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SUNDAY

November 20, 2005

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Goodfellows expect increase in requests for help

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

As local families struggle to cope with job losses, pay cuts, higher medical costs and rising heat bills, a Westland charity that buys Christmas gifts for needy children is expecting a higher demand for help this season.

Last year, the Westland Goodfellows bought toys and clothing for 700 children from 500

families, and they expect the need will only grow this year.

"We expect that with the economy being pretty tough, the demand will be up," Goodfellows President Jim Rachwal said.

Goodfellows raised a record-breaking \$35,000 last year, boosted by strong support from Ford Motor Co. and union employees.

Whether Goodfellows volunteers will raise that much this year is uncertain.

Volunteers will continue a long-standing tradition by standing in major Westland intersections on Friday - the day after Thanksgiving - and handing out Goodfellows newspapers for donations.

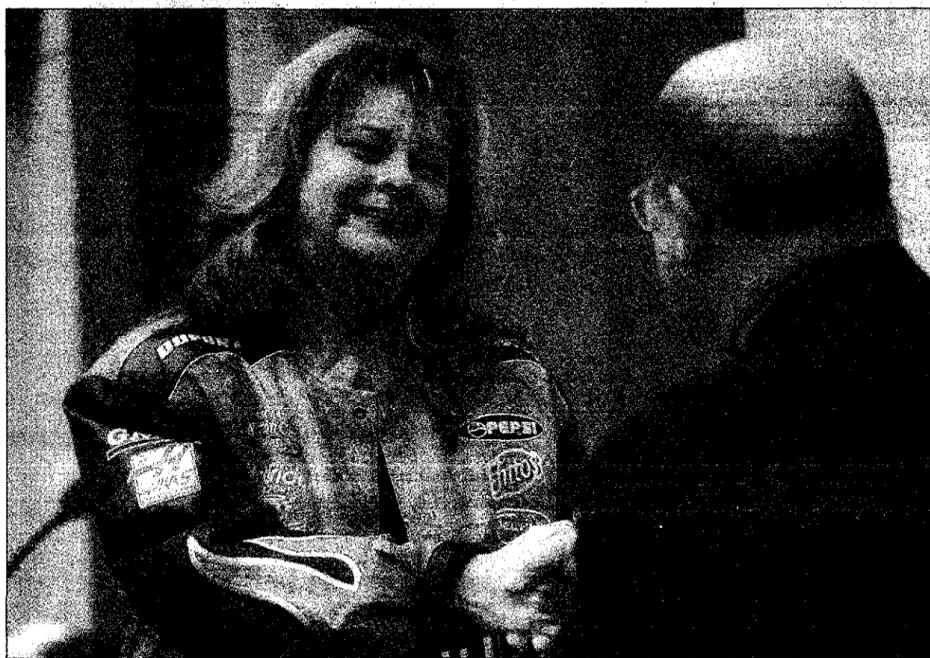
Goodfellows used to hit the streets for two days, but Rachwal said the organization has tried to shift some of its fund-raising efforts because of the dangers to volunteers working in busy intersections.

"The traffic load is higher, and people are in a hurry," he said.

Ford Motor Co. already has pledged \$10,000, Rachwal said. Moreover, one Westland-based company, The Firing Line Indoor Gun Range & Gun Shop, recently gave \$2,500 that its owners raised during a charity event.

This year will be somewhat melancholy for

PLEASE SEE GOODFELLOWS, A4



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Canton Township Supervisor Tom Yack shakes Elizabeth Walling's hand after publicly recognizing her for her heroic efforts in saving her husband, Roland, from his burning car.

'She is my hero for life'

Canton honors woman for saving husband's life

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

When Elizabeth Walling pulled her husband Roland from his burning car on Sept. 12, she wasn't thinking about being someone's hero. She had decided she wanted more than just 20 years with the man she loves.

So it's no wonder the Westland resident was surprised when she was invited to a recent Canton Township Board meeting to be honored for what she did. She was nominated for the honor by the Canton Police officer who responded to the accident at Cherry Hill and Sheldon.

PLEASE SEE HERO, A4



Joining Elizabeth Walling at the ceremony were her husband Roland and daughters Samantha and Nichole.

Board public hearing Nov. 21 at Churchill

The Livonia Board of Education will host a public hearing on the Legacy Initiative at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 21, at Churchill High School.

People will be able to fill out a blue card to get the chance to speak for three minutes at one of four microphones set up in the school gymnasium.

The proposal involves closing a total of six school buildings, adding a new level of schools called upper elementary buildings for grades 5-6 and

saves the district around \$1.9 million annually, according to school officials. The plan was crafted by a Demographics Committee after more than a year of study, in response to declining enrollment and revenue, and increasing costs.

To accommodate the public hearing, the school board has moved its regular voting meeting to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22. The board will not be voting on the Legacy Initiative that day, according to board

President Dan Lessard.

"We've still got questions, us, the board," Lessard said Friday, "and we want to make sure that anybody who wants an opportunity will have an opportunity to talk."

All open meetings will be cablecast on LPS cable Channels 15 & 19 in Livonia and Westland. For a complete cable schedule see the district's Web site at <http://www.livonia.k12.mi.us/great/nov05.pdf>.

By Dave Varga

1st defendant pleads in pizza delivery case

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Justice - and prison - came swiftly for one of three defendants accused of robbing two pizza delivery workers in Westland.

Daniel Garrett, 21, of Canton already is serving four to 15 years after pleading guilty in Wayne County Circuit Court to an armed robbery that happened Aug. 29 in the 400 area of Farmington Road.

Garrett also is serving a two-year term on felony firearm charges stemming from that holdup and a similar robbery that occurred six days earlier at Ravencrest Condominiums, on Newburgh near Marquette.

Garrett was accused of providing the .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun and driving a getaway vehicle during the armed holdups. No one was injured.

Details of his guilty plea came from Westland police and online state prison records.

Before he was sent to prison, Garrett had been jailed in lieu of a

\$500,000 cash bond - the highest of the three defendants - partly because of threatening remarks he allegedly made.

"He had made threats that he would have shot police officers if he had had the gun at the time of his arrest," police Sgt. David Heater has said.

Garrett later denied making the threats, Heater said. The final outcome still is pending for two other defendants.

Christopher Lee Allen, 19, of Westland was charged with two counts of armed robbery and two counts of felony firearms. He is accused of being the gunman.

