



A sign at the gas station lets customers know when the fueling assistance is available.



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The distinctive logo for handicapped accessible lets disabled drivers know the fuel call button is for them.

FUEL CALL

FROM PAGE A1

Harris relates the fuel call button to the full service gas stations once provided. Fueling assistance is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, but the problem the disabled face is how to notify the attendants. Many of the gas station's listed on The MPVA's Pump Guide Web site ask people to call ahead or pull in and honk their horns.

"This is a nice service to have," said Harris. "It's the first in the metro area. I believe there's some in Grand Rapids

and Mt. Pleasant."

The MPVA developed The Pump Guide seven years ago and now lists between 900-1,000 gas stations that provide assistance for the disabled. Another MPVA Web site, www.disabilitygas.com, also promotes use of the fuel call and includes a video showing how it is used.

The MPVA also is pushing for federal legislation to require the installation of accessible communications devices at all gas stations. In a letter to Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin, Harris said federal legislation "would bring a uniform standard to the gasoline industry and allow drivers with

disabilities a process that makes refueling simple and dignified."

Harris hopes what Hadi has done at the Westland gas station will have a domino effect, that once it's proven to be a good investment on his part, other stations will follow suit.

"I hope people see this as a win-win situation," said Harris. "It provides a service for people with disabilities and in return, the owner will see an increase in customers. I hope others take

Sam's lead and purchase these buttons."

Harris added that there are tax incentives available under ADA to pay for half the cost of the fuel call buttons.

Harris also said he plans to change his driving habits. Hadi's station is no longer out of his way.

"I'll come here from now on," he said.

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HOLMAN

FROM PAGE A1

remain a fixture on Ford Road east of Wayne, even as GM shrinks amid fears the auto giant, like Chrysler LLC, could end up in Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

City officials say Red Holman has been a good neighbor. Moreover, the company has a substantial impact on the local tax base.

Westland Finance Director Steve Smith said that in 2008, Red Holman tax revenues amounted to \$183,400 for its real property — meaning its buildings.

According to a formula, \$41,000 of that amount would be for city coffers, \$77,000 for schools and the rest for the county, Smith said.

Red Holman paid another \$12,000 in taxes on personal

property for items such as shop equipment, Smith said.

Just as important as the tax revenues, city officials certainly want to avoid what would be a major vacancy along the Ford Road commercial corridor — a key area that local leaders are striving to protect amid the economic downturn.

Red Holman is located in the city's Downtown Development Authority district, an area that city leaders hope not only to protect, but help prosper in coming years. As such, some taxes are captured for the DDA district.

"Obviously we're hopeful that they're going to stay open," Westland Economic Development Director Lori Fodale said. "They're an integral part of the Ford Road corridor and the DDA district."

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PICKERING

FROM PAGE A1

only candidate I am supporting for election to the city council," he said.

Pickering ran for the mayoral post two years ago but was defeated by Mayor William Wild, who, barring a write-in campaign, is unopposed in his November election bid.

Pickering said he will continue working hard for the city through the end of the year, when his current four-year term will expire. Even after that, he said he plans to remain active in a city he has served in numerous capacities for decades.

"I won't disappear," he said.

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return bid for city office in the future. But he described himself as satisfied that voters have a qualified field of candidates, without him, for this year's election.

He said he will actively campaign for Bryant.

Pickering said he didn't decide against a re-election bid in hopes of boosting Bryant's candidacy. He said he believes he could have helped her even if he had remained in the running.

"As of right now, she is the

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EDUCATION

ACHIEVERS

Second-year Westland John Glenn wrestling captain **Zaid Ammari** has been awarded a Farmers Student Athlete Citizen Award.

Ammari carries a 3.74 grade-point average and is a member of the National Society, a member of the Student Council, serves on diversity and math clubs, and is on the school's quiz bowl team. He is a volunteer at St. Mary's Hospital and serves as a D.A.R.E. role model.

