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 SPORTS, B1

Nankin Transit's Fernandez retiring

By LeAnne Rogers
 Staff Writer

After nearly 20 years as the Nankin Transit Commission executive director, Richard Fernandez is retiring effective July 1.

Fernandez, 77, submitted his letter of resignation at a commission meeting following a brief closed session with commissioners.

The commission met a day after Westland hosted a meeting for residents to voice suggestions for improvements and concerns over the service offered by Nankin Transit, which provides transportation to seniors and handicapped residents in Westland,

Wayne, Garden City and Inkster.

"It is with a heavy heart I come to this decision at this time. There are unforeseen events beyond my control," Fernandez wrote in his resignation letter. "I have worked very hard to provide transportation to citizens under difficult financial circumstances."

With rides costing \$1 each way, Nankin Transit depends on federal and millage revenues through the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation and contributions from member communities.

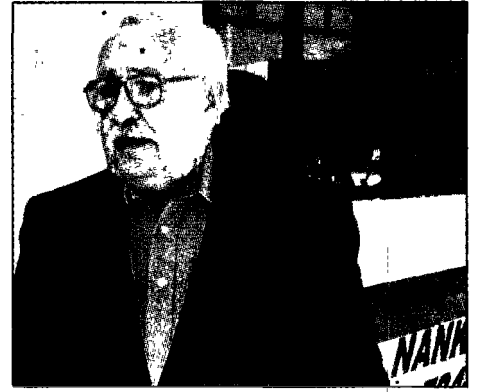
Applaud efforts

Nankin Transit Commission members, representatives from each partic-

ipating community, applauded Fernandez's efforts to keep the service operating despite significant funding and staffing reductions in recent years.

"This is one of the hardest thank yous. I came on board when things were on life support. Things improved due to his (Fernandez) creativity," said longtime commission member Mike Harris of Westland, a wheelchair user. "A system like this gives people control of their lives. A lot of people aren't comfortable asking for rides."

Many of the complaints about Nankin Transit centered on the difficulty of scheduling rides. New computerization

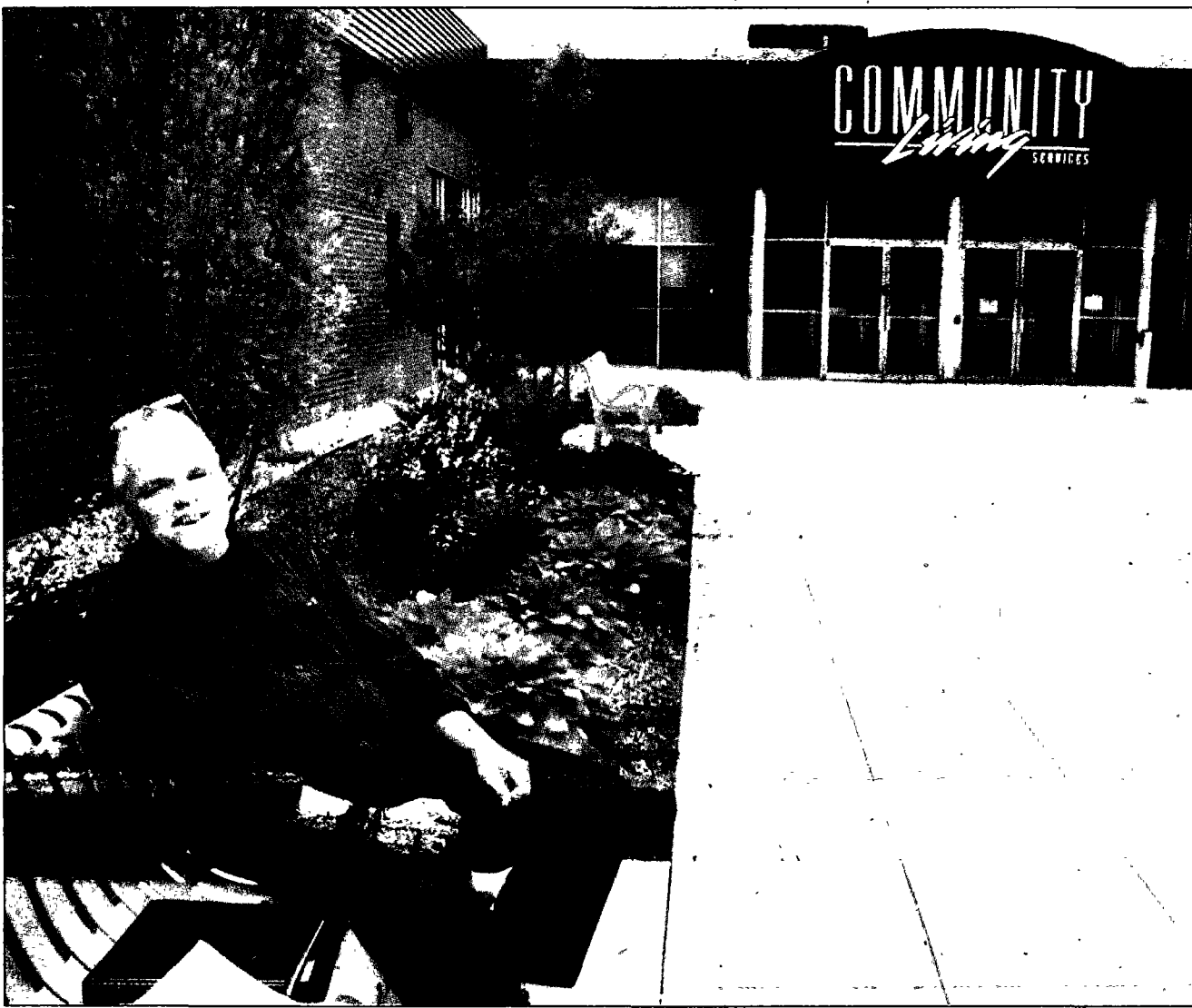


Nankin Transit Commission executive director Richard Fernandez is retiring effective July 1.

See TRANSIT, Page A2

"Label cans, not people. I treat people equally. I'm people-driven first."

RAY SCHUHOLZ, member of Westland's Disabilities Concerns Commission



Westland resident Ray Schuholz is a peer mentor at Community Living Services in Wayne. STEPHEN CANTRELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A man with a mission

Cause: Ray Schuholz advocates for disabled people

By LeAnne Rogers
 Staff Writer

To regular viewers of Westland City Council meetings, Ray Schuholz is a familiar face at the podium bringing a positive message about respect, advocating for the disabled or giving someone a pat on the back.

"Label cans, not people. I treat people equally. I'm people-driven first," said Schuholz. "It doesn't matter if you walk into City Hall or a restaurant. I'm a customer."

Being an advocate for the disabled is a mission for Schuholz, 47. A member of Westland's Disabilities Concerns Commission since 2005, Schuholz is currently the chairman and also works 24 hours a week as a peer mentor advocate at Community Living Services in Wayne.

Born with a developmental disability, Schuholz was 2 years old

when his father left and his mother subsequently had a difficult time caring for him.

"The system says you can't take care of your kid and they put you into an institution," said Schuholz, who was placed in the now-closed Plymouth Center when he was 6 years old. "I was fortunate when I got out after four years. That is no place for no one to live. It was like being behind walls - things went on that shouldn't have."

The change came one day after Schuholz met a woman named Alice Saules, who had a son at the Plymouth Center.

"I patted her on the shoulder. I said I wanted to get out of there, that I wanted a home," said Schuholz. "She said she'd see what she could do. A month goes by and then she said I was going to a home. She got me to a foster family. I was so

happy."

Schuholz lived with his foster family - an elderly couple who are now deceased - in Farmington Hills for 15 years. As time passed, he said, he was able to get more into the community and rehabilitated himself from the time spent institutionalized, becoming a special education student and graduating from North Farmington High School.

"Some foster families collect their checks and keep you locked in the home. They believed in me," said Schuholz. "They had an adopted son and other foster kids. They cared about kids. They were retired and this was a second career for them. I was very lucky to have a foster family."

There are things people can overcome in life, he said, although their

See SCHUHOLZ, Page A2

Woman enters plea in death of her baby

Father convicted of murder in first degree, child abuse

By LeAnne Rogers
 Staff Writer

A Westland man has been convicted of first-degree murder and two counts of felony child abuse in the death of his infant son.

Antonio Pepalonia Brandon, 23, was found guilty as charged Tuesday following a jury trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

The baby's mother Nicole Susanne Roberts, 20, had previously entered a guilty plea to second-degree murder and one count of first-degree child abuse in the death of Kayden Brandon, age 2 1/2 months. Roberts was scheduled to be sentenced Wednesday by Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Craig Strong to to 18-40 years in prison on the murder count and a concurrent sentence for child abuse.

Facing a mandatory sentence of life in prison without a chance of parole, Brandon is scheduled for sentencing on July 15 before Strong, who presided over the trial.



