

9/4

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COMMUNITY LIFE, SECTION C



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PINK PAGE C10

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SUNDAY  
September 4, 2005

# WESTLAND Observer

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## City to aid hurricane victims

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli has announced a fund-raising effort to help families devastated by Hurricane Katrina. "I know the citizens of Westland are among the most charitable in the country," she said. "If we provide the vehicle

for their donations, I know the people of Westland will be able to make a difference in one of the worst natural disasters to ever hit the United States." Local firefighters raised tens of thousands of dollars to help victims in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. They stood in major city intersections and held out boots to collect money.

In the latest disaster-relief effort, Cicirelli has established a local fund that will allow citizens, corporations and charitable organizations to give money to help those devastated by the hurricane that slammed the Gulf Coast. Checks may be dropped off at any city building and should be made payable to City of

Westland/Hurricane Help. Cash also will be accepted at the cashier's counter at City Hall on Ford Road, and donors will receive a receipt for income tax purposes. "I am starting a Westland relief effort for those communities that have been affected by the recent devastation wrought by Hurricane

Katrina," Cicirelli said in a statement issued by her office. "I am asking all citizens to consider donating to this local fund that will be forwarded to organizations providing greatly needed services to this area of our country." Cicirelli announced that the money raised here will be given to a relief agency helping

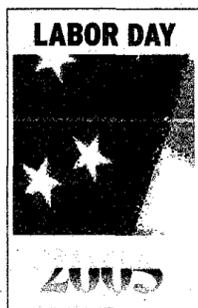
with recovery efforts in the areas hardest hit by the hurricane. The local effort is accepting cash only, rather than clothing, food or other items, because of the difficulty of getting commodities to the survivors. For more information, call the mayor's office at (734) 467-3200.



Diane Higgins and Denny Popa visit at Joy Manor during a Westland Rotary meeting. Popa of Canton is a funeral director at L.J. Griffin Funeral Home and Higgins of Westland works as a waitress member at Joy Manor in Westland. Neither one is in a union.

## Unions struggle with change to global economy, new jobs

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER



Mike Lang's father came over from Ireland in the 1920s. He got a job at Ford Motor Co. and immediately found himself immersed in the union battles of the 1930s and the birth of the United Auto Workers in 1935. Lang said his father was there at the famous

"battle at the overpass" at Ford's Rouge Assembly plant, when union organizers were confronted by Ford security forces. "When I got out of high school, I got a job working as a Teamster. I was loading trucks and box-cars and loading boats for a while," he said. In 1965, Lang, 66, got a job at Ford's Livonia plant and became active in the UAW, serving in

several positions over the years. Since 2000, Lang, who lives in Westland, has been chairman of the Local 182 retirees chapter. Lang's history can be repeated throughout the metro Detroit area, still one of the strongest union strongholds in the United States. But nationally and locally, unions have been in steep decline.

According to the Department of Labor, only 12.5 percent of American workers were members of a union, down from 20.1 percent in 1983 and from more than 30 percent in the 1950s. Michigan is one of only four states with membership above 20 percent - it's 21.6 percent

PLEASE SEE LABOR DAY, A4

## DDA board taps Brist to serve as chair

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Efforts to spruce up the commercial corridors along Ford and south Wayne roads will come under new leadership.

The city's Downtown Development Authority board - charged with sprucing up Ford Road and the southern leg of Wayne Road from Ford to Glenwood - will be led by new officers.

The DDA board has elected Westland Chamber of Commerce President Lori Brist as its chairwoman.

"I'm looking forward to leading the DDA," she said. "It goes hand in hand with my job working with the chamber and assisting the business community."

The DDA board uses taxes collected in a special district to spur economic development.

Brist replaced former DDA board chairman Kim Shunkwiler, who resigned this summer along with board member Doug North.

When asked about the DDA's future, Brist said new goals have been identified:

■ A subcommittee will review the DDA's facade-improvement program, which gives DDA grants up to \$5,000 to help businesses with renovations, new signs, landscaping and other design projects.

■ Another subcommittee will study enhancing the new "streetscape" project on Ford Road between Central City Parkway and Wayne Road - possibly with seasonal banners and holiday decorations.

Another local board, the Tax Increment Finance Authority, also led by Brist, is considering a similar project along Central City Parkway and Hunter.

■ Brist hopes to enhance the DDA district's marketing strategy to make businesses more aware of what aid and programs are offered.

"I want to enhance the marketing of the DDA district itself and try to sell some of the empty storefronts," she said.

The latest efforts to spur DDA activity also will be boosted when Mayor Sandra Cicirelli hires a new economic development director - a position she eliminated early in her mayoral term amid efforts to trim spending.

Meanwhile, the newly aligned DDA board also includes vice chairman Marty Eisenstein from National Block Co., secretary Margaret Harlow of Harlow Tire & Service, and treasurer Paul Asker, an attorney with Asker, Chapp & Clos.

They will serve two-year terms. "I think they're anxious to dig their heels in and get moving," Mayor Sandra Cicirelli said. "I think it's a good board that will do some positive things."

## Elderly Livonia man faces trial in traffic death at store

An 88-year-old Livonia man faces trial for negligent homicide amid allegations his car hit and killed an 82-year-old woman in the Westland Meijer parking lot. George Gerald Kosmyrna faces trial in Wayne County

Circuit Court after he waived his right to a preliminary hearing Thursday in Westland 18th District Court. Kosmyrna is charged in the death of Josephine Gregory - a Westland community volunteer whose interests ranged

from campaigning for local politicians to playing casino slot machines, according to her daughter, Anita Gillman, of Long Island, N.Y. Gregory died after Kosmyrna lost control of his car, which police said spun around and

struck Gregory and another woman who survived her injuries. The accident happened June 2. Gregory, who received multiple injuries, died at the University of Michigan Hospital nine days after the accident. Kosmyrna's license has since

been revoked, according to Westland District Court. A not-guilty plea has been placed in Kosmyrna's court file. He is free on a personal bond as he awaits trial. Kosmyrna could face up to two years in jail and a \$2,000

fine if convicted, although he also could receive a probationary sentence. Gillman has suggested that Michigan lawmakers should consider strengthening tests that drivers, particularly the elderly, have to take to continue to drive.

