

DEBRA VOLANSKI



BETH SINGER

Margaret Skinner, owner of Margeaux Interiors Inc., painted the ceiling of this foyer two shades darker than the walls, a current trend in home interiors.

Think warm colors, simple

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to predicting the future, local interior designers say rich warm tones and clean-lined elegance will rule home decor in the new year.

Margaret Skinner, owner of Birmingham-based Margeaux Interiors Inc., focuses solely on residential interior design. She's been doing so for eight years.

Skinner said she's noticed that her clients tend to lean toward more environmentally-friendly materials these days, when renovating their living spaces. From bamboo to eucalyptus, flooring options are more interesting than ever.

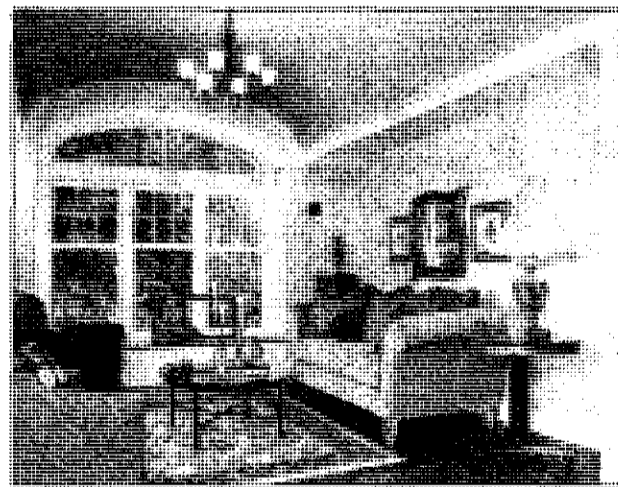
"These are much more renewable," said Skinner. "I'm finding people are using more recyclable items. They are re-using items in a new way - salvaging tile or brick, recycling glass for mosaic tile."

Skinner attributed this trend to two things - the state of Michigan's sluggish economy and clients who are more environmentally aware. "I'm trying to promote that, too," she said, "more awareness of our own resources."

And Skinner said you don't have to sacrifice high-style to do so.

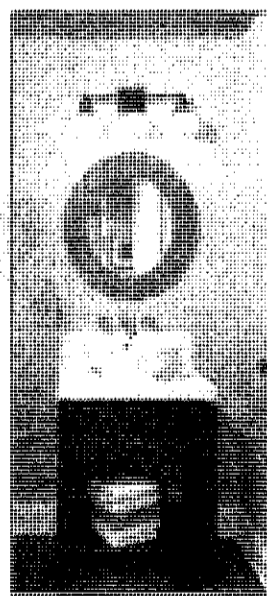
"People do want to hold onto what they have," said Debra Volanski, owner of Debra Designs in Canton. She too is seeing a trend toward re-using and re-mix-

decor for 2007



BETH SINGER

Wainscoting, molding, and a window seat add detail in this living room, designed by Margaret Skinner.



BETH SINGER

Margaret Skinner enhanced this small powder room with tin ceiling.

PLEASE SEE DECOR, D2

Full steam ahead for a tasty and healthy New Year

The festivities are officially over. Most of us will have to pay for the sins of holiday overindulgence - too many second helpings of rich, fatty foods, too many pastries and chocolate.

Enough! The good news is that mending your ways doesn't have to mean cutting out flavor. In fact, steaming food is a good way to retain not only flavor, but color and

nutrients as well, creating a festive-looking as well as healthful, diet-conscious entrée.

Steaming is one of the gentlest ways to cook. The even, moist heat of the steam envelops the food, allowing it to retain its natural juices and nutrients.

There are many different varieties of steamers in many sizes, shapes and price levels. If you don't

own one, you can easily fashion a steamer at home.

Start with a deep pot, deep enough to hold two to three inches of boiling water, a stand of some kind to hold a plate, and the plate of food to be steamed. The pot should be wide enough to allow about an inch of space between the plate and the pot, to allow steam to circulate evenly. A tight-fitting lid is also nec-

essary.

