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HOMETOWNLIFE - PAGE C7



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SUNDAY  
November 12, 2006

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## Goodfellows: More families will need help

The Salvation Army's Wayne-Westland Corps is preparing for its annual bell-ringing campaign amid concerns about an increase in need for services this holiday season. Story on Page A5.

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Westland nonprofit group that raises money to buy Christmas gifts for needy children will face a formidable task this holiday season.

Due to job losses and shrinking household incomes, more local families will need help this year as the Westland Goodfellows organization struggles with its own drop in revenues, officials said.

Last year, Goodfellows helped more than 600 children in 225 families, Westland Fire Department Capt. John Adams said.

This year, more than 300 families are expected to need help.

Donation chairman Vic Barra estimated that hundreds more children will need help.

"The number could go as high as 1,000 children," he said.

That comes amid shrinking revenues, according to the group's Web site.

Goodfellows volunteers last year raised \$10,343 - down from \$16,469 in 2002.

"We've had an obvious downturn in the local economy and layoffs in the auto sector," Barra said.

Many families are hurting, and others who didn't expect to need help will, indeed, be seeking assistance, Barra said.

"It could be a mother who went through a divorce who's not getting the child support she's supposed to get," Barra said. "We have all of life's difficult scenarios."

Volunteers still will have the Goodfellows newspaper sales at major city intersections on Nov. 24, during the group's long-standing, post-Thanksgiving fund-raiser.

But several other events also will help raise money.

PLEASE SEE **GOODFELLOWS, A5**



PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wayne Memorial High School student Ashley Smith, a JROTC platoon leader, joins her fellow other cadets in honoring those who have served the country in the military during group's Veterans Day Ceremony Friday morning.

## Cadets honor those who served

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

The mournful sound of *Taps* echoed across the lawn of Wayne Memorial High School Friday as members of the JROTC, students and visitors paused to honor those who have served in the military.

Cadet Master Sgt. Jessica Hensley, reading from a proclamation issued by President George W. Bush, told the audience that America's veterans "have demonstrated to us that freedom is the mightiest force on earth" and "that their sacrifices will be remembered by a grateful nation."

One by one, four cadets - Staff Sgt. Brieanne Rice, Master Sgt. Ryan Crayne, Sgt. Shawn Polite and 2nd Lt. Bobbi Turner - went to the podium to recount the number of men and women who served and who died for their country since the American Revolution.

"We pay tribute to all who served and this ceremony is but a small way to say thank you to the 45 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and support personnel who have stood in harm's way for the noble cause of freedom," said Turner.

A pair of boots, a rifle and beret served

PLEASE SEE **HONOR, A6**



Cadet Sgt. Shawn Polite salutes after placing a flag near the traditional symbol of a fallen soldier during the Wayne Memorial High School JROTC Veterans Day ceremony.

## Prosecutor looks at new charges in home invasion case

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

Relatives and supporters of four defendants packed a Westland courtroom Thursday for a hearing that will determine whether the young men should stand trial for a home invasion involving charges of torture.

They'll have to wait. The preliminary hearing they came to watch was postponed for a week, delaying potential testimony against four defendants accused of barging into a Westland man's apartment, torturing him, robbing him at gunpoint and taking his car.

Charged with torture, first-degree home invasion and armed robbery are James Michael Hobson, 18, and Harry James Taylor, 23, both of Canton, and DeCory Lamar Sharpe, 19, of Westland.

Hobson and Taylor, who also is known by the last name of Miller, also have a felony firearms charge against them. The fourth defendant, 19-year-old Laquinta Terry of Southfield, is charged with armed robbery, first-degree home invasion and driving a stolen vehicle.

In court Thursday, Prosecutor Luke Skywalker indicated that he may seek to add stolen car charges against Hobson, Taylor and Sharpe.

The four defendants are charged in a home invasion that



Terry



Taylor



Sharpe



Hobson

happened about 2 a.m. Sept. 20 on the city's northwest side, in the Westland Village Apartments at Joy and Hix.

During the incident, a 47-year-old victim was robbed after being ordered at gunpoint to lie on the floor. Police said the intruders put packing tape around his head and mouth and tied up his hands and feet.

For the next 30 minutes, police Sgt. Steve Borisch has said, the intruders ransacked the man's apartment - stealing guns, liquor, credit cards and a cell phone before taking the victim's 2005 Monte Carlo.

Hobson, Sharpe and Taylor are jailed in lieu of a \$1 million cash bond, while Terry's bond is \$500,000 cash.

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## Marine with Westland ties killed in Iraqi gunfire

Evelyn Burgess said she knew something terrible had happened when three Marines showed up at the front door of her Westland home.

"I knew something was wrong, I knew he was gone," said Burgess, 61, about being notified her only child, 35-year-old Marine sergeant Bryan Burgess of Canton Township, was killed by a sniper's bullet Thursday while serving with the 1st Battalion of the 24th Marines in Fallujah.

"They told me he was shot through the cheek and the bullet went through his neck and killed him instantly."

Bryan Burgess lived with a roommate the past several months in Canton before being deployed, but was raised in Westland and attended Livonia Franklin High School. Evelyn Burgess said her son was in the Marines for 11 years and traveled around the world, but this was his first tour of duty in Iraq.

"He had only been in Iraq for six

weeks and I was afraid for him," she said. "But, he wanted to serve his country and be with his fellow Marines."

"He didn't want to disappoint them. He was on my mind 24 hours a day, but he liked the challenge," said Evelyn Burgess. "I'm very proud of him."

Burgess said she's hopeful her son's body will be back home on Wednesday.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

## County Health Department revises lead test position

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Wayne County Health Department employee apologized Thursday for giving out erroneous information about testing for possible exposure to lead.

The employee, Joyce Brown-Williams, had told the *Observer* that the health department will test children and adults at no cost.

