

THURSDAY
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The Observer & Eccentric
Newspapers

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75 CENTS

Local 'Foes' join 199 other bands at Blowout - Filter, B6

WESTLAND OBSERVER

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to planning
a fabulous
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Special Section
inside today's
newspaper

AROUND TOWN

In the news

The *New York Times* on Monday featured an article on U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, and the impact of his vote against President Barack Obama's stimulus package on his 2010 election prospects. McCotter joined all Republican members of the House of Representatives in voting against the economic stimulus. On the other hand, McCotter has been a vocal supporter of government loans to General Motors and Chrysler.

Among those quoted in the article by Carl Hulse was Michigan House Speaker Andy Dillon, D-Redford, who is quoted as saying, "Since when do Republicans vote against tax cuts? They are betting the farm, because if this works, I think people will remember they were not on board."

The *Times* article notes that McCotter, chair of the Republican House Policy Committee, has broken ranks with his party on expanding health insurance for children and supporting a measure to ease union organizing.

On the stimulus, the *Times* quotes McCotter: "It won't work. If I thought it would work, I would have voted for it."

Blight buster

A sign of the housing markets woes is a pile of personal belongings dumped in the yard of a foreclosed home. That won't change under a new city ordinance that takes effect today (Feb. 26), but it does shorten how long those possessions can stay there.

The Westland City Council recently approved the ordinance, which limits leaving abandoned property outside of foreclosed home for longer than 72 hours. It comes on the heels of another previously adopted ordinance that deems high grass in excess of eight inches a problem and stipulates that it must be cut.

"While it is imperative we give occupants adequate time to secure their belongings, this ordinance will prevent the mortgage company from creating a blight nuisance," said Mayor William Wild. "Our goal is to protect property values and sustain the livability of the neighborhood."

In addition to imposing a time limit on how long the personal articles can remain outside the premises, the ordinance allows the city to remove and dispose of the property as well as recover removal and disposal costs.

Likewise, the cost the city incurs to cut the grass of foreclosed or abandoned properties is passed on to the property owner, and if the property owner fails to pay the cost, a 30 percent surcharge is added to the property's tax bill.

Tax rates: Relief for some, not all

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Westland's residential property assessments plunged 17 percent for 2009, fueled by a housing-market crash that will mean tax relief for many — but not all — local homeowners, city officials confirmed.

"I'm guessing the majority of people will see some sort of relief this

year. How much, I don't know," city Assessor James Elrod said.

Still, longtime residents could be shocked to learn that they will pay slightly higher property taxes this year — even though their home values dipped — due to quirks in a voter-approved law in 1994 that slowed tax hikes even as the housing market prospered.

The result, as unnerving as it might

seem, is that some homeowners will not see their taxes decline until the gap is closed between two key numbers — their assessed value and their taxable value.

While Elrod expects the gap to close for virtually all residents by 2010, the situation likely won't be well-received from struggling homeowners who thought they had tax relief coming this year.

"We are getting some calls," Elrod said.

It works like this. One longtime city homeowner saw her assessed value, or state equalized valuation, plummet from \$82,520 last year to \$66,400. The SEV represents half of a home's value.

However, her taxable value rose

Please see TAXES, A3

Kids lace up to learn how to skate

Amber Costigan's favorite movie is *Ice Princess*. According to her mother, Rhonda, she loves the movie and loves to watch. She estimates her daughter has viewed the film 500 times.

That movie, a new pair of skates and seeing the medals and newspaper clippings about her mother, who was a competitive skater, was enough to get the 6-year-old on the ice at Mike Modano Arena last week to learn to skate.

"She did a good job, she ice skates better than I thought," said Rhonda

Costigan. "She was shaking her butt so much to make herself move. She did the obstacle course. She skated better than I thought."

Open to boys and girls ages 6-15, the ice skating clinic was among several recreation programs offered to youngsters during the area school districts' mid-winter break. Ice skating instructors worked with new skaters, teaching them how to skate, how to stop and in the case of Amber do toe picks with figure skates.

Please see SKATE, A3



Youngsters use their arms to maintain their balance on ice skates during the learn to skate program at the Mike Modano Ice Arena.



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Amber Costigan, 6, of Westland breaks into laughter after falling during her first time ice skating. Helping her up was her friend, Breanna Kolenc, 10.

Help needed with finishing touches on Octagon House

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Westland's historic Octagon House, a mid-1800s home that has been restored and opened for public tours, still needs a few finishing touches.

The two-story house, situated in the Westland Historic Village Park on Wayne Road between Marquette and Cherry Hill, needs volunteers for plaster work in a small, upstairs

bedroom where historians want to spruce it up with new wallpaper.

A carpenter also is being sought to build a bookcase and to finish "a little touch-up work" around the house, historian Jo Johnson said. To help, call (734) 326-1110 or (734) 522-3918.

Even now, Johnson described the house as "usable" and said a couple of small weddings are expected to occur there as early as this spring.

Local officials unveiled the Octagon House to a large crowd dur-

ing the 2007 holiday season. It also has been opened to the public 1-4 p.m. Saturdays, and Johnson said special tours may be arranged.

The opening of the eight-sided house, flanked by two additions built in the mid-1930s, capped a years-long restoration effort to protect one of the city's oldest houses. Johnson said historians still hope to add more period furniture to the beloved home.

Historians say the original two-

story house was built by the ancestors of Clyde Smith, who owned the former Clyde Smith & Sons Farm Market & Greenhouses on Newburgh Road.

The Octagon House once stood just south of the now-raised farm market, but it was moved to Warren Road near Hix before it was relocated a few years ago to its new spot in the historic village.

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Judge gives lengthy sentence in sex assault case

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

A Westland man who sexually assaulted his live-in girlfriend's 8-year-old daughter will spend much — if not all — of his life in prison.

Tadario Derwin Sims, 22, was sentenced Wednesday in Wayne County Circuit Court to 25-50 years for four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, and Judge Vonda Evans imposed an additional nine to 15 years for three counts of second-degree CSC.

Sims learned his fate after a Wayne County jury convicted him earlier this month following allegations he molested the girl, gave her alcohol and showed her pornographic movies while his pregnant girlfriend was receiving hospital care for a child he fathered.

'He's a threat and danger to the children of Westland and the state of Michigan, so he's where he belongs.'

DEBRA MATHEWS, Westland police sergeant

Westland police Sgt. Debra Mathews commended the sentence Evans imposed for sexual assaults that happened early last year in the city's Norwayne neighborhood.

"He sexually assaulted an 8-year-old child. It was very cold. It was very calculated," Mathews said. "It involved alcohol and pornography, and there's no doubt in my mind that if the girl hadn't told (her mother), it would have continued."

"He was only 22 years old, so he had a long life ahead of

him to molest young children," Mathews said. "He's a threat and danger to the children of Westland and the state of Michigan, so he's where he belongs."

Sims faced at least 25 years in prison for sexually assaulting a child under 13 years old, but Evans' court clerk said the sentences of 25-50 years and nine to 15 years will be served consecutively — not simultaneously.

Sims chose to go to trial even though he made two videotaped confessions admitting his crimes.

The girl's mother went to police after her daughter told her what had happened. The mother also has four sons, including the last-born boy fathered by Sims.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Report: Man has money taken during assault

1 A 54-year-old man told police he was assaulted and robbed of his money while he was walking on Grand Traverse near Kalamazoo Court, southeast of Palmer and Venoy, shortly after midnight last Friday. He was taken to Oakwood Annapolis Hospital by Westland paramedics.

The victim told police someone ran up behind him, punched him in the left eye and removed \$126 from his pants pocket. He said he didn't get a description of his assailant, who fled the scene. The man told authorities he ran for help and that a resident of nearby Manistee called for help.

Home broken into

2 A 37-year-old man told police that the rear patio doors of his home had been smashed and that a television had been taken between 7 p.m. and midnight Saturday while he was away from his home on Treadwell, southeast of Palmer and Newburgh. The man, who was away playing cards, told police that a couple of prescription drugs also had been taken.

