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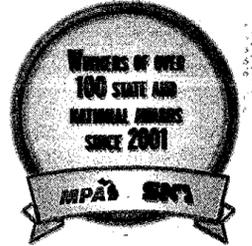
Bully
'It doesn't need to be a rite of passage'

OBSERVER LIFE, SECTION C

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Massive parks project proposed by WYAA

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

The Westland Youth Athletic Association will meet soon with the Westland City Council to propose a massive parks improvement project. The WYAA would need council's approval to ask voters for a 1-mill increase for its Frontier Park Plan at an estimated cost of \$35 million. The project would convert 80 acres of land west of Central City Park, the biggest chunk currently owned by Wayne County, and use it for a state-of-the-art facility which would include the fol-

lowing:
 ■ Eight to 10 baseball-softball fields, including one field designed specifically for special needs children.
 ■ Three multi-purpose turf soccer fields, including one indoor.
 ■ An 118,000 square-foot facility for ice hockey and figure skating — using a state-of-art geothermal heating and cooling system. The facility could accommodate seating for 1,000 spectators.
 ■ Adjacent to the ice facility, a geothermal indoor pool with a leisure area that seniors

could use.
 ■ Expansion of the nearby Bailey Center with two additional basketball courts.
 ■ A set of walking trails for senior residents in a nearby senior complex.
 The WYAA also proposes to demolish Modano Arena, the city's lone indoor ice rink, considered an antiquated facility, along with selling off land at Voss Park, located at Palmer and Henry Ruff roads, to help finance the project.
 The power-point presentation was made Thursday night at the Bailey Center by current

WYAA president John Gellert, along with former past WYAA presidents Mark Rodriguez and Todd Kangas. Also in attendance was Chris Simonian of the Westland Hockey Association, Special Olympics district coordinator Ron Kulas, WYAA Vice President of Operations Keith DeMolay, and longtime WYAA board member Joe Wilson.
 "This is not a Band-Aid approach, this is a fix," Gellert said. "We feel this is an ideal location and the time to do it."

PLEASE SEE PARKS, A5

Reading Rand

Chiller author
scares up students'
interest in reading

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

They squealed with laughter when he wiped his pencil on the principal's sweater. They jiggled their fingers, wiggled their eyebrows, got a strange look in their eyes and did their very best spooky laugh. And one young man even learned to talk like a radio announcer. And when they were done, they headed back to their classrooms, some clutching copies of Jonathan Rand Chiller books to their chest.

Jonathan Rand, author of Michigan Chillers books, entertains the students at St. Damian School during a visit last week.

"I just started reading him last year," said Dillon Gorham, a third-grader at St. Damian School in Westland who brought his copy of Rand's *Dinosaurs Destroy Detroit* to a program featuring Rand. "I like scary books and this author sounded kind of cool and the books looked kind of cool. This is my fourth book."
 Cool and dude were heard a lot during the afternoon assembly, mostly from Rand who punctuated his presentation with humor that had the youngest to the oldest students laughing.

PLEASE SEE AUTHOR, A6



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

All smiles as St. Damian School third-grader Dillon Gorham listens to author Jonathan Rand talk about his Chiller novels.

Center Stage night club faces wrecking ball

BY KEVIN BROWN
STAFF WRITER

The Police, Rodney Dangerfield, The Allman Brothers Band and Grand Funk Railroad all played Center Stage in its late '70s early '80s heyday. Now, plans call for demolishing the club on Ford Road east of I-275 in Westland, and building an 11,500-square-foot strip mall and a 14,000-square-foot Gordon's Food Service market.
 The strip mall developer is negotiating with Starbucks, Noodles and Company restaurant, and others to occupy sites.
 "They would like to go as soon as possible," said project engineer Bob Rowe, adding the project must win approval from township planners.
 Developer Bill Banicki said he expects to buy the property by mid-February, from the family of long time owner John Sassak, who died in 2003.
 Rowe said "it's real premature" to say when the strip mall and market would open, adding construction would likely begin by fall.
 Planning requirements for that stretch of Ford Road include brick building facades, garden walls and landscape provisions in keeping with the upscale.

PLEASE SEE CENTER STAGE, A5

Retiree announces plans for second run for mayor's job

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Vowing to take a pay cut, trim city spending and run a government "for the people," Consumers Energy retiree Jay R. James has declared he will campaign to become Westland's mayor.
 James, 61, announced last week that he will challenge Mayor Sandra Cicirelli as she seeks her second, four-year term. He plans to publicly declare his candidacy Monday during a Westland City Council meeting.
 "We need to make some changes," he said.
 James failed in his first mayoral bid as a write-in candidate in 2001, when Cicirelli beat him and Councilman Richard LeBlanc. He vowed he will be on the ballot this year and campaign harder than before.
 On Friday, Cicirelli confirmed that she will seek reelection but said she considers it too early to make her formal announcement.
 "I absolutely do intend to run for mayor again, and I will certainly take any challenger seriously and will campaign very aggressively," she said.
 James pledged that, if elected, he would accept a

PLEASE SEE RETIREE, A6

ATHENA Award has a sweet celebration

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Willy Wonka would be proud of Westland. Chocolate may not flow down the Rouge River, but community leaders have come up with a sweet alternative.
 Skip the trip to Hershey, Pa. Look no further than Westland to attend the Chocolate Fantasy Ball.
 A chocolate theme will coat an ATHENA awards program that will honor a local resident who has excelled professionally, who has improved the local quality of life and

who has helped women realize their leadership potential. The formal, \$100-a-ticket event will start at 6 p.m. Saturday, March 12, at the Hellenic Cultural Center on Joy Road east of Newburgh. It will be sponsored by former ATHENA Award winner and Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, the Women of Westland, and the Westland Community Foundation.
 "It's going to be absolutely fabulous," foundation board member Sharon Scott said. "It's going to be one of the best parties we've ever seen in this city."
 Especially for those who love chocolate. While the evening will include hors d'oeu-

vres and a dinner, a special area will be decorated with four fountains that will flow chocolate — two for dark chocolate, two for white chocolate, said Women of Westland member Robin Kay Cooke.
 Such finger foods as strawberries and pretzels will be ready for the dipping.
 "We'll have all the chocolate you can imagine," Cooke said.
 Tables will feature chocolate-covered almonds, brownies and other mouth-watering treats. The ATHENA Award winner will be announced during an 8 p.m. ceremony.

PLEASE SEE ATHENA, A2

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Coming Thursday in Filter

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Attorney says client is wrongly accused

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Livonia man is wrongly accused of sexually molesting two mentally disabled women in Westland while he worked for an agency that provided them with transportation, his attorney said Friday.

"All I can tell you is, he's not guilty," defense attorney Samuel Posner said. "He's got a nice girlfriend. If he needs sex, he's got a girlfriend."

Posner made his comments one day after he appeared in Westland 18th District Court and asked for a delay in a preliminary hearing for Karl Mandel Robinson, 35.

Robinson is charged with one count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving mentally disabled women ages 22 and 29. His hearing is now scheduled for March 3.

Robinson is accused of having the 22-year-old woman perform oral sex on him in his

van. He also is accused of groping her after giving her a ride to a friend's house on Glenwood.

The woman told police that the two incidents happened in January.

The 29-year-old woman told authorities that she was groped and fondled at the same house, where a mutual friend of the two women lives. The older woman said she was molested a few hours after the younger woman on Jan. 19.

The allegations surfaced while Robinson was working for a Southfield agency that provides transportation and other services for the mentally disabled.

As he awaits his hearing, he has been jailed on a \$150,000 cash bond.

Robinson's hearing on March 3 will determine whether he should stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court. He could face penalties ranging up to life in prison, if convicted.

dclem@oe.hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

Music man brings brass band show to GC

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Craig Strain is excited to be coming home to Garden City. He'll be back in town on Feb. 12, and he's planning on bringing a few friends with him - the Motor City Brass Band.



Strain

The Farmington Hills resident is the musical director and conductor of the band which will be in concert that evening in Garden City High School's O'Leary Auditorium.

"The one thing that's interesting is that when I graduated from Garden City High School, it was before the split (to Garden City East and West High) and we didn't have the auditorium," he said. "We played concerts in the gymnasium. Now they have that gorgeous auditorium."

Strain has been a music teacher in Detroit, Bloomfield Hills, Novi and at different community colleges and the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp.

He also has spent a lot of time recording music in the 24-track digital recording studio in the basement of his home. But nine years ago, tuba player Ray Murphy invited him to come and listen to a band. He even invited him to conduct it for a few songs.

Strain did and by the end of the rehearsal he was hired as the band's conductor.

"We started out at a small group with questionable ability and got better," he said. "Now we're quite an ensemble."

'UNUSUAL BAND'

The Motor City Brass Band is based on the style of a British brass band. It is made up of brass instruments and percussion. It has cornets instead of trumpets, tenor horns instead of French horns, a flugelhorn, English style baritones, euphoniums, trombones and E-flat and B-flat tubas.

"We have seven tubas which



The Motor City Brass Band includes percussion and brass instruments, including seven tubas.

is a lot and which is what makes us unusual," Strain said.

The band does about 25 performances a year. It rehearses on Monday evenings at Greenfield Village. Its main venue is the Ford Center for the Performing Arts in Dearborn, although it has performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor, the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts and at schools, churches and city auditoriums around the metropolitan area.

For its Feb. 12 concert, the band will perform a wide range of music like George Gershwin's *Strike Up the Band*, the *English Folk Songs Suite* and *Make Me Smile* by the rock band Chicago.

Strain was introduced to music by his father who played the piano as an avocation. He tried to teach his son and daughter how to play, but Strain didn't enjoy it.

But he did get into music in seventh-grade at Burger Junior High School where he signed up for band and got a coronet.

"They showed us the instruments and that seemed to be the one I wanted play," he said, recalling how he and his mother went to Grinnell's in Detroit to rent his instrument.

He also played in a teen band, the Crazy Kats, that performed at teen clubs in Garden City in the 1950s. The clubs would have live bands for dancing on Friday nights.

"A lot of great musicians came out of Garden City and Dearborn then for those teen

bands," Strain said. "It was like cars. You worked on cars and you played in teen bands."

Strain had a lot of friends in the bands, but while they went on playing, he left and went off to Eastern Michigan University where he studied political science and music science.

PURSUIT OF MUSIC

When he graduated, he went to law school for a year, but returned to EMU and got his master's degree in music composition and trumpet and a bachelor's degree in music education.

"I had planned to play on weekends and be a successful lawyer, but when I got away from it, I realized I wanted to be in music," he said.

Strain's father died at age 36. He never saw his son perform. Strain says his father would be amazed to see him now.

"He didn't take to me as a teacher and I didn't take to him as a teacher," he said. "But once I started playing in the seventh-grade, everything started coming easy to me. How much was nature and how much was nurturing, I don't know."

