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Wednesday, February 11th, 7:00 PM

Reservation Required
Please RSVP to

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*Feel free to bring a guest.
Seating is limited to ONLY 40 spots. Adults only.*

Livonia school board eyes selling five vacant sites

By Karen Smith
Staff Writer

The Livonia school board will consider Monday hiring a consultant to market the first of five vacant properties over the next few years.

It will also consider offering limited Schools of Choice for general-education students again next school year after administrators said this year's pilot program proved successful.

Both actions follow community budget forums held in January, where attendees said they'd prefer revenue enhancements over program cuts to keep the district out of deficit, according to Superintendent Randy Liepa. The district, which has a general fund budget this school year of \$146.5 million, expects to have just \$400,000 in fund equity by June 30.

The board will consider contracting with Bill Bowman of Great Northern Consulting Group to market the former Washington and Nankin Mills elementary school sites for approximately \$15,000 each. Topographical studies at about \$7,000 each will also need to be conducted. "By and large, we discourage the sale of property, but we have a significant number of vacant parcels," Liepa said Wednesday at a committee of the whole meeting.

He said administrators have identified five they won't be needing in the future: the approximate 13-acre Washington site at Hix and Ann Arbor roads in Livonia; the approximate 7-acre site at Hubbard and Ann Arbor Trail in Westland, the 4.5-acre Perrinville School site on Ann Arbor Trail at Farmington Road in Westland; a 10-acre site across from the Western Wayne Skill Center in Westland; and another 10-acre parcel on Hicks Road south of Johnson Upper Elementary in Westland.

Perrinville was torn down in 2011, Washington in 2014 and demolition on Nankin Mills was started in December. The other sites never had schools on them, Liepa said. The historic one-room schoolhouse remaining on the Perrinville property is being moved to Greenmead His-



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Demolition began on Nankin Mills School in December. The site is one of five properties the Livonia school board is considering selling over the next couple of years.

torical Park.

Liepa said real estate market conditions have improved recently. He said he will recommend putting the Washington and Nankin Mills sites on the market this year and the other sites on the market over the next couple of years.

"From ease of development, highest and best use, Washington and Nankin Mills make sense right now," he said.

School board President Colleen Burton said members can look at the proposed use of the properties when they review the proposals.

"We actually do have some input on that," she said, adding the board can decide if a proposal is a good fit for the community.

Trustee Mark Johnson noted the board can reject any proposals: "We're not bound by the Requests for Proposals to sell the property."

Schools of Choice

The board will also consider Monday offering 50 seats next school year to general-education Schools of Choice students: 20 in kindergarten, 10 each in first and second grades, and five each in third and fourth grades. This year, 60 seats in kindergarten through sixth grades were

made available to general-education Schools of Choice students in a pilot program.

"We believe it was very successful," Liepa said, adding the students acclimated easily. "It's turning out to be a plus for our school system."

Liepa said the number 50, as opposed to 60, is being recommended by administrators for next school year, based on the projected need.

More seats — 20 next year, compared with 10 this year — will be made available in kindergarten. This year, the district had 30 applicants for the 10 kindergarten seats and not enough applicants to fill the five available sixth-grade seats, he said.

The district is offering the handful of third- and fourth-grade seats mainly to accommodate siblings of children in its academically talented programs, which are also open to Schools of Choice students, Liepa said. The district prefers to accept younger students over older students.

Burton said there is difference between "open" and "limited" schools of choice. "I'm hoping the public understands this (program) is on a very limited basis."

May 5 vote

The board will also consider Monday adopting a resolution supporting the May 5 statewide ballot proposal that would, among other things, increase the state sales tax from 6 percent to 7 percent, providing additional funding for roads and an additional \$300 million for schools, about \$200 per student.

Liepa said school districts have not received that much of an increase in the foundation allowance since before 2000. While it is "not a windfall" — the amount is about a 2.5-percent increase — he said it will help restore some of the lost funding in the past five years.

Trustee Dan Centers thanked Liepa for his leadership in drafting a resolution. "There's a lot of information on it and people are unsure about it," he said.

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STUDENT ACHIEVERS

Concordia University Ann Arbor officials released the Fall Honors List for the first semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. To be eligible for the honor, students must achieve a minimum 3.50 grade-point average.

Among the area students named to the list were: Westland residents **Allison Guse**, a senior studying Family Life Church Worker; **Jessica Klieber**, a junior studying Legal Studies Public Policy; and **Martha Mullett**, a freshman studying Biology.

Founded in 1963, Concordia University Ann Arbor is affiliated with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Brittney Roach of Wayne has been named to the Honors List for the fall semester at Mercy College of Ohio. To be named on the Honors List, a student must achieve a grade-point average of 3.3 or higher and be enrolled for 6-11 credit hours.

Roach is a senior, studying Medical Imaging. **Jordan Daniel Thrun** of Garden City, has been named to the President's List at the University of North Georgia for achieving a 4.0 grade-point average, carrying 12 or more credit hours in one semester and having no grade lower than B.

Thrun is pursuing a bachelor of arts in degree in International Affairs.

Darren Homburg of Wayne, a members of The Citadel South Carolina Corps of Cadets earned top honors in the fall 2014 semester.

Homburg was named to the Dean's List recognition for carrying 12 or more semester hours and a grade-point average of 3.2 or higher with no grade below a C for the previous semester's work.

Four Westland residents have been named to the Fall 2014 Academic Honors List at Spring Arbor University. The Academic Honors List recognizes full-time students who have received a grade-point average of 3.7 or higher for the semester. Part-time students must receive a 3.7 grade-point average for the semester and carry a cumulative 3.7 GPA.

Named to the list were:

» **Tessa Diaz**, the daughter of William Diaz and Bethann Delpiano of Westland. She is a sophomore, majoring in biology.

» **Shelby Mitchell** of Westland. She is a junior majoring in psychology.

» **Daniel Palka**, the son of Walter and Deborah Palka of Westland. He is a freshman, majoring in accounting.

