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Study session

The Wayne-Westland school board will hold at work study session at 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 15, in the board meeting room of the district's administrative offices at 36745 Marquette, west of Wayne Road, Westland. On the agenda will be a review a draft of board's operating procedures.

The study session will be followed by the board's monthly meeting at 7 p.m.

Open house

Wayne-Westland's Champions program will participate in the annual Lights On After-school nationwide celebration of afterschool programs on Thursday, Oct. 18.

Champions will be one of more than 7,500 sites across the nation sending the message that afterschool is key to children's success, and that the lights must be kept on and doors open after school.

"The benefits of quality afterschool programs are clear. They support working families by ensuring that children are safe and productive when the school day ends," said program manager Dawn Adkins. "And, they give children the opportunity to discover hidden talents as they grow academically and socially."

The community is invited to be part of lights On. Champions is holding an open house 4-6 p.m. at Marshall Upper Elementary School on Bayview east of Wayne Road in Westland.

There will be refreshments as well as activities and an opportunity to see why children and families like Champions and how its high-quality programs are making a difference to children and families every day.

Sweetest Day contest

Enter our Facebook contest for a chance to win a night at the Townsend Hotel and a \$50 voucher for the Rugby Grille restaurant.

To enter, just visit our website, Hometownlife.com, and click on the Sweetest Day contest photo on the right-hand side. All you need to do to enter is fill out a short form with your contact information.

Share the contest link with a Facebook friend and get an extra chance to win if they also enter the contest.

Don't forget, to increase your odds of winning, you may enter the contest once per day and share the link with as many friends as you want. The drawing is Oct. 15.

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Central City Parkway concept is unveiled

By LeAnne Rogers
Observer Staff Writer

At a recent town hall meeting getting input on a new City Hall, residents also got the first look at conceptual plans for the Mile — Central City Parkway between Ford and Warren roads.

The proposal would turn that mile-long section of Central City Parkway into a walkable, bikeable, drivable spine linking residents to public parks, a civic center, programmed events, and shopping.

"City Hall is the first thing that we have to figure out. If we build it on Ford Road, where do we put

the fire station?" said Mayor William Wild.

Initially, the proposal was to build a new City Hall behind the William P. Faust Library. After Westland received free assistance through the Mayors Institute of Design, the recommendation was to take a second look at the current Ford Road location.

While working on a solution to replacing City Hall, the visioning was expanded to include possible future redevelopment of Central City Parkway.

"This is about more than a singular building project. We know that our troubled City Hall build-

ing has to be replaced, and my goal is to reach consensus on how we will do that by the end of the year," said Wild. "While that remains our number one priority the next question is where do we go from there. What has come out of those discussions thus far is the realization that we have a unique opportunity to recreate ourselves."

Largely to be paid for with Tax Increment Finance Authority funds — which equates to zero community tax increase — plans for the Mile include a lot more than just sidewalks and trees.

The concept by consultant

OHM puts the four-lane Central City Parkway between Ford Road and Westland's commercial gateway at Warren Road on a diet making room for proposed paths and park space.

Multiple nodes along the one-mile stretch provide opportunities for activity, drawing people to and along the corridor. These nodes could consist of anything from a farmers' market to programmable event and art spaces.

Not far from the library, there could be reading and café nodes. Close to residential neighbor-

Please see **CONCEPT, A2**



STEPHEN CANTRELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary Denning poses with cookies that let people select their favorite presidential candidate.

Here's a sweet way to support your candidate

By LeAnne Rogers
Observer Staff Writer

In weeks leading to the presidential election, the polls trying to predict which candidate is ahead are flying fast and furious.

A less scientific survey is under way at Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe in Westland using voters' sweet tooth. The store is offering frosted butter cookies — blue for Democratic President Barack Obama and red for Republican Mitt Romney.

"We've done it for Super Bowls and presidential elections. Usually it comes out pretty close," said Denning, whose store is located on North Wayne Road. "This is the fourth time we've done the presidential election."

Midweek, Obama was ahead but Denning noted there can be big swings in the race.

"We'll see one person buy 10 cookies and that puts a candidate ahead," said Denning. "But it always comes true (with sales reflecting the winner)."

The cookies sell for 50 cents each and will be on sale through election day Nov. 6.

"We'll sell 300-400 cookies by election day, at least," said Denning.

Most customers come into the store for cakes or other purchases when they happen to see the cookies, said Denning.

Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe is open Tuesday through Saturday, closed Sunday and Monday.

lrogers@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-5428

Women of Westland disbands

By LeAnne Rogers
Observer Staff Writer

After a dozen years raising money for scholarships and hosting their annual Chocolate Fantasy Ball, the Women of Westland are dissolving.

"Life happens. We (the group mainstays) have had a lot of family problems — that's the main problem," said WOW President Mary Denning. "We're calling it quits on a high note. At our last meeting, we decided to distribute our remaining funds."

The group had approximately \$6,000 remaining. Donations were made to causes that are important to the various WOW members, Denning said.

That includes the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, scholarships at Schoolcraft and Henry Ford community colleges, a donation to the Culinary Arts Program at the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, Warms, the Red Wagon book program serving Norway, Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church, Ashford Court and Sweet Dreams, which provides blankets to the needy.

"We're giving the money away. I hate to see it breaking up but it's time," said Denning. "We gave out a lot of scholarship money. I'm very proud of what we did. We did a lot for the community."

Formed in 2000, WOW had about 50 members at its peak with about 30 members today, Denning said, with 15 or so active members.

At the annual chocolate fundraiser, WOW presented the Athena Award for several years. Last year, the switch was made to a new award honoring efforts to help women achieve their goals.

The event supported the Barbara Douglas Scholarship Program, which provides financial awards to qualified women in the community who want to attend college for undergraduate credit or trade school.

lrogers@hometownlife.com
(313) 222-5428

Longtime Norwayne residents to be honored

By LeAnne Rogers
Observer Staff Writer

A year from the 70th anniversary of the community's establishment, longtime Norwayne residents will be recognized at an invitation-only founders dinner Tuesday, Oct. 23.

"This will really be the key event to kick off the Norwayne 70th anniversary," said Henry Johnson, who chairs the Norwayne Community Citizens Council. "We sent invitations to 15 families who have lived in Nor-

wayne for nearly 50 years."

The citizens council is sponsoring the dinner, along with Sts. Simon and Jude Catholic Church, where the dinner will be held, and Ekklesia Church.

"We're also going to recognize five residents who have done an outstanding job maintaining the appearance of their homes," said Johnson.

Constructed beginning in 1943, Norwayne was built to house workers building B-24 bombers at Willow Run — part of the munitions effort during World War II.

Along with working to have a historic designation and marker in time for the Norwayne 70th anniversary, the citizens council has also submitted a request to the city seeking a name change for Dorsey Park, located adjacent to the Dorsey Community Center.

"We would like to rename it Liberator Park, the other name for the B-24," said Johnson.

That request to rename the park has been forwarded to Westland's Parks and Recreation Advi-

Please see **NORWAYNE, A2**

NORWAYNE

Continued from page A1

sory Committee, said Mayor William Wild. As a city, Westland has undertaken many efforts to stabilize the Norwayne subdivision, including a heavy investment of federal funds for acquisition and demolition of blighted structures and renovation of single family homes for affordable homeownership and rental opportunities. Both Wild and Johnson agree that the city's investment in Norwayne has been beneficial. When the housing market rebounds, Johnson said he believes Norwayne will become a community of choice, not necessity. "It started five years ago with a road project and we followed it up with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program," said Wild. "The goal was to get residents engaged. The group (the citizens council) has

taken it and run with it. The key now is to keep the momentum going and getting buy in from a lot of different areas." As a founder and chairman of the Norwayne Community Citizens Council, Wild said Johnson is carrying the torch in moving forward with improvements in the community. "I can't think of a better person to do it. Making Norwayne a community of choice is all of our goal," said Wild, adding he would like to look into using a neighborhood school for an upgraded community center. The citizens council has sponsored a Community Garden and other activities in Norwayne. Their second annual Octoberfest will be held noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27, in Dorsy Park. The free event is open to youngsters up to 13 years old and will feature face painting, pumpkins, food and bouncers.