On Thursday, she clarified her statement, saying that the

PLEASE SEE **TEST, A2**

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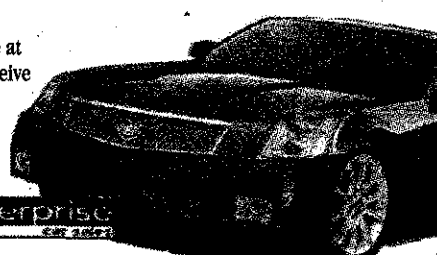
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Coming Thursday  
in Filter

Let the  
parties  
begin!

Thanksgiving Eve is a time to  
mingle with friends.





## Holiday concert

The County Connection Chorus will present 'Toyland' at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. The holiday concert will feature award winning quartets Fermata Nowhere and FootNotes and the 50-member a cappella harmony of the County Connection Chorus. Tickets are \$12-\$15 and available by calling (734) 480-8843. For more information, visit the County Connection Chorus Web site at [www.countyconnectionchorus.org](http://www.countyconnectionchorus.org).

## INFORMATION CENTRAL

### CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK:

#### 'MORE BOOKS PLEASE!'

National Children's Book Week begins Monday. It is an important time for libraries, bookstores, households and schools because it focuses on the value of literacy and the sheer joy of reading.

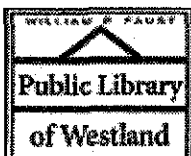
Originating with Frederic Melcher, who served as the secretary of the American Booksellers Association in 1919, advocates of quality children's books are inspired to emphasize the importance of reading. He encouraged children's literacy as primary community and family goals.

This year's theme, "More Books Please!," echoes the hope we share as advocates for reading readiness, language enrichment and depth in understanding at all levels in a child's life.

We want the library to be a haven and gateway for a child's questioning mind. Academics, personal enjoyment, curiosity and inspiration are all paths to learning. Your library has an amazing collection of materials suited to children's needs.

Though the *Harry Potter* fever has normalized (we carry 10 copies of the sixth book), other imaginative worlds are unfolding. Charlie Bone and Henry Winkler's *Hank Zipzer* are new characters blending magic and trouble, concocting a lot of fun along the way.

*Rookie Readers* are beneficial to emerging readers. This nonfiction literature series offers a worthy introduction to math, science, geography and lan-



guage arts. *A Circle in the Sky*, by Zachary Wilson, is a concept book about shapes. Visually

inviting, it is a fun presentation of everyday shapes. *Pet Store Subtraction* by Simone T. Ribke uses colorful photographs of parakeets, gerbils, hermit crabs and more to teach subtraction in an entertaining way. How encouraging to tutor a small child with these enduring books.

A whole week of literacy-building activities is planned for our community families. We begin today (Nov. 12) with a *Blues Clues* Party, from 2-3 p.m.

On Monday, Nov. 13, the beautiful Bharatanatyam Dancers will perform at 7 p.m. Please take advantage of this chance to experience the oldest of classical dance forms in India.

Story times will be offered at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. A Grated movie will be shown at 1 p.m. Friday. Two fun events are planned for Saturday, Nov. 18 - Baby Time Story Time at 10:30 a.m. and for older children, Colorful Patterns Craft at 2 p.m.

Children's Book Week is a time to recognize the magic of learning through books. Libraries devoted to young patrons take pride in versatile collections. School success is only one of the foundations important for a confident child. Equally important is the joy of self discovery.

"More Books Please!"

Coming right up! They are here at the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland.

#### Highlighted Activities

**Organizing for the Holidays:** 7 p.m. Nov. 14.

Join professional organizer Alana Martin of Winged Pig Solutions to learn organizing strategies to help reduce your stress level, have more fun, and focus on what's most important during the holidays.

**Internet 201:** 7 p.m. Nov. 15.

An "inside look" at Internet search engines - which ones do what, how to evaluate them, how to choose good Web sites. No registration or fee required.

**Microsoft Word for Beginners:** 2 p.m. Nov. 18.

Learn the basics of Microsoft Word, a word processing program that lets you create a variety of documents including letters and resumes. Learn how to set margins, change font style and size, check spelling and print. No registration is required.

**Afternoon at the Movies (Teen Program):** Noon Nov. 18.

Enjoy a double feature - two holiday-themed movies for your enjoyment. Bring pillows, beanbags, anything comfortable to sit on, we'll supply the popcorn. All 6th-12th-graders welcome.

Information Central is compiled by Bernadette Dewey, a children's associate at the William P. Faust Public Library, 6123 Central City Parkway, Westland. For more information, call (734) 326-6123.

## CORRECTION

Democratic congressional candidate Tony Trupiano's vote count in Thursday's *Observer* should have been 114,524.

## KNOW THE SCORE

check out the numbers in today's **SPORTS** section

# Senior Alliance's card sale helps finance holiday meals

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

Last year, when The Senior Alliance put out a call for volunteers to deliver meals to seniors on Christmas Day, the response was nothing short of "overwhelming."

This year, Senior Alliance Interim Director Lori Vale is hoping for another good response to the agency's Bank Day holiday card sale.

"The need isn't so much for volunteers to deliver meals this year, what we do need help with is volunteers to stand at banks and sell the cards," Vale said.

On Dec. 8, volunteers will be at participating banks, selling holiday cards for \$5 each. The money raised will pay for meals delivered to seniors on Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and now Labor Day. The \$5 represents the cost of one meal.

When a person buys the card, they will be asked to sign it and include a holiday greeting. The card will be delivered with the meal to a senior on Christmas Day. Since there will be more cards sold than meals delivered, each senior will get several holiday cards with their meal. Vale said.

The Bank Day hours will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and volunteers will be asked to commit to working three hours - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1-4 p.m. There will be a meeting the week before Bank Day when volunteers will get boxes of cards they will be selling. Vale estimates she needs 80-plus volunteers to work Dec. 8.

She also is looking for more

banks to participate in the program as well as businesses interested in selling cards at their offices or stores. Bank Day is Senior Alliance's biggest fund-raiser.

"Some organizations in recent years have bought a box or two of cards and placed a business card or logo sticker in the signature area," she said.

Senior Alliance will have a Holiday Card Kickoff at its offices at 3850 Second St., Suite 201, Wayne, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15. People can stop by to pick up cards to sell in the community.

While Bank Day is Dec. 8, people can sell cards in the community through Dec. 22, Vale said.

