

Burgers rule the grill

TASTE, B5



Tumbled pavers strike down decks - AT HOME, SECTION C

They got the beat

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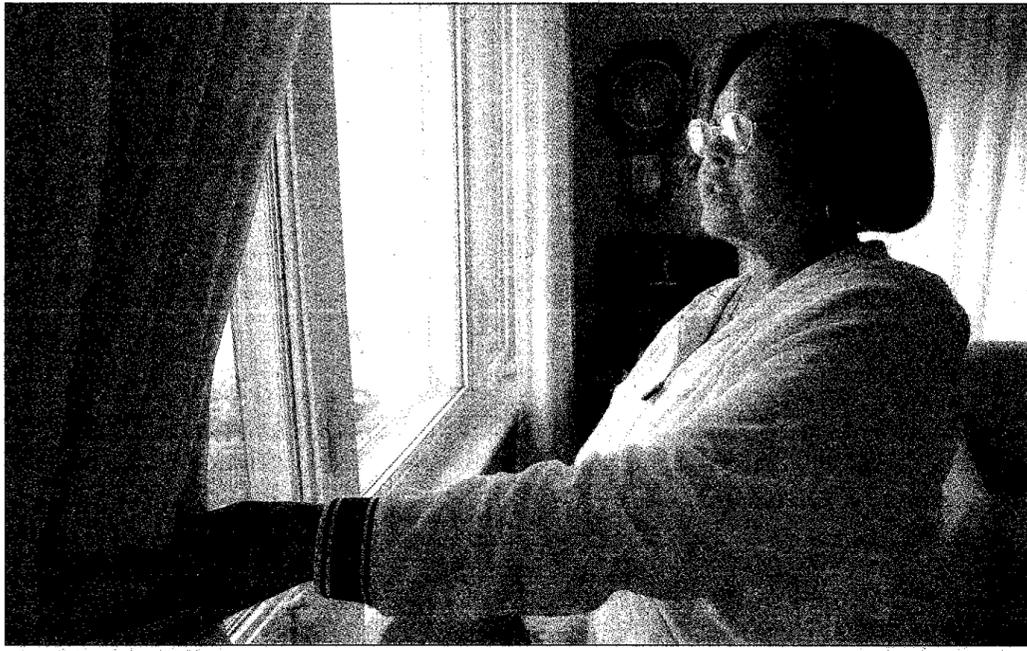
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"My life is great, now. I just thank God, because this has been a true blessing to me."

Sharon Anderson

Peace and quiet



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elnora Ford explains how the three-pane windows of her house on Eton help keep out noise from Detroit Metro Airport. She lives in the house built by her late father in 1951, when Eton was a dirt road.

Bill proposes redistricting commission

BY DAN MEISLER
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

"The Legislature picks voters instead of voters picking their elected officials." That's the main reason state Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, wants to change the way political boundaries are drawn for state lawmakers and members of the U.S. House from Michigan.

Anderson says the current system, in which the political party in power redraws the districts every 10 years based on U.S. Census Bureau data, allows for partisanship to alienate many voters. That's because the districts are drawn to favor a certain party, so that many elections are not competitive.

Anderson's proposal, which he introduced last Thursday, would amend the Michigan Constitution and create an independent, nine-member commission to draw the boundaries every year. The result, he said, will be more closely contested elections.

'ENGAGE VOTERS'

"It will engage voters more because they realize their votes mean more," Anderson said. "We shouldn't have as many cases of Democratic or Republican dis-

PLEASE SEE REDISTRICTING, A8

Home repairs turn down volume on airport noise

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Grandmother Sharon Anderson used to brace herself when airplanes flew over her home on Westland's southeast side. "It seemed like I could count the people on the plane," she said. "The noise was so bad that it busted the seals inside my windows. I couldn't have a decent phone conversation."

Neighbor Elnora Ford, 65, recalls how the noise from Detroit Metro Airport worsened the longer she lived in the house that her late father built in 1951 on Eton, then a dirt road.

"We just didn't make phone calls between 6 and 8 in the evening," she said. "It sounded like the planes were going to land on top of the house."

Anderson and Ford, who are next-door neighbors and friends, have shared more than the frustration of living under the flight path of one of the nation's busiest airports.

They have benefited from an \$80 million Wayne County Airport Authority program that is paying for noise-reduction work on 2,400 homes in Westland, Romulus, Taylor, Dearborn Heights and Huron Township.

Anderson, Ford and other homeowners pay nothing. The authority is using Federal Aviation Administration dollars

PLEASE SEE QUIET, A6



Sharon Anderson opens the new door of her home on Eton, after the house received major renovations to reduce noise from airplanes. 'I can actually have a decent phone conversation now,' she said.

Police seek leads in Burger King robbery

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland police are continuing to seek leads that could help them solve an armed robbery that happened early Sunday at the Burger King restaurant at Middlebelt and Ann Arbor Trail.

Authorities are asking anyone with information to call the Westland Police Department at (734) 722-9600.

Also, Burger King is offering a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to the gunman's arrest, police Sgt. John Hoak said.

The incident happened about 1:45 a.m. Sunday when a lone gunman made his way into the restaurant on the city's northeast side.

No shots were fired. No one was injured. "The suspect confronted employees of the location and robbed them at gunpoint," Hoak said in a police department memo.

The suspect was brandishing what employees described as a blue steel handgun. He escaped with an undisclosed amount of money.

"The suspect ordered the four occupants of the location into the walk-in cooler and then fled on foot," Hoak said in his memo. "The employees remained in the cooler for several minutes before exiting and calling the police."

The gunman was described as a black male, 20-25 years old, 150-175 pounds. Descriptions of his height ranged from 5-foot-11 to 6-foot-3.

He wore a dark hooded sweatshirt with yellow lettering on the front, black pants, black Nike shoes, and a blue or black bandana.

Police Chief Daniel Pfannes confirmed that officers brought in a police dog to try to track down the suspect. The dog led officers to a nearby subdivision but then lost the gunman's scent.

"It's our belief that he escaped the area in a car," Pfannes said.

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Employee faces hearing on embezzlement charge

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

An Ypsilanti woman faces a court hearing amid accusations she embezzled \$19,300 while working for Lover's Lane — a Westland-based company specializing in lingerie and sex toys.

Fikisha Anjel Taylor, 31, was employed as a human resources assistant when she became under suspicion of embezzling money from Lover's Lane corporate headquarters on Ford Road, east of Hix, police Sgt. David Heater

said. Taylor, accused of taking money from Feb. 5 through April 22, faces a June 2 hearing in Westland District Court that will determine whether she should stand trial.

She could face penalties ranging up to five years in prison, if convicted of embezzling between \$1,000 and \$20,000.

She is free on a \$10,000 personal bond as she awaits her hearing.

Taylor's defense attorney couldn't be reached for comment.

Taylor started her job in

January and was in charge of payroll, Heater said.

She is accused of giving herself thousands of dollars in bonuses and having them deposited directly into her bank account, he said.

A human resources employee ultimately noticed discrepancies in financial statements, leading to an investigation of the missing money, Heater said.

Taylor, who is married and has a 7-year-old daughter, faces a court hearing after police executed a search warrant at her

Ypsilanti home April 26, Heater said.

Authorities seized some of her bank statements. She was arraigned May 16.

"She has no criminal history," Heater said.

Taylor could face five years in prison if convicted, but her penalties could have doubled to 10 years behind bars if she had been charged with embezzling more than \$20,000 — or just \$700 more.

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Coming Sunday on the PINK page

Minx mixes it up with DJ style





PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

With a Westland fire truck as the backdrop, seniors head out on the fitness walk to Central City Park and back to the Friendship Center.

