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High speed chase ends in arrest

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Romulus man is accused of driving a stolen car and leading Westland police on a chase that topped 100 mph early Saturday along Cherry Hill Road.

William David James, 26, was arrested after he crashed a 2003 Chrysler Concorde into a snow bank at Cherry Hill and Central in Inkster, police Sgt. Steve Borisch said.

James was arraigned Monday in Westland 18th District Court on charges of fleeing and eluding, receiving and concealing stolen property, and driving with a suspended license.

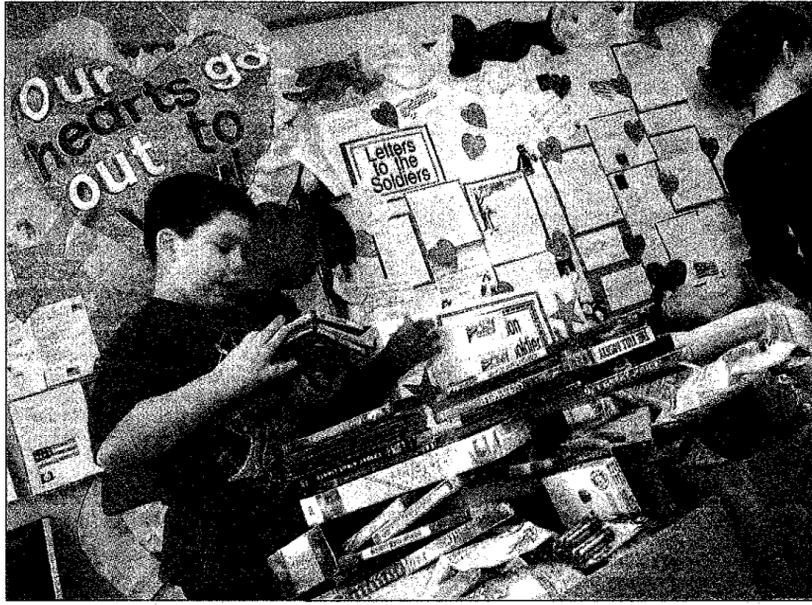
Judge Gail McKnight ordered James jailed on a \$100,000 cash bond and entered a not-guilty plea in his court file. She scheduled him for a Feb. 10 preliminary hearing that will determine whether he should stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

The incident started when a Westland police officer saw a motorist ignore a red traffic light at Newburgh and Cherry Hill about 3 a.m. Saturday, according to police reports.

The driver briefly pulled into a business parking lot before leading police on a high-speed chase along eastbound Cherry Hill, ignoring red traffic lights at several intersections, police said. The car had been reported stolen four days earlier in Highland Park.

The police officer pursued the driver until he lost control and crashed in Inkster, where he tried to flee on foot before he was captured, Borisch said. A passenger in the car was not arrested.

James was driving with a suspended license, and his criminal record indicated that he also was convicted in Detroit in 2003 for fleeing and eluding, according to police reports.



Brad Keogh, 7, (left) of Westland looks at the DVDs that have been collected for Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies at the Burger Center for Students with Autism. Helping packing the items Brandon White (behind left) and Shawn Agge (right).

TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students provide soldiers with 'ticket' to the movies

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Russ Mullen is making sure he sends an e-mail to his son, Sgt. Dennis Morton, about an extra special package headed his way.

The package is full of movies, popcorn, candy snacks and a few necessities and is coming from students and staff at the Burger Center for Students with Autism.

It's one three special deliveries being made to serve personnel in Iraq or en route to the country. Morton is stationed in Mosul with the 25th Infantry's Stryker Combat Team, while the brothers of Burger staff members Cathy Amatucci and Sandy Bosker are on their way to Iraq.

"The fact that they decided to do this is wonderful," said Mullen of the two-week-long Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies. "I think it's great."

Teacher Cheryl Chaveriat came up the idea for

the collection after hearing about Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies from her hairdresser.

She asked the parents of her students to make donations and include a picture and write a note to go with the donations. When other classes heard of it, they wanted to get involved.

By Monday morning, two extra-long folding tables in the hallway of the school were piled high with everything from microwave popcorn, candy, powdered drink mixes, canned cheese ravioli and DVD and VHS tapes like *I, Robot*, the *Star Wars* Trilogy, *Anchorman* and *The Full Monty*, and Quinn Ebner's favorite, *Friday Night Lights*.

"It's about football," the Canton youngster (Quinn) said of his selection.

Quinn was the first to respond to Operation Take a Soldier to the Movies, bringing in the movie, popcorn and drink mix. He also included

PLEASE SEE MOVIES, A7

Union calls off protest as contract talks resume

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Representatives of Michigan Education Association Local 4 and school district officials are headed back to the negotiating table in hopes of hammering out a new contract.

The move comes just days after hourly union members decided to take their concerns about the possible privatization of support services to the Wayne-Westland school board meeting Feb. 7.

According to Evelyn Baran, Wayne-Westland MEA executive director, the union Wednesday morning called off plans to be at the meeting.

"We have been called back to the table for expedited bargaining," said Baran. "It's a move that we're excited about."

Talk of privatizing custodial services had been circulating in the district for several weeks - talk that Superintendent Greg Baracy called "rumors with no substance."

Baracy last week confirmed that the district was researching privatization, but for informational purposes. Nothing has been discussed, and no decisions have been made, he said.

"We've talked to a few folks for informational purposes only," he said. "It's been blown out of proportion. We have to know, we have to be prepared to answer any and all questions on where we can contain costs."

According to Baracy, the school district "can't continue to do business in the same way" after being shortchanged millions of dollars by the state over the last three years. So school officials are looking at every aspect of the district operations in finding ways to trim more than \$7 million from the 2005-06 budget.

PLEASE SEE TALKS, A6

Former Agape Christian principal charged with sexual assault of student

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

A former principal at Agape Christian Academy is charged with the sexual assault of a former student which apparently began when she was a sophomore at the Canton Township school.

Clark Sexton, 30, of Westland pleaded not guilty Wednesday to two counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct, a felony which alleges penetration, and one count of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct, a misdemeanor.

Sexton was arraigned Wednesday in 35th District Court before Magistrate Eric Colthurst. Bond was set at \$30,000, and Colthurst ordered Sexton not to have any contact with the alleged victim. A preliminary exam is set for Feb. 11 in 35th District Court.

Canton police said the former principal turned himself in on Wednesday.

Police allege Sexton had a sexual relationship with the girl, who is now 20 and

lives in Canton, between 1999 and 2001. Sexton was hired by Agape in 1995, and became principal in July 1999. He left the school last May.

According to police reports, Sexton and the girl began a relationship when she was a sophomore. Police reports state the relationship continued into the student's junior year, when most of the sexual encounters allegedly took place.

Although the victim told police she broke off her relationship with Sexton, he allegedly kept e-mailing her until July 2004. Last month, the victim told her parents of the relationship and the police were also informed. After a two-week investigation, police arrested Sexton on Wednesday. The woman told police investigators that most of the sexual encounters took place in Sexton's vehicle in a parking lot near the northwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Haggerty Road.

Police officials said it makes no difference that the girl consented to the sexual

relationship.

"Consent plays no part, because of the age of the victim. The law says when you are 13, 14, 15, you can't give consent," said Canton Detective Sgt. Rick Pomorski.

