



Sailors battle Mother Nature in Mackinac race

HOMETOWNLIFE - SECTION C



Blood thirsty

HEALTH - PAGE C6

Fitness meet

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WESTLAND Observer

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2 women charged in festival stabbing

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Two young women were arraigned Friday on charges of beating and stabbing a 19-year-old woman during the Fourth of July fireworks display at the Westland Summer Festival.

Nicole Harrington, 17, of Westland and Joleen Krueger, 20, of Livonia are facing a July 20 court hearing on charges of assault with intent to do great bodily harm, less than murder, and felonious assault.

The women are accused of attacking the victim amid a huge crowd of spectators in the Bailey Recreation Center parking lot, near City Hall on Ford Road. The dispute allegedly started after the victim bumped into her assailants,

leading to a heated argument and then a fight, police Sgt. Steve Borisch said.

Harrington is accused of pulling a knife and stabbing the victim in the head, back and hand - injuries that left her in fair condition at Garden City Hospital. Krueger is accused of beating the victim.

The suspects fled through the festival crowd, Borisch said in court Friday, but police arrested them Wednesday at Harrington's mother's house in Westland.

Borisch told Westland 18th District Court Magistrate Donald Vandersloot on Friday that two witnesses who knew the suspects came forward.

"There were probably hundreds of witnesses," Borisch said.

After witnesses came forward, investigators got photos of the suspects by going online and getting copies of their driver licenses, Borisch told the *Observer*.

Police took the photos of the suspects to the hospital for identification by the victim, he said. "They deny the stabbing," Borisch said.

The incident happened about 10:17 p.m. Tuesday just as the fireworks display started erupting over Central City Park. It put a blemish on the end of a six-day festival that city officials said was otherwise a success.

On Friday, Vandersloot entered not-guilty pleas in the defendants' court files and ordered them to appear in court for a July 20 hearing that will determine whether they should stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

He ordered the women jailed on \$50,000/10 percent bonds, meaning each would have to post \$5,000 to be released. If convicted, they could face penalties ranging up to 10 years in prison.

Krueger told Vandersloot that she has a small daughter and that she lives with her father in Livonia.

Harrington told the magistrate that she attends John Glenn High School.

Borisch indicated in court that Harrington has been involved in previous fights, including one that involved a baseball bat.

"I'm afraid she may have a little bit of a violence problem," he said.

dclcm@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2110

4-H educator looks to expand program

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

Mention 4-H and horses, cows, rabbits and the like come to mind. But 4-H is much more than that, according to Laurie Rivetto.

The new 4-H educator for Wayne County Michigan State University Extension for western Wayne County, Rivetto is hoping to get the word out that the organization offers more than livestock, horses and ponies for youth ages 9-19 years.

"Anyone with any interest, a club can be created," said Rivetto. "Five youth from three different families and an adult to oversee them constitutes a club. They can choose what they want to do as an individual or as a group, and they can get support and materials and resources from the local office or the state."

To get the word out, Rivetto is reaching out to existing clubs like the Four Season 4-H Horse Club in Northville and working on a survey to find out what the "pressing needs" of



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As a 4-H educator, Laurie Rivetto is working on ways to reach out to western Wayne County youth to get them involved in the organization.

PLEASE SEE 4-H, A4

Godbout draws fire for campaign piece

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A campaign letter sent to Westland voters by state House candidate James Godbout is drawing strong criticism from the departing legislator he hopes to replace.

The letter includes a picture of Godbout standing on the House floor with state Rep. Glenn Anderson, before Anderson removed him as his campaign treasurer.

On Wednesday, Anderson said the letter implies he is endorsing Godbout for the 18th District seat when, in fact, he is supporting candidate Richard LeBlanc.

"I think he's trying to mislead the voters by doing this," said Anderson, D-Westland. "I think that was clearly his intent, and I just don't want the voters to be misled."

Anderson accused Godbout of issuing the letter as Westland voters began receiving their absentee ballots.

Godbout vehemently denied the allegations. He said the campaign piece, which also pictures him with Gov. Jennifer Granholm and Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli, was intended to show he can work with officials at all levels of government.

"Nowhere in the letter do I say that he endorses me," Godbout said. "There's nothing misleading about the piece. I was his treasurer for five years. That's all it says in that piece."

Godbout said he was dropped as Anderson's treasurer after announcing last year that he would campaign for the 18th District seat.

Godbout and LeBlanc - current Westland City Council members - are competing with former state Rep. Vince Pettipren to become the Democratic nominee in the state House race. The winner of the Aug. 8 primary will face Republican Sam Durante in November in a district that has been a

Democratic stronghold.

Godbout's campaign letter outlines some of his accomplishments and is signed by two local officials who endorse him - Police Chief Daniel Pfannes and Fire Chief Michael Reddy.

Anderson, who is leaving the House amid term limits, said Godbout never asked his permission to use the picture. "He did not do it with my approval," Anderson said Wednesday. "I just think that goes to the character of the person."

Anderson described himself as "firmly" in support of LeBlanc to replace him. (Anderson, meanwhile, is challenging 6th District state Sen. Laura Toy, R-Livonia, this political season.)

Anderson and Godbout had been longtime friends and political allies before they began having differences last year. Godbout said he used the picture from friendlier times as part of a campaign piece designed "to show my ability to work with all people."

"I'm disappointed that Representative Anderson didn't have the decency to call me to discuss his concerns before running to the media," Godbout said Thursday.

Anderson said Godbout should have contacted him before using the picture. Anderson said it was too late to discuss the issue after the letter had been sent out.

Anderson said the campaign piece appears designed to deceive voters. He said he wanted to address the issue quickly so that absentee voters aren't misled as they mail in their ballots.

"He's putting this piece out at the 11th hour for absentee voters," Anderson said.

The dispute between Godbout and Anderson marked a turning point in what had been a quiet 18th District race. Some political observers predicted months ago that it could become a contentious campaign.

Petitpren: Experience needed in Lansing

Three candidates will compete in the Aug. 8 primary to become the Democratic nominee in the 18th District state House race. This installment concludes a three-part series about them. The incumbent, Glenn Anderson, couldn't run due to term limits.

WESTLAND ELECTION 2006

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Vince Pettipren can boast what two other candidates cannot in his bid to become the next 18th District state representative.

Petitpren, 78, already served in the state House, completing three consecutive two-year terms in 1965-70.

He shrugged off any suggestion that the intervening 36 years have reduced his dedication or his ability to represent Westland residents in Lansing.

"I know the legislative process. I had to work very hard to accomplish things," he said during an interview with the *Observer*. "I've lived here 51 years. People do know me, and they do respect me."

Petitpren will face Westland City Council members James Godbout and Richard LeBlanc in the Aug. 8 primary. The victor will challenge lone Republican candidate Sam Durante in the Nov. 7 general election. The winner of that race will earn a two-year term for a job that pays \$79,650 a year.

Petitpren touted his qualifications as the reason voters should choose him. He has served as a U.S. Navy medic in Korea; taught at Wayne Memorial High School and Eastern Michigan University; worked as superintendent of Taylor schools; served nine years on the Wayne-Westland school board; chaired the 15th Democratic congressional district; and worked as a Wayne State University administrator.



