

Fall's ritual:
Cider mills
rule

TASTE, PAGE B7



Japan's synth punk rockers
are coming to metro Detroit

Filter, Inserted section



Dining room gives
way to expanded
kitchen

AT HOME, SECTION B



THURSDAY
September 15, 2005

WESTLAND Observer

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Burger Center



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nurse Sandy Stoecklein shows 5-year-old Vitaliy Sleta her instrument that would take his blood pressure, while sitting on the school bus table at the Burger Center Annex in Garden City.

Nurse finds helping students rewarding

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

When Sandy Stoecklein was age 8, her mom had a bad stroke.

"She was bed-ridden for a long time," recalled the Westland resident.

That illness prompted Stoecklein, 58, to pursue a career as a registered nurse. She graduated from the Presbyterian University Hospital nursing school in Pittsburgh, Pa., where she received "excellent training."

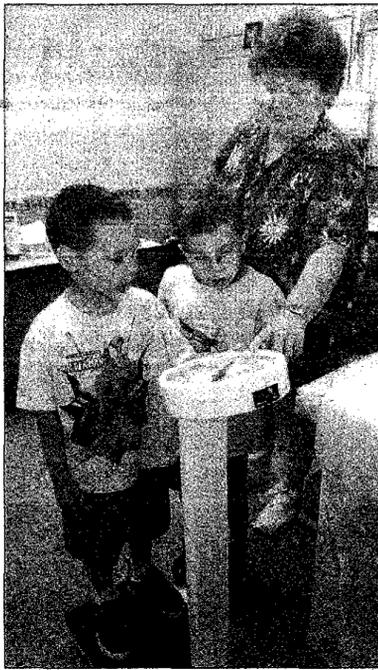
She considered dropping out of nurses' training when her mother died, but her instructors encouraged her to stick with it. She did and now works as a nurse at the Burger Center for Students With Autism Annex located at the Cambridge Center in

Garden City. "Oh, I love it," she said. "I just love the kids and I know they give me more than I could possibly give them. To me, it's been just a heart-warming experience to work for these kids."

"I do feel blessed to work there."

Burger serves students from preschool up to age 26. She started with Burger, a Garden City Schools-based program serving students throughout Wayne County, in 1999. She had worked for Wayne County almost 15 years, including as head of the obstetrics-gynecology clinic as well as more than seven years for the state of Michigan in health screening.

PLEASE SEE NURSE, A6



Nicholas Fuchs 4, (left) and Justin Noble 5, both of Garden City, take a look at their weight with nurse Sandy Stoecklein.

Central City Park is stage for benefit

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A group calling itself Musicians for Relief will stage a 12-hour concert Sunday, Sept. 25, to help the city of Westland raise money for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

"We're hoping to raise \$100,000 that day, and I think we can do it," said event manager Dean Boucher, a stagehand with Detroit Stage Employees Local 38 and a drummer for the local rock band Power Source.

"It's an event for the whole family," said Boucher, a 39-year-old Westland resident. "This is a whole community coming together. The American people have shown that they can come together to help people."

Boucher and event brainchild Eric Turczyn, working with city officials, announced that the Musicians for Relief bands will

play 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Central City Park, in the ball diamond area behind the Bailey Recreation Center.

"It'll happen rain or shine," Boucher said.

Admission will be \$10. Concert-goers with student identification will get in for \$5, and the event will be free for children ages 10 or younger.

The proceeds will be given to a city hurricane relief fund established by Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, who said the money will go to the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

Rare Earth, a band with Motown roots, will headline the concert, Boucher said. The lineup also will include the Howling Diablos, guitarist Joey Gados Jr. from the movie *School of Rock*, Power Source, The Ride, 6 Peace, the Eddie Leighton

PLEASE SEE BENEFIT, A4

Fund nears \$23,000 for hurricane relief

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Hurricane Katrina relief fund established by Mayor Sandra Cicirelli already has netted nearly \$23,000 - an amount that is certain to grow in coming weeks.

"I'm very pleased with the response," Cicirelli said Tuesday.

Westland firefighters, alone, raised more than \$21,000 last Thursday by standing in city intersections and holding out their boots to collect money from motorists.

Another \$450 was raised Sunday as city officials and employees joined St. Matthew Lutheran Church members near City Hall for a 9/11 memorial service that also honored firefighters, police officers and military personnel, Cicirelli said.

Residents have given another \$1,000 on their own, and officials expect to raise more money during upcoming events.

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, classic rock station WCSX-FM 94.7 will broadcast from Max & Erma's restaurant at Newburgh and Warren during a fund-raising event.

"We'll have some firefighters

there to collect money from customers," Cicirelli said.

Students at Academy of Westland have started a penny collection effort to help hurricane victims, and they also have initiated a drive to collect toothbrushes, hairbrushes, combs, washcloths, towels and other nonperishable items, said Principal Christopher Lindsay.

Students will make gift baskets to help families who find shelter in southeast Michigan, he said. Anyone who wants to help may drop by the school on Henry Ruff south of Cherry Hill between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays.

The Westland Youth Athletic Association will accept checks and money orders made payable to the American Red Cross during football games between the Comets and the Meteors on Sunday, Sept. 18.

The event at John Glenn High School will feature three games between teams in various age groups. Longtime WYAA board member Bud Somerville said he will be on hand to collect donations between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Games will start at noon.

"We want to help out as much as we can," Somerville said.

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Fire Safety Day educates, helps fund cameras

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Scores of children dropped to the floor of a smoke-filled house and crawled to safety Saturday in Westland.

There were no injuries. Actually, there was no fire. Rather, these children learned how to escape a burning building during Fire Safety Day - an event that drew some 200 children and their parents to Fire Station No. 1 at Ford and Carlson.

The event helped draw attention to an effort by the Westland Jaycees - a

group of young leaders - to raise money to buy thermal imaging cameras for city firefighters.

The special cameras top \$10,000 each, Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Riley said, but they can save lives and reduce property damage by giving firefighters enhanced vision inside burning buildings.

Jaycees members have raised \$2,000, but they hope to collect enough money to buy five thermal imagers during the next five years.

"We're hoping to buy one for each of the city's five fire stations," said Lisa

PLEASE SEE SAFETY, A6



Westland Fire Capt. John Adams shows a thermal imaging camera to youngsters Nicholas Welch (left) and Richie Graham in a smoky building during Fire Safety Day.

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Number 32



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INDEX	
APARTMENTS	F8
AT HOME	B1
BELIEFS & VALUES	B5
AUTOMOTIVE	G6
CROSSWORD	F8
JOBS	G2
MOVIES	D13
OBITUARIES	B5
REAL ESTATE	F1
SERVICE GUIDE	F8
SPORTS	C1
TASTE	B7

Coming Sunday
on the PINK page

Haute
fitness
fashions





TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Redford's Dave Koury sells and rides the WindJammer bicycle, which is locally produced.

Man creates, sells WindJammer bicycles

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

In these days of nearly \$3-a-gallon gas prices, one Redford man offers a low-cost alternative to driving about town.

Dave Khoury sells the WindJammer, a motorized bicycle which can be used for short commutes and for recreation.

Six years ago, brothers Nick Turco, of Livonia, and Dave Turco, of Irish Hills, happened upon a make-shift motorized bicycle at a garage sale - and it inspired them to create this whole new mode of transportation.

Now, WindJammer Bicycle Co. sells motorized bikes to people of all ages. Khoury came on board about three years ago and currently sells the bikes, as well as rides them.

"I'm very proud and excited about it," he said.

Khoury, formerly a Wayne County Parks and Recreation employee, took on the sales job full time after recovering from a serious accident on his motorcycle. A driver talking on a cell phone hit him twice at the intersection of Telegraph and Goddard roads.

He wasn't able to return to his job, but said he loves his new endeavor, involving the WindJammer.

The bicycle comes in red or yellow and is made of aircraft-quality lightweight aluminum.

It weighs 44 pounds, but can carry up to 300 pounds. The bike revs up to 25 miles per hour and runs on a 33cc motor.

"It's street legal, no license required," said Khoury, adding that the bike folds up and can be carried in a bag, making it easily portable.

The WindJammer is a favorite mode of transportation for his 14-year-old nephew, for example. In addition to young people, he says the bike is a good choice for anyone who can't otherwise ride due to health problems, anyone unable to drive, or anyone interested in trying it out.

"If you want to pedal, you can at any time," said Khoury. "It just makes you go that much farther."

He admits the bike isn't based around exercise, but it allows people of all ages to ride.

The company is branching out and selling the WindJammer in places like

Georgia and Florida, as well as here in Michigan. Khoury has personally sold 100 bikes this summer. Whenever he's out riding his own WindJammer, he answers questions from curious on-lookers.

His neighbor, Amy Oparardi of Redford, even bought her own. "They're a lot of fun," she said. "I really enjoy it."

Oparardi said the bike offers another way to enjoy the outdoors, and it does draw a lot of attention.

"It saves on gas," she added.

The half-gallon gas tank functions like a weed-whacker tank might. It takes an oil-gas mixture of 25:1. A muffler keeps the sound of the motor to a minimum.

WindJammer sells for \$895 regularly, though there's an end-of-summer special rate available now for \$795. It includes a two-year warranty and a 90-day warranty on the motor. The entire vehicle has been patented.

For more information on the WindJammer, call (313) 535-9821 or visit www.windjammerbicycles.com.

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Kids help kids, adults reach out to them

COOL IDEA

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Starting Oct. 1, Dairy Queen customers can purchase more than their usual Blizzard or soft-serve ice cream cone.

The "cool treat" restaurants - with nearby locations in Livonia, Canton, Farmington Hills and Garden City - are now participating in a campaign to benefit Children's Miracle Network.

Dairy Queen will sell Kids Helping Kids glow-in-the-dark bracelets for \$1 each. Proceeds will go to local Children's Miracle Network hospitals.

The bracelets come in red, yellow, blue, orange and green. "These bracelets will help build awareness of Children's Miracle Network throughout the country," said Patty Halvorson, director of promotions for Dairy Queen. "We want to bring attention to the needs of these kids. It is a cause we are very passionate about."

This isn't the first joint venture between Dairy Queen and the national organization. The restaurant has supported Children's Miracle Network since 1984, raising more than \$55 million.

For more information visit www.dairyqueen.com or www.thedqclub.com or www.cmn.org.

Livonia recently welcomed a new learning center, which provides programs for children with autism, ADHD, speech, physical, mental and learning disorders.

Great Expectations Family Sensory Integration & Learning Center offers a variety of ways to reach children with special needs. Among them is the Sensory Training Education Program, known as STEP, which uses aspects of light therapy, motion and balance therapy and music therapy to reach children with sensory disorders, autism, developmental delays and more.

In addition, the center offers Reading Plus, meant to improve reading and comprehension skills, and Play Attention, which uses video game and NASA-based technology to enhance a child's ability to focus and pay attention.

Great Expectations Family Sensory Integration & Learning Center is located at 31580 Schoolcraft Road in Livonia. Call (734) 762-0332.

Stephanie Angelyn Casola writes about new and changing businesses for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. E-mail tips on your new favorite Wayne County shop to scasola@oe.homecomm.net or call (734) 953-2054.

Church welcomes all to 7th annual car show

Classic car enthusiasts might want to stop by a Westland church on Sunday.

