

### Friendly flowers

AT HOME, SECTION B



### Family ties bind at Passover

TASTE, PAGE B5



### Rockin' Revival

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## Highest honor Scout project gives moms some comfort

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

New moms at Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor have someplace to rest their feet, thanks to the efforts of Tim Yrsem.

A sophomore at Wayne Memorial High School, Yrsem, with the help of family and friends, made 20 nursing stools for the hospital as his Eagle Scout community service project.

"My friends think it's kind of cool," said Yrsem who completed his board of review earlier this month and is waiting for his certificate from Boy Scouts headquarters before planning his Eagle Scout court of honor, probably in June.

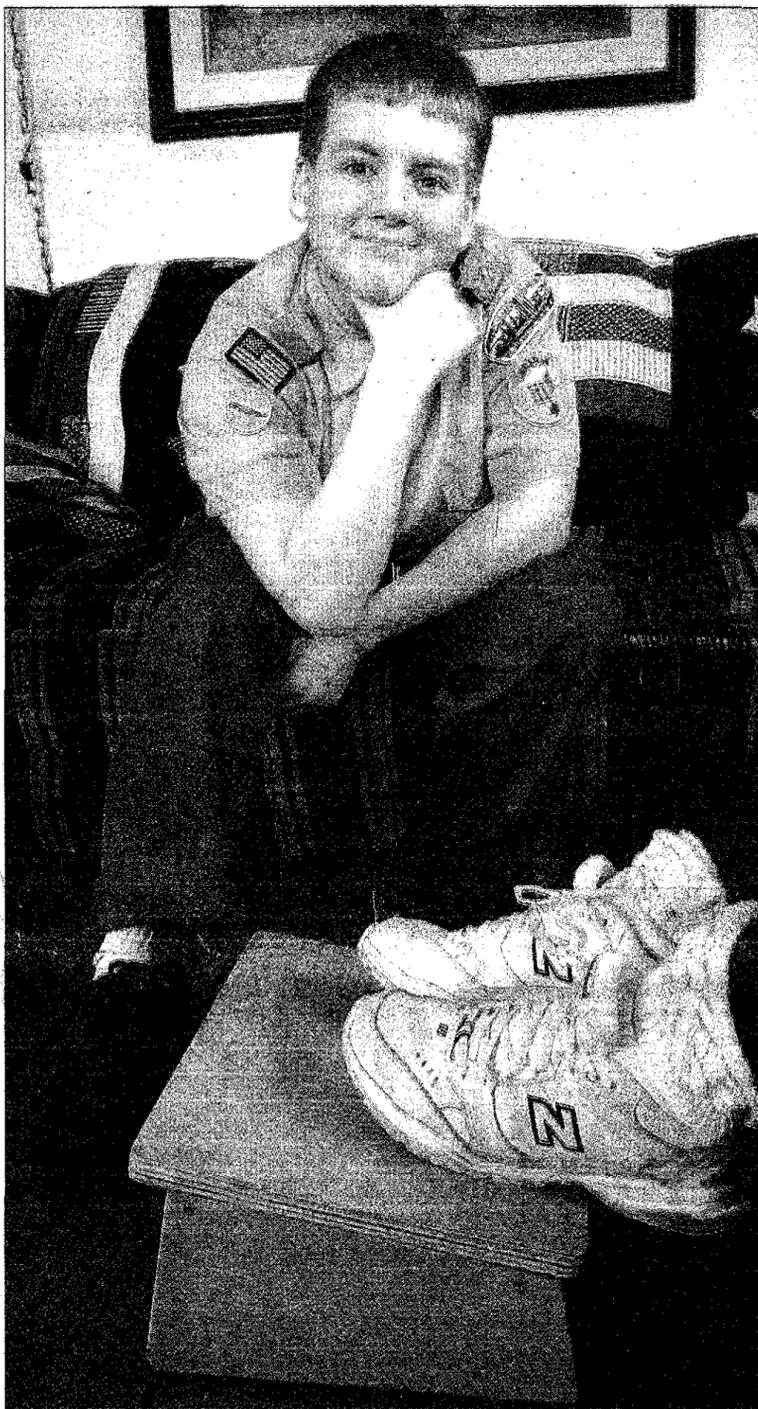
"Tim's cousin was born with a heart defect last July and was flown to Ann Arbor," said his dad, Dan. "They had a few stools there. When it came time to do his project, he decided it would be a nice way to give back for what they had done for his cousin."

Yrsem planned, organized and got donations for the project. Northside Hardware ACO and Nankin Hardware in Westland, Town & Country in Garden City and Romulus Hardware helped with donations.

He used a stool like the one his sister donated to the hospital to make the pattern and DTR Innovations in Utica chipped in the plywood.

"My dad works with a guy who has a friend who owns the company," said Yrsem said of DTR. "He donated the wood and cut out the pattern. We still had to do the sanding, putty up the holes and assemble it."

PLEASE SEE EAGLE, A5



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tim Yrsem shows off one for 20 nursing footstools he made for Mott Children's Hospital as his Eagle Scout community service project.

## Plastipak likely to get a tax break

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Westland plastics company apparently will receive a tax break in return for investing \$11 million in its manufacturing facility on John Hix, south of Ford.

Plastipak Packaging Inc. officials, in a second round of talks with city leaders, appeared Monday to have support for a 12-year tax abatement plan that includes installing a new production line.

The proposal will likely be decided next Monday by a Westland City Council vote. A council majority appeared supportive during this week's talks.

"I don't see any down side at this point, based on current economic conditions, in granting an abatement," Councilman James Godbout said Monday.

City leaders halted industrial tax abatements in 1993, but they now fear that jobs could be lost unless they soften their stance.

Plastipak employs 251 workers in Westland and is the city's eighth largest taxpayer. The new tax break would be the fifth the company has received since it opened its local plant in 1983.

City leaders hope that a tax break will strengthen Plastipak's ties to Westland. The new line also will bring as many as 15 new jobs to the company, which makes plastic bottle containers.

"This is a chance for us to be proactive," Councilman William Wild said Monday.

If approved, Plastipak will receive a tax abatement only for new equipment, or personal property, that it plans to install. The company would get an \$870,000 tax break over 12 years. However, it still would pay nearly \$1.1 million in new taxes during the same period.

The company will have two years to install its new equipment, but Thomas Mellnick Jr., senior tax manager, indicated that the expansion could occur as early as August.

Plastipak has never threatened to pull out of Westland, even without a tax abatement. Still, a local tax break would virtually ensure that the new production line would be started here, rather than in a Plastipak facility elsewhere, Mellnick said.

"I would be very surprised, if not shocked, if the project didn't end up here," he told city leaders Monday.

Godbout worried aloud that denying a tax abatement could result in the Westland plant gradually becoming more of a warehouse than a manufacturing facility.

Ultimately, he said, such a decision could lead to the local plant's closing - a risk that city leaders don't appear ready to take.

Council President Charles Pickering has said that city officials stopped giving out tax abatements in 1993, during better economic times. He has said that officials have started reconsidering the stance in hopes of keeping companies and jobs here.

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## '40s-style dance aids soldiers

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Westland committee has embarked on a plan to help wounded U.S. soldiers returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Westland City Councilman Robert Stottlemeyer, committee leader, has announced a "Back to the '40s" charity dance scheduled for 4-11 p.m. Sunday, June 5, at Burton Manor in Livonia.

"I've always been ticked off at what happened to the troops when they came home from Vietnam and the way they were treated," Stottlemeyer said. "I didn't want the troops coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan to feel like nobody cares."

The '40s dance will cost \$30 a person. Stottlemeyer said it will feature the Glenn

Miller Orchestra, an Andrew Sisters-style group called Satin Dolls and the U.S. Army Reserve Band.

All military branches will be represented, including several soldiers wounded in the latest conflicts involving U.S. soldiers.

The cities of Westland, Garden City and Wayne already have adopted proclamations endorsing the event. The Livonia City Council has indicated it will give a vote of support, and committee members also plan to approach Redford officials.

"This is for a great cause," Stottlemeyer said.

The charity dance will benefit two organizations - the national Wounded Warriors Project and the Westland-based Veterans

PLEASE SEE DANCE, A4

## Officials probe cause of fires

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Westland firefighters battled two large brush fires Sunday on the city's northwest side, but officials couldn't say whether an arsonist was to blame.

"They're definitely suspicious," Deputy Chief Kevin Riley said. "Basically, all brush fires are suspicious, but it runs the gamut from careless smoking to intentional."

Firefighters from three stations fought a brush fire that burned five acres near Johnson Elementary School, southeast of Hix and Joy roads. They fought the blaze from 2:50 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

The fire didn't damage the school or injure any people, Riley said.

Firefighters from two stations battled a two-

acre brush fire that erupted just before 4 p.m. behind Anthony's Pond subdivision, on Hix Road between Joy and Warren. They doused that fire within 45 minutes.

The fire didn't damage any homes or injure anyone, Riley said.

