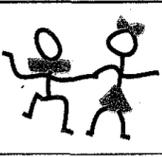


Students dance all night long to raise funds for children
OBSERVER LIFE - SECTION C



Seniors still bewildered by new Medicare benefit
HEALTH - PAGE C6



REFERENCE ONLY
Vintage jewelry designer creates Treasures of Time
PINK PAGE C8



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David Barber saws lumber for his structure as part of the SkillsUSA competition.

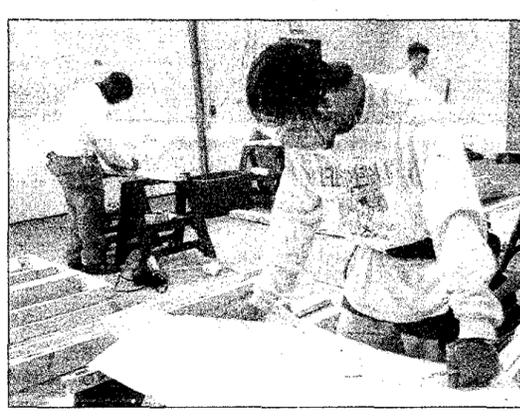
PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Contest tests students' building skills

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Michael Holtzman admits he's nervous about Thursday's SkillsUSA regional competition in Ypsilanti. A second-year student in construction trades at the William D. Ford Career Technical Center, he faces the challenge of doing as good, if not better than, last year's student competitors. "I'm confident I can do well, but I'm not sure what to expect," said the John Glenn High School senior. "But I'm nervous, especially after the first year (2005) of doing it. The guy went all the way to the nationals. Those are some very big shoes to fill." SkillsUSA is the former Vocational Industrial Clubs of America. It's a national non-profit organization for teachers and high school and college students who are prepar-

ing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations, including health occupations. Holtzman, along with fellow second-year students Clifford Daniels and Jacob Quatlander, will represent the Wayne-Westland school district at the regional competition after coming out on top of a local competition. David Barber is the alternate. At the local event, the students were given 5½ hours to build a doghouse. They received a list of tools they needed to bring to the site as well as the dress code and were allowed to arrive a half-hour early to organize their 10-by-10-foot work area. They didn't know what they were building until the day of the competition when they received the materials to complete the job, including blueprints and job change orders. They had time to look over



Timothy Lewis stops to check the design plans during the SkillsUSA competition.

their blueprints and had five minutes to ask questions. Then they took a five-question test before going to work. The test counted for 20 percent of their score.

"I had no idea of what to expect," said Holtzman. "I went in there and tried to build as much as I could plus

PLEASE SEE SKILLS, A6

Officer lauded for drunken driving arrests

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

To people who drive drunk, Kenneth Percin is a repeat offender. Time after time, he gets them off the street. Percin, a Westland police officer, arrested 95 drunken drivers in 2005, earning him two Lifesaver Awards within the last two weeks from state and county chapters of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD. Police Chief Daniel Pfannes couldn't be prouder. "Every drunk driver is a potential car crash waiting to happen," Pfannes said. "It is unknown how many people were potentially saved by the efforts of Officer Percin. The one thing we know for sure is that Percin definitely made our streets safer for the public." Percin won a state Lifesaver Award in late February during a ceremony by the Michigan MADD organization and the state Office of Highway and



Percin

Safety Planning. He was one of nine officers honored, and he had the third-highest arrest totals for drunken driving. On Thursday, Percin won another Lifesaver Award during a Wayne County MADD event that honored 29 officers for making roads safer. "This is the seventh time that Officer Percin has been recognized and awarded for his life-saving efforts," Pfannes said. "Ken's positive attitude toward drunk driving enforcement is unparalleled. He is someone that this community should be proud of." Percin, 37, also was honored last year as Westland Police Officer of the Year - not only for getting drunken drivers off the road, but for an exemplary year that included solving armed robberies and vandal-

PLEASE SEE OFFICER, A4

Westland wins 'bloody' battle

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland was the bloodiest city in Wayne County following a battle that pitted communities against each other. Forget the tourniquet, though. It's all good. Westland earned an award from the American Red Cross Southeastern Michigan Chapter for organizing the most successful blood drive during the Battle of the Badges, in which police officers and firefighters competed to recruit the most donors. Mayor Sandra Cicirelli recently accepted the award during a Wayne County Commission meeting, earning accolades for a battle fought last summer to ease a critical blood shortage. "Our public safety employees are the very best, and they see the need for blood donations every day in the course of their jobs," Cicirelli said. "They really stepped up to the plate, and we are very proud that they were the best in Wayne County." Wayne County had 10 blood

drives and collected 402 pints. In all, firefighters beat out police officers for recruiting more donors. Westland bled blue, though, with local police actually outpacing firefighters 55 pints to 40. Still, the Westland Fire Department won accolades for recruiting more donors than any other fire department in Wayne County. Westland will hold the Battle of the Badges trophy until the next blood war this summer. Cicirelli accepted the award in February along with Fire Chief Michael Reddy and Deputy Police Chief Marc Stobbe. They received it from Mary Anne Stella, Red Cross director of corporate relations. A single unit of blood can save up to three lives, and donations can be made every 56 days. Donors must be in good health, weigh at least 110 pounds and be at least 17 years old. To help, call (800) GIVELIFE.

