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**THURSDAY**  
November 24, 2005

# 4 Detroit teens arrested in carjacking

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Four Detroit teens face criminal charges for a carjacking that police say happened early Sunday at Merriman and Warren, where a Westland man and his brother were forced out of their car at gunpoint. The incident started about 5 a.m. when a 27-year-old Westland man, accompanied by his 21-year-old brother, stopped his BMW for a red

light on westbound Warren at Merriman, police Sgt. Steve Borisch said.

The victims, on their way home after night-clubbing, had their BMW windows partially rolled down when a 1998 Malibu drove up behind them and two men got out, approaching the BMW from both sides with at least one semiautomatic handgun, Borisch said.

Two other people - one male and one female - remained in the Malibu.

Threatened at gunpoint, the victims were ordered out of the BMW and forced to lie down on the pavement of Warren Road, Borisch said.

Their attackers took money from their pockets and, leaving them in the road, stole the BMW and started traveling east on Warren, the detective said. The BMW was trailed by the Malibu.

The victims called 911 and police came to assist them as other departments were alerted about the carjack-

ing, Borisch said. Moments later, Dearborn Heights police spotted the BMW at Warren and Beech Daly and tried to stop it, prompting the driver to flee north into a residential neighborhood while the Malibu headed south, police said.

Authorities chased the BMW until the driver, 19, and the passenger, 17, jumped from the car and tried to flee, Borisch said. The man suspected of driving the stolen car was captured on Clairview after a Redford police dog

was brought in and found him hiding under a Jeep, Borisch said.

"The dog had to drag him out from under the car," the detective said.

The passenger in the stolen BMW escaped but was later picked up at his Detroit home, Borisch said.

Although the pair in the Malibu - a male and a female, both 17 - got away, Westland police caught them about an hour later when they returned to

PLEASE SEE **CARJACKING, A9**



PHOTOS BY HEATHER ROUSSEAU

Kim Rutkowski shows her emotion Saturday after being crowned the new Wayne-Westland Junior Miss. Rutkowski, a John Glenn High School student, also won in the scholastic, talent and fitness categories.

## Junior Miss winner 'surprised'

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Westland teen Kim Rutkowski charmed judges Saturday and earned the title of Wayne-Westland Junior Miss, earning a trip to state competition in March.

"I was really shocked and surprised when they called my name," the 17-year-old John Glenn High senior said. "I was really excited that they chose me."

Rutkowski captured honors in the categories of scholastic, talent and fitness on her way to winning the 2006 Wayne-Westland Junior Miss contest - the largest of its kind in Michigan.

She tap-danced her way into the judges' hearts, but she's had much practice.

"I've been tap-dancing since I was 4 years old," she said. "I absolutely love it."

Rutkowski hasn't decided where she will attend college, but she will have some money for tuition after walking away

with \$3,050 from Saturday's competition at Wayne Memorial High School's Stockmeyer Auditorium.

In all, Junior Miss officials gave out \$21,500 in scholarship money - up from \$18,000 last year, said Junior Miss President Pat Hermatz.

Rutkowski said she prepared for Saturday's contest by putting "110 percent" of her energies into it.

After high school, she plans to study to become a pharmacist. She is a member of the National Honor Society and was formerly involved in Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and the Spanish Club. She also is a class representative, helping with activities such as the senior prom.

Rutkowski also plays basketball and softball at Glenn.

Placing second to Rutkowski among 28 Junior Miss participants was Kelly Doerr, who earned the title of Wayne Junior Miss. She, too, will advance to state finals in March

in Alpena, Hermatz said.

Doerr, a Wayne Memorial High School senior, earned \$2,200 in scholarship money as the first runner-up, and she also won honors in the categories of interview and self-expression.

Hermatz praised the efforts of the high school seniors who participated in this year's four-hour event.

"It was a very, very good program," she said. "The girls are all winners as far as I'm concerned."

Here's a look at other winners:

■ Heather Ennis, a finalist who earned honors in the scholastic, talent and community service categories. She earned \$1,750 in scholarship money.

■ Alisha Schrader, a finalist who won in the categories of interview, physical fitness and audience participation. She earned \$1,600.

■ Jennifer Guthrie, a finalist

PLEASE SEE **JUNIOR MISS, A4**



Jennifer Guthrie of Wayne Memorial High School does an act for the talent portion of the Wayne-Westland Junior Miss program. She was one of six finalists and was one of the winners in the scholastic and talent categories. She plans to study chemical engineering at the University of Michigan.

## Crowd to board: Reject flawed plan

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA  
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public School trustees listened for 5½ hours as community members shared emotional pleas and education research - which mostly opposed the district's Legacy Initiative.

The plan, presented formally to the board last week, would close seven school buildings, consolidate school communities, and establish three new upper elementary buildings for grades five and six. Board members hosted a public hearing Monday night at Churchill High School's auditorium. It marked the first televised remote hearing for the school district.

Grant and Alicia Wenzinger recently moved to the district from Redford Township.

"We put a lot of thought into making this decision," said Grant Wenzinger. "We left Redford where we lived two blocks from an elementary school. Being close to our schools was an important factor."

Should the plan pass, the Wenzingers will have three

PLEASE SEE **PLAN, A9**

## Salon plans purrr-fect fund-raiser for animals

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

After seeing how dogs, cats and other pets suffered miserably through Hurricane Katrina, a Westland hair salon owner was impressed that the Michigan Humane Society stepped in to help displaced animals.

Now, Lori Cicirelli, manager of E Salon at 141 Wayne Road north of Cherry Hill, wants to show her appreciation.

Cicirelli, daughter-in-law of Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, has announced that the humane society will receive 100 percent of proceeds from haircuts at her salon from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4.

"I'm really big into animals, and after Katrina and everything else, I just thought this would be a good thing to do," said the salon manager, who has three cats and a dog of her own.

Haircuts cost \$14.95 for adults and \$9.95 for children, Cicirelli said, adding that her salon also will offer free eyebrow waxing, normally \$13, for customers who bring in items from the Michigan Humane Society's wish list.

Those items include dog and cat food, collars, leashes, 9v batteries, cat litter, dog treats and rawhide chews, grooming brushes, blankets, rubber gloves, non-porous toys.

No appointments are necessary. For more information, call the salon at (734) 721-8881.

The Michigan Humane Society welcomed the E Salon event.

"The Michigan Humane Society sincerely appreciates the support of E Salon and their clients who participate in this event, making the holidays brighter for the needy animals in our care," spokeswoman Nancy Gunnigle said.

Gunnigle asked that any other businesses interested in doing a benefit for the MHS call (866) MHUMANE, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

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Coming Sunday  
on the **PINK** Page



Look great for the holidays with glittery party style

# Talk aims at confusion over drug plan

BY MATT JACHMAN  
STAFF WRITER

For Mary Johnson, senior citizens trying to understand what Medicare's new prescription drug coverage means to them should break it into three C's: cost, coverage and convenience.

But some of the seniors who packed Livonia's Civic Park Senior Center to hear about the benefit on Monday added a fourth C to the equation: confusion.

"This is the most confusing thing I've ever seen. I can't believe the government came out with something so confusing," said Paul Polsky of Livonia after listening to Johnson, director of the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, and other speakers Monday.

"I'll get my daughter to check on it for me," said Mary Vamos of Inkster, who attended with her husband, Bill. "I still don't understand it."

Polsky, a retired pharmacist, said he didn't blame the confusion on Monday's presenters, but on the complexity of the benefit they spoke about.

"People walk out of here now and they don't understand any more than when they came in," he said.

Clearly anticipating the confusion complaint, Johnson urged listeners to figure out what the drug coverage, called Medicare Part D, offers for them rather than trying to comprehend the entire picture.

"It's not the best thing since sliced bread, but it's what we have and it's better than what we had," Johnson said.

The presentation on Medicare drug coverage was



Hundreds of residents filled Livonia's Civic Park Senior Center Monday for a Medicare Plan D seminar led by Mary Johnson (foreground) of the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program and sponsored by State Sen. Laura Toy.

sponsored by state Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, whose district includes Redford Township. A similar program in Redford recently drew more than 200 people, according to Toy's office.

The drug benefit is open to anyone enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B. Enrollment began Nov. 15 and continues through December, with drug coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2006.

Those who enroll after December will likely pay more for the coverage. But the plan is optional, and Johnson said many seniors will have comparable or better drug coverage.

The Medicare drug program is a federal partnership with insurers, and in Michigan, Johnson said, 18 organizations are offering a total of 41

plans through the program. The average monthly premium is about \$32 a person.

"This is an insurance. Salesmen are going to try to sell you the insurance," she said.

Other key points in the drug plan, Johnson said, include:

■ An annual deductible, which is a maximum of \$250 per person for 2006.

■ No family enrollment, which means a husband and wife could join different plans, depending on their needs, and pay two different premiums.

■ A gap, or "doughnut hole," which means no coverage for those whose drug costs reach a certain level on a per-year basis (generally \$2,250 in total costs, according to the Medicare Web site, until out-of-pocket costs reach \$3,600).

Extra coverage for that gap may be available, the Web site says.

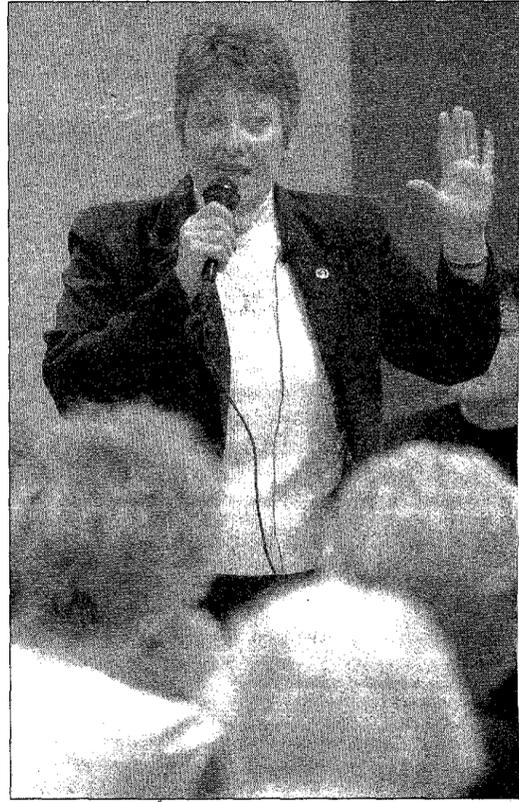
■ A requirement that all plans must cover at least two drugs for every medical diagnosis. Many cover more than that, Johnson said.