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**Coming Thursday in Filter**

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# Fast-rising prices fuel grumbling at pumps

BY MATT JACHMAN  
STAFF WRITER

Drivers grumbled and changed Labor Day weekend travel plans and government officials focused on fuel bills as Detroit area gasoline prices rose again last week.

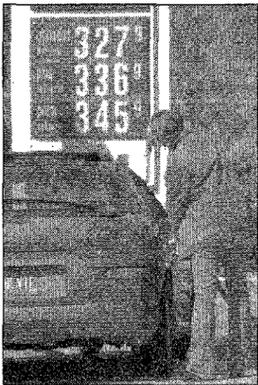
Retail gas prices inched, or, in some cases, leaped, over \$3 a gallon at local stations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which disrupted the flow of Gulf Coast oil to refineries. The move over \$3 a gallon came after a couple of months of steadily rising prices.

"It's just incredible what we're seeing here," said Plymouth City Manager Paul Sincock. Through July, the city's gasoline bills were up 32 percent over last year, Sincock said.

Plymouth was protected by hurricane-driven price hikes - for the time being - because it buys gas through the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, which had a supply on hand. "We're anticipating another spike," Sincock said.

"Might as well get it for three before you get it for five," said Ted Sarrach of Canton Township as he topped off the tank on his Ford Expedition at the BP station on Farmington and Schoolcraft roads in Livonia Thursday morning.

As Sarrach spoke, a station worker changed the advertised price for regular from \$3.07 to \$3.24 a gallon. Sarrach chuck-



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Area prices are well over \$3 per gallon.

led; he had stopped in time to get the lower price.

The retired Ford Motor Co. engineer, said he hoped rising prices would create more interest in mass transit in the Detroit area, and also in bicycling. "Most people are very spoiled and they use their personal vehicles," Sarrach said.

He doesn't drive the Expedition much, he said; his other vehicle is a more-efficient Ford Escape, which his wife uses for work.

Serena Billotto of Livonia wasn't as lucky as Sarrach. She had driven by the station a short time before and had seen the \$3.07 price. When she returned, the price had jumped.

"I might as well get it. It's

gonna change," said Billotto, who was buying gas for her Ford Windstar.

Billotto, of Livonia, said the prices were causing her to reconsider attending a weekend barbecue in Macomb County. She may just stick closer to home, she said.

"I guess I can't be complaining, though, with what's going on in New Orleans," she added.

John Schoder Jr. of Westland said he canceled plans to visit King's Island, an amusement park near Cincinnati, over the weekend. "It's going to cost us two hundred bucks, there and back, easily," Schoder said.

He had just finished buying \$25 worth of premium for his Ford Mustang Cobra at the BP station at Merriman and Joy roads in Westland on Thursday. The Mustang gets 12 miles per gallon in city driving, he said.

His other vehicle is a truck. "It sucks down gas, too," he said.

Late Friday afternoon some gas stations were showing lower prices, including some at just below \$3 a gallon.

A few minutes later, Paul Kaliszewski, also of Westland, paid \$96 to fill the tank on his Ford F-150 pickup. "Beaucoup bucks," said Kaliszewski. But he can go three weeks or more between fill-ups, he said.

In Redford, township finance director John Cubba said municipal fuel bills are running well over budget. Not even halfway through the township's fiscal year, Cubba said, the police department has spent \$46,000 of its \$72,000

gasoline budget.

"We're going to have to figure out how to mend that," he said.

The city of Livonia took a fuel delivery on Thursday, said finance director Mike Slater, at a wholesale price of \$2.67 a gallon. On Aug. 22, Slater said, the price was \$1.99 a gallon. That's a 34-percent increase in less than two weeks.

Rising gas prices may have brought new riders to the region's bus system, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation. SMART spokeswoman Beth Gibbons said the system noted a 4-percent ridership increase in June and a 3.7-percent increase in July.

"We've had increases but haven't been getting the spike we expected. It's been a slower increase," Gibbons said.

SMART has also had to absorb surging diesel fuel costs. Gibbons said \$1 million was added to the fuel budget at the last SMART board meeting.

"We'll hold the line. We don't anticipate changing anything," Gibbons said. "We'll get by the best we can. We do have newer buses that are more fuel efficient. And our routes are planned efficiently. We'll wait and see."

Commuters interested in joining a car-pool or van pool can register on line for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' RideShare program. Visit the Web site www.semcoq.org.

Staff writer Hugh Gallagher contributed to this story.

## OBSERVER NEWS BRIEFS

### Measles reported

Public Health Director Anahid Kulwicki recently announced that a person who recently traveled on an international flight was infected with the measles virus. The passenger traveled through Frankfurt, Germany, to Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport.

"This case reminds us how important it is to be vaccinated against preventable diseases," said Kulwicki. "Most people have already been immunized, but the infection can be dangerous to those who have not received the vaccination."

People can generally be considered immune to measles if they were born before 1957, have documentation of physician-diagnosed measles, have lab evidence of immunity, or have documentation of adequate vaccination.

The Wayne County Department of Public Health offers the measles vaccine in its clinics.

Measles is a highly contagious virus. It is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms include a rash starting on the face and neck and eventually spreading to the rest of the body, high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Though rare, patients may develop complications such as diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis, seizures, and death. Individuals who develop a rash with fever should have the rash evaluated by a private health care provider.

Residents who have questions about the measles vaccine

can contact the Wayne County Department of Public Health at (734) 727-7100.

### Service marks 9/11

St. Matthew Lutheran Church in cooperation with the city of Westland will have an open air memorial service in remembrance of the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001.

The ceremony will be at 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, in the area between Westland City Hall and the Bailey Recreation Center on Ford west of Wayne Road.

The service which will have a distinctly patriotic theme will honor those people who lost their lives, thank those who helped that day, and express gratitude to those who continue to serve as first responders.