The plate that holds the food should be heatproof, with a little depth to it so it can hold any juices that might be produced as the food steams.

The plate of food can be set on any kind of heat-proof stand or rack that will keep it stable and high

PLEASE SEE HEALTHY, D3

Let's examine intelligence of smartphones

Can a smartphone make you smarter? Probably not, but it can help you work smarter, and that's a goal worth pursuing.

I recently got the chance to try three of the latest and greatest models: the BlackBerry 8703e, the LG enV VX9900 and the Motorola Q.

All three came from Verizon Wireless, though the BlackBerry is also available from Cingular (as the 8700c) and T-Mobile (8700g), and Sprint is expected to offer the Q in the near future.

I tend to be a harsh critic when it comes to phones, mostly because I dislike their unintuitive, overcomplicated menu systems.

That's why I've always been partial to Palm's Treo line: the friendly, familiar Palm Operating System offers tap-and-go simplicity.

Not so the BlackBerry, enV and Q, which rely on scroll-wheel or number-pad navigation.

Still, despite their somewhat steep learning curves, these smartphones pack considerable power. Let's take a look at the pros and cons of each model.

RIM BLACKBERRY 8703E

Not too different from the original e-mail-only BlackBerry, the 8703e combines savvy phone features with RIM's unsurpassed e-mail capabilities.

Put simply, new messages get "pushed" to the device as they arrive, meaning you don't have to manually retrieve your mail. For anyone whose life revolves around their inbox, it's easy to see how the nickname "Crackberry" came to be.

The 8703e's thumb keyboard features relatively large, rectangular keys, and though they seemed a bit cramped, I found I could type quite accurately.

I also liked the BlackBerry's bright, colorful screen, fast start-up and reasonably uncluttered interface. Once you learn the intricacies of scroll-wheel/back-button navigation, you should be able to zip along.

Unfortunately, the 8703e suffers from a somewhat weak Web browser (due in part to its small screen) and, surprisingly, a lack of instant-messaging software. For a device that so excels at e-mail, you'd think IM would be second nature.

LG ENV VX9900

At first glance, the LG enV looks like a traditional candy-bar phone.

Open it up, however, and you're treated to a roomy screen and even roomier keyboard, by far the best of the bunch for composing messages.

The enV also boasts a two-megapixel camera that actually takes decent snapshots (provided you turn off the autofocus, which adds interminable shutter lag). It even has stereo speakers for listening to music without headphones.

I really wanted to like this phone. The design is just about perfect: comfortably curvy and narrow, but with that great QWERTY keyboard inside the clamshell. And I found voice quality and volume to be quite good.

Unfortunately, Verizon's costly, clumsy implementations of e-mail and instant messaging make this phone unworthy of envy.

To get mail, for instance, you have to download a special program and pay an extra \$20 per month, or install Verizon's Wireless Sync software on your PC, which forwards mail to the phone (and requires your PC to remain on at all times).

As for instant messaging, you can connect with AIM, MSN and Yahoo networks, but each message you send or receive is treated as a text message - and billed accordingly.

Much as I like the enV hardware, Verizon's service charges will quickly put me in the poorhouse. Thanks, but no thanks.

MOTOROLA Q

Thin, sexy and more multimedia-savvy than either the BlackBerry or the enV, the Motorola Q turns heads like few other smartphones. It includes a 1.3-

The amazingly thin Motorola Q gets bogged down by its unfriendly, unintuitive Windows Mobile interface.

PLEASE SEE BROIDA, D2

Purtan column to return

Off the Air with Dick Purtan & Purtan's People will return next week.

This year get ready for Bordeaux 2005

Last year, all the Bordeaux wine buzz was about the excellence of the 2005 vintage. Top chateaux offered their wines at astronomical futures prices and many wine lovers got wine sticker shock.

