

2/2



View photographer Tom Hoffmeyer's Super Bowl Week photo gallery online at [www.hometownlife.com](http://www.hometownlife.com)



Super caterer  
TASTE - PAGE B9

The best seats, eats and all things Super Bowl, today in Filter INSERTED SECTION



**HOMETOWNlife** Have your photos of friends and family at Super Bowl events considered for our online gallery. E-mail jpegs with name and information to [photos@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:photos@oe.homecomm.net).

THURSDAY  
February 2, 2006

# WESTLAND Observer

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PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Scott Winfrey (center) of Canton gets help from his father, Ron (left), and his sister-in-law, Melissa, in cutting the shells off of 100 pounds of lobster. Scott Winfrey, owner of Marquis Foodservice in Westland, is making lobster lollipops to serve Saturday during a Super Bowl party thrown by Playboy's Hugh Hefner.

## Change of heart

### Fifth-grade class gets re-invited to 'super' NFL experience

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

A group of Westland fifth-graders will get to have a special NFL experience bowling with several Pittsburgh Steelers.

It appeared that the once-in-a-lifetime Super Bowl opportunity would go from being a super event to a super bust when the kids were told Monday that there had been a miscommunication and that the experience was for children who attend Youth Education Town in Detroit.

"It will be even better than before," said Madison Principal Sue Kelly after hearing Tuesday that the 30 students would be a part of the event at the Super Bowl in Canton on Friday.

The sudden change of heart came after several parents contacted WDIV-TV reporter Ruth Spencer about the turn of events.

One of the parents was Deanne Richter who with her husband, Randy, e-mailed several different organizations about the event.

"You can't do that to children, it's not fair," said Richter, whose daughter Samantha is a member of the class.

The NFL experience had been set up by a member of the Super Bowl Host Committee. Planning had begun early last week when Kelly was about the mini-event. Students were told about it Thursday. But Monday Kelly had to inform the students that they could not participate in the event.

She later e-mailed the host committee member, expressing disappointment at the sudden decision not to provide the students with the experience.

However, the NFL decided to re-invite the 30 youngsters Tuesday and have them share in the experience with youngsters from Detroit, making the Friday morning clinic a multi-cultural experience.

"They (the NFL) apologized for the disappointment, and they are all 'stepping up' to make sure that our children have a positive experience," Kelly said.

The students will spend two hours Friday bowling with several Steelers players. They will receive T-shirts, bowling balls and bags and have lunch with members of the Steelers team.

By Tuesday afternoon, students were headed to the school library where they were fitted for their custom-made bowling balls.

## Glitz ... glamour ... glitter

### Local caterer savors chance to provide menu for Playboy party

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Playboy bunnies cannot survive by rabbit food, alone. Hugh Hefner's famous playmates and other celebrities won't go hungry Saturday night during a Super Bowl XL bash in Detroit.

The exclusive party will be catered by Marquis Foodservice, a Westland

business run by Scott Winfrey of Canton and Zina and Donald George of Walled Lake.



Two thousand of Hef's closest friends will be attending his party, inside three hangars at the Coleman A. Young International Airport, formerly Detroit City Airport.

They will have a chance to

PLEASE SEE CATERER, A4



Steven Pisarski of Canton seasons the racks of lamb that will be served at the Playboy party.

## Deadline nears to file petitions in school race

Wayne-Westland school district voters may have an easy choice May 2 when choosing a candidate to fill a four-year term.

As of Wednesday morning, only one candidate, incumbent board President Frederick Weaver, had officially declared his candidacy by filing petitions with the Westland city clerk's office.

Other potential candidates still may enter the race, but they face a filing deadline of 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7. The clerk's office is located in Westland City Hall, on Ford Road west of Wayne Road.

Candidates have to collect signatures from 40-100 registered voters in the Wayne-Westland district - or pay a \$100 filing fee.

Candidates also have to be at least 18 years old and live in the district.

Even though the Wayne-Westland district draws students from other communities, such as Canton, all potential candidates go to the Westland clerk's office for petitions.

Weaver is seeking what would be his second four-year term.

## School trustee: It's a difficult job, but an important job



BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

Steve Kelly has a lot in common with Ed Turner. Both are retirees and experienced school board members who got their start as appointed members then went on to elected positions. They're also share a common commitment of time and energy to benefit the students in the Wayne-Westland Community Schools.

What separates them is time. Kelly served on the school board during

the mid- to late 1970s when the district was losing students by the thousands and having to close schools. Turner is a current school board member who has been a part of the renovation of those schools after several rounds of closings.

"I've always said I represent the kids first, the parents second and the teachers and administrators third," said Turner, who tries to visit at least two elementary schools a day in his capacity as a school board trustee.

"The best part is feeling you have done something that has a direct impact for chil-

dren," added Kelly. "It's the best feeling you can have, all the rest is peripheral to the main objective."

Kelly spent five years on the school board, first as an appointee and then as an elected member. He left his seat in 1980 when he accepted an administrative position with the Garden City Public Schools.

The most difficult time was when the district was beginning to downsize. He remembers the night when his daughter asked if he



FILE PHOTO

As a school board member, Steve Kelly faced the challenge of closing schools.

PLEASE SEE TRUSTEE, A3

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Volume 41  
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Coming Sunday on the PINK Page



Detroit's Marc Buchanan, founder of Pelle Pelle, designs SBXL jacket

## Wayne High seeks Distinguished graduate

Wayne Memorial High School is continuing its tradition of recognizing a former graduate for the Distinguished Alumni Award at commencement on June 3.

"The Distinguished Alumni Award is our way of honoring an outstanding graduate on an annual basis," said Principal John Albrecht. "We have had many outstanding people graduate from Wayne Memorial. Many have contributed significantly to the betterment of society on a local, state, national or international level.

"This is an opportunity for our current graduating class, to hear first hand from a former alumnus who has made his or her mark on society."