Brandon Myers, 19, of Canton was accused of one count of armed robbery and one count of felony firearms. He was charged only in the Ravencrest robbery, amid accusations he called in the fake pizza order, allowed his vehicle to be used and accompanied the gunman to the delivery worker's car, police have said.

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Judge orders trial in Comerica Bank holdup

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Just 16 days after he is accused of robbing a Westland bank, a 28-year-old man was ordered Thursday to stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

Russell Rasmussen, 28, could face penalties ranging up to life in prison if he's convicted of robbing the Comerica branch on Wayne Road, south of Warren.

He was ordered to stand trial after he appeared in Westland 18th District Court on Thursday and gave up his right to a preliminary hearing - a move that, for now, averted testimony.

Rasmussen is a serial bank robbery suspect who also is accused of similar incidents in Canton and Dearborn.

He is jailed in lieu of a \$1 million bond on the Westland charge. According to police Sgt. Chris Benson, Rasmussen is accused of going into the Comerica branch, passing a note to a teller and indicating a holdup.

Although he didn't reveal any weapon, he is accused of passing a note and warning a teller to give



Rasmussen

money "and no one will get hurt," according to police reports. The teller complied with his demands. Rasmussen's arrest came after a Plymouth Township woman told police that he had borrowed her car and didn't return it. After Dearborn Heights authorities found the vehicle, she found a note inside it that was similar to those used in the robberies, according to Canton police Sgt. Rick Pomorski.

Rasmussen was arrested Nov. 7 - six days after the Nov. 1 robbery in Westland.

He is not a suspect in a similar robbery that occurred one day earlier at the Comerica branch on Wayne Road near Cherry Hill.

Rasmussen has prior convictions for unarmed robbery, fleeing from police and auto theft. He had been released from prison in April but was reported in October as absconding from parole by Washtenaw County and Ann Arbor authorities.

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INDEX

APARTMENTS	F2
AUTOMOTIVE	F4
CLASSIFIED INDEX	D2
COMMUNITY LIFE	F3
CROSSWORD	C1
HEALTH	C6
JOB	D1
OBITUARIES	C4
PERSPECTIVES	A9
NEW HOMES	E1
SERVICE GUIDE	D7
SPORTS	B1

Coming Thursday in Filter

Holiday Guide
Your guide to the season's most anticipated movies. See more in the next issue of Filter.



Filmmaking couple delights in giving people the creeps

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

The stuff of Todd and Tommy Brunswicks' dreams is the stuff of most nightmares. And the movie making couple are proud to say they've got a pretty tight grip on giving people the creeps.

"There's a formula to it," said Todd Brunswick, while his wife Tommy nodded and took a sip from a paper coffee cup. "You need a really good monster, lots of blood and guts and some 't-and-a'."

For the last five years, the Brunswicks, of Canton, have been making direct-to-video horror movies. They're small movies, produced on a shoestring. They've completed five movies so far, and have four more in the works.

The most recent release, *Mr. Jingles*, a tale of a blood-thirsty clown, has just completed the final stages of production before the Brunswicks take it to the American Film Market. *Writers Block*, the story of a writer haunted by a tragic accident, will premiere in December, and the couple is working on their first urban thriller, *Dead Thangs*.

AIM TO PLEASE

There are some things that are "must haves" if you're going to please your fans, Tommy said.

"You have to have great kill scenes," she said, but her husband quickly added that you don't need to spend so much time on other details.

"Like dialogue or acting," he said. Movie making had been a dream to the Brunswicks. They met in high school when they were both students at Churchill in Livonia. But they didn't start dating until they wound up being neighbors years later.

As newlyweds, they were both working in corporate video production and every night Tommy would nudge her husband before they fell asleep and ask, "So we're going to make a movie someday, right?" Five years ago, when the regional and national economy started taking turns for the worse, and Todd's company was bought and sold and bought again, they were both downsized from their jobs.

As the parents of three boys, ages 10, 7 and 5, the couple had no time to waste figuring out what to do. It was time to find work or to finally make good on the dream of making movies.



Todd (left) and Tommy Brunswick, of Canton, show off the poster for their latest film, 'Mr. Jingles.' The filmmaking couple has made five horror films, all on a shoestring budget.

"At one point I was offered a full-time job, and even though it was the hardest thing in the world to do, I turned it down," Todd said. "We had to give this a shot."

Even though they both admit to having a few "chick flicks" in them, they chose horror as their genre for common-sense reasons.

NO BARRIERS

First, because the movies are direct to video, they need as broad an audience as possible - an audience that spans cultural and language barriers.

"Comedy won't translate in other cultures. Neither does romance," Tommy said. "But horror is universal. Everyone is frightened of a stranger jumping out of the bushes. Everyone is afraid of the madman who comes to your house to kill you."

The appeal of horror is broad, and nearly half of all DVDs rented are horror movies.

Another factor in choosing to make horror movies is that the couple works on a tight budget, and works almost exclusively locally, which limits the pool of available actors.

"The acting isn't so important in horror

movies," Todd said, adding that sometimes bad acting adds to the campiness of their films.

So they found actors who are willing to work for food - or less (it's common in the local independent movie making community to work for free in order to help others). And they put together a small crew, now known as "The Skeleton Factory." They found people who are willing to give their time in exchange for credits and place on the Internet Movie Database.

"I became the producer from hell," Tommy said, laughing.

The Brunswicks avoided the usual traps of fledgling movie makers and refused to go into debt to make films. They have no credit cards and have taken out no loans to finance the pictures.

"We have to stay on budget. We don't have any money," Todd said.

They've gone for months at a time getting by on Ramen noodles and the understanding of their landlord, but they've recently attracted the attention of some solid investors. "We just got a call Friday. They said if we take care of the movies, they'll take care of the expenses. We'll see how all that works," Tommy said.

Journalist's talk focuses on challenges of today

Broadcast journalist Teresa Tomeo will be the guest speaker at two programs Sunday, Nov. 20, at St. Theodore's Catholic Parish in Westland.

Presented by S.T.A.T.I.C. (Students Taking Action Together In Christ), the new middle school youth group at the church, the 45-minute talks will focus on "Choices and Challenges Facing Today's Teens" and "Making a Difference in the Media."

The program will run 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call St. Theodore's at (734) 425-4421. The program is free and open to the public. A free will offering will be requested.

The programs are free of charge, but a free will offering is requested.