■ Extra assistance for seniors who want to enroll but have limited resources.

Johnson said Part D is the first major change in Medicare, a 40-year-old federal program. She said it's estimated that the average participant who has no drug coverage now will save 50 percent on his or her drug costs through the benefit. The Michigan Medicaid/Medicare Assistance Program is a free counseling service. The toll-free number is (800) 803-7174. The address for the Medicare Web site is www.medicare.gov.



Rocco Barra of Livonia listens to an explanation of the Medicare Plan D program.



Mary Johnson, director of Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, talks to seniors at Livonia's Civic Park Senior Center about the new Medicare Plan D program.

## FOR THE RECORD

- G**  
Gerald Gotthelf  
Gotthelf, 76, of Birmingham, died Nov. 19.
- H**  
William J. (Bill) Hall  
Hall, 69, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., formerly of Birmingham, died Nov. 14.
- K**  
Alvin Grant Karhu  
Karhu, 27, died.
- L**  
Mary Ann Leone  
Leone, 60, of Royal Oak, died Nov. 20.
- P**  
Carol Lynn Patterson  
Patterson, of Canton, died Nov. 16.
- V**  
Carol J. Voytas, M.D.  
Voytas, 51, died Nov. 15.



For the Record appears in every edition of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in Passages on page B5.

# City programs spread holiday cheer

With talk of a Christmas decorating contest, a tree-lighting ceremony, a Santa call-in show and a holiday poster competition, it's clear that the countdown is on for Christmas in Westland.

## TURN ON THE LIGHTS

One sure sign of the holiday season is a ceremony in which thousands of Christmas lights will be turned on to illuminate the trees in front of Westland City Hall.

Typically, a couple hundred people join the festivities, scheduled for 6:15 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5.

Moreover, the city's parks and recreation department has issued an urgent bulletin: "Santa is making a special trip to Westland to help Mayor Sandra A. Cicirelli and the Westland City Council members light the city's Christmas trees."

The evening also will include a Christmas carol sing-along and awards given to children who won a now-closed essay contest for *What Christmas Means To Me*.

Cicirelli is asking children to bring a pair of new children's mittens or gloves that they will get to hang on a tree. The items will be donated to the Westland Goodfellows to help with its *No Child Without A Christmas* campaign.

After the ceremony, children also will have an opportunity to go next door to Fire Station No. 1 to visit with Santa and enjoy refreshments.

## DECORATING CONTEST

The holiday cheer continues with the city's 19th annual residential Christmas decoration contest. Anyone who wants to nominate a house for an award should write to the Westland City Clerk's Office, 36601 Ford

Road, Westland, MI 48185, or call (734) 467-3185.

Westland City Council members will judge the nominees and give awards for first, second and third place during the Dec. 19 council meeting at City Hall.

Deadline for nominations is 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5.

## MAYORAL CHEER

Cicirelli will host a *Bring in the Holidays with the Mayor* program at 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 7, between City Hall and the Bailey Center. Some schools and Scout troops will decorate the trees, and there will be a Christmas carol sing-along and refreshments. To attend, call (734) 467-3200.

## CALL SANTA

One day later, the mayor will host a Santa call-in show scheduled for 6-7 p.m. Dec. 8 at city cable station WLND. Children may call (734) 427-9003 to talk with Santa.

## SNOW GIVEAWAY

Finally, children who want to ensure that they have a white Christmas - whether it snows or not - are encouraged to enter a poster contest.

The winner will get a truckload of snow dumped on the front lawn on Dec. 21.

If snow already has fallen, another award will be given.

Westland children in kindergarten through fifth grade are eligible. They should:

■ Draw a poster of how their house would look covered in snow.

■ Include their names, ages, addresses and home phone numbers, name of their schools and grades - and mail the posters to the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford Road, Westland, MI 48185, or drop them off at the rec center 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays. Deadline is 10 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14.

For more information, call the Bailey Center at (734) 722-7620.

# WESTLAND Observer

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## CITY OF GARDEN CITY December 12, 2005 - BOARD OF REVIEW

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO all property owners of the City of Garden City that the Board of Review will meet in session on Tuesday, December 13, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to correct mutual mistakes of fact or clerical errors. PAT4 of 1995 authorizes the July Board of Review to hear appeals for poverty exemptions, but not for poverty exemptions denied by the March Board of Review. This applies to current year only.

ALLYSON BETTIS  
TREASURER-CITY CLERK

Publish: November 24, 27 & December 1, 2005

## Thanksgiving Ad Correction Notice

On page 11 of the November 24th ad, the statement "Any of our in-store offers in this ad are also available online" appears in some markets. This is incorrect.

The correct statement is:

"Many of our in-store offers in this ad are also available online."

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.

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# Road to recovery

## Giving up drinking has made his life better

BY JULIE BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

The holidays are tough for Tom, a recovering alcoholic from Canton.

"It's a hard time of year," the 59-year-old professional said. With families getting together, he decides what gatherings to attend "and not feel guilty if I have to avoid some."

Tom has some family members who have also fought alcoholism. He attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for help, and cited the marathon sessions held during the holidays.

"You can go to meetings that run the whole day, Christmas Day for example." He follows AA's 12-Step program and recommends that alcoholics get help from their sponsors/mentors.

An informal meeting at a restaurant with a sponsor/mentor is all that may be needed to avoid drinking, he said.

He urges recovering alcoholics to avoid bars and office parties as well.

Friends and family can do a lot to help a recovering alcoholic. Make sure you have non-alcoholic drinks and food available if you're entertaining, he said. Some hosts can be aggressive when it comes to drinks: "So they kind of push drinks on people."

Drunken driving's a serious problem too and Tom urges hosts to make sure all their guests get home OK. "No one should ever let someone leave

their house if they feel they're a little under the weather, and drive. There can be serious consequences."

A designated driver is an excellent plan, he added.

Tom, who drank for 10-15 years, feels better these days. "I feel a lot better, better physically, emotionally."

Tom praises AA for all the help it's afforded him. Some family members have been more supportive than others, and he's had to steer clear of certain places.

Going to AA and seeing what's what is a good idea, he said. There are various groups, including some for women only. He still attends regularly.

Depression can be common this time of year too, with missing loved ones. "That's why fellowship is so important. You don't want to get too lonely."

Professional counseling's often required, Tom said, and AA is meant to be a supplement to that. He has words of encouragement for recovering alcoholics.

"Not to give up hope, to despair." Drinking should be avoided, but if you do slip and drink don't give up, he emphasized.

Alcoholics Anonymous of Greater Detroit can be reached at (248) 541-6565 or (877) 337-0611. There are a variety of meeting sites and times throughout the metro area.

The Northwest Wayne Alano Club, 2903 Wayne Road in Wayne, can be reached at (734) 727-4725.

## Drinking problem a yule challenge

BY JULIE BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

Experts agree the holiday season is a challenge for people recovering from substance abuse.

"Absolutely, because a lot of people associate celebrating with alcohol," said Linda Cunin, director of Oakwood Healthcare System's Employee Assistance Program.

Those in recovery can get caught up in the holidays, she said, and not see their therapist or go to meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or Women for Sobriety.

"There are a lot of ways to reach out for help and support," said Cunin, a licensed master social worker. It's important to make plans with others in recovery.

"You don't want to delude yourself into thinking 'Oh, I can stop by with my old drinking buddies.'" Those in recovery need a plan for family gatherings, perhaps a signal to leave such as saying there's another commitment.

Cunin emphasized the need for a designated driver when alcohol is served. "People need to recognize getting out of control is not the thing to do anymore." A glass of wine before dinner is fine for most, but drinking to get drunk is not.

Those in recovery may go back to old behaviors, she said, isolating themselves or overdoing by such things as excessive spending. It's important to stay focused on recovery, she said, paying attention to anger, sadness and guilt.

"Learn to say no and practice that." Some recovering alcoholics are comfortable saying they're in recovery, and Cunin said people often respect that.

In addition to AA, there is Alanon for friends and family and Alateen for young people affected by alcoholism. "It's an excellent group," Cunin said of Alanon. "The meetings are something that people can go to forever. With the support groups, they're always there for

you."

The Rev. Bryan Smith is pleased to host an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting at his church, Geneva Presbyterian of Canton. It meets 7:30 p.m. Thursdays at the church, on the west side of Sheldon north of Ford.

"It's something that's pretty covered up," Smith said of alcoholism. He cited the prevalence of women and children being beaten on Super Bowl Sunday "because so much alcohol gets consumed on that day."

Hosting the AA group goes back a number of years, pre-dating Smith's arrival at the Canton church. He believes it's an important initiative and what the church should be about.

"There's been a lot more people here in the group in the last month," the pastor said. "I think times are very difficult for certain people in our economy now."

There's a great deal of turmoil and anxiety in our society, he said. "We're living in an age of dread. People are very depressed by a lot of concerns."

Some turn to alcohol to numb that, Smith said.

Cunin emphasized having soft drinks and juice available at parties, and letting people know with a small sticker if there's alcohol in punch. "It's always a good idea to let people know they're going to be consuming alcohol," she said, adding some people on certain medications shouldn't drink.

She's found fewer companies have alcohol-heavy holiday parties. Cunin tells those in recovery to focus on the negative aspects of their past drinking.

"For a few hours of intoxication, the price they pay may be very significant," she said. "You have to think about the negative things that happened, and not glorify those times."