This year, the less-hyped and heralded 2005 Bordeaux wines will begin to show up on wine retail shelves. You should consider buying. "From Bordeaux, 40 producers are extremely well known and command high prices, yet there's no excuse for rustic 2005 Bordeaux from any producer," said Alain Moueix, fourth-generation director of Château Fonroque in Saint-Emilion.

Our trip to Bordeaux last year and a tasting of more than 300 wines from the 2005 vintage more than proved this.

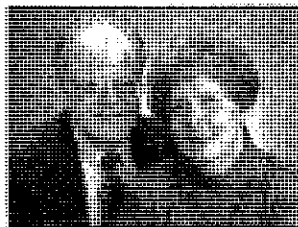
BORDEAUX FACTS AND FIGURES

In the broader French region known as Bordeaux, there are 12,000 wine chateaux and more than a quarter million vineyard acres, producing 800 million bottles annually. Due to overproduction, there were endless reports last year of a wine crisis in France, including Bordeaux. *Sacrebleu!* Incentives via the EU may now make available monetary motivation for the least competitive producers to grub up their vineyards.

Through all this, however, Bordeaux remains California's biggest competitor for high-end wines. From the 2005 vintage, we discovered stellar values, because it has long been said, that in a great Bordeaux vintage, real value lies in seeking out the best from lesser-known chateaux. Especially true if you are not fond of the current style trend for many New World red wines — overtly jammy, overly extracted, over-ripe fruit characters, heavy-handed oak and alcohols soaring to 16 percent and higher, resulting in inelegant wines, lacking terroir characteristics.

Sylvie Courselle of Chateau Thieuley, a producer of Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur wines, adds a caution: "Red Bordeaux wines are best with food. They are not sipping wines."

Within the Bordeaux region, there are 57 appellations in the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) system. To simplify location and characteristics of wines produced, it's easiest to categorize them into six larger,



Focus on Wine

Ray and Eleanor Heald

roughly geographical areas. On the right bank of the Dordogne River, all producing principally plush Merlot-based wines, Saint-Emilion (where limestone soils significantly impact the wines' character) can be grouped with Pomerol and Fronsac. Most Saint-Emilion and Pomerol wines will be priced well above \$50. What delighted us most was the superiority of wines from Fronsac at prices well below \$50.

Premières Cotes de Blaye, Cotes de Bourg, Cotes de Castillon, Premières Cotes de Bordeaux and Cotes de Francs are also right bank and frequently dubbed Les Cinq Cotes de Bordeaux, deriving its name from the right banks of the Gironde, Dordogne and Garonne Rivers. On the left bank of the Garonne River and the Gironde estuary, Cabernet Sauvignon prospers in gravelly soils in the Médoc, Pessac-Léognan, Graves and Haut-Médoc. The largest category is labeled Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur and can originate from throughout the region. In 2005, weather conditions benefited cabernet franc, so Medoc and Haut-Medoc producers have potential to surpass plaudits given to only a few vintages in the last 100 years. "However, 2005 was an unusual vintage," cautioned Damien Berleureau of the Syndicat Cotes de Bordeaux. "Although ripe fruits are evident, tannins are also. These will tame with bottle age and the wines will be long-lived."

Read *Focus on Wine* next week (Jan. 11) to learn more about Bordeaux wines and what to buy from the 2005 Bordeaux vintage.

Eleanor and Ray Heald are contributing editors for the internationally respected *Quarterly Review of Wines* and Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, and restaurants for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Contact them by e-mail at focusonwine@aol.com.

WINE PICKS

Disposable income for wine drinking is little short after the holidays? Try these values, all \$12 or less.