When Strain isn't busy with the Motor City Brass Band, he's doing demos for bands, burning CDs for them to sell at their gigs and doing arrangements for musicians, high schools and bands in his basement recording studio.

And he's still playing in bands, but nothing like his '50s rock'n'roll band. It's more like his 18-piece jazz band, the

STRIKE UP THE BANDS

The Motor City Brass Band will perform at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12, at Garden City High School's O'Leary Auditorium, 6500 Middlebelt.

The concert is a part of a series sponsored by the Garden City Public Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence and Garden City Rotary Club. The second concert will feature Paul Keller Orchestra on Saturday, April 23.

Tickets are \$16 per person per concert or \$30 per person for the concert series. They're available in advance from Peggy Sexton at American Speedy Printing, 33265 Ford, Garden City, and at the Garden City school district's Administrative Offices at 1333 Radcliff.

Tickets also are available by mail by sending a check, made payable to the Foundation for Educational Excellence, to Sheryl Quinn, Foundation for Educational Excellence, 1333 Radcliff, Garden City, MI 48135. They also will be available at the door the night of the performance.

For ticket information, call (734) 762-6323.

Craig Strain Orchestra and Dr. Pocket, a 10-piece rhythm and blues band. "That's my two most active bands; but everyday I write and arrange music for people, that's my day job" he said. "I retired from one and dove into another, but I love music. What could be more fun than doing something I love. I'm lucky."

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Susan Rosiek Executive Editor (734) 953-2100 srosiek@oe.hometownlife.com	Keely Schramm Filter Editor (734) 953-2105 kschramm@oe.hometownlife.com
Hugh Gallagher Managing Editor (734) 953-2149 hgallagher@oe.hometownlife.com	Frank Cibor Retail Sales Manager (734) 953-2177 fcibor@oe.hometownlife.com
Sue Mason Community Editor (734) 953-2112 smason@oe.hometownlife.com	Cathy White Retail Advertising Rep. (734) 953-2073 cwhite@oe.hometownlife.com

Newsroom (734) 953-2104 Fax (734) 591-7279
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IN THE SERVICE

Pfc. Kyle Thomas, the son of Keith and Jeri Thomas, completed U.S. Marine Corps boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., on Nov. 5.

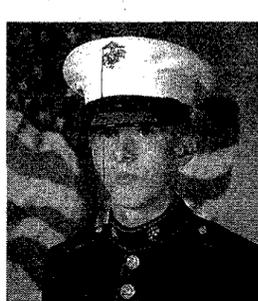
Thomas joined the Marine Corps through the delayed entry program on July 29, 2003, while he was a senior at Wayne Memorial High School.

He has completed Marine combat training at Camp Reiger, N.C., and is headed to Pensacola, Fla., for flight crew school.

For more information about the Marine Corps, contact S.Sgt. Phillip Callis at the Marine Corps Recruiting Station, 36480 Ford Road at Central City Parkway, Westland.

If you have a relative in the armed

ATHENA



forces, active or reserve status, for In the Service, please send his or her photograph, information about their military status, and your name and telephone number to Sue Mason, Westland Observer, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by e-mail to smason@oe.hometownlife.com.

FROM PAGE A1

followed by big band music by Rhythm Society.

Anyone who wants to nominate a potential ATHENA Award recipient - female or male - may call (734) 467-9113 or download a form from www.womenofwestland.com. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 28.

Organizers also are asking local businesses to support the event as paid sponsors or by donating merchandise.

"This is an opportunity for the whole community to come together to recognize our unsung heroes," ATHENA Award planning committee member Sam Corrado said. "We are planning an amaz-

ing evening that can only become more fabulous with the active participation of our business community," said Corrado, owner of the local shopper publication ACT CENT In & Around Town. "We've created a variety of ways for businesses to support the event and gain recognition and advertising so that it's both comfortable and effective for their specific budgets."

Business owners may get involved by calling the earlier-listed telephone number.

Cicirelli encouraged local residents to submit nominations of community leaders.

"It's going to be a truly nice event," she said. "I think it's going to be a really classy and fun event. We're real excited about it."

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Churchill senior competes for coveted mathematics award

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

Samuel Mohun Bhagwat, a senior at Churchill High School, developed a complex math project that was so good he placed among 40 finalists nationwide vying for \$530,000 in prestigious Intel Science Talent Search scholarships.

Bhagwat's work aims at classifying determinantal sequences.

"This whole project is pretty exciting," Samuel said. "I'm excited to have made it and I'm looking forward to the competition."

The finalists, selected from 300 semifinalists who are 16-18 years old, are invited to participate in rigorous judging sessions March 10-15 in Washington, D.C.

And the winners go home with substantial college scholarships that include \$100,000 for first place, \$75,000 for second place and \$50,000 for third place. Fourth- through sixth-place finalists will receive \$25,000 each and the seventh-through 10th-place winners will receive \$20,000 each.

All of the remaining 30 finalists are promised a \$5,000 scholarship award. In addition to the all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, all students attending the competition will also receive an Intel Centrino mobile technology-based notebook computer.

Samuel, 16, says he's thankful to his parents, Dr. Ashok Bhagwat and Haika Gay, as well as his math mentor, Brian Conrad, associate professor of the math department at the University of Michigan, for helping him reach this difficult goal.

Samuel occasionally visits Conrad at his campus office to talk about math concepts and to seek help when he doesn't understand a problem or needs motivation.

"(Conrad) helped me when I was in a rut and he gave me guidance," Samuel said.

The professor also gave Samuel book of references



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Samuel Bhagwat placed among 40 finalists nationwide vying for \$530,000 in prestigious Intel Science Talent Search scholarships.

describing how mathematics can be a creative discipline, which is an interesting theory that contradicts popular opinion that math is always formula-based and rote.

"I wanted to help him see it the way mathematicians see it," Conrad said. "I had him work on a problem that tried to solve some open questions. Often, part of the process is getting the student to think about mathematics in a different way and thinking more about underlying structure in the problem rather than solving things in a recipe procedure."

Conrad says Samuel has "taken the first step" in becoming a mathematician.

"He's very bright and has a good impression in what is involved in solving a difficult problem," Conrad said. "If mathematics is something that he's interested in doing, he has a feel for the investment in time and energy it can take. The thing that takes adjustment in college is realizing that for some problems there is no

method and you have to discover a method."

Math isn't Samuel's only interest. He also studied guitar and his father's native language, Marathi, the last two summers in India. At Churchill, he's captain of the varsity Quiz Bowl team and his accomplishments include a Grand Award at the Science and Engineering Fair of Metro Detroit. Samuel hopes to attend Harvard and is waiting for an entrance application reply.

The Livonia resident also attended Livonia's Webster Elementary and Frost Middle School, which offer programs for students who thrive in accelerated classes. He was promoted past sixth grade and is currently in the math, science and computer accelerated classes at Churchill.

However, since Samuel did so well academically, often-times specialized courses had to be considered at Churchill to continue stimulating him.

"He's very friendly; extremely curious; willing to go with

the flow; always polite and a very cerebral young man," said his Churchill guidance counselor, Cori Pesci.

Pesci describes Samuel's parents as "extremely flexible" in trying to find the right instruction methods for Samuel.

"It has always been a challenge to educate him and it took a lot of guidance with educators," Haika Gay said. "We had a lot of conferences and we were able to challenge him outside the schools."

Samuel has had math mentors since he was in second grade.

"He was so far ahead in mathematics, the school curriculum was never a challenge," Gay added. "It's been a fascinating experience educating and raising him."

Samuel and the other STS finalists reflect the best accomplishments of solid, project-based, curiosity-driven education, according to Intel CEO Craig Barrett in a press release.

"Like many STS finalists before them, this group will be responsible for future discoveries that address critical needs while helping to keep America at the center of innovation," Barrett wrote.

Alumni of the Intel STS hold more than 100 of the world's most coveted science and math honors, including six Nobel Prizes, three National Medals of Science, 10 MacArthur Foundation Fellowships and two Fields Medals.

The finalists' research projects include studies on engineering new tissue to heal wounds, improving cancer treatments, developing new energy conversion technology and using ancient textiles to date archaeological sites.

Samuel is the only finalist from Michigan. Eighty-percent of this year's finalists play a musical instrument, 50 percent volunteer in their community, 47 percent are fluent in a language other than English and 25 percent have perfect SAT scores, according to an

The finalists, selected from 300 semifinalists who are 16-18 years old, are invited to participate in rigorous judging sessions March 10-15 in Washington, D.C.

Intel press release.

Some of the finalists also include an award-winning poet, a competitive ballroom dancer, a table tennis gold medalist in the U.S. Junior Olympics and the founder of a nonprofit organization focusing on social justice, the release states.

Winners will be announced at a black-tie banquet on March 15. Science Service, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the understanding and appreciation of science among people of all ages through publications and educational programs, has administered the program since its inception in 1942.

For more information about the Intel and the scholarship program, visit www.intel.com/education, www.intel.com/pressroom, <http://www.sciserv.org/sts/645/ts/finalists.asp>.

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Map showing location at Westland Mall, near N. Warren Rd. and Central City Pkwy.

Awrey's hopeful to survive

Employees continue to work without paychecks

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

Employees at Awrey's Bakeries remained patient and optimistic as they continued their duties last week with their jobs and paychecks in limbo.

The 360 workers were supposed to receive their weekly checks on Wednesday.

Instead, they were told the 95-year-old, family-run bakery filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection which enables the company to reorganize its finances. The matter is before Judge Steven Rhodes in the Detroit district of U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

"We weren't sure if people were going to come back to work on Thursday," said Betty Jean Awrey, the company's vice president and the wife of third-generation president Robert Awrey.

"Everyone showed up for work on Thursday and they said they are with us. It just warms your heart to know we're all in this together."

There was some good news Friday as Rhodes authorized the company to cut two paychecks this week for each employee. Workers will receive last week's check on Tuesday, Betty Jean Awrey said.

"It didn't come as a complete shock," said a 25-year Awrey's employee from Redford, who asked not to be identified. "All of us are dealing with it as best we can."

"Everyone is trying to stay upbeat. We're all working together to try and pull through this. We all hope they can turn it around."

During the bankruptcy process, Awrey said it will be business as usual as the bakery continues to produce cakes, muffins and danishes at the plant on Farmington Road at Industrial Drive, the company's home since 1967.

She's optimistic the company will be under the court's control for only a few months as it deals with \$29.2 million in debt, some of which comes from \$9.5 million in new refrigeration equipment and other plant renovations five years ago. The company has \$35.5 million in assets, according to court documents.

"We have a cash flow problem right now," Awrey said. "We're short on sales right now because we're in a highly competitive business, but we're optimistic we will get through this because we have a good plant and a good product line."

Finances have been a struggle for the bakery in recent years with the popularity of no-carb diets and in light of overall economic conditions. Last year, the company trimmed its workforce by 40 jobs and missed payments to creditors. The company paid its summer 2004 tax bill, but it still owes \$329,758.70 in winter taxes, said Livonia City Treasurer Linda Grimsby.