Locating deserving alumni is a difficult task, so the high school is turning to the com-

**A Distinguished Alumni committee will select the 2006 recipient, with the announcement of the winner to be made in mid-May.**

munity to nominate a Wayne graduate for the honor.

Residents can make their nominations by calling secretary Mary Huber at (734) 419-2206 or by sending it to Wayne Memorial High School, 3001 Fourth St., Wayne, MI 48184.

Nominations are due by Feb. 15, 2006. A Distinguished Alumni committee will select the 2006 recipient, with the announcement of the winner to be made in mid-May.

**B**  
**Jo Ann Boyne**  
 Boyne, 62, of Ellijay, Georgia, died Jan. 26.

**John Michael Breen**  
 Breen, 81, died Jan. 28.

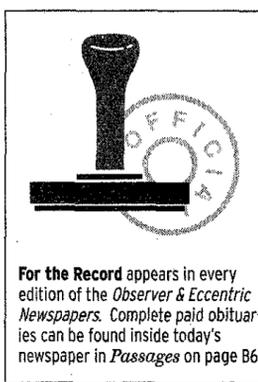
**D**  
**Sidney Dillick**  
 Dillick, 89, of West Bloomfield, died Jan. 26.

**H**  
**Emma Ruth Hedeman**  
 Hedeman, 95, formerly of Clarkston, died Jan. 25.

**L**  
**Mae K. Lock**  
 Lock, 94, of Birmingham, died Jan. 25.

**M**  
**James D. "Don" Mix**  
 Mix, 82, formerly of Canton and Westland, died Jan. 28.

**R**  
**Jane L. Ruthenberg**  
 Ruthenberg, 85, of Birmingham, died Jan. 31.



**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 B6.

**S**  
**Lawrence Stock**  
 Stock, 74, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., formerly of Farmington, died Jan. 14.

**W**  
**Robert "Bob" Warren**  
 Warren, 56, died Jan. 29.

### CORRECTION

The article *Steeler Resolve* that appeared last week should have said that Ben Roethlisberger attended Miami University (Ohio).

## Teen librarian makes her move to Detroit

BY JULIE BROWN  
 STAFF WRITER

Librarian Rori Bielak has always been drawn to work with low- and middle-income teens. And she's leaving her post as young adult librarian at the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland to work as a children's librarian at the Detroit Public Library.

Bielak, who will work at the main branch on Woodward across from the Detroit Institute of Arts, said "any teen from any income level has issues." Birmingham and West Bloomfield students benefit from good literature as much as any, she said, and a young adult librarian can tailor the collection to suit local needs, choosing from a variety of literature.

"I think they have a tendency to fall through the cracks," she said of the middle schoolers and high schoolers she's worked with.

Bielak has been at Westland nearly five years, and also



Bielak

worked at a Colorado library seven years. She also did an internship at the Houston Public Library.

She earned her master's degree in library science from Wayne State University.

"I'm sad to leave my teens," Bielak said.

She'll also be moving from Westland to Detroit, living in Lafayette Towers not far from Eastern Market. She grew up in Detroit and lived downtown years ago.

"I hope to do some good in Detroit," she said, citing such activities as short story contests and author visits. "I'm looking forward to being a part of that."

The Detroit library has a strong relationship with the city's school system, and she's eager to learn more about that.

She has words of wisdom for her successor, yet to be hired. "Just be open to a lot of hugs because these teens are full of them," she said. "They're wonderful kids."

John Patane, Westland library director, said the full-time job, which includes reference duties, will be advertised and filled.

"I'm glad for her because it is a new professional challenge," he said of Bielak.

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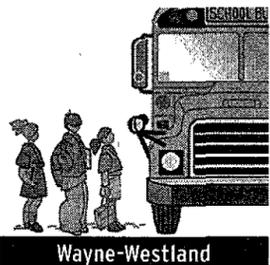
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Wayne-Westland

# Diversity is 'work in progress' for district

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

Ask Terrance McClain about serving on the Wayne-Westland Board of Education and he answers by first telling you that first and foremost, he loves children and loves working with children.

He then tells you that he values education, something instilled in him by his father who was an educator.

Both statements are evident in what he says and does as a school board member in his interaction with the students and district staff that come before the board.

But what is most apparent is what McClain, as an African-American, brings to both the school board and the district.

"Sometimes you start talking about diversity and it brings on divisiveness," said McClain.

"But because of my background and gifts from God, I believe I bring diversity without that divisiveness."

McClain has been a member of the board for more than two years and during that time has worked to establish a relationship with his fellow members. He has showed them that he is cooperative, but able to elaborate on issues.

"I love the district, I very much support the superintendent, but we still have a lot of work to do," he said. "I believe I've demonstrated that I can work within the system to provide guidance and help elevate those who have been disenfranchised."

McClain's addition to the board has continued a tradition of diversity on the board both in ethnicity and in socio-economics, according to Superintendent Greg Baracy.

"We've had members of the board that represented various segments of the community over the years," said Baracy. "If you look at socio-economics, we've had quite a diverse representation with board members from Wayne, Westland,

Inkster - Leonard Posey - and from Canton, Bud Winter."

Wayne-Westland remains a predominantly white school district, with African-American children making up 16-19 percent of the student population. That percentage has stayed fairly steady over the years.

But while the change has been slow and measured, the district hasn't ignored the issue of diversity. In fact, Baracy believes the district has been "culturally rich" for at least the last 15 years.

"One thing I like about the community is that it's been culturally rich for a long time," he

said. "I believe that's the reason we haven't experienced the problems other districts have."

The district has made a point to focus on diversity in its instructional materials. When looking at a new curriculum, administrators make sure that the texts are "rich in culture and representative of the community's diversity."

One area that still needs work is a more diverse teaching staff.

"The district does have some very qualified minorities in administrations and teaching, but finding them and keeping them is a problem," said McClain. "Wayne-Westland

can't pay as well as some other districts, and even if we do hire them, they get a year or two under their belts, see a better opportunity and leave.

"It does frustrate me, but it's the mindset of today's society."