"It's very difficult to pinpoint how these kinds of fires are started," Riley said.

Anyone convicted of setting brush fires could face penalties ranging from probation to several years in prison.

Authorities don't have any suspects; nor can they be certain that the fires were started by an arsonist.

However, Riley said anyone who has information about Sunday's fires is encouraged to call the Westland Fire Department at (734) 467-3201.

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Coming Sunday  
on the PINK page

A chat  
with  
Nicky  
Hilton





# Markarian to push district's 'voice in Lansing'

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

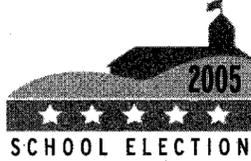
Cynthia Markarian has spent the past year on the Livonia Board of Education, and she hopes to be elected to her first full term in May.

Markarian was appointed to the post after Trustee Terry Godfroid-Marecki vacated to take a seat on City Council last year. The 35-year-old mother of three works as a vice president at DFCU Financial, dealing with information technology.

"I wanted to be involved in the community," she said. "I thought it was a good fit."

Her husband is a building supervisor at the Western Wayne Skills Center, and his family is very involved in the district. Markarian has lived in the district since 1998.

She believes that the biggest issue facing Livonia Public Schools today involves the



## SCHOOL ELECTION

budget, and funding coming from the state. "No Child Left Behind is a really good idea," she said, "but it's not funded well. They were really trying to close the gap between low-achieving schools and higher-achieving schools. While I understand what their goal is, the process is not working."

Markarian said if she were elected, her first goal would be to ensure schools "have a voice in Lansing." "I want to let them know how their changes are affecting us," she said.

Programs she would strengthen, should money be available, include Reading Recovery. "Kids learn at different rates," she said, adding that more help should be available for those struggling with reading. She's also a strong supporter of the music program,

Editor's note: This is the final in a series of candidate profiles for Livonia Public Schools Board of Education candidates. District voters will elect two people to four-year terms in the Tuesday, May 3, election.

and would like to see it restored.

Markarian would not support selling off any of the district's vacant property, because she said "you'll never get it back." She agrees with the methods that are already being used at some sites, like leasing property and making it available to the community.

When it comes to neighborhood schools, she's said "the last thing I want to do is put my 5-year-old on a bus." Markarian recognizes how difficult it is to close a school and consolidate. But she can't rule out that possibility, should it be the best option. The demo-

graphics committee is currently researching that and other options in the district.

"People become very attached to their schools," she said. "We have to do things that make sense."

Markarian supported the board's decision to hold a special February millage election - a choice some other candidates have cited as a poor use of about \$40,000.

She said if the millage was delayed, summer projects would've also been delayed. And she didn't want to take voters for granted by assuming the millage would pass in May.

Markarian holds the district's curriculum and programming in high regard. As a new board member she met with the curriculum director to learn about grade level expectations and how curriculum is translated at each grade. "I think we're on the high achievement side," she said. "We could always do better."

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## Newest member

Jason Brassfield, 24, has become the newest member of the Westland Police Department, bringing the number of sworn officers to 100. Brassfield, shown here with Mayor Sandra Cicirelli and Police Chief Daniel Pfannes, took his oath on Monday. Other city officials, police officers and Brassfield's mother, Alice, attended the ceremony at City Hall. Brassfield was a former Explorer scout with the Westland department. He later became part of Westland Shopping Center's security police. He then worked for the Wayne County Sheriff's Department before accepting a position in Westland. Pfannes noted that the explorer program has produced many fine police officers, and we are proud that Jason was able to return to where his career began.

# Friends remember Talmadge as special

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Friends who loved her fondly called her Betty T or Aunt Betty.

Westland police officers remember her for the little dolls she made and sold to raise money for the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program.

And political candidates recall how she would spend her own money on postcards that she would mail to friends, encouraging them to vote.

Betty J. Talmadge, 77, who died Monday, will long be remembered as a woman who gave to her community.

"Betty was a very special person, both within my personal home and within the city of Westland," city Councilman Richard LeBlanc said.

He recalled how Talmadge was involved in organizations

**Betty J. Talmadge, 77, who died Monday, will long be remembered as a woman who gave to her community.**

ranging from Oddfellows to Business and Professional Women.

"And who could forget DARE?" LeBlanc asked. "Each year she designed a DARE doll and raised money for the Westland DARE program."

As a friend, Talmadge would often bake pies for LeBlanc.

"On more than one occasion, she would call me and say that she had filled my pie tin - in other words, I should go over there real quick before someone stole my pie," LeBlanc said. "I

just found that she was a real treasure. I really, really will miss her, as will my wife, Cheryl."

State Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, praised Talmadge for continuing as a community volunteer into her 60s and 70s, even though getting around became more difficult as she got older.

"She was a tireless volunteer," Anderson said. "She didn't believe in just sitting back and letting things happen. She was a very good friend. I told her son (Charles) that she was like a grandmother to me. I'm very thankful for Betty Talmadge."

Anderson recalled how his daughter Melissa, now 24, would be invited as a young child to a candy-making get-together at Talmadge's house.

"She would invite kids to come over and make candy," Anderson said.

Anderson's daughter recently

took her own children - son Logan, 8 months, and daughter Mackenzie, 2 - to visit Talmadge.

"Melissa was really glad she did that," Anderson said.

Services for Talmadge will be at 1 p.m. Friday at UHT Funeral Home, 35400 Glenwood in Westland. Visitation will continue 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. today (Thursday) at the funeral home.

Friends may visit a Web site and leave a tribute to Talmadge by logging onto www.uhtfuneralhome.com.

Talmadge, wife of the late Earl Talmadge and mother of the late Gary Talmadge, is survived by sons Richard and Charles (Jill) Talmadge; daughters Kathy (Tom) Kanable and Deborah (the late Glenn) Lewis; sisters Kathryn Wilson and Dolores Rasmussen; 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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## FOR THE RECORD

### DEATHS

**A**  
Millie Aronson, 77, of Garden City died March 18.

**C**  
Dr. Philip Cohen, of Palm Beach Gardens, formerly of Detroit.

**F**  
John J. Fodermaier Jr., 90, died April 7, in San Antonio, Texas.

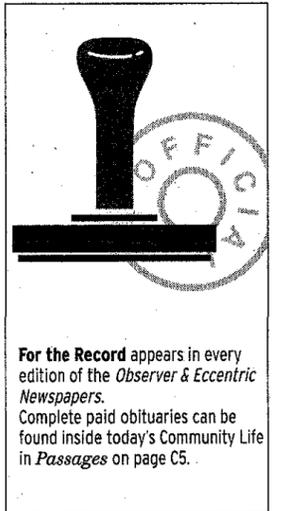
**H**  
Linda L. Hutchinson died April 12.

**K**  
Allie Kirtley, 80, of Garden City, died April 8.

**M**  
James Arthur McGraw, 77, of Petoskey, died April 10.

**P**  
Carol Lee Palarchio, 72, of Goodrich, formerly of Clarkston, died April 5.

**R**  
Lavon O'Neal Robertson, of Bloomfield Hills, died April 10.  
Vernon C. Reid, 80, of Clarkston, died April 11.



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Community Life in Passages on page C5.

**Y**  
Roberta Jean Nichols Yakel, 73, of Plymouth, died April 3.

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# Jamboree shows science, math can be fun

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

Science and math can be fun and exciting. No, really. "When people hear a term like chemical reaction, they think 'really boring,'" said Donna Ferguson of Plymouth Township. "But, I'm trying to show kids how chemical reactions relate to their daily lives."

Ferguson was one of nearly 500 people from Pfizer Corporation who put on 37 science and math demonstrations as part of the Science and Math Jamboree (SAM-JAM) at the company's Ann Arbor headquarters last week for nearly 1,500 eighth-grade students.

Ferguson, who also talks science with students at Isbister Elementary in Plymouth Township - where she has two children enrolled - admits that scientific terms can sometimes get in the way of a good message.

"If you ask for an hypothesis, you get this weird look like 'oh boy, she's talking science. What's for lunch?'" said Ferguson, who conducted demonstrations for students in the What Is a Chemical Reaction booth. "But, if you say 'what's your educated guess,' they can all answer that question."

"A lot of it is verbiage to maintain that interest and spark," she said.

That's why Ferguson relates chemical reactions to situations like eating breakfast, drinking coffee and walking the dog.

At the Tastes of Distinction booth, students learned there are many different kinds of cells and nerves that contribute to the total sensory experience of taste, and that taste and smell are definitely linked.

"We talk to them about taste buds and map the taste buds on their tongues, and how smell is important in their taste," said Sherry Bright of Canton Township, a project manager at Pfizer. "We have them taste sweet and sour liquids and then map where they



Victoria Jones of Slauson School gets her tongue dyed by Pfizer's Marjorie Eshoo of Westland to help predict how sensitive Victoria is to bitter tastes.

strongly feel sweet, or sour or salty."