Awrey added it didn't help that some of the bakery's customers failed to pay some large bills.

For starters, she said the company plans to trim costs by cutting some product categories.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Awrey Bakery sign is nearly a historical marker along Farmington Road.

For example, instead of manufacturing several kinds of croissants, Awrey said the company will manufacture one or two croissant products.

"We just need some more sales and things will get better for us," Awrey said.

The company was founded in 1910 by Fletcher and Elizabeth Awrey in the kitchen of their Detroit home. They grew with distribution of their baked goods in a horse-drawn carriage and by opening neighborhood stores. Awrey's became known as "America's Hometown Bakery," as it evolved into one of the largest private-owned baked good producers in the country.

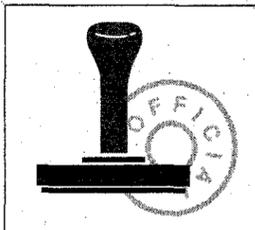
Awrey's products are featured by Sysco, a commercial food distributor which makes up 58 percent of the bakery's business. Awrey's bakes cakes for Baskin Robbins ice cream shops and products are sold in some supermarkets.

Livonia Mayor Jack Engbretson said he's concerned about Awrey's situation.

"We will do all we can to help them," Engbretson said. "We're all hoping for the best, and that they resume a prosperous and vibrant operation soon."

Staff Writer Sue Mason contributed to this report.

FOR THE RECORD



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Community Life section in Passages on page C5.

DEATHS

- C**
Mary E. Cartier, 66, of Pontiac, died Jan. 28.
- D**
Donald R. Deno, 86, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 25.
- E**
Myrtle E. Eicholtz, 79, died Feb. 2.
Hilda R. Ettenheimer, 86, of Bloomfield Hills, died Feb. 1.
- H**
Edna Hall, 68, of Westland, died Jan. 31.
Josephine N. Helzerman, 75, of Rochester, died Jan. 29.
- K**
Robert M. King, 79, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 30.
- M**
Donald Leo Miller, of Livonia, died Feb. 1.
Anna L. Muellner, 98, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 28.
- N**
Jean A. Nunnelle, 79, of Traverse City, formerly of Birmingham, died Jan. 27.
- O**
Margaret Mary O'Connor, 76, died Feb. 1.
- P**
Robert E. Parr, 59, of Rose City, died Jan. 30.
- R**
Sandra J. (Sandy) Rosaen, died Feb. 4.
- S**
Pauline M. Smith, 84, died Feb. 2.
Margaret Bank Stanford, 84, formerly of Bloomfield Township, died Jan. 30.
Edward John Surmacz, of Livonia, died Feb. 1.
- W**
Robert James Walters, 23, formerly of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 30.

MIKE MODANO ICE ARENA

- Open Skating**
Open skating is available noon-1:45 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday now through March 31. Cost is \$3.50 for children and seniors and \$4.50 for adults. Get \$1 off on weekdays admissions. Skate rental is \$2.50, and skate sharpening \$4.
- Drop-in Hockey**
Drop-in hockey is available 10-11:45 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Cost is \$5 per player (daytime hours) and goalies skate free. There also is a Friday evening session 10 p.m. to 12:45 a.m. Cost is \$10. Full equipment is required.
- Freestyle Ice**
Ice time for freestyle skating is available 2:30-4:50 p.m. Monday, 6-8 a.m. and 2:30-5:50 p.m. Tuesday, 2:30-5:50 p.m. Wednesday 6-8 a.m. and 2:30-4:20 p.m. Thursday and 2:30-5:50 p.m. Friday. Fifty-minute sessions cost \$5.25, while 30-minute sessions are \$3.50. There's an additional \$1 charge for drop-in.
- The arena is at 6210 N. Wildwood, just south of Hunter. For additional information, call the arena at (74) 729-4560.

BAILEY RECREATION CENTER

- Court Use**
Court costs are based on prime time hours - 4-10 p.m. Monday-Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday.
- Weight/Fitness Room**
The weight/fitness room is open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Residents pay \$4 daily (walk-in), with contracts for unlimited use costing \$25 per month, \$80 for six months and \$150 for a year. Non-residents pay \$6 daily (walk-in), with contracts for unlimited use costing \$35 per month, \$120 for six months and \$225 for a year.
- Facility and Park Rentals**
Various room sizes are available for all occasions, including showers, wedding receptions, parties, classes, business meetings, etc.

- Sunday - and non-prime time hours - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.
- Racquetball Courts - \$9 per hour prime time and \$8 per hour non-prime time for residents and \$11 per hour non-prime time and \$12 per hour prime time for non-residents.
 - Wallyball Courts - \$11 per hour non-prime time and \$12 per hour prime time for residents and \$16 per hour non-prime time \$18 per hour prime time for non-residents.
 - Brewball - \$7 per hour non-prime time and \$8 per hour prime time for residents and \$10 per hour non-prime time and \$11 per hour prime time for non-residents.
 - Court Gold Cards (10 hours of time) are available at \$80 resident racquetball and \$110 for non-resident racquetball; \$110 for resident wallyball and \$170 for non-resident wallyball; and \$70 for resident brewball and \$100 non-resident brewball

- Open Gym**
The hours vary, so call ahead for times. Cost is \$2 for residents and \$4 for non-residents. Students pay \$1, but must show middle school or high school identification card.
- Senior Friendship Center**
Programs, Activities, Services
- Alterations: The Friendship Center offers alterations for a nominal fee every Tuesday.
 - Advisory Council: A group of elected individuals representing their various clubs within the city and Friendship Center. The Advisory Council discusses and determines various senior needs and deliberates which issues should be presented to the Commission on Aging. Meets the first Friday of the month.
 - Angel Wings: 5 p.m. Tuesdays.
 - Blood Pressure Check: Offered 9:30 a.m. first and third Mondays and Wednesdays and 11 a.m. every Friday.

- Book Club: 1 p.m. Fridays.
 - Bridge Class: 1 p.m. Wednesdays.
 - Canadian Prescription Drug Program: Call for information.
 - Card Groups: Five groups of Pinochle, one Euchre and one Bridge Club.
 - Ceramics: 9:30 a.m. Thursdays.
 - Commission on Aging: Appointed by the Mayor, the commission advises the department of the needs of older adults and studies recommendations made by the Advisory Council. Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month.
 - Congregate Meal: Lunch is served daily at 11:30 a.m. It gives seniors a great opportunity to socialize with peers. Call 24 hours in advance and before 11 a.m. to make or cancel reservations.
 - Cosmetologists: Every Wednesday and Friday by appointment only.
 - Couponing Group: 3 p.m. every third Thursday.
 - Couponing for Military: 9 a.m. Wednesdays.
 - Creative Writing Group: 1 p.m. the second and fourth Wednesdays.
 - Crochet and Knitting Group: 9:30 a.m. Thursdays.
 - Daily Exercise: Offers range of motion, stretching and mild exercise. Call for time.
 - Diabetes Screenings: 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays.
 - Home Chores Program: This program is designed to help seniors mow their lawns in the summer; leaf raking in the fall and snow removal in the winter. Call for additional information.
 - Jazzercise: This class is designed for exercisers 40 years of age and up. It provides a low to moderate workout to music and helps to improve strength, flexibility, balance and cardiovascular endurance.
 - Legal Aid: By appointment only. Call for more information.
 - Line Dancing: 10 a.m. Wednesdays.
 - Meals on Wheels: Homebound meal delivery for shut-ins. Call for information.
 - Pancake Breakfast: 8:30-11 a.m. Every second Thursday of the month.
 - Pinochle Class: 2 p.m. Thursdays.
 - Quilting Class: noon Thursdays.
 - Rookie Pinochle: 3 p.m. Thursdays.
 - Telecare Reassurance Program: Calls are made to check on lonely, sick and shut in seniors on a regular basis.
 - Travel Group: One day and occasional overnight trips are offered.
 - Water Color Class: Meets 11:15 a.m. Fridays.
 - Yoga: 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays and 3:30 p.m. Thursdays.
- The Friendship Center is at 1119 N. Newburgh, south of Ford. For more information, call (734) 722-7632 or (734) 722-7628.

THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

Classes/field trips
The Westland Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a variety of activities and field trips for people with special needs through its Therapeutic Recreation Program now through June. The program includes classes in golf, cooking, exercise and arts and crafts for those 13 years and older. There also is bowling and fun nights, swimming fishing and a dance planned. There is at least one field trip each month, including seeing the Harlequin Globetrotters, the Detroit Tigers, Michigan State-University of Michigan hockey game and a mystery trip.



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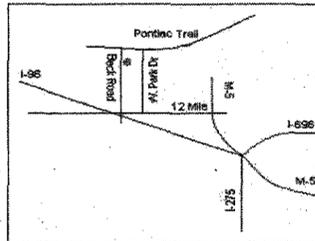
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PARKS

FROM PAGE A1

"We see this as buying value for the city and bringing the value of homes up, but it has to be a joint effort with the community."

Rodriguez said he has already had preliminary discussions about the project with Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and Parks and Recreation Director Bob Kosowski.

The WYAA stressed the plan addresses concerns about the city losing parks and recreation dollars to adjoining communities such as Livonia and Canton, which have developed state-of-the-art community centers along with centrally-located youth athletic fields.

"We want to make Westland a destination for people," Gellert said. "We look to put the city on the map. We don't want to take away the look of the area. We know there are concerns about wildlife. We want to keep as many trees as we can."

The WYAA also would seek additional sponsors for portions of the plan. Rodriguez cited one example in Atlanta, Ga. where the McDonald's Corp. donated \$300,000 for a baseball-softball diamond for severely handicapped children.

Rodriguez admitted start-up costs for a geothermal system for a new ice facility and pool is expensive, but he said the city can save, during the long-term, heating and cooling costs.

"It would be less than half

the cost of what it takes now to heat Modano Arena," he said. "And with the turf (soccer) fields we'll get more hours and days of use with less maintenance."

The WYAA also said the two new sheets of ice would also make Westland more attractive to host tournaments for hockey. Centralized baseball-softball diamonds and soccer fields would also make the city a more attractive host.

And taking a line from the movie "Field of Dreams," Kangas added during his presentation: "If we build it, they will come."

Following the presentation, Simonian expressed concerns about the project on several fronts.

"I don't believe we can support two sheets of ice," he said. "We're only charging right now \$160 per hour. It's in use only 42 to 45 hours per week. We don't play after 11 p.m. There's a glut of ice out there."

"And why does everything has to be centralized? I don't want to sound like the devil's advocate, but with the economy the way it is right now . . ."

According to 2003 figures he obtained, Rodriguez said the median sales price for a home in Westland was \$118,000. He estimated that if the mill proposal passes, it would cost taxpayers, on average and depending on the sales value of their home, \$45 per year over a 20-year period.

For questions, concerns or comments, e-mail FrontierPark@wyaa.org.

