

Merry Christmas

CANTON Observer

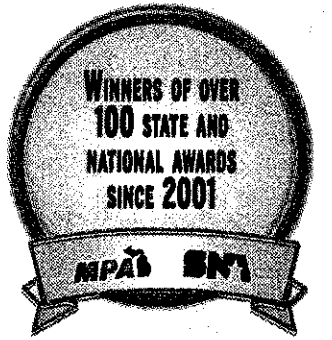
Your hometown newspaper serving Canton for 30 years

THURSDAY
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Inside

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'Forbidden Christmas'

Actors lampoon the typical celebrity holiday variety special with song, dance and lots of laughs.

INSERTED SECTION

At Home



Heavenly collection

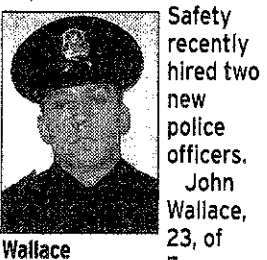
Angels light up residence all year long.

SECTION B

Memo

Cops join force

The Canton Department of Public Safety recently hired two new police officers.



Wallace



Bialy

store detective. He has a bachelor of arts degree in social science from Michigan State University and is also a graduate of the Oakland Police Academy.

Joseph Bialy, 27, of Wyandotte previously worked for the Detroit Police Department. He has an associate's degree in criminal justice from Ferris State University.

Canton police officers are required to go through a vigorous testing process that includes a written test, physical agility test, oral board, extensive background check and psychological examination.

Holiday closings

Canton Township offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 24, and Monday, Dec. 27, for the Christmas holidays. For New Year's, offices will be closed Thursday, Dec. 30, and Friday, Dec. 31, except for the treasurer's office, which will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 30, to accept property tax payments.

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A holiday performance at center court

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

Anyone who plans to watch the heavily anticipated rematch between the Detroit Pistons and Indiana Pacers on Christmas Day may want to tune in a little early.

Local singer and performer Justine Blazer, a 2001 graduate of Canton High and former Chiefette, will take center court and sing the national anthem before the game, which starts at 12:30 p.m., and is being televised by ESPN for a national audience.

Blazer, 21, is looking forward to the experience, though she is a little worried about being associated with the Detroit area, because of the hostility some expect the Indiana fans to show the Pistons. Last month, the two teams were involved in one of the worst sports brawls ever. Several Pacers have been charged with crimes stemming from the incident.

"I'm really looking forward to this, but I've asked them not to introduce me as an artist from Detroit," Blazer said.

Blazer, who has been busy with her singing career, made her most recent performance on Dec. 14 at Fifth Avenue in Detroit, where she helped the U.S. Marine Corps. collect toy donations and raise money for the Toys for Tots program. She played the gig with her band, the Justine Blazer Band, which consists of bassist Matt Coen, guitarist Charlie Coen, and drummer Jay Mingis.

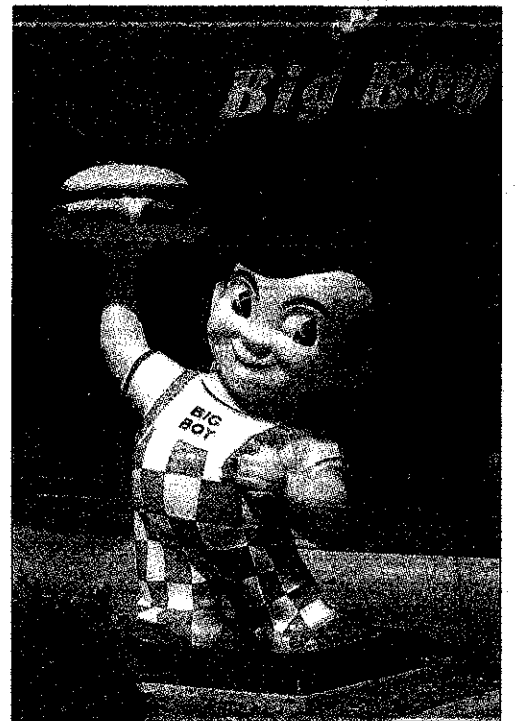
Blazer had so much fun

PLEASE SEE SINGER, A3



PHOTO BY DONALD J. ALLEY

Performer Justine Blazer of Canton sings at 5th Avenue in Detroit last week in a charity concert benefiting Toys for Tots. She will sing the national anthem before the Pistons game on Christmas Day.



The fight to keep Big Boy a part of the Ford Road landscape made news around the country.

Sign, art or icon?

Whatever the answer, Big Boy was top newsmaker

BY JACK GLADDEN
STAFF WRITER

It isn't often that a fat little boy from Canton makes headlines around the country, but this one did.

And that's why the *Observer* has chosen the Ford Road "Big Boy" as its "newsmaker of the year."

Big Boy's ascent into the headlines started in March when restaurant owners Tony and Rana Matar were ticketed by the township, for the second time, over the statue. Canton officials said it was in violation of the sign ordinance because the restaurant already had one street sign and that was all that was allowed.

"We just want to take a deep breath," Rana Matar said at the time. "It's a big joke. It's absurd. It's the craziest thing I ever heard."

She maintained that the statue was not a sign but an "icon" that had been around since the 1930s.

Township Supervisor Tom Yack said it was simply an ordinance enforcement issue. "This is really something pretty insignificant that's happening within the community," he said.

But he acknowledged - even at the time before any court hearings had taken place - that he had received lots of telephone calls and e-mails about the issue.

Matar called it "an uprising." "My customers are furious," she said. "They are hurt and mad. I've had people calling from Bloomfield Hills, Farmington, even Canada saying you have to fight this." And so they did.

At the first court hearing in April, the Matars' attorney, David Lawrence, requested a three-week adjournment to conduct discovery. Judge Ron Lowe, of the 35th District Court, granted the request but not before raising several questions himself.

PLEASE SEE NEWSMAKER, A4

Tragic fire still a reminder of danger posed by Christmas tree

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

The horrifically tragic Christmas tree fire that killed seven Canton family members 14 years ago remains, for many, a constant reminder to follow fire safety precautions, especially with live Christmas trees.

"Until you see these fires close-up and see how terribly hot it is, it's hard to understand," explained Canton Fire Chief Mike Rorabacher. "I don't think people realize how fast these Christmas trees burn."

On Dec. 22, 1990 Martin and Debbie Dell'Orco were at home with seven of their nine children when they called the Canton Fire Department at 11:10 a.m.

"Six of the seven children were in bed and whether they were awake or not is unknown," according to a report prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which reviews

serious fires around the country in an effort to prevent similar incidents.

It was determined that "defective or overheated" Christmas tree lights ignited the "unusually" dry tree, according to the FEMA report.

While Martin attempted to remove the burning tree from the home, Debbie frantically called the fire department from the deck of the home. She pulled her 6-year-old son outside.

Debbie tried to re-enter from the front door, but it had been locked for the night. She then desperately tried to get in through the kitchen door, but the smoke was too heavy. In a frantic attempt to free her children, she grabbed a carpenter's clamp from the garage and began to break out the bedroom windows from outside the house, but was unable to reach any of her children.

Meanwhile, Martin Dell'Orco, 38, made futile attempts to remove the

burning tree from the family room.

Martin abandoned the tree and tried to rescue six of his children still in the single-story ranch house. He died along with six of his children - Bonnie, 12; Sara, 9; Katie, 8; Megan, 5; Michael, 5; and Robert, 4. Two of the Dell'Orcos' other children were spending the night elsewhere.

After the fire, Debbie Dell'Orco filed a lawsuit, and has since set up a fund to provide housing for Canton residents who are displaced after fires. Dell'Orco, who still resides in Canton, couldn't be reached for comment.

"Fortunately we don't have to use that fund very often," Rorabacher said. "This certainly accented, once again, the danger relative to Christmas trees. We always preach the point that Christmas trees can be safe if you do this, this and this. If a tree is allowed to dry-out you have a tremendous

fire load."

A Christmas tree fire can develop and spread throughout an entire home almost instantaneously, FEMA reported.

"In this fire, the tree was dry, and overheated or defective lights provided the ignition source," the FEMA report says. "This fire reached overwhelming proportions at lightning speed and left the family helpless to survive."

Immediate evacuation of a structure is of cardinal importance during a fire, FEMA officials say.

"Critical evacuation time is lost when occupants attempt to extinguish a fire," the report says. "The larger the number of occupants the longer it takes to evacuate. The less the occupants know about self-evacuation the longer it takes to evacuate. Evacuation should be the primary concern of the occupants during a fire."

PLEASE SEE FIRE, A3

Purse snatchers targeting women in store parking lots

BY JACK GLADDEN
STAFF WRITER

Canton Police are warning shoppers: Keep your eye, and preferably your hand, on your purse while you're out buying groceries or Christmas gifts.

According to Canton Police Detective Sgt. Rick Pomorski, between Dec. 15 and 20, six purses have been stolen from area businesses while women customers were shopping. The same thing is happening in other communities, he said.

He said one of the thefts

occurred between noon and 1 p.m. The others were after 3 p.m.

Stores hit so far are Kroger, Holiday Market, Farmer Jack, Wal-Mart, Target and Meijer.

"We suspect it may be a man and a woman working together," Pomorski said. "One woman said she was approached by a young woman asking her to help her look for a certain item. When she looked back at her cart, the purse was gone."

He said a video tape from the Meijer incident shows a woman leaving the store with a shop-

ping cart with the purse in view. She goes out of view on the tape for a second or two and when the tape comes back the purse is gone.

In two instances, Pomorski said the victims had a conversation with a woman while inside the store.

"They were described as female of medium height and build, brown shoulder-length hair, early to mid-30s, Mexican or Italian looking, wearing brown or tan coats," he said.

He said the purses are usually found in the parking lots or by

dumpsters, although some have not been recovered. While some credit cards have been taken, he said a lot of cash was missing.

"It's so easy to get distracted," Pomorski said.

"Just the stress of shopping itself during this season. Your mind might not be focused 100 percent on the security of your purse."

He had some advice for shoppers.

"Always keep your purse with you," he said. "If you can't do that, lock your purse in your trunk and put your wallet or

money in your pocket."

If shoppers who've had their purse taken have a suspect, they should get a license plate number, if possible, a description and any other identifying features, and let a store clerk know of the incident.

"We have extra police on bicycles outside the businesses and in cars patrolling the areas," he said.

"But we don't have anyone inside the store."

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AGENCY ADDS EXECUTIVES

Modern Insurance Agency of Canton, an independent insurance agency representing several companies, recently announced the addition of two new senior account executives to its staff.

Amy Lauer, who holds a property and casualty license, will sell and service both personal and business insurance. She has eight years experience.

Lana Steciak has sold and serviced insurance for over twenty years. She also holds a property and casualty license and will sell and service all lines of insurance. Both women reside in Westland.

GIFTED PROGRAM

Van Buren Public Schools is accepting referrals for possible placement in its Gifted Program for the 2005-06 school year. Eligible students must be in grades K-7. The program, which services students in grades 1-8, is designed for academically gifted and highly motivated students. The program stresses a combination of acceleration and enrichment. There is a high level of academic work, a rapid instructional pace, and many opportunities to delve more deeply into subject matter.

Some of the characteristics to look for are:

- A long attention span
- Heightened sensitivity
- Intense curiosity
- Resistance to routine and drill
- A strong sense of fairness
- Concern with issues "too old" for his/her age

Forms are available in all Van Buren elementary and middle schools, and the administration building. All forms must be completed and returned by Jan. 18, 2005 to your school principal, or sent directly to:

Barbara Woody, G/T Coordinator, North Middle School, 47097 McBride, Belleville, MI 48111. For more information call Barbara Woody at (734) 697-6370.

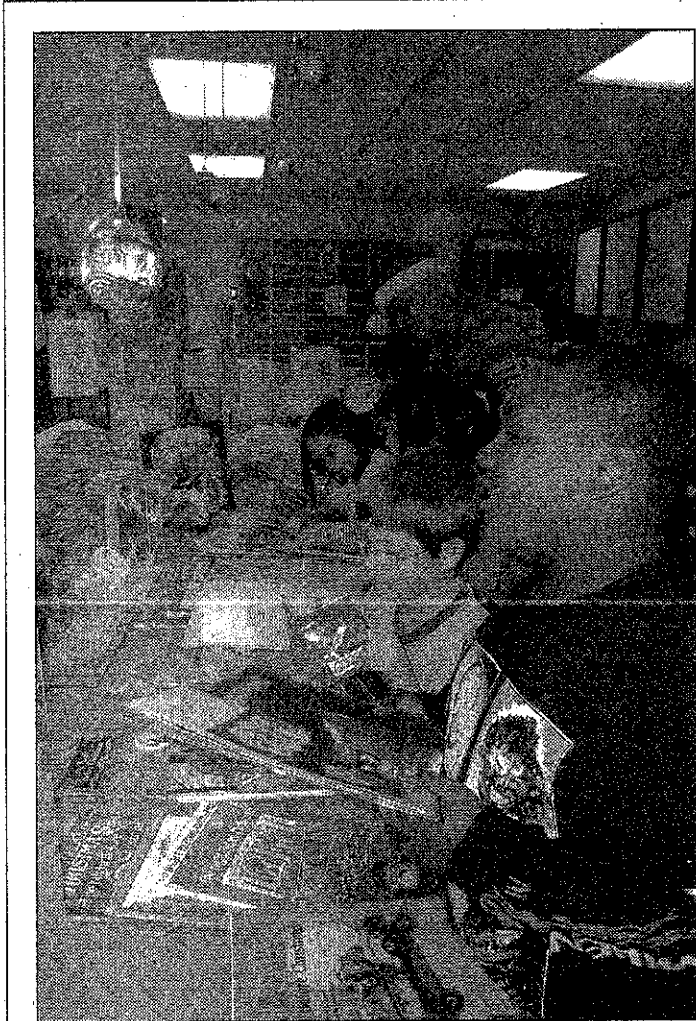
SWIM, GYM AND FILM

Bring out the entire family and celebrate the New Year from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 31, at Summit on the Park. The aquatic center will be open from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for all kinds of swimming and water activities. Following the swimming, a movie will be shown, and popcorn and pop will be on sale. Feel free to bring blankets, cushions and pillows to sit on — no chairs or outside food and beverages please.

WINTER HELP

Plato's Coney Island (42405 Ford) is accepting donations of "gently used" blankets, coats and other winter clothing for needy families this holiday season. It will distribute whatever is collected to families in Detroit, in conjunction with the Detroit Police Department.

For those interested in helping, drop off donations in the box at the back of the restaurant through Christmas day. Both children and adult sizes will be accepted. There is also



Holiday collection

Miller Elementary School teacher Jon Childs and some of his second-grade students view his extensive collection of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas books and related articles. Childs, who has been collecting the books since he started teaching 30 years ago, displays his collection in the teachers' workroom at Miller each year for Miller students and staff to enjoy.

a drop-off box at Plato's Farmington location (35227 Grand River). For more information, call (734) 981-7301.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Lee and Noel Bittering Team at RE/MAX is offering three scholarships, each in the amount of \$1,000, for local

high school seniors that are planning to attend a college or university in the fall of 2005.

To apply for the scholarship, entrants must submit a short essay (not to exceed three pages, double-spaced with a 12 pt. font) that address the following question: Describe how someone in your life has influenced you in a positive way and changed your life?

All submissions must include name, address and phone number of entrant, high school they attend, and college or university they plan to attend in the fall. All submissions must be received by Dec. 31, 2004. They should be sent to The Bittering Team, 43435 Joy Road, Canton, MI 48187. "The Plymouth/Canton

community has supported us for over 20 years. The Bittering Team Scholarship is just one of the ways that we can say thank you by giving back to our community," Noel Bittering said.

For more information, contact the team at (734) 459-1010, or email Bittering at noelbittering@remax.net.

PLYMOUTH-CANTON CIVITAN CLUB

The Plymouth-Canton Civitan Club is looking for energetic new members to participate in community service projects. This club meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Plymouth Salvation Army Building on Main Street. Call (734) 981-7259 for further info.

MOTHERS & MORE

The Wayne County chapter of Mothers & More meets twice a month in Plymouth. Call (866) 841-9140, Ext. 4329, or visit Web site mother-sandmore63@onebox.com.

CRAFTERS, ARTISTS WANTED

Officials of the Plymouth-Canton Music Boosters are looking for crafters and artists for "Spring Arts and Crafts Ensemble." The event is scheduled for 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, March 19 at Canton High School. It's a juried show. For more information, e-mail Diane Van Dyke at djvandyke@peoplepc.com or call (734) 416-3354.

SYMPHONY FUND-RAISER

The Plymouth Symphony is selling the 2005 Entertainment Book, offering 50-percent discount coupons at hundreds of restaurants and discounts for many other services and events. The 2005 Entertainment Book can be picked up at the Plymouth Symphony Office, next to the Cozy Cafe in downtown Plymouth, or by calling Mary Thomas, (734) 453-3016. Cost of the book is \$20, with proceeds benefitting symphony programs. For more information, call the symphony office, (734) 451-2112

@ THE LIBRARY

DID YOU KNOW?

The Canton Public Library holiday schedule:

Christmas -closed Friday, Dec. 24, through Sunday, Dec. 26. Will reopen Monday, Dec. 27, at 9 a.m.

New Year's -closed Friday, Dec. 31, and Saturday, Jan. 1. Will reopen Sunday, Jan. 2 at noon.

Bring the kids to the Children's Library for our winter crafts event on Tuesday, December 28 from 10-11 a.m. or 1-2 p.m. Ages 4-7, registration not required.

WEB WATCH

www.firstamendmentschools.org - "a national initiative designed to transform how schools model and teach the rights and responsibilities of citizenship"

www.wapms.org/plants - descriptions of problem plants in western U.S. wetlands

www.charitynavigator.org - click on the Holiday Giving Guide

NEW MATERIALS LIST

Search a complete list of new materials added to the library's catalog this week, visit <http://catalog.cantonpl.org/fli> st.

Adult Fiction
■ *The Da Vinci Code* - Dan Brown

■ *Damned if I Do: Stories* - Percival Everett

■ *Getting Used To Dying* - Zhang Xianliang

Adult Non-Fiction
■ *And I Don't Want To Live This Life* - Deborah Spungen

■ *Crime: A Serious American Problem* - Thomas Wiloch

■ *Frommer's Spain 2005* - Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

■ *Photoshop 7 Bible* - Deke McClelland

Adult Sound Recordings
■ *Best 1991-2004* - Seal

■ *It Always Will Be* - Willie Nelson

■ *Peachtree Road* - Elton John

■ *She's So Unusual* - Cyndi Lauper

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Last shows of Christmas Eve will start no later than 5pm. First shows on Christmas Day will start after 3pm.

LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG)
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 2 PRINTS / 2 SCREENS
 TH 11:30, 12:20, 1:50, 2:40, 4:20, 5:00, 6:45, 7:15, 9:00, 9:30
 FRI 11:30, 12:20, 1:50, 2:40, 4:20, 5:00
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (PG-13)
 2 PRINTS / 2 SCREENS
 TH 12:00, 12:40, 2:20, 3:00, 4:40, 5:20, 7:00, 7:40, 9:20, 9:55
 FRI 12:00, 12:40, 2:20, 3:00, 4:40
ALEXANDER (R) TH 8:15, 9:30
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 2 PRINTS / 2 SCREENS
 TH 11:20, 12:30, 1:40, 2:50, 4:00, 5:10, 7:30, 9:45
 FRI 11:20, 12:30, 1:40, 2:50, 4:00

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Landmark motel to be replaced

BY JACK GLADDEN
STAFF WRITER

A Canton landmark of sorts, the De Swan Motel on the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Belleville Road, is being replaced by a sign of the times - a combination Tim Hortons/Flagstar Bank.

The project was recommended for approval by the township planning commission at its regular Monday night meeting. Each building will have separate drive-through windows.

Planners were generally happy with the project. The only major reservations were that access would be from the east-bound lanes of Michigan Avenue and from an entrance on Belleville Road, which would allow only right turns in and out of the site.

The project sponsor and planning department staff said the right-turn-only mandate came from Wayne County,

which is responsible for Belleville road.

In other business the commission approved a request for an expansion of the Canton Center Animal Hospital east of Canton Center and north of Ford.

The expansion would more than double the size of the existing building. Expanded surgery and recovery as well as treatment areas are proposed.

The commission was also told that a Jan. 24 date has been set for a joint meeting of the township board, the planning commission and the downtown development authority to get an overall view of IKEA's plans for its Canton location.

"It will be placed on the regular agenda for later on," Senior Planner Judy Bocklage told the commission. "This joint meeting will give us a look at the general concept."

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FIRE

FROM PAGE A1

Statistics show nearly 500 deadly home fires occur each December as a result of Christmas trees catching fire, according to the American Red Cross.

After the Dell'Orco fire, other reports of defective light sets had been received by the Canton Police and Fire Departments.

Rorabacher, the American Red Cross and FEMA make these fire safety recommendations:

- The first priority is to get people out of a structure - even if a fire doesn't appear to be spreading.

- Keep live trees watered as much as you can.

- Use additives that make sure the tree can draw up as much water as possible.

- Check the water in the tree stand twice a day.

- Keep the tree away from the fireplace, exits, hallways and doorways to allow easy access into and out of rooms.

- Make a home fire escape plan that is regularly practiced by all family members.

The plan should include sleeping with bedroom doors closed; a planned response to smoke detectors; checking the primary exit, escaping through a secondary exit; making certain windows open easily and reporting a fire.

- Avoid using candles while entertaining during the holidays.

- Use good, quality Christmas tree lights that have a "UL" approval on the wire. Underwriters Laboratory tests for safety.

- Install smoke detectors



Neighbors placed a memorial on the front lawn of the Dell'Orco home, after a Christmas tree caught fire, killing Martin Dell'Orco and six of his children in 1990.

and make sure the batteries work.

"Smoke detectors will do their jobs, but these trees will go off so fast that a smoke detector doesn't have time to do their job," Rorabacher said. "I'll probably get a piece of

coal under my tree this year for saying this, but there's some beautiful artificial trees out there that will pay for themselves after a couple of years. Live trees are hard to keep up on and you hate to find out the hard way."

SINGER

FROM PAGE A1

during the show, and has such a belief in the cause, that she hopes to make it an annual event.

"It was an awesome show. We performed all the holiday classics," she said. "I didn't get a count on how much we raised, but I know the Marines had a huge wad of money at the end of the night."

The national audience that she will be playing for on Christmas Day is not exactly a first for Blazer, who has sang the anthem at numerous major sporting events, and has been on major television networks including ABC, ESPN and FOX. But still, she said it will be special singing such a meaningful song on Christmas. And the fact that the country is at war only adds more meaning, she said.

"I'm always excited about singing the anthem, but now that we are in wartime it really means something," Blazer said.

"When I'm singing, I look around at all the people and wonder how many of them have a friend or a loved one in the war. It's very sentimental for me now."

Blazer also just released a Christmas CD, called *Just a Justine Christmas*. Containing 12 holiday classics, the CD can be purchased at either Dearborn Music store, including the one in Canton, or on Blazer's Web site at www.justineblazer.com.

"It's very warm, very romantic," Blazer says of the work.

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FOR THE RECORD

DEATHS

B

Benito J. Barreto, of Livonia, died Dec. 17.

Amelia M. Bresler, 87, of Lansing, died Dec. 15.

F

Becky Furca, of Redford, died Dec. 11.

G

John A. Grzebiak, of Westland, died Dec. 18.

M

Barbara J. McCune, 68, of Farmington Hills, died Dec. 11.

Loran Jean Marshall-Holden, of Westland, died Dec. 15.

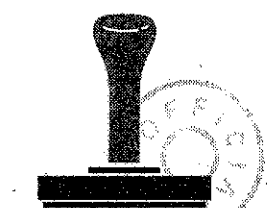
Robert C. Mitchell, 68, of Detroit, died Dec. 15.

P

Lawrence F. Peter, 88, of Eustis, Fla., died Dec. 20.

S

Vincent Charles Secontine, Jr., 83,



For the Record appears in every edition of the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. Complete paid obituaries can be found inside today's Sports section in *Passages* on page C7.

of Birmingham, died Dec. 19.

W

John E. Webb, of Redford, died Dec. 18.

Robert E. Willette, 76, of Plymouth, died Dec. 16.

Z

Rev. John B. Zwiers, of Redford, died Dec. 20.

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our SPORTS coverage
ROCKS!

Armed robbers hit two stores on Michigan Ave.

Canton Police responded to two armed robberies on Sunday, Dec. 19. The first incident occurred at about 12:20 a.m. at the Cottage Inn pizza take-out at 43647 Michigan Ave.

Two subjects described as white males wearing ski masks and armed with handguns entered the store and ordered an employee to a back room at gunpoint. The subjects returned to the front of the store where they escaped with an undisclosed amount of cash. A Van Buren Police canine unit assisted by attempting a track

which was unsuccessful. The second incident occurred about 9:50 p.m. at the Wendy's restaurant at 40450 Michigan Ave. Two black males armed with handguns entered the store and ordered employees to produce money from the store safe and

cash registers. The escaped with an undisclosed amount of cash. A Canton Police canine track was unsuccessful. It appears that in both cases the suspects fled in vehicles. Both cases remain under investigation.

NEWSMAKER

FROM PAGE A1

He noted that Canton had formed a public art committee that had been working to get art on the road. Then he went into a dissertation on Campbell's soup cans and other items that became "art" in the 1960s.

"I don't know whether there's a way that this (the Big Boy statue) can be justified as pop art," he said.

And that raised the questions: Is it a sign? Is it an icon? Is it art?

At that point the story was picked up by the local dailies and TV stations, even the Associated Press. And it began to make headlines around the country.

When the parties appeared in court again after the three weeks, Lawrence requested and received another three-week adjournment to continue discovery.

By then Matar said she had received at least 40 letters from people who wanted to save the Big Boy. And a petition at the restaurant had been signed by more than 6,000 people.