Seniors celebrate day by getting fit

An estimated 225-250 senior citizens turned out Friday for Westland's celebration of National Senior Health and Fitness Day.

A smaller crowd made a two-mile trek from the senior citizen Friendship Center to Central City Park and back, while others exercised inside the building.

"The weather was absolutely beautiful," center Director Peggy Ellenwood said. "The sun was shining, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. It was a glorious morning, and it felt good to be outside."

Thirty vendors visited the Friendship Center, offering seniors a wide range of services.

St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia tested seniors for bone density.

"One senior had never had her bone density checked. She was so relieved to find out that she didn't have osteoporosis," Ellenwood said. "This is such an important test for aging people, especially women."

Westland Convalescent Center sponsored blood pressure checks for seniors and also donated a cross-cutter paper shredder as a door prize - one of many given away.

The donation prompted Ellenwood to suggest that friends and family members consider a paper shredder as a gift to seniors - for whatever occasion - to help protect them from identity theft.

Other items raffled off included grocery store gift



John Kozieski has the blood pressure of a 20-year-old, according to Millie Camilleri, a licensed practical nurse from Westland Convalescent Center.

Thirty vendors visited the Friendship Center, offering seniors a wide range of services.

certificates, restaurant certificates and lottery tickets.

"A lot of people told me that this was the best year yet" for the local observance of National Senior Health and Fitness Day, Ellenwood said. "Every year it just gets better."



Jan Olweean reaches up during a Jazercise class offered as part of the fitness observance.

Renovations spruce up mall; Parisian to pamper Dads

SPACE AVAILABLE

Westland residents have probably noticed the improvements made recently to a plaza at the corner of Merriman and Palmer roads. Owners of a strip mall which is home to the Sak N' Save grocery store, at 1647 Merriman, and a Dollar General store recently expanded the building and improved its surroundings with fresh landscaping.

Najah Gasso, a Keego Harbor resident, owns Merriman Inc. in Southfield and the strip mall is one of his properties.

"We've owned it for six years," he said. "We've always had good tenants."

When the CVS Pharmacy moved out of the plaza about four years ago, Gasso brought in Dollar General and the Smoker's Shop, which have kept business moving.

About eight months ago, he decided to begin work on the property. He has added onto the existing buildings, put up a brick wall and landscaped the area. Since then, a new tenant - Allied Cash - has opened for business.

Out of the 34,000 square feet in the plaza, there is still some available for prospective business owners. Gasso said he has 3,200 square feet open, which can be used in whole, or divided into two separate spaces.

Gasso said his property has "lots of frontage and good exposure." It's a neighborhood plaza with a diverse group of businesses, services and restaurants.

"The renovation looks very nice," he said. "All the tenants are pretty happy. (The businesses) employ a lot of people."

For more information on the space still available, contact Bob Richardson at (248) 855-1221.

DAD'S DAY AT THE MALL

Parisian at Laurel Park Place in Livonia will celebrate Father's Day throughout the store next month. Bring Dad into Parisian between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 11, to enjoy spa treatments by



Zihr, or sample a wide variety of men's fragrances, or to enjoy special events in the men's department featuring designers Tommy Bahama, Polo and Claiborne.

Shoppers who bring in an old tie to donate can purchase a new one at 20 percent off. This will exclude Robert Talbot ties, but the offer is available June 10-12.

The family-friendly shopping event set for June 11 will also include art stations where children can decorate an original Father's Day card. And youngsters under 12 will receive a free gift from Parisian when making Father's Day purchases.

Popcorn and appetizers from Laurel Park's Max & Erma's Restaurant will be available throughout the day.

Make sure Dad registers to win one of the many prizes available on Father's Day. Those prizes include gift certificates for the following: St. Johns Golf Course in Plymouth; Oasis Golf Center driving range in Plymouth; Mitchell's Fish Market in Livonia; Drakeshire Lanes in Farmington Hills; Northville Car Wash and Top of the Cone in Plymouth; Northville Oil Change in Plymouth.

Dad's interested in making an appointment for the Zihr spa, available between 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on June 11, should reserve a space by calling (734) 953-7503. Parisian is located at 17625 Newburgh Road just north of Six Mile in Livonia. For more information, call (734) 953-7500.

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.

DEATHS

Maria Mehmetaj, 92, of Birmingham, died May 22. Richard W. (Dick) Mozier, 79, of Livonia, died May 21.

R Sister Mary Judith Rapin, RSM, 87, of Farmington Hills, died May 23. Alma M. Riess, 86, of South Lyon, died May 31.



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Sports in Passages on page C11.

BUDGET HEARING NOTICE

Academy of Westland, will be holding its annual budget hearing on June 2, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. The location will be at Charter School Administration Services, 20755 Greenfield Road, Suite 400, Southfield, MI 48075. The budget is available for public inspection at Academy of Westland, 300 Henry Ruff Road, Westland, MI 48186. The meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

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Celebration Day

MHS dedicates new state-of-the-art Westland center

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

An afternoon downpour couldn't dampen the enthusiasm as supporters of the Michigan Humane Society gathered in Westland Sunday to dedicate its new Berman Center for Animal Care.

The new state-of-the-art facility has been named after Bill and Madge Berman of Franklin, longtime MHS supporters and board members who donated \$750,000 to the project.

Calling it a work of love, Madge said they made up their minds to do it during a conversation one evening.

"We thought what a wonderful thing to do, why wait until you're dead," she said. "This place (the old shelter) was a wreck and now we have this beautiful example of the most efficient way to care for animals. I think the surgical suite is as good as Beaumont's."

"It's a huge change," said Michelle Goff, president of the MHS Board of Directors. "The Westland shelter was functional but not adequate and now we have this amazing addition to our resources and our ability to meet the needs of the animals."

According to Goff, the society had wanted to build the new shelter for many years and finally decided to go ahead with it even though it had only raised about half of the \$6.9 million needed.



Stephanie (from left), Brooke, Jeff, Brittney and Brandi Starling of West Bloomfield play with the cats in the 'Cat Village' during a tour of the facility.

"It was a big step forward in terms of need," she said.

Bob Weiland, chairman of the board, said the expansion started more than 20 years ago when "we had a belief, a thought and a concept. It's an incredible facility."

The original Westland shelter was built in 1971 and expanded in 1985. The new center faces Newburgh just south of Marquette. It triples the sheltering and adoption capacity to 315 animals. Cats ready for adoption live in con-

dos where they are able to socialize with other cats. They also have a room with floor-to-ceiling windows to watch what's going on outside and get used to such house amenities as furniture.

Rather than being stuck in metal cages, the dogs now have large rooms with glass doors and a raised sleeping area. There are more get acquainted rooms and a large classroom for pet education.

The center has 15 heating and cooling zones for disease

prevention and flooring that goes several inches up the walls. Poured as a liquid, it provides unique maintenance in terms of disease prevention, said Bob Scraff, chairman of the building and facilities committee.

"It's user friendly for animals, the public and the employees," he said.

"We can see more clients and it gives us the potential to educate more people and a greater potential to reach more people," added Felecia



Lori Pyle of Garden City plays with CoCo a Shar Pei/Husky mix while touring the Berman Center Sunday.

Paladino, a veterinary technician taking guests on a tour through the clinic.

Paladino pointed out the pluses of the expanded treatment area with more hookups for clippers and anesthesia, eight examination rooms and four new surgery suites with tables designed to maintain an animal's temperature during an operation.

"I love it, doesn't it make you want to smile?" she said.

Cal Morgan, MHS executive director, called Celebration Day "a historic day in the history of the Michigan Humane Society."

"We know we can build a beautiful building, but it is merely a tool," he said. "It is a significant platform to take our goal of 100 percent adoption to the next level. Our goal is that by 2010 every animal that comes in here will have a future in life."