Bright said eighth-grade is a prime time to get the interest of students in science and math, and ultimately careers requiring those qualifications.

"The kids are either losing their interest in math or science at that point, or they may be leaning toward it," Bright said. "In all the demonstrations we try to relate something to our personal jobs, or some of the other scientists jobs, so they can get a feel there are exciting things in the research industry."

Pfizer information scientist Marjorie Eshoo of Westland remembered the effect on her by an eighth-grade science teacher who made science fun, which led to a college degree in chemistry.

"By doing things like SAM-JAM, it shows science can be fun and cool," said Eshoo. "If

kids like to challenge themselves, there are a lot of fun and challenging and puzzling things to do in science."

"A lot of people think you have to be some mad Ph.D. scientist to be involved, but you don't," she added. "You don't have to have an advanced degree to get into an area of science you may like. We have people with high school diplomas and associate's degrees."

For 13-year-old Chelsea Gallagher, SAMJAM was definitely a success in showing science and math can be fun.

"I thought this was a pretty cool idea," said Gallagher. "I used to think science was pretty boring, just a lot of writing and reading. But, I found out you can really do hands-on activities."

As for the so-called studies that indicates girls lag behind boys in math and science



Donna Ferguson works with Emerson School students on common chemical reactions during the science fair sponsored by Pfizer.

studies, Gallagher believes that's a myth.

"I think girls are better because we're more precise

and learn faster," she said.

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## DANCE

FROM PAGE A1

Haven - that are dedicated to helping soldiers and their families with housing, food, day-care, handicap ramps and other necessities that they need but can't afford.

"I want to say a word on Veterans Haven. I know they provide all the services for free - 100 percent that goes in goes out," said Garden City Councilman William Kaledás. "Please try to attend. It's important to the returning soldiers."

Stottlemeyer, wife Betty and other committee members hope to sell out the 1,800-seat Burton Manor and raise as much money as possible to help wounded troops.

They're advertising the event by putting up posters around the area, and senior citizens at the Westland Friendship Center also made pin-on buttons to promote it.

Stottlemeyer credited corporate donations with helping to cover the event's costs.

Moreover, other proceeds will come from ticket sales and a silent auction organized by committee members Georgia Becker, Jo Johnson and Pat Mitchell.

On Tuesday, Becker said bids already are being accepted and will continue through the evening of the "Back of the '40s" dance.

"Right now, we have 39 items (for bid) in the book," Becker said. "We're still getting items donated, and we've already had some people bidding on different items."

Some items include four Detroit Tigers baseball tickets with free parking; a gold ring; Meadow Brook Theatre tickets; an \$100 tab for Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe; Macomb Center for the Performing Arts tickets; Showcase Cinema passes; a \$225 gold bracelet; a T-shirt autographed by racecar driver Bobby Rahal; and autographed pictures of racer Richard Petty and actor John Travolta, among many other items.

"I just wrote John Travolta a letter, and he sent a picture," Becker said. "Isn't that cool? Everybody has been really generous in giving items for the silent auction."

To bid on items or for more information about the auction, call Becker at (734) 729-1605.

Organizers say that the "Back to the '40s" event isn't intended as political, but only to show support for troops - regardless of whether those attending favor or oppose U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Veterans Haven President Vince Berna sent out a letter seeking support for the charity event.

"You may not agree with the war," he wrote, "but we must support the troops."

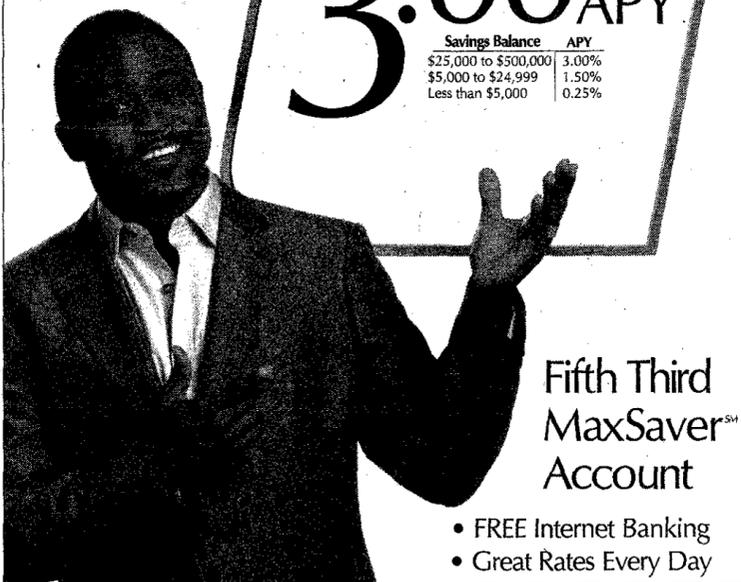
Tickets are available at Burton Manor, 27777 Schoolcraft, Livonia; the Hellenic Cultural Center, on Joy east of Newburgh in Westland; at Veterans Haven Outreach Center, 4924 S. Wayne Road in Wayne; or by calling (734) 721-4594.

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## Chamber hosts special luncheon

Westland's top administrative professional will be honored during a special Westland Chamber of Commerce luncheon 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 27, at Johnny Carino's, 35613 Warren Road.

An award for Administrative Professional of the Year will be given out during the chamber's Administrative Professionals Appreciation Luncheon.

Cost is \$15 for employers and \$20 for administrative professionals. The cost includes lunch and dessert and an appreciation gift for the administrative professionals.

For more information or to get a nominating form, call the Westland Chamber of Commerce at (734) 326-7222.

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**EAGLE**

FROM PAGE A1

For the Wayne resident, getting the donations was no easy task. According to his father, he has struggled with dyslexia and getting a badge like citizenship was difficult.

"Sometimes, I had my doubts, but Tim's been really conscientious and has stuck with it," said his father. "He would rather be doing something else, but he kept on. It kind of became a family effort although he did do all of the work."

Of the 21 merit badges he's earned to date, Yrsem's favorite was learning how to care for and use a shotgun. The hardest was communications, and that was a difficult part of his project.

"I had to call people," he said. "I don't like talking on the telephone and that made it difficult for me."

Yrsem started in Cub Scouting at age 8 and joined the Boy Scouts at age 11. A member of Boy Scout Troop 1742 of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints in Westland, the 16-year-old is following in the footsteps of his older brother Danny, who earned his Eagle Scout several years ago.

Danny sets a positive example for his younger brother who already is contemplating how many more merit badges he wants to earn. For every five badges past the rank of Eagle, a Scout earns a palm. Danny has five palms.

"I plan to get more badges to earn palms and help with the younger Scouts. I've got to beat my brother," Yrsem said.

According to his father, Yrsem is one of three Eagle Scouts in the troop which has 16 members. There's also another young man working on his community service project and five Life Scouts, one rank below Eagle. The remainder of the troop are new Scouts.

For now, he can relax and wait for his court of honor and congratulatory letters from far and near.

"Danny got a whole bunch of them," said Dan. "He got one from Al Kaline and the president, and Tim is looking forward to that."

smason@oe.hometown.com | (734) 953-22

**Coffee Hour**

State Re. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, will have a coffee hour 9-10:30 a.m. Monday, April 18, at the Big Boy restaurant, 6360 N. Wayne Road at Hunter.

Citizens are welcome to discuss issues and/or concerns with Anderson who holds the coffee hours the third Monday of the month.

**Power Soccer Clinic**

The Westland Parks and Recreation Department will host a Power Soccer Team Clinic 2-5:30 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford.

Power soccer is a team sport for individuals with disabilities who use power wheelchairs. It is the first sport designed specifically for power wheelchair users. The game is usually played in a gymnasium on a regulation basketball court. Teams of two power wheelchair users attack, defend and maneuver an oversized ball into a designated goal to score points.

The clinic is designed to build a Westland power soccer team. For more information, call Margaret Martin at (734) 722-7620, Jerry Frick, power soccer executive in Atlanta, Ga., at (770) 654-0715, Alan Pomranka of Michigan Wheelchair Veterans at (517) 490-3893 or Ken Britton at (734) 595-4157.

**Earth Day**

Scout groups, classes, church groups, home school groups, civic clubs or preschools looking for an Earth Day activity can adopt a planter box outside the Bailey Recreation Center. The planting will take place 4:30-6 p.m. Friday, April 22. For more information, call the Bailey Center at (734) 722-7620.

**Garage Sale**

More than 80 garage sales all in the same place at the same time in

the parking lot west of Westland City Hall, 36601 Ford Road, next to the Police Department. For further information about how you can reserve a spot, call Margaret Martin at (734) 722-7620.

**Night Off**

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

Those nights the Westland Parks and Recreation Department 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, cheer-leading, math games and arts and crafts, and kids can choose the same activity for both sessions.

The event is for children in first-through 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.

**Spring bazaar**

The Edison Elementary PTO will have its Spring Bazaar 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 20.