At the next hearing, Lawrence requested, and received, another delay because he was not satisfied with the documents the township had produced. Attorney Ron Witthoff, representing Canton Township, said he had already supplied Lawrence with more than 70 pages of documents



MONICA FOUTS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Attorney David Lawrence helps Big Boy owner Tony Matar paint over the lettering after a compromise with township officials.

and thought the request for additional material was overboard.

By then it was June and Lawrence was still pressing for more documents. The story was published in newspapers from New England to California and became fodder for columnists from Mount Clemens to Chicago. Political newcomer Todd Caccamo even used the issue during his successful run for township trustee, saying it was a private property issue that township officials should let go.

In July, Yack told board members at a study session that the township had put together a possible compromise.

"We're not going to reach closure here," he said of the legal proceedings. At a court hearing on July 27, almost

five months after the case began, both sides agreed to the compromise: The statue could stay, but the two words "Big Boy" on the bib had to be removed or covered up. That was done a month later at a public ceremony that was caught on film by newspaper photographers and television camera crews.

At the final court hearing, where the compromise was agreed upon, Lowe ended the case with another bizarre twist.

"We've had a lot of dialogue in here, but we never got the chance to ask what my opinion might be about the Big Boy," he said. "I don't know what my opinion might be about the Big Boy."

Then he handed both attorneys a thick document. It was an article from the *Georgia Law Review*, written by a professor from the New England School of Law.

He said the professor made a "very compelling argument" about the issue of dealing with "signs and art and things that can cross over as to how you should address them."

He didn't just happen on the article, however.

"You generated so much press about the Big Boy," Lowe said, "that apparently up in New England they were reading about it and that's why this professor sent this article along saying, 'You might want to read it, judge. It might be helpful.'"

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- Unit 4287 household
- Unit 4294 household
- Unit 5251 household
- Unit 6015 household
- Unit 6220 household
- Unit 6268 household

Shurgard of Farmington Hills
28600 Grand River Ave.
Farmington Hills, MI 48336
248-473-9303

- Unit 2188 household
- Unit 3294 household
- Unit 3420 household

Shurgard of Livonia
30300 Plymouth Rd.
Livonia, MI 48150
734-522-7811

- Unit 2017 household
- Unit 3091 household
- Unit 4140 household

Shurgard of Westland
36001 Warren Rd.
Westland, MI 48185
734-326-6000

- Unit 3098 household
- Unit 3196 household
- Unit 4020 household
- Unit 5072 household
- Unit 5126 household
- Unit 5170 household

Shurgard of Walled Lake
1901 East West Maple Rd.
Walled Lake, MI 48390
248-669-4020

- Unit 4004 household
- Unit 4044 household
- Unit 8042 household/95 Mustang

Shurgard of Plymouth
41889 Joy Rd.
Canton, MI 48187
734-459-2200

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- Unit 1026 household
- Unit 1034 household
- Unit 2071 household
- Unit 3032 household

Shurgard of Dearborn
24920 Trowbridge
Dearborn, MI 48124
313-277-2000

- Unit 1078 household
- Unit 1090 household
- Unit 1252 household
- Unit 1560 household
- Unit 2026 household
- Unit 2090 household
- Unit 2240 household
- Unit 2492 household
- Unit 3004 household
- Unit 3010 household

Shurgard of Sthfld@Telegraph
24200 Telegraph
Southfield, MI 48034
248-208-9000

- Unit 1050 household
- Unit 1020 household
- Unit 1102 household
- Unit 1123 household
- Unit 1140 household
- Unit 2019 household
- Unit 2030 household
- Unit 2100 household
- Unit 2117 household
- Unit 2152 household
- Unit 2169 household
- Unit 2175 household
- Unit 2187 household
- Unit 2196 household
- Unit 3026 household
- Unit 3052 household
- Unit 3057 household
- Unit 3074 household
- Unit 3078 household
- Unit 3081 household
- Unit 3118 household
- Unit 3133 household

Shurgard of Southfield
19350 W. 8 Mile Rd.
Southfield, MI 48075
248-357-1137

- Unit 1002 household
- Unit 1044 household
- Unit 1061 household
- Unit 1101 household
- Unit 1169 household
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- Unit 2018 household
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Shurgard Taylor
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Taylor, MI 48180
313-292-2950

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- Unit 5104 household
- Unit 6001 household
- Unit 6005 household
- Unit 6025 household
- Unit 6129 household
- Unit 6189 household
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Shurgard of Canton South
45229 Michigan Ave.
Canton, MI 48188
734-398-5416

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Physical Therapy UPDATE


Presented by
Hands On Center For Physical Therapy

A STITCH IN TIME


If you are a runner, you may experience a "side stitch", which is a cramp in the diaphragm (the muscle between the lungs and abdomen that helps you breathe). When blood supply to the diaphragm is low, it spasms. Pin can also appear in the shoulder. In the event that you get a side stitch, try slowing down for 30 seconds. If the pain is on the right side, exhale forcefully each time your left foot hits the ground. On the other hand, if the stitch is on your left side, exhale when your right foot hits. It may also help to practice deep "belly breathing", which is characterized by the abdomen going in and out.

We hope that you have found today's column both interesting and informing. When you require physical therapy, contact HANDS ON CENTER FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY. Our responsibility is to provide you with the highest quality care possible. To accomplish this, we take the time to understand each of our patients concerns and discuss all necessary rehabilitation options. To schedule an appointment contact us at 435-8370. We are conveniently located at 650 South Main Street in downtown Plymouth and we offer easy access and parking.


P.S. Shoulder pain that persists after a run may signal a heart attack, in which case medical attention should be sought immediately.



Johan Comuth, PT




Mark Mjnsbergen, PT



Bob Schoemaker, PT

What if you could give someone a gift that could change their life?



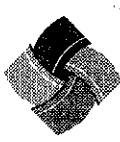
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TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kimberly Harris (left) of Wayne and Carol Secco of Westland adopted German shepherd/Lab mix 8-week-old-puppies at the Michigan Humane Society Tuesday. The puppies were foster pups being cared for by Barbara Rogulski of Livonia.

Make pet feel welcome in new home

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Experts agree pets as Christmas gifts aren't the greatest. But once the holidays are over, you might want to consider adding a pet to your home.

"If you're going to give an animal at Christmas, make it stuffed," recommended Dr. Brad Davis, a veterinarian with VCA Animal Hospital of Garden City. He suggested a book on animals or a gift certificate as alternatives for the holidays.

"In January and February, there are going to be tons of animals needing homes," said Davis, a 1972 graduate of Michigan State University's veterinary school. "It should never be an impulse decision."

The Michigan Humane Society recommends carefully considering animal adoption in advance.

The Humane Society's shelters in Westland, Detroit and Rochester Hills have animals available for adoption. Information is available online at www.michiganhumane.org or by calling (866) MHUMANE (648-6263).

THINK FIRST

"It's the busiest time of year for many people," said Nancy Gunnigle, MHS spokeswoman.

"We recommend not surprising someone with a companion animal they may not be ready to commit to."

Waiting until the new year is best, Gunnigle said. That can help people make a match to last a lifetime.

"I would definitely agree with that," said Dr. Vyvian Gorbea, a veterinarian and owner of Plymouth Veterinary Hospital. "There should be a lot of thought that you put into it."

Ideally, the family should go to the shelter together, Gunnigle said. Older children can help with pet care, but parents must realize the ultimate responsibility is theirs. Expecting too much of kids "can reduce the enjoyment of the animal."

Adoption counselors at the Humane Society work with people to make the right match, noting some animals are higher maintenance.

"That's one of our greatest joys," Gunnigle said of sending an animal to a loving permanent home.

The society provided more than 13,000 animals for adoption last year, mostly cats and dogs.

"We hope people will think of the Michigan Humane Society when they're looking to add a companion animal," she said.

Animals coming home for the first time benefit from a crate or playpen which will give them a place for quiet, Davis said. It's important to set a routine for meals and other things as soon as possible.

"If things are constantly changing, it makes it hard for them," he said.

A comfortable bed's

important for a pet, said Gorbea, a 1990 graduate of MSU's veterinary school. Access to food and water is also essential, she said, and for a purchased animal vaccines should be made current within a week.

SOUND ADVICE

The Humane Society offers the following tips to keep animals safe during the holidays:

■ Holiday plants that can be harmful or toxic include mistletoe, holly, poinsettias, Japanese yew and Jerusalem cherry, as well as the bulb of the amaryllis plant. Contact your veterinarian if your pet is vomiting, lethargic or foaming at the mouth.

■ Keep animals away from holiday decorations and never leave them unsupervised around the Christmas tree. Tinsel, ribbons and angel hair can cause intestinal blockages if swallowed. Glass balls may be "fetched" off the tree and break.

Also, ingested pine needles can puncture the intestines, so vacuum around the tree frequently.

■ Preservatives, aspirin or sugar commonly used to prolong a Christmas tree's life may prove harmful if the water is ingested. Aspirin is especially deadly for cats.

"A lot of people use that for preservative for their Christmas tree," Gunnigle said of aspirin. Davis said many dangerous products are still on the market.

■ Make sure lights and electrical cords are out of reach. Besides the risk of electrocution, the whole tree may topple over.

"Obviously, there are a lot of things in the household," Gorbea said of Christmas trees and other seasonal items that can harm pets.

■ Keep animals away from ribbons and bows. Cats find them fascinating; however, they are a serious choking hazard.

■ Make sure pets are secure while you are entertaining. More guests mean more chances for the cat, dog or other animal to slip out unnoticed; as always, be sure he is wearing a collar and ID tag in case of escape. Provide pets with a quiet retreat when festivities get too stressful.

■ Resist giving fatty foods as treats. Gravy, poultry skin and other rich foods can cause severe gastrointestinal upset. Likewise, do not give animals poultry or steak bones, which can lodge in the throat, stomach or intestinal tract.

■ Chocolate is poisonous to dogs and can prove fatal depending on the dog's size and the amount and type of chocolate ingested. The safest rule is to keep all chocolate out of your dog's reach.

■ Lighted candles should never be left unattended, especially with animals around.

Clinics and the MHS can help answer questions about nutrition, medication and other pet topics, Gorbea said. "They do a lot of information over the phone," she said of the MHS.

Rakolta: Dialogue can bridge racial divisions

BY GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

"The legacy of the past is rooted in today." And that is especially evident in the state of race relations in the metro Detroit area.

That message was delivered Monday morning by John Rakolta Jr., chairman of New Detroit, Inc., who spoke to a full house at the Race Relations and Diversity Task Force at The Community House.

Detroit is the most segregated major city in the nation, Rakolta said, and there are deep divisions between the black and white communities that still echo with the pains of slavery.

Today, fundamental misunderstandings remain between the two communities that requires a "true and honest dialogue with respect," Rakolta said.

An example of successful dialogue was



New Detroit chairman John Rakolta Jr. brought a message of understanding to The Community House Monday.

related by Rakolta, who has hosted a series of dinners for New Detroit board members at his home in Bloomfield Hills.

New Detroit was established in 1967 to

deal specifically with the city's racial problems. The board of about 75 members with a variety of business and social organization backgrounds seeks to improve relations. But Rakolta said he saw a lack of communications and understanding on the board.

Each dinner brings a handful of board members together in a casual setting to discuss racial issues in an open manner.

The encounters have been eye-opening, Rakolta said. Tough topics like reparations and a national apology for slavery have been discussed.

And that's the key to finding common ground, Rakolta said. The answer is in dialogue, not debate. Debating implies a winner.

There is no one solution to the problem, Rakolta said, and time alone won't solve it. There has to be full equality for all and "we have to keep the conversations going," he said.

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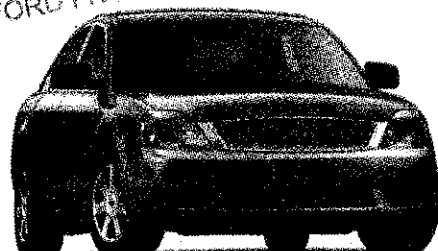
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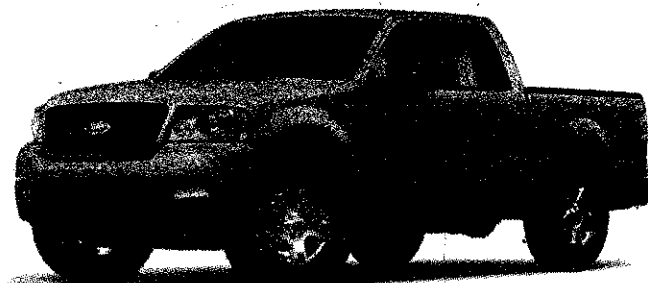
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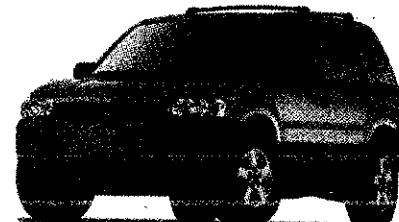
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OUR VIEWS

Christmas magic survives frenzy

"It went 'zip' when it moved and 'bop' when it stopped
And 'whirr' when it stood still!
I never knew just what it was and I guess I never will!"

— Tom Paxton
The Marvelous Toy

Some people say Christmas isn't what it used to be. Devout Christians are concerned that Christ has been pushed aside by commercialism, secularism and an oversensitivity to the feelings of non-Christians. They say nobody says "Merry Christmas" anymore, just "Happy holidays."

Parents are concerned that the simple joys of the season are being undermined by loud, violent and socially isolating video games that have replaced the wonderful toys of their youth.

Everyone complains about the traffic jams, the buying frenzy, the incessant commercialization, the forced conviviality, the bad holiday music and worse movies and all the dancing Santas and reindeer.

But still, there is a magic to this season amidst all its mixed messages and conflicting themes. Like Tom Paxton's marvelous toy, it moves and fascinates us still.

On every street corner and in front of department stores and supermarkets, volunteers ring bells so the Salvation Army can provide food, clothes and toys to needy families. Goodfellows sell newspapers to assure that no child will go without a Christmas. While shelters, soup kitchens and serious need exist all year long, it is at Christmas that we are stopped and reminded of that need and open our hearts and our wallets to help.

Families and friends separated by miles or just by busy lives pause for a night and day to gather again and celebrate the Christmases past they've shared and the love that sometimes goes unexpressed for too long a time.

Little tots, eyes all aglow, find joy in the simplest things — colored lights, a twirling toy, a chilly sled ride and a jolly man in a red suit.

We do live in a diverse community, where people of many cultures and religions have come together to live. For many, Christmas is not part of their religious tradition. For others, Christmas is not a particularly religious holiday.

But to those concerned that Christ has been pushed aside, it might be comforting to think that the magic of this season begins with the simple humility of the Nativity story. We bestow gifts on children because wise men brought gifts to a baby in Bethlehem. We remember the sick and needy because we have been taught for hundreds of years that Jesus preached and practiced such charity. We gather as a family on this night above all others because we celebrate a family finding shelter in a stable.

Christmas has many meanings — may you find joy and peace in your special celebration of the season.

Holiday drunken driving is costly in many ways

Although it's been said many times, many ways, it's worth repeating — if you drink, don't drive this holiday season. And be sure to spread the word.

Efforts to make it a safe holiday in the metro area are getting help from the Michigan State Police and the statewide You Drink & Drive, You Lose campaign which began Dec. 20 and continues through Jan. 2.

Law enforcement officials in Wayne, Oakland and 20 other counties throughout the state will be on the lookout for those who drink and drive. So if you're thinking about one more cocktail before hitting the road, think again. It could cost you big!

Remember that Michigan's drunken driving definition is .08 blood-alcohol and the costs associated with a drunken driving arrest have increased. In addition to court costs and fines, convicted drunken drivers will also pay a new \$1,000 penalty included in the driver responsibility program. The \$1,000 penalty will be imposed for two consecutive years. Anyone who refuses a breath test to determine blood-alcohol levels will receive an automatic one-year suspension of driving privileges.

During last year's Christmas and New Year holiday weekends, there were 13 traffic deaths statewide, according to the Michigan State Police.

Nationwide, more than 2,700 individuals were arrested for alcohol-related offenses during this same holiday enforcement period. And according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 2,100 people nationwide were killed during the 2003 holiday season in alcohol-related traffic crashes and/or crashes where safety belts were not used.

Don't drink and drive this holiday season and don't allow someone else who has been drinking to drive.

Drive safe, drive sober and drive buckled up this holiday season.



LETTERS

Take a hint

You would think that the Hollywood Left would have taken this past presidential election as a lesson to stay out of American politics. Well, in fact, it seems to have had the exact opposite effect.

According to Reuters, in a recent interview Michael Moore stated, "For the last month, we've had to listen to a lot of conservative pundits talk about how the Democrats need to run away from Hollywood, it's actually the opposite." Moore said, "Democrats need to embrace Hollywood because this is where they need to come to learn how to tell a story. President Bush had a more compelling story to tell and the Democrats didn't, and that has to change."

Interestingly, Moore insists that Democrats go to Hollywood to learn how to "tell a story." That right there is a mistake. America doesn't want to hear a story. America wants to hear the truth. Obviously, Hollywood has a general misconception of how real America lives, and what real America believes. Most mainstream Americans are good, God-fearing people that embrace traditional values, and could care less about what their sources of entertainment (mainly Hollywood) say about politics and other such issues.

Honestly, people don't go to concerts to hear celebrities rant on about who they would vote for, and who could possibly enjoy a movie about someone's twisted political views. Hollywood simply does not have the same values as mainstream America, and if they are embraced by the Democrats, I can guarantee they won't be celebrating a major victory anytime soon.

Michael Moore and his cronies may never get it, but one thing is for sure, it is extremely fortunate for this country that a few hare-brained celebrities and their warped ways of thinking did not influence America's major decisions.

Christina Garmon
Canton

Ford Road too dangerous

The Canton Downtown Development Authority, after reviewing a review of the plans provided by the nationally famous Corradino Group of Kentucky to make Ford Road safe for drivers, now plans to turn Ford Road into a walkable business corridor.

Reportedly that was one of the issues on the table for the Downtown Development Authority when they met Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2004.

They are saying now that they developed these ideas about a downtown business district more than a year ago when the township presented its master plan. The focus changed when the township board approved hiring Hamilton Anderson Associates to analyze Ford Road.

The Downtown Development Authority has been skimming tax income from the local business community for nearly 20 years. Will they be putting in a walking circle? The distance from the

front to the back in most of our local box stores should require a mass transit plan as it is.

Who is going to walk a mile from home, gather up 100 pounds of groceries and then window shop on the way back? Most of the stores and their signs are set so far back on Ford Road that you need binoculars just to see what they have for sale.

As each day goes by Ford Road becomes more dangerous.

Mr. Yack will now add pedestrians.
Alfred Brock
Canton

Less hype, more disclosure

The subject of the state deficit interrelates with other problems within our political and tax system. I will try to devote most of my comments to the schools in particular.

I would disagree with the school groups that met and developed a program "We're not taking it anymore." The approach to talk to elected officials to acquire increased funding beyond the allotments is folly. Many taxpayers may object to the imminent "forced taxation" such an approach may bring. Politicians should understand that the taxpayer has had enough (I'm one of them) with generalities and special interest groups.

With the obvious numerous union and/or association groups that abound in public service or the school system, their approaches via an "organized" means can be viewed as an approach to collectivism of sorts. As some examples:

1. Wayne County is providing "sweet" deals for early retirement, and has 17 unions. Some unions enjoy a \$5 match for every \$1 contributed for retirement.

2. Canton Township has about five unions, and has similar programs allowing a \$3 match for every \$1 contributed.

It is clear the employees love these programs. The reality is I've never heard of such sweet deals in the private sector — some employees have none. The professed "low pay" is irrelevant — many people work for low pay. All one has to do is take a full door-to-door poll. The above programs are grossly excessive.

I agree with Jim Ryan, superintendent of Plymouth Canton Schools — the system needs to educate the taxpaying public. We need facts, and a lot less hype. More detail from others (such as Mike Maloney) would be nice. The *Observer* pie charts recently published are a good general beginning. Less "government" by unions and associations needs to be implemented, and placed back into the taxpayer's control.

It seems prudent to conclude that the average taxpayer has to develop their own organized group to counteract or challenge the obviously excessive abundance of others. It would be nice to know how many levels of bureaucracy and their purpose exists today, along with all the numbers.

Charlie Page
Canton

Teach sexual abstinence

During the 1950s some of us responsible for curriculum development considered adding a class in sex education to better prepare the young for living. The conservative among us thought it imperative for the man or woman selected to do the teaching insist that abstinence was the goal of instruction. Most of the school staff laughed or showed considerable scorn and discomfort.

The consensus opined that sex education would result in less experimentation and early experience with sex in daily living, and fewer unwanted pregnancies. And we all know how far from the target their bullets fell.

With an increase in the teaching of abstinence, there still remains, it seems, the absence of any reference to morality, that the two hugging and kissing, reaching first base, stop right there. Earlier than the 50s I can remember that the young lass found to be with child was hustled from the burrow, the village, the city, maybe the state, till the fruit of sexual experience was realized. Shame was the order of the day.

Bring back shame in conjunction with the teaching that abstinence is moral and good, that the very young have no privilege, no priority, no permission to seek sexual pleasure, committing the acts reserved for the adults in our world.

Thirteen-year-olds may not drive. Fourteen-year-olds may not purchase Jim Beam and drink it.

Back to the better days when morality was meaningful and real. Join abstinence with morality and shame, and experience lower numbers of pregnant young girls, and thus fewer social and economic problems for the rest of us to bear.

Neil Goodbred
Livonia

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

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QUOTABLE

"I think there will be some type of adjustment period to get used to it, and we'll need to do some aligning of our curriculum to teach what is expected on the Michigan Merit Exam. According to the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, the new test lines up favorably with state standards and benchmarks."

— Mike Bender, secondary education director for Plymouth-Canton Schools, on decision to scrap the MEAP test for the Michigan Merit Exam

Not everybody on this list deserves visit from Santa

Christmas is almost here, and it's time to sneak a peak into the stocking to see what Santa has brought some of our best-known folks. Make that, what Santa should be bringing them. First of all, it is ...

■ Mud for Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, who is refusing to sell a city-owned 80-foot by three-quarter-mile strip of land in southwest Detroit that is needed to build a truck tunnel to Canada that would create thousands of jobs and reduce cross-border congestion.

A group called Detroit River Partnership is trying to put together a deal to build the tunnel, and they need the land to finish it off. But a new tunnel would mean competition for Manuel (Matty) Moroun, who makes a ton of money from the 10 million vehicles that use his Ambassador Bridge.

The shadowy Moroun, whose mysterious business practices were the subject of a major recent piece in *Forbes*, is a big financial backer of Hizzonor. Word on the street (and in the Detroit papers) is that Moroun is leaning on his pal to put the kibosh on the deal. Funny thing, however — Wayne County Executive Bob Ficano, Detroit Chief Development Officer Walt Watkins and Director of Development Activities Henry Haygood are all for it.

This, of course, reeks of corruption. Worse, if anything, it's a perfect instance of how things that could really make a difference to job-starved Michigan get killed by wealthy and influential special interests and compliant politicians.

■ Brain candy for us all from the University of Michigan library, which at 7 million volumes is one of the largest research libraries in the world. The university announced last week that Google, one of whose co-founders is U-M grad Larry Page, will make virtually everything in its library holdings available to the public online.

Although it's not well-known, U-M's research library is on a par with Harvard's, Stanford's and Oxford's — the other major school libraries included in Google's plan.

The implications are remarkable. It signifies the coming of age of online access to information. Within a few years, ordinary people will have direct access to the scholarly resources of the world's greatest libraries without having to paw through dusty volumes in the stacks.

And that U-M's library is included in this deal is further indication of the extraordinary world-class resource that the university represents to the entire state. That's a resource our lawmakers owe it to us to protect.

■ A lump of coal for Wal-Mart and a Blue Cross-Blue Shield Card for the company's many "associates" in Michigan. Despite its popularity, Wal-Mart has come in recent months under increasing criticism for crushing Main Street merchants and ruining small downtowns.

Its attempt to build a new store in the Petoskey area was derailed by a local citizens group earlier this year, and a similar group is now hard at work in Pittsfield Township near Ann Arbor to do the same thing.

A new issue has arisen: Whether Wal-Mart's employment practices are driving its employees into state-financed medical programs like Medicare and the charity lines at hospitals. If so, it's a case in which a big company is offloading some costs onto the taxpayers, as Medicare is a large and rapidly increasing cost in Michigan's budgetary mess. Wal-Mart, by the way, pays an average employee \$10 an hour and charges monthly health care premiums as high as \$264 a month, according to *The New York Times*. What's more, it makes the eligibility requirements considerably steep.

Wal-Mart says it has no idea how many of its employees or their families are insured under state programs. The folks in Lansing I asked about it didn't know, either. But if Michigan wants to cut the costs of state-paid health care, it might have a look to see how many folks employed by Wal-Mart are winding up getting their health care paid by Michigan taxpayers.

■ Crystal balls for state school chief Tom Watkins and members of the State Board of Education. Recent research shows a crisis is brewing in funding state schools: Public school employee pension costs will rise from 15 percent of payroll in 2005 to more than 20 percent in 2008 and more than 30 percent by 2018. Moreover, health care and retirement benefit costs by 2008 will average \$1,200 per pupil, whereas the state's foundation education grant is only \$6,700 per pupil.

Watkins and the state board are calling for a fundamental restructuring of the K-12 system and its financial underpinnings. That's the right approach, rather than tinkering around the edges. But it will take a better crystal ball than mine to figure out whether anything will come of it.

And as for the rest of us ... happy holidays to all! May your Christmas stockings be filled with wonderful things and, most of all, may you and your family have a serene and happy holiday.

Phil Power is the chairman of the board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2047 or at ppower@homecomm.net.



Phil Power

Here's wishing all a merry, inclusive Christmas season

A few days ago, my family made its annual pilgrimage to the mall for photos with Santa.