Among those he thanked for helping with the facility was the city of Westland and the center's neighbors.

"You never know how they're going to react when you put an animal shelter in their back yard and they

reacted wonderfully," he said.

Westland Mayor Sandra Ciciirelli was among officials at the ceremony and presented Morgan with a key to the city and a joint mayoral-council proclamation declaring Sunday as MHS Celebration Day.

"We're proud this is here in Westland," she said. "And I'm very excited on a personal level. Every dog I've owned has come from the Michigan Humane Society and all of my kids' dogs are from here."

With the center up and running, the MHS focus now turns to raising the remaining \$3.6 million. Naming opportunities within the building are available, starting as low as \$5,000 for landscape sponsors up to \$300,000 for the veterinary medical center sponsorship.

Brick pavers also are being sold for \$100 to \$1,000 for the Joan Rodecker Entrance Plaza. Once the plaza is done, the remaining pavers will be placed on the grounds of the Westland campus.

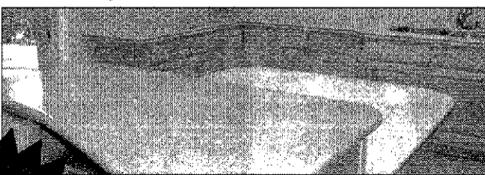
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Canton leads in building permits

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

New condominium and apartment developments in Canton helped make Canton Township a leader last year in total number of building permits issued in Wayne County.

Wayne County led the seven-county Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' region with 5,858 permits issued.

In Wayne County, Canton led the way with 1,067 new residential building permits in 2004, according to the SEMCOG's annual report, which documents new residential construction in the southeast region by community.

"It sounds so big I have a hard time seeing where it all is," said Canton Township Supervisor Tom Yack, adding that the new projects are spread throughout the township. "This last year we've seen a tremendous number of apartments and condos."

Two-thirds of the new residential development in Canton was in condominium form, many along the Geddes Road corridor. Multiple-family permits totaled 600 in 2004. The Uptown apartment development in Cherry Hill Village contributed 150 units.

"They're being well received in Canton," Yack said of the new homes.

Looking at this year, it looks as though single-family homes will be the big contributor to new building permits.

"It's hard to tell what this year will bring," Yack said. "Probably more single-family homes."

Yack said lower interest rates, Canton's central location, wide choices of housing stock and recreation programs are just some of the reasons it has been the place to build.

The school district is apparently another attractive factor, with a majority of Canton children attending Plymouth-Canton schools. This means school officials need to continually keep their eyes open.

"We're watching all these developments and our question is when will these be done and where do we place the children once they're done," said Jim Ryan, Plymouth-Canton superintendent.

Each new student coming into the district generates \$7,025 in per-pupil funding.

Plans are in the works to build a new elementary school as part of a \$109 million school bond passed last year. Groundbreaking has already taken place at the new site, on

Cherry Hill at Denton.

Here is a roundup of some of SEMCOG's data:

In Southeast Michigan last year, 25,362 new residential permits were issued, the largest number since 1998. This marked an 8 percent increase over 2003 figures.

Oakland County was close behind Wayne County for the second time in two years, with 6,434 new units.

Macomb County was third with 5,401 units. Wayne County housing activity represented 25 percent of all new housing within the seven-county regions.

Within the region, single-family homes accounted for 60 percent of new units, townhouses and condominiums 27 percent and multi-family units 10 percent. In Wayne County, those figures were 52 percent, 32 percent and 14 percent respectively.

Macomb Township in Macomb County (1,086 units) and Canton Township in Wayne County (1,067 units) were the top two communities for total units permitted. The city of Detroit was third for the second consecutive year with 925 new units. Detroit was also the region's leader in demolitions with 2,662 or 66 percent of the region's total.

Program targets auto theft

Officers and investigators from the Wayne County Sheriff's Office and 30 other police agencies throughout Metro Detroit have launched a fight against auto theft. Last week, more than 200 officers have been rounding up dozens of suspected car thieves, gathering intelligence and raiding suspected chop shops, Sheriff Warren Evans said Friday.

The four-day sweep, called Operation ACTION (Arresting Car Thieves In Our Neighborhoods), is part of a new effort to disrupt the local auto theft industry, which has caused a recent spike in reported stolen

cars in the area. According to the Auto Theft Prevention Authority of Michigan, car thefts in 2004 were up 31 percent in Macomb County, 23 percent in Oakland and 10 percent in Wayne.

Evans has teamed up with officials from Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties, as well as the Detroit Police and other Wayne County police departments for a massive arrest and intelligence-gathering sweep. During the first three days of the operation, officers picked up 113 suspects who had active warrants for their arrest, recovered 30 stolen vehicles and executed four search warrants.

Rather than just cart suspects directly to jail, however, officers took them to debriefing centers located throughout the region. While there, the suspects were questioned by auto theft investigators and assistant prosecutors who often were successful in obtaining additional information regarding the location of stolen vehicles, other car thieves and active chop shops.

Operation ACTION is one component to a much larger effort to revolutionize how the law enforcement community, especially in Wayne County, deal with car thieves.

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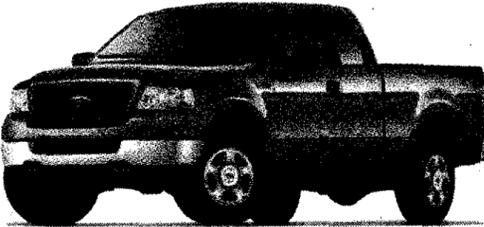
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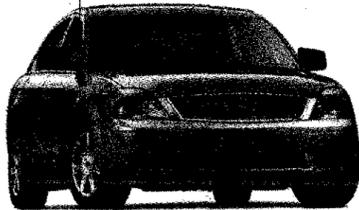


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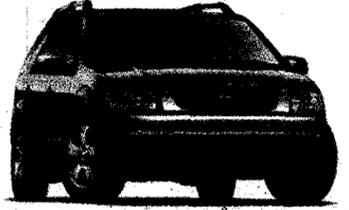


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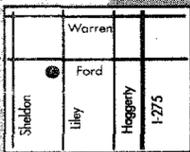
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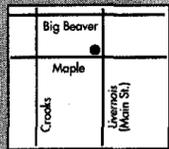
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Her prom memories will surely stick

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Chances are no one else at Franklin High School's Senior Prom will have a dress quite like the one Theresa Bailey plans to wear Thursday night.

She not only hand-made the dress, she constructed this one-of-a-kind creation completely out of duct tape. While it's currently on display at the Livonia Career Technical Center, she'll debut the dress May 26 at St. Mary's Cultural Center in Livonia.

Bailey entered an online scholarship competition titled "Stuck at Prom." First-place winners in the contest receive \$2,500 each in scholarships and the school that hosts the prom also receives another \$2,500. The contest is sponsored by the Duck Tape Club.

"I have worked extremely hard on my duct tape creations," said Bailey in an e-mail message. "I had so much fun making them that I would have done it even if it wasn't for a scholarship."

Bailey used more than 10 rolls of duct tape and spent more than two months con-

structing her dress, which is blue with silver vinyl designs; her date's tuxedo is black and white with gold vinyl accents; and accessories include a purse, strappy blue high heels and black men's dress shoes.

"I always liked duct tape," she said. "I used to duct tape everything around the house. I thought it was a cool idea."

Bailey heard about the contest in its first year, when she was in sixth grade.

BONDED BY DESIGN

Her designs were based on characters in James Bond movies. The dress and tuxedo patterns were first made out of cotton and then covered in duct tape. The white shirt and vest are only partially coated in tape, to make sure her date's outfit wasn't too heavy.