The bazaar will feature a collection of 25 vendors, mostly direct-sell businesses like Tupperware, DK Books and Party-Lite candles along with a few cash-and-carry vendors selling jewelry, denim purses, stamped greeting cards and other fun items. There will also be a bake sale held in conjunction with the bazaar, which will be held in the gym.

No children will be allowed in the gym, however, baby-sitting will be available. Edison School is at 34505 Hunter, Westland.

**PLACES AND FACES**

**Golf outing**

The Westland Rotary Club will hold a Centennial Golf Celebration Thursday, May 26, at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills in Salem Township. The outing will have a scramble format and 11 a.m. shotgun start. It includes 18 holes of golf, lunch and beverages at the turn, door prizes and a filet mignon dinner and banquet.

The costs is \$160 per golfer or \$600 for a foursome. Sponsorships also are available. For more information, call Dr. Kim Shunkwiler at (734) 728-5533, Tom North at (734) 421-1300, Todd Blevins at (734) 425-7766 or Capt. Matt O'Neil at (734) 722-3660.

To register, send a check, payable to Westland Rotary to the Rotary Golf Outing, Shunkwiler Chiropractic Health Center, 5978 N. Wayne Road, Westland, MI 48185. Proceeds will benefit the Salvation Army and Westland Rotary charities.

**Big band concert**

The music of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller and modern jazz will be featured when the 15-piece Paul Keller Orchestra performs 7 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at O'Leary Auditorium.

Tickets are \$16 per person and the proceeds benefit community projects by Garden City Rotary and the Garden City Foundation for Educational Excellence.

Get tickets in advance from Peggy Sexton at American Speedy Printing on Ford in Garden City. Tickets also will be available at the door.

**Poker Tournament**

The Westland Jaycees is sponsoring a Texas Holdem Tournament and Vegas Night Saturday, April 16, at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. The tournament starts promptly at 6 p.m. and runs until 11 p.m. Register at the door for \$50, beginning at 4:30 p.m. There will be

no rebuy-ins during the tournament.

The Vegas Night will open at 7 p.m. and include blackjack, Let It Ride, Holdem and seven-card poker. Food, beer and pop also will be available. For more information, call (734) 228-0400 or by e-mail at wholdem@yahoo.com.

**Vendor fair**

St. Damian Church is inviting parishioners and their friends who have home-based businesses to participate in a vendor fair 1-4 p.m. Saturday, April 30, at the church on Joy Road east of Merriman.

Vendors that will have exhibits and/or products include Arbonne International, Logenberger, Princess House Crystal, DK Books, Pampered Chef and Party Light & Creative Memories. For more information, call Ritaanne Felczak Otto at (734) 425-8970.

**Off and running**

North Brothers Ford and the City of Westland are sponsoring the seventh annual 5K Fun Run and Walk Saturday, May 14, for the benefit of the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

Runners and walkers collect donation in advance of the race/walk which will start at 9 a.m. at the Bailey Recreation Center. Prizes and recognition will be awarded to the top three females and top three males in seven age groups - ages 1-10, 11-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 and over.

The pre-registration deadline is May 7 and T-shirts are guaranteed for all registered by that date. The registration fee is \$12 for students age 18 and under and \$15 for adults. After May 7, the fee is \$18.

Registration starts at 8 a.m. on race day. For more information, contact Erin Jackson at North Brothers Ford at (734) 524-1232. Registrations can be sent to her attention at the dealership, 33300 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185. Checks should be made payable to North Brothers Ford.

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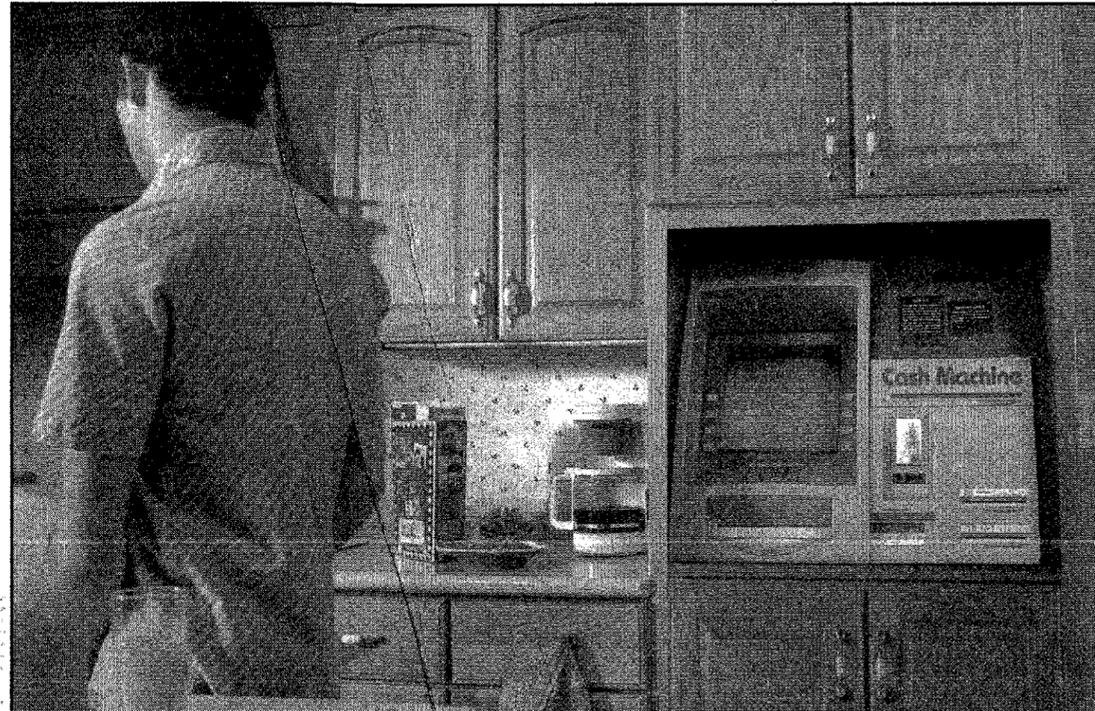
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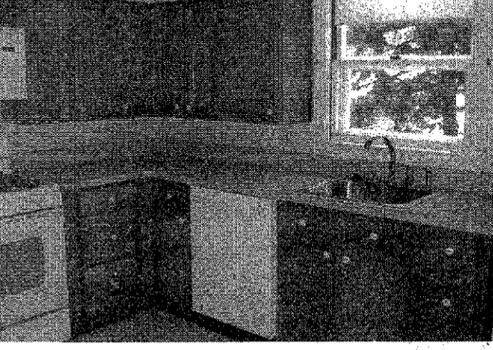
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## TV's Turner, youth choir featured at prayer breakfast

Frank Turner, known to viewers in metro Detroit as an investigative reporter and a co-anchor at WXYZ-TV Channel 7, considers his most meaningful recognition to date to be his growing reputation as "America's First Evangelical Anchorman."

On Thursday, May 5, Turner, an internationally recognized evangelist and Bible teacher, will discuss his faith and the part it has played in his life and career at the 31st annual Livonia Community Prayer Breakfast in Burton Manor. Suffering abuse as a child,

Turner was on his own at age 14 and starting a 25-year addiction to alcohol and drugs. He juggled his habit with jobs in television, starting as a production assistant at a Chicago station, which led to reporting jobs in Omaha, Nashville, New Orleans and, eventually, an anchor spot at Channel 7.

By 1998 Turner was fired, broke, severely depressed and immersed in a lawsuit filed by an ex-fiancee. In the summer of 1999, Turner began attending church services, and in August of that year he was baptized, which he says, put an

end to his addiction and depression.

The theme of this year's breakfast, which takes place on the National Day of Prayer, is "Shed His Grace on Thee."

Also featured will be the Livonia Youth Choir, directed by Melissa Lloyd. The choir will perform a variety of music including "Sing for Joy," by George F. Handel and "Everytime I Feel the Spirit," arranged by Robert Thygeson.

The Livonia Prayer Breakfast is a version of the National Prayer Breakfast held annually in Washington, D.C.

Inaugurated in 1953 by some members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, these events are now held in many states and cities throughout our nation.

The Livonia Prayer Breakfast was initiated in 1975 by an ecumenical group of citizens and continues as a voluntary spiritual communion. Its focus has been on bringing inspirational speakers to communicate positive, faith-filled principles that will inspire people to think globally and act locally.

## Jockey unveils line for home shoppers; Westland has new dining option

### UNDERWEAR TO OUTERWEAR

Shoppers need not head to the mall to buy active and loungewear any longer. Joanna Krenk, a Canton resident, has recently become a consultant for a brand new line by Jockey, called Person-to-Person.

The company, which came into existence Feb. 1, now offers an exclusive line of at-home merchandise featuring everything from women's underwear to men's loungewear. Even baby and toddler items will be available in May.

Part of the service involves women's bra fittings. "Ninety percent of women wear the wrong bra size," said Krenk. After all, she said, comfort is "what Jockey is all about."

