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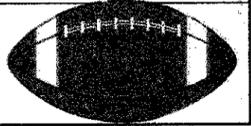
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OBSERVER LIFE, SECTION C



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# WESTLAND Observer

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September 11, 2005

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TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## A boot full of caring

Westland firefighter/paramedic Ken Hamilton takes a donation from Dan Kramer of Garden City at the corner of Ford and Wayne Road Thursday morning. Members of the fire department put their boots to work, collecting more than \$21,000 in donations to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

# Hearings clear way for work on Cherry Hill

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

A plan to widen a portion of Cherry Hill west of Newburgh is one step closer to reality, following conclusion of the second public hearing on amending the work plan for the Local Development Finance Authority.

The city wants to use some of the tax dollars captured within the district to pay for surveying, appraisals and the purchase of right-of-ways for property that borders Cherry Hill from Newburgh to the CSX Railroad tracks.

According to Planning Director Bruce Thompson, the city would use \$50,000 for the work in an effort to have the "Cherry Hill widening moved up on Wayne County's projects schedule."

"In the short term, we want to make that intersection at Cherry Hill and Newburgh user friendly and this will be a tool to help do that," Thompson said.

He added that the work amendment doesn't change the LDEA district boundaries. In fact, the proposed widening falls within the district's existing boundaries, which straddle

Cherry Hill west of Newburgh and run along the railroad tracks to the southeast.

The work would take about two years to complete, once the amendment is approved, and would involve seven properties along Cherry Hill.

"I've talked to almost all of them and most appear willing to work with us," Thompson said.

The city would hire someone to do the surveying and appraisals, estimated to cost about \$10,000. The remaining \$40,000 would be for the right-of-way acquisition.

Cherry Hill is seeing increased traffic because of development along Cherry Hill in both Canton and Westland, including the Brookfield residential development on Cherry Hill just west of Hix.

But congestion on Ford Road also is contributing to the traffic increase, Thompson said.

"It's impossible to drive down Ford and people are looking for alternate routes, one of them is Cherry Hill," he said. "Our first goal is to straighten out traffic at Newburgh and Cherry Hill, which stacks up because of the lack of lanes."

PLEASE SEE WORK, A6

# City revamps lineup for Turn Off Violence

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

Blame it on the Westland Rotary Club. It was the organization which approached the city of Westland about a program that encourages families for one evening to turn off their TV sets and get out and have fun.

Dubbed Turn Off the Violence, the event will be back for an 11th year with its crowd-pleasing favorites and some new features.

"We've been doing it a long time and we wanted to pep it up," said Margaret Martin, parks and recreation program supervisor who has been working the lineup for this year. "It's still Turn Off the Violence just the same as the Rotary created all those years ago, but we

wanted some new twists."

One twist will be the addition of Step Up to Health, an initiative that came out of a National Parks and Recreation Association summit earlier this year. The program is designed to encourage a healthier lifestyle and by having representation at the summit, Westland has earned the right to call itself a Step Up to Health community, Martin said.

"There's plenty of information floating around, plenty of research that if families interact in a positive way, they can turn off the violence," she added.

This year's Turn Off the Violence Night will have zones — food, entertainment, inflatable games, animals and crafts to name a few.

"We've always had food with the same sponsors, but this year we're working

with them to put up healthier food," Martin said.

In the entertainment area, Richard Paul, a speaker, author, ventriloquist and educational presenter, and his puppet friends will offer helpful tips and suggestions on how to stop teasing and put an end to violence in three 15- to 20-minute shows, titled "Duck Sense for Kids — No Bully Club."

Ronald McDonald also will be presenting half-hour magic shows, and adding to the fun will be the always popular balloon work of the Clowns Around Redford.

Local business Bobby's Bouncers will once again provide inflatables for the evening and organizations like the

PLEASE SEE VIOLENCE, A7

# Wagons ho! Project nets teen his Eagle rank

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

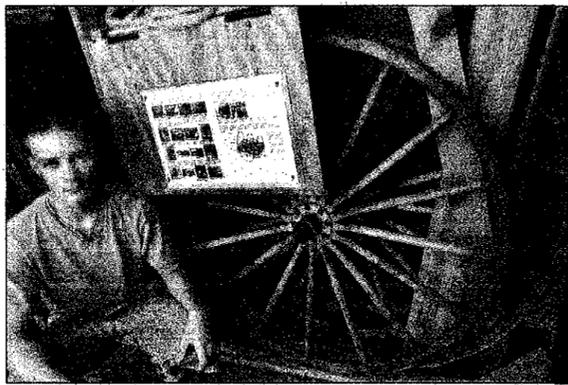
Driver's education ... it's a teen thing. And like most teens, Charles Best is taking it.

But before the teenager could even begin, Best had to become a member of an elite group by earning Boy Scouting's highest rank, that of Eagle Scout.

"He's an amazing boy," said his mother, Marci. "He likes to lead others. He's a natural leader."

Best is a member of Boy Scout Troop 1742, based at the Westland Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He's the second member of the troop to earn Boy Scouting's highest rank this year and is just a few steps ahead of five-six other Scouts who are working on or getting started on their Eagle Scout projects.

"We should have eight Eagle Scouts by next year and two just turned 18 who were Eagle Scouts," he said. "The church has set it up to use Scouts as a youth program for young men."



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

PLEASE SEE EAGLE, A6

With help of volunteers, 16-year-old Charles Best built two handcarts for his church as his Eagle Scout project.

# Community garage sale benefits city programs

With just six days until the fall installment of the Westland Community Garage Sale, it looks like it will be a full house.

Billed as "a great way to find hundreds of unique items for your home at bargain prices," the garage sale will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday in the parking lot between the Westland City Hall and Westland Fire Station on Ford west of Wayne Road.

"We've already rented 90 of the 100 spaces," said Ronalee Bowman, director of the Westland Youth Assistance, which shares the proceeds with the Westland Therapeutic Recreation Program. "It's about the last chance for a garage sale, and we usually sell out."

One of those spaces will be occupied by kids in Youth Assistance. According to Bowman, the kids "will be selling items like everybody else, but the proceeds will go to the mayor's Hurricane Katrina Fund."

Other groups have participated in the sale, including the Westland Historic Village Park Fund-Raising Committee, a three-year participant.

According to committee member Jo Johnson, the group makes a moderate amount of money, "but any amount we make is great."

The group's table will have an assortment of Avon bottles, figurines, furniture, books, household items and cash register.

Held in May and September, the sale draws hundreds of people to the civic center complex and raises up to \$1,000 for each program. The money helps support recreational opportunities for the city's special needs residents and pay for activities for at-risk youth.

"It's put to good use," Bowman said. "We use these funds to send kids to camp or provide karate or recreational experiences."

Spaces rent for \$20 and residents interested in reserving a spot can call the parks and recreation department at (734) 722-7620.

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Coming Thursday  
in Filter



Polysics:  
Japan's  
synth  
punk  
rockers  
are selling  
out shows

# Some ESL classes move to church, others stay put

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

Two English as a Second Language courses have been moved from a proposed site, Washington Elementary, to a Westland church.

Classes started last week - after a one-week delay - at Joy Baptist Church, 37055 Joy Road.

The move was necessitated by Washington parents who shared concerns about the addition of 60 adults to the small elementary building.

"We explored a whole host of possibilities," said Jay Young, director of community relations for Livonia Public Schools. The church offered the use of their Sunday school classrooms four mornings a week, in exchange for the cost of utilities. Young said he expects the cost will be minimal.

"The first class started there yesterday (Sept. 6)," said

Young. "They liked the setting."

But the debate between parents and administrators has now shifted to Johnson Elementary, the other building the district chose to house ESL courses when it leased the Dickinson Center on Newburgh.

More than 25 parents attended a meeting with Supt. Randy Liepa last week to their concerns. Patty Westphal-Hogan, mother of a second-grader at the school, pushed for additional security measures to be taken at the building.

"It's not so much the ESL program as it is the doors being unlocked," she said. "Anybody would be able to walk in."

Westphal-Hogan estimated the program would bring in an additional 80 adults, coming and going throughout the day.

Though the ESL hall is gated, the gate cannot be locked due to fire safety regula-

tions, she said. And ESL classes are dismissed while Johnson students are on their lunch break.

