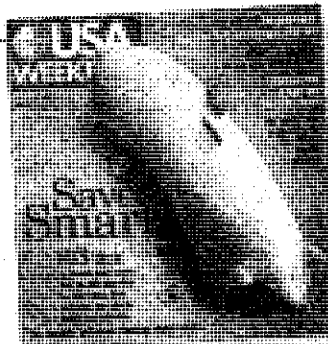


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Teen describes assault by would-be photographer

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Dabbing tears from her eyes, an 18-year-old woman gave unwavering testimony Thursday against a purported photographer accused of luring her to wooded Hines Park, partially undressing her, calling her "a bad girl" and sexually assaulting her. As she fought him off, the woman said 29-year-old Steven Wayne Milam of Westland pushed her against a tree, put plastic zip ties on her wrists, called himself an undercover police officer and warned that she was in trouble for her knowledge of a murder committed by one of her friends — a killing that police said never happened.



Milam

Judge C. Charles Bokos to order Milam to stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court for unlawful imprisonment, criminal sexual conduct with intent to penetrate, criminal sexual conduct involving a second-degree assault, and impersonating a police officer. Milam, jailed with a \$500,000 cash bond,

"I was scared. I was crying. I was hysterical. I didn't know anything about it," the teen testified in Westland 18th District Court, during Milam's preliminary hearing.

could face 15 years in prison if he's convicted. Bokos rejected arguments by defense attorney Mark Magidson that Milam's actions didn't amount to a sexual assault. "His intent on the face of it could have been a photo shoot — I don't know," Magidson said. Early in her testimony, the teen said she and two male friends were walking through the Norwayne subdivision on July 3 when Milam drove by, asked for directions and said he was a photographer involved in a photo shoot at the Marriott Hotel in Romulus. The woman said Milam told the teens they could earn hundreds of dollars. The woman testified that she

spoke by phone several times with Milam and arranged to meet him on July 5 at a Bob Evans restaurant in Romulus. She said her grandfather drove her and that Milam produced a contract for her modeling services. She said Milam told her to meet him at the nearby Marriott, where her grandfather said he would return for her in 90 minutes. The teen said Milam told her that he needed to meet up with two business associates named Susan and Rick. While on their way to the supposed meeting, the woman testified that Milam took pictures of her outside a Westland market where he stopped for a pop, at Jaycee Park at Wildwood and Hunter, and outside of Hayes Elementary School, before

they arrived at the Kroger store at Middlebelt and Warren. The woman testified that they walked into the woods of Hines Park. "He said he knew of a place where we could take pictures in the trees," she said. Once inside the woods, the teen said Milam gave her a tape measure and told her to take measurements of her wrists, ankles, thighs and hips. "He told me that I needed to take my clothes off — that I needed to have my clothes off when I measured myself," she said. She refused to undress, and she said Milam had her pose for several pictures before he came up behind

Please see **ASSAULT, A2**

Dog days

Kids' 'best friend' faithful reading companion

BY JULIE BROWN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Alyssa Hoeft, almost 10, got in some summer reading Thursday ... and she wasn't alone.

Alyssa, a fifth-grader at Jefferson-Barns Elementary in Westland, read to *Elle Mae*, a rescue dog whose specialty is reading, during an afternoon session at the Dorsey Center. The sessions are sponsored by the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland. "She's a good listener," Alyssa said. "I thought she was going to bark."

Alyssa, whose favorite books are by Dr. Seuss, especially *Green Eggs & Ham*, said the library session at the center was different from school, "cause I would usually read to kids not dogs," she said.

Elle Mae was patient and gentle with the children.

"Elle is my dog," said Lynne Hagmann of Westland, with the Read Fur Fun organization, which provides Reading Education Assistance Dogs. "We are a registered pet therapy team."

Hagmann and Elle visit St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia. Hagmann's been involved about nine months.

"We do this during the school year, too," at schools, she said of the



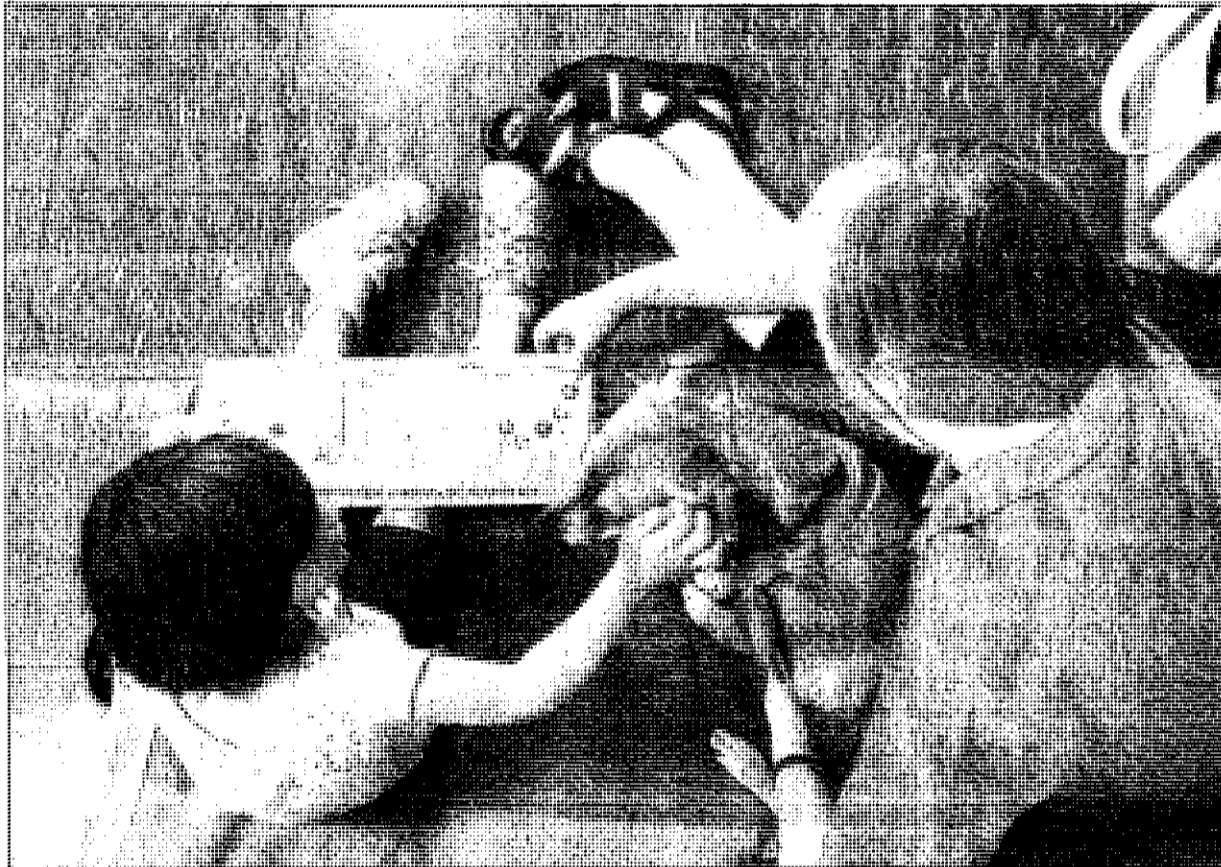
Perhaps Elle doesn't want to hear about 'The Cat in The Hat.'

one-on-one reading in "a relaxed, nonjudgmental environment."

Cheryl Napsha, library director, and Library Board member Leslie Bell, both of Westland, were at the Dorsey Center Thursday. The library has begun to offer children's programming this summer at the Norwayne neighborhood site, a city facility.

Elle will be back at the Dorsey Center 1-3 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 14, for children's reading. The library is offering story times with crafts at the Dorsey Center, 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, July 30, Monday, Aug. 4, and Thursday, Aug. 14, although Elle won't be there July 30 or Aug. 4.

Light refreshments are served, and you don't need to register in advance. For details, call the Children's Reference Desk at (734) 326-6123.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Six-year-old Richelle Daly pets reader dog Elle. Elle and her owner, Lynne Hagmann of Westland, help kids read.

The children usually pick the books, said Hagmann, although at schools a teacher or learning specialist often picks them.

"The idea is not to do textbook kind of things," she said.

Napsha was pleased to have colleague Lisa Hausman, head of children's services at the library, with her at the Dorsey Center on Dorsey, a side street off Venoy south of Palmer.

"She'll adapt her stories to the

age group so everybody's welcome," Napsha said.

She and other library leaders are looking at having a permanent presence at the Dorsey Center. A committee's looking at finances and other issues related to that.

"We're grateful to the city" for Dorsey Center use, Napsha said. The library is on Central City Parkway, further north in the city, and leaders are exploring ways to reach the Norwayne area.

Across the colorful room complete with mural, Chyann Daly, 13, was reading *Big Yellow Sunflower* to younger kids.

"It was fun," Chyann said of Elle's visit. "I liked it a lot."

Chyann, an eighth-grader at Dr. Charles Drew Academy in Ecorse, likes the Harry Potter books. She's read all but one which she is tackling now.

"I like to see what happens next," she said of books.

County, city pitch Central City Park cleanup proposal

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

A joint proposal by Wayne County and Westland city officials to start fixing a portion of Central City Park will be handed over this week to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality — 20 months after it was revealed that the former landfill was contaminated, mostly by lead.

"We're coming in with broad strokes to see if it resonates (with MDEQ)," Assistant Wayne County Executive Alan Helmkamp

said Friday. "We want to pitch our conceptual plan."

The initial phase will center on new soccer fields, pavilions and restroom facilities on the easternmost 12 acres of the 100-acre park, which Mayor William Wild ordered fenced off after he became mayor in January 2007.

It wasn't known how quickly MDEQ officials might react to the first-phase cleanup proposal.

In another development, Wayne County Commission appointee Ronaele Bowman

said Friday she will try to secure \$500,000 from a county parks millage to help pay for the first-phase remediation and also for a small water/splash park, called Rainforest H2O, that Wild earlier proposed just north of Central City Park, in an area commonly referred to as Tot Town.