The Revs. Kurt Lambert and Paul Pollatz will preside over the distinctly patriotic memorial service which will include prayers for peace and protection, songs by the adult and children's choirs of St. Matthew's Church and School and comments by local dignitaries.

### Concert for guard

The American Liberty Pop Singers, directed by Randy Blouse, will be in concert 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, as a benefit for the families of the Michigan National Guard.

The free concert will be at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 37775 Palmer Road, Westland. All free-will offerings will be matched by the Thrivent for Lutherans and given to the Michigan National Guard's Emergency Family Fund.

For more information, call (734) 722-1735.

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# Breaking the cycle of poverty

Starfish programs aim to steer families toward lifelong success

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

There was a time when Ouida Cash talked about owning a strip of property that would give her organization access to Cherry Hill Road. Standing on the north side of the former elementary school, she now talks about developing that property to provide another entrance to Starfish Family Services.

But when that happens remains a question mark. Now is not the best of times for nonprofits. In fact, it's a tough time for agencies like Starfish.

"When our revenue goes down, the need goes up," she said. "The times when our need is greatest is when people need to think particularly as a donor or as a volunteer."

Located on Hively west of Middlebelt, the Inkster-based private nonprofit has been helping families throughout southeastern Michigan for 42 years.

It offers 18 programs, including Head Start classes in the Crestwood, Inkster, Livonia and Plymouth-Canton school districts, after-school and summer programs, a teen runaway shelter, crisis nursery, preschool and child care programs, teen health center and employment, training and literacy programs.

During the summer, youngsters learned about growing vegetables from master gardener Patty Donahue and tended to a courtyard garden, filled with squash, tomatoes, peppers, watermelon and yard-long Asian beans.

Some of the vegetables they sold at a produce stand set up one afternoon a week in front of the agency. The rest went to Starfish's kitchen where Chef Jim Johnson let them sample the fruits of their labor and taught them about nutrition.



Summer program students Demarco Butler, 10 (from left), Ronald Haygold, 9, and Khachaurd Shabacz, 10, lead off the vegetable race.

## 'FUTURE PRESIDENTS'

Johnson, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, has traded working in country clubs and white linen restaurants for the "plastic placemat crowd."

"I once cooked for presidents, now I cook for future presidents," said Johnson who has helped youngsters make salsa, sautéed zucchini and stuffed tomatoes.

When he's not teaching the children things like they have the digestive tracks of rabbits and should "eat a lot of vegetables," he's preparing meals for children who come to the agency for its programs.

During the summer, he cooks up to 100 meals a day, but when school programs are in operation, its up to 800 meals a day.

"A lot of our children receive two of their three meals per day here," said Cash.

And if the agency isn't busy enough, it's now on the verge of making national headlines.

Thanks to \$1.1 million in grants, including \$900,000

from the McGregor Foundation, Starfish has launched the nation's first Family Success Model pilot program.

The Family Success Model is designed to break the cycle of poverty by teaching families the life skills needed to move from poverty to independence, helping them overcome barriers and learn what's needed for long-term success.

"We want to strengthen the family to create a brighter future," said Cash. "If you're in poverty, how do you learn the skills to go from poverty to middle class and stability? Our goal is to learn with families how to help them create sustainable family success."

The McGregor Fund gift - \$300,000 a year for three years - will be used to implement the model, while the remaining \$200,000 will be used to build an information technology system to track family progress.

## RANGE OF SERVICES

Families will participate in a range of Starfish programs

and have access to other agencies. They also will be partnered with a Starfish staff advocate who will help the family move toward sustainable success and with a "Starfish Family Champion" - individuals, corporations, foundations or civic, social or church groups - which will share inspiration, time and financial support to enhance the life of the family.

Each day, the family will receive a new piece of information or skill to "inoculate" it against poverty, Cash said.

"Our goal is to help these families to have the strength to pass on success and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty," she added. "For our families, it's overwhelming. They don't have housing, don't have jobs."

For more information, about Starfish Family Services and its programs, call (734) 728-3400 or visit its Web site at [www.starfishonline.org](http://www.starfishonline.org).

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Margie Madiros and two friends walk through what's left of the house in Ocean Springs, Miss.

## Livonia native is 'fortunate' after losing home to Katrina

BY DAN WEST  
STAFF WRITER

His family lost their home and their future is unknown, but Livonia native Martin Madiros does not want to be called a victim after his family lost most of their possessions to Hurricane Katrina.

Madiros, his wife, Margie, and 6-month-old son, Mitchell, safely evacuated their home in Ocean Springs, Miss., just east Biloxi, before the devastating storm devoured their two-story brick home located about a mile from the Gulf of Mexico.

"We are very fortunate we are safe and that's what's important," Martin Madiros said Friday. "We are faring much better than a lot of people right now."

Madiros, a 1983 Franklin High School graduate, works as a civilian naval architect with a U.S. Coast Guard facility in Pascagoula. His family moved to Ocean Springs, a city of about 17,000 people, in December 2003 after living in New Orleans for about a year.

The family and their two pets left town - their third hurricane-forced evacuation in a year - last Sunday as Katrina gained strength in the Gulf of Mexico. They put some belongings in both of their cars and drove 220 miles northeast to Montgomery, Ala.

While they were a safe distance from the eye of the storm, the family was hit with heavy downpours, strong winds and numerous tornado warnings.

"There was quite a bit of storm damage in Montgomery," Madiros said. "We still had power and some tornadoes touched down but they were on the outskirts of the county."

Throughout the ordeal, he kept in touch with his father, Ron Madiros, the former city assessor who lives in Livonia. Ron Madiros said he was concerned but relieved his son left the Gulf Coast before the storm made landfall.

On Tuesday, Martin Madiros and his family moved to Mobile, Ala., about 45 miles from Ocean Springs, to temporarily stay with a co-worker. Thursday, they reached their property and sifted through the debris on and around their concrete slab. They recovered a few belongings, including some dishes, a lawn mower and large box of tools.

