

# Canton Observer

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Canton, Michigan

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**Rate shopping:** Canton's involvement in an MMRMA coalition seeking lower electricity rates could be a good deal./A14

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## The music goes 'round and 'round



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

**Discovery days:** Kason Singh (left) and Ken Herzfeld, both 10, check out the business end of their clarinets during Introduction to Band class sixth hour with Martha Farmer on Sept. 19. For a story and more photos in the Observer series, "Dawn of Discovery," please turn to Page C8 in today's paper.

# Runway shift likely

■ A complaint about noise and new FAA guidelines should result in takeoffs from Canton's Mettetal Airport being moved farther south of Joy Road.

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM  
STAFF WRITER  
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Mettetal Airport's advisory board last week tweaked the wording of a resolution that could help cause the airport's runway to be moved.

New Federal Aviation Administration standards stipulate runways must be at least 200-300 feet from major roads. In Mettetal's case, the runway is roughly 50 feet from Joy, said Randy Collier of Michigan Department of Transportation's Bureau of Aeronautics.

Board member Carl Schultz said it was important that the resolution, which will be forwarded to Canton Township's board of trustees for approval, have very specific wording. "We should put a (distance) number in there," Schultz said.

Please see RUNWAY, A4

# Fire prevention is focus in October

BY EILEEN MCCARVILLE  
STAFF WRITER

Canton Township's Fire Department thinks fire prevention awareness is something that deserves more than seven days. That's why it's reserving the whole month.

National Fire Prevention Week, set for Oct. 8-14, will actually stretch through all of October, featuring a

## Related column, A15

variety of special events. A big part of the message — about the dangers of fire — can be spread through the community's children, said Canton Fire Chief Mike Rorabacher, head of the department since 1991.

"It became apparent early on that the best way to do it is to educate the

kids," Rorabacher said. "Kids are, by far, the best conduit to get the safety information into the house. We try to send them home with a check list that they can go through with their parents. We want them to help make sure everything in their homes is O.K., from the furnace to the dryer."

"We urge them to check the smoke detectors, check around the furnace

and water heater, to (work with their parents) on an escape plan."

The fire department will host a continuous open house at its two stations: Fire Station No. 1, at Canton Center Road and Heritage Drive; and Fire Station No. 2 on Warren Road between Lilley and Haggerty. The stations are

Please see FIRE PREVENTION, A4

# Car thieves target new Mustangs

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM  
STAFF WRITER  
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Canton police say they're pretty sure that four Mustangs missing from a storage facility didn't just gallop away.

In fact, they're certain that as many as three people may be involved in stealing four 2001 Ford Mustangs in two incidents Friday and Monday. The cars were taken from a fenced Ford Motor Co. vehicle storage facility on Hannan south of Michigan. Hundreds of new vehicles are stored on the site before being taken to dealerships.

The thieves apparently gained entry to the facility by cutting a hole in a chain link fence and driving through it, said Canton police Sgt. Charles Raycraft.

He said he was unsure the thieves' motive was to sell intact vehicles or sell them for parts.

"It could be one or the other," Raycraft said, adding that their being able to take three cars at one time indicates an organized operation.

Unlawful driving away of a vehicle is a felony and carries a five-year maximum sentence.

Please see STOLEN CARS, A2

## Fall gets a chill reception



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

**Top-rated:** Jim "Colonel Jim" Sholar of Canton celebrates his win in the Great Lakes Regional Chili Cookoff Sunday in downtown Plymouth. Sholar and wife Linda will be jetting off to Laughlin, Nevada for the national chili competition this weekend. For a story and more photos from the annual festival, please turn to Page A3 in today's Observer.

# Sunday cancer run is tribute to area resident

BY EILEEN MCCARVILLE  
STAFF WRITER

Just a few years ago, Trish Donnelly-Runnion was a normal, active young woman — unaware she had a lump in her breast, which was later diagnosed as breast cancer.

Though the Plymouth resident fought strenuously during three years of treatments, Donnelly-Runnion lost her battle, succumbing to the disease in January 1997. She was just 28 years old.

Her family wants to keep the memory of their loved one alive, but more important, they want to raise awareness that breast cancer "can happen to anyone at any age," said Donnelly-Runnion's brother, Pat Donnelly of Canton Township.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. So it's fitting this Sunday marks the fourth annual Trish Donnelly-Runnion Memorial Fund Run at Summit on the Park, 46000 Summit Parkway. This year's run includes a

one-mile walk/run, and 5K and 10K runs. Plaques and ribbons are awarded to winners in each age division: Under 18, every five years to age 60, Pat Donnelly said.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m., followed with the 10K run at 8:45, the 5K run at 10, and the walk/run at 10:45. All runners will participate at the same time.

Proceeds go to St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor for breast cancer awareness, and also finance two annu-

al scholarships for members of the Plymouth-Salem High School cross country team.

Donnelly-Runnion was an active runner and member of that team, as were her three sisters, Pat Donnelly said. She ran on scholarship and coached at Schoolcraft College. She also received a bachelor's degree in special education at Western Michigan University, going on to teach in the Plymouth, Caro and Brighton school districts.

Please see FUND RUN, A4

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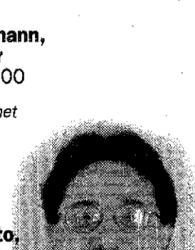
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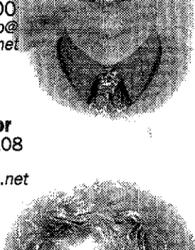
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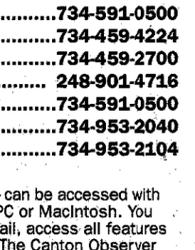
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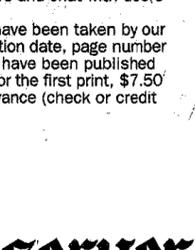
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# Observer Arts coverage lauded

The Canton Observer's Arts and Leisure section, led by assistant managing editor-features Keely Wygonik, captured third place in the lifestyle section of the Michigan Press Association 2000 Better Newspaper Contest. The award was among 16 that the Observer Newspapers earned in the annual newspaper contest. Entries appeared in The Observer between April 1, 1999, and March 31, 2000.