"Plan, plan, plan. Don't let it just happen." It helps to keep your sponsor's number with you "so that you have access to somebody who can be supportive to you," she said.



Westland City Councilwoman Cheryl Graunstadt scoops up food and helps Joan Tennent in the buffet line during the Thanksgiving feast at the senior Friendship Center. To Graunstadt's left is Joan's husband, Jack.

## Turkey feast draws hundreds of seniors

They came, they ate, they danced, they won prizes. Some 300 senior citizens gathered at the city's Friendship Center last Friday for an early Thanksgiving feast.

"I think we had a record-breaking crowd," center Director Peggy Ellenwood said. "It was a wonderful turnout."

Seniors dined on the usual fare - turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green bean casserole and pumpkin pie.

"It was a feast," Ellenwood said. Those who ate a little too much were able to dance it off with music performed by the Tommy James Trio.

Businesses and donors such as Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano donated gifts that the center raffled off for seniors.

Gifts included paper shredders, variety baskets with candies and other goodies, gift cards for Meijer, and other items.

Now, the senior center is gearing up for its next big party - this one for Christmas.

That event will start at noon Thursday, Dec. 15, at the center, 1119 N. Newburgh. It will include dinner, a repeat performance by the Tommy James Trio and a visit by Santa and Mrs. Claus, Ellenwood said.

Cost is \$8 for center members and \$10 for others. Those attending will have an opportunity to have their picture taken with Santa.

"Many of our seniors never had their picture taken with Santa when they were children, so they love it," Ellenwood said.



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli talks with Julie Pawyl during a Thanksgiving feast at the senior Friendship Center.

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# WESTLAND

## SHOPPING CENTER

### Holiday Hours Quick Reference Guide

#### December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 9 AM - 9 PM	2 9 AM - 9 PM
				8 9 AM - 9 PM	9 9 AM - 11 PM	10 9 AM - 11 PM
4 9 AM - 9 PM	5 9 AM - 9 PM	6 9 AM - 9 PM	7 9 AM - 9 PM	14 9 AM - 10 PM	15 9 AM - 10 PM	16 9 AM - 11 PM
11 9 AM - 9 PM	12 9 AM - 10 PM	13 9 AM - 10 PM	20 8 AM - 11 PM	21 8 AM - 11 PM	22 8 AM - 11 PM	23 8 AM - 6 PM
18 9 AM - 9 PM	19 8 AM - 11 PM	20 8 AM - 11 PM	27 10 AM - 2 PM	28 10 AM - 9 PM	29 10 AM - 9 PM	30 10 AM - 9 PM
25 MALL CLOSED	26 8 AM - 9 PM					31 9 AM - 6 PM

#### November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
20	21	22	23	24 MALL CLOSED	25 7 AM - 10 PM	26 8 AM - 10 PM
27 9 AM - 9 PM	28 9 AM - 9 PM	29 9 AM - 9 PM	30 9 AM - 9 PM			

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# JUNIOR MISS

FROM PAGE A1

who took honors in scholastic and talent. She won \$1,550.

■ Chidinma Ogbuaku, a finalist who earned awards in scholastic and interview. She earned \$1,550.

■ Heather Lindon, a finalist who won in the categories of scholastic and self-expression. She received \$1,450.

■ LaTaché Snell-Jones, who earned \$1,150 after winning in the categories of talent, self-expression and spirit.

■ Annette Mihailovich, who won in the categories of scholastic and physical fitness and who received \$900.

■ Joy Jano, who won in the categories of interview and self-expression and who earned \$800.

■ Janelle Pangilinan, who was a finalist and who earned \$750 in scholarship money.

■ Jessica Stetler, who won in the category of talent and who took home \$550.

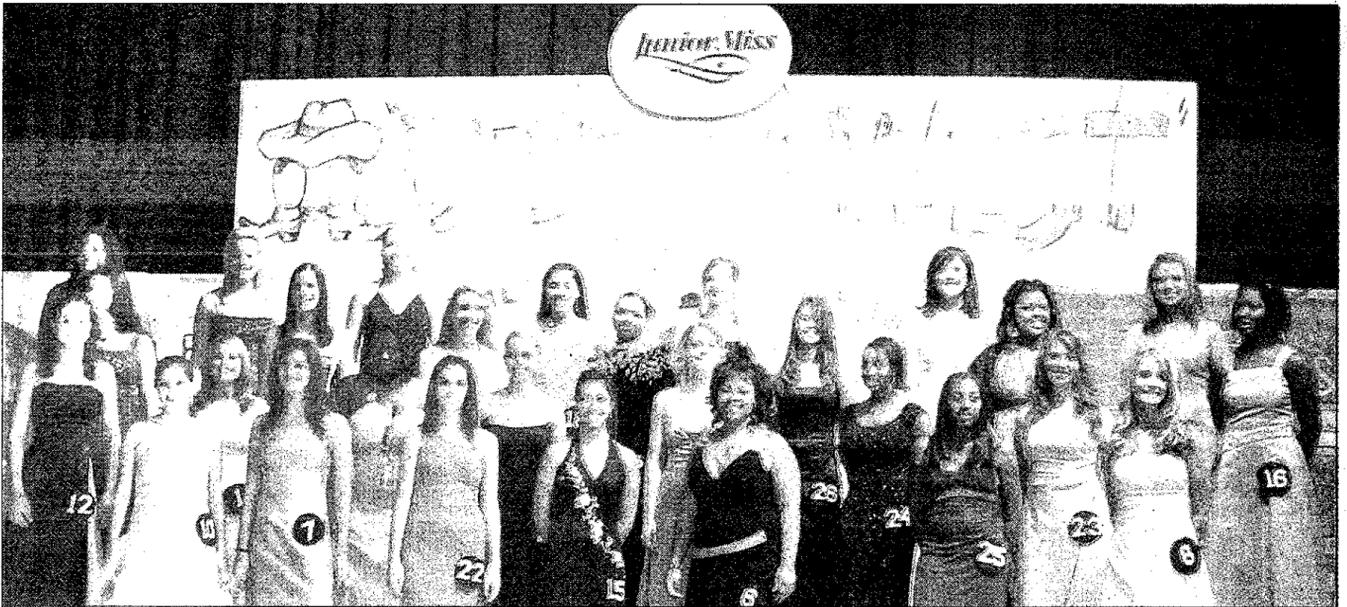
■ Stacy Luke, who won an event bowl-a-thon. She received \$500.

■ Heather Hawrylak, who earned \$450 and who took honors for self-expression.

■ Jennifer Swartz, who won \$450 and earned honors in physical fitness.

■ Iyonna Smith, who won \$400 and took honors for community service.

Every girl who participated won \$200 in the category of Be Your Best Self. The remaining participants included Sharita Hudson, Sarah Layton, Corisa Butler, Kristy Thullen, Kristein Tabangura, Mary Freeman, Carrie Lauberns, Kelly Craig, Rena Butler, Janá White, Dafina Goci and Rachel Piro.



PHOTOS BY HEATHER ROUSSEAU

This year's Wayne-Westland Junior Miss program drew 28 contestants.



Wayne-Westland Junior Miss winner Kim Rutkowski will now advance to a state competition in March.



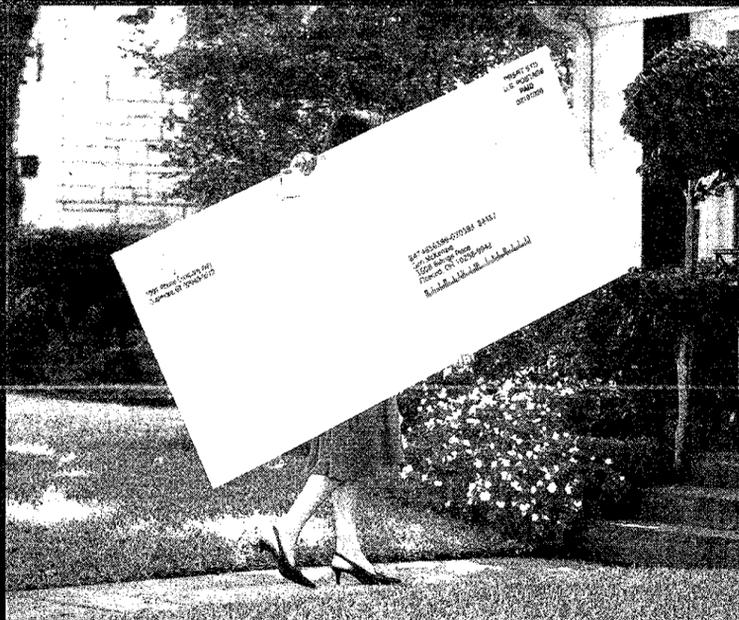
La Tache' Snell-Jones, a Wayne Memorial High School student, shows her vocal talents during the Wayne-Westland Junior Miss program. She won the spirit award, voted by all participants to honor the girl who embodies the Junior Miss spirit. She plans to attend either Hampton University or Tennessee State University and hopes to be a professional entertainer.



Kelly Doerr of Wayne Memorial High School performs on the cello before becoming the second-highest winner in Saturday's competition. She won the Wayne Junior Miss title and also took honors in the talent and self-expression categories. Doerr plans to study veterinary medicine after high school.

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# A unique pattern

Canton designer stitching up her dream

BY CAROL MARSHALL  
STAFF WRITER

In a corner of her basement, Karla Miles works late into the night piecing together dresses, jackets and blouses. But she's not building her own personal wardrobe. She's stitching together a dream.

Miles says she first began sewing when her four children (now age 17, 18, 20 and 21) were little, and found she had a knack for it. She began creating her own patterns and designs, which led to requests from friends who wanted unique fashions. And that led to Larlie, Miles' design company, headquartered at the sewing table in her Canton home.

"When my kids were little I learned how to sew so I could make them nicer things," Miles said. "But people liked my stuff and were constantly asking me to make them things. I guess that's how it all started."

In 2003, Miles quit her full-time job as an executive secretary, but admits now it may have been too soon. Now she works as a temp secretary by day, and by night works at her business.