Petitpren

Those are just a few of the accomplishments for Pettipren, who received his bachelor and master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University and his doctorate from Wayne State - all in the field of education.

"I have administrative abilities," he said, adding that as a state lawmaker he helped pave the way for Wayne County Community College and similar college systems by becoming "the father of the community college act."

Petitpren has five adult children, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. It was his late wife, Joan, that had urged him to return to politics, before she died in a 1999 car accident when another driver ran a red light.

PLEASE SEE PETITPREN, A4

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Number 13



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Coming Thursday in Filter

Art a la Ann Arbor



'Homespun charity' helps a nation

BY JAY M. GROSSMAN
STAFF WRITER

The three women sat around Karen Couf-Cohen's kitchen table in Franklin Village and mapped out their strategy to save the world.

They're starting in Ghana. "The bottom line is we want to share this wonderful story and inspire other people to think about how they can touch a life in becoming involved with this," Cohen said. "This is a small, homespun kind of charity ... you can donate a bike and a few months later it shows up in Africa."

Gisela Becker, 77, sits at the front of the table. She took a leap of faith in 1995, deciding almost impulsively to help a young boy from Ghana she had met on a bus while traveling in Europe.

His parents died in a car crash and the boy had traveled to Greece to work on the docks.

He lasted a couple of weeks before authorities discovered he was only 15.

The two met in Turkey. Becker was heading to a cousin's wedding in Istanbul, while the boy was searching for friends of his late parents.

They talked for hours and a connection was made. A year or so later, Becker found herself sleeping in a tent under the stars in Africa.

She was miserable. "The first night I thought I can't last here for two weeks," she said. "I didn't care anymore how I looked. It was so hot, it was so dirty. There were no fans — and air conditioning, forget it. There was nothing. There was no water. You'd get two-thirds of a pail of water and you have to deal with it. The streets are not paved ... they're red dirt. It was unbelievable. I didn't think I'd last another day."

Adler learned about Becker through a local newspaper article. She cut it out and shared it with her son, Aaron, 23, a student at Michigan State University who had traveled to Ghana to study abroad in 2004.

"Most of the time he doesn't come home and they (the articles) kind of get outdated ... it just so happened that the day the article was there, he came home and he read the article," Adler said.

"If you really want to know the whole story, he came home for Rosh Hashanah dinner, which he hasn't done in a 100 million years. He just so happened to come home that night for the dinner and about nine-thirty or so we get home and he is reading the article and he said, 'I'm calling this woman tonight!'"

Libby Adler sits next to her. She recently helped Becker by hosting a fund-raiser for a new orphanage in Kumasi, the second-largest city in Ghana.



A young boy drives a plastic toy truck donated by a family from the metro area.



Gisela Becker with Ekow, a native of Ghana who helps run her charity.

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all the people because their parents had AIDS ... so many of the men go abroad to work and bring (the disease) back to their wives.

"There is a Catholic orphanage that takes AIDS babies in Kumasi, so I'm not worried about children who are infected with AIDS. I'm looking to help the bigger kids — I want them to get an education so they can be on their own."

HIGHER CALLING

Why Ghana? Becker hears that question often. Adler answers it for her.

"We've had this discussion before; she's very religious and I'm very not religious. But she thinks, why did she meet this boy on the bus and why did I read the article that day and give it to my son. She thinks it's a higher calling. I think it's a coincidence. But whatever you want to call it, this just happened."

Adler pauses for a moment, perhaps realizing there really is no specific reason to help a village in Ghana.

It takes a leap of faith. "If she had been on a bus with a boy from Brazil, we'd probably have an orphanage in Brazil going. It just so happened this is how her life unfolded."

Cohen, who met Becker through a cultural program on Africa at The Roeper School, agrees.

"Thank God somebody is called upon for some spiritual reason to help somebody in this world," said Cohen, the publicist of the group. "Everyone has something that calls on them, that speaks to them, that they feel passionate about."

Becker shrugs. Her garage is filled with mattresses, bags of clothes, boxes of toys and other supplies that she plans to ship to Ghana in September. It will cost more than \$6,000 to transport the large storage box of goods by train to New York, where a ship will them carry it to Africa.

Becker will pay for this out of her own pocket — just as she mails \$40 a month to several schools in Ghana so they can pay for teachers.

Along with the orphanage, she wants to build a silo in Appiadu, a village in the Ashanti region, so the farmers can store their corn.

"The chief already gave me some land," she said. Adler also smiles.

"That's another reason why I decided to help," she said. "I knew there was no board of directors ... it's just Gisela."

Becker will pay for this out of her own pocket — just as she mails \$40 a month to several schools in Ghana so they can pay for teachers.

The Friends of the Westland Historical Museum will sponsor its third-annual flea market 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 22, on the grounds of the historic Perrinville Schoolhouse, built in 1856.

The schoolhouse is located on Warren Road at Cowan, just a quarter-mile west of Merriman Road.

The flea market will be held rain or shine, historian Ruth Dale said.

Donations are needed, with suggestions including dishes, small furniture, kitchen items, jewelry, toys, tools, antiques and collectibles — but no clothing.

Donations will be accepted 1-4 p.m. Saturdays July 1, 8 and 15 at the Westland Historical Museum, 857 N. Wayne Road between Marquette and Cherry Hill.

Spaces for this year's flea market will cost \$15 each. Proceeds from Friends of the Museum items will help restore the foundation of the 1850s museum.

For more information, call Ruth Dale at (734) 425-1955 or Virginia Braun at (734) 427-4648.

Preschool Fair

Stottlemeyer Early Childhood Center, 34801 Marquette, Westland, will hold its preschool registration fair from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 12.

Parents can register their child for the Head Start preschool program. Preschoolers will receive free books and there will be facepainting, story telling, games, crafts and refreshments.

For more information, call Maureen Reddy at (734) 419-2635.

New address

Westwood Community Church has moved to 9600 Wayne Road at Hunter in Westland. Praise and worship is at 10 a.m. Sunday. There also is a children's church and nursery, and doughnuts and coffee are also served. For more information, call (734) 254-0093.

Bible school

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church will have a vacation Bible school 9 a.m. to noon Monday-Friday, July 10-14, at the church, 37775 Palmer west of Newburgh.

The cost is \$15 per child and \$30 per family. Each family will receive a sing and play CD which includes songs learned at the Bible school.

To register or for more information, call (734) 722-1735.

Yard sale

The YWCA Western Wayne County will host a Yard Sale 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, July 21, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 22.

Office supplies, office furniture, children's toys and other items will be on sale. The Yard Sale will be held at the YWCA Administrative Offices, 26279 Michigan Ave., and proceeds from the sale will benefit the families served by the YWCA.

The YWCA also is looking for volunteers from the community to help organize items to be sold, and help work the day of the sale.

For more information, call

'Historic' flea market

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For more information, call

the YWCA Western Wayne County at (313) 561-4110 Ext. 18.