"The Observer Newspapers strive to put out the best community newspapers in the country," said managing editor Hugh Gallagher. "We are proud that the MPA has recognized our efforts. I applaud the hard work and dedication of our editors, reporters and photographers."

Winning awards isn't easy, said Banks Dishmon, vice president and chief operating officer of HomeTown Communications Network. "It shows the commitment that every journalist, advertising and marketing person, production personnel, publisher and corporate staff make each week to produce the very best newspapers," he added. "These awards are a clear reflection of our mission statement: 'Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.'"

Also receiving awards were: Staff writer Darrell Clem, Westland Observer staff writer, second-place award for local news reporting for his coverage of the city clerk firing. Judges described his work

as "extremely thorough and well-done."

Staff photographer Hawley, third place in spot news picture competition for "Closed doors" in the Westland Observer.

Brad Kadrach, editor of the Plymouth Observer, first place for his editorial page and second place for editorial writing.

Dan O'Meara, Farmington sports editor, first place in sports writing.

Steve Kowalski, former Redford-Garden City sports editor, second place in sports writing.

Paul Beaudry, Redford-Garden City sports editor, second place in sports column and second place in sports coverage.

Mary Rodrigue, Farmington Observer HomeTown Life editor, second place for lifestyle section.

The Garden City Observer captured an honorable mention for general excellence.

Staff photographer Elizabeth Carnegie also earned two honorable mention awards — for her feature photograph taken at the Garden City High School class of 1999 prom and her photograph "Hi There," which appeared in the Farmington Observer.

The Livonia Observer captured awards for sports photographs; and spot news coverage of a chemical scare after an explosion and fire in October 1999.

In total, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers captured 40 editorial and 26 advertising awards.

# Police: Window shooting spree continues

**COP CALLS**

Reports of shattered windows caused by BBs, pellets from a pellet gun or marbles continued to come in through the weekend, but the incidents have appeared to have stopped, according to Canton Police.

At least 50 reports were filed between Thursday, Sept. 28, and the remainder of the weekend, said Canton Police Sgt. Charles Raycraft.

Here is a listing of some of the incidents:

- 6400 block of Durham, \$1,000 damage to rear window of 2001 Ford Windstar minivan, possibly caused by a BB or slingshot with a marble.
- 44000 block of Leeann, \$800 damage to rear window of 2001 Ford Explorer.
- 42000 block of Addison, \$800 damage to rear windows of 1999 Ford Windstar
- 44000 block of Hanford, \$1,000 damage caused to rear window of 1999 Ford Windstar
- 45000 Patrick, \$300 damage to rear window of 2001 Mercury Mountaineer. A marble was found inside vehicle.

**Vehicle break-in**

Someone reportedly broke into a vehicle parked in the 41000 block of Woodbridge and took \$100-\$200 worth of compact

discs and a \$200 video game system. Entry was gained by breaking out the rear window, causing \$700 damage, according to a police report.

When the victim, a 47-year-old Canton man, shook out a jacket he removed from the vehicle, a live mouse reportedly fell onto the floor. When he returned to the vehicle, he discovered several dead goldfish. He declined to give suspect names to police, but said he had been giving information to a Western Wayne Narcotics officer and that he believed the suspects may be seeking retribution against him.

**Assault**

A 12-year-old Canton boy was reportedly assaulted by two other boys while waiting for a school bus Tuesday, Sept. 19, in the 46000 block of Geddes. A police report stated the boy's attackers said they owed him 50 punches each and proceeded to punch him in the arms, trip him and kick him in the stomach while he was lying on the ground.

Both the boy and his father told police that they want to press charges.

# Spellers face off in new location at annual Bee

The Community Literacy Council, in association with Yazaki North America and Neville Financial Group will host the 2000 Community Spelling Bee Oct. 18 at the Yazaki Learning Center in Canton.

This year's event is being held at a new location. Previously, spellers squared off at Summit on the Park in Canton.

The annual event raises money to promote literacy programs and awareness in the community. Last year's winning team, The Spelling Savants of the Friends of Canton Public Library, out-spelled Friends of the Plymouth District Library to

snag the trophy and coveted bragging rights. This year's event will include approximately 15 teams sponsored by community businesses and organizations.

The Community Literacy Council is a non-profit organization that coordinates a network of adult volunteer tutors who help adult students improve their reading, writing and math skills. The council serves Wayne County.

For more information about the annual spelling bee or the Community Literacy Council, contact Bill Sharpe, executive director, at (734) 416-4906.

# Stolen cars from page A1

Three Mustangs were stolen Monday. A storage facility employee reported the thefts just before 10 p.m., according to police reports.

On Friday, three suspects reportedly attempted to steal four vehicles but only left with one. Police discovered three vehicles stuck in the mud near the

storage facility's fence line. Wayne police responded to the scene and spotted three men running away, but were unable to apprehend them.

Anyone with information about either of these incidents may call the Canton police at (734) 397-3000.

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# Good stuff

## Chili and motorcycles signal a change of season

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER  
tbruscato@oe.homecomm.net

For the fifth year in a row, the Great Lakes Regional Chili Cookoff, Salsa Competition and Motorcycle Show ran out of chili.

"We just can't seem to get enough," said organizer Annette Horn. "This year we went through at least 500 gallons of chili."

Part of Horn's problem is the fact the cookoff seems to be growing in popularity, with an estimated 20,000 people attending last Sunday's event.

Horn said this year's competition raised nearly \$10,000 for the Plymouth Salvation Army and the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Michigan. In the five years of the Chili Cookoff, Horn has raised approximately \$46,000 for charity.

"It really makes it worthwhile when we can give away so much money," said Horn.

"The chilis were great!" said Michele Potter, Plymouth city commissioner, who was a judge for the event. "They were certainly much hotter this time around."

"The entire experience was great. A lot of fun people, great crowd and perfect weather," she added.

"My mouth really started to tingle ... it was really hot," said Commissioner Bill Graham, another chili judge. "The whole event was fun."