In line ahead of us was a grandma dressed in a traditional sari and sandals.

Maybe Christmas is for everyone, after all. In our divided country, the 25th day of December has increasingly become an all too divisive holiday. But it shouldn't be.

There have been plenty of calls for reconciliation — culturally, if not politically — in the wake of this past year's divisive presidential election.

Christmastime is as good a time as any to start.

Not that there haven't been some battles, even locally. School districts and communities throughout our region have struggled, sometimes angrily, over aspects of the holiday.

Birmingham banned Christmas music from its streets a few years ago after some people complained it promoted religion.

But if Irving Berlin can continue to wish us a White Christmas, Barbra Streisand can invoke a Silent Night and John Lennon and Yoko Ono can ask us to imagine there's no heaven yet bid us a Happy Xmas all the same, exactly whose religion is being promoted?

Troy this year struggled with the idea of allowing groups to place nativity scenes and other exhibits on the grounds of its civic center. There, council members ultimately adopted a lottery system for civic groups and civic displays.

Only one person applied. City halls and civic centers aren't the place for religious symbolism.

Our elected leaders, even down to our local city councils, aren't defenders of the faith, but representatives of us all.

Christmas should be a time of inclusion, not exclusion.

Does that take the Christ out of Christmas? Not necessarily.

There's a big nativity scene on the front steps of the church where my son attends a secular preschool.

There's also a big, lighted one on the front lawn of a place I pass every day to and from work.

More power to them. Christmas can still belong to us all.

A few weeks back, an elementary school in Southfield, our region's most culturally diverse city, held a program simultaneously celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Las

Posadas and Kwanzaa. There's much worth learning about each holiday. But Christmas isn't the province of any one religion, cultural or ethnic group.

It can be a universal holiday. There are some things about the Christmas spirit that everyone, regardless of culture or creed, can plug into.

There's much not to like about the holiday, of course, especially in the way we've come to celebrate it.

Rushing from store to store, sweeping up the house for descending relatives and working short-handed while co-workers take their vacations can produce far more stress than joy.

Yet, cut through even all that unpleasantness and there's still something of value underneath.

That's because it's about generosity, of time as well as spirit.

Given and received in that spirit, even the least expensive gift can become a thoughtful remembrance. Even if it goes back the next day.

Conducted in that spirit, even the most dreaded family get-together can remind us we don't have to be so alone. (And shouldn't those shelves have been dusted long ago, anyway?)

As for work ... maybe there's the possibility that you'll get some time off, too, and soon. At least you can count on one day.

It's not just about those we know, however. It's a time to remember those in need and those without families.

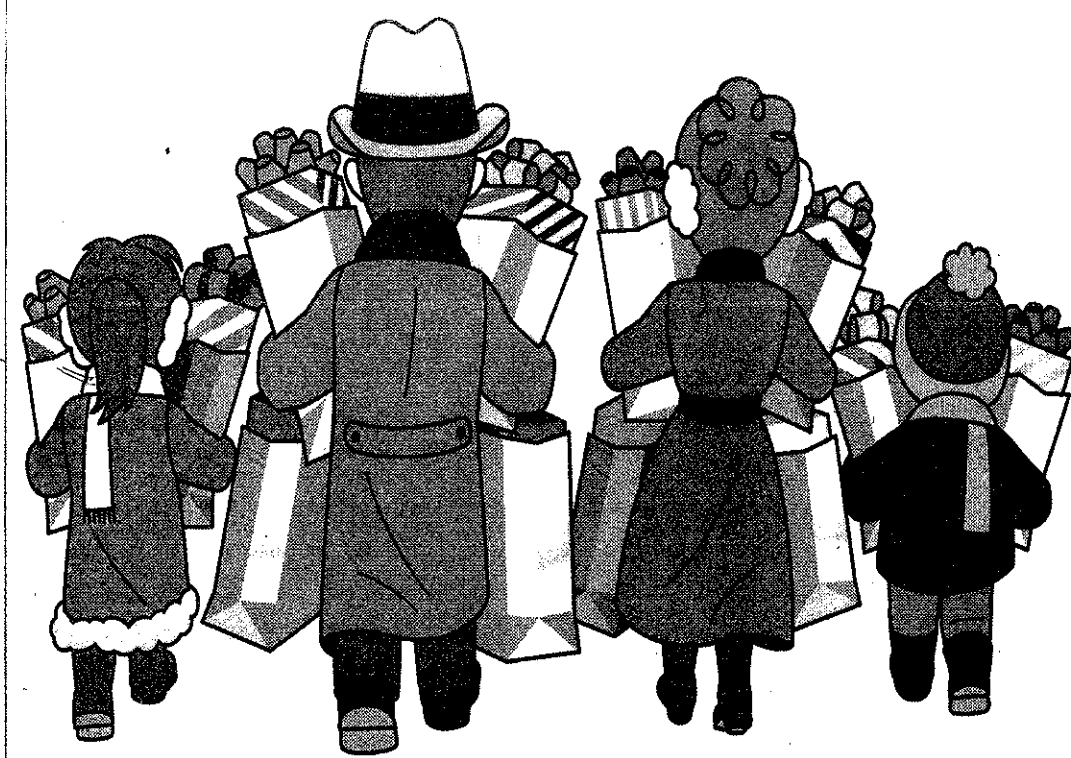
Christmas is the time most of us celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. But not all Christians even celebrate it on the same day.

Yet, if the spirit of Christmas moves people of any or no faith to drop a few coins in the kettle, put a turkey in a food basket or give a coat to someone who has none, I can't imagine Jesus would mind.

Wayne Peal is editor of the *Southfield Eccentric*. You can write him at 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009, send him an e-mail at wpeal@oe.homecomm.net or send him a fax at (248) 644-1314.



Wayne Peal



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Say or do something funny when snapping kids' photos

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
STAFF WRITER

Take a tip from Livonia photographer Kim Jamieson and say or do something funny when snapping photographs of your kids this holiday season.

Jamieson recently shared secrets like this in a hands-on workshop at the Longacre House in Farmington. In the past she's taught classes for professional photographers but this was her first time working with moms and dads.

"These are tips that are useable and practical," said Jamieson who's been a professional photographer for more than 20 years. "The number one mistake parents make is they just take children and stand them there and say smile. It's almost like a jail house picture. You want to capture a kid's personality and their vivaciousness. If people would just elicit expressions from their children.

"All children will cooperate. Sometimes they don't because of the stress parents are putting on them. When kids are going to be photographed, the parents stress out and children feel that stress. I recommend making it fun."

Choosing the right location is just as important to creating vibrant holiday photos as always photographing children at their eye level. Jamieson says, venture outside and experiment. Don't let the clouds keep you inside.

Overcast days are often the best times to take photographs. "They miss out on their front porch. They go to great lengths to decorate their lawns and porch. This is a perfect setting," said Jamieson. "Put a heavy sweater on them and go outside and take a couple of cute pictures instead of lining them up on the couch with presents. And don't just pose them in front of the tree. The cutest ones of my daughter are when

she's ripping open the gift." Jamieson used to shoot wedding photographs until the birth of her daughter 19 years ago. Since then she's specialized in capturing children naturally, and families.

"I realized kids give it a magical look," said Jamieson who has been honored with the Kodak Gallery Award for photographic excellence. "Up until then I didn't photograph children. My daughter taught me a lot.

"Sometimes parents stand too far away from their children. If you're at Cinderella's Castle at Disney World, get in

closer, crop. Do not take the full castle with your children looking like ants. Other times the photo's distorted because they're standing too close."

Jamieson offers one last tip. Take more than one photo.

"Film is cheap," said Jamieson. "Missing those precious memories and expressions of your children is expensive. I recommend shooting a lot of pictures. I just took photos of my daughter on the beach in Harbor Springs with a Chihuahua puppy and took 36 to 48 shots."

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Livonia photographer Kim Jamieson (right) shows Laura Packer of Birmingham (left) how to work with children to shoot the perfect photograph. Packer's children were still in school but another mother allowed her sons, Alex and Spencer Weber, 5, of Livonia, to stand in.

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Project manager named for redevelopment

The Wayne County Airport Authority has hired Mr. Sam Vaskov as manager of the \$400 million North Terminal Redevelopment project at Detroit Wayne County Metro Airport, working directly for Lester W. Robinson, Chief Executive Officer.

Vaskov will head up an array of professional consultant teams that will be retained to plan, design and construct a passenger terminal to replace the now vacant Davey Terminal previously occupied by Northwest Airlines before its move to the new McNamara Terminal in February 2002. The new terminal is projected for completion in late 2008 with initial site demolition work to commence in late 2005.

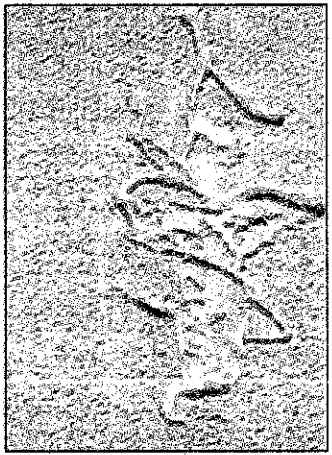
Vaskov has more than 40 years of experience in airport development, program management, and aviation facilities planning, design, and construction on large and complex airport and airline projects. On a recent mega project, he served as the senior American leader on a team of 30 Canadian and American project management experts at Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport, the busiest airport in Canada.

"I feel we are very fortunate to have obtained the services of Sam Vaskov," said WCAA CEO Lester Robinson.

"He brings world-wide experience to an already great team here in Detroit."

The new terminal will serve carriers currently operating out of the aging Smith Terminal including Air Canada, American, America West, Delta, Independence Air, Spirit, Southwest, U.S. Airways, United and perhaps others.

On Sept. 7 the WCAA Board approved a contract with Gensler Architecture, Design & Planning to provide designs for a new terminal of up to 29 gates, featuring convenient opportunities for new shops and restaurants, shorter walking distances, and improved baggage screening and luggage claim operations.



Some mustards contain very strong dyes that are difficult to remove. It may be necessary to remove the stained area and reinsert an undamaged section of carpet.

Don't let spills stain your holidays

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER

It's the holidays and here come Uncle John with a plate full of chicken wings, Aunt Betty with a glass of wine and little Bobby with that soft drink.

Ooops! Suddenly you've got a spill and, if you don't clean it quickly, it could turn into a carpet stain.

You would think that wine is the most common stain on carpeting at this time of year. Think again.

"It's candle wax," said Barbra Wilson, technical information manager for the Carpet and Rug Industries, based in Dalton, Ga. "That's a year-round item, too, not just during the holidays." No. 2 is wine, followed by tree sap.

CRI receives many phone calls for information on stain removal, especially at this time of year. The Web site (<http://www.carpet-rug.org>) includes tips and pointers on how to remove these stains.

Holiday celebrants tend to move the candles around, and sometimes the larger ones burn for a long time, Wilson said. "The wax just puddles inside the candle, and they just blow the liquid when they put them out," Wilson said. "Sometimes the wax ends up on a table, but it also ends up on the carpet."

Tree sap ends up on the carpet because homeowners forget to put a cover down at the bottom of the tree.

As with any stain, Wilson

PLEASE SEE STAINS, B4

DON'T WHINE ABOUT WINE STAINS

Got a wine stain? Follow these tips from the Carpet and Rug Institute:

Absorb as much of the spill as possible with a white paper towel.

Mix together 1/4 of a teaspoon of a dishwashing liquid (non-bleach, non-nanolin) to a cup of water. Dip a white cloth into the solution and dab this onto the stain. Let the solution sit on stain for about 15 minutes, giving the solution time to break up the stain.

After 15 minutes, use a white absorbent cloth and blot and press on this area pulling up excess liquid and most of the stain. Rinse this area with a mixture of 1/2 white vinegar and water, blotting on area, then lay 1/2 inch thick stack white paper towels on this area, sitting a glass baking dish on paper towels.

Let stand for about 15 minutes, as this method helps pull the rest of the stain up and away from the carpet fibers.



PHOTOS BY LAWRENCE MCKEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Southfield resident Lillian Clinton began collecting angels for her Christmas tree. Now she keeps the angels out all year in her home. Top, the angels are made of a wide variety of materials, such as porcelain, ceramic, crystal and wood. They are of almost every race and age.

Heavenly collection

Angels light up residence all year

"All night, all day, angels watching over me..."

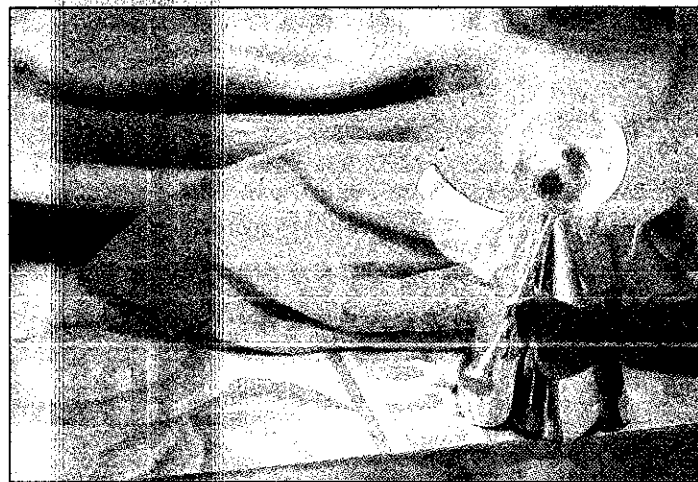
Angels can be found in writings, movies, TV shows and songs, such as the tune above that Lillian Clinton sang as a child. And myriad angels can be found every day in Clinton's Southfield home.

Every room in the house has at least one figurine, painting or other image of an angel, part of Clinton's collection that has been spreading for almost 10 years. They are displayed all year.

"I got started when I first put an angel on the (Christmas) tree," Clinton said. "Every year I'd get more angels and wouldn't want to put them away,

PLEASE SEE ANGELS, B4

STORY BY MARY KLEMIC | STAFF WRITER



Clinton's collection includes angel napkin rings.

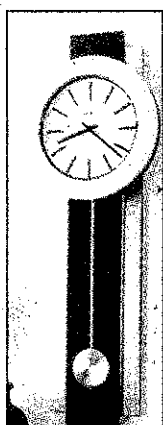
MARKET PLACE

Submissions

Do you have a special item you'd like to showcase in Marketplace on the front of At Home? We'd like to feature it! Send a photo or slide of the piece, along with information, to: Ken Abramczyk, At Home editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

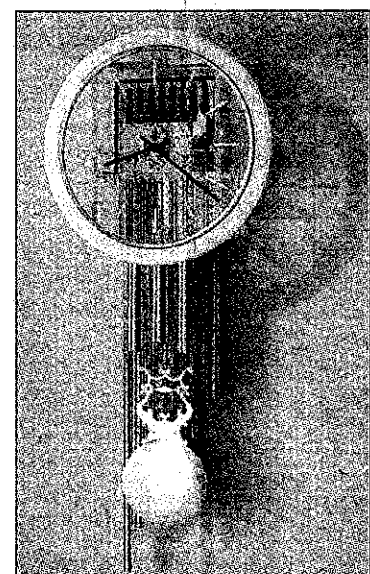
Prime time

Clock designs by Howard Miller® have been center stage on some reality TV shows, including NBC's *The Apprentice* and FOX's *Renovate My Family*. *The Apprentice* features an array of Howard Miller clocks in the contestants' living quarters and the elevator lobby outside the board room. The distinctive Howard Miller clock named the Focal Point (shown here) dresses the wall in the living room next to the famous phone that only receives the most important calls from Donald Trump himself. This 65-inch long wall clock has a clear acrylic dial that spans 27-1/2 inches, a visible movement made from highly polished solid brass, and polished brass weights and



pendulum that are complemented by chrome-plated tubes. Other clocks in *The Apprentice* are the Grand Cayman floor clock in the living room, a selection of bedside alarm clocks in the living quarters, and the Magnifique gallery clock in the lobby. *Renovate My Family* debuted on FOX this fall, featuring the Biggins family from Dallas and Howard Miller clocks on the premiere episode. Among the wall and table clocks that were part and parcel of the transformation of the family's house were the striking Bergen wall clock (shown here) that combines wood and metal for a clean, contemporary look.

For a free copy of Howard Miller's guide to the Finer Points of clocks and collectors cabinets, or to find a store near you, call (800) 873-0506 or visit www.howardmiller.com.



Accents

Wanted: home gyms

Soon every would-be dieter will be struggling with food choices and looking to knock off holiday pounds by signing up with a health club.

But you don't do that. You already own exercise equipment and use it at least five days a week. (OK, maybe it's three days a week, or worse yet, the equipment is used for hanging clothes.)

We'd like to feature home gyms created in lower levels or basements at the homes of Observer & Eccentric readers. If you have a combination of a



treadmill, stationary or recumbent bike, elliptical or free weights set up in that special room, we'd like to hear from you and include your room and you in our story.

Please contact Ken Abramczyk, At Home editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia MI 48150, call (734) 953-2107 or e-mail him at kabranczyk@oe.homecomm.net

Help Maybury

If you want to give a gift that gives forever, purchase a board to help rebuild Maybury Farm.

Boards are \$250 each and your name (up to 23 characters) will be placed on a plaque to be hung permanently at Maybury Farm.

To order a board you may contact the Northville Community Foundation at (248)374-0200, Visa and Mastercard are accepted and donations are tax-deductible or you may send a check for \$250 per board to the Northville Community Foundation 18600 Northville Road, Suite 275, Northville, MI 48167.

Software aids parents

SoftwareTime announces the launch of ComputerTime 1.0, software that lets parents decide when, where and how children use the family computer.

SoftwareTime, available for purchase through www.softwaretime.com, enables parents to get a handle on excessive computer use, so kids can spend time on other activities.

Inappropriate Internet content continues to be a big problem for parents. While there is filtering software on the market, no product is foolproof. The best filter is a parent's watchful eye, and ComputerTime allows parents to assist in that function, according to officials at SoftwareTime.

SoftwareTime, a privately held company, was founded in 2003 to address the needs of parents regarding their children's computer use.

Visit [SoftwareTime at www.softwaretime.com](http://www.softwaretime.com).

Make the most of your hand-me-down PC

It's the holidays, and that could mean a new PC under the tree, menorah, or whatever non-denominational gift shrine you employ in your house.

Ah, but what's to become of the old PC? It cost a pretty penny back in its day, so you're loathe to leave it at the curb. And anyway, it still runs OK - it's just slow and "gunked up" (sorry for the technical jargon).

Give it to the kids. Chances are they won't care if it has a mere Pentium III processor (gasp!) or a measly 20GB hard drive (horrors!). As long as they can play Putt-Putt Saves the Zoo, they're happy.

Indeed, younger kids - by which I mean 10 and under - can easily make do with an outdated system. That's because most educational software and kids' games have very modest requirements, meaning they run just fine on older machines.

How old? It's tough to say exactly, but as long as the PC can run Windows 95 (preferably Windows 98), it should be fine.

After you've transferred all your files, e-mail, Web links, and other vital data to the new machine (I recommend IntelliMover (www.detto.com), which makes the process painless), your best bet is to wipe the old machine's hard drive.

If the computer came with a system-restore CD, dig it out. Running it will reformat the hard drive, wipe out all the gunk, and effectively return the machine to factory-new condition.

If you don't have a system-restore CD, do a Google search for "reformat hard drive." Space doesn't permit me to walk you through the process here, but there are plenty of how-to guides available online.

Before you hand the machine over to the kids, there's one program I recommend you install first:



Tech Savvy

Rick Broida

VirtualDrive 9.0 (www.farstone.com).

You see, kids can be rough on CDs; my daughter has rendered several of her favorite games unplayable, as the discs are now too scratched for the computer to read.

VirtualDrive enables games and other software to run without their CDs.

Basically, the program copies the entire contents of each CD to the computer's hard drive, thus fooling Windows into thinking the disc is present.

Presto: no disc-swapping required, and no concerns about scratches because the kids don't have to handle the CDs anymore.

Now, all my daughter has to do is the click the icon for the game she wants, and it runs almost instantly.

Obviously VirtualDrive isn't just for hand-me-down PCs, either. Awesome, awesome utility.

Starting this January, I will devote occasional columns to answering your computer questions.

So start sending them in (my e-mail address is below), making sure to include your full name and home city.

In the meantime, have a happy, healthy, and safe holiday!

Rick Broida writes about computers and technology for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Broida, of Commerce Township, is the co-author of numerous books, including *How to Do Everything with Musicmatch* and *101 Killer Apps for Your Palm Handheld*. He welcomes questions sent to rickbroida@excite.com.

Nature's survivors: Common houseplants

BY LEE REICH
FOR AP WEEKLY FEATURES

It's no wonder your houseplants are looking ill these days, after having basked outdoors in summer sun and breezes, their leaves washed in rain.

Think what a change they've had to endure, brought indoors to dim light, dry air and perhaps chlorinated municipal water!

They will survive. Many houseplants come from dark, tropical jungles, so they are accustomed to shade. As for dry air, well, it isn't enjoyed, but is tolerated, by dracaena, weeping fig, rubber tree, philodendron, devils ivy and other common houseplants.

Just because these plants can survive winter indoors doesn't mean that they can be neglected. Without help, they would die a slow death. And the dimmer the light and the drier the air indoors, the more care these plants need.

No need to be overly concerned about leaves dropping from your houseplants, or for some leaves developing a few brown margins.

A periodic shedding of leaves is natural for all evergreens, such as weeping figs, although some are dropping because of the change in environment. The plant will be fine as long as it can hold onto a good portion of its leaves.

As for the marginal browning that can develop on a

houseplant such as dracaena, the leaves aren't diseased, just a little shocked from the move indoors.

Damaged leaves will never look healthy, but the plant as a whole will be fine.

Mostly, what these plants now need is water when they are thirsty.

The way to tell if a plant needs water is to lift the pot to feel its weight, or to probe into the soil with your finger or an electronic moisture probe. Even tropical plants take a little rest in winter, so they need little water and no fertilizer for the next few months.

Even though the plants don't absolutely need it, they would enjoy more humidity in the air as well as moisture on their

leaves. Misting with a sprayer does little good (although it might make you feel good), but a periodic shower in the bathroom would be greatly appreciated.

The kindest thing you can do for your houseplants is to give them a vacation outdoors each summer. Expose them gradually to sun and wind by putting them for a couple of weeks in a spot sheltered from bright sun and wind. As growth begins, increase feeding and watering.

Eventually, the plants could be moved to a brighter, more exposed location outdoors.

No need to make growing conditions too good, though. After all, we seek survival, not rampant growth, from our houseplants.

Choose company that fits your style

BY JOHN ELWELL

Because glossy magazines often feature bells and whistles of a dream kitchen, it is easy to lose sight of your budget and priorities when remodeling it.

List on paper the things you need in your dream kitchen, as well as the things you can live without.

Ask yourself what aspects of a kitchen are most important to you and your family. Do you sit down for a family dinner each night, or do you more frequently "eat-on-the-run" standing over a countertop? Do you cook or is your idea of a homemade meal heating up

take-out containers? How much counter space do you require? Do you need a home entertainment area?

Speak to neighbors, friends and relatives about their kitchen remodeling experiences. Talk to a few different companies and ask whether they provide a guarantee on materials and labor and the length of installation.

If the local company is part of a franchise system, call the corporate office for a reference and ask about the level of training provided.

Ask the salesperson or remodeler for a list of previous customers. You can hear first

hand if clients were pleased with the quality of the materials, workmanship and customer service.

Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed about the company.

Ask to see before and after photos of kitchens remodeled in your set price range. Ask for samples of materials including cabinet doors, flooring and hardware.

Keep in mind there are a number of remodeling options to consider such as new cabinetry, customer cabinet refacing, laminate and solid surface countertop replacement,

kitchen accessories, and decorative handles. Having a variety of options gives you an opportunity to purchase the services that best suit your individual needs, budget, taste and lifestyle.

Farmington Hills resident John Elwell is owner of Kitchen Solvers of Rochester Hills. Kitchen Solvers is a kitchen and bath remodeling franchise specializing in cabinet refacing, new cabinets, solid surface countertops, glueless laminate flooring, bath liners and wall surrounds, and closet organizers. Kitchen Solvers has 140 franchise locations in 32 U.S. states and Canada. For more information, visit <http://www.kitchensolvers.com> or call 1-800-845-6779.

HOME CALENDAR

Candlelight tours

Christmas candlelight tours of Greenmead Historical Park in Livonia will take place Sunday and Monday, Dec. 26 and 27. The first group tour will start at 6 p.m. Tours will then start every 15 minutes until 8 p.m. Greenmead is at Newburgh and Eight Mile; enter from Newburgh. Advance tickets are \$5 per adult, \$3 per student. For reservations, call (248) 477-7375. Proceeds will benefit historic Greenmead. Along the route of the tour of historic

village buildings at Greenmead, visitors will meet costumed re-enactors and a variety of musical performers. The tour will end with refreshments and carols at the Meeting House.

Blood drive

Blood supplies fall to dangerously low levels during the holidays. A blood drive will take place 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Dec. 27, at Art Van Furniture, 6500 14 Mile in Warren. To make an appointment, call the American Red Cross at (800) GIVE-LIFE.

King & I discount

Discount coupons for The King & I are available at all metro Detroit Art Van Furniture stores now through Monday, Dec. 27, while supplies last. Save up to \$10 the first week (Jan. 11-16). Some restrictions apply. Coupons are redeemable at the box office.

Home decor

Haberman Fabrics, 905 S. Main in Royal Oak, presents a variety of home decor classes for different skill levels. The schedule includes Lampshades, Sundays, Jan. 2-23 (fee is \$80); Beginner Pillow, Mondays, Jan. 3-17

(\$60); and Roman Shade, four sessions beginning Thursday, Jan. 6, or Friday, Jan. 7 (\$80). Call (248) 541-0010, e-mail ContactUs@HabermanFabrics.com or visit www.HabermanFabrics.com for registration and other information.