CONCEPT

Continued from page A1

hoods, there could be a dog park. The possibilities are endless, and will be finalized by council with input from the community. "What's special about this concept is that it is an opportunity to build upon and promote what was already there," said OHM Director of Planning and Urban Design Tony Slanec. "The Mile concept strengthens activities which establish a sense of place and create a regional destination for future

investment." Not unlike many of its neighboring cities, Westland grew up quickly around the auto industry. Development occurred reactively and did not foster the build out of a traditional downtown. "The desire for a traditional downtown has always been there. We have a lot of housing and retail, just nothing to pull it together. OHM designed The Mile to be a unique Westland version of a downtown — a series of 'experiences' culminating in one big memorable place," said Wild.

Arts celebration returns to Westland Shopping Center

By LeAnne Rogers
Observer Staff Writer

Described as a celebration of visual and performing arts, the Three Cities Art Club's Festival of the Arts returns to Westland Shopping Center Friday through Sunday, Oct. 19-21. It's the second year for the festival, sponsored by the Westland Rotary Club, to be at the mall. "There will be 17 artists displaying over 100 pieces. We had displayed at the Canton Library but they have so many programs we couldn't get the room on consecutive days," said club president Marilyn Meredith. "We were looking for a place. Westland doesn't have an art club, so we got with the mayor and the Rotary Club."



Three Cities Art Club members Betty Felts of Garden City (seated), Rod Jenkins and David Lamb, both of Canton, with painting by Elmer Reeves of Canton during the first Festival of the Arts in 2011.

The expanded festival, which had a good response last year, begins at 10:30 a.m. Friday and continues through 5 p.m. Sunday. Event co-chair Allen Brooks is a former Westland Rotarian and contacted the club about sponsoring the event. "It's really nice. When you walk into the mall, it's overwhelming what they have done," Westland Rotary Club President Antoinette Martin. "It's nice to have something different. It's not fireworks or asking people to donate money for something. It's giving back to

the community." Along with displays of original paintings and photograph by club members there will be drawing and painting demonstrations, free face painting for children and live entertainment including music from classical to jazz and ballet and modern dancing. Live entertainment will include ay D. Kilgus of Piano Pleasures, the Livonia Symphony Orchestra String Quartet, the Dance Academy performing ballet and modern dance, the Livonia Symphony Orchestra Woodwind Ensemble, the Harmony Town Chorus and the Livonia Symphony Orchestra Brass. A demonstration especially for kids will be presented by Sharon Dillen-

beck, owner of D&M Art Studio in Canton, from 4-5 p.m. on Friday. Martin will join state Sen. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, Westland Mayor William Wild and Westland Shopping Center General Manager Carol Rutz as special guest judges to select their favorite pieces of art. Awards will be presented at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday. Also on Saturday, there will be a "Paint-Off" 2-3:30 p.m. when four artists will draw/paint in four different mediums — oil, acrylic, watercolor and pastel. Artists from Three Cities Art Club will be displaying and selling over

100 paintings and photographs. Framed and matted prints and note cards will also be available for purchase. "We had a very good response last year. I sold three paintings myself — one I was still working on as a demonstration," said Meredith. Founded 60 years ago, the Three Cities Art Club originally was formed in Plymouth, Northville and Livonia. The club relocated to Canton and meets at township on the first Monday of the month with membership open to everyone. "We demonstrations, workshops and presentations at our monthly meetings," said Meredith. "You can learn if you don't know how to paint. If you have experimented with art, you can try new things. We have photographers but it's mostly painters." Festival visitors can enter to win prizes donated by Center Mass, Inc., D&M Art Studio, Westland Mall, artist Kenneth Barbb, Lakeshore Grill Restaurant, Belanger Tire, Red Lobster and Fruigart. There's no purchase necessary, you need not be present to win and chances of winning are based on the number of entries. For more information, call (313) 231-3939 or visit www.threecitiesartclub.org.

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There's plenty to do for Halloween for young, old alike

Take a bite out of downtown Wayne's Zombie Pub Crawl starting at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 26.

Start your zombie limp on West Michigan Avenue, at the US 12 Bar and Grill or Stockdale's on the Ave West, then proceed over to Jake's for a bite, and end your midnight massacre at the Village Bar and Billiards. The event is free, just bring your best zombie attire to scare up local pubs and restaurants with your fellow undead. Within two blocks you will find costume contests and other fun at downtown Wayne's favorite hot spots while admiring the creativity of fellow zombies.

The Zombie Walk is held on the Friday before Halloween every year. Participants meet up at US 12 at 8 p.m., then make their way down Michigan Avenue, making pit stops along the way at the supporting venues and have a great time being Zombies. There will be lots of gift certificates and fun prizes.

Don't have a zombie costume? No problem. They are one of the easiest costumes to make at home and for little money. First pick your outfit. Were you a doctor before you were bitten? A cheerleader? Get creative. Next, rip your clothes in areas that compliment your story as to what you were doing when you were turned. It's your story, have fun with it.

Your makeup is a key factor to realism and how far you want to go for the full zombie effect. For fake blood, corn syrup works great but can be very sticky so use with caution. Another great way to get a more realistic effect with fake blood is to put it on in layers. Add

multiple coats of "blood" to darken the stains, letting each application dry first. You can also go online and find recipes to make your own "blood" as well.

The event is for those age 21 and older.

Check out www.downtownwayne.org for details on other Halloween related events for all ages.

The Wayne County Parks also is offering a dose of spooktastic fun sure to rattle the whole family, even your four-legged friends. With three events spread out over a two-day period, there's no shortage of a good time this Halloween.

The hour-long Halloween Forest Fun Hike will be held Friday, Oct. 19. Bring children dressed in costumes to enjoy this unique outdoor Halloween event.

A guided night hike will introduce some of our "not-so-scary" funny forest dwellers. Hikes begin on the grounds of Nankin Mills in Westland. After the hike, guests will meet amazing live creatures from around the world during an indoor presentation.

Participants must pre-register as event space is limited. Pick starting times of 6, 6:30, 7 and 7:30 p.m. The cost is \$6 per child, \$2 per adult for Wayne County residents. For out of county residents, costs are \$7 per child and \$3 per adult. Call (734) 261-1990 to register.

Wayne County Parks

Wayne County Parks also is holding a Halloween Festival 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20.

Bring the whole family to enjoy an afternoon of free games and activities at the Hines Park Nankin Mills Picnic Area. Children dressed in costumes are wel-

come. This event includes hayrides, inflatables, costume parade, games, trick-or-treating, entertainment and much more.

There also will be a Howl-O-Ween Dog Park Party 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 20, at the dog park. The free event includes costume contests, games and prizes for your pup. Pet related vendors and light refreshments will be available.

The Wayne County Dog Park is located at Hawthorne Ridge Park on Hines Drive, east of Merriman Road in Westland.

For more information on this or any other Wayne County Parks event, call (734) 261-1990.

Also hosting Halloween activities are:

- Kirk of Our Savior Presbyterian Church which will have Trunk-or-Treat and Other Halloween Fun (Cupcake Walk, Paint a Pumpkin and more) 2-3:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 28, at the church, 36660 Cherry Hill, west of Wayne Road, Westland.

Everyone is welcome with or without a costume. For more information, call (734) 728-1088.

- Grace Moravian Church which is hosting a Trunk or Treat 5:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 24. One prize will be awarded to the scariest trunk and one prize will be awarded to the friendliest trunk.

Food and beverage will be available inside the church for a donation \$2 per person (children 5 years and younger are free). Everyone is welcome. The church is 31133 Hively, off Fernwood, near the corners of Cherry Hill and Merriman in Westland. For more information or to RSVP, call Cheryl Hice-Hillon at (248) 756-3592.

Canton eyeing shared services

By Darrell Clem
Observer Staff Writer

Calling it the Big 4, Canton and three other western Wayne County communities have launched an initiative to explore ways they can share services, trim costs, improve efficiency and potentially snag a larger chunk of state-shared revenue.