"We were fortunate just to be able to go back and look at our property," Madiros said.

"We've talked to some people who may not be able to go back for a long time, if at all."

Martin and Margie Madiros now face the task of applying for insurance relief, debt protection and other disaster assistance. They might temporarily move to Margie's native state Maryland where Martin would be able to continue his work for the Coast Guard since the Pascagoula facility will be out of operation for a while.

"Our office survived, but the ship yard was damaged and there is no power, sewer or utilities to operate," he said.

# Labor Day Sale

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**LABOR DAY**

FROM PAGE A1

but that's down from more than 30 percent in the early 1980s.

"Unions are losing a lot of strength and members, because of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and WTO (World Trade Organization) and work going to China," Lang said. "Ford, General Motors all have plants over there. ... We're in bad shape in this country because of free trade. We want fair trade, not free trade."

**UNION DECLINE**

Hal Stack, director of the Wayne State University Labor Studies Center, said globalization and economic restructuring are partly responsible for the decline in union membership.

"That restructuring of the

economy has been moving away from the jobs that were heavily union organized toward jobs that are not traditionally unionized," he said.

Stack said unions didn't put a lot of effort into organizing, while employers and the government have taken a tougher anti-union position, symbolized by President Reagan's move to decertify unionized air traffic controllers in the early 1980s.

"Unions were victims of their own success. The move to middle class life and the move to the cabin up north. Unions took members for granted," Stack said.

Phil Truran, president of the Communications Workers of America Local 4013 and the 2004 Democratic candidate for Congress in the 11th District, said he thinks unions may "continue to go down before they go back up."

"The world economy is making it harder for the U.S. to

**UNION FACTS**

- 12.5 percent of the U.S. workforce were union members in 2004
- 12.9 percent were members in 2003
- 20.1 percent were members in 1983 (the first year comparable data was available)
- 21.6 percent of the Michigan workforce were union members in 2004
- 21.9 percent were members in 2003
- 36.4 percent of government workers nationally were union members in 2004
- 41.3 percent of local government workers nationally were union members (the largest unionized work group) in 2004
- 7.9 percent of private industry workers were unionized in 2004
- Two occupation groups - education, training and library occupations and protective service occupations (police and fire) - had the highest unionization rates in 2004 at about 37 percent each.
- Men were more likely than women to be union members. In 2004, full-time wage and salary workers who were union members had median usual weekly earnings of \$781, compared with a median of \$612 for workers who were not represented by unions.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

compete," he said. "Unions are making concessions to compete and people ask, 'Why should I be in a union?'"

Westland resident Bill Johnson, chairman of UAW Local 900 at Ford Motor Co.'s Wayne Assembly Plant, also sees the situation as "getting bleak" for unions but said it's urgent for unions and their members to organize and fight back.

"I think unions are more important now because of the economy," he said. "If we don't stick with what we've done over the years, every manufac-

turing job in the country is going to leave here. We have to turn the heat up on these corporations to keep the jobs here, because they want to get the work done for \$1.25 an hour.

"If the corporations keep going to China and Mexico, there won't be anybody here to buy the product when they bring it back."

Lang and other UAW retirees gathered recently to discuss troubled times for unions, just as members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal

PLEASE SEE LABOR DAY, A5



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

UAW retirees gather at UAW Local 182 in Livonia Jack Gaits, Taylor; Fred Justin, Westland; Ed Bundoff, Commerce; Dorothy Newman, Detroit; Leonard Kizer, Westland; Bud Bobursky, Canton; Jessie Stovall, Detroit; Al Churchill, Livonia; Harvey Moon, Livonia; Mike Lang, Westland; Walter Watts, Westland; and Shauqi Mughannem, Livonia.

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**LABOR DAY**

FROM PAGE A4

Association were going on strike against Northwest Airlines over concessions demanded by the airline to forestall bankruptcy. And, the union movement recently experienced a major rupture when the Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Workers and the Service Employees International Union withdrew from the AFL-CIO at the umbrella union's annual meeting in July.

To this group of retirees, the UAW had made it possible for them to move into the middle class.

Al Churchill, 69, of Livonia became an apprentice tool and die worker at the Rouge after serving in the Army in Korea. Harvey Moon, 84, of Livonia came over from London, Ontario, where he had help organize a United Steelworkers chapter. Jake Gaits, 68, of Taylor followed his father into the auto industry and the union.

"My dad worked at Chevrolet and he used to take me to the meetings when I was a wee bit of a lad," Gaits said. "When I got out of the service I went into the steel mill."

**SOME GROWTH**

While union membership in private industry has declined to 7.9 percent, membership among government workers remains high, at 36.4 percent. Teachers, librarians, police and firefighters have the highest union membership of any workforce. The National Education Association is the world's largest union.

"Our organizing strategy is we answer the phone," said Margaret Trimer-Hartley, communications director of the MEA. "We're not going out organizing because we feel those who are treated poorly will want to organize."

MEA has grown by organizing school support staff such as

bus drivers and clerical and lunchroom workers. "They saw teachers were united with one voice and had more political clout in Lansing," she said.

Mary Kay Herr, a teacher at Plymouth-Canton's Tanger Center Infant and Preschool Education Program, has been a member of the MEA for 28 years.

"It's a very good support, I think, for teachers. It's a group of people that cares about kids and cares about education," said Herr, a union rep at her building who learned negotiating skills from her father, a UAW local president.

Trimer-Hartley said these are difficult times for even such a successful union as the MEA.

"When times get tough, school districts and businesses look for any solution to improve cash flow or cut costs. We face that challenge," she said. "As the rest of the country, we also face rising health care costs. We are fighting the fight of our life to retain the right to bargain health care."

A bill has been introduced in the state Senate that would require all school employees in the state be covered under a state medical insurance plan. Health care is currently negotiated with local school boards.

"We think both the schools and employees have a fundamental attachment to local contracts," Trimer-Hartley said. "There is a belief that there is value in bargaining at the local level. They (local boards) feel they have more leverage, too, in bargaining."