The Warren Road Light & Life Free Methodist Church, on Warren at Farmington, will sponsor a classic car show 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

"It's just something we're doing for the community," said Ronda Miller, the church's director of assimilation.

Those attending are welcome to join a 10:30 a.m. service, she

said, and there will be a free lunch served.

It's the seventh year the church has sponsored the classic car show, and John Glenn High School's JROTC will be on hand to salute the country's military personnel, Miller said.

Games and activities also will be offered for children, she said. "We have had as many as 700 people attend," she said.

The event is for all ages, and admission is free.



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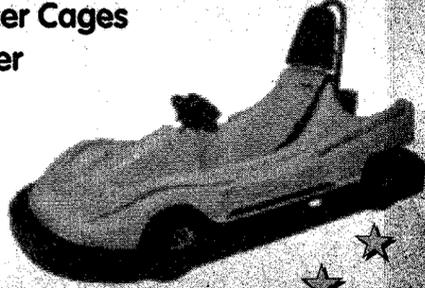
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Crash kills man, snarls traffic for days; charges considered

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

Police again are calling on I-275 motorists to slow down in the wake of a fatal crash that killed a 23-year-old Rose City man Tuesday morning and caused a chemical spill that left the freeway snarled in a traffic jams for two days.

"People need to slow down," Michigan State Police Sgt. Michael Shaw said. "Every time we do traffic enforcement initiatives on that section of I-275, we catch people going too fast."

"We catch some people doing 100 mph."

Daniel Jason Wilber was driving his Chevrolet Corsica south on I-275 near Six Mile when he was struck by a Dodge van and forced off the freeway at about 6:35 a.m., police said. The Corsica skidded through the grassy median and crashed into a semi tractor-trailer traveling north-

bound.

A medical helicopter transported Wilber to the University of Michigan Hospital where he was pronounced dead hours later. The driver of the semi suffered minor injuries and was treated at the scene.

Broadcast media reports helped police find two witnesses who produced information that identified the driver of the van. A 25-year-old Farmington Hills woman was questioned and released Wednesday.

Sgt. Matt Nutt said the van was impounded. Findings from the police investigation are being taken to the Wayne County prosecutor's office. He said they are seeking two criminal charges against the woman: leaving the scene of an accident causing death and negligent homicide.

"It appears the van bumped the victims vehicle and it was a hard collision," Nutt said.

The crash also caused the truck's trailer to tip and spill 5,000 gallons boiling road tar onto the roadway and into some storm sewers.

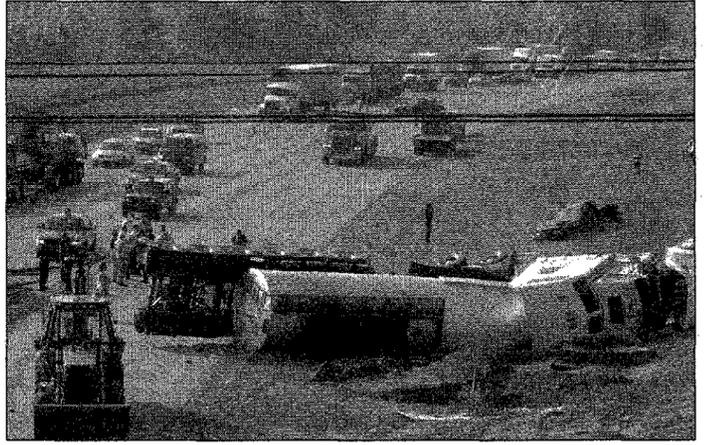
Hazardous materials teams worked Tuesday and Wednesday to clean up the spilled substance that was so hot, it bubbled on the roadway - forcing police to close several lanes of the freeway.

"As the substance drains into the sewers, it has hardened so some of the sewer equipment had to be replaced," Shaw said Tuesday.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the left lanes of southbound and northbound I-275 remained closed until environmental officials deemed the area clean and safe, Nutt said.

There was another crash involving a semi tractor trailer Monday evening that slowed traffic on I-275 in Livonia, but none of the drivers involved were seriously hurt.

dwest@oe.hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2109



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One man was killed and this tractor-trailer overturned in a Tuesday morning accident on northbound I-275 near 6 Mile. The accident snarled I-275 traffic.

MADD walk welcomes four-legged supporters

When the Metro Detroit MADD chapters said everyone is encouraged to participate in the upcoming Strides for Change 5K, they weren't kidding.

People won't be the only participants; the invitation has been extended to all four-legged canine friends. The Strides for Change 5K walk presents dogs with an opportunity to walk among the many supporters in this event.

The walk will take place on Saturday, Sept. 24 at Olde World Canterbury Village, in Lake Orion. Opening ceremonies will begin at 8:30 a.m., with the walk starting at 9 a.m.

"MADD invites all walkers to participate, regardless of age, gender, or species," said MADD volunteer Vicki Clark. "It gives people from all walks of life, an opportunity to join together to support MADD in their mission to create safer roads. Anyone can make a difference, even the pups."

MADD's Metro Detroit chap-

ter is also offering a prize package to the "top dog." The dog that raises the most money will be crowned the canine cash challenge winner for Strides for Change. Additionally, they will receive an all expense paid getaway to a dog hotel for a week, as well as a photo session with their owner and other prizes. However, no dog will go home empty handed. All four-legged friends will receive a doggy goodie bag and their own special VIP area; the MADD Dog Diner. In the MADD Dog Diner, vendors will provide grooming and training demonstrations, literature and other items to pamper our canine fund-raisers.

"MADD Dog Diner allows our four-legged friends to lend a paw in helping MADD keep our communities safe, as well as an opportunity to participate in various other activities," said MADD Dog venter Marc Guerrieri, owner of Canine Resolution in Waterford. "In addition to raising funds and

promoting safe driving, they can show-off their unique talents in the best dog trick competition, participate in one of our training demonstrations, and engage in many other enjoyable activities in the VIP section."

Maddux, a feisty yorkie from Oakland County, is excited to be a part of this important fund-raising event. According to his owner, Matt Burchart, he's already raised more than \$100.

"This is a fun and unique way to bring attention to MADD and raise money for their programs," said Burchart.

If your dog is interested in participating in Strides for Change, please visit www.stridesforchange.org and under select a city, click on "Detroit Metro." When registering, under "First Name," type in your dog's name. Under "Last Name," type in the word, "Dog." If you are registering your dog, you will not need to register yourself.



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Flapjack fund-raiser

The pancakes were sizzling on the grill and getting smothered in syrup patrons of the Westland senior Friendship Center enjoyed breakfast will helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Volunteer Josephine Mosiej serves pancakes to Steve Skowronski at last week's all-you-can-eat event.



Among those enjoying breakfast was Gene Barbu of Westland.



Russell Forbush (left) and Josephine Montgomery (right) sit down for pancakes as Bud O'Leary and center Director Peggy Ellenwood serve drinks.



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Plymouth native feels 'lucky' after escaping Katrina

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

Like many residents in New Orleans who heard a hurricane was headed their way, Jeff and Celia Whitman figured they could lay in some groceries, board up their house and ride it out.

But that was when the Whitmans went to bed on Saturday, Aug. 27, when Hurricane Katrina was still classified a Category 3 hurricane. By the time Celia Whitman, normally a late riser, got up at 5:45 a.m. Sunday, she knew they'd been wrong.

After packing a bag, grabbing Jeff's hunting bow along with some family photos and jewelry, the couple and a friend jumped into the Whitmans' pickup and headed east, away from all the other traffic evacuating the area after Katrina was upgraded to a Category 5 storm.

"I'm not normally a morning person, but for some reason I got up early that morning," recalled Celia Whitman, the daughter of Alan and Lois Stewart of Plymouth Township. "When we saw it was a Category 5, we packed a suitcase, grabbed the dog and hit the road."

The couple headed for Pine Mountain Valley, Ga., where they have friends who are putting them up. Their truck broke down along the way, and they had to abandon it along Highway 59 outside Hattiesburg, and pile into a rental for the rest of the 11-hour trip that normally takes seven hours.

With a storm bearing down on her daughter's house, Lois Stewart of Plymouth Township couldn't do anything but watch. Thankfully, Celia made sure to call her parents, who have made Plymouth home for more than 40 years.

"We were very fortunate because she called us, so we knew they'd left," Lois Stewart said. "We didn't want to watch (storm coverage), but you have to. It's so terrible, and it really gets to you. We worry about their house, about their jobs."

In Georgia, Jeff contacted an old boss, who offered him his old job, making furniture and cabinets, "on the spot," Celia said. With a roof over their heads, potential employment on the horizon and the appearance,

from satellite photos they've seen, that their New Orleans home is intact, Celia Whitman knows it could have been worse.

"We're really lucky, we have each other," Whitman said. "There's a chance we have our stuff, our house may have survived. I have friends who lost everything. For these people, there's just nothing left."

That's not to say the Whitmans escaped unscathed. Celia Whitman was poised to open the new Audubon Insectarium in New Orleans, but the level of damage to the facilities is still unknown. The insectarium was scheduled to open in the spring, but Whitman said she isn't sure it will.

They had their mail forwarded to their friends' house in Georgia, but there are still bills to be paid, insurance claims to be made and other correspondence to take care of. Whitman said she isn't sure how all that's going to work out, but she's glad to have had it to occupy her time.

"I've been doing the paperwork ... mortgage, insurance, bills, and everyone's been very helpful," said Whitman, a 1983 graduate of Salem High School. "These details are insane, but that's all I could do was start dealing with all that. That's what has occupied my time."

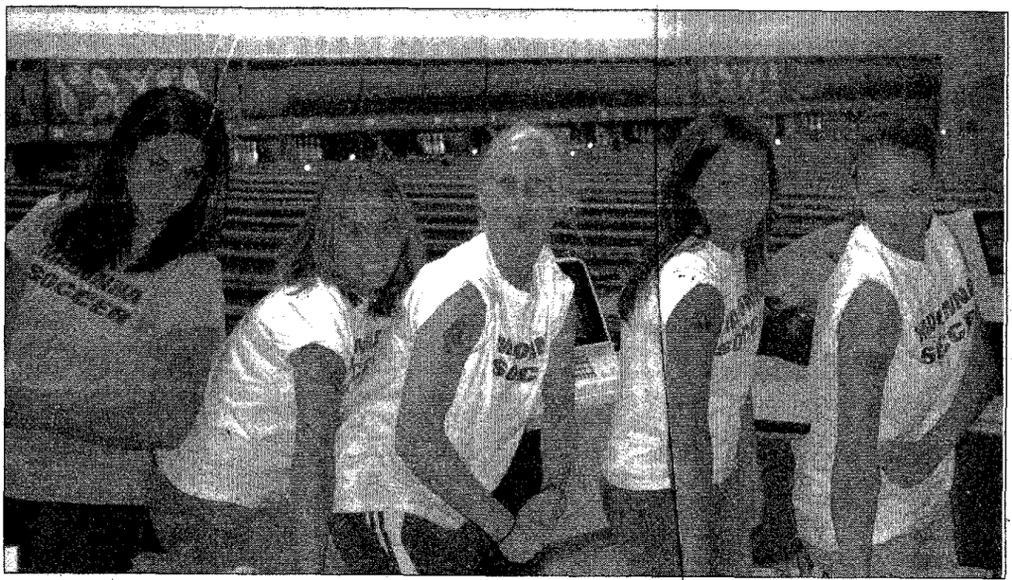
Safe from the effects of the storm, Celia Whitman watched coverage of the city she'd called home for about 18 months. And it did nothing to ease her mind as she watched report after report about looting and other criminal activity.