» **Cecilia Said**, the daughter of Joseph and Lisa Said of Westland. She is a freshman, majoring in psychology.

Tasha Gore of Westland received her bachelor of social work degree at Spring Arbor University's commencement exercises on Saturday, Nov. 22. Gore was a cum laude graduate.

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Colbeck: Not sure ref assault bill is answer

By David Veselenak
Staff Writer

A proposed bill introduced in the Michigan Senate that would charge those who assault sports referees and coaches with a felony is something local state Sen. Patrick Colbeck isn't sure is the right answer. Colbeck, a Republican who represents Wayne, Canton, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Northville, Northville Township and Livonia, said the bill, introduced last month, may add additional protections that he believes the state government should not add. "It's dangerous to go off and take that approach," he said. "I think our laws are made for the equal benefit for everyone." The bill, Senate Bill 32, was introduced by Sen. Morris Hood, D-Detroit, in January and was placed in the judiciary committee, one Colbeck sits on in



Colbeck

Lansing. If approved, it would make the assault or battering of a sports official, such as a referee or coach, a felony punishable by up to three years of imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. Currently, assaulting a referee or other individual follows standard assault laws, which is a misdemeanor. The bill comes after a referee, Westland resident John Bieniewicz, was allegedly assaulted last summer at Livonia's Mies Park by an adult soccer player in a match Bieniewicz was officiating. He later died from his injuries. The suspect in his death, 36-year-old Dearborn resident Bassel Saad, is set to go to trial on second-degree murder charges Feb. 23. Colbeck, who recently began representing Livonia in the Senate after redistricting, said he doesn't believe a special class of protections should be added to certain professions and not others. He said while his heart goes out to the family of those affected by crimes like this, he said penalties should be consistent.

"If you assault somebody, you should be associated with the penalties of assault," he said. Ken Shingledecker, director of operations for the Livonia City Soccer Club, said he has not heard much about the bill since it was proposed, but having the discussion over the issue is important in this day and age. "I would say any steps that people feel need to be taken to protect officials and coaches are good steps," he said. "It's obviously an important topic that needs to be talked about." Colbeck said the way to correct issues surrounding the treatment of sports officials and others should be something that should be done without having to be legislated. "People need to start pulling out the idea that we should be loving our neighbors as ourselves. We're not doing that anymore," he said. "You have to solve it with a change of heart." The bill remains in committee.



SUBMITTED

Westland resident John Bieniewicz was reportedly assaulted last summer at Livonia's Mies Park by an adult soccer player in a match Bieniewicz was officiating. He later died from his injuries. The suspect in his death, 36-year-old Dearborn resident Bassel Saad, is set to go to trial on second-degree murder charges Feb. 23.

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February Veteran of Month active member of Honor Guard

Schmidt served in the U.S. Marine Corp. from September 1961 to January 1966. He is a long-standing member of American Legion Post 32 in Livonia and a member of the Post "Honor/Color Guard" for 24 years.



Richard A. Schmidt of Plymouth was honored as the February "Veteran of the Month" by the Sons of the American Legion Squadron of the Myron H. Beals American Legion Post 32 in Livonia. Schmidt served in the U.S. Marine Corps from September 1961 to January 1966. Upon enlisting in Detroit, he was sent to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego for boot camp. He was then sent to Camp Pendleton for basic training and then to the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, Calif., where he was trained in supply logistics. In October of 1962, while at Barstow, he was put on stand-by alert as the Cuban Crisis played out. In November of that year, he was deployed to Okinawa — the central supply base for all for the Pacific Command and in particular, Vietnam. While in Okinawa he competed in the Far-Eastern Division Rifle Matches. In June of 1964, he was sent back to the States and served out his time at the Marine Corps Supply Center in Albany, Ga. While there, he worked with civilians to create a catalog of parts with location codes and stock numbers to streamline the supply operation. Schmidt is a long-standing member of American Legion Post 32 and has been a member of the Post "Honor/Color Guard" for 24 years. During his

time with the Honor Guard, they competed in many state and national competitions. They won the state competition six times and narrowly missed the national competition by seven-tenths of a point and a second time by five points. Last year they served in more than 70 local events. The Honor Guard focuses on military-related services, normally inclusive of flag folding and presentation, a 21-gun salute, and Taps to honor those who have served. The Color Guard's "duties" focus on community-related activities such as the flag dedication at Willow Run Airport. They also visit senior citizen homes where veterans reside. He was the guest speaker at the SAL meeting on Feb. 3 and shared his experiences in the Marine Corps. His talk was followed by a standing ovation from all attending to show their appreciation for his service to the country and to the American Legion. Schmidt was presented a plaque containing his picture and service information and an additional plaque was put on display in the entrance hall of the Post 32 for all to see. The SAL invites local residents to nominate veterans to be honored at its meetings. Nomination forms can be picked up at the American Legion Hall, 9318 Newburgh Road, Livonia, MI 48150.

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Saturday, February 14 • 9:30 a.m. or 11:15 a.m.
Risen Christ Lutheran Church
46250 Ann Arbor Road • Plymouth, MI 48170

Tuesday, February 17 • 5:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.
Canton Public Library
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Anna LeBelle straightens the binders at the Schoolcraft Book Store, where she works via the Livonia Transition Program.

LPS students with disabilities land jobs at Schoolcraft College

A particular group of students can be found on the campus of Schoolcraft College in Livonia

every day of the week, but they're not there to study algebra or biology.

These students are learning how to be model employees and contributors to the college, through the Livonia Public Schools' Livonia Transition Program, or LTP.

Created four years ago by Jennifer Taiariol, administrator of student services at Livonia Public Schools, the LTP program is designed for adult students who have varying types of disabilities. Students spend half of their day in a classroom setting at the Western Wayne Skill Center and the other half working in real jobs at the numerous job sites

that have partnered with the program.

On the job, the students are gaining confidence while showing their strong work ethics and positive attitudes.