RED WINES

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- 2004 Meridian California Cabernet Sauvignon \$10
- 2004 TwoFare Farms California Cabernet Sauvignon \$10
- 2005 McManis Merlot \$10
- 2004 Canyon Road Merlot \$10
- 2005 McManis Petite Sirah \$11
- 2005 McManis Syrah \$10
- 2005 Bulletin Place Shiraz \$8
- 2005 McManis Zinfandel \$11
- 2005 Bordeaux (Dc-vc) \$10
- 2005 Cotes de Roan MED (St. Emilion) \$10

WHITE WINES

- 2006 MAM Chenin Blanc \$10
- 2006 Cotes de Roan WHITE \$10
- 2006 Simonsig South Africa Chenin Blanc \$11
- 2005 A by Acacia California Chardonnay \$11
- 2005 Estancia Pinellas Ranches Chardonnay \$12
- 2005 Estancia Pinel Grigio \$12
- 2005 Gallo Family Twin Valley Moscato \$5 — sweet dessert sour

If a retailer does not stock a specific wine we recommend, ask that it be ordered from the distributor or order it direct from the winery.

HEALTHY

FROM PAGE D1

enough to prevent boiling water from splashing onto the food. You can improvise a stand by removing the ends of a large can that once held sweet potatoes, for example, or pumpkin.

This dish is as pleasing to the eye as it is to the palette.

STEAMED CHICKEN WITH RED AND YELLOW BELL PEPPER

- 1/2 tablespoon sesame seed oil
- 1 teaspoon grated garlic
- 1 teaspoon grated, peeled fresh ginger
- 1/2 cup sliced spring onions
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/2 pound (8 ounces) skinned, boneless chicken breasts
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1 large yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1/2 cup sliced canned bamboo shoots (drained and rinsed)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

per
3 cups hot steamed rice, preferably brown

In a small cup, combine oil, garlic, ginger, spring onions and soy sauce. Pour marinade over chicken breasts and rub into meat. Set aside while completing other preparations or marinate for up to 2 hours in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before steaming.

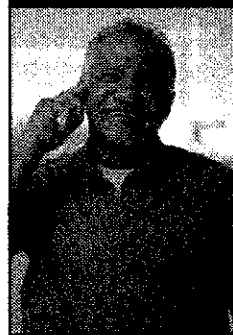
Steam until chicken is almost tender. Add bell peppers and bamboo shoots. Sprinkle any remaining marinade over vegetables. Continue steaming until chicken and peppers are tender.

Cut chicken into thin bite-sized slices, then combine with vegetables. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with rice.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 252 calories, 4 g. total fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 36 g. carbohydrate, 18 g. protein, 3 g. dietary fiber, 349 mg. sodium.

Recipe courtesy American Institute of Cancer Research. AICR's Web address is www.aicr.org.

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FOOD CALENDAR

If you have an item for the food calendar, please submit it at least two weeks prior to your event to Ken Abramczyk, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, e-mail kabramcz@hometownlife.com, or fax (734) 591-7279.

Wine Exploration Series

The Community House offers a variety of classes to learn more about wine, all seven sessions cost \$162, including An Introduction to Wine, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 17; California and the Pacific Northwest, 7:30

p.m. Jan. 24; Wines of France (two sessions), Jan. 31 and Feb. 7; Italian Wines, Feb. 14; South of the Equator, Australia, Chile, Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand, Feb. 28; Fortified Wine: Ports, Sherries and Madeiras, March 7; to register for classes, contact The Community House, 380 South Bates Street, Birmingham, (248) 644-5832, or online at www.communityhouse.com.