Nicole Roberts

See DEATH, Page A2

Fireworks complaints skyrocket

By LeAnne Rogers
 Staff Writer

An ordinance reflecting new state restrictions on the hours for discharging fireworks is likely to be adopted by the Westland City Council Monday so it will be in effect for the July 4 holiday.

The changes in the fireworks law prohibits use of fireworks from midnight to 8 a.m. on legally permitted days. The exception would be for the New Year's Day holiday, when fireworks would be allowed from midnight until 1 a.m.

"This addresses the provision that people most complained about," said Westland City Attorney James Fausone, as the ordinance was introduced for a first reading earlier this month.

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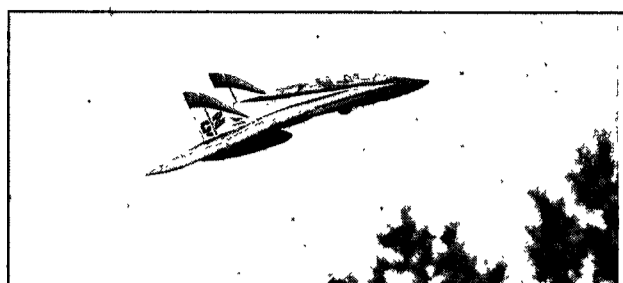
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TAKING TO THE SKY



Dave Schneck shows off his CAP 232 plane during the Signal Seekers RC Club's fourth annual Friends and Family Day Saturday. PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



David Schneck's Scimitar plane takes to the air during Signal the Friends and Family Day Saturday.

Signal Seekers introduce aviation to newcomers

By Sue Mason
Staff Writer

A late afternoon shower may have brought an abrupt end to the Michigan Signal Seekers RC Club's fourth annual open house Saturday, but not before Alex Parkyn showed what it takes to be No. 1 in the nation in discus, or hand launched, remote controlled gliders.

A member of the U.S. F3K junior team, Parkyn stopped by to demonstrate the sport he took up three years ago. Displaying the grace of a discus thrower, Parkyn spun around several times before sending his carbon fiber and Kevlar glider skyward. It's no simple feat, considering the plane has a six-foot wing span.

"It took a lot of practice and learning about how the atmosphere works," said Parkyn. "The goal is to find a good thermal and stay up an hour."

A.J. Jaffe of Westland also used his hands to man the controls of his Thunder Tiger Rapture E720 helicopter that zipped around the Signal



Matt Komar of Westland experiences the joy of flying using the buddy flyer program with Dale Hatcher of Dearborn Heights.

Seekers airfield off Henry Ruff in Westland.

Jaffe moved here from Pennsylvania for his dream job, working at Experience RC in Livonia. His passion is RC helicopters and competing in aerobatics.

"It's challenging and difficult," said Jaffe, who put his helicopter through its paces for spectators. It did barrel

"I do fairly well," he said. "I can't imagine having something like this when I started flying. Technology has just accelerated development so much. There's no ceiling with these things. They go further than you can see it."

In attendance

The fourth annual Friends and Field Day

"We had close to 15 Cub Scouts here," said club president Scott Pastchen of Livonia. "We had Pack 440 from Canton and Pack 865 out of Westland. They came to visit and helped out."

"Once I went straight down, one time it went up and down and up and down," said Grant Pierfelice of Canton who enjoyed his second expe-

tion. The whole purpose is to get a younger crowd into remote controlled aviation."

The club got its start in the early 1960s as a nonprofit organization with the purpose of building, instructing, promoting, advancing, and ultimately flying model aircraft. It's chartered by the Academy of Model Aeronautics and currently has about 80 members.

Its airfield is located in what had been the gardens for Wayne County Hospital-Eloise. Ford Motor Co. bought the land in 1995 and lets the club use space for its airfield. The club has a 400-foot landing strip and a half-mile of clear airspace in all directions. Club members, including instructors, are usually at the field around 5-5:30 p.m. Wednesdays through September.

Headed to Denmark

Parkyn's father Chris, a former Signal Seekers member, watched his son send his glider aloft. The teen will be headed to Herning, Denmark, in mid-July for the 2103 FAI World Championship for Hand-Launched Gliders

after taken top spot in juniors competition in Denver.

"He did two preliminaries and a tryout in Denver," said Chris Parkyn. "You have to be one of the top three juniors in the country to make the team. He was first place."

Although relatively new to discus gliders, Parkyn has flown various types of powered and glider free flight and radio control aircraft most of his life. He's a member of the Detroit Balsa Bugs free flight club. He has competed as a junior in free flight at the national competitions held in Muncie, Ind.

"I'm not nervous about the world championships, I'm excited," said Parkyn of the opportunity to compete as a member of the U.S. junior team.

For more information about the Michigan Signal Seekers RC Club, visit its website at www.michigansignalseekers.org.


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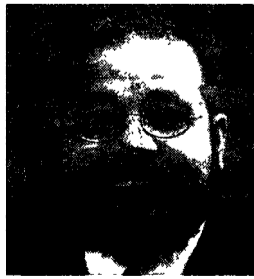
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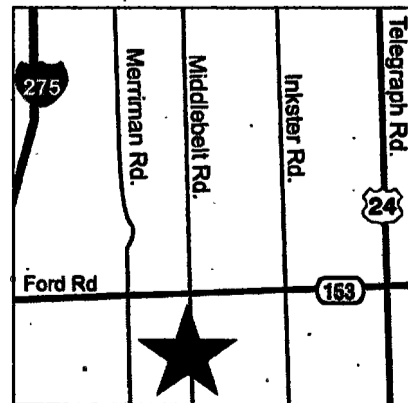
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It was a cool relief Monday when the huge water bucket emptied its contents on the kids about every five minutes. PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CANTRELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wet & wild escape

Finding ways to cool off Monday wasn't hard for the adults and youngsters who hung out at Westland's H2O Zone in Tattan Park.

The spray ground, built in 2009 by the Westland Downtown Development Authority, is a 6,000-square-foot wet and wild playground that offers plenty of relief from the heat.

It has 14 above-ground features, including an 18-foot helicopter that sprays water from its rotor, a large bucket that dumps water on youngsters every five minutes and a 15-foot-long serpent that mists water from its nose.

The spray ground is free of charge and open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week, weather permitting.

The spray ground is just one of two kid-friendly attractions

at the park, located on Carlson just south of Ford Road. Also on site is the always popular Play Planet, a space-themed play structure. Also paid for by the DDA, the play structure was constructed after the city closed Central City Park, including a community-built play structure, due to contamination.

Play Planet is one of the country's largest play structures. It covers more than 30,000 square feet and has rockets, space ships, lunar slides, moon buggies and more to explore.

For more information on parks and recreational activities in Wayne and Westland, go online to www.ci.wayne.mi.us and click on the Parks and Recreation Department tab.



Evelyn Barber of Wayne took a ride on the spray ground's wild alligator.



Lucas Bauer of Westland enjoys being sprayed.



Kallee Somsel of Westland takes aim on her friends with the water gun.



Benjamin Flateau of Westland liked just running at the spray ground.



With temperatures up near 90 degrees Monday, Westland's H2O Zone spray ground was the place to be.

OUR VIEWS

Play it safe

Fireworks can hurt, if not used properly

Fireworks are synonymous with the Fourth of July, and with the holiday just a week away, it is a good time to remind people about fireworks safety.

With Michigan now allowing the sale and use of consumer fireworks like Roman candles, bottle rockets, sky lanterns and other items that leave the ground, more people than ever are putting on their own backyard shows. As a result, safety is critically important.

Fireworks can cause blindness, third-degree burns, permanent scarring and even death. According to the National Council on Firework Safety, 9,300 people suffer serious injuries due to fireworks every year, with 400 losing sight in one or both eyes. Forty percent of injuries are caused by illegal fireworks, and 45 of injuries sustained by children are to those under age 14.

Even fireworks that are labeled as safe can cause injuries. As children, we've all enjoyed waving sparklers, but they have caused more injuries to youngsters under age 5 than any other type of fireworks. Sparklers burn at temperatures of about 2,000 degrees. They're hot enough to melt some metals; imagine what they can do to a child.

The Office of the Michigan State Fire Marshal has some tips to help make Fourth of July fireworks safe. Some are common sense, but still worth repeating.

» Buy ready-made fireworks rather than making your own, even from a kit.

» Make sure an adult is present at all times.

» Don't allow children to operate fireworks, even sparklers.

» Buy only legal fireworks that have a label with instructions for proper use. If your fireworks don't have an instruction label, they're probably illegal to use.

» Choose fireworks that are appropriate for the area you'll be using them in. For example, avoid using rockets or other aerial fireworks in the backyard or a busy street.

» Follow all the directions on the label closely.

» Always use fireworks outside with a bucket of water or hose nearby. Keep fireworks away from dry leaves or other materials that can easily catch on fire.

» Point fireworks away from people. If you're lighting a firework, wear eye protection and don't lean over the firework.

» If a firework doesn't seem to work, do not go over to it or attempt to relight it. If you can reach it with a hose or bucket without getting too close, douse it with water.