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Board halts man's 'out of line' comments

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Tensions flared at the start of Monday's Livonia Board of Education meeting as trustees stopped one Livonia parent after he suggested Supt. Randy Liepa's private business should be made public. "If anyone questions what we're doing, how we're doing it or how we voted, they have every right in the world," said Dan Lessard, board president. "Unless you want to bring an attorney, don't question my integrity." He was responding to public comments made by Mark Wojcik, a parent who shared his disapproval of the Legacy Initiative during the committee meeting. He strayed from the topic of school closings and reorganization to suggest the district might be involved in some secre-

tive real estate deals and said he thought Liepa's private business dealings should be disclosed publicly. At that point, trustee Lynda Scheel cut in: "This has nothing to do with the Legacy Initiative. I really want this to stop." Trustee Kevin Whitehead noted that the board policy requires a compelling reason in order to sell property. And Lessard said if the board was discussing a real estate issue, "you folks would be the first to know because it's gonna happen right here." Wojcik later described the board's reaction as becoming "very animated about the time that I discussed disclosure of any potential conflicts of interests for people in high positions." Lessard said Wojcik was "out of line." "I have no desire to violate the law and

I resent your implications," Lessard said during the meeting. "I resent them highly. The superintendent should be incensed for you dragging his hobby (co-owning horse stables) into this." He called the incident a personal attack on Liepa. Whitehead agreed. "To let the discussion of erroneous information go on is of no benefit to the Legacy Initiative," he said. The board's vocal reaction was unusual, with board members interrupting audience comments during a meeting. On Wednesday, Wojcik said he was "deeply sorry" if he offended anyone. "If there was anyone personally attacked I would guess that it was the Livonia community at large since the unleashing of the Legacy Initiative," he added.

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Coming Thursday in Filter

For better or worse

Check out the new Detroit Film Theatre season where the big-screen offerings will make you feel alive.

Network makes getting married easier

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

It's reported that some 10 percent of the 2.3 million couples who will get engaged this year did so in February on Valentine's Day, or so says the Diamond Information Center.

In Canton, Tracey Pawlowski is waiting for those happy couples to come see her about a cake. And one Westland company is hoping they'll book a cruise.

As the owner of Back Home Bakery, Pawlowski is building up the store's wedding business. Just as she was starting to get more orders for wedding cakes, she was invited to join the Wedding Referral Network - the first network of its kind in Michigan.

Here's the idea: A group of local businesses that provide wedding-related services form a group. Each member is screened and must prove their service or product measures up to the group's standards. Members must apply, and must provide references, which the network members call on. They must meet for a face-to-face interview and the members vote on whether or not to let the applicant join.

The group produced a network to benefit each other by way of word of mouth advertising, and put together a coupon book where brides can find specials on products such as wine from Vintner's Cellars in Canton, jewelry from Showroom of Elegance in Canton, and even honeymoon packages from CruiseOne in Westland.

Because the members get to know each other and each store's products - from table decorating and entertainment to jewelry and just about everything else wedding related - they can confidently recommend services by other members, said WRN creator photographer Basel Abunab.

"I noticed that I booked weddings from two sources - an ad or a referral. And about 70 percent of my business was coming from referrals, so I wanted to do something

more structured around that idea," said Abunab, a Plymouth resident who owns Precious Memories Photography in Canton.

But he wants to provide special services for brides without making them feel pressured.

"Once you get inducted into the WRN, you have to give something back to the brides," he said. Most give a discount but all treat the brides the way Abunab wants them to be treated.

"The attitude is like a culture. You treat the bride like a queen. It's her day, and she should be treated special," he said.

It's a philosophy which has worked for Pawlowski and the rest of the network, which formed in July.

Pawlowski has been to just two bridal trade shows, and at the first one, she went by the book. She had a rehearsed sales pitch, but it just didn't feel right to her, she said. So it was no surprise that no one she met at the show called her to inquire about wedding cakes.

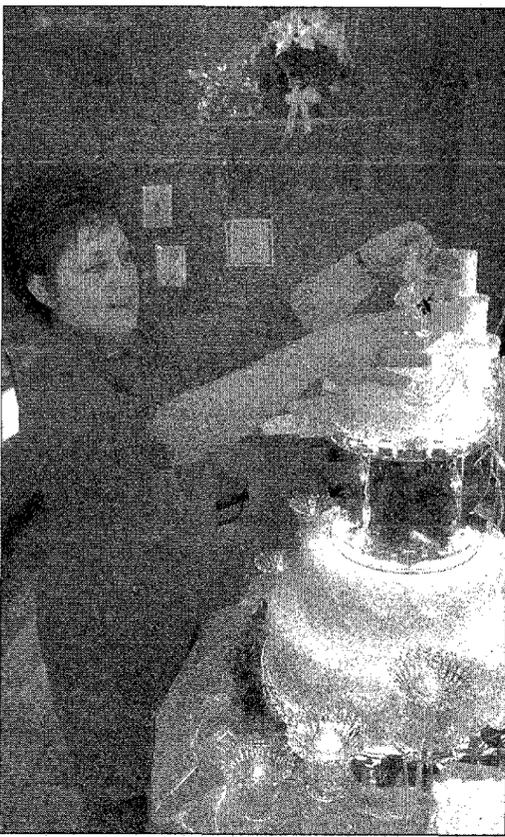
But the second show was different. She and others from the network took a more laid-back approach, and just started talking to brides. They wanted to know things like, "How did you meet your future husband? How long have you been dating? Are you planning a honeymoon?"

Pawlowski stopped trying to sell cake and just started giving away samples of baked goods. "The brides had all sort of gravitated to us because we were much more about them, and much less about selling services," she said. And the brides picked up on the network members' genuine interest, and Pawlowski's phone started ringing.

"My philosophy is that if I can get something into your mouth, you're probably going to love it," Pawlowski said.

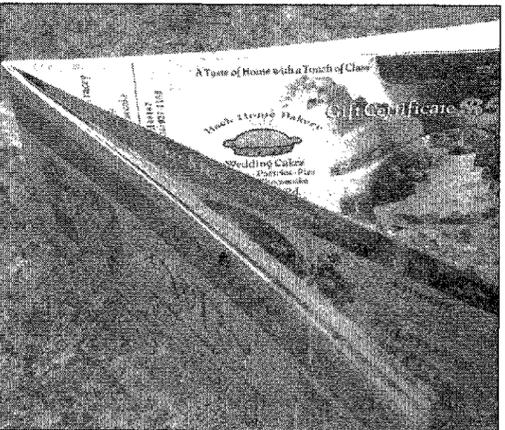
For more information about the Wedding Referral Network, visit online at www.thewrn.com.

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PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tracey Pawlowski, owner of Back Home Bakery in Canton, is one of several business owners who are members of the Wedding Referral Network.