Some city officials, including Wild and council President James Godbout, also have indicated the county should use some of the parks tax for the project.

On Tuesday, Bowman brought the commission's Ways & Means Committee to

Westland's Bailey Center so its members could learn firsthand about the problem. She also asked city Parks & Recreation Director Robert Kosowski to explain some of the new plans to the panel.

"They were all shocked at the magnitude (of the problem)," Bowman said, adding that she believes the county should use some parks millage dollars to boost Westland's recreation plans, in return for the city's lengthy loss of its longtime recreation gem.

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Number 16



NEW LOCATION
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INDEX

APARTMENTS	D3
AUTOMOTIVE	D3
CLASSIFIED	C7-D6
HEALTH	C5
HOMETOWNLIFE	C1
JOBS	C7
NEW HOMES	D1
OBITUARIES	C4
OPINION	A9
REAL ESTATE	D2
SERVICE GUIDE	C9
SPORTS	B1

Coming Thursday in filter



Parade makes the return of the feature film "Youth in Revolt" starring Michael Cera, Ray Liotta and Steve Buscemi takes to the neighborhood streets and houses for filming.

Wayne-Westland board taps Pitsenbarger as president

BY SUE MASON
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Martha Pitsenbarger admits she's going to have to learn not to do the roll call for the Wayne-Westland school board.

ing last week. "You'll have to bear with me, it's been a long time since I've been here," said Pitsenbarger.

Schofield, who held the position for six of the eight years she's been on the board, was elected secretary.

Association of School Boards. Monit will be the representative for the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Gabriel. He replaces Terrance McClain, who decided not to seek re-election.

on the last, extended congratulations to the new officers and "a lot of luck" to Gabriel.

Officers learn homeland security from Israeli counterparts

BY REBECCA JONES
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Law enforcement officers from across Michigan gathered in Livonia Thursday and Friday to learn from each other and international experts in responding to terrorism, public health threats and other homeland emergencies.

"Throughout the history of their country, they have been dealing with these issues. If we can learn from them, it's going to make our area that much safer."

WESTLAND CHIEF JAMES RIDENER

Security Affairs. "Throughout the history of their country, they have been dealing with these issues. If we can learn from them, it's going to make our area that much safer," said Westland Police Chief James Ridener.

important in these times of financial hardship, and they can all learn from each other "not to let history repeat itself."

including criminal justice, military and covert action, diplomatic functions and economic sanctions.

ASSAULT

FROM PAGE A1

her, called her "a bad girl," grabbed her wrists and put plastic zip ties on them. She said he failed to bind her wrists together.

During the ordeal, she said, "he lifted up my shirt and he pulled down my skirt" to her ankles. She said she readjusted her clothing and told him that she was uncomfortable.

"He told me to stop resisting," the woman testified.

Then, she said he told her that he was an undercover police officer and that she was linked to a friend who had committed a murder. She said she grabbed her cell phone out of her pocket and called her grandfather, but she said Milam took the phone and repeated the bogus story to the grandfather.

Finally, the teen said she screamed and that Milam walked away. She said he came back, burned off the zip ties with a cigarette and fled. She said she ran through the woods for help toward the Kroger store. She said the ordeal left her bruised and that she had scratches on her legs from running in the woods.

The teen testified that Milam never told her that he wanted to have sex with her. However, Judge Bokos said it should be up to a jury to decide Milam's intentions and the charges against him.

Referring to the defense attorney's suggestion that Milam might have been involved in a role-playing game, Bokos responded that "it's a pretty serious game this man was playing" and that "this thing got way out of hand."

Bokos refused to reduce Milam's bond.

Topics ranged from bomb training to counter-terrorism and speakers included members of the Israel National Police Bomb Squad, retired members of the Mossad and Tel Aviv Police department.

The conference, sponsored by the attorney general's office, was part of the Law Enforcement Exchange Program, an effort by the Jewish Institute for National

It's important for the departments to understand how to manage a coordinated response, he said. If a crisis happened at the border crossing, "it wouldn't be just the city of Detroit, it's going to the whole area" that must respond, Ridener said.

Livonia Lt. Ron Taig said working together is also

Terrorism in the United States did not begin with 9/11, he said. An earlier example is the Ku Klux Klan.

With domestic terrorism, he said, there is only one response, the criminal justice system. Responding to international terrorism will require a combination of approaches,

"In other countries, it's kind of the opposite," he said. "People live with violence as part of their political system."

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AROUND WESTLAND

Concert series

The Birmingham Straw Hat Band will perform Dixie, polka and march music during a concert scheduled for 6 p.m. Sunday, July 20, in the performance pavilion behind the Westland public library, on Central City Parkway between Warren and Ford. The concert is free. Those attending are encouraged to bring chairs and blankets. The concert may be rescheduled if it rains.

The seventh annual Elegant Environments Parade of Ponds is scheduled for July 26-27. It's a self-guided tour of Downriver gardens and ponds. Tickets are \$12 and include both days. They are available at the Westland Historic Village Park. Proceeds will benefit the Westland Garden Club. For more information, call (734) 728-1232 or (734) 522-3918.

Recreation Department's Westland Stars is inviting dance teams, studios and community recreation dancers to join them in competing in the dance division of this summer's Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games. The event is open to teams and individuals in standard dance — jazz, tap, ballet, lyrical hip hop, etc. ballroom/swing, and clogging. The AAU Junior Olympic Games will take place July 23-Aug. 2 in the metro Detroit area. The dance event

will be held at the Allen Park Performing Arts Center July 28-30. Information can be found at www.ausports.org.

Blood Drive

An American Red Cross blood drive will be held 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 17, in the Community Room of St. Damian Parish, 30055 Joy Road, Westland. For an appointment, call (734) 716-2057. Walk-ins are welcome.

Let's read

The Westland public library will host a "Reading Dog" program at the Dorsey Center Thursday, Aug. 14, for children who love to read, are just learning to read or want to practice reading aloud. A trained Reading Education Assistance Dog will welcome elementary-age students 1-3 p.m. for individual sessions.

The program will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. It is for a child and the dog only; caregivers may stay in the reading room. Children are welcome to bring their own book or select one. Elle

Mae is a certified therapy dog who is supportive to emerging readers. She is nonjudgmental and provides gentle encouragement to build confidence in reading aloud. The program helps to reinforce reading skills and provides an incentive for kids to read.

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Child's illness delays court hearing in stalking case

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

A 14-year-old boy who came to Westland 18th District Court on Thursday to testify against his accused stalker became sick, forcing authorities to delay a preliminary hearing for 29-year-old defendant Cherokee Lee Hunter.

Judge C. Charles Bokos adjourned the hearing until Aug. 23 after attorneys said the boy wasn't feeling well.

Hunter, jailed with a \$250,000 cash bond, is charged with stalking a minor, contributing to his delinquency and being a second-degree habitual offender. However, his supporters have said they don't believe he is guilty.

Hunter, who lives on Surrey Heights on Westland's southwest side, is accused of offering to fix the boy's scooter, showing up in his back yard with a beer, riding by his house on a bicycle and sitting outside in his car, police Sgt. Debra Mathews has said. The incidents allegedly happened in June, she said.

The boy's parents, who live a few

streets away from Hunter, warned him to stay away and then went to Westland police for help, Mathews has said.

A not-guilty plea has been placed on record for Hunter, who, according to Mathews, could face penalties ranging up to seven years and six months in prison if he is found guilty. The defendant was convicted in 1997 of second-

degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 12-year-old girl.

In court Thursday, police Sgt. Michael Willard said Hunter owes over \$25,000 in child support for a child he fathered. Willard also said Hunter, a registered sex offender, failed to report a change of address when he moved.

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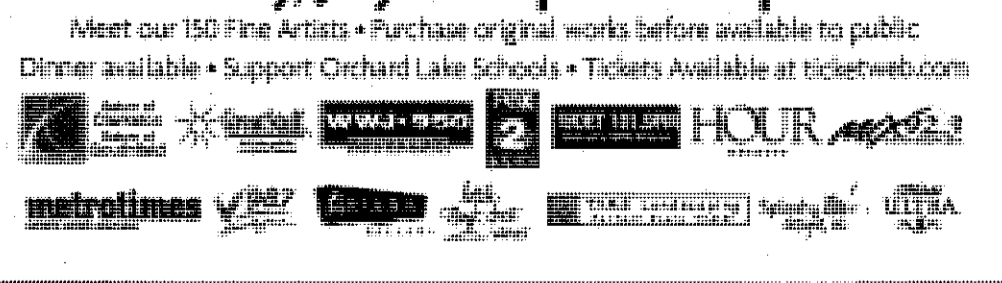
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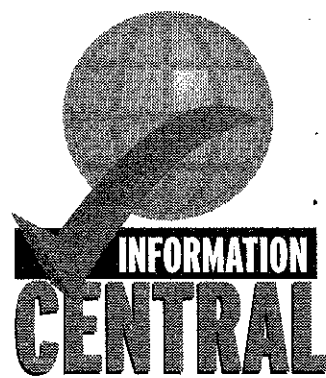
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Women's rights and Seneca Falls Convention

Women have always played a vital role in the history of the United States. Although still a hot topic, the path to equality has taken great strides. Much of what has taken place has its roots in the Seneca Falls Convention held July 19-20, 1848.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were denied access to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840. This denial first led to a discussion of calling a convention regarding women's condition. Eight years later, when both women were in the Seneca Falls area, the meeting was set. The Seneca Falls Convention was billed as "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman."

Stanton used the Declaration of Independence as a model for a Declaration of Sentiments which would list "injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman." The document also had 11 resolutions, including the radical idea that women should be allowed to vote. Three hundred people, including 40 men, showed up at the Wesleyan Methodist



Church to take part in the convention. One hundred people signed the Declaration of Sentiments, which was subsequently published in the New York Herald, gaining the movement much-needed publicity.