» Soak all fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them away.

» If someone gets an eye injury from fireworks, don't rub the eye or attempt to wash it out. Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room. It could make the difference between saving a person's sight, permanent blindness, or significant burns.

Another bit of advice: Avoid buying fireworks in brown paper packaging. That's often a sign that the fireworks were made for professional shows and could pose a danger to consumers.

And if you're planning on putting on your own fireworks show be considerate of your neighbors. While you might consider it OK to do your fireworks show at 2 a.m., your neighbors may not appreciate the noise.

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley last week signed into law what he called a "common sense bill" that allows local governments to prohibit the use of consumer fireworks between midnight and 8 a.m. on the day before, day of, and day after national holidays. People who ignore the rules, could face fines of up to \$500.

Dr. John Hall, manager of the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Analysis and Research, may have said it correctly: "Safe and sane fireworks don't exist. When things go wrong with fireworks, they go very wrong, very fast, far faster than any fire protection provisions can reliably respond."

This Fourth of July play it safe. Leave the pyrotechnics to the professionals. It's better to be safe than sorry.

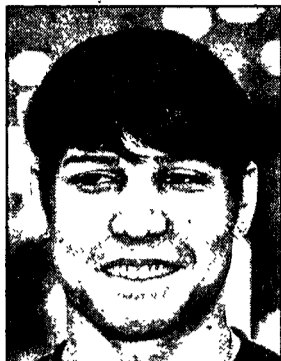


The professional fireworks displays, which always attract large crowds, are a safe way. FILE PHOTO

COMMUNITY VOICE

How do you feel about an online sales tax?

We asked this question at Westland Shopping Center in Westland.



"I'm not really for it. We're already paying for shipping."

Nick Cooper
Dearborn Heights



"We pay enough for shipping and handling. It would be a ripoff to charge tax on top of that. We pay enough as it is."

Mary Cooper
Dearborn Heights



"I guess I'd say yes. I think it's only fair."

Jessica Dishew
Garden City



"I guess so. If people paid sales tax, they might not spend as much online."

Eric Price
Canton

LETTERS

Help Yankee Air

Observer and Eccentric: Attention Bob Hynes
Re: B-24 Bomber Plant at Willow Run

If all the Michigan veterans who fought in World War II were here not to voice their opinion they would all agree on the importance of the B-24 Bomber and the role it played helping to end the war in Europe.

The historic bomber plant at Willow Run, where over 8,000 planes were built by Rosie the Riveter, is epic!

Some of us who had an opportunity to see an air show at Willow Run took the old bomber plant for granted and expected that it would always be a part of the Yankee Air Force Museum, as it should be. Your article, Mr. Hynes, featured the late Sonny Elliot, who became a prisoner of war after being shot down from his B-24. It's just one of thousands of examples of bravery in action fought by veterans male and female.

My interest in your article is largely because four of my brothers served in World War II, brothers who were too young to travel the world in conditions not fit for a pig, in most respects. One brother was killed at the young age of 22 and is buried in France. Another brother returned home in a body cast, another deaf from the shelling and another afflicted with frozen feet. They were all proud to serve and make sacrifices. Veterans to the end! Many parents lost sons and daughters over there in countries they hardly studied about in school. These parents had hopes and dreams for their kids college, marriage, children, grandchildren. So many sacrifices were made by so many people.

The planes did the job they were built to do and earned the nickname "The Liberator." General Motors, Ford and Chrysler need to step up and say "thank you" to the veterans who not only served in the war, but came home, bought their vehicles and even worked in their factories. They all benefited from the war and the end result. I hope they realize the importance of giving back to the veterans and the Yankee Air Force Museum. It's time to step up to the plate and preserve a monumental piece of Michigan history.

Agnes Camilleri
Westland

Explanation needed

OK, we know what Bob Ficano's intent is and we know Benny is running for mayor of Detroit, but can someone, anyone from the Wayne County Commission explain to us, the citizens of Wayne County, how you can justify spending over \$300 million on a jail in downtown Detroit.

We've known for years that Mike Ilitch was looking for a place to build a new hockey arena. Couldn't any of you figure out that maybe, just maybe, he would have bought that land for a tidy sum and you, in all your wisdom, could build a jail with that money on a different site. But then that makes sense and none of your decisions ever make sense.

How about approving the WCCC security contract. You let Benny pay his best friend a \$50K consulting fee and his brother becomes the head of that security firm. The good news there is, your giving Benny a leg up on how to run the city of Detroit.

Again, I beg the citizens of

SEND US YOUR VIEWS

We welcome your Letter to the Editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We may edit for clarity, space and content. Submit letters by the following formats:
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Fax: (313) 223-3318
Email: smason@hometownlife.com

Blog: You may also let your opinions be heard with your own blog at hometownlife.com.

Deadline: Letters must be received by 9 a.m. Monday to be published in the Thursday edition.

Wayne County to remember this at election time. If the candidate has incumbent, next to his or her name, that means they were part of this debacle and you must decide if you want them back. I know I don't.

I want to apologize to the GC City Council for trying to save money by using less water.

You caught me and raised my rates so now instead of saving money for using less, I will pay more. What's next? Charging me more taxes for not putting out my garbage. Maybe you could put a toll booth up on the park's walking path. How about a pay to enter turnstile at City Hall.

Skip Wehrle
Garden City

Hold line on pensions

First I would like to offer my condolence to the Woehlke family. Mr. Woehlke and his family are in our prayers.

To the City Council and Westland pension board, I commend your honest and sincere attempt to offer the Woehlke family heartfelt monetary reparation for their loss. I believe you will use your private funds to follow through on your offer to increase their pension even, if public funds are not allowed.

Many in the city have offered what they can afford during these tough economic times. The citizens of Westland have always been great during public fundraisers for families in need. Westlanders are, and will always be, neighborly and offer above and beyond whatever they can.

That said, I must remind the City Council they have been elected to be fiscally responsible with public funds. Many citizens have lost benefits, pensions and are accepting pay cuts to keep their jobs and many are still losing their jobs. In some cases, both spouses work two jobs to make ends meet. Many single moms are having to take a second job to put food on the table for their children.

We are compassionate people, but once government sets a precedence, where do we stop giving handouts. Many citizens don't trust government management of public dollars and feel our city leaders are paid too much. Many feel government has forgotten the value of the dollar. Pensions are becoming a benefit of the past only offered to unions and government employees. Many professionals in dangerous employment are only offered insurance in which they pay the premiums.

I was talking to my veteran buddy who did three tours be-

tween Iraq and Afghanistan. He told me our young soldiers being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan are not offered a pension unless they serve 20 years. Even if they see action, unless they serve 20 years, they do not receive a pension. If a soldier dies in action, the spouse only receives a one lump sum payment, no guaranteed pension.

My deepest condolence goes out to our lost hero's in the armed forces and our first responders. I'll never understand why government officials are paid more than they are.

I recommend the City Council reduce their pay or pension to cover any pension increase. Otherwise please refrain from increasing any pension.

C. Manzo
Westland

Thanks for support

The Franklin High School Senior All Night Party would like to thank all of the businesses and organizations that helped make our party for the Class of 2013 a great success! We could not have done it without your help. Please make it a priority to frequent the businesses and organizations that donate and give back to their community.

Jimmy Johns - Plymouth Road - Livonia, Biggy Coffee, Antonio's Pizza - Westland, Livonia Merribowl, Chili's - Wonderland, Livonia Pat Milliken Ford, Benny's Pizza - Westland, Daly's Restaurant, Fat Kat's Pizza - Livonia, Nick at Night DJ, Luigi's - Livonia, Cardwell Florist, Bed, Bath and Beyond - Westland, Livonia Education Association, Busch's Market - Livonia, Focal Point, Sorrello's - Livonia, Livonia Goodfellows, Valentino's - Livonia, Livonia Parks and Recreation, state Rep. John Walsh, Livonia Paraprofessional Association, IKEA - Canton, Livonia Youth Commission, 7-Eleven, Webster PTA, Walgreen's, Livonia Anniversary Committee, Franklin Athletic Boosters and Franklin Band Boosters.

If anyone was left out, please accept our deepest apologies.

Becky Wood and the Franklin Senior All Night Committee

Don't profile suspects

The First Amendment right to free speech is a wonderful concept but it is a sad day when it is used without logic or justice to attack others. The

Assigning blame to all Muslims for the Boston bombings is malicious. Our worst act of domestic terror, the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building (168 dead), was carried out by a Catholic, Army veteran and gun rights supporter. Must we be "vigilant and skeptical of those around us" who are Catholic, veterans or gun rights advocates? That is silly.

In Michigan, our worst act of school violence (38 elementary school children and 6 adults dead) was carried out by a farmer and former school board member. It is nonsensical to view farmers and school board members as "our worst enemies

As a person who has lived and worked abroad with Hindus and Sikhs, Buddhists and Muslims, I just find some of the biases among a few of my fellow Americans so wrong headed. We need a little more of Abraham Lincoln's vision, "With malice toward none, with charity for all..." Let's live and work together with grace.

