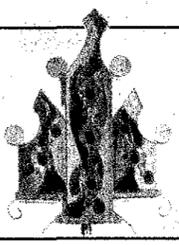


Dream houses that are for the birds

AT HOME, SECTION B



Fried plantain makes a sweet Cuban dish - TASTE, PAGE B7

SURF'S UP

At growing number of waterparks

FILTER, INSERTED SECTION

THURSDAY
June 9, 2005

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Big stink: Citizens complain about trash hauler

BY LEANNE ROGERS
AND DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITERS

As residents complain about trash not being collected on time, officials in Garden City and Westland are trying figure out how to solve the problem.

Midwest Sanitation currently provides trash hauling services to each city. The contract with Westland expires at the end of the month while

the agreement with Garden City runs until Sept. 30.

Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli confirmed Monday that her office has been flooded with complaints about delayed trash pickup.

"The service has been bad the last month or so," she said.

Likewise in Garden City, Department of Public Services Director Jack Barnes said his office also received a lot of citizen complaints. "There are misses (on collections). We got a

lot of calls. We were told there were equipment problems," said Barnes. "We're looking at our options. We expect to be fining them again."

Under their contract, Garden City can fine Midwest for missed collections and did that over problems in April.

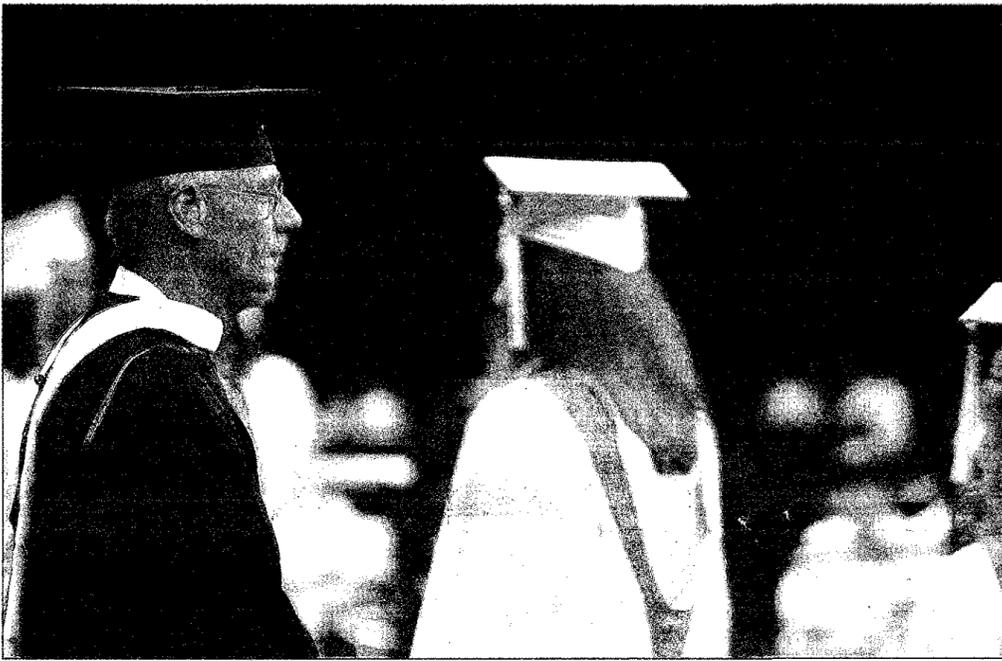
Some residents have said the problem goes back much further.

"We've been having the problem sporadically, off and on, for a couple of years," said Westland resident Jon Reno, who lives on Parkwood.

"It's not just me. It's not just Parkwood," Reno said. "It's the whole section of the city down here. The service is terrible."

Making similar complaints, Garden City resident Sarah Waltman told the council that she and her husband had waited until later in the day prior to her scheduled trash collection to put out a large chair. Although they waited a day to accommodate the Memorial Day holiday

PLEASE SEE TRASH, A5



BRIAN LOOPER

Graduation Day

Retiring teacher Richard Gordon looks on as John Glenn High School graduates move to the podium to accept their diplomas at commencement ceremonies held on the campus of Eastern Michigan University Saturday. For more on the ceremony, see Pages A2-3.

New city budget protects services and avoids layoffs

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland city leaders have adopted a \$56.9 million spending plan that protects city services, avoids employee layoffs and boosts the budget surplus.

In a 6-1 vote, the Westland City Council approved a new budget proposed by Mayor Sandra Cicirelli - the last of her first four-year term in office.

Cicirelli called her spending plan conservative and projected a surplus that will top the \$2 million mark during the budget year that starts July 1.

"We're not out there splurging by any means," she said.

With Councilman Richard LeBlanc casting the lone dissenting vote, the council adopted Cicirelli's proposal following budget talks that started in April.

LeBlanc argued that the general budget has siphoned too much money from other sources, such as the water-sewer fund. He also opposed Cicirelli's decision to expand her administration by reviving the position of economic development director, which she eliminated early in her mayoral term.

LeBlanc suggested hiring a contractor rather than restructuring an administrative post to spearhead economic development efforts.

Cicirelli's plan is expected to boost the budget surplus to \$2.1 million - tenfold the mere \$200,000 that she inherited early in her term. Cicirelli attributed the increase mostly to prudent spending, although the city also will receive \$625,000 by selling land near a fire station on the southeast side.

Councilman James Godbout embraced the new budget, saying the city has weathered state revenue cuts without cutting services to residents.

Cicirelli's new spending plan will cut the city's

garbage-disposal tax by a quarter-mill, due to savings gained by using a landfill rather than a now-demolished incinerator.

That will return \$18.75 a year to a typical homeowner with a \$150,000 house, Finance Director Steve Smith said.

Despite the tax cut, Cicirelli pledged that her administration still will explore options for a curbside recycling program, even though earlier programs became dismal failures.

Moreover, the budget will lead to a water-sewer rate increase of only 4 cents, pushing rates to \$5.29 per 1,000 gallons. The increase will simply offset higher costs that the city of Detroit passed to Westland.

A typical household will see their water-sewer costs increase only a few dollars a year, Smith said.

Cicirelli's budget also contains money to revive a secretarial position that was eliminated several years ago in the city clerk's office.

Clerk Eileen DeHart has trimmed spending in her office to help pay for the position.

Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt voiced concerns about long-term costs for the position, although she ultimately voted in favor of the new budget along with colleagues Michael Kehrer, Charles Pickering, Robert Stottlemeyer and William Wild.

The new budget will allow Cicirelli's administration to move ahead with several big-ticket purchases, including 10 more retro-looking, black and white police cars.

On Monday, the mayor vowed that her administration will continue seeking ways to improve the city's finances and boost the budget surplus.

"We will work hard to increase it," she said.

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Officials wave red flag over Senate bills

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Fifteen school buses. Fifteen Reading Recovery teachers. Fifteen class size reduction teachers. Art, music and media classes at all of the elementaries schools.

Each one represents about \$1 million, roughly what the Wayne-Westland Community Schools would lose if a state Senate subcommittee's proposed K-12 funding plan becomes a reality.

"This is a travesty," said Superintendent Greg Baracy of Senate Bill 279. "They're



Greg Baracy

finding a way to increase our foundation allowance, but also finding a way to decrease it."

In a brief sent June 2, the Middle Cities Education Association alerted its members to SB279, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on K-12 School Aid's proposed funding plan for fiscal 2006.

School officials have fired out a letter to three state senators - Laura Toy, R-

Livonia, Raymond Basham, D-Taylor, and Bruce Patterson, R-Canton - whose districts include Wayne-Westland, urging them to oppose that bill and a second one, SB266, which would shift \$18 million from the School Aid Fund to community colleges.

"It really shows they're continuing their shell game. They're finding a way to eliminate revenue out of the budget, but in front of the media, they're still saying they support the foundation allowance,"

PLEASE SEE SENATE, A6

Ypsi woman faces trial for embezzlement

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

An Ypsilanti woman will face trial in Wayne County Circuit Court for charges of embezzling \$19,300 while she worked for a Westland company that sells lingerie and sex toys.

Fikisha Anjel Taylor could face penalties ranging up to five years in prison, if she's convicted of taking money from Lover's Lane corporate headquarters on Ford Road, east of Hix.

Taylor was ordered to stand trial after she waived her right to a preliminary hearing last Thursday in Westland 18th District Court - a decision that averted pretrial testimony.

She remains free on a \$10,000 personal bond as she awaits trial.

Taylor is accused of embezzling \$19,300 from Feb. 5 through April 22 while she worked as a human resources assistant for Lover's Lane.

She is accused of giving herself thousands of dollars in bonuses and having

them deposited directly into her bank account.

Police started an investigation into missing money after another Lover's Lane employee noticed problems with financial statements, Sgt. David Heater has said.

Taylor, married with a 7-year-old daughter, was charged after authorities in April executed a search warrant at her home and seized bank statements.

She has no criminal history.

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Volume 41
Number 4



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Coming Sunday on the PINK page

The elegant grace of fashion icon, Carolina Herrera.



Glenn's Class of 2005 receives diplomas

Photographs and information about the Wayne Memorial High School Class of 2005 graduation will appear in the Sunday, June 12, issue of the Observer.

The Eastern Michigan University Convocation Center provided the backdrop Saturday as family and friends gathered to watch the member of John Glenn High School's Class of 2005 graduate.

The students heard from School Superintendent Greg Baracy and from 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Marine Capt. Grayson T. Story during the ceremony.