Farmers Insurance teamed up with Fox Sports Detroit to honor well-rounded high school student/athletes throughout the state.

Junior **Keely Mog** and freshman **Adam Sonak**, both of Westland, have been named to the Dean's List for winter term at Northwood University. To achieve Dean's List recognition, the two students must earn a 3.25 grade point on a 4.0 scale.

Senior **Brent Opiela** of Westland has been named to

the President's List for winter term at Northwood. To achieve President's List recognition, Opiela had to earn a 3.85 grade point on a 4.0 scale.

Wayne Memorial High School's JROTC **Zebra Battalion** won the Commander's Cup for the third consecutive year in recent competition in Centerline. All of the teams finished in the top three for their event. However, it was the two first-place trophies from the Varsity and LET 1 Color Guards that led the battalion to victory.

In addition to the overall win, Cadet Capt. **Candace Papineau** came in third place out of 150 cadets in the individual drill competition. Cadet Cpl. **Brian Browning** was also named the top LET 1 Drill Commander in the competition.

The Zebra Battalion finished in the top three in every competition and was the Michigan Wide Drill Champions.

Students find reward in helping others

BY SUE MASON
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

They're high school kids from two totally different programs who come together during the school week to play Wii, shoot some hoops, toss around a football and even fly kites.

It's an eight-week pilot program that pairs students from Cambridge Alternative High School with high school-aged teens in Garden City's autistic program. The program draws students from the 34 school districts in Wayne County.

After three weeks of interaction, the program is showing promise of being offered as a class in the 2009-2010 school year.

"It seems like a really good fit to mold the two programs together," said Debbie Eves, assistant director of adult and community education. "We wanted to get students more integrated into the high school, many come from other districts."

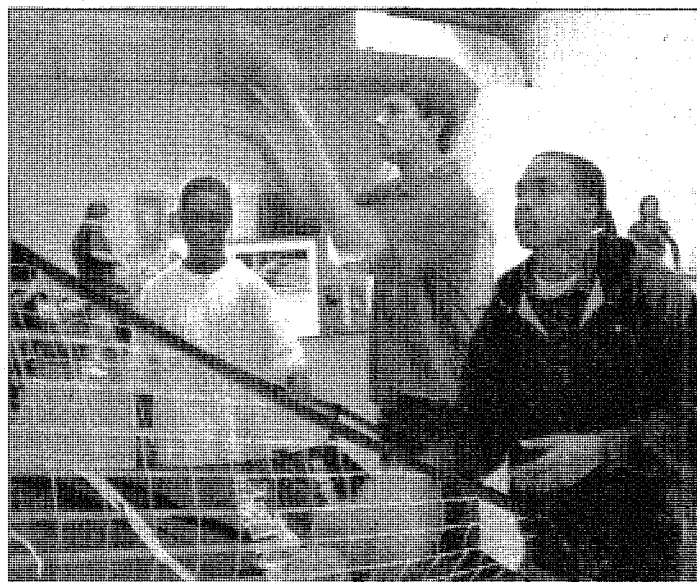
The Cambridge students, who have to have better grades and be community minded, teach their Burger counterparts to be good sports and show them coping skills by playing games, taking community walks or trips to the store. In the process, they build up their own self-esteem and improve their competencies.

Brandon Coffey of Westland was one of those students who "wasn't on the right path," but has changed a lot since enrolling at Cambridge. He's "done a 180" and is applying it to the program, he said.

He likes interact with the kids and gravitates to those who want to be by themselves. He's been able to get one boy who isn't always willing to participate to shoot some hoops.

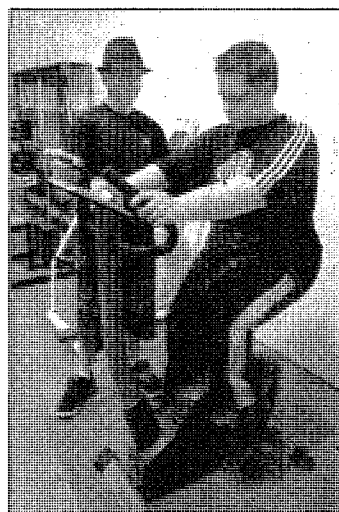
"I love it, I look forward to doing it," said the 18-year-old. "It's something I enjoy doing."