McClain, who is a member of the Michigan Caucus of Black School Board Members, is glad that he made the decision to seek a seat on the school board. He believes he can be a voice for minorities and provide a resource for the school district.

"I'm committed to do what I can to learn what we can do to make it better for the students and the district," he said.

**Students:** 13,651  
**Staff:** 2,504 - including full- and time employees and all substitutes.

**Annual School Budget:** \$116,950  
**State Foundation Allowance:** \$7,571 per student

**Schools:** 17 elementaries, 4 middle schools, 4 high schools - 2 comprehensive career technical center and one alternative high school. All of the schools have North Central Association accreditation.

**Graduation Rate:** 86.33 percent  
**Dropout Rate:** One-year dropout rate of 3.99 percent and one-year retention rate of 96.01 percent

**Education Yes!** District has received Yes for meeting Annual Yearly Progress every year since its inception.

**No Child Left Behind:** District is in compliance with the new federal regulations and guidelines.

## TRUSTEE

FROM PAGE A1

was going to close her elementary school. As a parent, it tugged at his heart strings, but as a member of the Wayne-Westland school board, it was a decision he had to make.

Describing himself as "very young, very idealistic and naive," Kelly admits he wasn't sure what a school board member did specifically when he was approached to apply to fill a vacancy. He never thought he would be selected, and when it happened, he found that it was "very much a learning experience."

"I was told that as a group the school board spends time formulating policy and that wasn't necessarily inaccurate, but it didn't take in the time involved and the responsibilities," he added.

## WHO'S IN CHARGE

In his time on the board, Turner has discovered that the school board "doesn't run the district, it is the superintendent," and that Wayne-Westland is for-

## INTERESTED?

Candidates for school board must be 18 and a resident of the district for at least 30 days. A candidate must get at least 40 signatures of registered district voters on petitions from the City Clerk's office, or pay a \$100 fee by Feb. 7.

tunate to have an excellent one in Greg Baracy.

"I came on when the district was still in financial difficulty, it was a rough time," said Turner who was elected to the board in 1997. "I give all the credit to the success of our district to Greg and his Cabinet. I think this district has regained its status as a lighthouse district because of Greg and his staff."

Turner estimates he spends at least four-six hours a week doing his school board work. There's a monthly meeting, as well as meetings of the building and site and curriculum committees.

That time doesn't count the hours he spends in the schools - he tries to visit at least two elementaries each day - and at

school functions like the recent JROTC joint military ball.

Because he's retired he can devote a lot of time to the schools.

He savors being called Uncle Ed by older students and laments that he has nothing to do when schools are closed for breaks.

He does all that for an annual stipend of \$2,960 a year. That breaks down to \$50 per meeting not to exceed 52 per year and a \$30 per month mileage stipend.

Having been there and done that, Kelly said anyone considering a run for a school board seat should explore why they want to be involved. Is it because they have children at heart or is it a stepping stone to other political positions?

"They need to have a more realistic idea of the time commitment," he said. "You have to keep apprised of what's going on in the district and devote a lot of your time at home to it."

"It's a very difficult job with a lot of pressure and a lot of frustration, but it's an important job."

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Open House

St. Michael Lutheran S has two open houses planned for February for parents interested in enrolling in the pre-school and/or school. The pre-school open house is 5:30-7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, while the school open house and registration will be 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.

For more information, call (734) 728-3315.

Chili cook-off

The Westland Democratic Club will hold a chili cook-off fund-raiser 6-9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at the Harris-Kehrer VFW Post 3323 in Westland.

There's a \$10 fee to enter the contest and cooks are asked to bring a crockpot of their chili for judging. There's also a \$10 charge to taste the chilis and vote for the best one. Beverages and dessert are included in the charge.

People who attend are asked to please bring a donation of a personal care item for our local veterans hospital patients. Suggested items

included men's white socks, liquid soap (alcohol free), disposable razors or toothbrushes and toothpaste.

For more information, call Nan Melke at (734) 674-7327. The hall is at 1055 S. Wayne Road, between Cherry Hill and Palmer.

Cropping fund-raiser

A scrapbook fund-raiser, Croppin' for the Edison Eagles, will be held 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, in the gymnasium of St. Matthew Lutheran School and Church, 5885 Venoy, Westland. The cost is \$35 and includes a light breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and beverages, scrapbooking and stamping vendors, raffles and much more.

Call Kelly Salter at (734) 891-0219 or e-mail kelly@bellcreek.org for more information or to register.

Chocolate Fantasy

Tickets are on sale for the second annual Westland ATHENA Award Chocolate Fantasy Ball Saturday, Feb. 11, at the New Hawthorne Valley

Country Club, 7300 Merriman, Westland.

Tickets are \$75 per person and include cocktails at 6 p.m., followed by a strolling dinner at 6:30 p.m., award presentation 7:30 p.m. and dancing to the music of White Lace.

Tickets are available at Mary Denning's Cake Shoppe on Wayne Road north of Cowan - (734) 261-3680 - or through the mayor's office at Westland City Hall - (734) 467-3200.

Room rentals

Looking for more office space? Planning a party? Having a meeting?

Look no further than the YWCA of Western Wayne County. If you or someone you know is looking to start or expand a business, the YWCA has office space available for rent. There also is room to have meetings for any organization.

The YWCA is available for birthday parties, wedding or baby showers, luncheons, or any other celebration. Kitchen facilities also are

available. It also has accommodations for dance and aerobics classes.

Evening and weekend times are available. Call the YWCA of Western Wayne County at (313) 561-4110, Ext. 18, for more information on facility rentals. The YWCA is at 26279 Michigan Ave., Inkster.

Charity bowling

The Westland Chamber of Commerce will hold 2006 Winterfest charity bowling event 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, at Westland Bowl, 5940 N. Wayne Road. Partial proceeds benefit the Joseph F. Benyo Scholarship Fund.