The winners are:

■ First place chili: James Sholar of Canton. Colonel Jim's Chili

■ Second place chili: Carrie Lentz, Nicholasville, Ky. Belle Breezing Bordello Chili by Carrie

■ Third place chili: David Staley of Nicholasville, Ky. Mow Em Down Chili

■ Fourth place chili: Chuck Hoff of Columbus, Ohio. Dragon's Breath Chili

■ Fifth place chili: Wes Carlson of Loves Park, Ill. Black Coyote Chili



**That's crazy:** Douglas "Crazy Clem" Byrd of Canton donned novelty teeth and glasses and chili pepper garland to prepare his batch of "Crazy Clem's Chili."

- First place salsa: Marie Drelich of Shelby Township. Spice Girls Salsa
- Best booth: Donna Bothell of Walled Lake. Madd Cow Chili

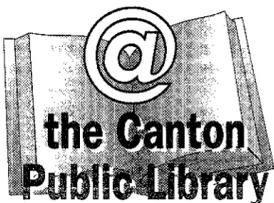


STAFF PHOTOS BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

**Out for a walk:** Lisa Graichen of Northville and Bill Huber of Farmington Hills stroll through the Chili festival in downtown Plymouth on Sunday.



**Ready to roll:** Lisa Mititaroff of Dearborn Heights sits atop her husband Mick's motorcycle along Main Street near the end of the event. Mick didn't enter the competition Sunday.



8, 1871. The fire leveled 3-1/2-square miles, destroying 17,450 buildings, leaving 98,500 people homeless and 250 people dead. Financially, the loss was \$200 million. On the same day a fire destroyed the entire town of Peshtigo, Wis., killing more than 1,100 people  
Source: Chase's 2000 Calendar of Events

### Library construction update

The painting is almost complete, and the carpet is going into the new Children's Library. The move into the new children's area is scheduled for Oct. 13 (the library will be closed to the public that day, see story below). Plans are under way for the fiction, magazine section and large-print collections to be moved into the Community Meeting Room on this day also. For more information visit the proposed floor plan and our photo album of the expansion at our Web site: www.cantonpl.org

### New CD-ROMs

Here are some new multimedia selections available from the library:

- Stratego
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000
- Visual Basic 6.0
- Who Wants to Be a Millionaire
- Windows 2000 Desktop Management
- WinWay Resume

### Hot topic of the week

Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 8-14. This is the time to increase your awareness of the dangers of fire and to educate yourself on how to stay safe. The theme this year is "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" For more information, contact the Fire Protection Agency at www.nfpa.org

@ the Canton Library is compiled by Laura Dorogi of the library staff. The library is at 1200 S. Canton Center. For more information about library programs and services, call 397-0999.

### Did you know?

- The American Library Association Founding anniversary is Oct. 6, 1876?
- Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, begins at sundown on Oct. 8?
- Griswold Lorillard of Tuxedo Park, N.Y. fashioned the first tuxedo for men on Oct. 10, 1886?
- Saturday Night Live celebrated its 25th anniversary this year?
- The Secretary of State offices are now offering university fund-raising license plates? Fifteen universities are being offered.

### Web Watch

Check out these Web sites:

- www.alternativemuseum.org
- www.dotcomfailures.com
- www.socialfunds.com
- www.Starport.com
- www.1stheadlines.com

### Help me!

Here are some books about raising boys:

- The War Against Boys by Christina Hoff Sommers
- Our Boys Speak by John Mikkah
- Real Boy's Voices by William Pollack
- The Good Son: Shaping the Moral Development of Our Boys by Michael Gurian
- The Wonder of Boys by Michael Gurian

### Q&A

Q: When was the Great Chicago Fire?

A: According to legend, the great fire of Chicago began when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern in her barn - on Oct.

## Construction closes library

The Canton Public Library will close early, at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 12, and will remain closed to the public through Friday, Oct. 13, to allow movers to transfer the Children's Department from its temporary home in the library's Community Room to its permanent quarters.

At that time, adult fiction, biographies and magazines will be moved temporarily into the Community Room so that the next phase in the library's expansion can be completed.

The library will re-open for normal business hours 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14.

## Homecoming parade is Friday

The Canton High School Homecoming Parade begins at 5 p.m. Friday in the parking lot at adjacent Salem High School.

The homecoming football game against the Northville Mustangs follows at 7:30 p.m. Admission to the game is \$3.

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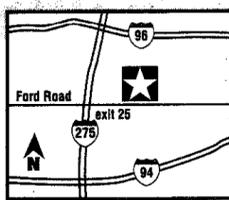
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# Summer weather has new meaning for Borgess teacher

BY JEFF COUNTS  
STAFF WRITER  
jcounts@oe.homecomm.net

While many teachers ask students to write an essay about how they spent their summer vacations, rarely are teachers asked the same question.

"Somebody should ask them," said Ronald Ferenczi, a math and chemistry teacher at Redford's Bishop Borgess High School.

Ferenczi, 49, spent part of his summer at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Scholarship summer institute for Environmental Science at Princeton, New Jersey and on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship studying the weather.

Both experiences are having a direct bearing on classroom activities at Borgess.

Geometry lessons can be awfully dry, Ferenczi said.

"But they come alive when you teach navigation," he said. "The kids are interested in it."

He said his experience on the government weather ship help with the math lessons.

"The kids think there's some sort of road map out at sea," he said. "They think you can tell where you're at by looking for land."

"But I tell them there's no way to know when you're 30 miles out and there is no land."

He spent 18 days on the NOAA ship, Whiting, which was mapping the ocean bottom in Delaware Bay.

The program is offered to science teachers throughout the year to help them obtain environmental knowledge of the oceans and coastlines of the United States.

The 13 research ships are commissioned in three areas: Fisheries research, oceanography and charting and hydrography.

The bottom survey done when Ferenczi was aboard are known as side-scan and multi-beam sonars, which ensure full bottom coverage of the areas.

At the heart of the system is a computer system capable of determining the depth of the ocean bottom to within 0.1 meter and the geographic position to within 3 meters using the Differential Global Positioning System. The information is used by the ship's hydrographer to review, visualize, correlate and analyze the survey data near real time to determine if the mission objectives have been accom-

plished.

"It was a terrific experience," Ferenczi said.