**HEALTH CARE AN ISSUE**

Health care has become a major issue for government and private industry.

"Clearly, health care costs are a burden on the automobile industry in this country," said Al Churchill. "In terms of competing with others folks in Europe, because these folks have a national health care program. In this country the cost of health care is built into the cost of the car and it put us at a disadvantage. For me the

solution is some kind of national health care."

For many years, organized labor has looked to the Democratic Party to champion such issues as health care, worker safety and retirement programs.

"Our motto is we back those who back us," said Mike Lang, who is a Democratic precinct delegate. "That's who we are looking to get elected."

Trimer-Hartley said the MEA has found more support from Democrats but has worked "both sides of the aisle." "There is a strong relationship with Republicans who are supporters of public education. That is our litmus test, no other issue," she said. "About a third of our members are Republicans."

Al Churchill said he is frustrated with the Democrats, who have focused on social issues at the expense of union issues.

"As far as I'm concerned, politicians generally have left working people swinging in the wind," he said.

Mike Lang complains that high schools don't teach labor history and education is the key to developing union membership.

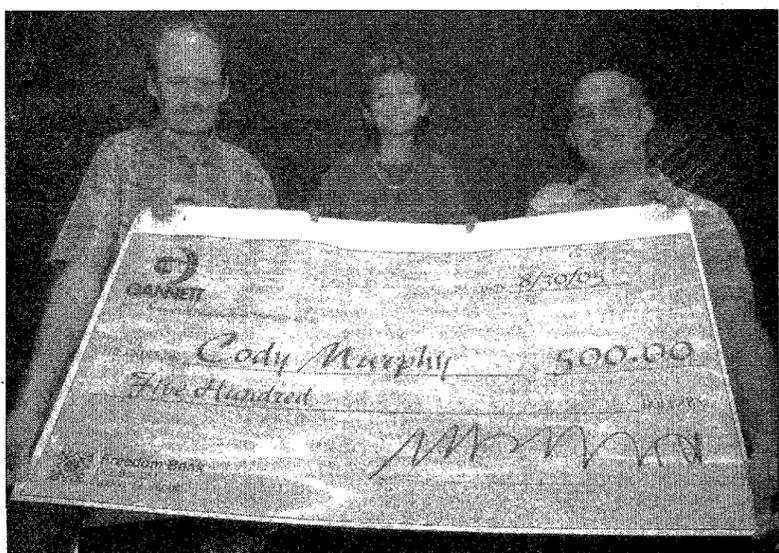
"You hear about other stuff, but not about unions," he said. "Especially the UAW when they organized with the sit-down strikes, you go into the schools and you don't learn about that."

Truran said the public also needs to be educated about unions.

"We have to educate people on what a union member is," he said. "The perception is that a union member is someone who is overpaid and underworked. It used to be when you had a union person do a job, you were using the best person to do the job. We need to educate members that we're still the best people to do the job."

Staff writers Darrell Clem and Julie Brown contributed to this story.

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Cody Murphy of Westland is the winner of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers' 'Easy Money' Circulation Contest. Cody, 13, the son of Jerry and Patty Murphy, received the grand prize for signing up new subscribers on his route. Cody is a student at All Saints Catholic School in Canton. Presenting Cody with his check are John Kunkle, area manager (left) and O&E Circulation Director Mark Warren. Cody has been a Westland carrier for more than three years. He's saving his money to buy a car.

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## Jewish federation aids hurricane relief

The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit has established a mailbox to funnel donations for humanitarian aid for the communities affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The Federation is collecting funds in conjunction with a national relief effort coordinated by the Jewish community network organization, United Jewish Communities (UJC). The UJC is working with local Jewish Federations and agencies in the affected regions to assess damages and help coordinate relief efforts.

All of the donations raised locally will go directly to the UJC Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund. The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit will not deduct any administrative costs. Federations in the storm region have asked that dona-

tions not be sent to them directly as they are unprepared to handle these efforts.

To make donations to the victims of Hurricane Katrina go online to [www.thisisfederation.org/relief.asp](http://www.thisisfederation.org/relief.asp), <http://www.thisisfederation.org/relief.asp> or call (248) 205-2550. Checks made payable to Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit can be mailed to Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, P.O. Box 2030 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-2030.

For general questions related to the Federation's Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Fund, contact Howard Neistein, chief administrative officer, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, (248) 203-1464 or [neistein@jfmfd.org](mailto:neistein@jfmfd.org).

## Donations for hurricane victims pour in

BY ALEX LUNDBERG  
STAFF WRITER

After Hurricane Katrina came ashore and ground several Gulf Coast states under her heel, local and national organizations are putting people and resources together to try to bring the region back to life.

Southeast Michigan American Red Cross spokesman Bryan Peckinpaugh said the organization's national effort has fielded 275 shelters in six states.

"There are 76,000 people in them being served by 2,000 Red Cross volunteers," he said. "We've got 185 disaster relief vehicles distributing 500,000 meals a day."

At the local level, the southeast Michigan chapter of the relief agency sent one of those vehicles and eight volunteers to help with food distribution. That number was expected to rise to 30 by Saturday.

While the organization has

always trained volunteers to help in disaster situations and will do so again for Hurricane Katrina, that's not what they need right now.

"Financial donations are best," Peckinpaugh said. "They allow us to purchase bulk supplies and take them where they need to go."

So far, donations from the tri-county area have risen well into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Nationally, forces are coming together to bring aid to the hurricane-wracked areas of the south. This year's annual Jerry Lewis MDA telethon will include appeals for aid, President George W. Bush has enlisted former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush to coordinate aid and aid concerts are scheduled for Sept. 10 on MTV, VH1 and CMT. All three are Viacom properties and more fund-raising efforts will be coming through their other entertainment channels,

BET, CBS and UPN.

On Thursday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced that she is activating the state's Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the state's efforts to support Hurricane Katrina relief. The operations center will coordinate incoming offers of assistance, information on private relief efforts and efforts by the state of Michigan.