"The behavior made me angry," she said. "If they were stealing because they had to to survive, that's one thing. But if they go in and smash things ... they were stealing televisions in a city with no power. I'd rather lose my stuff to the hurricane."

But not all the behavior has been bad. In Columbus, Ga., Whitman went into a Target store to buy some clothes and other items. While in line to pay, she talked to her sister on her cell phone and explained what had happened.

"The woman in front of me heard me talking to my sister," Whitman said, "and insisted on paying for my things. It was only \$13, but what a kind gesture."

bkadrich@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 459-2700



MADONNA SPORTS INFORMATION

Powered up

Members of the Madonna University women's soccer team ham it up - and show off some fresh (and fake) tattoos - during a bowling fund-raising effort for victims of Hurricane Katrina last week at Merri-Bowl Lanes. Shown from left are Dina Allie, Kristen Balogh, Caitlin Boyak, Liz Diponio and Jenny Aldea.

BENEFIT

FROM PAGE A1

Project, Crossover and Red Hill. "Bands will be playing all day," Cicirelli said. "It will be family-type music."

Boucher, Turczyn and others hastily planned the Musicians for Relief benefit in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Gulf Coast and left many survivors with nothing.

"We were watching all of this transpire daily, and we wanted to help whoever we can," said Turczyn, who is unemployed with disabilities brought on by a fall. "You see stories of children without parents and children leading other children to safety. I am a Catholic, Christian person, and I believe we have to take care of our people."

Organizers had planned to stage the concert at Chatters, a local bar. Ultimately, they decided to have it outdoors to accommodate a much larger crowd.

"It's just remarkable how it's gotten so big," Turczyn said.

In other concert-related developments:

■ Those attending are urged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

■ The Michigan Humane Society will have a booth to accept donations to help pets affected by Hurricane Katrina - an idea spearheaded by Boucher's girlfriend, Tracy Guich, and her daughter, Kaylee.

■ Performance Staging of Plymouth will provide a stage for the concert, and Thunder Audio Group will lend a \$500,000 sound system, Boucher said. The latter company has worked with performers as diverse as Metallica and Mary J. Blige, he said.

■ Organizers will arrange for a semi-truck so that concert-goers can donate toys, books, school supplies and such baby items as diapers, Boucher said.

■ The event will include a classic car show.

■ A children's area will include clowns, an inflatable moonwalk, face-painting and other activities, Boucher said.

■ Corporate donations to offset costs, such as insurance, will be accepted, Boucher said.

■ Various merchandise will be raffled off.

"People of all ages can come and have a good time," Boucher said. "It's an event for the whole family."

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Power Source - Dean Boucher, Gary Chiaravalle, Jim Garee, Kevin Evans, Brian Boucher and Janet (Todoroff) Ramsden - will be performing as part of the benefit rock concert.

Livonia man helps restore power in Gulf states

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Lou Roy has seen more devastation in the past two weeks than he ever imagined. "I hope I never see it again," the 62-year-old Livonia resident said.

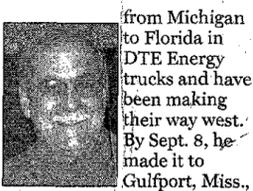
Roy, a field supervisor working for DTE Energy, left his Wayne County home Aug. 26 for the Gulf region and is working to help restore power in areas ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

It isn't uncommon for DTE employees to volunteer like he

is doing in times of disaster. Companies like DTE have a reciprocal policy to assist one another. Roy, who has been with the company for 38 years, has worked at hurricane and tornado sites in the past. He even traveled to Quebec in 1998 to assist in restoring power lines after a major ice storm damaged the area.

"Nothing compares to this," Roy said during a phone interview Thursday. "This is by far worse than I've ever seen in 40 years of doing this work."

He and a crew of about 20 employees drove 700 miles



Roy

from Michigan to Florida in DTE Energy trucks and have been making their way west. By Sept. 8, he made it to Gulfport, Miss., an area of major destruction due to Hurricane Katrina.

They are restoring downed power lines, utility poles and assisting in the overall restoration effort.

"Yesterday we were in Pass Christian," Roy said. "That is where the eye of the storm came in. There were 1,500 to 2,000 homes and I would say 99.9 percent of them are destroyed."

He and the other volunteers helped restore power to the water tower, which re-ignited the water supply in Pass Christian. The task was an important one, he said.

"If people came back to get their belongings it would be unsanitary, what they're breathing," Roy said.

The conditions worry his wife, Sue Roy, too. "I really miss him," she said. "I worry about him a lot."

The couple has been married 23 years. She said her husband

hasn't been gone on a volunteer job like this for more than two weeks. But she said she's very proud of his efforts, and somewhat jealous he has a skill that is so needed right now.

Accommodations for volunteers like Roy are meager. Initially when the electrical crews arrived in Mississippi, they were meant to stay in tents and sleep on cots. Those tents were sorely needed in New Orleans, Roy said, so the volunteers agreed to sleep in their trucks on the first night.

Now, they are housed in dormitories at the University of Southern Mississippi - sleeping on mattresses with a blanket on the floor. Meals are doled out army-style at camps. But there isn't much time for rest.

"We're up at 5 and work 'til dark," Roy said.

Residents who evacuated have returned to Gulfport and Biloxi, many to survey the damage and collect belongings. It took two days for Roy and other DTE volunteers to restore power in the area and the first customers to receive it happened to be from Huntington Woods. Roy said they were happy to see the familiar "Detroit Edison trucks."

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Please Note: The bidding will start at the towing and storage charges.
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AROUND WESTLAND

Veterans observance

Local veteran organizations will host a program in front of Westland City Hall at 6 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 16, in observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The names of all Michigan service men and women who have lost their lives in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts will be read in remembrance of their sacrifice for our country.

Blood drive

Hayes Elementary School will hold an American Red Cross Blood Drive 1-7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at the school, 30600 Louise, Westland. Call (734) 427-2810 for an appointment. Walk-ins are always welcome.

Katrina benefit

Residents can enjoy an afternoon of ice skating and help the victims of Hurricane Katrina at a skating benefit 1-2:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17, at the Mike Modano Ice Arena, 6210 N. Wildwood at Hunter.

Participants are asked to bring donations of cans and bottles, toys and nonperishable foods. Cost will be \$4.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children age 12 and under. Skate rentals will be available.

For more information, call (734) 729-4560.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Church is having a Las Vegas Party 8 p.m. to midnight Friday, Oct. 21, at the church, located on the southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

There will be blackjack, table games, hourly raffles and non-smoking Blackjack rooms. Admission will be \$7 and

includes food (hot dogs, potato salad), pop and potato chips. Beer available at \$1 per glass.

For more information, call (734) 427-5150.

St. Bernardine Men's Club also is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Sept. 23, Sept. 30, Oct. 14, Oct. 28, Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, Dec. 16, Jan. 6, Jan. 13, Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.

Participants don't need a partner to play. Snacks and soft drinks are included in the \$5 charge. Games start at 7:30 p.m.

Youth group

Youth Matters, an after-school recreation and skill building program for parents and children 7-12 years old is being offered by the Garden City Family Resource Center. It is aimed at children who are having problems with acting out, anger management and other issues.

The program, open to western Wayne County residents, runs for seven weeks beginning Sept. 10. Children attend twice weekly, parents once a week.

Space is limited. Call (734) 793-1360 to register.

Football signups

Michigan Athletic Youth Association, CL3 Promotions, Brooks Insurance Agency and WayneFord Civic League have partnered to bring to the community NFL Youth Flag Football, the national program.

There are four divisions in each league - co-ed 6-8 years, co-ed 9-11 years, girls 12-14 years and boys 12-14. Each division has 32 teams with 10 players per team.

The cost is \$75 per participant and \$65 for each addi-

tional family member. For previous Wayne-Ford Civic League participants, the discounted price is \$60 per participant and \$55 for each additional family member.

Register at Wayne-Ford Civic League by appointment, pay online by visiting www.cl3promotions.com and click on NFL Youth Flag Football link, or by mail send to P.O. Box 87386 Canton, MI 48187.

For more information, call Leon Carter at (734) 231-7110, Richard White at (734) 516-8469 or Vic Barra and Terri at (734) 728-5010.

Craft show tables

Table rental is available at the cost of \$20 for the annual St. Theodore Confraternity of Christian Women's craft show Saturday, Oct. 22.

The show will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Social Hall, 8200 Wayne Road, Westland. Call Mary at (734) 425-4421 (voice mail #10) to reserve a table.

■ Crafters are needed for the annual Holiday craft show at Hawthorne Valley on Nov. 27. For information, call Sue or Paul at (734) 844-3128.

■ Crafters are still needed for the 19th annual Delta Kappa Gamma juried show on Saturday, Oct. 15. The show will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at West Middle School, 44401 W. Ann Arbor Trail in Plymouth Township. Call Jan at (734) 844-1707 or e-mail to theways@comcast.net for more information.

Stars tryouts

The Westland Stars Cheer and Dance team will hold a clinic 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 22, in the multipurpose room on the Bailey Center on

Ford behind the Westland City Hall.

The clinic is being held in advance of tryouts 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29. Everything needed to try out for the team will be taught at the clinics.

The program costs \$5 per class or \$25 per month. Coaches are Wayne-Westland school teacher Toni Lay, a former cheerleader with 22 years of coaching experience; Keri Morton, a former high school and college cheerleader, and Jillian Wehrheim, a Junior Olympic champion dancer and high school cheerleader.

Kids interested in the program should come dressed to work out - no jeans - and bring water (no pop or food).

For more information call: 734-722-7620.

Medicare seminar

Bruce Kaufman, the president of Supplemental Health Benefits Agency, and Stacy Smith, consultant pharmacist with Specialized Pharmacy Services, will speak about Medicare Part D in a program offered by Westland Convalescent Center on Thursday, Sept. 22.

The topics answer such questions as what is Medicare Part D, who is eligible, how can seniors can save up to 75 percent or more on prescription drug medications and when can seniors start using this program.

The program will be 2:30-4:00 p.m. at the convalescent center, 6137 W. Warren, between Wayne and Central City Parkway in Westland.

People interested in attending can call Judy Bianchi at (734) 728-6100 to sign up.

Nominees sought

Nominations are being

accepted for the YWCA of Western Wayne County's 2005 Women of Achievement Awards. The awards recognize outstanding women throughout western Wayne County in the categories of arts/communications, business/industry, government/law, professions, senior woman, volunteer service and young woman.

To nominate an outstanding woman you know, call the YWCA Women of Achievement Department at (313) 561-4110. Deadline for nominations is Sept. 30.

Nominees will be honored at the 14th Annual Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon Oct. 27 at the Dearborn Inn. The program begins at 11 a.m. with a silent auction, a new portion of the luncheon. The awards presentation begins at noon.

Readiness program

The YWCA of Western Wayne County is offering an alternative to regular preschool programs for children.

