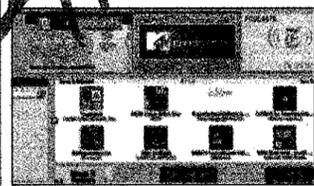


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What a difference a year makes

AT HOME - PAGE B1



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Winner is!

Red Wagon founder wins ATHENA honor

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Joan Carr was surprised ... correct that ... shocked when she heard her name called as the winner of the 2006 Westland ATHENA Award. She was certain her friend, Ronaele Bowman, would win, so much so that she had told her that.

But instead, it was Bowman, who also had been nominated for the award, showering Carr with congratulations and a bouquet of flowers during the awards portion of the Chocolate Fantasy Ball.

"She knew I was the winner," said Carr. "She works in (County Commissioner) Kay Beard's office and did her resolution for me."

The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated excellence, creativity and initiative in his or her business and profession; contributed time and talent to help improve the quality of life for others, and assisted women in realizing their full leadership potential.

Wendy Lyon, a social worker at Lincoln Elementary School, nominated Carr for the award, citing her work as a psychiatric nurse at the University of Michigan Hospital and the Hawthorne Center and her volunteer work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Red Wagon Literacy Project and Wayne-Westland's Health



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Joan Carr, who has filled her retirement years with working with the residents of Westland's Norwayne community, shows off the 2006 Westland ATHENA Award she received Saturday evening.

PLEASE SEE ATHENA, A6

District finds plenty wrong with state list

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Wayne-Westland school officials had planned to handle a Freedom of Information Act request for the names of employees the state said had criminal records with "sensitivity."

But an Ingham County Circuit Court judge took care of it, issuing a preliminary injunction last week that will keep the highly criticized state-generated results under wraps.

"This is a boondoggle," said Wayne-Westland Superintendent Greg Baracy. "No employee should have to go through that type of emotional stress based on the release of a list that was not given the due diligence that is required of us in our daily operations."

"This has been devastating for people who pride themselves on living very clean lives," added Evelyn Baran, the Wayne-Westland Michigan Education Association executive director. "If you work in a school district and know the kind of people there and how they were hired, it's just not possible to be that kind of person and apparently it

wasn't." In Wayne-Westland, there were 27 names on the state list. Five were tied to felonies including attempted murder and possession, manufacture, sale and delivery of narcotics. Misdemeanor charges range from a moving violation to minor in possession of alcohol, drunken driving and having open intoxicants in a vehicle. Some of the offenses dated back some 30 years. "One just says liquor," said Baracy. "What does that mean? One is listed as damage to property. These lists didn't come with legends to figure out the meanings."

The district has been doing background checks on teachers for at least 10 years, but law that went into effect Jan. 1 requires that school employees undergo criminal background checks twice per year. The law was aimed at identifying sex offenders, whose employment would have to be terminated.

Baracy isn't sure how the state got employees' names, but believes it used the state's Registry of Educational

PLEASE SEE LIST, A5

Anderson's bill takes on bullies

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

With two-thirds of Michigan students saying they've been bullied or harassed at school, state Rep. Glenn Anderson has proposed legislation to address the problem.

Anderson, D-Westland, has introduced a bill that would require every school to establish a plan to reduce bullying and harassment of students.

"Bullying is a very serious threat to school safety and has been linked to higher levels of dropout rates, crime, suicide and school shootings," he said. "Every child in Michigan deserves to learn in a safe environment that's free from threats and violence, including from their fellow students."

"Classrooms should be a place where our kids can learn and grow, not a place of fear, harassment and physical harm," Anderson said.

The Wayne-Westland school district already has some policies in place, but Superintendent Greg Baracy said he would need to study Anderson's plan to determine whether changes are necessary.

"I would say for those schools that don't have policies in place, this might



Anderson

be helpful," Baracy said. "We've had anti-bullying policies in place for some time."

House Bill 5616 would require local schools to develop anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies with input from parents, students, administrators, teachers and other employees.

Anderson's plan defines bullying as any behavior against a student that involves physical harm or the fear of it, resulting in emotional distress. He named his bill "Matt's Safe School Law" in honor of Matt Epling, a 14-year-old East Lansing pupil who killed himself in 2002 after being assaulted by older students.

"A lot of students bring certain stereotypes from home," Baracy said. "Our job is to make students aware of the sensitivity of certain things that they say that would be offensive to other students - and to make students aware of how hurtful this can be."

Anderson referred to a 2003 National School Climate Survey indicating that 65 percent of Michigan students had been bullied or harassed and that most of those didn't report it to officials. The

pressure can overwhelm some youths. "Tragically, Matt took his own life because he likely believed he was alone in his ordeal and perhaps felt hopeless in stopping it," Anderson said, issuing a statement about the bill. "He was a bright, creative and articulate young man with tremendous promise."

Anderson indicated that some school districts have no anti-bullying policies while others have "reasonably good" plans in place. His bill, which had bipartisan support in the House, has won early endorsements from the Michigan Education Association and an organization known as Fight Crime - Invest in Kids.

In Wayne-Westland, students are taught in elementary, middle and high schools not to bully or harass their classmates, Baracy said.

Anderson noted that Gov. Jennifer Granholm has called on legislators to pass anti-bullying measures.

"My proposal would guarantee that all students, whether they live in Birmingham or rural Bruce Crossing, will never stand alone, but their schools will stand with them against bullies," he said.

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

Vietnam Moving Wall to make stop in city

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

War veterans have embraced news that a smaller replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall will be in Westland for the city's summer festival.

"It's quite an honor for Westland to even get the memorial, because I understand it's so difficult to get it into the cities," said Bill Acton, commander of the local American Legion Post 251.

"This will be good so that people can view the memorial," he said. "Some of us unfortunately can't get to Washington, D.C., to see the real one, but I understand this is a tremendous replica of that memorial. I'm sure any veteran would be honored to look at it."

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli formally announced this week that the Vietnam Moving Wall - a half-size replica - will be on display in Westland during the summer festival, scheduled for June 29 through July 4. The wall has been touring the nation for nearly 20 years.

"It is a very great honor for the city of Westland to be able to display this replica of the original monument on the Fourth of July," Cicirelli said, in a prepared statement. "Having the display come to Westland is the result of a lot of hard work that was done by the festival planning committee. It will make the Westland Summer Festival even better this year."

Kenneth Mehl, a decorated Vietnam veteran, festival chairman and former Westland City Council member, will be in charge of arrangements for the Vietnam Moving Wall.

The wall's visit will be historic for the festival, which is staged around the city government complex on Ford Road, between Ford and Wayne. The memorial will be erected on the east side of City Hall.

Many volunteers will be needed for the Vietnam Moving Wall site to set it up, keep it secure, help visitors find names, and take it down. To volunteer or for more information, call Mehl at (734) 261-5955. dclem@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

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Coming Sunday on the PINK Page

Artrageous Fashion 2006!

Board members defend plan, answers

BY DAVE VARGA
STAFF WRITER

Livonia school board members spoke up Monday in their own defense.

They had been peppered at another board meeting by public comments calling for the school board to drop its controversial cost-cutting plan for restructuring the schools.

Plus, in the couple weeks they had watched the Livonia's mayor announce his opposition to the plan and opponents begin a recall campaign against five board members who supported it.

Steve Futrell, who leads the recall group called Citizens for Livonia's Future, told the board members they hadn't explained the plan to the community, leaving them no

other choice but for the recall and a lawsuit to stop the plan. Some 800 volunteers would be gathering signatures, he said, noting he wasn't trying to intimidate them. "My point is to let you know that we are incredibly serious," Futrell said.

During public comments, a half-dozen other speakers stated the board ignored the community's views, the plan should be delayed, and the board failed to answer questions.

Later in the meeting, trustee Cynthia Markarian answered comments about delaying the plan: "In my opinion, it's taking too long."

Markarian also responded to Mayor Jack Engebretson's comments, saying they were based only on property values, not educational needs.

"We are preserving the quality of education our children deserve," she declared.

Trustee Lynda Scheel called the mayor's comments "questionable." As for the timing, she said, "I find it odd that he waited until after" the board vote. Scheel also noted that Livonia Public Schools' previous school closings had not lowered property values.