Registration is at 12:30 p.m. with the tournament starting at 1 p.m. Four-person teams will bowl, alternating every fourth frame. Cost is \$120 per team or \$30 per person. Price includes bowling, two well drinks and dinner buffet after the tournament at Marvaso's Italian Grille, 6569 N. Wayne Road.

For more information, call the chamber at (734) 326-7222.

Training class offered for weather spotters

Skywarn severe weather spotter training is being offered 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4 at the Maplewood Center.

The Garden City Fire Department, in cooperation with Garden City Emergency Management and the National Weather Service, is hosting the program at the Maplewood Community Center in Garden City. A second session will be held on Saturday, April 1.

The training is designed for community volunteers, amateur radio operators and public safety officials to enable them to identify key cloud formations and storm effects and report their findings to weather service meteorologists at the Detroit/Pontiac Forecast Office.

This information is used, along with sophisticated technology, including Doppler radar, to issue severe thunderstorm and tornado watches and warnings to the public.

"Skywarn spotters are a key component of our communities emergency management activities, and annual training is an important step to assure their readiness in an emergency,"

said Fire Chief Bill Forbush.

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) program fields about 50 volunteer amateur ham radio operators during storms to act as the eyes of the Weather Service at the local level.

"Public service, and particularly emergency communication, is one of the cornerstones of amateur radio," said RACES Skywarn coordinator Tom Staley of Garden City. "Volunteers are trained and equipped to provide supplemental communications support to agencies like the National Weather Service, county and local emergency management authorities and public safety officials when needed."

An emergency management radio station is being constructed at Maplewood Center by the Garden City Amateur Radio Club and should be available for viewing at the class. The Skywarn training class is open to the public and is offered free of charge. To register, call Dionna at (734) 793-1782 or by e-mail at fire@gardencitymi.org.

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CATERER

FROM PAGE A1

savor mouth-watering lobster lollipops - steamed lobster on sticks that can be dipped in a spicy plum sauce or a wasabi/ginger mix with chive sprinkles.

They will sample pomegranate-scented coconut chicken and spicy chili garlic chicken - both on skewers. They'll savor small tenderloin sandwiches and lamb chops, and they'll satisfy a sweet tooth with petit fours, strawberries and bananas dipped in chocolate, and award-winning brownies.

The party will follow an airport theme, and a specially built conveyor belt will deliver three kinds of sushi - not luggage - to party-goers as they stand and socialize.

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Winfrey and his business partners started working Wednesday with a team of food preparers at their business, near John Hix and Cherry Hill roads.

"We're cooking for 2,000

people," Winfrey, 39, said.

"We've cooked for parties in this range before, but never anything with this scope of celebrity to it."

Hefner will plunk down substantial money to use the airport, hire entertainers and bring in what many consider some of metro Detroit's best-catered food, made right here in Westland.

Marquis Foodservice will have a team of 115 people working Saturday night to pull off a party that could be a huge boost to their business.

"It definitely helps your profile," Zina George, 33, said.

Marquis Foodservice already has catered some large events, including a Stanley Cup party thrown by Steve Yzerman and Darren McCarty.

Hefner hired the company after finding it on a national list of emerging businesses with ties to minorities. The Georges are Chaldean.

It didn't hurt that the business came with high marks for catering large events with style.

"It's exciting," Zina George said, although she'll be glad when Super Bowl weekend is over. "I just can't wait until Monday."

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# Granholt says 'boots on the ground' will beat DeVos money

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholt admits it will be tough to combat — dollar-for-dollar — a gubernatorial campaign by expected Republican challenger Richard DeVos of Grand Rapids.

However, Granholt is banking on the allegiance of her supporters to get out the vote as she seeks re-election in November.

"We won't be able to match them dollar-for-dollar on the air, but we have the boots on the ground to make sure we have people at the polls on election day," said Granholt to cheers by supporters at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Livonia Sunday. "I don't have billions of dollars, but we have more people than he does."

At that, nearly 75 people — who were personally invited — cheered and applauded Granholt, who plans to use her "jobs for today and tomorrow" campaign to meet and mobilize supporters across the state.

"Please tell people we have the most comprehensive economic plan of any state in the country, \$2 billion (21st Century Jobs Fund) to diversify our economy is very impor-

tant for our state," said Granholt. "We are the state that put the world on wheels, our niche should be alternative energy and fuel cells. We should be the state that makes America independent of foreign oil."

Granholt received more applause when she talked of growing jobs in the state, raising the minimum wage, a program to make health insurance available to a half-million people currently without health coverage and \$4,000 scholarships to college students.

"It makes you feel like you can go to college," said 15-year-old Joe Kalinski of Livonia, who said he never thought he'd see the governor. "We need to expand technologies and come up with new ideas. I like the fact she recognized hydrogen fuel cells, and to bring automotive back to Michigan."

Granholt has taken criticism from some for not moving Michigan forward. But, Mary Jane Bevelheimer of Plymouth Township said it's not all Granholt's fault.

"She's had a tough road to hoe because they're (Republicans) working against her," said Bevelheimer, who worked as a volunteer in the governor's first election campaign. "As a woman, I like her

politics, her emphasis on education and health care."

Martha Trafford of Canton Township volunteers for State Rep. John Stewart, R-Plymouth Township. However, the retired Livonia school teacher of 30 years said she's an independent, and will support the Democratic governor in her run for a second term.

"I'm very pleased with what Gov. Granholt has done," said Trafford. "I think she inherited a mess from the previous Republican governor, so she's had to make drastic cuts to maintain some semblance of a working economy in Michigan."

"She's tried to help the business community, brought jobs to Michigan and has made a commitment that she will find more funding sources for public schools," she said.

As the longest-ever serving member of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners (28 years), Kay Beard of Westland said intimate meet-and-greet opportunities, like the one in Livonia Sunday, should become a staple of Granholt's campaign.

"She needs to communicate directly with the people, which is what she does best," said Beard. "Let the people see and

hear her, and question her."