Tomeo is a keynote speaker, seminar leader, and a seasoned broadcast-journalist. She draws from 20 years of experience as an award winning newswoman to provide insight and advice on media issues for audiences of all ages.

She also draws from personal

experience and her devout Christian faith to help young people deal with peer pressure and bullying. As a teen growing up in the 1970s, she gave into the pressure to be thin and was eventually hospitalized for the eating disorder, Anorexia Nervosa.

In "Choices and Challenges Facing Today's Teens," which is for both youths and adults, she will answer such questions as how to help young people make wise entertainment choices, how to help them realize that what they see and hear in the media does make a difference in their lives, their churches, and their communities, and how to help them face the many moral challenges ahead. In "Making a Difference in the Media," which is for adults, Tomeo will show you the enormous impact the media have on our children and society. Participants will find out how one voice can make a difference in the type of information and entertainment that floods homes and the lives on a daily basis.

AROUND WESTLAND

Coffee hour

State Rep. Glenn S. Anderson, D-Westland, will hold his next local coffee hour for 9-10:30 a.m. Monday, Nov. 21, at Westland Big Boy Restaurant, 6360 N. Wayne Road at Hunter. Citizens are welcome to visit with Anderson and discuss issues and/or concerns. Anderson holds local coffee hours third Monday of each month.

Taste Fest

Tickets are on sale for the Westland Chamber of Commerce's seventh annual Holiday Taste Fest which will be at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the Hellenic Cultural Center at 36375 Joy Road, east of Newburgh.

Admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for senior citizens (55 and over) and children (12 and under). Tickets are on sale 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the chamber office, on Ford Road east of Newburgh.

Feeding the needy

The Wayne Ford Civic League has partnered with Gordon Food Service to provide 450 Thanksgiving celebratory meals to the most needy in the community on Nov. 23.

According to Vic Barra, the civic league has been in contact with St. Theodore Church, Veteran's Haven and the Wayne County Family Center to assess the needs of those organizations in hopes of helping this holiday.

Any organization wishing to participate can call Barra at (734) 728-5010.

Membership meeting

The Westland Youth Athletic Association will hold its annual general membership meeting at 7 p.m. Dec. 1. The meeting will be held at the WYAA Lange Compound at 6050 Farmington Road, Westland.

For more information, contact the WYAA at (734) 421-0640 or electronically at wyaa@wyaa.org.

Holiday party

Westland senior citizens are invited to the Holiday Extravaganza, a Christmas party, at the Westland senior Friendship Center, Thursday, Dec. 15.

Doors will open at 11:30 a.m., with the "fabulous feast" will be served at noon. There will be a chance to have pictures taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus, dancing to the music of the Tommie James Trio and gifts galore.

Tickets cost \$8 for members and \$10 for guests. They're available at the Friendship center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland.

New Year's Eve

Tickets are now on sale for the Ushers Club's annual New Year's Eve dinner dance at Ss. Simon and Jude Church, 32500 Palmer, Westland. Tickets cost \$20 each and include reserved seating, party favors, snacks, mixers, beer, a three-meat buffet with side items, dancing to the music of The Goldtones and pizza shortly after midnight.

Tickets are limited and none will be sold after Dec. 27. To order them, call Sharlene or Curt Frizzell at (734) 425-6819.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Men's Club is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Dec. 2 and 16, Jan. 6, 13 and 27 and Feb. 3, 17 and 24, at the church, southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

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.

Craft show

The annual Hawthorne Valley holiday craft show and Pack 547 bake sale will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27, at the facility at 7300 Merriman, Westland. Admission will be \$2, with kids free of charge.

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- B098 - James Rouleau - mattress, refrigerators, big screen TV, tool chest
- B163 - Danielle Cameron - stove, kitchen chairs, computer desk, curio cabinet
- B218 - Mark Conn - treadmill, bakers rack, bed, mattress, air conditioner
- B221 - Barbara Ayers - mattress, sofa, totes, weights, boxes
- B230 - Felando Merriweather - bikes, boxes, fishing equip., exercise equip.
- B245 - Sonya Dickens - TV, boxes, totes, mattress, computer chairs
- B254 - Teena Taylor - washer, tables, boxes
- B256 - Lisa Marchena - mattress, boxes, dresser, stereo, chairs
- B392 - Lisa Marshall - dinette set, furniture
- C023 - Kimberly Moore Barnes - BBQ grille, boxes, bags, bedroom furniture, bikes, desk
- C038 - Malkia Miller - treadmill, golf clubs, TV, sofa, totes, computer, tires, boxes
- D014 - Karen Hunt-Baker - computer, sofa, loveseat, stove, refrigerator, boxes
- D028 - Michelle Black - boxes, entertainment center, dresser, sofa bed, chest of drawers
- F010 - Robert Benjamin - washer, dryer, refrigerator, mattress, microwave, BBQ grille
- F042 - Tina Holden - boxes, bags, computer, TV's, bikes, mattress, microwave
- F044 - Angela Chadwick - fishing equipment, bedroom furniture, entertainment center

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- 1103 - Net Lawrence - mattress, boxes, cabinet, refrigerator, table, tool box, TV
- 1108 - Alexandra Giron - baby crib, bags, boxes, sofa, microwave, TV
- 1118 - William Alcenius - box of videos, table, boxes
- 1134 - Jim Ferguson - bags, boxes, pictures, TV, furniture
- 148 - Milton Engel - bed frame, clothing, refrigerator, camping gear, guitar, bunk beds
- 206 - Kellie Williamson - microwave, boxes, computer, mattress, stereo
- 208 - Penny Hensley - sectional
- 213 - Teresa Mihalic - boxes
- 401 - Jason Kentworthy - mattress, dresser, microwave, lamp, TV
- 404 - Jennie Dominguez - mattress, boxes, monitor, power scooter, tool boxes
- 623 - Eric Johnson - boxes, tables, nightstand
- 650 - Karen Kazik - mattress, boxes, lamp, microwave, table, totes
- 656 - Joseph Minni - bed frame, mattress, boxes, ladder, lamp, microwave, recliner
- 809 - Lorri Schoelles - sofa, dryer, entertainment center, washer, lamp
- 835 - James Tanner Jr. - clothing, sofa, stereo, TV, vacuum, dinette set
- 941 - Jamie Edwards Lopez - mattress, boxes, speakers, end table

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WESTLAND Observer

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Franklin band caps season at Grand Nationals event

BY DIANE HANSON
CORRESPONDENT

The Livonia Franklin High School Marching Band ended their successful competition season Nov. 11 with the performance of a 10-minute program, "Scheherazade," at the Bands of America Grand National Championships in the Indianapolis RCA Dome.