At Schoolcraft College, that type of combination is not only welcomed, it is contagious, according to Glenn Cerny, vice president and CFO at Schoolcraft.

"These kids bring a joy and a different type of attitude that develops more energy for our staff," Cerny said. "That's exactly what Jennifer and I were thinking of when we started this."

See STUDENTS, Page A7



Aaron Rutkowske folds towels in the Fitness Center at Schoolcraft College.

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STUDENTS

Continued from Page A6

The partnership blossomed after the idea was sparked by Cerny's wife, Leslie, a speech pathologist at Churchill High School in Livonia.

"We have a lot of opportunities on campus, so we reached out," he said.

Now, there are eight LTP students who work in various jobs on the campus each day. They perform duties that include office work, digitizing files, and custodial book store operations and one student keeps the Schoolcraft Fitness Center looking great.

"This (program) is a resource that hasn't been tapped. We are getting a huge benefit," Cerny said.

The students have proven themselves to be dependable and self-directed. Their supervisors are thrilled to have them on the team.

"Anna has been a delight," said Joe Holzman, who supervises Anna LaBelle at the Schoolcraft Book Store. "She has a great attitude, she helps everybody and she's always looking for work. She's a smiling face that lifts people's spirits."

Aaron Rutkowski works in the Fitness Center, where he keeps the towels laundered and the windows sparkling clean. Jennifer Cook, his supervisor, said "it's comforting" to have Aaron there.

"He brings a lot of smiles and comfort," she said, adding that the clean towels for the members are also very appreciated.

Becky Harrison and Donna McCollister supervise two LTP students in the custodial area. They're enjoying teaching Bailey Fox and Raffi Markarian the various jobs they have in five buildings on campus.

"They're a lot of fun,"



Back row, from left: Raffi Markarian and Brian Derus; front row, from left: Bailey Fox, Anna LaBelle and Aaron Rutkowski.

"Whope that wha students exiitthey're secring cometitive employment,"

BETHANTER, Livonia Transiin Program specialist

Harrison said. "Once they ick up on (a task), theynow it. Just like anytdy else, it's getting to krw their abilities." Wtching them grow

their skills has been rewarding for Harrison and McCollister.

"When they first came, they couldn't tie a bag," said McCollister, noting that now they're doing windows, cleaning and stocking bathrooms and moving from place to place, in a pair, without a supervisor.

"I enjoy seeing them go from where they were, when they first came here, to where they are now," Harrison said.

Kim Fortner, an LTP teacher, said it's important that the students are

taking the life skills they're learning in the classroom and applying them to their jobs.

"We talk a lot about (life skills) in the classroom, but they're actually doing it out in the community," she said.

The point of the Livonia Transition Program is the "transition" piece.

"We hope that when students exit, they're securing competitive employment," said Beth Santer, LTP program specialist. "The nice thing about Schoolcraft is that it gives them the option to work among their age peers. And, there is a wide variety of job sites on campus."

The LTP staff is very pleased with this new partnership with Schoolcraft.

"It's going very, very well," Santer said. "They are absolutely phenomenal with our students."

Other job sites for the 35 students who are enrolled in the Livonia Transition Program are Angel Gardens, Biggby Coffee, Webster Elementary, Coolidge Elementary, Western Wayne Skill Center, Perrinville Early Childhood, Cintas Laundry Service, Adat Shalom, Family Video, Emerson Middle School, YMCA and DAV thrift store.

The program has

blossomed since starting four years ago.

"Every year, we add more job sites," Santer said. "We try to match up students with job sites that are in their interest area and within their skills."

One exchange between Anna in the book store and her supervisor, says it all.

"We love having you here," said Joe Holzman to Anna LaBelle.

"Thank you. I love working here," Anna replied, with a smile.

For more information on the Livonia Transition Program, visit livonia-publicschools.org and click on Programs.

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If the number of applications submitted during open enrollment does not meet or exceed the number of available seats, students will continue to be enrolled in the order their completed applications are received until all seats are filled. If needed, waitlists will be created.

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DIA offers free bus ride from Canton, Redford for Wayne County Day

The Detroit Institute of Arts is providing free bus transportation to and from the museum Saturday, Feb. 28, for Wayne County residents as part of its "County Days," which provides this service four times per year for residents of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Visitors can browse the collection, see the DIA's "guest of honor," Rembrandt's Self Portrait with Shaded Eyes, on loan from the Leiden Collection, New York, and make their own work of art in the DIA



On display in the Detroit Institute of Art's African American Collection, is "Quilting Time" by Romare Bearden.

Three free exhibitions are on view: Ordinary

People by Extraordinary Artists: Works on Paper by Degas, Renoir and Friends; Photographs from the Detroit Walk-in Portrait Studio by Corine Vermeulen and Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral.

Shopping and eating are always part of a fun day and the DIA has plenty of both. Café DIA offers entrees, a decked-out salad bar, grill station, sandwiches and desserts. Kresge Court diners can enjoy gourmet snacks, sandwiches, salads and desserts. Both

restaurants offer a variety of beverages, including Starbucks coffee, beer and wine. The museum shop carries a selection of art-related items, many of which cannot be found in other area stores.

Parking is available at each departure location. Round-trip transportation and admission are free, but reservations are required. To reserve a spot, call 313-833-4005 or go to tickets.dia.org.

The western Wayne County locations and schedule are:
» Northville Commu-

nity Center, 303 W. Main St. The Van Gogh Bus leaves the community center at 9:30 a.m. and leaves from the DIA at 2 p.m.

» Canton Public Library (park on west side of library), 1200 S. Canton Center Road. The Monet Bus leaves the library at 9:30 a.m. and leaves the DIA at 2 p.m.

» Handy Park, 26650 Capitol St., Redford. The Picasso Bus leaves the park at 10 a.m. and leaves the DIA at 2:30 p.m.

The DIA is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 9 a.m.

to 10 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. General admission (excludes ticketed exhibitions) is free for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb county residents and DIA members. For all others, admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors ages 62 and older and \$4 for ages 6-17. For membership information, call 313-833-7971.