Agape Christian Academy is on Geddes Road, east of Canton Center. It is a nondenominational Christian K-12 school with about 350 students.

According to Agape spokesman pastor Mark Moore, school officials were notified of the allegations the same day as the police.

"We heard about the allegations and are shocked and appalled," he said in a statement. "Our prayers go out to the alleged victim."

Moore said the school conducted background checks on Sexton.

"All proper safeguards were in place such as a criminal background check, a fingerprint check and also checking references. He passed all the requirements," he said.

Referrals increase for Youth Assistance

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER



Michael O'Gorman
Business Person
of the Year



Gary Leirstein
Mentor of the
Year



Jordan Barnes
Most Improved
Male



Heather Peck
Most Improved
Female

A Westland program that helps troubled youths improve their lives saw a one-year, 64 percent increase in referrals - a sign that more youngsters are getting the help they need, officials said.

The Westland Youth Assistance Program had 292 referrals in 2004 - a sharp increase over the previous year, Director Ronaele Bowman said.

"We're really working to make a difference in Westland by reaching the youths and the parents," she said Monday during the program's annual awards ceremony at DeLuca's restaurant.

The increase in youth referrals doesn't mean that more Westland youngsters are getting into trou-

PLEASE SEE REFERRALS, A6

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INDEX

Apartments F7
At Home B1
Automotive G7
Classified Index F5
Crossword Puzzle F6
For The Record A5
Jobs G3
Movie Guide E6
Obituaries C9
Real Estate F1
Sports C1
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Wear It!



Higher ed assignment thrills state rep

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

State Rep. John Stewart was looking forward to telling his 88-year-old mother, a Phi Beta Kappa, about his appointment as chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

Stewart, a Plymouth Township Republican, noted his mother's family included seven educators. He's also pleased about the appointment, made by new House of Representatives Speaker Craig DeRoche, R-Nowi.

"I'm excited and I love this appointment," said Stewart, who will also be vice chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee of Appropriations. "I couldn't be happier."

Stewart served four years on the subcommittee. He was elected to the Michigan House to represent the 20th District in 2000 and was re-elected in 2002 and 2004. His district includes Plymouth, Northville, Wayne and part of Canton Township east of I-275.

His subcommittee will have some six members of both parties "to do the brainwork, the heavy work. We're going to be a forum for re-establishing the value of higher education."

The legislators will determine appropriations for the state's 15 major public universities, as well as appropriations and scholarships for such smaller schools as Madonna University.

"It's been disheartening," Stewart said of the recent budget cuts in higher education. "We have taken a hit of 15 to 16 percent in the last two years," and are now cutting the substance of education.

"We're more aware than ever that universities can and should generate jobs," Stewart said, citing research and development for the auto industry and other fields.

Stewart and his wife have two daughters in Michigan schools. Laura is a senior at



JIM JAGDFELD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

State Rep. John Stewart, R-Plymouth Township, will chair the Higher Education Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, and will serve as vice chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee.

Western Michigan University studying education. She wanted to teach in China, but her dad said her education could be put to good use in Detroit or Benton Harbor schools.

Younger sister Sarah is a sophomore at Grand Valley State University. John Stewart earned a law degree from Detroit College of Law/Michigan State University, a master's in public administration from Wayne State University and a bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University.

Stewart recalled his four years at EMU, involved in music, IM sports and other activities. He believes EMU and other state universities are the best place for a student age 18-22 to find himself or herself.

Retention and student graduation are key issues for Stewart, as is holding the line on tuition. "We go over each university budget with a fine-toothed comb. We're not empire building," he said, adding the emphasis should be on students and their instruction.

Tuition control will require cooperation among Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Stewart's

Educators welcome Stewart's appointment

Those who have worked with John Stewart on education issues were pleased to hear of his recent Higher Education appointment.

"John has been not only a friend to education, but has always consulted with us when it comes down to educational issues and how pending legislation would affect children," said Greg Baracy, superintendent of Wayne-Westland Community Schools.

"Further, he represents his constituency well." Stewart considers education a priority and works diligently to support public policy that pertains to those issues, Baracy said, adding: "If we had more legislators in Lansing like John, the state's financial and educational problems may be solved."

Officials at Eastern Michigan University seemed equally pleased to have Stewart aboard.

"We are pleased he is in a leadership role," said Juanita Reid, vice president of university relations at EMU. "We wish him well."

Reid said EMU faces challenges in its budget, and that Stewart will help to reach EMU's goals.

Senate counterpart and himself, he said.

Stewart noted his district is close to four major universities, the Dearborn and Ann Arbor campuses of the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and EMU. His district has a high percentage of high school graduates going on to those schools.

He hopes to bring in Ford Motor Co. President James Padilla to testify as to what skills college graduates will need for the coming decades.

"We need to train and educate our students differently, to be leaner and more agile," Stewart said.

Stewart also hopes to bring in Philip Power, chairman of HomeTown Communications Network, which owns the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. He also plans to ask his uncle, Jack Shingleton, a former Michigan State University trustee and placement official, to testify, along with former Michigan Gov. William Milliken and others.

His major goal is to make

people aware "about the wonderful experience one can have getting a well-rounded undergraduate education in Michigan. We have a little bit of everything here."

Stewart also will work with Lt. Gov. John Cherry, whose commission recently released its report on higher education and economic growth.

"I welcome it, I support it," Stewart said of the report. He wants to, in the words of an old Methodist minister, give feet to our prayers and make education "a budget priority so that students can find tuition affordable."

Stewart was elected as a Plymouth Township trustee in 1988 and served until 1992. He is a member of the Kiwanis Club and the First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth.

Stewart, 55, and his wife, Beth, live in Plymouth Township. Beth Stewart is director of the Plymouth Historical Museum.

jbrown@oe.hometowncomm.net | (248) 901-2565

Open for business

Shop for a room-redux, shampoo your pup or dine in style at these offerings

Westland residents whet your appetites. **Longhorn Steakhouse** is preparing to open its doors at 35400 Warren Road. The restaurant chain originated in Atlanta in 1981 and has since spawned 235 locations.

According to Tracee Raglow, part of Longhorn's management team, the steakhouse offers "a wide range of menu selections including our savory chicken, mouth-watering salmon and of course our legendary steaks."

The restaurant also will feature a fully-stocked bar. An opening date has not yet been announced. For details, call (734) 466-4300.

DESIGNER'S TOUCH

With so much attention devoted to interior design, it was just a matter of time before someone would devise a way to re-design rooms using the home decor you already own.

That someone is Marleen Prater, owner of **Remixed Rooms**. Prater started her Canton-based business on the principal that homeowners, apartment-dwellers and loft-living could be even better with a designer's touch.

When Prater bought her home, she called an interior designer looking for advice. Instead, she was handed a hefty price tag of \$5,000 per room.

Her experience spurred the idea for Remixed Rooms. A half-day room makeover, just \$199, begins with a consultation where Prater gets to know her client and the intended use of the room. Then, she returns, clears the area out, "shops" around the entire house and redesigns the space.

"Whatever you have, I'll find things to fill the room," said Prater.

Prater offers a consultation service for \$75, as well as personal shopping and homestaging, each priced per hour.