The referral group produces a book of coupons that provides discounts for wedding-related goods and services. This is the 2005 edition.

Event to help police tactical response unit

The Firing Line Indoor Gun Range & Shop has announced its annual fund-raiser to benefit the Westland Police Department's tactical response team.

The fourth cigar party is scheduled for 5 p.m. Saturday, March 18, at the Hellenic Cultural Center, on Joy east of Newburgh. Tickets are \$50 and will include a buffet dinner, open bar, Vegas night, 50/50 raffle, prize raffles and a silent auction. Entertainment will include musical guest The Foxmoor Four and a traveling magician.

The event was started when the city was financially unable to equip the tactical response team, and it has continued due to its popularity. In all, \$40,000 has been raised, with attendance growing from 100 people to 400. Event sponsor-

ships are available ranging from \$100 to \$550.

Those attending are expected to include Chris Tamer, formerly of the National Hockey League's Atlanta Thrashers and Pittsburgh Penguins; Dave Roberts, formerly with the Vancouver Canucks; and Pete Stoyanovich, formerly of the Miami Dolphins and the Kansas City Chiefs.

For more information, e-mail Westland police Officer Jeff Kavanaugh at jkavanaugh@wpld.net or call the police station at (734) 722-9600. Donations may be sent to the Westland Police Department, Attn: Officer Jeff Kavanaugh, 36701 Ford Road, Westland, MI, 48185. The Westland Chamber of Commerce and The Firing Line also have tickets available and will accept donations.

Toy holds office hours

Residents can meet with State Sen. Laura Toy during local office hours scheduled for Monday in Livonia and Redford.

The Livonia Republican, whose 6th District includes Garden City and Westland, will meet with residents 11 a.m. to noon at the Livonia Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road.

Toy will be available to talk

with residents 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. at the Redford Senior Center, 12121 Hemingway.

No appointment is necessary and residents will be able to discuss state issues with the senator.

Those unable to attend can contact Toy by mail at P.O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909, by phone at (517) 373-1707, or by e-mail at senttoy@senate.michigan.gov.

Senate meeting on schools set

State Sen. Bruce Patterson, R-Canton, will host an open meeting for all those who wish to hear or speak about education and school finance.

The meeting will be in Flat Rock, 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 8. The Senate Education Committee chairman, Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) and the K-12 School Funding Subcommittee Chairman, Sen. Ron Jelinek, of the Appropriations Committee, will hear public input.

The meeting will be at the Flat Rock Community Center, One Maguire Street, Flat Rock,

near Exit 29B (Flat Rock) off I-75. The Center's phone number is (734) 782-3488.

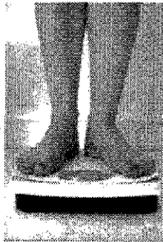
The last meeting, in Brownstown, was attended by over 200 people.

There, the Senate Education Committee heard over 20 speakers.

Parents, teachers, students, and school administrators gave valued insights. Sen. Patterson expressed his warm appreciation for the insights and concerns stated. He promised to bring his influence to bear on the final shape of school legis-

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Wayne Memorial High School ninth-grader Cory Mullins throws a strike.

Kids bowled over by midwinter break

Midwinter break started with a crash of bowling balls against pins at the Westland Parks and Recreation Department's Bowling Party. Held at Westland Bowl, 96 children and their parents turned out Monday for the three-hour event.

"We'd hoped 50 would sign up, and we would have been ecstatic with 100," said recreation Supervisor Margaret Martin, who greeted guests at the door.

Those participating enjoyed three games of bowling and munched on hot dogs. Martin also held drawings throughout the event, giving away future passes to the Bailey Center swimming pool and Concrete Jungle skatepark.

The recreation department has been offering a lineup of golf, soccer, basketball and similar activities for several

years for schoolchildren looking for activities during midwinter break.

Children also can blow the dust off their skateboards, with the recreation department hoping to have Concrete Jungle open as much as possible when weather permits. The cost for Wayne County residents is \$3 for children and \$5 for adults.

All-day passes also are available.

This year's installment was to end Friday with the Detroit Pistons basketball camp. Martin was predicting a sell-out.

The midwinter break program has been so successful that a similar one is being offered during Easter vacation, April 17-21.

For more information about parks and recreation programs, call (734) 722-7620.



Madison Todd, 4, of Wayne, who tried to steer her ball, reacts after it went into the gutter at Westland Bowl. She and her four sisters took part in a midwinter break program offered through the Westland Parks and Recreation Department.

PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Cydney Brock, 9, a fourth-grader at Patchin Elementary School, lets a bowling ball fly during the midwinter break program.



Sisters Breanna Todd, 10, (from left), Kandace, 12, Erica, 7, and Elizabeth, 9, get help from their mother, Emily, in setting up for the next bowling game. The children are four of seven that Emily and her husband Doyle of Wayne have adopted. They attend Schweitzer Elementary.

Laurel Manor event to benefit soldiers' families

A major fund-raiser will be held in Livonia next month for the families of U.S. soldiers wounded or killed in military combat.

The Fallen and Wounded Soldiers' Fund is staging the event that will take place at Laurel Manor, starting at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, March 11. The fund helps families travel to visit their wounded soldiers in overseas hospitals, send their children to college, and provide handicap accessibility equipment at the homes of wounded and disabled soldiers.

"We'd like to raise at least \$100,000," said Tino DelSignore, an event organizer and Laurel Manor's co-owner. "We'd like to get at least 1,000 people at this event which sup-

ports a great cause."

The program begins at 5:30 p.m. Television meteorologist Chuck Gaidica will serve as master of ceremonies. Guest speakers will include Special Forces Master Sgt. William Gillette, Col. Danny Pummill from the Office of the Secretary of the Army, and U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton. DelSignore added entertainment is planned.

In addition to ticket sales and sponsorships, the event will also raise money with an auction of dinners, overnight hotel stays, jewelry and Special Forces paraphernalia. Ticket prices start at \$100 per person, with corporate sponsorship opportunities available. Call Chris Cornelius at (248) 417-6984.