Outreach clinic

The Legal Aid and Defender Association Inc. will conduct a free outreach clinic on civil legal services for income-eligible residents at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 19, at the Westland Senior Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland.

Attendees are asked to register before 10:30 a.m. A Legal Aid attorney will assist only those persons who have done so by that time.

For further information, call Gina Polley, director of community relations and governmental affairs, at (313) 964-4111, Ext. 6440 or (877) 964-5310, or by e-mail at gpolley@ladetroit.org.

Flea Market

Vendors are needed for a flea market 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, at Good Shepherd Reformed Church at Wayne Road and Hunter in Westland. Space is available at \$20 per space. Applications are available by calling Ray or Jackie Gagnon at (734) 722-7225.

Craft Show

Table rental is available at the cost of \$20 for the annual St. Theodore Confraternity of Christian Women craft show 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, in the Parish Social Hall at 8200 Wayne Road, Westland. Call Mary at (734) 425-4421 (voice mail #10) to reserve a table.

Enrollment offered

St. Damian Catholic School is accepting enrollment for fall. It offers preschool for children ages 3 and 4, kindergarten either three full days or five full days, and classes for students in grades one through eight. The school is located at 29891 Joy Road in Westland. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information call (734) 421-6130.

Antiques appraisals

The Westland senior Friendship Center will host its fifth annual Newburgh Road Show, an antiques appraisal, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, July 28.

Admission will be \$1. Col. Thomas Moody of Blue Willow Antiques will be doing the appraisals. He specializes in glass, pottery, furniture, radios, kitchenware, war memorabilia, quilts, dolls and toys.

There will be a charge of \$3 per item appraised, with a limit of three appraisals. Refreshments will be available for a small donation.

The Friendship Center is at 1119 N. Newburgh, south of Ford, Westland. For more information, call (734) 722-7628.

Pancake breakfast

The Westland senior Friendship Center holds an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast 8:30-11 a.m. the second Thursday of the month at the center on Newburgh south of Ford.

The cost \$4 per person for buttermilk or multi-grain pancakes, coffee, juice, low fat milk, sausage and bacon. Sugar free syrup will be available.

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TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Looking good

Christie McCune (from left), Debbie Young and Crystal Smith judge the men's legs contest at the Westland Summer Festival. The women also took part in the women's leg contest, which McCune won. Her husband Tom won the men's contest.

Court delays Peer hearing to September

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

Westland teen Jeremy Peer, charged with fleeing the scene of a fatal accident in Florida, has waived his right to a speedy trial, according to a Bay County Courthouse clerk.

Peer, a 2006 graduate of Livonia Franklin High School, had been scheduled Wednesday for a pretrial hearing on charges he drove off a Florida road April 17 and hit a couple as they walked alongside Front Beach Road.

His hearing, however, has been delayed until Sept. 6 amid allegations he caused an accident in Panama City Beach that killed Colleen Martin, 33, and injured her husband, Montey.

On Wednesday, the prosecutor's office in Florida con-

firmed that authorities still are awaiting a medical examiner's report related to Martin's death and a toxicology report that will indicate whether Peer had been drinking or using drugs.

Panama City Beach police had earlier said it could be three months or even longer before they would receive the toxicology results.

Peer is accused of hitting the Martins while driving a Jeep Commander and then fleeing the scene, only to be arrested a few hours later when a motel employee saw the damaged vehicle and notified police.

The incident happened during spring break.

Peer's pretrial hearing has now been twice postponed, but authorities indicated there could be some new developments by September.

Peer was a star athlete while he attended Livonia Franklin High, playing football, basketball and track. He has been described by football coach Chris Kelbert as a model student who had earned an academic scholarship to Adrian College.

Friends and relatives of the Martins have e-mailed the *Observer* to say that the real tragedy is that Colleen Martin was killed and taken away from her husband.

Relatives have said the Pennsylvania couple had moved to the Panama City Beach area to start a business because they had visited and wanted to make it their home.

If convicted, Peer could face penalties ranging up to 15 years in prison.

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Elderly man fires gun at neighbor

An 88-year-old Livonia man was being treated at St. Mary Mercy Hospital and could face felony assault charges after police reported that he fired a handgun at his next-door neighbor.

While the 70-year-old man was not harmed in the shooting, a bullet busted a doorwall window at another neighbor's house in the Joy-Farmington area.

Detective Marty Donnelly said the 88-year-old man, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, was upset because he

believed his neighbor took his guns. The revolver he thought was missing, however, was the weapon he fired at his neighbor, Donnelly said.

The man stepped onto the back porch of his home on Joy Road, spotted his neighbor watering his back lawn, pulled out the revolver and fired three rounds at about 9 p.m. last Saturday, July 1.

"The neighbor felt the man was aiming the gun at him," Donnelly said.

Police recovered one bullet lodged in an interior wall of a

nearby home on Hees Street, where a rear doorwall window was shattered. Officers also removed all weapons found inside the 88-year-old man's house.

The man was arrested, released for medical examination and remained at the hospital Friday, Donnelly said. A police report has been submitted to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, but it is not known whether criminal charges will be filed.

By Dan West

Challenge denied; vote Aug. 8

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Residents living in the Livonia Public School District will have a chance to vote for or against the recall of five members of the Board of Education on Aug. 8.

On Thursday afternoon, Chief Circuit Judge Mary Beth Kelly denied a petition in which those board members challenged the number of signatures needed to force a recall election.

Board president Dan Lessard, and trustees Lynda Scheel, Rob Freeman, Cynthia Markarian and Kevin Whitehead contended that Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett was incorrect when she validated 8,923 as the number of signatures needed, per board member, to support a recall election in the school district. Their attorney, David Gillam, argued the Wayne County Clerk failed to include at least 15 precincts when calculating that total. On June 2, the five board members challenged the clerk's decision, saying the required amount should have been closer to 11,464 signatures.

By June 6, Garrett's office had certified the initial numbers given. Kelly further validated that decision Thursday when she chose to "allow a technical deficiency to be balanced in favor of putting a recall on the ballot."

Following the decision, members of the Citizens for Livonia's

Future group, which spearheaded the recall effort, breathed a sigh of relief in the hallway outside of the courtroom.

"We're very pleased with Judge Kelly's decision," said Jody Hamilton, a Livonia parent. "We think it's the right decision. Now the public will have the right to vote. That's all we were asking for — let the public decide."

Holly Burr, another member of the citizen's group, said the decision came after much hard work on the part of residents who believe in the recall effort.

During the hearing, Kelly asked Gillam how he could challenge the number as being too low when those involved in the recall effort could counter that by saying "if we needed more we would've gotten more."

In her findings, Kelly noted the amount of time that passed before board members chose to challenge the numbers provided by the Wayne County Clerk. The required amount of signatures was determined and published in February, following the board's decision to support a district-wide reorganization plan called the Legacy Initiative.

Five of the six trustees who supported the plan were targeted by the recall effort.

They first challenged the accuracy of that required number on May 12, seven days after the petitions had been filed with the county.

"They had every opportunity

to challenge (the number), every opportunity to seek counsel to challenge, every opportunity to say this number is wrong," Kelly said.