Westphal-Hogan and other parents favored the idea of placing an alarm on the unlocked gate.

While the alarm wasn't on the list, changes will be made to address the concerns, Young said.

Video cameras will be installed at the front and the separate ESL students' entrances, along with a monitor in the front office.

The ESL students will wear photo IDs rather than buttons, and additional signage will be placed around the school. Parking will also be more clearly defined, Young said.

As for the possibility the district would also move ESL out of Johnson School, Westphal-Hogan said "they're not budging."

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## Wish you were here

Georgina Kirwan of Livonia (right) and her daughter, Judy Kellerman of Westland, show a copy of the Observer during their vacation trip to Oslo, Norway. If you go on vacation, take a picture with your Westland Observer and send it to Sue Mason, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

# Advisory committee gives suburbs a voice with DWSD

BY CAROL MARSHALL  
STAFF WRITER

There was a time, not too long ago, when some administrators in the 126 communities served by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department felt like they weren't valued customers.

"We were checks," Plymouth City Manager Paul Simcock said. But the relationship between the suburbs and the city's water department have improved since 2003, when the DWSD formed its Technical Advisory Committee.

"There was tremendous pressure from some suburban communities to regionalize DWSD, and at the same time DWSD was going through a master plan update," Canton Municipal Services Director Tim Faas said.

So strong was the pressure that some communities were threatening to pull out of the DWSD system, just as the department was preparing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars on improvements.

"Those two things collided, and forced Detroit and the suburban communities to come together," Faas said.

TAC will meet in Canton at 9

a.m. Sept. 29 at the Summit on the Park for one of its quarterly meetings. On the agenda is a discussion of the water department's emergency preparedness.

TAC has been tasked with guiding the DWSD on developing emergency preparedness strategies, establishing an elected officials task force, improving customer service management and, most importantly, examining the water rate structure and working on a comprehensive contract for all of the 126 communities served by the department.

"Everybody has different contracts right now, and they all have different expiring dates, and the possibility is there that some have even expired," Faas said. "They need to be redone. They're over 40 years old."

Faas said a new contract between the DWSD and its customer communities could happen in about a year. "The true value of TAC will come with the hopefully unanimous agreement on a new model contract. We can figure out the emergency response stuff and we can understand how the rates get calculated, but to agree on the contract is the

big challenge," he said. "I'm optimistic that's going to work out."

The formula for rates is complex, according to Don Rohraff, Westland water and sewer superintendent. Based on water usage during regular and peak hours, distance from the water source and inclines between the city and the suburb, negotiating with each community is something that the DWSD doesn't — and shouldn't necessarily — have time to do, he said.

"TAC has definitely helped with that," Rohraff said. Unification of the suburban customers has "made us feel like we have a voice and that somebody is listening."

But so far, TAC hasn't had much impact on the rates themselves. "We've actually had a slight rate decrease from Detroit," Livonia Public Utility Manager Kevin Roney said. "But it's not because of TAC. The rates are based on usage and cost. But what TAC does do is help us understand the rates, and will help us with a contract to establish new rates."

TAC has worked well enough that Faas anticipates there will be a similar group formed to deal with sewerage rates.

## INFORMATION CENTRAL

When was the last time you were carded?

At the library, you can get carded at any age from zero on and, since September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month, the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland is hosting exciting activities and incentives for you and your family to get a library card.

It is extremely important for children to have their own cards. Besides giving them a sense of ownership, it gives them the opportunity to be responsible, especially as they enter their teen years.

This month, in honor of Theodore Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss) there will be a weekly drawing for those in preschool through fifth-grade. Pick up a goody bag and submit an attached raffle ticket. Your child could be a winner of a Dr. Seuss lunch box.

Or, children may draw their favorite Dr. Seuss character and submit for another raffle to win *Cat in the Hat* Wooden Book Ends.

On Sept. 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., come hear guest readers participate in a Seuss-A-Thon, a reading

marathon. Children, ages 5-8, also can design and make their own hat 2-3 p.m. Sept. 24. Registration is required for this program.

For teens and adults who receive a library card, they can enter a raffle and win weekly prizes. Every week there will be a different activity sheet related to Dr. Seuss. All contestants who correctly answer the questions will be eligible to win a prize.

In addition, the Wayne-Westland middle and high school who has the most students sign up for a library card will receive a prize for their school library.

Anyone who lives in Westland can get a library card (it's free!) All you need is a picture ID. Those under the age of 18 will need a parent's signature on the application.

From books, magazines, books on tape or CD, music CDs, and CD-ROMs to graphic novels, anime, videos, and DVD's, and Internet access, there is a wealth of information for each and every member of your family. And, it's all free!

Sign up today and get carded! No matter how old you are, there is

something here for you.

**Library Web site:** 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12. Discover the library's new Web page. Find out about new features and expanded information available at [www.westland.lib.mi.us](http://www.westland.lib.mi.us).

**Teen Acting Workshop:** 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 13. Nancy Fiorkowski, artistic director of the Motor City Youth Theatre, will use group critiquing and individual coaching to help you shine like a star at your upcoming auditions. Bring contrasting monologues. This workshop is open to ninth-12th-graders. Register at the Reference Desk.

**Free workshop:** 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 27. Come to a free workshop on getting your home organized, office, and family organized. Presented by Alana Martin, a professional Organizing Consultant. Register at the Reference Desk.

**The William P. Faust Public Library** is at 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. Call (734) 326-6123.

## Bentley's final class to host 20th reunion

As the last graduating class at Bentley High School, the Class of 1985 was certainly a special one.

Now, they're planning a 20th year reunion and looking for many of their 425 classmates.

"We've been in contact with about 175 of the people, so we're really hoping to get in contact with the other people," said Ken Rakowicz, a 1985 grad who is now a chiropractor in Howell.

The reunion is scheduled for 6-11:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1, at

Northville Hills Golf Club. The night features a "strolling dinner," cash bar, memory slide presentation and more. Register and make payments via credit card at [Classmates.com](http://Classmates.com) by Sept. 26.

Classmates knew when they started at Bentley that they'd be the final graduating class and that created a special bond, according to Rakowicz, who was the last of six siblings to graduate from there.

"To know that I was going to

be the last in the lineage that was going to graduate from Bentley, I knew would be something special."

That Class of '85 connection made their graduation "that much sadder," Rakowicz said; however, it also meant that a lot of them stayed in touch.

He urges classmates with questions to contact Pam Gale-Riley at [psriley00@hotmail.com](mailto:psriley00@hotmail.com) or at (800) 220-5001.

By Dave Varga

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# Square dancers gather for reunion



Bill Peterson pages through some scrapbooks compiled from his years of square dance calling and teaching in Livonia and around the world.

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

When Bill Peterson calls, people listen. The former Livonia resident has spent the past 50 years as a square dance caller — a career that's allowed him to travel the world.

And to celebrate his anniversary, he's planning a reunion for square dancers to come together, and strap on their dancing shoes.

The free square dance event will be 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 18, at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center on Farmington, south of Five Mile.

Peterson taught classes at the center for about 23 years. He expects 250-350 people will attend the celebration. It is open to all who are interested.

Six professional callers will be on hand to get the dancing

started. And even those who no longer dance are encouraged to come and visit with Peterson and his wife, Cathi.

The couple, both Wayne State graduates, met while teaching in Detroit.

Bill Peterson was a physical education teacher who worked in Detroit and later in South Redford Schools.

In September 1956 he taught his first adult education square dancing class at Detroit's Cody High School — and he's never looked back.

Though he continued teaching dance and physical education courses until his retirement from Thurston High School, Peterson's interest in calling for square dances only grew.

He began taking groups of square dancers to Europe, to tour various countries and to perform.

He worked for Holland America Dance Cruises in Alaska, the Panama Canal and the Caribbean. Peterson combined his love of square dancing and line dancing with traveling.

He did the festival circuit and spent weekends or full weeks on square dance trips, or working with dance teams.

"Square dance people are nice people," he said. "They're informal, relaxed type of people. It's been a great activity."

When asked if he ever imagined his career would take this turn, he said no: "I thought I was going to be a school principal."

Cathi Peterson accompanied her husband on many of those trips.

"It's been a really wonderful ride," she said. "We've done a lot of traveling. Mainly, it's been his career."



PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bill Peterson shows some memorabilia — including the original class list from the first square dancing class he taught at Cody High School in 1956. He's hosting a free dance Sunday, Sept. 18, in Livonia.

The event next weekend is meant to celebrate the dancers, many of whom are longtime friends.

Cathi Peterson said: "Without the dancers, you can't do much."

She said some groups of people who met through square

dancing have remained friends for 25-30 years.

"We're looking forward to seeing friends," she said, "even if they're not dancing."

For more information about the event call (248) 668-9494.

scasola@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 953-2054

# 2 more men charged in holdups

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

A Westland teenager has been bound over for trial in Wayne County Circuit Court after waiving a preliminary examination on charges he robbed two pizza delivery workers.

Christopher Lee Allen, 19, will be arraigned Sept. 29 on two counts of armed robbery and two counts of felony firearm in connection with robberies Aug. 23 at the Ravencrest Condominiums and Aug. 29 in the 400 area of Farmington.

Charges were amended during Thursday's hearing to include the firearms charges after police recovered the weapon — a .45-caliber Colt semiautomatic pistol — from the home of brother of a second defendant, Daniel Garret of Westland.

According to Sgt. David Heater, the firearm charges were added after officers deter-

**Charges were amended during Thursday's hearing to include the firearms charges after police recovered the weapon.**

mined that the weapon used was not a toy gun as they were led to believe. He added that the gun was reported stolen following the break-in of a home in Westland.

If convicted, Allen could face penalties ranging up to life in prison on the robbery charges and mandatory two-year sentence on the firearms charge.

Garrett, 21, accused of driving the getaway car, was arraigned Thursday afternoon before Judge C. Charles Bokos

on one count each of armed robbery and felony firearm. A not guilty plea was entered in his court file. He is being held in the Wayne County jail in lieu of \$250,000 bond.

He also faces a charge of misuse of a communications device, a 90-day misdemeanor, and a seat belt charge, a civil infraction.

Brandon Myers, 19, of Canton also was arraigned on one count each of armed robbery and felony firearm, stemming from the Ravencrest holdup. He is being held in the Wayne County Jail in lieu of a \$500,000 cash bond. A not guilty plea was entered in his court file.

Both men will be in court Thursday for a preliminary hearing on the charges.

In the Ravencrest incident, the delivery driver was relieved of \$21, far less than the more than \$60 order the trio had placed.

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# Suspect sought in pizza store robbery

## Armed robbery

Westland Police are looking for a man in his 40s who is suspected of robbing Hungry Howie's Pizza on Ann Arbor Trail on Sept. 5.

An 18-year-old employee told police he had just punched out of work when the suspect entered the store and asked for a small pizza. Unable to place an order, he had his older brother, who also works there, to help the man. When his brother told the suspect the total would be \$6.23, the man pulled a handgun from the waistband of his pants and demanded "all the cash in the cash register."

The suspect took all of the cash, checks and credit card receipts and fled the store on foot. Westland Police Dog Drago was able to track the suspect to a parking lot in the northeast area of the Hawthorne Club Apartments, where he lost the scent.

The teen's brother told police he was able to push the holdup alarm button when the suspect pulled out the handgun.

A third employee, also working in the rear of the business, told police that he went up front when he heard the buzzer, saw the suspect and then returned to what he was doing. It was only when the teen locked the rear door that he found out about the robbery.

The brothers described the suspect as a white male, around 40 years old, who stood 5 feet, 10 inches tall. He had a shaggy beard, long light brown hair and dirty hands.

## Illegal dumping

A 52-year-old Westland man believes some of his personal items found dumped behind

## CRIME WATCH

My Lady Florist on South Wayne Road may have been put there by the company that now owns his former home.

On Sept. 6, the shop's owner complained to police that several people had been dumping garbage in the alley behind the business. Police questioned that man after finding a trophy, several photographs and some clothing in the alley.

The man said he had lost his home on Florane to the bank and had recently moved out. He added that the company that now owned the home or an eviction company may be responsible for the dumping.

Police officers checked the home and found several items strewn on the front lawn, leading them to believe that the man had been evicted.

## Break-in

A 49-year-old man will stand trial on a charge of breaking into an occupied home in May.

Jerry Templeton Jr. is being held in Wayne County Jail in lieu of a \$50,000 cash bond after waiving his right to a preliminary hearing on a charge of home invasion first degree.

Templeton, who was arrested Aug. 30 in Detroit by Michigan State Police, is accused of breaking into the Westland home of his nephew while the latter's girlfriend was asleep in a bedroom and taking \$200 from a box in a dresser in another room.

The woman told police she was awakened by the man entering the bedroom. He said he was looking for his nephew and another relative who also lived at the home. When told

they weren't home, he left through the front door.

The woman checked the home and found a kitchen window with the locks broken and footprints on the counter. Bricks also were found stacked up under the window on the outside.

According to the police, the nephew called his father who talked to the suspect and was told that he had gone to the home to pay the younger man \$40 that he owed him and that he had entered the house through an open front door. He claimed he had left the money on the kitchen table, but no money was found by the girlfriend.

## Break-in

Westland Police have arrested an 18-year-old Westland man in connection with the Sept. 6 break-in of a home on Oakwood Lane.

Police arrested the teen after stopping him while he was walking in front of a neighbor's home. He told police he had been knocking on doors looking for someone, but was unable to provide police with an address or working telephone number.

They had been called to the home around 10:30 p.m. by the owner who came home from bowling to find the basement light on and the back door in the garage open and still swinging.

The homeowner also found that the front door had been kicked in and several rooms had been searched, including the basement, and the refrigerator.

The suspect apparently fled the house as the owner pulled in, but not before leaving a note of apology written with

red marker in the refrigerator door.

The homeowner found a Bose radio on the ground by the back door in the garage, and the police discovered a bag in the back yard that contained socks, liquor, steak sauce and other miscellaneous items.

The teen, who also was intoxicated, was arrested for breaking into the home as well as being a minor in possession of alcohol and held on a criminal bench warrant out of 18th District Court.

## Counterfeit money

A 20-year-old Westland was arrested Sept. 4 after trying to pay for an order at Burger King. An employee spotted the phony bill and was able to keep the young man at the counter while summoning the police.

The man said a friend had given him the \$100 bill. She had planned to use it to buy back her stolen cell phone from an Inkster man.

When questioned by police, the woman denied giving the young man the bill or plans to use it to get her cell phone back.

Two other people who had come with the suspect to Burger King, said they were headed home when the suspect asked them to stop so he could get something to eat. He ordered two five-piece McNuggets. When confronted about the \$100 bill, he used a \$20 bill.

The suspect also faces a charge of drug possession after police found 32 Zolofit pills and one Vicodin pill in a prescription vial labeled as Alproazan and made out to a different individual.

# Forum Fitness Center celebrates re-opening

It has a new name and a renewed focus, and now the Forum Fitness Center is having a grand re-opening celebration.

Originally known as the Forum Health Spa, the facility change hands on Feb. 14, exactly 24 years to the day that it had opened. The new owners are Tom and Rebecca Bertha and Jeff and Laurie Sullivan.

The grand re-opening celebration will be Monday through Saturday at the center at on Ford at Wildwood in Westland.

The Forum Fitness Center is attached to the Coliseum Racquet Club and offers traditional strength training equip-

ment and cardio-vascular machines. There's also an indoor track, heated lap pool, large hot tub, steam rooms, dry saunas and massage.

In addition to a complete karate program, the list of group cardio/toning classes is growing and now includes cardio kickboxing, Pilates, Salsa Cardio, and Spinning.

The center is open 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

For more information, call the center at (734) 729-7000 or visit the its Web site at [www.ForumFitnessCenter.com](http://www.ForumFitnessCenter.com).

# Senate passes Student Safety Initiative plan

Six offenders would be stopped from working in schools under legislation that passed the Michigan Senate last week.

The Senate approved parts of the Student Safety Initiative. Senate-sponsored bills in the package were passed earlier and are before the House of Representatives for consideration.

Sponsored by Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, Senate Bill 617 will create Student Safety Zones by prohibiting convicted sex offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of a school.

"Children are Michigan's most vulnerable residents," Toy said. "We need to help make sure that they are safe when they go to school everyday. Our children deserve to be safe while they're learning at school."