The Seneca Falls Convention set the stage for the Equal Rights Amendment fight which was first introduced in 1923 as the Lucretia Mott Amendment in honor of the 75th Seneca Falls anniversary. It took until 1920 for the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote

The William P. Faust Public Library of Westland is an excellent place to learn about the struggles of women in the United States. The following titles deal with the Seneca Falls Convention and its main participants: Vivian Gornick's "The Solitude of Self: Thinking about Elizabeth Cady Stanton," Gwenyth Swain's "Road to Seneca Falls: A Story about Elizabeth Cady Stanton," Sally McMillan's "Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement."

Also of interest would be the videos "Equality: A History of the Women's Movement in America" and "Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony" and the audiocassette, "Great American Women's Speeches." The William P. Faust Public Library of Westland is open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Saturday or visit us anytime on the Web at westland.lib.mi.us.

Highlighted Activities
Computer Classes: 2 p.m. July 21, flickr: storing and sharing your pictures online.

Check the flyer in the library for a complete description and requirements for all classes. All computer classes are hands-on. Space is limited. Register in advance at the Reference Desk. 734-326-6123.

Rise of a Great Museum: Great

Art - New Start: 7 p.m. July 22. Learn the fascinating details of the history of the Detroit Institute of Arts and its recent renovation. Find out what new and exciting features the DIA has to offer. Call the library to reserve your seat at (734) 326-6123.

Teen Alternative Fashion Show: 6 p.m. July 23. Come to this exciting event to see teens model their own fabulous creations. Anyone in grades 6-12 is welcome to participate as a designer and/or model. People of all ages are invited to watch the show!

Political Poster Art: 7 p.m. July 30. Political posters have a rich history of mass communication and activism. This talk will examine their historical and cultural impact. See how printing technologies influenced the medium and the message over the years. This talk will be given by Andrew Maniotes, a graphic design professor at Eastern Michigan University. Call the library to reserve your seat at (734) 326-6123.

Information Central was compiled by reference librarian Susan Hanson. The William P. Faust Public Library is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

Schoolcraft facility vandalized, cars damaged at site

BY LEANNE ROGERS
 OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Two cars and a building window were reported damaged July 17 at the Schoolcraft College Radcliff Center.

A custodian called police after finding the damage which was estimated at \$2,500. The cars damaged belonged to the college police academy. One vehicle windshield appeared to have been smashed with a baseball bat or pipe, police said.

The second vehicle had a windshield and window smashed along with a spotlight being knocked off, the vehicle having apparently been hit by a heavy object, according to police. The vehicles were parked in the school's west parking lot.

Similarly, police said a window on the southeast side of the building had been hit struck with a heavy object.

A police academy staff member told the officer that an unknown man had complained about the noise from a night driving training session that was held July 13. He said the man was loud and uncooperative in talking with academy staff.

Westland police offered a second possibility noting that on the night of July 12 they had arrested a Westland man who was causing a disturbance at the nearby McDonald's restaurant on Ford at Radcliff. The man was also a suspect in a complaint about a vehicle being damaged in Garden City. The Westland officer noted the Westland man regularly caused problems in the area and the Radcliff Center would have been on his route walking home.

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Kriewall says he has experience to make change

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER



Kriewall

Edward Kriewall says he's qualified and ready to replace Thaddeus McCotter as Michigan's 11th District U.S. House representative. "We need a lot of change in Washington," Kriewall said in a meeting with editors from the *Observer* and *Hometown* newspapers. "The current congressman is not dynamic enough, he's not a change agent. I think I'm more qualified to his job. I want to get up there and make things happen." Kriewall is running against Livonia attorney Joseph Larkin for the Democratic nomination. McCotter of Livonia is running for his fourth term. He

is unopposed in the Republican primary. Kriewall admits that he is more "an independent" than a traditional Democratic candidate. He said he voted for George W. Bush in both of his presidential elections, but he also voted for Clinton twice. A major issue for Kriewall is the war in Iraq. "We need to get out of there as soon as possible. We're not wanted there," he said. "We're looked on by the rest of the world as invaders. We don't have any business being there. It's a civil war and there is no

KRIEWALL FILE

Age: 66
Residence: Novi
Marital status: Single, two adult daughters, two grandchildren
Education: Bachelor's degree from Detroit Institute of Technology; master of public administration from Nova Southeastern (Fla.) University.
Professional background: Novi city manager, 1974-2000; licensed builder.

weapons for mass destruction," he said.

Kriewall said the economy is another area where McCotter hasn't acted.

"There has to be more protectionism for our industry, for our labor, to balance what's going on," he said.

He said there hasn't been a lot of respect for the American auto industry in recent years over high union and executive wages and the quality of cars.

"But I think that's all changed and the quality of our cars are as good as Toyota's, Honda's or anything else," he said.

Kriewall said American workers are also hurt by immigration.

"Immigration is a major

problem, even legally we are letting too many people into this country," he said.

"The jobs are leaving and we're letting in 2 million people a year. I think it's out of whack."

He said illegal immigration has been a drain on medical, social and educational services.

"I believe in being tough on illegal immigration and scaling back on legal immigration," he said. "A lot of politicians don't want to get tough on immigration, but we're giving the country away and somebody has to

do something."

On energy, Kriewall said he favors additional drilling for oil, as well as exploring "all forms of energy."

As a longtime administrator, Kriewall said he has been successful at working with legislators to get things done. He mentioned the M-5 interchange, Twelve Oaks Mall and the Novi Expo Center as examples of projects he helped develop.

"I like to move the football, get the job done and make change," he said.

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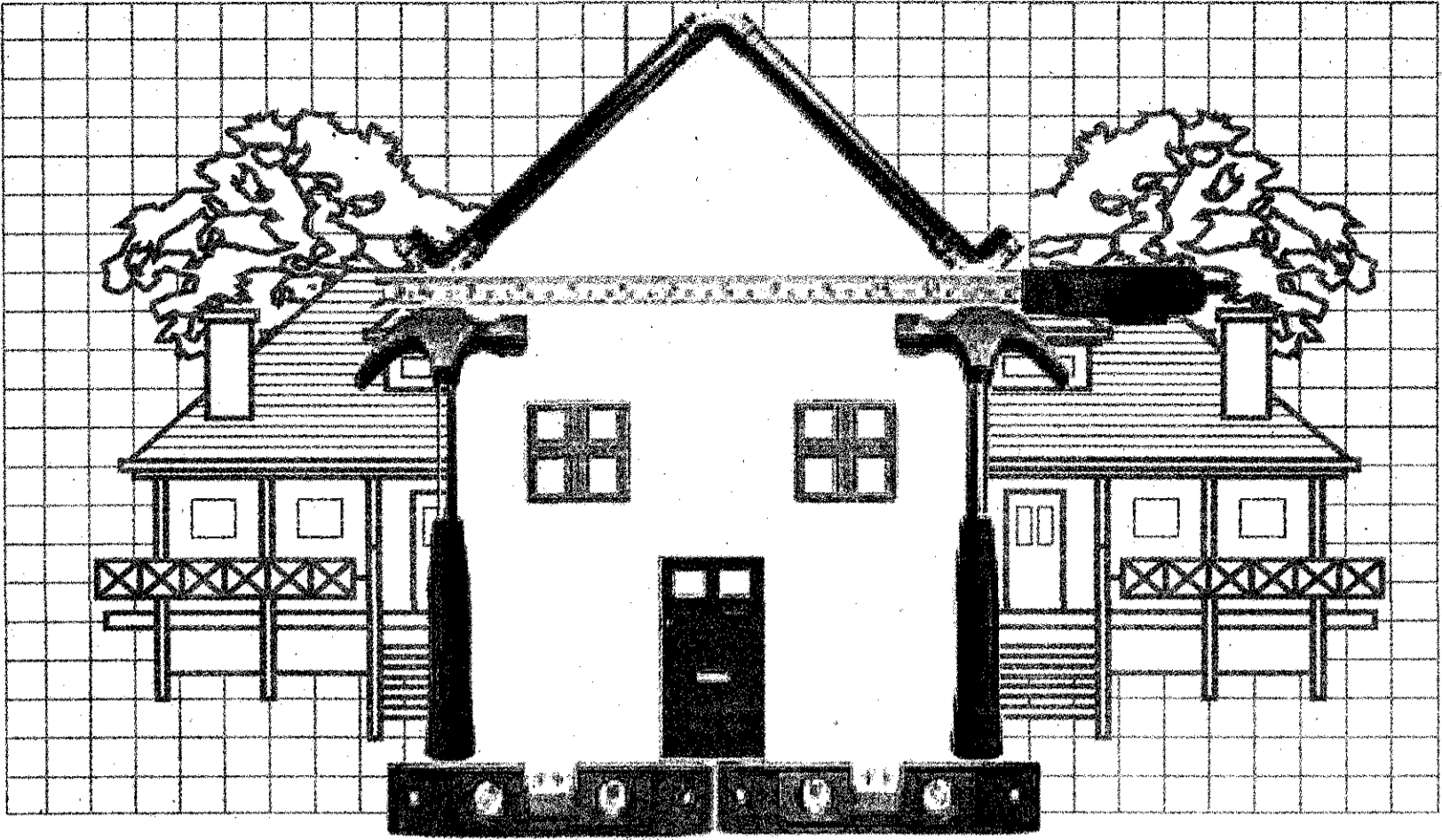
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Larkin lists war as top campaign issue

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER



Larkin

Livonia attorney Joseph Larkin has a list of reasons why he is running for the 11th Congressional District, but the war in Iraq is at the top.

In a meeting with editors from the *Observer* and *Hometown* newspapers, he said incumbent Republican Thaddeus McCotter, "goes the party route and not the best interests of the people."

Larkin is running against former Novi City Manager Edward Kriewall in the Aug. 5 Democratic primary. McCotter is running for his fourth term. He is unopposed in the Republican primary.

Larkin said he thinks the war in Iraq was wrong.

"We still have to figure out how to get out of there. One of the things is that we just can't turn around and leave in one

shot," Larkin said. "We have to set security and military goals. Those decisions have to be set by our military people and not by politicians."

Another issue on Larkin's list is energy.

"We have to make changes in our energy positions to not be dependent on foreign oil and fossil fuels," he said.