Parents can register their four-year-old children now for the YWCAs Michigan School Readiness Program in Westland. The School Readiness Program is a home-based preschool program, consisting of 30 weekly home visits, plus monthly center visits and field trips.

The program is free for all participants, but children must meet eligibility criteria. Children enrolled in the program must turn four years old by Dec. 1.

For more information about the YWCA Michigan School Readiness Program or any other YWCA program, call (313) 561-4110.

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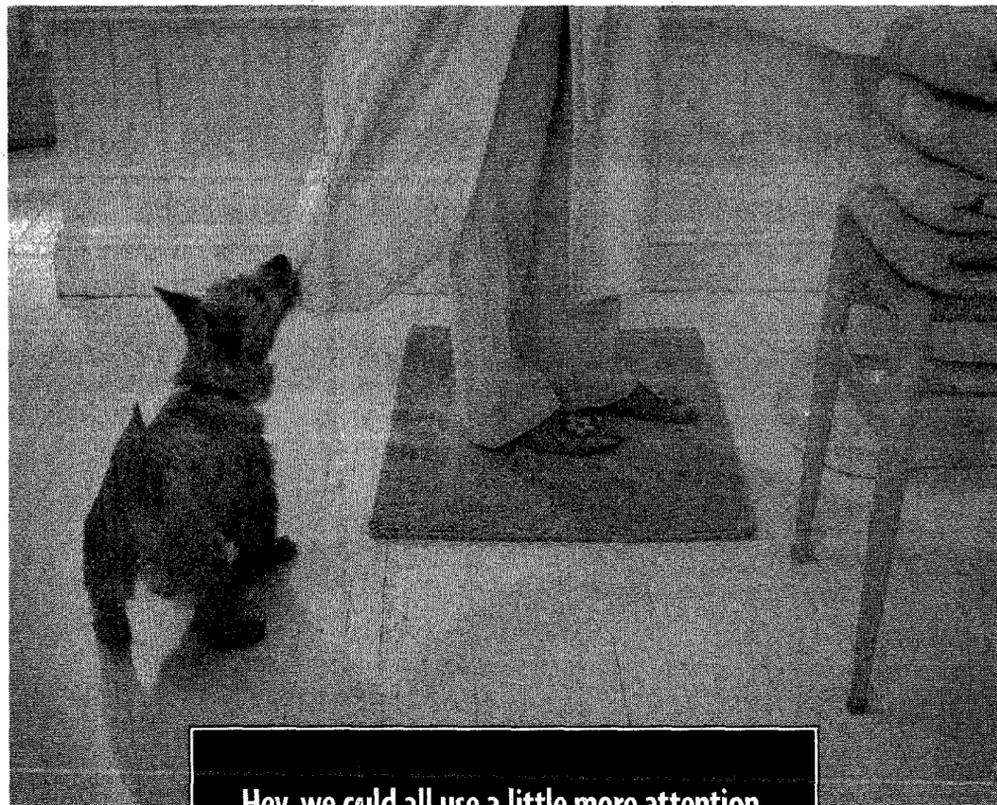
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NURSE

FROM PAGE A1

Stoecklein and husband Joe - who have three grown children and four grandchildren - were transferred to Michigan in 1970 through his work with Ford Motor Co., "so we've been in Michigan ever since."

At Burger, she gives medication approved by physicians and parents, helps with seizures and asthma and gives first aid. She's on the behavior management team to help with aggression issues.

"It's a really rewarding job," said Stoecklein of starting with a child who can't talk who later calls her Nurse Sandy.

She also works with parents at Burger, helping them as they raise their children.

In her free time, Stoecklein's an active member of Geneva Presbyterian Church in Canton. She's been involved with the antiracism team and has assisted needy people

through Fort Street Presbyterian Church efforts in Detroit, collecting clothing from Garden City schools.

She enjoys Bible study, activities with her grandchildren and going to community theater productions in Dearborn with her husband.

Joe likes NASCAR and has gotten her interested; she's even attended races. Stoecklein also likes scrapbooking, but noted she's falling behind in those efforts.

Her professionalism draws praise from colleagues in the Garden City schools, including Barbara Masten, Burger Annex director.

"I am not sure how we would survive during the school day without Nurse Sandy," she said. "You just know that Nurse Sandy will do whatever it takes to see that a child's health needs are met."

"They provide a valued service," said Superintendent Richard Witkowski about the nurses.

Stars' guitars to raise money for youngsters

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

Music legend Paul McCartney is coming to metro Detroit next month, but those attending a Southfield benefit can catch a glimpse of him - sort of - a few weeks earlier.

The Cast of Beatlemania, performing spot on impersonations of John, Paul, George and Ringo, will be featured entertainment during Stars Guitars, a Sept. 24 benefit featuring autographed items from rock music's elite.

Some two dozen guitars, autographed by such Rock and Roll Hall of Fame members as Tom Petty, Sting and Elvis Costello, will go to the highest bidders. Proceeds will benefit the Pediatric Cancer Survivors Scholarship Program of William Beaumont Hospital.

Administered by Dr. Charles Main, chief of pediatric oncology at Royal Oak Beaumont, the scholarship program provides educational support to the hospital's young cancer survivors.

"Last year's event provided \$1,000 scholarships for 20 youngsters," Beaumont representative Ilene Wolff said. "The program has provided some \$250,000 in scholarships in its history."

For event organizer Melissa Downey, the quest for autographed items is an all-consuming passion.

"We use whatever resources we can - management, booking agents, even friends of friends," she said. "For Tom Petty, it took us six months just to get in touch with the people we needed to get in touch with."

Artists from such genres as classic rock, alternative rock, county and pop will be well-represented.

The roster of items includes guitars signed by John Mellencamp, Avril Lavigne, Melissa Etheridge and Brooks & Dunn, autographed drum heads from Phil Collins and Don Henley and a tour book



Rock legend Elvis Costello shows off the kind of guitar to be auctioned at this year's Stars guitars event on behalf of the Pediatric Cancer Survivors Scholarship Program of William Beaumont Hospital.

and compact disc personalized by Neil Diamond.

In addition to the autographed instruments, a variety of other items will also be up for auction.

"We have jewelry, gift baskets, spa trips and some 150 other items as well," Downey said.

The Cast of Beatlemania can be considered the deans of America's many Fab Four tribute bands.

"The appeared on Broadway together and have been playing together for 24

years" Downey said. "This is their first Detroit-area appearance this year."

The second annual Stars Guitars event will be held at the Shriners Auditorium and Conference Center, 24530 Southfield Woods.

Admission is \$75 per person for the business casual event. Additional information on the event is available by visiting the Web site at www.starsguitars.org or calling Downey at (248) 541-4388.

wp@oe.homecomm.net | (248) 901-2503

SAFETY

FROM PAGE A1

Graham, Fire Safety Day organizer.

The group collected \$300 on Saturday as children learned fire safety tips.

"I think it went over really well," Graham said.

Youngsters received plastic firefighter hats and toy badges. They toured a fire engine and the fire station, and they got to use a fire hose to knock down those familiar orange cones seen at road construction sites.

Children also got to try on heavy firefighter jackets and helmets, although Graham said some youngsters could hardly stand up under the weighty fire gear.

Fire authorities took children to a small house near station No. 1 that is used for training exercises. Firefighters filled the building with a special, harmless smoke and taught the youngsters how to escape.

Although they are far from their goal, Westland Jaycees hope to raise enough money to buy firefighters the thermal imagers that could save lives



Battalion Chief Ron Francis assists Richie Graham with a fire hose during Fire Safety Day.

during fires.

"We're tickled pink that they're doing this," Riley said.

Westland now has only one thermal imager, and it is an older model, he said.

"The ones that the Jaycees want to get us are state-of-the-art," Riley said.

Anyone who wants to help is encouraged to call the Jaycees at (734) 226-0400.

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Glenn planetarium offers public shows

Take a trip through space without ever leaving you seat.

The planetarium at John Glenn High School in Westland is now open to the public. One of very few high school planetariums in Michigan, it is currently available for afterschool shows on an appointment only basis.

The planetarium has a capacity for 71 people. The cost for public groups is \$3 per person. The proceeds from each performance goes towards the

upgrade and maintenance of the planetarium and it's programs.

Groups can choose from three different programs:

■ "Rusty Rocket" is a program geared toward elementary-aged students. It teaches them interesting facts about the planets and their location in the sky.

■ "Worlds in Motion" is geared toward older students to show them how motion affects not only us but our

world and universe.

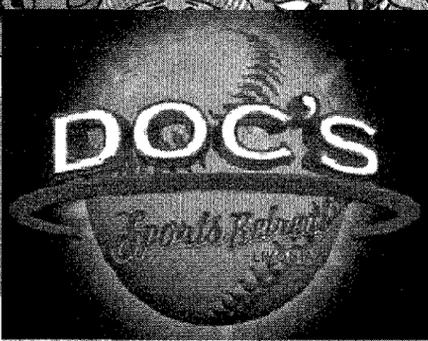
■ "More that Meets th Eye" is a general interest program that combines star-hopping and constellation identification with exploration of deepsky objects.

Along with these programs, each group will explore the current night's sky and spend time on constellation location and identification.

The planetarium was initially installed when the school was built in 1965. It was

obtained through a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as a way to introduce space education to students.

Elementary and high school students in the district visit the planetarium each year to see what stars make up the night sky. For more information about the planetarium or to book a program, call Linda Willman at (734) 419-2198, voice-mail box 6922, or by e-mail at willmanl@wccsd.net.

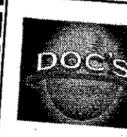


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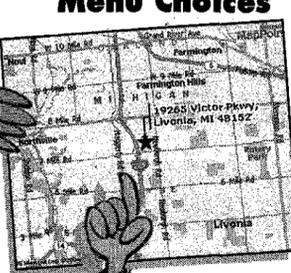
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FOR THE RECORD

<p>A</p> <p>Sister Mary Adrian Adrian, 91, of Farmington Hills, died Sept. 12.</p> <p>Rita Joan Armand Armand, 68, of Clarkston, died Sept. 10.</p> <p>B</p> <p>Blanche Ward Bell Bell, 80, formerly of Birmingham, died Aug. 17.</p> <p>D</p> <p>Mary Dannemiller Ditz Ditz, formerly of Saginaw and Bloomfield Twp., died Aug. 26.</p> <p>E</p> <p>Glenn Robert Etherton Etherton, 62, of Dexter, formerly of Westland, died Sept. 5.</p> <p>G</p> <p>Robert Gillman</p>	<p>K</p> <p>Barbara Glass Glass, 61, of Plymouth, died Sept. 8.</p> <p>L</p> <p>Lorraine Kanavas Kanavas, 84, formerly of Birmingham, died Sept. 7.</p> <p>M</p> <p>Melanie Meenen Meenen, 55, formerly of vonia.</p> <p>Edna Moorman Moorman, 87, of Bloomfield Hills, died Sept. 8.</p> <p>P</p> <p>Florine M. Phillips (nee Weintraeger) Phillips, 89, died Sept. 11.</p> <p>R</p> <p>Nell W. Roberts Roberts, 83, of Canton, died Aug. 11.</p> <p>S</p> <p>Ralph M. Stanifer</p>	<p>Gillman, 70, of Lakeland, dd Aug. 21.</p> <p>Stanifer, 58, of Sioux City, Iowa, died Aug. 29.</p>
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Southfield resident Jamillah Muhammad recently received national honors for her work as program director of WMXD-FM.