Trustee Kevin Whitehead said decisions can't be based on the economy, but should be based on what's best for students.

A real estate expert told him how houses in Brighton, Hartland and other western communities had been losing value. "Geez," the Realtor joked to Whitehead, "your program must be really far-reaching to affect housing in Livingston County."

Several board members responded to public comments that focused on a story from 2003 quoting then-trustee Larry Naser telling board members they could save \$3 million by closing four schools. They questioned his proposal then, and do now. Naser's math "left something to be desired," board President Dan Lessard said.

Responding to a speaker mentioning one-hour bus rides, trustee Joanne Morgan called such an exaggeration "fear mongering," adding that community questions were answered but many people didn't want to hear the answers provided. "We need to take a look and bring a plan that we could be proud of," she said.

Trustee Rob Freeman outlined items that could each be



Markarian Scheel

cut if the district wanted to replace the \$1.7 million that the Legacy Initiative would save, such as preschool programs, athletics and half of the non-required busing. "These items put a picture on what that amount of money is," he said.

Several trustees thanked members of the transition team. Trustee Tom Bailey, the only board member to vote against the Legacy plan, also thanked district PTA members. "Our community is filled with anxiety," he said. "Pray for guidance for all of us."

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Some plans set for 5-6 schools

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public Schools' District Transition Team outlined goals last week for the creation of new upper elementary schools, which will house grades 5-6 next school year. Some issues, like starting and dismissal times, remain undecided.

"The 5-6 principals did get a chance to meet," said Randy Liepa, superintendent. "They are working very hard to work out the details (of those schools)."

Upper elementary principals will continue meeting each week, according to Donna McDowell, coordinator of community and business partnerships. Transition activities are being planned and parents can expect "getting to know you activities" across the district. In March, the team will consider more closely the addition of specials classes for those buildings.

The group met Feb. 1 - with 63 participants representing schools and the community at that gathering, according to McDowell - to continue planning for the district's Legacy Initiative, a controversial plan to save money by restructure buildings.

For now, the team has set preliminary guidelines for the district's new upper elementary buildings - which will be housed in what are now Riley, Johnson and Cooper schools. Here's some of what parents and students can expect at those schools:

- Upper elementary schools will operate as a single community with one staff and one student body.

- The school day will be comparable in length to the current elementary day, and will include School Age Child Care programs.

- Students will still have a "homebase" teacher who serves as the primary contact for parents.

- Team-teaching will be used, as it is currently at those grade levels. Teachers will have flexibility in sharing students for certain core classes, conducting group presentations, and managing time outside of scheduled special area classes.

- Students will receive planners and lockers, though lockers will not have combination locks. Children will still be escorted by teachers to specials classes, lunch and recess.

STAFF PLACEMENTS

Last week, Liepa announced that administrators are currently working on teaching staff placements for all schools buildings for the 2006-2007 school year.

The team will announce definitive start and end times for the school day by the end of this month.

Such information is eagerly awaited by parents like Holly Burr, who lives in the school district.

She raised concerns before the LPS school board last week wondering why the district has not answered questions regarding start and dismissal times, even as new school buses were ordered and approved for purchase under the Legacy Initiative.

"These are our children," she said. "We want and deserve answers."

GRANDFATHER RULE

Students currently attending kindergarten through third grade may have the option of staying in their current school building, under the Legacy Initiative's "grandfathering" provision next year.

Those living in a changed boundary area can arrange to return to a home school, provided their parents take on the responsibility of transportation.

Next year's kindergartners, however, will be required to attend the new "home" school under Legacy guidelines. A letter to parents is expected regarding this issue.

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John Glenn High seeks Distinguished Alumnus

The Faculty Council at John Glenn High School is searching for a few good nominations. The council is in charge of the school's Distinguished

Alumnus award and is looking for a graduate who has gone on to achieve excellence in his or her life.

Presentation of the award is a part of the high school's graduation ceremony. The council believes the recipient can have a positive, motivational effect on the graduating seniors as well as the school community and the faculty.

Residents can nominate a John Glenn graduate who has earned distinction in his or her field of endeavor following graduation by contacting Robyn Brennan at John Glenn High School, 36105 Marquette, Westland, MI 48185.

The Faculty Council will review all nominations and select the winner who will be honored at commencement ceremonies on June 3.

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3rd-graders get a wordy gift

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Third-graders in the Wayne portion of the Wayne-Westland school district have a new tool to help with their learning – a dictionary – thanks to the Wayne Rotary Club.

The club funded the purchase of 450 dictionaries which were presented to students between Thanksgiving and Christmas at both public and parochial schools within the Wayne city limits.

Dictionaries also were given to third-graders at Schweitzer Elementary in Westland which takes in students from Wayne.

"The students loved it," said Diane Nichols, principal at Schweitzer. "They were amazed to get them and use them, even to do their math. They're very proud of them and very grateful to have them."

John Van Stipdonk, in a presentation before the Wayne-Westland school board, credited Nate Weiser with bringing the program to the Wayne Club. A member for

more than 50 years, he saw a small article about a club in California which initiated the project.

Weiser approached his fellow Rotarians who signed on to do the same literacy program for students in their city.

"What Nate did with the project in the end was to foster literacy," Van Stipdonk said.

The club contacted the principals at the schools and "got them to buy in to the project," according to Van Stipdonk. Many of them sent home letters to parents about the project.

"They let them know that their child was getting a dictionary and explained why they were showing up at home with their backpack 4 1/2 pounds heavier," he said.

The dictionaries are not only full of words and definitions, there are also sections that can help the students with such subjects as mathematics.

The club made sure that the books were personalized, handwriting the students' names on plates inside the front cover.

"Every place we went, they

were huddled in groups and looking at them," he said. "They couldn't keep quiet and were sharing what they found in them."

Van Stipdonk said the club received several hundred thank you letters from students. He added that the club tried unsuccessfully to contact homeschoolers to supply them with dictionaries.

"It would be a great success in and of itself, but we will do this every year," Van Stipdonk said.

The Rotarians received praise from Roosevelt-McGrath Principal Mary Anne Garzon who said the school "considers them our best friend."

"You've helped the kids with their writing, and we believe that's an important skill to have," she said. "It's important on the MEAP tests and we're glad to have these dictionaries."

Board members also were enthusiastic about the donation. Trustee Steve Becher, a retired elementary teacher, admitted he could have used the dictionaries during the



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A few of the third-graders at Schweitzer Elementary show off the dictionaries they received from the Wayne Rotary Club. The club gave out more than 400 dictionaries to third-graders at Wayne-Westland schools in Wayne as well as third-graders who live in Wayne, but attend Schweitzer, located in Westland.

three years he taught third grade. "It almost seems like you're reading a novel more than a dictionary," added trustee Skip Monit. "It's a thesaurus, it has

the presidents. It's a key tool for our kids."

Board Vice President Cindy Schofield pointed out that the club is always there to answer a need.

"If you go to the Rotary and say we have a need, they will find a way to fund it," she said. "Often, they don't get a thank you for that."

smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112

Compromise leads to reopening of shelter

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

It had to be fate, but just as the temperatures began to dip back below freezing, the warming center at Full Gospel Temple in Westland reopened.

Closed last fall after it failed to receive a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, it reopened its doors to the homeless late last month after Mayor Sandra Cicirelli determined that the city might not have the legal authority to close it.

Cicirelli also reviewed the warming center operations and found it to be a good program. "We need to take care of our homeless individuals in a compassionate way, but we have to do it safely," she said.

The city had received complaints of the homeless being released into the neighborhood near Adams Middle School in the early morning hours. In a compromise, Full Gospel Temple has agreed to take the homeless to another site before releasing them, Cicirelli said.

"The operation they run is a good operation," the mayor said, adding that The Salvation Army and other agencies also will be working to address homeless issues.

The decision to reopen the warming center was welcome news for shelter volunteer Thelma Ivey, who has always believed that God would provide an answer about how to shelter the homeless in Westland.

"I knew God was in control," said Ivey. "He allowed us to open up the shelter before the cold weather set in."