He said he supports all kinds of alternative energy, including nuclear.

"I am for every possible, intelligent, logical way of creating energy for America," he said.

On the economy, Larkin said McCotter and the Bush administration "seem to have disdain for American jobs and American companies."

LARKIN FILE

Age: 43
Residence: Livonia
Marital status: Divorced, no children
Education: Bachelor's degree in political science, University of Michigan; law degree, University of Michigan
Profession: Attorney, 19 years, Larkin Legal Services, Livonia

Larkin said steps needed to be taken to help people facing foreclosure be able to keep their homes.

Larkin also favors universal health care.

"With the drag on the economy, more people are losing their jobs and not having health care," he said. "Corporate America is demanding that we look at

universal health care. In the auto industry, the cost of health care is added to the cost of every automobile and makes it hard for us to compete."

Larkin said Bush's tax policies favor the higher income bracket.

"I'm more inclined to follow Mr. Obama's idea. I'm talking about transferring more of those tax breaks down to the middle class and poor people. That's where the emphasis has to be," he said.

On two issues, Larkin agrees

with McCotter. He describes himself as a pro-life Democrat. He also favors stronger enforcement of immigration laws.

"I believe there are laws on the books that are not being enforced," he said.

"There should only be legal immigration. I come from Irish immigrants who came here in the 1930s. I'm not against immigration, but illegal immigration. People coming here illegally means jobs lost for Americans. The focus of my campaign is jobs for

Americans. I'm for the prosecution of people hiring illegal immigrants."

Larkin said he knows more than McCotter ever will about what it means to be out of work.

"Mr. McCotter to my knowledge graduated from law college and went right into politics," he said.

"He's never held a job in his life other than being on the taxpayers' nickel. Myself, I've had to fight and struggle in my job and I know what it's like."

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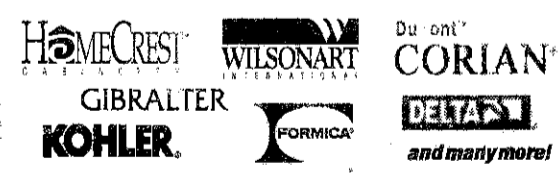
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A member of the Ho Chunk Nation, Reg Pettibone of Livonia talks about the circle of life with the children attending the Garden City Library Summer Reading Program.



PHOTOS BY TIM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Children taking part in the Garden City Library Summer Reading program were entertained by Native American Dancing and Songs by Reg Pettibone and his family.

Dancer highlights Native American culture at library

Local youngsters got a first-hand look at Native American culture at the Garden City Library's Summer Reading Club.

A recent club meeting featured Reg Pettibone, a full-blooded Native American Champion Dancer from the Ho-Chunk Nation. With traditional background and upbringing, Livonia native Pettibone provides the audience with a better understanding of true Native American culture through dance, song narration, and an art display with traditional items.

mental emphasis.

The young readers got to interact with Pettibone, including participating in a traditional dance.

Participants in the Summer Reading Club, elementary school students, read books to earn prize certificates. The youngsters also have the option of attending weekly meetings that feature a variety of entertainment programs.



Performing the men's traditional dance, James Casey, 12, (from left) of Garden City, Hunter Childress, 9, of Garden City and Matthew Tyrchniewicz, 8, of Petersburg, follow Reg Pettibone around the buffalo.

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Passenger traffic on the rise at Metro

Despite a sluggish economy and the rising cost of jet fuel, total passenger traffic at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) continues to climb in 2008.

"Aviation is one sector in our local economy which is holding its own in very challenging economic conditions," said Lester Robinson, CEO, Wayne County Airport Authority.

Total passenger traffic at DTW increased 3 percent for the first five months of 2008 and 2.7 percent for the month of May, according to data released this week by the airport's division of financial planning and analysis.

Airlines are projecting schedule reductions this fall, which are expected to affect passenger counts, but in the meantime, passengers are increasing their numbers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. May 2008 represents the fifth consecutive month, year-over-

year, of total passenger traffic increases at DTW.

Five of the top 15 airports have reported declining passenger traffic in May according to research conducted by DTW's Strategy Management Division.

A total of 15,256,287 passengers used DTW through May compared to 14,805,485 for the same period last year. International passengers were up 2 percent for the first five months and 5.5 percent for the month of May on the strength of increases reported by hub carrier Northwest Airlines, Royal Jordanian, Air France and new service by Aero Mexico.

Operations (aircraft landings and take-offs) were down 1.2 percent for May and remain essentially flat, -0.2 percent year to date.

"We will continue to strive to keep our costs to the airlines low, as the year goes on, to

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May Calendar Year Monthly Summary
Preliminary as of July 3, 2008

	Calendar Year 2008		Calendar Year 2007		CY 2008/2007 % change	
	May	YTD	May	YTD	May	YTD
Total Passengers*	3,274,707	15,256,287	3,189,781	14,805,485	2.7%	3.0%
Domestic *	2,990,845	13,915,114	2,920,727	13,490,019	2.4%	3.2%
International**	283,862	1,341,173	269,054	1,315,466	5.5%	2.0%
Total Passengers	3,274,707	15,256,287	3,189,781	14,805,485	2.7%	3.0%
Operations	40,234	195,340	40,722	195,782	-1.2%	-0.2%

* Total passengers is defined as the number of passengers traveling outbound (enplaned) and inbound (deplaned) as reported to the Wayne County Airport Authority by the airlines operating at Detroit Metro Airport.
** Canadian passengers pre-cleared, before entering the U.S., are reported as domestic arrivals and recorded as such by the Authority.

Please note: Airport statistics are subject to change as airlines report updates to Wayne county airport Authority

encourage them to maintain their Detroit air service schedules as much as possible," said Robinson.

"Rising jet fuel costs and refinery margins have had a devastating effect on airline finances."

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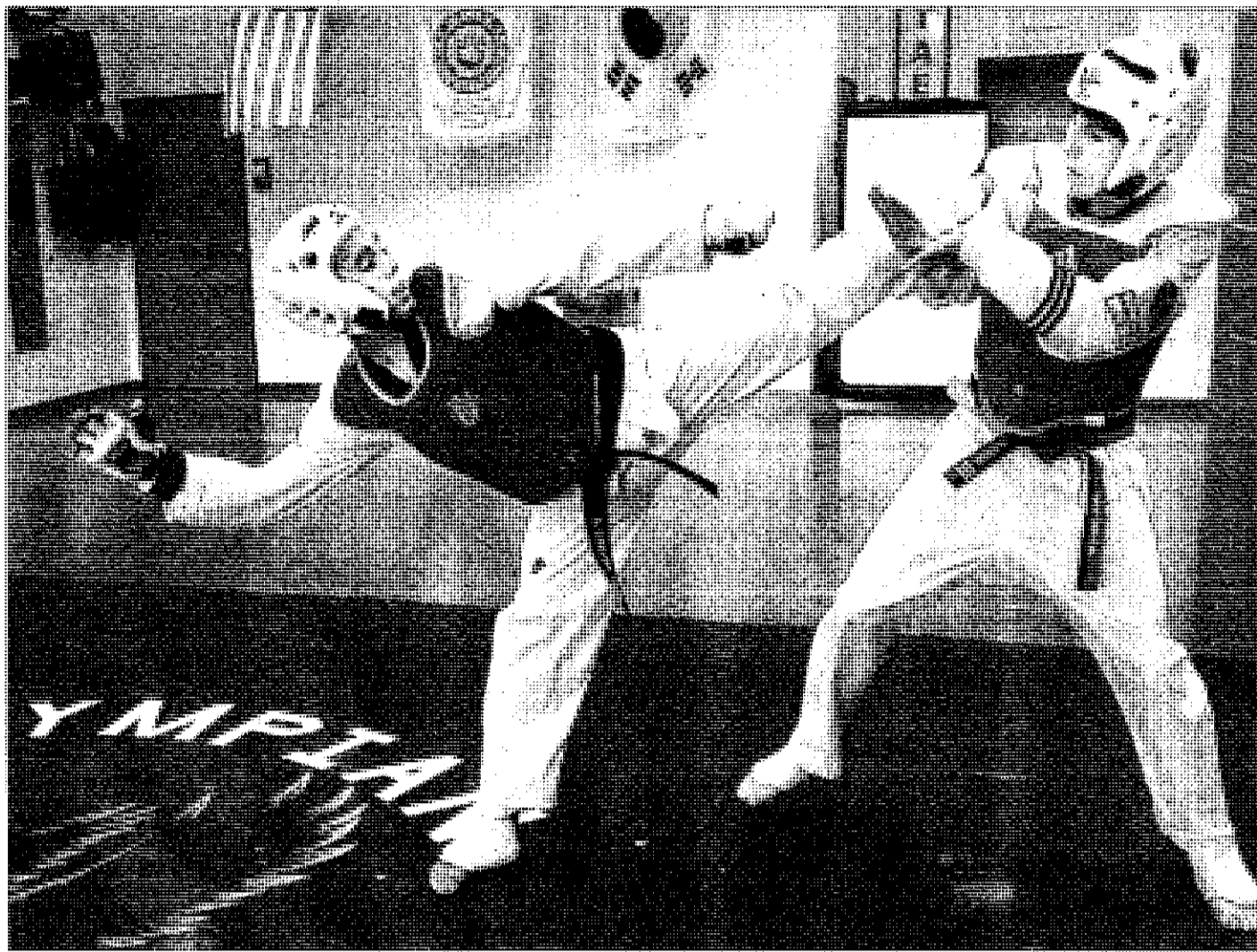


Sunday, July 20, 2008

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Brad Emons, editor . (734) 953-2123 . bemons@hometownlife.com

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Brothers Alex (left) and Austin Covert spar during a workout at Olympian Tae Kwon Do, which their family owns in Canton. Both of the Coverts will be students at Salem High School in the fall.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

'COVERT' OPERATION

Teaching Tae Kwon Do is a family affair for Canton's Coverts

BY ED WRIGHT
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Laura Covert. Alex and his younger brother — 14-year-old Austin — have both made their mark on Tae Kwon Do mats across the country and, for that matter, the world.