Maureen Miller Brosnan was a key member of Granholt's executive team in her initial run for governor. The Livonia resident, now a member of the State Transportation Commission, said she was having doubts about the future of Michigan, knowing the Ford Wixom assembly plant closing could just as easily be the Ford Livonia Transmission plant.

"I went to the State of the State with a lot of fear about what Michigan's future was looking like," said Brosnan. "But, I left a lot calmer, knowing we have somebody who knows what needs to be done; who has the energy, the ambition, the desire and the ideas to do it."

If Brosnan could give one bit of advice for the governor, it would be to be tougher on the Republican-dominated Legislature.

"I know she has tried to compromise in many, many situations, but apparently compromise isn't working so well," said Brosnan. "Maybe to advance her agenda, she needs to be more heavy-handed. The future of Michigan is at stake."

Granholt told her supporters she'd welcome the chance to debate DeVos.



Gov. Jennifer Granholt greets supporters Sunday in Livonia.

"I would do it in a heartbeat," said Granholt with a smile. "But, he won't take it.

"Let's talk about the issues, but he has no plan, he can only criticize," added Granholt. "I worry he has hired some of the most notorious people from

the right, national people who have done the most negative advertising in the history of the United States.

"It's going to get ugly."

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## Schoolcraft offers tax preparation class

Two new accounting classes at Schoolcraft College will prepare you to prepare your own federal and state income taxes.

The 12-week classes are introductory.

Accounting 139, Michigan and City Taxes, begins Feb. 4, and meets from 9 a.m. to noon

on Saturdays.

Accounting 138 begins Feb. 9, and meets 6:30-9 p.m. on Thursdays. Schoolcraft College tuition fees are \$65 per credit hour for residents of the college district and \$97 per credit hour for nonresidents. For more information on the

classes: contact LaVonda Ramey at (734) 462-4400, Ext. 5122; e-mail Gerald Mellnick, the instructor in Accounting 138, at gmellnic@schoolcraft.edu; e-mail or William Breger, the instructor for Accounting 139, at wbreger@schoolcraft.edu.

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## OUR VIEWS

# We're now daily e-newspaper

By now many of our readers have undoubtedly realized a subtle shift in how this newspaper covers the community. We are and always will be committed to offering lively community newspapers that arrive on your doorsteps Sunday and Thursday. The shift is in our new O&E Web site at [www.hometownlife.com](http://www.hometownlife.com).

Readers who visit the site will see daily news updates, many of which don't appear in the print version of our product. That doesn't mean you can't find stories that appear in the paper — nearly all local content and photographs contained in the print edition are now available online.

Finding the Westland edition is easy. Just scroll to the mid point of the O&E home-page under the heading Your Hometown News and click on the link to Westland, which is located in the section labeled Wayne County.

We see the Web as a great way to tell readers information that can't wait. If a key community meeting is canceled because of a snowstorm, we want readers to know about it before driving to town hall.

We also want our readers to know about breaking police and fire news and stories on schools and interesting people. To do that, we need help from the community.

We'll always be your local hometown newspaper, both on the Web and in print. So if you know of news that can't wait until Thursday or Sunday, give us a call at (734) 953-2112, and community editor Sue Mason will see that it gets the attention it deserves.

Readers who visit the site will see daily news updates, many of which don't appear in the print version of our product. That doesn't mean you can't find stories that appear in the paper — nearly all local content and photographs contained in the print edition are now available online.

# Do homework before filing for school board

The filing deadline is fast approaching for school board candidates running for office May 2.

We hope they've done their homework. Besides filing a nominating petition or \$100 fee with the county clerk's office by 4 p.m. Tuesday, candidates should also have an idea of what they're getting into.

It's more than being a warm body at a meeting twice a month.

School board members, who often get paid nothing, spend countless hours preparing for the tough decisions they'll have to make at those meetings about budgets, personnel, curriculum and other matters. They study reams of information provided to them by administrators in board packets and conduct their own research by talking to parents, students and teachers, visiting schools and observing programs in action.

Many of them also take classes through the Michigan Association of School Boards, where they learn about complicated school financing laws, state and federal mandates like No Child Left Behind, contract negotiations and other issues that directly impact education.

After preparing and training for meetings, school board members are expected to set aside their personal interests and vote for the good of the entire district. This may mean alienating neighbors or acquaintances who expect support for their school or program. It also may mean becoming the target of personal attacks.

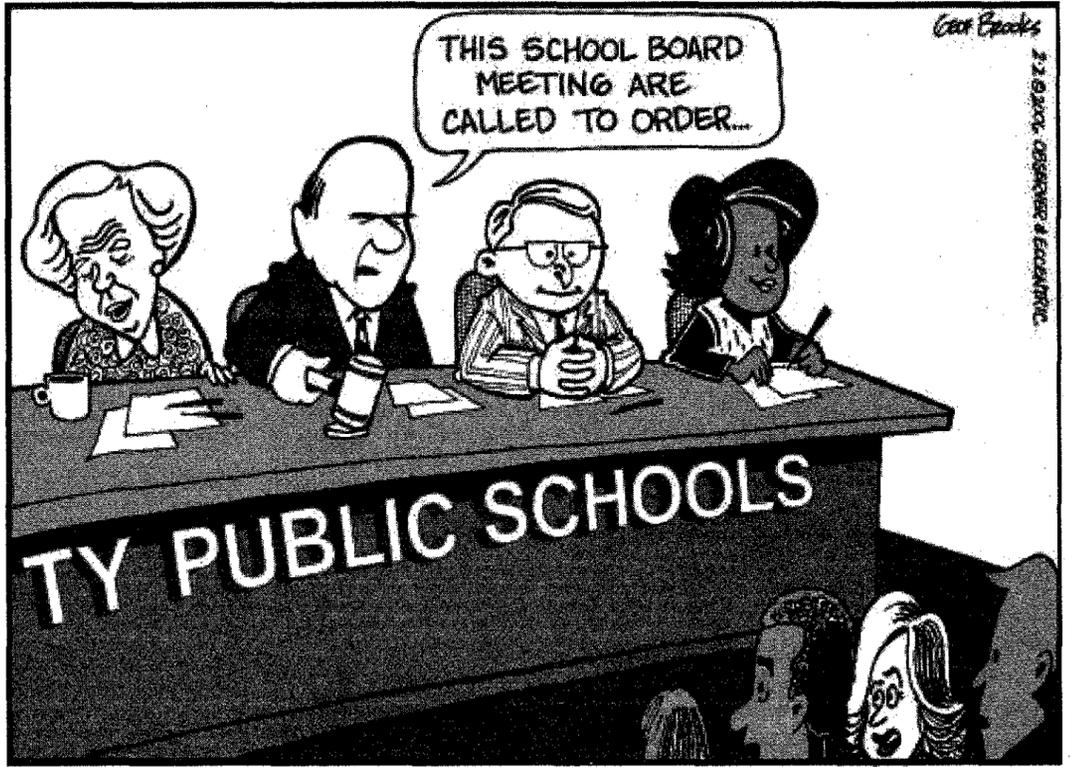
Besides meetings, school board members are expected to attend and support the district's students at major athletic events, marching band competitions, drama presentations and awards ceremonies.