A 1992 summa cum laude Glenn graduate, he attended U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., where was selected to work with NATO as a Foreign Language Scholar and received two varsity light-weight football letters.

He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1996 with a bachelor of science in international relations and national security policy.

He has served in a variety of positions at the Naval Academy, Camp Lejeune, N.C., Fort Knox, Ky., and Camp Pendleton, Calif., and has been stationed in Okinawa, South Korea, Haiti, Greece, Spain, Kuwait and Iraq.

He had received numerous service decorations, including four Sea Service Deployment Ribbons, Korean Defense Service Medal, War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals and two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals with combat distinguishing device for valor.

Graduating during commencement ceremonies were:

Latacha Shantel Albert, Qurat ul-Ain Ali, Elyse Aurora Allard, Kevin Lawrence Allore, Eric William Arakelian, Borislav Dimitrov Atanasov, Joseph David Bacer Jr., Jesse David Backman, Stefanie Jean Bader, Melissa Marie Ballard, Christopher Joseph Banaszak, William Edward Barrett, Joseph Donald Barrow, Shannon Margaret Barton, Joshua David Bartrum.

Amber Nicole Batayah, Nathan Samuel Beard, Melissa Ann Begarowicz, Navjot Kaur Benipal, Stephanie Nicole Beveridge, Jessica Kerr Biglow, Sean Christopher Blodeau, Timothy Charles Bingham, Brandon Anthony Blise, Catherine Susan Blanck, Alexis Nicole Bland, Colleen



PHOTOS BY BRIAN LOOPER

Chantal Moore (left), the Class of 2005 president, and treasurer Kellie Coughanour applaud during remarks by Superintendent Gregory Baracy, during John Glenn High School's graduation ceremony Saturday.

Michelle Bloom, Sara Melissa Boczar, Jennifer Lynn Boris, Carson Elizabeth Boron.

Shawn David Borton, Toni Bourcier, Nicole Marie Bower, Jarret Edward Bozigian, Brian James Bradley Jr., Melissa Ann Braunstein, Adrian Eugene Brazier, Jason Ryan Brendel, Emily Grace Brennan, Edward John Brown II, Brandon Michael Budnick, David Lee Burgess, Derrick Antoine Bush Jr., Melinda Sue Cahill, Cristina Laura Calbajos, Reanne Pascua Calma.

Amanda Leigh Campbell, Samantha Rae Cannon, Dominique Rene Cantu, Sean Jeffery Caram, Keyauna Mon'le Card, Ryan Timothy Carlington, Orlando Leon Carswell, John Edward Caston, Angela Marie Cetrone, Jasmeka K. Chambers, Jeffrey Scott Chambers Jr., Ashley Megan Cherry, Situnyiwe Tembe Chirunga, Daniel Owen Chisholm, Alexander Leon Christian.

Thomas William Cichowski, Gary Ronald Cingel II, Monica Rallene Clenney, Shaun Edward Clinton, Jacquelyn Victoria Coats, Miga Agim Coka, Ryan Alfred

Collings, Nicole Ann Colon, Anthony John Colosimo, Amanda Kaye Colwell, Brittany Anne Colwell, Theodore Edward Conley, Matthew Joseph Cooper, Royce Darnell Cooper, Kellie Kay Coughanour, Jarrett David Coulter.

Daniel Mark Cover II, Amanda Marie Cox, Jeffery Alan Cox, Maurice Comet Cox, Jamie Lynn Craig, Stevie Cruz Crase, Brittany Tashay Crawford, Kyle Matthew Dahn, Brandon Anthony Davis, Megan Denise Davis, Michelle Rene Davis, Stephanie Marquisha Davis, Andrew Carl Dean, Megan Margaret Dean, Julia Susan DeGroot, Michelle Diane DeGuzman.

Jaycob Ryan Delpiano, Vincent Deno DeLuca, Stephen Micheal DeRosia, Robert W. Destrampe Jr., Brisida Vasillag Dhembi, Samantha Julia-Lou Dillard, Ashley Nicole Dobos, Amanda Kathleen Doherty, Raymond Thomas Domzaiski Jr., Jennifer Kristine Dotson, Ryan Joseph Doupe, Kayla Marie Downing, Ryan Edward Downs, Sadie Amanda Dube.

Barry Blake Eberhardt Jr., Amber Nicole Edens, Laura Marie Eiben, Vernon Lee Emmons Jr., Taneisha Shanta Ervin, Michelle Elizabeth Erwin, David Anthony Espinoza, Tina Janay Evans, Nicole Elizabeth Ezekiel, Jonathon William Fenton, Joseph Allen Ferguson, Nicholas Earl Ferrara, Joshua James Fetty, Aaron Raymond Figruski, James Robert Fisher, Kyle Fisher, Chelsie Lynn Fitt, Alicia Anne Fitzpatrick, Scott Lee Fletcher, Tarrara Brooke Forbes, Shawn Michael Fournier, Ashley

Alison Freeman, Roy Patrick Frettenborough, Scott William Gabbert Jr., Stephanie Jean Gagnon, Jennifer Lynne Galindo, Michael George Galunas, Alicia Lynn Gardner, Rachael Marie German, Christopher Lee Gibson.

Danielle Eva Gibson, Joshua Foster Gierada, Jennifer Marie Glenn, Starla Nadine Glenn, Bryn Marie Gloffelty, Dayna Shanale Goldston, Ava Joanne Gomez, Jessica Leigh Grabowski, Whitney Rae Graham, Bradley Alexander Gray, Lesley Maria Grayson, Brett Joseph Green, Bruce Aaron Green, David Melvin Grissom, Jessica Lin Gunn, Andrew Michael Haarer.

Robert Joseph Haarer, Kimberly Mary Hagelthorn, Michele Lee Hahling, Kristina Kay Hall, Robin Jamie Hall, Krystal Marie Hanley, Cordarro Kalief Harper, Tara Mae Harrington, Jack S. Harris Jr., Angela Susan Hastings, Robert Charles Havro, Diane Leah Hawkins, Jessica Ann Hays, Ashleigh Lynne Hayter, Lance Matthew Hengesbaugh, Thomas James Henley.

Erica Nichole Hensley, Benjamin Dowe Hinken, Alisha Monae Hitchcock, Eric Patrick Hitt, Steven Charles Holden, Tiffany Ann Holloway, Sarah Marie Holt, Michael Anthony Holten, Joshua Mark Horyn, Rhonda Lynn Houk, Ashley Nichole Hubert, Kiarra Re'Shawn Huddleston, Ryan Matthew Hudy, Tarra Breanne Mae Hunt, DaVita Kristina Hurst.

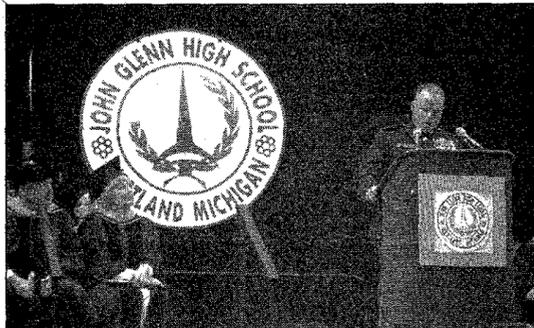
Dominek Devon Jackson, Sheryl Alyse Jacobs, Evis Jakova, Steven Edward Jaynes, Corderro Robinson Jenkins, Megan Elizabeth Johnson, Rosetta Pearl Johnson II,

Carley K. Jones, Chauncy DeLane Jones, Jamal LeMar Jones, Korrie Ann Jones, LaToya Lee Jones, Lyndon Daryle-James Jones II, Elizabeth Ann Jordan, Jeremy Lee Jozefczak, Shelby Elizabeth Kaplan, Kenneth Francis Kardel Jr., Cassandra Lin Kierpaul, Erica Anne Kimber, Samantha Mari Kimber, Jonathon David Kimble, Adam Joseph Kinczkowski, Clifford Ray Kitchen Jr.,

Keith Anthony Knurick, Heather Marie Kobylarek, Shawn Kohsmann, Nadiola Korcari, Xhensil Alfredo Korcari, Joshua David Krupin, Shannon Marie Krushlin, Tiffany Maurine LaCroix, Cory Andrew LaGuire, Sean Clinton LaGuire, Emily Shannon Laird, Stephanie Marie Lane, Brandon Scott Lang, Jessica Raeleen Langley, Brittnee Marie Lawfield.

Eric Walter Leach, Andre Tyrone Ledbetter, Kelly Melissa Ledbetter, Jamall Gary Lee, Nicholas Robert Leija, Sarah Marie Lemond, Jillian Michelle Lentine, Stephanie Lynn Leonard, Aaron Robert Leveske, Adam Charles Lewis, Kristen Nicole Lewis, Amanda Jane Lilla, Nathan Edward Lum, Aubrey Racheal Lynn, Grant Ryan MacDonald, Kaleigh Ann Madden.

Emily Christine Magee,



The 2005 Distinguished Alumnus, Marine Capt. Grayson Story, speaks to the graduating class as Superintendent Gregory Baracy (far left) and Principal Joan Sedik look on.

Jarren Anthony Manning, Charles Thomas Marleau II, Justin Louis Marroquin, Joshua Edward Marshbanks, Lydell Eric Mason IV, Kyle Garrison Maxwell, Rachel Lynne Mayes, Jonathan Daniel McCahill, Tanisha Lasha McCassel, Barbara Ann McClung, Joshua Russell McCollum, Karie Renee McCollum, Katie Marie McCollum.