"I work late all the time. I know no limits, but my husband will tell me when it's time to quit for the night," she said, laughing.

Miles launched larlie.com, her online boutique, in February.

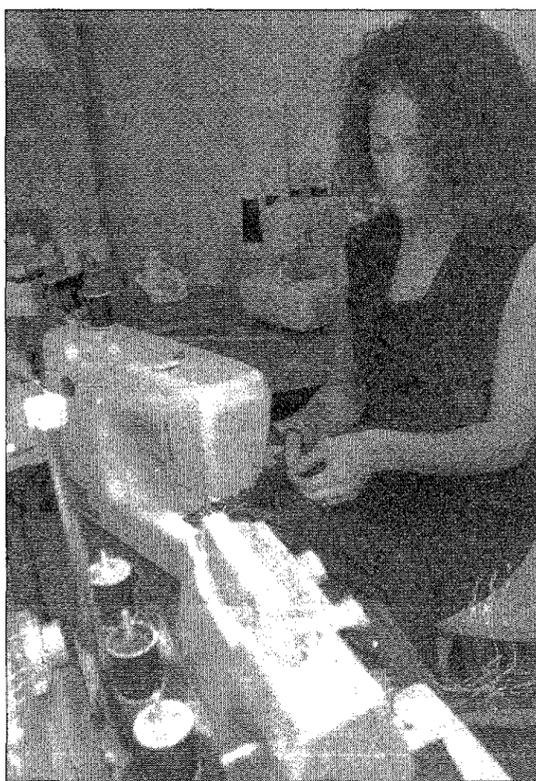
The cyber boutique features about 20 pieces for fashion-savvy career women, but Miles hopes to soon have a bricks-and-mortar boutique, and is looking west - straight down Cherry Hill Road to the village - for a location.

Her work week is driven largely by moments when she feels inspired.

"Some days I only work on design. Then I may take a week and do nothing but cut fabric. Another week I sew all week," Miles said. But she doesn't keep much inventory on her "under construction" rack and the stand full of completed pieces.

"I don't want to do too many of one thing," Miles said. "People don't want to be duplicated. They want something that no one else has. So I don't make a lot of one thing. I keep changing."

Miles finds her inspiration everywhere. She loves fashion magazines, particularly "Women's Wear Daily." She said the key to making design



Karla Miles produces her clothing in the basement workshop in her Canton home.



Karla Miles wears one of her own creations.

personal is to take bits and pieces of the things she likes and add features that she thinks are unique.

When it comes to fabric, sometimes finding the right textures and colors is as simple as taking a trip to Royal Oak. Other times, she travels to New York in search of the perfect fabric.

"Right now I'm really into knits," she said. "Because I've worked in an office setting forever, I like things that are comfortable and that will look good all day. My goal is to make women look good and feel comfortable."

Part of that is the fabric, but it's also about good design.

"Good design, to me, is to look at a person and make clothing for her that enhances her silhouette," Miles said.

Though Miles wants to keep her company and inventory small (she had a nightmare of an experience trying to send designs to India to be sewn - "Nothing came back just right," she said.), she is proud that her clientele is growing fast.

"Just when I start to get discouraged, I'll see someone wearing one of my designs and that helps to keep me going," Miles said.

For more information about Larlie, call (734) 812-4601, or see Miles' designs online at [www.larlie.com](http://www.larlie.com).

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## Chocolate flows at New Hope event

The folks at New Hope Center for Grief Support in Northville are putting a lot of faith in the restorative powers of chocolate as they host their annual holiday open house, "Evening of Elegance," 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9.

The annual event will be done at this year's home, located in Novi's Asbury Park community off of 11 Mile, just east of Beck Road at a model home provided by Superb Custom Homes.

According to Sandy Prebenda of Plymouth, New Hope's outreach and special events coordinator, the highlights of the evening will include a tour of the model

home, feasting on a broad array of appetizers donated by numerous local restaurants, and the music of guitarist Kris Kurzawa.

To soothe the sweet tooth of potential guests, the event will also feature a chocolate fountain, one New Hope officials figure could be renamed the "Fountain of Hope." The fountain was added for the first year last year, and Prebenda said it helped make the event a big success.

"Most of us think 'chocolate' around the holidays; my dad always kicked off the season with a gift of Whitman's Chocolate sampler boxes," Prebenda said. "But I never

really saw how it could cure more than a sweet tooth until last year when we added it to our holiday event.

"Now, I have seen chocolate curing heavy hearts, even if only for a moment," she added.

Tickets for the event are \$35 per person.

Proceeds benefit New Hope Center's services and programs, designed for those who are grieving, "which can be a very challenging process to negotiate with the pressures of the holiday," Prebenda said.

For more information, visit New Hope's Web site at [www.newhopecenter.net](http://www.newhopecenter.net) or call (248) 348-0115.

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# It's all play at doggie day care

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER

Imagine a day of recess.

That's what many dogs enjoy at 4-Legged Friends, a doggie day care in Farmington Hills.

New owners Craig and Jennifer Poisson of Redford Township have their hands full of paws at their 2,500-square-foot indoor center on Hugo Street, north of Eight Mile. The dogs come to socialize with other pooches at the cageless day care.

The couple has owned the business since April. They jumped at the chance to buy the business, formerly located on Nine Mile Road in Farmington.

"I have always loved, loved, loved animals," said Jennifer. "It was a 'dream come true' job for us."

The number of dogs varies daily. Monday and Friday are the slowest days with about 15 dogs; on Wednesday and Thursday, there are almost 30 dogs. About 90 dogs have memberships.

The cost is \$27 a day or \$250 for 10 visits if they join the Biscuit Club.

The business is open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7 p.m.-6 p.m. on Friday.

"We don't do half days," Jennifer said.

Cody, who is 12 years old, is a mixed breed who receives special treatment because of her age. She has been coming to day care since 2000. The majority of other dogs are about a year old and rambunctious, Jennifer said. It's sometimes a little much for Cody.

"She is good for about an hour or two," said Jennifer.

Then, Cody comes to the gate to say she has had enough socializing.

Dogs come from a multi-mile radius. One comes from as far as Brighton.

"It is kind of like a school yard of kids," Jennifer said. "The referees are there to make sure everything goes well. They quickly learn who their friends are. We rarely have to step in."

The dogs play with their human friends, too, and play ball.

Dogs should be at least two months old to attend the day care.

They must come in for an interview and can't be aggressive with toys, food or people.

"We take them into the back area to see if they play well and don't get scared or aggressive," Jennifer said. "We don't separate by size, age or temperament. The dogs which come here have to be friendly with all sizes."

Doggie friendships seem to be based on personality, she said.

"They learn dog manners," Jennifer said. "In their own little world, they teach each other what is appropriate and what is not."

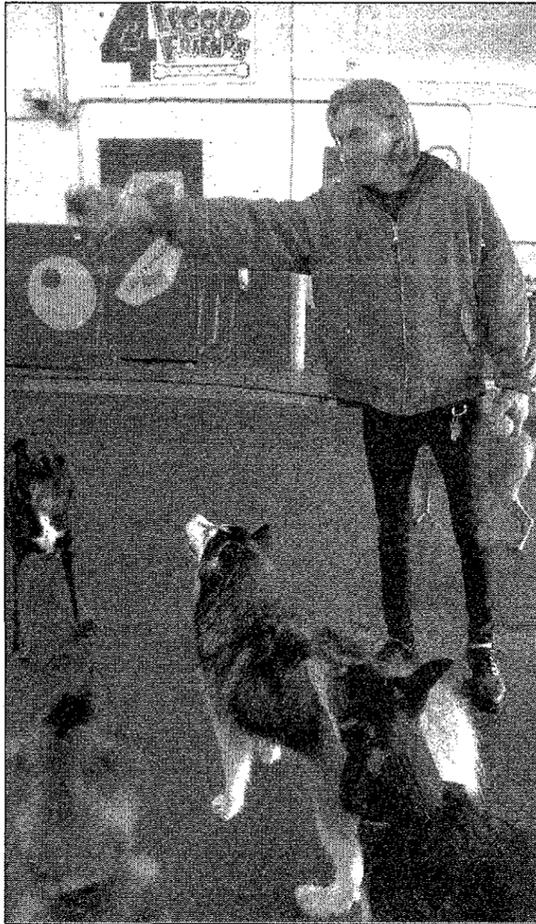
Tracy Kaczor, a Redford Township resident, said 4-Legged Friends was recommended by her veterinarian at Beech Road Veterinary Clinic in Redford Township about three months ago.

Kaczor thought that Bubba, her 8-month-old German Shepherd, was nipping too hard. Bubba learned obedience and socialization at the day care, where he has attended twice a week for more than two months.

"It is like night and day," Kaczor said. "He gets so excited when I say we are going to see Jenny and the dogs."

The Poissons have a television monitor, so customers or "parents" who pick up their dogs can watch them on the TV.

"We just put a Web cam on our Web site so they can log in during the day and check



TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

All eyes are on Craig Poisson, who owns the doggie daycare with his wife Jennifer, as he throws a ball for the dogs spending the day at 4 Legged Friends in Farmington Hills.

them out," Jennifer said. "They can watch the dogs playing."

Their Web site is [www.4-leggedfriendsdaycare.com](http://www.4-leggedfriendsdaycare.com).

The two rotate their time with the dogs.

Both love animals in general and have opened their hearts up to them.

Craig has brought home many cats who he found abandoned in an apartment complex where he worked.

"People would dump their cats and move," Jennifer said. "He would find them. We have found homes for a lot of them."

Craig also works part time at Plaza Vet in Farmington,

where he cares for animals who are sick or boarded, before he comes to work at 4-Legged Friends.

The Poissons offer boarding for their day care dogs. Trainers are available at night. The Poissons don't do training.

On top of all this, the couple is looking for a home for Speedy, a black and white male cat, 2 years old, who was found at a Speedway station in Redford Township. For more information, call (248) 474-4100.