This isn't Krenk's first venture into home-based business. She formerly worked with Discovery Toys. Upon learning more about the Person-to-Person line, she became excited about the idea of selling name-brand merchandise, and doing so on her own schedule.

Krenk said the clothing is sold by one-on-one appointment or in-home parties. Women's wear ranges in price from about \$18 to \$45, while men's items cost about \$16-\$26. The activewear is what initially interested Krenk, who considers herself "athletic."

For more information about



Jockey Person-to-Person merchandise or to become a consultant, call (734) 416-9887.

### SERVICE AT STEAK

Westland's latest addition for area diners is about to open its doors. Longhorn Steakhouse will open for business beginning at 4 p.m. Monday, April 18 at 35400 Warren Road.

"We are a casual dining steakhouse that offers a wide variety of menu selections, and a fully stocked bar, both served with out of this world legendary service," said Manager Tracee Raglow.

Business hours will be 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday. The restaurant offers all-ahead seating so patrons won't have a long wait at the door.

Call (734) 461-4300 for more information.

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

## INFORMATION CENTRAL

If you enjoy television shows like CSI, Forensic Files, and Cold Case, you also may enjoy reading true crime books. Whether you are already a fan or new to the genre, the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland has something for you.

One reason that people read true crime is to learn about historical events. The *Lizzie Borden Sourcebook* is one such book. In it, David Kent has compiled actual newspaper articles from before, during and after the trial as well as transcripts of actual court testimony.

Jack the Ripper is another infamous criminal that has fascinated people for over a century. Although most everyone has heard about him, he was never caught and there is still no agreement on who Jack the Ripper really was.

The library has many books about him and his crime, some presenting facts and others, including Patricia Cornwell's *Portrait of a Killer* and James Tully's *Prisoner 1167: The Madman Who Was Jack the Ripper* make a case for the real identity of the man.

Another reason for reading true crime is to get a more complete story about current events than one would get from reading the daily news. One example is *23 Days of Terror* which was written by Angie Canon and the staff of *U.S. News and World Report*. The book is a start-to-finish chronicle

of the Beltway Snipers in Washington, D.C. Anyone wanting to know who the criminals were and how they were caught can find it in this book.

Of course, no one can talk about true crime writing without mentioning Ann Rule. She has written more than 20 *New York Times* bestsellers including *The Stranger Beside Me*, *The Story of Ted Bundy* and Rule's unknwon friendship with this serial killer.

New to true crime and just want to see what it's all about? Ann Rule's *True Crime Files* are books consisting of several shorter stories and are great for people with limited time or people who just want to see if the genre is for them without committing to an entire book. If you would like to browse our true crime section stop by the library or call (734) 326-6123 for more information.

**Adult Book Discussion Group:** 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 19.

The name of the book for this meeting is *Plainsong* by Kent Haruf. These are informal open forum discussions. Please read the book before attending. No registration required.

**Third-Fourth-Grade Book Club:** 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 20.

Talk about books, make new friends and participate in cool activities. This month's book is *Nim's Island* by Wendy Orr. Register and pick up a copy of the book from the Children's Desk.

## Churchill's Gratia Legio earns title

Churchill High School's Gratia Legio Winter Guard team recently returned from Saginaw with the gold medal, earning first place in their division.

The team competed against 16 other Winter Guard groups in Michigan Class A.

"Our hard work and dedication definitely paid off," said Kim Fallows, participant. "It feels amazing to be No. 1 out of 16 other guards. Winter Guard was a great experience."

Gratia Legio includes 14 stu-

dents who spent the season practicing twice a week and competing on weekends.

Gratia Legio includes Churchill seniors Kaitlyn Moran, Christy Casper, Maria Silva, Megan Boltz, Sarah Hettel, Danielle Christie, Kim Fallows, Melissa Smith, Churchill juniors Brittany Blaskay, April Maas, Colleen Newsome, sophomore Erin Cummins, and freshmen Brianna Malyn and Cayla Yuhn. Carolyn Barta, a Churchill graduate, coaches the team.

## IN THE SERVICE

Jeff Nichol, the son of Chuck and Cindi Nichol of Westland, is currently deployed to Camp Fallujah, Iraq.

A Marine lance corporal, he entered the service on March 19, 2003, through the Delayed Enlistment Program. He graduated from boot camp at Parris Island, S. C., on Sept. 12, 2003, and went on to Marine combat training in North Carolina in October 2003 and field wireman training at Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., in February 2004.

He was deployed to Haiti March-June of 2004.

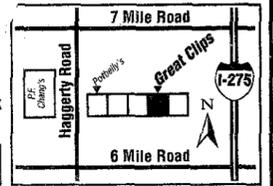


Jeff Nichol

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Cheer for the hometeam, read today's **SPORTS** section

# Public Act 502 draws attention to need for organ donors

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

State Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia was in the mood for a celebration when she walked into the room at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia on Thursday, April 7. The Senate Bill she introduced last year, passed the Senate and House Chambers, and was signed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm, creating Public Act 502 - the Michigan Organ and Tissue Donation Education Fund.

Michigan residents applying for or renewing a driver's license or state ID card can now contribute to the fund that will raise awareness about registering organ donors for the state's list. As of April 1, 2,633 people were waiting for kidney, heart, lung, liver, and pancreas transplants in Michigan. Toy has a special place in her heart for those in need. Her brother was disabled until his death at age 44.

"Experiencing my brother being sick and knowing about a family praying to God to help this 10-year old who would die without an organ donation, I knew we had to do something," said State Sen. Toy. "We want to educate them about one day

sharing something with someone to save a life."

It's evident that State Sen. Toy takes pride in the legislation that amends the state vehicle code to create the education fund within the state treasury. The state treasurer will disperse the money to the Department of Community Health with no more than 8 percent going to the Secretary of State and Community Health for administrative purposes.

Only 7 percent of Michigan residents are currently registered on the list. The national average is 40 percent. Seventeen other states have already raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to increase their number of donors.

"What more precious gift can you give to another than the gift of life," said Toy. "A gift of life donor leaves behind not only a family that treasures his or her most generous or noble gift, but also countless other families and other generations that can lead by his or her example."

April is Donate Life Month and with a few simple steps just about anyone can save a life. Signing the back of your driver's license is not enough. Discuss the decision with your family so

they know your wishes, then register.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

JoLynn Pulliam's niece Jennifer had always wanted to donate but at age 16 she never got around to signing up for the registry. She was too busy taking on the lead role in her high school play and being a teenager until one day tragedy struck. She was living with her family in Japan when she suffered a massive brain hemorrhage.

"When doctors determined there were no brain waves, my brother and sister-in law remembered that Jennifer always said she'd wanted her organs to go to a donor," said Pulliam, a registered nurse and recruiter for St. Mary's Human Resources department.

"She was flown on a ventilator on an Air Force transport plane to Seattle and was able to donate to 5 people including a young mother of 2. Those children wouldn't have had a mom without the transplant. She touched so many lives. It's important to highlight the bill so they know they have the opportunity to donate when they renew their license."

Pulliam is proud of the fact

that St. Mary Mercy was the first hospital in Michigan to train 50 people to request donations. An author of a nursing text book, Pulliam believes so strongly in the need for organ donations that she included a section in the fourth edition of her book released in January. The book also features a page dedicated to Jennifer.

"In 2004, four patients at St. Mary were organ donors which more than doubled the organ and tissue donations over the past four years. But first people need to fill out a card before they die."

Ron Dorogi is alive today because someone donated a liver. The 55-year old Canton resident received the transplant Jan. 20, 2004. Today he volunteers at the U-M Health Center in Canton. Through April 15 he will be at the Secretary of State in Canton to ask people to sign up to be donors.

"I think the act is terrific," said Dorogi. "It promotes something



Toy

## Granholm nominates Flanagan for education post

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM  
STAFF WRITER

A former Wayne County school administrator has been hand-picked by Gov. Jennifer Granholm as a candidate for the state Department of Education's top job.

Michael P. Flanagan, formerly superintendent of Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency and Farmington Public Schools, has agreed to be nominated for the job as the state's K-12 school chief. In his current job, he is executive director of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators and resides in Delta, west of Lansing.

Flanagan said that if selected by the state board, he will try

to reach consensus with a variety of groups, including the state board of education, the governor and the department of education.

"I'm humbled that the governor thinks I'm the right man for the job," Flanagan said.

The new superintendent will replace Tom Watkins, who resigned following a public feud with Granholm.

Granholm, who sent a letter recommending Flanagan for the job to the State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus, was particularly



Flanagan

impressed by Flanagan's leadership abilities.

"He has shown consistent commitment to the children of this state - particularly those who face barriers in their education," Granholm's spokeswoman Liz Boyd said.

The ultimate decision about who will be the next superintendent rests with the state's board of education. The board can choose from candidates who have applied for the job or they can choose Flanagan, Granholm's recommended candidate.

Straus has said that the board anticipates a "quality pool of applicants" for the superintendent's job.