"I'm very proud of these kids," said a smiling Kristi Jasin, director of bands at Franklin, of her 68 marchers. "They've worked hard this season as all the bands do that come to Bands of America. They've done a very nice job on a very tough show. There is a lot of high demand physically and musically and they handled it very well. They deserve all the credit in the world."

The Franklin band joined 90 other top bands from 25 states across the country for the three-day spectacular of amazing music, marching, dance and showmanship, culminating in the 12 highest-scoring bands performing in the Saturday evening finals show.

Only three of the 10 bands from Michigan advanced to the semi-finals round: Plymouth-Canton, Muskegon Reeths-Puffer and Jenison. Plymouth-Canton was the only Michigan band among the 12 highest-scoring finalist bands competing in the Saturday nighttime show, ending up with ninth place. First place went to Indiana's Carmel High School.

Even though Franklin didn't make the final cut, they marched off with some very valuable experiences.

"We get so much out of coming down here," said Jasin. "We get to see groups from all over the country. You can't buy that kind of exposure. It gets the kids fired up so they can see possibilities of what can happen in the future with our group."

L. Scott McCormick, president and CEO of Bands of America, couldn't agree more. "The kids that are here that don't advance to semi-finals or finals may have gained the most out of the weekend," he said. "That's something the students are keenly aware of. 'It's so cool because we don't



Cassie Haupt on piccolo (left), clarinetist Rachael Riesen, flutist Kelly Kile and Shelbe Caldwell on clarinet perform with the Franklin Marching Patriots at the Bands of America Grand National Championships in the Indianapolis RCA Dome Nov. 11.

PHOTOS BY DIANE HANSON



Timpani player Adrian Blasko keeps his eyes on the drum major for timing as color guard members Ashley Binder (left) and Alyssa Giroux weave through the band with their flags during Franklin's preliminary performance at the BOA Grand National Championships Nov. 11 in Indianapolis.

usually get to see these big bands and there are many bands here that are a lot bigger than us," said Rachel Woods, senior drum major. "It's so amazing to watch and see what they do and how it's different."

Said senior trumpeter Jade Rowley: "I like spending the week with my friends and seeing all the other bands." "It's just a great experience," added senior percussionist Kevin Jaksim.

House bill draws heat from school districts

BY TONY BRUSCATO
STAFF WRITER

As state Rep. Phil LaJoy, R-Canton Township, introduces a bill to increase state per-pupil funding for Plymouth-Canton Schools and five other districts in the state, neighboring school districts want to know why they aren't included in efforts to stave off the financial inequities of Proposal A.

LaJoy's House Bill 4828 would increase the state foundation grant by \$750 for school districts that are performing well academically and administratively, and surrounded on three sides by school districts that receive state funding that is at least \$1,000 more per pupil.

For Plymouth-Canton, that would mean about \$13 million in additional money for the general fund budget because it is surrounded by Livonia, Northville and Ann Arbor schools, all of which have state foundation grants more than \$1,000 above Plymouth-Canton's \$7,200.

However, some school administrators want to know why they are being left out.

"Everybody should get a change," said Wayne-Westland Superintendent Greg Baracy. "Phil LaJoy should be working on closing the gap between school districts, not introducing legislation that creates more of a divide between school districts."

"We lose 300 kids a year, that's \$2.5 million," added Baracy. "Where's the equity there?"

Livonia Superintendent Randy Liepa, whose district is faced with declining population and the closing of school buildings, believes any new legislation should carry more weight than just comparing academics, administrative costs and per-pupil allocations.

"Those districts with declining enrollment are paying a price, and I would hope they would be considered," said Liepa. "When enrollment starts to decline, it takes a while to reduce costs equal to revenue coming in."

"There are some lower funded school districts in metro Detroit - like Redford Union, Garden City and Wayne-Westland - that should also be given some consideration," added Liepa.

LaJoy said HB 4828, by no means, is a cure-all for Proposal A, but is a start in achieving equity for school districts across the state.

"Obviously, we have a problem in terms of the equity in funding," said LaJoy. "I know everybody wants to get more money, and that's something we should do. I personally believe we need to reduce the gap."

"Having said that, we have to start somewhere," he said. "We need to use this as a beginning. If you don't start somewhere, you never get anywhere."

LaJoy said he expects the House Education Committee to consider his bill within the first three months of next year. If moved forward, the bill would need 56 votes to get through the House.

The School Equity Caucus, which represents 250 school districts throughout the state, is seeking adequacy and equity in the funding of schools. Executive Director Richard Wilson said increasing school funding is "worthwhile and desirable," but LaJoy's bill isn't the answer.

"A lot of school districts throughout the state need a lot of help, and for us to go out and find a handful of districts that benefit... it's an approach that is not the most desirable," said Wilson. "I think its future passage in the House is highly problematical."

The Middle Cities Education Association speaks for urban school districts across the state, and executive director Ray Tellman, like most others, wants to see more districts involved in any tweaking of Proposal A.

"What has to happen is a more sympathetic approach, where there are no winners and losers," said Tellman. "Everybody needs to be treated more fairly, or you just end up pitting school districts against each other."

Plymouth-Canton Schools Board of Education Vice President Judy Mardigian said other school districts - including Wayne-Westland, Livonia and Northville - have seen some type of Proposal A funding adjustments in the past.

"This is just another of those solutions," said Mardigian. "It doesn't mean it (LaJoy's bill) should be the only way to address inequities, it just addresses one aspect of it. Hopefully, it's only one of many more to come."

Following the introduction of LaJoy's bill, State Rep. John Stewart, R-Plymouth Township, introduced legislation to increase per-pupil funding for Plymouth-Canton Schools by \$1,500.

"This is the beginning of the negotiation process for next year's K-12 budget, and I am hoping that the additional \$1,500 per student will improve the equity gap," said Stewart. "Education is a top priority. One of the most important things we can do for our children is to make sure they are getting a good education."

House Bill 5415 is also headed to the House Education Committee for consideration.

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HERO

FROM PAGE A1

"It tickled me a little bit that someone would think to nominate me," said Walling. "That's cool. Roland thinks I'm very much deserving of this. He told them, 'my wife deserves this because she did so much for me.' And here I'm being humble saying it was God's will."