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## AROUND WESTLAND

### Thanksgiving dance

The Wayne Ford Civic League will host a Thanksgiving Senior Dinner & Dance at noon Sunday, Nov. 27, at 1645 N. Wayne Rd in Westland. There will be turkey, ham and trimmings with dancing to the music of the Meltones. Tickets are \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members of the league. They are available at the door. For more information call (734) 728-5010. Those attending should be 60 years old or older.

### Taste Fest

Tickets are on sale for the Westland Chamber of Commerce's seventh annual Holiday Taste Fest which will be at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, at the Hellenic Cultural Center at 36375 Joy Road, east of Newburgh.

Admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for senior citizens (55 and over) and children (12 and under). Tickets are on sale 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the chamber office, on Ford Road east of Newburgh.

### Feeding the needy

The Wayne Ford Civic League has partnered with Gordon Food Service to provide 450 Thanksgiving celebratory meals to the most needy in the community on Nov. 23.

According to Vic Barra, the civic league has been in contact with St. Theodore Church, Veteran's Haven and the Wayne County Family Center to assess the needs of those organizations in hopes of helping this holiday.

Any organization wishing to participate can call Barra at (734) 728-5010.

### Membership meeting

The Westland Youth Athletic Association will hold its annual general membership meeting at 7 p.m. Dec. 1. The meeting will be held at the WYAA Lange Compound at 6050 Farmington Road, Westland.

For more information, contact the WYAA at (734) 421-0640 or electronically at

wyaa@wyaa.org.

### Holiday party

Westland senior citizens are invited to the Holiday Extravaganza, a Christmas party, at the Westland senior Friendship Center, Thursday, Dec. 15.

Doors will open at 11:30 a.m., with the "fabulous feast" will be served at noon. There will be a chance to have pictures take with Santa and Mrs. Claus, dancing to the music of the Tommie James Trio and gifts galore.

Tickets cost \$8 for members and \$10 for guests. They're available at the Friendship center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland.

### New Year's Eve

Tickets are now on sale for the Ushers Club's annual New Year's Eve dinner dance at St. Simon and Jude Church, 32500 Palmer, Westland.

Tickets cost \$20 each and include reserved seating, party favors, snacks, mixers, beer, a three-meat buffet with side items, dancing to the music of The Goldtones and pizza shortly after midnight.

Tickets are limited and none will be sold after Dec. 27.

To order them, call Sharlene or Curt Frizzell at (734) 425-6819.

### Las Vegas Party

St. Bernardine Men's Club is sponsoring a Pinochle/Euchre Card Party on Fridays, Dec. 2 and 16, Jan. 6, 13 and 27 and Feb. 3, 17 and 24, at the church, southwest corner Ann Arbor Trail and Merriman in Westland.

Participants don't need a partner to play. Snacks and soft drinks are included in the \$5 charge. Games start at 7:30 p.m.

### Craft show

The annual Hawthorne Valley holiday craft show and Pack 547 bake sale will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 27, at the facility at 7300 Merriman, Westland. Admission will be \$2, with kids free of charge.

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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Margaret Grigorian decided to put 30 years of experience into her own new boutique, Perfect Fit@Margaret's in Old Village.

## Seamstress ready for new challenge

Boutique owner targets Plymouth for start of new chapter in life

BY BRAD KADRICH  
STAFF WRITER

Like many people who lose a spouse, Margaret Grigorian lost the will to do much of anything when she lost her husband in May 2004.

She admits she spent a year or so "moping," before starting to come out of a depression and wanting to find a way to go on with her life.

For her 50th birthday, Grigorian took her daughters — 27-year-old Jackee, store manager at Brookstone at Briarwood Mall, and Lisa, a Northville High School senior — to Las Vegas. It was during that trip Grigorian decided the time

had come.

"I didn't have much will for a year," admitted Grigorian, 50, of Northville. "When we went to Las Vegas, I thought, 'I've got to do something with my life.'"

What to do wasn't much of a question. A seamstress by skill and trade for 30 years, Grigorian decided to go into business for herself. Having spent a great deal of time shopping in Plymouth, she knew it was a town she loved and began scouting locations for a new boutique.

After all, after spending four years as alterations manager at David's Bridal in Westland, she figured dealing with brides-to-be would be plenty of training for opening her own business,

and Perfect Fit @ Margaret's was born.

"That gave me a heck of an experience with the toughest clientele you can find — brides," Grigorian said with a smile. "It was time for me to find a different challenge."

She consulted with her sister, Barbara Wdziekonski, who she said helped her design the boutique, located on Starkweather in Plymouth's Old Village. Grigorian admitted she consulted her sister and brother-in-law before making the leap into her new business.

Her sister accompanied Grigorian on her first shopping trip to Chicago, and Grigorian credits her sister with the design and building of Perfect Fit.

But her sister said the effort was all Grigorian's.

"I think she's over-estimating my input," Wdziekonski said, laughing. "I'm pretty handy with tools, so I can do those things. (But) She's capable of doing everything herself, she's a very strong person. We are there just for support."

Grigorian still does alterations and seamstress work out of the back room of her boutique, while the front of the shop features sweaters, jackets, purses, scarves, tops, wraps and other gift items and accessories.

She said she spent a lot of time in Plymouth, learning what other shops had, in the hopes of providing something unique.

"I have some unique items that come from New York or Los Angeles, things no one else has because I didn't want to step on anyone's toes," Grigorian said. "I wanted something unique and different, not something you could find at the mall."

Desperate to find something to occupy her time, and her mind, after losing her husband, Grigorian took to knitting scarves. Now, those scarves are on sale in her boutique.

"When I was going through my depression, I had to have something to do, so I knitted," she said. "I knit and crochet, so I was always in the shops (in Plymouth). My favorite thing is to park downtown and walk around,

maybe grab a coffee.

"That's why I decided to build my business here," she said. "I absolutely adore Plymouth."

A seamstress for 30 years, Grigorian first worked out of her house before moving to David's Bridal. Now, she's graduated one more step and owns her own business.

And none of it comes as a surprise to her family.

"We always thought of her, especially my husband, as someone who is independent enough to do something on her own," Wdziekonski said. "We all knew she has the skills, she's an excellent seamstress, so we thought this was just made for her."

bkadrich@hometownlife.com  
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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

It's all family at Perfect Fit, with (from left) Lisa Grigorian, owner Margaret Grigorian, Margaret's sister Barbara Wdziekonski, and Jackee Grigorian.



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## Nutcracker comes back to Salem stage

In the long-standing Holiday tradition, the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra joins with the Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company to present Tchaikovsky's classic fairy tale, *Nutcracker Ballet*.

The performances, according to symphony officials one of the only regional *Nutcracker* performances accompanied by a professional orchestra, will be presented at 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3; and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, in the Salem High School Auditorium, 46181 Joy Road.

Admission is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children.

Symphony officials have engaged 35th District Court Judge Ron Lowe to introduce each performance with a heartwarming reading of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Following the 11 a.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday) per-

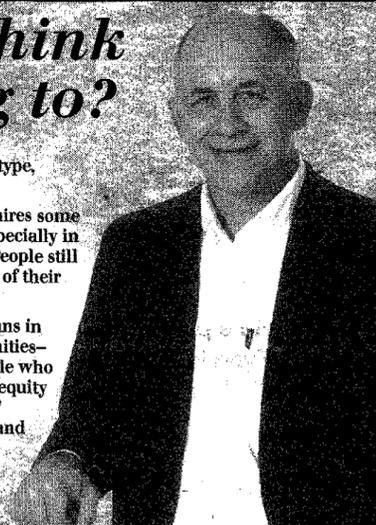
formances, the Plymouth Symphony League will host the Sugar Plum Tea in the cafeteria. Tea tickets are available for \$5.

These performances are made possible through the generous support of the Plymouth Symphony League and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

For tickets, season subscriptions or more information, contact the Symphony office via e-mail at [info@plymouthsymphony.org](mailto:info@plymouthsymphony.org) or by calling (734) 451-2112.

More information please visit our website: [www.plymouthsymphony.org](http://www.plymouthsymphony.org). Tickets are also available at Children's Dance Theatre in Plymouth; Dearborn Music, Evola Music, Dancewear Gallery, and Joanne's Dance Extension in Canton; or through the Plymouth Canton Ballet Company.

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**Mark Savitskie** may be a CPA, an auditor, a numbers man. But for a left-brain type, he's nothing if not creative.

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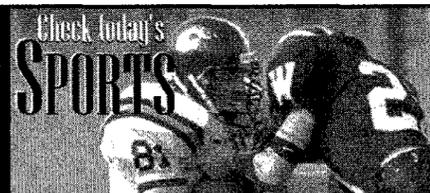


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## PLAN

FROM PAGE A1

children attending three schools and riding on buses. In addition, they have one son with cancer.

"Waiting outside for a bus for 10 minutes is a big problem for us," said Alicia Wenzinger. "It's a nightmare."

She said, as did many others, that neighborhood schools are the "whole appeal of Livonia." Wenzinger also said she expects the added programs at grades five and six will be the first cut when future financial problems arise.

"We recognize the need to do something," said Ignacio Salazar, another LPS parent. "Nothing matters more than our children. Their education and their safety is paramount."

But he said the current plan before the board is "seriously flawed." Salazar said he's not convinced the promise of additional physical education, music or foreign language courses for fifth- and sixth-graders was enough to warrant the proposed changes.

He said 45 minutes of a foreign language once a week would do "nothing for our children." Salazar said the proposed 24 additional minutes of programs was not worth an extended bus ride.

"I ask you to vote down this proposal and adopt a K-6 model that provides education with heart," he said.

## TRANSITION AT ISSUE

Lines surrounded four separate microphones in Carli Auditorium, and speakers waited hours for their turn. The hearing lasted until after

12:30 a.m.

Larry Naser, a former trustee, was first to speak. A longtime proponent of closing school buildings to save programs, Naser urged the board not to "overcorrect" the financial problems by closing too many buildings and adding modular or trailers to accommodate overflow.