The Student Safety Initiative includes:

■ Requiring background checks on all paid school and day-care center employees and prohibiting anyone with a sex offense from being employed;

■ Revoking teaching certification for convicted sex offenders.

■ Requiring all school employees to self-report any criminal charge to their school district and to the Department of Education.

"Parents should have every assurance that the schools where they send their children are the safest possible places," said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "No predator belongs in our schools, in our daycare centers or anywhere near our children. The work we did today will help give parents some much-needed peace of mind."

The Student Safety Initiative is a bicameral effort that comes on the heels of a series of reports showing repeated cases of sex offenders being allowed access to children in Michigan schools.

At least 35 Michigan school employees, a majority of whom are teachers, have been charged or convicted of sexual misconduct in recent months, according to recent news reports.

# Huron Valley Girl Scout Council receives grants

The Girl Scouts of the Huron Valley Council is on the receiving end of three grants that will help meet the needs of disabled and low-income girls.

The council, which serves every one in five girls living in western Wayne, Livingston, Monroe, Washtenaw and Oakland counties, received a \$7,000 grant from the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southeastern Michigan.

The grant will be used to purchase of a motorized cart to provide girls with physical challenges transportation around Camp Linden.

With this additional cart girls with disabilities will be able to move easily between outdoor activities at the camp's

400-acre facility.

"Through the grant from the Ronald McDonald House we can continue to provide programs that are rewarding for girls with physical challenges, focusing on their capabilities instead of their disabilities," said Gail Scott, Huron Valley Council chief executive officer.

Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor awarded a \$4,000 grant to the council to send 24 low-income girls to summer day camp or overnight camp.

Every summer the Girl Scouts provides financial assistance to girls who want to go to camp.

"Thanks to the support of the Kiwanis Club, the grant money will help us to reach out

to more girls that are less fortunate, and provide them with a priceless camping experience," said Scott.

She added that the Huron Valley council is committed to providing a safe atmosphere for girls to explore new and exciting things, learn about themselves and others, and become a member of a community that values diversity.

Camping helps them gain substantial skills that will last a lifetime, she said.

The Rotary Club of Ann Arbor also gave the council \$2,000 to support the council's Project Prevention program. The program reaches out to lower income girls who explore

Girl Scouting.

Project Prevention offers a number of programs that instill morals and values.

Girls will learn skills that include understanding and appreciating diversity of others, develop the ability to make positive decisions based on their values, and gain knowledge of how to become leaders in their communities.

"The Rotary Club grant, supporting Project Prevention, will assist Huron Valley in our continued efforts to provide programming to girls who may not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting," said Scott.

## FOR THE RECORD

**B**  
Blanche Ward Bell  
Bell, 80, formerly of Birmingham, died Aug. 17.

**D**  
Mary Dannemiller Ditz  
Ditz, 79, formerly of Bloomfield Township, died Aug. 26.

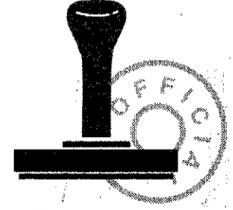
**E**  
Glenn Robert Etherton  
Etherton, 62, formerly of Westland, died Sept. 5.

**G**  
Robert Gillman  
Gillman, 70, formerly of Ypsilanti, died Aug. 21.

**K**  
Barbara Glass  
Glass, 61, of Plymouth, died Sept. 8.

**S**  
Vera Komolowicz  
Komolowicz, of Westland, died Sept. 6.

**M**  
Lowell "Tom" Thomas Miller II  
Miller, 35, of Monroe, died Aug. 31.



**For the Record** appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric* newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Community Life section in *Passages* on page C4.

**S**  
Edward Allen "Eddie" Sawicki  
Sawicki, 23, of Albion, died Aug. 16.  
Philip V. Sheffield  
Sheffield, 46, of Clarkston, died Aug. 31.

### CITY OF GARDEN CITY ASPHALT ROAD PROJECT

The contractor is scheduled to begin doing base repairs on Thursday, 9/8/05. Work will begin on Leona & move north, between Merriman & Hubbard, up to Pardo. The project should take 7-10, 12 hour days. This should have minimal impact on residents/traffic flow.

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AROUND WESTLAND

Food drive

Skateland West, 37550 Cherry Hill, will have a canned food drive to help local families in need this upcoming holiday season. The food drive will start Sunday, Sept. 11, and continue every Sunday through December during Skateland's 1:30-3:30 p.m. skating session.

Every skater who brings a canned good will get in for \$1, compared to regular admission of \$3.50. Skate rental and inline rental are separate. All canned goods will be donated to The Salvation Army.

Stanley Cup help

Four-time Stanley Cup champion, and former Detroit Red Wing, Johnny Wilson will have the Stanley Cup at Westland Mall for two hours Tuesday to raise money to be used to help survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Fans can get their picture taken with the Cup for \$10 per photo from 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 13. Photos will be processed on the spot, so fans can take their pictures home immediately. No personal cameras or photos will be allowed due to time constraints. All proceeds from the photos will go directly to the Salvation Army to help the hurricane victims. A Salvation Army volunteer will be on hand to accept donations.

Westland Mall is located at 35000 Warren in Wayne Road in Westland. For more information, call (734) 425-5001.

Readiness program

The YWCA of Western Wayne County is offering an alternative to regular preschool programs for children.

Parents can register their four-year-old children now for the YWCA's Michigan School Readiness Program in Westland.

The School Readiness Program is a home-based preschool program, consisting of 30 weekly home visits, plus monthly center visits and field trips.

During home visits, a certified teacher comes to the home to work with the child.

Children get one-on-one attention from a teacher, plus the socialization experiences of a classroom during the monthly visitations and field trips.

During the monthly center visits, there is a parent meeting in which different parenting

topics are discussed. Many times there are guest speakers who offer expertise on many different topics.

The program is free for all participants, but children must meet eligibility criteria. Children enrolled in the program must turn four years old by Dec. 1. For more information about the YWCA Michigan School Readiness Program or any other YWCA program, call (313) 561-4110.

Football signups

Michigan Athletic Youth Association, CL3 Promotions, Brooke Insurance Agency and Wayne-Ford Civic League have partnered to bring to the community NFL Youth Flag Football, the national program, which will give participants a chance to travel to Orlando, Fla., to play in the national tournament at the Walt Disney World Sports Complex.

There are four divisions in each league - co-ed 6-8 years, co-ed 9-11 years, girls 12-14 years and boys 12-14. Each division has 32 teams with 10 players per team.

The cost is \$75 per participant and \$65 for each additional family member. For previous Wayne-Ford Civic League participants, the discounted price is \$60 per participant and \$55 for each additional family member.

Register at Wayne-Ford Civic League by appointment, pay online by visiting www.cl3promotions.com and click on NFL Youth Flag Football link, or by mail send to P.O. Box 87386 Canton, MI 48187.

For more information, call Leon Carter at (734) 231-7110, Richard White at (734) 516-8469 or Vic Barra and Terri at (734) 728-5010.

Craft show tables

Table rental is available at the cost of \$20 for the annual St. Theodore Confraternity of Christian Women's craft show Saturday, Oct. 22.

The show will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Social Hall, 8200 Wayne Road, Westland. Call Mary at (734) 425-4421 (voice mail# 10) to reserve a table.

Theater auditions

Inspired Theatre is holding open auditions for *A Christmas Carol* at 7 p.m. Sept. 12-13 at Genesis Center, 35248 Palmer Road, Westland.

The show is a musical, so participants should be prepared to sing and read and be dressed to do some movement. The production needs adult men and women ages 17-72, boys ages 7-15 and girls ages 6-18.

Show dates are Dec. 9-11. For more information, call (734) 728-4107 or by e-mail at inspiredtheatre05@yahoo.com

Stars tryouts

The Westland Stars Cheer and Dance team will hold clinics 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 15 and 22, in the multipurpose room on the Bailey Center on Ford behind the Westland City Hall.

The clinics will be held in advance of tryouts 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29. Everything needed to try out for the team will be taught at the clinics.

The program costs \$5 per class or \$25 per month. Coaches are Wayne-Westland school teacher Toni Lay, a former cheerleader with 22 years of coaching experience; Keri Morton, a former high school and college cheerleader, and Jillian Wehrheim, a Junior Olympic champion dancer and high school cheerleader.