Gillam said when "the county clerk is put on notice of the error, I think it's the clerk's obligation to deal with the error."

He said it was the difference between an "oops" and an "oh man, this is a problem."

"In our case this is a problem," Gillam said.

Janet Anderson Davis, representing Garrett, said "we believe Clerk Cathy Garrett was reasonable in her procedure and in her calculations. We believe voters will not be disenfranchised."

Kelly agreed. She said "no one has been disenfranchised. There has not yet been an election."

While there will indeed be a recall election in the school district Aug. 8, Kelly shared "heartfelt" concern with the five trustees sitting on the plaintiff's side of this hearing.

"I know what it means to make hard decisions and then feel the wrath of having made those decisions," she said.

Kelly said she's familiar with the divisiveness that comes from "this kind of issue," which deals with the quality of schools and well-being of children. She said she hopes the community will soon begin healing and find closure.

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

Mistake to delay mailing out ballots

Preparations for the Aug. 8 Livonia Public Schools trustee recall election in Livonia and the northern portion in Westland have gotten off to a rocky start.

While Livonia City Clerk Val Vandersloot received more than 20,000 recall ballots from the Wayne County Clerk's office June 24 as scheduled, those ballots were coded and printed incorrectly.

The ballots, which cannot be used, had been prepared for mailing to absentee voters. They were not sent out.

"The same is true in Westland," Vandersloot said.

Correcting the problem will be a massive undertaking, she said.

"To make sure they are corrected and printed will take a while," Vandersloot said. "I am so concerned about this."

As a result, she said when she does receive corrected ballots she will not mail them to voters until she is able to get the appropriate codes and test the ballots to ensure they will be properly counted.

Vandersloot referenced an Oakland County election in which a municipality had a similar problem. Ballots had to be hand-counted as a result,

she said.

Those anxious to receive their ballots should wait before calling Vandersloot.

"I have no idea when we're going to get them," she said.

She is responsible for mailing absentee ballots out by the Saturday prior to the Aug. 8 election.

Registered voters living within the Livonia Public Schools School District may visit www.ci.livonia.mi.us for more details on voting, or call the 24-hour voting hot line at (734) 466-2121.

— By Stephanie A. Casola



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Photographer rides to help Make-A-Wish Foundation

Photojournalist Bryan Mitchell will balance a camera and a mountain bike later this month, all in an effort to support the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Mitchell, a former staff photographer for Livonia-based *Observer* and *Eccentric Newspapers*, will be a participant and photographer for this year's Make-A-Wish Foundation WAM 300 bicycle tour.

In three days, the Northville resident will cover 300 miles, from Traverse City to Chelsea, to raise money for Make-A-Wish, a non-profit organization that grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses. Mitchell will be

among hundreds of cyclists and volunteers participating in the 19th annual event, from July 27-30.

"With children of my own I can't imagine kids going through this, so I'm doing it for the kids," said Mitchell. "And for the great work that Make-A-Wish does."

Last year the event brought in more than \$775,000 for the children of Make-A-Wish.

This year's goal is \$800,000. It takes about \$8,000 to grant a single wish.

"I have photographed kids with life-threatening medical conditions who have received some type of gift or special day and have seen first-hand the

huge smiles and joy," said Mitchell. No kid should ever have to suffer and be sad - but the reality is some do.

In addition to riding, Mitchell will create an online photo story as events unfold at www.bryanmitchell.com and www.mountain-bikephotographer.com. Blog updates can be found at <http://konamidwestracing.blogspot.com> before and after the event.

"These kids need some fun and joy in their life and together we can help provide it," said Mitchell.

Donors wishing to support Mitchell's efforts for Make-A-Wish may visit <http://wishmich.kintera.org/WAM/bryanmitchell> to do so.



Photographer Bryan Mitchell, who rides mountain bikes for Kona Midwest Racing, will be riding in and photographing this year's Make-A-Wish Foundation WAM 300. Mitchell is a former staff photographer for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers* in Livonia.

Scholarships available for essay winners

College-bound female students from this year's Class of 2006 or the Class of 2007 are eligible to enter the National Foundation for Women Legislators annual Bill of Rights Essay Contest.

The organization provides resources, fosters leadership development and offers networking opportunities for female members of Congress, state legislators, county commissioners and city council members. Each year the its members provide scholarship money and support to seven young women.

State Sen. Laura M. Toy, representing Michigan's 6th District, is currently seeking a student to sponsor this year.

"This contest gives our young women a chance to win a college scholarship while making their voices heard on the significant role that dozens of American women leaders have played in shaping of our Bill of Rights," Toy said. "It is my hope that many of our students will take the time to enter."

Participants will write a 400

to 600 word essay telling the inspiring story of one heroic American woman. The essay should discuss how her life and achievement connects to at least one constitutional right secured in the U.S. Bill of Rights, as well as how this personally impacts the author.

Winners will receive a \$3,000 scholarship and an all-expenses-paid trip to the group's annual conference at the Ritz-Carlton in Avon, Colo., in November.

Entries are due to the NFWL office in Washington, D.C. no later than Tuesday, Aug. 15.

Entrants must be sponsored by a female legislator from their state to qualify for the award.

"In addition to a scholarship to help with college expenses, the seven nationwide winners will be invited to share their essay with female lawmakers from across our country," said Toy. For more information on how to enter, call (517) 373-1707 or send an e-mail request your name, address, phone number, high school and class to senltoy@senate.michigan.gov.

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4-H

FROM PAGE A1

youth are living in the western Wayne area.

Her western Wayne area ranges from suburban to somewhat rural and stretches from the Detroit boundary on the east to the Washtenaw County line on the west. It takes in Westland, Garden City, Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Canton, Livonia and Redford.

It's an area that has been without a representative for five-six years, so Rivetto knows she has a lot to do to breathe new life into the program. So far, she has gotten information on 12 clubs and 150 youth who are involved in 4-H in this area.

"I believe 4-H can be a lot bigger than it is," she said. "It's not now because the area didn't have a representative or the people didn't know about 4-H. I hope to demonstrate that there's a need to have this position on this side of the county."

The H in 4-H stands for head, heart, hands and health. The organization lets kids take the lead, with the help of adult partners, in thinking, learning and problem-solving.

It helps kids build strong relationships with peers and adults based on caring and respect and learn by doing and then using their talents and skills to make their communities better places in which to live and grow. It also helps kids make healthy choices to keep them physically and mentally able to do what they need to at school, at home and in their communities.

It goes beyond animals into communication arts - speaking, writing and drama - the visual arts, environmental education, science and technology. And even has different programs and activities for youngsters ages 5-8 that are develop-

mentally appropriate and are educational, safe, and fun.

"One of the things I want to do is help people become more aware of 4-H," she said.

"There's a lot of opportunity to be involved in different things, not just horses. There's so many kids in the communities that can learn and grow from these programs."

To make 4-H accessible to area residents, she's set up shop in the MSU Extension building on Venoy south of Van Born in Wayne. She's also developing a needs assessment that will ask questions about the concerns and issues that need to be addressed with youth in order to aid 4-H in the future.