There are lesser events like a hot dog roast and golf outing, but the Holiday Cards provide a bulk of the money needed to pay for the meals.

"We usually raise enough to support our Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter dinners, but since we've added Labor Day, we need to raise more," Vale said.

She expects to deliver about 3,000 meals for the four days and about 1,500 meals between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Requests for Thanksgiving meals will be accepted up until the week before and for Christmas up until Dec. 15.

The meals that are not part of the state-funded Meals on Wheels program, which provides hot meals to shut-in seniors Monday through Friday.

"We stepped in with the holiday meals because these programs are closed," Vale said. The holiday meal is just one

program offered by Senior Alliance, the Area Agency on Aging 1-C. It also provides Meals on Wheels, a chore service, family caregiver support and information on medical programs for seniors living in its service area, which includes Livonia, Redford, Westland, Garden City, Canton, Plymouth and Plymouth Township.

Vale also is looking for volunteers to deliver the dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The time commitment is about three to four hours. Each volunteer will have 5-10 meals to deliver, depending on their assigned route. The routes are broken down by zip code and major roads.

Senior Alliance has three "kitchens" that prepare the meals - St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia, Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn and the Park Restaurant in Lincoln Park.

The Park cooks a vast majority of the meals that will be delivered on Christmas Day because the area it will serve - the Downriver communities - has the heaviest concentration of seniors.

St. Mary Mercy prepares meals for seniors living in Livonia, Redford, Westland, Plymouth and Plymouth Township, Canton and neighboring communities, while Oakwood Hospital is cooking for seniors in Garden City, Dearborn Heights and Dearborn, to name a few.

For more information on Senior Alliance programs or volunteer opportunities, call Vale at (734) 727-2017.

## GIFT CARD EFFORT

The KB Toys store at Westland Shopping Center is asking customers to buy a gift card and help the Children's Leukemia Foundation of Michigan.

Now through Nov. 18, the store is conducting a drive to support the toys program sponsored by CLF. Gift cards can be purchased at the store for any amount - the minimum card starting at \$3 - to be donated to CLF. Westland store manager Tonia Schneider, who developed the promotion for the store, knows firsthand how cancer can impact a family.

Children's Leukemia Foundation of Michigan provides gift packages to child patients and their siblings and to the children of adult patients through the toys program.

To learn more, visit its Web site at [www.leukemiamichigan.org](http://www.leukemiamichigan.org).

## TEST

FROM PAGE A1

department will only test children up to 6 years old.

She apologized for any confusion in the aftermath of news that elevated levels of lead had been found in Westland's Central City Park.

Others who want to be tested are advised to see their own doctor or get a referral for a specialist.

Georgia Becker of Westland said she went to the county health department in Wayne on Thursday and was told that she couldn't get the test. She said she and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who played in the park, plan to go to a doctor and pay for the test.

"I think the city should be responsible" for paying the doctor's bill, Becker said. "They didn't let anybody know what was happening in the park. They've known for a long time what was over there."

Mayor Sandra Cicirelli ordered Central City Park closed on Saturday, Nov. 4, after earlier soil tests indicated elevated levels of lead and other contaminants in the park.

The mayor has come under fire for not alerting the public sooner.

The city put up "park closed" signs, but apparently some people still are using it.

Becker said she saw children playing in the park on Thursday, five days after signs of its closing had been posted.

"These were little kids," she said. "Not everybody knows about this problem. It's just sickening."

There was no word by Friday of any other efforts to further seal off the park.

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## St. Damian students sign on to keep their school safe

BY SUE MASON  
STAFF WRITER

As Steven Szymanski sees it: If his school was unsafe "there would be danger, there would be bullying, confusion during the danger and kids hurting each other or kids not helping one another."

Luckily for the fourth-grader his school is safe, something that his classmates and the rest of the students at St. Damian School in Westland attested to during their Michigan Safe Schools Week program last week.

Steven was among a group of students who read essays they wrote about school safety as part of the program.

Preschoolers through eighth-graders took turns reading their essays before the entire group stood and said the safe school pledge, led by St. Damian pastor, the Rev. Larry Zurawski.

Fourth-grade teacher Mary Stempian served as master of ceremonies, telling students they were joining students from around the state in taking the pledge.

"You have shown up to be part of a statewide program," she said. "Right now, students, teachers, and lawmak-

## Taking the pledge



St. Damian second-grader Kaitlyn Toloday (from left), third-grader Katherine Whitfield, fourth-grader Steven Szymanski, fifth-grader Sara Polzin join the rest of the student body in reading the safety pledge during the Safe Schools Week program.

ers are gathering in Lansing to pledge to keep schools safe."

For his part, Steven told his fellow students he would help make St. Damian safe.

"I will share at recess, say please and thank you and help others in their school work" he told them. "I will watch over the younger kids, I will follow the safety rules, and I will keep looking for strangers."

The weeklong Michigan Safe Schools Initiative is sponsored by the state Department of Education. It features activities that demonstrate the positive role children can have in making their schools safe. Each day the [www.safeschools.msu.edu](http://www.safeschools.msu.edu) has highlighted specific challenge to school safety.

Hopes are to have 100,000 students around the state take the pledges. Four schools in Westland have - St. Damian, Adams Middle School and Edison, Schweitzer and Jefferson-Barns Elementaries.

The students pledged not to bully, tease or hurt anyone or use technology for those same purposes and to tell an adult if they hear anyone threatened or if a student brings something to school that could hurt others.

Eighth-grader Rachel Nowaske encouraged students to practice safety to stop the "violence, hatred and anger" that is spread around schools.

"Every day kids are picked on because of their race, size and the friends they have," she said. "In my school, some of

the same things go on, but here we are taught to be nicer and more accepting of others."

Fellow eighth-grader Carly Giles spoke to students about the Drug Awareness Resistance Education - D.A.R.E. - program, telling them that such programs help them "realize the importance of making the right decisions."

Paige-Marie Cummins, a St. Damian seventh-grader, cautioned students about Internet usage, telling them to "think before you type."

"One mistake could change everything," she said.