The Detroit Institute of Arts is at 5200 Woodward, Ave., Detroit. For more information, call 313-833-7900 or go to www.dia.org.

BBB has advice on what to do when identity is compromised

Tens of millions of Americans could be victims of the latest corporate data breach, this one at Anthem Insurance. Unknown hackers apparently stole personal identifying information (PII) from current and former Anthem customers, including names, addresses, Social Security numbers, dates of birth and other information that can be used for identity theft.

Anthem has set up a separate website with information on the breach, but the Better Business Bureau recommends that consumers always go to a company's main website first and follow links from there. Scammers often take advantage of data breaches and subsequent confusion to set up spoof websites and send phishing emails.

BBB offers the following suggestions for consumers concerned that their PII has been stolen (also available at bbb.org/breach):

» Do not take a "wait-and-see" approach as you may have done with breaches involving credit card data. You must

act quickly. Breaches involving Social Security numbers have the potential to be far more detrimental to victims, and the damage can be difficult to repair.

» Consider taking a preemptive strike by freezing your credit reports. This will not impact existing credit cards and financial accounts, but will create a roadblock for thieves seeking to create fraudulent accounts using your personal information.

» At a minimum, if you know your Social Security number has been compromised, place a fraud alert on your credit reports. While less effective than a freeze, this will provide an extra layer of protection.

» Take advantage of the free credit monitoring services Anthem will be offering to breach victims. While this is not a preventative measure, this will alert you to new accounts or inquiries using your Social Security number so that you can act quickly to repair the damage.

» Vigilance is key. Regularly check your credit reports at annu-

alcreditreport.com for unauthorized charges or other signs of fraud. (Note: This is the only free credit report option authorized by the Federal Trade Commission.)

» For more information and complete step-by-step guidance on repairing the damage caused by identity theft, visit the FTC's identity theft resources.

» Expect that scammers will take advantage of this data breach to send out phishing emails and other messages that appear to be from Anthem, a credit bureau or other legitimate companies. Do not click on links from any email, text or social media messages about this or any other data breach.

For all businesses that collect customer information:

» Make sure you protect your customers' data. If a data breach can happen to a major corporation with significant data security measures in place, it can happen to any business.

» Check out BBB's updated online guide Data Security - Made Simpler for free information on how to create

a data security plan.

According to its BBB Business Review, Anthem Inc. also operates as Wellpoint Inc., Anthem Blue Cross & Blue

Shield and Administrator Federal, Inc. However, not all Blue Cross & Blue Shield companies are part of the Anthem network. If you aren't sure

if your insurer is affected by this data breach, call the number on the back of your card or go directly to your insurer's website.

Michigan native produces Hollywood film about bullying

By Jay Grossman
Staff Writer

Jordan Roberts, who entertained local listening audiences for years with her celebrity voices on the Dick Purtan Morning Radio Show, is the executive producer behind a powerful film about bullying called *White Rabbit*.

Her production company, Filmanthropic, and Breaking Glass Pictures are hosting special screenings and anti-bullying fundraisers across the country. The first screening on the nationwide tour kicks off Thursday, Feb. 12, at the Imagine Theaters in Royal Oak.

"I'm glad to bring this to my hometown," the Bloomfield Hills native said Wednesday in a phone interview from her home in California. "I really wanted to produce this film because I was constantly bullied in school and it was the unhappiest time of my life."

Roberts started her career by doing spot-on celebrity impressions in comedy bits with Purtan that were based on actual news events. Fan favorites were Kathie Lee Gifford, Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand, Whoopi Goldberg and Madonna.

She and her producing partner, Barbara Lazaroff, recently launched Filmanthropic as a vehicle to create socially conscious mainstream movies and television programming.

"Our company isn't just about doing socially-conscious films," she said. "Every movie we make, we will generate increased awareness and funds for its cause."

In *White Rabbit*, the devastating effects of teen bullying are brought out through the story of a picked-on student who contemplates shooting up his school. It features Hollywood stars Nick Krause (*Boys n the Hood*, *The Descendants*), Britt Robertson (*Tomorrowland*, *Cake*) and Sam Trammell (*True Blood*). Roberts believes the audience will be surprised by the movie's message.

"It leaves you feeling hopeful, like you can do something," she said. "It's not glorifying a high school shooting — it's trying to prevent it."

The Lahser High School graduate grew up in Michigan before moving to St. Louis in sixth grade because of her dad's job. Over the next several years, she found herself constantly being bullied by classmates.

"I went from having a lot of

DETAILS

What: "White Rabbit" sneak preview and bullying prevention fundraiser hosted by Jordan Roberts.

When: Thursday, Feb. 12.
Schedule: 5:30 p.m.: VIP reception hosted by Filmanthropic. Tickets are \$100; 7 p.m.: Movie screening presented by Fuel Leadership Performance; 8:45 p.m.: "White Rabbit" release party sponsored by Imagine Entertainment.

Where: Imagine Royal Oak, 200 N. Main St.
Tickets: Available at the door; general admission, \$10; benefactor admission, \$25. To pre-purchase 10-plus tickets or to inquire about sponsorship, please contact the Variety the Children's Charity office at 248-258-5511.



"White Rabbit" is a story about a high school shooter in the making and the consequences of teen bullying.



Jordan Roberts

friends in school, to moving to a new area and having no friends and being afraid of going to school," she said. "Then we moved back to Michigan and it was like magic — suddenly I had friends again."

"In my case, a lot of it had to do with the environment," she added. "The circumstances changed for me. I was one of the luckier ones. I've had a great life. But there's no question it affected my self-esteem. When you're being bullied in school, you're constantly in fear — fight or flight. I always wonder what kind of grades I would have gotten if I wasn't bullied."

The movie was filmed in Louisiana on a limited budget of around \$900,000. Filmanthropic's goal is to raise \$1 million for anti-bullying and children's charities.