If you have an item for the calendar, please submit it at least two weeks in advance of the date it should be published. Send to Ken Abramczyk, At Home Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail kabramczyk@oe.hometown.com.

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Esther Shapiro still helps consumers Volunteering can take on many roles

John from West Bloomfield wrote and inquired about Esther Shapiro, the former director of consumer affairs for the city of Detroit.

Shapiro was appointed Detroit's director of consumer affairs way back in the 1970s, helping many thousands of Detroit consumers. During her reign in office she helped to recover millions of dollars for homeowners who had been ripped off by unethical business practices. She had a regular radio show for years and we've all seen her many times on television taking on a scam artist.

One of the most recognized names across the country, she continues to work in the world of consumer affairs. Shapiro still lives in her beloved city of Detroit, is in good health and takes regular classes to strengthen her walk and agility. At a recent awards lunch of The Society of Consumer



Appliance Doctor

Joe Gagnon

Affairs Professionals awards, she gave a 10-minute talk on this country's reduction of helpful consumer bureaus.

Shapiro is as sharp as a tack and still carries that Victorian image of proper language. She flies to Washington D.C. quite frequently as she sits on the board of several national consumer bureaus. She remains a popular expert in her field of consumer advocacy, was a terrific person to work for and taught so much to individuals who were interested in helping others. The award given out at the SOCAP luncheon was named in her honor, a tremendous tribute to a great woman.

DRAIN HOT WATER?

Mike writes: Should I drain my hot water heater? It's probably 15-17 years old, and I've not done anything to it. It works just fine.

My old friend, Lefty Wilson of the Detroit Red Wings would say, "Lord! Love a Duck" every time we would get in a boat to go fishing. He told me that he couldn't swim a stroke and hadn't drowned yet.

I suggest, Mike, that you use his cliché from now on to keep that hot water tank alive. I wouldn't touch the tank and at the first sign of trouble I might think of a replacement.

The time to drain a hot water tank is from the very beginning of purchasing a new one. Every three or four months open the valve at the bottom and allow a few gallons to drain into a bucket. This will help prevent a deposit of minerals from building up inside

at the bottom of the tank. In your current tank there could be several inches of mineral deposit that greatly reduce the efficiency factor, especially if it is a gas-fired heater.

You should also be aware of a leak possibility in your current tank. Although it usually starts with a drip, it could be a problem if it lets go all at once. Keep the area clean of personal items and make sure the floor drain is accessible.

A recent caller on the radio show told me his hot water heater was 27 years old and isn't it a shame that the life expectancy of tanks today is only seven years.

They don't make them they used to. "Lord Love a Duck." Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can now be heard on WWJ-950 and WXYI-1270. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (248) 455-7281.

How do I juggle my work and home schedule to help out at my child's school? How much time should I spend volunteering?



Domestic Planner

Diana Koenig

First, determine how much extra time you have in your schedule to volunteer at school. You may decide to spend time improving the conditions of the entire school, such as holding the office of president of a parent-teacher organization. You may also choose activities that directly involve your child, such as volunteering as a room parent for parties.

Activities need to be chosen according to your home responsibilities. If you do not work full-time or care for younger children, you have a golden opportunity to spend time at your child's school.

If you need extra money for the household budget, consider applying for a paid position at the school. Many schools have careers in the following areas; secretarial, cafeteria cook or monitor, librarian's assistant, custodian or classroom teacher. This gives you the opportunity to be at the same location as your child and contribute to the needs of his environment.

If, on the other hand, you have the financial resources, consider a donation to purchase an item. Ask the principal about the needs of the school. It could be an inexpensive item, such as a plant that would improve the landscaping. You could donate money for a more costly item, such as a new computer.

RUNNING FOR BOARD

Many parent-teacher organizations elect a board of parents that helps make decisions about different aspects of the school.

Running for office on this board will put you in a position of influence. Many such boards sponsor fund raisers, classroom parties, field trips and school social events and have influence in the area of curriculum. As a member of this board, you will have the ear of the school staff.

If you decide you do not have the time or talent to run for the board then consider chairing a committee.

The school probably will need a chairperson for some committee that would touch your area of expertise.

Our school has needed a

chairperson for some of the following areas; cupcake day, phone directory, carnival, candy sales, plant sales, fifth grade recognition, school dance, teacher appreciation, graduation, field day, landscape improvement, school store, and restaurant day. Some committees require your involvement for the entire school year while others exist for only a short period of time. While the fifth grade recognition was more work for me than serving as the cupcake chairperson, it was easier because the time was consolidated into a few weeks instead of a nine-month commitment. Make sure you know what is involved before you volunteer.

JUST VOLUNTEER

An alternative to being the chairperson is to volunteer as a helper on a committee. You can contribute ideas to the workload without the responsibility of contacting people or overseeing the project to the finish.

If you would prefer to serve in a lower profile position of equal importance, consider working in the library, computer room, cafeteria or recess assistant. In many schools the teachers fill these positions because of need. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

For direct involvement with your child choose to volunteer for classroom parties, field trips, and helping out in the classroom with activities. You can be in charge of all the classroom parties or be a helper.

The most valuable time I have spent at school has been in the classroom or on field trips because I can interact with my child.

Although many parents tend to get more involved at the elementary level, middle schools and high schools also need volunteers. Don't hesitate to volunteer because you think you lack creativity or knowledge in a specific area. Get ideas from people who have served before you, and talk to friends who have volunteered at their school.

Everyone has something to offer: You will be a valuable contributor to your school.

TODAY'S REFRIGERATOR

BULLETIN:

"Time invested at your child's school is time spent wisely!"

Send your questions and success stories to: Diana Koenig. E-mail dianakoenig@hotmail.com or www.domesticplanner.com.

Keep energy bills - and your blood pressure - in check

BY JAMES AND MORRIS CAREY

(AP) - According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the typical American household spends \$1,400 a year on energy bills.

With that rising cost of energy and an altruistic spirit to save the Earth, many people are using one or more of the following energy saving upgrades that can, collectively, yield a 30-percent savings or more than \$400 per year.

HEATING, COOLING

Tune up your furnace or air conditioner.

Heating and cooling costs the average homeowner about \$600 a year - nearly half the home's total energy bill.

Maintain your equipment to prevent future problems and unwanted costs. Keep your cooling and heating system at peak performance by having a contractor do annual pre-season check-ups.

A typical maintenance check-up should include the following:

- Check thermostat settings to ensure the cooling and heating system keeps you comfortable when you are home and saves energy while you are away.

- Tighten all electrical connections and measure voltage and current on motors. Faulty electrical connections can cause unsafe operation of your system and reduce the life of major components.

- Lubricate all moving parts. Parts that lack lubrication cause friction in motors and increase the amount of electricity you use.

- Check and inspect the condensate drain in your central air conditioner, furnace or heat pump (when in cooling mode). A plugged drain can cause water damage in the house and affect indoor humidity levels.

- Check controls of the system to ensure proper and safe operation. Check the starting cycle of the equipment to make sure the system starts, operates and shuts off properly.

DUCTS

Seal and insulate ducts.

Better than half of American households are heated or cooled with ducted forced-air systems.

Unfortunately, the average forced-air duct system loses about 30 percent of the energy produced by the furnace or air conditioner in the course of distributing air to the rooms.

Fortunately, this energy loss can be reduced by sealing duct joints with mastic or a high-quality metal-faced duct tape.

Insulating ducts in unconditioned spaces such as attics, basements and crawl spaces will further improve energy efficiency.

THERMOSTAT

Install a programmable thermostat.

According to the Department of Energy, a programmable thermostat can save 5 percent to 30 percent of your heating and cooling bill by automatically adjusting the thermostat setting at night or at times when your home is unoccupied, saving you about \$100 per year.

For the most versatility and energy savings potential, look for a programmable thermostat that has up to four programming day parts and programming options for weekdays and weekends.

AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks.

One of the most do-it-yourself-friendly energy upgrades is sealing air leaks - big energy wasters and comfort busters.

Sealing air leaks is simply plugging holes, cracks and gaps where air can pass into or out of your home using caulk, expandable foam or other weather-stripping.

On hot and cold days, you pay money to run an air conditioner or a furnace to maintain your home at a comfortable temperature. A house that leaks air costs more to heat or cool because your system must work longer to "condition" the air.

If you happen to sit next to one of those leaks, you are uncomfortable because the room feels hotter or colder. Sealing those air leaks will help you maintain your home at a comfortable temperature all year long and help lower utility bills.

The biggest holes are most often found in the attic and the basement.

INSULATION

Add insulation.

Insulation is designed to resist heat flow.

Thus, if it is hot outside, insulation greatly reduces the amount of heat you can feel inside a house. By the same token, if it is cold outside, insulation helps keep the heat inside the house.

Without insulation, the walls of your house would be hot to the touch during the summer and your air conditioner would have to work harder to keep you cool. In the winter, a lack of insulation makes walls very cold to the touch and the furnace must work harder to keep you warm.

The Department of Energy suggests that exterior walls be insulated to at least R-11 and ceilings to at least R-38.

WRAP

Wrap your water heater and pipes.

Putting an insulating wrap on your water heater can reduce your water heating costs.

Water heater blankets usually cost \$10 to \$20 and are available at hardware stores and home improvement centers.

Wrapping water pipes with prefabricated neoprene insulation will prevent the water temperature within pipes from dropping so radically, reducing the amount of energy needed to raise the water temperature and improving comfort.

FLUORESCENT

Install compact fluorescent lighting.

Lamps used more than two hours per day on average are good candidates for replacement with compact fluorescent lamps.

The energy bill savings will more than pay for the extra cost of the lamps over their lifetime, and you will have to replace fewer lamps because fluorescent lamps last 10 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.

In addition, motion sensors or timers on outdoor lights can help reduce the electricity bill for these high-use lamps.

WINDOWS

Replace windows.

To save energy and make your home more comfortable, when replacing windows use windows with wood or vinyl frames, low-E glass, and argon gas between the panes of glass, which can save a significant amount of money on your energy bill.

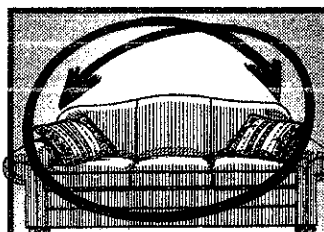
For more home improvement tips and information, visit our Web site at www.onthehouse.com or call us at (800) 737-2474 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. EST every Saturday.

Scents-ible solution

BY JAMES AND MORRIS CAREY FOR AP WEEKLY FEATURES

Earl asks, "How can I remove a perfume stain out of my wood table? Also, do you have something to remove water stains off my black coffee table?"

This formula is for water-stained wood furniture, but it should work for perfume. But you might want to test a hidden area to see if the black finish is negatively affected. First, cover the affected area with mayonaisse or petroleum jelly and let it sit for eight hours. Next, sand with a dry Scotch-brite pad. Finally, rub lemon oil onto the cleaned area to bring back the finished luster.



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ANGELS

FROM PAGE B1

and I decided . . . 'Why put them away?'"

Clinton doesn't know how many angels are in her collection. One year she counted just the angels that were on the Christmas tree; the total was almost 100 there alone.

HEAVENLY COLLECTION

The angels are of almost every race and age, male and female. They are neatly arranged in cabinets, on tables and on walls.

They are made of a variety of materials, including ceramic, crystal, porcelain and wood. One angel has a straw body and mesh wings; another has wings made of feathers.

Two angels are Teddy bears, one of which plays the song *Jesus Loves Me, This I Know*. A wall hanging is a metallic arrangement of angels and musical elements.

The angels' gowns may be white; others are a variety of colors. Some angels wear ethnic ensembles rather than gowns. Some may hold a musical instrument, a book or another object.

There is a "teacher" angel (Clinton taught elementary school and teaches in a mentor program) and a "daughter" angel (she has a daughter). There are napkin rings bearing angel figures.

With the touch of a switch, a few become animated or emit a fiberoptic glow.

The angels come from different shops and craft fairs, locally and from around the country (Connecticut, Texas, Missouri). Some are gifts.

"Everywhere I would go, for vacation or wherever, I started bringing them back rather than souvenirs," said Clinton, who also works with a hospice and is involved in planning Southfield's Martin Luther King Day events.

"Wherever I am I look for angels."

One of Clinton's favorite angels is more than 18 inches tall, has long, flowing, black hair, and wears a white and gold gown.

Clinton saw the angel in *Ebony* magazine. After she couldn't find it, she asked her relatives across the country to help with the search. A cousin found the angel in St. Louis and gave it to her.

Clinton's Christmas tree is adorned with ornaments in shades of purple; white, feathery doves; white money plants and, yes, assorted angels, including one at the top. An angel is in the Nativity scene on a coffee table.

WIDESPREAD

"People really seem to connect with angels," said Linda Sabatini, who with her husband, John, owns Angel Treasures in Rochester. "All religions believe in

angels. Everybody believes in angels. It goes way, way, way back, thousands of years."

The Sabatinis' eight-room store carries a number of angel-related items - including statues, art works, books, cards and jewelry - with spiritual, natural, New Age and religious themes. It offers speakers and seminars.

Angel Treasures' customers come from all over the state and country - and from outside the United States as well, Linda said.

They may be looking for an angel for a sad occasion, such as the loss of a loved one, or a happy event, such as a wedding or a new baby.

"We have coins that say 'I watch over you,'" Linda said. "A lot of people in service take them with them."

A U.S. soldier in Iraq who was being interviewed on TV pulled one of the coins out of his pocket, she said.

Scott and Rebecca Takacs of Livonia have an "angel room" in their house. They acquired an angel collection over time, starting with an angel from Scott's grandmother. "We like having them," he said.

CELEBRATIONS

Clinton celebrates Boxing Day and Kwanzaa as well as Christmas. A Kwanzaa display is on one table. A tabletop tree features Kwanzaa cloth around its base and as ornaments.

As a child, Clinton loved a book about George Washington



LAWRENCE MCKEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One of Clinton's favorite angels in her collection stands more than 18 inches tall.

Carver. The book said that Carver learned to read at a time when it was against the law to teach slaves to read.

"I was so fascinated," Clinton said. "Somebody going to all

the trouble to learn to read.

"We're the descendants of survivors. I was always so proud of my black heritage."

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GARDEN CALENDAR

Beverly Hills Garden Club

Della Haydon of Garden City will present a program on indoor bonsai to the Beverly Hills Garden Club 1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4, at the Beverly Hills Village Office, 18500 W. 13 Mile. Guests are welcome.

Livonia Garden Club

Composting will be the topic of the next meeting of the Livonia Garden Club, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4, at the Livonia Senior Center, Five Mile at Farmington Road. Master composters Jane and Allan Geisler, instructors at Henry Ford Community College, will present a program outlining indoor and outdoor composting as a component of organic gardening.

Increase your knowledge of the ecological and gardening benefits of the use of "black gold" - compost. Visitors are welcome.

School of Gardening

The Michigan School of Gardening offers a variety of classes for different levels.

Register early. Seating is limited. Some classes have pre-requisites. For more information, call (248) 4-GARDEN or visit www.michigangardening.com. The schedule includes Effective Hand-drawn Design, Tuesdays, Jan. 4-25, in Pontiac or Thursdays, Jan. 6-27, in Livonia (fee is \$168); and Growing Vegetables, Mondays, Jan. 10-24, in Livonia (\$102).

The School of Gardening also offers specialty classes and classes for the certificate of landscape and garden design at The Community House, 380 S. Bates in Birmingham, west of Woodward and south of Maple (15 Mile). For information or to register, call The Community House at (248) 644-5832.

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STAINS

FROM PAGE B1

said it is important to tackle it immediately.

REMOVING WAX

Wilson recommends scraping the wax gently with a butter knife, then placing ice cubes in a metal pot or container (the cubes don't melt as quickly in a metal pot vs. a plastic bag, Wilson says), and place the container on the top of the wax until it freezes.

Hit it with a blunt object, which will shatter the surface wax. Vacuum it up. For the candle wax that has flowed into the fiber, put clear rubbing alcohol onto a white cloth or white cotton ball, blot and press.

ZAP THE SAP

For sap from a Christmas tree, use a solvent, Wilson said. "When using a solvent use caution, put the solvent onto a white cloth or white cotton ball (never pouring onto the carpet) and blot and press," Wilson said. "After the stain is removed, rinse with water and blot dry with a white cloth."

Sometimes stains can be difficult to get out (such as mustard) and it may take more than one try to get the stain out, Wilson said. "As long as the stain is getting lighter, with each removal process it's working," Wilson said. "If there is no change in the stain, it would be best to have a professional to come in."

"To successfully clean up any stain, it's very important to get to the stain immediately. The longer any stain stays on the carpet the harder it is to get out."

Blot spills, but don't scrub

No one likes it when there is a spill on the floor, but with the help of the Carpet and Rug Institute, it can be cleaned before becoming a permanent part of the carpet.

Here is how to properly deal with spills and keep your carpet clean:

SPOT REMOVAL STEPS

Act quickly.

Most carpet available today has been treated with a stain-resist treatment, so many spills can be removed if immediate action is taken. The longer the delay, the higher the probability of a spill becoming a permanent stain. Remember, staining is influenced by many factors, and no carpet is completely stain proof.

Blot liquids with a dry, white, absorbent cloth or white (no printing) paper towels.

Do not scrub the area. Scrubbing can cause pile distortion in the affected area. Continue to use a dry cloth or paper towels until the area is completely dry. For semi-solids, gently scrape up with a rounded spoon.

Solids should be broken up and vacuumed until completely removed.

Pretest any spot removal agent in an inconspicuous area to make certain the solution will not damage the fiber or the dye. After applying several drops to the testing area, hold a white cloth on the wet area for 10 seconds. Examine the carpet and cloth for color transfer, color change, or damage to the carpet. If a change occurs, another cleaning solution should be selected.

Apply a small amount of

the selected cleaning solution to a white cloth, allow to sit for about 10 minutes and work in gently.

Rubbing alcohol (90 percent isopropyl) can be used as a dry cleaning solvent by applying with a cloth or towel. Do not pour rubbing alcohol directly onto the carpet.

Work from the edges of the spill to the center to prevent the spill from spreading. Do not scrub. Blot, absorbing as much as possible, and repeat if necessary.

Continue using the first cleaning solution as long as there is a transfer of the spill to the cloth. It is not necessary to use all of the cleaning solutions if the first solution removes the spill.

Be patient. Complete removal of the spill may require repeating the same step several times.

After the spill has been completely removed, rinse the affected area thoroughly with cold water, and blot with a dry cloth until all of the solution has been removed. (Some cleaning solutions will cause rapid soiling if the solution is not completely removed.) Apply a one-half inch layer of white paper towels to the affected area, and weigh down with a flat, heavy object. Continue to change paper towels as needed.

A dry, absorbent, cleaning compound may be used as a substitute to accelerate drying time.

Many fiber manufacturers provide toll-free cleaning assistance and advice (consult your warranty), or phone CRI for assistance at (800) 882-8846. Information is also available at <http://www.carpet-rug.org>.

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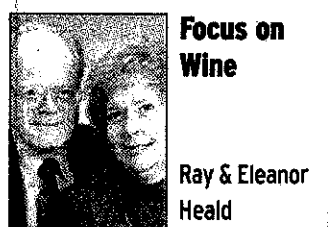
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Focus on Wine

Ray & Eleanor Heald

Keeping immigrants' roots alive

It's common for U.S. wineries to have foreign roots but it's not generally mentioned that in South America, it was the Italians who following their agricultural homeland heritage, planted vines in the fertile soils of Argentina's Mendoza region.

In 1910, Valentin Bianchi was one such Italian transplant.

Robert Pepi, winemaker at Andretti Winery in California's Napa Valley, who consults at Valentin Bianchi winery, says, "Mendoza soils are typically well-drained and not overly fertile. This fact, in combination with minimal rainfall, creates wines with intense fruit character."

He also noted that low humidity leads to a low incidence of pests and vineyards can be farmed virtually pesticide-free. Additionally, a new generation of viticulturists, has brought state-of-the-art

PLEASE SEE WINE, B8

WINE PICKS

Many readers have asked for CABERNET SAUVIGNON recommendations in a broad range of prices for gift-giving and drinking during the upcoming holiday season. From over 100 wines tasted, here are the picks.

Outstanding splurges

- 2001 Kuleto Estate (\$50)
- 2001 St. Clement Oropas (\$50)
- 2000 Stags' Leap Estate Reserve (\$65)
- 2001 Chateau St. Jean Cinq Cepages (\$75)
- 2000 Beringer Private Reserve (\$100)
- 2001 Silverado Limited Reserve (\$100)
- 2001 Quintessa (\$100)
- 2001 Joseph Phelps Insignia (\$125)

From Napa Valley between \$25 and \$50

- 2000 Folie a Deux Cabernet Sauvignon (\$26)
- 2001 Mason (\$28)
- 2001 Beringer (\$35)
- 2000 Chateau Potelle VGS (\$40)
- 2001 Silverado (\$40)
- 2001 Stags' Leap (\$42)
- 2000 Folie a Deux Private Reserve Estate (\$46) (more than 2 years in French oak)
- 2002 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Artemis (\$48)

\$20 and under values

- 2002 Annie's Lane (Clare Valley Australia) (\$13)
- 2002 Gallo of Sonoma (\$13)
- 2002 Chateau St. Jean (\$15)
- 2002 Goundrey Offspring (Australia) (\$15)
- 2001 Genesis (\$17)
- 2001 Rodney Strong (\$18)
- 2002 Alexander Valley Vineyards (\$20)
- 2001 Chateau Souverain (\$20)
- 2001 Hess Estate (\$20)

Piggy bank nearly empty

- 2002 Hogue Cabernet-Merlot (\$10)
- 2002 Black Opal (Australia) (\$8)



Garlic, parsley and marjoram join with butter and bread crumbs and mustard to coat this veal rib roast.

CATTLEMEN'S BEEF BOARD

Roasts

WITH THE MOST

Veal rib cut can impress holiday guests

Make this holiday meal one to remember.

Impress your guests with a veal rib roast, enrobed in a crusty herbed bread crumb and mustard coating, and finished with a cranberry-port wine sauce. Not only does it taste delicious, but it makes a stunning presentation on the holiday table.

It's always a good idea during the holiday season to order roasts in advance. That way you're sure of getting the size and type of roast you need.

The roast is easy to prepare. Just pop it into the oven in a roasting pan. The ribs form a natural rack, so place it rib-ends-down in the roasting pan. That's it until it's time to add the crumb coating about 30 minutes before the end of roasting. Veal is most juicy and flavorful when

cooked to medium doneness, so for best results use a thermometer to check the temperature.

While the roast is standing after cooking, the pan drippings are combined with cranberry sauce and port wine to make the sauce that so deliciously complements the mild flavor of veal. The standing time is very important, so don't skip this step. During standing time the roast firms up, making it easier to carve and helps prevent the loss of those flavorful juices.

Eat smart and eat well this holiday season with veal on your table. Serve steamed green beans and wild rice to complement the veal and sauce. Chocolate truffles and peppermint ice cream with a drizzle of fudge sauce make an easy yet special finale to this festive menu.

For additional recipes, or to order veal delivered right to your door, log on to www.vealstore.com.

Slow cook roast with chipotle, poblano

Winter has its own food classics. One favorite is slow-cooked beef. It provides warm comfort while winter's winds whirl outside. By mixing hearty chuck roast with other rich flavors, Chef Dianna Stoffer with the Certified Angus Beef brand, has created a new winter classic - braised chuck roast, chipotle and poblano

peppers, heavy cream and aged cheese.

The chuck roast, a budget savvy cut, has been transformed into a soon-to-be family favorite that is also fit for entertaining.

The poblano and chipotle (smoked

PLEASE SEE ROASTS, B6

VEAL RIB ROAST WITH CRANBERRY-PORT SAUCE

- 4 to 5 pound veal rib roast
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 1 can (16 ounces) whole berry cranberry sauce
- 1/2 cup ruby port wine
- Coating:
- 1-1/2 cups soft bread crumbs
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 medium cloves garlic, crushed
- 1-1/2 teaspoons dried marjoram leaves

Heat oven to 325° F. Place veal roast, rib ends down, in shallow roasting pan. Insert ovenproof meat thermometer so tip is centered in thickest part of veal, not touching bone or resting in fat. Do not add water or cover. Roast in 325° F oven to desired doneness; about 22 to 27 minutes per pound for medium. (Do not overcook.)

Meanwhile in medium bowl, combine coating ingredients. Set aside.

About 30 minutes before end of roasting time, remove roast from oven. Spread mustard evenly over top surface of roast. Coat with crumb mixture, patting firmly into mustard. Return roast to oven and continue roasting. Remove roast when meat thermometer registers 155° F for medium. Let stand 15 minutes. (Temperature will continue to rise about 5° to reach 160° F for medium.)

Meanwhile skim fat from drippings, if necessary. Add wine to drippings, stirring until browned bits attached to pan are dissolved. Transfer drippings to medium saucepan; add cranberry sauce and cook over medium-high heat 10 minutes or until sauce is thickened, stirring frequently. Trim excess fat and remove back bone from roast. Carve roast between bones into thick slices. Serve with sauce. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Cook's Tip: Ask meat retailer to loosen the chine bone (back bone). After roasting, the back bone can be removed easily by running a knife along edge of roast.

Note: A veal rib roast will yield two 3-ounce cooked, trimmed servings per pound.

Nutrition information per serving (1/8 of recipe): 289 calories; 9 g fat (4 g saturated fat; 3 g monounsaturated fat); 105 mg cholesterol; 234 mg sodium; 26 g carbohydrate; 1.1 g fiber; 23 g protein; 6.7 mg niacin; 0.2 mg vitamin B6; 1.4 mcg vitamin B12; 1.3 mg iron; 10.8 mcg selenium; 3.9 mg zinc.