Those activities can conflict with family commitments or board members' other volunteer activities.

But those activities — where students' successes are celebrated — usually are the reason school board members run in the first place.

They want to help shape the education and future of the next generation.

It's a commendable job, but one that takes dedication, passion and a love for children. Don't bid on it lightly.



"That's it! I'm running for the school board."

## Help working families

I am fortunate; I have health insurance which reduces my medication copays to \$107 per month.

My father is not so fortunate. A retired teacher, confined to a wheelchair due to an automotive accident that almost killed him, he relies on Medicare to help him make ends meet, which they rarely do.

As things stand, he is homeless — living part time with me and my brother, part time with his own mother — because he cannot afford both his medications and rent.

Our family works hard and combines our resources to pay for our own medical care, but in a few months when I turn 25, I, too, will be losing my medical insurance, just as I graduate college.

I want to join AmeriCorps, but if its medical plan is as bad as Medicare, or if I cannot find a way to help my father get better access to medical care, I'm going to have to postpone public service and graduate school to work full-time at a minimum wage job and support us all. And even then there is no guarantee I'll succeed, with the government calling in my student loans.

Working families and people with disabilities need more than what Medicare programs are currently providing. We deserve a chance to be productive members of our society, to be given the tools we need to contribute to our communities. Give us a chance. Give us justice!

Nancy Hetrick  
Westland

## Changes will hurt seniors

My name is Ashwinderjit Mahal and I am a senior at Winston Churchill High School. I am writing to you so I can express my opinions on the new Medicaid laws and the negative impact on our nation's health care.

These budget-cutting measures passed by the U.S. Senate with the help of Vice President Dick Cheney on Wednesday, Dec. 21, could have a very bad effect on our country's citizens. This legislation, which still needs a final sign-off from the House before going to President Bush, makes changes to the state Medicaid program that saves the federal government \$5 billion over five years, but on the other hand, it also raises the problems for senior citizens who need the government help to pay for their nursing home care.

In my view, these cuts are giving rise to more problems for the states and citizens of this country. These cuts can put more burden on the state government. When the federal government is not going to pay, then it's the responsibility of the state government to care for its residents. However, some states don't have enough money to give proper health care to all the people who are in need of it.

If a person pays taxes his whole life, then he has a right to get the proper care when he is in need of it. It is against humanity to make a senior citizen pay for his own health care. Our nation's future depends on today's young genera-

## LETTERS

tion. This budget can affect the children who are abused and neglected by their parents.

It is not possible for the state government to pay for everyone. To provide proper health care, they need the federal government's attention, since all tax goes to the federal government.

State government should learn about the problems which they have to face after the passing of this bill.

Ashwinderjit Mahal  
Westland

## Top 12 Legacy list

Here are the top 12 reasons to support the Legacy Initiative:

- 1) I am satisfied that the school board had addressed all of the parents' concerns.
- 2) I feel secure that our school board is willing to significantly increase the busing of our children and traffic volume to our schools without even as much as preparing a traffic study.
- 3) Forty minutes of music, art, foreign language is a worthy tradeoff for 7.5 hours on a bus for my child each week.
- 4) I prefer large schools, 900-plus student grade 5-6 factories with lots of transitions.
- 5) I believe that the school board's K-4 plan will attract young families to move to Livonia and create community involvement by spreading our children all over the city and beyond the city limits.
- 6) I like to gamble with my child's educational future with radical changes to a successful school system.
- 7) Closing seven schools of 31 or approximately 23 percent of our existing schools to save less than 1 percent of the Livonia schools' budget (1.5-2 million) makes a lot of sense.
- 8) I believe that our school board is open and honest with their intentions. The 14-month long demographic committee study has recorded no minutes of any meeting though they could not guarantee that there never was a quorum.
- 9) I take comfort in the fact that my child will spend more quality time on a bus than waste it on after-school sports, extracurricular activities or, worst of all, spend it with their family.
- 10) I feel that the city of Livonia is a much nicer place to live than it was just three months ago before the REPEL-LENCY INITIATIVE was unveiled.
- 11) I must be a real estate developer or someone with a back-door deal with a real estate developer.
- 12) I get that "WOW" feeling when I think about this initiative. Actually, it's more like Whoa-nelly you're going to have to excuse me. Move out of the way quick! Gurgle gurgle Blahhhh! Sorry sir, I tried to warn you. I really have to go after I help this innocent bystander clean up.

Mark Wojcik  
Livonia

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Mark Wojcik  
Livonia

State government should learn about the problems which they have to face after the passing of this bill.

Ashwinderjit Mahal  
Westland

It is not possible for the state government to pay for everyone. To provide proper health care, they need the federal government's attention, since all tax goes to the federal government.