Working with the Burger stu-



Cambridge students Gabriel Young and Carlton Smith shoot hoops with Devon Gullen.

PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



James Rollinson works with Dylan Nesbett on the stationary bike as part of a program involving students from the Burger Center for Students with Autism and the Cambridge Alternative High School.

dents isn't anything new for 17-year-old Carlton Smith of Detroit. His mother works with special needs people. He helps the Burger students play basketball and

catch a football. Gabriel Young II of Detroit adds Wii and UNO to the mix. His favorite activities is a split between basketball and playing Wii Guitar Hero and bowling.

"They're really good at it, they win most of the time and I'm not trying to let them win," he said. "They beat me at it."

According to Burger teacher Eric Selix, the program is something that can be looked at with the restructuring of the autistic program. Older students will be moved to Burger West, with the Burger center on the east side of town housing toddlers through middle schoolers.

"It's something we looked at doing now with a look to the future when the organization is more homogeneous," he said. "It's a cooperative relationship that can extend itself through the years."

The students have done some cooking, had a birthday celebration and done some community walks to local stores to work on group skills in a retail setting. There also may be a trip to the

Wayne Recreation Center pool for a swim day.

"I think that'll be really fun," said James Rollinson of Westland who has helped the Burger students pick out food at the Kroger store on Middlebelt and how to use a crosswalk not "run through the parking lot."

The students are keeping anecdotal logs, jotting down what they see happening. The data will be used to evaluate and enhance the program.

"We want it to be rewarding for the students," said Eves. "We may be able to create a class with credit as long as the data supports it and shows students are getting something out of it."

Taraylen Ford of Dearborn has learned a few things from the interaction.

"It really has taught me take advantage of life and to respect people who are different from me," she said. "At first, I was kind of nervous, it was the first time I was around people with special needs, but I've learned their language now. My student relates more to me because I've learned his language."

Burger teacher Carrie Olson said the two groups of students getting together has brought about change. The Burger students seem to be more willing to break out of their patterns.

"One student recently started being closer to the group," she said. "He's off in a corner and he's still not part of the group, but he is closer to the group. He's becoming more socially aware."

The program lasts 90 minutes and Eves said they're finding the students are getting "a lot of altruistic rewards" because of it.

"They now think I'm here because I'm needed, I'm here because someone is counting on me," she said. "And it gives them something bigger to count on. I think it's been rewarding for everybody."

'Keep It Safe' Night is May 27

Safety will be the theme and the message of the first annual "Keep It Safe" Community Night held at Taft-Galloway Elementary School in Wayne Wednesday, May 27.

Presented by the school in partnership with JFL Diversified Business Network and Reid Associate, the community night is being billed as an informative evening of fun, food and entertainment. It will take place 5-8 p.m. at the school at 4035 Gloria St., Wayne.

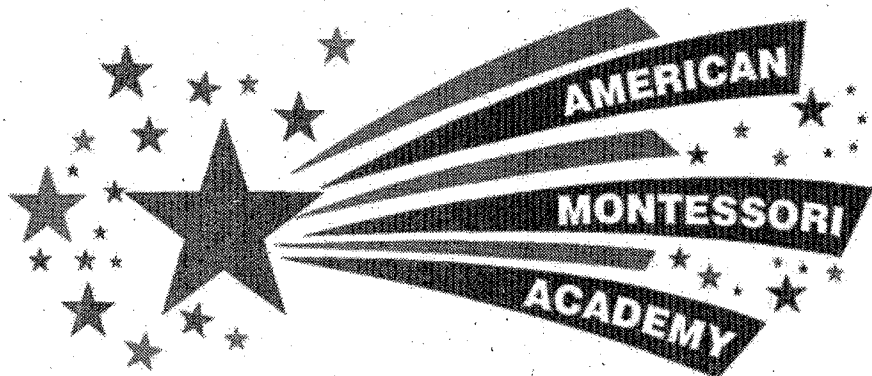
There will be free goodie bags for the first 150 guests, and dinner - tickets are required - will be served 5-6 p.m. The lineup includes informational sessions by Westland Police D.A.R.E. Program and the Wayne Police Department,