"I'm bringing the movie to my

hometown to raise money for Variety the Children's Charity and Peace Now," she said. "I want to help prevent bullying — that's what is driving all of this — and I'm doing this in at least 10 cities this year."

Leigh Steinberg, the celebrity sports agent who inspired the movie *Jerry Maguire*, will be speaking at the Los Angeles fundraiser of *White Rabbit*. Steinberg believes high school athletes can play a key role in reducing teen bullying.

"Bullying at every level of education is a scourge which steals self-identity from the victim, often for life," he wrote in an email message Wednesday. "Athletes sit at the pyramid of the social matrix in high school and have the ability to combat this problem by role modeling. I have pushed for coaches and athletes to take the lead in combating bullying."

Roberts said she is using her experiences of being bullied to become a champion for kids who are facing their own tormentors.

"I'm so proud, not only of this beautiful film and its brilliant performances; I'm proud of the life I have now," she said. "So much love, so many friends. Healthy parents. So much gratitude."

grossman@hometownlife.com | 586-826-7030 |
Twitter: @BhmEccentric

Stevenson to celebrate 20 years of Japanese instruction

Stevenson High School will celebrate 20 years of Japanese Language Learning in Livonia with a reception March 31.

Former Livonia Japanese language students are invited to attend.

Stevenson's Japanese Program maintains a small but strong presence. Its students' successes have been recognized at the state level with multiple first- and second-place trophies at the Michigan Japanese Quiz Bowl, second-place wins at the Japanese Language Speech Contest, and first- and second-place wins in the Nengajo (New Year's Card) Contest.

Second-year students have also received national recognition with sixth- and 10th-place wins at the National Japan Bowl. Many of the Japanese language students continue to follow their love of Japanese language and culture beyond high school.

Stevenson High School will host a reception from 3-4:30 p.m. March 31 to celebrate 20 Years of Language Learning in Livonia. Speeches and performances will start at 3 p.m. with refreshments to follow. Former Livonia Japanese language students should RSVP to Melisia Taylor at mtaylor@livoniapublicschools.org by March 24.

EMU-Livonia to host graduate open house

Eastern Michigan University-Livonia will host a free open house 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, for prospective graduate students interested in business, public administration or educational leadership.

Sessions are at 5:15 p.m. for educational leadership; 5:45 p.m. for business administration; and at 6:15 p.m. for public administration. The \$45 application fee will be waived for attendees who complete their application during the open house.

EMU-Livonia is at 38777 Six Mile Road, just west of I-275. Advisers will be available on site for business administration, public administration and educational leadership.

To RSVP, go to <https://extendedemich.hobson.sradius.com/crm/forms/zKG03GG08670x6700pM4>

For more information, visit emich.edu/masterleadership, call 877-818-4368 or email livonia@emich.edu.



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Vinyl big part of The Park record show

By Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

Vinyl record collectors, whether reliving Bruce Springsteen-inspired glory days or embracing Daft Punk's electronic futurism, can likely find a turntable treat simply by visiting a Plymouth-Canton school.

Despite the decline of old-school music stores, vinyl's resurgence has made a record show by student radio station WSDP-FM (88.1), The Park, one of the hippest places for area music collectors to find the right groove.

Like a revived classic, The Park's seventh annual record fair returns 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, to the Salem High School cafeteria, where collectors can find thousands of vinyl records, CDs, import-only releases, T-shirts, posters and other collectibles.

"I would say probably most of the music is vinyl," said station manager Bill Keith, a Salem grad who earned a telecommunications degree from Michigan State University and worked for a country radio station before returning 24 years ago to The Park.

Keith has a theory about vinyl's comeback. "Vinyl has a warmer sound to it," he said, and the packaging gives musicians more room for artwork, lyrics and credits. "It's a bigger palette for the artist to work on."

The Park, a Plymouth-Canton student radio station since 1972, raised

about \$2,000 last year from its record fair. Potential vendors, who pay \$30 to reserve an eight-foot table to display their collections, may call Keith at 734-416-7732.

As many as 50 vendors are expected; WSDP has its own space, too.

Patrons pay just \$3 for admission, though collectors can pay \$5 to start shopping an hour earlier at 9 a.m. among music genres such as classic rock, hip hop, electronic, country and indie rock. Students from Canton, Plymouth and Salem high schools get in free with their student identification.

Annie Wellman, a 12th-grader and station program director, said she has bought a KISS action figure, vinyl records of *The Sound of Music* and a Christmas soundtrack by Alvin and the Chipmunks and old VHS movies.

Power of vinyl

Tori Brown, a 12th-grader and station promotions manager, said she enjoys the camaraderie among music lovers who gather in one spot to buy, sell and talk music, regardless of their favorite genre. Shoppers looking for vinyl range from teens to baby boomers.

"You can see this community of people," said Brown, who cited punk rock as among her favorite genres.

Caitlin Flora, an 11th-grader and WSDP music director who enjoys punk and alternative rock, agreed, saying she enjoys seeing "how music brings people together."



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Annie Wellman (from left), Tori Brown and Caitlin Flora are part of WSDP-FM (88.1) The Park.

The record fair is one of the Park's fundraisers. The station also has a May auction and a fall pledge drive, altogether raising about \$30,000 a year.

The Park has drawn its share of accolades. It was named the state's best high school radio station last year by the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. It also was a finalist in 2014 for the National Association of Broadcasters Marconi Award for Best Non-Commercial Station — the only high school station nominated.

The Park has adapted

to change to widen its reach. It moved to an adult Top 40 format in 2012, leaving behind indie and alternative rock. Just recently, it increased from a 200-watt station to 300 watts with a new transmitter, reaching a broader area.

After 43 years on the air, it seems, The Park, like vinyl albums, is a survivor.

For more on the station, go to www.881ThePark.com.


dclem@hometownlife.com
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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

WSDP station manager Bill Keith talks about the record fair.

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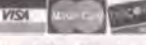
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PREP SWIMMING

Spartans split KLAA Central meets

Stevenson takes down South Lyon, falls to Novi

By Ed Wright
Staff Writer

Late-meet drama wasn't a dominant ingredient during the Livonia Stevenson boys swimming-and-diving team's pair of recent KLAA Central Division contests.