LAWRENCE MCKEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Resident works to keep her station on top

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

A radio career is a natural for someone nicknamed "Jam."

But WMXD-FM program director Jamillah Muhammad would have been drawn to the profession no matter what her name.

"I remember putting together mix tapes for my own imaginary radio station - WJAM - when I was a child," said Muhammad, a Detroit native who has made her home in Southfield for the past three years.

Her love for the profession and her on-the-job skills haven't gone unnoticed. Earlier this summer, she received the Program Director of the Year Award in the urban adult contemporary category from *Radio and Records*, a leading industry trade publication.

"I'd say there are some 200 to 300 stations broadcasting in that format nationwide," *Radio and Records* spokeswoman Dana Hall said. "It's an award recipients receive by a vote of their peers."

WMXD's 2004 breakthrough as metro Detroit's most-listened-to radio station didn't hurt.

As program director, Muhammad oversees "whatever you hear on our station."

Also known as Mix 92.3, WMXD has recently made industry headlines with its high profile morning host search which has included tryouts by such high profile hopefuls as former *LA Law* star Blair Underwood, R&B singer Gerald Levert and radio and TV favorite Donnie Simpson, among many others.

Muhammad promises a few more name personalities will take their turns at the mike before the final selection is made.

Though the 15-year radio veteran got her start in Chicago, she acknowledges the Detroit market is unlike almost any other in the relationship between radio stations and their listeners.

"A lot of what we do is lifestyle related, for instance we know that breast cancer is a major issue for African American women in Detroit and that's why we sponsor Sista Strut, an annual walk on Belle Isle."

A Mother's Day brunch at the Southfield Westin and a host of other events are among the other ways the station reaches out to its key audience.

WMXD, a Clear Channel station, is

heir to Detroit radio's proud tradition of promoting home-grown artists.

"We can't give the love to everybody, but we do try to spotlight up and coming Detroit artists," she said. "After all, if they can't get the love here, how will they ever be able to get in L.A. or Atlanta?"

One artist she's tipping for big things is Detroit-born gospel singer J Moss, whose music received an early boost on her station.

Though she entered college with an eye toward a career in television, Muhammad jumped at the chance to join a Chicago-based radio station, eventually working her way back to her Detroit hometown.

Her office, in Detroit's elegant Penobscot Building is a far cry from the make-believe radio station she ran from her childhood bedroom.

Two stacks of CDs rest neatly on her desk while the soft sounds of Luther Vandross fill the room as she excuses her self for a moment to meet one of a steady stream of callers.

WMXD is up and running - and so is its program director.

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Disabled vets get contract preference

Senate Bill 303, which requires preference be given to disabled veterans when awarding state contracts and was sponsored by state Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, was recently signed into law by the governor.

"Today we send the right message to Michigan's disabled veterans," Toy said. "We remember and are profoundly grateful for your service and sacrifice, and we respect and support the contributions you continue to make to our great state and nation today."

SB 303 would set a goal that not less than 3 percent of total state expenditures for construction, goods and services are awarded to businesses owned by veterans with a service-connected disability.

Under a companion bill in the bipartisan package, the Department of Management and Budget would be required to report to the Legislature each year on its progress towards awarding state contracts to disabled veterans and other persons with disabilities.

"This legislation is a tangible way to give back to those who have given so much of themselves for our benefit," said Toy, who serves as chair of the Michigan Senate's Veteran Affairs Committee. "We have to be serious about helping those who have helped to defend our nation."

Toy noted that a purchasing preference law for disabled-owned businesses has been on the books in Michigan for more than 15 years, yet the goals of that law have never been met and the reporting requirements in statute have never been honored.

"My legislation requires preference be given to veterans and sets a goal for the state to aim for," she said. "We need to enforce these laws and make sure that our veterans benefit. I am dedicated to helping the men and women who have served our country."

The legislation, Public Act 91 of 2005, passed both the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives by unanimous votes.

Storytelling Festival Sept. 16-17 at library

Replace pictures of despair with stories celebrating humor, humanity and Louisiana culture, as the Detroit Story League hosts performers from New Orleans, California and Maryland at 23rd Storytelling Festival, Sept. 16-17, at the Civic Center Library.

Established in 1912, Detroit Story League is a volunteer organization whose motto is "Service through Storytelling." Tickets are available at the door. Times and prices are available at

www.DetroitStorytelling.com or
Info@DetroitStorytelling.com.

Participants include Louisiana talespinner Dianne de las Casas, California funnyman and puppeteer Willy Clafin, and Maryland's darkly dramatic Jon Spelman. The Friday night concert for adults begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets at the door are \$12 and include refreshments and reception after the concert.

Families can enjoy quality time together at the 1:30 p.m. family concert on Saturday, Sept. 17, for an entry fee of only \$2 per person.

Saturday workshops for adults begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. Fee is \$40.

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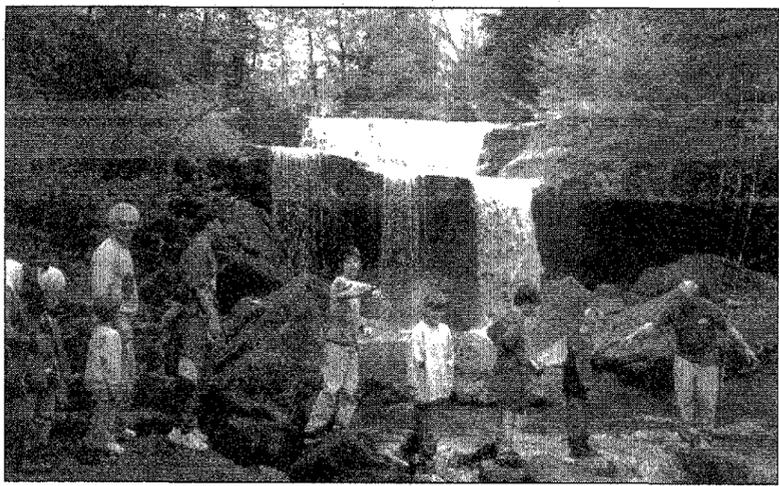
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Adventure Guides members cross near a YMCA camp waterfall during a campout. Fathers and sons (from left) are Doug and Dylan Vicars, Tom and Joe Saferian, Neal Haldane, Tommy Kirby, Eric Aitken, Chris Haldane, Trevor Kenyon and a camp guide named Frank.

Y's Adventure programs offer parents, kids chance try it out

The Livonia YMCA Adventure Guides, Princesses and Maidens are gearing up for another year of campouts, fun nights, pine car derbies, bowling events, roller skating parties and more.

And they're inviting those who think they might be interested to sign up to attend a campout or visit a free fun night to try out the program through the YMCA which serves Westland and Garden City.

Adventure Guides are for fathers and sons; Adventure Princesses are for fathers and daughters; and Adventure Maidens are for mothers and daughters.

Any parent and child can attend a campout or a fun night to decide if they would like to join the program. Campouts are held at different YMCA campgrounds from Friday evening to Sunday morning. They feature any number of activities including horseback riding, doing crafts, exploring nature, wall climbing, fishing and more. Participants pay a cost for the campouts.

The fun nights are open nights at the YMCA where the facility is closed to the public and participants use the pool, tennis courts and gymnasiums for special activities and food.

Each Adventure program consists of smaller, age-appropriate groups called circles, which meet once a month for a circle activity. Those can be as simple as a craft in the basement or as elaborate as an overnighter on a submarine.

Any parent and child can attend a campout or a fun night to decide if they would like to join the program. Campouts are held at different YMCA campgrounds from Friday evening to Sunday morning.

Usually, each parent plans one activity, rotating months. All of the circles come together to participate in the larger activities such as campouts, fun nights, bowling events, etc.

Programs are designed to enhance the parent-child relationship and emphasize the vital role that a parent plays in the growth and development of a child. The program is recommended for children ages 5-13 and a parent.

For more details on the campouts, fun nights or other program details, contact Adventure Program coordinator Linda Kirby at (734) 261-2161.

Local mechanic finds ways to extend police cars' lives

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

A Livonia automotive repair shop is growing in size as its police vehicle reconditioning service grows in recognition across the country.

Michigan Reconditioning and Fleet Services moved into a larger facility this summer as more police departments learn about the Stuart Durocher's company that refurbishes police cars like new, but at half the cost of purchasing and equipping a new vehicle.

"It provides an instant savings for cities who are struggling with their budgets these days," Durocher said. "We're only one of a few businesses in the country that provide this service and we're starting to hear from people in more states."

Durocher's company rebuilds engines, transmissions, electrical and cooling systems, brakes, steering and suspension components. His mechanics even refurbish

steering wheels and the driver's seat as part of a repair package that costs \$12,000 per vehicle.

The average cost for a new car that needs to be fitted with radio equipment, lights, stickers and other police equipment is about \$25,000.

"We do just about everything but repaint the vehicle," Durocher said. "Since most police cars log so many miles in just a few years, the body of these cars aren't in bad shape anyway."

In addition to reconditioning police cars from as far away as New Mexico, the three-year-old company also performs repairs on the local 170-vehicle fleet for Comcast cable. It also does some work for Federal Express and Guardian heating and plumbing.

The 36-year-old Dearborn man grew up in Bell River, Ontario, working on cars with his mechanic father. Before opening his own business in a 4,000-square-foot building on Newburgh in 2002, he worked as a service manager at an out-

state Ford dealership. His old Newburgh location once expanded to 6,000 square feet before his recent move into a 16,000-square-foot facility in the city's industrial corridor on Glendale in the Stark-Schoolcraft area.

"The interest in what we do has exceeded our expectations," Durocher said. "We're an efficient operation that offers quality work and a quick turnaround time on our work."

"We realize businesses need their cars back quickly, so we don't have all kinds of layers customers need to deal with. All of our mechanics can make good decisions and deal directly with the customer."

Mayor Jack Engebretson — strapped with Livonia's budget struggles — said he will explore the possibility of using the local company's services.

"It would be a great way to save the city some money," Engebretson said. "At the same time, it would be a plus to support a local business."

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Expert: State's economy faces meltdown without reform

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

Michigan, its cities and schools are in danger of an economic meltdown without major changes in the way the state raises and distributes revenue.

That's the message from a state finance expert to an audience of government, business and school leaders recently.

"I've never seen anything like this situation," said Tom Clay, director of state affairs for the Citizens Research Council of Michigan.

All government agencies and schools can expect major, per-

haps massive, deficits for years — in good times and bad — unless the state changes the way it taxes and spends, he predicted.

"The economy is not going to grow us out of the budget deficit," Clay said during a government forum sponsored by the Southfield Community Foundation.

While the post-9/11 stock market crash and U.S. automakers' declining market share haven't helped, Clay said neither is the root cause of the problem.

"The problem is structural," he noted, indicating that the state has undertaken measures

increases in spending for prisons and health care at a time when its manufacturing tax base continues to decline.

"We've shifted to a service-based economy and, for the most part, we don't tax services," said Clay, who served in Republican and Democratic state administrations for more than 30 years, ultimately serving as deputy state treasurer under former Gov. John Engler.