The captain, chief executive officer, the chiefs and crew made him feel part of the NOAA family.

He helped out on the deck, the galley, the survey department and even the bridge, helping maneuver the ship in eight to ten-foot seas.

"It was a real thrill," he said.

The ship itself has a bit of history, he said. The craft and its crew helped in the search and recovery of the plane in which John F. Kennedy, Jr., and his

wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, died.

When at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Scholarship summer institute for Environmental Science at Princeton, he picked up information that will help his chemistry classes.

The students at Borgess are part of the Rouge River water quality testing program in Wayne County.

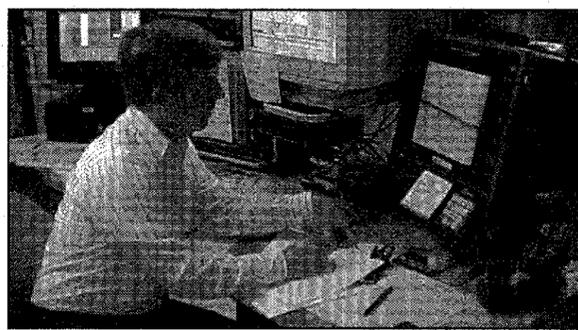
His students will also be learning about global warming.

He was involved in a project with other teachers to design a Web page on global warming,

with links to local and national science sites.

He said the focus is on environmental feedbacks and their consequences, the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss, climate and environmental change, ecosystem processes, functions and utility and resources uses, conflicts and alternatives.

To look at the Web page or find out more about the Woodrow Wilson Leadership Program, the Web site is [www.woodrow.org/teachers](http://www.woodrow.org/teachers).



New skills: Ronald Ferenczi at work during his fellowship.

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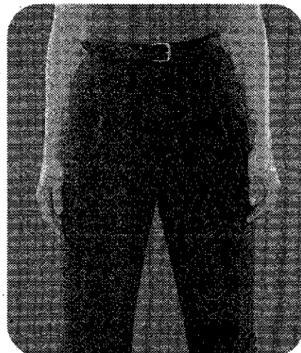
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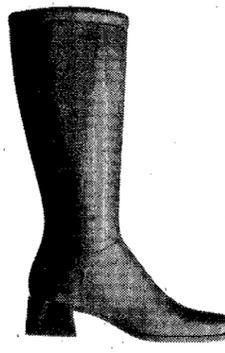
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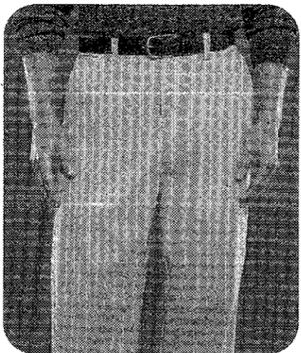
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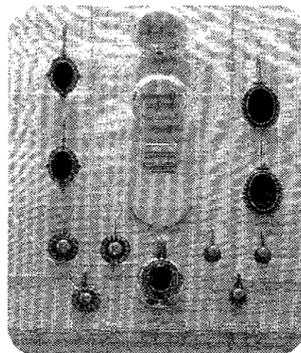
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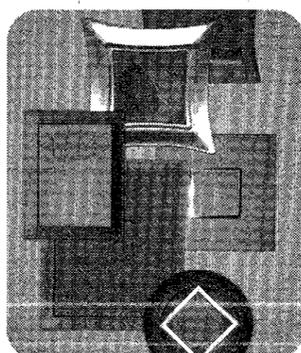
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## Reform candidate's court date moved

BY JEFF COUNTS  
STAFF WRITER

Congressional candidate Joseph A. Ditzhazy Jr. was back in court Tuesday in connection with charges he assaulted his wife on Sept. 22 at the couple's Redford home.

Ditzhazy appeared before 17th District Judge Charlotte Wirth for a pre-trial hearing in the case. He sought to have the hearing delayed until Oct. 19, and Wirth consented to the request.

He is charged with domestic assault and battery, a misdemeanor charge, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and/or \$500 fine. He pleaded not guilty to the charges at his arraignment Sept. 22 and is free on bond.

Wirth ordered the candidate to have no contact with his wife until the Oct. 19 hearing.

He is the Reform Party candidate for the 11th District congressional seat and is running against Republican incumbent Joe Knollenberg and Democrat Matt Frumin.

At Tuesday's hearing, he complained he hadn't had contact with his children since his arrest and was unable to retrieve items from the home.

"My only suit is in the house. My law books are there and other papers," he said.

He also complained that his children haven't been going to school.

Wirth told him that his attorney should try arranging a visit with his children.

"We do this in domestic violence situations," Wirth said. "The victim has the right to feel protected."

Ditzhazy also objected to his wife staying at the home.

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# Schools admonished for anti-voucher advocacy

BY MIKE MALOTT  
HOMETOWN NEWS SERVICE  
mmalott@homecomm.net

The secretary of state has concluded that as many as 12 school districts may have violated campaign finance laws that prohibit units of government from spending taxpayer dollars to influence the outcome of an election.

Kids First! Yes!, the organization that placed Proposal 1 on the November ballot to create vouchers, has filed complaints against 17 districts. One complaint has been dismissed. Four remain under review.

Because "Section 57" is new - approved by the Legislature in 1996, the secretary of state's office has not sanctioned any school district, according

**■ Kids First! Yes!, the organization that placed Proposal 1 on the November ballot to create vouchers, has filed complaints against 17 districts. One complaint has been dismissed. Four remain under review.**

to spokeswoman Elizabeth Boyd. Rather, letters have been issued warning that unless the violations stop, action may be taken in the future.

## Huron Valley schools

The secretary of state's office concluded Aug. 23 that Huron Valley may have violated the law in e-mails, newsletters, presentations and press releases.

The district's newsletter, the "Huron Valley Educator" included an article

titled "Vouchers Loom: Students at Risk," which stated, "Vouchers are about privatization, not opportunity. Vouchers are at the heart of the right-wing attack on public institutions, an attack that seeks to reduce government responsibility for the good of all while maximizing support for private and corporate gain."

The Huron Valley Board of Education adopted a resolution in opposition to vouchers, which it can do, but it should

not have issued a press release about that resolution, the secretary of state's compliance and rules decision concluded.