Prescription drugs stolen

3 A manager of Maple Drugs, on Ford Road

POLICE BRIEFS

west of Wildwood, reported that someone broke into the pharmacy and stole prescription drugs between 11 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18, and 8:10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19. The employee reported that nothing else appeared to have been taken.

An alarm had been activated near a back door on the night of the incident, but when police arrived the store was locked and no one was found. The incident remains under investigation.

Wedding ring stolen

4 An 18-year-old woman reported that someone broke into her Woodcrest Villa apartment, on Wayne south of Joy, while she and her fiancé were gone between 10:30 a.m. and 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18.

The victim told police she had locked the door but that someone got inside, ransacked a bedroom and took a wedding ring worth \$500. She also said cash was missing from a dresser drawer.

Game system, games taken

5 A 27-year-old man reported that a PlayStation, games and money were

taken from his Hampton Court apartment, north of Ford between Wayne and Wildwood, shortly after he left around 8:30 p.m. Saturday to walk to a local business. The victim told police he was only gone for 10 minutes but that the door of his apartment had been kicked in.

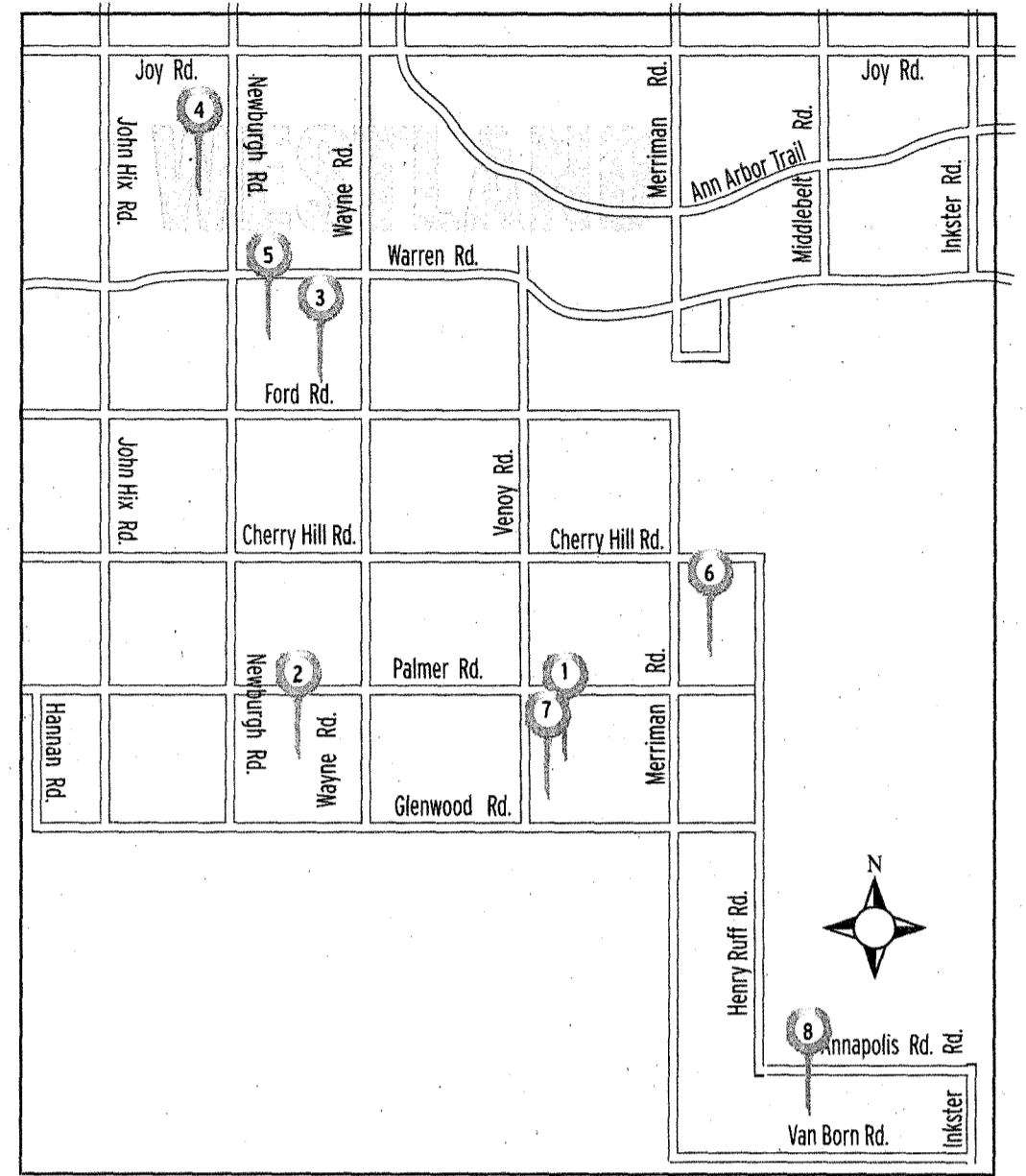
Gun found on sidewalk

6 An employee of Regal Market, on Merriman north of Palmer, contacted police to report that a customer found a gun, described as a 9mm Black Ruger, on a sidewalk near the location. The gun was inside a Meijer shopping bag. Police also found a loaded magazine next to the gun, but no rounds had been loaded into the chamber. Police confiscated the items during the incident that happened about 11:15 a.m. Feb. 13.

Computer, TV stolen

7 A 53-year-old man told police that his home on Mackinac Court, southeast of Palmer and Venoy, was broken into sometime between 3 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, and that a new television and computer were stolen.

The man told police the incident happened when he



had gone to the Westland Kmart store to look for partially smoked cigarettes from an outdoor ash tray. When he returned home, he said, the side door was open.

When asked why he would look for used cigarettes after having spent \$250 on a new television, the victim couldn't

answer, according to police.

Lock cut off storage unit

8 A 31-year-old man reported that some of his personal belongings had been stolen when a lock had been cut off a storage shed at Storage Pros, near the northeast corner of Van Born and Middlebelt,

sometime on Wednesday, Feb. 18. A maintenance man told police that it appeared there may have been damage to other locks, which had been replaced with cheaper padlocks, possibly in an attempt to conceal the crimes.

- By Darrell Clem

PUBLIC NOTICE
Oakland University Department of Music Hosts A PIANO LIQUIDATION
 This unique opportunity is your chance to purchase a quality piano for a fraction of the price you would normally pay!
 During the past academic year, the Department of Music has been using new pianos through an ongoing loan arrangement with the Yamaha Piano Company. The selection includes grand, player grand, vertical and digital pianos. This special event will also feature a limited number of new and used pianos from Kawai, Steinway, Baldwin, and more.
To Secure the Best Price & Selection A Preview Appointment Prior to Sunday is Recommended
by Calling 248-370-2917
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PUBLIC SALE HOURS: Sunday, March 1st from 11 am - 5 pm

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Westland-Garden City Strictly Business

BUSINESS MILESTONES

SPECIAL EVENTS

Look who's 10

Guardian Martial Arts & Fitness in Garden City recently reached a milestone - its 10th anniversary. That's how long the martial arts and fitness studio at 30942 Ford Road, has been offering American Kenpo, STOTT PILATES, Kickboxing and Tai Chi to the community. Owners Kelly and Shelby Perkins opened the studio in a 1,200-square-foot building in 1998 and moved one door east to its current location in 2002, giving them more room to offer additional classes. In 2007, it added Pole Dance Fitness classes to its curriculum and beginning March 7, GMA will add CCW classes. Coming up in late spring, Guardian will add, "Kids Get Growing." Also on tap are Humane Pressure Point Tactic classes. Guardian Martial Arts & Fitness also has a satellite school, located inside Cherry Hill United Methodist Church in Canton. For more information, call (734) 266-0565.