The accident happened around 1:30 a.m. as they were returning from a party in Milford. Roland was driving his 1968 Camaro, when he was hit by a car in the intersection. The Camaro spun around and was struck a second time.

Elizabeth, who was following her husband in her red 1968 Camaro, watched in horror as her husband's car burst into flames as soon as it was hit. She stopped, grabbed a small fire extinguisher and rushed to help her husband.

She struggled to free her husband, who had been knocked unconscious by the initial impact, and even heeded the cries of onlookers to leave before the car exploded. But she only ran a few feet before going back to try one more time.

That extra effort and Roland regaining consciousness was enough to get him out and away from the car before it was engulfed in flames.

"Flames were coming from underneath his car," Elizabeth said after the ceremony. "I tried to run once to get away from the fire, but I only ran about three feet, when God

knocked me down. I fell down and God said, 'You're not down just yet. Get back up.'"

Township Supervisor Tom Yack showed off photographs of the car. One was a picture of the 1968 Camaro before the accident. Then there were three photos in which the car is unrecognizable.

"Witnesses said the vehicle exploded twice," Yack said, adding that he was proud to recognize her for "saving her husband from certain death."

"What Elizabeth did ... what can I say," said Roland. "She did what she set out to do. She's a strong-willed person, a determined person. I wouldn't have what I have without her."

It's been more than two months since the accident. The burns Elizabeth sustained on her face have healed nicely although the scars from the burns on her arms are still blood red. She was off work for a month before returning to her job at the Wayne Post Office.

For Roland, the recovery is slower. It was first thought he would be off work for six months, it now looks like it could be as long as a year. He struck his head in the initial crash and sustained a four-inch gash on his forehead that took 30 stitches to close.

He wakes "up with a pounding headache every day" and to date, the heaviest thing he has lifted is a broomstick in physical therapy. He doesn't "feel much better than the day it happened."

The accident has changed the Wallings. Elizabeth said it

"seems like we're on a first date all over again."

"I've found I'm more compassionate to people, more patient, so there's something good about what happened," she said. "It's not how long you live, it's the journey you took while living."

Roland agrees there's been a life change for them.

"Life has changed, it's more meaningful, more loving, more caring," said Roland. "We hug out daughters everyday. We enjoy every minute. Our moments together are cherished in a whole different way."

"We had fun before, but now we realize how much we have and how much we enjoy having fun."

Devoted Camaro enthusiasts, the Wallings are working on a new one. They had the car in the garage before the crash and had hoped to have it street worthy by spring. But that probably won't happen. Roland can only provide the expertise while good friend Karl Utley does the work.

"We'll definitely get back in another," said Elizabeth. "We've got to have his and hers Camaros."

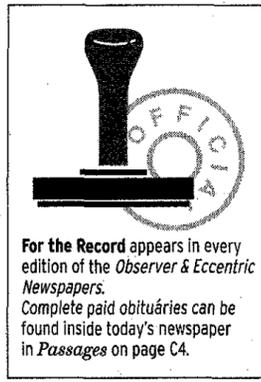
And somewhere down the road they'll fulfill a plan Roland has of buying a motor home, putting a Camaro on a trailer and going down Route 66.

For now, "she is my hero for life," he said.

Staff writer Carol Marshall contributed to this story.

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FOR THE RECORD



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in Passages on page C4.

- A**
Russell Armstrong
Armstrong, 76, of Brighton, formerly of Livonia, died Nov. 14.
- B**
Daniel C. Barker
Barker, 52, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 8.
Robert J. Badenhop
Badenhop, 27, of Munnith, died Nov. 16.
Richard Darrel "Richie" Bevins
Bevins, 28, of Clarkston, died Nov. 16.
Mildred E. Brogren
Brogren, 83, of Farmington Hills, died Nov. 16.
- C**
Rev. Leo M. Cornelli
Cornelli, 93, of Oxford, died Oct. 27.
- D**
Lawrence "Andy" Devine
Devine, 86, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 9.
- G**
Robert Gladfelter
Gladfelter, 90, of West Bloomfield, died Nov. 11.
Gail Ann Green
Green, 72, of Owosso, formerly of Northville, died Nov. 16.
- H**
William J. "Bill" Hall
Hall, 69, formerly of Birmingham, died Nov. 14.
Mildred E. Heiges
Heiges, 98, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 12.

- Raymond J. Hopkins Sr.**
Hopkins, 71, of Oakland, died Nov. 9.
- Carol Ann Lauri**
Lauri, 68, of Bloomfield Hills, died Nov. 5.
Ruth E. Leitch
Leitch, 93, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 9.
Helen Lekas
Lekas, 67, of Pontiac, died Nov. 6.
Pamela Loprete
Loprete, 56, died Nov. 6.
Arthur Townsend Lougee
Lougee, of Parsonsfield, Maine, died Nov. 6.
- M**
Shannon L. Malson

- Molson, 26, of Rochester Hills, died Oct. 23.**
Harry Carl Markle Jr.
Markle, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 12.
- Dorothy I. Pavlik**
Pavlik, 91, of Bloomfield Hills, died Oct. 26.
Evelyn M. Primeau
Primeau, 84, of Richmond, died Oct. 22.
- R**
Beatrice C. Rutkowski
Rutkowski, 89, of Macomb, formerly of Rochester Hills, died Oct. 27.
- S**
Helen M. Siewert
Siewert, 82, of Rochester, died Oct. 26.
- V**
Vera M. Valade
Valade, 88, of Farmington Hills, died Nov. 3.
Catherine A. Van Hartesveldt
Van Hartesveldt, 79, of Bloomfield Hills, died Nov. 15.
Louis C. Venegoni
Venegoni, 82, of Rochester Hills, died Nov. 14.
Carol J. Voytas
Voytas, 51, died Nov. 15.
- W**
Jessie Jane Williams
Williams, 84, of Rochester, died Nov. 6.
- Z**
Karen Zoltowski
Zoltowski, 58, died Nov. 14.