Recipe courtesy of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Side dish

Free recipe calendar

To have help at hand next year for days when you get a longing for a potato fix, take note of a new calendar that offers prize-winning spud recipes for each month of 2005.

The Idaho Potato Commission has published a healthy recipe calendar featuring tasty, nutritious potato recipes that were winners in a 2004 national recipe contest. Besides their nutrition values, winning recipes also qualified as quick and easy to prepare, and they all include Idaho potatoes as an ingredient.

The calendar may be ordered by sending five 37-cent stamps to cover postage, and a 3-by-5-inch card or piece of paper with your name and full mailing address clearly printed on it (to be used as an address label for the return mailing) to: Idaho Potato Commission, Attn: 2005 Healthy Recipe Calendar Offer, P.O. Box 1670, Eagle ID 83616.

Those wishing to receive additional Idaho Potato offers, news and information in 2005 may print an e-mail address on the back of the 3-by-5-inch card. The commission says the offer is good while supplies last. There is a limit of one calendar per person, and the calendar should arrive in two to three weeks.

Entertaining tips

On the bright side, decorate your festive meal with the rich color and taste of beets. Boil beets for 35 minutes until barely tender. Drain under cold water, peel and slice into 1/4-inch pieces.

Melt 3 tablespoons unsalted butter and cook 1/4 cup shallots. Stir in 1 tablespoon flour, add 1/2 cup chicken stock, 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard and 1/4 cup cream. Cook until thick; add beets and combine well. Add salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle parsley on top.

Brunch drink: Overnights are common during the holiday months. Wake them up with a spicy drink mixture. Combine 8 ounces tomato juice, 1 ounce vegetable cocktail mix, 3 dashes hot sauce, 2 tablespoons horseradish Dijon mustard, 1/4 teaspoon salt, pinch of black pepper and 2 celery sticks.

Lovely leftovers: The party often continues past the day of the celebration. To savor the surplus food, slice a piece of remaining moist turkey, or other cooked poultry, add a slice of sweet ham, soft herb cheese, extra-crispy lettuce and cherry tomatoes (from leftover salad) and sandwich between 2 pieces of whole-wheat pita bread. Spread with extra-hot Dijon mustard to add a zesty taste to the day-after lunch.

Recipe from Maille Fine French Condiments.

Sauce it up at the holiday table

Planning that all-important, once-a-year holiday meal with a beef roast as the centerpiece – but don't know what to serve with it?

Sauce it up this year.

The Beef & Veal Culinary Center of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association has created three different sauces that pair perfectly with your showstopping beef roast – plus a savory rub to season it.

So, whether it's a regal rib roast, tempting tenderloin or other holiday favorite, coat the roast with the Savory Rub and serve it with a special sauce.

If time is a consideration, choose Easy Shallot-Thyme Sauce. It's delicious and easy.

Start with prepared beef gravy as the base, adding sautéed shallots and fresh thyme. The sauce is on the table in just 15 minutes.

For those who love the classic combination of beef and mustard, Mustard Cream Sauce will please. It, too, is easy. Just simmer cream and sautéed garlic until slightly thickened, stir in coarse ground Dijon-style mustard and chives – 20 minutes is all you need to create this beef-friendly accompaniment.

And if you have just a few more minutes, Balsamic Reduction with Wild Mushroom Duxelles can complement your roast. It contains balsamic vinegar, wild mushrooms, garlic and red wine – all flavors that bring out the best in beef.

Choose your roast, season it, and say "happy holidays." Roasted vegetables and red-skinned potatoes, with chocolate cake for dessert make it a perfect meal indeed.

SAVORY RUB FOR BEEF ROASTS

4 teaspoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in small bowl; mix well. Store in airtight container until ready to use. Makes about 3 tablespoons.

Nutrition information per

serving (1/6 of recipe): 7 calories; 0 g fat (0 g saturated fat); 0 g monounsaturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 291 mg sodium; 2 g carbohydrate; 0.3 fiber; 0 g protein; 0.0 mg niacin; 0.1 mg vitamin B6; 0.0 mcg vitamin B12; 0.2 mg iron; 0.7 mcg selenium; 0.1 mg zinc.

EASY SHALLOT-THYME SAUCE

2 tablespoons butter
¼ cup minced shallots
1 jar (12 ounces) prepared beef gravy
¼ cup prepared steak sauce
1 teaspoon coarse ground Dijon-style mustard
1½ teaspoons ground thyme

Heat butter in medium saucepan over medium heat until melted. Add shallots; cook and stir 2 minutes or until softened. Add gravy, steak sauce, mustard and thyme. Cook and stir 3 minutes or until heated through. Makes about 1½ cups.

Nutrition information per serving (1/6 of recipe): 74 calories; 5 g fat (2 g saturated fat); 1 g monounsaturated fat; 10 mg cholesterol; 570 mg sodium; 7 g carbohydrate; 0.3 g fiber; 1.5 g protein; 0.2 mg niacin; 0.0 mg vitamin B6; 0.0 mcg vitamin B12; 0.3 mg iron; 0.1 mg selenium; 0.1 mg zinc.

MUSTARD CREAM SAUCE

1 tablespoon, vegetable oil
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup whipping cream
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
3 to 4 tablespoons coarse ground Dijon-style mustard
1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives

Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium-low heat until hot. Add garlic; cook and stir about 1 minute or until tender. Stir in cream, salt and pepper; simmer 7 to 8 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring occasionally.

Remove pan from heat; stir in mustard and chives. Makes about 1½ cups.

Nutrition information per serving (1/6 of recipe): 170 calories; 17 g fat (9 g saturated fat); 5 g monounsaturated

fat); 54 mg cholesterol; 482 mg sodium; 4 g carbohydrate; 0.1 g fiber; 3 g protein; 0.0 mg niacin; 0.0 mg vitamin B6; 0.1 mcg vitamin B12; 0.1 mg iron; 0.6 mcg selenium; 0.1 mg zinc.

BALSAMIC REDUCTION WITH WILD MUSHROOM DUXELLES

½ cup balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 package (4 ounces) assorted wild mushrooms, (such as baby portabella, shiitake and oyster), minced
4 large cloves garlic, minced
½ cup dry red wine
1 can (14 to 14½ ounces) ready-to-serve beef broth
1 tablespoon cornstarch
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon butter.

Bring vinegar to a boil in medium saucepan. Reduce heat; simmer 8 to 9 minutes or until reduced to about 2 tablespoons (consistency will be syrupy). Remove from heat. Set aside to cool.

Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add mushrooms; cook and stir 5 to 8 minutes or until mushrooms are lightly browned. Add garlic; cook and stir an additional 2 minutes. Add wine; cook 3 to 5 minutes or until liquid has completely evaporated.

Meanwhile combine broth and cornstarch in small bowl, stirring until cornstarch is dissolved. Add balsamic reduction, broth mixture, salt and pepper, as desired, to skillet; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until mixture is reduced by one half. Remove skillet from heat; add butter and stir until melted. Makes about 1½ cups.

Nutrition information per serving: 94 calories; 7 g fat (2 g saturated fat); 4 g monounsaturated fat; 5 mg cholesterol; 238 mg sodium; 6 g carbohydrate; 0.3 g fiber; 1 g protein; 0.8 mg niacin; 0.0 mg vitamin B6; 0.0 mcg vitamin B12; 0.5 mg iron; 2.0 mcg selenium; 0.1 mg zinc.

Recipes courtesy of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

ROASTS

FROM PAGE B5

jalapeño) peppers' medium heat is offset by the mellow flavors of heavy cream and cheese. The CAB chuck roast supplies an abundance of savory beef flavor. Garlic, cilantro and other seasoning add the finishing touches to this full-bodied dish.

SIERRA CHUCK ROAST

3 pounds Certified Angus Beef chuck roast
kosher salt, as needed
freshly ground pepper, as needed
olive oil, as needed
water, as needed
2 tablespoons olive oil
2½ cups finely diced sweet onion
4 poblano peppers, roasted, skinned, seeded and diced
2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, minced*
8 garlic cloves, roasted and minced
½ cup beef broth
4 cups heavy cream
2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon white sugar
4 teaspoons finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 cup grated aged Manchego cheese or aged Romano

Preheat oven to 350° F. Season beef with salt and pepper; gently rub into meat. Brown beef on all sides in small amount of oil in heavy, preheated pan. Pour off drippings. Add about one to two inches of water into pan; do not cover beef with water. Cover tightly with lid or foil and roast for 2½ to 3 hours. Do not uncover during braising. Allow roast to rest 15 minutes before separating into chunks.

While the roast cooks, place two tablespoons oil in medium frying pan over medium-high heat. Caramelize onion; add peppers and garlic. Deglaze pan with broth and reduce by half. Add cream and reduce by half again. Season with salt and sugar.

Spoon ½ cup sauce on each plate. Top with three ounces of sliced beef. Garnish with cilantro and cheese. Serves six.

Nutritional information: 750 calories; 50.7 g fat; 24.1 g satu-

rated fat; 54.4 g protein; 6.7 g carb; 273 mg chol; 1367 sodium; 6.7 mg iron.

Chef's Note: The chipotle peppers in adobo sauce are available in a seven-ounce can. The leftover chilies and sauce can be frozen for future use.

Here's a stunning meal with leftovers from the Sierra Chuck Roast and colored peppers.

2 cups leftover roast, cut into strips
8 ounces cooked long grain and wild rice
1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes
4 ounces chopped green chilies
¼ teaspoon adobo seasoning
4 seeded and cored red peppers

Combine beef, rice, tomatoes, green chilies and adobo seasoning. Heat mixture thoroughly and stuff into peppers. Place in 400° F. oven for 20 minutes to soften peppers. Serve with remaining sauce or a favorite salsa.

For other recipes, cooking tips or grocer and restaurant locations, visit www.certifiedangus-beef.com.

Roast goose is a Christmas classic

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Goose has a long history as traditional Christmas fare, especially in Europe – where, of course, they didn't have turkeys until such New World novelties began to catch on.

Think back to Dickens' unforgettable version of the goose dinner, in *A Christmas Carol*, served with apple sauce and mashed potato. And then as the bird was carved, "the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth" – steamy, fragrant sage-and-onion stuffing.

In the United States, back in the 1870s, according to the cookbook *Good Housekeeping Great American Classics* (Hearst Books, 2004, \$24.95), there were popular recipes for roasted goose for special occasions, including one that began: "On the day before Christmas, kill a fat goose and dress it." Not the way we do it now, generally.

Good Housekeeping's cookbook revisits many kinds of food traditions, reminds us of their historical context, and suggests ways to keep them happily and tastily in the family's present.

HOLIDAY GOOSE A L'ORANGE

1 fresh or frozen (thawed) goose

(about 12 pounds)
5 medium oranges, each cut in half
1 bunch fresh thyme
4 bay leaves
¼ teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
3 tablespoons orange-flavored liqueur
2 tablespoons cornstarch
½ cup orange marmalade

Preheat oven to 400° F. Remove giblets and neck from goose; reserve for another use. Trim and discard fat from body cavity and any excess skin. Rinse goose inside and out with cold running water and drain well; pat dry with paper towels. With goose breast-side up, lift wings up toward neck, then fold wing tips under back of goose so wings stay in place. Place 6 orange halves, thyme sprigs and bay leaves in body cavity. Tie legs and tail together with kitchen string. Fold neck skin over back. With two-tine fork, prick goose in several places to drain fat during roasting.

Place goose, breast-side up, on rack in large roasting pan (17 by 11½ inches). In cup, combine dried thyme, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper; rub mixture over goose. Cover goose and roasting pan

with foil. Roast 1 hour 30 minutes. Turn oven control to 325° F; roast 2 hours longer.

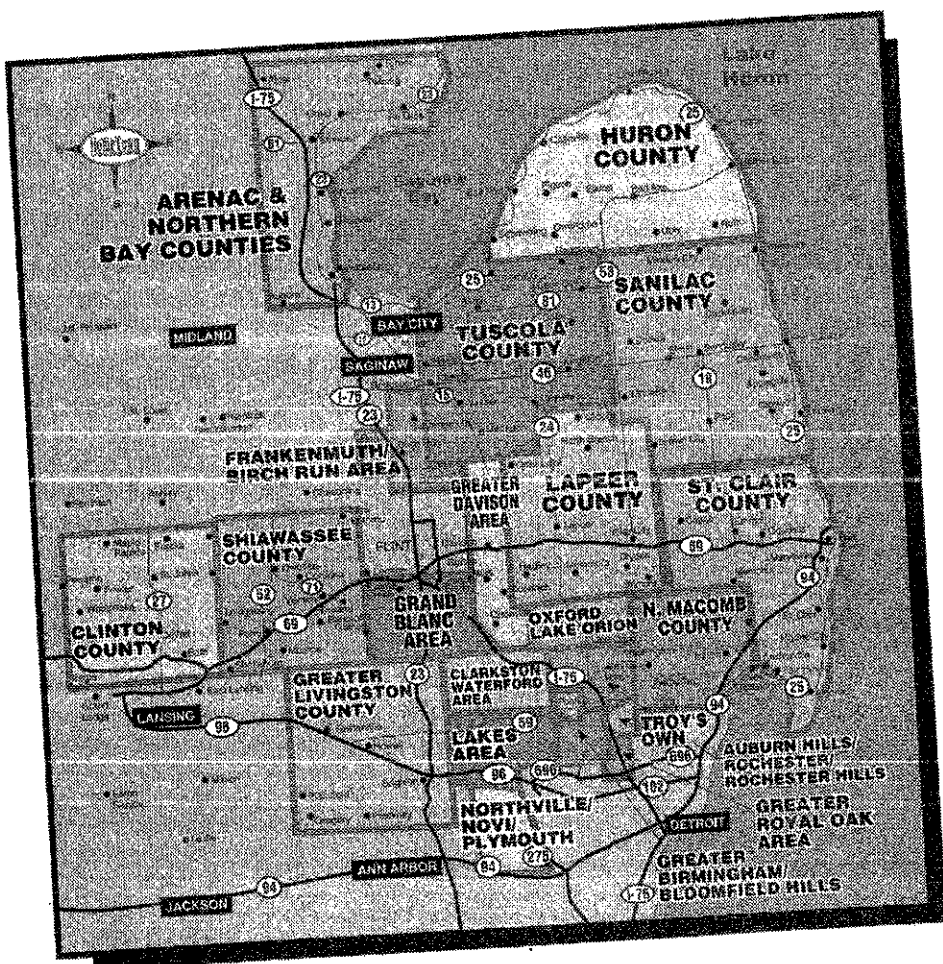
Meanwhile, in small bowl, from remaining 4 orange halves squeeze ¾ cup juice. Stir in 1 tablespoon liqueur, cornstarch and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt; set aside. In cup, mix orange marmalade with remaining 2 tablespoons liqueur.

Remove foil and roast goose 45 minutes. Remove goose from oven and turn oven control to 450° F. Brush marmalade mixture over goose. Roast goose until skin is golden brown and crisp, about 10 minutes longer. Transfer goose to warm platter; let stand 15 minutes to set juices for easier carving.

To prepare sauce: Remove rack from roasting pan. Strain pan drippings through sieve into 8-cup measuring cup or large bowl. Let stand until fat separates from meat juice; skim and reserve fat for another use (there should be about 5 cups fat). Measure meat juice; if necessary, add enough water to meat juice to equal 1 cup. Return meat juice to boiling over medium heat, stirring; boil 1 minute. Serve sauce with goose. Remove skin before eating if desired.

Makes 10 main-dish servings. Recipe from *Good Housekeeping Great American Classics*, Hearst Books, 2004, \$24.95

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WINNERS!

Our Shop Local contest has ended and the winners?

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"Support my community and its economy" came from more than a few of you.

To others "shop local" meant friendly merchants and saving time—nothing wrong with that!

In fact your responses were all so much alike, we nearly put them all in a hat.

But then we found two entries that we judged to be the best.

Thanks to these two ladies for the words that they expressed:

Sterling Russell of Oakland County and Susan Klarr of Wayne claimed the prize this year

To everyone who entered, **THANK YOU, Happy Holidays and Good Cheer!**

THE
Observer & Eccentric
NEWSPAPERS

WHERE HOMETOWN STORIES UNFOLD

Visit the local merchants in today's newspaper.

Make festive Rudolph cake



WISCONSIN MILK MARKETING BOARD

Sour cream, chocolate and whipping cream help make this festive Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer cake a holiday treat.

mixture is melted and smooth. Add half of flour mixture to chocolate mixture and beat on low speed of electric mixer until combined. Add sour cream mixture and beat until combined. Add remaining flour mixture and beat until smooth. Pour batter into prepared pans.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool layers in pans on wire racks 10 minutes, remove from pans and cool completely on wire racks. While cakes cool, prepare filling and icing.

For filling, beat whipping cream at high speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; set aside. Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, sugar and extract at medium speed until creamy. Fold cream cheese mixture into whipped cream. Stir in nuts, if desired. Chill.

For icing, melt chocolate and butter in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring frequently. Cool about 5 min. Stir in sour cream.

Gradually add powdered sugar, beating till smooth and easy to spread.

To assemble, pipe chocolate icing around outer edge of bottom layer. Spread all but 1 cup filling inside the piped circle. Place second layer on top. Frost top and sides of cake with icing. Just before serving, cut cake into 8 slices and decorate as desired using reserved filling, candies, cookies and cherries for eyes, antlers, ears and nose.

Recipe courtesy of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. This company's web site <http://www.wmmb.org>.

Nothing says holidays like the delicious flavor of a sweet treat. This Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer Cake from the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board incorporates real dairy products to create a festive, flavorful dessert that is sure to impress the guests at your next holiday gathering.

CAKE

- 1/2 cup dairy sour cream
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups boiling water

FILLING

- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 8-ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)

ICING

- 6-ounces package semi-sweet chocolate pieces
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup dairy sour cream
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar, sifted

Suggested Decorations: 16 M&M's milk chocolate candies (for the eyes)

16 Rolo milk chocolate covered antlers (antlers)

4 Pepperidge Farm Double Chocolate Chunk Soft Baked cookies, cut in half (ears)

8 maraschino cherries (noses)

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter and flour two 9-inch round cake pans. In a small bowl, stir together sour cream, eggs and extract; mix well and set aside.

Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt; set aside.

In a large electric mixer bowl, combine chocolate, butter and water; stir with a spoon until

Holiday cooks can find help online, on hot lines

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toll-free telephone services and Web sites offer a variety of specialist answers to cooking and food-safety questions during holiday preparation times. Here are some of them:

■ U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline: (888) 674-6854. Food safety specialists answer calls about meat and poultry preparation and cooking questions, year-round Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day at the same number. Also available in Spanish.

On the Net: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

■ Butterball Turkey Talk-Line: (800) 288-8372. Home economists and nutritionists answer holiday cooks' questions, in both English and Spanish, for callers in the United States and Canada. Callers can request a free pamphlet with safety and cooking tips and recipes.

Through Dec. 23, weekdays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST.

Dec. 24 to Dec. 25, Christmas Eve-Christmas Day, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dec. 26, day after Christmas, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Automated assistance avail-

able outside the above hours and all year long.

On the Net: <http://www.butterball.com>

■ Foster Farms Turkey Helpline: (800) 255-7227. Turkey-cooking questions are answered and information given 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. PST, Monday through Friday.

On the Net: <http://www.fosterfarms.com>

■ Perdue consumer help line: (800) 473-7383.

Consumer-relations representatives answer cooking, storage and other questions about poultry products weekdays year-round (except Christmas Day) 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST. Free booklet offer with tips on safe handling of poultry.

On the Net: <http://www.perdue.com>

■ Shady Brook Farms: (888) 723-4468.

■ Honeysuckle White: (800) 810-6325.

Automated holiday-meal information lines offer 24-hour service every day throughout the holidays, including meal planning, buying and cooking turkeys.

On the Net: <http://www.shadybrookfarms.com>, and <http://www.honeysucklewhite.com>

■ Empire Kosher poultry

customer hotline: (800) 367-4734, or (717) 436-5921. Help is offered by consumer-affairs representatives year-round Monday through Thursday

8 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. Program offers recipes, newsletter, tips on defrosting and cooking poultry. Closed Jewish and secular holidays.

On the Net: <http://www.empirekosher.com>

■ Ocean Spray consumer help line (800) 662-3263.

Year-round, weekdays (except Christmas Day, New Year's Day and other major holidays) 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST. Consumer department staff field questions on cranberries, offer recipes, cooking tips, nutritional information, menu-planning worksheets, product information.

On the Net: <http://www.oceanspray.com>

■ Reynolds Turkey Tips Line (800) 745-4000. A year-round 24-hour automated hot line;

through Dec. 31 offers advice on turkey defrosting, preparation and cooking options, free brochure and recipes.

On the Net: <http://www.reynoldskitchens.com>

Also on the Net: <http://www.mccormick.com>.

Includes a holiday entertaining guide.

WINE

FROM PAGE B5

techniques for grape growing to the country. Malbec, an historic red Bordeaux grape variety, is at home in Argentina. Fifty-year-old or older plantings yield concentrated, well-structured wines with plum, blackberry, black pepper and spice qualities.

Currently, Bodegas Valentin Bianchi farms over 700 vineyard acres in the cool elevation of San Rafael, south of Mendoza. This climate offers red grapes a longer growing season, which benefits their flavor and complexity.

THREE LABELS

Valentin Bianchi wines are released under three labels: Elsa, at under \$10; Famiglia Bianchi, under \$20, and Enzo Bianchi Grand Cru, a cabernet sauvignon blended with small amounts of merlot and/or mal-

bec (depending on the vintage), priced under \$30.

For many years, Enzo Bianchi has been the flagship label with grapes coming from only the best plots within the three Valentin Bianchi vineyards, all located in San Rafael, the area with the best soil in Mendoza.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the Valentin Bianchi wines available in the Michigan market, we recommend:

■ 2003 Elsa Syrah (\$9) with standout cherry and spicy aromas and a mellow finish. Serve it with lamb or pasta with a hearty mushroom sauce.

■ 2003 Famiglia Bianchi Sauvignon Blanc (\$16) has sufficient semillon in the blend to add complexity. It is hall-marked by grapefruit, tropical fruit notes and a crisp, clean finish. It's a perfect complement to oysters, shrimp and broiled white fish.

■ 2002 Famiglia Bianchi Malbec (\$18) showcases dark

fruit, berry aromas and mirrored flavors.

One of the best under \$20 malbecs around. Hard cheeses and fruits in place of dessert are delightful with this lush wine.

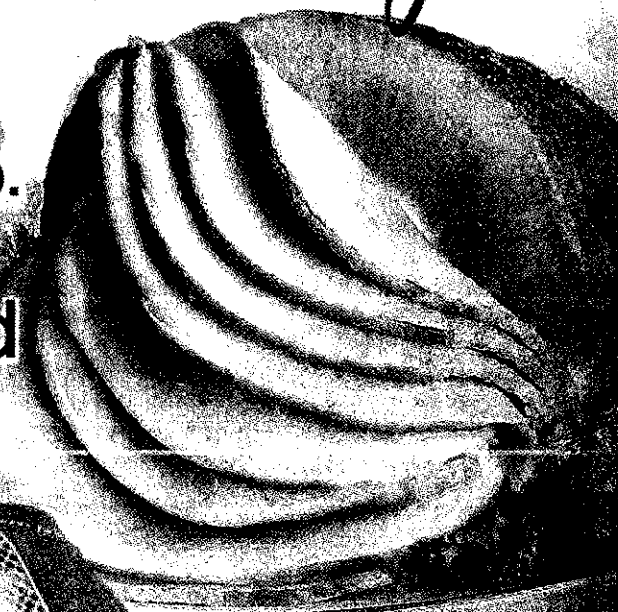
■ 2002 Famiglia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon (\$18) is stellar at this price. Blended with merlot and malbec, it's marked by berry and spice aromas and flavors leading to chocolate hints in the finish. It screams, "serve me with a medium-rare steak."

■ 2001 Enzo Bianchi Grand Cru (\$27) is a step above the Famiglia Bianchi cabernet, showing exceptional concentration and layering of fruit and spice with the chocolate element lasting long into the finish. It too screams, "bring on the steak."

The Healds are contributing editors for the internationally respected Quarterly Review of Wines and Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, and restaurants for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Contact them by e-mail at focusonwine@aol.com.

Happy Holidays!

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Half Ham



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Semi-Boneless Half Ham

A Busch's
exclusive!
More flavor...taste
the difference!

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Coca-Cola
Products
all varieties, includes
Schweppes Ginger Ale
& Mixers, 2 liter bottle
(plus deposit)
limit 6 please



\$1.88
Tropicana
Pure Premium
Orange Juice
all varieties
64 oz.



79¢
Freshlike
Vegetables
Broccoli Cuts, Cut Corn,
Cut Green Beans, Green
Peas, or Mixed Vegetables
16 oz.



\$1.88
Spartan
Butter
Quarters or Solids
1 lb.

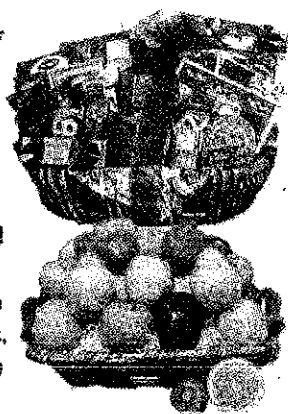


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Sunday, December 26
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Sidelines

Wolfpack tryouts

Tryouts for the Western Wayne Wolfpack AAU basketball teams for girls between the ages of 10 and 13 will be held on three separate nights in January.

On Jan. 4, tryouts for the 12-and-under team will be held 6-7:30 p.m. at East Middle School. Tryouts for the 13-and-under team will be held 7:30-9 p.m. Jan. 4 at East.

Tryouts for the 10-and-under Wolfpack squad will be held 6-8 p.m. Jan. 12 at Isbister Elementary School. The final tryout – for the 11-and-under unit – will be held 6-8 p.m. Jan. 13 at West Middle School.