Stacy Lynn McConnell, Jeremy David McEvoy, James Martin McGinnis, Stephanie Ann McGuire, Robert Nicholas McKinney, Kiara Alexandria McMillian, Lakita Marie McMillian, James Scott Meldrum II, Shanna Brittney Newton, James Michael Meyer, Joseph Frank Michalek, Jaimi Alise Mitchell, Chantal Katrina Moore, Jessica Nicole Moore.

Megan Joi Moore, Rebecca Jeanette Morawsky, Anthony Joseph Morello Jr., Roslyn Marie Morris, Brian Vincent Morrow, Alicia Lynn Morton, Nicole Marie Murphy, Trystan Murphy-Fahlgren, Gerald Wayne Murray, Saif Nabif Naber, Nicole Nadasen, Bradley Edward Napora, Allison Rae Nardone, Matthew Richard Nardone, Amelia Jo Nash.

Crystal Marie-Dawn Niedermeyer, Calvin C. Nobles Jr., Nathan Bernard Nooyack, Jeffrey Adam Novak II, Justin Terry O'Neill, Jaunline Rachel Ochoa, Benjamin George Oliphant, Jeremy Jarrel Oliver, Enea Agron Onuzi, Jeffrey Joseph Opoka, Melissa Lynn Osborne, Dennis William Overstreet, Brittany Danae Owen, Megan Marie Paika, Melissa Jo Paika.

Michael Lee Palmer, Shawn Ryan Palmer, Vera Palushaj, Anthony Thomas Parrish, Sachiben A. Patel, Sonal S. Patel, Jessica Leanne Patrick, Richard Allen Paul Jr., Lauren Michelle Perry, Aaron Michael Peterson, Jazzmenn Lee Peterson, Gangayswhar Kumer Phagoo, Erinn Nicole Phillips, Margaret Grace Phillips, Patrice Pickens, Steven Mitchell Pisarski.

Terry Earl Pittman, Jayne Marie Plante, Deborah Lynn Podorsek, Jennifer Ilene Porter, Brandolyn Kristen Powell, Mindy Lynn Rader, John Adam Radomski II, Robert Joseph Randolph, Sharrod LaRoyce Rawls, Ryan Michael Ray, Anthony Michael Reaume, Brittany Danielle Redden, Stephanie Marie Rees, Kyle James Reichert, Sydney-Morgan Reinhart.

Nathan Renard, James Matthew Restum, Mia Britney Reynolds, Darryl Keith Rice, Adi A. Rihani, Tahitia Allante Roberts, Samuel Hoyt Robertson III, Joshua Allen Rockwell, Corey Michael

Rodler, Charles Douglas Rose Jr., Devin Leigh Ross, Allen William Rushlow, Derek Charles Sample, Alison Jean Sanders, Ashley Darlene Sanders, Kimberly Ann Sanders.

Jessica Mary Sanford, Charles D. Sankey, Jonathan Michael Sanow, Bernadette Kathleen Savard, Andrew Jerome Schmitt, Teresa Marie Schneider, Vanessa Danielle Schrock, Brett Andrew Schwatz, Jordan Michel Scott, James Richard Sharkey, Duane Robert Shewmaker, Jessica Ann Shippe, Rachael Elizabeth Shock, Rachel Marie Sienko, Brian Davendra Singh.

Rachael Courtney Smith, Rachei Kristen Smith, Shannon Lynn Smith, Todd Anthony Smith, Joseph Arthur Smitherman, Brandon David Sneddon, Corey James Snyder, Pawanpreet Singh Sohi, Ashley Nicole Sorensen, Donna Marie Soulliere, Sean Michael Southard, Richard Michael Stanek, Heather Angela Stanfel, Natalie Shea Starbuck, Philip Matthew Stephens.

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GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT 6000 MIDDLEBELT GARDEN CITY, MI 48185

The following vehicles have been deemed abandoned and will be sold at public auction on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. The auction is to be held at Westland Car Care Towing, 6375 Hix Rd., Westland, MI 48185.

Please Note: The bidding will start at the towing and storage charges.

YEAR & MAKE	STYLE	VIN#
1991 Lincoln	4 DR	1LNCM9745MY715423
1997 Ford Taurus	4 DR	1FALP52U0VG180123
1987 Ford Tempo	4 DR	1FABP36XXHK180254
1993 Ford Taurus	4 DR	1FACP5248PG292736
1991 Buick	4 DR	11G4CW58L1M1678251
1992 Buick Century	4 DR	1G4AG54N5N6445166
1992 Pontiac	2 DR	1G2WJ1474NF315717
1990 Dodge Dynasty	4 DR	1B3XC56R0LD918252
1990 Chevy Cavalier	2 DR	1G1JC14G4LJ129536
1994 GMC	SW	1GKDM19Z6RB532467
1986 Chrysler	4 DR	1C3BF66P2GX534931
1995 Nissan	4 DR	1N4BU31D6SC122398
1987 Toyota	PU	JT4RN50R7H0287451
1991 Geo Prizm	4 DR	1Y1SK5465MZ066359
1988 Chevy Corsica	4 DR	1G1L751W7J290446

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Executive Editor
(734) 953-2100
srosiek@oe.hometownlife.com

Hugh Gallagher
Managing Editor
(734) 953-2149
hgallagher@oe.hometownlife.com

Sue Mason
Community Editor
(734) 953-2112
smason@oe.hometownlife.com

Frank Cibor
Retail Sales Manager
(734) 953-2177
fcibor@oe.hometownlife.com

Cathy White
Retail Advertising Rep.
(734) 953-2073
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Summer Clearance Kick-off Saturday, June 11th

Here's what everybody has been waiting for... the summer clearance at Once Upon A Child! All gently used items will be 25-50% off! Be there early to get the best selection! No other discounts/coupons apply to this sale. Some large items may not be on sale.



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Once upon a child
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17 honored as valedictorians

Seventeen students were tapped as valedictorians of John Glein's Class of 2005. Recognized for their academic achievement were:

■ **Melissa Ann Braunstein**, the daughter of Robert and Martha Braunstein. She had a 4.16 grade point average. She will attend Eastern Michigan University to study psychology.

■ **Rachael Marie German**, the daughter of Scott and Cathy German. She had a 4.0 grade point average. She will attend Central Michigan University to study sports medicine.

■ **Andrew Michael Haarer**, the son of Michael and Gloria Haarer. He had a 4.024 grade point average. He will attend Calvin College to study biology.

■ **Robert Joseph Haarer**, the son of Michael and Gloria Haarer. He had a 4.024 grade point average. He will attend Calvin College to study biology.

■ **Angela Susan Hastings**, the daughter of Freda and Michael Hastings. She had a 4.024 grade point average. She will attend Grand Valley State University to study elementary education/English.

■ **Stephanie Ann McGuire**, the daughter of Victor and Andrea McGuire. She had a 4.071 grade point average. She will attend Alma College to study pre-medicine.

■ **Roslyn Marie Morris**, the daughter of Charlene Morris. She had a 4.022 grade point average.

She will attend the University of Michigan-Dearborn to study business marketing.

■ **Sachiben A. Patel**, the daughter of Pina and Ashok Patel. She had a 4.119 grade point average.

She will attend the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to study pre-medicine and biology.

■ **Sonal S. Patel**, the daughter of Shantosh and Meena Patel. She had a 4.064 grade point average. She will attend Wayne State University to study pharmacy.

■ **Lauren Michelle Perry**, the daughter of Leslie and Judith Perry. She had a 4.00 grade point average. She will attend Albion College to study English.

■ **Sean Michael Southard**, the son of Charles and Cheryl Southard. He had a 4.04 grade point average. He will attend University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to study molecular, cellular and developmental biology.

■ **Charmane Danille Thurmand**, the daughter of Tyrone and Charlien Thurmand. She had a 4.00 grade point average. She will attend Central Michigan University to study pre-medicine and biology.

■ **Jennifer Ann Vander Klipp**, the daughter of Robert and Theresa Vander Klipp. She had a 4.098 grade point average. She will attend Eastern Michigan University to study chemistry and secondary education.

■ **Bryan James VanToll**, the son of Theodore and Mary VanToll. He had a 4.095 grade point average. He will attend Western Michigan University to study music education.

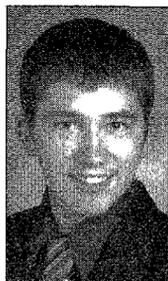
■ **Marika Germaine Wegiel**, the daughter of Renate Wegiel. She had a 4.200 grade point average.



Sonal Patel



Sachiben Patel



Sean Southard



Rachael German



Angela Hastings



Stephanie McGuire



Roslyn Morris



Lauren Perry



Charmane Thurmand



Jennifer Vander Klipp



Bryan VanToll



Marika Wegiel



Renee White



Tanya Wildt



Melissa Braunstein



Andrew Haarer



Robert Haarer

She will attend University of Michigan-Dearborn to study computer engineering.

■ **Renee Catherine White**, the daughter of Karen and Terry White. She had a 4.048 grade point average. She will attend Adrian College to study English.

attend Adrian College to study English.

■ **Tanya Marie Wildt**, the daughter of Karen Wildt. She had a 4.024 grade point average. She will attend Adrian College to study English.

Committee looks at shift in running Livonia district

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to the future of Livonia Public Schools, the district's demographics committee won't take any changes lightly.

The all-volunteer committee - consisting of staff, students, administrators, board trustees, and community members - organized earlier this year to examine the needs and makeup of the school district, and to determine how to most effectively run the district with what limited finances may be available.