While acknowledging the problem, local officials said they're being creative as they grapple with a loss of state revenue sharing and uncertain state education spending.

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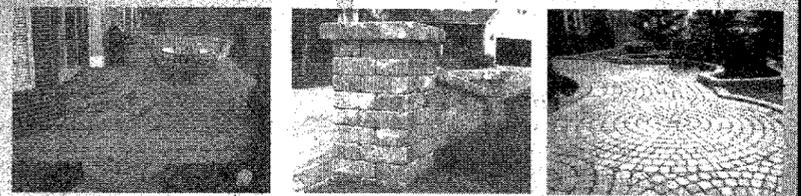
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Numerous local businesses, charity organizations and individuals are reaching out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Here are some opportunities for you to help:

Bank on it
Independent Bank, with a branch in Livonia, is working to provide relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Companies or individuals can now make a donation to the Salvation Army's relief fund at any Independent Bank branch office.

Donations will aid the Salvation Army as it works to provide shelter and food to evacuees through its centers in Mobile, Ala., and in New Orleans. "We can never fully comprehend what the people in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama have faced," said Ron Long, president and CEO of Independent Bank East Michigan. "We just want to help any way we can."

The Salvation Army has said that a \$100 donation will feed a family of four for two days, provide two cases of drinking water and one household cleanup kit.

Blood drive
In addition to financial resources and donated goods, the American Red Cross is calling for blood donations. To aid in the effort, the public is welcome 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 26, to give blood or donate money at Mama Mia's Restaurant, located on Plymouth Road in Livonia.

The restaurant, which has been in business for 53 years, will offer free food to those who donate. The fund-raiser will be held in the banquet rooms adjacent to the restaurant.

Disaster Relief
To assist in the hurricane efforts by volunteering or making a financial donation to the National Disaster Relief Fund, call (313) 833-2664 or visit the Web at www.semredcross.org.

Checks may be sent to the American Red Cross - Southeastern Michigan Chapter, P.O. Box 441280, Detroit, MI 48244-1280. Write NDRF in the memo line.

Tavern fund-raiser
The Sports Venue Bar & Grill, 6327 Middlebelt (between Ford and Warren), Garden City is holding a Hurricane Victim Fund-raiser until midnight tonight. A \$10 donation includes a buffet dinner, non-alcoholic beverage and a DJ and dancing, 7-11 p.m. Patrons are asked to bring clothing, food, toiletries, linens

LOCAL GROUPS HELP HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

and gift cards to receive a coupon for a draft beer. For more information, call (734)525-3134.

Katrina Concerts
In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Plymouth Downtown Development Authority announced there will be one more concert at Kellogg Park, with money raised during the performance to be used to support relief efforts for the victims of the hurricane.

The concert is 6:30 p.m., Friday in the park, and will feature the Detroit bluegrass band Cass Avenue Ramblers, along with the Troubadors. DDA director Bob Anderson said, at press time, other acts were being contacted for possible inclusion in the performance. Admission to the concert is free. However, the Plymouth Salvation Army, working with the Plymouth Rotary Club A.M., will be collecting donations to be used for hurricane relief, Anderson explained.

The bands and several businesses - including Signature Audio Services, Community Financial and Jimmy John's - are donating their services for the evening.

A group called Musicians for Relief will sponsor a \$10-per-person fund-raising concert 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, in Central City Park behind Westland City Hall on Ford south of Wayne Road. Rare Earth will headline the concert. The lineup also will include the Howling Diablos, guitarist Joey Gados Jr. from the movie School of Rock, Power Source, The Ride, 6 Peace, the Eddie Leighton Project, Crossover and Red Hill. Admission is \$10 per person, \$5 for students with identification.

Operation Biloxi Bound
Some Oakland County Catholic parishes are teaming up to fill a 50-foot semi truck with food, clothing, toiletries and other necessities to send to Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Biloxi, Miss. Donations are welcome at Holy Family Catholic Church, 24505 Meadowbrook

Road, between 10 Mile and Grand River, on the west side of the road, in Novi. The collection is set for 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 18 in the parking lot of the church. Items of greatest need include: socks, underwear, pajamas, men's boxers, clothes of all sizes; toiletries such as toothpaste, soap, towels, washcloths, toilet paper, tissue, wet wipes; diapers, formula, toys, sheets, pillows, blankets, bottled water, canned goods, non-perishable food, children's vitamins, paper plates, plastic knives, forks, spoons, can openers. Even the smallest donations will be accepted. The semi truck was donated by John Quinn, of Commodore Logistics in Warren. A second truck, donated by Two Men and a Truck, will be on hand if needed. Gas and drivers are being donated. Call Julie at (248) 380-8544 or Brenda at (248) 449-6247 for more information.

Heart Walk
The American Heart Association's Heart Walk, set for Saturday, Sept. 17, at the Southfield Municipal Complex, will not only benefit those affected by heart disease and stroke, but also those displaced by Hurricane Katrina by collecting paper goods and personal hygiene items for the Salvation Army.

Archdiocese collection
As of Tuesday, the Archdiocese of Detroit has collected \$600,000 for the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. All donations are being sent to the Catholic Charities USA. The Archdiocese has not authorized any telephone solicitations on behalf of Hurricane Katrina relief. Individuals wishing to contribute to the relief effort should make checks payable to the Archdiocese of Detroit and indicate "Katrina Relief Fund" on the memo line in the lower left corner. The checks should be sent to: Archdiocese of Detroit, "Katrina Relief Fund," 1234 Washington Blvd., Detroit MI 48226.

Treat for a donation
On Thursday, Sept. 22, all Cold Stone

Creamery locations in Michigan will give a free slice of ice cream cake in exchange for a donation to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Local stores include one in Cherry Hill Village at 50409 Independence Street, and one in downtown Plymouth in the Mayflower Centre. To find the nearest location to you, visit the company's Web site at www.coldstonecreamery.com.

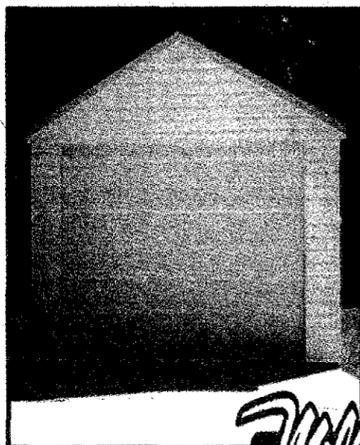
Numbers to remember
To volunteer to help, you can contact these organizations: the Salvation Army at (800) SAL-ARMY, the Red Cross at (800) HELP-NOW, Feed the Children at (800) 525-7575. Donations of clothing and furniture are being accepted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at (800)440-6728, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at (313) 972-3100, the Salvation Army at (313) 962-5960, Goodwill Industries at (313) 964-3900 and Food Solutions at (734) 591-3388.



DONALD J. ALLEY

Chastity Sylvester of New Orleans helps her nephew, Berlin Wells, 2, (right) and son Jason Alexander, 4, to the pizza donated by Buddy's Pizza for their Random Acts of Pizza program. In total, there are 25 members of the Wells family seeking shelter here in metro Detroit while they wait for word on their houses and belongings in New Orleans. They left by car before the hurricane, traveling to Houston, Arkansas, Mississippi, and St. Louis before coming to Belleville to stay at a brother-in-law's house after hotel rates became inflated due to the demand from other evacuees. They got word through a church program of the Ramada Inn offering shelter.

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OUR VIEWS

Schools continue to make progress

Last spring, Superintendent Greg Baracy chided Realtors about how they market the Wayne-Westland Community Schools. The district, he told them, has come a long way in improving its buildings and its academic achievement. Where it once was a diamond in the rough, it's now a multi-faceted gem.

And now Baracy can prove the district is making the grade with the state's Education YES! report card. According to the state, all but two of the district's 23 schools received an A or B on the report card. The other two schools received grades of C.

The district also met the requirements of adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act as did all of its schools except John Glenn High School, which failed because one of its sub-groups did not make AYP.

The district is appealing the decision and fully expects to have the designation changed to meeting adequate yearly progress.

It's a good showing, considering the Plymouth-Canton school district had two of its three high schools and Garden City had its high school fail to make AYP.

Only the Livonia Public Schools did better with the district and all of its schools meeting expectations.

Wayne-Westland administrators and staff have worked hard to improve test scores and the grades the state handed out are proof. Schools that tend to have large at-risk populations did very well, and the C grade Hicks and Jefferson-Barns received shows their students' achievement is moving in the right direction.

We congratulate the district, its staff, administrators and students for making the grade this year and urge them to keep up the good work. We also encourage them to spread the word about the district's successes. The only way others will know how good the district is by them telling others the good news — not just once, but every chance they get.

Maybe if they say it loudly enough and long enough, people will stop and see that as the district's slogan says, "great futures start right here."

We congratulate the district, its staff, administrators and students for making the grade this year and urge them to keep up the good work. We also encourage them to spread the word about the district's successes.

Constitution Day a mandate that should be embraced

For years, local school officials have complained long and hard about the federal government mandating certain programs and services without providing the funding to pay for them.

These "unfunded mandates" often times have dealt with Head Start programs, educating special needs students and subsidized lunch programs. All critical to students' needs, but often with a hefty price tag.

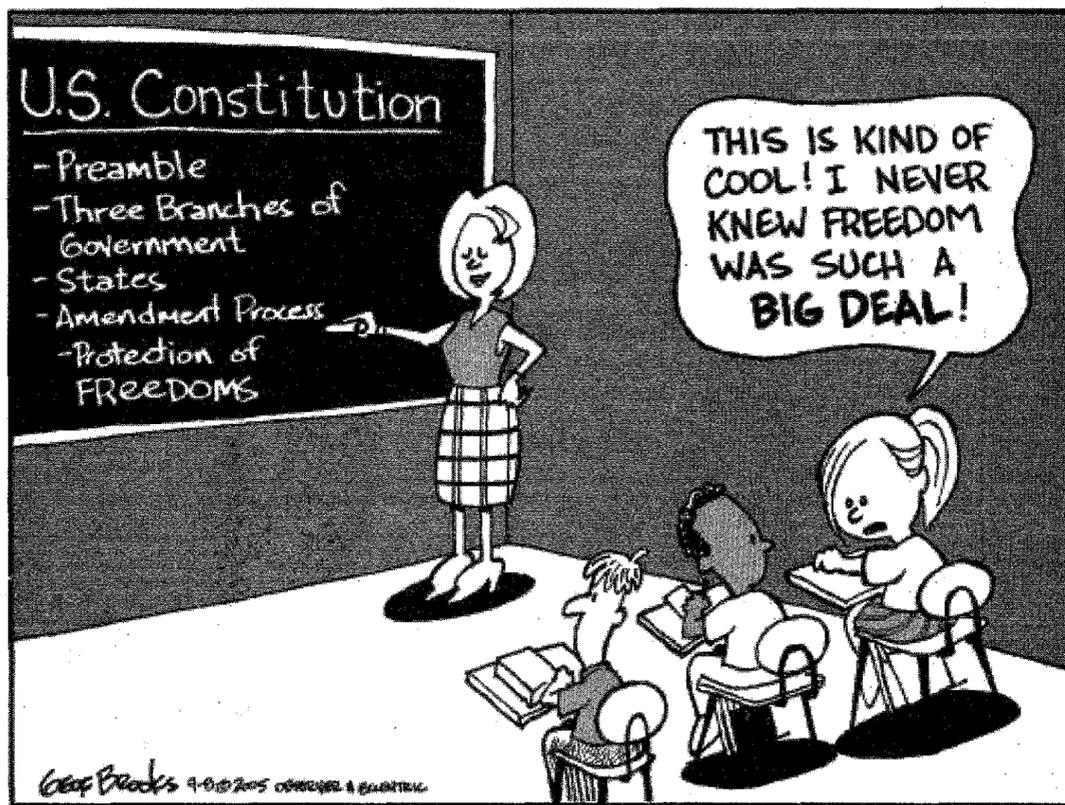
Now another "unfunded mandate" has come down the pike courtesy of Uncle Sam, but this one should be embraced not only by our local school officials, but by all who live in this great country.