Ivey got a call from the Rev. B.C. Beneteau, director of the Lighthouse Home Missions, on Jan. 20, asking her to notify the churches that had supported the center to meet and prepare for its reopening. Beneteau had hoped to have the center up and running within days of the meeting, but it didn't happen until Jan. 29.

The center is open only at night during the winter months, and to accommodate the arrival of students at Adams School, which is just east of the center on Palmer, it is staying open an hour later. Its new hours are 7 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Eight area churches and a cadre of volunteers had supported the warming center until it was

The center is open only at night during the winter months, and to accommodate the arrival of students at Adams School, which is just east of the center on Palmer, it is staying open an hour later. Its new hours are 7 p.m. to 8 a.m.

ordered closed. The center has operated from January through March for the last five years, but it was forced to close its doors two weeks early last year. It provides homeless people with a meal and a place to sleep and clean up.

Six churches have signed on to help, and volunteers are being trained to work with the homeless when the center is open. Since the center has no kitchen facilities, the participating churches are preparing their own meals and bringing them to the shelter.

In addition to hot meals, sandwiches are still being made for that program and a soup kitchen that operates daily at Full Gospel Temple. The sandwiches are served with soup provided by two area restaurants.

Volunteers, who meet at 9 a.m. the first Wednesday of the month at the Warren Road Light and Life Free Methodist Church in Westland, are trying to make sandwiches for both the soup kitchen and warming center.

"We invite people to join us to help make the sandwiches," said Ivey. "We try to make more so that we have more to share."

While Ivey feels prayers were answered with the reopening of the warming center, supporters are still hoping for a donation of two vans to transport the homeless to another shelter for the day and bring them back in the evening.

"We appreciate them allowing us to reopen," said Ivey. "Now my prayers are to get a permanent shelter, so we can work with the homeless year-round."

People interested in helping make sandwiches or work at the shelter, can call Ivey at the Warren Road Light and Life Church at (734) 458-7301.

Staff writer Darrell Clem contributed to this story.



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Who will be king?

Vying for the honor of reigning over Wayne Memorial High School's Coming Home festivities this weekend are seniors Daniel Porta of Wayne (from left), Justin Girouard of Wayne, Justin Collop of Wayne, William Follow of Wayne/Westland and Joshua Simmons of Inkster.



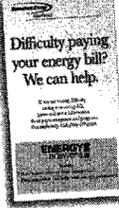


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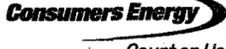
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Scholarship available

Westland firefighters are offering three scholarship for students interested in furthering their education. Two \$1,000 financial aid scholarships and one full ride scholarship that includes tuition and books for paramedic training, valued at \$6,000. Students must be full-time residents of the city of Westland and cannot be related to any current or past city of Westland employee. Applications are available at Westland Fire Station No. 1 at 36435 Ford Road. They must be postmarked by March 31 and can be sent to Capt. Tom

Wright/ Bobby Foust Scholarship, 37201 Marquette, Westland, MI 48185. For more information, call Wright at (734) 721-2003 or (734) 467-3201 or by e-mail at bobbyscholarship@yahoo.com

Free seminar

Vickey Foley, marketing director and development, and Penny Thomas, director of social service, both with Community Hospice, will explain advanced directives, at a free seminar at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 25, in Meeting Room A/B of the Westland Public Library, 6123 Central City Parkway.

Sometimes called living wills, advanced directives are documents which state a person's wishes on such things as extreme measures, feeding tubes and ventilators. Bonnie Hilberer, an advanced planning funeral professional with Vermeulen Funeral Homes, also will be there to explain options for funeral preplanning. For more information, call the library at (734) 326-6123.

Town hall

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli will have her first Town Hall meeting of 2006 at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the senior citizen Friendship Center,

1119 N. Newburgh. Residents are welcome to voice concerns or ask questions of Cicirelli and her administration.

Coffee with Glenn

State Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, announced that his next local coffee hour with his constituents will be 9-10:30 a.m. Monday, Feb. 20, at the Westland Big Boy restaurant, 6360 N. Wayne at Hunter.

Citizens are welcome to address Anderson with their concerns or questions.

Vegas Night

Garden City Hospital's Health Enhancement Center is bringing casino-style gaming to Westland at its annual "Heart of Gold" fund-raiser. The event, with a Vegas Night theme, takes place on 3-7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Hawthorne Valley Country Club, 7300 N. Merriman in Westland. All proceeds raised will benefit the center's Cardiac Rehabilitation Equipment Fund. Tickets are \$25 and are available by calling (734) 458-3248.

Participants will have the opportunity to play a variety of classic casino games and enjoy dinner while listening to musical entertainment provided by the Gold Tones. "Vegas Night" is sponsored by Midwest Cardiology Associates.

Open houses

St. Damian School will host its annual open house from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 12. An accredited Catholic school, St. Damian is accepting enrollment for all classes at the school at 29891 Joy Road between Middlebelt and Merriman. It offers 3- and 4-year-old preschool, full day kindergarten and grades 1-8. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

Willow Creek Co-Op Preschool will have an open house 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the preschool in Kirk of Our Savior Church, 36660 Cherry Hill, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-0078.

Realtors to visit LPS

Livonia Public Schools will present Realtor Appreciation

Day 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at Emerson Middle School, 29100 W. Chicago in Livonia.

The event will include lunch provided by district food service staff, a tour of the school, a presentation featuring the Legacy Initiative video and more. Supt. Randy Liepa will share a special presentation and be on hand to answer questions. All agents will receive district informational materials.

For more information regarding the event, agents can contact the district at (734) 744-2500.

Happy New Year

Celebrate the New Year - the Chinese New Year - at Chinese buffet hosted by the Grange and Harris-Kehrer VFW Post 3323 5-8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24.

This is the first of five monthly ethnic meals. There will be a St. Pat's Day dinner on March 17, Good Friday fish fry on April 14, German/Polish night on May 19 and Hawaiian luau on June 16.

The cost is \$7 for adults and \$4 for children 5-12 years old, youngsters age 4 and under free. Take-out orders are available for an additional 50 cents. The post is at 1055 S. Wayne Road at Avondale.

Toastmasters

The Westland Easy Talkers Toastmasters Club can help people overcome their fear of speaking in front of people by teaching public speaking in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. The club meets at 6:30 p.m. Thursday evenings at Denny's Restaurant, 7725 Wayne Road at Cowan.

For more information, call John Elbe at (734) 414-3401 or Curt Gottlieb at (734) 525-8445.

Scrapbook workshop

Ss. Simon and Jude Parish will have a scrapbooking workshop 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at the church, 32500 Palmer east of Venoy, Westland. The cost is \$35 for the full day and \$25 for a half day. For more information, contact Karen Kopcak at (734) 634-3934 or by e-mail at kholtenbeck@twmi.r.com.

Charity bowling

The Westland Chamber of Commerce will hold 2006 Winterfest charity bowling event 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at Westland Bowl, 5940 N. Wayne Road. Partial proceeds benefit the Joseph F. Benyo Scholarship Fund.

Registration is at 12:30 p.m. with the tournament starting at 1 p.m. Four-person teams will bowl, alternating every fourth frame. Cost is \$120 per

team or \$30 per person. Price includes bowling, two well drinks and dinner buffet after the tournament at Marvaso's Italian Grille, 6569 N. Wayne Road.

For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Men's Club is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Feb. 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.

Singers needed

Do you like singing religious music, Kirk of Our Savior on Cherry Hill west of Wayne Road, Westland, is looking for singers for its adult (ages 13 and up) traditional choir. All Christian faiths and all voice ranges are welcome.

Rehearsals are at 7 p.m. Thursdays. For more information, call Tim at (734) 718-8733 or the church at (734) 728-1088.

Car donations

People with a car to donate can give it to Veterans Haven. The organization is accepting cars, running or not running, that are given to veterans to provide them with transportation to work, school of medical needs.

To date, the agency has given away more than 250 vehicles and three fully furnished mobile homes to needy veterans. To donate, call Veterans Haven at (734) 728-0527 or go to vetshaveninfo.org on the Internet.

Room rentals

Looking for more office space? Planning a party? Having a meeting?