Call (734) 502-2752 or send e-mail to mprater3@comcast.net. A Web site is coming soon to www.remixedrooms.com.

ALL WASHED UP

Mike Toomey spent the past four years in the dog training business. In the meantime he's grown fond of a clean, well-trained pup. That's what led the Ypsilanti resident to open **ShamPooch**, the first self-serve dog wash in the Plymouth-Canton area.

The business just opened its doors on Thursday, and Toomey said all pets are welcome.

The business provides all you'll need, from pet shampoos, conditioners and ear cleaners, to forced-air fur driers, brushes, combs, nail clippers and aprons. The cost will run from \$15-\$22, with a \$5 charge for larger dogs with a long coat. But through the end of February, ShamPooch is charging \$10 per dog.

The benefit of ShamPooch is that customers don't need an appointment and pet owners stay with their pets.

"You get to pamper your own pet, and you don't have to clean up," said Toomey, who came up with the concept 2 years ago.

ShamPooch is located at 44270 W. Warren Road in Canton. Call (734) 414-0331 for more information.

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

PLACES AND FACES

Euchre tournament

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

players are welcome for open card games.

Vegas Nights

James Caan won't be there, but the thrill of Las Vegas will be when St. Theodore Parish holds two Vegas Nights 6 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday, Feb. 4-5.

Hosted by the Confraternity of Christian Women and Men's Club, there will be Black Jack, easy craps, Let It Ride,

roulette, money wheel and 50/50 drawings. The maximum prize will be \$500 per person.

Food, beer, wine and soft drinks also will be available. Admission is \$2.

St. Theodore Parish is at 8200 N. Wayne Road, Westland.

For more information, call (734) 425-4412.

Garage sale

The Westland public library will sell computer monitors, hard drives, printers, keyboards and mice, along with such furniture as a sectional sofa, chairs and lamps during a garage sale in February.

The sale is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. It will be at the library, on Central City Parkway south of Warren.

The sale is not open to city or library employees or their

family members.

Free seminar

William Gramzow, an advanced planning counselor and funeral director with R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home, will conduct a funeral planning seminar at Westland Convalescent Center on Thursday, March 10.

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

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

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

Night Off

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

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

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

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

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

In concert

Another date to remember is May 18. That's when the Brigham Young University Singers will perform in concert at Wayne Memorial High School. Tickets go on sale beginning March 1.

For ticket information, con-

tact Howard Mahler at (734) 419-2245 or meherh@wwcsd.net or Matthew Diroff at (734) 419-2244 or diroffm@wwcsd.net.

Toy show

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

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

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

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

Grab your date

Moms and Dads, grab your favorite partner or that very special princess. The always popular Fairy Princess Ball and annual Daddy-Daughter, Mommy-Son Western hoedown are coming in February.

This is the third year the Parks and Recreation Department is offering the Fairy Princess Ball. Two dances are planned - 3-4:30 p.m. and 5:30-7 p.m. - Saturday, Feb. 5 at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford.

There will be refreshments and dancing for young ladies and their escorts - dad, grandpa and older brother or uncle - as well as a souvenir photo by McFerran Studio.

The cost is \$15 per couple, plus \$7 for each additional child. Tickets must be purchased by Tuesday, Feb. 1. Corsages are available at \$7 each and must be purchased at the time of registration. No tickets or corsages will be available at the door.

The Western Hoedown will be 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8 and also includes a souvenir photo by McFerran Studio and refreshments.

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Big Yellow Box

Crayola colors her life with direct sales

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

Laurie Young has the energy of a corporation and she plans to funnel it into her own home business selling a new product that promotes family togetherness.

Crayola launched a home-based business line promoting craft projects, The Big Yellow Box, last June and Young was the 49th consultant nationwide to sign up. Today there are more than 700 consultants.

"It was so exciting," she said when she learned of The Big Yellow Box. "I knew this was something I felt drawn to and compelled to and believed in whole-heartedly."

Each craft is packed into a yellow box that contains everything you'll need, including instructions. As the mother of three grown children, Young decided she wanted to find a business that would involve her daughter, Jo, 3.

"This has sparked this whole adventure to have something to do with her as she grows up," said Young.

SALES BACKGROUND

Direct sales isn't something new for Young who gave up her nursing job to work as a Pampered Chef consultant in 1993.

"I felt so blessed to stay at home and have the income to match my income as a nurse," said Young, a 20-year Westland resident.

Instead of pie pans and spatulas, Young now promotes the 25 Crayola crafts appealing to everyone from 3-year-olds to teens and adults. Most kits are under \$25.

"They could be brought into nursing home activity centers, preschools, hotel rooms on vacation; people who want to make holographic glass necklaces and pins and sell them on eBay and they would be great for fund-raisers," Young said without taking a breath. "Every project has a functional use in addition to being decorative."

Salt and pepper shakers to a giant piggy bank called the Dream Pig where you drop money in to work toward a goal, a hand-painted wooden clock with treasure drawers, pet bowls and tea party sets. Two crafts involve a press that dries flowers for cards, photo albums and journals.

Young recently showed her business at a vendor show in the Fox Theater.

Michelle Mertic, director of Fox Tots, a day care center inside the Fox Theater, said she was so impressed with the products she bought a craft for her 9-year-old son.

"Purely as a mom, if nothing else, they looked really cool," Mertic said. "It's nice that they give you the whole craft."

One of the perks of the handmade crafts is that you can add a name to a gift, sign your name, embellish the design, or experiment



Laurie Young of Westland has found family togetherness with Crayola's Big Yellow Box home sales.

with the materials.

Young arrives at a hostess's house with her large yellow crates that hold all The Big Yellow Box crafts.

"It's mom's night out, that's how we socialize," Young said. "That's how we solve problems. We encourage one another and we shop. I figured with Crayola being the backers and the wonderful focus of spending time with your family and kids that it was promoting doing something quality with friends and it can be therapeutic."

"I'm not a crafty person but I feel blessed to be able to sit down and do these crafts."

INCOME WILL VARY

Income levels for consultants depends on many variables, she said. Someone who has two presentations weekly, with average sales, would be paid more than \$800 monthly, Young said.

The best part of the presentation party, she said, is that she brings the pressed flower craft for guests to make while they hear about The Big Yellow Box.

Young said she wants to spread the word to people that direct selling is a viable means of making an income. In fact, she said, when she and her first husband were divorced she was left raising their children and received a foreclosure notice on their house.

"I saved the house, sold it and made a profit and got out of all that debt as a result of direct sales," she said, adding that she has taken fam-

ily members on multiple trips to Disney World and Hawaii as direct sales incentive trips, too.

"I think my family was skeptical because you don't want to see someone you love fail and you hear about so many scams out there and you wonder is this real?" she said. "I'm thinking why wouldn't anyone at least try this? They have to erase all what they learned about direct sales."

For \$199, Crayola provides consultants with business kits that includes 10 of the most popular items, as well as a virtual office online with all they need to start. Other consultants, like Young, mentor newcomers.

"Coming from a nursing background, it should not have surprised me to find out how many professionals, nurses, teachers, engineers are involved with Big Yellow Box," Young said.

She wants to target recently unemployed people, retirees and young adults.