The state of Michigan is actively preparing to serve in support of efforts, both in this state and in the south, to bring relief from Hurricane Katrina. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has urged citizens to work through their state governments so that relief efforts can be coordinated to ensure that help is delivered in the safest and most effective way possible.

### WATCH FOR SCAMS

Unfortunately, while aid organizations are coordinating

relief efforts, telemarketers are being arranged and regular citizens are opening their doors to refugees, history teaches that scam artists are also gearing up efforts.

"It makes it all the more disgusting," said Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard.

Just as the Oklahoma City bombing and 9/11 brought out swindlers of every type, Hurricane Katrina will also have a bumper crop of opportunists ready to take advantage of the charity of others.

That said, protecting yourself and your charitable donations isn't hard.

Donations can be made to the Southeast Michigan chapter of the American Red Cross by calling (313) 833-2664, on the Web at [www.semredcross.org](http://www.semredcross.org) or by mail to P.O. Box 441280 Detroit 48244-1280.

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SAT/SUN 11:45, 2:10, 4:35, 9:25

FRISAT LS 11:50

MON 11:45, 2:10, 4:35, 7:00, 9:25

UNDISCOVERED (PG-13) 3:25, 9:30

RED EYE (PG-13)

(11:25) 1:25, 3:25, 5:25, 7:30, 9:30

FRISAT LS 11:30

FOUR BROTHERS (R)

(12:05) 2:25, 4:45, 7:05, 9:25

FRISAT LS 11:45

MUST LOVE DOGS (PG-13)

(11:00) 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40

FRISAT LS 11:30

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE

FACTORY (PG)

(11:30) 1:55, 4:20, 6:45, 9:10

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(11:15) 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

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## Katrina donors should give money

The southeast Michigan Salvation Army and Red Cross organizations are asking that contributors to relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Katrina give money rather than goods.

"We're asking for monetary donations at this point in time," said Michelle St. Pierre, assistant director of Salvation Army social services for this region. The number to call is (877) SAL-MICH, and credit cards are accepted.

Checks to the Salvation Army can be sent to 16130 Northland Drive, Southfield, MI 48075. The memo should include: hurricane relief.

Teams are on site in the southern U.S. at Hattiesburg, Miss., Mobile, Ala., and New Orleans, La. Additional vehicles were in surrounding areas Thursday to be deployed when safe.

The Salvation Army can serve 500,000 meals a day, she said, and provide emotional and spiritual support. Meals are going to victims of the hurricane and to first responders.

The Army has at least 100 canteens, and kitchens set up in Baton Rouge and Mobile could be moved as needed. In addition, the emergency radio network SATERN is handling

requests. Information on loved ones is available online at [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org), health and welfare inquiry form.

She added a \$100 donation will feed a family of four for two days, provide drinking water and a cleanup kit with toiletries.

The Red Cross is also asking for financial contributions and is unable to accept bulk items from individuals.

The Red Cross is able to accept bulk, corporate-in-kind donations from partners that will meet specific needs. Call (313) 833-2664 for more information.

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## Argument over food leads to stabbing, charges

A 45-year-old Westland man is facing criminal charges for allegations he stabbed his 24-year-old niece in the stomach during an argument over food.

The niece was recovering from injuries following the incident, which happened about 4:45 p.m. Thursday on Concor Court in Westland, police said.

According to police reports, the niece stopped by to visit her grandmother's house and confronted her 45-year-old uncle about eating the elderly woman's food.

The uncle became upset and a verbal dispute followed. He approached the niece and started swinging at her, but she walked away, police said.

The uncle followed her into the grandmother's bedroom, pulled a knife and stabbed the niece in the stomach, police said.

The niece was taken to Garden City Hospital and was recovering from the stabbing.

The uncle was expected to be arraigned on criminal charges, possibly this weekend.

### Hospital assault

A Detroit man who reported being unhappy with his mother's care was arrested for assaulting a Garden City Hospital employee and a police officer Aug. 30.

The employee, a Livonia man, told Garden City police that he was caring for the man's mother at the hospital, 6245 Inkster Road, when the man confronted him. To avoid a further confrontation, the employee said he left the woman's hospital room and went to get linens.

In the hallway, another employee noticed the Detroit man following the caregiver. When the caregiver turned around, he said the Detroit man struck him in the chest, pulled off his employee badge ripping the pocket of his shirt and then head-butted him, making contact near his mouth.

When officers arrived, the Detroit man was back inside the hospital room. Questioned by police, the man said he was dissatisfied with his mother's treatment but said nothing about physical contact with the

### CRIME WATCH

caregiver.

Officers talked with the man a second time to get his version, then told him he was under arrest. The man became increasingly agitated, police said, taking a fighting stance with officers, then moving towards them as he reached for something in his pocket.

Kicking and striking at officers, the man injured one officer before being subdued with a Taser. In addition to charges of assault and assault on a police officer, the man was held on seven warrants.

### Loss of music

Police are looking for suspects in connection with a home break-in that took place while a homeowner and his daughter slept Wednesday morning in the Seven Mile-Middlebelt area.

Someone broke a lock on a door wall and entered the house between 7 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., according to a Livonia police report. Two amplifiers, a bass guitar and a tape recorder were taken from a room where one of the homeowners gives music lessons.

### Disorderly conduct

Garden City police arrested a Plymouth woman for disorderly conduct after she refused to leave a home in the 6400 block of Silvio Aug. 31. The woman called police after going to the home where her children's baby sitter lives.

The woman told police that she is involved in a custody dispute with her soon-to-be former husband, who had the baby sitter pick their two children up from school. Neither the baby sitter nor the children were at the home when the woman arrived, only the baby sitter's daughter.

When officers arrived, they said the woman began yelling at them to "do their jobs" and arrest the baby sitter. After being told it was a civil dispute, police said the woman became enraged and continued yelling at the officers, who repeatedly warned her to leave. The woman continued to head back to the home, so she was arrested.

### Armed robbery

An employee at Game Spot, 33159 Ford told police that he was alone in the store when two men entered wearing masks. One of the men was armed with handgun.