a demonstration by PKSA Karate of Westland and a performance by Youth Under Construction.

There also will be face painting, music by DJ Mystic, free vision screening by Dr. Randy Houdeh and vendor tables, including one manned by representatives of the Michigan State Police. The Michigan Masons Child ID Program will be creating identification packets for parents throughout the event. The Wayne Fire Department will have the fire trucks and the Wayne County Sheriff Mounted Division will have its horses on display.

The event is free of charge to families.

For more information, call Taft-Galloway at (734) 419-2760.



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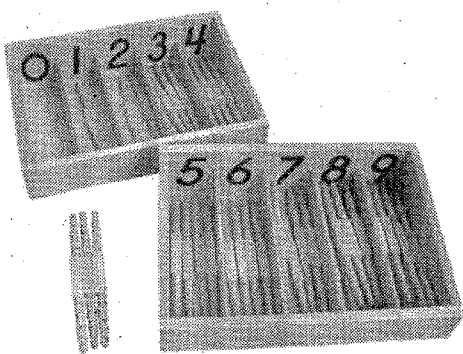
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SECTION B
(LW)

HOMETOWN LIFE

Brad Emons, editor (313) 222-6851
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Churchill leans out Patriots for regional crown

BY BRAD EMONS
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Evert needed Navratilova, Ali couldn't avoid Frazier. And apparently the Livonia Churchill and Livonia Franklin girls track and field teams bring out the best in each other as well. Friday's MHSAA Division 1 regional went right down to the final event with Churchill

repeating as champion by a razor-thin margin of 122-119.5 over the Patriots. Westland John Glenn finished third in the 16-team field with 69 points followed by Detroit Cass Tech and Livonia Stevenson rounding out the top five with 65 and 60, respectively. Once again junior Sara Kroll figured prominently in Churchill's victory as she

GIRLS TRACK

overhauled Stevenson senior Courtney Calka on the final turn to win the feature race of the day, the 1,600-meter run, in 4:57.34. Kroll shattered her own school record, while Calka also lowered her own mark with a 4:57.39. Churchill also got wins from freshman Senclair McDonnell

in the high jump (5 feet, 2 inches) and junior Taylor Byron in the shot put (36-10). "I don't know what to say other than everybody played huge roles," Churchill coach Pat Daugherty said. "The credit goes to our seniors and captains Samar (Aoude), (Shannon) Getchen, (Alicia) DiMauro and Kroll. We got points from a lot of places. It was a repeat of the city meet

where it came down to the 4 x 400. "I also have to commend Franklin. They really kicked our butts in the 4 x 800. Dave (Bjorklund) has brought that program a long way in three or four years from nothing." Bethany Pilat also gave Churchill a boost with a fourth in the 1,600 and a third in the