She's asking current 4-H leaders and youth to contact her to find out about upcoming events. She's also the person leaders need to turn their annual reports into to avoid missing out on opportunities at the state and local level, including the Wayne County Fair which takes place Aug. 8-12.

This is a learning experience for Rivetto. She's never been involved, either as a youth or an adult in 4-H. She grew up in Troy and graduated from Troy High School, and brings her experience working as a camp director for three years in Rochester and at the Boys & Girls Club where she programmed club activities and worked with the young people.

She has a bachelor's degree in middle childhood education from Ohio Northern University and a master's degree in youth development from MSU.

"I love working with kids in an informal setting," she said. "I enjoy making an impact on their lives and enhancing what they've learned in school."

Youth and adults interested in learning more about 4-H can call Rivetto at (734) 727-7236 or the MSU Extension office in Wayne at (734) 721-6576.

PETITPREN

FROM PAGE A1

Responding to questions from the *Observer*, Petitpren said the state has to let go of a single business tax that brings in nearly \$2 billion a year.

"I think it's unfair, and it always has been," he said.

The tax deters potential businesses from coming to Michigan, Petitpren said, because "they have to look at that tax as a negative."

The tax already is set to expire by 2009 at the latest. Petitpren said he believes that the lost revenue could be made up as new companies move to Michigan.

To improve the state economy, Petitpren suggested luring manufacturing companies here by giving them a tax break on land for several years.

"We have to make them want to come to Michigan," he said, adding that the state also should tout its recreational and water resources as reasons to come here.

On education, Petitpren said he opposes the K-16 Coalition

for Michigan's Future, which would guarantee that school districts receive additional money each year to at least keep pace with inflation. The measure could be decided by voters later this year, unless state lawmakers act on it within days.

"If you don't have the money, you can't give it to them," Petitpren said of school districts. "If I was in Lansing, I would have to vote against it to be fiscally responsible."

He said he is concerned that the plan could force the state to gut other programs.

Petitpren cited several issues he hopes to address in Lansing, including a property tax break for senior citizens. He said he wants to serve on education and taxation committees in the House.

"I've been a Democrat all my life, and I believe we have very poor leadership in Lansing right now," he said. "I intend to be a leader. I'm strong enough, I have the knowledge, I have the contacts, and I know how to work with the other party."

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Viva Italia!

World Cup parties at Livonia spots fuel homeland pride

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

Italian-Americans will gather at several Livonia locations today, July 9, to eat pizza, sip vino and anxiously root for their homeland's soccer team in the World Cup championship match.

Many in Livonia's sizable Italian-American community will join relatives and fellow Italian natives to watch their team, which is favored to win soccer's biggest prize in today's 2 p.m. match against France.

A crowd is expected to gather at the Italian-American Banquet Center of Livonia on Five Mile at I-275. The Italian-American Club of Livonia, which is usually closed on Sundays, will be open at 1 p.m.

Enthusiasm escalated Tuesday after Italy's thrilling 2-0 overtime victory over Germany to earn a berth in the title game. This sparked many e-mails and phone calls to club president Mary Galasso from members seeking a party for the game.

"We figured we should be in our club to celebrate," Galasso said. "We'll have some ladies bring in desserts, we'll have a big family event and enjoy the victory - hopefully."

The club, established in Livonia in 1977, serves 877 Italian-American families.

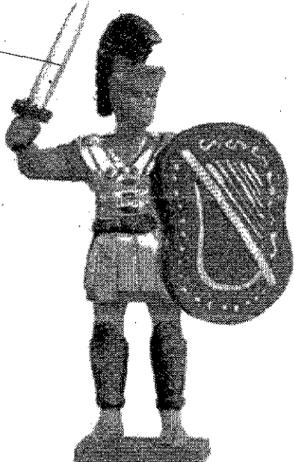
Galasso said 90 percent of the membership lives in Livonia, but there are a number of members who live in West Bloomfield, Dearborn, South Lyon and other metro Detroit suburbs. The banquet center's basement has a room for many social events throughout the year that often attract the room's capacity of 220 people.

"I really don't know how many people will be there on Sunday because of the short notice, but there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm," Galasso said.

The Livonia Italian Bakery on Seven Mile near Farmington has been a popular destination to watch World Cup matches for many years, with its televisions stationed in a 30-seat cafe inside the bakery. Owner Franco Petrucci said his place provides a more intimate setting that captures many attributes of a traditional European cafe.

"We always expect people to come here and watch the games here," Petrucci said. "But we'll expect more people to come on Sunday since people don't have to work. There will be a strong Italian influence."

Galasso and Petrucci said non-Italian soccer fans are invited to join the celebrations and experience the unique atmosphere at their respective gatherings.



Soldier undaunted

The 15th annual Detroit Toy Soldier Militaria & Figure Show hits the Livonia Holiday Inn at Six Mile and I-275 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, July 16. Admission is \$6 per family, which features vendors from around the world selling new and antique figures, books, prints and memorabilia, plus an interactive children's area, living historians in period uniforms and more. For more details, call (248) 586-1022 or visit www.michtoy.com

INFORMATION CENTRAL

In order to help better serve its multicultural patron base, the William P. Faust Public Library has a collection of fiction books that are written in various languages.

Started in 2004, the core collection includes titles written in Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Spanish, Tamil and Vietnamese. Currently the most popular language has been Chinese. Titles include translations of English-language materials as well as those written by native authors.

Please be on the look out for some new titles that have been ordered in the following languages: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Korean, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Tagalog and Urdu.

We are always looking for suggestions of languages that might be popular with our patrons - just let us know by dropping off a comment card or talking to someone at the reference desk.

The children's collection also collects materials in different languages. The majority of the titles are for beginning readers. Languages include Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Navajo, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese and Yiddish. Some new translated titles have been ordered in Albanian and Romanian.

The adult foreign language fiction collection is shelved in the Young Adult area next to the English as a Second Language collection. The juvenile foreign language collec-

tion is housed in the children's area.

The William P. Faust Public Library of Westland is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. The Library is closed on Sundays during the summer.

Cranial Capacities of Corvids - What it really means to be a "Bird Brain": 2 p.m. July 15.

You might not be aware of how much brain power exists in the tiny bodies of our feathered friends, but never fear! Dr. Star Kraven-Mudd of Concorvidae University will be enlightening the public with the inside scoop about our brilliant Michigan birds.

Adult Book Discussion Group: 7 p.m. July 18.

Join us as we discuss *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. Please read the book before the meeting. All are welcome.

Adult's/Young Adult's/Children's Summer Reading Programs: June 10-July 29.

Sign up for a whole summer of reading fun and prizes. See each department for details.

Information Central is compiled by Young Adult Librarian Bridget Sturdy at the William P. Faust Public Library, 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

PRESCHOOLS

Preschool listings should be submitted in writing. They can be mailed to Sue Mason at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, by fax at (734) 591-7279 or by e-mail at smason@oe.homecomm.net. For more information, call (734) 953-2112.