"One of my goals is to establish a mentorship with high school students, especially those not destined for college," she added. "These kids can benefit from skills in communication, presentation, organization, accounting, teaching, self-improvement and even a lot about figuring out their own taxes."

For more information about the Big Yellow Box, call Young at (734) 595-8396 or visit the Web site at www.bigyellowbox.net/info. Young also will be at the Westland Rotary Toy Show on Sunday, March 6, at Joy Manor.

3 plead guilty in drive-by shooting

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A drive-by shooting involving an AK-47 on a residential Westland street has led to guilty pleas by three defendants.

No one was shot during the incident, which happened about 4:30 a.m. last Sept. 25 on Elbridge Court, near Palmer and Wildwood in the city's Norwayne neighborhood.

One woman who ducked behind a car as shots rang out received minor injuries from metal shards after bullets struck a vehicle.

"She actually took cover behind this car to keep from getting shot," police Sgt. David Heater said.

Defendant Marc Alexander Davis, 23, of Taylor was accused of standing through the sunroof of a 2003 Monte Carlo and firing an assault rifle after residents lobbed the car with beer bottles, rocks and paint from a paintball gun.

Tensions between the two sides escalated as Davis and two others drove up and down Elbridge Court while Davis was looking for two men who weren't there.

"Davis had been assaulted a couple of months earlier, and he was looking for these guys," Heater said.

Davis pleaded guilty last Thursday to felonious assault and felony firearms charges as he appeared in front of Wayne County Circuit Judge Annette Berry. He will face a at least two years in prison when he is sentenced March 4.

Eighteen-year-old Kimberly Ann Wells, who drove the car, pleaded guilty to felonious assault and faces sentencing Feb. 8.

Daniel Jeffrey McGrath, 23, of Wayne was accused of covering up the car's license plate. He also pleaded guilty to felonious assault and faces sentencing Feb. 8 in front of Berry.

All three defendants have been jailed since the September incident.

Davis will face a mandatory two-year prison term for the felony firearms charge - and possibly more for the assault charge.

Wells and McGrath could face jail or potentially be released and given credit for the time they have served.

The defendants pleaded guilty to reduced charges. They had originally faced charges of assault with intent to murder, which carries penalties ranging up to life in prison upon conviction.

Charges against a fourth defendant had been earlier dropped by Circuit Judge Mary Waterstone. Garden City resident Ron Boggess, 23, had been accused of loaning the assault rifle to the defendants.

He wasn't at the shooting scene, however, and Waterstone dismissed a firearms possession charge against him.

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<p>Joe's Canned Tomatoes</p> <p>2/\$3.00</p> <p>28 oz. can</p>	<p>Joe's Pasta Sauce Rstd Garlic & Onion & Tomato Basil</p> <p>\$3.99</p> <p>26 oz. jar</p>	<p>Joe's Pickles</p> <p>2/\$5.00</p> <p>25 oz. jar</p>

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Ficano appoints deputy county executive

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano has appointed Azzam Elder as deputy Wayne County executive. Elder, 35, of Dearborn has served as Corporation Counsel for Wayne County since 2003, overseeing a legal department of approximately 100 employees.

As deputy executive, he will succeed Charlie Williams, who left the county in December. Elder's appointment to the second highest position in the executive office will require approval of the Wayne County Commission.

"Azzam Elder is solution and performance oriented," said Ficano. "He is dedi-



Elder

cated to making government more efficient and implementing the vision of this administration. The residents of Wayne County will benefit from his leadership."

"Charlie Williams did a tremendous job," Ficano said. "His experience and knowledge of the workings of government were assets that benefited the people of Wayne County in numerous ways."

During his tenure as chief civil attorney for Wayne County, Elder restructured the county's legal department into specialized teams led by senior attorneys.

Under his direction, the legal department has helped county departments become more efficient and generated millions of dollars in increased revenues

from settlements, collections of taxes and other initiatives.

Prior to becoming Corporation Counsel, Elder was an assistant Wayne County prosecutor. He served as chief prosecutor in charge of litigation and directed the Drug House Unit and the Abandoned Properties Unit.

Elder received a bachelor's degrees in political science and psychology from the University of Michigan. He earned his Juris Doctor from the Detroit College of Law, graduating magna cum laude. Elder is involved in various civic, business and civil rights organizations. He is the treasurer of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). Elder and his wife Charlene, also an attorney, are the parents of four children.

Shirley Waldman 'personified O&E's special ways'

Shirley Waldman and Fran Gillis met each other in the classified ad department of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Shirley filled in as manager when Fran was on maternity leave. When Fran returned, the pair became co-managers of the department - a title they held for 31 years.

Their longtime working partnership developed into a warm and loving friendship. Shirley Waldman, 78, of West Bloomfield and formerly of Livonia, died Monday of complications from emphysema.

Services were held Wednesday at Ira Kaufman Chapel in Southfield. Interment was at Adat Shalom Memorial Park Cemetery in Livonia.

Gillis, her longtime co-worker, called Waldman "a beautiful, sweet and loyal friend who was always courageous in the face of illness."

"We were buds. We complemented each other. We worked hard, but we also had a tremendous amount of fun working together. Our motto was 'faith, family and loyalty to our staff and company,'" said Gillis.

Shirley's voice could be heard throughout the classified department as she announced: "Calls waiting." "Shirley personified the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers* and our special way of doing things," said Philip Power, chairman of the board of HomeTown Communications Network, the parent company of the O&E.

"Together with Fran Gillis, she ran the classified advertising phone room with a velvet hand and an iron will that required every sales rep to respond to each and every customer as though they were the most important person in the world, regardless of whether they were placing a big ad or a small one."

"She helped customers



Mrs. Shirley Waldman

write their ad for maximum impact; she cajoled slow payers into developing a payment plan that worked for their business as well as ours; she made sure every sales rep was well taken care of, whether sick or just feeling blue.

"She was the person who originally suggested I bring dozens of red roses into the phone room for Valentine's Day to pass out to our sales reps, a practice that I continued for years while I was running the papers," said Power. Waldman retired in March 1992.

"She always said it was the best place she ever worked. She loved it and all the people," said Les Waldman, her husband of 58 years.

Other survivors include sons, Jeffrey of Glendale, Wis., and Richard of Grosse Pointe Park; daughter, Terri of Tucson, Ariz.; grandchildren Weston, Noah, Sara and Erin Waldman; great-grandchild, Kane Waldman; sisters, Elsa Bleeman of Toronto, Canada; Rosalie Schwartz of Farmington Hills and brother Robert Abramovitz of New York.

Memorials may be sent to the American Lung Association.

Local author gives talk on Catholic councils

Local author, the Rev. Francisco Radecki, will speak at the Wayne Public Library 7 p.m. Feb. 10, at on the history of the ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church. He is the author of *Tumultuous Times*, a book that describes this history.

His presentation will appeal to a wide audience, from the high school student to the theological expert.

Radecki will discuss how the ecumenical councils have shaped the Catholic Church and have clarified Catholic teachings. This will prove to be an educational and entertaining evening for anyone interested in history or religion. Copies of *Tumultuous Times* will be available for purchase.

Radecki is a member of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate Queen. He and his identical twin brother, the Rev. Dominic Radecki, the co-author of *Tumultuous Times*, were ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1988.