Look no further than the YWCA of Western Wayne County. If you or someone you know is looking to start or expand a business, the YWCA has office space available for rent. There also is room to have meetings for any organization.

The YWCA is available for birthday parties, wedding or baby showers, luncheons, or any other celebration.

Kitchen facilities also are available. It also has accommodations for dance and aerobics classes.

Evening and weekend times are available. Call the YWCA of Western Wayne County at (313) 561-4110, Ext. 18, for more information on facility rentals. The YWCA is at 26279 Michigan Ave., Inkster.

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Nominations sought for Salute to Excellence

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, preparing for her State of the City address, will again share the spotlight with an exemplary father, mother, teacher, high school student and two senior citizens.

Cicirelli will hand out her Salute to Excellence awards during her fifth State of the City address, set for 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 12, at the senior Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh. The public is invited.

Cicirelli, continuing an awards ceremony started by former Mayor Robert

Thomas, will honor the winners during a night in which she will tout the accomplishments her administration has made during the last year. She also will share her vision for Westland's future.

Nomination forms for Father of the Year and Mother of the Year are available at the mayor's City Hall office, on Ford Road between Wayne and Newburgh.

They should be returned to her office by 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, or mailed to her executive assistant, Terry Carroll, at the City of Westland, 36601 Ford Road, Westland, MI, 48185.

Cicirelli said Monday that her office is

working with local schools to garner nominations for Teacher of the Year and High School Senior of the Year.

She also will give two awards to senior citizens - one for leadership and one for community service. Westland Senior Resources Director Peggy Ellenwood said letters of nomination may be brought or mailed to the Friendship Center.

Winners in each category must be available to attend the State of the City program. For more information, call the mayor's office at (734) 467-3200.

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

DEATHS

B
Lillian "Patricia" Bassett
Bassett, 90, of Plymouth, died Feb. 12.
Danny Bogush
Bogush, 80, of Troy, died Jan. 27.
C
Philip Thomas Calder Jr.
Calder, 42, of York, Pa., died Feb. 10.
D
Helen M. DeSmet
DeSmet, 84, died Feb. 11.
G
Jason William Gamble
Gamble, 28, of Wayne, died Jan. 9.
H
Melda Hilgendorf
Hilgendorf, 85, of Austin, Texas, for-

merly of Rochester, died Feb. 9.
R
Ronald Dean Roberts
Roberts, 74, of Gold Canyon, Ariz., formerly of Farmington and Livonia, died Nov. 23, 2005.
Francis William Rockwell II
Rockwell, 82, of Bloomfield Township, died Jan. 11.
W
Kay E. Walsh
Walsh, 69, died Feb. 8.

Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in *Passages* on page C8.

LIST

FROM PAGE A1

Personnel and cross-referenced them with State Police records. The burden of proof fell on the school district and employees.

"That takes time and money and isn't a good use of our time," Baracy said. "The names don't match the ethnicity, the birth dates, the ages. That should have been done before the list was sent to the districts."

According to Baran, the consensus among MEA representatives is that the list most likely has a 90 percent error rate for felonies and at least a 60 percent error rate for misdemeanors.

"We know a 9-year-old didn't steal a car or an 8-year-old didn't hold up a liquor store, they didn't match up birth dates to names," she said. "Yes, there's people out there with those records, they just don't work in this school district."

Baracy had said the district would not violate the law and respond to the FOI request made by *The Detroit News*, but stressed that the district "would not disclose any list where innocent people are falsely listed as criminals."

"I'm obligated to protect my employees," he said. "Even if it's false, once information like that is made public, it can't be retracted."

"The News says people have the right to know, but we say the people have the right to know the truth," said Baran. "We're so grateful the judge granted the injunction. We believe the districts, through the state Department of Education and the State Police, will get an appropriate list and it appears there will be a lot fewer felons on it."

smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112

ACHIEVERS

Four Westland residents have been named to the fall 2005 Dean's List at Michigan Technological University in Houghton.

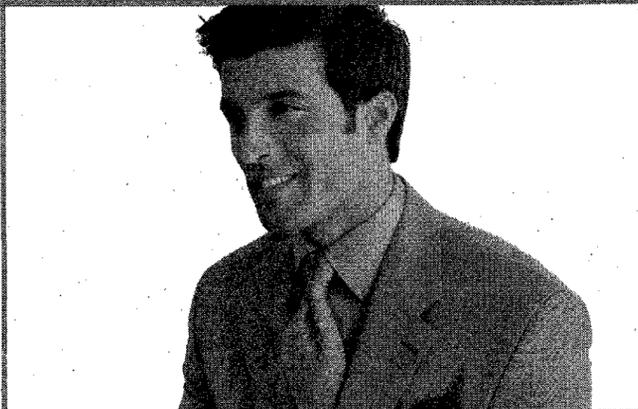
Earning at least a 3.5 grade point average were **Andrew Hafeli**, a junior majoring in materials science and energy; **Aaron Havel**, a freshman majoring in civil engineering; **Douglas Williams**, a junior majoring in chemical engineering, and **Jon Woods**, a senior majoring in computer science.

Receiving their degrees at the end of the past term at Madonna University were Westland residents **Jason Beauchamp**, English; **Jennifer Chapman**, Criminal Justice Private Investigation and Criminal Justice; **Kimberly Hamann**, Nursing; **Brandon Hannah**, Social Work; **Michael Harbold**, Criminal Justice; **Michael Kennedy**, Criminal Justice; **Cecile MacDonell**, Gerontology; **Kim Tangalan**, Private Security Certificate; **Kim Tangalan**, Criminal Justice Private Investigation and Criminal Justice, and **David Tishkowski**, Psychology - Mental Health.

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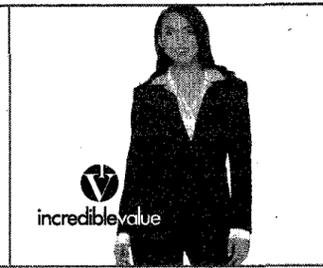
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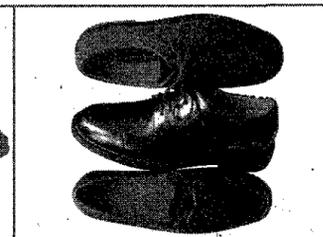
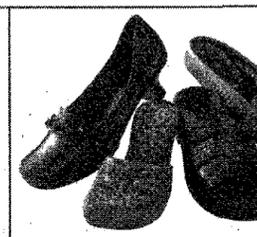
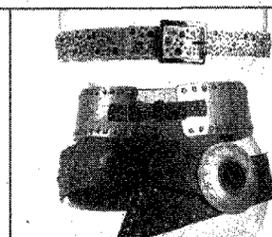
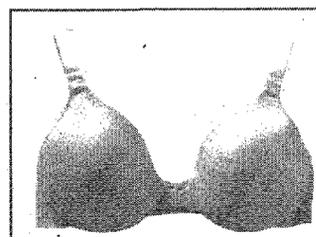


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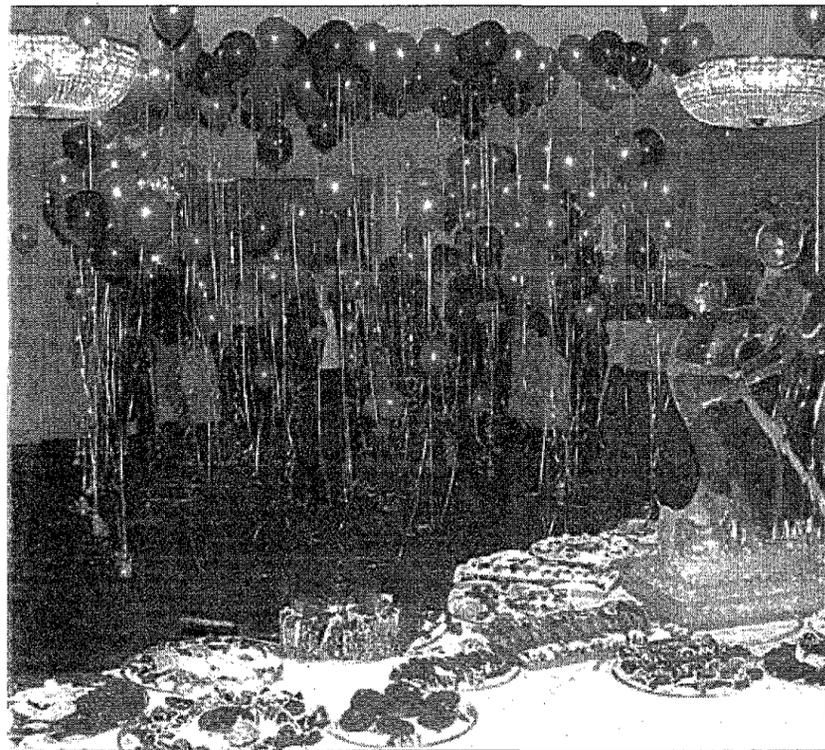
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Three tables of chocolate confections and white and milk chocolate fountains tempted the guests at the second annual Chocolate Fantasy Ball.