Native Italian Cooking

Discover how to make paccheri al prosciutto e piselli (pasta with ham and

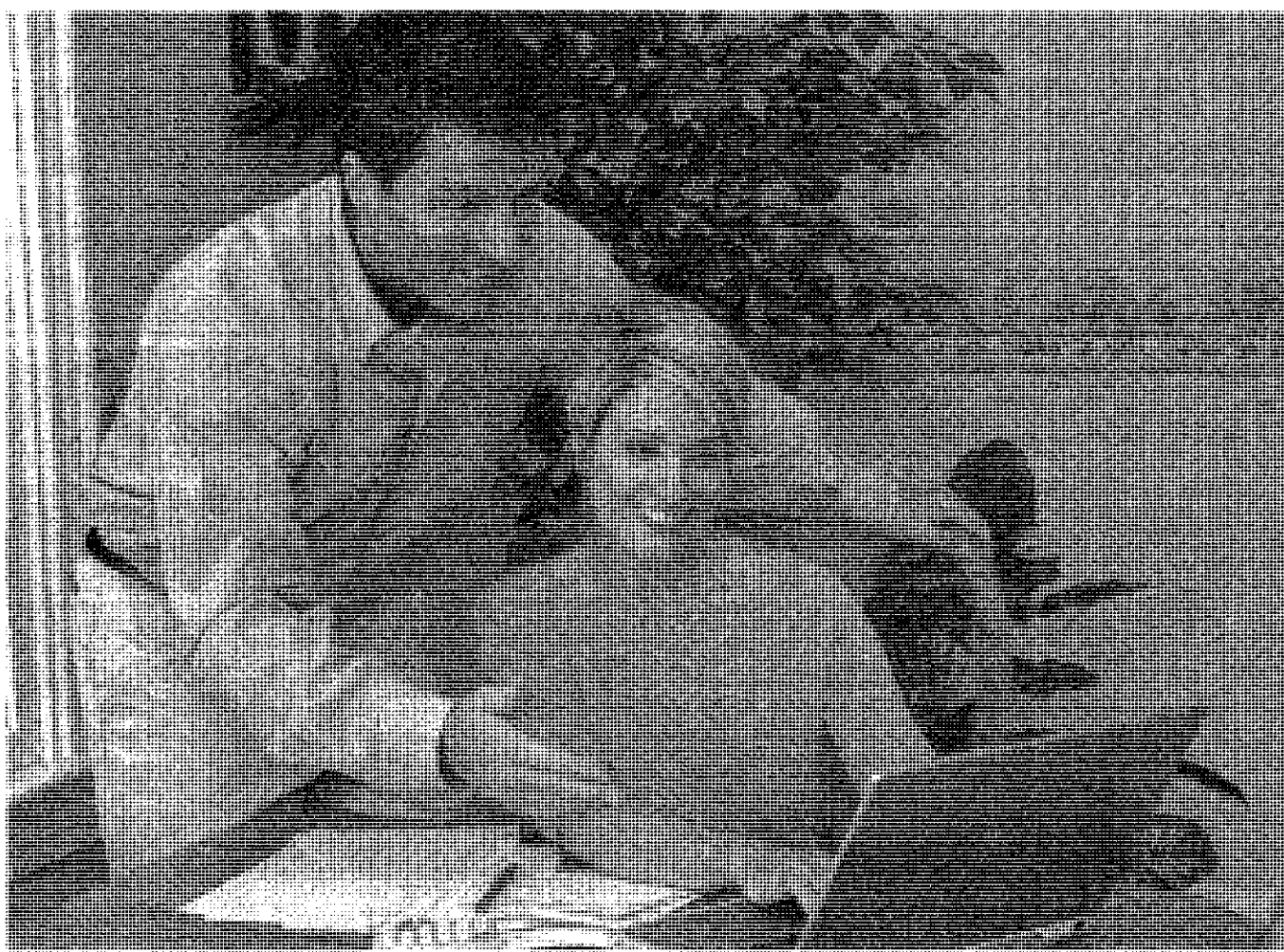
peas), spaghetti alla carbonara (spaghetti with eggs and pancetta) and bucatini alle zucchini. A \$6 materials fee is payable to the instructor in class. Instructor Giovanna Cappi was born and raised in Italy. Class is 6:30-8:30 p.m. Jan. 23, \$26 for class, to register for classes, contact The Community House, 380 South Bates Street, Birmingham, (248) 644-5832, or online at www.communityhouse.com.

Sauces 101

Simple sauces can be made from things

you already have at home. Learn the keys to building your flavors for that rich taste in your food. Taste samples and take home recipes. A \$6 materials fee is payable to the instructor in class. Chef Christopher Jones brings with him a vast skill set from such places as The Hotel Pontchartrain, Marriott, Hilton, and Radisson. Class is 7:30 p.m. Jan. 22, cost is \$26, to register for classes, contact The Community House, 380 South Bates Street, Birmingham, (248) 644-5832, or online at www.communityhouse.com.