Francisco Radecki has been at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Wayne, Michigan for 11 years.

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HAP Senior Plus is an alternative to Medicare supplemental insurance for a plan premium of only \$40 per month. Senior Plus is a federally qualified HMO with a Medicare contract.

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** Medicare covered services. *** Coverage subject to limitations.

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Postal Service warns residents to clear walks

It has been several days since the big winter storm and thousands of residents have not cleared a path to their homes or mailboxes. The United States Postal Service is reminding postal customers to look out for the safety of letter carriers.

It is the time of year letter carriers battle frigid cold temperatures and deep snowdrifts to deliver the mail. Customers should make sure to clear accumulated snow and ice from their walkways and steps to insure daily delivery of their mail.

Customers are required to ensure that proper access is provided to mail receptacles. Proper access includes the removal of large accumulations of snow and ice from the area around curb line receptacles, so that a carrier can access the mailbox from his or her vehicle. Those customers who have door delivery or receptacles mounted near the house must keep sidewalks, approaches and stairs to the receptacle free of ice and snow.

Open House & Career Expo

6:00 pm - 8:30 pm • Thursday, February 10, 2005

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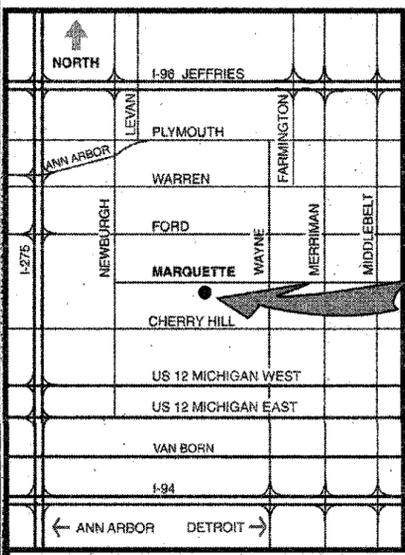
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Wayne-Westland Community Schools

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- Community Residents
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- Business & Industry Representatives

Why Attend?

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- Observe Student Activities
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- Visit with Local Employers
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DEATHS

A
Carol M. Albrecht, 82, of Lake Orion, died Jan. 30.
Martha L. Armstrong, 92, of Livonia, died Jan. 17.

B
Nellie May Barr, 99, of Waterford, formerly of Clawson, died Jan. 28.
Randy D. Benefield, of Westland, died Jan. 22.
Martha M. Brown, 87, of Bloomfield Hills, died Dec. 31.
Wallace H. Brown, 92, of Auburn Hills, died Jan. 6.

C
Mary E. Cartier, 66, of Pontiac, died Jan. 28.

D
Harold M. Davis, of Westland, died Jan. 23.
Donald R. Deno, 66, of Pontiac, died Jan. 28.

F
Dolores M. Farwell, 72, of Plymouth, died Jan. 27.
Donald G. Ferguson, 84, of Auburn Hills, died Jan. 14.

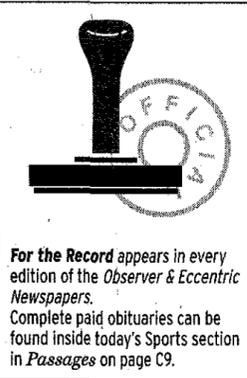
G
James A. Gilmore, 91, of Bloomfield Township, died Jan. 19.

H
Edna Hall, 68, of Westland, died Jan. 31.
Donna J. Harless, 75, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 23.
Edna L. Harp, 75, of Auburn Hills, died Jan. 15.
Josephine N. Helzerman, 75, of Rochester, died Jan. 29.
Doug L. Humer, 57, of Auburn Hills, died Dec. 28.

J
Jerry D. Johnson, 65, of Winter Haven, Fla., died Dec. 28.
Jack H. Jones Jr., 19, of Inkster, died Jan. 20.

K
Robert M. King, 79, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 30.

L
Grace R. Lemerise, 83, of



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Sports section in Passages on page C9.

Rochester Hills, died Jan. 3.

M
Tia Lynn McArthur, 38, of Plymouth, died Jan. 28.
Leda McBee, 90, of Plymouth, formerly of River Rouge, died Jan. 30.
Carroll "Howard" McDonald, Jr., 62, of Farmington Hills, died Jan. 19.
Anna L. Mueller, 98, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 28.

O
James M. O'Toole, 85, of Westland, died Jan. 20.

P
Robert E. Parr, 59, of Rose City, died Jan. 30.
Harold E. Paulus, 90, of Troy, died Jan. 11.
Dennis Peyton, 91, of Plymouth, died Jan. 29.

R
Floyd E. Ramsey, 81, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 6.

S
John R. Schettenhelm, 85, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 23.
Margaret E. Stallard, 79, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 18.
Donald E. Stapleton, 77, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 10.
Helen Stymelski, 78, Jacksonville, Fla., died Jan. 28.

T
Leonard Bernard Tasiemski, of

Westland, died Jan. 25.

V
Mable Vincent, 93, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 5.

W
Madlyne R. Walter, 91, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 14.
Jack V. Wick, 82, of Farmington, died Jan. 20.
James H. Woodall, 82, of Rochester, died Jan. 2.

Z
Walter B. Zetterlund, 75, of West Bloomfield, died Jan. 15.
Atsuko Zmich, 59, of Rochester Hills, died Jan. 18.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

Feb. 6 would have been Ronald Reagan's 94th birthday.

The man known as "Rawhide" to his bodyguards, and "The Gipper," "The Teflon President" and "Dutch" to his friends and few detractors, is arguably one of the most memorable U.S. Presidents to date.

During his life, his career went from pool lifeguard to stand-up comedian to actor to governor of California to President of the United States.

He was father to four children by two wives (Jane Wyman from 1940 to 1948, and Nancy Davis from 1952 until his death in 2004). He was the oldest man ever elected president, and lived the longest of all of them.

He was the first president to beat the "zero factor" - all previous presidents elected in a year ending in zero had died in office. He did almost die; John Hinkley Jr. attempted to assassinate him in 1981 (which prompted the famous quote to Nancy, "Honey, I forgot to duck.")

He is generally credited with helping to end the Cold War, helping to stop nuclear proliferation with the INF treaty (though it was his administration that began researching Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as "Star Wars"), and freeing the Iranian

hostages.

But Reagan will probably be best remembered as "The Great Communicator" - a man with a quick wit, a gentle sense of humor, and a masterful command of the English language.

Many of his most famous quotes are collected in *Ronald Reagan: The Wisdom and Humor of the Great Communicator*. The library also has many recordings of his speeches, such as *Ronald Reagan: The Great Speeches, Vol. 1*. We even have recordings of his early radio work; he is featured in a radio play called *One and One's a Lonesome*, found on *More Tales of Suspense*.

We have print biographies by Edmund Morris and Peggy Noonan, and video biographies, such as the one produced by A & E (*Ronald Reagan: The Many Lives*).

There are two recent collections of his correspondence, where his mastery of the language shines best: *Dear Americans: Letters from the Desk of President Ronald Reagan*, and *I Love You, Ronnie: The Letters of Ronald Reagan to Nancy Reagan*.

Celebrate the life of the 40th President of the United States by reading (or listening to) more about him.