ATHENA

FROM PAGE A1

and Welfare Advisory Committee. "Joan is the finest example of selfless volunteerism in our community," Lyon wrote. "And to other women, she has passed on that passion and compassion that drives her to hard work and mobilizing others to reach out to those in need."

REACHING OUT

Carr was among six women nominated for this year's award. In addition to Bowman, the recently retired director of the Westland Youth Assistance Program, others are: Mary Browe, supervisor of the Wayne-Westland Community Schools' Dyer Senior Center; Linda DeVore, a dietitian and diabetes educator who works at Henry Ford Dialysis and Garden City Hospital; Marsha Bianconi, the executive director of the Conference of Western Wayne, and Diane Browning, assistant librarian at Eastern Michigan University and service unit manager for the Girl Scouts of Huron Valley.



Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, an ATHENA Award winner herself, presents Joan Carr with a proclamation during the awards portion of the Chocolate Fantasy Ball.

Carr is best known in Westland for the Red Wagon project. She started the program seven-eight years ago to bring books to children in the Norwayne area who have no way to get to the city's public library. She brought the idea to the church and got it going. One of her very first volunteers was Bowman.

The project went on to be named as the best community service program in the state by the Michigan Association of School Boards and was presented at a National Association of School Boards convention.

HUGS TO GIVE

Carr views the Red Wagon project as an offshoot of her work with St. Vincent de Paul. Through her church, Ss. Simon and Jude, she visits families that request assistance, determining if they need what they've asked for and often finding they need even more. She dispenses hope to women who feel dejected and depressed, and serves up hugs for those who haven't had one in a long time.

"I try to convey to them that we do care and that they truly have a choice, that they don't have to stay there," she said.

What makes what Carr does even more special is that she doesn't live in Westland. In fact, she never has lived in the city. She called Garden City

home for 52 years, before she and husband Joe moved to Canton two years ago.

Her connection comes through church. The mother of four boys all born one year apart, she found the "math didn't add up" at St. Raphael Church in Garden City which allowed moms in the crying room with two small children and didn't allow any small children in the church during services. So the Carrs switched churches, moving to Ss. Simon and Jude, located on the edge of the Norwayne community.

She doesn't see herself as a shining example. The people she influences, she said, are because they're compassionate. She does nothing more than give them the opportunity to be that.

"I believe we get more than we give when we do volunteer work," she said. It is Carr's giving that have inspired those who have worked with her on the health and welfare committee and the Red Wagon project.

"Women who have been fortunate enough to work beside her have all benefited from the contagious nature of her leadership," Lyon wrote. "We all want to follow her lead as women in this community who are committed to the greater good and the improvement of the quality of life for all."

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Dinner dance to raise money for people with developmental disabilities

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

Christine Lerchen believes her daughter Elizabeth might not be moving into her own condominium if not for the help she received through the years from the Arc of Northwest Wayne County in Redford. The nonprofit supports people with developmental disabilities and their families by providing educational opportunities, information, and advocacy.

Fund-raisers such as the annual dinner dance Saturday, Feb. 25, at Vladimir's in Farmington make it possible for the organization to offer services and programs that allow members to develop socially and contribute to the community.

"Elizabeth is age 25 now and I don't think she would have had the fully included life she has had if not for the Arc of Northwest Wayne County," said Christine Lerchen, the Arc's executive director.

"The Lekotek play sessions I started in 1988 as a volunteer were meant to draw in young families to keep the Arc strong. In the program the children enjoy toys and have a lot of fun but families get to know about

the Arc and learn about services in the community to help sons and daughters become viable members of the community, to be fully included in the fabric of life, first in school and then the community."

This year the nonprofit hopes to raise \$10,000 so staff can continue to answer phone calls and meet with families who are trying to access special education and mental health systems. Volunteer and grant or staff-based programs provide a variety of opportunities for people with developmental disabilities including training them to participate in Special Olympics. Fund-raisers such as the dinner dance raise money to pay for the rental of gyms and transportation to state games.

The Arc's Just Fun Club coordinates social activities including monthly dances for adults with developmental disabilities. Another program, After I'm Gone, helps parents plan for their adult children when they're no longer able to care for them. Still another program, guides parents through alternatives to guardianship.

Marianne DiPonio Licari's brother is involved with swim-

ming as part of the Arc's athletic program. Duane is one of the reasons she's volunteered to serve as chairperson of the dinner dance which is expected to draw around 350 people. Her family, the DiPonios, founded the annual fund-raiser that provides services to help Duane and other Arc members find jobs in the community. Currently, Duane, 40, works at Joe's Produce in Livonia.

"I feel it's such a good cause," said Licari of Livonia who'll be in attendance with all six of her brothers and sisters, and their children who volunteer to make the dinner dance and a May golf outing successful. "It's a fun evening that brings together not only members of the Arc but other people in the community, all age groups. People who help with raffles are 16 and there are others in their 70s. The dinner dance is not only for fund raising but to come out and have a good time. The band, Mass Transit, actually donates their services for the evening.

"We have great raffles for two tickets to the Pistons, a flat screen TV, an extravaganza for 5 different metro Detroit area restaurants. After dinner, we'll

have a huge sweet table with items from Elite Sweets of Livonia. Others involved with the dance bake sweets for the table. It's a family affair and you can't beat the price that includes an open bar, family style dinner and pizza later in the evening."

The annual dinner dance runs from 6:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 25. Tickets are \$50, \$40 per person with a developmental disability, and available by calling (313) 532-7915.

lchomin@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2145



Guests of all ages enjoyed the 2005 dinner dance to benefit the Arc of Northwest Wayne County in Redford.

Red Kettle campaign hits target

The Salvation Army reported last week that its 2005 Red Kettle Christmas Campaign raised a total of \$6,767,905 from Nov. 18, 2005, through Jan. 31, 2006, the highest amount ever raised in the annual drive by the Eastern Michigan Division. The 2005 Christmas campaign increased from the \$6,098,000 raised in 2004; an even more significant increase from the \$4.82 million raised in the 2003.

In 2005, southeast Michigan donated an additional \$3 mil-

lion to The Salvation Army for tsunami relief and \$5 million in response to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita relief efforts.

"We are immensely grateful for the generosity our community has shown to the world and to our neighbors throughout the last year," said Major Norman Marshall, divisional commander for The Salvation Army Eastern Michigan.

With Detroit recently ranked the poorest city in the country with a 33 percent poverty rate,

demand for The Salvation Army's services continue to rise. Salvation Army officials are crediting the successful fund-raising campaign to the Detroit community's outstanding generosity in times of great need and to initiatives developed by The Salvation Army to streamline operation costs including the online volunteer drive, Ringbell.org, which filled more than 6,400 hours of bell ringing from Nov. 18 through Dec. 24.

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OUR VIEWS

ATHENA: Carr is excellent choice

How do you improve on perfection? Just ask the Women of Westland, Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and State Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia. The trio pulled off yet another evening of elegance and chocolate decadence with their Westland ATHENA Chocolate Fantasy Ball.

It once again was the perfect backdrop for an award that recognizes an individual who has demonstrated excellence, creativity and initiative in his or her business and profession; contributed time and talent to help improve the quality of life for others, and assisted women in realizing their full leadership potential.