"Sometimes people don't think before they post something and might put personal information. And that's where a small mistake becomes a big problem. A stranger should go to your house and stalk you,



St. Damian eighth-grader Carly Giles reads her school safety essay at the Michigan Safe Schools Week program.



St. Damian kindergartner Rachel Toloday watches as the Rev. Larry Zurawski and Principal Susan Perna sign the safety pledge.

and maybe even try and kidnap you."

Following the program, the students returned to the classrooms where they signed their pledges.

Principal Susan Perna was impressed by the students' essays, telling them that "the one thing that impressed me

most is that you considered our school safe."

"I don't think any child should go to school, feeling worried and scared," she said. "Now you understand the reason why we have tornado and fire drills."

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# LPS loses 500 students, \$2 million in revenue

BY REBECCA JONES  
STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public Schools lost twice as many students as it expected this year, leaving a \$2 million budget shortfall. Enrollment was down 2.8 percent — 497 students — from last year. That leaves LPS with 17,717 pupils and leaves some parents wondering how the district will cope in coming years if officials have to keep dipping into the fund equity to balance the budget.

"How many times is LPS and this administration going to go to the well, i.e. fund equity, before the well goes dry?" Livonia resident Roger Spence asked.

Supt. Randy Liepa reported the enrollment figures numbers at the Nov.

6 school board meeting.

"We know that we have lost some students to surrounding schools or surrounding school districts," he said. "Some families have left us because of the school closings and the grade reconfigurations."

About a dozen more families than in the prior year left the district to move out of state, he reported, and 100 students left the district for private schools. "That's about double what we would see in prior years," he said.

Liepa also attributed the loss to the economy and community demographics. For example, 370 more students graduated last year than entered kindergarten this year.

The district planned on a loss of 251 students or 1.4 percent this fall, and bud-

geted for a loss of about 160 students under the blended count (75 percent of fall enrollment and 25 percent from last February's count).

LPS uses an enrollment model developed by a former school district employee to determine enrollment projections. Liepa said last spring's enrollment projections did not take into account the Legacy Initiative, a controversial plan which closed seven schools to save money. The plan led to a failed recall effort.

Livonia resident Anita Sabatini said she pulled her two sons out of the district and wonders how many others have withdrawn based on the "poor decision" the board made. She was also peeved that the audit report showed that the district had a surplus.

"Does this mean we could have waited another year to implement this plan?" she said, also questioning whether the loss would have been as significant if the district had listened to its constituents better.

Sabatini suggested that the district set up a new demographics committee to better plan for next year.

Administrators still have to determine what impact the student count will have on its budget. Budgeting and state aid is based on the blended count.

Liepa estimated that \$2 million in adjustments would be necessary. He will recommend taking money from the district's \$10.9 million fund equity to balance the budget. The school board will make that determination later this month.

Budget adjustments are always necessary after the start of the school year when the district determines actual enrollment figures, personnel costs and the state's per-pupil allocation, Liepa said. Typically the district does not try to cut the budget mid-year.

"Our goal has always been to maintain our programs as we go throughout the year," he said. "It's one of the reasons you have fund equity."

Resident Kim Naccashian questioned that move.

"How was it in June our district was broke and now we have so much money in our fund equity that we can borrow millions to balance the budget?" she asked.

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# Students savor Big Apple fashion

BY REBECCA JONES  
STAFF WRITER

From Fifth Avenue to Chinatown, Livonia students shopped New York style, and learned about fashion merchandising.

"We wanted to get a feel for New York. If you want to work in fashion, it's really the place to go," said Patricia Wright, who teaches fashion merchandising at the Livonia Career Technical Center.

Thirty-six students and 12 chaperones took the trip Oct. 22-25.

Last week, students discussed the trip as they took time in class to knit scarves for a women's shelter.

Participants got a behind-the-scenes tour of the flagship Macy's store at 34th and Broadway, saw a boutique run by a "Project Runway" contestant, and they shopped. Senior Brittany Hourigan now knows why make-up is on the first floor and mattresses are sold from the ninth. One is an impulse buy.

"We learned how they display and dress mannequins. In the juniors area, they have loud music playing and Ben & Jerry's and pizza places. In the designer or more sophisticated areas, they have a Starbucks," Hourigan said.

She even picked up a Coach purse in Chinatown. "It's real," she said, showing the inside label.

Lauren Whitehead picked up Chanel and Dolce & Gabbana purses for \$40 each.

"Chinatown was my favorite. It was just different and interesting. You get to call the shots," she said.

Whitehead also got a chance to tour the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she plans to attend after starting her studies at Schoolcraft College next year.

"I want to get into the fashion industry. It's really one of the top schools in the world," said Whitehead, who plans to study advertising and marketing.

This was the first time the fashion merchandising class planned its own trip, rather than traveling with DECA, an association for marketing students. Arriving by bus and staying in New Jersey helped keep costs down and let more students attend, Wright said.

"We were able to make it a more fashion-oriented trip," she said.

Students also recently learned how to knit during a clinic offered by building paraprofessional Joan Hovey and retired paraprofessional Cindy Gutkowski.

Students bought yarn and practiced their new skill by knitting scarves for women at First Step shelter in Plymouth. Senior Odyssey Cox used fine-gauge needles to knit a multicolor scarf. Working on the project during her free time, she estimated the scarf would take four days to complete.

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PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMEYER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Livonia Career Technical Center seniors Jamie Scott, left, and Chelsea Peabody, right, knit scarves for First Step, which helps victims of domestic violence.



Livonia Career Technical Center fashion merchandising student Odyssey Cox recently learned how to knit and plans to learn crocheting. She is making a scarf for a charity.



Students in the Livonia Career Technical Center's fashion merchandising class learned how to knit and are making scarves for a local women's shelter.

# Bomb threat at Cooper proves to be hoax

BY REBECCA JONES  
STAFF WRITER

A bomb threat written in crayon at Cooper Upper Elementary was a hoax, police and school district officials said.

The note, described as graffiti in orange crayon, appeared on a girls' bathroom stall Nov. 8 right before school dismissal.