James Pearson
Highland

OBSERVER

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Brian Cheesman of Canton swings on the tee for the 18th hole. He's watched by Chuck Duckwall of Battle Creek.

PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pro-am helps fund operating room

By Brad Kadrich
Staff Writer

Much of the work was already done Monday when golfers took to Pheasant Run Golf Club in Canton for the 16th annual St. Joe's Pro-Am, what with some \$140,000 of the \$150,000 goal already having been reached.

But that didn't stop more than 200 golfers on 54 teams, including more than 50 professionals, from finishing the job, helping to raise money to benefit the new St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Outpatient Surgery Center the hospital is building. Hospital officials said the state-of-the-art hybrid operating room will allow cardiologists, radiologists and cardiac, cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons to coordinate procedures for patients who need intensive heart and vascular interventions.

And the pro-am is a big part of making it happen, according to St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor CEO Rob Casalou, who said the tournament will raise "about 10 percent" of the funding needed.

"It's the leading edge of heart treatment. ... We can do surgery and interventional care in the same room," Casalou said. "This tournament has funded a lot of benefits to patients in Ann Arbor and Canton over



Rob Casalou, president and CEO of St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor and Livingston, said Canton's Pheasant Run is the perfect place to hold the fundraiser.



Hockey Great Ted Lindsay didn't play, but was on hand as chairman emeritus of the fundraiser.

the years."

The celebrity pro-am drew stars from a variety of areas, most notably hockey players. Detroit Red Wings legend Ted Lindsay serves as the tournament's chair emeritus, while former Red Wings Stanley Cup champion Joe Kocur was among Monday's celebrity players, as was defenseman James Wisniewski of the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Other celebrities

supporting the cause were 2010 Olympic ice dancing champions Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, sports radio personality Jeff Lesson and health reporter Lila Lazarus.

Lazarus, a television personality who has formed Orchard Lake-based Lila Productions, does health documentaries with St. Joseph Mercy. She said the tournament is a "great cause" and it gives her a chance to see the doctors with whom she works on-camera in a different setting.

"It's a great chance to see the doctors I work with outside the operating room," said Lazarus, who won a local Emmy for her documentary on the meningitis outbreak. "And it's a great cause. In life, you're given two hands - one to help yourself and one to help others."

Casalou said the hospital holds its annual fundraiser at Pheasant Run because Canton is a big part of the communi-

ty the hospital serves, being home to the outpatient facility St. Joseph Mercy Canton.

"We consider Canton our community," Casalou said. "Pheasant Run has been so supportive of us. I can't imagine having the tournament anywhere else."

Canton Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Paden acknowledged St. Joseph Mercy as a "good partner" and said the relationship between event and course is a natural.

"St. Joe's is a huge supporter of the Canton community and Pheasant Run is a terrific golf course," Paden said. "Anytime we can get this crowd of people into our community, it's a plus."

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'Wicked,' weird, deadly: Villainous plants among us

Summer's heady days are upon us, and many gardens in the area are bursting forth with verdant abundance. Few of us may give consideration to our blooming beauties beyond their obvious aesthetic and fragrant contributions to our landscapes. Some of these natural charmers, however, harbor perilous secrets within their tender shoots and leaves.

Author Amy Stewart explores the dark side of such plants in her book, *Wicked Plants: the Weed that Killed Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities*.

Her detailed examples of unfortunate plant victims include Shakespeare's Juliet (she consumes a mandrake-laced sleeping potion) and the Greek philosopher Socrates, who was felled by a drink of *Conium maculatum*, or poison hemlock.

Here are some nefarious no-goodniks that may be more familiar: Joe-Pye Weed, the beautiful pink wildflower blooming in your garden, has a deadly relative, white snakeroot (*Eupatorium rugosum*). A delicate enchanter decked out in fuzzy white flowers, white snakeroot is native to Michigan and other Midwestern states. According to Stewart, frontier settler Nancy Hanks Lincoln fell ill in 1818, a victim of "milk sickness" caused by drinking milk produced by cows that had eaten this killer plant.

Does your garden include rhubarb, its crimson color beckoning from your vegetable patch? Delicious stalks, but deadly leaves. What about the succulent kalanchoe brightening your kitchen windowsill with clusters of cheerful flowers? It contains com-

pounds that can damage a cat's cardiac system. And be careful when digging up horseradish to serve for dinner - aconite, also known as monkshood, has roots that appear very similar to those of horseradish, but the monkshood roots contain aconitine, a powerful alkaloid that causes nerve paralysis and death.

Stewart's easy-to-use volume, complete with detailed etchings of each garden villain, is fun and essential reading for any backyard grower. Her book is a helpful reminder to enjoy the fruits of your gardening labor, but approach your plants with caution. Behind those glossy leaves and beguiling flowers may lurk a callous killer!

Find *Wicked Plants: the Weed that Killed Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities* and more gardening titles at your Wayne Public Library, where you can Dig into Reading (adults and children) or delve Beneath the Surface (teens) with summer reading programs for all ages.

Just a reminder: The Wayne Public Library will have new hours of operation beginning on July 1. The library will be open Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Thursday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. The library is closed Sunday and Monday.

The library will be closed on Thursday, July 4.

Library Central was compiled by Kathleen G. Kozakowski, Adult Services Librarian. The Wayne Public Library is at 3737 S. Wayne Road, Wayne. For more information, call 734-721-7832 or go online to www.wayne.lib.mi.us.

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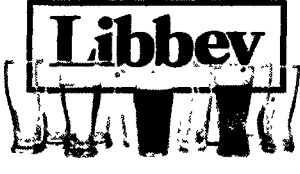
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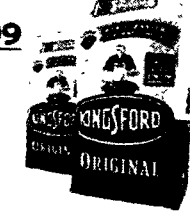
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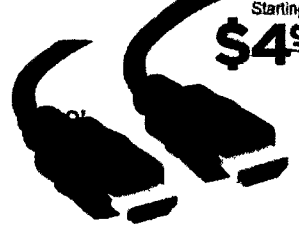
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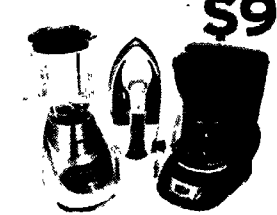
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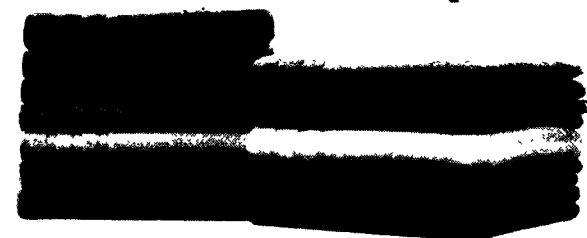
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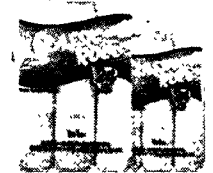
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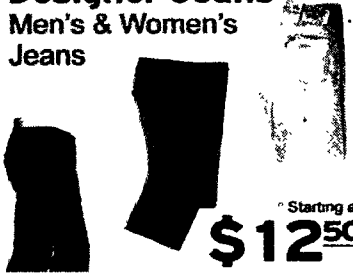
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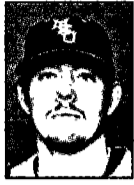
Martin gets his shot at pro ball

Farmington High grad was NCAA Division II Pitcher of the Year at Minnesota State

By Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

As an athlete and pitcher, Harvey Martin is accustomed to challenges and having to prove his ability and worthiness. His experience at that has prepared him for the next rung on the ladder of his baseball career.

Martin, who starred at Far-



Martin

mington High School and Minnesota State University, is starting that process all over again with the Milwaukee Brewers farm team in Helena, Mont. He had hoped to be drafted after being named an NCAA Division II All-America and national Pitcher of the Year. He was

See MARTIN, Page B2



Harvey Martin of Farmington pitches for Minnesota State in the NCAA Division II tournament. MINNESOTA STATE ATHLETICS

Maybury run set July 27

The Northville Road Runners will stage their annual 8-kilometer and 1-mile Classic run-walk Saturday, July 27, at Maybury State Park, located off the Eight Mile entrance (one mile west of Beck).

The event, which will benefit the Friends of Maybury, starts at 5 p.m. with the 1-miler (pre-registration cost \$5) followed by the 8K (pre-registration cost \$25) on dirt and paved trails at 5:30 p.m.

The 8K participants will receive a tech T-shirt and all children in the 1-mile will receive a finishers medal. Awards will be in five-year increments.

Family fun includes a story hour, face painting and hands-on activities during the race. Post-race activities include pizza, live music, libations, homemade baked goods and awards ceremony.

Application forms can be downloaded at www.northvilleroadrunners.org; or you can register online at www.active.com

Race day registration begins at 3 p.m. (\$35 for the 8K and \$8 for the 1-mile). A recreational park passport is required at the gate and day passes are available.