Leaders from Canton, Livonia, Westland and Dearborn are hopeful the effort can forge stronger ties and possibly blaze an even wider trail of cooperation among all 18 communities that belong to the Conference of Western Wayne, a consortium that focuses on issues such as legislation, transportation, public safety, economic development and employment.

Canton Township Supervisor Phil LaJoy initiated an inaugural round of talks in late September that focused on human resources and benefits, public service, information technology and golf-course management. He said the Big 4 communities are comparable in size and have a combined population of 370,000 residents.

"I just felt that we have four large communities ... and we might even be able to put together a model that could be used for all 18 communities in the Conference of Western Wayne," LaJoy said. "We hope to find opportunities that could bring savings. We're looking at ways we can work together and save money."

Setting aside partisan differences, LaJoy and Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey, both Republicans, and Democratic mayors William Wild of Westland and Jack O'Reilly of Dearborn brought some of their government officials in finance, public works and human resources, among other departments, to the start-up session.

"All four cities brought their top talent to the meeting," Wild said. "At the very least, when you bring the four cities together and their top talent, you have a pretty good think tank. It was pretty impressive."

The effort comes after Gov. Rick Snyder said certain state-shared revenues could be awarded to Michigan communities that prove they

are trying to pool resources and save money.

"That's kind of where I'm at with it," LaJoy said. "It's right in line with the governor's thinking."

Some municipalities, particularly Canton and Livonia, already have had discussions about shared public safety dispatch services, though the effort has been shelved for now as some communities move to upgrade their radio and other equipment.

The Big 4 could potentially pool resources for projects as small as buying fertilizer to efforts as large as managing golf courses, LaJoy said.

"Some things we can do together to save money," he said. "There's no timeline for this. It's going to take us a little while. But we've had some pretty good feedback."

Westland recently consolidated its parks and recreation department with Wayne's and is moving forward with a merger of the two cities' fire departments — efforts that prompted a visit by Lt. Gov. Brian Calley.

"Sustainable cities and regions are rapidly becoming the defining element of the global economy," Wild said. "Those that align their assets are in a much better position to compete by growing jobs, attracting investment and appealing to current and future homeowners."

Big 4 leaders say their communities are different, yet many of them have faced similar challenges as they try to become more efficient amid declining revenues.

"Recognizing and supporting community distinctiveness while promoting community cooperation and development is crucial to our mission," Wild said. "That's why we are taking a strategic regional approach to solving issues. By looking at common needs, joint problem-solving helps everyone, including our neighboring communities."

Canton leaders have repeatedly said that any efforts to pool resources cannot reduce the level of service residents have come to expect.

Staff Writer LeAnne Rogers contributed to this story.

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- Sharon Goodsell, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator
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LPS school board considers \$260M construction bond

By Larry Ruehlen
Observer Staff Writer

Add up the cost of a new career tech center, building an elementary school and a \$40 million technology infusion and pretty soon you are talking about real money.

"When you take a look at a bond that would cost the average house taxpayer \$216 a year, that's \$260 million," Livonia school board President Patrice Mang said. "That's \$18 a month out of a household budget. Now \$260 million sounds like a lot of money and it is, but I would encourage this board to break it down correctly."

Mang's comments came during a committee meeting to explore just how big of a bond the school board will ask voters to approve in the coming months.

The board decided by straw vote to explore seeking a bond last month for district-wide facility upgrades. A date for the election hasn't been determined, but officials are targeting February or May 2013.

Not everyone on the board shared Mang's view of the situation.

"I'd love to have everything on this list, but we have to be realistic," board Secretary Mark Johnson said. "The city is talking about an increase in the refuse millage... In the back of my mind, I'm thinking 'How much can this community absorb?'"

In January, the district conducted a telephone poll of 480 registered voters to gauge support for \$190 million in improvements in three areas: technology and equipment, fine arts and major

facility renovations (not including roofs and parking lots).

A \$190 million bond would cost the owner of \$125,000 a year, or \$12 a month, for 30 years.

The majority of poll respondents said they believe voters would reject a \$190 million bond proposal because it would cost too much. However, the majority also said they personally would support it. The majority of respondents also said they think most people would support technology renovations to help make the district competitive with current education practices.

Opinions from board members varied. While Johnson wanted to work from the bottom up and do only what is absolutely necessary to improve educational opportunities, Vice President Gregory Oke wanted to be sure the district wouldn't be forced to come back to residents for more money in the foreseeable future.

"Playground improvements are nice, but how much do they improve student learning?" Johnson asked.

"I want to make sure we cover the essentials," Oke said, explaining that residents would have little patience if the board asked for \$100 million now and another \$100 million in five or six years.

While the preliminary plan calls for improvements to all elementary schools, Oke, an elementary school principal in Macomb County, proposed building at least one new school. He said it would make sense to have at least one new school

rather than having all buildings that will need periodic upgrades as they continue to age.

Superintendent Randy Liepa said Oke's suggestion is just what the meeting was for — to air ideas and start the process of reaching consensus on the board.

The board discussed the need for:

- Building a new career technical center
- Adding multi-purpose rooms to elementary schools
- Major technology upgrades
- Hiring an outside company to oversee the project

Liepa said enrollment is expected to continue to drop and that the district might be able to close one or two elementary schools at some point. If all elementary buildings are improved and schools are closed, district programming would be moved into the renovated facilities rather than selling them or tearing them down, he said.

The next step is a request for proposals for a management firm that would oversee the project over an expected five-year construction period. Selecting a firm before getting approval is necessary so the management fees can be added to the total cost of the project before the board sets a final amount on the bond it will seek.

"Ultimately, each of you (board members) will have to come up with a number you can live with, as hard as that may be," Liepa said.

lruehlen@hometownlife.com
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PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Ethan Gaydos, Conner Smith, Addison Casey and Maranda Stone talk with Michael Boynton about how to help someone who is being bullied.

Students pledge to not bully others

The students of Memorial Elementary 1-2 Campus dressed in orange and took a stand against bullying after listening to Mike Baynton from the Wayne County Executive's Office.

Baynton was at the Garden City school Wednesday to talk to first- and second-graders about bullying. Wednesday was National Unity Day and Baynton's presentation was on "Friends Caring for Friends." Baynton, a spokesperson for the Community Outreach Program, helped the students identify:

- What does bullying look like?
- Why bullies bully others?
- What to do when you are bullied?
- What should you do when you see someone being bullied?
- What are the possible consequences if someone is caught bullying?

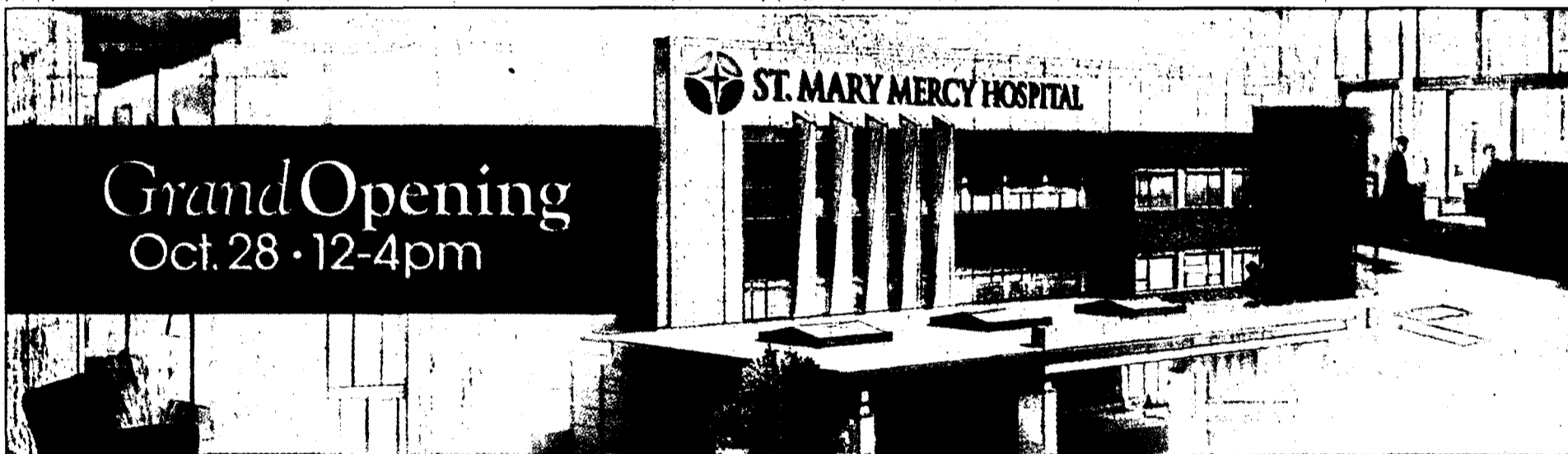
Youngsters asked question and, even though the students were in the first and second grades, many of their answers were very thoughtful, said Principal Mary Pantier.