E-mails contained copies of a press release issued by the voucher opposition group, All Kids First.

## Oakland Intermediate schools

The secretary of state concluded in July that the Oakland County Intermediate School District violated the act in an audio-visual presentations and e-mails.

"The presentation engages in speculation about tuition tax credits ... (and) goes beyond mere factual information," the secretary of state decision states.

In the newsletter, pro-voucher argu-

ments are listed as "some kids will benefit" while the anti-voucher stance claims that "many kids will be hurt" and "public schools are good and getting better."

E-mails were received from the Michigan PTA and All Kids First and distributed through the Oakland Schools information system. The message calls for people to send letters to the editor at local newspapers explaining why vouchers are not a good solution, adding that, "It is your job to help make sure that message gets out there."

## Lansing schools

Kids First! Yes! filed a complaint against the Lansing School District

Please see **VOUCHERS, A8**

# Judge asked to intervene against Secretary of State

BY MIKE MALOTT  
HOMETOWN NEWS SERVICE  
mmalott@homecomm.net

The heated campaign contest over vouchers has boiled over into a courtroom clash.

Educators filed suit Friday, Sept. 29, arguing that a new campaign finance law, intended to keep the government from spending tax money to influence elections, is stifling their First Amendment free speech rights. At least, it will if Secretary of State Candice Miller is allowed to continue interpreting and enforcing it the way she is now, they say.

During a show cause hearing Monday, Oct. 2, the Huron Valley School District, its teachers union, the Michigan Education Association and the Utica Education Association asked Ingham County Circuit Judge Michael Harrison to issue a preliminary injunction against Miller, blocking her from enforcing the law for the remainder of the election season. Harrison took the case under advisement, saying he would likely issue an order early next week. In the meantime, the judge did say school districts can publish articles in opposition to the voucher proposal in newsletters, as long as they also contain an article in support of the ballot question to provide balance.

According to secretary of state spokeswoman Elizabeth Boyd, the court also "expressed reservations about the interpretive statement" Miller wrote back in July to explain to school district officials what they can and cannot do, as they talk to constituents about the ballot question, to stay within the bounds of the Campaign Finance Act's new "Section 57."

This is a fight that has been brewing for months. Both sides say they are feeling intimidated and harassed by the other. Kids First! Yes!, the voucher proponent group that placed the constitutional amendment question Proposal 1 on the ballot for this November, contends that it has simply been attempting to monitor the activities of school districts as they inform voters about the ramifications of the proposition.

To obtain the materials those districts are putting out, Kids First has filed a string of Freedom of Information Act requests with districts across the state, spokesman Greg McNeilly said. Some districts have received as many as eight so far, he said.

Kids First has also filed 17 complaints with Miller, alleging districts violated Section 57. In 12 cases, the secretary of state office has agreed that

Please see **BATTLE, A8**



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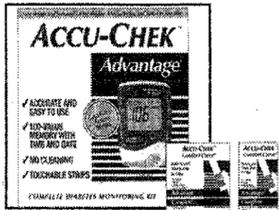
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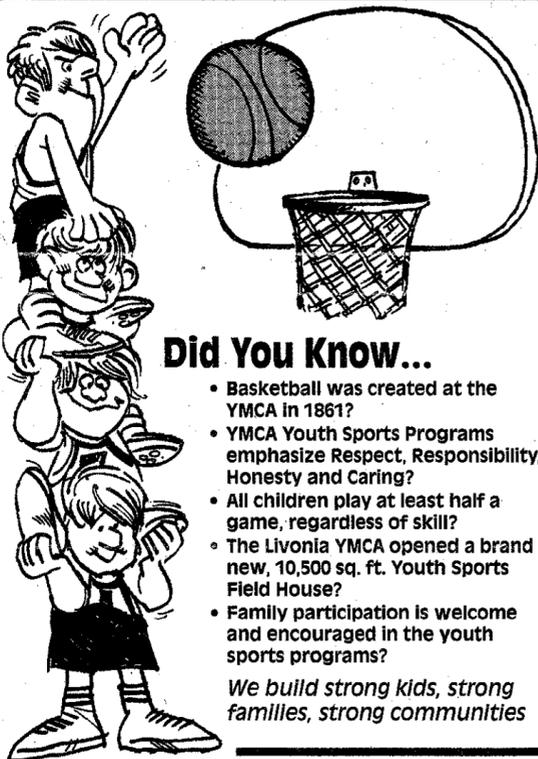
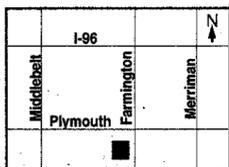
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# Battle from page A7

there may be infractions and has issued letters telling district officials to stop the violations.

No fines or sanctions have yet been levied. One complaint was dismissed; the remainder are still under review. That many FOIA requests in the short period of time since last October "borders on harassment," said Southfield school district Public Information Director Ken Siver.

Southfield has not been the target of a complaint. Still, Siver said that it is obvious from the number of FOIAs filed that the purpose is not to monitor but to intimidate school district officials into saying nothing at all about the proposal.

Southfield Superintendent Marlene Davis said the FOIAs and complaints are having a chilling effect on many teachers and school board members, whether a complaint has been filed against them or not. That's a violation of educators' free speech rights, Huron Valley Superintendent Robert O'Brien said.

In fact, he believes teachers and district administrators have an obligation to explain the effect of ballot proposals to their constituents. Local voters often ask them for their explanations and interpretations of education-related questions.

Huron Valley was the subject of one complaint, and the secretary of state warned the district Aug. 23 that it may have violated the law in newsletters, e-mails and press releases it has issued. But it's the school districts that are harassing Kids First! Yes!, according to McNeilly.

Some districts have been reluctant to comply with the FOIA requests. Others have said they would turn over the information but have attempted to charge exorbitant amounts for the documents. "They'd say, 'OK, but we will charge you \$100 per hour for compiling this information,'" McNeilly said. "When we told them they couldn't do that - the FOI Act says they have to charge us at the rate of the lowest person on staff who can compile the information - they'd say, 'OK, it will take five hours at \$20 per hour.'"