CENTER STAGE

FROM PAGE A1

village look township planners have established for the flourishing business district.

LIFE, DEATH OF A DREAM

"There wasn't a bad seat in the house," recalled former Center Stage manager John Goci, who currently owns the U.S. 12 club in Wayne.

When Center Stage was built in the mid-'70s, the original owners had a deal with the top local booking agency of the time, Brass Ring Productions. They brought in top acts including Ricky Nelson, War, and Brooks and Dunn.

When the original owners ran into money problems, Sassak - a tool and die business owner who also ran the Urban Cowboy club in Westland complete with mechanical bull - took over.

Goci recalled the 20,000 square-foot club's acoustics as superior. Center Stage was the largest such club on the west side, holding 1,500 on two levels. Even more impressive were two skyboxes available for rentals, before the notion of suites became common.

A former World War II bomber pilot, Sassak also showed major boxing matches on closed circuit TV at Center Stage. Goci said the legendary Thomas Hearns vs. Sugar Ray Leonard bout in 1989 was memorable.

The club was packed. Hearns knocked Leonard down twice, but Leonard was named the winner. "Everybody was totally distraught the Hit Man lost," Goci recalled. "Everybody thought he won and were quite upset."

Around this time, the club was also becoming known for other fights, involving groups of teens, as Center Stage was also serving as a teen club.

"The Canton police used to set up vans in the parking lot," recalled Township Supervisor Tom Yack.

"Sometimes teenagers get out of hand," Goci said. "I don't recall anybody being seriously injured. I got a lot of training for this business at Center Stage."

Sassak's son, Mark, said his father "loved the night club

business."

John Sassak later tried to recast the Center Stage as a dinner club, but closed it in 2001 after he was injured in a car accident. He died at age 83, in May 2003.

MOVING ON

Banicki said he does not have a name for the property, to be developed by his company Model Properties, which is headquartered in Flushing near Flint. He's so positive about the prospects for success that the land sale is going through immediately, and is not being tied to approval of the development by the township government.

"It's certainly near I-275. You've got a huge anchor next door that draws a lot of traffic; Wal-Mart and Sam's Club are very powerful and Ford Road is an absolutely great site for a small strip mall," Banicki said. "We don't anticipate any big problems."

Other strip malls developed by Banicki include the 32,000 square-foot Riverview Plaza at Fort and Pennsylvania roads in Riverview and another at Ford Road and Middlebelt in Garden City which includes a Rite Aid.

Yack said the effort to redevelop the property is welcome. "It fell into disrepair. The sign in front looks terrible," he said.

"It's probably one of the best locations in Canton because of proximity to Don Pablos and Sam's Club," Yack said. "Lotz Road to the north is going to be improved; they won't have to pay any part of that."

Mark Saum, an assistant manager at the Gordon's Food Service store at Ford and Newburg roads in Westland, said plans call for the Westland store to relocate to the larger Canton site.

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Council meeting

The Westland City Council will have its regular business meeting at 7 p.m. Monday at City Hall, on Ford Road east of Newburgh. The council also will have a 5:30 p.m. study session Monday with members of the Downtown Development Authority to discuss ongoing efforts to improve a special DDA district along Ford Road and on Wayne Road between Ford and Glenwood.

Euchre tournament

The Village of Westland is hosting its first Euchre Tournament for seniors age 62 and older at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19, at the senior community, 32001 Cherry Hill between Merriman and Venoy, Westland. There is no fee, however, space is limited and reservations must be made by Feb. 15 by calling (734) 762-8926. Pinochle and Bridge players are welcome for open card games.

Free seminar

William Gramzow, an advanced planning counselor and funeral director with R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home, will conduct a funeral planning seminar at Westland Convalescent Center on

Thursday, March 10.

The seminar will be 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the convalescent center 36137 W. Warren, between Wayne Road and Central City Parkway in Westland.

Gramzow will cover such funeral planning topics as funeral prearrangement planning, how to select a funeral home and understanding Medicaid and SSI as it relates to funeral planning.

The public is invited to attend the free seminar. Call Judy Bianchi at (734) 728-6100 to sign up for the special event.

Night Off

Parents looking for an evening out should circle Friday, April 22 and June 3.

Those nights the Westland Parks and Recreation Department, the Westland Jaycees and Hoops Stars Basketball and Academic Tutoring will offer Parents' Night Off.

Parents can leave their children at the Bailey Recreation Center 6-10 p.m. both evenings and enjoy a night out while the kids enjoy a pizza dinner (chips and a beverage included) and two activities. The choices include basketball, cheerleading, math games and

arts and crafts, and kids can choose the same activity for both sessions.

The event is for children in first-eighth-grades and cost \$20 for one child per night off or \$35 per child for both. Register by April 19 for the first Night off and by May 30 for the June 30 program at the Bailey Recreation Center, 3351 Ford.

For more information, call Ron Levin at (248) 496-3268.

Toy show

The Westland Rotary Club will host a toy show 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, March 6, at Joy Manor, 28999 Joy, east of Middlebelt.

The show will feature new and antique toys, collectibles, Beanie Babies, action figures, die cast toys, slot and model cars, Matchbox, Hot Wheels and more. There also will be 50/50 raffles and drawings for door prizes.

Show admission is \$3 for adults with children under age 12 free. Proceeds will support Rotary charities.

Table space is available at \$30 per table and is available by writing to Westland Rotary Toy Show, 6600 Burnly, Garden City, MI 48135. For more information, call Mary McGaw at (734) 748-8515.

Quilt show

Grange No. 389 will have its annual spring quilt show 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 12, at the senior Friendship Center, 1119 S. Newburgh, Westland.

The show will feature quilt classes - a cathedral window quilted pillow and special kids classes 9 a.m. to noon, quilted book cover class 1-4 p.m. and paper piece project 1-6 p.m. - quilt displays, demonstrations, appraisals and lunch. There also will be a display of old, new, unfinished quilts, wall hangings and quilted clothing. The entry fee is \$1 per piece to be judged.

Table space also is available for vendors. The cost is \$25 for a 10-by-10-foot space.

The kids class costs \$5, the pillow and book cover classes cost \$20 each, and the paper piece project \$30. Preregistration is required. Tickets are \$1 in advance and \$2 at the door.

For tickets or to register, call Sharon Strebbling at (734) 722-4857.

Registration also can be sent to Strebbling at 5692 N. Globe, Westland, MI 48185. Include your name address and telephone number as well as an alternate phone number.

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ACHIEVERS

More than 80 band and orchestra students from Wayne Memorial High School performed at the District solo/Ensemble Festival on Jan. 29. Fifty two students received medals and 18 students qualified for the State solo/Ensemble Festival which will be on March 19 at Chelsea High School.

The state qualifiers include:
 ■ Percussion quartet - Adam Smith, Michael Crill, Doug Clendening and Matt Lancaster.
 ■ Snare drum solo - Adam Smith.

■ Clarinet solo - Tirrell Davis.
 ■ Flute solo - Cyndi Aslanian.
 ■ Clarinet duet - Samantha Boslooper and Erin Hanner.
 ■ Clarinet solo - Kim Blessing.
 ■ Trombone/baritone duet - Patrick Brown and Josh Scholler (John Glenn High School).
 ■ Trumpet solo - Jacob Schofield.
 ■ Tenor drum solo - Doug Clendening.
 ■ Marimba duet - Jessica Kay and Adam Smith.
 ■ Alto saxophone solo -

Mark Arnold.
 ■ Snare drum solo - Matt Lancaster.
 ■ Alto saxophone solo - David Kiracofe.
 ■ Violin solo - Tricia Terrien.
 ■ Baritone solo - Bobbi Turner.
 ■ Clarinet solo - Melissa Schmidt.
 ■ Violin solo - Kristina Rogers.
 ■ Clarinet duet - Kim Blessing and Kristen Kiracofe.
 The director of instrumental programs at Wayne Memorial High School is Matt Diroff.



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Oooh, that's scary. St. Damian School first-grader Pearse Branigan puts on a scary voice during a program with Jonathan Rand, author of Michigan Chillers books.

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AUTHOR

FROM PAGE A1

"I love to write, I write every day and I make sure I have a pencil with me," said Rand, the author of the Michigan Chillers and American Chillers books for kids ages 8-12. "I have the coolest job in the world."

He mixed humor with talk about reading and writing, offering tips on what not to do with a pencil - "Don't scratch under your arms with it, don't pick your nose with it, don't put it in your ear and then chew on it." - and sharing two secrets with students - reading is a destination and books don't have covers.

"Find a book, hold it in your

hands and ask where you're going to go," he said. "Reading is not something you do, reading is a place where you go. The books on the shelves of the library mean places to visit. Books don't have covers, they have doors, and when you discover they have doors, not covers, you can go all over the world."

Rand has been writing his Chiller books since 2000 when he came out with his first Michigan Chiller, *Mayhem on Mackinac Island*. He had spent more than two decades in radio and TV, when he decided to write the books, geared for kids ages 8-12, and "two million books later and I haven't looked back."

"I wanted to write spooky things for kids," said Rand. "The ones from Michigan I put in a little history about the city like how it got its name."

He's done 10 Michigan Chillers with titles like *Terror Stalks Traverse City*, *Gargoyles of Gaylord*, *Kreepy Klowns of Kalamazoo* and *Sinister Spiders of Saginaw*. The Detroit book is number eight in the series and Dillon's favorite so far.

"They're interesting," he said. "If someone likes scary books, these would be good for him."

When he started hearing from kids around the country, asking why he didn't write stories about their states, he expanded his writing to include his American Chillers series that started out with *The Michigan Mega Monsters* and went on from there to include *Ogres of Ohio*, *Florida Fog Phantoms* and *Minnesota Mall Mannequins*.

It was third-grade teacher Donna Wizinsky who helped get Rand to come to the school.

"I started a publishing center here, and I was trying to get the kids interested in writing. I knew just the man to get them interested," said Wizinsky, who knew that man was Rand after seeing him do a program while a student teacher in the Livonia Public Schools.

Rand took his audience all the way back to his elementary school years, talking about his loves - reading, writing and

stories - on to his time in college when landed a job in radio where he had to write commercials - "I made my commercials like stories."

He also explained the process he went through to write his first scary book from turning off the lights and turning on creepy music only to discover he needed to master the unwritten rule - you can't write a scary book until you do the spooky laugh.

Fingers jiggling, his eyebrows wiggling and a scary look in his eyes, Rand presented his best version of a spooky laugh which he said he practiced for two weeks before he started writing. Then he found five students to be his models as he taught the entire group his technique.

"I call the process of writing creating magic," he said. "If I told you invisible men make the trees bend, you'd think the big tall dude with the pony tail had too much sugar on his Froot Loops. But by using a pencil and my head, I create a magic world on paper."

"What's up here," he added, tapping his head, "is in here (his Chiller books)."

And he also had a word of advice.