For more information, call Fred Thomann at (734) 484-7746; or Bob Blohm at (734) 495-3160 or (734) 414-8156.

'Cat spikers shine

Plymouth finished 3-2 at the competitive Madonna University High School Volleyball Tournament held Saturday in the Plymouth High School gymnasium.

The Wildcats ousted Cass Tech (26-24 and 25-15), Flat Rock (25-14 and 25-9) and Wayne Memorial (25-9 and 25-9), but were upended by Dearborn Divine Child (25-16 and 25-18) in pool play before falling to Tecumseh, 25-21 and 25-19, in the qualifier.

Plymouth was led by Jeanine Moise (27 kills, 11 digs, 18 solo blocks), Sarah Haskins (41 set assists), Janet Hanchette (26 digs, three service aces) and Lindsey Vogelsberg (10 digs).

The Wildcats return to action Monday when they compete in the University of Michigan-Dearborn Invitational.

SC cagers win

Schoolcraft's men's basketball team dominated a depleted Genesee (N.Y.) team on Saturday night, coming away with a 90-62 victory.

Martin Samarco (Belleville) torched the Cougars for 29 points to lead the Ocelots in the win. Courtney Williams, a 6-9 transfer from Oakland University, chipped in 18 and Jamaal Lock (Detroit Redford) finished with 14.

Genesee (5-10), which finished 24-7 last season, was playing short-handed as three regular starters were out with various injuries against the Ocelots.

Schoolcraft (12-1) took advantage early, building up a 41-21 lead, notching another blowout victory. Eight of the Ocelots' 12 victories have come by 20 points or more so far this season, including three drubbings of 50 points or more.

Ty Scott had 13 to round out the Schoolcraft players that finished in double digits.

A.J. White led the Cougars with 16 points and Genesee received 15 points from Phil Santiago, 14 from Bart Tooms and 10 from Jim Irwin.

Wildcat cagers win with hustle

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Plymouth's boys basketball team may not bombard opponents with rim-rattling dunks or flashy 3-point shots, but the Wildcats' hustling, gritty methods have proven to be successful in the season's first quarter.

The substance-over-style Wildcats improved to 4-1 Monday night in the Plymouth High School gymnasium with a scrappy 63-51 victory over Bloomfield Hills Andover, whose record dropped to 1-4.

All five of Plymouth's games this season have been played on its home court. The Wildcats will hit the road for the first time Tuesday, Jan. 4, when they travel to Dearborn Heights Robichaud.

"Once again it wasn't pretty, but the boys keep finding different ways to win," Plymouth coach Tom VanWagoner said, referring to his team's come-from-behind, 12-point triumph over the Barons. "I told the kids after the game that they should be proud of what they've accomplished so far, but they said they're disappointed they're not 5-0.

"We'll really see where we stand when we play Robichaud when we come back from the break. They're very tall and very athletic, so that will be a good test for this team."

Led by its full-court, turnover-producing defense, Andover surged to a 13-3 lead in the game's first five minutes. Once the Wildcats figured out how to beat the press, they scored easily and forged a 15-15 tie at the end of the first quarter with a 12-2 run.

Plymouth grabbed its first lead, 17-16, one minute into the second quarter when D.J. Coleman converted a drive. The Wildcats improved their lead to 35-29 at the half.

Andover trailed just 41-40 after three quarters thanks to the inside play of senior forward Brian Zematis, who scored four points and grabbed four rebounds in the eight-minute span.

Plymouth led 44-43 with five minutes to play before building its comfortable winning cushion with free throws and fast-break baskets, which were sparked by point guard Brent Jones.

"I thought we played well the first three quarters, but Plymouth did a good job handling our pressure in the fourth quarter and it got away from us," said Andover junior varsity coach Lloyd Praedel, who was filling in for coach Howard Golding, who missed the game due to a death in the family.

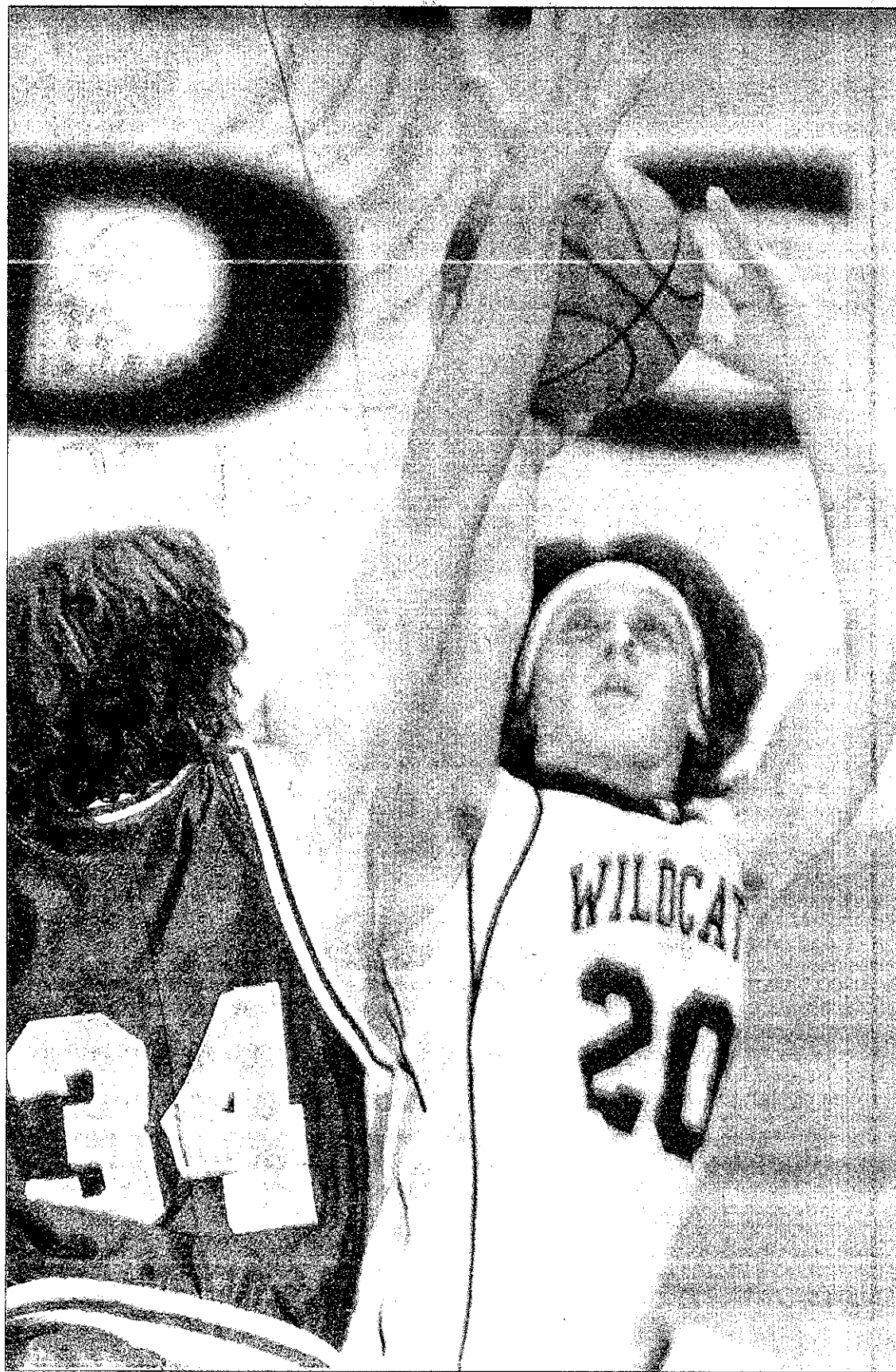
Plymouth's Jim Wilbur led all scorers with 14 points. The junior forward also contributed six rebounds and three steals. D.J. Coleman scored 12, A.J. Davey had 10 and Kulraj Sandhu chipped in with nine. The Wildcats outbounded the Barons, 37-23, thanks largely to Josh LeDuc, who grabbed 14 boards. Davey snared eight caroms.

Mike Wint led the Barons with 12 points, including two threes. Zematis scored eight and Tino Fernandez tallied seven.

Plymouth hit 21-of-46 field goals (45.6 percent) and 20-of-35 free throws (57.1 percent). The Barons struggled from the field (35.2 percent) and the line (50 percent).

After committing seven turnovers in the game's opening three minutes, the Wildcats had just 11 the rest of the game.

ewright@oe.homecomm.net | (734) 953-2108



JERRY POLYNSKY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A.J. Davey was a key contributor in Plymouth's victory over Bloomfield Hills Andover Monday night. The junior netted 10 points and eight rebounds in the 63-51 win.

Plymouth icers take Ypsi crown

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Plymouth's hockey team rolled through last weekend's Ypsilanti Lincoln Christmas Tournament like a Zamboni cruising through a china shop.

The Wildcats took home the first-place hardware after thumping their semifinal opponent Willow Run and finals foe Lincoln by identical 10-0 scores.

The pair of one-sided victories improved the Wildcats' record to 3-4 heading into Wednesday's game against Taylor Truman at the Taylor Sports Plex. The dominant wins also gave Plymouth a much-needed dose of momentum after a rough 1-4 start.

"It was a nice weekend for us," Plymouth coach Mike Kaput said. "Ypsilanti Lincoln did a nice job of hosting the tournament, and the boys all had a good time."

Brett Kavulich really enjoyed the first game, recording a hat trick. Charles Webb added a goal and three assists and Christian Blick earned the shutout, stopping eight Flyer shots.

John Knoerl, Ryan Stamm, Josh Dillon, Mark Olivier, Jason O'Guinn and Justin Michalek also scored goals for the winners, who led 4-0 after one period and 6-0 after the opening 30 minutes.

The title game between Plymouth and Lincoln was limited to just two periods due to an MHSAA mercy rule that stops games once a team compiles a 10-0 advantage. O'Guinn scored four goals, Knoerl had two, while Billy Gauthier, Stamm, Kavulich and Dillon knocked in one apiece. Olivier notched three assists.

Justin Desilets made 11 saves to secure the shutout for the Wildcats.

Lincoln advanced to the final game by throttling Taylor Kennedy, 11-1, in a Saturday semifinal match-up.

"After watching Lincoln play on Saturday, I really thought we were going to be in for a tough game," Kaput said. "But we scored on five of our first six shots."

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P-C coaching fixtures share honor

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Over the past 30 years, Bob Blohm and Fred Thomann have coached with and against each other in more girls basketball games than they can probably remember.

The two have become fixtures on the coaching landscape at the Plymouth-Canton Education Park, leading their respective teams to a long run of successful seasons.

So it's only fitting that Blohm, Canton's girls basketball coach for the past 16 years, and Thomann, the girls coach at Salem since 1984, share this year's Observerland Coach of the Year honors.

Blohm's and Thomann's teams enjoyed abundantly successful campaigns in 2004. The Chiefs captured the Western Lakes Activities Association title on the way to a 17-6 overall record, while the highlight of Salem's 16-7 year was a Class A district



Thomann



Blohm

For the complete Observerland All-Area Girls Basketball Team. Please see page C2.

championship, which it secured with a final-game win over Canton.

"I think the mark of this year's team is that it was competitive in just about every game we played this year," said Thomann, whose coaching career at Salem commenced in 1972 when he took the reins of the boys hoop program. "With the exception of maybe one game, we were never blown out. We pushed every team we played to the max."

Thomann said this year's squad was all about balance.

"It was a fun team to coach because

you never knew which player's light was going to go off each game," he said. "If one of the top players had an off-game, someone else would pick it up."

Blohm's Chiefs overcame a rough 2-4 start to win 15 of 16 games at one point. They peaked in the WLAA championship game when they ousted regular-season title-holder Walled Lake Northern, 46-30.

"This team exceeded my expectations this season," Blohm said.

"We started slowly, but once we got over the hump and the girls figured out how hard they had to play, they played great. Winning the (WLAA Western) division and the league tournament made this a very nice year for this group."

Salem's Gui finds success on mat, in class

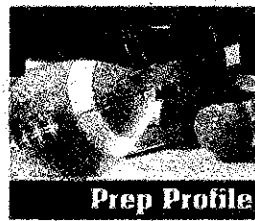
BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

To succeed in the rugged, survival-of-the-fittest world of high school wrestling, a complete, around-the-calendar commitment to the sport is not a luxury — it's a requirement.

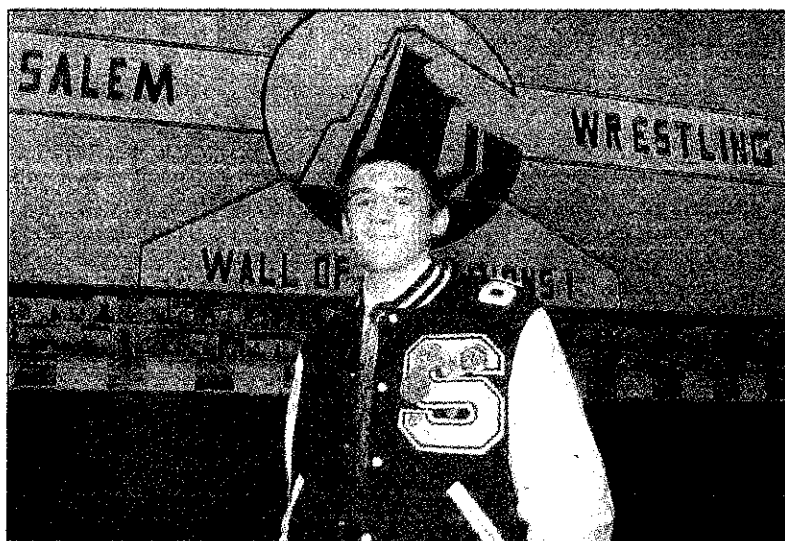
No one understands this better than Salem junior Val Gui, who, just over two years after stepping onto a wrestling mat for the first time, is excelling for the Rocks.

Gui's commitment to excellence was evident this past summer, when he spent 30 days at a demanding camp hosted by a

number of renowned wrestlers and coaches at the University of Minnesota. While his friends back home were swimming, working on their



Prep Profile



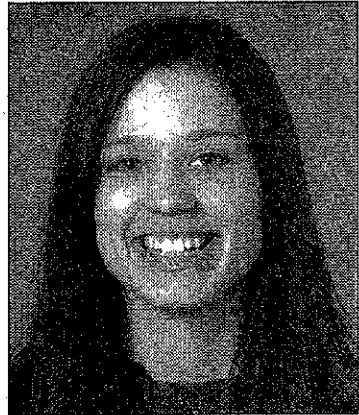
HEATHER ROUSSEAU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Salem's Val Gui is an accomplished student in the classroom and in the wrestling room. The junior carries a 3.97 grade-point average and a 7-4 record for the Rocks' wrestling team.

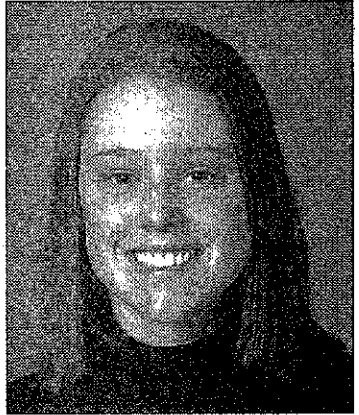
PLEASE SEE SALEM, C3



Ariel McKissick Thurston



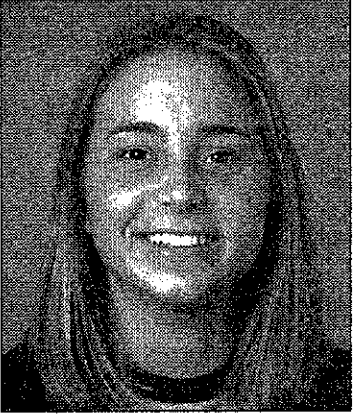
Marissa Martin Clarenceville



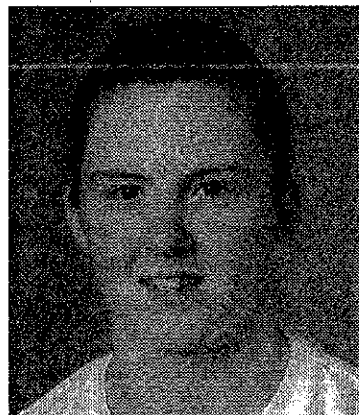
Alyssa Guerin Salem



Jeanine Moise Plymouth



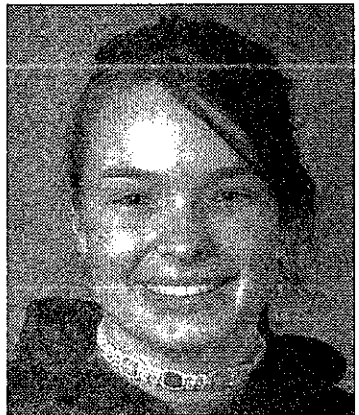
Ellen Canale Salem



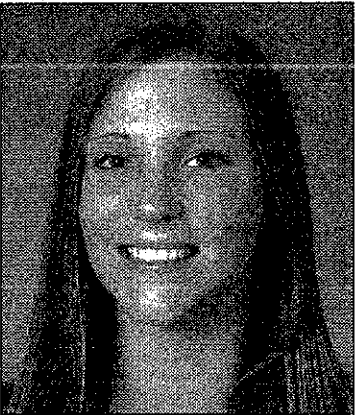
Erica Yost Ladywood



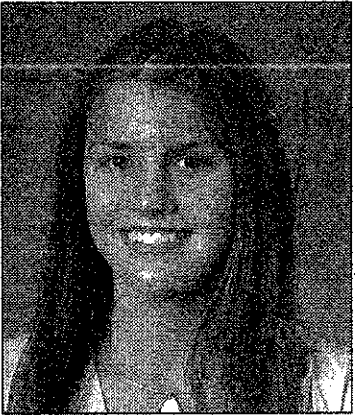
Katie Cezat Canton



Lisa Ealy Canton



Lindsay Fletemier Garden City



Alisha June Garden City

2004 ALL-OBSERVER

GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

FIRST TEAM
 Katie Cezat, 5-11 Sr. F, Canton
 Ellen Canale, 5-9 Sr. G, Salem
 Lindsay Fletemier, 6-4 Sr. C, Garden City
 Erica Yost, 5-6 Jr. G, Liv. Ladywood
 Jeanine Moise, 5-10 Jr. F, Plymouth

SECOND TEAM
 Ariel McKissick, 6-2 Sr. C, Red. Thurston
 Alyssa Guerin, 5-9 Sr. G, Salem
 Alisha June, 6-0 Sr. F, Garden City
 Marissa Martin, 6-0 Sr. C, Clarenceville
 Lisa Ealy, 5-9 Jr. F, Canton

THIRD TEAM
 Becci Houdek, 5-9 So. G, Canton
 Teresa Coppielle, 5-10 So. F, Salem
 Katie Tuomi, 5-7 Sr. G, Clarenceville
 Kathryn Wheatley, 5-8 Sr. G, Salem
 Kim Olech, 5-10 Jr. F, Plymouth

FOURTH TEAM
 Colleen Fiaherly, 5-9 Jr. G, Plymouth
 Lauren Trosell, 5-9 Sr. G, Liv. Stevenson
 Joi Jennings, 5-9 So. G, Ply. Christian
 A.J. Creps, 5-10 Sr. C, Agape Christian
 Megan Szczypka, 5-10 Sr. G, Liv. Ladywood

CO-CHIEFS OF THE YEAR
 Bob Blohm, Canton
 Fred Thomann, Salem

HONORABLE MENTION
 Churchill: Stephanie Bradshaw; Franklin: Trisha Morrill; Robyn Whalen; Stevenson: Rachel Deszert; Lauren Brodie; Wayne Memorial: LaDwan Jones; Jennifer Anderson; Westland: John Glenn; Jennifer Swartz; Heather Lindon; Lutheran Westland: Elyse Gieschen; Sam Wiemer; Kelsey Ramthun; Huron Valley Lutheran: Becky Schultz; Brittany Hickman; Garden City: Lauren Watts; Jessica Rayburn; Redford Union: Stefanie Stephens; Kelly Kesteloot; Sade Poole; Redford Thurston: Chloe Booker; Teresa Clarke; Salem: Cary Sommers; Lauren Kurtz; Canton: Molly Conlon; Leslie Olech; Plymouth Christian: Lauren Soblesky; Kelsie Tietjen; Agape Christian: Danielle Henry; Belleville: Taylor Manley; Plymouth: Chelsea Quinlan.

All-Area basketball team is stocked with talent

FIRST TEAM

Katie Cezat, 5-11 Sr. F, Canton: Cezat finished her career at Canton as the school's all-time leader in points, rebounds and blocked shots. As a senior, she averaged close to 20 points a game and over 10 rebounds per contest. She was effective around the basket, but the four-year varsity player could also help break a press with her slick ball-handling skills.

"Katie's strength is her versatility," Canton coach Bob Blohm said. "She is a strong post player and she moves well away from the basket as well. She scored a lot this year off of offensive rebounds. Even though she was double-teamed a lot this season, she put up great numbers."

Ellen Canale, 5-9 Sr. G, Salem: Canale did it all for the Class A district champion Rocks, leading them in scoring (11.5) and assists (5.5). She was second on the team in rebounding from her guard position. A three-year varsity starter, the senior earned a scholarship at Division I Eastern Illinois University.

"Ellen is a very, very good player, and she was our vocal leader as well," said Salem coach Fred Thomann. "She either led our team or was close to leading our team in every statistical category. She was recognized by several Division I schools, so obviously she is a very talented player."

Lindsay Fletemier, 6-4 Jr. C, Garden City: Fletemier earned co-MVP honors for the Cougars after averaging 15 points and 12 rebounds per game, along with a season's total of 96 blocks.

"Certainly, I think she, along with (Katie) Cezat of Canton, was one of the premiere post players in the area and certainly one of the best post players I've ever had at Garden City," said Cougars' head coach Barry Patterson, who calls the junior center the team's "X-factor."

He added there is no telling how good the junior center can be in 2005-06.

"I think she has a tremendous upside to her game, she's very athletic, runs the floor well and has good hands," Patterson said. "I don't believe she

knows yet how good she is and how good she can be."

Selected to the All-Mega White first team, Fletemier scored 32 points in a game to establish a Garden City record.

Erica Yost, 5-6 Sr. G, Liv. Ladywood: The transfer from Dearborn Divine Child made All-Catholic as she averaged 12 points, five assists, three rebounds and two steals per game for the Class B district champions.

Yost shot 42 percent from the floor, including 36 percent from three-point range. She averaged 62 percent at the line.

More importantly, the point-guard averaged just two turnovers per game.

"Erica got better as the season went along because coming into a new system took time," Ladywood coach Andrea Gorski said. "She handled the ball primarily for us. Her stats in the Catholic League as a guard were pretty solid all the way around."

Jeanine Moise, 5-10 Jr. F, Plymouth: A junior, Moise was a force in the paint for the Wildcats in their inaugural full sea-

son at the varsity level. She led the team in scoring (15.5), rebounding (15.0) and blocked shots (2.7) despite getting extra attention from opposing teams' defenses.

"There were times this season when Jeanine would dominate games, both offensively and defensively," said Plymouth coach Richelle Reilly. "She was an important part of the success we had this season."

SECOND TEAM

Ariel McKissick, 6-2 Sr. C, Red. Thurston: McKissick's solid season earned her a spot on the All-Mega Blue team. She averaged 16 points, seven rebounds, two blocks and two steals per contest.

Head coach Bob Ostrowski said McKissick did an excellent job at both ends of the floor. On offense, she blended height and athleticism, taking the ball to the basket and scoring on putbacks and drives from the wing. Her season's high was 28 points, virtually all scored in the low post.

Defensively, McKissick "was aggres-

sive for boards and blocked shots, and that's what kept us in a lot of games," Ostrowski said.

Alyssa Guerin, 5-9 Sr. G, Salem: A three-year varsity starter, Guerin was the Rocks' second-leading scorer behind Canale, averaging around nine points a contest.

"Alyssa is a great competitor and was very versatile for us the past three years," Thomann said. "She is an outstanding rebounder and defender, and she's been a key member of our team for the past three years."

Alisha June, 6-0 Sr. F, Garden City: Her coach, Barry Patterson, called June the "heart and soul" of the Cougars this season.

June, who earned All-Mega White honorable mention, tallied 12 points and 8.5 boards per game and made about 40 percent of her field-goal attempts. She played almost every minute of every game.

"We were really blessed this year to have two post players who can run the floor," Patterson said. "... She was really

the heart and soul of our team. She's a tremendous athlete with a great work ethic and is just a joy to coach."

Marissa Martin, 6-0 Sr. C, Clarenceville: The All-Metro Conference pick earned second-team All-Observer honors for the second straight year.

The Clarenceville co-MVP averaged 12.9 points and 9.2 rebounds per game for the 15-7 Trojans. She shot an impressive 74 percent from foul line.

"Marissa did really well this year taking on a leadership role," Clarenceville coach Julie Patterson said. "She was the player team's feared most that played against us because she can post-up or take it outside. She has the ability to play inside-out."

Lisa Ealy, 5-9 Jr. F, Canton: Only a junior, Ealy did it all for the Chiefs, finishing as one of the team's most consistent scorers, rebounders and defensive players.

"Lisa was a big part of our success this season," said Blohm. "She can score, rebound and defend. Lisa should be one of our leaders next season."