Kids First attorney Tim Knowlton said one district attempted to charge the group \$300 for one FOIA request. He said the group may file a lawsuit itself over the prices it is being charged.

The secretary of state herself is coming under fire for the way she is enforcing the new state law. The court case is filed against Miller. Kids First is not a party in the case, although it will seek to join.

Huron Valley, for instance, was cited for materials it has released about the voucher proposal. A district newsletter, the "Huron Valley Educator," contained an

article entitled "Vouchers Loom: Students at Risk." The article included the statement, "Vouchers are at the heart of the right-wing attack on public institutions, an attack that seeks to reduce government responsibility for the good of all while maximizing support for private and corporate gain."

David Murley of the secretary of state's Compliance and Rules Division concluded the newsletter went beyond a strictly factual presentation of the pros and cons of the voucher proposal. He explained that school officials can take positions on ballot questions and can campaign on their own time with their own money, but they cannot use public resources to promote their point of view or attempt to influence the election.

The teachers unions joined the case over a secretary of state decision that they cannot use school building mailboxes or the district's internal mail system to communicate with their members about the voucher proposal. Huron Valley Education Association attorney Tom Baird said there is an exception in Section 57 that allows for internal communication between unions and members.

But McNeilly and Knowlton argue that if the mailboxes are used to distribute materials opposed to vouchers, they should also be opened to use by those who support the proposal. Huron Valley Superintendent O'Brien said he believes the secretary of state's interpretation of the law will violate his free speech rights. He is also questioning whether there is a political motivation in what he sees as an unusually aggressive manner by Miller's office of enforcing the campaign finance law.

In all previous elections, it has been the Attorney General's office that has kept an eye on school districts as they put out information about ballot proposals, Davis said. Secretary of state spokeswoman Boyd countered that the change is the result of a 1996 amendment to campaign finance law.

Prior to '96, the state relied on Attorney General opinions to keep governmental units from expending public resources on election campaigns. The '96 revision clarified the rules in law and assigned enforcement to the secretary of state.

Boyd said Miller has gone to great lengths to keep politics out of the enforcement of campaign finance law. "She was one of the first to come out in opposition to vouchers," Boyd said. "To suggest now that she is now somehow paying homage to the group that supports vouchers is ridiculous."

# Wills to speak on vouchers

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Gary Wills will offer his perspective on the controversial school-voucher proposal Tuesday, Oct. 17, at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills.

Wills, a professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., will lecture on "Freedom From or For Religion" at 7:30 p.m. There is no charge.

If it passes in the Nov. 7 general election, the voucher referendum will rescind Michigan's ban on using tax money for private and religious schools.

In conjunction with the lecture, Clergy & Citizens United, an association of more than 500 Michigan clergy and civic leaders, will present its Citizen of the Year Award to Gov. John Engler for his stand against vouchers.

The presidential debate between Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush will be shown on large-screen television after Wills' talk.

A discussion of that debate, moderated by Jack Lessenberry, a Metro Times columnist and Wayne State University journalism professor, will follow.

Birmingham Temple is at 28611 12 Mile.

Clergy & Citizens United was organized in 1995 to defend the separation of church and state in the public schools.

Wills, a former professor at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, has written, among other books, the award-winning "Lincoln at Gettysburg" and the recent "A Necessary Evil."



**Wills speaks:** Author Gary Wills will offer his perspective on the school-voucher proposal at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 17, at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills.

# Vouchers from page A7

Board of Education for adopting a resolution stating opposition to the voucher proposal. The Secretary of State has concluded boards can adopt such resolutions. The complaint was dismissed.

**Livonia schools**

Kids First! Yes! filed a complaint in September against Livonia schools. The complaint is still under review by the secretary of state.

Kids First cited a August issue of the district's newsletter, "Dialogue," which included an article by Superintendent Kenneth Watson.

The article was quoted as saying, "the successful passage of this issue represents a definite cloud on our horizon." It also stated that, "combined with a declining enrollment

through other causes, vouchers will have a strong potential negative on our district."

**Grand Ledge**

Kids First! Yes! filed a complaint in September against the Grand Ledge school district for posting an audio-visual presentation, much like the one produced by Oakland Schools, on its district Web site. Although the secretary of state's office has judged the presentation to be in violation, the school district had not removed the presentation from its Web site, the Kids First group complained. The voucher proponents are asking the secretary of state to order the school district to remove the presentation from the Web page.

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**Mascot and friend:** The Tiger, aka Kelly LaVaut, 17, hugs cheerleader Jaime Elgas, 17, after the half-time festivities at Friday's homecoming game.



STAFF PHOTOS BY PAUL HURSCHMANN

**Root, root, root:** Brittney Embry, 15, and the rest of the Tiger cheerleaders root the football team on to victory in Friday's homecoming game against the Monroe Trojans.

# Homecoming

## Belleville win caps a busy week

It was a perfect end to an exciting week. The Belleville Tigers did their part Friday, beating Monroe 34-14 in the school's annual homecoming game before a crowd of more than 5,000. The victory, which helped the undefeated Tigers clinch a state playoff berth, was followed by the

**Related column, A15**  
annual Homecoming Dance on Saturday. It featured the same Mardi Gras theme carried out during the week with activities including Mask Day and Bead Day. The theme was inspired by the Bayou

Grill, the main street restaurant with a menacing alligator statue on its roof. Senior April Dawson, 17, said spirit week is the best thing about homecoming because "it brings the whole school together to participate in one thing."



**Sharing a big moment:** Homecoming Queen Sarah Boehms, 17, gets congratulations from her best friend "since forever" Carrie Sucher, also 17.

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## Unemployment pay system improved

Michigan's unemployment insurance program has made a significant change in how it gathers the information to determine what a jobless worker will receive in unemployment benefits. And the change affects not only the unemployed but employers as well.

Starting this week, Michigan has begun using a "wage record" system for establishing an unemployed worker's monetary eligibility for jobless benefits.

"The change to wage record is a dramatic improvement to our unemployment insurance program," said Kathy Wilbur, director of Michigan's Department of Consumer & Industry Services. "It will mean much better service to jobless workers, less paperwork for employers and savings to taxpayers throughout Michigan."