This budget can affect the children who are abused and neglected by their parents.

Working families and people with disabilities need more than what Medicare programs are currently providing. We deserve a chance to be productive members of our society, to be given the tools we need to contribute to our communities. Give us a chance. Give us justice!

My father is not so fortunate. A retired teacher, confined to a wheelchair due to an automotive accident that almost killed him, he relies on Medicare to help him make ends meet, which they rarely do.

I am fortunate; I have health insurance which reduces my medication copays to \$107 per month.

ple. Kangaroo courts in Guantanamo undermine our credibility with the rest of the world and weaken our case for rightful action in other parts of the world.

The rights and freedoms this country was based upon should be extended to all until they are proven guilty. To do otherwise renders all of our rights and freedoms null and void.

Roy Johnson  
Redford

## On affirmative action

As a member of the ACLU, I vehemently protest the so-called Michigan Civil Rights Initiative's upcoming ballot question aimed at ending affirmative action in the Great Lakes State.

I am no fan of affirmative action. I find it interesting, however, that the MCRI seek only to remove race- and gender-based affirmative action. Let's not fool ourselves because affirmative action comes in more flavors than race and gender.

At Michigan universities, for example, potential students are asked on their admissions applications if a relative ever attended. This, too, is affirmative action and for years has unfairly benefited its share of white males.

When it comes to public sector hiring, meanwhile, let's not forget that employers such as the United States Postal Service award extra hiring points to select groups like military veterans. Again, affirmative action giving preference to a minority group.

While groups backing the MCRI are quick to call race and gender referencing "reverse racism" or social engineering, which it may or may not be, why are they only targeting race and gender? Should the already-privileged children of alumni garner extra consideration when applying for college? Should select groups like military veterans garner extra consideration when applying for employment?

If you oppose affirmative action, you cannot simply pick and choose. Either eliminate it all or leave it alone.

Peter Ponzetti III  
Rochester Hills

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

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## QUOTABLE

**"It's a tremendous loss to the employees, to the economy and to the entire surrounding area. For every auto worker who gets laid off, there are a number of other people who will lose their jobs."**

— Ron Graunstadt, health and safety representative for United Auto Workers Local 36, about the closing of Ford's Wixom Assembly Plant

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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.

# Granholt's speech outlined her strategy for re-election

Anybody who doubts the political smarts of Gov. Jennifer Granholm would do well to look carefully at the State of the State address she delivered last week.

Other politicians in her shoes might have approached this speech with dread, for the state of the state is not, by any measure, anything to brag about. The governor is saddled with a terrible economy, a formidable (and formidably well-financed) Republican opponent in Dick DeVos and a GOP-dominated Legislature that will do anything and everything it can to make her life difficult.

Yet Granholm responded with a speech that was both masterfully delivered and which showed a shrewd understanding of the probable electoral landscape come November.

As you listened to her speech, you could see her systematically clicking through a list of likely political targets, be they Democratic, independent or moderate Republican.

She had something for workers for small companies; for poor people without health insurance; workers scraping along on the minimum wage; college-bound kids and their parents; K-12 students and their families; and entrepreneurs and venture capital types.

She knows perfectly well that the Legislature is not about to approve any of her proposals, but politically, that won't hurt her a bit.

Wasn't it Harry Truman who laid out a similar set of challenges and won an upset victory for president in 1948 by campaigning against "a do-nothing Republican Congress?"

Let's consider Granholm's main proposals, and to whom they are likely to appeal:

■ She called for a new 401(k)-type savings retirement plan for employees of small businesses that don't offer pensions. Her idea was that the state should set up the apparatus for the program without kicking in any matching funds.

"People shouldn't be counting on Social Security for their retirement nest egg," state Treasurer Jay Rising told *The Detroit News*. "We know that 60 percent of firms with 25 employees or less offer no 401(k)."

Hard to see how conservative voters can argue against this. For years, Republicans have asserted that workers should take more individual responsibility for their own retirement.

■ The governor proposed creating a health insurance plan for the 550,000 working poor who have no health care coverage. That proposal will need approval from both the feds and the Legislature.

There was no clue as to what this would cost, or where the money would come from. But the half million-plus Michigan folks affected certainly are not going to blame their governor for standing up for them — or reward the GOP for sneering at the idea.

■ Likewise, the low-wage workers who would stand to benefit by an increased minimum wage.

Granholm proposed increasing the wage by nearly \$2 an hour to \$6.85, effective January 2007. And she pledged to lead a campaign to place the boost on the statewide ballot this fall. What a wonderful way to appeal to union voters to turn out strong in the middle of a tough campaign!

■ College-bound kids and their parents, both increasingly concerned about increases in tuition, will be pleased by Granholm's proposal to re-jigger the Merit Scholarship program to award a full \$4,000 to students who complete two years of college.

There's more than politics lurking behind this one. In comparison with other states, Michigan's labor force falls far behind in percentage of workers with college degrees, and four grand for kids who stick it out for two years should be a pretty good incentive.

The prospect of a much tougher school curriculum — including four years of English and math, two of social studies and science and two years of a foreign language — might make kids in school nervous.

But most of them can't vote yet — and their parents, at least, are by now beginning to realize that merely getting a high school diploma without really knowing anything is hardly the route to a secure economic future for their children.

They'll look kindly on the governor's proposal. (Even the Republicans are unlikely to stop this one.)

■ The rapidly growing health sciences sector in Michigan cannot but be enthused at her call for repealing current medieval state restrictions on stem cell research that could lead to cures for diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

A fair number of companies that might locate in Michigan have said they won't come as long as the Legislature's head-in-the-sand attitude toward scientific research persists.

The overall picture is clear. If the major purpose of a politician's life and career is to get (re)elected, Granholm did a mighty fine job of preparing for political conflict coming this fall.

The only sad thing is that nowhere in her speech did she tackle the really fundamental issues facing Michigan and its urgent need to restructure our hemorrhaging economy. Those include the chronic structural state budget deficit, now at well over \$1 billion per year, and the archaic, arcane and business-unfriendly single business tax.