At the end of the assembly, students



Michael Boynton of the Wayne County Outreach program, talks to youngsters at Memorial about bullying.

raised their right hands to make a pledge, promising Pantier that they would not bully.



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DISCOVER 
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Marketing a piece of history: Building with ties to Henry Ford for sale

By Julie Brown
Staff Writer

A historic building at Northville Road and Mill Street in Northville Township, which has ties to auto pioneer Henry Ford, is currently on the market.

"He always sort of had farming and agriculture in his heart," Bill Sivy, a Northville Township Historic District Commission member who has researched the building, said of Ford.

The auto pioneer acquired land beginning as early as 1919, Sivy said, with 10 parcels. The largest now houses the Waterford Mill Pond.

Several years ago, Sivy did a presentation on the local village of Waterford, which grew up here in the mid-1800s. It was also known as Meads Mill, for several Mead brothers who had built a flour mill.

Ford's plant, part of his Village Industries, opened at Northville Road and Mill Street in 1925. The building, which has been modified and is up for sale or lease, was one of Ford's 19 Village Industries plants. The first, Sivy said, was the one with a current waterwheel in downtown Northville, which opened in 1920.

"He still believed in the values of the farmer who lived in the country," Sivy said. Plants were water-powered, often on the Rouge River.



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A new tenant for Northville Township's Waterford Mill plant is being sought. The building, located along Northville Road south of Six Mile, was once part of Henry Ford's Village Industry factories placed along the Rouge River system.

There was a Cherry Hill plant in Canton that employed disabled veterans. Other plants hired only single and widowed women.

The plant at Northville Road and Mill Street made precision gauges for manufacturing. The building has had several additions and was operated by Ford until 1957, when it was sold to the Haller Co.

Sivy is unsure of detailed history after that.

"We'd like to see it put to some use," he said, noting

the wood floors and early industrial architecture of the original northeast portion at 16580 Northville Road.

The gauge blocks made there during the Ford years were the design of a Swedish man known as the "Edison of Sweden," Sivy said. That man had many talents, but not a great head for business.

Northville native Brad Smith of Friedman Integrated Real Estate Solutions is the listing broker for the property, owned by

a local trust.

"My grandpa was born and raised in Northville," Smith said of his grandfather Dan Boland, who daily walked the streets of downtown Northville. "He's the reason why I moved to Northville."

Boland recently died. The building has some 78,000 square feet, Smith said, and could be divided a number of ways.

"The opportunities are kind of endless," Smith said.

Residential use is pos-

sible, but would require rezoning. There's activity nearby, Smith noted, such as the coming University of Michigan Health System development, retail use on Seven Mile and parks and recreation use.

"I think residential would fit well," Smith said. A cool art gallery or wine shop could be there, he said.

"It'd be nice to keep the historic presence of the building," Smith said.

Industrial use isn't out of the question either, he added. The site has a Motor

Cities "You Auto Know" plaque on its history.

Smith, 29 and single, noted the coming Garage restaurant in Northville, along with such eateries as Poole's and Brick's and workout facilities.

"Activities," he said of what Northville needs for young professionals. "I think it's the type of activities."

Smith can be reached at (248) 848-3028 for property information.

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Things to remember when converting to a Roth IRA

By Rick Bloom
Guest Columnist

Q: Dear Rick: Originally when I received the buy-out offer from Ford I was going to continue with what I had. However, after attending your seminar and listening to what you said, I've decided to change my mind and take the lump-sum distribution. Considering what my wife and I both receive for Social Security and what her pension is, it makes sense to take the lump-sum and let it reinvest and grow. I'm going to follow one of your suggestions and begin converting some of our traditional IRAs into Roth IRAs. Does it matter whose IRA I convert? My wife is about five years older than me. She is in her late 60s. Do I have to name my wife as beneficiary of my IRA? Because of her pension I figure she won't need the money and, therefore, I would leave it directly to our three



Money Matters

Rick Bloom

A: Thanks for the kind notes about the seminar. Whenever I hold a talk or seminar, I always make sure that they're educational. All too often financial seminars are only meant to sell you something. You know that they're going to try to sell you something whenever they offer you a free dinner or something of that nature. My advice is when you get that

invitation throw it away. The hard sell that you will get is not worth the free dinner.

invitation throw it away. The hard sell that you will get is not worth the free dinner.

In reviewing your situation, the first issue is whether you should convert your wife's or your traditional IRAs into a Roth. Based upon your age and the fact that your wife is closer to required minimum distributions than you are, I recommend that you first convert her IRAs. Once her IRAs have been converted to a Roth, then you can start yours. That would be the most efficient choice, considering your ages and required minimum distributions rules.

With regard to Roth IRAs, they are not subject to required minimum distributions

and, thus, you can allow them to grow tax free for as long as you choose. In addition, it's always important to remember that you do not have to convert an entire IRA in one year; you can convert as much or as little as you want on a year-by-year basis.

As to beneficiary — there is no problem naming your children as the primary beneficiary. The only difference from a tax standpoint is that if your wife was the beneficiary, upon your death she would have the option to roll the entire amount into her own IRA. The kids would have a little different tax treatment. There is, however, a potential issue when it comes to estate taxes.

When you pass away, money in your IRA is part of your estate for tax purposes. If your spouse was the beneficiary of your IRA, taxes would not be an issue because that money would qualify for the unlimited marital deduction. Basically, the unlimited marital deduction means that whatever you leave a spouse upon death is not subject to estate tax. On the other hand, if anyone other than your spouse was a beneficiary such as your children, then that part of your estate would not qualify for the unlimited marital deduction. Depending upon the size of your estate, who you name as beneficiary, may be an issue.

When it comes to estate taxes, the great majority of people don't have to worry about them.

However, if you have a very large estate, estate taxes may be an issue. Remember, effective estate planning can eliminate or reduce estate taxes substantially for those

subject to the tax.

Sometimes people name a beneficiary for an IRA or some other investment account and then fail to periodically review their beneficiary designations. I cannot stress enough how important it is for everyone to occasionally review their beneficiary designations. Family dynamics change, as well as financial situations. Don't forget to review all beneficiary designations — primary and secondary.

One last note, remember if you are going to convert money from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA, the transaction must be completed by the end of the year. Custodians get very busy late in the year so don't wait until the last minute. My advice is to get it done before Thanksgiving.

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. His website is www.bloomassetmanagement.com. If you would like Rick to respond to your questions, please email him at rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

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Elizabeth Nitz, owner of After School Einsteins, explains the process for making "bloody hand prints" on golden rod paper.

After School Einsteins get into Halloween creepy science

It didn't take an Einstein to figure out that Halloween must be near. Glowing slime, bloody hand prints and dancing ghosts were among the creepy science experiments conducted by a group of Buchanan Elementary students during Wednesday's after school enrichment program offered by After School Einsteins.