The board will interview the finalists, who may request confidentiality until they are named as finalists, in an open

meeting. A decision is expected later this month or next.

The state's school superintendent helps shape policy for 553 school districts state wide and 200 charter schools.

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## Never feel powerless again Kohler generators powered by GM provide value and peace of mind

With five children and a rural home in Michigan's "tornado alley," Tom Deagostino needs to be plugged in, despite what ill winds blow his way. And they blow a lot. "One year, a tree fell onto the house. Another year we lost power in an ice storm for five days - we lived like pioneers."

Power outages remind us of how much we depend on electricity and how vulnerable we can be without it. So Deagostino has joined a growing number of homeowners who vow they'll never feel powerless again. They've installed a residential generator by Kohler Power Systems, a trusted backup power system that adds value to their homes and priceless peace of mind. The Deagostino's selected a 15 kilowatt (kW) generator to provide backup power to everything in their home.

The 15kW and 30 kW Kohler generators are powered by General Motors engines, well known for their durability in trucks, cars and buses for nearly a century, and generate ample electricity to run today's homes.

"In today's world, the stakes are pretty high," said Don Grau, owner of Gen Power, Inc. in Wixom and an authorized Kohler distributor. "Depending on where you live, no power can mean no water. No sump pump to prevent flooding. No income if you work at home."

A commercial-grade Kohler residential generator automatically restores power in seconds, even if you're not there. It features digital power and provides worry-free, turnkey protection for even the most finicky electronics. In fact, hospitals rely on Kohler standby generators powered by GM to keep life-saving equipment running during outages.

Unlike portable generators that must be plugged in, started and refueled, standby generators are automatically fueled by liquid propane (LP) or natural gas and are installed permanently outside new or existing homes. During an outage, an automatic transfer switch restores electricity within seconds, then shuts down the generator when the grid is back up.

A Kohler Power Systems professional will assist homeowners in choosing a unit that fits both their needs and their budget. Standby automatic generators protect homes, and provide convenience and assurance that portable generators cannot match.

Industry-leading features include:

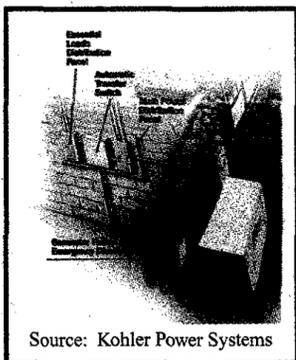
- **Low noise** - Kohler generators are about as quiet as the average central air conditioning unit - important in communities with strict noise ordinances.
- **Service** - Because peace of mind is so important when power is at stake, trained Kohler technicians service Kohler units.
- **Electronic governor** - A Kohler exclusive that prevents sharp dips in electrical output at startup that can play havoc with sensitive equipment like computers and other appliances with microprocessors. Other generators use a mechanical governor that may cause problems with these kinds of devices.

Reliability was important to Deagostino, an engineer, who was frustrated with the quality of his parents' standby generator. When it was his turn to buy a unit and replace his parents' system, he opted for the winning combination of Kohler and GM.

Now he awaits the upcoming storm season with confidence instead of dread.

"I have a permanent solution for backup power," he said. "I guess you could say I feel very empowered."

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Source: Kohler Power Systems

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## OUR VIEWS

# Volunteers help make city great

Westland's history is looking good these days. We're talking about the city's historic village where its latest additions, the Rowe House in December 2004 and the Octagon House in April 2002, now have permanent foundations and new roofs.

The foundations and roofs are the first big steps in getting the homes ready to open to the public. That may be several years down the road, but when they do open the credit will primarily go to the Friends of the Westland Historical Village.

This volunteer organization has made it its mission in life to nurture and protect the city's heritage. Structures that in another time or another era would have been razed to make way for progress are standing tall and looking good, thanks to the Friends' efforts.

It no easy task. They've sold T-shirts and coffee mugs, had tables to sell donated items at the events like the community garage sale. This week, they hosted an "old-time" fashion show and luncheon to raise money to help repair the Octagon House.

The Friends of the Westland Historical Village are but one of the many volunteer groups and volunteers who work day in and day out for the Westland community. The Friends of the Library have staged their fair share of book sales to raise money for the William P. Faust Public Library, and an untold number of men and women have given of their time to mentor young people through the Youth Assistance Program.

Next week, April 17-23, is National Volunteer Week. Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, the week is about thanking one of our country's most valuable assets — our volunteers — and calling the public's attention to all that they do to improve our country, our state, our community.

The 2005 theme is "Inspire By Example," and that's what these volunteers do. We would like to take this opportunity to thank every person who gives of themselves for the betterment of the city. To steal a line from the MasterCard ad, what they do for Westland is truly priceless.

# Keep people as focus in allocating funds

Communities in Wayne and Oakland counties have begun a campaign to convince the federal government that Community Development Block Grants it allocates are vitally needed.

There's no time to waste. Plans now call for the CDBG funds to be moved in the 2006 budget year to the Commerce Department from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The next budget year isn't that far off.

While the move is curious in itself, the program could be wiped out, since there are no plans to increase funding in the Commerce Department's budget.

This isn't chump change. The loss of CDBG funds could cost \$162 million in Oakland County alone.

But statistics and politics aside, the money isn't going to fill a slush fund. Real people will feel the loss of these funds. It's being used, particularly in older communities, to help those residents with low incomes for such things as home chores and repairs.

Wayne County communities also are using the funds for police and fire programs.

In Oakland County, the funds go toward the Main Street redevelopment program for older communities, law enforcement and a prescription program.

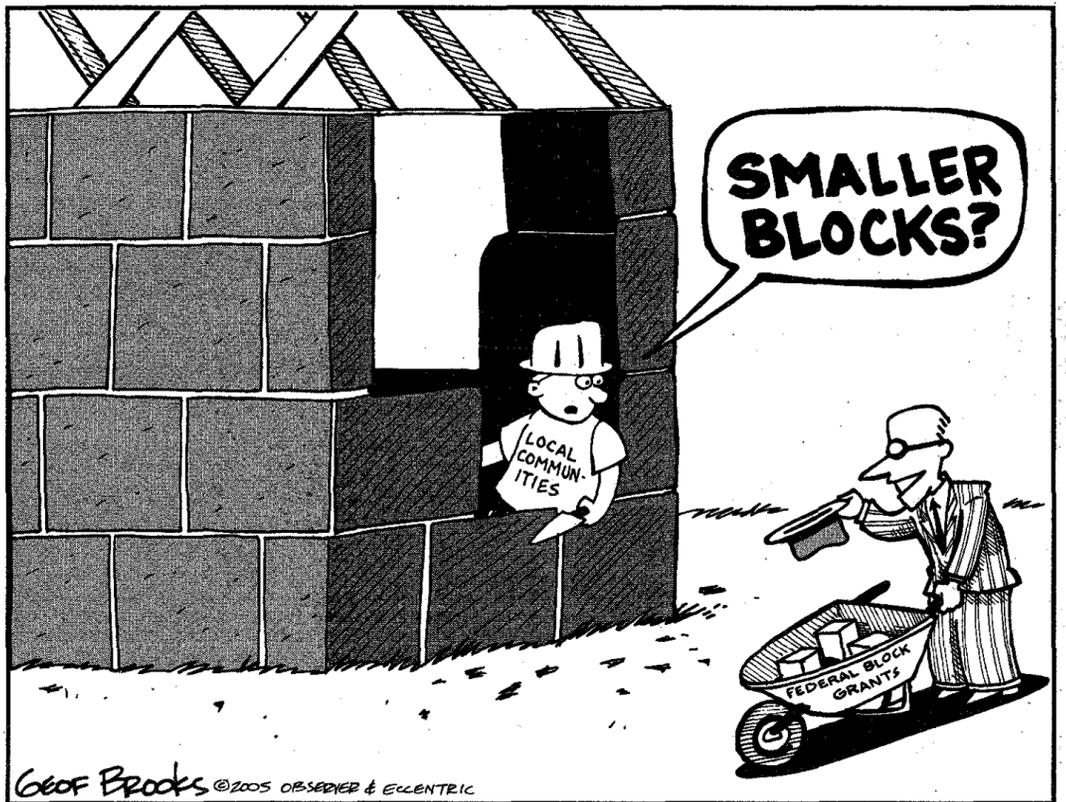
These are quality-of-life programs, and when residents can't provide for themselves, it's the job of government to lend a hand. In carrying their case forward, Wayne County governments have approached Congressman Thaddeus McCotter.

Oakland communities and agencies, such as Lighthouse of Oakland County, Haven (a domestic abuse shelter) and the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency, gathered last week to explore their concerns.

One county official called for putting pressure on the Bush administration. That's exactly what needs to happen.

The way to start is by having a long talk with Wayne and Oakland county congressional representatives, and our senators. Go armed with hard facts, along with pictures of those who need the services the most. After all, they are among those whom the leaders are supposed to represent.