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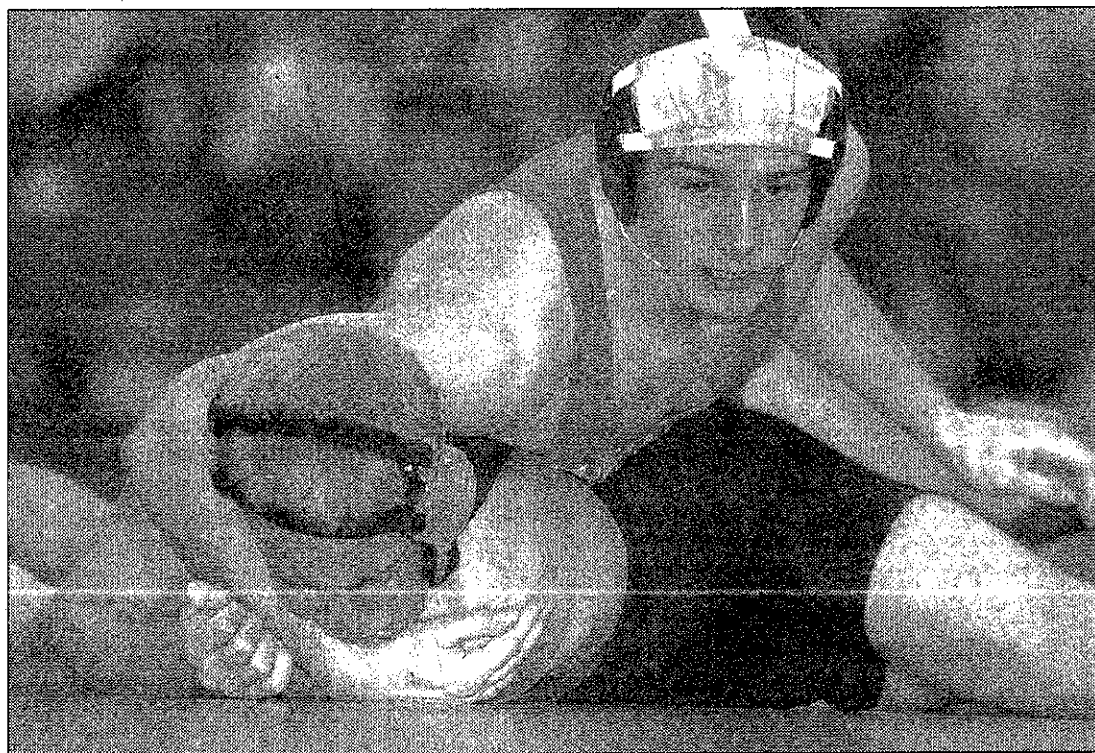
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ANDREW RUBENSTEIN

Canton's Konrad Konsitzke went 5-0 in the 140-pound weight class in Saturday's Canton Team Tournament. The Chiefs finished first in the event, downing New Boston Huron in the finals.

Chief wrestlers capture first in Canton Team Tourney

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Canton's wrestling team was the host with the most Saturday in the annual Canton Team Tournament held in the school's Phase III gymnasium.

The Chiefs breezed through the round-robin part of the 10-team invitational with a 4-0 record. They then tripped up Division 3 powerhouse New Boston Huron, 4-5-24, in the finals.

The five wins boosted Canton's overall record to 10-3 as it heads into Wednesday's meet at Birmingham Brother Rice.

"It was a pretty exciting day for the team," said Canton coach Casey Randolph. "The kids were ecstatic to beat a really good team like New Boston Huron in the finals. We're turning into a very competitive team, which is nice to see."

Canton knocked off Livonia Stevenson (72-3), Monroe

Jefferson (44-27), Ann Arbor Pioneer (56-13) and Allen Park (45-33) to finish first in Pool A. Huron pinned its competition in Pool B to set up the final match-up.

Seven Canton wrestlers earned gold medals after compiling unbeaten records: Ryan Schnettler (5-0 with four pins at 103 pounds); Jay Fleischmann (5-0 with four pins at 119); Corey Phillips (5-0 with five pins at 130); Ryan Webb (5-0 with four pins at 135); Konrad Konsitzke (5-0 at 140); Keil Price (2-0 at 171); and Tom Bonnell (1-0 at 215).

Canton 125-pound senior Pete Bonneau, who finished 4-1, gave up the opportunity to finish undefeated and a gold medal when he made an incredible, selfless sacrifice that made the day special for a disabled Ann Arbor Pioneer opponent.

"Pioneer had a disabled wrestler who had never won a match," explained Randolph. "I'm not sure what was wrong

with him, but he used hand crutches and he didn't have use of his legs. I talked to Pete before the match, and I asked him how he would feel about letting the Pioneer wrestler win. He said he had no problem with it."

"When the Pioneer wrestler — his name was Zach Damon — won (8-5), his hand was raised and he got a standing ovation. It was a pretty emotional scene and a great gesture by Pete."

Canton's P.J. Caram also compiled a 4-1 record at 189 pounds.

"Before I was named coach, this tournament was an individual meet," Randolph said. "But I revamped it into a team tournament because more kids get to wrestle in more matches. At the individual tournaments, if you lose your first two matches, you're done. At the team tournaments, most of the wrestlers get five matches in no matter what."

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Whalers reach .500 mark with 2 wins

The Plymouth Whalers hit the Christmas break at the .500 mark — 14-14-4-2 — after winning two out of three games on the road Dec. 17-19. The Whalers are now in second place in the Ontario Hockey League's West Division, just two points behind the pace-setting Sault Greyhounds.

On Sunday, the Whalers scored twice in the first 55 seconds of the game to take an early 2-0 lead and never look back on the way to a 6-3 victory. The six-goal output was the team's largest this season.

Plymouth led 3-2 at the end of the opening period and 5-2 after 40 minutes in a game played before 2,943 fans at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium.

John Vigilante led the Whalers' attack with two goals and an assist. He now has 11 goals this season. John Armstrong and John Mitchell both tallied a goal and two assists each. Mike Knight (three assists) Andrew Fournier (one goal) and James Neal (one goal) all played well offensively for the winners.

Rookie net-minder Justin Garay earned the win in goal for the Whalers, stopping 32 of 35 shots. Mike Kavanaugh, Brett Trudell and Matt Piva scored for Oshawa.

Mitchell's three-point night

tyed him with former Whaler captain James Wisniewski for 11th on the team's all-time scoring list with 187 points. Mitchell has scored 65 goals and 122 assists in 224 games.

On Saturday, The Whalers edged Belleville, 2-1, before 2,751 at the Yardmen Arena in Belleville. Dan Collins and Mike Knight scored goals for the Whalers, who were bolstered by the strong goal-keeping of Ryan Nie.

Nie stopped 30 of 31 Belleville shots to earn his 13th victory of the season. Nie's bid for his first shutout of the season was ruined at 1:03 of the third period on a goal by Belleville's Matt Belesky.

In the final minute of play and Belleville with an extra attacker on the ice after pulling goalie Kevin Lalande, Nie made a point-blank stop on Bulls' veteran Evan Brophrey to preserve the victory.

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SALEM

FROM PAGE C1

tans and spending time relaxing, Gui was sweating through days that included four practices and little time for recreation.

And he loved it. "It was all wrestling, all the time," Gui said. "We'd get up at 6 a.m. and our first practice would start at 6:15. We'd wrestle all day. There were high school wrestlers from all over the country, including California and New York."

"It was very intense, but it was a great experience for me. A guy told us at the camp that only 70 percent of the wrestlers who go through it end up graduating from it."

Among the graduation requirements was a 15-mile run on the final day. It turned out to be a final Gui passed with flying colors.

"My wrestling skills improved exponentially at the camp," said Gui, who had to raise close to \$2,000 to attend. "I have a lot more confidence in my ability this season because of what I learned

there."

Gui, who has worked his way to a 7-4 record so far this season, said the most taxing part of the sport is the time it takes to become competitive.

"I usually stay after practice for an hour or so to work on things, so most nights I don't get home until 5:30," he said. "By the time I eat, I'm usually pretty tired, but I still have homework to do. It's tiring, but it's worth it."

"One of the things I like best about wrestling is that it's an individual sport. You're only going to get out of it what you put into it."

Unlike many of his wrestling peers, Gui said he doesn't have to worry about watching his weight.

"I'm a big sweater, so I lose a lot of weight naturally," he said. "I'm actually small for my weight class. I wrestle at 152, but I usually weigh around 147. I could move down to 145, but the guy we have at 145 is very good, so it's best for the team if I stay at 152."

Salem wrestling coach Greg Woochuk said while Gui is an accomplished grappler, he's an even better person.

"Val works very hard at

wrestling, but he puts just as much time and effort into his family and his academics as he does wrestling," Woochuk said. "He has an incredible work ethic and attitude that the younger wrestlers on the team really look up to. He's definitely a well-rounded young man."

Gui's hunger to excel on the wrestling mat is matched by his academic ambitions. He currently holds a 3.9 grade-point average even though he takes several advanced placement classes.

"The most challenging class I have right now is probably my advanced placement U.S. history class," Gui said. "But that's also my favorite class. I love history."

Gui, who competes for the Salem cross country team in the fall, is a regular volunteer at the Romanian Orthodox Church in Detroit. On Thanksgiving, he helped serve to several homeless people in the city.

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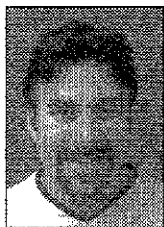
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Christmas Eve 2000 changed everything for Detroit Lions

It was the night before Christmas, back in the year double zero... but a creature was stirring, and no Lion was a hero.



Mark Wilson

...es, it's another lame attempt to replace the words to Clement C. Moore's traditional poem just to get a point across on our pro football team. Everyone shreds that timeless ditty by creating their own rhymes. That ode to St. Nick should only be replicated with tidings of joy and good cheer. The last four years have been far from great for the Detroit Lions. It's hard to believe it's been four years to the week that on a

fateful Christmas Eve, the fortunes of an entire sports franchise changed on one field goal. Paul Edinger, a Michigan State alum no less, booted a 52-yarder, giving the Chicago Bears a 23-20 victory at the Pontiac Silverdome. It pushed the Lions out of the playoffs, finished the head coaching career of Gary Moeller and began possibly the

worst era in Lions football. Talk about settling in for a long winter's nap! "Gary Moeller is our head coach; he has carte blanche with what he wants to do with our football team," Lions owner William Clay Ford said when he tabbed the former Michigan Wolverine coach to replace Bobby Ross in November 2000. Carte blanche lasted exactly seven games. Moeller went 4-3, but losing to the Bears on that Edinger field goal changed everything. The stockings weren't the only thing hung that Christmas Eve. Matt Millen was brought in as

the new team president and Mo was shown the door. Four years and 47 losses later, the Chicago Bears are back in town this week. The Silverdome is now the world's largest Monster Truck venue and Gary Moeller was three coaches ago. The Lions have only been able to squeak out 15 wins in 62 tries. "Makes you long for the days of 'carte blanche.'" "It's been a tough road, no doubt," said Lions coach Steve Mariucci, who can only be blamed for 20 of those losses. Marty Mornhinweg gets the other 27. "We still believe we are tak-

ing positive steps here to make this team a contender again," Mariucci added. He's not laughing over his first two years as Lions head coach. Mariucci's belly isn't exactly jiggling like a bowl full of jelly. He certainly did not expect just one win since a 4-2 start this season with only two games remaining. "There's no question it's mind-boggling that we have not been able to take advantage of some big opportunities," injured star kick returner Eddie Drummond said. Opportunity lost. Story of the Detroit Lions. All those memories come fly-

ing in like a ride on Santa's sleigh with the Bears coming Sunday to Detroit. Paul Edinger is still their field-goal kicker and their record is identical to the Lions' 5-9. It would seem that the Lions are a little better off. Kevin Jones is now just 62 yards away from 1,000 and Joey Harrington is better than any quarterback the Bears can trot out there. Both teams are just playing now to finish the season. Come Jan. 3, the focus will be on the NFL draft. For the 47th straight year, there will be no champi-

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WILSON

FROM PAGE C4

onship in Detroit. The Bears are not much better. They have only one title in the past 41 years. It may have been 19 years ago, but at least Chicago has been to a Super Bowl.

"We know the fans here are tired of waiting. Shoot, we're all tired of waiting," said Kelvin

Pritchett. He is the longest-tenured Lion, having played here since 1991.

"It's very frustrating, but what can you do except to keep working hard trying to improve?" added kicker Jason Hanson, who came to town a year after Pritchett.

If only Hanson had kicked that field goal instead of Edinger on Christmas Eve 2000, how different things may have been. Alas, only

visions of sugarplums will keep dancing in their heads.

Mariucci will try to finish this season strong. Losing last week to the Vikings on a botched extra-point snap didn't exactly make for a holly jolly Christmas. He has the Bears and Titans and that's it.

Year No. 2 of his regime will be in the books. Winning both would avoid the fourth straight season of double-digit losses. "That's one thing about the

NFL, there is always something to play for," Mariucci said with a wink.

But I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight, Merry Christmas to all ... And to all, a good night.

Mark Wilson is host of the *Steve Mariucci Show* Mondays on WKRK-FM (97.1). He's a former Associated Press and Michigan Association of Broadcasters Michigan Sportscaster of the Year. He lives in West Bloomfield.

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Sports Roundup

LEARN TO SKATE

The winter session of the Novi Ice Arena's Learn to Skate program will run from Jan. 4 through Feb. 19, 2005. Classes are offered in a variety of times on Tuesdays through Saturdays. Skate rental is available.

In addition, Learn to Skate students who are registered will receive free admission to open skating at the Novi Ice Arena throughout the seven-week session.

The following classes will be offered: beginning tots; Snowplow Sam 1-3; basic 1-8; freestyle 1-2; adult 1-4; and home school.

Open registration for Learn to Skate begins Dec. 5. For more information, call the Novi Ice Arena at (248) 347-1010 or visit its Web site at www.noviicearena.com.

SOCCER SIGN-UP

The Canton Soccer Club is accepting registrations for spring soccer for players 5 through 19 years of age (as of March 1). Registration forms are available online at www.cantonsoccerclub.com or at the club office, which is located at: High Velocity Sports, 46245 Michigan Ave., Canton.

For more information, call (734) 480-7046.

ULTIMATE FISHING

The four-day Ultimate Fishing Show, which will feature hundreds of exhibits for outdoor-sports enthusiasts, will be held Jan. 13-16 at the Novi Expo Center.

The show will include several direct-factory exhibits that will be staffed with designers, technicians and other manufacturers' experts as well as specialty bait vendors from across the country.

"It's a pure fishing show," said Adam Starr, of ShowSpan Inc. "Detroit sportsmen have long yearned for such a show. For us and for them, this is an all-new event at a new venue. That's why we're calling it the Ultimate Fishing Show."

For more information, call (734) 480-7046.

JUNIOR GOLF TOUR

Scholarship opportunities are available for local students between the ages of 12 and 18 who participate in the third season of the Top 50 Jr. Tour, which is presented by the Professional Golfers' Association Michigan Section. The program is a regional golf tour offering players tournament experience plus the opportunity to earn college scholarships.

Boys and girls are eligible for tour membership. Players do not have to be members of their school teams to participate.

The tour consists of 10 qualifying rounds and 10 tournament rounds, and is held on local private and public courses.

"The top 40 qualifiers at each qualifying round play in the tournament round for free," said tour director Dan Thomas. "The qualifying field for each tournament is limited to 150 players. Additionally, the top 10 finishers in each week's tournament are exempt into the following week's tournament and will play for free. So a total of 50 players per week are playing free golf."

Scholarship awards are offered based on rules of golf exams, topical essays, sportsmanship and community service. Scholarship awards can be increased as a student's grade-point average increases.

Play begins on June 11 and runs through the season-ending championship tournament on Aug. 8. The full schedule is posted on the tour's Web site at www.Top50JrTour.com.

Interested parents and players should contact the tour at (248) 321-0000 or visit the tour Web site for a membership application.

The tour is presented by the PGA Michigan Section and the National Golf Scholarship Association (NGSA).

ACADEMY OPENS

Former Detroit Lion Frank Gallagher and major league pitching coach Jeff Jones recently opened the Bullpen Baseball/Softball Academy in Farmington. The 12,000-square-foot facility is equipped with six batting cages and three pitching tunnels.

Included on the Bullpen's staff are Tigers hitting coach Bruce Fields, current Detroit pitcher Nate Robertson and several local collegiate players.

For more information, see the Bullpen's Web site at www.bullpenbaseball.com.

CARBO BASEBALL SCHOOL

The Bernie Carbo Pro Premier Baseball School will stage individual, small group and team skill session specific to conditioning, velocity improvement, power hitting and fielding.

Mark Rutherford, former Livonia Churchill High, Eastern Michigan University and former Minor League player, will be the featured instructor.

For more information, call director Gordie Rutherford at (734) 421-4928.

SOFTBALL/BASEBALL LESSONS

Total Baseball, 30990 Wixom Road, will offer pitching, hitting, and fielding lessons for ages 6-18.

Lessons are by appointment only.

The cost is \$35 per half-hour or \$165 for five private lessons. Call 248-668-0166 or e-mail totalbbballwixom@aol.com or visit www.total-baseball.com for more information.

Items for the Sports Roundup may be faxed to (734) 591-7279 or mailed to The Observer, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI, 48150.

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Real Estate Inquires

Robert M. Meisner

Have a dispute? Get help resolving it

I have heard the terms "facilitator" and "mediator" being kicked around by our association attorney. Can you describe what that means?

A facilitator or mediator is someone who is trained to attempt to resolve disputes between parties without rendering a decision or otherwise taking sides. A facilitator is trained to attempt to reach an accommodation between the parties whether or not the case is in litigation. Oakland County has trained facilitators to assist in dispute resolution and the Oakland County Circuit Court encourages the parties to litigation to pick from a list of certified facilitators who have gone through special training in the facilitation/mediation process.

I am upset with the way the association has been cutting our grass and won't fix my unit. I am planning on withholding my assessments to protest. Do you think that is a good idea?

Absolutely not. The Condominium Statute and, no doubt, your condominium documents provide that your disenchantment with the association's providing of services or management is not a basis to withhold assessments. While you may have a claim against the association for mismanagement, that should not result in you withholding your assessments which will only give the association the right to lien your unit and foreclose including the recoupment of attorney fees. Make your protest to the board of directors and seek legal redress but continue to pay your assessments.

Robert M. Meisner is a lawyer and the author of Condominium Operation: Getting Started & Staying on the Right Track, second edition. It is available for \$9.95 plus \$2 shipping and handling. For more information, call (248) 644-4433 or visit bmeisner@meisner-associates.com. This column shouldn't be con-

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Women get things done with CREW-Detroit

BY KEELY SCHRAMM
STAFF WRITER

Kim Lewandowski stomps her work boots as she walks in the building, apologizing for the mud. She's an environmental scientist for G2 Consulting Group of Troy and supervising the demolition process at the former Jacobson's Men's Store on the corner of Old Woodward and Willits in downtown Birmingham.

Working in a male-dominated field can be tough. Who do you talk to?

"Typically, commercial real estate is male-dominated," said Gail von Staden, an architect with Rossetti in Southfield.

That's the reason she and Lewandowski belong to the Detroit Chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women — CREW-Detroit.

Von Staden likes having a forum to meet women within the profession to seek out for information, resources and suggestions on how to handle a specific problem. "The caliber of the membership is exceptionally strong," she said. "You are for the most part dealing with decision-makers."

"The networking is great for me," Lewandowski said. "I like everyone so much, they're very helpful."

Founded in 1986, CREW-Detroit is one of the largest chapters of the CREW network, a professional organization of more than 5,700 commercial real estate women in the U.S. and Canada. CREW-Detroit has more than 125 members, women involved in every aspect of commercial real estate from accounting, architecture, law, sales/brokerage, appraisal, property/asset management, leasing and finance. Its goal is to advance the success of its members in commercial real estate. Men aren't excluded. The Detroit chapter doesn't have any male members, but men do attend programs.

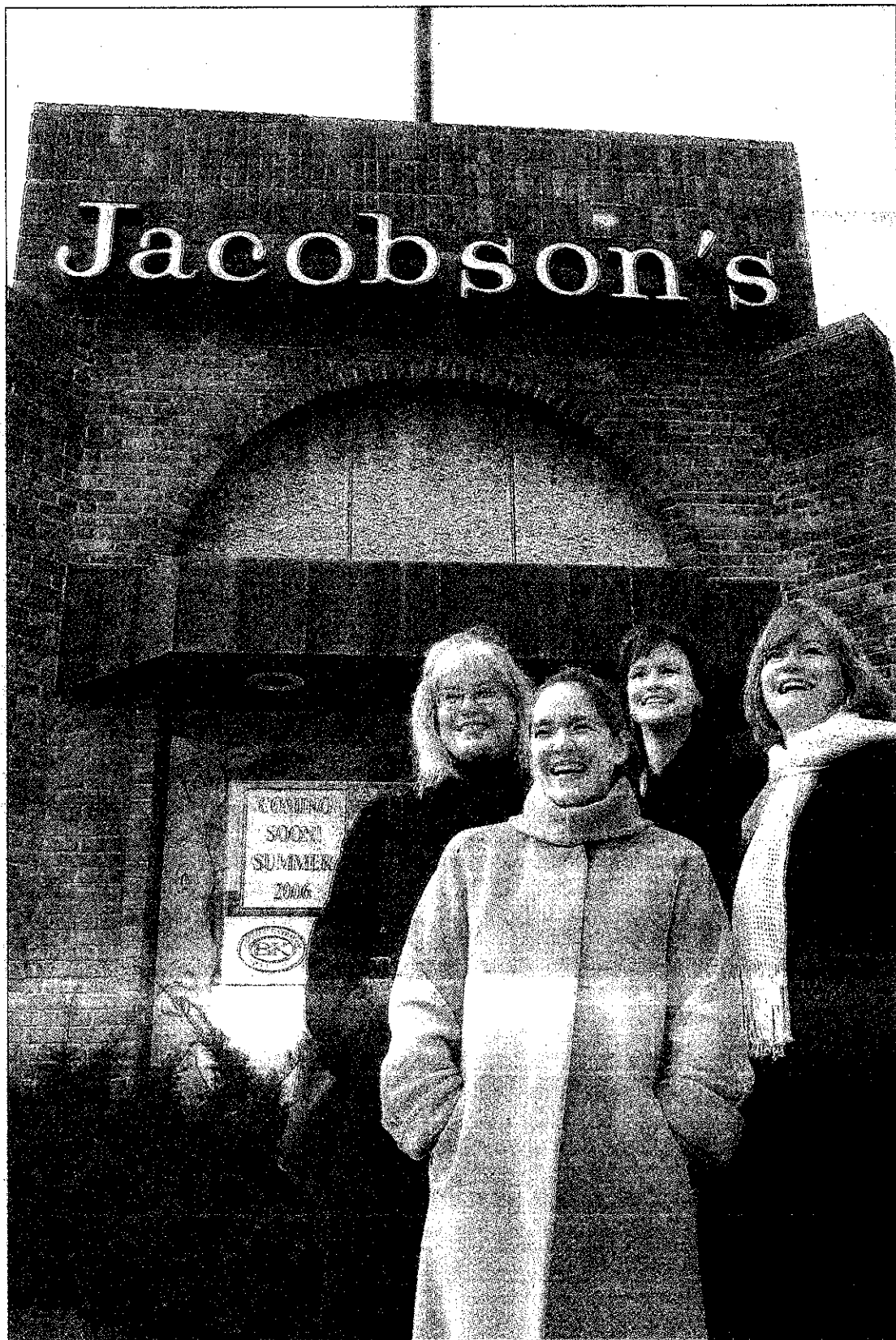
Catherine Malicki, director of marketing for the DeMattia Group in Plymouth, is CREW-Detroit's newly elected secretary and communication's liaison.

"We're promoting each other; you do what you can," she said. "You meet other women trying to make it in this field."

Newly elected president Joan Cleland is a longtime CREW-Detroit member and executive vice president for Acquest Realty Advisors, Inc. in Bloomfield Hills. She, like other members, enjoys seeing something come out of the ground — a project from start to development.

"One of the amazing things about our profession is things get built," von Staden said. "It's a collaborative effort of many people."

Bren Buckley, vice president for development of Bingham Farms-based developer Burton-Katzman Development Co., is the project manager for 325 N. Old Woodward — site



Gail von Staden, (front), Bren Buckley (left to right), Catherine Malicki, and Joan Cleland, members of the Detroit chapter of Commercial Real Estate Women, in front of 325 North Old Woodward in Birmingham. The old Jacobson's men's store is being replaced with a multi-use building that includes offices, retail and condos. Buckley is managing the project for Burton-Katzman Development Co.

of the former Jacobson's Men's Store, which is being redeveloped into a multi-use building with retail on the first floor, two office floors and 16 condos.

A lawyer with an MBA, Buckley joined CREW because she relocated to the area, didn't know many people and wanted to build some contacts in the industry.

As she looks forward to the new year, Cleland said CREW will continue to work to create and enhance networking opportunities for its members and offer quality programs.

Empowering members in their prospective industries to effect change, and enhance leadership training, are also among Cleland's goals for the group.

Its Real Estate Excellence Awards banquet in September at Oakland Hills Country Club has become a sell-out event, and coveted award. The competition is open to new construction and redevelopment projects. Each project must involve at least one firm with a CREW-Detroit member. This year, CREW-Detroit created an Excellence in Real Estate scholarship to support a woman entering the commercial real estate field.

CREW-Detroit also hosts an annual golf outing in June to benefit Alternatives for Girls, an organization that has helped thousands of homeless and at-risk girls and young women in Detroit.

Looking forward to 2005, CREW-Detroit members talked about the commercial real estate market in metro Detroit.

Malicki said things are picking up and this has been the best year ever for the DeMattia Group. "We have a backlog of projects," she said. "You hear about the down economy, but we're not feeling it."

Corporate downsizing has had an impact on leases. "There's a lot of strategic planning, but not implementation," von Staden said. "Corporations are looking at different ways to use their real estate more efficiently to improve the bottom line. Vacancy rates are high and companies are not likely to commit to long-term leases. They're extending leases."

One of the most exciting things to happen in the commercial real estate world is the redevelopment of downtowns to include more residential.

"Our goal is to drive pedestrians downtown to revitalize the areas," Cleland said. "Retail will follow. Birmingham and Royal Oak have become models for other cities. It's a great market for new as well as redevelopments. It's been steady to super busy."