Owner Elizabeth Nitz, who is also a Livonia Public Schools parent and president of Cooper Upper Elementary's PTA, brought four Halloween-themed science experiments for the students to try: Glow In the Dark Slime - the favorite among most of the scientists - Atomic Spikes, made from mixing up a super absorbent polymer; Bloody Hand Prints and Secret Messages, made from an ammonia mixture and golden rod paper; and Dancing Ghosts, created by static electricity, balloons and tissue paper ghosts. Each fun experi-



Lennon Lattanzio closely checks out the liquid that would soon form into an "atomic spike."

ment came with an informative explanation.

Nitz said it's a fun way for kids to learn a little bit more about science.

"They get hands-on science learning," said Nitz. "And, they have fun."

Every student gets to do their own experiment and they get to take items home."

Buchanan student Luke Merchant thought the Halloween theme was especially cool.



Buchanan Elementary student Ian Kalinowski inflates a balloon for the "dancing ghosts" experiment.

"We made stuff that I've never seen before," he said. "The slime was my favorite."

He likes the hands-on approach, too.

"There's really cool stuff in (science)," he said. "It's important to do experiments so you can learn things."

Marjorie Moore, principal at Buchanan Elementary, said the after school science program is popular with students.

"The children are enthusiastic about the hands-on experiments and often talk about what they did the next day," she said. "The activities are so

engaging that the time flies by! Our PTA earns a little profit that directly supports student activities at Buchanan, so it is a win-win for everyone."

After School Einsteins is offered as an enrichment program several times throughout the school year at Cooper.



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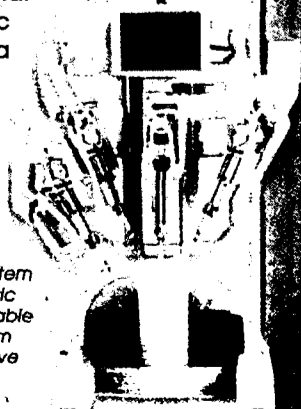
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Member FDIC

McCotter: 'They were clearly not sufficient to make the ballot.'

By David Veselenak
Observer Staff Writer

Two staff members of former U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter will have to wait to find out if they will stand trial in connection with falsified nominating petitions.

Paul Seewald and Don Yowchuang will learn if their case will be bound over to circuit court at 9 a.m. Oct. 23 in front of 16th District Court Judge Sean Kavanagh.

Kavanagh, while wrapping up the pair's preliminary examination Thursday in Livonia, said he wanted more time to go through transcripts of interviews between witnesses and state investigators.

McCotter was called by the defense as a witness during the three-hour

hearing, one of few public appearances he's made since leaving office.

Wearing a suit with a pink tie, McCotter appeared shaken when answering several questions, including whether he knew the signatures were photocopied from previous petitions turned in.

"All conversations I engaged with Mr. Seewald or anyone else were that we were on track or done," McCotter said, about the process of collecting signatures for nominating petitions.

Seewald and Yowchuang stand charged with several misdemeanors and felonies after the Secretary of State found photocopied signatures on McCotter's nominating petitions. The issue forced McCotter's name off the ballot, and he ultimately resigned from Congress in July.

McCotter said congressional candidates typically collect close to the 2,000 signature maximum allowed to insure enough valid signatures and to not appear to be losing support from voters in the district. He had been told Seewald had signed several petitions without being the circulator when they were returned without one.

McCotter said he was on a delegation trip to Hawaii when his chief of staff called to report the irregularities. He was then contacted by Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, telling him he would not qualify for the August primary ballot after her office found many of the lines broken on the forms, indicating the sig-

natures had been lifted from elsewhere.

McCotter said he was unaware the photocopied signatures were submitted, and only found out when Johnson contacted him.

"To me, it was 'why? Why were we at this point when this is something that is so routine?'" he said. "They were clearly not sufficient to make the ballot."

McCotter has not been charged, but was advised by Kavanagh that he had the legal right to remain silent during questioning.

Gregory Townsend, an assistant attorney general who is prosecuting Seewald and Yowchuang, presented several petition forms as evidence, and showed them to McCotter, as well as former volunteers Dillon

Breen and Pamela Hull, who circulated petitions.

Townsend asked Breen to compare a petition he filed with 15 signatures to another form that bore his signatures that was filed with the state.

He said it was clearly photocopied.

"They all have the same addresses on them," he said. "They all also seem to be cut and pasted, as the lines do not match up."

Breen, who is running for a seat on the Livonia School Board, said he turned in his petitions to Yowchuang, and assumed he would handle the filing of them in Lansing.

Hull, who fundraised for McCotter, said when she turned in some petitions, Yowchuang went through them in front of her.

She said she never let the petitions get away from her when collecting them at various events through Wayne County, and was unaware her forms had been copied to count as two sets of signatures.

"The clipboard never left my hands," she said.

Mark Mandell, Seewald's attorney, said the state is wasting its time prosecuting people that made a mistake on nominating petition forms. He said Attorney General Bill Schuette is spending more time prosecuting his client rather than violent offenders throughout the state.

"He chose to chase my client, why doesn't he come down (and prosecute himself)?" he said. "It's a political witch hunt."

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Every year, mailboxes on the shoulder of roads are subjected to a pounding when snow plows go by. Many of them become loose or in need of repair after years of exposure, becoming a public nuisance and creating dangerous driving conditions.

However, with proper routine maintenance, calamitous damage to the posts and receptacles can be prevented. On Saturday, Oct. 20, Michigan's "Shake Your Mailbox Day," residents are being encouraged to tighten screws and ensure their

posts and receptacles are secure enough to withstand large amounts of thrown snow.

Officially launched statewide in 2009, "Shake Your Mailbox Day" is a joint effort between the State of Michigan, the U. S. Postal Service and county and local road commissions to raise awareness about possible household dangers before the start of winter.

"As we gear-up for another cold and snowy season, I feel it is important to remind residents to do their part

in an effort to cut down on winter related accidents and injuries caused by loose or unsecured items," said Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano. "A sturdy mailbox is safe and accessible and doesn't end up in the road, creating a hazard for drivers."

For more information on "Shake Your Mailbox Day," visit www.michigan.gov or check out the official mailbox guidelines provided by the U.S. Postal Service at www.usps.com/manage/know-mailbox-guidelines.htm.

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OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS
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State program aims \$8 billion at assisting businesses

By Michelle Muñoz
Correspondent

Mike Finney, president and chief executive officer of the Michigan Economic Development Corp., is determined to help make Michigan the most business-friendly state in the country.

Part of that effort is the Pure Michigan Business Connect program, which assists participating companies in finding talent, obtaining business analysis services and assisting in locating capital.

Finney discussed the \$8 billion program with the Livonia and Farmington Area chambers of commerce at a joint breakfast Friday at Farmington Hills Manor.

The Pure Michigan Business Connect program was developed by MEDC and started in June 2011. It is a government-facilitated package of services available to businesses in the state. The program is aimed at helping businesses get started and then helping them grow.

DTE and Consumers Energy each signed on with the program and committed to spending \$250 million with Michigan suppliers over five years, but Finney said Consumers recently doubled its commitment to \$500 million over five years on its own. Finney said Consumers is at \$375 million in contracts with in the state.

Credits 'mortgage future'

Finney said rather than offer tax incentives, which do not offer businesses cash, the state decided to give businesses things they could use immediately. He said the state currently has tax



PHOTOS BY JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Members of the Livonia and Greater Farmington Area Chambers attended the Michael Finney breakfast at the Farmington Hills Manor.



Michael Finney, President and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corp., was the keynote speaker Friday at a breakfast organized by the Farmington Area and Livonia chambers of commerce.

credit obligations that could stretch all the way to 2032.

"The reality is that tax credits, while they do serve a purpose ... you're essentially mortgaging the future," Finney said. Bosch, Rehmann, Blue

Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Farmers Insurance Group were the presenting sponsors of the breakfast.

Finney said government is playing the role of facilitator by providing the necessary tools

to businesses that will help them flourish and companies are using the resources to great success.

"It's critical," Finney said. "It's having an incredible impact."

Program called 'practical'

Karen Blazaitis, owner and president of Mid American Studios in Farmington Hills, had not heard of the program before the presentation, but said business owners are in need of the kind of tools Finney discussed.