He said they stole \$500 in cash and \$4,000 in various games, game systems and DVDs before leaving on foot.

### Drug arrests

Two men were arrested on charges of possessing cocaine on Tuesday afternoon when police found them with suspected crack cocaine outside a Redford automobile parts store.

The incident took place at the Autozone store on Five Mile near Telegraph.

Police found one man, 45, of Detroit, outside the store with a crack pipe with suspected crack inside it. Another suspect, 29, of White Lake, was found inside the store; police said he admitted to having drugs in his car.

A crack pipe was found in an ashtray of the 1994 Pontiac Grand Prix, and a plastic bag with suspected crack in it was found in the car's center console.

## Verdict tossed in Seaman murder case

BY STACY JENKINS  
STAFF WRITER

The drama in a murder case that has all the makings of a Hollywood movie continued this week in Oakland County Circuit Court.

A decision by Circuit Judge John McDonald to toss out the first-degree murder verdict of former school teacher Nancy Seaman in the hatchet death of her husband has rattled the cages at the Prosecutor's Office.

"I'm completely flabbergasted by the judge's decision," said Prosecutor David Gorcyca, calling it "unprecedented" and "outrageous."

McDonald was supposed to address the motion for a new trial, but instead revoked the eight-month-old verdict - which was reached by the 12-member jury within five hours after two weeks of testimony - and issued his own in its place, noted Gorcyca.

"There was no legal basis or precedent in law that allows a judge to substitute his decision over that of a jury of 12,"



FILE PHOTO

Nancy Seaman

said Gorcyca.

Gorcyca's office will file papers for appeal next week.

Seemingly not shocked by the judge's actions, Michael Faraone, appeals attorney for Seaman, said the fact is that she remains jailed on a murder charge.

"It's still our contention that she did not commit murder," Faraone said, noting premeditation is a requirement of first-degree murder.

McDonald ordered Seaman be re-sentenced on second-degree murder charges, stating there was not enough evidence to show Seaman premeditated the murder of her husband,

Bob Seaman, in May 2004 in their Farmington Hills home.

Faraone said he never asked the judge to reduce the sentence to second-degree murder. Instead, he wanted acquittal, a new trial or a lesser charge of manslaughter for his court-appointed client.

He said the prosecution and the jury focused on Seaman's actions after the incident, but that does not show she planned out the murder.

"You can't premeditate the offense after the offense has occurred," he said.

Seaman has never denied killing her husband of 31 years. She claimed she was a battered wife and that she killed him in self-defense.

Critical evidence and information were not presented to the jury during the trial, said Faraone.

Seaman is serving life without parole on first-degree murder and would likely serve about 10 years if the charge is reduced to second-degree murder.

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<b>USDA GRADE A</b> Fresh Whole Turkey <b>TENDERLOINS</b> <b>\$2.49</b> lb.	<b>GREAT FOR BLT'S</b> Smith's <b>PLATTER BACON</b> <b>\$2.49</b> lb.	<b>USDA CORN FED SELECT BEEF</b> Tenderloin Fillet <b>STEAKS</b> <b>\$11.99</b> lb.	<b>USDA GRADE A</b> Fresh Amish Whole <b>TURKEY BREASTS</b> <b>\$2.29</b> lb.
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# Lower Rouge Parkway a perfect candidate for millage money

I'm usually met with either disbelief or disdain when I tell people that I've floated a canoe down the Rouge River. I can't tell you how many times I've heard the response, "You what?"

And that's an understandable reaction. We haven't exactly been the best of stewards when it comes to the Rouge, a river system that drains most of the metro Detroit area. In fact, throughout the 20th century, we pretty much turned it into an open sewer in many areas.

Thankfully, however, a boatload of federal money and local efforts to reverse this process have begun to pay off. While the Rouge still has its problems, in most areas you aren't going to die if you touch the water. And I should know. Between my volunteering for annual cleanups and the



**Kurt Kuban**

occasional canoe rollover, I've had plenty of body contact with the Rouge River. And I've yet to grow a third arm.

Most of my canoe trips have been on the Lower Rouge River. In different increments, I've actually canoed the river from Beck Road in Canton all the way to the Detroit River. Most of this area is included in the Lower Rouge Parkway, which is owned by Wayne County. If you can get past the

occasional sunken car or shopping cart, or the din of noise coming from nearby Michigan Avenue, the parkway is one of the best wooded corridors we have left in Wayne County.

With the exception of the county-operated Inkster Valley Golf Club and a few maintained parks in Inkster, Wayne and Westland, the parkway is really quite underutilized. Most of it is wetland and thick forest, containing giant cottonwood, elm and sycamore trees, and is home to a wide array of wildlife. Much of it is also inaccessible except by the most adventurous of souls.

With some planning, the parkway could be one of the jewels of the county's park system, and should be considered as county officials move forward with deciding what capital improvement projects to fund with the recently renewed county parks millage. In fact, the county could partner with Canton, Westland, Wayne, Inkster, and Dearborn to make multiple improvements to the parkway, including improving water quality with help from the newly formed Rouge Assembly, which is looking for projects to invest in.

Perhaps there could be one trail system that one could take from Canton to Dearborn, and then connect with other trails. The county could also partner with charitable organizations such as the GreenWays Initiative, which plans on

spending upwards of \$75 million to create and expand greenways in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair and Livingston counties. Canoeing is also a real possibility if water quality issues can be cleared up.

You might think getting so many agencies to come together on a project seems too lofty. Yet, there is already a model to draw from. Right in our back yard no less.

Up in Oakland County, multiple communities and agencies have been developing what has become known as the Rouge Green Corridor, a 12-mile stretch of forested corridor straddling the Main Branch of the Rouge, from Birmingham on the north running south to the Southfield/Detroit line. The corridor includes several parks and nature preserves, extensive woodlands and wetlands, and is home to many sensitive species of wildlife that have disappeared from much of the metro area.