GOODFELLOWS

FROM PAGE A1

some Goodfellows due to the recent death of former volunteer Gerald "Jerry" Smith, who helped Goodfellows and other charitable organizations. "When other people declined to step in and help, he was the one who would always grab the ball and take over," said Larry Futrell, a longtime Goodfellows volunteer and retired Westland firefighter. "When the call came in, Jerry would step up to the plate," Futrell said. "I miss Jerry. He was always witty, and

he was always friendly." Rachwal recalled how Smith was involved in such activities as Jerry's Little People, which helped needy children year-round. "He did a lot of things for this community - not just Goodfellows," Rachwal said. Meanwhile, Rachwal advised families that may need help with Christmas gifts to pick up applications from the Dorsey Community Center, Westland City Hall or the Westland Chamber of Commerce. Help from Goodfellows isn't solely based on income. "We've helped families whose house burned before Christmas, or families that

suddenly had a job loss before the holidays," Rachwal said. Friday's fund drive will start at sunrise and continue until sunset. Anyone who wants to help is simply encouraged to show up at the VFW Harris-Kehrer Post 3323, at 1055 S. Wayne Road near Avondale. Volunteers also are needed to pack Christmas presents at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 16, at the Westland senior citizen Friendship Center, and to deliver them at 9 a.m. the following day. For more information, call (734) 722-5400 or visit the Goodfellows Web site at www.westlandgoodfellows.org. dclem@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

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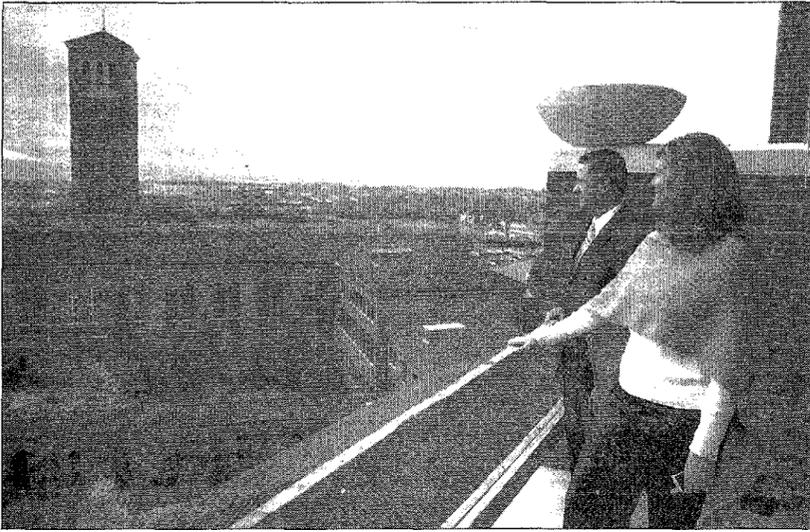
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PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The best view in Plymouth Township might be from a suite on the seventh floor of the new Inn at St. John's, scheduled to open in January.

Coming down 'Super' stretch

St. John's hotel project set to wrap in January

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

The new Inn at St. John's has already sold out for four nights of the week when the Super Bowl comes to town in February.

So it's a good thing the inn, being added to the St. John's Golf & Conference Center, is scheduled to open on time in mid-January. Workers are moving along on the plans for the seven-story, 118-room structure that will allow the center to service the residential needs of people using it for weddings and other gatherings.

"The hotel portion has always been in the master plan for the center," said St. John's general manager Paul Wegert. "There's a huge demand from a wedding standpoint for one-stop shopping, and there's also a big demand on the corporate side."

The property, a former seminary owned by the Archdiocese of Detroit, reopened in the late 1990s as a conference center. Developers back then hinted they'd eventually be putting a hotel on the property.

"We've been somewhat limited to local meetings and one-day events," said Ron Wilson, CEO of Hotel Investment Services Inc., the firm that runs the complex. "The hotel will allow for significant increase in business in both the corporate market and the social market."

Expanding its ability to host large conferences and weddings has been a big part of the game plan at St. John's. Next up on its to-do list is the opening of the Grande Ballroom, a converted gymnasium that will now be able to hold some 450 people.

Wegert said that adjustment alone will allow St. John's to



St. John's general manager Paul Wegert shows off the high-tech kitchen at the Inn at St. John's, which will allow hundreds of banquet guests to be served hot entrees.

expand its offerings. "That will certainly allow us to have weddings over 400 people," he said. "We've been turning that business away by the week."

The hotel is also going to include a new 80-seat restaurant, Five, which St. John's officials say "makes a statement with its inspired, innovative and eclectic American cuisine," crafted by new executive chef Tom MacKinnon, best known for MacKinnon's restaurant in Northville.

The restaurant will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and features a martini lounge.

The 118 rooms will range from deluxe guest rooms to several suite options, including a two-story Presidential suite option that puts the sleeping quarters upstairs. All the rooms will offer wired and wireless Internet capabilities.

"We really wanted to cater to the business class," said Tawnya Johnson, St. John's director of sales and catering. bkadrich@hometownlife.com | (734) 459-2700

ACHIEVERS

Two seniors at Wayne Memorial High School have qualified as finalists in the 49th annual Michigan Mathematics Prize competition.

Bruce Brewer and Mengyu, both seniors, are among the top 1,000 students from among 10,000 students in Part I of the Michigan Mathematics Prize competition. Part I was a multiple choice exam with 40 problems given at 250 high schools throughout Michigan.

The finalists will compete in Part II on Dec. 7. The exam consists of five problems the student must provide written explanations and solve the proofs.

The students with the top 100 scores on both parts will be invited to an Awards Day at Delta College in February. The top 50 will be presented with scholarships from \$500 for bronze awards to \$2,600 for the first-place gold medalist.

Tina Visingardi, the daughter of Joseph and Shirley Visingardi of Westland, recently received a master of science degree in management from Thomas Edison State College in Trenton, N.J.

Visingardi, a resident of Colts Neck, N.J., is president of Vision Management Consulting in Holmdel, N.J.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

I wanna go home

She was cold, she was hungry, but she has a full tummy and a warm place to stay while employees at the Observer Newspapers look for her owners. This black female dog with graying on her muzzle and paws was seen wandering in the Wayne-Plymouth Road area and eventually found her way to the Observer Newspapers building at Schoolcraft and Levan where the employees have brought her in from the cold. If this is your pooch, call us at (734) 953-2214.



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In Lansing

State Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland (third from right) recently meet with William D. Ford Career Technical Center students Ben Weier (from left) and Marissa Williams, teacher Zachary MacLean and students Oriana Davis and Alex Scott at the State Capitol Building. MacLean and the students were in Lansing for the fifth annual AT&T/MACUL Student Technology Showcase which gives elected officials an opportunity to see how technology is being used in the classroom to enhance student achievement.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

It's been 142 years since Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the Civil War, proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving holiday, to be celebrated on the last Thursday of November (despite centuries of Pilgrim custom which generally observed the feast in October).