The honor this year goes to Joan Carr, a retired psychiatric nurse who has filled her golden years with volunteer work.

Carr is an excellent choice for the honor. During her nursing career, she helped develop the first child psychiatry program at the University of Michigan Hospital. But it is her award-winning Red Wagon Literacy Program which provides books to youngsters in Norwayne and her work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society that stand out.

Carr is not shy to ask someone she meets if they would like to pull a wagon and deliver books during the summer. Nor is she shy about giving out hugs to those she helps through St. Vincent de Paul. For some, she says, her hug is the first they have received in "a long time."

But the biggest thing she brings to the children and families in Norwayne is hope where there is no hope. She gives the women the idea "that someone cares."

What is so amazing about Carr is that she does this for Westland even though she has never lived in the city. She lived in Garden City for more than 50 years and just recently moved to Canton. Her connection with Westland came when her family began attending Mass at Ss. Simon and Jude Church.

Six women were nominated for the this year's ATHENA Award. All were excellent choices, but Carr stands head and shoulders above them in what she has done. She is a shining example of the saying of where there's a will, there's a way.

We congratulate Carr on being named Westland's 2006 ATHENA Award winner and encourage residents to celebrate her success by sending her books - children's books - to keep her wagons filled this summer.

Michigan must act on lobbying reform

In 2005, Michigan had 2,573 registered lobbyists or lobbyists' agents working in Lansing to prod legislators and administrators on everything from environmental protection to tax abatements. If you own a business, belong to a union, hunt, farm, teach or provide health care, you're represented by lobbyists in Lansing and Washington.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. Lobbyists provide valuable information for legislators and administrators on every conceivable issue. Sometimes they even write the initial legislation on an issue.

But as the recent news about lobbyist Jack Abramoff and former Majority Leader Tom DeLay shows, there is a line between lobbying and bribery. The Congress is currently debating several campaign financing and lobby reform measures. Republicans are attempting to distance themselves from the Abramoff scandal, which primarily involves Republicans. Democrats see an opportunity to use the issue in this year's crucial congressional elections.

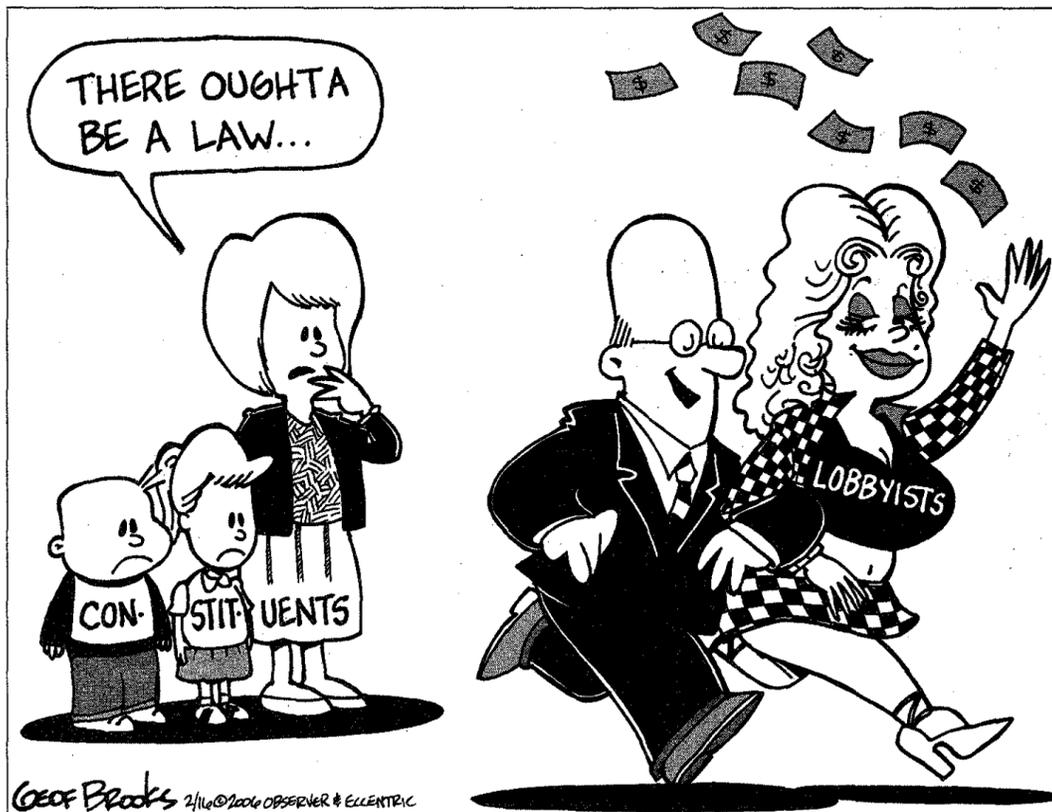
Gov. Jennifer Granholm used her State of the State address as an opportunity to push for several campaign and lobbying reforms.

In Michigan, lobbying is regulated under the Michigan Lobby Regulation Act of 1978. The Michigan Department of State Bureau of Elections sets various monetary thresholds for expenditures or compensation for which lobbyists must register. The thresholds are adjusted annually based on the Detroit Consumer Price Index.

More needs to be done. Granholm has called for a series of ethics reforms "that will require public officials to disclose their financial information so taxpayers know elected officials are working for the public, not enriching themselves."

Michigan is one of the few states that doesn't require financial disclosure statements.

While there is nothing wrong with lobbying for legislation, there is a great deal wrong with public officials accepting bribes to do the bidding of lobbyists. Now is the time to act quickly for honest government.



Geoff Brooks 2/16/06 OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

LETTERS

Not guys, but customers

I have noticed something spreading around the local restaurants lately.

It's called: "You Guys"
"You guys want to order now?"
"You guys want refills?"
"Can I get you guys anything else?"
"Your table's ready, guys"

This happened at an Italian restaurant, a Coney Island, and at the fast food place the cashier looked up and said "uhh" to take my order.

Managers, when training your employees, stress that we are not their pals, buddies, or friend.

We are paying customers.

Diane Kurgan
Garden City

Step aside

The state of Michigan can help solve the electricity shortage by stepping aside for a change. "Deregulation" requires utilities sell power to competitors at prices so low they can then re-sell it for less.

This is neither deregulation nor competition - just unreasonable activism in the marketplace, leaving investors little inducement to build new coal plants.

Coal is plentiful and cheap, but it is dirty to handle and dangerous to mine. Atomic power is cleaner, safer, cheaper and the target of mass hysteria. Attorney General Frank Kelly ordered a nuclear plant closed and dismantled when it was ready to come online. The utility felt customers should pay, but charging investors (including many retirees) was better politics. Gas and oil beneath the Great Lakes are accessible by slant drilling, but this too is prohibited by law.

Environmentalists "know not what they do," but they could study science and economics before influencing politics.

Hank Borgman
Farmington

Remove affirmative action

The proposal that is backed by the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative to ban race and gender preferences in universities I think is the best thing for the state of Michigan. I do not think it was fair that maybe someone who is African American with the same test scores as a white person should be picked instead of the white person because they are African American. How is that fair? It's not.

Just because someone is a different race does not mean that they should be picked over someone else. That would be like saying that you have brown hair and someone else with blonde hair was picked over you because you're brunette so you can not go to this college. In the past the affirmative action was placed so people with different diversities could attend college because they were being discriminated. This way the colleges would have a diversity of people. Today I think it is time to remove affirmative action as long as the different diversities

do not get discriminated.

I also think affirmative action should be removed because now it is discriminating the white's rights. Someone who is white could qualify for a job but get rejected because the job might require a minority to reach that company's standard for affirmative action. This is discriminating whites because they can not have the job because they are white. Just like in the past blacks got refused for certain jobs because they were black. Now if we were to take affirmative action away I think people getting jobs will finally be fair and equal to everyone. I think it will help everywhere.

In conclusion, I think affirmative action has done what it was supposed to do. It would be better to do away with it once and for all.

Brittany Bishop
Livonia

Michigan must rebound

Recently Gov. Jennifer Granholm was quoted as saying that her five-point economic plan she introduced to the state was already creating jobs for Michigan citizens. In this era of globalization, we must build upon our strengths and diversify our economy to be competitive.