While southeastern Michigan can lead the way in this campaign, local officials must network with those from other states to present a united front with a common goal.



## Civic League on life support

After a battle that has gone on for more than 25 years the Wayne-Ford Civic League is now on life support and won't make it past 18 months in my opinion.

In October 1981, after being put into debt by those in charge, Marian Greenfield was elected president and with the help of committed people (which I was honored to be one of) got the Civic League out of debt and back on solid ground within two years and the two people who wanted to get the land that the Civic League sat on were stopped in their tracks. They weren't very happy, but they never gave up on getting that land.

Last year with internal problems, the court stepped in and made Vic Barra interim administrator for nominations in September and elections in October, with three rulings — the former president couldn't run, Vic Barra couldn't run for president by way of our by-laws, and the by-laws in place January 2004 were the ones that would be used and there would be no changes in them until after the elections and only by the full membership.

I met with Vic Barra late November-early December for about 90 minutes and let him talk about what he wanted to do at the Civic League. Vic said he would change the by-laws so he could run for president and that he had signed a letter of intent to sell some of the Civic League's land to help pay off its debt.

I told Vic about the courts rulings (which seemed to surprise him) and that he couldn't sell the land since he wasn't the president. Vic said he would have to unless I knew where to get that money to which I said go to the bank and refinance the loan, since the city did it a few years ago to which Vic said he couldn't because he wasn't president. During that time until the so-called elections, Vic Barra kept on trying to change the by-laws and get himself elected president, but when he knew that wouldn't happen, he surrounded himself with people, knowing that (off paper) he would run everything.

You see, to get all the Civic League's land it has to go under and nothing else will do and they will pay whatever it cost to get that land.

I have but a few questions: If the Civic League is in such debt then why Vic, did you cheat so much to hang on to it? And why only the sale of the land would do? And just how much money do you think you will get?

The one true thing I will tell you, Vic Barra, I'm not going away, and if I make the connection, you will be going away for at least five-eight years.

Jim Davis  
Westland

## Ford, GM missed chances

Where were Ford and General Motors just months ago when they signed that lucrative union contract with the UAW? Sleeping?

Now they want the federal government to bail them out. They need to talk to the union and beg for some of the contract back. I guess they thought they were going to get it all back from the salary people or

## LETTERS

the government. CEO Richard Wagoner at GM says we have a \$4 billion burden that the Japanese don't have. You had that when you signed the contract. Stop crying and cut back on your salaries and all your vice-presidents' bonuses of millions. Wait until the Chinese get here. You are going to love it!

You had a chance to get some of your health care back from the UAW last contract, but you didn't have the balls to address it with Ron Gettelfinger. You people at General Motors and Ford run on 100 percent BS.

And to you General Motors. I can't believe you gave 276 people on the *Oprah Show* free cars at a cost of \$8 million and now they are going to pay state and local taxes on each car at a cost of about \$7,000 per car and can't live up to their insurance obligations to their salary employees. You people, managers, should be proud of yourselves. The federal government should make you live up to your obligations. Shame on You!

Wayne Mirth  
Westland

## Two sides to every story

I disagree with your "slant" on your explanation of what is fairness in journalism.

I can't think of any administration's "spin" mastery better than during the Clinton years. There are always two sides to every story. During the Democratic years of the White House, you — the liberal press — were in your glory. Now, you — the liberal press — don't like a lot of things that you hear because you don't agree. What's the difference between "slanting news" favoring either the liberal or the conservative side? It's just as biased either way. You talk of 19th century journalism being either wholeheartedly Democratic or Republican — what has changed? It hasn't!

My "spin" on this is that I feel the No. 1 factor in our society that is missing is integrity. Many people in our society today never feel shame for what they say or do that is untrue. People today justify and rationalize their actions, which is immoral. I feel the very moral fiber of our society is corroding.

I am deeply concerned because your newspaper will be turned over shortly (or maybe this has happened already) to the Gannett Corp. The company that is responsible for the brain drain from the ranks of *The Detroit News* during the newspaper strike in the '90s. The company that tried intimidating people to break the strike and come and work for them. And you want me to think that the *Observer* (editorially) will be "fair and balanced?" I think not.

You have the power to write whatever you believe because of your position at the *Observer*. When I read your articles, I rarely agree with your "spin" on a story.

So, this is still what makes America great. Anyone, even you, has the freedom and the right to write or say whatever you want ... and we have the freedom to disagree.

Maureen Wilkie  
Livonia

## Poached frog

Mr. Power's frog poaching analogy ("State government continues to bleed our great universities," *Observer*, March 31) is just as well fitting to be applied to state government taxing.

As I remember, years ago we had neither sales nor state income taxes. At that time, the state government at all levels, and its financially appropriated beneficiaries, functioned just fine. Then someone thought of the idea that money from sales tax would come in handy, so for start a 2-percent sales tax was levied.

Money poured in and with it grew the appetite for more. If there is more money available, there is always a way to spend it, and some more. Not too long after, the sales tax was increased to 3 percent. Then we were told that still more money is needed, but if we object to sales tax increase by 1 percent more, then there will be a need for a state income tax.

Well, some years later a state income tax was imposed anyway, that on top of the 4-percent sales tax. Then enacted was Proposal A, increasing the sales tax even higher, to 6 percent, in return for the reduction of homestead property tax.

The reduced property tax continues to rise with rising valuation. Now we hear all kinds of proposals how to tinker with Proposal A, how to circumvent its provisions, how to raise property tax even more, but apparently leaving the sales tax intact at 6 percent.

The latest suggestion is for broadening the state sales tax to include services. One may wonder where it will end; how soon will the frog get poached.

In the past, some avid advocates of more taxing avoided paying recommended-by-them higher taxes by moving to other states. But for those of us, obviously a great majority, with limited incomes, burdened with all kinds of taxes, evident and hidden, who are trying to make ends meet, every penny counts.

It seems to me the right thing to do rather than again raising taxes is to reduce the size of bureaucracy in the much overgrown government, and eliminate wasteful funding, wasteful spending.

Joseph Wira  
Plymouth

## SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

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

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## QUOTABLE

"The state board determined that it wanted to recognize excellence. We want all schools to excel and you set the example for other schools. I commend you and I'm very proud of you."

— State Board of Education President Kathleen Straus, in presenting the prestigious the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary Award to the students and staff of Edison Elementary School

# Detroit's next mayoral choice matters to us all

For folks who don't live there, Detroit and its manifold problems often seem of another world, tortured by layers of mismanagement, racism, poverty and political corruption.

"I just wish it would go away" is a comment I must have heard 100 times — and we've all heard even worse.

But, like it or not, Detroit does matter to us all — and, like it or not, it is not going away. It is and will remain Michigan's largest city, with a long and distinguished history going back to 1701. Less than a century ago, it led the birth of the manufacturing revolution that brought unprecedented prosperity to Michigan and its workers.

Yet its present condition — described by a columnist some years ago as "America's first third world city" — brings shame on our state and hurts our national image. Which is why the August primary election for mayor of Detroit really matters. There will be three major candidates: The incumbent, Kwame Kilpatrick; City Council member Sharon McPhail; and Fremman Hendrix, who was deputy under former Mayor Dennis Archer.

Kilpatrick, who at 31 was the city's youngest-ever mayor when he took office, has been acting ... well, his age. Or not quite his age. Many observers consider him immature and impulsive, not ready for the big time.

There have been many gaffes over his three-plus years in office — key staffers improperly pulling rank, a fancy car leased for his family, investigations suppressed and widespread rumors of night life funny business. So many, in fact, that his re-election is no longer a sure thing.

Devastatingly, a poll released last week by EPIC/MRA found that more than half of Detroiters think Kilpatrick has accomplished nothing since being elected, and only one in five voters want to see him re-elected. His job approval rating is 62 percent unfavorable, while 61 percent of respondents think the city is "on the wrong track." In a trial heat, Kilpatrick fared poorly, running behind Hendrix and even with McPhail.

McPhail is no stranger to the voters. She's run for many offices, including mayor, since 1993, and was finally elected to Detroit City Council in 2001.

Unfortunately, this is a council that for years has ranked right up there as among the silliest and least constructive legislative bodies in our state. A friend of mine, a long-time knowledgeable observer of Detroit politics, describes McPhail as "mercurial, brilliant, but erratic, with one set of standards for herself and another for everyone else."

"She tried to be Ecorse city attorney and a Detroit councilman at the same time and fought to keep both jobs, though every court and the state attorney general told her she was nuts to think that wasn't a conflict of interest."

Two years ago, she was roundly ridiculed for charging that Kilpatrick had somehow rigged her electric back massager on a chair in her council office to give her a nasty shock. (No evidence was ever discovered that any-

one had sabotaged her chair.) This year, she has cleverly gotten Benny Napoleon, the popular former police chief, to appear to run with her under the promise that she will appoint him deputy mayor.