Copper Country treat

Mention pasties and you auto-

matically think of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. You can get one of those Copper Country favorites at Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe at 8036 N. Wayne Road, Westland. The pasties are made from an old family recipe that's been passed down for generations. They made with ground sirloin, potatoes, rutabaga, onions and carrots. They are old-fashioned and made fresh in the bakery by Baker Charlie. Stop by and try one. Also available are chicken pot pies and pizza rolls. Call (734) 261-3680 or (888) 715-4479 at least an hour before and Charlie will bake them for you. You can pick them up hot and ready for lunch or dinner.

It's Blizzard time

We're not talking about the weather, we're talking about the Dairy Queen Blizzard ice cream treat. If you've got a craving for one, you can satisfy it at the Dairy Queen of Garden City. Hey, it may be chilly, but you can get your Blizzard fix at the ice cream stand that's now open for the season. Hours currently are noon to 8:30 p.m. until

the weather warms up. Stop by and go green by ordering a Mint Oreo Blizzard, the flavor of the month for March, or have your favorite sundae or cone. You'll find the Dairy Queen of Michigan at 28825 Ford, east of Middlebelt. For more information, call (734) 427-7850.

For your princess

To celebrate the introduction of the new line of Disney youth bedroom furniture, Art Van Furniture is hosting a special Princess event at its Westland store at 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 28. Little girls will be treated like a princess for a morning - complete with gowns and tiaras! The morning will feature breakfast, story telling and party favors. Tickets are \$5. Seating is limited, so to reserve a spot call (888) 619-2199. The Westland store is on Wayne Road, north of Warren Road.

Breaking the Boundaries

Members from 16 Chambers of Commerce from the western suburbs, including Westland and Garden City, will have an After-Hours 5-7 p.m. Thursday, March 26, all under the roof of Burton Manor on Schoolcraft, west of Inkster, in Livonia, to "Break the Boundaries"

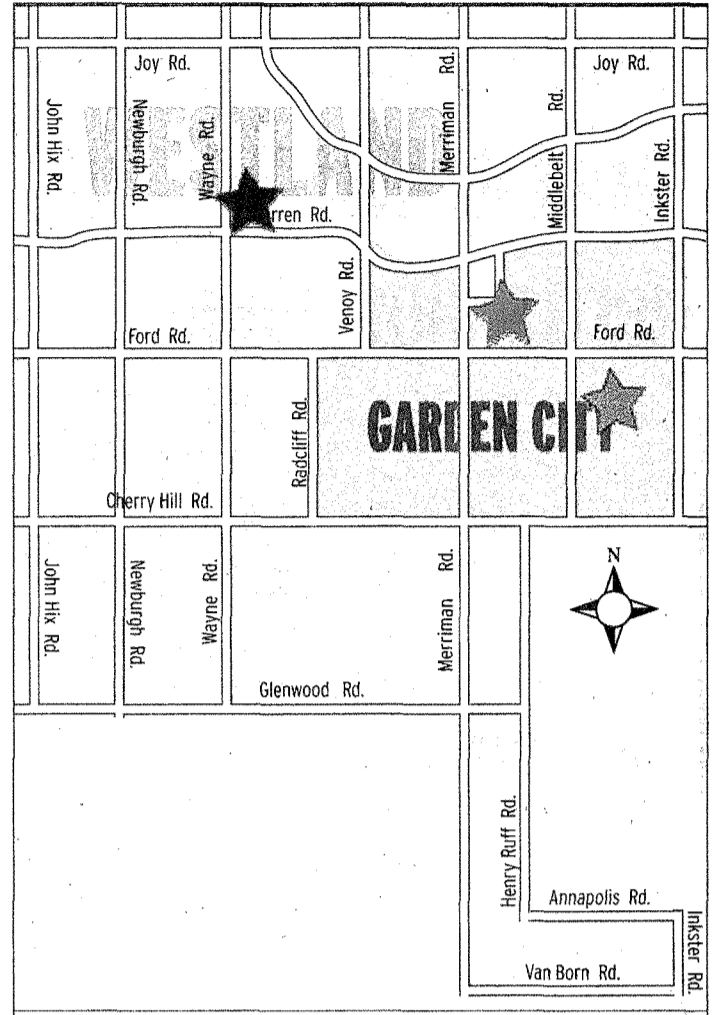
and do some serious networking. Cost is \$10 per person and \$25 for an expo table. Call the Westland Chamber at (734) 326-7222 or the Garden City Chamber at (734) 422-4448 for more information.

GET IN THE RACE

Slot Car Mania at 6527 N. Wayne Road at Hunter in Westland will run a "Run What You Brung" slot car drag race night Saturday, Feb. 28. Qualifying begins at 2 p.m., with races starting at the end of qualifying. For more information, call Slot Car Mania at (734) 469-7087.

SEND IT

Get in on the Strictly Business Page of the Westland and Garden City Observer by sending us your business news, promotions, events or milestones. It's simple. Just e-mail all of the details to Sue Mason, editor, at smason@hometownlife.com and she'll take care of the rest. Our new local business page runs each Thursday in your Westland and Garden City Observer. We welcome comments and suggestions, too. We look forward to hearing from you.



IT'S YOUR BUSINESS Q&A



Jocelyn and Jim Kollar of Alleycat Designs offer embroidery and Direct to Garment printing at their store on Wayne Road in Westland.

Alleycat puts its mark on clothing

Observer: Tell us about your business, including the types of service and/or products you feature.

We provide embroidery, screen printing, airbrushing, and Direct to Garment printing services, ranging from polo shirts for corporate and local businesses to T-shirts for clubs and organizations. We have a variety of wearables at our fingertips including jackets, hats, sweats, T-shirts, polos, uniforms, and more. We service a wide range of customers and a wide range of locations from a fire department in Connecticut to a Parks and Recreation department in West Palm, Florida. Our focus, however, is here locally and in the state of Michigan.

Observer: What makes your business unique?

What makes our business unique is probably our Direct to Garment printer. We invested in this machine for a particular reason. People would come to our store and have this elaborate design they wanted on shirts. When you do screen printing, the price of the item is basically driven by the number of colors in the design. The more colors, the higher the price. With the Direct to Garment printer we can take the design, no matter how many

ALLEYCAT DESIGNS INC.

Business Name: Alleycat Designs Inc.
Business Address: 6647 Wayne Road, Westland
Name and Title: Jim and Jocelyn Kollar, owners
Hometown: Westland for 15 years
Business opened when? March 2000
Number of employees: Including us, 3
Your business specialty: Embroidery, Direct to Garment printing
Hours: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Closed Saturday and Sunday
Business phone and Web: (734) 728-7867 and www.alleycatdesigns.com

colors, and print it directly to the shirt. No setups (unless art work is needed) no minimums, no transfers, no problems. Whether you need 1 or 100, we can do it. This print is nice because you can't feel the ink on the shirt and it washes well. So, if you have a custom design or just want you kids picture on a T-shirt we can do it.

Observer: How did you decide to open your first business?

In 1997, Jim worked in the automotive industry as a quality assurance manager. He injured his back and it was apparent he would not be able to return. At the same time, Jocelyn managed an airbrush store, Abba Airbrush, in Wonderland Mall. After a little more than a year on worker's compensation and not being able to find a job we met someone who set up a kiosk outside of the airbrush store who was selling embroidered goods. After talking with him several times, he helped us by steering us in the right direction to get started on our own. Jim started the business in the garage at our home. We wanted to be home for our kids as they were young at the time. After six years and the kids getting older and with no room left in the garage, we moved to the store front where we at today.

How did you decide to locate in the Westland community?

We wanted to stay in Westland, close to home. We weren't really sure it would happen. Didn't know if we could financially, but we met the nicest guy that worked for the management company of our current location and they really helped us out a lot. They made it very easy.

Do you have a funny tidbit or story to share with our readers about your experience so far as a small business?