The numbers so far from this plan have been great, as 132 companies have announced expansions in Michigan and have invested over \$3.7 billion in the state this year. She also said that there were three crucial areas of success in this last year (2005) from this plan pertaining to: securing jobs, protecting families, and educating our kids. Michigan hasn't seen the job total over 279,000 since 2003; the plan has also helped to keep 1,650 fugitives off the streets protecting children at schools and child care facilities; and she has also demanded a new high school curriculum in which the standards are much more rigorous and will surely give youths a better education.

It's clear that Gov. Granholm knew what she was doing when she introduced this plan for Michigan and it has obviously helped Michigan to see a more diverse economy, create good paying jobs, and as the governor simply puts it, protect our quality of life. I have never really put much thought into Gov. Granholm and her ideas, but after reading this article, and having known about Michigan's poor economy, I have become much more interested in our state politics and policies.

It is important for Michigan's economy to rebound as quickly as possible. The population has been decreasing rapidly over the last few years, and hopefully Gov. Granholm's plan will help to bring people back to Michigan. Hopefully, with the promise of a well paying, secure job, people will not turn their backs towards Michigan and help to rejuvenate a crippled state. I know I feel more comfortable now, knowing that I will have a secure job in my future, in Michigan.

Dan Crosby
Livonia

Questioning McCotter's view

Recently I came across a news article consisting of letters written by eighth-grade journalism students at Frost Middle School in Livonia. One letter written by Hanlin Yang regarding the Iraq war says in part: "and the Downing Street memos that prove without a doubt that any real intelligence was being shot down as though it were the Luftwaffe in favor of pro-war propaganda. Let's not even mention how there were no terrorists in Iraq before Saddam was overthrown."

Well, this young person has it exactly right. Contrast this with the position of our U.S. Rep. Thaddeus McCotter, who when asked at a public event why we were in Iraq answered that it was to fight the ones who attacked us on 9/11. When it was pointed out that Iraq had nothing to do with al-Qaeda, who actually attacked us, McCotter continued to insist it was. I have personally received a similar response to this question from members of McCotter's staff at various meetings.

As everyone by now knows, including former Secretary of State Colin Powell, there was no evidence to suggest Iraq and Saddam Hussein were at all involved with Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, who actually attacked us. From this, one could reasonably conclude that McCotter does not have the sense of an eighth-grader.

To those of you who may not believe that anyone could still hold such a viewpoint in light of all the evidence that has been brought to light, I would invite you to ask him yourself at his next town hall meeting or "coffee chat." The only problem is, however, that when I called his office to find out when he had any meetings scheduled, I was told that there had been nothing scheduled as yet. With an anti-constituent and pro-corporate lobbyist voting record as McCotter has, I suppose I would not be too willing to want to face the voters - though it is customary for congressmen to hold town hall meetings when they are on recess. Therefore you'll have to call him at (734) 632-0314, and let him know what's on your mind.

Kenneth Hymes
Redford

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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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QUOTABLE

"My legislation isn't a takeover of the department, but a way to ensure that the water department's operations are reviewed and that recommendations for improvements are made."

- State Rep. Laura Toy, about Senate approval of her bill that would create an advisory board with oversight over the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Patterson's message is right: SBT is a killer for Michigan

I had the opportunity to hear L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County executive, deliver his State of the County speech last week. Patterson, no shrinking wallflower, spoke of a "healthy," "strong" and "robust" county. He went on to explain and update the initiatives he has introduced, including Wireless Oakland and Emerging Sectors. He explained that the core of the initiatives "launched over the past 13 years have patience as an ingredient." He gave credit to his team for its accomplishments, but that's his style. He plans ahead, is bold and gives credit where credit is due.

Patterson saved the best for last when he called for those assembled and those who were listening to pledge \$800,000 to launch a petition drive to place on the November 2006 ballot the repeal of Michigan's Single Business Tax. He has established a Web site called www.repealSBT.com to help those who want to make a pledge. A telephone number (888) SayNoSBT (729-6672) is also available.

He explains as "a ballot question, corporate dollars are acceptable and there is no limit that a company or individual can contribute."

As of today, the SBT is scheduled, in phases, to expire in 2009. Is this too late or just right?

Is Patterson smoking something or is he on to something? Is he saying the emperor has no clothes?

Many are not familiar with the SBT. It's a tax on businesses, not individuals. An individual pays a tax on his/her income. One could rightly assume that if a corporation or company records a profit that it will pay a (income) tax to the state. If the company loses money, it pays no (income) tax. Wrong. The SBT is essentially a tax on payroll — jobs. That's why Patterson calls it a "job killer, it's a business killer." So with a tax on payroll is a business going to expand in Michigan, is it going to add jobs in Michigan or is it going to move to Michigan? I say no, unless it's absolutely necessary to do so or it is "locked" into staying here. Let me speak from experience.

For more than 25 years, I was the president and CEO of HomeTown Communications Network, a company owned by Philip and Kathy Power, operating principally in Michigan. This newspaper was owned by HomeTown. As one can imagine, in 25 years we had some good years and some bad years (read losses). Michigan's economy, as we all know, is very cyclical. From memory, in every year, whether we earned a profit or experienced a loss, we had to pay the SBT. Now how fair is that?

Some would complain that they would like to not pay any tax at all even if they earned substantial sums, but I don't agree. Don't complain — if

Many are not familiar with the SBT. It's a tax on businesses, not individuals. An individual pays a tax on his/her income. One could rightly assume that if a corporation or company records a profit that it will pay a (income) tax to the state. If the company loses money, it pays no (income) tax. Wrong. The SBT is essentially a tax on payroll — jobs.

you are making a profit, pay your fair share of a fair tax.

So when we were looking to expand or acquire, we were very cognizant of the SBT. It was one of the reasons when we expanded the telephone directory business we went to Kentucky vs. Michigan. How many other businessmen make similar decisions?

Now, I am not advocating that we eliminate all taxes or eliminate the revenue the tax raises and neither is Patterson. I do agree with Patterson, however, that the SBT is a job killer and it puts Michigan at a disadvantage when compared to other states.

Patterson offers various solutions to replace the \$1.8 billion the SBT raises, such as a "fair corporate tax on profits, dropping the sales tax from 6 percent to 5 percent but extending its base ... a sales tax on gross receipts ... charging a fee for business licenses based on gross sales. There is a host of options to explore."

He is giving the Legislature and the governor the opportunity and the time to replace the revenue the SBT raises. If the petition drive is successful and the issue is on the November ballot and passed by the voters, the SBT goes away for the state's fiscal year beginning October 2007. That gives the powers that be a year, ample time to replace the revenue the SBT raises.

I would argue that the fairest tax is a tax on profits — net income. If a corporation is making money, it should pay a portion in tax to the state; if it is losing money, it should not pay a tax. In any event, when we desperately need jobs, the SBT — a tax on payroll — is a sure way to kill jobs.

If you agree, go to the Web site or call and make your pledge. It doesn't take much from any of us to raise \$800,000. Then help circulate petitions to obtain the necessary signatures so the voters can decide on the job killer SBT.

Patterson is right on — the SBT is a job killer.

Richard Aginian is president and publisher of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. He welcomes your feedback at raginian@hometownlife.com.

Super Bowl overshadowed big news from cancer researcher

Lost amidst all the excitement about the Super Bowl being in Detroit this month was the most exciting news to come along in a very long time.

It was "stop the presses" news. Front page, banner headline news. Except, of course, it wasn't. Rather it was quietly delivered to a roomful of women at Oakland University. But to those of us gathered there, it seemed like a miracle.

Dr. Susan Love, the guru to women diagnosed with breast cancer, was at the university Feb. 1 to deliver the Varner Vitality Lecture. She is the author of the book considered the bible on the subject, *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book*. She may not be a household name — unless your household has been affected by breast cancer.

Her audience, filled with survivors of the disease, burst into applause when she wound up her talk with the stunning news that she believes the cure will be found within five years.