"It indicated that on Nov. 10 that there would be a bomb," said Jay Young, director of community relations.

Westland police brought a bomb-sniffing dog through the school and found no evidence of explosives.

"They determined that it was probably a hoax and had no reason to believe it was a credible threat," Young said.

After school School Age Child Care programs were disrupted during the investigation, but the building was not evacuated during school hours.

Westland police also provided extra security at Cooper on Nov. 9 and 10.

School officials followed the district's Crisis Response Plan.

The school district sent home a letter with students the next day informing them of the threat and to reassure them that school was safe, Young said.

The letter asked parents to discuss the incident with their children.

"Please encourage (students) to always talk with a Cooper staff member should they see/hear anything related to this type of incident," the letter stated. "It is important that, as a community, we send a message that we will not tolerate threats of any kind."

"Bomb threats occur occasionally, but it is typically at the older schools," Young said.

Police are still investigating. They have no suspects.

The school, on Ann Arbor Trail, has an enrollment of 750 fifth- and sixth-graders. Cooper reportedly had more absences than normal Friday, but exact figures were unavailable at press time.

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# Salvation Army needs help for the holidays

BY JULIE BROWN  
STAFF WRITER

The Red Kettle Campaign is a vital part of the Salvation Army's work, and the Wayne-Westland Corps is no exception.

Local bell-ringing starts Friday, Nov. 17, and commander Capt. Matt O'Neil is hoping for a good year.

"Right now, I think we have 13," he said of bell-ringing sites. "We're ringing from Monday through Thursday, 11 to 7, and Friday and Saturday, 11 to 9."

This year's local campaign has a goal of \$125,000, the same as last

**The metro Red Kettle Campaign kick-off will be 5:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, onstage at Campus Martius.**

year. The goal wasn't met last year.

"We were being probably a little too optimistic," said O'Neil, who leads the local Salvation Army with wife Capt. Mindie O'Neil.

He cited people giving for Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief, as well as the earlier tsunami.

Local bell-ringing sites include several at the Westland Shopping Center, as well as Kmart and grocery stores.

Matt O'Neil would like to expand use of unstaffed "mini-kettles" this year, countertop containers suitable for smaller restaurants and convenience stores, "any business that thinks they can help out."

Volunteers are a vital part of bell-ringing.

The Salvation Army continues to use a few paid bell-ringers, but is trying to reduce those numbers. People who'd like to help out can call the Wayne-Westland Salvation

Army at (734) 722-3660. People can also volunteer by going online to [www.ringbells.org](http://www.ringbells.org) and navigating to Wayne-Westland on the left side of the screen.

"This year, we're counting on more and more volunteers," he said. "We're in need of volunteers."

There are other ways to help the Salvation Army this holiday season. There will be an Angel Tree by Macy's at Westland Shopping Center, where people can take a child's name and buy from a list for him or her.

In addition, the Adopt a Family program allows people to adopt an

entire family in a similar fashion. For information, call Margaret Gaster at (734) 722-3660.

O'Neil noted that about 500 families were helped locally last year, some 1,200 children and 600 adults.

"We're counting on a lot of Adopt a Family this year," he said, adding that not all families on the list were adopted last year.

The metro Red Kettle Campaign kick-off will be 5:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, onstage at Campus Martius immediately preceding the city of Detroit's annual tree-lighting ceremony. The theme is "What's in Your Kettle?"

## GOODFELLOWS

FROM PAGE A1

On Thursday, Nov. 16, Uno Chicago Grill will host a wine-tasting event 5:30-8:30 p.m., with singer Tyrone Hamilton. Appetizers and pastries will be served, general manager Sue Walsh said.

Admission is \$30 in advance, with tickets available at the restaurant on Wayne Road next to Westland Shopping Center, Walsh said. Tickets will cost \$35 at the door.

The event is being billed as the Hunters Widow Wine-Tasting event - an attempt to draw women whose husbands are away for hunting season, Walsh said.

On Thursday, Dec. 14, Uno Chicago Grill will sponsor a champagne-tasting event 5:30-8:30 p.m., also featuring Hamilton and with the same admission.

However, anyone who wants to attend both Uno Chicago Grill events can pay one admission of \$50, Walsh said. Both events will include raffles of prizes.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, Strykers Lounge at Ford and Hix roads will host a Goodfellows fund-raiser 5-10:30 p.m., with a disc jockey and raffles.

On Friday, Dec. 8, Marvaso's Italian Grille and the next-door Electric Stick billiards hall will sponsor a fund-raiser. A 9-ball pool tournament will be held 6-8 p.m. with a \$10 admission, Barra said, and raffles will be held 5-10:30 p.m. Hamilton will again perform.

Marvaso's and the Electric Stick are located in a strip mall on the northwest corner of Hunter and Wayne roads.

Prizes raffled during the various events will include such items as 20-inch televisions, DVD players, MP3 players, jewelry, haircuts, oil changes, and tickets for next season's Detroit Tigers games, Barra said.

Fund-raising aside, Barra also said Goodfellows will need help with packing children's toys 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15, at the city's senior citizen Friendship Center, on Newburgh south of Ford.

Moreover, help will be needed delivering gifts starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 16.

To help with packing or delivery, or for more information, call Barra at (734) 637-5579 or Adams at (734) 320-4218.

For more information about Goodfellows, visit the group's Web site at [www.westlandgoodfellows.org](http://www.westlandgoodfellows.org).