"It sounds like a wonderful practical solution," Blazaitis said. "When you are starting a business, there are so many things you don't know. It can get overwhelming."

Milene Plisko, district manager for Farmers Insurance Group in Livonia, also hadn't heard of Pure Michigan Business Connect until Finney's presentation. She said the guidance and tools available to companies participating in the program could help convince



Beth Cooke of LOC Credit Union smiles at a remark Michael Finney made during his presentation.

entrepreneurs to set up shop in Michigan rather than going to another state.

"It makes perfect sense," Plisko said.

Huntington Bank, DTE, Consumers Energy and Fifth Third Bank are some of the major partners involved in Pure Michigan Business Connect.



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**CITY OF GARDEN CITY
COUNTY OF WAYNE, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
October 22, 2012**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Garden City Council will hold a Public Hearing at the Civic Center, 6000 Middlebelt Road, Garden City, Michigan on October 22, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. regarding the proposed Special Assessment Roll (#4223) for Street Lighting.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT RESOLUTION No. 4 **STREET LIGHTING 2012**

WHEREAS, at a Regular Meeting of the Council on September 10, 2012 the City Council adopted a Resolution of Determination for Special Assessment District 4223, and the City Assessor was directed to prepare such roll; and

WHEREAS, such roll has been prepared and is presented herewith;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Special Assessment Street Lighting 2012 Roll Number 4223 be filed with the City Clerk for public examination; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a Public Hearing be held on **Monday, October 22, 2012** at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 6000 Middlebelt, Garden City, MI 48135, notice of such Public Hearing to be published in the newspaper of general circulation of the City, and that notice of such meeting be given by first class mail to the last known owner of each parcel affected thereby pursuant to the Garden City Code of Ordinances Chapter 40, Section 40.06(c).

ALLYSON M. BETTIS
City Clerk/Treasurer

Publish: October 14, 2012

NOTICE OF SEIZURE AND INTENT TO FORFEIT

Notice is hereby given that the United States Department of the Interior is hereby commencing a forfeiture proceeding against the following items of wildlife or wildlife products, which were seized in the Detroit area of Michigan on the dates indicated because they were involved in one or more violations of any of the following laws: Endangered Species Act, Title 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1538, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, 11 U.S.C. Sec. 1371-1372, the Lacey Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 3372, Wild Bird Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 4901-4916 or the African Elephant Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 4221-4245. These items are subject to forfeiture to the United States under Title 16, U.S.C. Sec. 1540(e), 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1377, or 16 U.S.C. Sec. 3374 and Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 12.23. Any person with an ownership or financial interest in said items who desires to claim them must file a claim with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, 2599 World Gateway Place, Bldg. 830, Detroit, MI 48242, Telephone (734) 247-6800. Such claim must be received by the above office by October 3, 2012. The claim will be transmitted to the U.S. Attorney for institution of a forfeiture action in U.S. District Court. If a proper claim is not received by the above office by such date, the items will be declared forfeited to the United States and disposed of according to law. Any person who has an interest in the items may also file with the above office a petition for remission of forfeiture in accordance with Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 12.24, which petition must be received in such office before disposition of the items. Storage costs may also be assessed.

File Number	Seizure Date	Value
2012303714	06/28/2012	\$2,281.00

Item
Thirty-nine (39) pounds of Mother-of Pearl (*Crassostrea angulata*) shell buttons, fifteen (15) pounds of individual shells (Mollusca), five (5) pounds of porcupine (*Coendou sp.*) quills, five (5) pounds of individual White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) toes, eight (8) White-tailed deer hinds, four (4) River Otter (*Lontra sp.*) skins, and twenty-nine (29) ermine (*Mustela erminea*) skins

Publish: September 23, October 7 & 14, 2012

Schoolcraft student takes life-altering journey into filmmaking

By Jill Halpin
Correspondent

When Justin Haight received the invitation in 2011 to take part in award-winning filmmaker Hunter Weeks's latest project in Montana, the 23-year old Novi resident said "yes" before he even knew what the project was all about.

"I didn't know anything about the project; I just knew that it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work with an amazing film director and if I didn't do it, I would always regret it," said Haight, an aspiring filmmaker, currently working toward a degree in computer science at Schoolcraft.

"I was familiar with (Weeks's) films and really admire the way that Hunter is able to capture the essence of America. This was a chance to learn from one of the best," he added.

As it turned out, Weeks's "project" was a full-length documentary film titled *Where the Yellowstone Goes*, and follows a 30-day drift boat excursion down the longest undammed river in the contiguous United States.

The movie, scheduled for a free public screening at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 18, in the Schoolcraft College VisTaTech Center in Livonia, paints intimate portraits of local residents in the cities and dusty towns along the Yellowstone River.

The experience provided Haight with some solid footing on his journey to becoming a filmmaker. He was given an associate producer credit for the film.

In addition to illustrating the history and controversies surrounding the longest undammed river in the lower 48 states, the film provided Haight with a life-changing



Hunter Weeks (from left), Justin Haight, John Hall, Shannon Ongaro and Mike Dion (far right) fish the banks of the Yellowstone River while making the documentary.



Schoolcraft student Justin Haight worked on a film that will soon be screened at his school.

ing experience he will never forget.

"I learned so much from working on this film with Hunter. It truly was an amazing experience — from the people that I met on the set to the people we encountered living along the river while we were actually making the film. I will just never forget it," said Haight, who spent almost two months traveling with the film crew out west as they filmed their experiences.

For Haight, the journey into filmmaking actually began when he was growing up. After viewing the photographs he took during family vacations, his parents Susan and Marcus designated him the official "family photographer."

"When I was younger, I just used a point and shoot camera, but

there was something about catching life on film. It adds a whole other dimension and I really liked it," Haight said.

A 2007 graduate of Hartland High School, Haight was in his junior year when he started thinking about colleges and careers. Working as a member of the high school yearbook staff, he enjoyed the chance to capture images.

His "eye" for selecting quality photographs was noticed by a teacher who encouraged him to pursue his talents. Haight is clearly a man of action. Once his career decision was made, he did not waste time.

Familiar with the work of a variety of filmmakers, he quickly took matters into his own hands, contacting various directors to ask for guidance and advice through email and Facebook.

"I pretty driven," Haight said. "I wasn't sure if I really needed a degree in film to be successful and wanted to get their opinions."

He ultimately decided on pursuing a degree in computer science at Schoolcraft College in Livonia — as a "backup plan" — while continuing to hone his filmmaking skills.

Big break

Haight continued to correspond infrequently with Weeks and, in 2011, sent him an email message "out of the blue, just to see if he was working on any new projects," he said.

The response from Weeks was fast, he said. "He said if I could get out to Montana in two weeks, I could work on the film," Haight said.

The rest is history — captured on film, of course.

Riding along the Yellowstone River in a support vehicle as part of a seven-member film crew, Haight spent six weeks learning the ins and outs of filmmaking.

"I did everything from data management to blogging about our experiences to help set up our camps. He also let me do some touch-up editing," he said.

Kind characters

The people Haight met living along the river made a big impression, he said, and made for some memorable experiences.

"The people that we met, randomly, as we traveled down the riv-

er really touched me," he said. "Montanans are unbelievably friendly. They just open their homes to you and welcome you in."

Haight recalled two brothers fishing along the Yellowstone.

"It was September 11, 2011, and they invited the whole film crew back to their home to eat the fish they had just caught in the river," he said.

He also recalls a memorable encounter the crew had with two sisters, known throughout their region as "The Cake Ladies" for their mouth-watering delicious angel food cakes.

"These two women are at least 80 or 90 and get up every morning at 4 a.m. and make angel food cakes from a secret recipe," he said. "People all around the area know about their cakes and although they do not sell the cakes, they do donate them to charity auctions, which are able to get a lot of money for them."

The ladies, who appear in the film, have lived along the banks of the Yellowstone River their entire lives.

"Lewis and Clark made their canoes from trees

on the property these women now own," he said.