The flowers attached to various pieces are stuck on with epoxy. Bailey made the purse she'll carry from scratch.

She said she couldn't have completed the project without the assistance she received from staff and fellow students at the Livonia Career Center. Principal Janet Haas and secretary Nancy Vreeland assisted

her with sewing patterns.

Haas said she didn't know duct tape came in colors other than gray before Bailey began this project. She was proud of Bailey's efforts.

"She worked hours on this project," said Haas. "Everyday I was amazed at how much she was able to accomplish."

Michelle Radcliffe, fashion merchandising teacher, allowed her to borrow a mannequin.

And classmates helped Bailey try the dress on to ensure it would fit properly.

"My own visual communications teacher, Mr. (Ed) Hubert not only allowed me to build the pieces in class but has been extremely supportive through the entire process," Bailey said.

EASY TO WEAR?

Her date, boyfriend Seth Morris, agreed to the idea of wearing duct tape outfits, even before he knew it was for a college scholarship.

Prior to this endeavor, Bailey said the most she'd made out of duct tape was a wallet.

"My mom didn't think I would follow through," she admitted. "Two weeks ago she

asked if I wanted to go shop for a prom dress."

But her mind is made up. Bailey made sure the clothes would provide enough movement. Her dress is slit up the back. And the tuxedo pants come with partially-zippered legs which make them easier to wear.

She did her best to get the "stickiness" out of the outfits. However, she's a little concerned that she and her date might smell like duct tape through out the event.

Bailey will graduate in June and plans to study graphic design at Western Michigan University in the fall.

In the meantime, she's working part-time at a sign shop and taking classes at Schoolcraft Community College - all to get a head start on life after high school.

"Theresa is a very independent young lady and will go far with her ability, talent and determination," said Haas. "We have all enjoyed her progress on the dress and tuxedo. We are all very proud of her at this center and wish her the best."

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Theresa Bailey, a Franklin senior, created this prom attire completely out of duct tape, in hopes of receiving a college scholarship. She and her date will wear the outfits at tonight's big event.

QUIET

FROM PAGE A1

and airline-backed bonds to renovate houses and to address a problem that increasingly fueled complaints.

"There's no cost to the homeowner at all," said Scott Roberts, who manages the airport authority's noise-mitigation project. "There's no lien on their houses. The program is intended to benefit the houses. It doesn't matter who lives there."

In Westland, alone, 179 houses in the Carver and Annapolis Park subdivisions have received the renovations in an area bounded by Annapolis to the north, Irene to the east, Van Born to the south and Dancy to the west, Roberts said. Work on another 175 homes should be completed this year. The renovations are designed by New Boston-based C&S Engineers, Inc., and contractors are brought in after groups of homes are released for bids.

Standing inside the home where she has lived for 22 years, Anderson

pointed out the triple-pane windows that have helped to reduce aircraft noise. She also received special "acoustic" doors, a new heating-and-cooling system, 12-18 inches of attic insulation and new electrical work.

"As time went on and more planes started coming in, the noise got worse and worse," Anderson said. "My life is great, now. I just thank God, because this has been a true blessing to me."

Doug Clark, C&S assistant construction manager, estimated that each house receives an average of \$24,000 in renovations. He and Tony Derricks, C&S site inspector, returned this month to visit Anderson and Ford.

"It's good to see that, almost a year after their work was done, they are still happy with it," Derricks said. "That is my pat on the back."

Clark agreed. "This is what makes it worth going into the office every day."

Every home in the target area qualifies for noise-reduction work, regardless of household income. It's a residential program, however. Churches

and businesses don't qualify.

Ford, a retiree who was the administrative assistant to the provost at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, said local residents, including her late father Charlie Ford, tried years ago to get noise issues addressed.

"I wish he could have lived to see this," she said, sitting in her living room.

Anderson and Ford said their hearing bills have decreased dramatically since their houses became better insulated. Ford, whose home received work similar to Anderson's, was able to donate her former furnace to a Detroit church that needed one.

"The work that was done on my house was tremendous," Ford said. "The team was so courteous. I had no complaints."

Anderson, Ford and others in their neighborhood no longer have to plan their lives around flight patterns.

Said Anderson: "I can actually have a decent phone conversation."

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Toy's healthy proposal nets honors

State Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, was recently honored by two state organizations for her work on legislation to protect the health of Michigan citizens.

Toy received the 2005 Significant Progress Award from the Donate Life Coalition of Michigan for her legislation to establish the Organ and Tissue Donation Education Fund, which became law on Dec. 29, 2004.

The fund allows individuals to contribute to organ and tissue donation education programs when they renew their driver's licenses.

Other awardees included WXYZ Channel 7 news personality Diana Lewis, Gov. Jennifer Granholm, and Barbara Gerber, mother of Jenni Gerber, age 27, who gave the ultimate gift by donating her organs to save others after a tragic car accident.

"It is my great hope that by increasing awareness and participation in organ donation and the organ donor registry in our state, we can ultimately

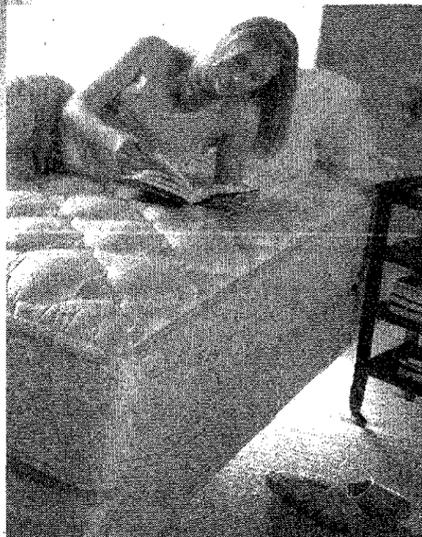
save lives," Toy said. "Michigan's participation rate stands at about 7 percent, while the national rate is 40 percent. We have a long way to go here in Michigan, and I am honored to do my part."

Toy also was named Legislator of the Year by the Michigan Dietetic Association for her work promoting licensure for dietitians and nutritionists in Michigan.

Toy is the sponsor of legislation to that effect, which is currently before the Senate's Health Policy Committee.

"In the face of an ever-growing and constantly-changing body of knowledge about proper nutrition, consumers need to be able to rely on the expertise and ethical conduct of trusted professionals," Toy said. Toy received the Donate Life Coalition of Michigan's Significant Progress Award May 5 at the Park West Gallery in Southfield. She was honored by the Michigan Dietetic Association at their annual convention May 13.