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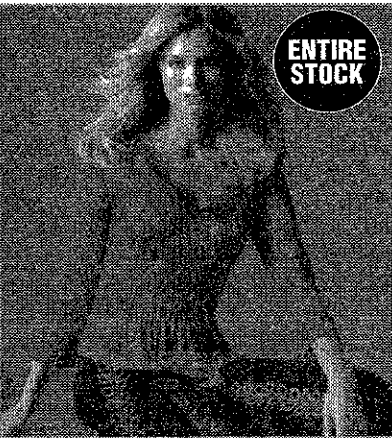
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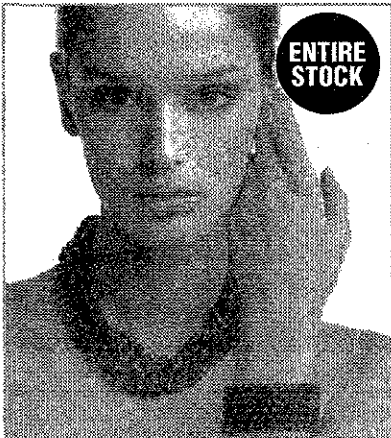
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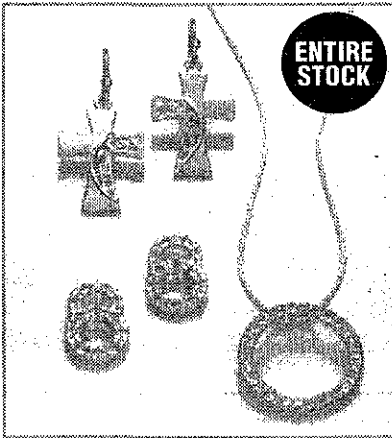
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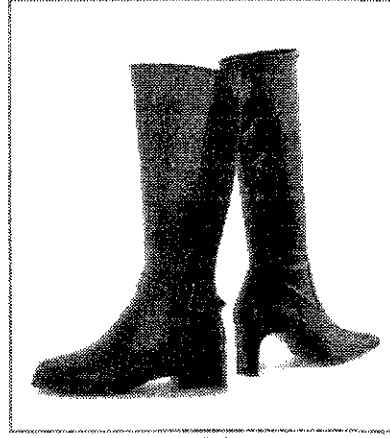
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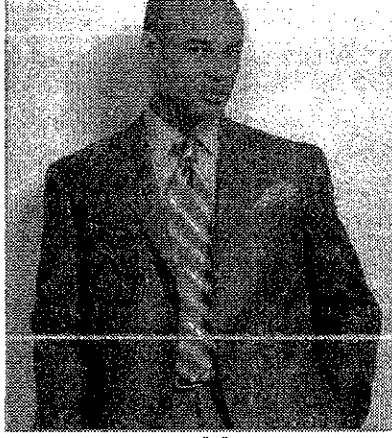
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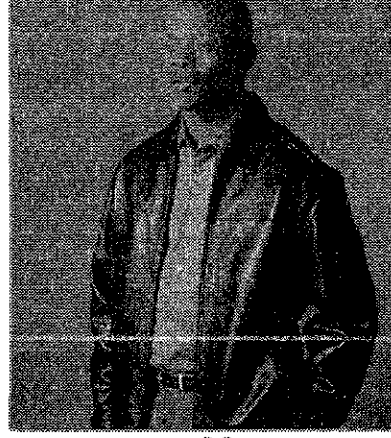
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## HONOR

FROM PAGE A1

as reminders of those who have died, and each of the cadet speakers placed a flag at the makeshift memorial to honor America's war dead.

Members of the Wayne Memorial High School marching band performed the National Anthem at the ceremony, while Cadet Cpl. Muata Mason played *Taps*.

The cadets also recognized 12 former members of their battalion who are serving in the military, and received a flag from Army National Guard Pfc. Anthony Butner on behalf of Sgt. William Paige who is serving with the 3rd Special Forces Group in Afghanistan. The flag had flown over the group's Camp Vance compound at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan on Sept. 11, 2006, "in honor of the Wayne Memorial High School JROTC program."

According to 1st Sgt. Steven LeHaine, the program's senior Army instructor, Paige became "attached" to the battalion during the summer JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge.

"We received the flag this week," LeHaine said. "We did expect it, it wasn't a surprise."

The flag will be framed and displayed in the JROTC area of



Narrator Cadet Master Sgt. Jessica Hensley reads President George W. Bush's Veterans Day proclamation at the ceremony. Behind her are cadets Master Sgt. Ryan Crayne (from left), Staff Sgt. Brienne Rice and 1st Lt. Andrew Pate.

the high, he added.

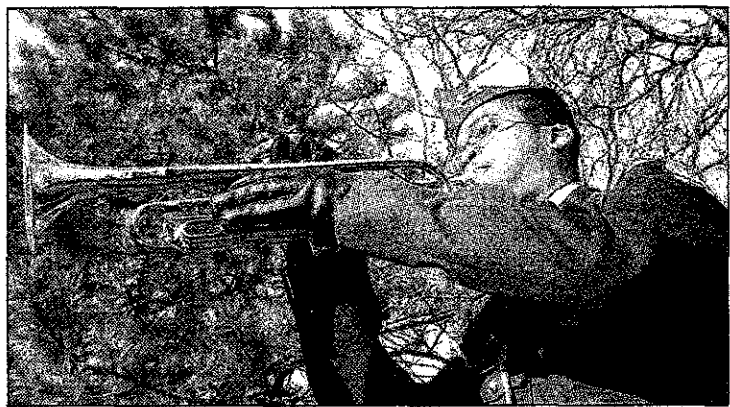
This is the third year that the high school JROTC battalion has conducted a Veterans Day ceremony at the school.

According to LeHaine, the 156-member battalion rehearsed indoors on Wednesday and again Friday prior to the 11 a.m. program.

"They know the commands, but the first time they ran the drill was before the ceremony," he said.

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PHOTOS BY TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Cadet Cpl. Muata Mason plays *Taps* at the ceremony.

## AROUND WESTLAND

### Food fest

Holiday Taste Fest, featuring food and drink from 19 vendors, mostly restaurants, will come to the Hellenic Cultural Center in Westland at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5.

Admission is \$20 per person for the event, sponsored by the Westland Chamber of Commerce.

The Hellenic Cultural Center is on Joy Road east of Newburgh.

Tickets may be bought 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays at chamber offices on Ford Road east of Newburgh. The event also will include entertainment. Call (734) 326-7222.

### Retirement party

A retirement celebration has been scheduled for Westland

18th District Judge Gail McKnight, her husband Richard McKnight, her secretary Tammy Harder and one of her court officers, Daniel Harvey.

The party is scheduled for 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Hellenic Cultural Center, on Joy Road east of Newburgh.