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OFFICER

FROM PAGE A1

ism cases.
Ne'chole McClendon, executive director of the Wayne County MADD chapter, praised Percin's efforts.
"He makes the roadways safer for all of us," she said Friday. "He is someone to look up to."
During Thursday's ceremony at Livonia's Burton Manor, the county chapter's senior victim advocate, Pam Karvonen, said the honored officers don't just arrest intoxicated motorists, but they also spend extra time to demonstrate patience and compassion to families of those killed and hurt in drunken driving crashes.
"We've talked to some victims who said they were lucky

their crash wasn't worse, but I think the lucky ones are those who aren't harmed at all by a drunk driver," Karvonen told the officers. "Because of your efforts, we have a lot of lucky people walking around today."
Wayne County CEO Robert Ficano said the changing culture over the past 20 years has made more people aware of their responsibilities when they drink alcohol.
Ficano talked about how alcoholics were common in television sit-coms and no one thought of designated drivers 20 years ago, but that has changed with the educational efforts of MADD and enforcement efforts of police.
"Changing culture is like trying to turn an ocean-liner around," Ficano told the crowd of 150 police officers, firefighters and drunken driving vic-

tims. "It takes time. You can't do it on a dime. But we are starting to see less drunk driving crashes because you are getting drunk drivers off the road."
"The entire southeastern Michigan community appreciates what you do."
In Westland, Percin has been selected to attend a national MADD awards and training session in April in Austin, Texas. His trip will be paid by the Office of Highway and Safety Planning.
"Ken's efforts have now transcended local news," Pfannes said. "His accomplishments are now being recognized on a national level."
Staff writer Dan West contributed to this story.
dclcm@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

Madonna's ASL program adds new technology

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Madonna University will receive \$50,000 worth of new technology specifically designed for its American Sign Language program.
The Livonia-based university has been awarded with the SANS Inc. and Sony Virtuoso™ grant.
With the grant comes 12 new computers, complete with cameras, headsets, software, video and sound cards, and an instructor's station. All the technology is going to be incorporated into the ASL program in time for summer classes.
The equipment is meant to enhance classroom instruction. "This should greatly assist us with documenting language (skills)," said Ken Rust, chair of the American Sign Language Department. "We will have a running record of their abilities. If anything needs to be worked on, we can identify it right away."
He said the new technology will make it possible for students to keep a log of how their language skills develop.
The grant brings with it the

ability for students to create digital DVDs. Students will be able to store footage of them using ASL, as well as use the technique to add to research papers and resumes.
"One of the things we wanted to do was provide an opportunity for graduating students to create a digitized portfolio on DVD of their sign language skills and interpretive skills," said Rust. "It would also include their resume and best written work."
The lab, though primarily meant for ASL student use, will also be used in the Foreign Language and English as a Second Language programs at Madonna University. Rust said the school attracts a lot of international students who will also benefit from the new equipment.
"The classroom lab experience is just what we needed," said Rust.
He called the lab and technology "a useful tool for student self-evaluation and as an assessment tool for faculty."
"The key is that ASL students will be able to see the link between what they do and how they do it."

Many grant applications were received, according to Stella Derum, national marketing director for SANS Inc. "We chose Madonna University because they presented a clear vision to incorporate our technology in the instructional classroom for their language programs and for their students to digitally document their skills development and proficiency," she said.
Madonna University's Sign Language Studies program is the only four-year program of its kind in the country. Students can earn a bachelor's degree in Sign Language Studies or take on a more advanced program in American Sign Language Interpreting.
Rust said he encourages students, especially those in high school, to consider sign language studies as a future career.
"This really is a growing career, and we're willing to serve," he said.
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6 p.m. Thursday, March 2 • HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS
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6 p.m. Tuesday, March 7 • WILLIAM P. PAUST PUBLIC LIBRARY
9123 Central City Parkway, Westland • Meeting Room B

6 p.m. Thursday, March 30 • CASINO WINDSOR
377 Riverside Drive East, Windsor • Promenade A

6 p.m. Tuesday, April 11 • HENRY FORD WYANDOTTE HOSPITAL
2133 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte • Multipurpose Room A

6 p.m. Wednesday, April 26 • CENTER FOR HEALTH SERVICES
23050 West Road, Brownstown Twp. (Between I-75 and Telegraph Rd.)

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DEATHS

A Peter J. Achille Achille, 91, formerly of Livonia, died Feb. 27.	B Lawrence W. Blunk Blunk, 95, of Plymouth, died March 1. Eleanor M. Budd Budd died Feb. 27.	C Frank Leroy Cochran Cochran, 87, of Westland, died Feb. 27. Virginia "Ginny" Cunningham Cunningham, 76, formerly of Plymouth, died Feb. 26.	F Marie A. Frey Frey, 92, of Lake Orion, died Feb. 24.	G Laura J. Gray Gray, 87, of Farmington Hills, died March 1.	H David K. Hammond Hammond, 64, of Royal Oak, died Feb. 24.	J Lillian Ruth Jacobsen Jacobsen, 87, formerly of Troy, died Feb. 28.	K Rose M. Kitti Kitti, 92, of Canton Township, died Feb. 27. B. Elizabeth "Betty" Knight Knight, of Bloomfield Hills, died Feb. 26.	M Dr. Raymond F. Madigan Madigan, 82, of Livonia, died. Bethelene L. Morris Morris, 86, of Rochester, died Feb. 26.	R Marilyn J. Ratzenberger Ratzenberger, 73, of Lake Orion, died Feb. 28. Franco A. Rea Rea, 56, of Livonia, died Feb. 27.	S Mary Elizabeth Shaw Shaw, 85, of Farmington Hills, died Feb. 24. Russell L. Simonson Sr. Simonson, 88, of Clarkston, died Feb. 25. Harold E. Smith Smith, 85, of Westland, died March 2. Lois Smith Smith, 89, of Rochester Hills, formerly of Kalamazoo, died Feb. 25.
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Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's newspaper in Passages on page C4.

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Please recycle this newspaper

Cookbook sale

A cookbook put together by the Friends of the Westland Historical Museum will be sold this week at the museum, on Wayne Road between Cherry Hill and Marquette.