Even after all that time, we're still looking for new ways to prepare the traditional meal. If you're stumped on recipes for dressings and pies, give thanks for the library!

Those with plenty of moxie may want to peruse the Thanksgiving 101 Menu currently available at <http://www.marthastewart.com>. The more ambitious among you might attempt Chef Paul Prudhomme's extravagant main dish, the Turducken: a chicken stuffed in a duck, which is in turn stuffed in a turkey (find the details at <http://www.gumbopages.com/food/poultry/turducken.html>). The recipe takes 12 hours to prepare, so get started early.

Speaking of turkey, *The Cook's Illustrated Complete Book of Poultry* (641.665 Coo) suggests roasting it without the bread-based stuffing inside:

"Part of the problem is that stuffing must reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees to be considered safe (carbohydrates, such as bread,

provide a better medium for bacterial growth than do proteins, such as meat). Since the temperature of stuffing often lags behind the bird, the USDA recommends waiting until thigh meat reaches 180 degrees."

But go much above 160 degrees and you end up with a dry turkey. *Cook's Illustrated* assures us that as long as you don't cook the stuffing in the bird, you can safely kill salmonella at 160 degrees and still maintain a moist turkey.

"The final word on poultry safety is this: As long as your thermometer reaches 160 degrees, all unstuffed meat (including turkey) should be bacteria free."

There are plenty of full menus offered in the 641.568s (Cooking for special occasions in the Dewey Decimal System). Try *Bon Appétit's Holidays* (641.568 Bon), Lorenz Books's *The Perfect Thanksgiving Book* (641.568 Per), Williams-Sonoma's *Thanksgiving: Festive Recipes for the Holiday Table* (641.568 Kid), or Diane Morgan's *The Thanksgiving Table: Recipes and Ideas to Create Your Own Holiday Tradition*. Her Italian sausage, mushroom and sage stuffing (p. 87) looks especially enticing.

"Look in your area for artisan sausage makers," she suggests. Indeed!

Involve your children in preparing

the meal, and they'll develop their own love of the holiday tradition. *Thanksgiving Fun: A Bountiful Harvest of Crafts, Recipes and Games* (J 745.59 Mur) by Beth Murray or *Happy Thanksgiving!* (J 394.264 Bar) by Carol Barkin and Elizabeth James can both give you plenty of ideas that will bring your kids to the table.

Don't resort to the Snoopy menu from *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving* (J VIDEO FIC Charlie Brown): toast and popcorn.

Call the library before the relatives start arriving.

Online Health Topics: 7 p.m. Nov. 21. Learn how to locate accurate, timely and objective health information using the Internet and electronic databases. Minimum Internet knowledge is recommended.

Harry Potter and the Magic of Science: 1:30-2:30 or 3-4 p.m. Nov. 26. Ages 7 and up, limit 24 per session. Have fun with Harry Potter activities and crafts. Experience cool science "potions" by a special guest chemist. You can come dressed as a character. Register at the Children's Desk by Nov. 23.

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Leader Dogs for the Blind, a non-profit organization that has been providing guide dogs free of charge to blind and visually impaired individuals since 1939, is selling "Save My Pet" window decals at Pet Supplies "Plus" stores.

The stickers increase a pet's chances of being rescued in the event of a fire, emergency or natural disaster.

In the face of danger, pets instinctively flee and hide, making it more difficult for emergency workers to rescue them. This was evident recently in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. By letting rescue workers know that a pet is

inside, the window decals increase an animal's chances of being saved, if this can be done without undue risk to the emergency crew.

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Legacy Initiative threatens sense of pride for many across the district

In the 20-plus years I've lived here, I've become keenly aware that Livonians are proud. We're proud of our parks, our city services and our community spirit. We're really proud of the education of the Livonia Public Schools.

Home listings boast Livonia schools. Parents join PTAs like nowhere else in the state. The teachers union carries a ton of clout because so many teachers choose to live here. And candidates for Livonia City Council - which has nothing to do with the schools - even tout the quality of the district.

All that pride is being shaken as people try to come to grips with this massive Legacy Initiative plan that seems to have the support of many of the school board members and officials, and a lot of opposition across the community.

Even opponents of the proposal understand that something needs to be done; most are willing to close neighborhood schools, once another big bragging point. Former school board member Larry Naser was the only one a few short years ago preaching that the district needed to close more elementary schools, rather than cut program and staff. Now the tide has turned to his side.

People realize we're an aging community with shrinking numbers of school kids. The district projects losing another 1,064 students in the next three years. At the current state funding, that means losing more than \$8.8 million over those three years. This proposal would cover about \$5.7 million of that. The remaining \$3 million of lost revenue plus the ever-growing costs of employee retirement and health care mean that even more cuts may indeed be needed when budget time rolls back around.

This Legacy Initiative, known as the K-4 proposal based on the

configuration of the elementary schools, was one of three seriously studied by the Demographics Committee. The others are commonly called K-5 and K-6. Each has its drawbacks. But this committee spent the time to solicit input, set firm guidelines, and come up with a creative solution with some positive aspects built right in.

This K-4 plan may sound like the best solution, but only if you agree with the committee on the value of those positives - the importance of expanding specials for grades 5-6 and the importance of keeping student communities together by not shifting most of the school attendance boundaries.

Many parents question the value of both of those issues. They look, for instance, at a foreign language class once a week for 20 weeks and ask, is that really worth it? There's more class time for instrumental music or technology education, but that question remains, especially in light of what the kids get in return - long bus rides and upper elementary schools with 900 students in them. Some would also question the real value of keeping those school communities together compared to such a massive overhaul.

It seemed pretty clear how some of the school board members felt this past Monday. They followed up Supt. Randy Liepa's outline of the entire issue - from concept to proposal to changes - by asking questions to which they already knew the answers. Many in the audience grumbled at the obvious effort to repeat positive points of the K-4 proposal. One listener wondered aloud if board members were purposefully trying to antagonize the crowd.

In the days or weeks following the upcoming public hearing, set for 7 p.m. Monday at Church Hill High, board members will have a tough job. They must do something, and they must decide what they think is best for the students. They also must factor in what's best for the community.