Then there is Fremman Hendrix, who met with a group of HomeTown Newspapers editors a couple of weeks ago for a conversation about the city and the region's future. He is a tall, relatively slim man with a high forehead, salt-and-pepper moustache and large hands, which he folds together when not gesturing. During our conversation (in which he, unlike so many politicians, spoke in complete sentences) he sat on the edge of his chair, legs bent under him, giving the impression of somebody ready to spring.

Hendrix served for eight years as deputy mayor and chief of staff, running the city's day-to-day operations and a workforce of 17,000. On his watch the city ran a balanced budget and cut taxes for the first time in years. He was also chairman of the reform city board of education.

Later, he spent several years as chief of operations for Strategic Staffing Solutions, a Detroit-based information technology company. I knew Hendrix while he was in the Archer administration and came to think highly of his managerial skills, maturity and common-sense vision for the city.

"The image of Detroit affects the entire region," Hendrix told the editors, "but Detroit right now is a fragile place. A good mayor can make a big difference, but Mayor Kilpatrick's learning curve has just been too steep."

Hendrix was blunt about the city's financial situation. "Bankruptcy is imminent unless we get our act together. Now that isn't entirely bad, because the specter of bankruptcy can drive collective bargaining with the municipal unions, who could find themselves faced with a choice between no union contract (via a judge's ruling) or a 50 percent cut in payroll. In any event, we need to reduce the number of departments from 44 to 30, but we also need to get another 800 or so police officers out on the streets."

Yet can Hendrix win, especially given his relatively low name ID and Kilpatrick's campaign war chest, now bulging with contributions from firms doing business with the city? "Name ID helps," Hendrix said, "but only if it's positive. It takes \$2 million to win. My goal is to have raised \$1 million by June. And if you get through the primary, you can raise a ton. Dennis Archer raised \$500,000 the day after he won his primary."

Originally, I thought Hendrix's campaign was a long shot. But I now think it just might succeed, if only because both Kilpatrick and McPhail have a demonstrated capacity to self-destruct.

Of course, it's a long way 'til the August primary, but the recent poll was surprising and encouraging for Hendrix ... and for anybody who hopes for a better future for Detroit.

Full disclosure: Philip Power is a supporter of and a contributor to Hendrix's mayoral campaign. He is also the former chairman of HomeTown Communications Network. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2047 or at ppower@homecomm.net.

# Family time, collaboration can improve quality of life

It fills our collective YMCA hearts with joy when we see families spending time together. Whether it is at the Boys and Girls Club, the Livonia Recreation Center or the Livonia Family YMCA, families that play together, stay together.

From our perspective, the greater number of successful not-for-profits and municipal opportunities in a community, the better the quality of life for its citizens.



Greg Wolcott

Collaboration is another key component improving our quality of life across this great nation of ours.

Our YMCA district's latest undertaking is our Physicians for Healthy Kids, Families and Communities effort. Under the volunteer leadership of Livonia Family YMCA's board chair Marshall Kleven and board director Dr. Mohammed Arsiwala, a new approach to collaboration has begun.

Working with local physicians, our work will include beginning programs for children with asthma, children with obesity and children in the 8-14 year age group category. This is just a start. Programs will also include weight management (for adults) and alternative exercise opportunities.

Speaking of program opportunities, our YMCA district is currently offering more than 65 program and membership opportunities. The Livonia Family YMCA is offering spring break day camp and spring break "YMCA Splash" aquatics. The latter teaches kids and families to be safer in and around water.

Those parents interested in a spending more time with their son or daughter are invited to try the Y's Adventure Guides program. This is a family program designed for a parent and his or her 5- to 11-year-old child.

In YMCA Adventure Guides, the parent serves as a guide in their child's life. The child is the explorer.

Parents lead, direct, supervise, influence and teach while presenting opportunities for children to explore the world around them. They lead by example as they set their children on a path through life. In the early years, the program is a side-by-side journey before children are launched into more advanced, independent activities. Activities include three camp outs, YMCA fun-nights, a parade, bowling, roller-skating, pine car derby and banquet.

Another new program trend is the Y's High School Recreation Basketball League. Our first try at this program has netted us 10 teams.

With a waiting list already, we hope to expand to a larger field of teams. This league is designed for boys and girls team participation. For further information, call Steve King at (734) 261-2161.

Like recreation centers, local schools, churches and other community centers, the Livonia Family YMCA is a safe haven, a destination, providing an opportunity for kids, teens, families, adults and seniors to come together in a safe, fun, wholesome environment.

*Did you know:* NCAA March Madness just wrapped up and many people know that basketball was invented at the YMCA (Dr. James Naismith in 1891), but did you know that volleyball was also invented at the YMCA? Believing basketball was too strenuous for businessmen, YMCA instructor William Morgan invented volleyball in 1895. The first game was played in the gymnasium of the Holyoke YMCA in Massachusetts.

Greg Wolcott is the district vice president of the Livonia Family YMCA. You can send comments or suggestions to him by calling (734) 261-2161 or by e-mail at gwolcott@ymcamedetroit.org.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### It's all propaganda

Thank you so much for putting into print (March 17 column by Philip Power, "Fairness in journalism on its way to becoming an old idea") a concern that I have had for a very long time. I've always talked about the "myth" of the liberal media. I've also almost completely stopped listening to the radio except for NPR, and almost never watch TV news.

The opposite of buying into everything that is brought out in a particular newscast is not believing anything you hear or read. I'm afraid that's pretty much where I am at this point. Now the "progressives" are fighting back with more of the same. That's what it is,

more of the same, propaganda. We now not only not listen to other points of view, we demonize them. Neither side on most issues will acknowledge any legitimacy to the other's position. We are cutting ourselves off from serious, informed debate. For those of us who want to know the deeper side to the issues, it is very difficult or even impossible to get reliable information and, more critically, almost impossible to have a calm and enlightened discussion about the issues that are now so critical. Thank you again. I shall look forward to your future columns.

Marshall Hutchinson  
Farmington Hills

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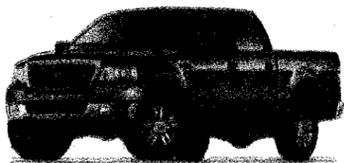
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Specialize in Ford vehicle service	YES	NO
Can offer one-stop service for everything your car needs	YES	NO
Technicians trained by Ford Motor Company	YES	NO

SERVICING YOUR FORD AT THE DEALERSHIP HELPS PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR WARRANTY.

THE GENUINE CHALLENGE. WE'RE BETTER. WE'RE PROVING IT. AND WE WANT YOU TO BE THE JUDGE.

**THE WORKS**  
\$34.95 OR LESS

A great value in maintenance – oil change, tire rotation, thorough inspection and more!

- ✓ Genuine Motorcraft® oil and filter change
- ✓ Rotate and inspect four tires
- ✓ Inspect brake system
- ✓ Test battery
- ✓ Check air and cabin air filters
- ✓ Check belts and hoses
- ✓ Top off all fluids

Up to five quarts of Motorcraft® oil. Taxes, disposal fees and diesel vehicles extra. See participating Dealership for details through 5/29/05.

**GUARANTEED! LOWEST PRICES**

ON ALL NAME-BRAND TIRES WE SELL—INCLUDING GOODYEAR, CONTINENTAL, MICHELIN AND MORE!



Requires presentation of competitor's current price ad on exact tire sold by Dealership within 30 days of purchase. See participating Dealership for details through 12/31/05.

**Genuine Motorcraft® Premium Wear Indicator Wiper Blades**

\$19.95 OR LESS

Motorcraft® wiper blades with wear indicator, per pair, installed. Taxes extra. See participating Dealership for details through 5/29/05.

**Genuine Motorcraft® Brake Service**

\$99.95 OR LESS

Get the brakes engineered specifically for your vehicle. Installed by the experts who know your vehicle best.

Install Motorcraft® pads or shoes on most cars/light trucks. One axle. Excludes machining rotors and drums. Taxes extra. See participating Dealership for details through 5/29/05.

**Genuine Motorcraft® Tested Tough® PLUS Battery**

\$64.95 MSRP

with 84-month warranty that includes FREE towing!

MSRP with exchange. Taxes and installation extra. Free towing valid only with Dealer-installed battery. See participating Dealership for limited-warranty details.

**EXPERT SERVICE AND GREAT PRICES!**

GENUINE PARTS. GENUINE SERVICE. GENUINE PEACE OF MIND.

**VARSITY**  
3480 Jackson Rd. 1-800-875-FORD  
ANN ARBOR

**ATCHINSON**  
9800 Belleville Rd. 734-697-9161  
BELLEVILLE

**GENE BUTMAN**  
2105 Washtenaw 734-482-8581  
YPSILANTI

**BRIARWOOD**  
7070 Michigan Ave. 734-429-5478  
SALINE

**HINES PARK**  
I-96 at Milford Rd. 248-437-6700  
LYON TWP.

**FRIENDLY**  
2800 N. Telegraph, 734-243-6000  
MONROE



**OPEN SATURDAYS**

See Dealer for Service Department hours.