Cookbooks will sell for \$10. They contain 295 recipes from 134 contributors. The book, *Cooking With Friends*, was compiled by a committee of historians including Ruth Dale, Georgia McDaniel, Virginia Braun and Connie Wagenschutz.

The book will be on sale at the museum 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, and Wednesday, March 8, and 1-4 p.m. Saturday, March 11. Proceeds will be used to help renovate the city's historic buildings.

The book includes four local pages at the front of historical information, as well as 16 helpful hints at the end. The book delves into five categories, including soups and salads; vegetables; meats and main dishes; breads and cakes; and cookies and desserts.

A Westland artist, Dorothy Drummond, made artistic drawings of five historic city-owned buildings especially for the book.

For more information, call Ruth Dale at (734) 425-1955.

WYAA meeting set

The Westland Youth Athletic Association will hold a special general membership meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 16th, at the Lange Compound, 6050 Farmington Road, in Westland. The purpose will be to discuss the possible sale of the WYAA property. All life-

time and current members in good standing are encouraged to attend. For more information call Mark Rodriguez at (734) 276-1979.

AMVETS events

AMVETS 171 Ladies Auxiliary will have a fund-raising breakfast 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, March 12, at the AMVETS hall, 1217 Merriman Road. Cost is \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for children.

The auxiliary also will sponsor a dinner to help Paws With A Cause at 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 22, at the hall. Cost is \$5 and there will be a cash bar. Paws With A Cause provides trained dogs for people with disabilities.

Also, the AMVETS hall will host a psychic fair noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 26. Admission is \$2; readings will cost extra.

Bunny bowl

Children will have a chance to bowl with the Easter Bunny 1-3 p.m. Saturday, April 1, at Town & Country Bowling Alley, at Wayne and Avondale.

Cost is \$7, and children must have adult supervision. The cost includes one game of bowling and shoes, one slice of pizza or one hot dog, and pop. Tickets may be purchased by calling (734) 722-6478.

The event is being sponsored by junior and youth members of Grange No. 389. Part of the proceeds will go to AAA Crisis Pregnancy Center.

Senior dinners

The Wayne Ford Civic League is offering a dinner for seniors noon to 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 5 and 19, at the league hall, 1645 N. Wayne Road, Westland. The price is \$8 for members and \$10 for nonmembers for a buffet dinner with beer, wine, pop, and dancing to live entertainment. The event is for people age 60 and older. Call (734) 728-5010 for more information.

Pancake Breakfast

The Westland Senior Resources Department will have an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast 8:30-11 a.m. Thursday, March 9, at the senior Friendship Center on Newburgh Road south of Ford.

The cost will be \$4 for buttermilk pancakes, multigrain pancakes, bacon, sausage and beverage. The public is invited to attend.

Author speaks

The Education Commission at St. Simon and Jude Catholic Church in Westland will host a presentation by nationally known author Angela Bonavoglia at 7 p.m. Friday, March 17, at the church, 32500 Palmer. Bonavoglia wrote *Good Catholic Girls*, a book about how women are leading the fight to change the Catholic Church. Her talk is open to the public.

Dancing classes

Dancing Singles in association with the Westland Parks and Recreation Department is offering beginner square dance class plus workshop Monday, March 6, at the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford. The class will be at 7 p.m., followed by the workshop at 8:15 p.m. Cost is \$30 for six weeks.

For more information, call Ray Wiles at (313) 383-2783.

Round dance classes, covering a variety of dance rhythms and choreographed step routines, are available Wednesday evenings at the Bailey Center. The cost is \$12 per month.

Round dances also are being held 6-9 p.m. Sunday, March 5, May 7, July 9 and Sept. 10, and cost \$3 per person. Phase 2 and 3 and some easy Phase 4 dances will be featured. For more information, call Judy at (734) 422-8738.

Quilt Show

The Plymouth/Westland Grange 389 is holding its fourth annual spring quilt show, workshop and classes 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 22, at the senior Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland.

There will be classes in hand appliqué (cost is \$25) and techniques for a peony and vine wall hanging (cost is \$55), as well as a special quilt project for children (cost is \$6). Pre-registered by April 19.

There will be a demonstration of yarns and new products by Hancock Fabrics and a display of quilts. Velda Kirby of Make It Sew will speak at a quilt luncheon that costs \$10.

For \$1, people can enter quilts to be judged in such categories as antique, mixed technique, mixed medium, single technique, group quilting, quilted clothing, wall hanging and unfinished top.

Admission is \$1 in advance and \$2 at the door.

For more information, call Sharon Strebbing at (734) 722-4857 after 6 p.m.

Art Auction

The Wayne Rotary Club and Wayne Parks and Recreation Department are sponsoring an Art Auction, featuring art in all media and price ranges. It will be Friday, March 24, at the Wayne Community Center, 4635 Howe, Wayne.

There will be a preview at 6:30 p.m., followed by the auction at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person which includes door prizes, silent auction, wine and cheese, hors d'oeuvres, dessert and coffee and cash bar.

Proceeds will benefit the Playscape for Rotary Park No. 1. For tickets or for more information, call (734) 721-7400.

Open houses

St. Damian School will host its annual open house from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, March 12. An accredited Catholic school, St. Damian is accepting enrollment for all classes at the school at 29891 Joy between Middlebelt and Merriman. It offers 3- and 4-year-old preschool, full-day kindergarten and grades one-eight. For more information, call (734) 427-1680.

Willow Creek Co-Op Preschool will have an open house 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the preschool in Kirk of Our Savior Church, 36660 Cherry Hill, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-0078.

Free seminar

Vickey Foley, marketing director and development, and Penny Thomas, director of social service, both with Community Hospice, will

explain advanced directives, at a free seminar at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 25, in Meeting Room A/B of the Westland public library, 6123 Central City Parkway.

Sometimes called living wills, advanced directives are documents which state a person's wishes on such things as extreme measures, feeding tubes and ventilators.

Bonnie Hilberer, an advanced planning funeral professional with Vermeulen Funeral Homes, also will be there to explain options for funeral preplanning. Call the library at (734) 326-6123.