People don't like change, that's a given. Parents' arguments of

inconvenience or misplaced fears aren't going to carry much weight. As for those 45-minute bus rides, one parent whose child catches two buses to get to Webster says headphones and a book work well for his fifth-grader on a long ride.

However, this K-4 plan raises tough questions. How will that many kids fit in an upper elementary school and how would it work? Does all this busing really make sense and can the district really keep the rides to 45 minutes? What about plans for selling the Bryant property or other district land?

Parents have valid concerns. They feel that they should have been given more warning; that more of them should have been sought out and surveyed; that they should have more of a say and more time to look at the three plans; and that saving only \$1.9 million a year (the current best-guess estimate) shouldn't cause this much pain and aggravation.

Frankly, the K-6 model - closing six school buildings and not creating upper elementary schools - sounds less disruptive, especially for many parents. It keeps sixth-graders in elementaries, busing costs are lower and it saves a lot more money, especially if the special classes (foreign language, music, etc.) aren't brought back for grades 5-6. However, teachers believe the district's sixth-graders are being stifled in elementary schools and they see the need for returning those special classes. Another drawback: the K-6 plan would require redrawing almost all the attendance boundaries.

In a sense, the Legacy Initiative is a radical plan and this really isn't a radical community.

Even with its drawbacks, going with the K-6 model, or delaying things and using the community to help come up with some variation, might actually be the most palatable solution, a way to keep the community proud of its district.

Dave Varga is editor of the Livonia Observer. He can be reached at dvarga@hometownlife.com

There are no likely winners in the Cox vs. Fieger debacle

What a mess. That's the only way to describe the political circus enveloping state Attorney General Mike Cox and flamboyant Southfield attorney Geoffrey Fieger.

And while Fieger and Cox remain the center of the maelstrom, expect a few more prominent politicians to be sucked into the eye of the storm.

By the time this whole sordid affair has worked its way through the legal system, the biggest loser in the political arena likely could be the state Republican Party, which runs the risk of having the political future of three of its rising stars seriously damaged.

The general feeling among area politicians is Cox's political future is toast. Cox, who held a press conference to tell the world he was unfaithful to his wife as part of his accusations that Fieger was trying to blackmail him to drop an investigation against the bombastic attorney, can forget about being governor one day, and may not even survive the rest of his first term as attorney general.

Given his flair for the dramatic, I am surprised Fieger has not suggested that Cox prosecute himself for adultery, which technically is still a crime in the state of Michigan.

Fieger still faces potential criminal charges over his financing of a campaign to unseat a state Supreme Court justice. And even though no charges were brought in the alleged blackmail scheme, he still could face disciplinary action by the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board.

But anyone who has followed Fieger's career knows he won't let Cox - who he has announced he will challenge in next year's election - off the hook with just political egg on his face. You can bet that Fieger will spend a considerable amount of his political and financial capital in an effort to force Cox to resign in disgrace.

Which brings us to Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorcyca. It was Gorcyca who held his own press conference to announce that, while he was sure that Fieger and his sidekick, Lee O'Brien, did in fact conspire to blackmail Cox into dropping his investigation of Fieger, there was not sufficient evidence to actually bring charges.

I found it a bit odd that Gorcyca could look into the television cameras and so confidently proclaim that Fieger was the horrible person that Cox claimed, but that his office just couldn't prove it.

He also warned Fieger he was not out of the woods yet, saying he had no reason to gloat. In my business, we don't name a sus-

pect until that person is formally charged with a crime, for fear of facing a big fat libel suit. Something tells me that Fieger still may have something to say regarding Gorcyca's behavior and accusations.

It has been suggested that Gorcyca, who himself has aspirations of higher political office, wanted no part of a battle with Fieger, not even to save the hide of fellow Republican Cox. And with Cox out of the picture, the Republican Party would need someone else to run for attorney general next year, say an ambitious county prosecutor, for example.

One person who has not been heard from in this saga is Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard. It was Bouchard's office that investigated Cox's allegations against Fieger.

Typically, when an investigation is concluded the law enforcement agency presents its findings to the prosecutor with a recommendation of what charges, if any, should be brought. We don't know what charges, if any, were recommended nor how the sheriff felt about Gorcyca's decision not to bring charges.

Bouchard, who spent the early part of the week up north hunting and far away from the mess, faces his own uphill battle in his campaign for U.S. Senate.

The sheriff put his fellow Oakland County Republicans in a tough spot by announcing he was running, then pulled out of the race, only to change his mind again and re-enter the campaign after many of his friends had endorsed the Rev. Keith Butler for the seat.

If for some reason the sheriff department's investigation is called into question as to why charges against Fieger were not brought, it certainly will not help Bouchard's efforts to unseat U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, and could further fracture the Republican Party.

The next likely chapter in this soap opera is whether a special prosecutor will be appointed to complete the investigation into whether Fieger violated campaign finance laws by anonymously bankrolling an ad campaign aimed at defeating state Supreme Court Justice Stephen Markman in 2004.

Cox, it seems, would be hard-pressed to argue his office can remain impartial in the case, given all that has transpired in the past couple of weeks. And the attorney general might be happy to distance himself from Fieger and the case now that the matter has blown up in his face.

If the heat gets turned up on Fieger, it's a pretty good bet he won't go down without another fight, and this time he likely will have more than just Cox in his sights.

Joe Bauman is managing editor for the *Eccentric Newspapers*. He welcomes feedback at (248) 901-2563 or e-mail him at jbauman@hometownlife.com.



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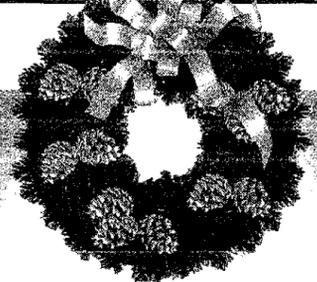
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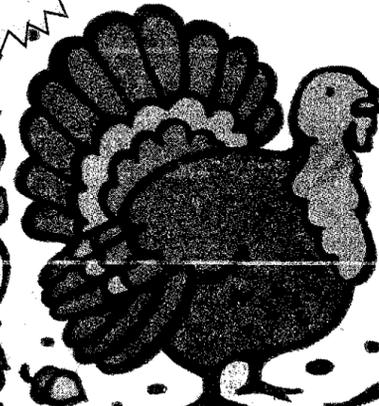


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