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Commission eyes goals for 2008

BY TONY BRUSCATO
STAFF WRITER

The fire department contract with Plymouth Township, getting rid of downtown eyesores and a new community pool are top priorities for the Plymouth City Commission in 2008.

A goal-setting session last week resulted in six areas on which the commission will be focusing its attention the next 12 months:

- Formulate an action plan for fire and dispatch contracts with Plymouth Township.
- Determine an action plan for parking management.
- Review the city's master plan.

- Define a policy on the use of the nearly \$2.3 million received in the sale of the Bathey property.
- Review options for revitalizing the former Amoco and Dairy Mart properties.
- Identify and meet with stakeholders on a community pool.

The previous city commission put a high priority on a new fire contract with Plymouth Township, as well as formulating plans for a possible switch to a public safety department.

"The fire contract is definitely my number one priority," Commissioner Jerry Sabatini said. "The longer we delay it, the longer it will remain our focus. I think we can come to a resolution. I don't think there's any reason to delay it."

Sabatini also said he'd like to see the city install parking meters downtown to help alleviate parking problems.

Mayor Phil Pursell wants to see the former Amoco gas station (Main and Ann Arbor

Please see **GOALS, A2**



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The hills of Hines Park were the place to be if you like sledding, snowboarding and toboggans. Plymouth Township resident Ellen Hoyer and her 7-year-old son, Luke, enjoy his snow day from school.

Mother Nature howls

Drivers annoyed, kids enjoyed first storm of season

The first major winter storm of the season certainly brought the usual mixed reaction when it hit last weekend.

While drivers struggled to get anywhere during and immediately after the storm, which dropped nearly a foot of snow Saturday and Sunday on the Detroit area, students surely relished the day off from school it brought Monday.

Plymouth-Canton school officials made the decision Sunday not to conduct school the following day as the area dug out from under the effects of the storm.

Monday was a play day in Plymouth, with parents and kids alike taking to the hills of Hines Park, Plymouth Township Park and the various parks in the city of Plymouth.

There was little else to report following the storm. "Other than the slippery streets, there weren't really any ill effects from the storm," Plymouth Community Fire Department Chief Randy Maycock said. "People were driving a little too fast for the conditions, but that was about it."

Maycock did issue one important reminder, asking residents to make sure they clear the areas around any fire hydrants near their homes.

"It's important firefighters are able to find those hydrants if it becomes necessary," Maycock said.



Earle Bassett and Cindy Hartford clear snow from the sidewalk in Old Village.

Shooting suspect shoots himself

Scott guard found wounded on Belle Isle

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

A man described by police as a "person of interest" in the killing of Scott Correctional Facility Lt. Joseph Candie in a shooting at a Plymouth Township gas station Wednesday morning was at press time undergoing surgery for self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

The man, whose identity hasn't been released but who Plymouth Township officials said was also an employee at Scott, apparently shot himself in the stomach in a rest room on Belle Isle, according to township officials.

The man was found by Detroit Police and taken to the hospital around 4 p.m. At press time, officials said the suspect was in critical condition at Detroit Receiving Hospital.

The suspect reportedly worked on the same shift with Candie at Scott; according to police, Candie was the suspect's supervisor.

Plymouth Township Police Chief Tom Tiderington stopped short of calling the man a suspect in Candie's death, although he admitted the man had been "a person of interest" as police began their investigation Wednesday.

"We are looking into the relationship and possible involvement of this individual," in Candie's death, Tiderington said Wednesday evening. "We haven't connected those dots yet."

Candie died from multiple gunshot wounds he suffered in the shooting, which followed a heated argument at the Shell gas station at Five Mile

and Beck shortly after 5 a.m. Wednesday.

Candie, 39, a 14-year veteran of the Department of Corrections, spent the last three years at Scott, where he was a shift commander on the midnight shift, according to Department of Corrections spokesman Russ Marlan. Candie had previously worked at the Western Wayne Correctional Facility down the street, which was closed a few years ago. He leaves behind an 8-year-old daughter.

"Lt. Candie was a member of our family," Marlan said. "We obviously want to see whom ever did this apprehended."

Candie was the victim of "multiple gunshot wounds," according to police. At a press conference earlier Wednesday, Tiderington said police aren't sure how many shots were fired, and weren't prepared to say how many times Candie had been hit. The chief wouldn't say what caliber gun was used in the shooting.