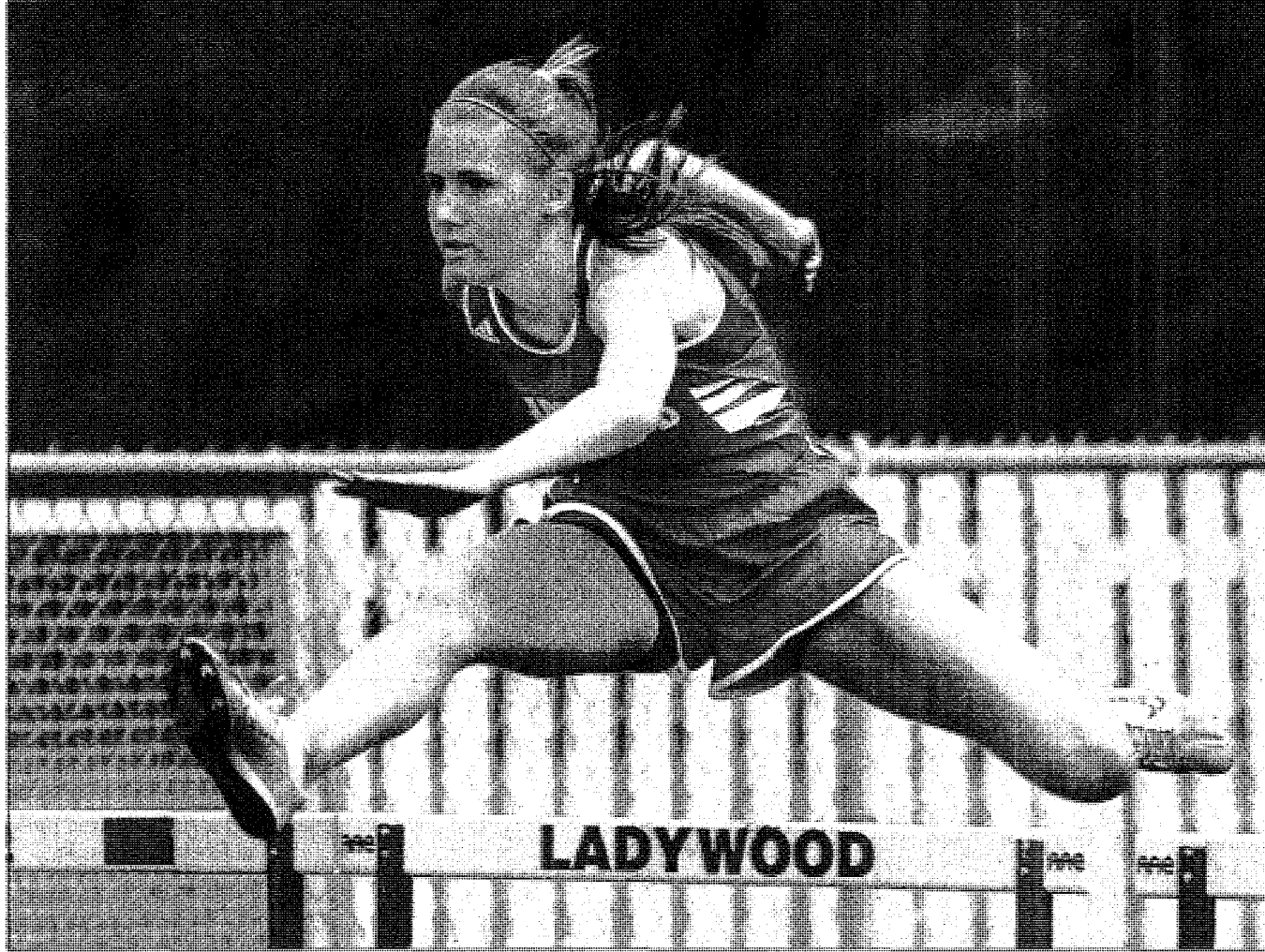
Please see **TRACK, B2**

Blazers eye league final vs. Cabrini

BY BRAD EMONS
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Freshman Briana Combs continued her mastery of Catholic League opponents Thursday leading host Livonia Ladywood to a 4-0 A-B Division softball semifinal over Farmington Hills Mercy. Combs allowed just one hit and struck out 12 as the Blazers, now 23-4 overall, move into championship game to face Allen Park Cabrini, which advanced with a 1-0 win Thursday in the other playoff semifinal over Warren Regina. The finals will be at 6 p.m. Monday at the University of Detroit Mercy. Carli SanMillan and Sarah Stempin each collected two hits, while Alysa Gietl contributed an RBI double against the 8-14 Marlins. On May 10, Ladywood wrapped up the Central