Singers needed

Do you like singing religious music? Kirk of Our Savior on Cherry Hill west of Wayne Road, Westland, is looking for singers for its adult (ages 13 and up) traditional choir. All Christian faiths and all voice ranges are welcome. Rehearsals are at 7 p.m. Thursdays. Call Tim at (734) 718-8733 or the church at (734) 728-1088.

Car donations

People with a car to donate can give it to Veterans Haven. The organization is accepting cars, running or not running, that are given to veterans to provide them with transportation to work, school or medical needs.

To date, the agency has given away more than 250 vehicles and three fully furnished mobile homes to needy veterans. To donate, call Veterans Haven at (734) 728-0527 or go to vetshaveninfo.org on the Internet.

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Thursday, March 9 5:30-7 p.m. **Plymouth-Canton Montessori School** 45245 Joy Road, Canton (734) 459-1550

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MARCH 6-31

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Detroit Zoo vote a winner among local residents

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Wednesday's vote by the Detroit City Council will keep the Detroit Zoo open pleased local residents. "I'm just glad the zoo's not closing," said Debbie Borst of Plymouth Township, a member of the Detroit Zoological Society. The Detroit City Council voted Wednesday to turn zoo operations over to the zoological society. Borst, her husband and five

children enjoy their trips to the zoo, including the kids' field trips in first and second grade. "They always like that, too." She noted that officials might likely want to have reopened the zoo in 10 years if it had closed. "The cost of doing that would be just prohibitive. At least they're thinking ahead," said Borst, whose 10-year-old daughter was particularly happy about the news. "She loves to go to the zoo." Officials at the Detroit Zoo

are relieved. "We're pleased that the council voted yes," said zoo spokeswoman Patricia Mills Thursday. "Now we can move forward." "It was very heartening to see all the support that we had from the public and our members and the media," Mills said. "No one wanted to see the zoo close, including members of City Council. We're very happy." There's still the issue of state funding, "which we should know about soon." A total of \$4 million will be needed from the legislature. "We're hopeful," Mills said. If state funding comes through, the agreement would soon take effect. "It'll be pretty seamless for the visitors. It'll be business as usual," she said. Zoo staffers will take care of the animals and guests as before. Information on the zoo is available online at www.detroitzoo.org. There's a link to the far right, "Support the Zoo," for membership, volunteering and donations. For information, call (248) 398-0900.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pardeep Singh nails the framing for his structure.

SKILLS

FROM PAGE A1

take the written test, so I had to rush. I didn't finish the competition because I took too long to read the blueprints."

According to instructor Mark Valchine, the idea is to complete the project. Students get enough wood to complete it. A wrong cut and they won't have enough to finish it. They ask for more materials, but ideally, if they make a mistake, they need to find a way around it and fix it, he said.

"They were judged on a 1/8-inch tolerance," he said. "If they were off more than 1/8 inch, they had points taken off. You could tell it was their first time competing. They didn't know they had to move, so it served its purpose."

The competition dovetails into Holtzman's future plans. His goal is to land an apprenticeship with an electrical company to work toward becoming a master electrician and home builder.

"I want to get as much experience as I can," he said.

For the district competition, students showed up well in advance of the start. Holtzman was the first to arrive at 6:50 a.m. and by the time Valchine got there just after 7 a.m. there were a few students waiting.

"I wanted to look over my notes before the competition," said Holtzman.

Valchine and the four students have been practicing for the regionals, meeting after school twice a week. Five different top-notch schools will be competing, so Valchine plans on bringing the group together at 5 a.m. the day of the competition. "It's really important to get them up and



Clifford Daniels won the district SkillsUSA competition and advances to the regionals in Ypsilanti.

moving and get some good food in them," Valchine said.

As for the competition itself, Holtzman knows what needs to be done.

"I definitely need to be quicker, I definitely know the regionals will be quicker," he said. smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112



CITY OF GARDEN CITY 2006 BOARD OF REVIEW DATES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO all property owners of the City of Garden City that the Board of Review will meet in session on the following date and time to examine the assessment roll for the current year:

Tuesday March 7, 2006 9:00 a.m.

The Board of Review will meet in session on the following days and times to hear appeals on the 2006 assessment roll:

NOTE: Meetings located in THE GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM with late night appointments on Tuesday & Wednesday

Monday	March 13, 2006	9:00am -5:00pm
Tuesday	March 14, 2006	1:00pm- 9:00pm
Wednesday	March 15, 2006	1:00pm- 9:00pm
Thursday	March 16, 2006	9:00am -5:00pm
Friday	March 17, 2006	9:00am -5:00pm

APPEALS BY APPOINTMENT or WRITE-IN. Write-ins must be received by Monday, March 13, 2006.

Tentative ratios and factors for the 2006 tax year are:

CLASS	PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT RATIO	PROJECTED EQUALIZATION FACTOR
Commercial	45.10 %	1.1086
Industrial	47.41 %	1.0546
Residential	49.21 %	1.0000
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Taxes are paid on TAXABLE value, which is the lower assessed value or capped value, unless there is a property transfer. The capped value is based on the CPI (Consumer Price Index), which will increase 3.3% for 2006. As a result, all Taxable Values will increase 3.3% unless there has been a transfer of ownership or an addition to the property.

The 2006 Assessment Roll will be open for inspection from March 7, 2006 through March 10, 2006 in the assessment office from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m..