There will be an open bar, a 7 p.m. dinner and entertainment.

Tickets are \$50 each and must be paid for in advance. The court is asking for tickets to be ordered by Dec. 1.

Tickets are available at 18th District Court, Mayor Sandra Cicirelli's office, the Westland Police Department and city fire administration offices.

For more information, call (734) 595-8720.

## Judge orders trial in child abuse case

BY DARRELL CLEM  
STAFF WRITER

A Nigerian woman living illegally in the United States was ordered Thursday to stand trial amid allegations she abused her 6-year-old daughter at her Westland apartment.

Onyinyechi Joy Ogundu, 25, appeared in Westland 18th District Court and waived her preliminary hearing on charges of second- and third-degree child abuse.

Her decision averted testimony and prompted Judge Gail McKnight to order her to stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court. Ogundu, jailed in lieu of a \$50,000 cash bond, could face penalties ranging up to four years in prison, if she's found guilty as charged.

Ogundu is accused of abusing her 6-year-old daughter from August 2005 through October 2006 at Woodcrest Villa, an apartment complex on the city's

north side, off Wayne Road south of Joy.

According to police Sgt. Debra Mathews, the girl was tied up, beaten with cords and sticks, and made to contort her body and stand in difficult positions, such as balancing on her left foot while leaning forward and putting her right index finger on the floor.

A scarf also was tied around the girl's mouth, Mathews has said.

Ogundu was arrested in October after employees at Garfield Elementary School in Livonia suspected that the girl was being abused, Mathews said. The child had scars that police believe were the result of abuse.

The girl has been placed in a foster home. A not-guilty plea has been entered in Ogundu's court file as she awaits trial. If convicted, she could be deported after she serves any prison time she may receive.

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

## Tickets now on sale for YWCA luncheon

Tickets are now on sale for the YWCA of Western Wayne County Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon and Silent Auction, slated for Friday, Nov. 17, at The Dearborn Inn.

The awards ceremony honors outstanding women from western Wayne County in the categories: arts/communications, business/industry, government/law, professions, senior woman, volunteer service and young woman. The YWCA also recognizes its Woman of the Year Award at the luncheon.

The silent auction previews at 10:45 a.m. and takes place 11 a.m. to noon. The program begins at noon.

The mistress of ceremonies is Doris Biscoe. An Emmy award-winning TV personality and co-anchor for WXYZ-TV Channel 7 Action News, she is the founder and president of Doris Biscoe

Communications.

"The YWCA of Western Wayne County is committed to helping women and their families for the past 50 years," said Karen Murphy, CEO of the YWCA of Western Wayne County. "The Women of Achievement Awards honor women who have been nominated by the community, and who are truly making a difference. We are proud to recognize and celebrate these women."

Tickets are \$40 each or \$400 for tables of 10. Call the YWCA Women of Achievement Department at (313) 561-4110 for reservations.

Based in Inkster, the YWCA of Western Wayne County serves Inkster as well as the communities of Livonia, Westland, Plymouth, Canton, Garden City, Belleville, Van Buren Township, Wayne, Northville, Romulus and Taylor.

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Classic Computer Recovery Inc. is using its warehouse in Garden City as a Wayne County drop-off site as part of the computer and a computer peripherals/electronics collection for America Recycles Day.

Residents, schools and small businesses can dispose of their computer electronics in an environmentally friendly manner between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday at the warehouse at 32400 Ford Monday, Nov. 13, through Thursday, Nov. 30.

Among the items accepted for this collection are comput-

ers (PCs), all-in-ones, laptops, modems, printers, monitors, CD-ROM drives, keyboards, mice, cables, hard drives and motherboards. Items, such as televisions, will not be accepted.

A school or business with more than 20 items to dispose of you should call Laura Charnota at Classic Computer Recovery Inc. at (734) -732-1784.

CCR specializes in electronic recycling and is capable of recycling more than 95 percent of the materials and components listed at its Garden City warehouse.

Visit [www.classiccomputer-recovery.com](http://www.classiccomputer-recovery.com).

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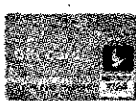
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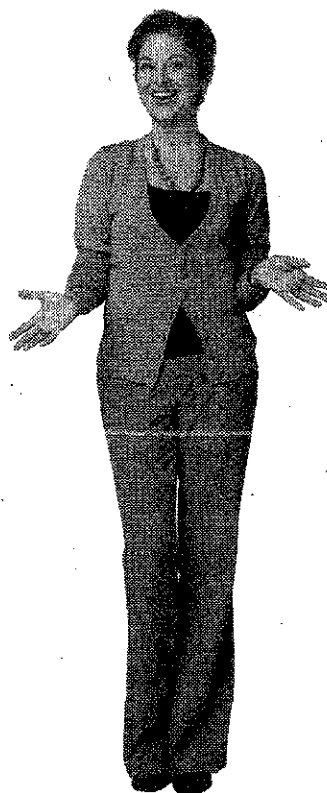
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# A good night to be a Democrat as GOP loses its grip on power

"Happy days are here again  
The skies above are clear again  
So let's sing a song of cheer again  
Happy days are here again"

— Jack Yellen-Milton Ager

Notes on a power-shifting election:

For the first time in many years, Democrats across the country could raise their voices and sing *Happy Days Are Here Again*, the party anthem since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

At the Quality Inn in Livonia, Democrats of the 11th Congressional District began to gather early, expecting that this would be a good night to be a Democrat. Shortly after the polls closed at 8 p.m., exit polling declared a big win for Gov. Jennifer Granholm. A young aide to Democratic congressional candidate Tony Trupiano, and a veteran of two tours in Iraq, shared the news that Pennsylvania's conservative Republican Sen. Rick Santorum has fallen to Hugh Casey. A short time later, the news came that Debbie Stabenow would be returning to the Senate. The news locally and nationally would continue to draw cheers from the crowd.