"I think we're really trying to be proactive," said Randy Liepa, superintendent.

The goal of the participants involved studying everything from school attendance boundaries and the use and location of school buildings to the configuration of grade levels and restructuring options.

For example, the committee is discussing whether sixth grade should be moved from the elementary to middle schools, or if its feasible to close another school building or redirect existing boundaries. They are looking at whether buildings might be under-utilized, and how staff might be effected by changes.

The committee itself is divided into three groups. The first focused on reaching out to determine what the district and community values most. The second group has delved into educational research. While the third group is coming up with options for the future of the school district.

Throughout the process, committee members said all "stakeholders" were included, from students to staff, retirees to PTA members. Using surveys, informational meetings at the schools and a DVD presentation, committee members hope that all who might be impacted will be informed and have a voice in the decisions which will be made.

"I feel pretty positive about it," said Elaine Koons, a committee member.

So does Kevin Whitehead, board president.

"We recognize we're asking folks what they think about different things. We're listening and responding to the ideas of a large group. And it's a very positive thing."

The work of the demographics committee fits into the district's ongoing Vision process. It aims to:

- Create updated, well-maintained facilities.
- Meet student's educational needs and provide a variety of opportunities to them.

They are looking at whether buildings might be under-utilized, and how staff might be effected by changes.

vide a variety of opportunities to them.

■ Provide for continuous improvement. "The survey was very open-ended," said Julie King, an Emerson teacher and committee member. "We asked 'What do you want us to think about and why?'"

She said the responses often centered on "student learning as opposed to individual concerns."

Koons said the reaction she's noticed throughout the district has been one of appreciation for "keeping us informed" and "giving us time to transition."

Liepa said whatever the district's response, the committee and administration will be able to back up its decisions. "We can tell them why," he said. "We want to know what people are thinking."

No major changes will occur this fall, but students, staff and parents will see the committee's proposal for changes sometime this fall. It will come before the board of education for approval.

"This really is an open process," said King. "It's not pre-determined. We're not trying to sell (something). There is no set individual agenda or group agenda."

Whitehead said there is more to the demographics process than just "looking at numbers." While any proposed changes will take into account the financial concerns of the district, that's not the primary reason for the process.

"We are still spending \$150 million," said Whitehead, adding that the question becomes how best to do that.

King said the proposal the committee is working on looks at more than just the coming year or two. It is a long-range plan.

Whitehead considers the demographics committee to be another form of communication within the school district. He hopes the process will answer the question: "How can we be a better organization?"

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Struggles turn to blessings for Race for Cure chairwoman

Race, fest to be held at same time

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYSBY
CORRESPONDENT

Some luck of the Irish. A caring heart. A sensitive and wonderful spouse. A supportive group of family and friends. A touch of feistiness.

These are just a few of the gifts that Maureen Keenan Meldrum has been blessed with over the years.

With these gifts, Meldrum has been able to survive two of life's greatest challenges - the death of a child and breast cancer.

These challenges, in turn, were instrumental in shaping her career path.

She is the director of Breast Cancer Special Programs for the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute and chair of the Susan G. Komen Cancer Foundation Detroit Race for the Cure.

Like many other young women in the late 1960s and early '70s, Meldrum went from high school to college to marriage, children and life in the suburbs.

For her, however, divorce followed - "we were too young when we got married" - and she became a struggling working mom with two small children.

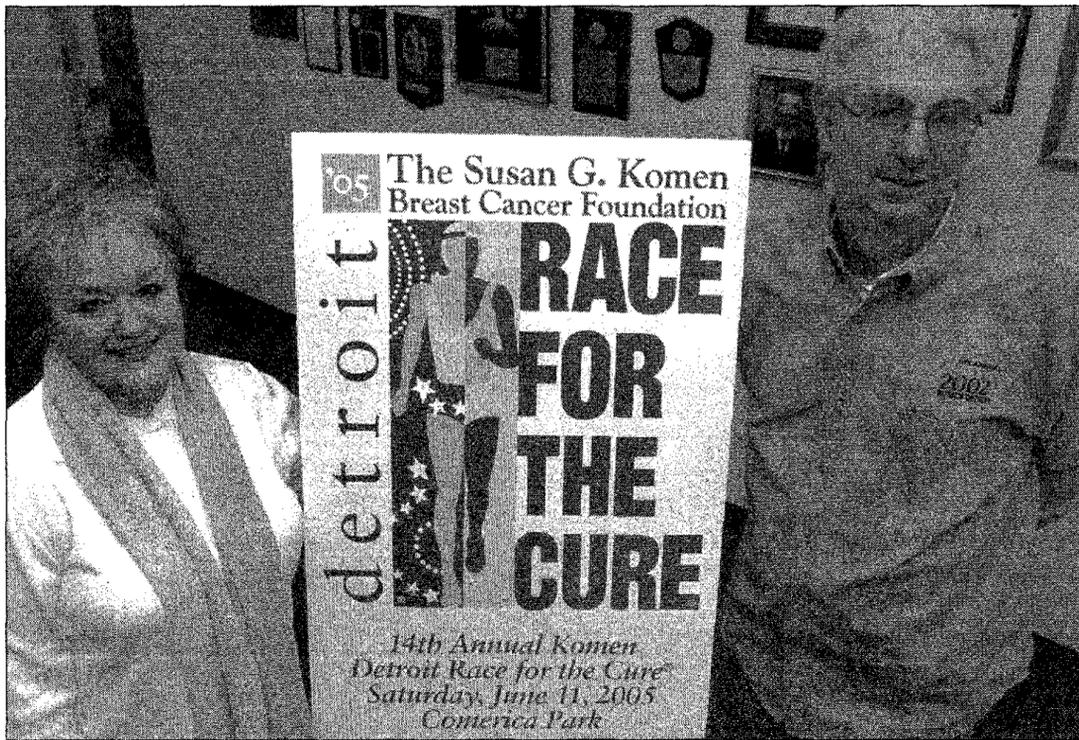
Her English degree from Mercy College gained her entry into the very demanding corporate world. Then, her life changed and became enriched when she met and married Michael Meldrum. That was 30 years ago.

LIFE CHANGING

A few years later, tragedy struck. An automobile accident killed her 9-year-old daughter, Courtney.

"A car came up on the sidewalk and struck her while she was riding her bike with her brother, Jason," said Meldrum. "What followed was the most devastating time of our lives. We made it through the grief with the love and support of our large extended family and friends."

Shortly after the loss of Courtney, the Meldrums took the positive step of adding to their family. They adopted a 5-



Maureen Meldrum and her husband, Michael, are driving forces behind the upcoming Race for the Cure.

year-old Korean orphan. (Their daughter, Susan, is now age 29; Jason is 36.)

The family was thriving and, on a professional level, Meldrum had advanced to a senior management position in a large corporation. Then, beginning in 1990, her second greatest challenge began.

Although this wife and mother had periodic mammograms (breast X-rays), "but not as regular as they should have been," a lump was discovered in one of her breasts by her husband.

This discovery, subsequent testing and lots of research - "I learned how to do research in business, so I kicked into gear to learn everything I could about breast cancer and the best place for treatment" - led her to the Karmanos Cancer Institute. This facility and the University of Michigan are the

only internationally ranked comprehensive cancer centers in Michigan. This means, according to Meldrum, that these centers have the best and most ongoing research, which is then put into practice.

SURVIVING CANCER

Two years a treatment, including chemotherapy, which resulted in hair loss, and a mastectomy have enabled Meldrum to survive cancer. "When I lost my breast, I had to remind myself that I'm not defined by a body part."

Her husband was at her side during all the doctor appointments and treatments. Meldrum said he and others provided her with a huge support system. Although tested physically and emotionally while going through this ordeal, she knew she was going to get through this difficult

period.

"If I could get through the loss of a child, I could get through anything," she said.

In 1993, this breast cancer survivor again was tested emotionally when her younger sister, Shelia, who had two young children at the time, was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was the third time cancer had hit her family. Years earlier, her brother had been successfully treated for the disease.

"After helping my sister in her recovery, I re-evaluated my life," she said. "I no longer wanted to spend 75 hours a week in the corporate world. I wanted to do something that would allow me to better help others."

For two years, she volunteered for the speaker's bureau for Karmanos and shared her story with others - "It was and continues to be a perfect fit for

me."

While this dynamo oversees major initiatives, such as Race for the Cure, she also spreads the message of the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

Meldrum is not alone in her fight against breast cancer.

"My husband is incredible and equally committed to this effort," she said. He serves as financial chair for the race and helped to establish Friends for the Cure, which has generated more than 40 percent of the revenues for the race.

"I have been blessed with so many gifts, but some of the best have come through my work at Karmanos and on the race," Meldrum said. "So many people - staff, volunteers, survivors and sponsors - give so much to this cause. I get to see what is in their hearts. How fortunate I am."