"If you want to be an author, don't be a writer, be a rewriter," he said. "Don't write a story once, don't write it and turn it in. Rewriting is my favorite process because I get to go back and hang out with those characters again."

Rand admits he has as much fun as the students at such presentations. He and his wife Boots will do up to 100 of them this year, driving from their home in Topinabee to schools and libraries around Michigan and into Indiana and Ohio.

They've even traveled to Miami, Fla., where his Chiller books are used at one school to teach English to the mostly Hispanic student body.

"I love humor, I love fun, and if I use humor, I keep the kids interested," he said. "They might not want to read, but I want them to enjoy the presentation."

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RETIREE

FROM PAGE A1

salary - currently \$84,035 - that matches that of the city's other top elected official, Clerk Eileen DeHart.

Cicirelli's \$90,465 pay had been frozen for three years until the Local Officials Compensation Commission decided this month to award 3 percent increases this year and next. The decision will push the mayoral salary to nearly \$96,000.

James also promised that he won't accept city health coverage and that - like Cicirelli - he will pay for his own car.

James, who has a business degree in accounting, said in announcing his candidacy that he would:

■ Replace some department heads and implement a stronger code of conduct.

■ Reduce city spending in every department. Cicirelli also has trimmed spending to help offset cuts in state-shared revenue.

■ Further reduce the number of city vehicles that are provided to department heads. Cicirelli has made some cuts in

this area.

■ Review contracts for the city golf course and ice arena, amid hopes of saving money.

■ Work with the Westland Chamber of Commerce to try to create more local jobs.

■ Ensure that taxes don't increase. "As a senior (citizen), we are all on a fixed income. I'm gravely concerned about how high our taxes are."

Cicirelli defended her first three years in office and said she has managed to keep city services intact despite state revenue cuts.

"We'll run on our record," she said.

Council President Charles Pickering - a Cicirelli supporter - predicted that the mayor would be difficult to defeat.

He commended the job Cicirelli has done, but he said competition is healthy for any election. He said good ideas can emerge during a competitive election.

"I fully support her for reelection, and I do believe that no matter who would run against her that she would be the front-runner," Pickering said.

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Long-forgotten autobiography reveals two amazing stories

This is the story of one of black history's amazing unknown pioneers, a slave boy who, against all odds, rose to become the foremost black classical scholar, a major voice in the debate over the future of black America and, finally, president of Wilberforce University.

And it is the story of a young white woman, born long after he died, who found his fascinating autobiography tucked away and forgotten, and who has just given William Sanders Scarborough's incredible life back to the nation after it was somehow tragically lost for decades.

"He was an American hero of the mind," Michele Valerie Ronnick said. "His story remains living proof that if you work hard, aim high and dream big dreams, you can overcome tremendous obstacles."

Thanks to her own hard work, Wayne State University Press has just published his book: *The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey From Slavery to Scholarship* (425 pages; \$29.95). Her achievement, like that of her subject, has been hailed as nothing short of brilliant by Henry Louis Gates, the famous scholar and critic.

Though they are separated by race, gender and more than a century, the black pioneer and the young scholar have something in common. No one would have expected either to become experts in ancient tongues.

Growing up in Florida in the 1970s, Michele Ronnick took Latin as a senior in high school mainly because her brother liked the teacher. It started her on a lifelong passion for the classics.

Nobody would ever have expected Scarborough to become a scholar - let alone a leading expert on Greek and Latin.

When he was growing up, it was illegal to teach blacks to read or write. U.S. Sen. John C. Calhoun, the famous fire-eating defender of slavery, once said that if he "could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe the Negro was a human being."

Scarborough, who surreptitiously was taught to read, ended up not just knowing that ancient language fluently - he became the author of a Greek college textbook widely used in the late 19th century.

He rose to become an amazing example who fought hardship all his life, never took no for an answer and who wasn't content to be a trailblazer in merely academic circles.

He dabbled in Ohio politics and fought Booker T. Washington's idea that African-Americans should be content to learn industrial arts and not worry about cultivating the life of the mind.

And William Scarborough was witness to some of the greatest moments of his time. He was a 12-year-old boy in Atlanta when the city was sacked by William Tecumseh Sherman (when blacks were allowed to do some looting, he tellingly went after, he says, "pencils,

William Scarborough was witness to some of the greatest moments of his time.

envelopes and paper.")

He saw Jefferson Davis dragged away as a prisoner of war; met Richard Wright and Frederick Douglass; knew Warren G. Harding; and attended Booker T. Washington's funeral. He fell in love with a white divorcee when that was social suicide; they married in 1881 and lived happily ever after for 45 years.

Then, in the fall of 1926, he died, after struggling into his library for one last look at his beloved books. Shortly before he had finished writing an autobiography, to which his heartbroken wife added a few pages. But it was never published, and it and he were finally forgotten.

Meanwhile, Michele Ronnick had gone on to become an expert on Roman literature, and ended up as part of the tiny classics department at Wayne State University. Eight years ago, doing research, she came across a reference to one William Scarborough. It said he was African-American, a former slave, and was the author of a textbook of ancient Greek.

What amazed her was that she had never heard of him. Her interest was piqued.

Then, after a lot of digging, she discovered a treasure trove: A copy of his autobiography, forgotten, in the Ohio Historical Society archives. For some reason, it had never been published.

As she began to read, she was hooked.

Wayne State University Press has just published the manuscript. It reveals a black man who was a straight-laced Victorian, who was always proper, but whose remarkable life puts most of us to shame. "I have never been ashamed of my birth conditions," he says succinctly. "I have left that to the slaveholders."

Shortly before he died nearly a century ago, Professor William Sanders Scarborough finished his memoir, writing, "I look ahead into years to come, when the melting pot - America - will have melted away racial lines, hates and prejudices ... a thing this country owes to its honor."

We can only guess what he would have thought today.

But I think it might be something like what I heard a minister say once during a service in the African Methodist Episcopal Church to which the old professor belonged.

"Lord, we're not what we should be. We're not what we could be and we're not what we are going to be. But at least we're not what we were."

Jack Lessenberry is editorial vice president of HomeTown Communications. He can be reached by phone at (248) 901-2561 or by e-mail at jlessenberry@homecomm.net.



Jack Lessenberry

Watkins loses political battle, but he raised honest concerns

Tom Watkins was always quick to return phone calls and he always gave good quotes.

Newspaper reporters appreciate those qualities in a public official.

Watkins is also passionate about public education. That was a good trait to have for the state's superintendent of public instruction. Despite an A- vote of approval by the State Board of Education last fall, Gov. Jennifer Granholm had been pushing for his removal for a long time.

Yes, yes, yes, he's a good talker, very passionate but, the governor says, an "ineffective leader." He talks a good game but wasn't getting the job done. Sort of like the governor, herself, in dealing with the state's tortuous economic problems. But, that's another story.

Anyway, she had a deal. He promised in May he would leave at the end of the year and reneged on the promise. You don't mess with a governor no matter how good your report card and stay politically alive.

Last weekend, push came to shove, and Watkins was no match for a governor and board members from the other party who have never been his fans. So it's off to Wayne State University for Watkins. Jeremy Hughes, the state's chief academic officer, will keep the seat warm until a replacement is chosen.

Though the board decides on the state superintendent, and a Democratic board brought Watkins in when John Engler was governor, the power still rests with Granholm.

Though Watkins was obviously in Granholm's crosshairs for a long time, he didn't help his cause with a report he was asked to prepare in December by state board President Kathleen Straus. Asking her superintendent for honest feedback was like setting up a bear trap and waiting for him to stick his foot in.

Watkins upset several constituencies at once. He worried about school costs and especially the high cost of labor, pension and health care. He didn't win friends in the Michigan Education Association by writing: "Succinctly, these obligations are competing with the ability to invest in tools such as professional development, technology, lowering class size, quality of pre-school programs, reading programs, dropout prevention pro-

grams, and para-professionals among many other tools that help teachers teach and children learn."

Whew! He also had the temerity to broach the issue of whether Michigan might have too many school districts and might need to think about combinations or cooperation or even elimination of some districts. Districts like Clarenceville, South Redford and Redford Union beg to differ. A recent suggestion along the same lines by the *Observer & Eccentric's* chairman Phil Power drew a barrage of letters from Clarenceville administrators, teachers and parents.

Obviously, in politics or business, when a boss asks someone to think outside the box, they don't really expect them to do more than pop out like a jack-in-the-box and then pop back in. They never really want anybody too far outside that box.

As a seasoned political figure, Watkins should have known that.

As Watkins notes, the report is his thinking, his concerns, his evaluation. The real business of getting things done remains with the governor and legislature. They're the ones who must make the bold decisions, or not.

These are confusing times for our school districts and Watkins and the state board haven't done a good job of explaining No Child Left Behind and getting schools behind the state's Education Yes! program. School districts regard the report card system as a black eye on their districts, rather than as a help in evaluating problems within the system. It's become, as it always does, political. And maybe Watkins' lack of enthusiasm for NCLB was another reason he was vulnerable.

According to news reports, Granholm's spokeswoman Liz Boyd said the governor is looking for someone who has served as a school superintendent, is dedicated to early childhood education and understands the problems faced by school districts with declining enrollment (read that Detroit). The board will choose, but it's obvious that Granholm has a silent veto power.

We hope whoever they choose will return phone calls, give good quotes and be passionate about improving public education.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the *Observer Newspapers*. He can be reached by e-mail at hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net, by phone at (734) 953-2149, or by fax at (734) 591-7279.



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Metro moving ahead on new terminal

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

This summer Metro Airport's Davey Terminal will be demolished and work will begin on a new \$418 million North Terminal, the first major capital improvement since management of Wayne County's Metro and Willow Run Airports was moved to an independent authority from the county commission.

The Davey Terminal has been unused since the airport's hub airline Northwest moved to the \$1.2 billion, 97-gate McNamara Terminal in 2002.

The new North Terminal scheduled to open in 2008 will accommodate airlines not in alliance with Northwest. The terminal will be paid for with money borrowed against the \$4.50 (per) ticket fee, which generates between \$40 million and \$50 million a year at Metro.

The Smith and Berry terminals will be demolished when the new terminal opens. Smith is currently used by Air Canada, American, American West, Delta, Independence Air, Southwest, Spirit, United and US Air and several commuter airlines. Charter airlines fly out of Berry.

The 27-gate terminal is being

built at a time when many major airlines are facing financial losses but air travel is approaching an all time high.

"Even though airlines are having financial troubles, we serve two masters, we serve the flying public and second we make the airlines as comfortable as possible," said Lester Robinson, CEO of the Airport Authority.

"We see the two as not always being the same. You can argue that quality airlines are doing poorly at a time in which we're about to break records in person travel. We're about back to our pre-2001 levels in terms of passenger activity. If you're operating at those levels and the airlines can't make money there's something wrong."

Robinson said labor costs, pensions, increased competition and fuel prices have all contributed to the airlines' problems. He said he is sympathetic to the airlines.