Willow Creek

Willow Creek Cooperative Preschool, on Cherry Hill between Wayne and Newburgh in Westland is now enrolling for the 2006-2007 school year. Willow Creek programs include Parent/Tot, 2-year-old, 3-year-old and 4-year-old year classes. For more information please call (734) 326-0078.

Preschool program

The Wayne-Westland Community Schools district has registration for preschool programs at Stottlemeyer Early Childhood and Family Development Center, on Marquette between Wayne and Wildwood. Included are an early intervention program, Head Start, Kids/Plus Preschool, a preprimary impaired program and Sparky Preschool. Registration takes place 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (734) 419-2635.

McKinley

McKinley Cooperative Preschool at 6500 N. Wayne Road in Westland. Nondiscriminatory and fully licensed, the program is open to youngsters ages 2-4. Morning and afternoon classes are offered. For information, call (734) 729-7222 or visit the Web site at www.mckinleypreschool.org.

Little Lambs

Little Lambs Preschool in Canton is now accepting applications for their 3-4-year-old preschool programs for fall 2006. Call (734) 981-0286 to set up an appointment to come in for a visit or for more information about its programs.

YWCA Readiness

The YWCA of Western Wayne County Early Childhood School Readiness Program is available to 4- and 5-year-old children. The YWCA is at 26279 Michigan in Inkster. Call (313) 561-4110.

Charter school

The Academy of Detroit-Westland, an entrepreneurial and business charter school, serves children in kinder-

garten through sixth grade. The school emphasizes basic education with business and entrepreneurial skills and offers a foreign language class, music and art, a dress code and a computer lab with access to the Internet. Call (734) 722-1465 or (248) 569-7787.

Free Methodist

The Westland Free Methodist Preschool is currently enrolling for the 2006-2007 school year. Four-year-olds attend on Mondays and Wednesdays, three-year-olds attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The preschool is at 1421 S. Venoy, Westland. To have further information, a tour or to enroll your child call the Preschool Office at (734) 728-3559.

Garden City Co-op

Garden City Co-op Nursery, housed in the Garden City Presbyterian Church, 1841 Middlebelt at John Hawk, has openings in its programs for children 18 months to 4 years. The tots class meets on Wednesday mornings, while the older youngsters meet on Mondays and Thursdays. Parental involvement is required. Parents can call (734) 261-2838 for more information.

United Christian

United Christian School on Florence near Middlebelt north of Cherry Hill offers classes two, three and five days a week. Classes meet mornings and afternoons for 3-5-year-olds, as well as flexible times for parents who need more than the scheduled preschool hours. There is a full curriculum in pre-reading, writing and early mathematics, including computer time. Call (734) 522-6487 for more information.

Little Peoples

Livonia Little Peoples Co-op Preschool is enrolling in programs for 3- and 4-year-olds. The preschool is at 8820 Wayne Road. For more information, call (734) 422-1176.

Little Lambs

Little Lambs Preschool, on Farmington Road south of West Chicago in Livonia has classes Monday-Wednesday-Friday afternoons and Tuesday-Thursday mornings for 3- to 5-year-olds. Little Lambs is a nonprofit, nondiscriminatory preschool. Call (248) 471-2077.

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Cruisers of the Week

The Westside Rod and Custom Car Club's Cruiser of the Week for July 5 goes to Mark Landen of Canton with his 1966 Ford Fairlane, a factory racer clone. The car has a 390-cubic inch big block engine, four-speed transmission and positraction rearend. The paint is Wimbledon white with matching rims. Landen said this car was a family project and thanks his wife Jennifer and their children for the help. Member of the Week is Bob Lane of Garden City with his 1968 Chevelle SS. It has a 502-cubic inch 500 horse power crate motor. The Westside Rod and Custom Car Club's show is 5 p.m. to dusk Wednesdays at the Romanowski VFW Post on Joy Road east of Middlebelt in Westland.

'Paul Revere Ride' rally this week

Livonia will play host this week to the 21st Century Paul Revere Ride, a cross-country rally "to bring attention to the illegal alien crisis in this country," according to a press release. The event, set for 12:30 p.m. Thursday, July 13, will take place at Civic Center Park, on Five Mile east of Farmington Road. The rally is organized by Michigan Citizens for Immigration Reform and features author and broadcaster

Frosty Wooldridge. Wooldridge will lead a group of motorcycle riders across the United States in an effort to share his views of the current illegal immigration crisis. The rally is open to all - those on motorcycles, in cars or on foot. Organizers encourage participants to bring American Flags and participate in the rally.

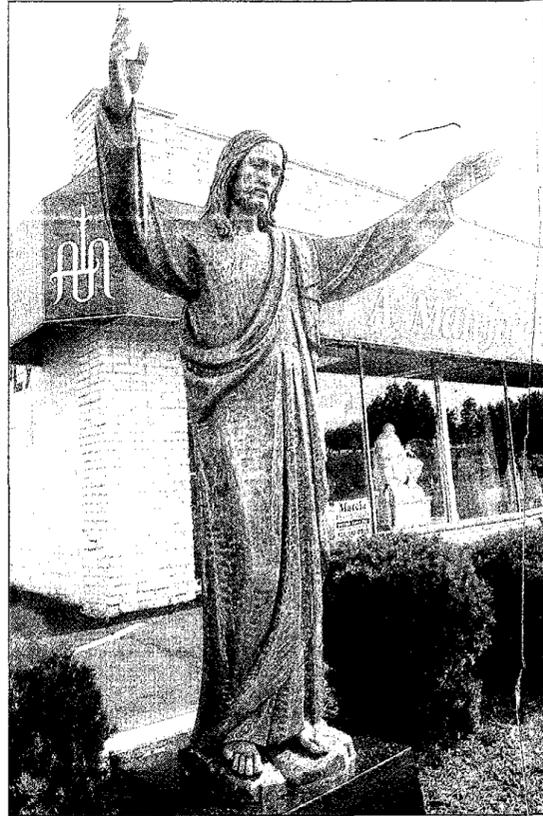
Heavenly sight

Landmark statue returns to its spot in front of A. Mateja

BY SUE MASON
STAFF WRITER

He's baaack! The Bible may foretell the second coming of Christ, but there's no mention of his second coming to Garden City. He did just that Friday, although it wasn't an apocalyptic event. No trumpets played by angels on high, just honking horns along Ford Road. Yes, the 6-foot tall statue of Jesus Christ that had watched traffic rush by on Ford Road east of Merriman for three years is back after a three-year absence. "It arrived Friday morning and people were honking their horns as we were putting it up," said Greg Klopp, a manager at the A. Mateja Church Supply Store. "People came in and said, 'Wow, you got Jesus back.'"