We really don't have any funny tidbits or stories about being business owners. It's hard work, fun at times. We meet different people. We made some jackets for some Red Wing Alumni once and had to make two for Gordie Howe. That was fun.

BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS

New physicians on staff

Garden City Hospital has added three physicians to its medical staff: Dr. Michael J. Kennedy, who specializes in infectious diseases and has an office at 24350 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 111, Farmington Hills; Dr. Eugene W. Lin, who specializes in physical medicine/rehab and has an office at 1819 E. Big Beaver, Suite 210, Troy, and Dr. Nilesh M. Patel, who specializes in orthopedic surgery and has an office at 21031 Michigan Ave., Dearborn.

The hospital now has 365 physicians in 47 specialties to serve the community. For more information or to make an appointment with one of the hospital's new or existing physicians, call the Physician Referral service at (877) 717-WELL.

Located in Garden City, Michigan, Garden City Hospital provides comprehensive health care services, osteopathic medical education, and health care related programs to the community at large. More information is available online at www.gchosp.org.

Program gets funding

Starfish Family Services, a nonprofit agency serving children and families in southeastern Michigan, has received a \$1 million grant from the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation and a \$200,000 grant from the McGregor Fund to support its Family Success Program.

The Family Success Program is designed to help families with young children transition from the daily struggles of poverty to independence and sustainable family success through activities related to community

engagement around challenges of poverty through training, mentoring, conferences, and poverty simulations.

The Family Success Model was developed in 2005 and piloted successfully by Starfish founder the late Ouida Cash. The current program will serve more than 60 families in Inkster and surrounding communities over the next three years. Each family assesses its current resources and strengths, sets long-term goals, and works towards those goals with support from Starfish and the community. Graduates of the program are engaged with Starfish staff as co-facilitators and mentors to families new in the program.

"We are humbled and grateful for the generosity of both the Fisher Foundation and the McGregor Fund to help families and children in our community realize their full potential by empowering them with skills, resources, and confidence to move from poverty to sustainable success," said Ann Kalass, CEO of Starfish Family Services. "Through our funding partnerships, we continue on our path to develop a highly effective and replicable poverty program based on a family-centered and respectful approach."

Starfish Family Services offers programs to help educate and empower vulnerable families and children in western Wayne County. They include free early childhood programs, a crisis shelter for teens, after-school and summer programming, an organic children's garden and a comprehensive array of behavioral health services. More information can be found online at www.starfish-online.org.

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OUR VIEWS

Court deficit merits close look

Westland's 18th District Court is facing a deficit, and in some ways, it's a sign of the times. When things get bad economically, crime increases. You need only look at back issues of your Observer to note the increase in break-ins, assaults and robberies around the city.

According to Police Chief James Ridener, calls for help rose from 43,000 two years ago to 55,000 in 2008.

That kind of an increase pulls police officers off more routine matters like dealing with speeders, drunken drivers, the kinds of offenses that can generate money for 18th District Court through fines.

Last week, Chief Judge Sandra Cicirelli and Ridener met with the City Council to discuss that revenue shortfall, which if not reversed, could eat away at the city's budget surplus. Cicirelli told the council that the economy and a 2,000 drop in traffic tickets last year is part of the \$659,000 revenue drop. Local officials attributed the latter to police officers who wrote less tickets in response to a labor dispute that's since been resolved.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the police department and the court. The former does its job and creates work for the latter. The more work there is, the more opportunity to collect fines. But in these difficult times, major crime takes precedence over minor infractions.

Yes, it is important to get the drunks off the road, slow down the speeders and get the guy who doesn't know how to use a turn signal, but residents want to feel safe in their homes and their businesses. People may remark about where a police officer is when they see a driver blow through a stop sign, but when it comes to crime, they want to know the police will come in a timely fashion. And there is no doubt that Westland police officers will be there.

Residents also have expectations of their court and judges. They want to be heard and expect to be treated fairly and that's just what happens in district court day in and day out. The court and its employees do their job and as a result, have made money for the city in the past years. But these are very lean times.

Pointing fingers will not erase the court's red ink. It has to look at how it does business and find ways to trim expenses and increase revenues. The only question is can it be done with only four months left in this budget year.

ONLINE VOICES & VIEWS

Don't blame the police

"Chief Judge Sandra Ference Cicirelli attributed the revenue shortfall largely to a collective decision by Westland police to curb their ticket-writing efforts last summer. Officials said the slowdown was in response to a now-resolved labor dispute with the city administration."

Don't forget the collective decision by the City and City Officials to make sure that police overtime details, such as Drunk Driving and Selective Enforcement (Ticket Writing) were cut in half. No longer is there two officers working such details to help the court generate money. How quick everyone is to judge the police officers when they have no clue the amount of work each officer does with no resources. For a city this size, there should be at least 10 more officers. We all suffer, but let's blame the cops who are out there putting their lives on the line to keep the city safe.

ServingCitizens

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- No
- Unsure

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WESTLAND OBSERVER

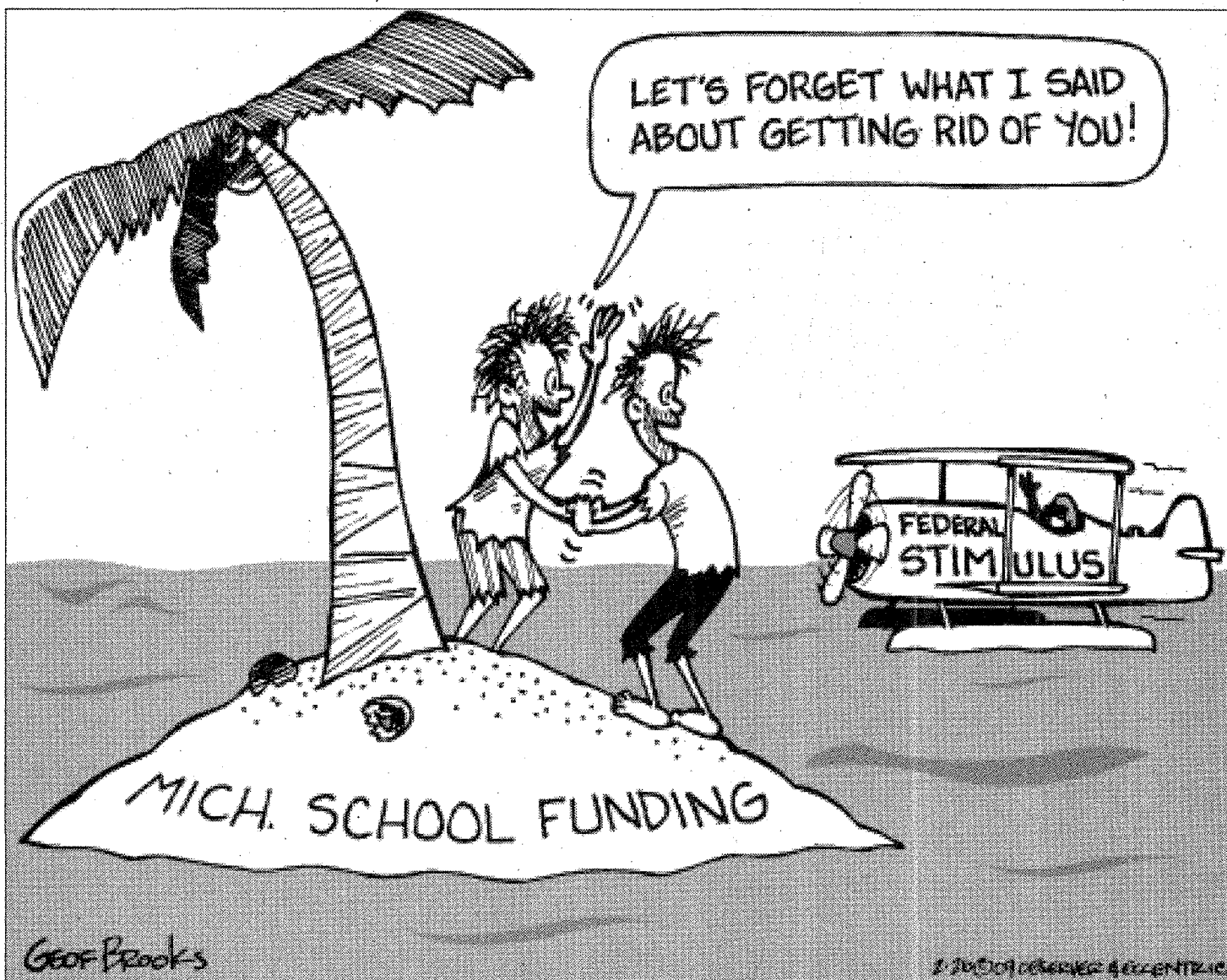


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LETTERS

Time for a change

Congress was out of control with all the spending they did over the last eight years. The Republicans were much to blame for the first six of those years, but the Democrats had control over the spending the last two years.