By an act of Congress, Sept. 17 has been declared Constitution Day in the United States and requires the teaching of the Constitution on or around that date as a condition of receiving federal funds. The date honors the actual signing of the Constitution, which took place Sept. 17, 1787.

It is a requirement long overdue. While many districts no doubt already include information about the Constitution in class material, a thorough understanding of the Constitution should be a part of every child's education.

Our nation's course was charted by the document, and the day is designed to introduce or reinforce the core Democratic values that were established and protected by it. In short, the Constitution defines what it means to be an American.

Today, the people of Iraq and their elected officials are embroiled in debate and political gnashing of the teeth over a proposed constitution for the new democratic Iraq. Hopefully, that country's citizens will be as well-served by its constitution as this country has been in the 218 years since ours was adopted.



Respects column

I have respect for Hugh Gallagher, even more so after reading "Conflict over there" stirs passions in our community." His honesty and his attempt to remain fair was obvious when he talked about the passionate views of the Palestinian American, Ali Abunimah, and the deputy consul general of Israel in Chicago, Andy David.

Mr. Gallagher recognized both of them as similar in character and worth, regardless of their opposing analysis to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. In order for us to have a more truthful and reasonable understanding of any conflict, we need to be more like Mr. Gallagher. As a prerequisite, we need to have honesty and truthfulness, followed by compassion and understanding, and a desire for good will for both sides.

Which brings me to ponder just how many of us, who have already taken sides, are truly aware of the factual history of the conflict? And how many of us understand both sides of this conflict and their different facets? It is true that there are those of us from both viewpoints that have no respect for the truth and no compassion for the other. And it is also true that our mainstream media have failed in presenting this conflict fairly. Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, truth and compassion still exist on both sides of this conflict and if united have the power to bring about a just and lasting peace.

M.R. Holmberg
Dearborn Heights

Government move fast?

Everyone is now jumping on the "Blame Bush" bandwagon for everything great and small that may have gone wrong in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. My initial response is "Since when does anyone expect the machinations of the federal government to move quickly?"

The larger the bureaucracy, the slower it moves.

But the first question should be with those that are initially responsible for its citizens — the city of New Orleans primarily, and the state of Louisiana secondarily.

There will undoubtedly be blame available to all agencies involved in this crisis — local and federal. No emergency response has ever occurred without process and human error. However, the people of New Orleans should first demand a complete investigation of how the city and state failed in their responses:

1. Why was the Red Cross prohibited from delivering food and water to the Superdome by the Louisiana state emergency officials (www.redcross.org/faq/0,1096,0_682_4524_00.html#4524).
2. Why was the New Orleans evacuation plan not followed? For instance, why were the buses (city and school) not used for evacuating its citizens per the evacuation plan? (<http://www.cityofno.com/>).
3. Why did Gov. Blanco delay a response to President Bush's offer of federalizing the relief effort — providing active duty military resources? (<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0509/05/ltm.01.html>).
4. Why was the largest levee break the same levee that was recently improved

and hardened? Who did the work? How did that company get the contract?

Heads will roll, careers will be lost in all levels of government due to this disaster. And for good reason, in many cases. Let's just hope and pray the right folks will be targeted and then replaced with better leaders.

Darin Stark
Garden City

'Gut wrenching'

I have spent the better part of three days watching and reading about the evacuation of Jewish settlers from Gaza with utter amazement at the sympathetic, one-sided coverage that pulls at the heartstrings of the readers.

The words used to describe the scenes included "heart breaking," "very emotional" and, the most widely used one of all, "gut wrenching," which I heard used no less than six times in a two-minute span on CNN, making one forget that these settlers and their settlements exist contrary to international law.

After watching such a display of empathy and understanding toward the Jewish settlers, I begin to wonder how different things might have been if the Palestinians could have gotten the same kind of sympathetic coverage as more than 750,000 of them were uprooted from their homes, their entire villages destroyed, their lands confiscated, hundreds of thousands of their ancient olive trees uprooted, oppressed and persecuted.

Just last month, I witnessed another Palestinian home in my village of Beit Hanina, which is located near Jerusalem in the West Bank, being demolished by the Israeli army even though it was built on land that had been in the family for hundreds of years.

No news crews or cameras were present to convey to the world the "gut wrenching" scene of the children weeping as their home was reduced to rubble along with their belongings. There were no neatly groomed reporters conveying the "heart breaking" image of the family as they dug through the debris, trying to salvage what was left of their possessions and memories. It was all a "very emotional" scene, which unfortunately has been repeated many thousands of times before.

It seems to me that Jewish suffering is somehow deemed more "newsworthy" or more deserving of our sympathies than the suffering of Palestinians.

Mike Odetalla
Canton

Israel must withdraw

Our mainstream media has long been under the influence of pro-Israeli Zionism and that is why we irrationally attempt to place the responsibility of peace on the Palestinians. According to the pro-Zionist media, the Palestinians are the hostile people harboring terrorists and the Israelis are the victims; we don't hear much about the history of the indigenous Palestinians or the devastating effects that nearly 40 years of brutal Israeli occupation has had on them.

There are a considerable amount of people such as I who believe that Israel's pullout is long overdue and that it's

about time Israel takes a step that loosens the choke hold which it knowingly placed on the Palestinian people over several decades. While Israel has loosened its grip a tad bit, it continues to illegally occupy far more land in the West Bank and Arab Jerusalem, the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are still surrounded by security barriers that are forcing them to live in a prison-like environment with no rights of entry from one area to another, therefore in actuality the choke hold persists.

Israel must withdraw from all Palestinian territories completely and then dismantle its apartheid-like security barriers and apparatuses in order for the Palestinians to have the atmosphere needed to fully recuperate and live normal lives.

Marion Mourtada
Dearborn Heights

Be careful with phone number

With the high cost of gas and my concern for the environment, I had been considering a cleaner, greener machine, a hybrid vehicle. Since production was increased and the wait this year was reduced from 10 months to just three, I felt it was time to act. I picked up my new car on July 12 and felt good about my decision. The dealership offered me very little for my 2001 Subaru Outback, which was in excellent shape, so I decided to sell it myself, as I have done in the past.

Before picking up my new car, I called AAA and transferred my insurance.

After cleaning and vacuuming the Subaru, I placed an ad in Auto Trader and parked it in my driveway. There it stood with a sign on the dashboard waiting for a new owner. After three weeks to the day, my Subaru had a new owner. I didn't meet him or her because the car was quietly taken in the middle of the night. My shock was indescribable.

Heed my advice: When placing an ad for your car or any items on your property, only list your cell phone number. Always continue comprehensive insurance on the car you are selling, which my agent failed to suggest to me.

I hope others will learn from my experience. We always think "It couldn't happen to me." But it can. Believe me!

Elaine Chalom
Livonia

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.

Mail:
Letters to the editor
Westland Observer
36251 Schoolcraft
Livonia, MI 48150

Fax:
(734) 591-7279

E-mail:
smason@oe.homecomm.net

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Sue Mason
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Marty Carry
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Hugh Gallagher
Managing Editor

Peter Neill
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Susan Rosiek
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Richard Agnien
President/Publisher

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.

QUOTABLE

"The big thing is that the Rotary used to do it and, thankfully, they're getting involved again. If we can get some grants, we really have a night the kids have never seen before."

— Westland Parks and Recreation Director Bob Kosowski, about the 11th installment of the city's Turn Off the Violence Night

Wine shipment fiasco shows where politicians' interest is

Fed up with politics as usual? Lots of people in Michigan are — and here is one reason why. For years, state law allowed wineries in this state to ship wine direct to Michigan customers. Meanwhile, shipments to Michigan residents from out-of-state wine makers were outlawed.

The law also required that all beer and wine sold at retail must be distributed by beer and wine wholesalers. If you think this sounds like a legalized monopoly, you're right. And it has been protected for decades by the most powerful lobby in Lansing, the Michigan Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association.

This group works to protect the interests — not of the consumers, of course, but of the 70-odd families who own wholesaling and distribution companies.

Ray and Eleanor Heald, the wine columnists who worked for these newspapers for years, sued, and the case wound up before the U.S. Supreme Court. In May, the high court ruled that the Michigan law was discriminatory and therefore an unconstitutional restriction on interstate commerce.

Wine lovers and free market advocates rejoiced, expecting that ruling would end the wholesalers' monopoly power.

The politicians had another idea. Led by state House of Representatives Majority Leader Chris Ward, R-Brighton, a bill passed overwhelmingly late last month by the House would severely limit direct shipments by all wineries, no matter where they are located.

That would then preserve the wholesalers' monopoly. Winemakers would be allowed to ship some wine under a tight annual limit, but they would be forbidden altogether to ship to restaurants and retailers.

Why? Well, you may think this is only a coincidence ... but the record shows the beer and wine lobby is among the 10 largest contributors to the political campaigns of two-thirds of the 84 representatives who voted for the bill.

Imagine that. The bill now goes to the state Senate where, again, many of the senators have benefited from the contribution record of the wholesalers. Some, however, think Majority Leader Ken Sikken, R-Wyoming, may be less inclined to preserve the monopoly of this tiny but extremely powerful sliver of our state.

Now consider just how many people are directly affected either way by this legislation that has so preoccupied the legislators we send to Lansing. Supposedly, remember, our lawmakers are there to look after our best interests.

To begin with, there are the 70 or so families

that own beer and wine wholesaling companies. And there are wine enthusiasts who make up far less than 1 percent of Michigan's 10 million residents.

This is, um, pretty small beer.

And it's even smaller beer when compared with stuff that affects almost everybody. Take high gas prices. It's no secret that the domestic automakers, the mainstay of our economy, have been in financial trouble for years. Now, they could be dealt a mortal blow by gas that is becoming so expensive that it will limit market demand for gas-guzzling new products now in the pipeline. (If you don't believe me, see what it costs to fill up that Hummer.)

Michigan's bad economic situation is being made worse by our archaic tax structure. Worst of all is the Single Business Tax, which essentially penalizes business for hiring workers ... in a state that often has the highest unemployment rate in the country.

With all this to deal with, how come the tempest in a wine bottle gets the rapt attention of our political system? Simple. The wealthy beer and wine wholesalers lobby buys the attention of our legislators. That's all. It literally buys their attention.

So the interests of a majority of our people are held hostage to a political system that divides its attention according to the amount of money a "constituency" can contribute to the politicians.