With wage record, the state's Unemployment Agency will now rely on existing quarterly wage information from employers to determine the amount and duration of unemployment benefits that jobless workers will receive. Under the prior system — wage request — the agency had to request weekly wage information from employers each time an unemployed worker filed a new claim for benefits.

"The wage request system was cumbersome and slow because of the need to contact employers for wage information whenever one of their employees would file a benefit claim," said Unemployment Agency Director Jack Wheatley. "For employers and the Unemployment Agency, requesting weekly wage data meant countless hours of processing time as well as mailing costs. And for the unemployed workers, the old system meant waiting for up to two weeks after filing a claim before learning how much they might receive in benefits."

With the new wage record system, the agency will use quarterly wage information that it already has on hand to determine a benefit amount when a claim is filed.

Wilbur observed that the savings in paper alone will be tremendous.

"If you could stack the Unemployment Agency forms that will no longer be used because of wage record, they would reach a height nearly as high as the Detroit Marriott Hotel in the Renaissance Center," Wilbur said.

Employers and jobless workers will notice improvements in the claims process. These include:

- Michigan employers as a group will no longer have to complete up to one million Unemployment Agency forms annually requesting weekly wage information. This will save employers Unemployment Agency hours of processing time and mailing costs.

- Laid-off workers can know immediately upon filing their

claims how much they may receive in unemployment benefits, rather than wait up to 14 days.

- Wage record can help identify and resolve problems with wage information before the first payment is made, and thereby reduce errors and fraud in the Unemployment Insurance system, saving millions of dollars for the state's Unemployment Insurance trust fund.

State and local governments will save \$5 million annually in taxpayer dollars because of reduced administrative costs.

The conversion to wage record affects all new unemployment claims filed after Oct. 1, but the change will not alter the total amount of jobless benefits paid to the unemployed or taxes collected from employers. Individual employers and workers, however, may see some differences in their taxes or benefits.

The Unemployment Agency is implementing the wage record system 15 months ahead of schedule.

The Unemployment Agency is part of the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services, the state's primary licensing and regulatory department.

## Wayne Community College seeks 1.5-mill tax increase

BY RICHARD PEARL  
STAFF WRITER  
rpearl@oe.homecomm.net

Residents of Redford Township and Westland will vote Nov. 7 on a proposed 1.5-mill property tax increase for people living in the Wayne County Community College district.

If passed, the "Education First!" initiative — a late addition to the November general election ballot — would establish, for the first time in the college's 30-year history, a permanent fund for capital improvements and program development, said Chancellor Curtis L. Ivery.

He said while WCCC "has been able to respond to the educational needs of the community, the physical state of its five campuses remains an obstacle to progress."

In the past, the college sold construction bonds for its projects.

The cost of the property tax to the owner of a house assessed at \$100,000 would be \$37.30 per year.

The estimated \$20 million per year raised by the proposed tax increase would be used first to replace the aging Northwest campus facility in Detroit — which houses WCCC's dental hygiene program — and also to add a multi-purpose auditorium to the Downriver campus, Ivery said.

Computer technology centers — open both to WC3 students and the public — would be created on each campus and a preventive

**■ The tax would establish a permanent fund for capital improvements and program development.**

maintenance and repair fund would be established for all the campuses.

To date, the college repairs facilities and equipment only when they break down, Ivery said.

Besides the Northwest campus on Greenfield and the Downriver on Northline, WC3 has its Western campus on Haggerty in Belleville; its Eastern campus on Conner near Detroit City Airport and its Downtown campus off the John Lodge Freeway in Detroit.

Ivery said the proposed tax increase is needed to maintain WCCC's "crucial role of servicing the community and keeping students within reach of high quality education."

He added that faculty and staff "have committed themselves to strengthening and expanding the curriculum to meet the needs of today's employers."

"If this college did not exist, we would have to invent it," he said.

Martha J. Grier, assistant to the chancellor for special programs and public information, said the present Northwest facility began life in the 1920s as girls high

school, then became a Catholic church.

It was expanded in the 1970s as a campus site, she said. But today it is too small and outdated and "We are in dire need of a new facility."

Grier said Northwest's auditorium would serve all but the Downriver campus. The new facility would be a combination performing arts, conferences and business-services center for all Downriver residents.

The computer centers would make computers available to the public at no charge seven days a week, Ivery said.

"This is essential to a college committed to helping the Wayne County community. This past June, the college received its first 10-year accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools," he said.

During Ivery's five-year tenure, WCCC's enrollment has increased annually. About 20,000 students are enrolled now.

WCCC has added more than 20 programs, with credential offerings including pharmacy technician, manufacturing and surgical technology, respiratory therapist, medical billing, heavy equipment maintenance and Web site design.

WCCC's Education First Foundation has provided student scholarships since 1996. The foundation finished the last fiscal year with \$200,000 in assets.

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## Economic forecast scheduled

Two University of Michigan economic forecasters will present their predictions for Wayne County in 2001 at the county's second annual Economic Forecast Luncheon, scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 11.

George Fulton, Ph.D., a senior research analyst at U-M's Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, and Donald Grimes, senior research associate, will be the keynoters at the 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. luncheon at the Tiger Club of Comerica Park in downtown Detroit.

Fulton has done economic forecasting and regional economic development for more than two decades, working many years with Michigan's Departments of Commerce (now Consumer and Industry Services) and Treasury and with the Michigan Economic Development Corp. Grimes has more than two decades' experience in forecasting labor market activities.

The annual luncheon is sponsored by Wayne County in conjunction with Wayne State University, Detroit Edison, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MGM Grand Casino and Ford Motor Co.

Tickets are \$25 per person. Call (313) 224-0745.