Spending helped put us in this situation, so why does Congress think that more spending can get us out? This stimulus bill is filled with outrageous spending, most of which has nothing to do with stimulating the economy. The bill will create 600,000 new jobs, but they are all government jobs, which will require ongoing taxpayer money to fund them.

Also included in this spending package is: \$30 million for the harvest mouse, \$8 billion for a rail train, \$5.5 billion for "green" federal buildings, \$300 million for "green" cars for federal employees. Congress needs to stop spending money that does not belong to them and get off the public free ride. They should be on the same plans we are expected to live with, such as, Medicare and Social Security.

And who decided that Congress should vote on whether or not congressmen get a raise? They should have NO say in whether they get a raise or not. My boss does not give me that option, why should they? Raises should be approved by a public vote.

For that matter, all spending should be approved by public vote. Online voting is a viable option. The Department of Defense has hundreds of programmers and analysts on the payroll doing security scans and checks constantly to make sure no one infiltrates the system.

Congress will tell us that there's "just

What do you think?

Mail comments to the Westland Observer, 615 W. Lafayette, Second Level, Detroit, MI 48226 or e-mail to smason@hometownlife.com.

too much for us to vote on," well, in therein lies the problem. We don't need a new law every day to take away more of our money and more of our freedoms. We need less government and more prosperity.

Why pay a congressman \$180,000 a year in salary alone to do what can be done online in a matter of minutes. This would save taxpayers about \$110,000,000 in salaries alone, not to mention, the money spent on offices, staff, health care, travel, etc.

It's time for a change WE can believe in, not the rhetoric of the same old "tax and spend" that Washington has been feeding us forever and a day.

Phil Solarz
Westland

GOP is bankrupt of ideas

It appears that the Republican Party, including all seven of Michigan's GOP members of Congress, has settled on a consistent strategy for obstructing President Obama's efforts to restore an American economy already ruined by Republican stupidity. Utterly bankrupt of ideas and still parroting their same tired and failed conservative economic nonsense, the GOP has also resurrected a long-discredited bogeyman in

the form of phony claims about alleged "socialism." In the Republican mindset, economic and tax policies that put more money into the pockets of working-class Americans are the quintessence of evil, a devious Marxist plot to redistribute income from the persecuted elites downward to the unwashed masses, meaning American working families.

Meanwhile, in a sick and pathetic affront to patriotism, Republicans and their anointed leader Rush Limbaugh are also openly hoping and even cheering for the American economy to further fail, hoping this ultimately helps them politically no matter what the consequences are for American families. This treasonous conduct exposes the GOP once and for all as devoid of integrity and a political party whose appeal is primarily to ignorance, bigotry and hatemongering. How ironic it is that these are the same Republicans that previously questioned the patriotism of those who had correctly challenged the Bush's administration's lies that led to the invasion of Iraq.

The hypocrisy of the current Republican whining about alleged socialism is all the more absurd following more than 30 years of fraudulent conservative economic policies in America. These policies resulted in a massive upward redistribution of income from the poor and middle classes and into the pockets to those already possessing great wealth. As the inevitable failure of an unregulated market economy now unfolds with catastrophic results, President Barack Obama's responses are a long overdue return to intelligence and common sense.

Joe Golonka
Westland

COMMUNITY VOICE

With gas prices low, have you changed your driving habits?
We asked this question at the William P. Faust Public Library in Westland and the Garden City post office.



"No, I've been retired for about a year and a half and I pretty much do what I want to do."

Skip Sikora
Westland



"Yes, I'm driving more. I went hunting a lot more this year. I think we're all worrying about it going up again."

Jon Ferrell
Westland



"No, I combine trips and I'm not going to my daughter's as much. When you're on a limited income, it's hard."

Anne Wallen
Canton



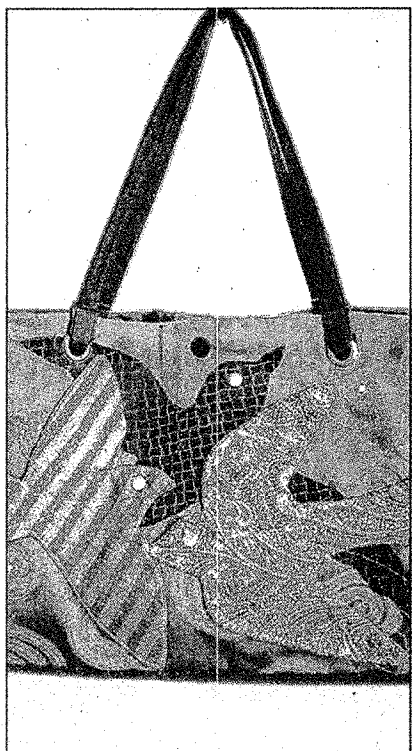
"No, because I'm as frugal as I was before. I try to get two-three errands done in one shot."

John Davidson
Westland

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Magic Bag purse show

Canton handbag designer Michele Kramp will preview her Spring 2009 Magic Bag Lady line, made from recycled fabrics and findings, during a trunk show at Heavenly Metal in Ann Arbor 6-9 p.m. Friday, March 6. Shop for handbags and browse the store's clothing, jewelry and artwork while enjoying wine and hors d'oeuvres at the shop, located at 207 E. Ann St. Call (734) 663-4247, visit www.heavenlymetal.com, or RSVP at themagicbaglady@yahoo.com.



E-mail items for consideration in Malls & Main Streets at least two weeks in advance to Wendy Von Buskirk at wvomb@hometownlife.com.

NEIMAN MARCUS BEAUTY EVENT

TROY — Purchase \$100 or more in cosmetics or fragrance and receive an NM Exclusive tote in pink, turquoise or orange filled with nine colorful treats during The Beauty Event, through March 8. Spend \$1,000 in cosmetics or fragrance and get \$100 off your total purchase on the spot. Visit Neiman Marcus at the Somerset Collection in Troy or online at www.neimanmarcus.com.

ADELE WECHSLER APPEARANCE

TROY — The Bridal Salon at Macy's Somerset will host couture wedding gown designer Adele Wechsler as she takes appointments during her trunk show, Feb. 27-March 1. Wechsler is known for timeless gowns, emphasized by sheer overlays which flirt with light and movement. Call (248) 816-4270 or visit the store, 2752 West Big Beaver Road, Troy.

PAMPER THE BRIDE AND BEYOND

SOUTHFIELD — Silver Garden of Southfield will host the third annual "Pamper the Bride & Beyond" Bridal Expo 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28 at Silver Garden in Southfield. This event will feature interactive workshops, live music, exclusive exhibitors, giveaways, pamper services, a Spotlight Fashion Showcase and a "Grooms Lounge." Call (248) 809-2117 or visit www.pamperthebrideexpo.com.