The statue quickly became a landmark after being placed between the sidewalk and curb in front of the store on Ford Road east of Merriman in 2000, and its disappearance in 2003 was cause for panic among people who had grown accustomed to seeing it. So when people started saying they wanted it back, owner Tom Klopp agreed late last year to special-order a new one. Manufactured in Italy, it arrived at the store last week. "It's cast bronze. They put a lot of work into it," Klopp said. "The finish it has will stay the same, it won't change at all." Workers used a crane to lift the 1,100-pound statue in place, but used their hands to get it in its final position. Klopp isn't sure how much it cost, pointing out that "prices change all the time." "They can actually make anything you want," he said. "It's a special order. If you want



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After a three-year absence, the statue of Jesus Christ is back in front of A. Mateja Church Supply on Ford Road in Garden City.

it 40 feet tall, they can do it." The statue sits on 1-foot tall granite and is one of four such statues in the state. There's two in Standish - one in a church and the other in a cemetery. Both were purchased from the Mateja store in Saginaw. The third is the statue that originally sat in front of Mateja's Garden City store, but was a must-have for St. Thomas a'Becket Church in Canton, which bought it in 2003. "It takes a long time to make, and the church wanted it real quick," Klopp said. Mateja has been in Garden City since 1994 although it has been in business since 1902. Started in Detroit, there are now three Mateja stores - one in Saginaw, managed by Klopp's father, Tom, in Garden City and in Cincinnati, Ohio. His nine children help out at each of the stores. Klopp came down to work at the Garden City store six years ago and now calls Plymouth home. As for the statue, it's "not going anywhere." It's there to stay for good in front of the store. "We can't sell it because there's no way to get it off the granite," Klopp said. "We plan to keep it." smason@hometownlife.com | (734) 953-2112

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All stakeholders should have input on mental health changes

The future of the Detroit Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (DWCCMHA) is one that all of us need to be concerned about because it provides critical services to more than 40,000 people in our community. Along with countless others, Adult Well-Being Services has a vested interest in what happens to DWCCMHA. We are a 53-year-old community-based, nonprofit agency that provides a comprehensive range of services to seniors, people who have developmental disabilities and adults with mental illness.

There are several major issues under discussion: 1) creation of a mental health authority or some other form of governance; 2) implementation of a new service delivery system, and; 3) replacement of the executive director.

With respect to governance, the questions of who will run the county's mental health programs and what its structure will look like are being debated at the state and local levels of government. The state Senate

has referred the entire community health appropriations bill which includes the DWCCMHA line item to a conference committee. Locally, the DWCCMHA Board and Wayne County Executive disagree on what should be the composition of the board. The Wayne County Commission approved a resolution calling for a 13-member board, all of whom would be appointed by the county executive. However, the state statute that created the agency calls for a 12-member board. It is now up to the Michigan Legislature to decide whether or not there will be a change in the State Mental Health Code and thus the board composition.

Governance is fundamental to operation and viability of a community mental health agency. Before any final decisions are made about the governance structure, we strongly urge our legislators and policy makers to involve the provider and consumer stakeholders in the deliberations. We are important to the success of any new governance entity and we encourage you to enlist our advice and support.

The most recent executive director, Richard Visingardi, is no longer in that position. The county has had many mental health agency directors in eight years. Because of unclear governance, a series of executive directors has had difficulty knowing who their boss is. Until the question of who has authority to hire staff,

This is a critical time for the mental health system in Wayne County. A transition in governance, a transition to a new service delivery system and a transition to a new executive director threaten to destabilize an already stressed system. We need to move forward with great care and with the input of all of the stakeholders. There is tremendous history and expertise in the provider and consumer networks. Let's find a way to use it.

carry out policies and enter into contracts is resolved, the system will continue to be unstable. The executive director needs to know to whom to report and to have real operational authority. Whatever organizational structure evolves must clarify the executive director's reporting line and boundaries of authority.

In addition to the deliberations related to governance and who will be the next executive director, there are plans under way to transition the service delivery network. An RFQ has been issued which plans to reduce the existing five managed-care networks to two. The last transition which occurred just three years ago took more than a year to work out the bugs and caused great stress and confusion for consumers. Let's not create unnecessary turmoil again for people who depend on a seamless delivery of services. We urge that the move to consolidate the service delivery network be suspended until all of the operational and governance issues are resolved.

This is a critical time for the mental health system in Wayne County. A transition in governance, a transition to a new service delivery system and a transition to a new executive director threaten to destabilize an already stressed system. We need to move forward with great care and with the input of all of the stakeholders. There is tremendous history and expertise in the provider and consumer networks. Let's find a way to use it.

Karen Shrock is the executive director of Adult Well-Being Services.

Karen Shrock

Karen Shrock

Michigan drifting southward in improving child well-being

The press kit for this year's Kids Count report came with a wheel. You can turn to each state and it gives the state's rank and how it scores on the Kids Count key indicators for child well-being.

Michigan scores a disappointing 27th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Kids Count is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the status of children's welfare nationally and state-by-state. The project in Michigan is supported by the Baltimore-based Casey Foundation and the Detroit-based Skillman Foundation, the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation of Michigan and the Michigan Association of United Ways. The Michigan Leagues of Human Services and Michigan's Children gathers the information.



Hugh Gallagher

The figures released this year were gathered in 2003.

Kids Count focuses on 10 areas it defines as critical for child well-being: percent of low-birthweight babies (live births weighing less than 5.5 pounds), infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births), child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14), teen death rates (deaths per 100,000 teen ages 15-19), teen birth rate (births per 1,000 female ages 15-19), percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19), percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19), percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment, percent of children in poverty and percent of children in single-parent families.

Michigan's worst ranking is 43rd in infant mortality at 8.5 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to a national average of 6.9. Among African-Americans the infant mortality rate swells to 17.4 deaths per 1,000 births. (The rate is 6.7 for white infants.)

Michigan's sluggish and shifting economy accounts for a 29 percent increase in child poverty. Perhaps the economy is also responsible for Michigan's biggest turnaround, a 30 percent change in the teen dropout rate, dropping from 10 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2003. And Michigan ranks a respectable 10th in teen death rate, dropping from 64 to 55 deaths per 100,000 youth between 2000 and 2003. The national average was 66. Auto accidents account for more than a third of all teen deaths.

The teen birth rate has also declined by 15 percent in the period covered.

Like all statistics, these can be read a variety of ways. The Casey Foundation and the local groups that participate in these surveys see positive signs for adolescents and disturbing signs for infants and younger children. They advocate for more governmental involvement in address-

ing these issues. They make special note of the disparity between African-Americans and the white majority. "This disparity in infant mortality rates is driven by differences in access to health care, good jobs, safe housing and transportation services," said Michele Corey, director of Community Advocacy at Michigan's Children in the release.

When going around the handy Kids Count wheel, Michigan seems to be going South in its concern for children. The low-tax, low-wages South and Southwest is often seen as a model by some legislators. But it's a poor model for anything but winter weather.

Follow the magic wheel to Mississippi which finishes 50th in overall ranking. Former President Clinton used to joke that he thanked God for Mississippi because it always finished behind Arkansas in these kind of measurements when he was governor. Louisiana is 49th, New Mexico 48th, South Carolina 47th, Tennessee 46th, Arkansas 45th, Georgia 44th, Alabama 43rd, Kentucky 42nd, North Carolina 41st.

At the top is New Hampshire followed by Vermont, Connecticut, Minnesota, Iowa, Utah, New Jersey, Nebraska, North Dakota and Massachusetts.