"At the same time, we realize we have more passengers coming to our terminals than ever before. We're going through a change and that change might mean that some of our carriers are going away," he said.

But Robinson said he is confident that Northwest will survive the current shakeout, but even if they don't the airport

will continue to operate successfully.

"Even if they go bankrupt, our market won't go bankrupt," he said.

Vernice Anthony, chair of the Airport Authority and president and CEO of the Greater Detroit Area Health Council, is also optimistic about the airport.

"We are joined at the hip by Northwest Airlines as our major partner," she said. "We feel strongly about having a strong, positive relationship. On the other hand we are building the North Terminal, creating more space for other airlines in terms of competition. Northwest is a hub that brings global travel and people passing through from all parts of the world."

Robinson said having Northwest as a hub airline provides Detroit travelers with more options than at other air-

ports that don't have a hub.

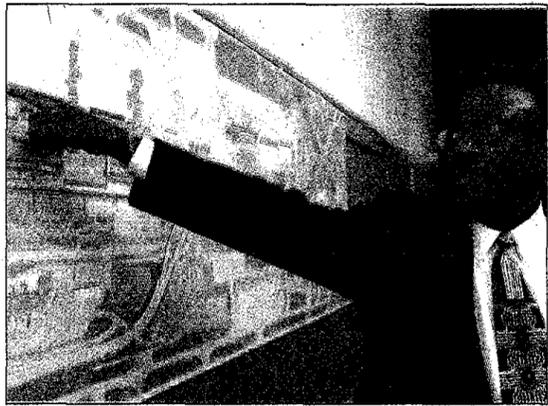
Still the airport is projecting a decline in landing fees of nearly \$7 million for the 2005 fiscal year and pursuing other sources of revenue.

"I think airports are collectively trying to find ways to operate more efficiently, to find ways to generate revenue outside of those charges it makes to the airlines to help pay for its costs," Robinson said.

Robinson said plans for the new terminal date back to 2001 and were delayed by the fall out from the terrorists attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

"Those passengers who are not choosing to fly Northwest deserve a better facility," he said.

"Quite frankly the facility we have today is an old 1950s-60s vintage facility and not the kind of service you want to represent this community in 2005."



TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lester Robinson, airport director at Detroit Metro Airport, explains the plans for another new terminal that will replace the existing Davey and Berry terminals.

This month the Airport Authority will select from among three concepts.

Apron construction is scheduled for later this year with construction of the terminal to

begin in spring 2006.

Sam Vaskov is the manager of the redevelopment project.

hgallagher@oe.hometownlife.com
(734)953-2149

Authority brought 'credibility'

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

The Wayne County Airport Authority was established by the state legislature in 2002 following an agreement between then Gov. John Engler and then Wayne County Executive Edward McNamara.

The legislation shifted management of Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Willow Run Airport from the Wayne County Commission to an independent seven-member board with three appointees of the governor, three by the county executive and one by county commission.

The authority was created after questions were raised about airport management and contracting procedures.

Vernice Anthony, current chair of the authority and president and CEO of the Greater Detroit Area Health Council, said there were problems under the old management structure.

"There were serious credibility problems, which was one reason why the authority was created in the first place, and there were also efficiency issues with county government," Anthony said. "How could we do this in a way that maintains public authority but adds timeliness and provides more of an open book about airport issues. That

has worked well the last four years."

Airport Authority CEO Lester Robinson, who was director of the airport when the management change was made, said some of the complaints about contracts were more perception than reality but that the authority has been an improvement.

"I am a firm believer that the authority has improved not only our image but our practices, and I believe one of the things that's very evident to me is the opening of our solicitation methods and not being a protectionist kind of purchaser has improved our efficiency by lowering our costs in a number of ways," Robinson said.

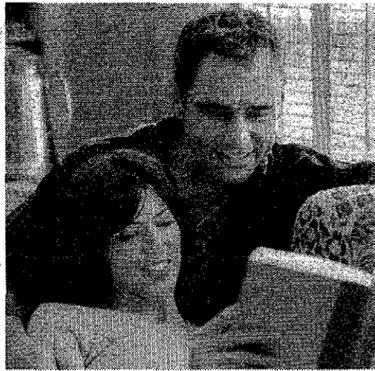
Robinson said the authority has allowed the airport to attract a wider range of vendors and contractors.

"I will tell you I've talked to professionals who've told me they would not have bid on our work if we were still part of the political process we used to be part of," he said.

He said the authority members are all "business people" who understand "the value of money and time."

"They challenge us to look for the best possible deal for the goods and services we need, they understand a little better that the political organization we used to be a part of," he said.

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ANGER AND ARTHRITIS

If you have arthritis, you have a right to become angry. First, it is difficult to explain your limits to others. Too often, in the eyes of the rest of the world, you look yourself and speak in a normal voice, then you must be all right. To them, you should be able to join an evening activity, shop longer with them, and take advantage of tickets to the ball game that just happened to come along.

Too often, you see skepticism or disbelief in people when you say you are too tired to join them, and need to stay home and rest. You have a right to feel angry when they don't understand.

Then, you have the projects and activities you want to do, but because of aching joints, cannot begin. The gifts you want to buy, but because of fatigue cannot go out to get. The skating, biking, jogging that your muscles crave, but that your arthritic knee and ankle joints forbid. There may be the craft or profession you wanted to claim, but which now is beyond you because of impaired joints.

There is a place for anger over having the arthritis at all. You are certainly right to ask: "Why me?" Your condition has nothing to do with you being a good or bad person. Most arthritis is a combination of an inherited tendency meeting something in the environment that triggers continuing inflammation and joint damage. You have no control over these events either by diet or personal habits.

Eventually, you must dissipate your anger. The greater need is to use the energy that you have to get through the life that you've got.

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MOVIES

FROM PAGE A1

a letter to the troops.

"Thanks for protecting us," he wrote. "You are very brave."

"One mother even wrote that she'd be a pen pal," said Chaveriat. "She told her husband what she wanted to do and he said it was OK."

Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies was started by Wisconsin residents Bernie and Kathy Hintzke who came up with the idea to help their son, Adam, who was serving in Iraq. It soon expanded to include soldiers serving in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Hintzkes' "ticket" to the movies included a new or used DVD movie, two packets of microwave popcorn, two presweetened drink mix packets, an assortment of movie theater candy and letters and photographs from contributors.

Instead of making individual packages, the Burger students created three boxes that Morton and Amatucci's and Bosker's brothers can share with their fellow soldiers.

The collection went beyond movie items when Mullen provided a list of items hard to find in Iraq, so things like the canned ravioli, disposable wet



Michael Lomas (center) of Melvindale and Jacob Davis (right) of Garden City load up the food for Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies at the Burger Center for Students of Autism.

cloths, games and playing cards were included.

"It's something he told me and what I hear from other guys," said Mullen, who is a Viet Nam War veteran. "It's things they can't readily get over there."

"I don't think they have the accommodations like I had in Viet Nam," he added. "I was in a barracks in Viet Nam. They're living in containers. They shipped everything over there in the containers, emptied them out and now they're living in them."

"The containers are probably the nicest thing they have to

live in over there."

Tuesday morning, the boxes were packed and inventoried before they were picked up by DHL, which is covering the cost of shipping the packages.

It was Ann Marie Witkowski who got DHL to ship the boxes for free. She had connections. Her husband, Andy, works for the company. And it was her son who insisted on including the cheese ravioli in the collection.

"I started counting how much we had at one time, but it kept coming in, so I stopped," said Chaveriat. "It started with one and then



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Renee Mills, 8, of Belleville helps load the items for Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies.

another. It was kind of neat to see it grow. It's about people doing something"

Mullen figured he has a few days to tell his son a special package is coming and he won't have to tell him to share. He's been doing that with the packages his parents have been sending every few weeks.

"When I was in Viet Nam, the moms would send care packages, but I never remember getting them from an organization like this," said Mullen. "It was what mom would send and what we could get from the USO."

He added that he now understands what his parents

went through when he was in Viet Nam and what his grandparents went through during World War II. His father was in the Normandy landing on D-Day.

"I think it's wonderful what they're doing," he said.

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OUR VIEWS

Keep the reports in perspective

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools made adequate yearly progress, or AYP, as reported by the Michigan Department of Education.

For Wayne-Westland, making the grade is a huge plus for a district that has long lived in the shadow of the Livonia schools, viewed by many as superior to its neighbor to the south. By making AYP, Wayne-Westland has proven it has just as good of an educational program as the Livonia schools.

The grade, however, isn't a perfect one. The score reflects the fact that one of its high schools — Wayne Memorial — didn't make AYP because of one subgroup. The district is appealing, but winning it is in doubt.

Wayne-Westland finds itself in a position of doing better than the Livonia district, which failed to make AYP. But does this mean that the district is failing? Is there cause for panic in a district with a reputation for quality?

School officials say they will win appeals of the issues that forced them into the same category as 20 percent of districts in the state — those that didn't make AYP. Whether or not they do, officials say the damage is really done.

However, at least in this area, we believe residents will keep all these education report cards, accreditations and similar new measuring sticks in the proper perspective.

Obviously, improving education is important and both districts' officials have said they'll use these reports to help redirect resources to try to help those subgroups meet achievement levels.

However, the ever-changing and increasingly complex process of evaluating schools makes it impossible for most of us to be anything but confused. In Livonia and Wayne-Westland, the issue is that, as the state's fifth- and 11th-largest districts, respectively, the size of those subgroups' populations means that the disparity of achievement gets measured, while in other districts it doesn't.

With all these benchmarks, we expect that schools and officials will celebrate the good marks and measurements, and we expect they will focus on reversing the poor reports. But as long as the districts keep pushing progress and its constituents believe they're on the path toward improvement, these measuring sticks will be kept in proper perspective.

Devil's in details of new election law

There's a big difference between passing laws that sound like good ideas and actually making good laws. The devil, as they say, is in the details, and municipal clerks and school officials see plenty of flaws in the election consolidation law that took effect last month.

This law was pushed as a way to improve voter turnout and, in turn, help eliminate stealth elections, those odd-time elections set up by school districts to ensure that only the die-hard "yes" voters go to the polls. It sets four specific dates a year for all elections — eliminating the June school board votes — and specifies all elections are run under state law.

Local clerks, generally, see nothing wrong with limiting the number of elections and making sure voters in city, township or school elections go to the same polling site for each election. And improving voter turnout is a great goal.

The problem, though, has come in administration of the law.

In some cases, the details of how it should work have been slow in filtering down from county clerks to local clerks. There has been general confusion over who'll administer elections, especially in districts which cross many communities. That's led to confusion over where to pick up school board petitions, sometimes just a few weeks before they're due. And towns are required to work out plans for administering something like the Schoolcraft Community College District election or rely on the county clerk's office.