For more information, call Peg Campbell at 248-417-5710; or email peggyacampbell@gmail.com.

Miss Softball: Ladywood's Fidge sings a happy tune

By Brad Emons
Observer Staff Writer

Celeste Fidge admits she wasn't a born hitter.

But the way the Livonia Ladywood third baseman crushed the ball during her senior year was a far cry from her days with the 12-and-under summer league team Livonia Storm.

"Actually it's a funny story," said the newly crowned Miss Softball. "When I was younger I was used to be at the end of the batting lineup. I really didn't have much interest in the sport of softball until I had this one coach (Jeremy Avery), who gave me a bunch of instructions to become a better hitter. And finally, one time when I made contact with the ball, it went right over the outfielder's head, and I said, 'I think I'm going to give this sport a try.'"

Fidge, who has signed with the University of Toledo, was named the Field Player of the Year by the Michigan High School Softball Coaches Association, while Sterling Heights Stevenson's Alyssa Huntley earned Pitcher of the Year honors by the MHSSCA.

Fidge, who hit .500 this season with five homers, 18 doubles and 35 RBI, became the second straight Ladywood player to earn the Miss Softball award joining former teammate Briana Combs, who was the 2012 MHSSCA Pitcher of the Year.

"I was very much shell-shocked," Fidge said of the honor. "I was not expecting to get it at all, but very happy. My teammates were really supportive of me getting it, too. I think it that was the best part of it was everyone else's reaction. It was a good feeling."

Ladywood coach Scott Combs informed Fidge of the honor last Monday, but made the announcement a little suspenseful.

"It was funny the way he presented it," Fidge said. "Early on that day he said, 'I have a secret to tell you.' I said, 'Oh, really, this should be great.' Then he calls me up later that evening and said, 'Go get your mom and your dad.' I was like, 'OK,' and he told me I was Miss Softball."

Fidge, who lives in Westland, attended Nankin Mills Elementary in grades K-four before going to Livonia St. Michael's School for grades five-eight. She began playing organized



Livonia Ladywood's Celeste Fidge was named Miss Softball Field Player of the Year. BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

softball at age 9 starting with the Storm's 10- through 14-and-under teams before moving over to Computware's 16- and 18-and-under squads.

Meanwhile, she landed at Ladywood as a ninth-grader where she started four straight seasons earning Division 2 first-team All-State honors three straight years helping the Blazers to an MHSAA state title in 2012 and a Final Four berth in

2013 as the Blazers finished 32-10 overall.

"She came in at a time four years ago when there were some veterans on the team and some people that had played heavy travel ball," Scott Combs recalled. "As a freshman, she was a totally different person. I don't think she said three words her freshman year around the team."

"I was very much shell-shocked. I was not expecting to get it at all, but very happy. ... It was a good feeling."

CELESTE FIDGE
Miss Softball winner

See FIDGE, Page B2

Bucks stop Rovers, 4-1

The Michigan Bucks avenged their lone setback this summer in the Premier Development League with a 4-1 win Saturday over the host River City Rovers (Ky.) in a match played at the Shelby County Athletic Complex.

Gerald Ben and Drew Ruggles each collected a goal and assist as the first-place Bucks improved to 7-1-0 (21 points) in the Great Lakes Division of the PDL's Central Conference.

Dion Peters and Nathan Steinwascher also scored for the Bucks, while brothers Matt and Nick Walker drew assists.

Bucks goalkeeper Adam Grinwis, who made three saves, had his shutout bid spoiled in the 89th minute by the Rovers' Luis Ramirez.

The Bucks will go after their seventh consecutive win beginning at 7:30 p.m. Thursday when they face the Toronto Lynx at Pontiac's Ultimate Soccer Arenas.

Tickets, available at the gate, are half-priced at \$5. For more information, visit www.bucksoccer.com.

Hole-in-one

Commerce Township resident Mike Lee registered a hole-in-one June 21 on Glenhurst Golf Course's 120-yard fourth hole.

The 70-year-old Lee, who has been playing golf for 50 years, used a seven iron on his memorable shot.

He carded a nine-hole round of 46. It was Lee's first ace.

Metro West skaters earn State Games gold medal

'The key was ... everybody bought into the system'

By Ed Wright
Staff Writer

Silver is nice, but it wouldn't suffice for the 2013 Metro West high school hockey team heading into last weekend's talent-rich Meijer State Games tournament in Grand Rapids.

The squad of Observerland-area icers met its gold standard on Sunday when it skated away with the top prize at the four-day competition after laying a thorough thumping on Team South, 10-0, in the title tilt.

Metro West was the runner-up in the 2012 tournament, which features a vast majority of Michigan's elite prep hockey



Members of the Metro West hockey team celebrate after winning the gold medal at the 2013 Meijer State Games in Grand Rapids.

talent. "The key to our success was that everybody bought into the

system," said Metro West head coach Ryan Ossenmacher, who was orchestrating the team for

the fourth time. "Most of these players are top-line guys on their high school teams, but some were asked to play on the third or fourth lines because we're so deep. Everybody accepted his role, which is why we were able to win the gold."

Metro West was so dominant in the championship game that the contest was halted after two periods when the mercy rule kicked in.

"We just came out flying and we never let up," Ossenmacher said, referring to the gold medal game.

Ossenmacher's skaters advanced to the final after smothering Team West, 3-0, on Saturday.

The champions opened with a

See GOLD, Page B5

MARTIN

Continued from Page B1

terribly disappointed when that didn't happen, but the Brewers called shortly after the draft ended to offer him a free-agent contract.

That was late in the day Saturday, June 8. He packed his belongings on Sunday and was on a plane Monday for Montana and the Advanced Rookie League.

"It's kind of a blessing in disguise," Martin said, adding he begins the next phase of his career with an inner chip on his shoulder. "I knew I would play professional baseball at some point from all the feedback I was getting, but free agency wasn't the first priority on my list."

"It's a motivating factor for me. I've always had to prove myself, at Central (Michigan) and Minnesota State. It won't be easy here and I don't expect it to be. Going through the things I did in college - the surgery, the transfer, the ups and downs during my career - put me in a good mindset to handle the free agency deal."

Regardless of how he got there, Martin has his foot in the door. He plans to make the most of his opportunity and, hopefully, move up the chain of minor league teams.

"I can't change the fact of free agency," he said. "I told the Brewers, 'I promise I will not take a day off all the time I'm here. I'll keep working and getting my nose dirty.'"

"I don't have the luxury of being an 18-year-old who signed for a lot of money. It's great playing here, but my goal is to be in the big leagues."

The season just started last week for the Helena Brewers, who were 1-3 in the Pioneer League standings at the ARL level. Martin's first appearance went well, however.

He pitched two scoreless innings of late-game relief Friday against the Missoula (Mont.) Osprey in the team's



Harvey Martin was 19-1 over two seasons and helped the Mavericks win two Northern Sun Conference titles. MINNESOTA STATE ATHLETICS

terrible win.

"I struck out the side in the first inning, which was kinda awesome to start my pro career," Martin said. "The next inning was a real quick inning with a couple pop-ups and a ground ball."

"There were a lot of nerves in that first inning, but I got it out of the way. When you have a successful first inning, you feel like you belong a little bit. Obviously, it's something to build on."

Big sky country

In the short time he's been there, Martin is enjoying the experience in Helena and reveling in the knowledge he's actually playing professional baseball.

"It's pretty awesome," he said. "Every now and then, I sit back during practice and realize where I'm at and kinda living my dream. We wear Brewers across our chests and it's a cool feeling every day to realize I'm employed by a Major League baseball team. It's been a great time so far."

The 6-foot-1, 195-pound Martin transferred two years ago from Central Michigan to MSU. He played two of four seasons at CMU where his mound time was limited to spot appearances in relief. He was redshirted in 2008 and had Tommy John surgery on his pitching arm in 2010.

He took a chance and left for Mankato, Minn., with something to prove as a potential starting pitcher. He was 10-0 and was named the Newcomer of the Year in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference last year.

"I definitely did what I set out to do by leaving and getting the opportunity to pitch," Martin said. "I was given the opportunity to do something that wasn't going to be given at Central Michigan. I had the opportunity to do that at Minnesota State and it worked out. I'm very thankful for that."

Repeat performance

The challenge facing Martin at the start of the 2013 season was to prove the previous one was not a fluke, that he could back it up by having another great year. He did that and more.

The right-handed Martin posted a 9-1 record with a 2.06 earned run average and was nationally ranked in several categories. He was second in strikeout-to-walk ratio with 91 and seven, respectively, in 78.2 innings.

He helped lead the 42-9 Mavericks to a second straight NSIC championship and consecutive runner-up finishes in the NCAA Division II College World Series. Martin's only loss in his two years at MSU occurred in the final game of

this year's CWS. Top-ranked Tampa won, 8-6.

"I don't regret going to Central at all," he said. "I earned a degree there and made a ton of great friends. In going to Minnesota, I thought it was kinda crazy, going to a Division II school where it was colder than Michigan. My decision to leave was probably the toughest I had to make, but it was the best decision I've made in my baseball career."