Marc Corriveau, the candidate for the 20th House District, was there with a large contingent of family and friends. He was excited that he had taken his hometown of Northville and Plymouth. The current representative to that district, Republican John Stewart and his wife Beth, a candidate in the rough and tumble Republican primary, gathered with the Democrats to show their support for Corriveau. By night's end, he won the seat against Northville Township Supervisor Mark Abbo.

Glenn Anderson, running against Republican incumbent Laura Toy for the 6th District Senate seat, was still smarting from a blitz of negative ads run by his opponent, but early returns were giving him a lift. He, too, would emerge a winner.

It would be nice to think that the awful race-baiting, gay-bashing, factually dishonest ads that were run by the Toy campaign turned voters against her. But it was more likely a strong Democratic vote in Westland that did the trick. Toy claims the ads were the product of the state party, not her. Then shame on the state party.

As late as 10 p.m., Trupiano would address the packed hall with confidence that he might pull off an upset against Republican incumbent Thaddeus McCotter.

Two years ago at Burton Manor, 11th District Republicans were in the same kind of euphoric mood as George W. Bush defeated John Kerry and the GOP carried the day across the country.

By the time I arrived Tuesday at the Republicans'

gathering at Laurel Manor, the crowd was dispersed, the mood was subdued and the only loud noise came from Dennis McCotter's band performing for a handful of people at his brother's election night party.

In the end McCotter would prevail, but in January he will be part of the minority in Congress.

The Republicans will also be the minority in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Pundits have weighed in from every corner about why things went so badly for the Grand Old Party.

Sen. Arlen Specter from the center and former House Majority Leader Dick Armey from the right both blamed the influence of Christian conservatives. James Dobson of the Focus on Family Christian conservative group countered that it was neglect of the Christian right's issues that kept many of them home on election day. (If Republicans buy into this argument, the Democrats may be in power for generations to come.)

Iraq and President Bush were key issues. Too many wrong decisions, too little progress in stabilizing the country, too much rhetoric about terrorism, too little support for the troops we sent over there and, in the end, too many dead Americans moved many voters to the Democrats.

The Democratic Party has been moving away from the liberalism that defined the party in the late '60s and '70s toward a more pragmatic centrist position. It was the Clinton model that helped the party recruit many moderate candidates with some conservative leanings.

Trupiano fit that mold, designed to appeal to a marginally Republican district. But he couldn't compete against McCotter's long-established presence in the district, though he gave it a good shot.

Pundits have also opined about the need for bipartisan cooperation. That's the theme they have given Granholm, who no longer has the resistance of a Republican House. Now she and the Democratic House need to work with a Republican Senate to develop a tax structure and a spending plan that will bring Michigan up to its rightful place as one of the nation's great progressive and prosperous states.

A major setback for progressives was the passage of Prop 2, the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative. Despite the opposition of leaders from both parties and an expensive campaign to defeat the measure, Michigan voters supported the ban on affirmative action by a wide margin. If the supporters of the MCRI are serious and honest about supporting programs to improve K-12 education in economically distressed areas, now is the time to step forward and offer some ideas.

Maybe Jennifer Gratz shouldn't fly back to California, but instead stay here in Michigan and promote "civil rights."

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

# Be clear, urge 'No' vote in Lansing on cable bill

There is much misinformation about House Bill 6456 which was introduced in the Michigan Legislature this fall to address cable franchising.

This bill would remove cable franchising from local governments where it has been for the past 30 years, and establish a statewide franchise. But there are numerous problems with this bill and it is not the panacea that the phone company makes it out to be in their ads.

The bill runs 22 pages and I have read them all. Let me address some of the key points that affect you as a cable customer and Michigan resident.

1. This bill does not require full build-out in all communities. Build out is a guarantee that all residents receive access to service. AT&T admits this. Of course, full build-out takes time, but within several years a community should expect that service should be available to all residents. That's what happened when your community first received cable back in the 1980s.

This bill, however, only requires AT&T and other providers to serve 25 percent of low income households within three years — leaving many neighborhoods without the benefits of choice or competitive service. AT&T told its investors that it will cover 90 percent of its high value customers — those who spend over \$160 a month — but only 5 percent of low value customers — those who spend less than \$100 a month — would get the service.

Currently HB 6456 has no guarantees that everyone in the community will get service. And the loose parameters within the bill don't even cover half the state in the next five years. AT&T's ads claim this bill will bring competition. But let's be clear: There's nothing preventing them from providing service to our communities right now.

In fact, many of our cities and townships have invited them, but AT&T has not signed one franchise agreement to date — the same franchise the cable operator has signed, so no time is wasted in negotiations.

2. Local governments will lose control over government-owned rights-of-way.

The video franchise your city or township holds with the cable operator can be immediately terminated. That means they don't have to provide cable service to you at all. This means your local city or township hall has no control over what happens to your streets or the rights-of-way in front of your home.

And that means that AT&T is free to install their large equipment boxes in front of your sidewalk or next to your driveway.

3. This bill allows your current video provider to immediately terminate their existing franchise agreement with your city, village or township. That means your current cable company doesn't have to provide cable service, or upgrades, to you at all.

4. Cities, villages and townships will lose more than \$55 million statewide due to lost franchise fees and in-kind services to municipalities and schools. Currently, these dollars are what the cable operators pay to use, or rent, those rights-of-ways which you, as a resident, own. This is money which your local community uses to maintain the right-of-way and provide essential services including public safety.

The programming you see on your local access channels, like city council, township board, or school board meetings, as well as information about your community, is funded through these fees.

We want competition, but we want it for all of our residents, equally. Urge your representatives to Vote "No" on HB 6456 until local government concerns can be met.

Vicki Barnett is president of the Michigan Municipal League and mayor of Farmington Hills.

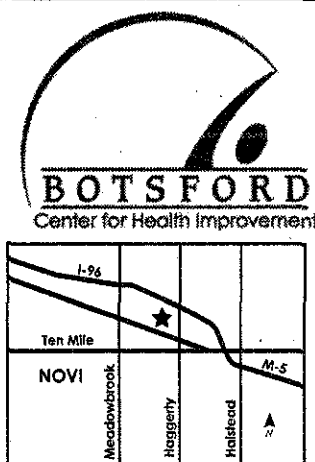
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