Alex, who received his first taste of the sport at the age of 3 when he joined his father's mini-ranger class, recently made the sport's national Junior AAU Olympic team and has advanced to compete in international tournaments as far away as Germany.

His next goal: earning a spot on the 2012 U.S. Olympic team.

And although he's three years younger, Austin isn't far behind his brother on the talent scale.

"This is our livelihood, but it's also our way of life now," said Christopher Covert, motioning toward the state-of-the-art surroundings of his Canton-based training facility, which is located on Cherry Hill Rd., just west of Canton Center. "Everything we do and teach revolves around the morals and ethics that Tae Kwon Do is based on."

"Both Alex and Austin started when they were 3 years old and they couldn't wait until they could move up to the next level. Tae Kwon Do has not only taught them how to defend themselves, but the discipline that evolves from the sport teaches them the

right way to carry themselves outside the ring."

Alex Covert, who earned varsity letters in soccer and track and field at Salem last year, said reaching the enviable point he's reached hasn't always been easy, but it's been worthwhile.

"It's always tough, but I love it," he said. "A lot of mornings, I'll wake up, my dad will throw a towel at me and say, 'Get ready to run.' Sometimes I don't really want to, but to get to the top like I want to do, you have to get up in the morning and run and work out."

Please see **COVERT, B6**

Rebels making strides

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The second season for the Redford Rebels is winding down. It's hardly been a routine year. For example, two Midwest Alliance Travel Baseball League games slated for this week against the Michigan Bulls were canceled when the Bulls opted out.

But Rebels' coach Bruce Corner preaches to his players to show up and give it

TRAVEL BASEBALL

their all on every pitch. And other than an occasional stumble, the team is making strides as demonstrated by a 2-1 mark at last weekend's Spartan Classic at North Farmington High School.

In a July 11 tourney opener against the Michigan Moose, Redford trailed 4-1 entering the bottom of the sixth on July 11 only to plate four runs and grab a 5-4 victory.

"I think they've come together the last two weeks than at the beginning of the season," Corner said. "They've started to concentrate more and at this level of baseball you really have to play smart. You're playing good teams with quality players up and down the lineup."

Against the Moose, the Rebels tied the game on a bases-loaded double by A.J. Ewart (Novi-Detroit Catholic Central) and pushed across the winning run on a bases-loaded walk to Brian Corner (Redford Thurston). That enabled reliever Kevin Neaton (University of Detroit-Jesuit) to collect the win.

Please see **REBELS, B5**

Sidelines

Motor City Golf

The Motor City Junior Golf Championship will be held Wednesday, July 30, at Whispering Willows Golf Course in Livonia.

Included with the \$49 entry fee are 18 holes of golf, a practice round (which must be played prior to the event), driving range balls the day of the event, a lunch ticket and a gift pack.

The event is open to junior golfers between the ages of 12 and 17 years old.

Registration forms can be picked up at Whispering Willows Golf Course, 20500 Newburgh in Livonia.

For more information, call (248) 476-4493.

Entry forms are due July 23.

PCS hockey golf outing

A golf outing to benefit the Canton, Salem and Plymouth hockey teams will be held Saturday, Aug. 23, at Hickory Creek Golf Club in Canton.

The fee is \$110 per player or \$400 per foursome. Included in the fee are greens fees and a cart; a steak dinner; snack at the turn; pop and water on the course; and prizes for best team, longest drive, closest to the pin.

The event will tee off with an 8 a.m. shotgun start.

For more information, contact Kathy Lash at (734) 453-6518 or Chris Wolfe at (248) 766-6754.

Raffle for WSU

The Wayne State University athletics department will be hosting its annual reverse raffle on Thursday, Aug. 14, at the McGregor Conference Center on the WSU campus. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Wayne State athletic department.

A \$5,000 grand prize will be given away. In addition, three \$500 prizes, spa gift certificates, hotel stays, dinner gift certificates, sports items as well as other prizes will be won by ticket holders. Only 140 tickets will be sold for the event. The ticket price is \$150.

The evening begins with an outdoor barbecue at 5 p.m., followed by the reverse raffle at 6:30 p.m. (the winner need not be present to win).

For more information, call Angela Ruth at (313) 577-0587.

Ex-players, coaches invited back for Devon-Aire's 50th

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

You know it's a pretty big deal when the mayor might throw out a ceremonial first pitch.

We're talking Kirksey and we're talking Livonia's Devon-Aire Softball League — which on Saturday, July 26, will celebrate its 50th year with the annual all-star games and picnic, said league president Tony Perez.

"Maybe we will contact Mayor (Jack) Kirksey to come out" and throw out the first

pitch before the Junior Boys (ages 7-12) slow-pitch game slated for 10:30 a.m., noted Perez.

But it will be Devon-Aire sponsor Mike McGowan, whose Livonia sporting goods store continues to supply the league, who will kick off the big day by throwing out the first pitch before the 8 a.m. opener (Junior Girls, ages 7-12).

The third and final game, expected to begin around 12:15 p.m., is the Senior Co-ed all-star contest with teams including boys and girls ages 13-18. The owner of Redford

Township's Little Bill's Trophies will toss out the first pitch before that contest, said Perez.

Of course, special guests won't be the only ones welcome to come out to Devon-Aire Park, located east of Merriman near West Chicago. Perez is reaching out to those former players, coaches and managers who live in the vicinity to invite them to the park for softball, free hot dogs and pop and a day of reminiscing.

To help take care of the latter, Perez said about 200 programs devoted to the league's rich his-

tory will be handed out. According to Perez, the league continues to thrive because of ongoing dedication and loyalty.

"What's made it special is we have a lot of people who play for so many years, they go and then they come back (as coaches)," Perez emphasized. "They don't forget their roots."

Perez' 19-year-old daughter Kara fits that bill.

She "graduated" from the league in 2007, but returned this year to coach the Senior Co-ed League T-Birds.

Donating 800 hot dogs for the occasion is Dearborn Sausage while Kroger and Mid-Joy Party Store are chipping in with pop, water and ice.

There also will be a baseball pitching machine and raffles for fun.

"Each team has a theme basket they've put together," Perez said.

For more information, contact Perez at (734) 525-2884 or via e-mail, mrgraphics1@yahoo.com.

tsmith@hometownlife.com

Local father-son duo see history unfold

BY ED WRIGHT
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Those weren't just any ordinary baseball tickets. Canton resident Bob Staples had securely tucked away in his wallet Tuesday morning as he and his 17-year-old son, Dane, boarded a plane to New York City.

They were — at least for huge baseball fans like the Staples — two tickets to paradise.

Thanks to a Hall of Fame-worthy gesture from Bob's cousin Scott Staples, the Staples didn't watch Tuesday night's Major League Baseball All-Star game on Channel 2 like most Detroiters — they watched it at Yankee Stadium along with 50,000-plus other ex-

berant fans, all of whom can say they witnessed one of the most stirring contests in All-Star game history.

The American League won, 4-3, in a tension-packed marathon that lasted a record 15 innings in the final All-Star game that will be played in "The House that Ruth Built." With the Yankees set to move into a new ballpark next season, Yankee Stadium has an appointment with a demolition crew — much like Tiger Stadium — following the 2008 campaign, which made Tuesday night's game that much more significant.

"Walking into that stadium before the game was like something I've never experienced before," said Bob Staples. "I had goose

bumps. It was so loud when they announced the players before the game that you couldn't hear yourself think. It was an unbelievable night, especially because I got to experience it with my son."

The Staples, who attended the game with Scott and three of his friends, were originally seated in right field. However, when the crowd thinned out as the game stretched into extra innings, they moved to some empty seats just beyond the left-field fence.

The move nearly earned them the ultimate souvenir when Detroit's Carlos Guillen ripped a potential game-winning blast in the bottom of the 12th inning

Please see **ALL-STAR, B5**



The Staples father-son duo of Bob (right) and Dane Staples not only attended Tuesday's historic 15-inning Major League Baseball All-Star game — they stayed until the very end as the digital scoreboard clock shows in the background.

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ALL-STAR

FROM PAGE B1

that — for a moment at least — appeared destined to land in Bob Staples' grasp.

"Right when (Guillen) hit the ball, it looked like it was going to land right in front of where we were sitting," recalled Staples, who was possibly the only one in the stadium besides Guillen and Tigers manager Jim Leyland who was wearing an Olde English D cap.

"So I got out of my seat, fought my way through a few people and got ready to catch it with my hat. When the ball hit about a foot from the top of the fence (Guillen ended up with a double), all the New York fans around me saw my Tigers hat and said, 'Hey, that was your boy!'"

Staples said he'll remember some in-the-stands happenings as much as the exciting on-the-field plays.

"I couldn't believe how much hatred the New York fans have for Boston," said Staples. "Whenever a Red Sox player's name was announced, he received long, loud boos. And one

'And one guy in our section, who was brave enough to wear a Red Sox hat, was getting all kinds of grief from the Yankees fans. I was relieved they didn't have it in for Detroit like they did for Boston.'

BOB STAPLES, Canton resident

guy in our section, who was brave enough to wear a Red Sox hat, was getting all kinds of grief from the Yankees fans. I was relieved they didn't have it in for Detroit like they did for Boston."

Despite the length of the game — it didn't end until close to 1:30 a.m. — the Staples were bound and determined to stay until the final pitch was thrown.

"There was absolutely no way we were leaving until the end," Staples emphasized.

Their feeling is understandable. After all, it's not often you get to visit baseball paradise.

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Remarkable runners-up

The PC Pride 12U Stars fast-pitch softball team finished second in the USSSA State Tournament on Sunday at Victory Park in Canton. The Stars defeated the Ann Arbor Gold, the Downriver Diamonds, Compuware and Team USA before losing 6-1 in the championship game to Torco Black. Both the PC Pride Stars and Torco Black will represent Michigan in the USSSA World Series in two weeks. Pictured are (front row from left) Elaine Gerou, Aubrie Cragg, Jessica Webster, Kaitlyn McIntosh, Lauren Hayes, (back row from left) head coach Mike Gerou, bat girl Victoria Porter, Shannon Watson, Megan Webster, Catherine Porter, Katy Meade, assistant coach Kevin Bias, Casey Bias and Elliott Mitchem.