On Thursday, the Spartans dropped a 108-78 decision to mighty Novi. One week earlier, Stevenson thrashed visiting South Lyon 107-79.

Stevenson bolted off the blocks against the Wildcats as its 200-yard medley relay con-

tingent of Adam Goeddeke, Brian Smith, Parker Wasielewski and Jackson O'Dowd pieced together a time of 1 minute, 45.68 seconds to edge Novi by a half-second.

After the Spartans' Alex Lee and Eric Ferrara went 2-3 in the ensuing 200 freestyle relay race, the hosts earned seven points in the 200 individual medley thanks to the brother combination of Matthew LaPorte (first place, six points) and Benjamin LaPorte (fifth place, one point).

O'Dowd captured the 50 free in 21.27 seconds, but Novi swept the 1-meter diving com-

See SPARTANS, Page B4



TOM BEAUDOIN

Stevenson's Eric Ferrara placed third in both the 100- and 200-yard freestyle events Thursday against Novi.

Coach needed

The Livonia Ladywood track and field team is seeking an assistant coach, who will be responsible for mentoring sprinters and hurdlers.

Interested individuals are encouraged to send an email to Ladywood head track coach Dennis Murray at dennismurray3@yahoo.com or Ladywood athletic director Vic Fournier at vfournier@ladywood.org.

Correction

It was erroneously reported in Thursday's edition of the *Observer* that Livonia Churchill's Englehart brothers were the only set of siblings to both place at the Observerland Wrestling Tournament held Jan. 31 at Churchill.

Livonia Franklin brothers Mitchel Retting (third place at 171 pounds) and Joshua Retting (fifth place at 215 pounds) both placed as well.

Hayes stars for MU women

Michele Hayes unloaded for a game-high 26 points Wednesday night as the host Madonna University women's basketball team moved back into second place in the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference with a 71-59 victory over third-place Siena Heights.

The Crusaders, ranked No. 25 in the latest NAIA Division II Coaches' Poll, improved to 15-8 overall and 13-4 in the WHAC.

Hayes, a 5-foot-6 junior transfer from Oakland University, made 9-of-20 shots from the field, including 6-of-9 from 3-point range.

Sophomore forward Justice Dean (Garden City) also chipped in 18 points and nine rebounds, while senior forward Rachel Melcher had a double-double with 13 points and 10 boards.

Sierra Calhoun led the No. 20-ranked Saints (19-6, 13-4) with 21 points, while Mackenzie Tomasik added 11 points and 10 rebounds. Jessie Arnold also tallied 10 points.

NATIONAL SIGNING DAY

CHARGING 'FOUR'WARD

Livonia Churchill gridiron standouts announce next-level destinations

By Ed Wright
Staff Writer

The resounding success Livonia Churchill's football program experienced the past few years was reflected in the size of the crowd in room 22A of the high school during Wednesday morning's "National Signing Day" ceremony.

With a large contingent that included family, friends, coaches and Churchill athletic director Marc Hage looking on, senior gridiron (and classroom) standouts Matt Skibinski, Brian Alsobrooks, Nick Davis and Tim Dulin officially signed letters of intent to play at the next level.

Skibinski, a 6-foot-5, 290-pound offensive tackle, signed on to play for Miami University in Oxford, Ohio; Alsobrooks, one of the state's top kickers and a highly regarded quarterback, officially committed to Eastern Michigan University; Davis, a bull-dozing 6-3, 290-pound offensive guard, agreed to continue his career at Wayne State University; and Dulin, a 6-4, 185-pound wide receiver, documented his commitment to the University of North Dakota University.



ED WRIGHT

Livonia Churchill senior football players (from left) Matt Skibinski (Miami University of Ohio), Brian Alsobrooks (Eastern Michigan University), Nick Davis (Wayne State University) and Tim Dulin (University of North Dakota) committed to play for their respective universities by signing letters of intent during Wednesday's "National Signing Day" ceremony at Churchill.

"I'd like to thank all of these athletes for the pride and honor they've brought to Churchill High School the past four years," Hage said, moments before the players gripped their pens. "All of these athletes are exemplary football players, but they're even better citizens. They're respectful, nice people."

Churchill head football coach Bill DeFillippo echoed Hage's praise of the four signees.

"You're fortunate as a foot-

ball coach if you have one of your athletes move on to play at the next level, so to have four shows what a special year this has been," DeFillippo said. "I want to thank you guys for the dedication, commitment and leadership you've shown the past four years. You were easy to coach, fun to coach and I am going to miss you all."

All four signees played instrumental roles in the Chargers' 8-3 season that saw them average nearly a point a min-

Imposing figure

A post-freshman year growth spurt propelled Skibinski into the college football recruiting limelight.

"I was a skinny 170 pounds my freshman season, so one of our coaches put me on a diet plan and a new weight-lifting routine," Skibinski said.

What did his new diet consist of?

See CHURCHILL, Page B4

COLLEGIATE SIGNINGS

Blazers ready to burn it up at the next level

By Ed Wright
Staff Writer

A trio of Livonia Ladywood athletes who shine brightest in the spring added some sunshine to Wednesday morning's dreary, gray weather when they inked letters of intent to play their respective sports at the next level.

As part of a "National Signing Day" ceremony at Ladywood, Blazer soccer standouts Samantha Riga and Andrea Kwasniewicz officially committed to play for Grand Valley State University and

Northwood University, respectively, while softball slugger Morgan Larkin agreed to continue her diamond career at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

A resident of Plymouth, Riga is a dynamic offensive player who netted 20-plus goals for the Blazers in 2014. She chose defending Division 2 national champion Grand Valley over other interested programs that included Michigan State University, Albion and the Miami University (Ohio).

See BLAZERS, Page B2



RACHEL COOK

Pictured (from left) are Livonia Ladywood seniors Samantha Riga, Morgan Larkin and Andrea Kwasniewicz, all of whom signed letters of intent during Wednesday's "National Signing Day" ceremony.