"We know we've got to close schools," said Naser. "I'm not quite sure we have the right formula to do that."

Michelle Pinkowski, a Taylor parent, said she has done her research regarding the additional transition students would make if upper elementary schools were created in the district. "Each time you switch schools, academic achievement suffers," she said.

Transition was a major topic of discussion Monday night. Cynthia Dempsey, a mother of two Washington students, said it's especially difficult for those with learning disabilities to change schools.

"Transition is not easy for an LD child, let alone any child," she told the board.

Pockets of the crowded auditorium sported matching "No 5-6" T-shirts. Mary Dudek, a Roosevelt parent, explained why she disliked the upper elementary concept in Livonia.

"K-4 does not work, cannot work and will not work," she said, explaining the additional strain the Legacy plan would put on the transportation department. She asked board members to imagine what it might be like to double the number of buses lined up at a given elementary school.

"We all know changes have to be made," Dudek said. "We all know money has to be saved

- but not at the cost of this insanity."

## 'REPRESENT THE PEOPLE'

Salem Samaan, a Livonia parent who also grew up in the district, asked the board to vote on a proposal based on facts, not estimated dollar savings and estimated one-time expenses like the Legacy plan contains.

"You're gonna make a decision that effects every last one of us in here, every citizen of Livonia," he said. "We can't expect you to vote on an approximate, an estimate." He finished with this statement: "Represent the people that put you in office," and received a standing ovation from the crowd.

Liz Schnell agreed the plan is too ambiguous for a vote. "I would hate for you to dismiss this as the vocal minority," she told the board.

Schnell was one of about 100 LPS parents who helped prepare a document detailing why they do not favor a five-six building.

"This process has felt so orchestrated," added Ann Rae, a mother of two LPS students and a counselor at Thurston High School.

Marie Tolen was one of a few speakers who stood up to show support for the plan as it is. While she said she understands the disadvantages the Legacy plan includes, Tolen said "the proposal must be adopted."

"The financial issues are real," she said. "I think drawing out the issue will only serve to polarize the community."

scasola@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2054

## CARJACKING

FROM PAGE A1

Westland, Borisch said.

The pair in the Malibu returned after they made a cell phone call to the suspect who had been driving the stolen BMW. He answered the call from the back of a police car and indicated that he believed he would be released because no gun had been found, according to Borisch.

The pair in the Malibu were at Warren and Venoy when

Westland officers spotted them and they ran a red light, police said. The pair pulled into a driveway and were taken into custody.

Later, a 14-year-old Dearborn Heights boy found the semiautomatic handgun near his house and threw it in a trash can, causing it to accidentally discharge, Borisch said. He wasn't injured, and his father heard the shot and ran outside.

Police confiscated the gun that was believed to have been

used in the carjacking.

On Tuesday afternoon, the four Detroit teens were to appear in Westland 18th District Court for an arraignment on multiple criminal charges, said court Administrator David Wiacek.

Borisch commended officers from Westland, Redford, Dearborn Heights and Detroit for helping capture the four carjacking suspects.

"It was a huge team effort," he said.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Friends of Eloise

The Friends of Eloise group meets 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month in the dining room of the Kay Beard Building, on Michigan between Middlebelt and Merriman. All are welcome. For information, call Jo Johnson, (734) 522-3918.

## Friends of Museum

Friends of the Westland Historical Museum meet at 7 p.m. each month except December at the Collins House, located at the museum complex, 857 N. Wayne Road. Call Jim Franklin at (734) 595-8119. Everyone is welcome.

## BINGO

## VFW Bingo

Veterans of Foreign Wars 3323 Auxiliary has bingo 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 1055 S. Wayne Road, Westland. There is a snack bar. The post has bingo at 1 p.m. every Sunday at the same place. Call (734) 326-3323.

## Dems hold bingo

The Metro Wayne Democratic Club has bingo 10:45 a.m. every Monday at the Wayne Ford Civic League, on Wayne Road south of Ford in Westland. For information, call Jan or Cliff at (734) 591-1694 or Cliff at (734) 729-8681.

## St. Mel Church

Bingo begins at 6:45 p.m. Fridays in St. Mel Church activities building, on Inkster Road north of Warren. Doors open at 4 p.m. Food is available.

## Shamrock Bingo

Bingo begins at 11 a.m. Wednesdays at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 35100 Van Born, east of Wayne Road in Wayne. Doors open at 9 a.m. Food is available. Proceeds go to charity. Call (734) 728-3020.

## K of C Bingo

Pope John XXIII Assembly of the Knights of Columbus Council 1536 hosts bingo games at 6:45 p.m. Thursdays. The games are in the Livonia Elks Lodge, 3117 Plymouth Road, one block east of Merriman in Livonia. Call (734) 425-2246.

## Metro Wayne

The Metro Wayne Democratic Club offers a bingo at the Wayne-Ford Civic League on Fridays. Doors open at 9 a.m. with bingo starting at 10:45 a.m. An all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet is available for \$3. Call Cliff Johnson at (734) 729-8681.

## FOR SENIORS

## Friendship Center

The Senior Resources Department (Friendship Center), 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland, offers a variety of programs for older adults. The Web site [www.ci.westland.mi.us](http://www.ci.westland.mi.us) offers more information. Call (734) 722-7632.

## Crochet &amp; Knit

A crochet and knit group meets 9:30 a.m. every Thursday at the Friendship Center on Newburgh near Marquette. Beverly Kaminski is the instructor. Participants should bring a type "G" crochet hook. Those interested can sign up at the center's front desk or call (734) 722-7632.

## Visually Impaired

The Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) support group meets 12:30 p.m. every Friday at the Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland. Participants share information and meet others. Those interested in joining can be scheduled on a bus route for transportation. For information, call (734) 722-7632.

## Choir

The Senior Choir, under the leadership of Robert Cassidy, is open to those who like to sing. It meets 9:30 a.m. Thursday. For information, call the Friendship Center, (734) 722-7632.

## Hearing checks

Every third Tuesday of each month, a representative from Personalized Hearing Care of Westland will check and clean hearing aids free, 2-3 p.m. by appointment only. Call (734) 722-7632 for more information.

## Exercise

Simply Jazzercise is designed for exercisers older than 40. The program provides a low to moderate workout. The exercise improves strength, flexibility, balance, posture, coordination and cardiovascular endurance. It incorporates simple dance routines with walking or jogging patterns and resistance exercises. Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes. Light weights and an exercise mat are suggested. Classes are 10:15 a.m. Monday, 5 p.m. Wednesday, 10:15 a.m. Friday, at \$3 per person per class. Sign up at the front desk at the Westland Friendship Center or call (734) 722-7632.

## Travel Group

The Friendship Travel Group meets 1 p.m. the second Friday of each month (unless a large event is scheduled) in the Westland Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh. Programs include celebration of birthdays, door prizes, description of new classes or programs, speakers from tour companies, overview of day/overnight trips and refreshments. Call (734) 722-7632.

## Dyer Center

The Wayne-Westland school district's Dyer Senior Adult Center offers activities Monday-Thursday at the center, on Marquette between Wayne and Newburgh roads. Mondays, Senior Chorus at 1:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, arts, crafts and needlework at 9:30 a.m.; Wednesdays: kitchen band, 10 a.m., bingo at 1 p.m.; Thursdays, ceramics, arts, crafts at 9:30 a.m.



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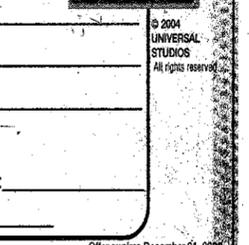
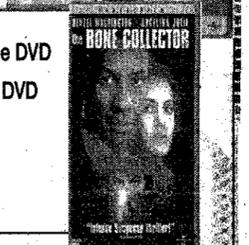
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## OUR VIEWS

### Goodfellows need community's help

It's getting so that the stores' rush to get from one holiday to the next is making it difficult to remember what we celebrate when. Christmas decorations were sprouting up even before the frost was on the pumpkin.

For some people, that transition from one holiday season to the next may be a bit drastic, but it's not too early to start making a pitch for another holiday item — the Goodfellows.

Each year, volunteers turn out to make sure there is "no child without a Christmas." They stand in streets and in front of stores selling their special edition newspaper, hoping to raise thousands of dollars to provide toys and food for needy families in the community.

A lot of the money the Goodfellows spend at Christmas is raised through the newspaper sale, although the organization does accept direct financial donations.

More than ever, the Goodfellows need the community's help to make Christmas happy for the less fortunate. Last year, the organization provided Christmas to 500 families in the community and, considering the state's economic climate, even more families may need help this year.

We encourage residents to pitch in and help the Goodfellows. Call the organization at (734) 722-5400 and commit a few hours of your time to selling newspapers tomorrow.

If you can't do that, buy a newspaper and be generous in doing so. Every cent raised will go to put a smile on a child's face on Christmas Day.

For those who already committed themselves to helping — you know who you are — we say thank you. In these tough economic times, it's great to see the concern and caring you have for your fellow residents.

### Count your blessings for special people

While pausing to give thanks for family, friends and food before devouring your holiday meal, consider those little-noticed folks who truly make life a lot easier.

For instance, remember the last time your kid got sick at school, really sick? You weren't there, so it was likely left up to the school maintenance personnel to clean up the mess. That's not all they do. Both men and women, they make sure school is welcoming for our children in the morning, and they are there to close up in the evening after such groups as the local PTA.

They deserve our thanks, as do others.

■ When your car died on the expressway, the tow truck driver rescued you, as well as your car. Bet you were thankful to get away from the traffic whizzing by.

■ How about the time you combined two chemicals to unplug the drain? The dispatch driver was calm and professional as she patched you through to the local fire department. No doubt you were thankful for the quick response.

■ You see them only once a week, but you sure notice if they aren't there. Dependable and hard-working, we're talking about our sanitation engineers. Hey, someone has to take the garbage away, because you sure don't want to have anything more to do with it. We ought to be very thankful that there are people willing to do that, week in and week out.