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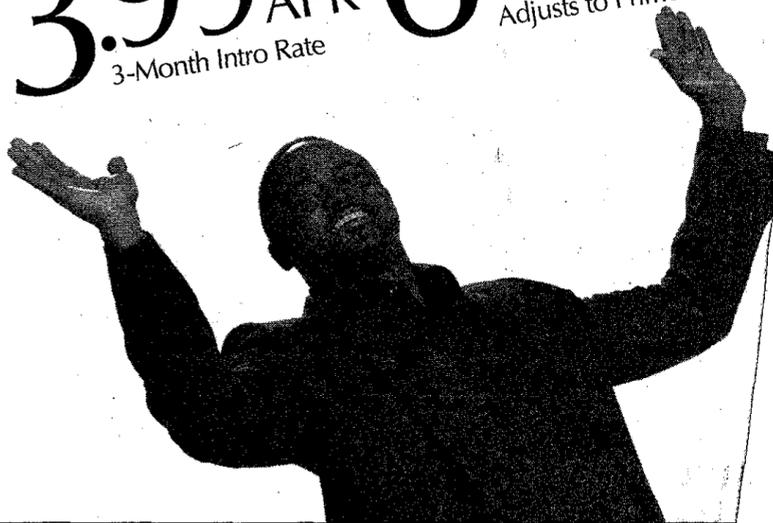
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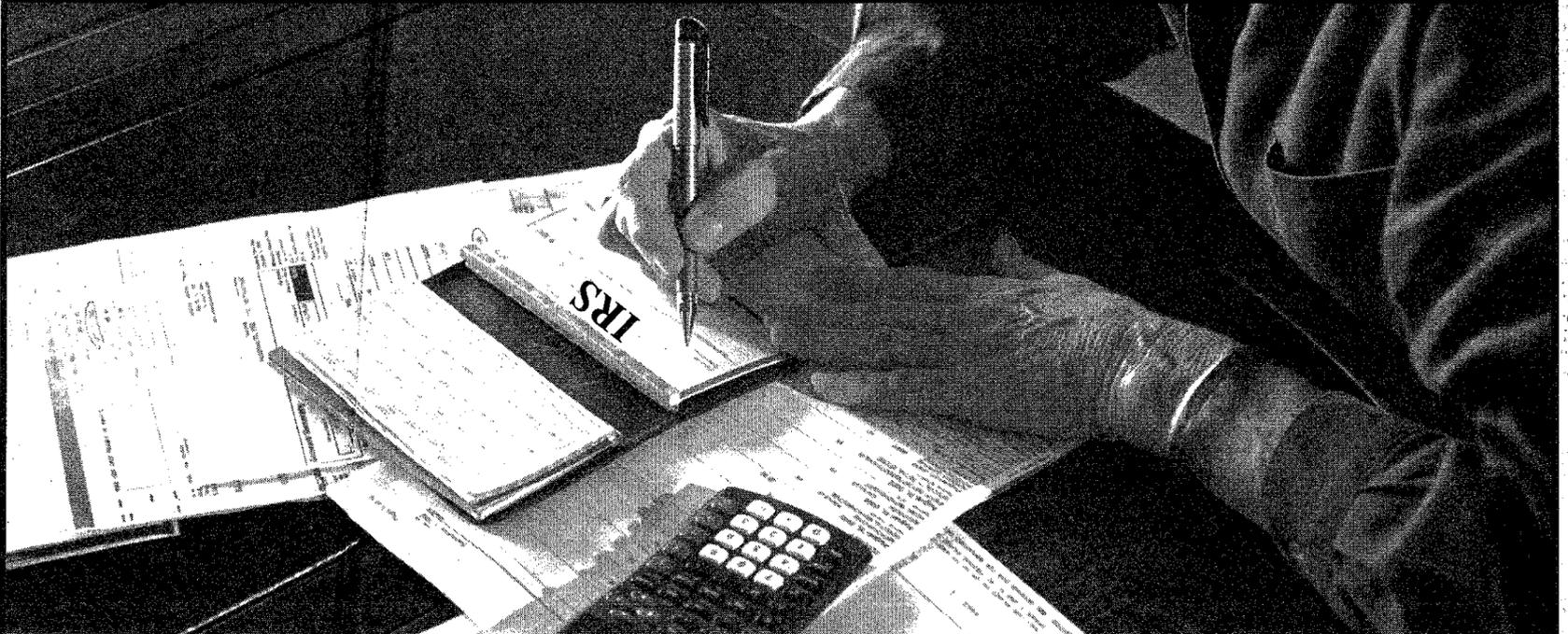


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Women sought for fest pageant

Young women who hope to reign as Miss Westland during the Westland Summer Festival need to get their applications in by May 31. The festival pageant will be held at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 29, on festival grounds at Thomas H. Brown Central City Park.

All pageant contestants must participate in the festival parade at 6 p.m. that same day, along with various events throughout the six-day festival that ends July 4.

Applicants must be a Westland resident, between the ages of 16 and 22 and never married. Judging will be based on the application, poise, personality, essay and general appearance. Formal attire is required; there will be no swimsuit or talent competition.

Applications are available at Westland City Hall, the Bailey Recreation Center and the

Westland Chamber of Commerce. They should be submitted to the Miss Westland Summer Festival Pageant, c/o Lisa Tesner, 34395 Parkgrove, Westland, 48185.

Applications should include such information as education, hobbies, interests, future plans and goals. Recent photographs should be included.

Space is limited to the first 20 applicants. Deadline is 4:30 p.m. May 31.

The winner will receive a \$1,200 scholarship. First runner-up will get an \$800 scholarship; the third-place finisher will get a \$500 scholarship.

The pageant is conducted by the Westland Summer Festival committee. It is sponsored by the Westland Community Foundation. For more information, call (734) 658-8088.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

"Safety where we live, work and play" is the theme of the National Safety Council's 2005 National Safety Month campaign, which kicks off June 1 and continues throughout the month.

A balanced concern for safety is an important part of an active lifestyle today, and the NSC's campaign aims to help people be aware of their personal safety and the safety of those around them.

You could visit their Web site at <http://www.nsc.org/nsm>, but you can raise your own safety awareness by stopping at the library.

It's never too early to start teaching our kids about personal safety. Take a look at *I Can Be Safe: A First Look at Safety for Kids* by Pat Thomas; *The Safe Child Book: A Commonsense Approach to Protecting Children and Teaching Children to Protect Themselves* by Sherry Kraizer; *The Panic Proof Parent: Creating a Safe Lifestyle for Your Family* by Debra Holtzman; or for the brand new parent, *Baby Proofing Basics: How to Keep Your Child Safe* by Vicki Lanski.

We also have *Making Your Home Safe for Children and Working It Out: A Survival Guide for Kids*, both on video.

Safety isn't just for the kids in your house, which is why you might find John Ward's *The Healthy Home Handbook: All You Need to Know to Rid Your Home of Health and Safety Hazards* a useful read. And when you find yourself

outside the home, there are still plenty of opportunities to consider your safety:

- Swimming - *On the Guard II: The YMCA Lifeguard Manual*.
- Driving - *AAA's Road Rage and Aggressive Driving: Steering Clear of Highway Warfare*.
- Hunting - *The Field & Stream Firearms Safety Handbook*.
- On the job - *Why Is This Job Killing Me?* by John B. Kachuba.
- In the wilderness - *Anthony Greenbank's The Book of Survival*.
- At the hospital - Thomas A. Sharon's *Protect Yourself in the Hospital: Insider Tips for Avoiding Hospital Mistakes for Yourself or Someone You Love*.
- On the Internet: *Hack Proofing Your Identity in the Information Age: Protect Your Family on the Internet!* by Teri Bidwell.

We have videos on *Electrical Safety, Ladder Safety, Shooting & Hunting Safety, Firearm Safety, Vehicle Safety, Lab Safety and Fire Safety for Kids*.

We even have a children's CD of safety songs, *Help Yourself!*, by Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer.

The William P. Faust Public Library is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

REDISTRICTING

FROM PAGE A1

Anderson was optimistic, saying he has more than 40 co-sponsors lined up, and support from the group's Common Cause, the Public Interest Research Group in Michigan and the Michigan Campaign Finance Network.

Anderson and Ward pointed out that official from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce has supported the idea publicly as well.

Anderson added that he hopes to enlist the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, as a supporter as well.

In an article posted on the Cato Institute's Web site in January, senior fellow Patrick Basham wrote that the current system stifles political competition.

"In 2004, only 3 of 435 congressional seats changed from one party to another. The re-election rate for House incumbents was over 98 percent," he wrote. "Nine in 10 Americans live in districts where the outcome is so certain that their votes are irrelevant."

Ward added that another result of the system is that interest groups mobilized in primary elections have more power, because most elections are decided in the party primaries, not the general elections.