LAWRENCE MCKEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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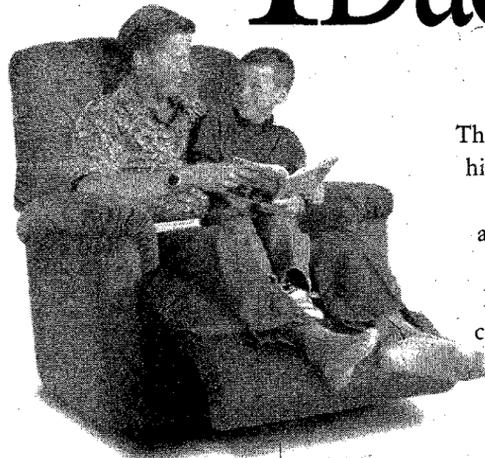
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TRASH

FROM PAGE A1
schedule, she said nothing was collected.
'We found a burned up chair the next day. The Fire Department was out at 1:30 a.m. to put out the fire,' said Waltman. 'They were out picking up trash at 7 a.m. Sunday.'
Midwest wasn't given permission to work in Garden City on Sunday.
'They were working Sunday and they are supposed to get permission, but I'd rather have them working on Sunday than leave it out there,' said Barnes.
Reno told the Observer that he is concerned that delayed trash pickup could lead to other problems, such as rat infestation of neighborhoods.
Formerly known as Painter & Ruthenberg, Midwest Sanitation lost contracts with Dearborn Heights earlier this month and the City of Wayne last year. Dearborn Heights residents are complaining about the lack of service despite Midwest Sanitation having a contract in effect through the end of the month.
Reached Wednesday afternoon, Midwest Sanitation president Paul Ruthenberg said he had a compost truck following him to make sure everything got picked up.
'Westland is running current and so is Garden City - extremely so. We're going to make sure we stay current,' said Ruthenberg, who attributed collection problems

Memorial Day week to volume and equipment difficulties.
'We had a lot of problems. I'm not making excuses. I just want to make sure everything gets picked up and we're back on track,' he said.
Cicirelli indicated that the city will need to search for 'the best provider' of trash pickup. She has personally phoned Ruthenberg to tell him to address problems, but she said the complaints have continued.
Westland City Council President Charles Pickering plans to meet with Cicirelli this week to talk of forming a committee to address problems with Midwest.
'It is a little disappointing that we're getting this kind of service,' Pickering said Wednesday.
In Garden City, City Manager David Harvey told council he would like to have several vendors make time-limited presentations to the council about trash collection options that are available.
'Then we can decide on what we want. The contract is up at the end of the summer and I'd rather address it sooner than later,' said Harvey.
Garden City Mayor Jaylee Lynch agreed.
'We need to be educated as a council. It's not just a matter of picking up the trash can,' she said. 'I'd love to see four or five vendors present what they offer. Then we can determine what services we want.'

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ACHIEVERS

Girl Scouts of the Huron Valley Council recently honored Carol Baker of Westland for her outstanding volunteer efforts and support of Girl Scout programming. Baker was presented an Adult Appreciation Pin at the council's 2005 Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner held in April.
Baker has served the Huron Valley Council in many capacities for more than nine years. She has been a leader, Services director, delegate and cookie manager. Currently, she is an administrative volunteer in Westland.
Baker mentors new leaders and promotes the importance of proper training to all volunteers. She is a role model that inspires the adult volunteers around her to do their best.
'Our Appreciation Pin exemplifies the true meaning of community service,' said Gail Scott, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of the Huron Valley Council. 'It is awarded to volunteers, like Carol, who provide outstanding service in their own communities and deliver exemplary programs to girls.'
Dr. David T. Walsworth, a family physician in Westland, was elected to the Michigan State Medical Society Board of Directors during the 140th

annual MSMS House of Delegates meeting on May 1 in Dearborn.
Walsworth, a graduate of the Wayne State University School of Medicine, will serve a one-year term on the MSMS board, representing members of the MSMS Young Physician Section.
The Michigan State Medical Society is the statewide professional association of 14,500 medical doctors in Michigan affiliated with the American Medical Association. Physician policies on various issues involving public health, health care delivery and medical ethics are set at the annual MSMS House of Delegates meeting.
Detroit Phi Beta Kappa Association has announced its honors bestowed to the top graduating seniors at John Glenn High School in Westland.
Honored were Quart Ali, Alexis Bland, Jennifer Boris, Melissa Braunstein, Emily Brennan, Sitinyew Chirunga, Jacquelyn Coats, Anthony Colosimo, Amanda Colwell, Andrew Dean, Joslyn DeGroot, Laura Eiben, Tearra Forbes, Rachael German, Jessica Grabowski, Whitney Graham, Andrew Haarer, Robert Haarer, Kimberly Hagelthorn, Angela Hastings, Steven

Holden, Sheryl Jacobs, Heather Kobylarek, Shannon Krushlin, Jessica Langley, Kristen Lewis, Kyle Maxwell, Stephanie McGuire, James Meyer, Chantal Moore, Roslyn Morris, Jeffrey Novak, Megan Palka, Sachiben Patel, Sonal Patel, Lauren Perry, Stephanie Rees, Kyle Reichert, Rachel Sienko, Ashley Sorensen, Sean Southard, Ashley Stone, Charmaine Thurmand, Erik Tuttle, Bryan Van Toll, Jennifer VanderKlapp, Marika Wegiel, Renee White and Tanya Wildt.
Wayne Memorial High School seniors honored include Taylor Brooks, Amanda Dye, Nilton Gjeci, Patrick Goring, Christina Haley, Kelly Harris, Ryan Herbst, Tiffany James, Angelina Johnson, Jason Kantner, Anthony Karasinski, Jennifer Kopacz, Sarah Maynard, Carolyn McCaffery, Michael Remington, Justin Schofield, Mark Valentin and Julie West.
Lutheran High School Westland seniors honored included Megan Bahr, Jacqueline Brewer, Kevin Brown, Monica Calhoun, Joshua Davis, Elyse Gieschen, Christina MacKenzie, Julie Macomber, Ruth Pranschke, Jaclyn Puhlman, Joy Schultz, Jennifer Timm and Christina Yancy.
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High School seniors honored included Christopher Atkinson, Kevin Bender, Jeffrey Bowling, Timothy Breen, Alex Brinza, David Budde, Benjamin Chabala, Martin Collins, Matthew Craig, Daniel Crawford, Thomas Daigneau, Charles Drummond, Matthew Fleszar, Corey Flood, Bret Fortuna, Nicholas Foster, Daniel Gill, Andrew Gonyea, Jeffrey Grad, Michael Holda, Kevin Hughes, Gary Klump, Anthony Kudron, Michael Kurtz, Douglas Laclair, Jemius Lee, Adam Lusch, Daniel Maciolek, Hamoody Macki, Evan McLaughlin, Isaac Miller, James Musgrave, Alan Olson, Alan Omilian, Michael Palombo, Scott Pfeffer, Dominic Piro, Craig Plonka, Sterling Price, Thomas Pugmire, Brett Quada, Alexander Romine, Zachary Roofner, Gregory Rost, Matthew Rutkowski, Anthony Sabo, Jon Smart, Joshua Smith, Christopher Szybisty, Eric Vrtis, Scott Wagner, Matthew Walters, Brett Wanamaker, Andrew Well, Garin Wind, Maxwell Working, Joseph Zatkoff and Michael Zuidema.
University of Detroit Jesuit High and Academy seniors honored included Benjamin R. Beckett, Ravi T. Bodepudi, Dane A. Caputo, Samuel N.

INFORMATION CENTRAL

Have you seen The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants movie yet?
The movie is about four friends who are spending the summer apart for the first time. Right before they go their separate ways, they find a pair of jeans that miraculously fit all of them and decide to take turns wearing them throughout the summer as a way to feel closer to each other.
The movie is based on a book of the same name written by Ann Brashares. In addition to The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, she has written The Second Summer of the Sisterhood and Girls in Pants, both continuations of the girls' adventures. All three of these books are available in the young adult section of the library and make for great light summer reading.
Girls in Love is also a trilogy about a group of friends who are facing the trial of starting high school. Among Friends is told through the journal entries of six high school juniors and shows the secrets and jealousy that threatens to tear the friends apart.
Emma and Abby were best friends until something terrible split them up. Now Abby is missing and Emma is trying to help find her in Missing Abby.
In Big Mouth Ugly Girl, Ursula stands up for fellow outsider Matt and an unlikely friendship blooms.
Another story of male-female friendship is Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes. Eric risks his friendship with Sarah in order to uncover her terrifying secret.
In No Laughter Here, Akilah is also determined to find out the secret that she knows her friend Victoria has

been hiding ever since she returned from her summer trip to Nigeria. The truth will shock you!
For readers looking for something shorter, Girl Goddess No. 9 has nine short stories all about girls, their friends, their families and the exciting things that happen to them.
Some other titles to consider include The Princess Diaries, Granny Torrelli Makes Soup, My Heartbeat, Snail Mail No More and the Make Lemonade trilogy.
Joust Read: Teen Summer Reading Program - Registration begins June 11.
Teen Poetry Contest - High School and Middle School Divisions - Poetry may be submitted between June 11 and July 23. Entries can be up to 25 lines and 350 words. Registration forms are available at the Reference Desk.
Medieval Movie Madness Day - 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. See Shrek at 10:30 a.m., Shrek 2 at 1 p.m., Ella Enchanted at 3:30 p.m. and Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves at 6 p.m.
Dragons, Dreams and Daring Deeds: Children's Summer Reading Program - Program kickoff 1-4 p.m. June 11.
Sidewalk Chalk - 7 p.m. June 13. All ages, come and decorate the library's sidewalk.
A Little Knight Music - 11 a.m. June 18. Family program. Free tickets.
The William P. Faust Public Library is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information call (734) 326-6123.

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SENATE

FROM PAGE A1

said Baracy. "They're taking the funds out the back door."

Roseville Democrat Michael Switalski is the sponsor of SB279, which cleared the subcommittee last week. The bill includes Gov. Jennifer Granholm's proposed \$175 per pupil increase in state school aid, but not her additional \$50 per high school student proposal.