In a time of dwindling budgets, the law also looks to be raising the cost of elections. School districts that used to run their own elections — many with paper ballots and using their own rules about numbers of election inspectors — can expect to see their costs multiply as clerks following state law require more election workers and the use of voting machines. Using machines for, sometimes, several hundred or a thousand voters in a small district school election leaves officials understandably angry with the potential new costs of this new law.

Officials agree: This law has gaps and lawmakers will need to make plenty of revisions once we get past this first year of elections. And we can only hope the lessons learned won't end up costing taxpayers even more money. Lawmakers could have avoided some of those issues, it seems, by phasing such a law in over a longer period of time.



Geoff Brooks 2-3-2005 OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

LETTERS

Let the state know

Dear parents of Michigan students:
For those of you who are not aware our state is involved in a financial crisis, this letter is intended to educate and inspire us as parents to gain knowledge and seek the information available to aid in the effort to resolve our funding issues.

As you know, we are funded by the state of Michigan and with so much information out there, we are not using the resources available to us to take this to the highest level, which is the state of Michigan.

We as a community need to work with our district in an effort to have our voices heard. Our children need solid foundations, and our schools are a part of that foundation.

What does this mean to us? It means that without proper funding we lose valuable jobs, textbooks, school activities, building maintenance, busing and other important programs.

We need to turn this negative into a positive and use our resources. Please visit the Web and share your concerns at www.Michigan.gov/gov and use the format at the bottom of this page to construct your letters. Let them know who you are and where you live and why we need changes, and how these changes affect you!

Please attend your local board of education meetings and become part of the solution and stay informed. These meetings are a wonderful way to learn about how funding works and what we can do to help. The state needs to hear each of our concerns.

Our districts are being forced into a corner and they need our help to make funding fair for everyone! Our children are our top priorities! Please take the time to let the state know that they need to make our children their priorities, too!

We all know that our community faces budget cuts and downsizing, but how much we allow is up to us! We must speak for our children and ensure them a solid future with the best education possible.

Our community does not want to face bankruptcy and job cuts as surrounding districts have. The issues are on your doorstep, let's all invite in a welcome change.

When addressing the state with any letters please include the following:

- A key message — this shows you want to communicate. Then add two to three paragraphs that offer examples or supporting evidence.

- Explain how the issues affects your child, your family, your school district or your community.

- "I know that my child's school has ... not been able to buy new books, increased class sizes, cut out or cut back on music, art, etc."

- Tell them what you want them to do — "The current funding plan is not working." "All these new laws are costing schools money and there isn't any more coming in."

- Be as brief as possible. Legislators prefer one-page letters that clearly state

your opinion or argument.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Adkins, Hamilton Elementary PTA president, at (734) 595-0314 or Toni Rizkallah, Kettering Elementary PTO contact, at (734) 729-9106.

Kelly Adkins
Westland

Support police officers

My letter is in regards to the article in the Jan. 13 edition of the *Garden City Observer* titled "Lawsuit Targets Five Police Officers."

As a young man, I would have never envisioned a fellow citizen suing a police officer for saving his or her life. If it were not for the excellent composure and level headedness of Garden City's fine police officers, this woman would have been killed.

She states that the officers used excessive force in the process of the shooting. It is my understanding that there were conflicting reports as to who the shooter was and his or her location.

The officers arriving on the scene could not have known where the shots were coming from, and I'm sure that they thought she was as much of a threat as the actual shooter.

As to her claim of being falsely arrested at the scene of the shooting, they were simply bringing her in for questioning in an attempted homicide of a police officer, as she was a witness.

At the time of the shooting, the officers did their duty to protect and serve. I would hope that the community would stand behind me in supporting Garden City Police Officers Rodney Donald (ret.) and Robert Muery, who has now advanced to the rank of sergeant, Westland Police Sgt. Jeff Trzybinski, Inkster Police Officer Shawn Adams and also Garden City police officers that helped save Mr. Rodney Donald's life.

I applaud the fine work these officers do every day and wish them the best. I hope for their sake and all of ours that this frivolous lawsuit is dismissed and these officers can continue with their stellar careers.

Matthew Koumariotis
Garden City

Questions test

My, how quickly the supporters of the Michigan Merit Exam seem to have forgotten about the ill-fated High School Proficiency Test (HSPT).

As a 1997 graduate of Canton High School, I was a member of the first class to take this test, which I think was scrapped after about two years. I believe my diploma has a sticker for proficiency in math and science, but not for English and reading, my two strongest subjects.

I feel sorry for the kids who are going to have to take this Michigan Merit Exam, as the *Observer* reports it will be like the ACT and could have more of a bearing on college admissions. Thankfully, the HSPT did not affect my chances of being accepted to the University of Michigan, where my first-

year writing professor commented that I came into the Residential College "as a good writer and worked to polish [her] many skills."

After getting the results from the HSPT, I had concerns about making it in Ann Arbor. However, when my first-year seminar professor told me I should do well at the university, I quickly let go of any doubts concerning my writing.

Since graduating from U-M, I have earned a master's degree in clinical psychology, and hope to go on for a Ph.D. someday. It's a good thing I did not let my life after high school depend on that one test.

Furthermore, as someone who makes a living administering psychological tests, I know how many, many years of research go into developing and norming such tests. I wonder how many years were put in to researching the HSPT, and how many will go in to the Michigan Merit Exam?

Amy Olszewski
Plymouth

Beware of tort reform

This country has always taken great pride in our determination and willingness to protect the citizens who could not protect themselves from injustice. We have been a country to champion the underdog and the little guy.

Now we have an administration that is proposing limits on the personal protection of our citizens, giving more power to large corporations, excusing them from accountability so they no longer need be concerned about the welfare of the little guy.

I believe they are calling it Tort Reform, but what it is really is a license to tie the hands of the ordinary citizen, take away any recourse that we may have to protect ourselves. This administration will try to convince us all that they are cracking down on trial lawyers when in fact what they are doing is removing the rights of the ordinary citizen to demand accountability from the people that we deal with every day, doctors, drug companies and big business. Don't be fooled or you will lose your right to be treated fairly.

Kathy Sasinowski
Royal Oak

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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Westland Observer
36251 Schoolcraft
Livonia, MI 48150

Fax:
(734) 591-7279

E-mail:
smason@oe.homecomm.net

QUOTABLE

"This is not about people deserving an increase. This is about a tough, difficult, unfortunate economic time that we live in and we should not be accepting salary increases."

— Westland Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt, about the Local Officials Compensation Commission's decision to give elected officials pay increases

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

Granholm typically cautious in revamping of tax system

Perhaps the very hardest thing for anyone holding public office is deciding whether — and when — to be bold or to be cautious. An example. Faced with a then-unprecedented budget crisis in 1983, newly elected Gov. James Blanchard chose to fight to temporarily hike the state income tax to cover the deficit. Net result? Economically, the measure worked, and within a couple of years the tax increase expired and the state had returned to prosperity.

Yet politically, there was a big downside for the Democrats. Two of their state senators who voted for the measure were recalled, and the Republicans took control and have dominated the Senate ever since.



Phil Power

Personally, I thought Blanchard did the responsible and right thing. And maybe the crushing reality of the situation left him with no real choice. But the conventional political wisdom flowing from the event is that being bold — when it comes to raising taxes — is always a mistake.

Now, we are facing a new and timely test of this proposition, in the form of the revisions to the Single Business Tax proposed last week by State Treasurer Jay Rising and Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

Certainly, something has had to be done about the antiquated 40-year-old SBT. At heart, it's a tax on payroll; for a state leading the nation in job loss, this seems a perverse way to structure our main business tax. In national surveys comparing state tax climates, Michigan has always stood out like a sore thumb because of the onerous way the SBT operates. Moreover, administering and computing the tax is a royal pain; some businesses spend more in figuring out how much tax they owe than the actual tax they pay.

The proposed changes get a lot of things right:

- The rate drops from 1.9 percent to 1.2 percent, a reduction of more than one-third.
- The tax base reduces the use of payroll as a factor, which also penalizes firms less for hiring new workers.
- A credit for research and development expenses should help high-tech companies.
- Manufacturers using lots of expensive equipment get a credit for personal property taxes.

All told, according to Rising, some 72,000 state businesses (including many small firms, which tend to be the main source of job growth) will see a tax reduction. Another 67,000 businesses will see no tax change; and 22,000 (including, notably, insurance companies) will

get higher tax bills. Overall, the changes in the SBT are supposed to be "revenue neutral," which means they are designed to not affect the total amount of money coming to the state.

But the obvious question now is whether the changes being proposed are far reaching ("bold") enough to really make a substantial difference to our economy. Some business types have proposed doing away with the SBT altogether and replacing it with a tax on business profit.

Personally, I have argued for eliminating the SBT and replacing it by broadening the sales tax to include services, but at a reduced rate. On the other hand, the SBT represents a big component of state revenue (now around \$2.2 billion annually), and it is a relatively stable tax in a state with a very volatile economy.

The Granholm administration has typically followed the path of moderate caution as it has made its choices along the bold-cautious continuum. So the recent SBT proposals are consistent with its overall philosophy. And from this perspective, they certainly represent a good first step.

In such matters, however, it's useful to consider what the economists call the "opportunity cost." The opportunity cost of choosing to buy fixed-interest bonds, for example, is that while such a choice may limit the likelihood of major loss, it also forgoes the possibility of big gains that could come if the money were invested in the stock market.

In choosing to make cautious changes in the SBT, the Granholm administration has forgone an opportunity to address the basic problem in Michigan's financial picture — the chronic structural deficit in the state budget. Deciding to junk the SBT and spread the sales tax to services is probably the easiest way to eliminate repetitive \$1 billion holes in the budget, but it's a risky move. A revenue-neutral tweak at the tax will likely, over time, result in some employment gains, but it almost certainly will not result in any fundamental improvement in the state's financial situation.

Choosing one route over another is all a matter of basic instinct between risk and reward, between boldness and caution. As the old saying goes, "you pays your money and you takes your choice."

But I still remember that when incoming Gov. John Engler was inaugurated, former Gov. George Romney leaned over and gave him only two words of advice: "Be bold!" That was advice he took, and whatever your politics, no man can say that John Engler didn't make a difference.

Phil Power is the chairman of the board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2047 or at ppower@homecomm.net.

Death shouldn't have to be the catalyst for making things right

My kid brother's dad died Sunday afternoon.

That's a pretty blunt way to put it, but that's how death really is. One second you're alive, the next you're not. Sounds like the beginnings of a "downer" column, but maybe it doesn't have to be.

My kid brother's dad died Sunday afternoon, and maybe there are lessons in his death — for all of us.

He was my dad, too, but for fewer of my growing-up years. He married my mother March 1, 1973, when I was 14. My older brother was 16 and my sister was just about 12, but my little brother was only 10. He was in our lives for several years before that.