While Tiderington said police didn't believe robbery was a motive, the later events also didn't do much to clarify the motive, because police aren't sure what the argument was about.

Jodi DeAngelo, assistant deputy warden at Scott Correctional Facility, wouldn't comment on the incident, other than to say it is under investigation and to admit the prison has "enhanced our security."

GOT INFORMATION?

Plymouth Township police are asking anyone with information about the shooting at the Shell station at Five Mile and Beck to call (734) 354-3232.

Trial date set in beheading case

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

Two teenagers accused of killing a 26-year-old River Rouge man have a date with a jury.

Jean Pierre Orlewicz, 17, of Plymouth Township, and 18-year-old Alexander Letkemann of Westland are scheduled to stand trial April 7 in the Third Circuit courtroom of Judge Annette Berry on charges of first-degree murder and mutilation of a corpse.

The pair stood mute at their circuit court arraignment Friday, and Berry entered not-guilty pleas on their behalf. A final conference date has been set for



DETROIT NEWS POOL PHOTO

Plymouth Township teenager Jean Pierre Orlewicz, 17, with attorney James Thomas in 35th District Court, faces an April 7 trial date in the death of Daniel Sorensen.

Feb. 15, according to court officials.

The teens are charged in the death of Daniel Sorensen, whom police say the suspects lured to the Canton Township home of Orlewicz's grandfather, then killed, last month.

Sorensen died Nov. 7 of multiple stab wounds. His head was cut off and thrown in the Rouge River in Hines Park, where it was found a few days later. Police say the teens burned Sorensen's hands and feet in a failed attempt to obliterate identifying marks such as fingerprints, then dumped his body in a vacant lot in Northville Township.

Orlewicz, a Canton High School senior, and Letkemann, who dropped

out of Churchill High School only to get his diploma through the adult education program, were arrested two days later.

They were bound over for trial after a day-long preliminary hearing Nov. 30 in 35th District Court in Plymouth. Judge Michael Gerou threw out one count of felony murder, saying prosecutors failed to prove the felony — the theft of a gun owned by Sorensen — occurred prior to the murder.

Neither prosecutors nor defense lawyers are commenting on the case, citing a gag order issued by Gerou.

bkadrich@hometownlife.com
(734) 459-2700



PAUL SCHULZ

Plymouth Township police seal off the entrance to the Shell gas station at Five Mile and Beck, where an argument Wednesday morning left a Scott Correctional Facility officer dead and a shooter at large.

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Coming Sunday in Health



Psychiatrist's new book focuses on grown-ups with ADHD

PLYMOUTH PIPELINE

Book signing Friday

John O'Shaughnessy, a Plymouth Township resident and author of *The Greatest Gift: A Return to Hope*, a story of courage and hope in the face of his wife's battle with terminal lung cancer, will hold a book signing 7 p.m. Friday at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Ann Arbor.

O'Shaughnessy details his wife's courageous battle with cancer and the impact on his family. The book is a powerful story about accepting and living through grief.

The bookstore is at 3235 Washtenaw Ave. (northwest corner of Washtenaw and Huron Parkway in the Huron Village Shopping Center 734-973-0846).

The book is available on Amazon.com, at Barnes & Noble and the Plymouth Book Cellar on Ann Arbor Trail in downtown Plymouth.

Luminaria sale

The Plymouth Symphony League is selling Luminaria Kits for the Christmas Holiday. Each kit consists of 10 white envelopes and 10 candles. Kits are \$5 apiece and may be purchased through Dec. 24 in Plymouth at the Book Cellar, Gabriel's, Saxton's, sideways or at the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society Office (470 Forest Place, Suite #18).

For more information, call (734) 451-2112.

Library blood drive

The recent snow storm greatly reduced the amount of blood collected by the American Red Cross.

Hoping to help increase the blood inventory for southeast Michigan, the Plymouth District Library will host a blood drive 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 28.

Reserve a time slot by calling the Library at (734) 453-0750, Ext. 217. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Fife & Drum alumni

The Plymouth Fife & Drum Corps is in the process of compiling alumni information to



Game night

The Teen Zone of the Plymouth District Library will hold a Teen/Family Game Night with board games, DDR, Wii Sports and pizza 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 27. This night is free; however, registration is required and may be made by calling (734) 453-0750, Ext. 4.

reach out to our alumni members regarding future events and performances.