REBELS

FROM PAGE B1

SOLID EFFORT

On July 12, the Rebels continued playing well at North Farmington with a 7-5 victory over the Macomb Inferno in a game described by the coach as "one of our best performances of the year."

Corner praised the pitching and hitting of Charles Daly

(Catholic Central) despite suffering from a pulled hamstring. Daly picked up the win, giving up just three hits in five innings while also going 2-for-2 at the plate with two RBI.

"He knew we were short of arms and he gutted out a real strong performance on the mound as well as at the plate," Corner said.

Also chipping in with two

hits was Brian Lobkovich (Dearborn Divine Child) while Eric Ely (Catholic Central) helped preserve the triumph with "strong defense at third."

The Rebels, however, couldn't maintain the positive momentum into Sunday's final day of the tourney. Redford (7-11-1) took a 17-4 pounding at the hands of the Lake Orion Chargers despite

a three-hit, three-RBI day by Charles Melvin (Thurston) and a two-run double by Jeremy Wafer (Thurston).

CHARITY SHOWCASE

Another example of how different a season it's been is the last-minute rescheduling of the MATBL Charity Showcase Tournament to raise proceeds for United States war veterans with

closed head injuries.

Corner learned this week that the tournament will not take place this weekend as originally scheduled; instead, it is slated to take place Friday through Sunday, July 25-27, at Macomb Community College.

"The kids are excited about it," said Corner, about the Rebels helping the cause. "Sometimes, we overlook

how lucky we are out here to play the game of baseball. There's men and women who give their lives and who are permanently injured for us to have that ability to play ball here in America."

About \$8,000 has already been collected to be distributed to those veterans in need, he added.

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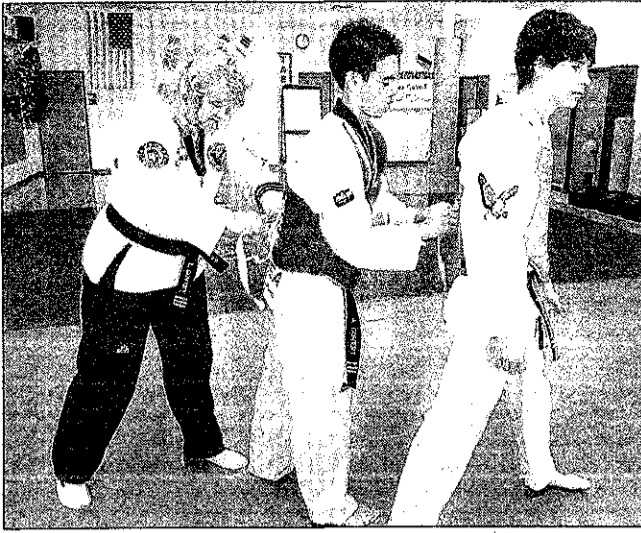
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Laura Covert helps son Alex (middle) into his gear. Alex does the same for his younger brother Austin.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

COVERT

FROM PAGE B1

"This is my lifestyle. It's all I've known since I was 3 years old and I wouldn't change it for anything."

Alex Covert said his friends think his black-belt skills are "awesome" and that some have rushed to him for occasional assistance.

"One of my friends was getting picked on last year, so he went up to the kid and told him I was a third-degree black belt and that I could take him," said Alex, who said he hasn't been in an off-the-mat scuffle since fifth grade. "So, yeah, they call on me some-

times when they need me."

Christopher Covert said Taekwondo — which is referred to as the "leg art" — demands a combination of control and strength.

"We can throw our foot as fast as a train, but at the same time we can wipe a bead of sweat off your forehead with our foot because of the control we have," he said. "Now, once the boys step into the ring in a competitive environment, it's a different story. It's about who can make the biggest impact with their skills."

Unlike judo (which is similar to wrestling) and karate (which requires more hand work), Taekwondo matches are often won or lost based on how well the athletes throw their legs.

"Typically, your legs are 10 times stronger than your hands," said Christopher Covert. "So most Taekwondo matches are ended with two hits — one hit when your leg hits the other guy's head and the other one when he hits the mat."

Olympian Taekwondo offers classes for everyone from 3 years old on up. Some of Covert's students are in their mid-60s.

For more information on available classes, call (734) 844-8299.

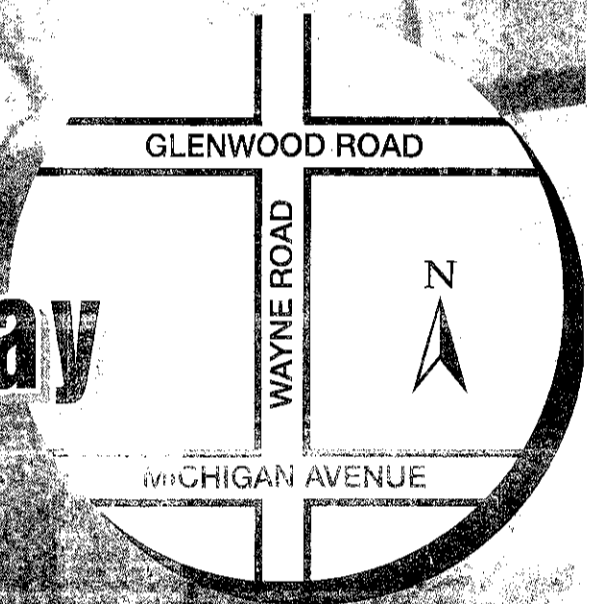
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PHOTO BY PHILIP E. COVERT

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Clancy isn't digging up the garden this year but has regressed since earning his Canine Good Citizen Certificate.

Playful pup goes to dogs

It's been about a year since Clancy, our Irish Wolfhound, earned his Canine Good Citizen Certificate from the American Kennel Club, but unlike Sassy, a yellow Labrador Retriever from Redford, he's regressed. Clancy isn't digging up the vegetable garden this year but any time he sees a dog, rabbit or neighbor he takes off to play, pulling the leash from our hand which is easy since he is the tallest breed the AKC recognizes. Sassy on the other hand is doing therapy work with her owner Cynthia Sweet at Heartland Hospice and Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Don't get me wrong. Clancy is a good dog, but he needs to mature and listen to my sister Gwen and I. He turns 3 years old on Sept. 19, and we're hoping this is the magic number. Until then we're considering going back to school or hiring a private trainer who specializes in behavior problems.

Clancy prepared for the CGC test by attending weekly classes at the K-9 Academy in Wayne with my sister and I for about one year.

In the ring he was perfect listening to commands of heel, sit, stay, down, and even did well off-leash. He would wait for a stranger to approach, never jumping on them or growling. These are all requirements to become a Canine Good Citizen. Some dog parks and therapy dog organizations ask for proof that a dog has passed the CGC test in the last two years.

Obedience training is important for every dog though. It can mean the difference between an obnoxious animal that is destructive and mean, and a dog who is a joy to be around.

Like me, Sweet thinks in addition to having a well-behaved dog, the benefits far outweigh the cost of training. She and Sassy are members of the Wolverine Dog Training Club in Farmington where they train once or twice a week. Sassy has been going to work with her as a nanny since the lab was three months old. Both Sassy, now 3, and Hardy, Sweet's other golden lab, compete in obedience trials. Hardy, who will be 2 in October, is a therapy dog as well.

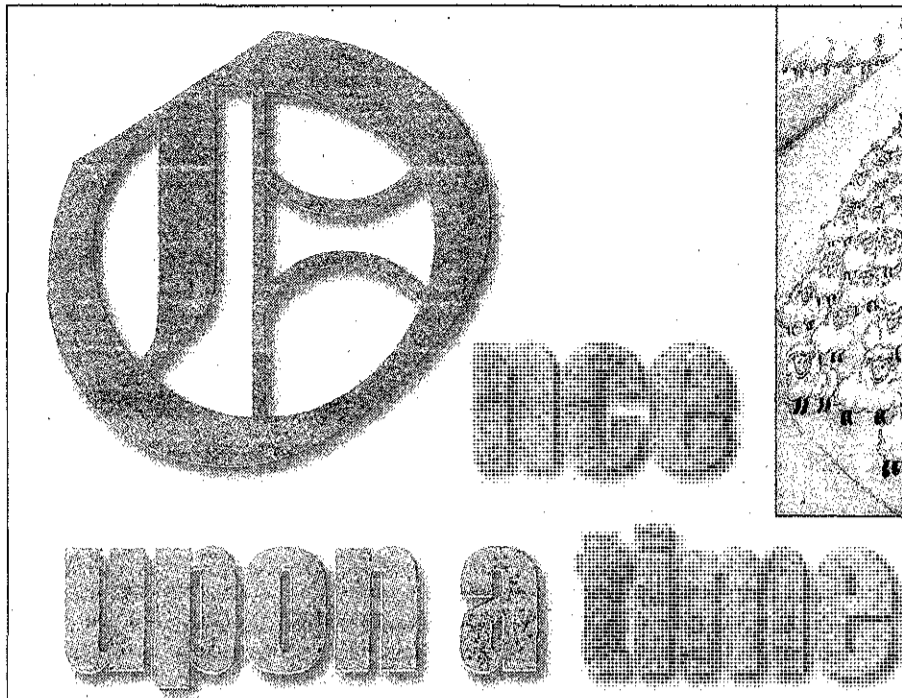
"There's more of a bond between your dog and yourself," said Sweet. "You have to work to get to a level like that. I know that I can trust them and they can trust me."

I know I can trust Clancy until he sees a rabbit or one of our neighbors then he's off and running. He stops in his tracks though when we say, "Bye, we're going for a car ride." Oh well I guess it is time for a refresher. The AKC encourages owners to have their dogs retested every few years because behaviors can change over time. I guess Clancy's no exception.

For more information about the Canine Good Citizen Program, visit www.akc.org.