It also includes:
 ■ A \$22.5 million cut in funding for at-risk programs. The governor had recommended a \$33 million increase.

■ Partial - 50 percent - per pupil school aid for developmental kindergarten programs.

■ A 50 percent reduction in Section 20J money to "hold harmless" districts with more than 2,000 students.

Gary Martin, deputy superintendent for business, calculates that, if approved, the two bills would end up costing Wayne-Westland \$932,000 or a loss of \$68 per student. The largest chunk - \$477,000 - would be at-risk money, affecting the district's Reading Recovery and class size reduction programs.

Martin also calculates that when the increased costs of retirement and health care are factored in, the district would lose \$71 per student. Retirement costs will jump to 16.34 percent or about \$78 per pupil cost, and the anticipated increase in health care costs \$100 per student.

"We've done \$4 million in cost containment and have a \$5 million deficit," said Martin. "It's like we're chasing our tail."

The report comes just before the school board is to vote on the 2005-06 budget. While the district has been able to maintain its program by cutting costs and tapping into

its reserves, it could face the prospect of borrowing to cover expenses next year, something it hasn't had to do since the early years of Proposal A.

Proposal A change the way districts were funded and aimed at equalizing the amount spent on education around the state. However, a June 2004 issue report done by the Senate Fiscal Agency, found that only 28 school districts are better off under Proposal A while 527, including Wayne-Westland, are in worse shape.

In Wayne County, Wayne-Westland came in third behind the Plymouth-Canton and Detroit districts in the amount of tax revenue lost since Proposal A was passed. The district has received \$109.1 million under Proposal A compared to \$157.7 million it would have received without it.

"Their own Senate Fiscal Agency provided the information on the effect of Proposal A and the detrimental effect the legislature's 70 tax cuts have had on school districts, but this is information nobody wants to talk about," said Baracy. "Their own people are telling them there's a problem and nobody wants to listen."

Baracy questioned lawmakers' contention that the tax cuts were needed to stimulate the state's economy, noting Michigan has beaten out Alaska as "the state in the worst shape in the nation" currently.

"We can control our spending and we've done an excellent job, but we can't control our revenue and we have a stranger controlling our destiny, and that's just plain wrong," he added. "They're taking a good solid school district like Wayne-Westland and dismantling it brick by brick."

"It's going to take some real backbone to solve these problems and stop sacrificing the children of Michigan."

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Performance workshop set

Arts Company, Project DayDream will hold a performance workshop entitled, "Nail That Audition" on June 10.

The workshop will feature Kevin Kennison of Disney Theatrical Productions. Known as one of the most pre-eminent casting directors in the country, Kennison will give performers insight into what professional casting directors expect and are looking for in an audition.

Session topics will include understanding what is expected in an audition, using rejection as a tool for success, knowing how to present yourself for all types of auditions, appropriate song selection and beginning a successful audition the moment you walk in the door.

Local notable instructors Mary Rashid of Walled Lake Central High School, Barbara Witslie of Madonna University and Debbie Tedrick of Interact Entertainment will join Kennison in the four-hour workshop designed to help actors and singers sharpen their performance skills and techniques.

The workshop, designed for students in third-grade through college level, will start at 4 p.m. It will be held at Madonna University; 36600 Schoolcraft, Livonia. There is a fee of \$45 per person, and pre-registration is required. Call Project DayDream at (248) 219-7644 or by e-mail at Info@DayDreaminc.Net.

PLACES AND FACES

A fun cause

Parents can get child identification kits for their children by attending a free event 2-4 p.m. Monday, June 20, at Bobby's Bouncers, 38620 Michigan Avenue, in Wayne.

The kits allow parents to store information, such as fingerprints, that can help authorities find children in the event that they are lost or abducted.

Participants will be given free pizza and pop, and a play area of Bobby's Bouncers will be open for children to play.

The event is also being sponsored by the Westland Police Officers Association, the Westland and Wayne D.A.R.E. programs, and the mayors of the two cities.

Westland Police Chief Daniel Pannes commended organizers. "I think it's a great thing to help protect kids."

For more information, call (734) 728-3139.

Building fund-raiser

The Westland Chamber of Commerce, which hopes to move its offices to the historic Rowe House on Wayne Road south of Marquette, is trying to raise money to restore the house.

The chamber and Westland Bowl have teamed up to raise money at 7 p.m. Friday, June 17, during a kickoff bowling event at Westland Bowl, 5940 N. Wayne.

Cost is \$20 per person and includes bowling, pizza and pop. For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

Summer reading

Westland public library employees have announced the summer reading program for children through the fifth-grade level.

Titled "Dragons, Dream & Daring Deeds," the program will run June 11 through July 23. The program is for recreational purposes and is not intended as tutoring.

Children pace themselves, and they may read books from the library or from home. They will report their progress at the check-in table.

Participants will read books to earn prizes. The program is free.

For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

Rummage sale

The Village of Westland will have its annual rummage sale 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday at the village on Cherry Hill just west of Merriman. Furniture, pottery, pictures and clothes will be sold during the fund-raising event.

Camping guides

Westland residents who are considering spending some of their summer vacation camping may want to consider contacting State Rep. Glenn S. Anderson's office for a free copy of the 2005 Michigan Campground Directory.

The directory is published annually by the Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds and includes information on camping facilities across the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of the Great Lakes State.

These publications will be available at the Westland Public

Library, the Westland City Hall, Westland Camping Center at 1475 S. Newburgh and Feister RV Center, 37401 Ford.

Constituents also can have a copy sent to their home, if they call Anderson's legislative office toll-free at (888) 833-8494.

Blood drive

The Bova VFW Post 9885 will hold an American Red Cross blood drive 2-8 p.m. Monday, June 27, at the post hall, 6440 N. Hix, Westland. To make a blood donation appointment, call the post at (734) 728-3231, the post surgeon Terry Dana at (517) 521-5646 or blood drive chairman Larry Tebor at (734) 377-8329 or (734) 261-2807 and leave your name, telephone number and desired time of appointment. Walk-ins are welcome.

All donors will entered in a drawing for three free games of bowling at Vision Lanes in Westland.

St. Damian Preschool still has openings available for 4-year-olds in the afternoon session (noon - 3 p.m.) and for 3-year-olds in the morning session (9-11 a.m.). Summer hours are from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday through Thursday.

St. Damian is at 29891 Joy Rd, Westland. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

School openings

St. Damian Preschool still has openings available for 4-year-olds in the afternoon session (noon - 3 p.m.) and for 3-year-olds in the morning session (9-11 a.m.). Summer hours are from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday through Thursday.

St. Damian is at 29891 Joy Rd, Westland. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

Skating party

Walking with Faith Inc., a team of more than 100 walkers and volunteers who walk in the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walks, will hold a "Kids FUN - RAISE for Multiple Sclerosis" skating party 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, June 16, at Skate Land West, 37550 Cherry Hill, Westland.

The cost will be \$10 per person with rentals of \$1.50 for roller skates and \$5 for inline skates. There will be 50/50 raffles, and a PSP raffle. Tickets cost \$1 each or 3 for \$5. Call Alecia Harris at (313) 999-5259.

Summer program

Westland Bowl in association with the Westland Parks and Recreation Department will offer free bowling for kids now through Aug. 20.

Kids up to 18 years of age will be able to bowl one free game per day during summer hours with a participation card, available at the bowling center, 5940 N. Wayne Road.

The center also is offering a free family bonus package on Saturdays.

For more information, call Westland Bowl at (734) 722-7570.

Buffet and comedy

Royal Oak Township native, Crystal Parker will perform her feisty stand-up comedy act at Marvaso's Italian Grille in Westland, Michigan on Saturday, June 18.

Parker, known on the comedy circuit as Crystal P., has been doing stand-up comedy, "sass with class," providing laughter without all of the profanity.

Showtime is 9:30 p.m. Also appearing with Crystal P. will be Cool Aide of Detroit. Marvaso's Italian Grille is at 6569 N. Wayne Road, Westland. Reservations can be made by calling (734) 405-5222.

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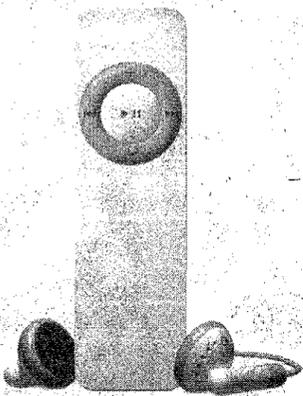


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Planners see Rouge Day turnout as success

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

If T-shirts are any indicator of an event's success, last weekend's Rouge River Day proved to be a rousing success, thanks mostly to lots of sunshine and a lack of rain.

Karen Hanna, office coordinator for Friends of the Rouge, which has organized River Day events for the past 19 years, said the requests for T-shirts are still trickling into the office, located on the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus.

"It sounds to me like participation was up this year," Hanna said, citing the good weather as a positive factor. All volunteers received free T-shirts, which is why the T-shirt requests are a good indicator of participation.

About 1,300 volunteers participated in last year's rescue event. Hanna, who is still tallying this year's numbers, said she hopes that the number increases to 2,000 this year.

Canton, Farmington Hills, Livonia, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Redford, Wayne and Westland were just a handful of metro Detroit communities bustling with volunteers working on restoration activities. Activities ranged from installing a rain garden in Farmington Hills to bird box construction in Canton.

And of course, picking up trash and debris kept volunteers busy, too. Fortunately, though, organizers say River Day is not as much about picking up the trash as it used to be.