ALLYSON BETTIS
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Publish: February 26, March 2, and 5, 2006

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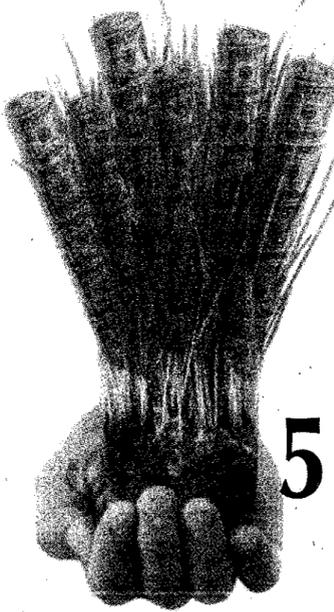


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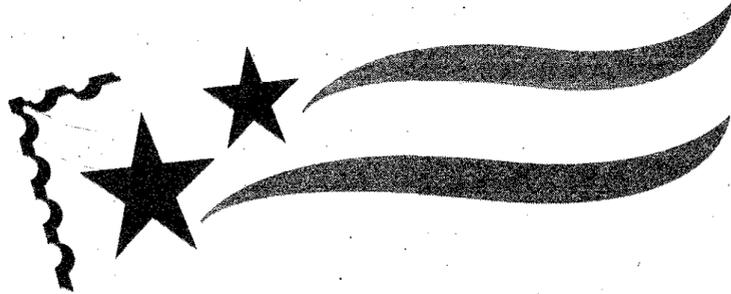


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Students want academic rigor it's relevant to their goals

A recent state Senate committee meeting on the proposal to require 18 high school credits, two students from Haven High School came forward to offer their views on the subject. Each gave strong, telling testimony about their educational goals, about continuing feelings about differences and about a clash of expectations.



her

Jake Taylor, a senior at Woodhaven, told the committee, chaired by Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, that he was learning welding in order to pursue a trade as a boiler maker. He passionately argued that his career goals were every bit as valid as those of future doctors, lawyers and scientists and shouldn't be shunted aside if new credit standards are implemented.

"I can't afford college and some have to be working after graduation," he said. "It also made the valid point that he could be earning a good income a lot sooner than someone who goes away to college."

He is the son of a pipefitter (who was some of a jack of all trades), I think Jake has some good points. Not all good jobs require a bachelor's degree, and we will continue to need people for health care technicians, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, mechanics and, yes, boiler makers. And jobs do and will pay good wages. But these positions will require some post school training and will require the solid academic base proposed in the requirements. And, unfortunately, many of these jobs in the traditional factory will not be done in this country because wages have become prohibitive for corporations.

Katie Williams, another senior, had to wait a while to make her presentation, anxiously rolling and unrolling her written statement. She had several concerns: the requirements will cut into sports they will cut into social time, they are costly tutoring that many parents can't afford and that they aren't relevant to their interest in pursuing some kind of dental education.

The argument about social time is not one that presses many adults, who watch fierce competition dragging our economy down. And many would argue that students who love sports will find a way to make the most important question Katie Williams, "What do these requirements have to

They dropped out because nobody seemed to care enough to push them to do their best.

do with me?"

The state Department of Education is pushing a mantra that goes "rigor, relevance, relationships" with the added phrase "rigor without relevance is meaningless." Unfortunately, many students have a hard time grasping the relevance of $x + 23 = 2x + 45$, especially as it applies to welding or dentistry. (Or journalism for that matter.)

But it is relevant to being educated and it is, often, relevant to skilled trades. In fact Jeremy Hughes, deputy state superintendent of public instruction, argued Monday that the math credits could be earned in the context of career tech classes and would be more relevant if they were.

And here's the kicker. On Thursday, the Bill & Melissa Gates Foundation released a survey of high school dropouts, conducted by the Peter D. Hart Research Associates. They found that nearly two-thirds of high school dropouts would have worked harder if expectations had been higher. They didn't drop out because school was too hard; they dropped out because school was too easy. They dropped out because nobody seemed to care enough to push them to do their best. They dropped out because they were "unchallenged, unmotivated, bored and unsupported."

Economics, family illness and becoming a parent were the other reasons cited.

According to the survey of 470 dropouts ages 16-25, nearly 50 percent said they left school "because their classes were boring and not relevant to their lives or career aspirations" and a majority said that their schools did not motivate them to work hard.

The survey also reports that 62 percent of those surveyed had C or better grades and 70 percent reported that they were confident they would have met graduation requirements.

If the legislature approves some form of mandated requirements and schools begin to implement them, they need to understand the concerns of Jake, Katie and those students who couldn't be bothered to finish high school.

Rigor, relevance, relationships. Yes!

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

There's plenty of room for wildlife outside of the zoo

Let's stray into dangerous territory: The Great Outdoors.

I believe the wildness of nature is best appreciated through a thick pane of glass — even in summer. Roughing it means not having cable TV. I haven't watered my lawn in three years. Somehow it remains green, although I don't think it's made up of grass anymore.



Greg Kowalski

The point is, I don't purport to know anything about nature. But all the commotion over the Detroit Zoo and its possible closing got me thinking about a little realized fact of Detroit and its environs. There's a lot more wildlife out there than we realize.

I don't mean the spiders under the stairs that we co-exist with or the occasional fly that finds a way into the living room. I'm talking about real creatures of the forest.

One night a few years ago, my neighbor came pounding on my door at about 10 p.m. "You have to help me," she said, clearly upset. "There's a giant rat on my porch."

I grabbed a flashlight and followed her to her house. "There," she pointed. I aimed my flashlight into the corner. Two beady eyes stared back at me and a mouth filled with impressive little teeth hissed open.

"That's not a rat," I said. "It's a 'possum." A fat 'possum. Somehow it had adapted to a tight urban neighborhood where there weren't even many trees.

We gave it some cheese (I don't know if 'possums eat cheese) and left it alone. That wasn't the only 'possum I've ever seen roaming the city streets. Or the only wild animal.

There are plenty of pheasants in the expansive empty fields that litter Detroit. I've also seen bats and other assorted flying creatures. I don't know what they were, but they were not pigeons or sparrows.

A while ago, not far from downtown Birmingham, a resident found a dead owl in a tree in front of his home. It was a pretty big owl,

There are plenty of pheasants in the expansive empty fields that litter Detroit. I've also seen bats and other assorted flying creatures. I don't know what they were, but they were not pigeons or sparrows. A while ago, not far from downtown Birmingham, a resident found a dead owl in a tree in front of his home.

too. And who knows what's in Quarton Lake, although the carp have all been fried.

Wild deer also are plentiful in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area. There was a whole herd, or flock, or whatever you call them, living in the Woodward-Lone Pine area. I haven't seen any roaming the neighborhood south of Eight Mile Road, except at Belle Isle, but frankly I'm surprised I haven't. There are huge empty spaces that would be ideal habitat for some wild animals.