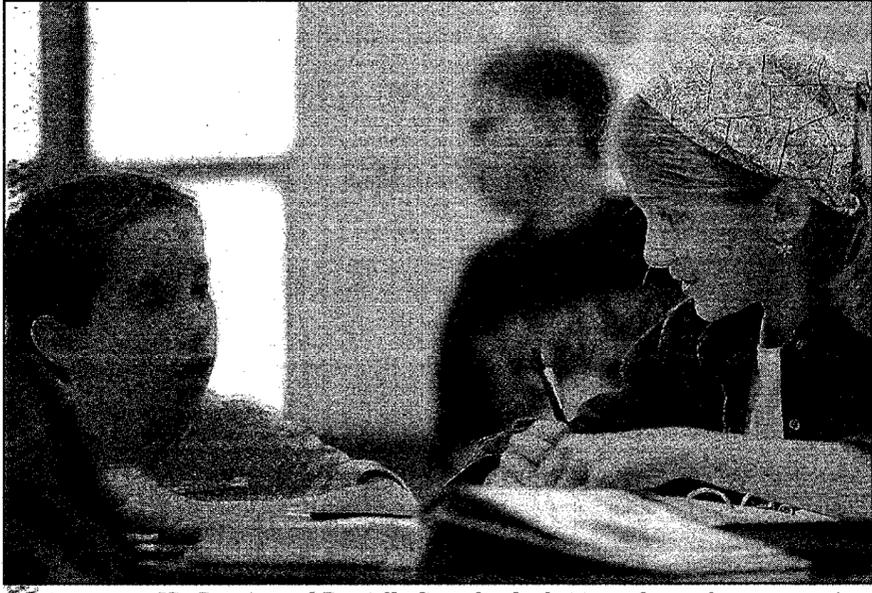








STAFF PHOTOS BY PAUL HURSCHMANN



Sharing notes: Vic Domin and Danielle Crowder, both 11, work together on a project in Sharon Paul's sixth grade Life Science class Sept. 15.



Picture perfect: Molly Howard, 12, kneels on the "stage," a special prop used by the yearbook portrait photographers to help the students with their posture, during picture day, Sept. 20.

# Students, staff enjoy fresh start

BY PAUL HURSCHMANN  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
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*Editor's Note: Staff Photographer Paul Hurschmann will be visiting Discovery Middle School throughout the 2000-2001 school year to bring "A Year in the Life of Discovery" to you. Through words and pictures, Hurschmann will share his unusual view of life in Canton's first middle school with readers of the Canton Observer, offering periodic updates.*

New friends, new classes and a new building. Those are common fare for the incoming sixth-graders at every middle school each year.

This year it was the same for seventh- and eighth-graders - faculty and staff as well - as Canton's first middle school opened its doors to the 2000-2001 academic year.

The teachers and staff, under the leadership of principal Roche LaVictor and assistant principal Clint Smiley, remained fairly intact as they closed the doors on a 20-year lease at Livonia's Lowell Middle School (in Westland) in June and took up new residence at Discovery Middle School on Hanford Road in Canton during the final week of August.

"We cut it fairly close, in terms of completing the construction of the new building," LaVictor explained as he conducted a tour of the new building recently. "And there will be work crews here finishing up some of the final touches throughout much of the year. But we've been able to take care of the students and not disrupt the classrooms, for the most part."

There were some unexpected leaks in the new roof - a metal structure that needs to "settle into place" - that caused some minor problems after recent heavy rains, but without causing any damage or loss to the classrooms or their contents. And there have been some glitches with the new clocks and the new phone system.

"All of the minor problems we've had were to be expected," said LaVictor. "But the kids have been just wonderful. They have truly taken to the new building, made it their own. They seem to be on their best behavior and are really keeping the place looking great."

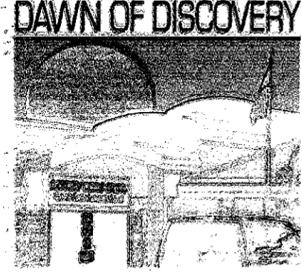
Of course, this may not last all year. "I'm just waiting for the shoe to drop," he joked. "I'm not sure how long the honeymoon is going to last. But, knock wood, I'm certainly not complaining."

And neither are the students. "Isn't this building great?" asked one unnamed student, as she passed between classes. "I'll bet kids at Pioneer would be so jealous."

A recent welcome dance was a rousing success, with more than 500 students attending.

"I would have called this a success if we had 400 kids," said LaVictor, following the event. "We had more than 500," he continued, as he held up his hand with all five fingers extended.

Whether at lunch, in band, science or art class, or participating in extra-curricular activities such as yearbook and sports, the overall attitude of Discovery students is enthusiastic.



Smile pretty: Freddie Fox, center, watches as Kristine Eggenberger, left, and Allie Garland, all 12, primp while waiting in line for their school pictures Sept. 20.



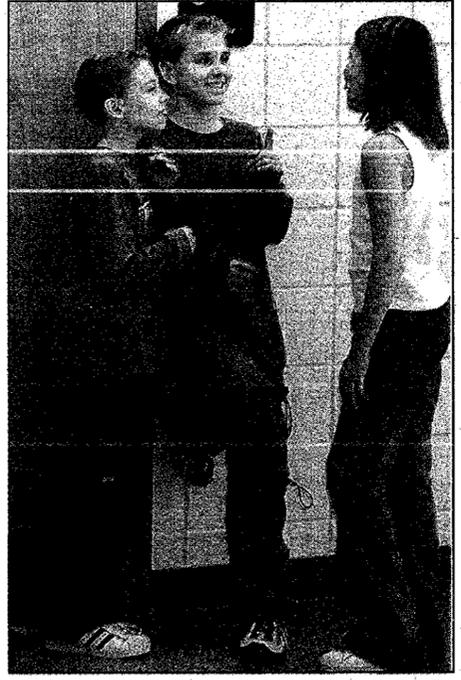
Chow time: Jaren Bauldry, from left, Chris Pietak and Ryan Langdon, all 11, enjoy their lunch in the Auditoria Sept. 15.



Study session: Amanda Lawrence, from left, Meghan Maxwell, Andrea Johnson and Kim Lamb all 13, search for books on one of the computers in the media center during their Language Arts class visit to the library Sept. 15.



A little bit louder, now: Laura Schulz and Cameron Loftis, both 12, dance to the song, "Shout," at the Discovery Welcome Dance Sept. 28.



First dance: Nate Burr, left, and Justin Patrick talk with Andrea Nyberg, all 12, during a break from the Discovery Welcome Dance Sept. 28.

















































