The 8th Congressional District in Michigan represented by U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton, is an example of how parties redistrict to their own advantage. Before redistricting for the 2002 election, the district was 52 percent Republican, according to data from the newsletter *Inside Michigan Politics*. After redrawing the lines, the district was 57.3 percent Republican.

Figures from the National Commission for an Effective Congress had the change at 47 percent GOP before the new districts, and 50 percent after. The group's Web site still concludes: "This marginal district ... was made more Republican through redistricting."

Through spokeswoman Sylvia Warner, Rogers declined to comment for this story.

NATIONAL CONCERNS

The issue got a lot of attention nationally when redistricting battle in Texas in 2003, helped along by House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, prompted Democratic lawmakers to flee the state instead of vote on new districts.

Jon Goldin-Dubois, director of state program development for Common Cause, credited that episode with raising the profile of redistricting reform across the country. Twelve states other than Michigan are looking at changing the way political lines are drawn. Aside from the effort by Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in California - which would create a panel of retired judges to do the redistricting - plans are circulating in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas and Utah.

"There's much more activity than there has been in previous cycles," Goldin-Dubois said. "The reality is you can, to a large extent, blame it on Tom and what he tried to do in Texas. By redistricting in the middle of a legislative cycle, they opened the floodgates to the rest of the country."

He hadn't read Anderson's proposal, but Goldin-Dubois said the more safeguards there are between the Legislature and the redistricting, the more likely it is to be independent.

"If there is not separation there, it does make it more difficult to envision a commission that's truly independent of the Legislature," he said.

Anderson's proposal, if approved by the Legislature would require a statewide vote. He said he hopes to have the measure ready to appear on the ballot in time for the November 2006 election.

The concept there is a good one," he said. "I think that could be a very positive thing."

Ward said he assumed that the proposal - in the form of a joint resolution required to change the state Constitution, not a standard bill - would be referred to his committee on House Oversight, Elections and Ethics. The formal title is House Joint Resolution K.

"It's likely I would at least have a hearing on it," he said.

When asked whether the proposal is likely to get support from many Republicans, Ward said it's possible.

"Republicans only need to look at a little bit of history," he said. Before the GOP-led redistricting in 2000, he said, "it was a long stretch before then that we drew the lines. Eventually things will change and Democrats will have control, and we'll have wanted to have a process a little bit more removed from politics in Lansing."

NOTHING FROM GRANHOLM

Heidi Hansen, a spokesman for Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, said she had not taken a position on the plan yet.

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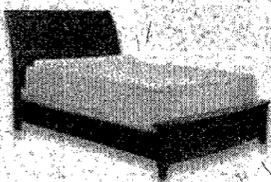
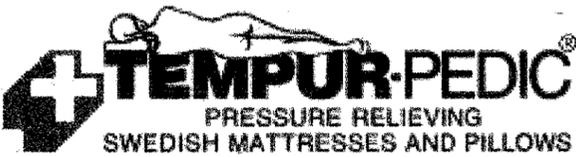
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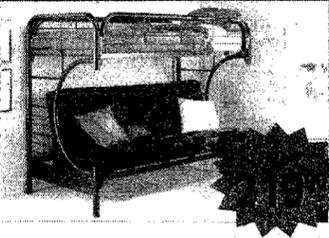
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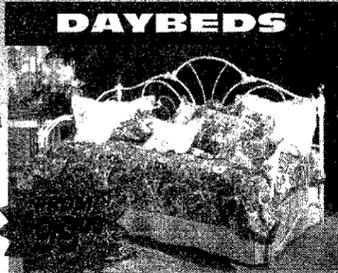
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OUR VIEWS

County's August election to cost us

A majority of Wayne County board members ignored their suburban community leaders last week by voting to put a .25-mill county parks tax renewal on the Aug. 2 ballot.

For some reason, a majority of the board decided that they should spend our money — thousands of extra taxpayer dollars — to pay for this election in August, even though they already had a cheaper election date available in November.

The reason for this pricey decision? Apparently, county officials weren't so sure that voters would make the "right decision" the first time. Their idea was to spend the money now so that the county officials can get "another bite at the apple" — i.e., they could bring the issue back for a second vote in November if voters denied the tax renewal in August.

An August vote puts the election "under the radar" in the view of many local leaders, except Detroit, where a mayoral primary should attract many voters and where much of the parks millage money has been spent. In many towns, it'll be the only thing on the ballot.

Many suburban leaders wanted this election in November and many believe that they haven't gotten much in return for this tax. Many supported a failed proposal by Phil Cavanagh, D-Redford — and supported by Laura Cox, R-Livonia — that would have replaced the parks tax with a new millage proposal, one that would have earmarked half of the tax money generated by each town to projects in that town. That vote would have been in November and would have required a two-thirds supermajority because it's technically a new tax, not a renewal.

For most communities across Wayne County, there are no primary elections scheduled in August. And if there's no election, the county must bear the entire cost of these elections. In Livonia alone, an election costs at least \$40,000. Beyond the cost, this election also causes extra complications in Livonia, where a city primary election is also scheduled for September.

So what is the total cost for running these elections for every community in Wayne County? A whopping \$400,000.

Maybe that's seen as a drop in the bucket across the entire county. And the county would have had to pay election costs for those towns that didn't already have a vote in November, but it would have been a lot cheaper. These are tight budget times across the state and we often hear elected officials talking about how they're trying to keep a lid on unnecessary spending. This time they didn't.

On Memorial Day, we honor noble sacrifice

The recent deaths of Capt. Stephen Frank, whose parents live in Farmington Hills, and Capt. Ralph J. Harting III, who went to high school in West Bloomfield, are reminders of the sacrifices being made around the world in service to the United States.

Since shortly after the Civil War, this nation has set aside a day in May to remember those who, in the words of President Lincoln, "gave the last full measure of devotion" for this country and the principles for which it stands and which have long set it apart as a beacon of freedom for the world.

We are now engaged in a controversial conflict in Iraq. The political debates over the initiation and prosecution of that war and an ongoing war against terrorism are a reflection of the freedoms we most cherish. But political differences aside, we must acknowledge the service and sacrifice of those who step forward to defend this country.

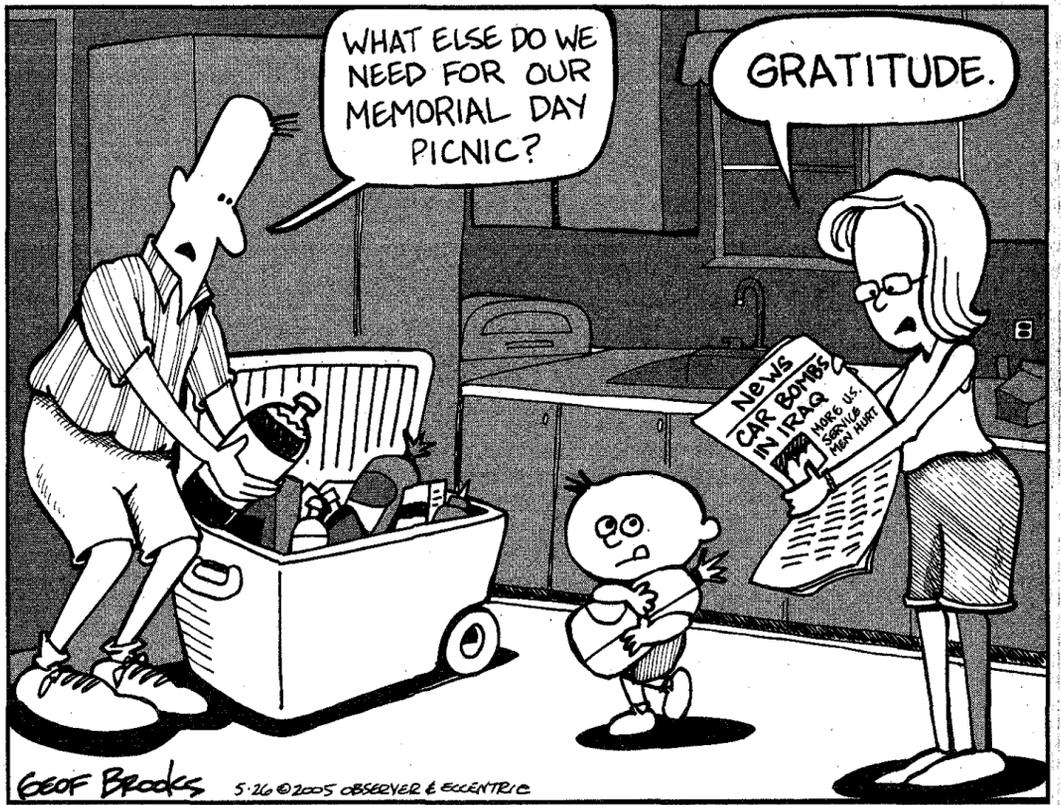
The military is sent into conflict by political leaders. They carry out the orders they are given, most honorably and within the accepted conventions of armed conflict. All accept the possibility that they may be killed in the line of duty.