Linda Chomin is the health and community life reporter for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She can be reached at lchomin@hometownlife.com or (734) 953-2145.

Sassy, a golden Labrador Retriever owned by Cynthia Sweet of Redford, earned her Canine Good Citizen Certificate last year and went on to become a therapy dog.



Gemba, a young shepherd, eventually becomes King in the new children's book by Jeanne Swanson and Pam Grossmann.

Children's book teaches lessons on leadership

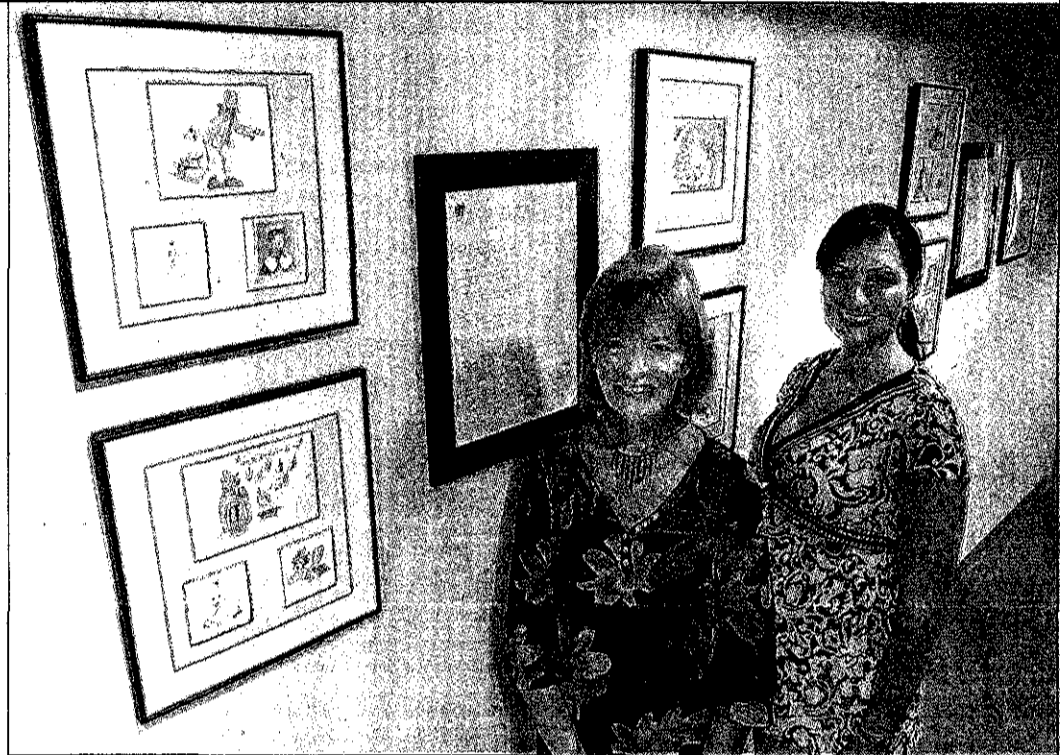
BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
O & E STAFF WRITER

Jeanne Swanson had no idea when she wrote a story instead of a presentation for her leadership class that it would turn into a children's book, but it parallels her belief that these skills should be taught early.

"King Gemba: Book One — Legends of Leadership" appeals to all ages with its words of wisdom from a Fairy Godmother. Swanson learned about the manufacturing industry at a young age through her father Wes Smith.

She is the fourth generation to work in the family business, E & E Manufacturing in Plymouth. She formally studied the principals of leadership while going for her master's degree at Walsh College in Troy. Today when she isn't working as public relations manager for E & E Manufacturing, Swanson is busy advocating for the industry in Washington, D.C., through the Precision Metalforming Association and National Association of Manufacturers.

"I never thought I'd be able to mix business with the artistic side," said Swanson,



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Artist Pam Grossman (left) and author Jeanne Swanson collaborated on the fairy tale, 'King Gemba: Book One - Legends of Leadership.'

28. "It was partly inspired by a trip to Disney World. Gemba is a Japanese term for leading from the ground up, getting involved in your daily business. It's straight from our leadership book.

"At E & E we already bring in school groups to teach them about manufacturing, to teach them it's not a dingy environment but employs highly trained engineers. We're hoping to see a reverse in the trend of the decline in manufacturing. There are still jobs out there."

Swanson is a bubbly, upbeat woman and this carries over into the book. The story begins as a kingdom searches for a new king and goes from prosperous times

for their woolen industry to starving and freezing.

It isn't until a shepherd comes along with his flock of sheep that the future brightens.

Pam Grossmann liked the book the minute she read it but was concerned her concept for the illustrations might not match Swanson's expectations. As it turned out, the cartoon-like characters capture the essence of the story. Grossmann is an accomplished Livonia artist who has not only worked in a variety of mediums for years but passed her knowledge on.

She has taught children and adults at the Plymouth

Please see **BOOK, C3**

KING GEMBA: BOOK ONE - LEGENDS OF LEADERSHIP

What: An exhibit featuring text and illustrations from the children's book

When: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, continues to Aug. 29

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Any Given Saturday: Derby girls balance motherhood and mayhem

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What: The Detroit Derby Girls are holding open tryouts for the 2008/09 season

When: Monday, July 21

Where: Riverside Arena, 6635 Plymouth Road, Livonia.

Requirements: You don't have to be a skilled skater at first, but you must be willing to work hard in and out of the rink. Most Derby Girls devote 12-15 hours a week to the league. Practices are Monday and Wednesday nights in Livonia. You also must be responsible for your own equipment, \$35 annual membership to USA Rollersports, and \$30 monthly dues.

For information: Visit www.detroitrollerderby.com or e-mail hr@detroitderbygirls.com.

BY JOHN RASMUSSEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Just four weeks after giving birth to her first child, Christy Schoonover had one thought in mind — getting back on skates.

Roller skates, that is.

The part-time hairdresser from Redford is so passionate about Roller Derby she laced up her skates and participated in her first bout when her daughter was just five weeks old.

Now six months old, Alice (known by Derby Girls as "Kitten Meow"), has yet to miss a bout.

"My husband has taken her to every one so far. It's awesome," she said.

Please see **DERBY, C2**



Christy Schoonover is 'Cat's Meow,' #9 on Detroit Derby Girls' D Funk All Stars team. She is shown here during a bout just five weeks after giving birth to her daughter.

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Chorus fund-raiser sells entertainment books

The BeckRidge Chorale, formerly the Plymouth Community Chorus, is selling 2009 Entertainment Books in order to raise funds to support local charities and provide vocal music scholarships for talented local high school students.

The book includes 2 for 1 and 50 percent discounts for shows, restaurants, sporting

events, hotel stays, airfare, care rentals, and more.

The cost is \$20. People pre-ordering the 2009 books now will receive a 2008 book free. Supplies are limited.

To purchase a book or for more information, call Stan at (734) 459-6829.

2009 books will be available for pick-up or delivery on Aug. 5.

DERBY

FROM PAGE C1

Ah, the life of a Detroit Derby Girl mom.

After disappearing for a couple of decades, modern roller derby can trace its rebirth to the founding of TXRD-Lonestar Roller Girls in Austin, Texas.

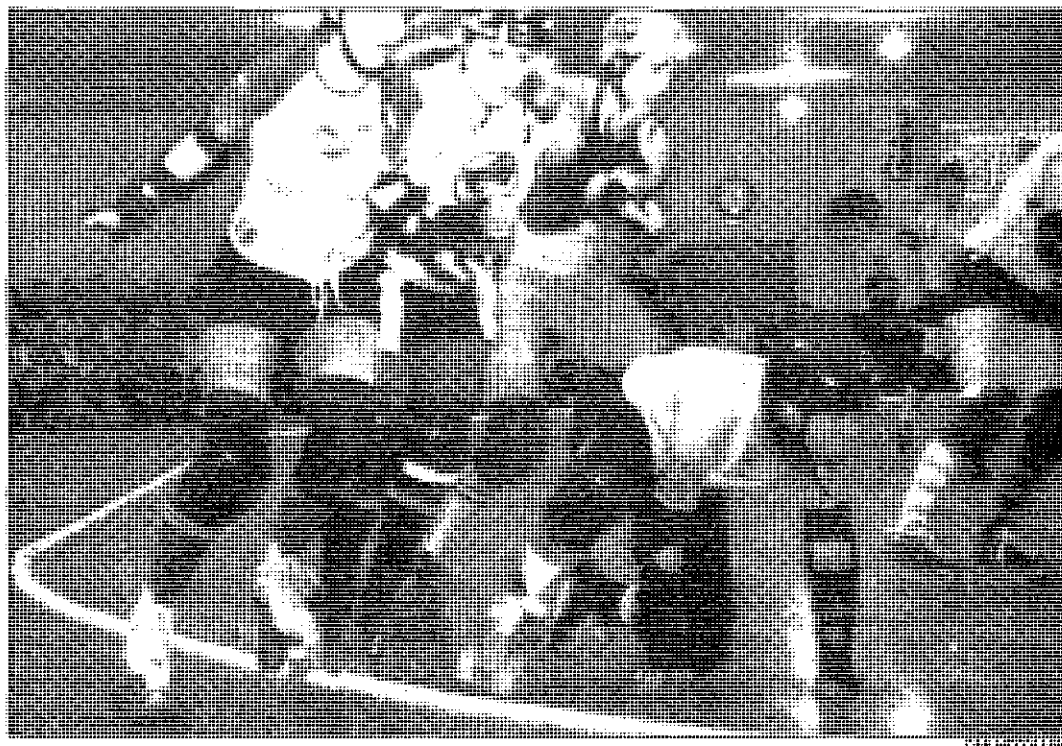
Rumors and stories of the league spread across the country, and slowly but surely other leagues began to sprout up.

The popularity of the sport really took off after cable network A&E ran the reality show "Roller Girls."

This DIY sport has come a long way since the schlockie, over-the-top wrestling style spectacle that most of us grew up with in '70s. Today, Roller Derby is a grassroots sport with individual leagues founded by and run by women of all ages and walks of life.