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Wheels and Treads

Auto Show Fashion Through the Decades

By Maureen McDonald
Special Correspondent

At the annual North American International Auto Show in Detroit, motor heads want to know how fast the Nissan Z will zoom from zero to 60, but fashionistas want to see the styles that show models wear.

If Margery Krevsky, CEO of Bingham Farms based Productions Plus calculates it right, the talented models will deliver fluent talks on Nissan's assets while sporting the latest outfits on the New York runway scene.

Krevsky oversees training, wardrobe and placement of 300 individuals working the bright lights of Cobo Center from Jan. 13-21.

"These individuals are far more than models," Krevsky said. "They are the eyes and ears of the vehicle brand whose wardrobe matches the spirit and style of the manufacturers they represent."

Clothing addresses the attitude of a contemporary home, an urban disco or the deep woods, much as it embodies a Toyota Avalon, a Lexus ES or a Nissan Pathfinder.

Coordinating wardrobe is more daunting than finding bridesmaid dresses, according to Krevsky, who started her career in fashion merchandising for Hudson's. All product specialists assigned to a car line must look good in the same outfit, proportions and colors.

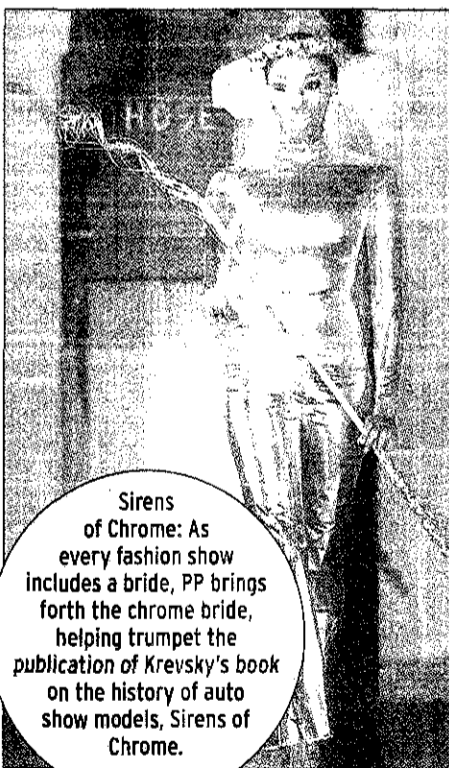
Clothing must be comfortable enough for models to empty boxes of product literature, stock information booths, move on and off turntables and demonstrate car features. And it has to last — models wear the same outfit 10 days in a row for up to 30 events in a regional circuit. At one time models referred to their outfits as "pain management," because they included chandelier earrings, waist cinchures, push-up bras and stilettos. Today's garments are made from breathable, beautiful fabrics that accent figures.

Krevsky maintains a full-time wardrobe department at Productions Plus to research historical styles and invent new outfits. She is currently working on a book about auto show fashion through the ages called *Sirens of Chrome*, due out this year.

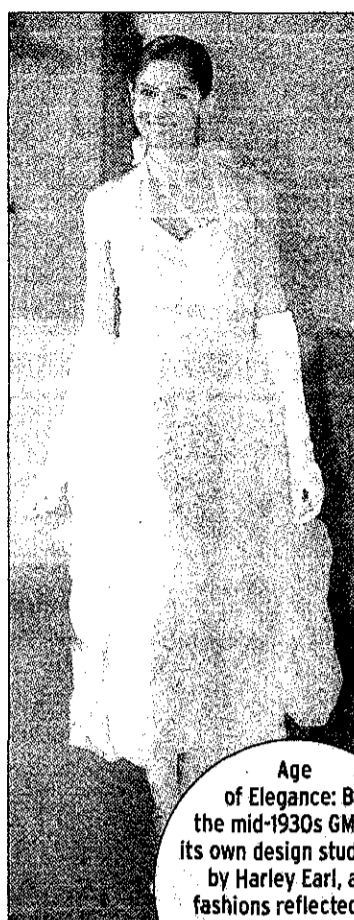
Last May, Krevsky presented a runway show of auto show fashions to members of Women in Communications at the Players Club in Detroit. Here's a look at outfits from the Roaring 20s to the 21st century:



Flapper Time: With the advent of closed coupe automobiles in the 1920s, motorists could dress as they pleased without mud and dirt splashing all over them — including beaded flapper gowns and feather boas.



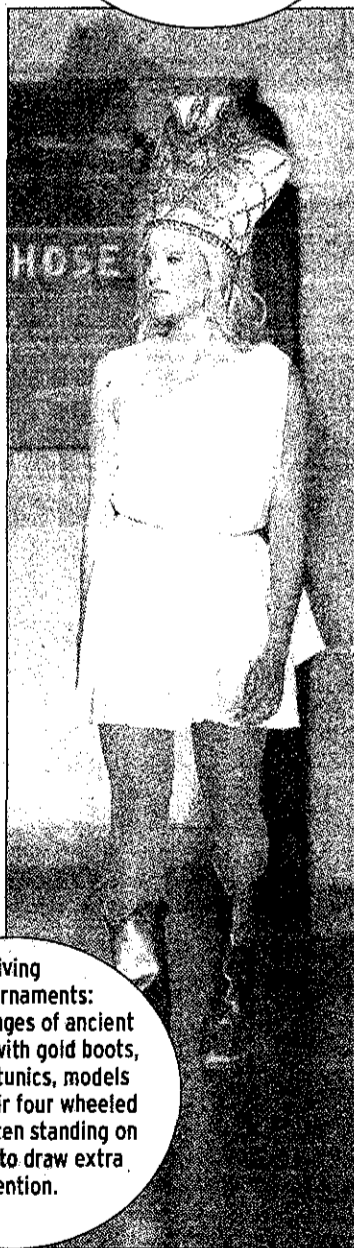
Sirens of Chrome: As every fashion show includes a bride, PP brings forth the chrome bride, helping trumpet the publication of Krevsky's book on the history of auto show models, *Sirens of Chrome*.



Age of Elegance: By the mid-1930s GM had its own design studio led by Harley Earl, and fashions reflected the elegance of styling and fine upholstery.



Dawning of Aquarius: The muscle car era of the 1960s brought young people into the purchasing arena, and models wore outfits that looked racy and captivating.



Living Hood Ornaments: Evoking images of ancient goddesses with gold boots, tiaras and tunics, models blessed their four wheeled chariots, often standing on car hoods to draw extra attention.

PINK picks

Wore It!

Skinny jeans and leggings

Toted It!

Oversized handbags — big was in!

Kicked It!

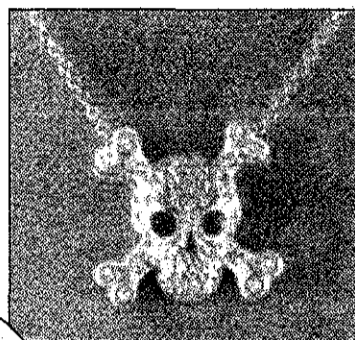
Wedges

Clicked It!

www.myspace.com and www.youtube.com

Accessorized It!

Belts — skinny or wide, they made fashion a cinch!



Jeweled It!

Skulls

Faced It!

Mineral makeup

Wared It!

The bob — everyone from Madonna to Britney rocked this timeless style

Drank It!

Pom-tinis

Smelled It!

Badgley Mischka Fragrance

Saw It!

The Devil Wears Prada

DVDD It!

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

TIV'd It!

Grey's Anatomy

Read It!

New mags: *OK* and *Blueprint* by Martha Stewart (national) & *Ambassador* (local)

Heard It!

The Raconteurs — Jack White's new band hit it big

Shopped It!