To learn more about CREW-Detroit, visit www.crewde-

CREW-Detroit elects new officers, board of directors members

CREW-Detroit recently elected its 2005 board of directors and officers:

- President/National Delegate: Joan Cleland of Acquest Realty Advisors Inc. in Bloomfield Hills, for a one-year term
- President-Elect/National Delegate: Debra Osuch of Soils and Materials Engineers Inc. in Shelby Township, for a one-year term
- Secretary and Communications Liaison: Catherine Malicki of DeMattia Group in Plymouth, for a two-year term
- Treasurer and Sponsorship Liaison: Angie Kakos of Diversified Property Services in Southfield, a two-year term

- Director and Real Estate Excellence Award Liaison: Gail von Staden of Rossetti in Southfield, a one-year term
- Director and Programs Liaison: Joanne Sisson of Palmer Commercial Services in Warren, for a two-year term
- Director and Membership & Member Services Liaison: Catherine DeDecker of Spalding DeDecker Associates Inc. in Trenton, for a two-year term
- Director and Community Outreach Liaison: Gloria Koster of Lake Shore Builders in Fenton, for a one-year term
- Director and Golf Outing Liaison: Carol Ann Arvan of FX Architecture,

- Inc. LLC in Royal Oak, one-year term.
- Annual dues are \$250 for regular members and \$1,500-plus for "affiliate members" — not eligible to join as regular members because their companies sell a product, rather than a service.
- New members need an existing member to sponsor them, and can request one from the membership coordinator.
- CREW-Detroit's next meeting, 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 13, at the Renaissance Center, Marriott in Detroit, offers an opportunity to learn about the impact of today's global econ-

omy on the major drivers of the U.S. economy. Mustafa Mohatarem, chief economist with General Motors Corp., is the keynote speaker.

CREW-Detroit is one of the sponsors with Corenet, Society for Marketing Professional Services. Registration and networking at 11 a.m. lunch served at noon, program begins at 12:20 p.m. The cost is \$40 members, \$55 guests. Register by Friday, Dec. 31, contact Sandy Alford at Spalding DeDecker and Associates at salford@spaldingdedecker.com or call (248) 844-5400.

Mortgage Bits



Timothy Phillips

Weighted averages can help with refinance decision

It's not always easy to determine whether using your home equity to pay off consumer debt is a smart call. You can determine if a debt consolidation refinance is right for you by calculating your effective interest rate for your entire debt load using a "weighted average."

Let's presume you have three categories of debt: a \$150,000 home mortgage at 6 percent interest, a \$30,000 personal loan at 9 percent interest, and \$20,000 of credit card debt at 18 percent interest. In this scenario, your mortgage represents 75 percent of your total debt, the personal loan is 15 percent of your load, and your credit cards are 10 percent of your total debt. These are the relative "weights" of your debts.

Simply multiply these "weights" by the respective interest rates, then add those numbers together. Hence, 75 percent of your mortgage's interest rate equals 4.5 percent; 15 percent of your personal loan's interest rate is 1.35 percent, and 10 percent of your credit card interest rate is 1.8 percent. Add these results to get a weighted interest rate of 7.65 percent.

Here, you are paying 7.65 percent to maintain your debt. If you can get a new "cash out" mortgage cheaper than that, a refinance probably makes sense for you, assuming you have enough home equity with which to work.

Your home equity is your home's value less what you owe against it. Determine your home's value either by noting the sales price (not asking price) of similar homes in your neighborhood, or by using this inflation factor technique.

Presuming a 6 percent annual rate of inflation, multiply your home's purchase price by a factor of 1.06 for as many years as you have owned it. If you bought five years ago for \$150,000, your home should be worth about \$200,000. (That is, 1.06 times itself five times, multiplied by your purchase price.)

This should give you an idea as to whether you can make a debt-consolidation refinance work for you. If you still need help, contact either me or another mortgage loan officer.

Timothy Phillips is a mortgage banker and newspaper columnist. You may access his Wealth Academy archives at www.PhillipsHQ.com or phone him toll-free at (866) 369-4516. Homebuyers should always consult a professional for guidance specific to their situation.

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Birmingham 3050 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Classic 50's brick ranch offers 3 bdrm & full bsmt. Remodeled kitchen w/oak cabinets & hardwood floors.

Canton 3080 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! 3 bdrm contemporary w/open floor plan & vaulted ceilings.

Garden City 3170 OVER 1900 SQ.FT. \$165,000. Built in 1999. Full bsmt, large lot. Get in this home with no money out-of-pocket.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! GREAT 3 BEDROOM 2.5 bath brick ranch. Dining area, full bsmt, 2 car garage.

Redford 3350 JUST LISTED! 3 BEDROOM, 2 BATH BUNGALOW in great part of Redford. Home has finished bsmt, detached garage.

Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Charming 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch. Hardwood floors in living & dining rooms.

Birmingham 3050 BRICK UPDATED COLONIAL 3 bed, \$445,000 www.salebyownerrealty.com/6381248-988-8388

Brighton 3060 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Beautiful 5 bdrm, 3.5 bath colonial on nearly an acre.

Detroit 3120 NOW'S YOUR CHANCE To woo this gorgeous 3 bedroom, 2 bath bungalow.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

Redford 3350 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! 3 Bdrm brick ranch w/neutral decor & hardwood floors.

Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Country setting for spacious 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch.

Brighton 3060 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Beautiful 5 bdrm, 3.5 bath colonial on nearly an acre.

Farmington Hills 3145 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Lovely 1999 built, 3 bdrm, 1400 sq. ft. colonial w/open floor plan & neutral decor.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

Redford 3350 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! 3 Bdrm brick ranch w/neutral decor & hardwood floors.

Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Country setting for spacious 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch.

3900-3980 Commercial/Industrial
3900...Business Opportunities
3910...Business/Professional Building
3920...Commercial/Retail For Lease
3930...Income Property For Sale
3935...Industrial & Warehouse For Lease

3900-3980 Commercial/Industrial
3940...Industrial & Warehouse For Sale
3950...Office Space For Lease
3960...Commercial & Industrial For Lease
3970...Investment Property
3980...Land

Birmingham 3050 NEW CONSTRUCTION - In exclusive sub. Great location on 1 acre. 4 bdrm, many upgrades.

Brighton/Howell 3060 BUILDERS CLOSE-OUT. Only 3 lots remain. Your plans or ours.

Detroit 3120 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Lovely 1999 built, 3 bdrm, 1400 sq. ft. colonial w/open floor plan & neutral decor.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

Redford 3350 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! 3 Bdrm brick ranch w/neutral decor & hardwood floors.

Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Country setting for spacious 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch.

Observer & Eccentric
For everything you think you know about selling a home, there's always a handful of questions just under the surface.

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Brighton/Howell 3060 BUILDERS CLOSE-OUT. Only 3 lots remain. Your plans or ours.

Farmington Hills 3145 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Lovely 1999 built, 3 bdrm, 1400 sq. ft. colonial w/open floor plan & neutral decor.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

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Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Country setting for spacious 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch.

Brighton/Howell 3060 JUST LISTED! ALMOST FLAWLESS Gorgeous 4 year old luxury condo. Over 2100 sq. ft.

Farmington Hills 3145 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Lovely 1999 built, 3 bdrm, 1400 sq. ft. colonial w/open floor plan & neutral decor.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

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Brighton/Howell 3060 JUST LISTED! SHOWERS OF GREAT DEALS in your Classifieds!

Farmington Hills 3145 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Lovely 1999 built, 3 bdrm, 1400 sq. ft. colonial w/open floor plan & neutral decor.

Livonia 3250 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Spacious 3 bdrm. brick ranch. Updated kitchen.

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Redford 3360 JUST LISTED! A HOME FOR YOU! Country setting for spacious 3 bdrm, 1.5 bath brick ranch.

55+ ADULT COMMUNITIES SOUTH LYON COLONIAL ACRES CENTENNIAL FARMS PRICED FROM... \$59,000 to \$149,900

Century 21 Chalet
REAL ESTATE CAREER INTERVIEWS WEDNESDAYS 6:30 P.M.
TAYLOR Everything is done. Fresh paint, newer carpet & 6 panel int. doors. Well cared for 2 BR, 1 bath ranch w/1st floor laundry, C/A and short walk to park and pool. \$91,900



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(734) 453-4600</p> <p>CUSTOMER SERVICE/TELEPHONE SALES An established and well recognized bottler and distributor of water products is looking for talented individuals to work at its Plymouth location. Responsibilities include taking incoming calls from customers, data-entry and dependability. No evenings and minimal weekends. Daily wage + commission, great benefit package, including 401K. Send resume to: Telephone Sales #11, P.O. BOX 701248 PLYMOUTH, MI 48170 Or fax resume to: (734) 416-3810, email: hr_manufacturing@hotmail.com E.O.E</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Sales 5120</p> <p>Real Estate Agent</p> <p>A CAREER IN REAL ESTATE! LOOK NO FURTHER If you desire to work in western Wayne county, be with number 1, see our other ad for details. Call Denise Setser 734-392-6000</p> <p>COLDWELL BANKER</p> <p>PREFERRED REALTORS</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Sales 5120</p> <p>Call to place your ad at 1-800-579-SELL (7355)</p> <p>Real Estate Agents</p> <p>A CAREER IN REAL ESTATE!</p> <p>ALL REAL ESTATE COMPANIES ARE NOT THE SAME If you are serious about entering the business and profession of Real Estate Sales, you owe it to yourself to investigate why we are #1 in the market place and best suited to insure your success. • #1 Rated Franchise System • Continuous Individualized Training • 100% Commission Plan • Group Health Coverage • Free Pre-Licensing • Latest Technical Computer Programs Enable You To Have The Competitive Advantage • Unsurpassed Local and National Advertising Exposure DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE Call Jim Stevens or Alissa Nead</p> <p>COLDWELL BANKER</p> <p>PREFERRED REALTORS (734)459-6000</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Sales 5120</p> <p>REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS Are you thinking of making a career move? CENTURY 21 Town & Country offers the largest marketing program, the best tools and the greatest support of any company in Michigan. Consider a move to the Birmingham office of Town & Country, conveniently located in the heart of town. CALL Margie at (248) 642-8100</p> <p>Real Estate</p> <p>TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE WITH A NEW CAREER!! Try our Simulator www.reocareers.com SIGNING BONUS CALL Linda @ 248-208-2905 Real Estate One...</p> <p>REMODELING SALES CONSULTANT/DESIGNER Immediate opening for outgoing person with computer skills, professional appearance & ability to envision, create and sell new living space. Accelerated draws & medical benefits. Email your resume: remodel@accentremodeling.com or fax to 734-455-0330</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Sales 5120</p> <p>SUPERSTAR SALES PERSON Are you outgoing, competitive, able to think on your feet? Does an upbeat work atmosphere and up to \$13 per hr. sound good to you? WEEDMAN, North America's largest franchised Lawn Care company has several immediate openings and we want you! We believe in an honest, fair, and professional workplace. Mon-Thurs 8am-9pm, and 9am-1pm on Sat. Please call... (248) 478-8393</p> <p>Telemarketer/Assistant Professional with experience needed to assist top-producing manager at Livonia mortgage firm. Excellent pay & bonus plan for the right candidate. Contact Gary Cronk for interview at: 734-564-0649</p> <p>TELEMARKETING Limited number of positions available for immediate full time employment. Casual, comfortable. Troy location. Salary plus daily cash bonus. Call 24 hours: 248-244-7965</p>	<p>Job Opportunities 5310</p> <p>AAA ATTENTION READERS: Since many ads are from outside the local area, please know what you are buying before sending money.</p> <p>ACCOMMODATION: NOW HIRING For 2004 Postal Jobs \$16.40 - \$59.00/hr. Paid training, full Federal benefits, no experience necessary. Green Card OK. Call 1-800-606-5049 ext #1000.</p> <p>DATA ENTRY Work from home. Flexible hours! \$\$\$\$ Great pay \$\$\$\$! Personal computer required. 1-800-913-2823 ext #100.</p> <p>DATA ENTRY Flexible Hours \$\$\$\$\$\$ GREAT PAY \$\$\$\$\$\$! Serious, responsible applicants w/personal computer - work from home. 1-800-913-2823 ext #63.</p> <p>FIND IT ONLINE HOMETOWNLIFE.COM</p> <p>EARN \$1,000-\$3,500 WEEKLY Answering Surveys Online! \$25.00-\$75.00 per survey! FREE registration! Guarantee paychecks! Process E-mails online! Earn \$25.00/E-mail! FREE government grants! \$12,000-\$500,000! Everyone qualifies! www.RealCashPrograms.com</p> <p>Government Jobs! Wildlife/Postal \$16.51 to \$58.00 per hour. Full benefits. Paid training. Call for application and exam information. No experience necessary. Toll Free 1-888-269-6090 ext. 200.</p> <p>HELP WANTED Earn up to \$409 a week assembling CD cases at home. No experience necessary. Start immediately! Call 1-800-267-3944 ext 119. www.easyswork-greatpay.com</p> <p>No Boss! No Commute! Learn to earn \$2,000-\$4,000/week. From home. Call for free message 1-800-259-0519</p>	<p>Job Opportunities 5310</p> <p>WEEKLY POSSIBLE \$990-\$2,320. Mailing our letters from home. Easy. FREE INFO. Genuine opportunity. 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. Call Now! 1-800-679-6857 24 hrs.</p> <p>Position Wanted 5340</p> <p>MEDICAL BILLER looking for work, full or part time, in Canton area. Call Cami. (724) 459-7265 or email: tbugescu@hotmail.com</p> <p>Childcare Needed 5380</p> <p>BABYSITTER - School aged children (2), seeks self motivated & responsible care giver. Plymouth, 20-25 hrs. per wk. Afternoons. Non smoker. Light housework/meals. 313-621-2986</p> <p>Education/Instruction 5600</p> <p>Theater For Children Includes dance & voice, begins January 10th for all ages. Call (248) 366-0027</p> <p>Financial Services 5640</p> <p>FREE CASH GRANTS! As seen on TV! Never repay! Gov't grants for personal bills, school, business, etc. \$47 billion left unclaimed. Love operators! 1-800-574-1804 ext 811.</p> <p>Business Opportunities 5740</p> <p>A FREE TON OF CANDY with your own vending business. Deal direct with mfg. High profits. Short hours. Investment required. 800-893-1185</p>	<p>Business Opportunities 5740</p> <p>AAA ATTENTION READERS: Since many ads are from outside the local area, please know what you are buying before sending money.</p> <p>ABSOLUTE GOLD MINES 80 Machines + Locations! ALL FOR \$10,300. 1-800-344-1277</p> <p>Are you making \$1,710 per week? All cash vending routes with prime locations available now! Under \$9,000 investment required. Call toll free (24-7) 888-344-5509</p> <p>EARN \$4375.00 WEEKLY! Processing simple E-mails online! \$25 per Email sent! Answer simple surveys online! \$25.00-\$75.00 per survey! Free government grants! \$10,000-\$250,000 never repay! www.fastcashathome.com</p> <p>Huge profits! Earn a potential \$3,000-\$5,000 per week part-time at home. Free info & training. Change your life...call now 24/7! 1-800-289-5566</p> <p>Hundreds earning over \$25K/month! Top checks are over \$100K/month! Work at home. Not MLM. Ask to hear our 9-minute audio. 888-230-7559 ext. 2712 www.QuickThousands.com</p> <p>WANTED BEAUTIFUL wealthy, idealistic, investor. Call David (248) 830-9433 generosity may substitute beauty.</p>
<p>ADVANTAGE YOURS The #1 CENTURY 21 Firm in America has openings for self-motivated sales associates at our beautiful downtown Birmingham office. We have the training, tools, support staff, marketing, technology, private offices, and great location to take your real estate career to the next level. Talk to the other real estate companies, then come talk to us. We will show you why CENTURY 21 Town and Country is the industry leader. The advantage can be yours! CALL Margie Duncan at 248-642-8100 to find out more.</p>	<p>LEASING AGENT Part/Time for Westland Apts. Leasing/ Customer service exp. preferred. Must be reliable. 734-428-9052</p> <p>OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED Looking for full time real estate agents (if unlicensed, we can recommend schools). Incomparable training. North-west Livonia location. Serious inquiries only. Call Tim Reilly: (734) 591-0333</p> <p>OUTSIDE SALES REP Needed for roofing/siding supply warehouse. East Side/Detroit/Downriver area. Knowledgeable in commercial & residential roofing along with sales exp. Many extras. Please apply at Wayne Oakland Building Supply, 25018 Plymouth Rd., Redford.</p>	<p>Look in your Observer & Eccentric CLASSIFIEDS</p> <p>...It's all about results!</p> <p>To Place An Ad Call: 800-579-SELL Fax: 734-953-2232 www.hometownlife.com</p>	<p>Cash In With Classifieds! 1-800-579-SELL</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Part-Time 5290</p> <p>DETAILING, Painting, power-wash. Livonia area. \$12/hr. Fax work exp. 888-261-9274 or call for info 248-345-9274.</p> <p>Help Wanted-Domestic 5240</p> <p>Carer/giver - Live-in, caring, mature woman, English speaking. Salary + room & board in Westland. Barbara 8-4pm, 810-229-7246</p> <p>CARETAKER for elderly person in wheelchair. Evenings. Must be able to operate hoist or make transfers. Royal Oak area. (248) 414-6610</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Part-Time 5290</p> <p>DETAILING, Painting, power-wash. Livonia area. \$12/hr. Fax work exp. 888-261-9274 or call for info 248-345-9274.</p> <p>Help Wanted-Domestic 5240</p> <p>Carer/giver - Live-in, caring, mature woman, English speaking. Salary + room & board in Westland. Barbara 8-4pm, 810-229-7246</p> <p>CARETAKER for elderly person in wheelchair. Evenings. Must be able to operate hoist or make transfers. Royal Oak area. (248) 414-6610</p>	<p>Help Wanted-Part-Time 5290</p> <p>DETAILING, Painting, power-wash. Livonia area. \$12/hr. Fax work exp. 888-261-9274 or call for info 248-345-9274.</p> <p>Help Wanted-Domestic 5240</p> <p>Carer/giver - Live-in, caring, mature woman, English speaking. Salary + room & board in Westland. Barbara 8-4pm, 810-229-7246</p> <p>CARETAKER for elderly person in wheelchair. Evenings. Must be able to operate hoist or make transfers. Royal Oak area. (248) 414-6610</p>	<p>Business Opportunities 5740</p> <p>WANTED BEAUTIFUL wealthy, idealistic, investor. Call David (248) 830-9433 generosity may substitute beauty.</p>	<p>Showers of Great Deals in your Classifieds!</p>

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Fact: We have 15 hometown newspapers in suburban Oakland and Wayne Counties.

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0001-2450
Home & Service Guide

Advertising 0020

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Anyone providing \$600 or more in material and/or labor for residential remodeling, construction or repair is required by state law to be licensed.

Brick, Block & Cement 0290
AL BLOCK, brick, foundation, & concrete work. Repairs. Lic. & Ins. Call anytime... 248-478-2602

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ABSOLUTELY AL'S
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Int/Ext. home repairs
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Call Phil. 248-615-4863

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A-1 Hauling-Move scrap metal, clean basements, garages, stores, etc. Lowest prices in town. Quick service. Free est. Wayne/Oakland City. Central location. 547-2764 / 559-8138

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Wrapping Gifts
Decorating for the Holiday
Childcare and eldercare for Shoppers and Party-goers
Elder escorts to holiday functions
(248)557-4600 or (800) 371-2063

Housecleaning 1080
Home & Comm. Cleaning
We get all the corners. Bonded & insured. Reasonable rates. Call Deb at 248-890-3800

Landscaping 1210
COMPLETE LANDSCAPING BY LACOUR SERVICES
Fall clean-ups, re-landscaping & new landscaping, grading, sodding, hydro-seeding, all types retaining walls installed, brick walks & patios. Drainage systems, lawn irrigation systems, low foundations built up. Weekly lawn maintenance. 30 yrs. exp. Lic & Ins. Free Est. 248-489-5955

Painting/Decorating Paperhangers 1420
EXPERIENCED PAINTER
Affordable prices. Neat. Int/Ext. Insured. Free Est. Suburbs. Eric. 313-477-2085

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Painting at Affordable Prices
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Today. Paint Tomorrow. Int. Wallpaper removal. 30 yrs. exp. ins. 1-800-821-3585
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Painting/Decorating Paperhangers 1420
ACCURATE INT PAINTING
plaster/drywall repair, small jobs OK. 46 yrs exp., Ins. Free Est. Larry 734-425-1372

CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
Interior expert painters, res., & commercial Quality work guaranteed. (248) 808-0008

Plastering 1470
VINCE MALTESE
Plaster/drywall repair. Lic/Ins. (734) 667-1232
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Roofing 1640
APEX ROOFING
Quality wk. completed with pride. Family owned. Lic. ins. For honesty & integrity: 248-476-6984; 248-855-7223

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Licensed. Insured. BBB.
734-513-0099

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RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
24 hr snow plowing service. Free est. 31 yrs. in business. 248-354-3213 248-546-4722

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ALL TILE Kitchen, baths, fireplaces, grout cleaning. 10% off w/ad. 734-415-0800

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Tree removal & trimming, stump grinding, storm clean-up. Lic & Ins. 248-926-2366

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BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS




HANNAH ROSE
1st Christmas
Born: June 12, 2004
Proud Parents:
Chad & Lindsey
Dearborn Hts, MI




KYLE CARMICKLE
Baby's 1st Christmas
Born 1-21-04
Living parents:
Roger & Shannon



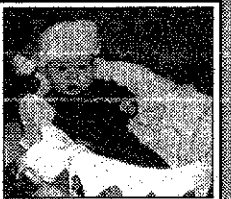
MYA DENISE JOHNSON
Born - Jan 5, 2004
Proud Daughter
of Cortney
Southfield, MI




TIMOTHY PIETRYKA
1st Christmas
Born: 1-6-04
Proud Parents:
Steven & Joann
Westland, MI




SAMANTHA A. MORRIS
1st Christmas
Born: 11-04-2004
Proud Parents:
Pete & Mei
Livonia, MI




SHAYLA V. HILL
Born July 13, 2004.
Proud parents of
Corey & Tracey



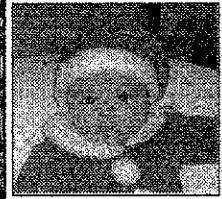
ADAM J RAPP
Born March 20, 2004.
Proud parents
Dave & Melissa



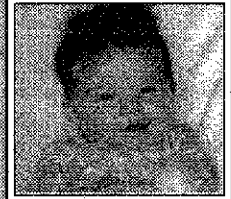
Samantha Brandman
1st Christmas
Born 1/9/2004
Proud Parents
Kevin and Lisa
Clarkston, Michigan




EMILY ROSE MILLER
Born: October 15, 2004
Height: 21 inches
Weight: 7lbs, 15ozs
Proud parents
John and Laura Miller




NYLA GRIFFIN
1ST CHRISTMAS
BORN 9-22-04
PROUD PARENTS
JOHN & DIANE



LEAH NICOLE ESKER
Born 8-12-04
Proud parents:
Mike & Gail Esker
Commerce, MI.



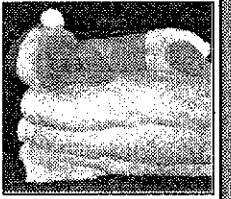
RYAN JACOB ESKER
Parents:
Rich & Julie Esker
LIVONIA
Birthday: 1-19-04




JESSICA MARIE LONGRIDGE
Born October 14, 2004
to proud parents
Bob & Lynn, Canton, MI



DANIEL FRANCIS ZENKE
November 11, 2004
Proud parents Bob and
Chris Zenke of Birmingham




KAYLEE BIEGAS
1st Christmas
Born Sept. 24, 2004
Proud Parents
Tim & Nikki
Westland, MI.




MADISON NIHRANZ
First Christmas
Born 7-22-04
Proud Grandparents
Karen & Ron
Oxford, MI




GRIFFIN WALKER GRAVA
1st Christmas
Born 8/12/2004
Proud Parents
Stacey & Brad
Clarkston, MI 48346




VINCENT THOMAS CIECIEK
1st Christmas
Born: 11-05-2004
Proud Parents:
Jen & Chris (Bellville)
Grandmother:
Gloria McDaniel (Livonia)
Grandparents:
Char & Len Cieciek (Salline)




KADEN JOSEPH RZEPKA
Born 11-20-04
Proud Parents: Darryl &
Becky Rzepka
Taylors, SC
Grandparents: Ralph &
Sue Rzepka Livonia, MI



ANYA MARIE WASILENSKI
Born 5-22-04
Merry Christmas
Love
Grandpa Padley




SEAN DAVID DEWITT
1st Christmas
Born Nov. 20, 2004
Proud Parents: David &
Colleen Dewitt of Plymouth.
Proud Grandparents: Robert
& Mary Dewitt; Greg &
Sharon Knoph




DYLAN WIZA
"1st Christmas"
Born 12/31/03
Proud parents
Chris & Karen
Plymouth, MI




Horace Jaidyn Holt III
Born 6-04-04
to proud parents
Tiffany & Horace,
and proud grandparents
Mary & Horace
David & Gloria.




BROOKE VICTORIA
1st Christmas
Born: 3-24-2004
Proud Parents:
Lee & Melissa
Livonia, MI



LAUREN LESLIE HOWARD
1st Christmas
Born: April 26, 2004
Proud Parents:
Dan & Tina
Macomb, MI



OLIVIA ANN
July 21, 2004
Love
Grandma Barb &
Proud parents
Mike & Jackie Hochstein



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

—and—

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 ★ For your continued support ★ For turning
 to us to help you ★ For appreciating the
 value in what we do and what we can do for
 you ★ For giving us the opportunity to
 serve you ★ For making our jobs
 meaningful and worthwhile.

from all of us in

The Classified Advertising Department

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