■ It's Thanksgiving and the stuffing's in the turkey, they turkey's in the pan and the pan is ... wait, was that just the transformer that blew up across the street? So much for cooking dinner in the electric stove. But not to worry, before long an on-call utility worker will be out to patch up the damage. Be thankful for all those gas, electric and phone workers who spend their holiday making sure that yours will go off without a mechanical glitch.

■ When you go into the mall this holiday season, don't lower your head and look away from the Salvation Army bell ringers. The Salvation Army and the many other charitable groups in Wayne and Oakland counties deserve our thanks — and our cash — for the wonderful work they do for those in need.

■ Most medical offices are closed Thanksgiving, but hospitals are always open. And those personnel, from orderlies to cafeteria workers, deserve our thanks for working when they no doubt would rather be at home with their families.

No doubt we will someday either need help ourselves from the people in these examples, or know someone who will. It's not something to be ashamed of; stuff happens.

So as you grasp each other's hands to say grace before your holiday meal, try giving everyone around the table a chance to say who they are grateful for. You'll likely find there's more to be thankful for than you think.



## LETTERS

### Heartfelt thank you

I want to say "thank you" and express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who had enough confidence in me to return me to the city council for another four years. I will continue to work very hard for you.

I also want to say thank you to those who helped and supported me in every way during the campaign — with endorsements, yard signs, preparing and sending literature, poll workers and offering words of encouragement.

Also a very special "thank you" to my family, who are always there to help and support me in anything that I do.

**Bob Stottlemeyer**  
councilman, city of Westland

### Honored to be re-elected

Please allow me this opportunity to express my gratitude for the recent endorsement by the *Westland Observer* of my candidacy for re-election to the Westland City Council. This community newspaper and its professional staff continually strive to educate Westland voters and your kind observation of my efforts as a councilperson these last four years was appreciated.

I was extremely honored to be voted into office, again, by Westland residents to serve for a second term as a member of the City Council. I'd like to extend my personal thanks to everyone that supported my campaign, from the volunteers that worked the polls, to the residents that displayed a lawn sign, to the many kind individuals that extended their personal encouragement both before and after election night.

I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to serve my community as an elected official and I appreciate the respect and support I have received thus far. I will continue to keep the best interest of Westland residents first and foremost in my next term of office.

It is interesting how each election can be so different from another and somewhat unpredictable as well. I jokingly mentioned to Chuck Pickering the night before the election about him taking that first-place spot and he acknowledged how he hoped that would occur. Even though it would have been so nice for me, I knew it was something Chuck really wanted. So when the numbers came in as they did, I was actually quite happy for him. Congratulations to Chuck and my other colleagues as well!

My favorite memories of this past election day involved family events, like my three grown daughters WANTING to help work the polls, not having to be asked. Thank you Andrea, Tracy and Erica, it's not every day that a parent is shown such proud respect and admiration from their children. You and your dad know how stressful some days can be for me and I love you all for being there to show your support.

Besides the great opportunity to meet and chat with Westland residents on election day, I was touched by some other personal observations which I call, "Daddy/Daughter" moments. First was my own dad, Don Mushinski of Dearborn Heights, proudly standing the polls on my behalf at Cooper early in the day. The second was Lori Brist's father

standing just as proud for his daughter at Schweitzer as the day wound down and we waited for the polls to close. Though it was getting late and colder, he was every bit as enthused and encouraging.

The best one was late into the night as those final absentee numbers came in and I was watching closely with friends at the Harris-Kehrer VFW hall. Bob Stottlemeyer's family was in the crowd and as it was displayed that his votes moved him up to second place. At that moment, I happen to be standing close enough to see his daughter get the biggest grin across her face. She had that look of pride and love and admiration for her dad and it really took away any of the sting I felt for getting bumped into third place.

Here's to family, public elections and good government.

**Cheryl Graunstadt**  
Westland

### A long overdue thank you

I would like to start out with saying that I grew up in Westland and although I could have been a better person in the community, I would truly like to thank all those teachers and neighbors that saw something good in a child and did what they could to help me find the right path.

I went to Kettering School and then on to Lincoln then to Marshall and then to Wayne High School without people that took the time out of their lives to talk and listen to me and show me that life could be better.

Well, I would probably be hooked on drugs or even worse dead like so many of my friends that fell into peer pressure or fell through the cracks.

I would like to say to all those who take time out and just say hello, how are you and, you know, if I were you I wouldn't just walk on by and look down at a young kid in need of a friend or just plain advice.

I know that there are still a lot of you out there that are helping someone in some way and that kids do listen when they are not being pushed in one direction by others that only what to harm them, but just need that little guidance from an adult.

Anyone who knew me when I was young probably wouldn't have thought I would make it at all, but like I said, thanks to all who did for I owe you my life and the lives that I helped in the process through the teachings of others that saw a kid in need of a little guidance.

The teachers that take the time and the others that gave a little time are to me some of the heroes that the city of Westland has living in it. I would like to say this to all those in Westland who were there for me, a warm and welcome holiday.

I know it took 40 years to say this, but thank all of you indeed for the gift that didn't come in a box or a card, but in a smile and a kind word of advice. Westland will always be in my heart no matter where I am in the world.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

**Alan Moorehead**

### Do as was promised

I am writing in response to the letter written by Robert Williamson in the editorial section

of the paper, dated Nov 10. Mr Williamson is on the Zoning Board of Appeals. He suggested that if we were at the meeting what we would have been aware of. I was at the meeting, and I also spoke at the meeting.

What I want to make everyone aware of is that Mr. Williamson asked who was for this. All but one person was "for this" (this being the warming center and soup kitchen). Let me also point out that a sign on the wall says the room will only hold 123 people, and also dozens of people were in the hallway. Yes, they were all for this also. The leader of the meeting was well aware of this fact because he would not let the meeting start until the doorway was clear.

We were not allowed to speak our part, we were held to a strict guideline that apparently is not followed by the ZBA when they are talking to the public. It was obvious that the ZBA had its mind made up before the meeting.

We all have sent money for victims of Hurricane Katrina, or other disaster victim projects. And we all feel real good about ourselves, and know we have done a good and correct thing. The truth of the matter is we feel a lot better when we are doing the good and correct things when the problem is far, far, away from home and not in our backyard.

We have had a homeless problem in Westland for decades, The Full Gospel Temple on Palmer Road (also known as the Light House Mission, soup kitchen and warming center), has been taking care of the needy and homeless for decades. When the ZBA closed the Light House Mission and soup kitchen and warming center down you all received notice to how the Christian community felt about that decision.

I am writing this letter to let you know that we are still waiting and watching for the good and correct thing to be done here in Westland. The Mayor has promised to keep the soup kitchen open and help find a new warming center here in Westland.

Now that the election is over, please do what has been promised. We could have men, woman and children, starving and in the freezing cold with no place to go. The Lighthouse is ready, willing and able to do God work and has 35 beds and with several other Churches to back them up with workers.

Do you want to be in the way of the Lord's work, and lose people this winter?

**Jim (HUGGS) Samples**

## SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

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

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

## QUOTABLE

**"Phil LaJoy should be working on closing the gap between school districts, not introducing legislation that creates more of a divide between school districts."**

— Wayne-Westland Supt. Greg Baracy about a proposal to give the Plymouth-Canton schools an additional \$750 per student in state school aid

# It's fun to be a clown on Thanksgiving Day

On Thanksgiving Day, many of Detroit's corporate executives will leave their business attire in the closet and don a fancy clown costume, use clown makeup instead of after shave or fancy cosmetics, grab handfuls of beads and march down Woodward Avenue in America's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Depending on the weather, long underwear is also a necessary part of the costume.

Sounds rather silly, but this is The Distinguished Clown Corps. Over the years, more than 2,000 Distinguished Clowns have been part of the parade. It all started in 1984 with Tom Adams of Campbell Ewald Advertising Agency and Walter McCarthy, chief of Detroit Edison. They thought this would be a good way to get corporate types involved in the parade and also raise money for the parade. After all, who doesn't want to be a clown and have some fun? It became very popular. In the early days, it was limited to 125 Distinguished Clowns, but as its popularity grew, the size limits were removed. It has also raised significant dollars; membership is \$1,000 for the parade.

This year, the Clown Corps includes Maggie Allesee (17 years), Peter Schweitzer of J. Walter Thompson (9 years), his wife Elaine (1 year) and David and Jan Brandon of Domino's Pizza (14 years). David Brandon will also serve as the 2005 Distinguished Grand Jester, leading the parade of clowns.

You can tell how long someone has been a clown by the type of costume and the arms bands. Each year of participation, a clown receives an arm band. At five- and 10-year anniversaries, the costume changes. Years one to four are a one-piece costume; five through nine are a two-piece costume; years 10 and longer are a two-piece costume, but the top is gold.

I became involved 10 years ago, when I was recruited by some friends (?) to join the Distinguished Clown Corps. I was apprehensive at first, but it has been a blast ever since.

Here's how it worked for me. I submitted my application and after review I was accepted. I then provided my measurements so that the volunteers at the Parade Co. could make a costume for me. The one-piece costume arrived and, as clown costumes go, was fashionable and fit well. Unfortunately, being a male, I discovered a significant and potentially fatal flaw — there was no front zipper. Off to the local seamstress I went to have a zipper put in. When nature calls, you have to be quick.

Thanksgiving morning starts off early, 6 a.m., at home getting dressed with all of the various layers so that you are comfortable, but not too warm, and you still are able to move. You're marching down Woodward Avenue for approximately two miles. Paying attention to that day's weather forecast is a



The author dressed up as a clown at a previous parade.

must. Do you have your clown shoes on or do you wear waterproof shoes? What about a transparent poncho to protect yourself from the rain? And how many layers do you wear? All important questions that require answers.