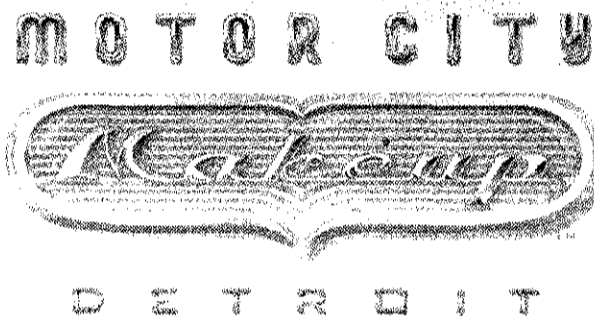
IKEA, Barney's Co-Op and H&M, finally arriving in Michigan!

Ate at it!

Nomi sushi in Northville, Crush in Southfield, Tavern 1909 in Plymouth and Bentley's in WB

Experienced It!

The Super Bowl in Detroit, and the Tigers in the World Series!



Motor City Makeup Giveaway!

Want to rev up your look? In honor of the North American International Auto Show, Motor City Makeup has donated 25 tubes of 'Auto Show Model' lip gloss to PINK for a glamorous giveaway!

The Milford-based company produces adorable lip glosses and balms with Detroit-inspired monikers like 'Woodward Dream Angel,' 'She's a Tiger,' 'D-Town Diva,' 'Livin' Lodge' and '313 Knockout.'

Motor City Makeup was founded by Natalie Hagopian, a registered nurse who ensures that the formulas are chock full of healthy ingredients, and Cindy Lehrer, a licensed esthetician who expertly picks the color palette.

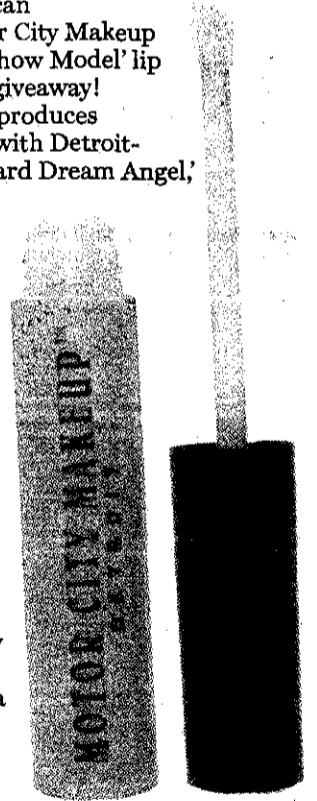
Hagopian said Auto Show Model was inspired by all the lovely ladies who add a dash of panache to NAIAS every year.

"We think today's auto show model is more than just a pretty face. These ladies really know their stuff, and they're actually a really important part of selling the cars," Hagopian said. "We wanted to pay homage to the models in a fun way. We picked a shimmering sheer ice pink color because it's an international show, and we wanted it to look good on all 'makes and models' of women."

Now, 24 lucky PINK readers can win a glamorous gloss of their own (we couldn't resist cracking open one tube for ourselves, and found it looks great alone or layered over lipstick.) To enter, simply send an e-mail to pink@hometownlife.com with your name, address, age and phone number. And, in the spirit of NAIAS and the Motor City, tell us in 25 words or less about something you always carry in your car, and why you can't live without it.

Get your entry in by 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12. We will announce winners in an upcoming edition of PINK!

Meanwhile, check out Motor City Makeup at High Wire Girls in Novi, Shoe-La-La in Birmingham, the Henry Ford Museum Gift Store or online at www.motorcitymakeup.com.



NURTURING LOCAL TALENT

Productions Plus is partnering with PINK to take 10 emerging fashion designers on a fashion-focused tour of the North American International Auto Show Jan. 17. The local designers will learn what it takes to wardrobe auto show talent, and may be invited to join the Productions Plus team in creating clothing lines to present to top automakers. Stay tuned to PINK for more, or visit www.productions-plus.com.



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