For these reasons they deserve our respect, whether we agree with the political decisions that put them in harm's way or not.

For many, Memorial Day has become merely the kickoff for summer, a holiday of cookouts and family gatherings, a weekend to air out the cottage.

But this year, especially, we need to take the time to reflect on the true meaning of this significant day. It is a good time to put aside political differences and understand the special valor of soldiers who serve in a free society.

This service is what we must honor on Memorial Day, because this represents the best of what this country means to the world.



Bush's hidden agenda

Finally we have endured through Mr. Bush propaganda campaign. (Actually the people of this country have incurred the expense of this propaganda campaign, but they do not have the privilege of listening to his plan.)

This campaign, called town meetings, had only participants pledging allegiance to Mr. Bush. He was unable to address any questions with his plans that may indicate its shortcomings and his misrepresentations of facts.

This is not new; in fact, Mr. Bush and his political party, (Tom Delay for one), now answer all questions with rhetoric, or attacks against those questioning their motives or actions and no longer answering to the public. These are not the signs of leadership.

The campaign was a failure even within the confines of his party. It is still remarkable that even in the face of failure, Mr. Bush still insists on gutting Social Security.

The corner stone of his destruction of Social Security are private investment accounts, which in effect privatize the Social Security, having investments going into conservative stock funds controlled by the businesses profiting from these funds. Looking at these funds, we would have the people controlling the funds whose profit is dependent on the funds.

When Mr. Bush, was placed in office, the stock market had crossed into 11,000 quite a few times. Let us assume Mr. Bush is not directly responsible for the falling of the market, but his business associates and close friends are responsible.

Mr. Bush's best bud, Kenneth Lay, is still out of jail and facing no criminal wrongdoing, yet he would have ordinary people invest in companies run by his corrupt (alleged) best friends. And today we still have not come close to where the market was five years ago.

Mr. Bush is asking people to put their investments into a market that has shown a net decline under his tutelage for their long-term retirement.

The Bush family is involved (George Bush Sr.) with a holding company that targets a 20 percent per year commission from its investors and 20 percent per year return from its investments, a desirable but an obscene rate of return. Perhaps this is the company that will hold all Social Security private investment accounts.

Mr. Bush's inability to face the public and critics demonstrates the weakness of the party and no backbone leaders. Rather than directly answer questions with their policy and supporting with facts, Mr. Bush and his party have answered with propaganda and party rhetoric.

Even after his failure of his propaganda campaign, he insists that a plan brought to him is acceptable only as if it has private investment accounts. The only question is which company and which executives will profit from his plan, not if this plan will fix Social Security.

Much like Mr. Bush's spineless behavior during his National Guard enlistment, it continues today. Mr. Bush's inability to face the public of his true

intentions and plans for this country show that his parties continuing efforts to hide behind a hidden agenda.

Allan Biber
Westland

Why repeat ourselves?

The column written by Kurt Kuban is so well-written — it should be written in large print in every newspaper and read slowly and thoughtfully, especially by those who think we are being saviors in Iraq.

Mr. Kuban tells sincerely and truthfully why we should all have recoiled in anger — and horror at getting into another foreign war.

I lived through World War II in London, England, as a child and into teen age, and when the war ended we left — as a family — with a suitcase each and came to Canada. We had been bombed out three times. There are no winners in war except the owners of firearms and war weapons factories. Seventeen members of our family came home wounded — R.A.F., 51st Highlanders and naval men.

Mr. Kuban writes about how we fought a war in Vietnam with horrifying losses — horribly injured vets, drug problems, soldiers with terrible nightmares and disillusion. Why are we repeating ourselves?

This war is a shocking, dreadful, frightening mess. How are we going to withdraw our troops before more die, or are injured? It is a perplexing puzzle that I hope President Bush has a solution for — and soon.

Helen Ermete
Livonia

Questioning the war

You've got a lot of guts ... bet you've been barraged with hate mail for being so "Un-American" (re: Kurt Kuban's May 15 column "Vietnam lessons merit heeding"). Are they calling you "unpatriotic?" You love our country, I bet, but hate to see how the rest of the world views us as they view George W.: an arrogant bunch who push their agendas through no matter what anyone else thinks. And we get cast into that lot with him. Great. And he won't change his mind or admit any wrong-doing. To do so or to consider anyone else's opinion is weakness? In the old days that was called wisdom.

Are they calling you "unsupportive of our troops?" This one has me baffled. If we didn't care about our troops, would we get so worked up that they are getting slaughtered for no good reason? Of course we support our troops, each one of them individually. We love them and do not want to see them die, especially for no good reason.

Are they saying "You don't understand why we're there?" Join the throngs from around the world ... those of us who don't follow our leaders blindly, but give our respect to those who earn it. What are his true motivations for this war? We already know the lies, which everyone seems so willing to gloss over and excuse, but is it just me being cynical or is it a coincidence that gas prices have risen so much due to this conflict, and those who stand to benefit most from high oil prices

in this country are wealthy men from George W.'s state?

What troubles me most about this whole scenario is that the Christian right supports George W. so vehemently and violently. I am a Christian who tries to do what Jesus would have done. Would He support this war? Would He support any war? I think Our Lord expects us to use our mind and the conscience He gave us. I'm glad you did and bravely wrote your column. I hope mine is not the only letter in support of you!

Sandy Kline
Plymouth

Support the troops

After 9/11 and the start of the Operation Iraqi Freedom war, our communities were united and showing support everywhere for our nation and our troops.

Now that the weather is getting nice again, and I have been outside, I have noticed that you just don't see the outward signs of support much. No flags, no "support our troops" signs, no yellow ribbons.

I know a lot of people do not agree with the president's decision on this war, but let's face the facts that there are tens of thousands of troops (and civilian volunteers) deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and dozens of other locations around the world who desperately need our support and need to know that we support them!

So please, fly your flags, plant that "support our troops" in your front yard and tie yellow ribbons on your trees.

Additionally, there is a wonderful Web site, anysoldier.com, that you can access with names and addresses of our service members who are willing to accept letters, cards and even packages to share with their units or to give to service members who do not get any mail at all. They echo the sentiment that the worst feeling is an "empty" mail call. One of the biggest requests is just a note to say we support them and are thinking about them.

So please, let's show our support and thanks to our military forces.