Kids interested in the program should come dressed to work out - no jeans - and bring water (no pop or food).

For more information call: 734-722-7620.

Veterans observance

Local veteran organizations will host a program in front of Westland City Hall at 6 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 16, in observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The names of all Michigan service men and women who have lost their lives in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts will be read in remembrance of their sacrifice for our country.

Medicare seminar

Bruce Kaufman, the president of Supplemental Health

Benefits Agency, and Stacy Smith, consultant pharmacist with Specialized Pharmacy Services, will speak about Medicare Part D in a program offered by Westland Convalescent Center on Thursday, Sept. 22.

The topics answer such questions as what is Medicare Part D, who is eligible, how can seniors save up to 75 percent or more on prescription drug medications and when can seniors start using this program.

Participants also will learn how the federal government subsidy will eliminate monthly premium payments and what EPIC is and how will it affect their income.

The program will be 2:30-4:00 p.m. at the convalescent center, 6137 W. Warren, between Wayne and Central City Parkway in Westland.

People interested in attending can call Judy Bianchi at (734) 728-6100 to sign up.

Nominees sought

Nominations are being accepted for the YWCA of Western Wayne County's 2005 Women of Achievement Awards.

The awards recognize outstanding women throughout western Wayne County in the categories of arts/communications, business/industry, government/law, professions, senior woman, volunteer service and young woman.

To nominate an outstanding woman you know, call the YWCA Women of Achievement Department at (313) 561-4110. Deadline for nominations is Sept. 30.

Nominees will be honored at the 14th Annual Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon Oct. 27 at the Dearborn Inn.

The program begins at 11 a.m. with a silent auction, a new portion of the luncheon. The awards presentation begins at noon.

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## EAGLE

FROM PAGE A1

Best, 16, has been a member of the troop since he was 12 years old. He earned 21 merit badges, of which 11-12 are required for the Eagle award, and by the time he received the honor he had 24 badges. He now has earned and additional five merit badges, enough to receive a bronze palm which complements the award.

For his community service project, he had one idea - keep it simple. So he decided to build two 5-foot-by-4-foot handcars for his church. "It wasn't really hard," he said. "We already had the design and the church bought all of the materials. The wheels came from a Mennonite settlement in Pennsylvania."

According to Best, the handcars will be used by church youth who every four years do a re-enactment of the trek their "ancestors made when they were forced out of town" in the 1800s.

The carts are about two feet in depth and are used by the teens to haul everything they need for the three days. Four years ago, the youth made their first trek, using 10 handcars, at Cole Canoe Base north of the Detroit metropolitan area.

Best, a junior at Garden City

High School, got help and was able to build the carts in one day. He did do a few small follow-ups to take care of small details like filling nail holes. He also got help from his mother, sister Traci and his mother's friend who made the covers that go over the wagons.

"He had me do a lot," said Marci. "He had me season 12 Dutch ovens."

Traci is working on earning the Young Woman's Recognition Award through a program set up by the church. She must do a 10-hour project in seven different areas. Lately, she's been making a lot of baby quilts.

"It's more involved," said Marci. "The church set up the program and they have to follow it."

Best also has three brothers - Michael is a Bear Scout, Russell starts Cub Scouts next year, and Jacob is working on his Life Scout rank on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout.

With his Eagle rank and his first palm in hand, he's looking to the future and a continued involvement in Scouting.

"I'll probably help more of the younger kids who are just getting started," he said. "I've got it done now and I'm happy."

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## WORK

FROM PAGE A1

Officials hope that such a project could help boost the local economy and possibly create new jobs by improving access to local businesses, including an industrial park southeast of Cherry Hill and Newburgh.

The plan also could lead to left-turn traffic arrows in both directions on Cherry Hill at Newburgh.

Thompson said the project, as well as the widening of Cherry Hill to beyond the city limit to Haggerty, is a priority of Mayor Sandra Cicirelli. Earlier this year, she stated that county officials have indicated that, if the city helps out with the project, they will move

### The plan also could lead to left-turn traffic arrows in both directions on Cherry Hill at Newburgh.

it higher on the priority list.

A lot of road work has already been done in the area. An railroad bridge was constructed across Newburgh and the road was widened to five lanes from Ford to Glenwood in two separate projects.

The Newburgh-Palmer intersection also was realigned to help ease east-west traffic congestion, and Palmer Road was widened to three lanes between Edwin and John Hix Road.

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# New year, new faces

## 1st-year teachers find flowers, familiar faces on their 1st day

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

What a difference a week makes for Sue Barill of Livonia and Marlene Luttrell of Westland.

Last Thursday, the two women were looking for jobs, this Thursday, they've gone back to school ... as teachers.

"I was just hired on Friday after I interviewed on Thursday," said Luttrell, a second-grade teacher at Lathers Elementary School. "I have four kids at home and they all wanted to come and help me decorate my classroom."

It's the same story for Barill, who found out Friday she would be teaching fifth-grade at Lathers.

"I was shocked but so thrilled," she said. "I'm happy to be in this district."

"They're just a natural fit with the staff," said Principal Susan Ford. "We're fortunate to have such very good teachers."

The school bell rang Thursday for the teachers and students in the Garden City Public Schools and by 10 a.m.

Luttrell had already cut her water bottle in half to make a vase for flowers. One student had brought her a bouquet and another, Joey Catton, had gathered up wildflowers for her during recess.

While Luttrell's a new teacher at the school, she's not new to it. She did her student teaching there in the fall of 2004, working with Charis Cunningham and her first-graders, and was a substitute teacher.

"It was neat to be in Charis's class and then come back as a substitute," she said. "This is such a loving community. They welcomed me with open arms, treated



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lathers Elementary second-grader, and a new student, Bryanna Flowers gets a push from her teacher Marlene Luttrell on the first day of school. It was also a first day for Luttrell who was hired by the Garden City schools last Friday.

me like family."

It took Luttrell 10 years to get her degree from Eastern Michigan University in December. In fact, she calls it "a family project," fitting in school around having babies.

"They got to see me graduate and come and see my classroom," she said. "It was so exciting."

Luttrell also has seven students in her class who are new to the school and spent the morning taking them on a tour of the building and having her class do activities so they could get to know each other better.

Ford also had an activity for new students in first through sixth grades, inviting them to the school on Sept. 1 for a scavenger hunt. The idea was to get them acquainted with where "landmarks" like the library,

music room, office and gymnasium.

Twenty-five of the 80 new students and some parents showed up.

"We left little clues around the building like how many bathrooms are there, the clues were designed to get them into the building," Ford said. "They even had to learn the name of the secretaries (Marlene Pienkowski and Marilyn Sterling)."

Barill also is an EMU grad who did some preteaching with Lathers' Chris Taylor last fall before doing her student teaching in the Livonia district.

The 30-40 hours she spent with Taylor was a plus. She already knew some of the students in her class on opening day.

"I'm surprised I wasn't more panicked than I was,"

she said.

She took half as long as Luttrell to get her degree. She went to school part-time, waiting until her youngest son was in school all day before starting college full-time.

"I thought it would never end," she said. "It's such a thrill to be at Lathers. Everyone is so nice and just went overboard getting me whatever I needed."

Barill also is an EMU grad who did some preteaching with Lathers' Chris Taylor last fall before doing her student teaching in the Livonia district.

"I'm not sure what they were looking for, but it worked out well for me," she added.

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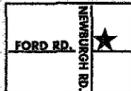
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# Supersized model airplanes to spread wings over Canton

BY CAROL MARSHALL  
STAFF WRITER

More than 4,000 people will look to the skies over western Canton and what they'll see is 100 giant scale model airplanes at the 22nd annual Flying Pilgrims Model Airplane Show.

The planes are not your average radio controlled model planes. They're supersized. With wingspans of more than 100 inches, they reach speeds up to 200 miles per hour, according to Jim Repp of Canton, president of the Flying Pilgrims model plane club.

"Giant scale means the model must be at least a quarter the size of the real aircraft," he said.

Most of them weigh between 15 and 50 pounds, and engine power ranges from 3-12 horsepower. They've got features which imitate their full-sized counterparts, including retractable landing gear, flaps and smoke systems.