MU men win

Salem High's Tyler Stewart came off the bench to hit three triples on his way to a team-high 13 points Wednesday as host Madonna University (11-14, 7-10) turned back Siena Heights (9-16, 5-12), 76-65, in a WHAC encounter.

Stewart was 3-of-4 from 3-point range as the Crusaders made 9-of-19 on the night.

Donald Owens added 12 points and eight rebounds, while Shaun Duncan and Jeff Schmitz chipped in 11 and 10 points, respectively. Duncan also dished out seven assists.

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NEW SENIOR THEATER TROUPE TAKING DONATIONS ONLINE FOR NEW SHOW

By Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

The new senior theater troupe, Better Than Ever Productions, hopes to collect \$1,000 in online contributions by Feb. 16 to fund its upcoming production in Westland.

"It's a big number for our group," said Jeanne Pruett, troupe president, who designed an online Kickstarter fundraising campaign. "If you don't collect it all, you get nothing. It's a big risk."

"I'm keeping fingers crossed. Every day something trickles in. We had one donation from Australia."

On Friday, Feb. 6, with just 10 days to go, the troupe had collected \$471 and still needed \$529. Kickstarter requires participants to meet their goal in order to collect any of its donations.

Pruett, 58, a Canton resident, hopes that visitors to the Kickstarter page also check out the group's video showing its members in previous stage productions.

"I wanted people to see how good this group is. When they see the video and see people dancing around the stage, they know this is a group that is not just hobbling along," she said. "This group is active. I think people dismiss others when they get past a certain age. This group proves people can do more."

"We get good audiences. I refer to us as the premier senior acting troupe in Michigan."

New name, new start

Audience members may recognize the 23-member group from performances at the Village Theater in Canton. Nearly all of the actors were members of the Still Got It Players, an arm of Spotlight Theatre in Canton. They worked together for five years with their director, Debbie Lannen. Last summer, after she retired and moved to Florida, most of the actors decided to start their own troupe.

They'll present *The Geezer Game*, written by Herb McCollom, Jr., an 83-year-old playwright from Pennsylvania, 1 p.m. March 19 and 26, 7 p.m., March 20-21 and 27-28 and 2 p.m. March 22 and 29 at Inspire Theatre, 5767 Executive Drive, Westland.

When the troupe first staged the play — as Still Got It Players in Canton — McCollom



Ray Fraser and Rich Pientak act out a scene in "The Geezer Game."

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

lom "brought his entire family to Michigan to see the play," Pruett said.

"He absolutely fell in love with us," she said.

Honored in New York

When McCollom's play was selected for the Midtown International Theatre Festival in New York, N.Y., last summer, he requested the same cast.

"We had a blast. It didn't win, but it was nominated for best outstanding ensemble production, up against other professional groups. It was an honor."

In addition to presenting full-length plays at theaters, Pruett hopes Better Than Ever Productions also will reach out to seniors at senior centers, assisted living homes and other locations.

Jack Galazka, also a former member of the Still Got It Players in Canton, hopes the new troupe gets a "firm start." He's cast as "lovable" but poorly-dressed retired electrician

in *The Geezer Game*, and has been involved in community theater as both an actor and director for years.

"I think the senior group by far is the most giving and caring group I've ever worked with. None of us is worried about the stardom we're about to achieve some day," he said, with a laugh.

"Inspire has been wonderful enough to allow us to come in. If this show is successful and the two groups meld nicely, maybe we'll do more together," he said. "At the same time, we're looking for other options. If someone has a space they'd allow a fledgling group to use, we'd be very open to that."

To find the group's Kickstarter campaign, go to Kickstarter.com and type in Better Than Ever Productions presents *The Geezer Game* in the search box.

To buy tickets to the show, go to inspiretheatre.com or call 734-751-7057.



Ray Fraser, Terry Viviani, Gary Turnquist and Jack Galazka in "The Geezer Game."

BIRTH



SUBMITTED

Brooklyn Eve Bonga

BROOKLYN EVE BONGA

Brooklyn Eve Bonga was born Dec. 24, 2014 at Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn.

Proud parents are Jessica Geiser and Christopher Bonga of Livonia.

Share your best wedding photo with O&E readers

What's your best wedding photo?

Was it shot while you exchanged vows barefoot on the beach?

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Eccentric wants to share your best wedding photo from 2014 and January 2015 with readers in its upcoming special section on weddings.

Tell us the names of the bride and groom, along with the date and place of the marriage. Send your best photo — in a large format — as a jpg email attachment to sdargay@hometownlife.com. The deadline is 5 p.m. Feb. 16.

Speed Queen bucks the trend with five-year washer warranty

If I were going to write a stage play today, I would title it "Copacetic" and have a few hundred members of the audience as the main characters. I'd be sitting in a small office with a computer and the walls decorated with a 1948 NHL calendar showing the many greats of that period, a Red Wing Alumni Jersey, a large picture of Lefty Wilson, the longtime trainer of our past Red Wing hockey team, and numerous framed photographs of former greats in the NHL.

Homeowners would walk through a door and lie down on a leather couch and tell me about the failures of appliance products in their homes. Without a doubt, "Copacetic" would become the longest-running play in history because people want to learn what is good or bad in the world of major appliances and they certainly don't want to waste their money on junk.

In the past week alone I have received a few hundred emails from readers of this column and their horror stories about a washing machine that is working in their laundry rooms. It is just flabbergasting to an old appliance repair man hearing the words, "stinks," "repeated repairs," "not enough water," "junk," "help," "dirty," "very lengthy cycles," "expensive," "lack of quality," and so many more negative comments to express a consumer's true feelings. Now, take this circle of newspaper readers and multiple it a few thousand times and can you image what owners of



Joe Gagnon
APPLIANCE DOCTOR

clothes washers are going through.