Jill Brani
Troy

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

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

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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

"As students learn about their local environment and what affects it, they develop a greater sense of ownership and responsibility to protect it."

— Courtney Shosh, Rouge Education Project coordinator, about the benefits of student participation in testing and monitoring the health of the Rouge River watershed

Strengthening nonprofits will help us all in long run

Nonprofit organizations play an enormous role in our state, although most are relatively little known. But they're influential, growing rapidly and getting more and more important all the time.

We all are familiar with some high-visibility nonprofits: Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, the Detroit Opera House (home of Michigan Opera Theatre), United Way, Focus:HOPE and The Henry Ford are good examples.

But there are also lots of smaller, local not-for-profit organizations scattered all over Michigan. Some are well-funded; some are hanging on by their fingernails. Nearly all are doing the best they can to make things better for all Michigan residents. These days, governments at all levels are generally doing less, and so our nonprofits have to do more.

That means shrewd and intelligent leadership is crucial. Virtually all nonprofits have boards of directors which set overall policy and hire and oversee management. And as anybody with any experience in business knows, the quality of the board can make or break any enterprise.

You have a bad board, you get a crummy organization — and, eventually, you may even have a company that is going out of business. For nonprofits, putting together a good board is particularly tricky, since members usually don't get paid for donating their time. That makes it particularly hard for small, struggling and little-known nonprofit companies to recruit the right people for their board of directors.

How do they do it? Now, for the first time, there is an outfit designed to help them: Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW). Started back in 1993, the Ann Arbor-based agency has developed into an effective incubator for nonprofit organizations.

Since 2000, it has also operated a program called BoardConnect that provides training for members of nonprofit boards. Through it, NEW has trained 613 candidates in the fine points of governing a nonprofit. By the way, a fifth of those were already serving on a board somewhere; 60 percent were entirely new to board service. And BoardConnect also operates a matchmaking service for nonprofits, matching up those who want to employ their time and expertise with boards that need them. To date, the matching part of the program has placed 166 candidates in board seats.

According to Susan Katz Froning, president of NEW, the idea behind BoardConnect is to "strengthen nonprofit board leadership through training in board responsibilities and effective recruitment practices." NEW's idea is to relieve pressure on the board

and administrative staff, and to instead allow them to focus more of their time on other issues involved with running a not-for-profit enterprise.

Many observers think BoardConnect is among the best programs of its sort in the country, which is why the folks at NEW have been approached repeatedly over the years about expanding the program to serve communities elsewhere in Michigan.

That's now happening. NEW and the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce are in the midst of developing a partnership to provide BoardConnect services to communities throughout southeastern Michigan. I figure there will be a formal announcement made at this weekend's Detroit Chamber conference on Mackinac Island.

One sign of how much this is needed: NEW has also been invited by a variety of metropolitan area foundations to apply for funding to make this happen.

The program will also be offered to communities outside the Detroit area. According to Froning, early discussions are under way with groups in Traverse City, Marquette, Lansing and Jackson. Overall, the vision is for BoardConnect to become Michigan's premier source for nonprofit board training by 2010.

That's a worthy goal. Many, perhaps most, readers of this column have worked with local nonprofit organizations. Some have served on their boards. Anyone who has done any of those things ought to agree that increasing the quality, capability and professionalism of nonprofit boards could vastly improve their effectiveness and thereby boost the quality of life of people throughout Michigan.

The BoardConnect expansion now being planned is an encouraging step in the right direction. So let's keep marching!

Incidentally, if you want a quick snapshot of how large the nonprofit sector in our state has grown, as of last year, Michigan was home to:

- No fewer than 41,000 nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, of which 21,000 were public charities. There were nearly 3,300 in Oakland County; 5,100 in Wayne County; 1,200 in Ingham County; and 250 in Livingston County.

- All told, they directly employed more than 315,000 people.

- They held assets valued at more than \$80 billion and received more than \$44 billion in revenue.

Collectively, they grew almost half again as fast as the Michigan economy as a whole.

Which makes it that much more crucial that they get the best leaders they possibly can.

Phil Power is the chairman of HCN, Inc., and a longtime observer of economics, politics and education issues in Michigan. Full disclosure: His wife, Kathy, served as chair of NEW from 1995-97, and his family foundation is partially funding the expansion of BoardConnect. He would be pleased to hear from readers at ppower@homecomm.net.

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These youngsters find their heroes in history, everyday life

Worried about young people today? Think they're all like that selfish, smart-aleck teenager in the cell phone commercial? You've seen her, the girl who's asked by her father about contacting her friend, so she sticks out her thumb and pinky finger and starts pretending to talk with her friend on a fake cell phone.

Maybe some are that self-centered and obnoxious. But there are a lot of young people out there who can give you every reason to stop worrying.

On Saturday afternoon, the Michigan District Optimists hosted 10 talented boys and girls at the Livonia Holiday Inn for the state oratorical contest. I was invited to serve as one of the judges in the contest, which offered the

winner from each gender a \$1,500 scholarship. Each had to present an original speech between four and five minutes long under a number of very specific rules.

It was a nerve-racking time watching the youngsters before and between speeches. But during each speech, it seems, each of these young people used their poise, talents and skills to inspire, teach, entertain and even move the audience near tears.

The theme for the contest was "My Hero is ..." and it was fascinating to hear who these youngsters, age 16 or younger, had chosen as their heroes.

A few chose from among the rich and famous. One boy chose multi-media star Oprah Winfrey and one girl chose world champion skater Michelle Kwan. They were selected based on overcoming challenges and persistence. The girl made a memorable comment on Kwan, saying she learned that "failure is only the momentum to succeed in your dreams." Pretty heavy stuff.

One boy identified the so-called "Greatest Generation" as his hero, offering a moving talk focused on the "everlasting imprint" that group of Americans had on our society.

Several of the youngsters chose someone they knew personally as a hero. One boy, born in China, shared a humorous tale of a "heroic" school friend who had helped him learn some English words — though not always the right ones — when he first visited a school in this country.

A diminutive girl chose Martin Luther King Jr. to spotlight, and she ended her speech by bravely singing an old anti-slavery spiritual, a cappella.

Another girl shared an emotional speech — well, it was emotional especially to those parents in the audience — about how she only had to look across the kitchen table to find her

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hero. Her father is a Scoutmaster and community volunteer, someone whose "exemplary values" influenced the world one person at a time.

One boy chose Jesus as his hero, not only focusing on his spiritual heroics but how he used his intellect to outwit the brilliant minds of his day and then how he nobly gave up his life for others. His choice of words — entreated, for instance — was stellar and he presented his speech with just enough gestures and sincerity to win the boys' competition.

Meanwhile, the girls' scholarship was won by a young woman who shared how her own life was affected by a brave man who had himself presented a speech to a church group she'd heard. The man had lived a violent life of addictions, including once killing a man. He was later saved by accepting God in his life, and shared with anyone who would listen how it was all possible with divine intervention. Her speech was not only impeccable, she overcame a microphone that was working, then stopped, then started again, all without batting an eye. The judges were impressed.

All in all, these talented youngsters made a big impression on members of the audience, some of whom weren't expecting to be so moved. The standing ovation for them showed our appreciation.

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However, a visit to one of these types of contests certainly shows some of the good work they can inspire. It's a big effort to put together such a statewide contest. In this case, I also had a chance to learn that the 114,000 or so Optimists in the world raise and give back some \$78 million a year in their communities. On a national basis, they've set a goal of tackling childhood cancer, by raising money to support children and families dealing with treatment and to support research. Talk about some heroics.

Dave Varga is editor of the Livonia Observer and Redford Observer. He can be reached at (734) 953-2119 or dvarga@oe.homecomm.net.



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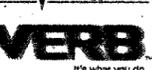
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