While the event was developed to generate newcomers into the model plane hobby, it has become an entertaining weekend for visitors of the club's 25-acre air field at the northwest corner of Geddes and Ridge, which features a paved 400-foot runway.

"Our intention is to generate new interest in the hobby, as well as provide entertainment to

the casual visitor. This is definitely a family oriented event," Repp said.

The Flying Pilgrims started out in Plymouth more than 40 years ago. It's now 200 strong, and is part of the Academy of Model Aeronautics, a 150,000-member national organization.

The reason for the hobby's success, Repp said, is the fact it has broad appeal.

"We have 6- and 7-year-old kids that are learning to fly, and we have members who are 85 and still flying," he said.

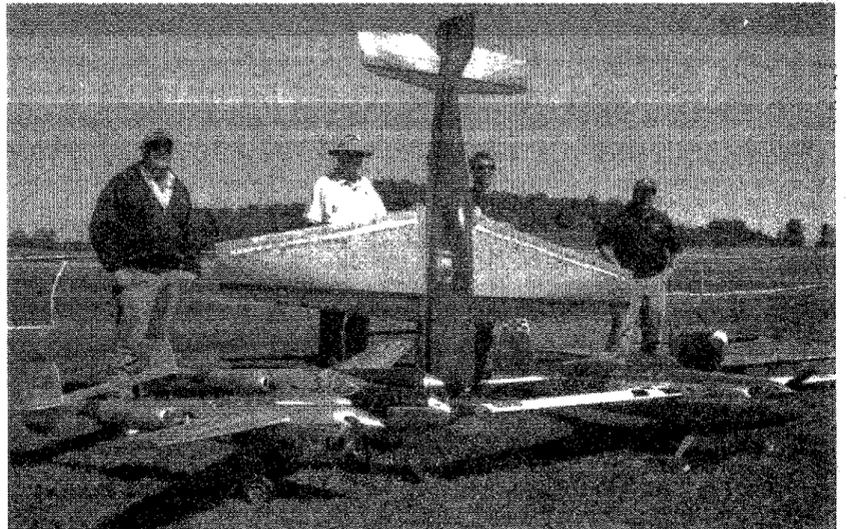
But the giant model planes are not the kind you start out with when you learn to fly, he said.

"These are not the models you usually think of. These are big airplanes. We open the show to the public because these are expert level pilots," he said.

Most cost between \$3,000 and \$8,000. "It's pretty impressive stuff," Repp said.

The show, at the northwest corner of Geddes and Ridge, will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 17-18. There is a \$5-per-vehicle parking donation, but the event is free to attend. There will be light concessions on site. For more information visit online at [www.flyingpilgrims.com](http://www.flyingpilgrims.com), or call Jim Repp at (248) 941-8731.

cmarsall@oe.hometown.com | (734) 459-2700



Two members of the Flying Pilgrims model airplane club hold up a YAK aircraft, which has a 120-inch wingspan. Members of the club include Canton residents Jack Kezlian (on left) and Jim Repp (on right).

## VIOLENCE

FROM PAGE A1

Civilians, Jaycees and Dads Club will participate. The Dads Club of Westland will be doing barrel racing on the baseball fields, while the Westland Jaycees will be helping families play a giant game of Yatzee, as well as potato sack races and wacky bowling.

"Probably several of the zones will be athletic, with one offering a physical challenge," Martin said.

Yet another zone will focus on animals with the Michigan Humane Society volunteers and their Wonder Dogs.

"We call them Wonder Dogs because every dog can be a wonder dog and every dog deserves a home," said Maggie Oullett, the group's unofficial coordinator. "That's our message."

The group made its first appearance three years ago at a pet adoption fair in Southfield. The members, who come from Livonia, the Rochester area, Wayne and Whitmore Lake, talk to kids about pet owner-

ship, bite prevention and animal abuse.

In the crafts area, the Grange will be coordinating the pumpkin decorating, while the Westland Historical Village Park Committee will be helping people with the family trees.

Martin has been working on getting grants and expects to hear back later this month on several of them, including one from the Michigan Council for the Arts to cover Paul's performances. State Farm Insurance has signed on as a major sponsor.

As many as 2,500 people have turned out for Turn Off the Violence.

It averages 1,500-1,800 people each year.

According to Parks Director Bob Kosowski, the evening is "going to be awesome."

"The big thing is that the Rotary used to do it and, thankfully, they're getting involved again," he said. "If we can get some grants, we really have a night the kids have never seen before."

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THURS. 6:45 pm **THURSDAY NIGHT 5 MAN TEAM**

THURS. 6:00 pm **LIVONIA ELKS** - 4 to a team

FRI. 9:15 am **MIDNIGHTERS** - Night Shift Workers - All averages welcome

FRI. 6:40 pm **GRANDALE** - needs 2 teams now at 30

### LADIES LEAGUES

TUES. 5:00 pm **FORD LADIES** - 4 per team - All averages welcome

WED. 12:30 pm **AFTERNOON DELIGHTS** - Any average - FREE BABYSITTING

WED. 1:00 pm **SPAREMAKERS** - Any average - 3 per team - FREE BABYSITTING

THURS. 9:15 am **EARLY BIRDS** - Ladies trio

THURS. 5:00 pm **ALLSTATE LADIES TRIO** - Early time - Come right from work

THURS. 8:15 pm **LADIES NIGHT OUT** - Finish bowling before 11:00 pm!!

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MON. 9:15 pm **ODDBALLS** - Any average welcome /Any combo of Men or Women

TUE. 4:30 pm **MIXED TRIO** - Any combination of Men or Women

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# Book combines reading and puzzle-solving skills

Jan Jones of Plymouth is a language arts writer whose favorite assignment is writing "leveled" readers — stories written to specific grade or reading levels that help develop reading and language skills.

One day while working a jigsaw puzzle, it occurred to Jones putting grade-level stories on jigsaw puzzles would combine the skills used in solving a jigsaw puzzle (sorting, concentration, and problem solving) with reading. She reasoned that such puzzles would make reading a fun, hands-on activity for kids.

Now Jones' jigsaw puzzles for kids, *A Story Piece by Piece*, are available for kids at three different reading levels for ages 5-9. In fact, the books are in stock at The Book Cellar and Cafe at 840 W. Ann Arbor Trail in Plymouth.

"It was a long process," Jones said. "I had to figure out how to make the stories work with the illustrations. I added questions to the puzzles that require the reader to use reading skills in order to get the correct answers. To build language and writing skills, I gave each story a playful emphasis on a language

feature such as onomatopoeia, homophones, multiple-meaning words, and so on."

Because stories have a beginning, middle and end, Jones put numbers on the backs of the puzzle pieces to identify each piece as belonging to a puzzle section. Thus the puzzles can be worked in sections to reveal the story and illustration in the correct reading order.

Jones uses humor and high-interest topics to hold young readers' attention. For example, one level-two puzzle for children ages 7-8, titled *Will Merry Mary Marry?* begins: "Lady Mary, very hairy, how does your hair grow so long? When I laugh or smile, it grows a mile. I'm so merry it grows on and on."

The art on the puzzle shows merry Mary and her wild red hair, spreading out in all directions, choking the village streets, winding itself around the villagers, and scaling the mountains in the distance. The reader also sees Sir Harry who wants to marry the merry Lady Mary, but he does not have a house big enough for all her hair. Mary solves the problem when she cuts her

hair and they open a wig shop.

Other puzzle stories include science topics, such as a humorous look at dressing for the weather (Level 1 for ages 5-6) and the story of two classmates who think they are talking to owls but are really hooting to each other, much to the amusement of the owls in the woods (Level 3 for ages 8-9).

Jones hired local artists to create original art for the puzzles. She tested the puzzles in a school, at learning centers, and on parents and kids.

"The results were better than I hoped for," Jones said. "Kids loved the puzzles. Teachers reported that the puzzles are fun and a useful reading tool. Parents saw the value in the puzzles and wanted them for their kids."

Input from everyone went into the final designs. Ideas for parents and teachers on how to use the puzzles and free teacher guides for each puzzle can be found on-line at [astorypiecebypiece.com](http://astorypiecebypiece.com) or puzzles can be purchased from the Web site. Schools can buy puzzles at a discount by calling (734) 451-1520.