For more information please call the library at (734) 326-6123.

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

MID-WINTER PROGRAMS

The Westland Parks and Recreation Department is offering a variety of activities during Wayne-Westland Community Schools' mid-winter recess. The lineup includes:

Golf instruction
Kids in first-sixth-grades can enjoy an hour of golf instruction on the golf simulators at the Westland

Municipal Golf Course on Merriman, south of Cherry Hill, at 10 a.m. Monday, Feb. 13.

The class costs \$5 per student. Pre-register at the golf course or Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford.

Cheerleading
Young Champions/Cheer America will be offering 1 1/2-hour clinics at the Bailey Recreation Center on Tuesday, Feb. 15. The clinics are for kids of all skill levels and ages 6-14. Cost is \$10 per clinic or \$30 for the entire day. Kids should bring a water bottle with their name on it, and those signing up for the whole should bring a sack lunch. Sign up at the Bailey Center.

The clinics include:
■ Beginner tumbling 9:30-11 a.m. Participants will learn such skills as forward and backward rolls, hand and head stands, back bends and cartwheels.

■ Cheerleading 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Participants will learn cheers, chants, basic arm movements, jumps, basic dance movements and more.

■ Baton 1:45-3:15 p.m. Participants will learn basic baton, tosses and various tricks along with dance moves and marching movements.

■ Self defense 3:30-5 p.m. Both boys and girls will learn essential skills, including stranger danger, safety awareness, punch, kicks, blocks and other basic moves.

Soccer Clinic
The Detroit Rockers come to the Bailey Center on Thursday, Feb. 17, for a soccer clinic for kids in first-eighth-grades. The clinic is 2-4 p.m. and cost \$15 per person. Sign up at the Bailey Center.

Clinic players will learn how to reach the next level with individual attention and game situation drills. For more information, call the Rockers at (734) 427-6017 or by e-mail at rockersoccer02@aol.com.

Basketball Clinic
The Detroit Pistons will have a youth basketball clinic 1-2:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, for kids in first-eighth-grades. Cost is \$20 per person, and register at the Bailey Center. For more information, call the Detroit Pistons at (248) 377-8653.

There will be five skill stations - ball handling, passing, shooting, defense and rebounding, as well as prizes, contests, games and a Pistons Souvenir.

Preregistration is required for all four programs and must be done two days in advance of the activity. For more information, call the Bailey Center at (734) 722-7620.

Take-a-Break Days!
The Wayne Parks and Recreation Department also is offering Take-a-Break Days! Day Camp during mid-winter recess Feb. 14-18, and during spring recess, March 28-April 1.

The day camp is for kids ages five-13 and is open 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The cost is \$30 per day, with the fifth day free, if you register for the full week. There's also a 25 percent discount for each additional child in the same household.

Activities include swimming, ice skating, arts and crafts, wallyball and more. Kids should bring a swimsuit and towel and sack lunch. Snacks will be provided.

Register at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe, Wayne. For more information, call (734) 721-7400.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

City of Westland
Mayor's Office - (734) 467-3200, e-mail mayor@ci.westland.mi.us
18th District Court - (734) 595-8720
Assessment - (734) 467-3160, e-mail assessor@ci.westland.mi.us

Career tech center holds open house

The William D. Ford Career Technical Center will host its annual Open House and Career Expo from 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10.

The center at 36455 Marquette in Westland offers more than 20 different technical training programs and is open to high school students in southeastern Wayne County.

Students, parents, community residents and business representative are invited to explore demonstrations in the technical programs, including:

- Auto Body Repair, Automotive Technology, Business/ Computer Technology, Child Care, Computer Aided Design, Computer Aided Manufacturing, Construction Technology, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Desktop

Publishing, Digital Media, Electronics Technology, Graphic Design, Health Occupations, Heating/ Air Conditioning Refrigeration, Integrated Web Design, Media Production, Medical Assisting, Oracle Internet Academy, Printing Technology and Welding Technology.

This year's theme is "Career Tech: Training Tomorrow's Workforce" which emphasizes the role career tech education and its business/industry partners play in helping youths and adults achieve success in the new millennium.

For more information about the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, call (734) 419-2100.

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Can Be Investments www.can-be.com
- ART MUSEUMS**
The Detroit Institute of Arts www.dia.org
- AUTOMOBILE DEALERSHIPS**
John Rogin Buick www.johrogin.com
- AUTOMOTIVE**
Davis Auto Care www.davisautocare.com
- BAKING/COOKING**
Chelsea Milling Company www.jiffymix.com
- BUILDERS**
Belanger Builders, Inc. www.belangerbuilders.com
Benchmark Homes www.brightonbuilder.com
Mitch Harris Building Company www.mitchharris.net
Tony Van Oyen Builders Inc. www.tonyvanyenbuilder.com
- CARDS AND GIFT SHOP**
Misty's Cards & Gifts www.mistyscards.com
- CERAMIC SUPPLIES**
Nee Deep In Ceramics www.nee-deep-in-ceramics.com
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Garden City Chamber www.gardencity.org
Howell Chamber of Commerce www.howell.org
Livonia Chamber of Commerce www.livonia.org
Redford Chamber www.redfordchamber.org
South Lyon Chamber www.southlyonchamber.com
- CHAPELS**
Historic Village Chapel www.historicvillagechapel.com
- CHILDRENS THEATRE**
Marquis Theatre www.northvillamarquistheatre.com
- CLASSIFIED ADS**
HomeTown Newspapers www.hometownlife.com
Observer & Eccentric www.hometownlife.com
Newspapers www.hometownlife.com
- COMMUNITY SERVICES**
Leadership Oakland www.leadershipoakland.com
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Ann Arbor Credit Bureau www.a2cb.com
- DENTISTS**
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Novi Dental www.novidental.com
Smilemaker www.smilemaker.org
- ELECTRONIC SERVICE AND REPAIR**
ABL Electronic Service, Inc. www.ablserv.com
- EYE CARE/LASER SURGERY**
Greenberg Laser Eye Center www.greenbergeye.com
Michigan Eyecare Institute www.micheyecare.com
- FESTIVALS**
Michigan 50's Festival www.michiganfiftiesfestival.com
- FIBERS**
Linden Lane Farms www.fibersofmichigan.com
- FLOORING**
Andy's Hardwood Floors www.andyshardwoodfloors.com
Dandle Hardwood Flooring Company www.dandlefloors.com
KI Enterprises, Inc. www.kiwoodfloors.com
- GIFT BASKETS**
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Poise Pilates www.poisepilates.com
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Accent Remodeling Inc. www.accentremodeling.com
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HomeTown Digital www.hometownlife.com
- LAND**
Oldford-Howell Development, Inc. www.parshalvillepond.com
- LANDSCAPING/CONCRETE**
Artistic Concrete Solutions www.artisticconcretesolutions.biz
- LASER HAIR REMOVAL**
Absolute Skin & Body Care www.absolute-skinandbody.com