In addition to developing a deep appreciation for the people and beautiful landscapes of Montana, the experience also provided Haight with insight into the unique aspects of translating real life onto film, something he hopes to do in future ventures.

"The documentary aspect allows you to catch the true person in their element — it's almost like capturing reality," he said. "I was so fortunate to work with such an esteemed filmmaker. Just being able to have him mentor me through the filmmaking process has opened my eyes to a whole different world."

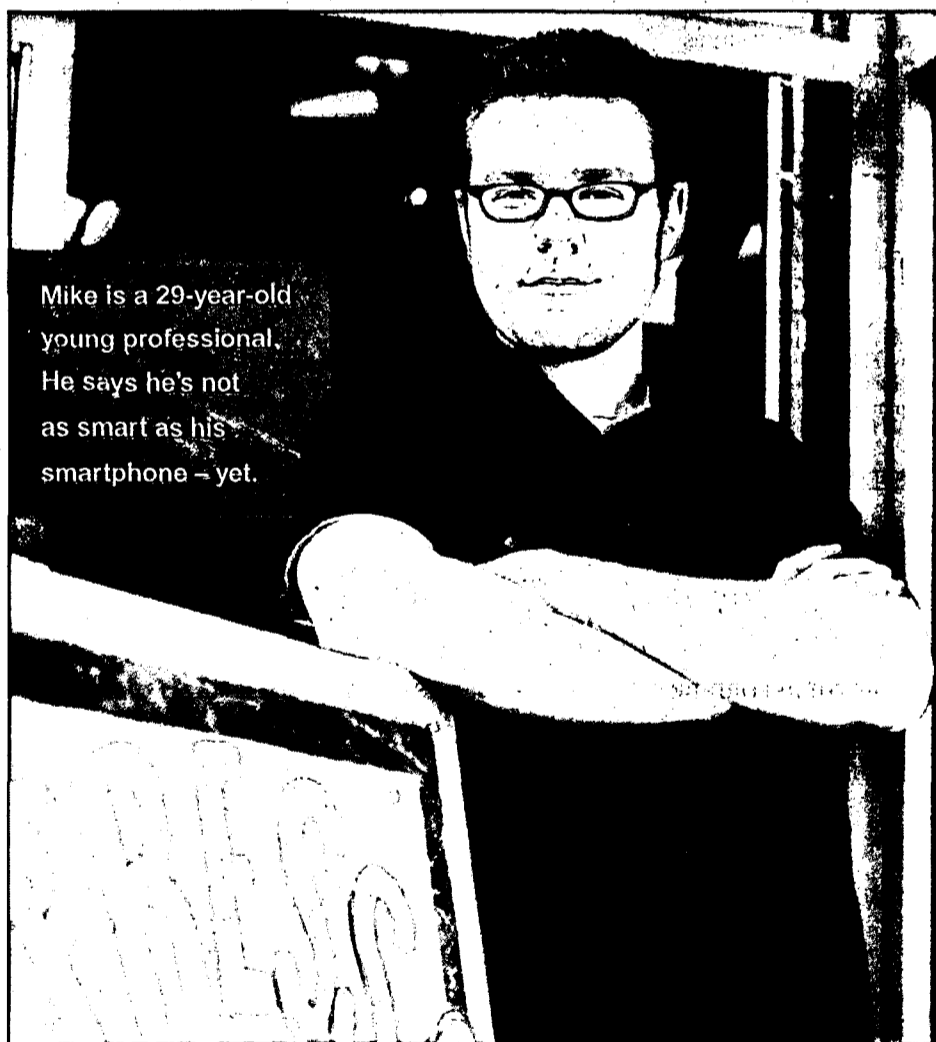
Mutual admiration

Weeks has an equally high opinion of Haight and said he that he is sure that Haight's energy will serve him well on his path to filmmaking.

"Justin is one of those people you only come across every so often," Weeks said. "He's filled with a charge that if used right can change the world. He's been a huge factor in helping create the story we all set out to make last summer on the Yellowstone River. I look forward to seeing Justin navigate the channels of life, work and maybe some more rivers in the future when we make another river film or two."

Now back home, Haight is looking forward to the screening of the film at Schoolcraft.

"I'm looking forward to the chance to share this with the community," he said, "I did not have any experience and he took a chance on me, and I am grateful."



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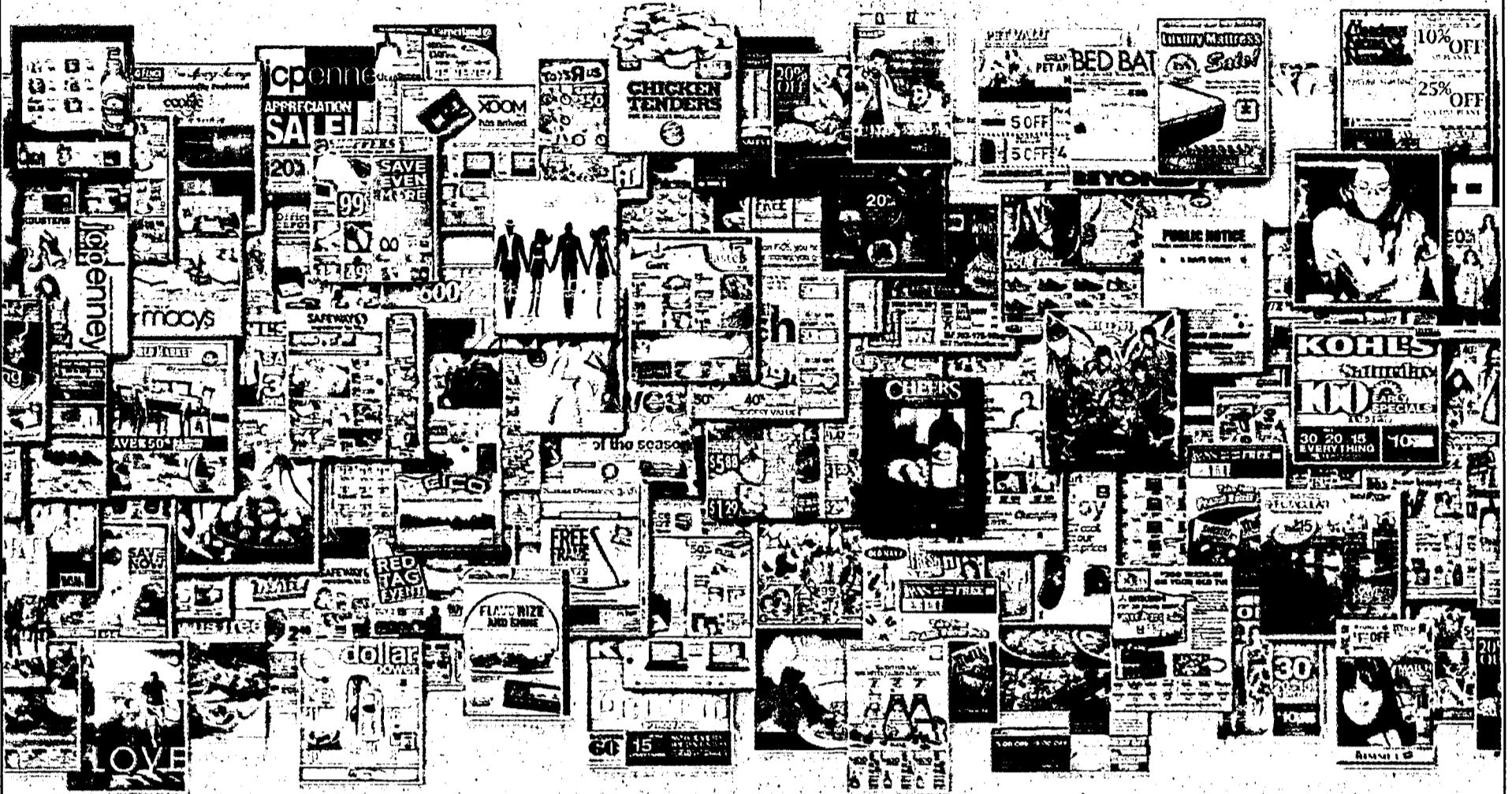
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Sources: Frank N. Magid Associates 2011

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DDA District decorates for fall

Decorative scarecrows and cornstalks will soon provide some seasonal trimming for Westland's Downtown Development Authority District.