Partners in the project include the towns of Birmingham, Southfield, and Beverly Hills, as well as the Oakland Land Conservancy, Oakland County Drain Commissioner's Office, Oakland County Planning and Development, Friends of the Rouge and the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority. These groups have spent several years developing a plan for the corridor - to make it a destination for quiet recreation such as nature walks and education, and even canoeing.

I have canoed through the stretch and it is quite impressive with plenty of potential, but certainly no more than the Lower Rouge Parkway.

Targeting the parkway would also make political sense for Wayne County, because a large portion of it runs through Canton, whose supervisor, Tom Yack, has been a vocal critic of the millage. He doesn't think the township has received a return on its investment into the millage fund. As it turns out, Canton recreation officials have a scheduled meeting this week to come up with strategies to tap into the millage money for the parkway. Canton has long planned a hiking/biking trail through its portion of the parkway, but has not been able to come up with the money to get it started.

Rather than the county choosing local projects to fund, such as improvements to Belleville Lake, soccer fields in Wayne, or the Village Theater at Cherry Hill, it seems wiser to invest in county-owned parks. Even though county officials say they have developed a system to fairly select what local projects to fund, there will always be someone disappointed with the process. And inevitably someone will cry foul.

**Kurt Kuban** is community editor of the *Canton Observer*. You can contact him at (734) 459-2700 or by e-mail at [kkuban@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:kkuban@oe.homecomm.net).

# Season pass for high school football scores high in value

**In this day of high gasoline prices, try walking to a college or professional football game. It's difficult if not impossible. Not so with a high school game.**

Labor Day is here. School is starting or has already started, and we're thinking of fall. Many of us also equate fall with football.

The majority of us think college teams like the University of Michigan, Michigan State, Eastern or Western; tailgating and visiting with old college friends.

Some of us opt for professional football and the Detroit Lions. Hope springs eternal before the first game is played as we wish for a top spot in a bowl game for our favorite college team or a spot in the Super Bowl for the Detroit Lions.

As with other entertainment events, the price of admission is expensive and getting more so. College football tickets at Michigan or Michigan

State are approaching \$50 and higher depending on where your seat is located. That doesn't include the annual seat license (contribution) that is required. The Detroit Lions are a little less expensive. A Family Fun Seat is \$40, but the price of admission increases from there.

All this assumes you are able to buy a ticket because all three teams sell a significant number of season tickets. If you have to go "online" or work with a ticket broker, the price is higher.

At the game, you usually stop at the concession stand. The price of hot dogs, chips, soft drinks and other items adds to the cost of the outing. A family of four is looking at upwards of \$200-\$250 for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon of football. In today's economy, that is out of reach for many families.

Another alternative we sometimes overlook is prep sports and high school football. It's not on the level of the college or professional game today, but it's every bit as entertaining and provides additional value.

It's a community event where you can mingle, converse or socialize with your friends, neighbors and even the teachers and administrators of your son's or daughter's high school. You can interact with these professionals on a completely different level. Prep sports can and do bring a community together.

In this day of high gasoline prices, try walking to a college or professional football game. It's difficult if not impossible. Not so with a high school game. Community located schools put the football field within a short walk of most attendees. Walking is also a good exercise so that mile or two walk could allow for an extra treat at the game.

The high schools are much less expensive. At Churchill High School in Livonia, individual game tickets for adults are \$4, students \$3 and kids and seniors are free. The cost can even be less if you buy a season pass. A season pass for all sports, not just football, for mom and dad and children under 8 is

\$60. That's a very good value.

The concession stand run by boosters sells hot dogs (\$1), chips (50 cents), soda pop and candy plus logoed school paraphernalia, sweat shirts, seat cushions, etc. Consider that a family of four will probably spend \$25 to \$30 for a Friday evening of high school football, with a halftime show thrown in to boot, making for a complete football package with the added benefit of socializing with neighbors.

I'm told varsity football at Livonia Churchill High School attracts upwards of 2,000 fans on a Friday night.

Birmingham Seaholm High School charges \$5 for students and adults. Children under age 10 are free, with a senior fee under consideration. A family pass for all sports (fall, winter and spring) is \$75.

The Booster Club sells a high-quality magazine program for \$5 and operates the concession stand, adding grilled hamburgers this season. At halftime, a 145-member band entertains as well as the Seaholm Dance team. As with Livonia, the school draws approximately 2,000 spectators. Aaron Frank, Seaholm athletic director, describes it as "a small-town atmosphere."

Birmingham Brother Rice High School charges \$5 for adults and seniors, \$2 for students, and children under 12 are free. The Dad's Club operates the concession stand. As a bonus they hand out a roster of both teams for free.

Brother Rice for key games such as Catholic Central will draw upwards of 6,000 to 7,000 fans. The home field is Southfield-Lathrup since they don't have their own field. Games are played at either 4 p.m. or 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Attending high school football games offers the opportunity to see future college stars. Many of the players from our area high schools go on to become key players at the college level.

When you consider attending a football game, look to our high schools. Where else, for \$25 to \$30, can a family of four enjoy a night out watching a good game, enjoying hot dogs, chips and soda, socializing with neighbors and be entertained by the band at halftime?

High school football is the answer. Try it this season. It's a great family activity.

**Richard Aginian** is president and publisher of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. You can reach him at [raginian@gannett.com](mailto:raginian@gannett.com).

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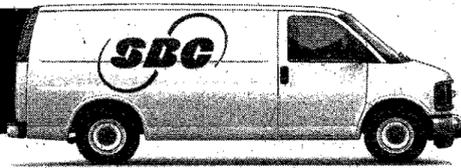

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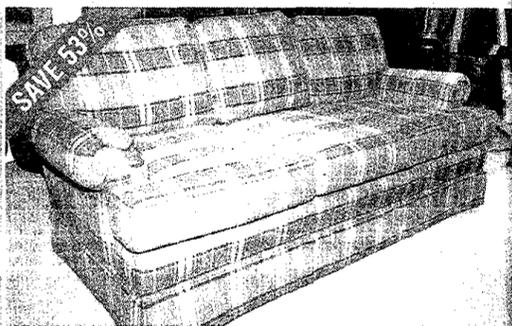


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