This wasn't wishful thinking or some pie-in-the-sky pipe dream designed to get the audience to open its wallets. A surgeon for 30 years, Love is engaged in research through her own foundation. She has patented a device and invented a process known as ductal lavage that is allowing researchers to learn more about the anatomy of the breast than they've ever known before. Her innovations are closing in on the day when very early detection will be followed localized treatment and cure.

Despite all the walks, sales of a rainbow of pink-hued merchandise and billions of dollars raised, there's still a lot the medical profession doesn't know about breast cancer — or about cancer in general, unfortunately. They don't know, for example, why one person's body will make cancer and why another's, perhaps someone who's smoked for decades, never will.

But they're making progress. Because of that, many theories of the past, and the horrible treatments they engendered, have since been discarded.

As I waited for Love's lecture to begin, the room filled up around me with breast-cancer survivors. One woman was newly diagnosed; another had just had her first real haircut since chemotherapy and its resulting baldness. Just listening to the conversations did

my heart good. Despite the sad news that so many have to go through the rigors of surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiation, one couldn't help but feel good that so many recover and go back to their normal lives, even if it's a "new normal," as one woman said.

After working to save patients for so long, Love has taken a back-to-basics approach, challenging herself to discover the root cause and then a treatment that doesn't practically kill the patient.

She talked about some hopeful research that points toward a possible approach. A researcher exposed laboratory mice to a carcinogen, then sent a weak solution of a chemotherapy drug through their nipples and into their milk ducts. The mice didn't get cancer.

She said the drug, one that is already in use in women but at much higher doses, won't cause the standard chemo side-effects at the lower dosage.

Love has a teenage daughter who, she said, inspires her to keep working for the cure. She didn't say so, but I'll bet that every time she faces a room full of survivors, they give her an inspirational boost as well.

In a flier handed out at the lecture, Love is quoted as saying, "I am excited and impatient. The road is clear. We can go slowly or quickly, but every day we delay another 592 women will be diagnosed and 110 will die. The cost is too high to hesitate."

She urges women to "go beyond pink ribbons, walks and races" to get involved in research. More information can be found on her Web site, www.drusanloveresearchfoundation.org.

These days one in eight women in the U.S. is diagnosed with breast cancer. With those odds, no one can feel immune. Many, many more go through repeated tests after suspicious lumps are felt or spots are seen on mammograms.

During a question-and-answer session, Love's eyes lit up and she smiled when she had to answer a question, "I wish I knew." She knows a lot, but there's still so much to learn. With the finish line tantalizingly close, one can understand her impatience.

I hope she never loses that. God bless the impatient scientist who quietly goes about making the world safer for her daughter, and all of ours.

Annette Kingsbury is a *Rochester Eccentric* staff writer. She can be reached at 651-7575, Ext. 17, or akingsbury@hometownlife.com.



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Oakland executive wants Single Business Tax on ballot

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

County Executive L. Brooks Patterson will show the way to a Michigan without the Single Business Tax if private citizens will provide the near \$1 million to put on a ballot drive, but representatives of the governor have said there will be no support for a plan that eliminates the SBT on the backs of working families.

At his State of the County address in Troy last week, Patterson said that if donors would come up with the money, he'd spearhead a ballot drive to eliminate the state's Single Business Tax.

"It's time to end the Single Business Tax," he said. "And so tonight not only do I call for an end of the Single Business Tax but I am prepared to put the question of its repeal before the public on the ballot this November."

All he needs is \$800,000 within the next 10 days. While he cannot place an item on the ballot himself,

Patterson said he's got a law firm and a public relations firm "that will guarantee to put the question on the ballot in November."

The SBT is a value-added tax base on three components labor (compensation and benefits), capital (depreciation, interest, dividends and royalties) and profits. The tax was created in 1975 as a way of stabilizing tax revenue for the state. Critics say the SBT penalizes businesses for being successful.

On Friday, the 15-member Republican caucus of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners pledged \$1,500 to put the issue on the November ballot.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm's press secretary Liz Boyd said the governor stands ready to alter or eliminate the SBT, something she's proposed in the past.

"She proposed changes in January of '05 that would have cut the SBT from 1.9 percent to 1.2 percent, that was voted down by the legislature,"

she said. "That would have been a significant tax cut for three-quarters of the businesses in the state."

What would not happen, she said, was a shift in tax burden from the state's wealthiest corporations to working families.

"The governor will not support cuts to schools, health care or public safety," Boyd said.

The need to repeal the tax, Patterson said, was indicated in the state's numbers.

"We are 50th in economic momentum, 50th in job creation, 49th in personal income gains, we are the only state except for two ravaged by hurricanes, to suffer a net job loss in '04 and '05," Patterson said. "And, of course, we're number one in unemployment."

Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives Craig DeRoche (R-38), who introduced Patterson as "bold, innovative and creative," said he welcomed the SBT challenge.

"We have to get there for

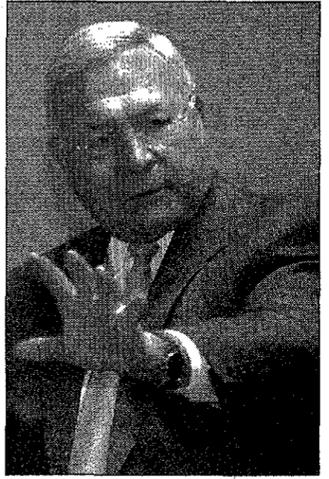
Michigan's future," he said. "We have to get to the meat and potatoes of attracting business."

Citizen's Research Council Director of State Affairs Tom Clay said removing the SBT would have a significant impact on the state's general fund.

"SBT is 22 percent of the general fund," he said. "The general fund spends 85 percent of its funds in four areas: Higher education, corrections, the Department of Community Health and the Department of Human Services."

The 22 percent figure is, coincidentally, the exact amount of the higher education or corrections budgets. While he doubts that the state will eliminate either program, he said realistic discussions have to happen before any tax cut goes into effect.

"If they're going to discuss cutting revenues they have to come up with some way of cutting on the spending side," Clay said. "Budgeting is a two-part process."



County Executive Brooks Patterson will supply the muscle to end the state's Single Business Tax if others supply the cash.

Airport receives federal funds

Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) will be receiving \$14 million in federal funding for airport improvement projects.

The funding was announced recently by U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Birmingham, and Wayne County Airport Authority CEO Lester Robinson

Addressing the media in the ticketing lobby of DTW's McNamara Terminal, Knollenberg listed the projects these earmarked transportation grants will help to fund:

- \$6 million for Multilateration Surveillance Technology Equipment
- \$5 million for rehabilitation of one runway
- \$2 million for capacity enhancements for another runway

- \$1 million for aircraft deicing fluid disposal infrastructure

"These projects will contribute to the safe and efficient operation of Detroit Metro Airport," said Knollenberg, who serves as chairman of the House Transportation Treasury Appropriations Committee. "Because it is a major connecting hub airport, improvements in Detroit will have a significant beneficial impact on aviation elsewhere in the nation."

THE PROJECTS

Multilateration Surveillance Technology will help DTW improve arrival capacity during low visibility conditions by significantly improving air traffic control's ability to monitor aircraft on final approach. Equipment upgrades would enhance DTW's low-visibility arrival rate from 72 to 96 aircraft per hour-taking full advantage of DTW's four parallel runways. Estimated project cost: \$8 million. Amount from this grant: \$6 million.

Runway 3R/21L Rehabilitation: The runway and associated taxiways require major rehabilitation consisting of the total replacement of the top 17 inches of concrete and nine inches of underlying asphalt as well as the repair and resurfacing of the asphalt shoulders. Estimated project cost: \$74 million. Amount from this grant: \$5 million.

Runway 3L/21R Capacity Enhancements: Primary focus will be on installing the appropriate navigational aids to improve the efficiency of this runway while other runways are undergoing rehabilitation. The project includes lengthening the runway as well as the extension of four associated taxiways, rehabilitation of centerline lighting, construction of a hold pad, drainage, shoulders, pavement markings and signage. Estimated project cost: \$35 million. Amount from this grant: \$2 million.

Aircraft deicing fluid disposal infrastructure: The Wayne County Airport Authority recycles the majority of the spent fluid which is sprayed by airlines to deice aircraft. Estimated project cost: \$7 million. Amount from this grant: \$1 million.

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