And the 2013 accolades piled up for Martin, who was named to the All-America first team and was selected the national Pitcher of the Year by Rawlings/ABCA, Daktronics and the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association. He also was the NSIC's Pitcher of the Year and one of eight finalists for the Tino Martinez Award as the top player in Division II.

"If I had been told all of this was going to happen to me when I left (CMU), I probably would have laughed about it," Martin said. "Awards come with team success. If a team is going to the national championship, you're going to have some All-Americans on it. I was just fortunate to be one of those guys."

"Award-wise, that was never the goal of leaving. The goal was to pitch and try to get into professional baseball. Anything else was an added bonus. I'm where I wanted to be."

Place in history

Martin ends his college career as the most decorated player in MSU baseball history and the first to win the Pitcher of the Year honor.

"His accolades on the field won't overshadow the impact he left off the field," MSU coach Matt Magers said, regarding Martin's ability to motivate his teammates. "His mental approach and passion for the game enabled him to compete at a level most players never attain. Despite only playing here for two seasons, Harvey will go down as one of the best to ever wear the Mav-

erick uniform."

Martin's most memorable game was this year's regional final in which MSU defeated Missouri Western, one of the best hitting teams in the country, according to Martin. He pitched a complete, 10-inning game and the Mavericks won, 4-1.

"Obviously, that catapulted me into a lot of the awards I got at the end of the season," Martin said. "To help lead the team into the College World Series was a lot of fun. I loved playing those guys at Minnesota State. We were fortunate to host the regional two years in a row and play in the (CWS) twice."

Moving forward

Not only has the 24-year-old Martin moved on from a good memory like that, he has put the disappointment of not being drafted behind him, too. The bottom line is he's playing pro ball now.

"I thought I was going to get drafted last year and it didn't work out, which made me a stronger person - to keep chasing it, developing patience and working toward what you want," Martin said. "A lot of people wanted to see more strikeouts out of me. I think that's why I was national Pitcher of the Year, because my strikeout-to-walk ratio was up there."

"One thing that hurt me in the draft was that I was older and had arm surgery. Teams aren't interested in older guys who've had arm surgery. I thought, with the season I put up there, I couldn't be denied the chance. I thought 250 innings was enough to show what I could do."

"If I never played in the Major Leagues, I wanted to leave with people saying, 'Harvey Martin was the best pitcher I've seen all season.' If I did that and made sure Year 2 wasn't a fluke, I thought I'd get a shot to be where I am. It's still sinking in. I haven't taken a day for granted and don't plan to do that."



FIDGE

Continued from Page B1

I'd see her walking around the infield or the outfield singing to herself, so it got to be a joke between me and her. But that made her relax. She was a little bit scared and intimidated by the rest of the team as a freshman, but we threw her right into the fire and we said, 'You're going to have to hit.' She was designated hitter the first year. I said, 'You're going to have to improve your arm and you're going to play third base, so stop being afraid of the ball.' She took all those things and worked on them day-after, day-after, day, and I think she has one of the best arms in the state of Michigan. I really do."

Fidge proved to be a sponge, soaking up all the instruction she could gather. "I told her, 'You're arm gets stronger by throwing hard,'" Combs said. "You're going to be a little sore, but work at it.' She took it to heart and turned out to be one of the best third basemen I've seen in a long time. She's extremely dependable. In fact, I had to rein her in many, many times. She'd run into fences, ran into bad lips of grass ... roll her ankle a few times. She did it by pure work and saw the other kids around her and said, 'I want to play, I want to excel. I gotta up my work ethic.'"

Fidge will be honored July 24 in the Softball Coaches Association All-Star game at Michigan State University.

She'll be playing summer softball for Finesse before enrolling at Toledo where she plans to study marketing. She also considered Madonna University, but fell in love with the surroundings and the academic support offered at Toledo.

"It touched my heart, I said, 'This is where I want to go,'" Fidge said. "I hope to make my way there. I'm going to have to open a couple of doors to get there, but hopefully I'll make my way there."

Fidge's development during her four years at Ladywood has been re-

markable and a joy for Combs to see.

"Her personality has been an absolute pleasure to see develop," the Ladywood coach said. "Coming from a 14-year-old, little snort-nose kid as a freshman, thrown into the fire, wide-eyed and not knowing what's going on around her, too. ... She's an extremely mature young lady now, a pleasure to talk to and has her goals in her sights and didn't let anybody deter her from it. She wanted to play Division I ball and worked her way into that mix. It's been a great four years. It went by very fast, but her maturity has been off the scale this year and it's been great."

And Fidge will cherish each and every moment playing for the Blazers.

"I would definitely say it's been the best times I've ever had as a Ladywood," she said. "There were such great memories, especially the team."

"All four years everybody was great and supportive. That's really what made Ladywood the best four years."

Fidge enjoys music and art when she's not playing softball. She even bills herself the team's undisputed "Adele."

"She's the team singer although there's a couple other people coming up underneath her that think they can challenge her," Combs said. "We have a little ritual where we put the headphones on at that start of each practice where we walk four or five minutes away from everybody. Everybody goes their own separate way. I'll be raking the field and I can hear her singing over everybody with the earphones on. I can tell that she enjoys it. I would imagine she's in the shower at home singing pretty much all the time."

And while Fidge won't admit to being a born hitter or singer, she can definitely hold her own. "I do like singing and I'm comfortable singing even though I might not be the best at it," said the newly crowned Miss Softball.

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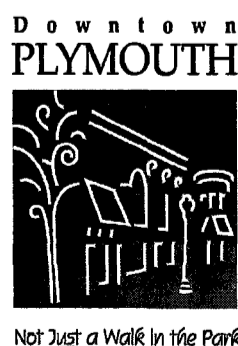
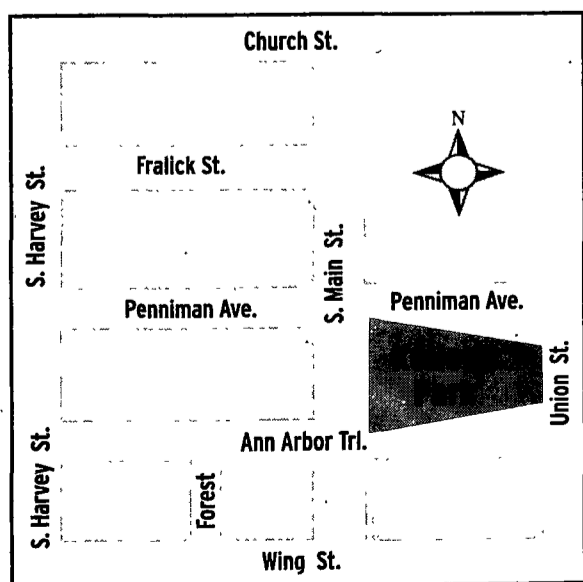
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Adrian-bound



Livonia Stevenson senior forward Carlin O'Malley (front) has verbally committed to play soccer in the fall for Adrian College. Also attending the ceremony was O'Malley's father Ken, Stevenson head coach Chris Grodzicki, assistant coach Jenny Barker, O'Malley's mother Kimberly and Livonia Soccer Club coach Ken Shingledecker.

Winning Warriors



The Plymouth-Canton Warriors 10-and-under baseball team was crowned champion of the NFWB Summer Classic Panther Tournament June 23 in Farmington Hills. Pictured are (front row from left) Miles Washington, Devin Beauchamp, Brendan Kelley, Chase Olson, Logan Hill, Jackson Wertz, (second row from left) Braedon McLaughlin, Andrew Uhlian, Evan Berger, Zachary Blaisdell and Ian Smith.

GOLD

Continued from Page B1
4-1 victory over Team Central on Thursday, one day before rocking Team South, 5-1. Metro West's lone loss was a 5-4 overtime setback to Metro East. "We had five or six guys back who played on the 2012 team, so they were extremely motivated to improve on the silver we won last year," Ossenmacher said.

won it." Familiarity bred success for the team's top three lines. One line consisted of Division 2 state champion Livonia Stevenson's No. 1 line, while another was made up of quarterfinalist Plymouth's best three skaters. The other top line included two NHL draftees. "It would be really hard to single anyone out because everybody played well," Ossenmacher said. Sharing the goal-tending duties were Salem's Parker Godfrey, Livonia Churchill's David Turel and Novi's Austin Petty.

ewright@hometownlife.com

New Lady Ocelots basketball coach signs two recruits

By Brad Emons Staff Writer

New Schoolcraft College women's basketball coach Kara Kinzer has entertained thoughts of putting a "Help Wanted" message on the electronic marquee off Haggerty Road heading into the 2013-14 season. "It's been a struggle, but we'll get there," said Kinzer, who replaced Kevin Brathwaite, who posted a 33-26 record in his two seasons with the Lady Ocelots.



New Schoolcraft College women's basketball coach Kara Kinzer (center) signed her first two recruits, landing Teniece Roberts (left) of Windsor and Victoria Fletcher of Mason (Dansville H.S.).