Plymouth author Jan Jones puts grade-level stories on jigsaw puzzles to combine the skills used in solving a jigsaw puzzle (sorting, concentration, and problem solving) with reading, reasoning that such puzzles would make reading a fun, hands-on activity for kids.

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## Sporting Lands Alliance hosts fund-raiser

The Sporting Lands Alliance will hold a fund-raiser on Monday, Sept. 19, at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester to raise money to help educate the public about preserving land for recreation in fast-growing southeastern Michigan.

"Every day we lose lands to development that could be used for bicycling, hunting, fishing or hiking," said Bill Vandercook, executive director of the Sporting Lands Alliance.

"We're not anti-development, we're just for smart growth," he said. "Our mission is to work with developers and property owners to set aside lands that can benefit all of us."

The money raised at the benefit dinner and auction will go to support educational programs.

"We're trying to educate kids about outdoor activities. Our focus is on the family," he said.

Access to recreational lands has taken on an added importance in the light of new studies that show many young people have weight problems.

Outdoors activities are one way that parents can teach their children how to get away from the television set and computer and get some exercise outdoors.

The cost of the fund-raiser is \$80 for adults, \$150 a couple, and \$50 for children under 18. To purchase a ticket ahead of time, contact the Sporting Lands Alliance at 248-601-1241. Information is also available at the group's web site, [www.sportinglandsalliance.org](http://www.sportinglandsalliance.org).

The fund-raiser will feature an auction, with items such as a hunting trip to South Africa and

a week at a North Carolina ocean front home.

The main mission of the Rochester-based alliance is to educate landowners about the importance of open space preservation and to encourage them to take steps to preserve their property. While the alliance home ground is Oakland and Lapeer counties, it is also working with other land conservation groups in the state to help preserve open lands. It also works with local, state and federal agencies.

"We're trying to focus on the fragmentation of open space by promoting alternative development methods," Vandercook said. "We want to find alternatives for landowners."

The alliance monitors local ordinances, policies and legislation that affect open space preservation.

As part of its mission, the alliance hosts horse backriding, fishing events, cross-county ski outings and clay, skeet and trap shooting events for families.

"Our theory is to get families outdoors engaging in fun events," Vandercook said.

The alliance draws its board members from a cross section of communities. They are: Frank Rewold, Keith McCormick, Tom McNulty, Chuck Buzzy, Jerry Carvey, Jim Smithers, Henry Gleisner, Charlie Mann, Nikki Reynolds, Kim Bosetti, John Fleming, Ken Matheis Sr. and Jeff Counts.

Contact Bill Vandercook, executive director, at 248-601-1241. His e-mail address is [bill@sportinglandsalliance.org](mailto:bill@sportinglandsalliance.org).

## County board commits \$1 million for evacuees

The Wayne County Commission Thursday passed an ordinance that will commit \$1 million in funding to provide housing, food, clothing, crisis counseling and employment assistance for victims of Katrina who choose to relocate to Wayne County.

"As a government agency, we have an obligation and responsibility to respond to this natural disaster and support our fellow Americans whose lives have been turned upside down," said Commissioner Bernard Parker, who chairs the Commission's Ways & Means Committee.

The \$1 million will be taken from appropriations within the 04-05 budget, and will be held for use by various county agencies to assist the victims. It is anticipated that the county will be reimbursed when the various agencies receive appropriations from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Commissioner Parker also sponsored a resolution that supports the Wayne County

Executive and Wayne County Sheriff in providing all means to help restore New Orleans and provide aid to displaced persons who come to Wayne County.

The resolution requests that President George Bush and Congress provide adequate resources to house, feed and educate Katrina victims, and also provide a federal jobs program for these victims.

"The County of Wayne cannot in good conscience follow the federal example in its response the worst national disaster tragedy in American history," Commissioner Parker said.

Commissioner Parker said the federal government's response to Katrina, in which most of the victims were poor and black, was in stark contrast to how it responded in 2004 when Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Ivan struck Florida.

"Florida is where President Bush's brother is governor and is where most of the victims were rich, retired and white."

## All levels of government need to learn from Katrina

Four years ago on this date, a reporter rushed breathlessly into the office.

She said, "Quick, turn on the TV, something terrible has happened. An airliner has accidentally gone off course and hit the World Trade Center."

We gathered around the small editorial department TV and watched the image of smoke billowing from the giant north building, wondering how any airline pilot could get so off course in New York City.

Then before our eyes, another plane sailed into the WTC's south tower erupting into a burst of fire. This was no accident.



Hugh Gallagher

We have been living with the consequences of that day for four years - increased security checks, restrictions on civil liberties, military action in Afghanistan, a war in Iraq and, we had presumed, improved planning to handle national emergencies.

Now on the anniversary of that tragic event, we are experiencing another national tragedy, more far reaching and devastating. But Hurricane Katrina is not the act of terrorists but a terrifying act of nature.

Hurricanes are recurring tragedies along our Atlantic and Gulf shores. Last year, Florida was hit by three major storms in succession. Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas are often battered by storms. Yet, Katrina has beat them all. It has taken down and totally evacuated a large American city, a city known far and wide for its music, food and Big Easy attitude. While New Orleans fought the storm's backlash that broke three levees, the major force of the storm also bulldozed through coastal Mississippi and Alabama, literally destroying whole towns.

A natural disaster gave way to a human calamity. While thousands were stranded by flood waters without food, water, medicine or transportation out, the city of New Orleans descended into anarchy with looters, snipers and rampaging gangs doing their worst. A city already known for poverty and violence became immensely poorer and more violent.

Government response was extremely slow and inadequate. At every level, government failed to do what it is supposed to do.

It is important for us to really learn from this disaster what government is supposed to do and who needs to take responsibility. We don't get hurricanes but we do get tornados, floods, extensive forest fires and blizzards. We need to know that the federal government will respond quickly and adequately. We need to know

that our security will be protected.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has taken the brunt of criticism in Katrina's tragic aftermath. Though clearly New Orleans and Louisiana relied too much on the federal response and needed to have an evacuation and police protection plan in place, the federal government is primarily responsible for coordination in these kind of emergencies.

Rapper Kanye West in a burst of unthinking outrage said on national television that New Orleans didn't get help because, "President Bush doesn't care about black people." That's an unfair charge and not supported by what happened.

The Bush Administration has concerns about the role of the federal government.

FEMA didn't act quickly enough for a variety of reasons, including its reorganization and subordination to the Homeland Security Department. No one seemed to know who was supposed to coordinate response. Bush's error was in not following through on his declaration of a disaster, despite warnings that even as the brunt of the wind bypassed New Orleans, the chance of a major flood existed.

Now we have a round of media-fueled finger pointing. While most attention is on the failure of FEMA, Republican congressional leaders and GOP-friendly media have been making a case against New Orleans and Louisiana officials (Democrats). But the president's initial reaction that the federal government had failed was the correct response, and everything after has been politics. Ironically arguments about a state failure reinforces the need for federal authority.

U.S. Rep. John Dingell has wisely proposed separating FEMA from the Homeland Security Department and giving it the authority it needs to coordinate all local, state and national resources in these kind of major natural disasters.

If this is the "improved" response to disasters, natural or manmade, we've got a lot more improving to do.

(On a positive note, the American people, including many from our area, have responded with generosity. Local police, fire and emergency workers, medical technicians, builders and ordinary people have volunteered their time and expertise. Area homes, schools and colleges have opened their doors to evacuees. This is a great country with a big heart and we prove it time and again.)

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.

## Emergency preparedness 101: Prepare for the worst scenario

During my tenure at the Wayne County Executive Office, I served as a liaison to Wayne County Emergency Management Unit. This unit serves as the first respondent in any emergency to most of Wayne County's cities and townships.

In the 13 years I served in this capacity, we had to respond to all kinds of emergencies including such natural disasters as flooding, tornados and airline disasters. During 9/11, Wayne County Emergency Management was activated in anticipation of further attacks and to deal with stranded travelers who found Metro Detroit home until the signal was clear for them to reach their destination.



Terry Ahwal

The Wayne County Emergency Management team consists of all local fire and police Departments; representatives from local mayors, Wayne County health and human services, public service agencies, and many other agencies including mental health and assessment and equalizations. The Emergency management team also consists of The Michigan State Police, the Department of Defense and federal government representatives. From the private sectors, we have representation from the utility companies, major industries, community organization, schools, hospitals, religious institutions, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the media.