That top group is a mix of northern and western states with liberal and conservative voting patterns.

One key difference between the bottom and top is racial and ethnic makeup of the states and long patterns of neglect toward minorities.

Our state legislators certainly need to do what is reasonable to attract business to Michigan. But they also need to address the problems surveyed in the Casey study. Drifting further south will only make matters worse. Some companies may well come for those handsome tax cuts and lack of regulation. But others might just wonder why a state with all this potential neglects its most vulnerable residents.

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

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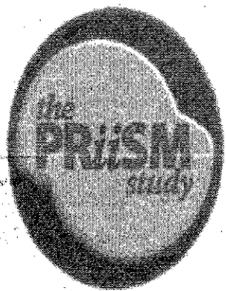
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Red Cross offers advice for summer weather

The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross, along with Chris Edwards, the weather Whysguy, are continuing in their efforts to help people prepare for weather-related emergencies by providing tips on summer safety to residents throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Edwards, a career meteorologist, said, "It is vital that we make the public aware of the severity summer weather can bring, especially with regard to protecting yourself from the unexpected. From thunderstorms to tornados, our community needs to be alert and informed on summer safety."

His weatherWhysguy science enrichment program informs school-age children on the fundamentals of weather.

The summer season brings much warmer weather as well as increased outside activity. However, it also brings the potential for very severe weather conditions, including heat waves, thunderstorms, flooding and tornados.

The following are Red Cross summer safety tips:

- Heat wave safety tips:**
- Slow down by avoiding strenuous activity or doing less of it.
 - Stay indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is unavailable, go to the lowest floor of the house, out of the sunshine.
 - Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days.
 - Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
 - Drink water as much as possible.
 - Eat smaller meals and eat more often, avoiding foods high in protein.
 - Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Thunderstorm tips:**
- When a storm approaches, find shelter in a building or car. Keep all windows closed.
 - If caught outside, find shelter immediately. If no shelter is available, take cover under shorter trees.
 - After a storm passes, listen to the radio for information and instructions.

- If someone is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number immediately.
- Flood safety tips:**
- A flood Watch means a flood is possible in your area.
 - A flood Warning means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area.
 - Assemble a disaster supplies kit containing essential medications, canned foods and a manual can opener, bottled water, flashlights, a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, cash, emergency contact numbers and other emergency items as needed.
 - When a flood Watch is issued, move furniture and valuables to higher floors in your home and fill your car's gas tank.
 - When a flood Warning is issued, listen to local radio and TV stations for information and advice. If told to evacuate, do so as soon as possible.
- Tornado safety tips:**
- Prepare a home tornado plan by choosing a place in the home where all family members can gather in case of a tornado.

- Assemble a disaster supplies kit containing similar items as in the flood disaster kit.
 - Stay tuned for storm warnings on radio and television and know what tornado Watches and tornado Warnings are.
 - A tornado Watch means that a tornado is possible in your area.
 - A tornado Warning means that a tornado has been sighted or is headed for your area.
 - When a tornado Watch is issued, listen to local TV and radio stations and be alert for changing weather conditions.
 - When a tornado Warning is issued, head for a safe place immediately.
 - After the tornado passes, watch for fallen power lines, listen to radio for instructions, use a flashlight for home inspection and do not use candles.
- For more information on these and other summer safety tips offered by the American Red Cross, Southeastern Michigan Chapter, visit www.semredcross.org or call (313) 833-2664.

Get some detergent: Annual Mud Day July 11

The annual Wayne County Mud Day will be held 11 a.m. Tuesday, July 11, at Hines Park Nankin Mills Picnic Area, on Hines Drive, east of Ann Arbor Trail in Westland.

Children, ages 12 and younger, are invited to participate in one of Wayne County's most popular events. The county mixes more than 200 tons of topsoil and 20,000 gallons of water to ensure that the mud is just right and muddy time is had by all. Youngsters will be separated into categories based on age to participate in Mud Limbo and the wheelbarrow races. At the conclusion of the event Mr. and Miss Mud will be crowned.

To ensure that parents and children are prepared for this day of dirt, it is suggested that parents make sure that children are wearing old clothes and shoes. Children also need to bring a clean change of clothes. An on-site clean-up area will be provided. Parents are also advised to bring a supply of towels, as there are not showers on site. Plastic bags will be provided to ensure that all dirty clothes are properly contained for the trip home.

To register groups more than 15 children, call Kim at (734) 261-9087.

For more information on this or any Wayne County Parks event, call (734) 261-1990.

AAA sponsors walkathon to buy child safety seats

On July 15, several hundred metro area walkers will provide donations to benefit low-income families in Michigan who are in need of child safety seats.

The 3rd Annual AAA Strollerthon, a 3K walk for child passenger safety, starts at 9 a.m. at the Detroit Zoo. This year there is an added incentive: Eligible participants can enter a drawing to win one of seven grand prizes - iPod(r) video/music players that can hold 7,500 songs, plus \$100 in downloads in the form of a gift certificate.

Drawing entries will be made available in the programming area at the grassy knoll inside the zoo.

AAA employees, members and the public will walk along a marked 3K route inside the Detroit Zoo. The donations will be directed to charity partner Michigan SAFE KIDS and used to purchase and distribute child safety seats. Charitable contributions will also be accepted from those who wish to donate funds without active participation, although registration is required to obtain zoo entry.

"There is a great need for this public service," said Linda M. Woolvine, president and COO of AAA Michigan. "We're grateful for the many contributions made by our program and media partners to help provide more safety and security to those who need it most."

State law mandates that children up to the age of 4 must be



Walkers will raise money to provide car safety seats for those who can't afford them.

properly restrained in a child safety seat no matter where they are seated in the vehicle, but for many Michigan families this important safety precaution is financially out of reach.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 200,000 families in Michigan live below the poverty level. These low-

income families have a lower usage rate of child passenger restraint systems, in part because they lack access to affordable child safety seats. The ultimate cost is death and injury rates many times higher than for the general population.

A 1998 study commissioned by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) stated that Hispanic children, ages 5 to 12, are 72 percent more likely to be killed in a crash than non-Hispanic children. African-American children in the same age range have a motor vehicle occupant death rate that is nearly three times that of white children.

In addition to the question of affordability, the proper installation and use of child safety seats - including booster seats for older children - continues to be a challenge. A 2002 study

of booster seat use in six states found:

- 37 percent of children aged 4-8 were using booster seats,
 - 46 percent were inappropriately using adult seat belts, and
 - 17 percent were riding completely unrestrained.
- For this reason, the 2006 AAA Strollerthon will also help build awareness of the important differences between child safety seats and booster seats, and the appropriate use of those seats. To participate in this year's AAA Strollerthon or to donate to this worthwhile cause, please visit: www.aaa.com/safety.
- Corporate sponsors for the 2006 AAA Strollerthon include: Michigan SAFE KIDS, Hertz, Sodexho, Dasani, Channel 955, 100.3 WNIC, MIX 92.3 and WJBK - Fox 2 Detroit.

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