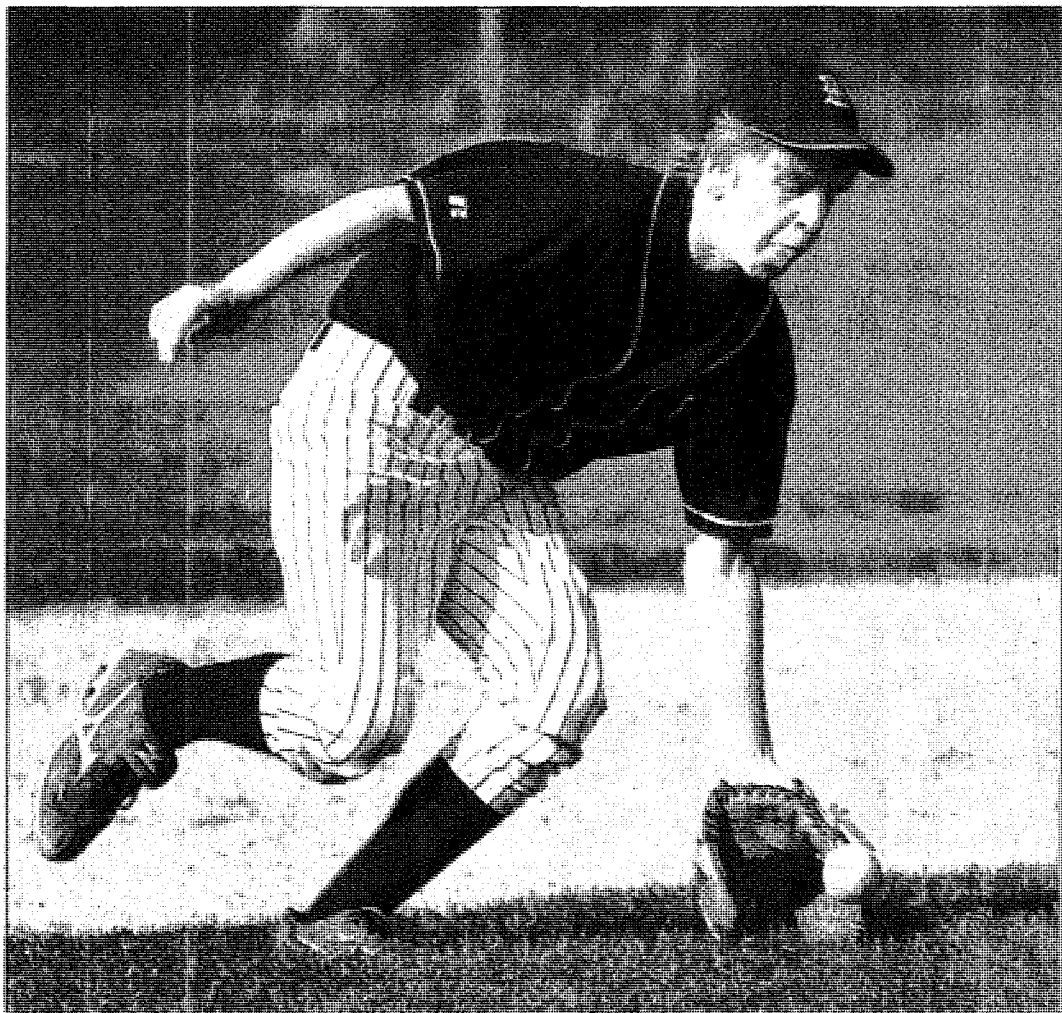
Please see **SOFTBALL, B4**



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Smooth sailing

Ladywood's Megan Yanik won both the 100- and 300-meter hurdles in Friday's Division 2 regional. She also helped the host Blazers qualify in two relay events. See related story on page B2



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lutheran High Westland shortstop Kent Krzyske scoops up the ground ball in Thursday's Metro Conference semifinal win over Macomb Lutheran North.