The 27-year-old Kinzer signed her first two recruits last week landing Victoria Fletcher, a 5-foot-9 guard from Dansville High School, along with Teniece Roberts, a 6-foot center who graduated from Windsor (Ontario) Assumption in 2010. Fletcher was a four-year all-league and all-conference starter in basketball and soccer. "I'm looking for Victoria to be an aggressive player," said Kinzer, who

spent two seasons as an assistant at Oakland Community College. "I would like for her to be able to play the shooting guard and the small forward position." Roberts, who attended a full semester at Schoolcraft, has not played competitive basketball since graduating from high school. She will graduate next May with a science degree. "Teniece is a very quick learner on and off the court," Kinzer said.

"She's a little raw, but she's is really working hard on her fundamentals during the summer workouts." She also has secured two more verbal commitments from a pair of 5-6 point guards - Sara Gammons from Flint Atherton and Chelsea Wesley from Morrice. Among the four players scheduled to return off last year's 8-20 squad, which finished 5-13 in the MCCA's Eastern Conference, include Bri Berbert

(Salem), Alexis Smith (Livonia Franklin), Marwa Sayed and Taylor Bunyak. "I'm expecting a lot from our incoming freshmen with only four returning players," Kinzer said. "The incoming freshmen will have a lot of responsibility on-and-off the court." Kinzer, who lives in Ferndale and works in her family collision shop business in Mount Clemens, played high school basketball at Utica Eisenhower before going on to four-year career at Saginaw Valley State. This is her first head coaching gig after spending the last two seasons as an assistant. Kinzer said she plans on holding summer workouts and open gyms with the hope of landing a few more players. And the door remains open. Any players interested in a look should email the first-year Schoolcraft coach at kkinzer@schoolcraft.edu.

bemons@hometownlife.com 313-222-6851

Rams feel the Sting in trio of setbacks

Danny Essian collected five hits on Sunday leading the Michigan Sting to a double-header sweep of the Michigan Rams in Livonia Collegiate Baseball League action at Bicentennial Park. The Troy High grad, a catcher at Alderson-Broadus College (W.Va.) and son of former Major Leaguer Jim Essian, went 2-for-3 with a run scored as the Sting took the opener, 3-1, followed by a 3-for-3 effort with two runs scored in the nightcap in a 4-3 victory. The Sting improved to 9-7 in league play, while the Rams fall to 7-8-1. Sting starter Kevin Marnon went all seven

innings to win Game One allowing just one run on five hits and two walks. He struck out seven. The Rams' Spencer Goebel, who took the loss, allowed two runs (one earned) in five innings. He allowed two hits, walked three and struck out four. Reliever Donnie Eaton gave up one run on two hits in two innings. Taylor Greztlakowski, Kyle Juscak and Dylan Ahern each knocked in a run for the Sting, while Justin Sherman went 2-for-3 with a double and Trent Drumheller added two hits and one RBI for the Rams. In Game Two, Nathan Weiss pitched all seven

hits and a walk to go along with six strikeouts as the Sting rallied from a 3-0 deficit by scoring three times in the sixth and one in the seventh for the one-run victory. Juscak also went 2-for-4 with a double, while J.P. Maracani went 2-for-3 with a double and two RBI for the Rams. Matt Avromov also added two hits in the loss. Rams starter Evan Piechota (Livonia Stevenson/Madonna University) went 5 1/2 innings, allowing three runs, all unearned, on six hits. He struck out four, walked one and hit a batter. Reliever Jake Gardner, who came on for the final 1 1/2 innings, gave up the game-winning run and took the loss.

STING 3, RAMS 2: On Monday, A.J. Jusick pitched a four-hit complete game leading the Michigan Sting (10-7) to an LCLB victory over the Michigan Rams (7-9-1) at Bloomfield Hills Lahser High School. Jusick struck out five, walked one and hit three batters. Rams starter Jake Ballick, who took the loss, went five innings allowing two, earned runs on five hits and two walks. He struck out four before Chris McDonald (Livonia Stevenson/Hillsdale College) pitched as scoreless sixth. Jeff Segal went 2-for-3 with a run scored, while Danny Essian added two RBI. Trent Drumheller hit a two-run homer in the fifth for the Rams. RAMS 11, LIGHTNING 6: Brett Ramirez (Salem/MU) knocked in three runs while Miles Sorise went 2-for-3 and scored twice as the Michigan Rams (7-6-1) downed the Michigan Lightning (1-13) in a game called after 6 1/2 innings due to a 2 1/2 time limit Friday at Bicentennial Park. Ben Yax, Tyler Baker and Brandon Katta also knocked in runs for the Rams, who erased a 4-2 deficit with nine runs in the fourth inning. Kirk Drumheller, in relief of starter Jeff Sorenson (Stevenson/Wayne State), pitched the final 3 1/2 innings to pick up the victory. Brent Marzion (Livonia Franklin) took the loss for the Lightning. Willard Brown went 3-for-4 with two RBI in a losing cause.

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German, American dancers share stage at Livonia Spree

By Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Debbie Felton's Academy of Dance will add a little German flair to its annual appearance on the main stage Saturday at Livonia Spree.

The Academy's competitive dance team will share performance time with Ballettschule Feibicke, a group of dancers from Berlin, Germany.

"At Spree we'll do jazz, contemporary, tap — we're bringing a little of everything," said Janet Coppola, the Academy's office manager. She suspects the German troupe will perform ballet and contemporary dances.

"Their ballet is more contemporary. Their pieces may have a more modern look. People love to watch other people express themselves. I don't think it matters if it's jazz, ballet or tap. Having these young ladies from Germany will be an experience for people in Livonia."

Ballettschule Feibicke is in Michigan this week through an 18-year-old exchange program with Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, which is located in Twin Lake north of Muskegon. The German and American dancers take turns visiting each others' countries every other year. The German dancers have toured Michigan nine times since the program began.

Sarah Jozwiak, a dancer at Debbie Felton's Academy of Dance, attended Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp last summer and performed in four European countries through the exchange program. She and other troupe members stayed with Ballettschule Feibicke host families while in Berlin. Her mother, Terri, arranged for Ballettschule Feibicke to



Members of the senior troupe at Debbie Felton's Academy of Dance perform a jazz routine.

participate in Livonia Spree while it's visiting Michigan this month. She also sought host families from the Livonia area.

"I'll have five (dancers) at my house," Terri Jozwiak said. "Part of the exchange program is to live with an American family. We do have a few activities planned while they are here. We'll have a picnic and a pool party and after the performance we'll stay at Spree so they can ride the rides. On

Friday we're going downtown to tour the Opera House, see Campus Martius, the DIA, the river front."

Ballettschule Feibicke leaves Livonia on Sunday and heads to Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and then Ann Arbor for performances.

The German group and the Academy's competitive dance team each will perform for 30 minutes from 2:30-3:30 p.m. on the main stage at Spree, which

is held at Ford Field, located at the corner of Farmington Road and Lyndon, in Livonia.

Dancers from Debbie Felton's Academy of Dance have performed at Livonia Spree since 2009.

Coppola said the event, which celebrates Livonia's founding, gives the dance team "great exposure" in the community.

"Eighty percent of our students are from the Livonia

area," Coppola noted. "It gives them a chance to showcase what they do."

She said Livonia Spree also gives dancers an opportunity to "give back" to the community."

For more about Debbie Felton's Academy of Dance, see feltondance.com. For more about Livonia Spree, visit livoniaspree.com. Visit Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp's website at bluelake.org

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Cool Watermelon Cheesecake, Sweet Sliders and Red, White and Blue Treat Pops

SPARKLING SWEETS ON JULY 4TH

Fireworks don't have to be the only party element that makes guests ooh and ah during Fourth of July festivities. With colorful sweets that sparkle and a themed tablescape exploding with red, white and blue, your party is sure to be the best on the block.

"Adding patriotic flair to your Independence Day celebration is easy with the right recipes and decorating accents," said Nancy Siler, vice president of consumer affairs at Wilton. "Put your personal John Hancock on the party by turning traditional summertime foods into amazing sweet treats."

Try these dessert ideas from the Wilton test kitchen for a celebration that ends with a bang:

» Burgers with a sweet bite: Traditional burgers are a staple for summer parties; switch things up with Sweet Sliders and build your burgers with unexpected ingredients. Start with whoopie pies for the buns, add a brownie "patty," roll yellow fruit candies into thin layers for cheese, and top it off with red and yellow Sparkle Gel for ketchup and mustard.

» Playful twist on summer fruit: Make mouths water by serving up slices of delicious watermelon ... cheesecake! Strawberry cheesecake dotted with mini chocolate chips imitates the center of the fruit, and a pistachio and coconut crumble crust mimics the watermelon rind.

» Patriotic treat pops: For the grand finale, nestle Red, White and Blue Treat Pops in a bowl of red Cinnamon Drops. Layer on the festive colors with vanilla cake, colored icing and star-shaped sprinkles. Finish with stars and stripes Rocket Treat Pops Toppers or red, white and blue pinwheels.