"In the past, when Rouge Rescue began, the river was really dirty," said Cyndi Ross,



Nearly 2,000 people volunteered during the annual Rouge Rescue on Saturday, including this group that helped plant native vegetation in Canton's Flodin Park.

associate coordinator of public involvement programs for Friends of the Rouge.

Car parts, shopping carts and even large appliances were among the Rouge's flotsam and jetsam in year's past, Ross said.

"After many years, the river has become a lot more aesthetic. (Though) sometimes you'll find the occasional tire and shopping cart in a strategic area."

Another river cleanup activity that has all but disappeared is something the wildlife appreciates.

"In the past, we used to pull log jams out of the river," Ross said. Because dead logs provide valuable habitat for animals, they are virtually left alone by volunteer workers.

Not all the animals actually

live on or in the logs. Some, like turtles, like to sun themselves on floating logs.

The Rouge watershed is 438 square miles and includes 48 communities in three counties. Its offshoots include the main, upper, middle and lower branches, encompassing 126 "river miles."

On the heels of River Day is "Water Week," running through June 12 and presented by the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water.

A variety of River Day events are planned June 11 along the Clinton River watershed. Water Week events are being planned in the Anchor Bay, St. Clair River, Huron and Shiawassee watersheds, as well as along Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River.

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- #2 Join the Milwaukee H.O.G. Chapter "Ride to Hell & Back Tour" Hell, Michigan that is. Come for breakfast if you can, then its feet up and knees in the breeze at 11am. (Police escorted)
- #3 Riders of Childrens Needs (ROCN) Poker Run 10am - noon. Last bike out promptly at noon 1st, 2nd, 3rd place prizes for the best poker hand. (Registering all riders)
- #4 Drawing 3pm - United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan will be giving away a 2005 Harley-Davidson XL1200 Custom Sportster on site TODAY!

Tickets available prior to drawing

Sunday June 12, 2005

- #1 Breakfast on us! 9am till noon. Bagels, donuts, juice and lots of coffee! Say goodbye to our Milwaukee H.O.G. brothers & sisters.
- #2 American Motorcycle Association (AMA) Observation Run sign in at 11am, last bike out at 1pm. Best poker hand 1st, 2nd, 3rd place prizes and awards. Oldest biker, youngest rider, largest club attendance (show your pride). Return by 4pm for awards & prizes.
- #3 All finished off with a pizza party and stories of the weekend.

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OUR VIEWS

School supporters needed for rally

If you support public education, the day to visit Lansing is June 21. That's when the K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future is holding a rally on the steps of the State Capitol to push lawmakers for adequate funding to public education.

The rally is to show support for two bills, SB 246 and HB 4582, that call for a minimum yearly funding increase in state school aid for K-12 schools, community colleges and universities.

The bills also call for:

- Inflationary increases in the foundation allowance; at-risk funding, special education and the intermediate school district foundation allowance; and for community colleges and universities.

- Capping local district contributions to the Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System at 12.99 percent, with the state paying any costs above that amount.

- Eliminating language that allows the state to cut school aid in the middle of a school year.

If the bills were approved, it would be a dream come true for school officials who have struggled to balance budgets with little or no help from Lansing. They realize that the bills' passage is a BIG if, so they want to sway lawmakers with a show of force.

The rally on the steps of the Capitol is a tactic cities used several years ago when state revenue sharing was in jeopardy and it worked, so it's no wonder organizers want a big turnout. The bigger the crowd the bigger the message: Stop shortchanging education.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has big plans for every Michigan child get a college degree. If that is to happen, kids need to get a good education. And that can only happen, if public schools, colleges and universities have the money to provide the education.

So if you live in, have an interest in or have children in the Wayne-Westland Community Schools, this is the time to show your support and attend the June 21 rally.

Make your grad's party alcohol- and regret-free

If you're planning a high school graduation party this summer, leave alcoholic beverages off the shopping list.

Not only is it illegal to serve alcohol to anyone under age 21, it can have serious consequences.

Many adults mistakenly think they can keep kids safe by letting them drink at home just as long as they don't allow them to drive. However, drinking for young people can have serious consequences beyond traffic accidents resulting in permanent injury or death.

Teenagers' brains are still developing, and they are very sensitive to alcohol's effects on judgment and decision making, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

They may do things they'll later regret — or may not even remember — such as fighting, engaging in sex, damaging or destroying others' property or accepting a dare or bet to do something harmful.

Alcohol poisoning and binge drinking are also risks associated with underage drinking.

If a young person drinks enough, he or she will eventually get sleepy and pass out. Alcohol suppresses nerves that control reflexes like gagging and breathing. That means he or she could vomit and choke to death or just stop breathing.

In addition, young people are more prone than adults to becoming addicted to alcohol. The younger a person is when he or she starts drinking, the greater the risk he or she will eventually become an alcoholic.

Parents need to talk to their graduates about the dangers of drinking alcohol and then set a good example themselves.

One way to do that is by hosting alcohol-free graduation parties to show young people they don't need alcohol to celebrate or have fun.

If you provide them with a wide selection of ice-cold pop, water and other non-alcoholic beverages, favorite party foods and some fun outdoor games to play, they'll have a great time — and you won't have any regrets.

The rally on the steps of the Capitol is a tactic cities used several years ago when state revenue sharing was in jeopardy and it worked, so it's no wonder organizers want a big turnout. The bigger the crowd the bigger the message: Stop shortchanging education.



Column refreshing

It was refreshing to read Hugh Gallagher's column on Sunday, May 29. It's refreshing because you tried to be objective and honest.

That is not the norm when it comes to most coverage of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. However, you have the moral responsibility and obligation to always seek the truth no matter how difficult that might be sometimes.

I salute your courage and look forward to continue reading your writings.

S.R. Shafie
Livonia

At crossroads

Thank you very much, Mr. Hugh Gallagher, for writing such an analytical article regarding such an important local event. I covered this event for a local paper and am pleased that you did the same.

The Palestinian side of the story is usually not covered in the mainstream U.S. media and when it is there is a downplay on its significance.

Once again, I would like to thank you for taking the time and effort to write such an article when the American people and the world are at a crossroads that will make or break the future for our children.

Bilal Dabaja
Arab Student Union president
Legislative Affairs chairman
Student Government

Sincerity is the key

Hugh Gallagher's sincerity in his commentary, "Palestinian-Israeli conflict raises question 'What is Truth?'" is appreciated. The analogy of comparing the six blind men to the conflict was interesting, but I am not sure how it relates to the poor standards used by most of our U.S. media outlets in covering the Middle East region.

I am sure that if these six blind men were advised that their initial description was limited to only one aspect of the animal and that there was much more to be discovered, they all would have come up with similar conclusions in the end.

If our intentions are sincere to begin with and we are open to the truth, we will find it. Sincerity is the key to seeking out and printing the full truth and should be our media's standard when covering any conflict; but when politics play a heavy role, much as they do in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the authenticity of the story gets lost in the current.

When we allow politics to take the lead as opposed to the facts, we set a dangerous precedent. Democracies are meant to thrive on the truth.

Marion Mourtada
Dearborn Heights

A different picture

Thank you Hugh Gallagher for your article in the May 29 issue of the *Observer & Eccentric*. For a small-town, local newspaper writer, you obviously see

LETTERS

the big picture that too many big-town, metropolitan newspaper writers miss.

The presentation that you witnessed by Alison Weir and Ali Abunimah was not meant to engender anyone's sympathy for the plight of the Palestinian people. It was, as you so eloquently put it, meant to show the disparity when reporting the "facts" of Palestinian-Israeli debacle.

If Americans only knew, we would see an entirely different picture than that painted by the mass media here at home. Thank you for the insight and for the courage to report it as you see it.

Ronald Amen
Livonia

Fair-handed approach

I'd like to thank Hugh Gallagher for the article published on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. (Palestinian-Israeli conflict raises question "What is truth?" dated May 29, 2005).

It is true that the truth often gets lost, particularly when it comes to that part of the world, and that there is a drastic difference in coverage between the North American media on the one hand, and that of the rest of the world on the other.

It is refreshing to see the *Observer* tackle on these issues, and Mr. Gallagher approach them fair-handedly.

Rifat Audeh
London, Ontario

Speed's dangerous too

Click it or Ticket? I say stick it. We don't need government to tell us about seat belts. All those people driving have passed their drivers test and supposedly are responsible enough to make intelligent decisions. So if the driver and passengers of automobiles decide not to wear a seat belt, it is up to them. That is freedom of choice, something that is lacking in today's government.

Remember not too long ago the 55 mph maximum on freeways. All the statistics stated that it saved not only lives, but gasoline. What happened?

A few years later it was back to 70 mph speed limits. Were the statistics wrong? I doubt that. But the truck drivers complained that they weren't making their runs on time, so the lives of the drivers on the road, as well as fuel wasted, be damned.

Danisa Saltarelli
Livonia

Tell the truth

The identity of Deep Throat, the confidential source who helped Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein piece together the story behind the Watergate break-in that led to the resignation of Richard Nixon, was revealed this week.

Watching as the story unfolds, our attention is drawn to important parallels between Watergate and the Bush administration's leadup to war in Iraq. The offense, lying to Congress and the American people about the reasons for going to war, is far worse than Watergate. Over 1,600 American soldiers who

gave up their lives, went to Iraq believing that they were there to defend our nation from an imminent threat, but a leaked memo of a meeting between Tony Blair and his top intelligence officials in July 2002, makes it clear that Bush knew that there was no imminent threat.