Warriors' Baglow spurs playoff win

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

An outstanding pitching performance by Austin Baglow on Thursday enabled Lutheran High Westland to knock off one Metro Conference nemesis and gear up for another in the title showdown. Baglow's complete-game two-hitter sparked the host Warriors to an 8-1 triumph over Macomb Lutheran North and set the stage for a 4:30 p.m. Monday Metro "winner-take-all" matchup with visiting Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook. Lutheran Westland coach Kevin Wade said defeating the Mustangs also helped avenge a loss from the beginning of the season. "It was nice to get a chance to play them again and prove that we were a better team than they saw the first time," Wade said. "I don't know if they took us lightly, but we definitely came out and put together a better performance."

The Warriors (13-2, 8-1) were in command all the way behind Baglow, who walked three and struck out six while allowing just one earned run to North (12-8, 6-3). On the offensive side, players chipping in with productive afternoons included Gage Flanery (2-for-4, run), Tony Cipolla (2-for-3, double, two runs, two RBI) and Kent Krzyske (2-for-3, two runs). "With the win we advance to the championship game at home on Monday," Wade said. "And to have a shot to win the conference title is great for the kids and this program." On Wednesday, the Warriors mercied Detroit Renaissance, 15-0. Jake Andrezejewski gave up just one hit and one walk in three innings for the mercy rule victory. At the plate, Flanery and Micah Hausch each went 2-for-3 and scored twice.

Please see **BASEBALL, B4**

GAME WRAPS

KLAA girls softball

FRANKLIN 12-6, S.I. EAST 0-1: On Friday, host Livonia Franklin (27-4, 16-0) swept both ends of a twinbill against South Lyon East (4-16, 2-13). Briana Taylor went 3-for-3 with a 2-run homer, while Nicole Emery went 3-for-3 as the Patriots won the opener, 12-0, in five innings. Brittany Taylor went 2-for-3 and had two stolen bases and Amanda Nixon added two hits in the win. Natalie Sanborn and Tiffany Lamble combined for the no-hitter for the KLAA South Division champions. In the second game, Sanborn (24-1) struck out eight, walked two and allowed two hits against the Cougars. Briana had a solo homer and single, while Nicole Emery, Jessica Emery and Mariah Barcus also had RBI singles.

FRANKLIN 15, JOHN GLENN 0: Nicole Emery, Audrey Geraghty and Chelsea Williams each had two-run singles Wednesday as host Livonia Franklin (25-4, 14-0) captured the KLAA South Division title outright against Westland John Glenn (0-22, 0-13).

Mariah Barcus also homered, while Keely Wilson and Nicole Williamson added RBI singles for the Patriots in the three-inning mercy. Winning pitcher Natalie Sanborn (22-1) retired 12 straight batters, fanning four, to record the no-hitter. Glenn starter Brandi Holbrook took the loss, while Amanda Caudill finished up. The two combined for 10 walks and nine hits.

CHURCHILL 3, STEVENSON 2: Sophomore left-hander Natalie Hiser tossed a five-hitter, did not allow a walk and scattered five hits to lead host Livonia Churchill (14-10, 7-8) to the Kensington Conference crossover victory Friday over Livonia (13-12, 7-7).

Taylor Kerr and Abby Jewell each collected two hits for the Chargers, while losing pitcher Laura Deacon had two hits for the Spartans.

Deacon gave up eight hits and fanned nine. The second game of the scheduled twinbill was called after one inning due to rain.

STEVENSON 5, NOVI 0: Laura Deacon's three-hit complete game carried Livonia Stevenson (13-11, 7-6) to the KLAA Central Division triumph Wednesday over the visiting Wildcats (9-12, 5-8).

Deacon struck out 10 and walked five in seven innings. Kris Vaclavek went 2-for-4 with an RBI to pace Stevenson's seven-hit attack. Kathleen Hoehn doubled and also scored a run.