PARISIAN HOSTS COMMUNITY DAY

LIVONIA — Shop for a cause as Parisian hosts Community Day Feb. 28. Purchase a \$5 booklet stocked full of discounts good for that day only, and proceeds from the sale of the coupon books will benefit various local charities. The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc. recently announced over \$10 million was raised for local non-profit organizations and agencies through its 2008 semi-annual Community Day events. Parisian is located at Laurel Park Place in Livonia and The Village of Rochester Hills.

BEAUTY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

ROYAL OAK — The Relationship Institute will stage "Beauty From the Inside Out," a women's workshop on using food, meditation and mind/body integration to enhance natural beauty, 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 28. It's three hours with three dynamic women — Kelly Hale, founder/director of Inspired Wellness in Birmingham and Brain Gym instructor; Andrea McNinch, culinary arts educator specializing in raw/vegan foods and founder of Regeneration Raw; and Shirley Bavonese, social worker and founder of the Relationship Institute. Cost is \$45 per person or \$75 for two people attending together. The Relationship Institute is located at 27172 Woodward Ave., Royal Oak. Call (248) 546-0407 or visit www.relationship-institute.com.

PENDLETON TRUNK SHOW

NORTHVILLE — Pendleton in downtown Northville will hold

its Fall 2009 Trunk Show March 4-7. The Pendleton passion for intense color, exceptional fabrics and wearable on-trend style captures the heart of the Fall season. Customers attending the show may view samples and place orders with no obligation — a great opportunity for petite, plus and tall customers. Pendleton is located at 117 N Center St. Call (248) 596-9820 or visit Pendleton Woolen Mills at www.pendleton-usa.com.

WOMEN'S WARE/WOMEN'S WEAR

YPSILANTI — Fashionistas and artists might want to schedule a road trip to see Women's Ware/Women's Wear at the Eastern Michigan University's Ford Gallery through March 25. The exhibit explores women's art in various media including textiles and jewelry. Works by 15 artists use clothing, accessories, broaches, embroidered pillows and button sculptures to reflect feminist themes. An installation explores shopping and its meaning. For more information call (734) 487-1268 or visit <http://www.emich.edu/fordgallery/>

HERSH'S HOSTS ZELDA TRUNK

WEST BLOOMFIELD — Hersh's will hold its annual ZELDA trunk show with beautifully designed separates for Spring March 12-14. Hersh's is located on The Boardwalk at 6901 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield. Call (248) 626-7776.

WHIMSICAL WEDDING EXPO

ROYAL OAK — Brides-to-be can find a variety of Whimsical Occasions Wedding Expo 1 p.m. Sunday, March 15, at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. For tickets, \$8 advance, \$10 day of show, Call (248) 399-2980 or visit www.whimsicaloccasions.com.

pink

Wendy Von Buskirk, Editor, (313) 222-8883, wvomb@hometownlife.com

Spring fashion is unleashed at benefit for BBYO

BY WENDY VON BUSKIRK
O & E STAFF WRITER

Times may be tough, but it's still easy to be fashionable.

Just take some cues from Fashion Unleashed, 8:30-10:30 p.m. March 7 at Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield. The annual runway event benefits Michigan Region B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, and BBYO teens model the clothes each year.

This year, they'll be wearing the latest looks from The Shirt Box, Guys 'N Gals and Moosejaw.

Lois Levenson, owner of Guys 'N Gals at the Orchard Mall, will act as emcee.

Levenson has been in business for 33 years, and has lent clothing from her trendy shop to Fashion Unleashed since it began.

Her daughter, Julie Feldman, served as president and treasurer for BBYO as a teen. Now, as co-owner of Guys 'N Gals, she helps to organize the fashion show.

"It's a great organization," said Feldman, who graduated from West Bloomfield High School. "It keeps kids busy and involved in their community, it promotes community service and lets them meet different kids from all over." Feldman said the outfits she's sending down the catwalk will reflect the bright colors, ruffles and dresses that are in vogue.

"It's all spring and light and fun and airy," she said. "Dresses are huge, so I'll definitely be doing a segment with dresses."

The bohemian look is also hot, Feldman said, and there are many ways to wear it.

"It's 'hippie chic,'" she said. "Maxi dresses, loose fitting tops, maybe with embroidery, little hippie headbands with feathers at the end, long beaded earrings. How cute will all that look on the runway?"

But if a gal can only buy one

FASHION UNLEASHED

What: Runway show featuring clothes from The Shirt Box, Guys 'N Gals and Moosejaw

When: 8:30-10:30 p.m. Saturday, March 7

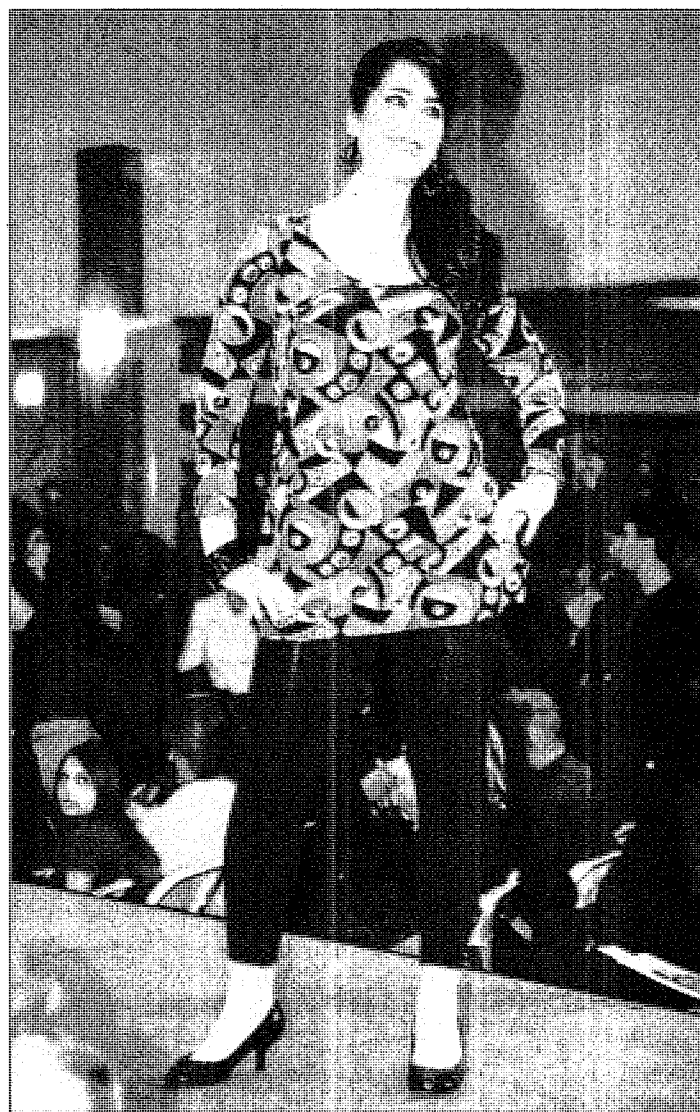
Where: Orchard Mall, Orchard Lake Road north of Maple, West Bloomfield

Tickets: \$15; \$10 students; \$250 pre-glow; proceeds benefit Michigan Region B'nai B'rith Youth Organization

item for spring it should be a scarf, Feldman said. Look for lightweight, colorful scarves, with or without fringe. "That's a great way to update your wardrobe. Throw it on with a dress, or with tank tops and jean shorts or jeans," Feldman said.

Tickets to Fashion Unleashed are \$10 for students; \$15 for general admission; and \$250 for a pre-glow at Tapper's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry with wine and hors d'oeuvres, along with prime seats at the show.

All proceeds benefit Michigan Region BBYO, a non-profit organization that provides leadership training, educational, social, athletic and community service programs for Jewish teenagers from all backgrounds.



Stephanie Horwitz of West Bloomfield, regional president for B'nai B'rith Girls, models clothing from Guys 'N Gals at last year's Fashion Unleashed.