Machine warranties

My God, it's just a washing machine, not a ship to the moon. Someone has to build a new washing machine one of these days that they might call a "Copacetic" or has it recently been done? The Speed Queen Company has just announced that its top load washer with electronic control has a full five-year warranty. That means that parts and labor are covered. This is a very big issue with me and most consumers. All the manufacturers used to have five years of coverage on many parts, which was limited, meaning you end up paying the labor. Three years ago all manufacturers dropped that standard and went to just one year of coverage, leaving homeowners high and dry after one year. I complained back then that this was all done at basically the same time by all the companies. That is called collusion and it's against the law. Ask Ford Motors about that fact. To see Speed Queen reverse this with its five-year full warranty must mean that it has a lot of confidence in its product. But then again, it is an American product and the company can be proud of the quality we have always been

known for. Way to go, Speed Queen, we might even include you in the stage play.

I don't want any of you to think that I don't appreciate all of your communications and please don't stop. What would I write about if you didn't write me? Now to another subject I'm hearing about. It's called the Smart Meter and boy has it become a controversial subject across America. A recent headline in my hometown paper of Timmins, Ontario, is "Thousands of smart meters are ordered removed in Ontario." My computer is jammed with people reaching out to me for help on many issues with these meters. If all goes according to plan I will already have done an interview with an expert from DTE on my radio show by the time you read this column. I have much to learn on this subject and will reserve judgment until I get smarter on the subject. I still make the claim that I can't see our utilities installing an appliance on our homes that is going to cause health issues. I am also wondering if a bill proposed in Lansing to hold the turbine companies immune from lawsuits in the future should a turbine cause a medical problem for property owners. Well, more to come. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard at 8 a.m., Saturdays on WAAM 1600. You can email your problems and questions on appliances to appldr@twm1.rr.com.

Plymouth-based foundation funds brain injury initiative at U-M

By Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

The University of Michigan Health System will open a new emergency center treatment area on Feb. 16 that will be equipped to offer the most advanced care to patients with a traumatic brain injury in the first crucial hours of their crisis.

"That is what I'm most excited about," said Brenda J. Massey of Plymouth, whose family foundation recently donated a significant gift to U-M Health System for traumatic brain injury research, technological innovation, and patient and family support. U-M Health System recognized the family's generosity by naming the new emergency treatment center in their honor. The Joyce and Don Massey Family Foundation Emergency Critical Care Center, or EC3, will be among the first of its kind in the United States.

"They now know there is a 'golden hour,' and if you can get to a person who is injured quickly and give them the most appropriate treatment, that's the best outcome," Massey said. "Instead of going to the ER and getting stabilized, you're already in a critical care area and there is no time lost in treating the patient."

Massey said the new ER area would have appealed to her father, Don, who was devoted to his



Joyce and Don Massey

wife, Joyce, a "quiet woman" who was the "music and joy" in the Massey family. Joyce sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car accident in 1983 and died 10 years later. Don, who owned a network of car dealerships, including a flagship location in Plymouth, until they were sold in 2002, died in 2011.

"The purpose of the Foundation is to look for ways to improve treatment of closed head injury. It was my dad's mission to give generously to head injury (programs and research) so other people would have a better outcome than we had."

"It's really a part of their love story. They were two fortunate peo-

ple who met the 'right one' and remained in love all through lives together," Massey said, adding that the work of the Foundation was "extremely important" to her father.

She said the Foundation began working with U-M Health System approximately a year ago to design a plan, the Joyce Massey TBI Program, that will accelerate improvements in traumatic brain injury treatment.

"I believe U of M is the finest hospital in Michigan and probably in surrounding states as well. We've had a very good relationship with University Hospital."

According to U-M Health System, the Joyce Massey TBI Program



Kyle Gunnerson, M.D., (right) the director of the EC3 at U-M Hospital, talks with a team of nurses and residents as they prepare for patients at the new EC3.

includes:

» A Massey EC3 Clinical Research Program, which will create the clinical infrastructure to evaluate and implement new diagnostic tools, monitoring techniques, and therapeutic strategies for ultra-early treatment of TBI and other critical illness and injury. It includes a database that will allow researchers to analyze data on all critically ill and injured patients treated in the Massey EC3. This program will be headed by Kyle Gunnerson, M.D., the emergency critical care physician and associate professor of emergency medicine who oversees the EC3.

» A Massey TBI Technology Innovation fund, which will accelerate innovative research to produce the next generation of technologies to revolutionize the care of

TBI, helping to restore victims to their pre-injury status. Teams of U-M physicians, scientists and engineers will compete to receive technology development awards to fund work on devices, diagnostics, therapeutics and digital health. This program will be overseen by Kevin Ward, M.D., a professor of emergency medicine who directs the Michigan Center for Integrative Research in Critical Care.

» A Massey TBI Translational Research Program, which will seek to improve TBI patients' long-term outcomes by developing and testing new diagnostic tools, more sensitive monitoring techniques, and better early treatments that can be used in the first few hours of TBI treatment. This program will be headed by Hasan

Alam, M.D., an acute-care surgeon who heads the Section of General Surgery in the U-M Department of Surgery.

» A Massey TBI Patient & Family Support Fund, which will assist patients treated in the EC3 and their families, giving need-based support to those who lack resources during a patient's hospitalization for such costs as travel, lodging and meals, as well as adapting their homes and buying special equipment not covered by insurance for post-TBI living. The U-M departments of Social Work and Emergency Medicine will oversee this fund.

» An annual Massey TBI Summit, featuring a Massey Lecture and the latest findings from U-M teams and leading experts from across the country working on cutting-edge TBI research. The inaugural summit will be held Sept. 25 in Ann Arbor.

"With this generous gift, the Massey family and foundation have expressed great confidence in the ability of our researchers to change TBI care," said James O. Woolliscroft, M.D., the U-M Medical School dean, in a press release. "Their remarkable vision will enable our care teams to explore creative ideas that ultimately will lead to more effective treatments for TBI patients."

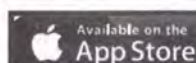
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