Worst of all may be the many cuts higher education has suffered in recent years, which have damaged the launch pad for creative innovation on which our economic future depends.

I know, I know. The governor knows perfectly well she won't get anywhere banging her head against a Legislature and a political system that is both unable and unwilling to deal with these issues. But sooner or later, somebody's got to. And as Moses could have told her, sometimes a leader just has to lead.

Phil Power is a longtime observer of politics, economics and education issues in Michigan. He would be pleased to hear from readers at ppower@hcn.net.

# NFL experience is roller coaster ride for group of fifth-graders

There's an adage about something being too good to be true.

How often does someone tell a tale that's so outrageous that the first thing that crosses your mind is just that? That was the thought that crossed my mind when my son told of a field trip he and his classmates were going on this Friday.

"Mom, my class is going bowling with the Pittsburgh Steelers and we're getting T-shirts, bowling balls and bags," he said, all in one breath.

"Are you sure?" My son hates to hear me say that, almost as much as me looking at his homework behind his back.

"Yeeees!"

It seemed so outrageous that the journalist in me made it imperative that I get a confirmation from an adult, so I went to the principal the next morning. Sue Kely is a very sane person, not prone to delusions, and quickly confirmed what my son said, filling in the blanks as to why this group of fifth-graders from Madison Elementary in Westland was getting this thrill of a lifetime.

"Oh, my God, yes, isn't it wonderful," she said, also in one breath.

Wonderful? It was an 11-year-old's NFL dream come true, a Kodak moment beyond belief. A member of the Super Bowl Host Committee had decided to give her best friend's youngest an NFL experience and had arranged for his fifth-grade class to have a bowling clinic with some of the Pittsburgh Steelers at the Super Bowl in Canton.

Wow! But the wow didn't end there. The kids would get T-shirts, bowling balls and bags and lunch with the players.

Can I hear a wow with multiple exclamation points?

But there was a downside to the invitation. My son's principal had to explain to the other fifth-grade class why they weren't going along. The invitation had started out with the student and 20 of his friends. The principal said no, she would not walk into a classroom of 30 students and tell 10 of them they couldn't go. It just wasn't fair. So after a bit more planning, it became 30 students, the teacher and four or five chaperones.

But she still had to explain to the other class how not everything in life is fair. But it would not be the first time she walked into a fifth-grade class to explain that lesson.

Monday afternoon, my phone rang. "Mom," there was no mistaking the disappointment in my son's voice. "We're not going. Some other class is."

He said a few more things, but it was a

jumble and didn't make sense. In an 11-year-old's mind, nothing makes sense when you steal their dreams.

My heart sank and I got a strange feeling in my stomach. Once I had confirmed this unbelievable tale, I had set the wheels in motion to cover it. I had contacted the woman on the host committee, seeking permission to cover it for the newspaper. By late Friday afternoon, my request was on its way to someone in PR for the NFL.

I expected a response by Monday morning. Nothing. The silence was deafening throughout the day; by mid-afternoon I was firing off a second e-mail to the host committee, asking if there was anything they could do to expedite my request. There was still no response by the time I left work.

I called the school, just like many of the other parents. This time the secretary confirmed it. Apparently, the bowling experience didn't fit the demographics of the NFL Experience which sent the players to schools around the city of Detroit as part of its Youth Education Town. The plug was pulled on the Madison experience.

I could go on about the tough lesson that this group of kids had to learn, a lesson I would have preferred had happened when they are older. I could talk about how kids are a resilient lot and they'll get over this.

In fact, I did. I was putting the finishing touches on this column when an e-mail showed up saying in part that the NFL "apologized for the disappointment, and they are all 'stepping up' to make sure that our children have a positive experience on Friday."

On Monday evening, my son told me he and his friends were talking and decided "they don't like the NFL much anymore." I expect to get a phone call this afternoon. The "Mom" will be filled with excitement.

Some disgruntled parent sent an e-mail to someone who made a few phone calls and bent a few ears. The kids will get their NFL experience tomorrow, but it'll be even better, according to Kely. The youngsters in Detroit will be joining the Madison students for the multi-cultural event.

Now, the kids have learned another lesson. There are people in this world who do care about kids and one of them just made their dream come true.

One day, when I sit down and write my memoirs, I'll be sure to include this NFL moment. People who care enough to question a decision deserve some recognition. Sue Kely surely does.

Sue Mason is editor of the *Westland and Garden City Observer*. If you have a comment or question, you can e-mail her at smason@hometownlife.com or write her at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.



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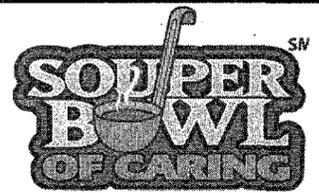
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## Party Planning IDEAS

Keep it simple! You can easily serve snacks and appetizers and still have a fabulous time.

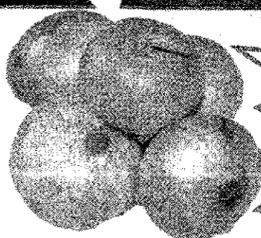
Have a Sandwich Buffet. An easy way to entertain! Put out an array of breads, meats, chesse and sandwich fixings and let everyone help themselves! Want to go all out? Cook a whole turkey or ham to slice for sandwiches!

Turn your table into a field. If you have a rectangular table, drape it with a piece of green fabric and draw on the yard lines and the end zones with white fabric paint.

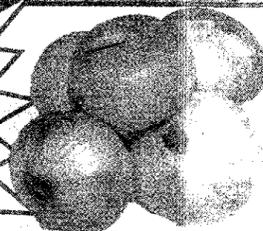
Use your empty dishwasher or washing machine to ice down extra cans and bottles of drinks. When the ice melts, the water just drains away.

Set up a football pool and give gag gifts to the biggest losers.

Give away door prizes, like team t-shirts and other NFL paraphernalia.



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