I'm not suggesting that if the zoo had gone under we should have released the animals into the wide open fields of Detroit, although there are huge stretches of vacant lots that would suit a lot of them fairly well. But the banks of Grand River really are not a place for crocodiles, and lions would not be comfortable roaming the slopes of Mt. Elliott.

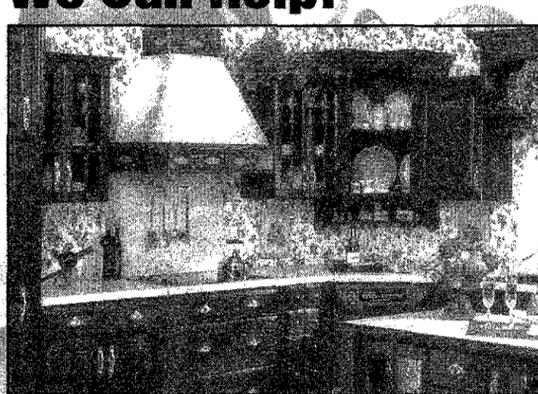
But I've often felt that someone should conduct wildlife tours of urban areas.

Some of the areas have gone back to their original state, with wildflowers abundant in the summer. Indeed, in some areas you can get an idea of what the metropolitan area was like more than a century ago. There are vast spaces interspersed with a few houses. It's fascinating in one way.

And sad in another.

Greg Kowalski is editor of the Birmingham Eccentric. He can be reached at (248) 901-2570 or at gkowsk@hometownlife.com.

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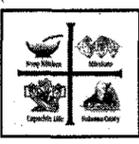
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Ficano proposes biotechnology partnership with MSU

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

A partnership with Michigan State University to develop biotechnology could do for Wayne County what the microchip did for Silicon Valley.

That was the message Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano delivered Wednesday in his annual State of the County address at the Wayne County Building in Detroit.

"You've heard the buzz - every day people are talking with excitement about biotechnology and alternative fuels made of corn, soybean and grain," Ficano said. "That's a hallmark of biotechnology. It's environmentally friendly. It also creates jobs of diverse skill levels."

Ficano introduced a plan to partner with MSU to develop E85, an alternative fuel that's 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, and other biotech patents.

"We're putting our plan in motion. I'll present a proposal to Lansing this month that exempts alternative fuel from taxes," he said.

Ficano also proposes funding to increase the number of E85 gas stations in the county. Currently there is only one station in Dearborn Heights. Ficano said he hopes to have 20 stations open by 2007.

"Last year alone, MSU received eight new biotech patents that can be licensed for commercial businesses to cre-



Ficano

ate jobs here," Ficano said. Ficano and MSU will seek state funding for research and development.

He also proposed that local communities work with the county to create an Agricultural Renaissance Zone to create research and manufacturing centers in the area around Detroit Metro Airport.

"We want to make sure our new biotech facilities have the same tax benefits as others in Michigan," he said.

Ficano said he supported the federally funded \$100 million grant to design a mass transit system between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

"I continue to encourage all elected officials to come together on adopting a transit system plan that will not be bogged down in politics and special interest agendas," he said. "We have the momentum. Now let's move to get it done."

Nancy White in Macomb County, L. Brooks Patterson in Oakland County, Mayor Kilpatrick in Detroit, myself - we're all ready to move. The governor is ready to move. This is a true sign of regional coop-

eration. Let's get our region moving now!"

Ficano declared the state of the county "stable and steady," citing three consecutive balanced budgets. The county is trying to eliminate \$56 million in deficits in county funds left over from 2003, 2004 and 2005 fiscal years.

Ficano renewed his proposal for a land bank that would clear title on vacant, tax-delinquent properties and free them up for redevelopment through county low-interest loans. The County Commission rejected an earlier proposal on the land bank because of differences about representation on the land bank board.

Ficano announced that a One-Stop Business Resource Center will be opening in Detroit soon to help small and medium-sized businesses.

The county executive said he will continue to promote economic globalization.

"Choosing to ignore the globalization of business or being angry about it will not lessen the harsh realities at home," he said. "In fact, it is counterproductive, we must discourage self-pity and the hand-wringing. We must capitalize on our opportunities."

He said his trip to China convinced him that Chinese leaders are interested in

investing in the Detroit metro area. He introduced two representatives from the Tempo Group, who will be building a 480,000-square-foot facility in

Canton that will employ 200.

He also proposed a Wayne Reads! program that would promote reading by providing books for mothers of new-

borns, literacy workshops and early childhood development tutors.

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SBT petition drive to go forward

BY ALEX LUNDBERG
STAFF WRITER

Despite a tight time frame and discouraging early projections, County Executive L. Brooks Patterson's initiative to repeal the state's Single Business Tax will move forward to the petition phase.

At a press conference Tuesday afternoon, Patterson said the effort will move on.

"I'm pleased to announce that we've reached our goal," he said. "We've taken in more than \$615,000 in pledges and have another \$185,000 in underwritten corporate loans."

Originally, the plan as announced at the State of the County address was to raise \$800,000 in pledges for the effort. A week later, based on lackluster fund raising, he amended that figure to \$600,000. At the Tuesday conference, he said the fund-raising effort would continue as the petition drive got under way.

Whatever the financial goals set or met, he said the response to the effort was a sign that the times are ripe for change.

"To achieve numbers this strong is evidence that we're ready for change in Michigan," Patterson said.

Changes, he said, are needed. Citing statistics that place Michigan near or at the bottom of the heap for job creation, job retention and personal income growth, he said the SBT has to go to make the state a more attractive place to start or expand a business. Others have made similar, ground up changes in their tax and business structure.

"In the 1980s, Ireland was the doormat of Europe, not somewhere you would want to do business," he said. "Now it's the second strongest economy in Europe."

The SBT generates about \$1.8 billion in revenue for the state's general fund. Patterson's plan says nothing about where replacement funds would come from. The petition drive, he said, would be an intervention for the state.

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