Derby leagues can be found in every major city — and some not so major ones — with large metropolitan areas boasting multiple leagues. Within the last couple years, the sport has exploded overseas with leagues throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Asia. Interest in the sport will surely expand again with Drew Barrymore directing and starring in a derby picture called "Whip It" currently being filmed in Metro Detroit.

During the season (October through May), Detroit Derby Girls bouts are held once a month at the historic Masonic Temple in downtown Detroit. Crowds at the bouts



Detroit Roller Derby isn't for the faint of heart. Just ask Cat's Meow, a.k.a. Christy Schoonover of Redford, getting sandwiched during a bout last season.

can reach nearly 1,000 people and are usually sold out well in advance.

Schoonover said she was a fan of the "Roller Girls" series and discovered that Detroit had its own league when she saw a poster on the wall of a local bar.

Danielle Simone, a cheerleading coach and mother of two, learned about the league when a friend came into her shop and mentioned she was going to a bout.

"I jumped at the chance to go!" the Royal Oak resident said. "I went to the bout and was 100 per-

cent set on joining."

Deanna Brucker, a full-time financial counselor in Hartland, learned about the Detroit Derby Girls through a couple of friends who skate with the league.

"I thought it would be interesting and fun. I mean, what better way to get some exercise and meet some cool people?" she said.

Tracy Toepler works for an interactive agency in Ann Arbor. She had been a competitive figure skater.

She first heard about the Gotham City Derby Girls, did a little digging and found out that Detroit was starting a league.

"When I saw my first practice, I was immediately hooked," she said, admitting her parents were a little tentative at first.

"They were worried about my safety," she said. "They thought it was just a passing phase. They have since become totally hooked. My dad had tears in his eyes after my team had its first win. They almost never miss a game."

Simone agrees that she has gotten nothing but support from her family and friends. When she was just joining the league, "I got a package at work, opened it and found out that my husband ordered my first pair of speed skates!"

With every mother, though, there are time issues and derby mom's aren't any different. Schoonover finds it hard to balance family and derby.

"I get to practice and bouts with

no problems, but I miss a lot of team get-togethers. I just don't want to be away from my baby that much," she said.

To a person, though, they all say that it's worth the time and bruises that come with the derby girl territory.

"I am more confident than I have ever been" Simone said. "I am so empowered by the strong women in our league ... I have 70 new girl friends that I can count on for anything."

Schoonover agreed it isn't about the competition, but rather the people she has met. "they're all my friends" she added, "and they're so real. I've never met — let alone liked — this many women in my entire life."

Like any sport, there comes a time to say goodbye.

Brucker has already hung up her skates.

"I miss it terribly already. I still plan on attending some bouts next season and cheering my girls on," she said.

Schoonover said she'll be a derby girl until she is too old and physically unable to do it. Toepler also thinks that she will skate on as long as her body lets her. "being an older player, I know my days are numbered," she said.

Simone will try to stay on as well. "I can always become a ref or on the stat army. My love for this sport runs too deep to really ever leave it completely. Once a derby girl, always a derby girl. It gets into your blood!"

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Another cause for a flare of osteoarthritis is injury. In a joint like the knee, an unexpected twist or fall may stretch a ligament or tear a meniscus adding further strain on the joint. In the hand a blow to the knuckles can create a calcium fragment sufficient to bring on a flare. Again, the treatment of choice is a steroid injection at the site of pain.

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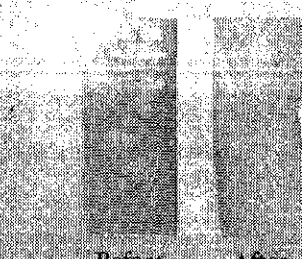
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Livonia Arts Commission continues concert series

The Livonia Arts Commission opened its 2008 Music from the Heart series with the blues and soul music of Union Avenue last Thursday at Civic Center Park, Farmington and Five Mile roads, Livonia.

On July 24, Trilogy brings the sounds of Motown and classic rock to Livonia's Civic Center Park.

Billy Brandt and Grievous Angel perform a mix of rockabilly, country and blues July 31.

The group has won many Detroit music awards.

BOOK

FROM PAGE C1

Community Arts Council for the last nine years, but before that was at Steppingstone School for preschool to 8th grade students in Farmington Hills and the Art Store & More in Livonia. She retired from Steppingstone two years ago after 22 years as an art teacher.

It was through the Plymouth Community Arts Council that Grossmann learned Swanson was looking for an illustrator. Both of their work is on display through Aug. 29, at the arts council.

Grossmann has exhibited her work locally and recently won an Award of Merit at a show continuing to July 24, in the Alfred Berkowitz Gallery at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

"It has been a fun, fun project," said Grossmann, who originally showed the book to Dawn Northey, an arts council staff member. Northey liked the concept so much she proceeded to organize the exhibit. It wasn't long before

Tammy Trudelle, the interim executive director, learned of the book and asked Swanson to transform the words into a children's play which was performed by the arts council's Plymouth Uptown Players June 20. More than 40 books were sold and signed during the successful production.

"I started with pen and ink and added the watercolor and did it in three to four weeks from my imagination," said Grossmann.

Swanson is just thrilled with Grossmann's interpretation of her words and is using half of the illustrations to decorate the nursery for the little girl she is expecting with husband Brian. The Novi couple is due with their first child Aug. 7.

Swanson has already read the book to the new baby and is thinking about creating a series.

King Gemba is \$22.50 and available at the online publisher booklocker.com as well as amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

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Piece together past at upcoming workshop

The Library of Michigan will host "Piecing Together Our Past," its annual Abrams Genealogy Seminar, July 25-26 at the Michigan Library and Historical Center in downtown Lansing.

"This year's seminar demonstrates that Michigan is a great place to do genealogy research, from the state's library to the local history rooms at public libraries throughout the state," said Randy Riley, special collections manager

at the Library of Michigan. "This program is a great complement to our collection, which is one of the largest in the country."

Keynote speaker will be Dr. George K. Schweitzer, the author of nearly 20 genealogical research books who is known for his use of period costumes. His address on Saturday, "Tracing Ancestors Back Across the Atlantic," is co-sponsored by the Ingham County Genealogical

Society.

Registration is \$40, and includes a boxed lunch on Saturday and a seminar syllabus. The Sheraton Lansing Hotel, 925 S. Creyts Road, Lansing, is offering a special discounted rate of \$89 for participants. Call (517) 323-7100 for reservations.

For a complete schedule of events and registration form, visit www.michigan.gov/familyhistory.

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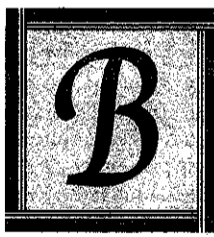
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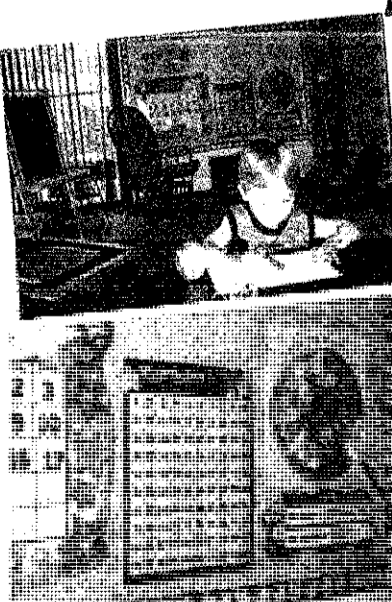
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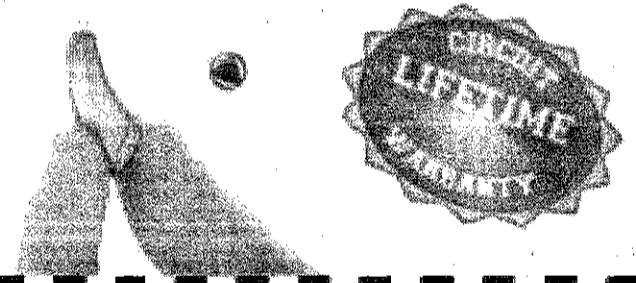
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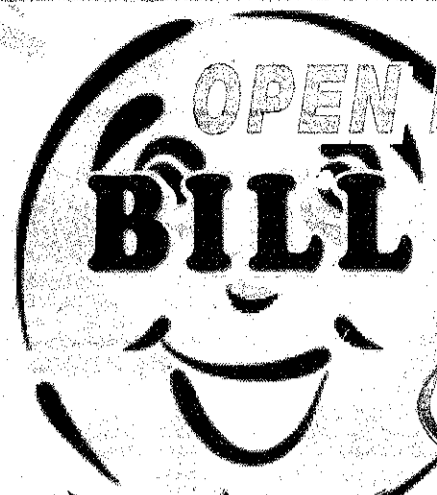
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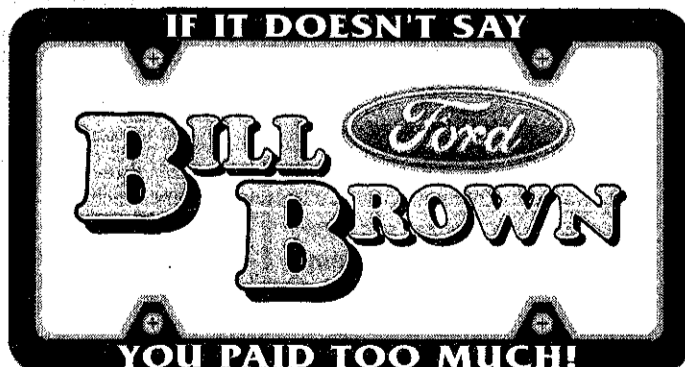
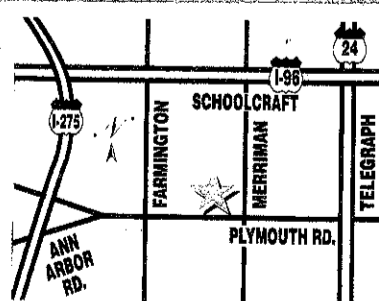
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