For more celebration ideas, visit www.wilton.com.

— Courtesy Family Features

COOL WATERMELON CHEESECAKE

Makes about 12 servings

Crust:
1 ½ cups (16 ounces) roasted salted pistachios
2 cups sweetened flaked coconut
¼ cup granulated sugar
4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted
Leaf green icing color
Filling:
3 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
¾ cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon imitation clear vanilla
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 package (16 ounces) frozen whole strawberries, thawed, pureed and strained (about 1 ½ cups)
1 envelope (¼ ounce) unflavored gelatin
No-taste red icing color
½ cup mini chocolate chips, divided

In food processor, pulse pistachios until coarsely ground. Add coconut, sugar, butter and icing color; pulse until well combined. Press into bottom and ¾ up side of 9-inch springform pan. Refrigerate while making filling.
In large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until light and creamy. Add heavy cream and beat until combined.
In small saucepan, bring strawberry juice just to boiling, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Sprinkle gelatin evenly over top and whisk vigorously to dissolve completely, about 3 minutes. Pour into cream cheese mixture. Add icing color and beat until well combined. Beat in ½ cup mini chocolate chips. Pour into chilled crust. Sprinkle top with remaining chocolate chips. Refrigerate until set, about 3 hours.

SWEET SLIDERS

Makes about 24 Sweet Sliders

Cake Buns:
1 package (16 ounces) yellow cake mix
Eggs, water and vegetable oil to prepare mix
Brownie Patties:
½ cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon water
½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 egg
Toppings:
Shredded coconut
Leaf green icing color
Assorted fruit flavored candies
Red sparkle gel
Yellow sparkle gel

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare whoopie pie pan with vegetable pan spray.

For buns, combine cake mix, eggs, water and oil in large bowl; mix according to package instructions. Fill prepared pan cavities ¾ full with cake batter.

Bake 9 to 11 minutes, or until tops of cake spring back when touched. Cool in pan 10 minutes; remove to cooling grid and cool completely. Repeat with remaining cake batter.

For patties, combine flour and salt in small bowl. In small saucepan, melt butter and sugar with water; stir until sugar is dissolved. Add chocolate chips; stir until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla extract.

In large bowl, beat egg with electric mixer. Add chocolate mixture; mix well. Add flour mixture; stir until just combined. Divide batter evenly between whoopie pie pan cavities, filling about 1/3 full. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out nearly clean. Cool 10 minutes; loosen edges of brownies and remove from pan. Cool completely.

For toppings, mix shredded coconut with leaf green icing color for lettuce. Roll yellow fruit candies into thin layers for cheese. Use red and yellow sparkle gels for ketchup and mustard. To assemble, top cake bun with a brownie patty. Add toppings and finish with second cake bun

RED, WHITE AND BLUE TREAT POPS

Makes about 12 Treat Pops

Whoopie Pie Cakes:
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons butter, softened
½ cup granulated sugar
2 egg whites
1 ½ teaspoons imitation clear vanilla extract
½ cup milk
Filling:
3 cups buttercream icing
Christmas red icing color
Royal blue icing color
Patriotic mix sprinkles
Rocket Treat Pops Toppers

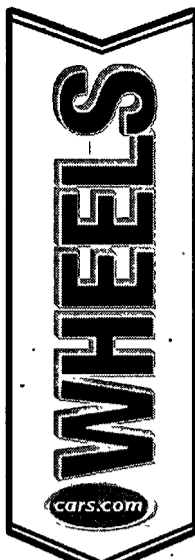
Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare mini whoopie pie pan with vegetable pan spray.

In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder and salt. In large bowl, beat butter and sugar with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add egg whites and vanilla extract and beat until well combined. Alternately add flour mixture and milk in three additions, beating until just combined. Spoon one tablespoon batter into each cavity.

Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until tops of cakes spring back when touched. Cool in pan 3 minutes. Cool completely on cooling grid. In separate small bowls, tint 1 cup buttercream red, 1 cup blue and reserve 1 cup white.

To assemble: Place one cake in bottom of treat pop. Pipe a swirl of blue icing from back edge following the curve of the container to the front, then filling in the center; add sprinkles. Add second cake. Pipe a swirl of white icing; add sprinkles. Top with another cake. Pipe a swirl of red icing. Top with Patriotic Sprinkles or Rocket Treat Pops Toppers.

Tip: Substitute vanilla wafer cookies for whoopie pie cakes.



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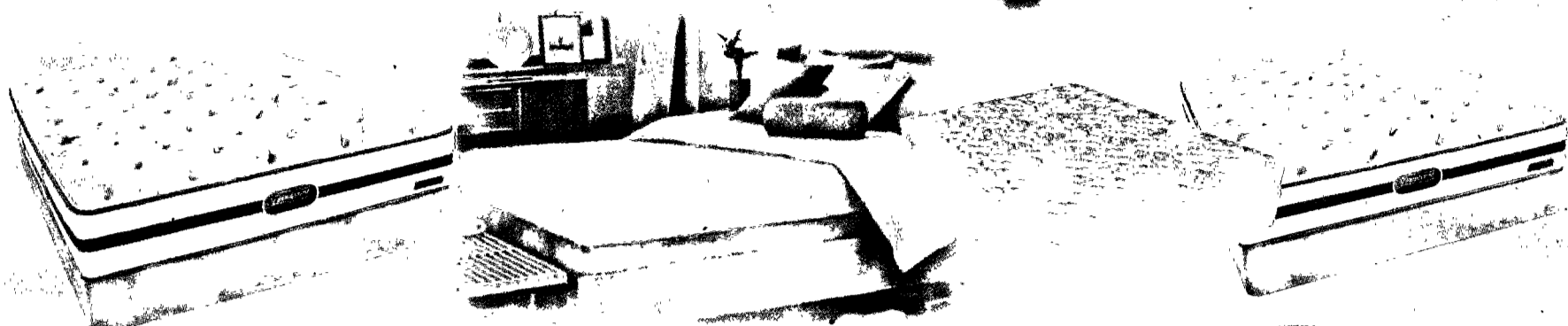
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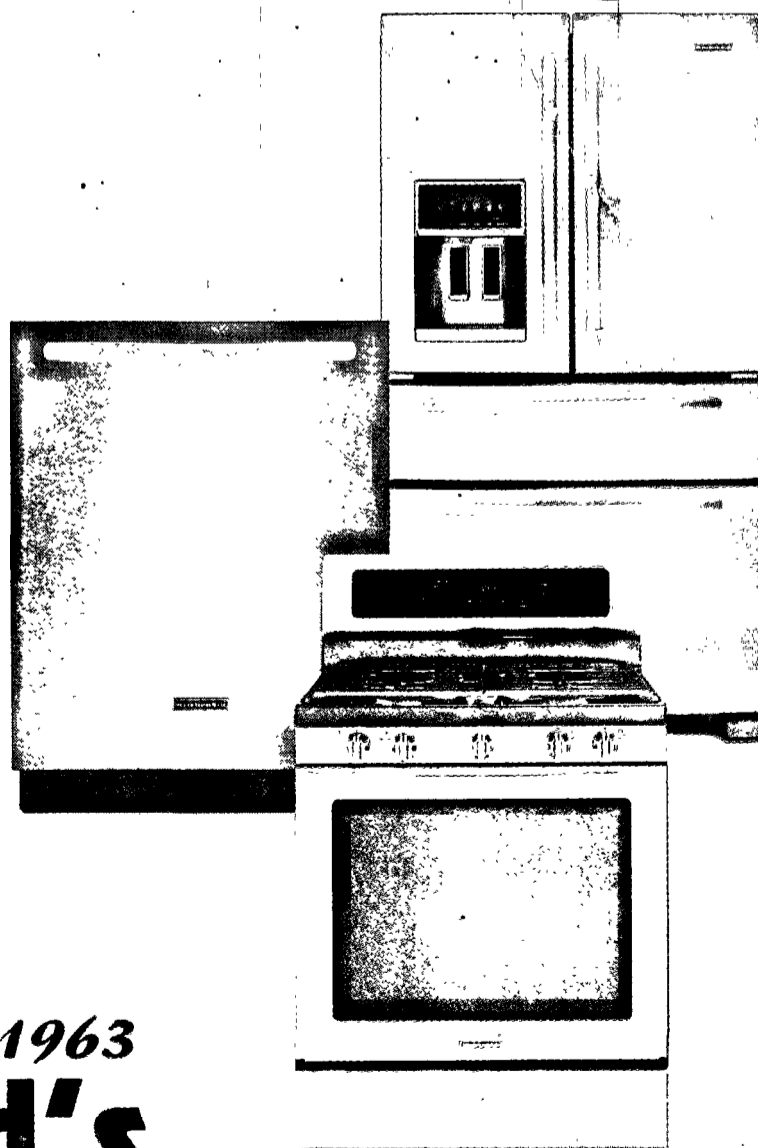


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