WATCHMEN Exclusive Poster

A sneak peek at the comic turned movie. Plus, an exclusive poster by Watchmen illustrator Dave Gibbons.



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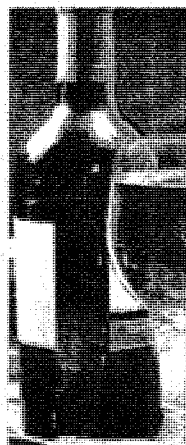
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Church services a time to paws for reflection

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
O&E STAFF WRITER

Beginning Sunday, March 1, customers coming into Dunk N Dogs Spa in Livonia can not only wash their dog but pray. The Rev. Claudia Barber says as long as pets are under control and not trying to eat their neighbors, they're welcome to attend All Creatures Universal Life Church. The service allows humans to worship with their pets.

"I think it's a really good idea," said Sharon Robinet, spa owner. "People like me who are single and have a lot of animals do almost everything with their animals. They go almost everywhere with me. Now I can incorporate them into my spiritual life."

Robinet likes the idea so much she's renting space to Barber at a reduced rate. As a business owner, the Redford woman spends long hours away from home so it was only natural that when Barber approached her with the idea of holding services at the shop, she was all ears.

For many church-goers, Sundays usually mean leaving their pets behind to attend to spiritual needs. Not anymore. Beginning March 1 and every Sunday thereafter, Barber will be holding regular services for pets of all kinds and their owners in the 1,000-square-foot indoor

ALL CREATURES WORSHIP

What: Church services for pets of all kinds and their owners

When: Begins 1 p.m. Sunday, March 1, and continues every Sunday

Where: Dunk N Dogs Spa, 27911 Five Mile, between Middlebelt and Inkster Roads, Livonia. For information, call the spa at (734) 422-WASH or Rev. Claudia Barber at (313) 563-0162

dog park at the spa which usually functions as a self serve pet wash and doggie day-care, grooming and obedience training facility as well as a cat rescue.

"What's nice is we're all animal people. We've all been to church where you line up in the parking lot for a blessing but it's only once a year and never inside. Why not have a weekly service where people can come with their animals?" said Robinet. "We have no idea how many people will be there or what kind of animals they're bringing so we decided everybody has to be on a leash or in a crate or carrier. We don't want birds or cats to set off the dogs."

Barber says pets must be up-to-date on vaccinations and friendly to people and other pets. She plans to bring her four dogs and six birds to

the hour-long services which will be very informal and centered around pets.

"My pets have done so much to help me spiritually as well as emotionally to connect more to God that it's a shame I have to leave them home. I want them to share this part of my life with me. We say our prayers in the mornings and they're always peaceful during that time," said Barber, who was ordained in the nondenominational church based in Modesto, Calif. in 2003. In addition to leading the services she provides Christian counseling for owners whose pets are ill or have died.

"It's not a fancy church atmosphere. I didn't approach any churches but wanted to have a place where there wouldn't be a problem if a dog has an accident," said Barber, of Dearborn Heights. "I've already had several people respond to the flyers I've been putting out. I've sent e-mails to all the rescues trying to get the word out and put ads on Craig's List."

"I believe what the bible says that God created all the creatures, human and otherwise. Jesus said when the smallest sparrow falls God knows. I believe they will be in heaven, that all creatures go back to God."



The Rev. Claudia Barber leads worship services for all creatures at Dunk N Dog Spa in Livonia every Sunday beginning March 1. Here she's pictured with Muffin, one of her four dogs.

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<p>St. Maurice Roman Catholic Church 32765 Lyndon • Livonia • 734-522-1616 (between Merriman & Farmington Roads) MASS: Mon. 8:30 a, Fri. 8:30 a, Sat. 6 p, Sun 9a</p>	<p>Cherry Hill Seventh-Day Adventist Church 33144 Cherry Hill, Garden City, MI 48135 (1 block west of Varsity) Phone: 734-524-0880 Pastor: Eddie Petreaca Meetings on Saturdays for: Early Morning Bible & Health Class - 8am Worship Service-English-9:30 am Bible Studies English & Spanish (All ages) 11:00 am Wednesdays Prayer Meeting: 7 pm</p>	<p>NEWBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH "Open Hearts, Minds & Doors" 36500 Ann Arbor Trail between Wayne & Newburgh Rds. 734-422-0149 Worship Service and Sunday School 9:15 am & 11:00 am Rev. Marsha M. Woolley Visit our website: www.newburgumc.org</p>	<p>HOSANNA-TABOR LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL 9600 Levene • So. Redford • 313-937-2424 Pastor - Reverend Paul Urdlin Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. Education Hour 10:45 a.m. Christian School Pre-Kindergarten-8th Grade For more information call 313-937-2233</p>
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<p>PRESBYTERIAN</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN SCIENCE</p>	<p>St. James Presbyterian Church, USA 25350 West Six Mile Rd. Redford (313) 534-7730 Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 A.M., Sunday School - 10:15 A.M., Thursday Dinners - 6:00 P.M., Thrift Store every Sat. 10am-2pm Nursery Care Provided • Handicapped Accessible Rev. Paul S. Bousquette</p>	<p>LUTHERAN CHURCH WISCONSIN SYNOD</p>
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For information regarding this Directory, please call Donna Hart at 734-582-8342 or e-mail: dhart@dmps.com

FILTER

Local 'Foes' join 199 other bands at Blowout



CelloBella! is Mike Wilhelm, of Dearborn Heights, on guitar and vocals, and Alison Donahue of Royal Oak on cello and vocals.

Blowout Family Hootenanny set

This year, Metro Times Blowout will include an afternoon of shows for parents and children. The Blowout Family Hootenanny, featuring the Mydols, CelloBella! and Danny Kroha, will take place 1-4 p.m. Saturday, March 7 at Cafe 1923, 2287 Holbrook, Hamtramck. Parents who buy \$20 wristbands for the Blowout can bring their children to the Hootenanny for free.

"I think this is the first time we've had a family-friendly show at the Blowout," said Maria Stella, promotions manager for Metro Times. "We really wanted to open up the event more and draw some people to Hamtramck during the day to benefit the businesses."

Call Cafe 1923 at (313) 319-8766 or visit www.metrotimes.com/blowout.



The Friendly Foes will take the stage at 1 a.m. Saturday, March 7, at The Belmont during Metro Times Blowout 12. They are (from left) Liz Wittman (bass and vocals), Ryan Allen (guitar, lead vocals), and Brad Elliott (drums).

Visit us online at hometownlife.com

BY WENDSY VON BUSKIRK
STAFF WRITER

The Friendly Foes, fronted by Livonia native Ryan Allen, will be among 200 bands playing at this year's Metro Times Blowout 12.

Set for March 5-7, the annual music festival is designed to celebrate homegrown bands and spans 15 venues throughout Hamtramck. It also includes a pre-party at the Majestic Theater Complex in Detroit on Wednesday, March 4.

Friendly Foes will headline Saturday night at The Belmont, 10215 Jos Campau. The music starts at 10 p.m. with Leaf Erikson followed by Lightning Love and Midnight Smoke.

Friendly Foes are expected to go on at 1 a.m.

The band consists of Allen on guitar and vocals; Liz Wittman, of Oak Park, on bass and vocals; and Brad Elliott, formerly of Plymouth, on drums. Both Allen and Elliott currently live in Ferndale.

It's the second Blowout for the Friendly Foes, who have been together a little more than a year, but Allen has played many more with other lineups.

"I think this will be my sixth or seventh Blowout total, and I've played it with many other bands that I've been in in the past, including Red Shirt Brigade, Tiny Steps, Scott Allen & the Breakdance, and the Sharp Hearts, none of which exist anymore," Allen said.