When you think about that, it isn't hard to conclude that the real reason so many people are fed up with our system is that it takes care of organized special interest groups that can afford to pay.

As for the big problems of our state, the ones that affect us all — well, too often the politicians see them as an unwanted intrusion on business as usual.

Phil Power is a longtime observer of politics, economics and education issues in Michigan. He would be pleased to hear from readers at ppower@hcnnet.com.

I'm paying homage; your writing is derivative; he is a mere hack

The late Sydney J. Harris was one of a kind among syndicated journalists.

Harris, based in Chicago, wrote a pithy, insightful column, "Strictly Personal," in which he discussed politics, business, religion, sports, society and pretty much everything else.

Harris' writing was informative and entertaining, learned yet unassuming, offering erudition for the everyday man (and woman) — back when the country was a little less class conscious (and politically correct).

He was never one to follow the pack in dissecting the story of the moment, taking, instead, a broad view of events. At the same time, he was able to pluck from life, both his and his readers', the most ordinary occurrences — routines, social encounters, oft-repeated rationalizations — and challenge the beliefs and hypocrisies that lay behind them.

He was an expert at spotting spin — political and personal — before it was called spin.

With that preface, let's apply one of Harris' most effective techniques to the state of things today in ...

Politics

My appointees are dedicated public servants who have paid their dues. Yours are benefiting from the spoils of your election. His are cheap political cronies.

I am loyal to the people. You gauge public sentiment before making a decision. He twists and turns with every poll.

My administration invested its resources in a worthy project that could benefit the entire community. His administration gambled taxpayers' money on an ill-conceived boondoggle.

Unforeseen circumstances forced some belt-tightening in my administration. His administration made deep cuts because of

poor planning.

Our nominee is an experienced jurist whose strict interpretation of the Constitution has been mislabeled as radical. Theirs has a long history of judicial activism.

Social stratification

My son is a bright, spirited child who needs to channel his energies. Your boy could use a bit more direction. His kid is an incorrigible brat.

My films infuse the commonplace with a wry, sophisticated social criticism. Your B-grade movies contain some moments of enlightenment. His pretentious fare is strictly lowbrow.

Our schools face some long-term challenges due to underfunding and unrealistic expectations. Their schools have a track record of failure.

I am against this project because it isn't a demographic fit for the community. You oppose it because you think it would bring in outsiders. He is appealing to racial fears.

Personal habits

My SUV is essential for my 90-mile round-trip commute. You bought yours for the occasional weekend up north. He fancies himself some kind of urban cowboy.

I keep up with the flow of traffic. You tend to have a lead foot. He is a chronic speeder.

My prescriptions help keep me balanced in a fast-paced, stressful environment. You need to be more careful with the booze. He is an addict.

My work station is cluttered because the demands of my job keep me multitasking. Your productivity would improve if you straightened your desk. He is a disorganized slob.

Matt Jachman is an *Observer* reporter and occasional columnist who: (a) Consistently offers worthwhile insight into local communities; (b) Tries hard, but is no Sydney J. Harris; or (c) Doesn't know what he's talking about. He can be reached at (734) 953-2115 or at mjachman@oe.homecomm.net.

LETTERS

Focus on existing parks

I would like to respond to Kurt Kuban's column on the Lower Rouge Parkway.

It would be a nice to expand the usage of the Lower Rouge Parkway, but after supporting the millage renewal for Wayne County Parks, we the residents abutting the Middle Rouge in Hines Park are very disappointed with the promises that were not fulfilled along with the

upkeep/care of the park this year. If the county can't take care of what is existing, how can development of other areas be considered?

The citizens of Wayne County have agreed to give more, but are getting less. Mr. Kuban's column is good — it would be nice to have more access to nature areas. But before we do that, the county must take care of what already exists.

Greg Laskowsky
Livonia

Small Business HEALTH COVERAGE

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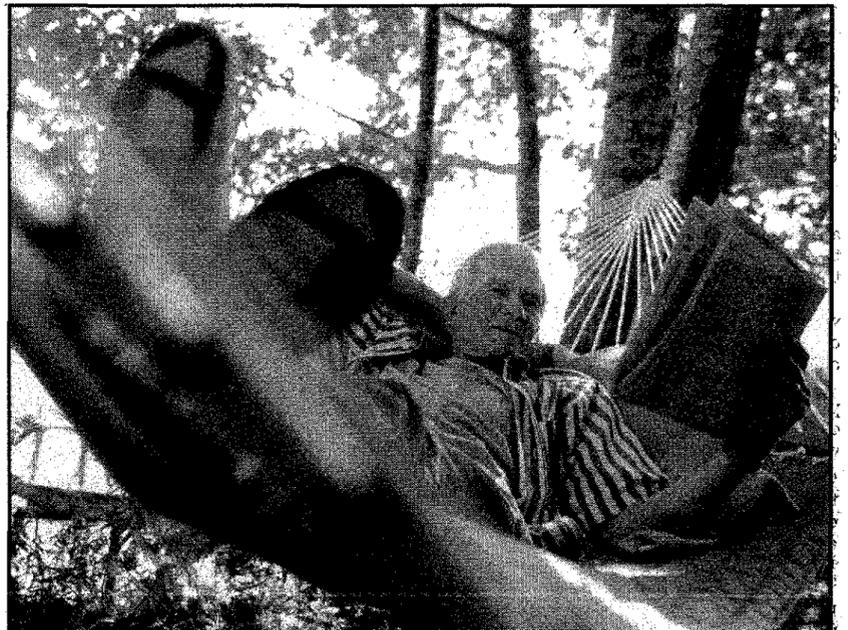
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DeVos: State is stifling jobs, business growth

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

According to the scion of one of the richest men in North America, Michigan has to re-examine its stance toward the business of attracting and encouraging business if it expects the economy to turn around.

At the Oakland County Republican Party's Newsmaker Breakfast at

Andiamo's in West Bloomfield, GOP gubernatorial hopeful Dick DeVos told a capacity crowd he saw his father's business, what would become Amway (and later Alticor), grow from a basement startup to a world-spanning corporation. He said the growth

reflects how all great successes start.

"Big companies don't start big, they start as small companies staffed by people working at home," he said. "That's entrepreneurship at its best."

He said the challenges facing Michigan are substantial. The state's status as having the worst unemployment in the nation and the worst place to look for a job may only change because of the devastation done to Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. The National Federation of Independent Businesses has ranked the state the worst place for small business.

"We're at the top of all the wrong lists," DeVos said. "We've got the lowest personal income growth. We're the only state to not move into positive job growth column since 2003."

What the state's leadership has

to do, he said, is to get out of the business of assigning blame and assessing the problem and start working on solutions. The first thing the state's leaders have to do is to change the taxes and regulation he says are stifling growth.

"It's about creating a culture that wants growth and reaches out to create growth," he said. "The competitive reality is changing. It will take investment and strategy to provide the jobs that will lift the community back to where it needs to be."

Without that change, people will continue to counsel their children and students to leave Michigan rather than live here, a trend he finds very troubling.

When asked if more money for the schools was the solution to falling test scores, he said that the presence or absence of funding isn't the main issue.

"In per-pupil spending we're

DICK DEVOS, REPUBLICAN

- Age: 49
- Residence: Grand Rapids
- Spouse: Betsy (26 years)
- 4 children: 14-23 years old
- Career: Former chairman of Alticor Inc. (formerly Amway).
- Political: Nationally known generous Republican donor. Led unsuccessful 2000 school voucher drive. Wife was former chair of state GOP.

between 12th and 16th highest in the nation and we've got the second highest-paid teachers in the country. That's good, that's something to be proud of," DeVos said. "But we don't do

enough to encourage those who are not the best teachers to pursue other careers."

Tommy Marx of Waterford said he was very much in favor of having someone like DeVos running the state.

"He's got good ideas and will create an impact on the state," he said. "He's got a great background and won't be influenced by money. He already has that."

John Bowker, a member of the Oakland County Republican party executive committee, said the issue of DeVos' money both is and isn't an issue to his candidacy.

"It's helpful, but when you count union money from the MEA and UAW I call it a draw," he said. "But it's a good thing because some of the money from the party can go to other candidates in races statewide."

The Bloomfield Township resident said the fortunes for the

Republican Party in Michigan will trend the same way as the party nationwide in that they will be tied to the fate of President George W. Bush. If things continue the way they have nationally, with the president's overall poll numbers at record lows, there could be a backlash against the GOP in 2006.

"If Iraq turns around and New Orleans is OK, the party will do well," Bowker said. "If there's 2,500-plus casualties in Iraq and New Orleans is still a ghost town, then there will be problems."

DeVos is currently the only Republican challenger to Gov. Jennifer Granholm as State Sen. Nancy Cassis dropped out of the race Monday and endorsed the Amway heir. The only other GOP candidate, State Rep. Jack Hoogendyk, R-Kalamazoo, dropped out last month.

Schoolcraft hosts College Night Oct. 5

Area high school students and their families can investigate the programs of approximately 70 colleges and universities during Schoolcraft College's annual College Night on Wednesday, Oct. 5. The event is free and open to the community.

Schools will be on hand in the Physical Education Building to answer questions and provide information on degrees, fields of study, admission requirements, cost and extracurricular activities.

A sample of in-state schools attending includes Michigan State University, Central, Western, Northern and Eastern Michigan universities, Adrian College, Ferris State, the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and Dearborn campuses, Hillsdale College and the College for Creative Studies. Out-of-state institutions range from Indiana University, to Bowling Green State University, Johnson and Wales University, Kent State University and Indiana Tech.

The program begins at 6:30 p.m. and continues until 8:30 p.m. For more information, call the Schoolcraft Office of Admissions at (734)462-4426.

Make-a-Wish holds Princess Ball

Octavia Reese, a concert cellist and Miss Michigan 2001, will perform at the Wallace F. Smith Performing Arts Building on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland College Sept. 17-18 as part of "A Royal Ball" to benefit Make-a-Wish Foundation.

More than 35 title-holding and professional performers have donated their time to prepare and perform at this event, sponsored by Jaguar of Novi, has two venues - a Royal Black-Tie evening of dinner and dance and a Princess Ball matinee.

The Sept. 17 Black-Tie Royal Ball, is preceded by a VIP sponsor reception at 6 p.m., the performance at 7 p.m. and an all-inclusive strolling gourmet dinner catered by Epoch Events and wine tasting at 8:30 p.m., sponsored by Novi Fine Wines.

This evening includes a silent auction, ballroom dancing exhibition, meet-and-greet with performers and Café Corner with a jazz trio just to name a few.

Tickets: \$60 adult, \$30 children. The Princess Ball on Sunday, Sept. 18, is modeled after two recent "Princess Wishes" for Princesses Charlotte & Karlie, both Make-A-Wish recipients who will also be in attendance. Club Libby Lu will perform VIP "Princess Make-Overs" for the sponsors' young VIPs at 1 p.m. At 2 p.m. the Saturday show starts.

At 3:30 p.m. the "Princess Ball" will feature interactive children's entertainment, craft tables, bouncing castle, silent auction with child-specific items, pictures with the princess performers as well as an opportunity to meet Reese. Prince and princess attire is encouraged. Tickets: \$30 adult and \$15 children for this matinee performance and Princess Ball.

For more information visit www.wishmich.org or call (888) 857-WISH (9474).

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