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- PUBLICATIONS**
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Equine Times www.equinetimes.com
- REAL ESTATE**
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One Way Realty www.onewayrealty.com
Sellers First Choice www.sfcrealty.com
Weir, Manuel, Snyder & Ranke www.weirmanuel.com
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Clark & Fron Realtors www.clarkandfron.com
Dan Klavitter www.michiganfinehomes.com
Fred & Karen Ryckman www.darngoodagent.com
John McCollum www.jpmccollum.com
Marie Schires www.marieschires.com
Marty Pouget www.martypouget.com
- RECYCLING SERVICES**
Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County www.rrasoc.org
- REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**
Center for Reproductive Medicine & Surgery www.reproductive-medicine.com
Midwest Fertility and Sex Selection Center www.selectgender.com
- RESORTS**
Sandcastles on the Beach Resort www.sandcastlesonthebeach.com
- RESTAURANTS**
Albans Restaurant www.albans.com
Bistro 127 www.bistro127.com
Italian Epicure www.italian-epicure.com
Pasquale's Restaurant www.pasqualesrestaurant.com
Stillwater Grill www.stillwatergrill.com
- RESUME SERVICE**
Advantage Staffing www.voiceresume.net
- RETAIL**
Hershey's Shoes www.hersheysshoes.com
- RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES**
United Methodist Retirement Community www.umrc.com
- SPORTS & RECREATION**
Plymouth-Canton Little League www.plymouthcantonlittleleague.com
- SPORTS GEAR**
Outdoor Pursuits www.outdoorpursuitsinc.com
- STAFFING**
Advantage Staffing www.astaff.com
- SURPLUS FOAM**
McCullough Corporation www.mccofoam.com
- SURPLUS PRODUCTS**
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- WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT**
HomeTown Digital www.hometownlife.com
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- WORSHIP**
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Awards mark 'a different kind of hero'

Livonia Public Schools students found more than 700 ways to express this year's PTA Reflections Contest theme of "A Different Kind of Hero."

At the annual awards night Wednesday for Reflections participants, school board member Joanne Morgan introduced youngsters whose entries were chosen for awards of merit and awards of excellence. But she made a point of noting the subjectivity of the selections, adding that every entrant would take home a ribbon.

"There's something special about every entry submitted," Morgan told the audience in the Churchill auditorium. "Every single one of you is a winner."

Awards were granted in the following categories:

LITERATURE

■ Grades K-2 - Awards of Merit to Cassidy Guerrero of Roosevelt Elementary, "The Baby Allie Reminder"; Nicholas Hunter of Taylor Elementary, "A Different Kind of Hero"; and Olivia Phillips of Taylor Elementary, "A Different Kind of Hero". Awards of Excellence to Katie Henderson of Hayes Elementary, Erin Pierzynski of Taylor Elementary, "My Papa Joe"; and Rachel Smith of Tyler Elementary, "Heroes from A to Z."

■ Grades 3-5 - Awards of Merit to Adam Clay of Nankin Mills Elementary, Sheryl Ann Crespo of Webster Elementary, "In Sickness and In Health... This Hero Stands"; and Amanda MacPhail of Nankin Mills, "A Different Kind of Hero." Awards of Excellence to Olivia Chen of Webster, "A Different Kind of Hero"; Shelby McMillan of Webster, "My Hero, My Mother"; and Alexis Tesner of Nankin Mills, "Sometimes We Notice Them."

■ Grades 6-8 - Awards of Merit to Charlene Fenton of Frost Middle School, "Not Like Everyone Else"; Robert Lagerstrom of Holmes Middle School, "A Different Kind of Hero Needs Courage"; and Brian Umfleet of Nankin Mills, "A Different Kind of Hero." Awards of excellence to Darren Chen of Webster, "A Different Kind of Hero"; Michael Johnson of Nankin Mills, "A Different Kind of Hero"; and Aimee Sassak of Nankin Mills, "A Different Kind of Hero."

■ Grades 9-12 - Awards of Merit to Chelsea Cherie Thomas of Franklin High, "No title"; Paula Lynn Tillotson of Stevenson High, "Nothing Short of a Miracle"; and Hilary Ann Ziarnik of Franklin High, "A Racing Hero"; and Bryan Warrick of Franklin High, "For Honor and Glory."

MUSIC

■ Grades K-2 - Award of Merit to Rio Thomas Barth of Coolidge Elementary, "Mommy." Awards of Excellence to Marika Rose Barth of Webster, "Ladybugs"; Cindy Grammatico of Cass Elementary, "Thank You"; and Raphael Sweetman of Taylor, "Brandon Bone Marrow Hero."

■ Grades 3-5 - Awards of Merit to Julia Rose Grammatico of Cass, "Helping Hands"; Yvette Franks of McKinley Elementary, "The Mixer"; and Juliet Wu of Webster, "Be My Hero." Awards of Excellence to Sheryl Ann Crespo of Webster, "The Little Green Dragon's Song"; Alwin David of Webster, "A Happy Clown"; and Christopher Garrick of McKinley, "My Dad's My Hero."

■ Grades 6-8 - Awards of Merit to William Guerin of Frost, "Sound of a Hero"; Graham Liddell of Riley Middle, and Keira Schmitt of McKinley, "Shining Star." Awards of Excellence to Edwin David of Frost, "Snake Charmer"; Savannah Keller of Holmes, "Looking for Heroes"; and Blake Morgan of Riley, "Heroes Hangout (After Hours)."

■ Grades 9-12 - Award of Excellence to Heather Huber of Stevenson High, "Fedora."

PHOTOGRAPHY

■ Grades K-2 - Awards of Merit to Marika Barth of Webster, "My Little Brother"; Mary Rose Crombez of Grant, "Teachers are a Different Kind of Hero"; and Rachel Smith of Tyler, "I Want to be a Hero When I Grow Up." Awards of Excellence to Matthew McClintock of Tyler, "A Different Kind of Hero... A Dog"; Allison McDonnell of Taylor, "Super Puppy"; and Erin Pierzynski of Taylor, "My Hero."

■ Grades 3-5 - Awards of Merit to Ashley Gruden of Hayes, "91 and Still Going"; Abigail Urbanski of McKinley, "Heroes That Help Me"; and Brandy Wenson of Randolph, "My Uncle, A Firefighting Police Officer, a Different Kind of Hero." Awards of Excellence to Elizabeth McCormick of Tyler, "The Unnoticed Hero"; Kevin McGann of Taylor, "My Grandpa - A Different Kind of Hero"; and Alexis Tesner of Nankin Mills, "Unsung Heroes."

■ Grades 6-8 - Awards of Merit to Blake Morgan of Riley, "Created by Mother Nature, the Grandest of Heroes" and a second award for "Heroes Bridge Us Over Troubles." Award of Merit for Samantha Wolf of Holmes. Awards of Excellence to Roni Allen of Holmes, "Ron Kagan, a hero

to elephants"; Andy McLean of Webster, "Everyday Construction"; and Rebecca Wutka of Holmes, "A Hero in My Eyes."

■ Grades 9-12 - Awards of Merit to Danielle Clerebout of Franklin, "The Strong"; Melissa Oliver of Stevenson, "Little Hero"; and Scott Wheat of Stevenson, "Little Heroes." Awards of Excellence to Megan Bowen of Stevenson for "One Small Step for Little Kids, One Giant Leap for Skaters Everywhere" and a second award for an untitled entry. Award of Excellence to Sitara Govender of Stevenson, "Care Giver."