Using DDA funds, Westland has been making a number of improvements to the streetscape and landscaping within the district which generally runs along Ford Road between Central City Parkway and Wayne Road.

Among improvements made over the past several months have been lighting and landscaping along the road driven by over 35,000 motorists daily.

"DDAs are a creation of Michigan legislature enacted several years ago to provide municipalities a financing mechanism for improving the quality of downtown areas" said Mayor William Wild.

While Westland does not have a true downtown, Wild said, the city does have a very defined area on Ford Road between Central City Parkway and Wayne Road that has been targeted for future redevelopment.

"Adorning the Ford



Watch for scarecrows along Ford Road in Westland's Downtown Development Authority District.

Road corridor with festive fall decorations is an inexpensive way in which to celebrate the season and improve the appearance of a busy thoroughfare," Wild said.

The work of the DDA

is performed by a small staff and a board of 11 citizens appointed by the mayor and council. DDA members volunteer their time, talent, and expertise to the DDA for the benefit of the district.

AROUND WESTLAND

Hunter safety

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Wayne County are offering a hunter safety class 5:30-9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 22, Wednesday, Oct. 24, and Friday, Oct. 26, at Nankin Mills, 33175 Ann Arbor Trail, Westland.

Hunter safety classes are required by the state to purchase a Michigan hunting license. The state requires 10 1/2 hours of instruction over three days. A test also is required to receive certification.

The deadline for registering is Thursday, Oct. 18. For more information or to register, call Jakleen Ochalek at (313) 225-0755 or send an email to jochalek@wayne.mi.us. More information about hunting requirements can be found online at www.michigan.gov/huntereducation.

Harvest Dinner

The First United Methodist Church of Wayne will hold its annual Harvest Dinner 4:30-7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19, at the church, 3 Towne Square, across from the Wayne Post Office in Wayne.

The cost is \$9 for adults and \$5 for children ages 4-12 for a complete turkey dinner, including beverage and desert. Pop will be sold for an additional of 50 cents. Carry-outs will be available. There also will be crafts, Rada cutlery, silent auction for quilt and bake sale and more.

The church is handicap accessible. For more information, call (734) 721-4801.

Road Rally

Must be completed by no later than Wednesday, Oct. 17, for a road rally being held by Kirk of Our Savior Presbyterian Church in Westland on Saturday, Oct. 20.

The road rally will start at 4:45 p.m. sharp at the church at 36660 Cherry Hill, west of Wayne Road. There is a \$7 per person registration fee. Sign up in church lobby, call (734) 728-1088 or go online to facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/KirkofOurSavior>.

A portion of proceeds to support Warm the Children, a mission project of the Kirk.

Participants can find a list of what they will

be looking for on the Facebook page, in the church lobby or it can be emailed or mailed.

And since it's the day of the University of Michigan-Michigan State football game, wear your colors.

Wrestling Club

Westland Bottle Rockets, a wrestling club for ages 4-14, meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-6:30 p.m. for beginners and 6:30-7:45 p.m. for advanced wrestlers, in the Wrestling Room of John Glenn High School. Practice will begin Tuesday, Nov. 27, and run through March 2013.

Registration will take place 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 6, outside the Wrestling Room at John Glenn High School, 36105 Marquette, Westland. The membership fee for the season is \$50 and includes a T-shirt.

More information and/or a copy of the registration form can be obtained by visiting the club link at glennwrestling.com. Questions can be directed to the coaches at brclubwrestling@gmail.com or call Judy at (734) 634-4595.

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MDOT unveils Ford Road possibilities

By Darrell Clem
Observer Staff Writer

Inching closer to a potential solution to Ford Road traffic woes in Canton, the Michigan Department of Transportation has unveiled five alternate plans amid an ongoing study that could have far-reaching implications for area motorists, residents and businesses.

MDOT officials and a consulting firm, Wilbur Smith Associates, rolled out the proposals Thursday evening and sought public opinion during an informal meeting inside Summit on the Park — the second state-led Ford Road session since June.

Though a project timeline and the money to pay for it remain elusive, MDOT project manager Gorette Yung said officials have made strides with traffic and environmental studies in hopes of choosing the best alternative by next spring.

"We're definitely making progress," she said, as residents pored over maps and data to understand the following five proposals:

- Seemingly the least popular, one plan suggests doing nothing to tackle Ford Road traffic problems that led to 2,378 crashes between Lotz and Canton Center during a six-year period.

- "I think something needs to be done because traffic flow is bad," said Cheryl Collier, a White Castle district supervisor who struggles to drive to the chain's restaurant on Ford east of Haggerty.

- A second proposal involves adding a westbound lane on Ford Road from I-275 to Sheldon Road, partly by converting turn lanes to one long through-lane. The eastbound lane at Haggerty



Mark Fisher from MDOT (from right) talks to Canton residents Keith Hansen and Frank Tintinalli.

also would be improved to ease traffic flow.

How long?

Mark Fisher, MDOT transportation engineer, said this proposal's main drawback is that a new westbound lane likely would usher in 15-20 percent more traffic on Ford Road.

"This plan would work, but for how long?" he asked.

- A third plan, one that seemed to fuel some support, calls for making Ford Road a boulevard by turning the middle turn lane into a grassy area and maintaining two lanes in each direction from I-275 to west of Sheldon. It involves restricting left turns at intersections and incorporating vehicle turnarounds similar to those on Michigan Avenue.

"I like the boulevard (option)," said Erin Ware, who lives near the IKEA store at Ford and Haggerty.

Officials say one potential detriment is that a boulevard could limit access to Ford Road businesses, but some local leaders have said traffic bottlenecks already threaten to choke off Canton's core shopping district.

Though the boulevard concept would force a slight widening of Ford Road, Canton Municipal Services Director Tim Faas said the proposal on the surface has appeal. "It moves the most amount of traffic and reduces the most accidents from a pure engineering standpoint," he said.

- The fourth option involves the long-discussed proposal to add access ramps from the southbound I-275 exit ramp to north and south Haggerty Road, allowing drivers to avoid Ford Road. It also entails adding a northbound service drive east of the interstate from Cherry Hill to just north of Ford Road.

"I could almost never have to drive on Ford Road again," Ware said with a smile.

Four failures

Canton and MDOT had submitted this proposal four times for a federal grant dubbed TIGER, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, only to face disappointment.

However, officials say the major flaw of the so-called TIGER plan is that it would mostly address traffic congestion in the Ford-Haggerty area, rather than in a broader area. Moreover, this plan is costlier and could have a more far-reaching environmental impact.

- The fifth and final proposal — and by far the most expensive and intrusive on the environment, residents and businesses — centers on building two new interchanges along I-275 at Cherry Hill and Warren Road. Some residents said the magnitude



Canton resident Paul Lakatos takes a look at presentations made by MDOT officials at a public presentation Thursday.



Canton Engineer William Serchak and Canton resident Larry Lucas talk to Matt Wendling from MDOT.

of this proposal is daunting.

Canton resident Andy Psilis told Matt Wendling, a civil senior engineer for Wilbur Smith Associates, that until MDOT chooses one option, other traffic-easing measures could be adopted such as having traffic lights better timed along Ford Road.

Wendling agreed. "That's one of the easier fixes, and that's going to be one of our short-term fixes."

MDOT and consultants say the ultimate plan has to include consideration of waterways, the I-275 bike path, wetlands and other issues. No solution is easy,

they say, in an area that is largely developed.

Psilis said he is encouraged that MDOT has taken its study seriously.

"I'm hopeful," he said. "I drive Ford Road every day."

Yung, meanwhile, said MDOT hopes within the next few days to have the proposals online at www.michigan.gov/mdotstudies. She said residents are invited to send their comments to MDOT-ford275@michigan.gov.

"We want feedback to know what people are thinking," she said.

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