Driving down the expressway getting to Comerica Park in a clown costume must be a sight. That's where we gather, have breakfast and get our faces made up. Professional clowns do the makeup and they do a fine job. You have to be careful with drinking too many liquids that morning because there's no rest stop

once the parade starts. Individual pictures are taken and then, in front of the tiger at Comerica Park, a group picture is taken. (The picture of me here is from a prior year). We're loaded onto buses and taken to our starting point, Woodward Avenue and I-94, waiting for the signal to start our march down Woodward.

It's at the starting point where we receive our beads. Beads are tossed to the curbside spectators, kids and adults alike, along the parade route. We have a chase vehicle loaded with beads so we don't run out. If you have ever attended Mardi Gras parades, the beads are similar.

Did you know that America's Thanksgiving Parade is the second largest distributor of beads after Mardi Gras? In my early years as a clown, we received either candy or cans of silly string. Silly string got a little silly and sometimes dangerous, so it was discontinued. Beads were introduced as a replacement.

Even today, some kids along the parade route arm themselves with silly string just waiting for the clowns. Once you spot the silly string, you stay away from that section.

Reaching the end of parade happens very quickly and the clown adventure is done for another year. Now comes the difficult part of removing all that makeup. The lasting memory of smiling children's faces is worth any aggravation that I have to go through. Being a clown is like being a kid again; it's a lot of fun. Why not join us next year?

Richard Aginian is publisher of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. He welcomes your comments at [raginian@hometownlife.com](mailto:raginian@hometownlife.com).

**Correction:** In last week's column, written before Monday night's Birmingham City Commission meeting, I said that they should get moving on the Shain Park proposal. That night the commission approved a plan for a two-level underground parking facility, sending the plan to the voters in 2006 for their approval.

## Let's connect the dots and say enough is enough for Bush

Failure to "connect the dots" became a very popular phrase to explain why the terrorists were able to hijack four passenger airplanes and fly three of them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. There is another set of dots that needs to be connected, so everyone can see who benefits:

1. The cost of the Iraq war is \$1 billion per week.

President Bush is the only U.S. president who has reduced income taxes in war time. His first term started with a financial surplus. Now our country is in more debt than at any other time in our history. U.S. companies received very lucrative contracts to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure after our military destroyed it. It has also been very expensive in terms of lives lost and people permanently injured.



Ann Abdo

Without broad-based economic development where Iraqis can earn a living wage, without effective institutions of civil society and without a form of government that is responsive to the needs of its people, there will be no peace in Iraq.

2. The cost of rebuilding the Gulf Coast will be as expensive as the war in Iraq.

Private corporations are again the beneficiaries of very lucrative contracts. We are told that to avoid any hindrances with redevelopment, the Bush administration wants to waive the minimum wage and EPA standards.

The residents of the Gulf Coast need long-term employment where they receive a living wage, not a minimum or lower wage. This huge rebuild should be organized as a federal public works program that hires those who are victims of the hurricane.

With oil, chemicals and e-coli bacteria in the water and land, EPA standards need to be fully enforced, so the Gulf Coast will be a safe and healthy place to live and visit.

3. Speaking from New Orleans, President Bush told us taxes will not be raised.

The funding of the Iraq war and the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast will be the excuses for making drastic cuts in the food stamp program, Medicaid and The Women, Infants and Children's nutrition (WIC) program. If the legislation is passed, it will diminish these programs by more than \$13 billion.

Once again, the president and Congress have decided to make life more difficult for the poor. The WIC program

pays for itself by reducing the number of problem pregnancies and birth defects.

We saw how the poor of New Orleans were treated. We've read that Detroit is the poorest city of its size in the United States. Many other cities in Michigan and throughout the country struggle to provide basic services to their residents.

4. One percent of the population holds more wealth than the entire bottom 90 percent combined, according to the U.S. Federal Reserve Watch. The tax cuts in 2004 meant an extra \$170,000 for taxpayers in the nation's most affluent 1 percent.

It is absolutely amazing that the richest people in the United States have already received a significant tax break, but the president is still not satisfied. If the next proposed tax deductions are approved, it will amount to \$70 billion.

We are the richest country in the world and we do not take care of our own. As of 2004, the U.S. Census Bureau published the following statistics: 35.9 million people live below the poverty level; 1 in every 8 individuals and 1 in every 10 families lives in poverty; more than 1 in 6 children live in poverty; poverty rates have risen for three straight years; 1 in 3 Americans living in poverty worked, but didn't earn enough to cover food, housing and other essential expenses. The bureau's benchmark of poverty for a family of three with two children is \$14,824.

George W. Bush told us that he is a compassionate conservative. He never defined what he meant by that, but his actions tell us a great deal. Let us connect the dots to see what kind of president and Congress we've voted into office.

The president and Congress have approved enormous tax cuts for wealthy individuals and large corporations. Large corporations have become war and natural disaster profiteers. The middle-class economic squeeze gets tighter, and the safety net for our poorest and most vulnerable citizens is being destroyed by the greed of people in power and influence.

Listen to what this administration says about proposed legislation; but beware, the devil is in the details.

It is time for us to stand up and say enough. We will no longer continue down this path of increasing inequality in income, wealth and health.

Find out more at [www.graypanthersmetrodetroit.org](http://www.graypanthersmetrodetroit.org). In addition, the 11th Congressional District Citizens for Peace has published a Political Action Guide.

Ann Abdo lives in Livonia.

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# To the future: Children's Summit discusses Kids Count survey

Kids Count in Wayne County! – the 2005 Children's Summit – offers an important opportunity for Wayne County leaders on children's issues to learn and comment on the statistical status of children throughout Wayne County, with the release of the Kids Count Data by Michigan's Children. The Summit will be held 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 2, from at the Fairlane Center North of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, 19000 Hubbard Drive, Dearborn. Marianne Udow, director of the

Michigan Department of Human Services, will provide a keynote address at the Summit on the need for increased emphasis on prevention services for today's at-risk children and families. Representatives from Michigan's Children will release the statistics for the more than 30 communities in Wayne County, followed by a reaction panel of Wayne County leaders in education, health, human services, and the legislature. Panel participants are Ismael Ahmed, executive

director, ACCESS; Dr. Marlene E. Davis, superintendent, Wayne RESA; Dr. Jeffrey M. Devries, director of Pediatric Education, Oakwood; the Honorable Hoon-Yung Hoppgood, Michigan State Representative; Perry Jones, president and CEO, Wayne Metro Community Action Agency; and Dr. Anahid Kulwicki, director, Wayne County Health Department. Moderator for the panel is Sharon Claytor Peters, president and CEO, Michigan's Children. Honorary chairs for the event are

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and Skillman President Carol Goss, who are being joined by an honorary committee of business, education, social services, and government leaders. Kids Count data for Detroit children was released in 2004, so the focus of the 2005 Children's Summit is on the more than 30 communities surrounding Detroit. The event, which is offered at no charge, begins with a continental breakfast and concludes, following

audience questions, at 11:30 a.m. Funding for the event is through a grant from Michigan's Children. Collaborator on the planning committee include Child's Hope, The Colina Foundation, Everybody Ready, The Guidance Center, The Wayne County Health Department and involved community leadership on children's issues. Please contact Child's Hope at childhpe@umd.umich.edu or by calling (313) 583-6401 to receive an invitation to the event. Space is limited.

## Toys for Tots campaign comes to area malls

Jim Harper & The Magic Morning show begin their 27th season of with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and the Toys For Tots Campaign. The annual Toys For Tots Campaign tours area shopping malls collecting new, unwrapped toys for the U.S. Marine Corps program. This year's schedule includes: Laurel Park Place on Friday, Nov. 25; Twelve Oaks Mall, Monday, Nov. 28; Oakland Mall, Tuesday, Nov. 29; Briarwood Mall, Wednesday, Nov. 30; Macomb Mall, Thursday, Dec. 1; Lakeside Mall, Friday, Dec. 2. Each year the men and women of the Magic Morning Show compete to collect the most toys. Jim Harper & The Magic Morning Show are asking their listeners to come up with the very best "stunt" that the losing team will have to endure. Jim Harper & The Magic Morning Show will be live each morning from 6-10 a.m. A complimentary light breakfast will be served at each location. Santa as well as other special guests will be at each of the broadcasts. Those unable to come to the malls to donate toys can stop by any Collex Collision location or at Eastland Mall. For more information, contact Lindsay Warren at (248) 591-6866 or lwarren@greatermediadetroit.com.

## Children can vote for book

The Library of Michigan has announced the five finalists for the 2006 "Michigan Reads!" one-state, one-preschool-book program, set for March 2006, and invited preschoolers and book lovers of all ages to cast their votes now through Dec. 9. People can take part in the voting in one of two ways: by casting their ballots online at www.michigan.gov/michigan-reads or by voting in person with a paper ballot at their local Michigan public libraries. The five books on the 2006 Michigan Reads! ballot are: ■ *Bed Hogs* by Kelly DiPucchio ■ *Imogene's Antlers* by David Small ■ *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming ■ *Sheep in a Jeep* by Nancy Shaw ■ *Stranger in the Woods* by Carl Sams II and Jean Stoick "Reading early and often to children is one of the most important things parents and caregivers can do," said State Librarian Nancy Robertson. Michigan Reads! was launched in 2004 by the Library of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Center for the Book. This year, the program is sponsored by Brogan & Partners, Michigan Education Savings Program, Michigan Education Trust and the Library of Michigan Foundation.



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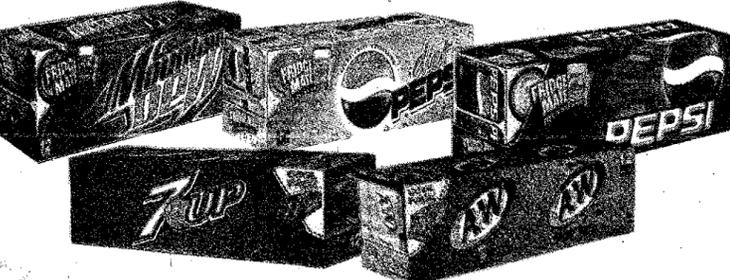
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