Losing pitcher Katie Enright went the first 4.1 innings, allowing three runs on four hits and three walks before giving way to Ashley McNamara.

PLYMOUTH 9, CHURCHILL 0: Lauren Smith pitched a five-hit shutout and Jessica Bondy scored three runs Wednesday to lead the visiting Wildcats (20-6, 9-4) to a KLAA South Division triumph over Livonia Churchill (13-10, 6-8).

Abby Jewell, the losing pitcher, allowed nine hits for the Chargers.



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HEALTH & FITNESS

Children's support group builds sandcastles from grief

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
O&E STAFF WRITER

Megan Wolfston rips page after page from a phone book. Only minutes before the 11-year-old girl was racing to change places under the parachute canopy as part of play therapy.



Megan Wolfston, 11, from Clawson tears up a phone book as a way of releasing anger.

parachute canopy. All of the children raced across the room. "It's a lot about normalization," said Tylenda. "It shows someone else was sad. There are others like you."

Founded in 1997, SandCastles offers grief support for children, ages 3 to 18, at 7 sites including Livonia and Rochester. The evening begins with dinner followed by activities in the Volcano room to let off steam. A group discussion helps children build sandcastles from grief.

"The anger and frustration for kids build up on the inside," said Peggy Nielsen, program manager. "The feelings are not wrong but what you do with it is wrong. We have punching bags, building blocks to knock down. We start the program with dinner as a lot of families are now single parents. It's a way to get to know each other. There's something about socializing over food that brings people together."

The adults as well as children need support during the grieving. An adult group meets separately in another room.

"I didn't have a support system at home," said Paula Wolfston. "It helped me to talk to people who felt the same way and to under-

stand what my children were going through."

Three years after Sharon Amey's husband committed suicide she continues to attend the SandCastles grief program at a Livonia church every other Thursday evening with her 7-year old twins, Ashley and Kevin. The children were 4 when their 52-year old father killed himself after being laid off two weeks before Christmas in 2005.

"We were going every two weeks then stopped going for awhile until I noticed the kids were struggling," said Amey of Canton. "Most of the times a person who commits suicide gets it in their mind everybody would be better off. They have no clue what the family is going to go through. I don't think he was thinking what Ashley and Kevin would do without him. At first they were so young and I would ask them what you talked about. They'd say we talked about times daddy took them sledding, played with them, took them to the park. They showed me the crafts they made. They would be about their dad being gone. Sometimes they would even say 'mom is sad.' When the kids went to the camp, they finally felt like they were not alone. I could see they got it. It was nice to see them being empathetic with other children who'd lost someone. SandCastles helped them get there. They turned their sad or bad times into telling somebody you're going to be okay."

Amey dealt with her grief in the adult group.

"Talking really does help when someone commits suicide. You have to talk," said Amey. "At SandCastles everyone is so supportive. As parents we mostly talked about the kids and how they were reacting. After a year or two you see your children being helped and they're going to be okay then the parents can grieve."

Amey thinks she's reached a point where she's going to be

okay. "I'd just like people to know there's always, even though it doesn't seem like it, a family member you can go to, a minister. There are just so many different places to help with a problem. I drill that into my kids. You have aunts, uncles, cousins and you always can come to me whatever is going through your mind. With all the layoffs, I just want to tell people there's hope. There's always a new career. My husband could have been a master gardener. Every year I see the two wisteria he tended. Our neighbor said he left his legacy in the crocuses and tulips."

For more about SandCastles or volunteering, call (313) 874-6881. Pre-enrollment is required. There is no charge but families are encouraged to make donations.



Megan Wolfston (left), 11, from Clawson, volunteer Jason Tylenda, and Desire Brown, 12, Oak Park, run under the parachute canopy as part of the play therapy for SandCastles grief support for children. Southfield's Birney Middle School hosts the support program of Henry Ford Hospice.

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