Concurrently, Allen played Blowouts with Thunderbirds are Now!, a successful post-

Please see **BLOWOUT, B7**

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What: 200 bands
Where: 15 venues throughout Hamtramck
When: March 5-7
Tickets: \$20 for Metro Times Blowout 12 and Pre-Party

PRE-PARTY

When: 9 p.m. March 4
Where: Majestic Theatre Complex, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit
Entertainment: Mustache in Your Face at the Garden Bowl; Silverghost, The Octopus, Child Bite, and Electric Fire Babies at the Magic Stick; The Meatmen, Outrageous Cherry, The Wrong Numbers, Punk Fitness Interlude, Gepetto Files and Fluent at the Majestic Theatre
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FOOD & WINE

More than Chardonnay

In an August 2008 Focus on Wine Column, we spotlighted chardonnays from California's Monterey wine region. Readers inquired, "what else should we discover from Monterey?"



Focus on Wine

Ray & Eleanor Heald

We did another tasting of wines from the Chalone American Viticultural Area (AVA) and Carmel Valley AVA, two of the nine AVAs in the Monterey region, which grow grape varieties from albarino to zinfandel.

CHALONE AVA

Although Monterey County may be the most diverse of all California growing regions, when it comes to temperature, the Chalone AVA has the most variability due to its lack of coastal influence.

During July and August, temperatures hit 90 degrees, but overall from April through October the range is 55 to 72 degrees. Due to elevations exceeding 2,300 feet, Chalone AVA has relatively warm nighttime temperatures.

Add this to a general aspect of Monterey County, that grapevines tend to produce buds about two weeks earlier than other regions and harvest, typically begins two weeks later than other regions. This means that grapes remain on the vine approximately a month longer, producing smaller berries with concentrated flavors.

WINE PICKS FROM THE CHALONE AVA

■ 2004 Michaud Vineyard Pinot Noir, \$38, has begun to show its fine oak influence and generous spiciness that makes it versatile with many foods from grilled salmon to roast chicken.

■ 2006 Graff Family Vineyards Viognier, \$20, is uber fruity with tangerine and white peach aromas and flavors.

■ 2006 Graff Family Vineyards Consensus, \$25, at 94 percent syrah, showcases a gener-

WINE PICKS

PINOT NOIR is the most versatile red wine. It pairs as well with salmon as it does grilled meats.

Best bets under \$20:

2007 Hayman & Hill Santa Lucia Highlands, \$15; and 2007 Mandolin Monterey, \$12.

Mid-priced: 2006 Clos du Bois Sonoma Coast Reserve, \$25.

Spurge: 2006 Lynmar Quail Hill, \$60.

ous black fruit core with a rich backbone. Very northern Rhonish in style at a very good price.

CARMEL VALLEY AVA

Hillside vineyard locations in the Carmel Valley Ridges make this region special. Hillside vineyard locations and those at higher elevations generally have warmer nighttime temperatures also.

Carmel Valley experiences more hours of afternoon fog-like conditions than any other AVA in Monterey County. Grapes remain cool and retain acid that makes them ideal food companions.

The seaside town of Carmel and the Carmel Valley AVA should not be confused. The AVA is rugged back country with high elevations above 1,000 feet and steep slopes with granite terraces.

WINE PICKS FROM CARMEL VALLEY AVA

■ 2007 Galante Vineyards Sauvignon, \$25, may seem a strange "pick" given what we've just written about red wines, but if you like sauvignons with lots of grapefruit and lime aromas with spice and vanilla notes and a long, satisfying finish, seek out this wine.

■ 2006 Galante "Blackjack Pasture" Cabernet Sauvignon, \$50, holds a "winning hand" in a lush, dark cherry, well-balanced expression with exceptional character and overall richness.

Eleanor & Ray Heald write about wine for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Contact them by e-mail at focusonwine@aol.com.



Girl Scout Sugar Free Chocolate Chip cookies form the crust of this cookie pizza concocted at last year's gala.

PHOTOS BY SANTA FABIO

Chefs cook up Girl Scout Cookie Gala challenge

It's difficult to improve on deliciously iconic Girl Scout Cookies ... but some of Michigan's most creative chefs are preparing to do just that.

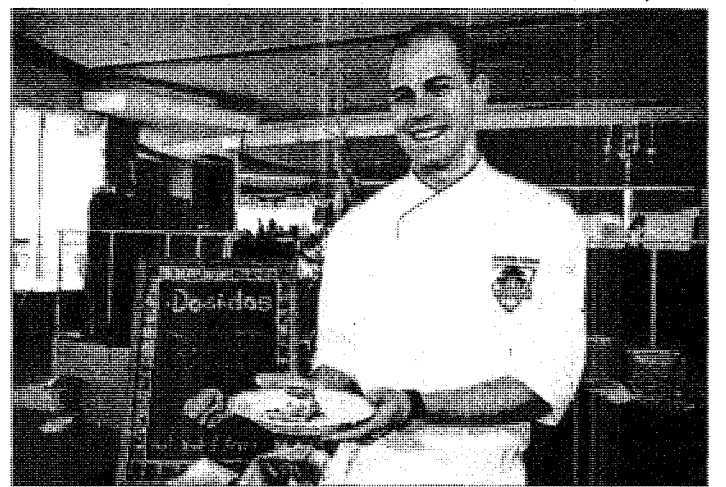
The Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Cookie Gala is set for Wednesday, March 11 at the Roostertail in Detroit. Eight talented chefs (one for each Girl Scout Cookie variety) will be serving up culinary creations using the cookies as key ingredients. The gala also includes hors d'oeuvres, an auction, and WXYZ TV's Glenda Lewis as mistress of ceremonies. Maggie Allesee and Yvette Bing are event co-chairs.

Each year for the past six years, area chefs have accepted the challenge to create a gourmet dessert using a randomly selected Girl Scout Cookie

variety. A panel of judges representing local media selects the Blue Ribbon Award recipient. Gala attendees vote for the People's Choice Award, and the organization's top officer chooses the CEO Favorite.

Participating in the 2009 Gala are Beverly Hills Grill (Beverly Hills), Fifty-One O One (Dearborn, 2008 Blue Ribbon recipient), Giulio & Sons — Hyatt Regency Dearborn (2008 CEO Favorite recipient), J. Baldwin's (Clinton Township), Historic White Horse Inn (Metamora), Mosaic (Detroit), the Roostertail (Detroit, 2008 Presenting Sponsor's Choice recipient), and the Traffic Jam & Snug (Detroit, 2008 People's Choice recipient).

The event raises funds to help bring the Girl Scout lead-



Chef Chris Johnson from Beverly Hills Grill, returning this year, made Peanut Butter Blondies from Girl Scout Do-Si-Dos at last year's Cookie Gala.

ership development program to nearly 50,000 girls in southeastern Michigan ages 5-17. To purchase tickets, \$70 per

person or \$120 per pair before Feb. 25, call 800-326-0309 or visit www.gsosfmd.org/cookie-gala.

CITY BITES

TRIBUTE RESTAURANT BEGINS ENTERTAINMENT

FARMINGTON HILLS — Nationally-known Sinatra stylist Mark Randisi recently launched live entertainment at Tribute. The upscale restaurant will now host live vocalists with piano accompaniment 7:30-10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights. Live piano music will also be played in the dining room on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Tribute is located at 31425 12 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. Reservations are recommended. Call (248) 848-9393 or visit www.tributerestaurant.com.

BREAK BREAD FOR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS

DETROIT — Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan is hosting metropolitan Detroit's top corporate, non-profit and civic minded women at the 16th

Annual Women's Power Breakfast Wednesday, March 11. The event will begin at 7:30 a.m. with coffee and networking, and the breakfast and program will follow from 8-9:15 a.m. at the Westin Book Cadillac in Detroit.

In 2008, Gleaners distributed 8.4 million pounds of food from

October through December, up 17 percent from the year before.

Sherry Margolis will emcee the morning's program, joined by Keynote Speaker Susan Ager, former Detroit Free Press columnist. For tickets, \$100-\$1,000, call (313) 923-3535 ext. 260 or visit www.gcfb.org.

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