Brad Kadrich

He owned a bar with his mother on Detroit's east side, and one of the two jobs my mother worked was tending bar there. It was a little neighborhood bar called Henry's, at Seven Mile and Gratiot, back when that area thrived more than it does today. There was a Montgomery Ward across the street, a

Fretter's appliance store on the corner and a Woolworth's down the block.

My mother found love in that bar and, for a long time, we found happiness, or at least our version of it. When I was a teenager, it was the coolest place in the world to be, much like the fictional *Cheers* would be years later on television.

The "regulars" were all young, vibrant people. There were pool and foosball tables in the back, there were three pinball machines up front. Guys named Dale and Tommy and Gary taught me how to push the pinball machines to get the right bounces.

They weren't skills I'd need later in life, but at the time there wasn't anywhere on Earth I'd rather have been. Those guys were heroes to me then.

I remember how happy my mom was the Christmas Eve she got her engagement ring. She'd moved us out of riot-torn Detroit to south Warren in 1967, and had struggled to put food on the table and clothes on our backs. My grandmother lived with us to take care of us while Mom worked two jobs.

The night she got engaged, she was running all over our small house, the one she'd bought with her own money and on her own terms, screaming, "See my ring! See my ring!" It was the happiest I'd ever seen her, or ever would, looking back on it now.

Christmas Eves we'd have the regulars over for drinks and fun, we'd play touch football in

But as the years wore on, the regulars grew older, got married, had children and moved on. So did we, my brothers and sister and I.

the street, snowy or not. We'd have annual picnics with softball games and other activities. We had jackets made, proudly proclaiming we were from Henry's.

When I was in the Air Force, I'd come home to visit, and we'd pick up a bag full of White Castle hamburgers and watch football before I had to go back to the base. It's actually one of my favorite memories.

But as the years wore on, the regulars grew older, got married, had children and moved on. So did we, my brothers and sister and I. Mom and Dad didn't and, as the area worsened and the business deteriorated, so did their relationship, and ours. Mom died in 1986, just weeks after the birth of her first grandson.

Dad swore at the time he'd be part of our lives, and he tried — for a while. He showed up for family parties, remembered birthdays, though not for all the kids. He attended the christening for my son, Robert, who was named partially after him. I called him when Andrew was born 18 months later, but the call wasn't returned, and I hadn't really spoken to him since. That was more than six years ago.

That wasn't true of my kid brother, who grew up with Dad as more of a father figure than we did. He made the effort, made the trek frequently from his Oxford home to Dad's St. Clair Shores condo with his wife and two daughters. He called Dad and his new wife on birthdays and anniversaries and holidays.

They had much more of a father-son relationship, and that's actually a good thing. He doesn't have the same issues his two older brothers had when Dad died. My older brother and I rushed to the hospital to make things right, as estranged family members often must do. For my kid brother, it was already right.

In retrospect, in light of death, I wish it was right for me, too. My dad died Sunday, too. Not my father, but my dad. And in his death is a lesson for everyone.

Make things right while you still have the chance.

Brad Kadrich is community editor of the *Plymouth Observer*. He can be reached by e-mail at bkadrich@oe.homecomm.net or by phone at (734) 459-2700.

Do you have temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMJD)?

Help us better understand this disorder. Volunteer to participate in research!

The University of Michigan Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center (CPFRC) is recruiting and screening individuals diagnosed with TMJD to become part of a research candidate pool. Candidates should be between 18-45 years of age and have no concurrent, serious medical conditions.

Upon completion of a screening evaluation, eligible volunteers will be advised of upcoming studies and have the opportunity to participate in a variety of research projects to be conducted over the next 1-3 years.

Volunteers receive financial compensation for time and participation.

For more information about the research candidate pool and/or to schedule a screening appointment contact the CPFRC at: 1-866-288-0046

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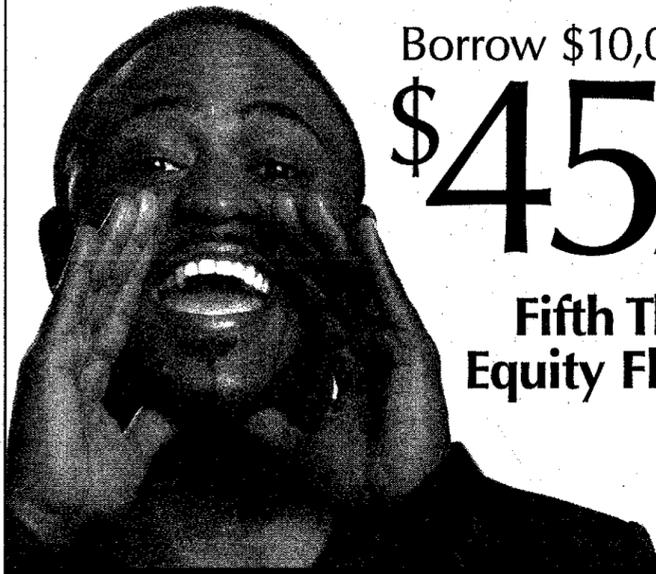
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3 seats up for election to Schoolcraft Board

An election to fill three seats on the Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees will be held Tuesday, May 3.

Dr. Patricia Watson and Gregory J. Stempien are running for re-election to six-year terms.

Dr. Philip N. Cascade, who was appointed to complete the term of Richard DeVries, is running to fill the remaining four years of the six-year term. DeVries was murdered in June 2004.

Prospective candidates must file their nominating petitions by March 7.

To be included on the ballot, a candidate must obtain the signatures of at least 50 but not more than 200 qualified voters from the college district on an official nominating petition which may be obtained from the college district municipality clerks and the Schoolcraft College President's Office.

There is no charge for filing petitions. Petitions bearing the required number of qualified signatures must be returned to the Livonia City Clerk, 33000 Civic Center Drive, Livonia, Michigan 48154, by 4 p.m. on

Monday, March 7, 2005.

Candidates must be registered voters and residents of the college's district, which reaches into 15 municipalities - City of Livonia, Garden City, City of Northville, Northville Township, Novi Township, City of Plymouth, Plymouth Township, and portions of Canton Township, City of Farmington Hills, Lyon Township, City of Novi, Redford Township, Salem Township, Superior Township, and the City of Westland.

The seven-member governing board holds regularly scheduled monthly meetings as well as special meetings as necessary. There is no compensation for these elected positions.

The President's Office is in the Administration Center on the Livonia campus, and is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. For more information, call (734) 462-4420.

Schoolcraft College is a public two-year college, offering classes at the Livonia campus on Haggerty Road between Six and Seven Mile roads, at the Radcliff Center in Garden City and online.

Friends of the Rouge seeks college volunteers

The Friends of the Rouge, a community volunteer organization with offices on the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus, is seeking College Student Assistant (CSA) volunteers to help with this year's Rouge Education Project.

The Rouge Education Project is a school-based water quality monitoring program that engages nearly 100 elementary, middle and high schools each year.

No experience is necessary to volunteer. All training is provided, according to Christina Bartoli, Rouge Education Project associate coordinator for Friends of the Rouge.

As CSA volunteers, local college students will be trained in water quality monitoring techniques and paired with an elementary, middle or high school in the project. Volunteers will assist that school on a field trip to the Rouge River, where the students will conduct an assessment of the river's water quality.

The volunteers must attend a

brief orientation on Tuesday, March 8, and a daylong workshop on Saturday, March 19. Volunteers also will be expected to help facilitate a daylong training workshop on Saturday, April 9, as well as take part in the monitoring on Wednesday, May 18.

"This is a great opportunity for local college students to gain volunteer experience for resumes, get involved in environmental education, and learn about the Rouge River," said Bartoli.

For more information, contact Bartoli at (313) 792-9626 or as coordinator@therouge.org. Registration forms also can be obtained by visiting the group's office, located on the UM-Dearborn campus in Room 220 of the Academic Support Center (formerly the Student Services Center), reached via the campus's Fair Lane Drive west of Evergreen Road.

For more information about Friends of the Rouge, visit www.therouge.org.

Madonna shows art work for Black History Month

Madonna University Art Department will present the exhibit *Individual Idioms. Interwoven Identity*, in celebration of Black History Month. The exhibit will feature contrasting mediums such as paint, fiber, ceramics, collage, found objects, installation and video by Detroit area artists, including: Peter Williams, Richard Lewis, Chris Turner, Loretta Oliver, Elizabeth Youngblood and Ross Sawyer.

"In defiance of a misinformed tendency to lump persons of color together as 'black artists,' they disprove this stereotype and prove that they are 'artists who happen to be black' through their strongly contrasting mediums," said Christina Hill, gallery curator. "Some have chosen traditional representative styles, others

abstractions, surrealism and radical manipulation of traditional techniques of weaving or sculpture. Most importantly, each of these artists labor to explore the deepest recesses of their intensely creative persona - with intriguing results."

The exhibit is on display through Wednesday, Feb. 23. Admission is free and the public is invited to attend. Gallery hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

For more information, contact Christina Hill, gallery curator, Madonna University art department, at christinahill49@yahoo.com.

Madonna University is located at I-96 and Levan Road in Livonia.

Gibson School hosts open house

Gibson School for Gifted Students is holding an Winter Open House 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Now in its 32nd year, the School continues to fulfill its mission of serving intellectually gifted students from 21 communities in Oakland, Livingston, Wayne and Washtenaw counties.

Gibson's school-aged gifted program is open to children between the ages of 5 and 14. Gibson also offers a Child Development Center for preschool children.

Gibson School is located just south of the I-96 (Jeffries) Freeway and four blocks west of Telegraph Road. For further information about the Open House or Gibson School, please call (313) 537-8688.



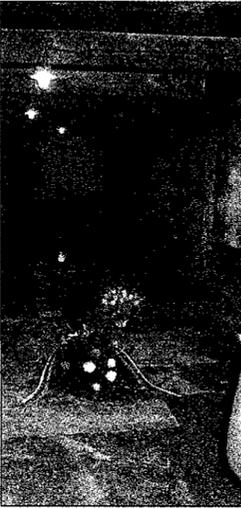
The congressional delegation visited one of several Jewish cemeteries in Krakow.

Rep. McCotter attends Auschwitz liberation commemoration

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, joined a congressional delegation taking part in the observance of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz Jan. 27.

Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., led the delegation to the commemoration. Joining McCotter and Israel was Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev.

Vice President Dick Cheney led a presidential delegation of holocaust survivors to Poland to take part in the observance. "The world must not and will not forget the sorrow, suffering, and slaughter of six million innocents, the blood of many of whom have consecrated this ground as a sacred testament to the triumph of the soul; and as an eternal caution to all tempted to elevate ideology over individuality and, in so doing, risk inflicting horror upon humanity," McCotter said.



A memorial floral wreath lies on the floor of a room that once served as a gas chamber at Auschwitz.



PHOTOS COURTESY U.S. REP. MCCOTTER

U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, R-Livonia, U.S. Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nevada, and U.S. Rep. Steve Israel, D-New York, stand at the main gate of Auschwitz, prior to ceremonies observing the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the former Nazi death camp.

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