VISUAL ARTS

■ Grades K-2 - Awards of Merit to Ross Cecil Hayes, "My Different Kind of Heroes"; Jillian Fox of Webster; and Samantha Shelton of Hayes, "My Hero is My Brother." Awards of Excellence to Katie Henderson of Hayes, "Liliana is My Hero"; Krishna Midathada of Johnson, "Sun - A Different Kind of Hero"; and Madhura Patil of Johnson, "My Dream Makes Me a Hero."

■ Grades 3-5 - Awards of Merit to Kerry Celmer of Randolph, "A Guide Dog is a Hero to the Blind"; Caitlyn Murphy of Hayes, "My Granny, My Hero"; and Sarah Nieuwkoop of Hayes, "My Hero Angel." Awards of Excellence to Aaron Boey of McKinley, "Four Legged Heroes"; Kiara Boey of McKinley, "My Mom"; and Katie Rellinger of Hull, "My Special Hero."

■ Grades 6-8 - Awards of Merit to Megan Fox of Holmes Middle School, "Your Neighbor Next Door"; Mohamad Idriss of Hayes, "A Wheelchair, A Different Kind of Hero"; and Elizabeth Nemeth of Riley Middle School, "Imagine Imagination (Your Brains Hero)." Awards of Excellence to Simon Bank of Riley Middle School, "Shekels"; Maddie Dudas of Tyler, "Over the Bend a Different Kind of Hero is Nature"; and Grace Lazie of Riley Middle School, "Determined."

■ Grades 9-12 - Awards of Merit to Mike Burdick of Stevenson High, "Fable"; Elizabeth Foisy of Stevenson High, "Conscience"; and Sara Stollings of Franklin High, "Olympic Dreams." Awards of Excellence to Christine Brooks of Franklin High; Peter Digennaro of Franklin High, "A Different Kind of Hero"; and Jonathon Drobil of Franklin High.

The Livonia PTA Council's Reflections Committee included Lisa Hausman, Cathy Reinke, Christine Walczyk and Joanne Morgan.

REFERRALS

FROM PAGE A1

ble, Bowman said. Rather, the program — housed behind the Westland police station — has strengthened its ties with local police.

Now, a teenager caught shoplifting one evening might be referred to the program the next day by police. In the past, the youth may have faced juvenile court without getting any help.

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, addressing the crowd of 70 people Monday, said the program has "blossomed and grown" since she helped spearhead it about 13 years ago as a Westland City Council member.

The program pairs troubled youths with adult mentors for one to two hours a week, although some spend more time together. They might see a movie, read together in a library, attend a sports event or simply go to a shopping mall.

The program also offers "life choices" classes, a karate camp, tours of jail facilities, parenting classes and other services.

Ninety percent of youths who enter the program not only improve their lives, but stay out of trouble — a success rate that local officials have lauded.

Currently, the program has 14 mentors, but could use about 10 more, Bowman said. Mentors, who receive 15 hours of training spread over five Thursdays, have to have a good driving record and pass a criminal background check.

Last year, 181 male youths and 111 females were referred to the program by such sources as the police, juvenile court and schools. This year, the program received 28 referrals in January alone.

Michael O'Gorman, counselor at a federal prison in Milan, serves as a mentor who arranges prison tours for local youths.

"I see lives wasted every day of my life, and I don't want to see yours wasted," he told the youngsters at Monday's ceremony.

Despite an increase in referrals, the Youth Assistance Program has had to cope with cuts in government grants and corporate donations. Moreover, it has only three full-time employees: Bowman, Deputy Director Paul Motz and Office Manager Mary Wludyka. They receive help from youth and parent volunteers in offering certain classes and services.

Cicirelli lauded the job that Bowman has done in the 12 years she has headed up the program.



According to Director Ronaele Bowman, the Youth Assistance Program had 292 referrals in 2004, a sharp increase over the previous year.

"This was a cause for her, and she is very dedicated to it," the mayor said.

When asked why she thinks the program has shown such success, Cicirelli said "It's a combination of everybody working together" — the police, the courts, the schools, the mentors, the youths and their families.

Four top volunteers received special awards Monday, amid much applause from their peers and youths involved in the program. They are:

■ O'Gorman, the Milan prison counselor, who was honored as Business Person of the Year. Motz praised O'Gorman for his compassion for troubled youths. "His goodness shines through."

■ Gary Leirstein, battalion chief and assistant fire marshal for the Westland Fire Department, earned the Mentor of the Year award. Motz described him as humble and non-judgmental: "He does inspire others to do more."

■ Teenager Heather Peck was honored as Most Improved Female. She was commended for having a positive attitude and setting a good example for her peers.

■ Teenager Jordan Barnes, who plays basketball for John Glenn High School's junior varsity team, was praised for accepting leadership roles and for developing with his family a "Team Jordan" attitude for improving his life.

With revenue cuts, the Westland Youth Assistance Program could use donations to help pay for the programs and services it provides for youngsters. To give, send checks to Westland Youth Assistance Program, 36701 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185. For more information about the program, call (734) 467-7904.

TALKS

FROM PAGE A1

"Transportation costs, supplemental services, administrative costs, we're looking at every area," he said. "And this is caused by the state. It's a responsibility we have and an expectation the community has that we be prudent."

Baracy has been conducting meetings with parents and school employees to provide information on the district's budget and the problem that it faces in the 2005-06 and 2006-07 budget years.

He met with leadership of unions in the district on Jan. 25 and said he "made it clear that when they get to the table, they can work it out."

The district has five contracts it has yet to settle, including Local 4's which expired last July. Also without

contracts are the maintenance, paraprofessionals, secretaries and special skills employees.

Baran said she was shocked and discouraged when she initially heard about the companies being called in, but is "encouraged at this time."

"Everyone is concerned, even the teachers," said Baran. "Wayne-Westland is very much a family, a very large family, and to hear this was really devastating."

Baracy has acknowledged that the union members are the "backbone of the district" and stressed that preserving educational programs and jobs has been the district's intent the last few years. Of the Local 4's 300 members, 205 live in the school district.

"I think they understand there's a very serious problem, but we don't all agree on how to solve it," he said. "The student program is our No. 1 pri-

ority and we have to work to maintain that."

"The state isn't going to solve this problem. We have to solve this problem ourselves and by working together we can solve it."

Linda Hardin, Local 4 president, agrees, but is annoyed by what happened.

"If he was sincere he would have come to us first before bringing in these companies," she said. "He should have made us a part of finding a solution. He's asking all the union presidents for ideas, but it's rather late. We're aware the district has problems, but we feel he is threatening us first."

Baracy stressed that the district planned for hard times, but "no one anticipated four years of freezes from the state and no one anticipated two years of revenue cuts."

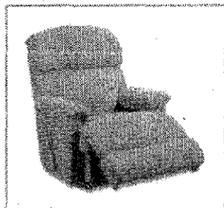
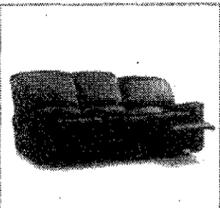
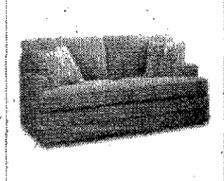
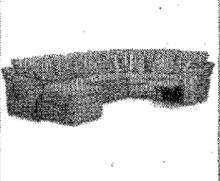
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