The memo indicates that Bush knew that the case for weapons of mass destruction was "thin" but regardless, was determined to overthrow Saddam and was willing to "fix" the intelligence and the facts around the decision to go to war.

It is ironic that today, when no weapons of mass destruction have ever been found, when an estimated 100,000 innocent Iraqis have died and more die each day in the chaos that defines this abominable war, President Bush has the audacity to claim that freedom is on the rise.

If we are lucky, maybe someone with half the courage of W. Mark Felt will come forward to tell the truth about the war in Iraq, about the prisons, about torture, maybe someone will have the courage to stand up for the United States against the administration of George W. Bush.

Katie Jacob
Birmingham

The worst

Here are some of the worst things that could happen in our country:

- A population too large to be sustained by our resources.
- Property and prices rise so high that very few can stay alive and well.
- The air, soil and water are so polluted that almost everyone becomes sick.
- A working class rebellion arises due to improper distribution of wealth.
- Witch hunts and a return of torture devices, due to complete brainwashing of small kids into superstition.
- A complete revulsion of science by the public.
- While other countries reap the benefits of stem cell research we are not allowed to use it in this country.
- An extreme passion for religious wars.

I hope our politicians can prevent these things from happening.

Gerald W. Siegle
Clarkston

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

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

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

QUOTABLE

"They have minimum of \$800,000, but if the streetscape comes in below budget, they could have more to spend. They could decide to continue the streetscape or some other project."

— Planning Director Bruce Thompson, about the amount of money the Downtown Development Authority will have to spend on more improvements within the DDA district

Changes to Medicaid could result in huge cost savings

BY BRUCE HANSEN

Every year, Michigan faces a state budget deficit crisis of staggering proportions. Not only does this tie our lawmakers in knots for months, it is beginning to threaten the health of our major research universities — the hope of our state's economic future — as they bleed from a thousand little funding cuts.

Yet there is a better way to balance the books, one the lobbyists and many legislators would rather you didn't think about. It involves a poorly understood and more poorly managed program called Medicaid, for which Michigan taxpayers shell out \$8.9 billion a year.

By making a few common-sense changes, the state should be able to save at least \$1 billion a year — while providing better quality care to the poor. No, this is not a shell game, or an illusion. Just the facts.

Here's how we can do that. First, the Michigan Legislature needs to pass legislation to eliminate the Certificate of Need (CON) Program. This was established years ago to force hospitals to share technology. For example, the goal was for several hospitals to share one CAT scanner.

That may have been worth a try — though in practice, it seldom worked. However, the state did, as usual, build up an expensive bureaucracy around the process, which has worked just fine at perpetuating itself.

Today, the CON process is used by hospitals to stop competition from other health care providers. And there is one exception. If one has money, one can buy a CON. A few years ago, a physician wanted a Certificate of Need to install an MRI scanner at his hospital. He hired a lobbyist, who told him he could get an "official" approval for \$50,000, if he retained the lobbyist at \$8,000 per month for a year.

Evidently, that was chicken feed compared to what the physician could make with a scanner. The doc paid up, and obtained his CON and scanner.

That is one of many examples why the administration of the Medicaid program needs to be turned over to the private sector. Also, the Michigan Department of Management and Budget should purchase a utilization and review system to determine what health care services were purchased at what cost and for whom.

The attorney general could then use this information to prosecute Medicaid fraud. In any event, every aspect of Medicaid should undergo a comprehensive forensic audit once every five years.

So how do we save a billion dollars? Well, believe it or not, dramatically reducing the cost of health care is not rocket science. We can learn from some well-run corporations.

Quad/Graphics in West Allis, Wis., is one of the nation's biggest printing companies. It is cutting

its costs by bringing primary care in-house (*Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 11, 2005).

Michigan Medicaid could, and should, establish cost-effective county primary care clinics in areas accessible to the poor.

There's no need to stop there. Staff who can deliver rehabilitation, as well as laboratory, radiology and MRI services should be hired by the state, which should also purchase the necessary equipment. Not to worry; the net cost to all of us will turn out to be far cheaper in the long run.

And Michigan should then take the next step. Secondary care physicians, specialists such as allergists, podiatrists and surgeons, as well as hospitals, get their patients from primary care doctors. The state clinics should have specialists and hospitals bid for those services.

Through these contracts, any service that can be provided "outpatient" should be removed from hospitals. For example: Blue Cross pays more than \$600 per physical therapy visit when the cost of the same service provided by an independent physical therapist ranges from \$120 to \$150 a visit.

Pharmacy benefits are out of control. The cost of a stomach medicine can be \$5 per pill. There's no excuse for that, now that wonderful generic drugs are on the market. We should limit the medicines provided by Medicaid to generics, unless a physician from a state clinic finds a brand name drug necessary.

Finally, we need to make a couple of eligibility changes. The state should no longer pay for health care services for 18- and 19-year-olds, who are legally adults. Nor should the state pay for your apartment should you become pregnant.

If Michigan were to adopt these simple changes to the delivery of health care services for the poor in Michigan, billions could be saved, and the quality of care provided to the poor would increase.

Frankly, if Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan adopted a similar approach, our corporations could cut their premiums in half.

But that's their business. The state budget crisis is everyone's problem. And a solution is sitting right under our Legislature's nose.

Bruce Hansen has been president and vice president of several health maintenance organizations, and also served as director of budget, policy and computer systems for the state Medicaid program.

Press needs more Deep Throats to make government transparent

Hero or traitor?

The recent revelation that former FBI deputy Mark Felt is the famous Woodward-Bernstein informer Deep Throat has divided opinion along those lines.

Some see Felt as a hero who helped bring down a corrupt administration. Others see him as a disloyal government worker. Some argue that as a law enforcement official, he should have taken his knowledge to his superiors to handle. (Of course, the FBI is part of the Justice Department, which was run by John Mitchell, Richard Nixon's campaign manager, confidant and fellow conspirator.)

The controversy over Felt dovetails with the ongoing story about the leaking of a CIA agent's name and the subsequent punishment of journalists who won't reveal who the informant is. The irony in that case is that the only journalist who used the information, the right-wing propagandist Robert Novak, has yet to face any court action at all. Meanwhile, those who thought better of jeopardizing a CIA agent's cover now face jail time for not ratting on a government official bent on manipulating the press to further the Bush administration's Iraq policy.

Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein and then *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee kept their secret for more than 30 years. With Deep Throat's help, they uncovered an unprecedented abuse of executive power, leading to the resignation of Nixon and jail time for many of his aides.

Using unnamed sources is always a tricky proposition. Newspapers are reluctant to use information that isn't clearly substantiated, with a name behind the information. In the case of Deep Throat, Bradlee insisted that his ace young reporters get two corroborating sources before going with the information.

Clearly a reporter faces tough obstacles when trying to track down a major scandal like Watergate, even a reporter from muscular news organizations like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN or the broadcast networks. Most news organizations regarded the original Watergate incident as, in Nixon's words, "a third-rate burglary."

It took tenacity and an imagination to see past the obvious and superficial, to see that the unthinkable could be true. It also took working sources, and those sources of necessity needed to be anonymous. Careers and maybe even lives were at risk. Those guys played hardball.

By revealing the name of their sources, news organizations cut themselves off from information that is often vital in a democracy, information that leads to real transparency in government. If sources don't feel protected, they won't give the information.

Most stories we cover as a community newspaper don't involve the kind of cloak and dagger that were needed in the Watergate story (so brilliantly portrayed in the movie version of Woodward and Bernstein's book *All the President's Men*). We are reluctant to quote unnamed sources, though sometimes we'll receive a lead from someone who doesn't want to be identified. That lead may take us to other sources who will go on record and that will provide our story.

Courts have ruled that news organizations do not have special privileges. A federal appeals court upheld a contempt ruling against reporters from *Time* magazine and *The New York Times*. They have refused to name the person who divulged the name of Valerie Plame, a CIA operative who is married to Joseph Wilson, a former ambassador to Niger, who criticized President Bush's assertion that Iraq had tried to obtain uranium from Niger. Neither reporter used the information they received.

By revealing the name of their sources, news organizations cut themselves off from information that is often vital in a democracy, information that leads to real transparency in government. If sources don't feel protected, they won't give the information.

News organizations everywhere are watching this developing story and feeling a chill on not just press freedom, but a chill on the public's access to information it needs, must have, to make honest decisions on the direction of OUR GOVERNMENT.

As an FBI deputy director, as an often overzealous government official, Mark Felt is open to some serious criticism. But in his role as Deep Throat, count me as one who regards him, in this instance, a true American hero.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the *Observer Newspapers*. He can be reached by e-mail at hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net, by phone at (734) 953-2149 or by fax at (734) 591-7279.

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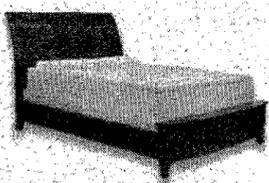
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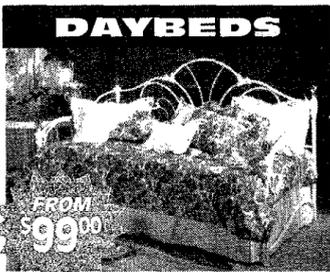
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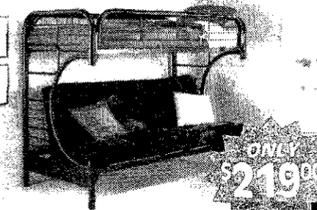


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