Our team was in constant training regarding all kind of scenarios. The simulation programs included the worst anticipated disasters ever imagined such as nuclear disasters, flooding and terror attacks simultaneously. The scenarios set for training were in anticipation of horrific circumstances. Regardless whether the disaster was real or set for practice everyone involved was to abide by three principals.

1. Prepare and prevent
2. Anticipate and respond as quickly as efficiently possible
3. Make sure that we recover from any disaster

In order for these rules to be carried out without a hitch it requires strong and decisive leaders who exuded confidence even in the most-dire circumstances. As I watched the horrific disaster unfolding in New Orleans, I could not help but reflect on the apparent failure from all levels of government.

Although, I do not have enough evidence to render a judgment on where the failure occurred in our nation's latest disaster, from my limited experience, I believe we failed. Anyone who is involved in emergency management can tell you that an assessment of a disaster does not take three to four days as was the case in this disaster.

It is astonishing to know that our public officials were not prepared for the magnitude of this disaster even though it had been predicted for years. Emergency preparedness 101

As of today, I don't know if we can recover as a nation from this disaster. We have not recovered from the terrorist attack of Sept. 11, 2001. We are still responding defensively and aimlessly at the people who perpetrated the evil act of terror and still have not yet begun to prepare ourselves for the next disaster as demonstrated in New Orleans.

teaches respondents and public officials to prepare for the worst of disasters. Local, state and federal government cannot hide behind the significant size of a disaster. Our training for disasters gives us several options and alternatives to respond appropriately for each disaster.

For example, if communications are cut off because of power, participants are able to communicate via alternative mechanism. As for evacuation, agencies are prepared for several mass evacuations plans at the same time, when one fails; other options are set in place automatically. Consideration for our most vulnerable citizens, such as the senior citizens, school children and the poor people are in the forefront of our concern. During the year, and in non-emergency situations, the agencies involved are always gathering and updating vital information to help first respondents be more efficient during the actual emergency.

Granted that Wayne County disasters were not as significant as hurricane Katrina, but if one follows the principals set forth for Emergency Management, the response will be more efficient, the cost of human lives will be minimal and recovery will be imminent.

As of today, I don't know if we can recover as a nation from this disaster. We have not recovered from the terrorist attack of Sept. 11, 2001. We are still responding defensively and aimlessly at the people who perpetrated the evil act of terror and still have not yet begun to prepare ourselves for the next disaster as demonstrated in New Orleans.

Regardless of who is to blame, we really need to examine ourselves and remove emotion and replace it with leadership and start working on a blue print to assist in averting, preparing responding and recovering from our next tragedy... If we don't do that, we will engulf ourselves with continuing disasters.

Terry Ahwal lives in Canton.

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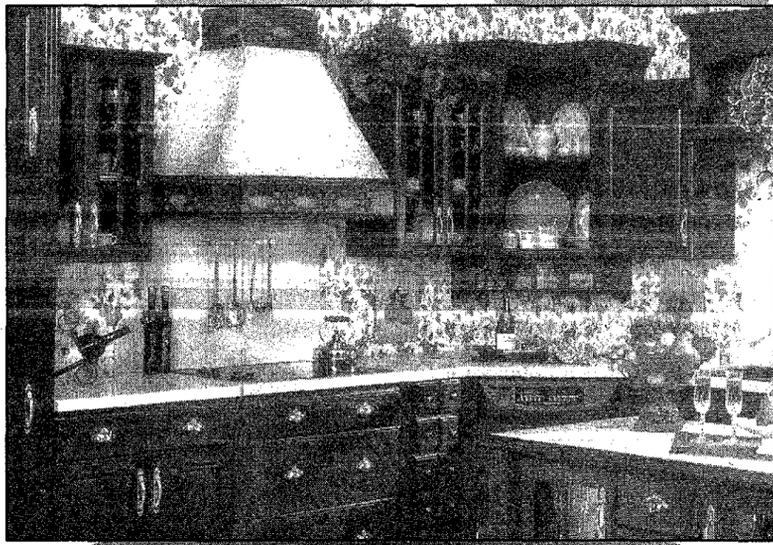
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# Disaster brings out the best in Michigan Youth Challenge Academy cadets

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

By Wednesday afternoon, Amber Saleh and David McGuigan were ready to sit down for a much deserved rest after making 500 beds, unloading several semi-trucks and sorting through donations at Ft. Custer in Battle Creek.

Saleh, 18, of Westland and McGuigan, 17, of Plymouth Township were among the 101 Michigan Youth Challenge Academy cadets preparing for the arrival of 280 evacuees from New Orleans on Monday.

Hurricane Katrina, as devastating as it was, is bringing out the best in people and that's what the academy for at-risk teens is all about. Cadets spend 22 weeks in the National Guard's residential military program turning their lives around.

"We were there to midnight helping them, pushing wheelchairs, helping carry packages," said McGuigan. "There were all different ages, families as large as 13 coming in."

All of the weary survivors had stories to tell as the young cadets passed out linens, clothing, food, and water after checking in everyone from babies to people with dogs. One survivor was especially grateful for a cold drink of water. Most couldn't wait "to get to their beds," said Saleh.

"One man was sitting on his roof three days without food and water," said Saleh. "They said they can't believe what happened."

Another fellow was on his deck for about a week watching the water rise.

"There were people with guns going around, a lot of danger, looting," said McGuigan. "They saw the bodies floating in the water."

In spite of the tragedy the survivors were "happy for everything" they'd been given on their arrival at Ft. Custer. Some called it first class treatment.

"One fellow was shouting and happy," said McGuigan. "He'd never been treated as good."

The expressions of appreciation left the cadets feeling good about themselves and enthusiastic about helping. It's estimated that between Friday, Sept. 2, and Wednesday, Sept. 7, cadets had given 5,000 hours of community service.

Evacuees are expected to remain at Ft. Custer for about a week before being sent to Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Detroit or destinations around the country if they are able to locate family members. They initially arrive at the Air National Guard Base in Battle Creek then are sent to Ft. Custer for in-processing through the Army National Guard at the governor's

direction. Gov. Granholm is Commander in Chief of the Michigan National Guard.

"It just feels really good to be helping them," said Saleh who'd volunteered at an orphanage before but never seen such tragedy. "Half don't know where their family members are or if they're even alive."

The experience taught Saleh to appreciate "what you have."

Until the arrival of the evacuees, McGuigan had been counting the days since he entered the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy. He'd already endured two weeks of marching and push-ups during boot camp and was now focusing his attention on computer assisted drawing and other classes offered in the program.

McGuigan and Saleh agree that along with learning discipline they developed "a better attitude." McGuigan was expelled from Plymouth Salem High School, Amber dropped out of Cambridge alternative high school in Garden City before being accepted into the academy. Today both sets of their parents are proud of their accomplishments. McGuigan hopes eventually to enroll at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Saleh to study cosmetology.

"They've probably touched more lives than they thought they would. They've done a great job," said ISG Michael McNeese, program recruiter. "I'm hoping the kids think things aren't as bad as they thought they were."

McNeese believes the cadets will be inspired by the evacuees to overcome any obstacles they encounter.

Many of the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy cadets dropped out of school or were at risk of getting into serious trouble with the law before coming to the academy which is currently conducting orientations for applicants interested in entering the January 2006 class. The next two take class Saturday, Sept. 24, and Oct. 22, at the Taylor Armory, 12450 Beech Daly. For more information, call (800) 372-0523 or visit the Web site at [www.ngycp.org/mi](http://www.ngycp.org/mi).

There is no charge for the National Guard Challenge program which is funded by federal and state partnerships and open to all Michigan residents, 16- to 18-years old. The boot camp weeds out teens uncommitted to the program consisting of 400 hours of classroom instruction, 160 hours of vocational/technical training, and 40 hours of community service and conservation activities to graduate. The academy helps cadets obtain a high school diploma or GED so they can go on to lead successful lives.

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A Michigan Youth Challenge Academy instructor briefs cadets before assigning them to help process Hurricane Katrina survivors at Ft. Custer. David McGuigan of Plymouth Township is pictured second from the left.

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