If you are a Plymouth Fife & Drum Corps alumni, please forward your contact information (name, phone number, e-mail address) to our Alumni Director, Robin Leclerc (rleclerc@wideopenwest.com)

Council on Aging

■ Plymouth Community Council on Aging presents The Heinzman School of Irish Dance and also a presentation by Jane Saylor, "Writing Skills," Jan. 14, 1:30-3 p.m., at the Plymouth Cultural Center. Refreshments will be served. Call (734) 453-1234, Ext. 236 for information.

■ Stroke Screenings by Life Line, hosted by the Council on Aging, will be held Friday, Jan. 18, at the Plymouth Township Friendship Station. Pre-registration is required. Call to schedule appoint-

ments for screenings at (800) 324-1851. Screenings available are Stroke Screen/Carotid Artery \$45, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening \$45, Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening \$45, Osteoporosis Screening \$35 or all four (4) screenings for \$129.

Me & My Shadow class

Young children and their grown-ups are invited to frolic indoors this winter at New Morning School's Me & My Shadow Parent & Young Child Classes, a fun, nurturing and educational introduction to preschool for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds and their grownups.

Activities include music and finger-play, art and discovery projects, snack and story time, all centered around a learning theme. New Morning School's Me & My Shadow classes provide special one-on-one time for parents and children, and encourage chil-

dren to take their first steps toward socializing with their peers.

Parents can choose from two eight-week sessions beginning Jan. 11. Classes run on Friday morning from 9-10 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m. Cost is \$72 for the entire session.

To enroll, please call (734) 420-3331, or download the registration form at www.newmorningschool.com

Garden Club

Beneath frosty autumn carpets, the gardens are awaiting their future displays for 2008. Trailwood Garden Club of Plymouth is looking for gardens in the Plymouth area for its annual Garden Walk taking place next June. Over the years, all manner of gardens have delighted visitors, ranging from compact city gardens to watery, wildflower, herb, cutting, and expansive country gardens.

Anyone interested in opening their special gar-

den can contact Georgia Randinitis at (734) 459-7146 or Marilyn Detmer at (734) 454-4625.

Cruise for the arts

Patrons can help the arts thrive in the community and cruise the Caribbean at the same time.

The first Plymouth Community Cruise, sponsored by the Plymouth Rotary A.M., is scheduled March 22-29, a seven-day cruise of the western Caribbean. Ports of Call (round trip from Ft. Lauderdale) include Ocho Rios, Jamaica; Georgetown, Grand Cayman; Cozumel, Mexico; Princess Cays, Bahamas; and two days at sea.

Prices start at \$969 per person, and a \$200 per-cabin contribution will be made in the cruiser's name to the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society upon return.

For reservations and more information, contact Kathy or Kate at Carlson Wagonlit Travel, (734) 455-5810.

Legion meets

■ The American Legion, Beasley-Zalesny Post 112 and Ladies Auxiliary Unit 112 meet the third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. All war-time veterans are welcome. Ladies must be a mother, wife, sister, daughter, granddaughter or great-granddaughter of a war-time veteran and are also welcome.

Meetings are held at IOOF Hall, 344 Elizabeth (at Ann Arbor Trail) in downtown Plymouth. For information, call (734) 459-7324.

■ The Plymouth American Legion Passage-Gayde Post #391 conducts its monthly meeting the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Plymouth Knights of Columbus Hall on Mill (next to the railroad tracks) in Plymouth Township.

All interested military veterans should contact Commander Mike O'Malley, (734) 459-7890, for more information.

GOALS

FROM PAGE A1

Trail) and Dairy Mart (Harvey and Pennington) sites developed.

"The city needs to do whatever it can to get these off the dime," Pursell said. "They're an eyesore, and everything else is getting built up around them. It's not just those two places, but those are the two I'd like to start with because they're right downtown."

While the fire contract is a No. 1 priority for Commissioner Dave Workman, the construction of a pool and fitness center with the help of public and private funding isn't far behind.

"The community voiced an interest a couple of years ago, and we need to rev up that conversation and get creative with recreation," Workman said. "We do a lot with community education classes, and we should do whatever we can to help along a community pool and fitness center."

Among the other issues the commission will be keeping its eye on are the 2009 road improvement plan, the political sign ordinance as the 2008 elections heat up and the liquor license policy.

"A lot of the goals, as a whole, represent an opportunity for the city to become more dynamic, attract business and grow," Commissioner Chris Lynn said. "With that, hopefully we can increase the tax base and can reduce the tax burden on residents."

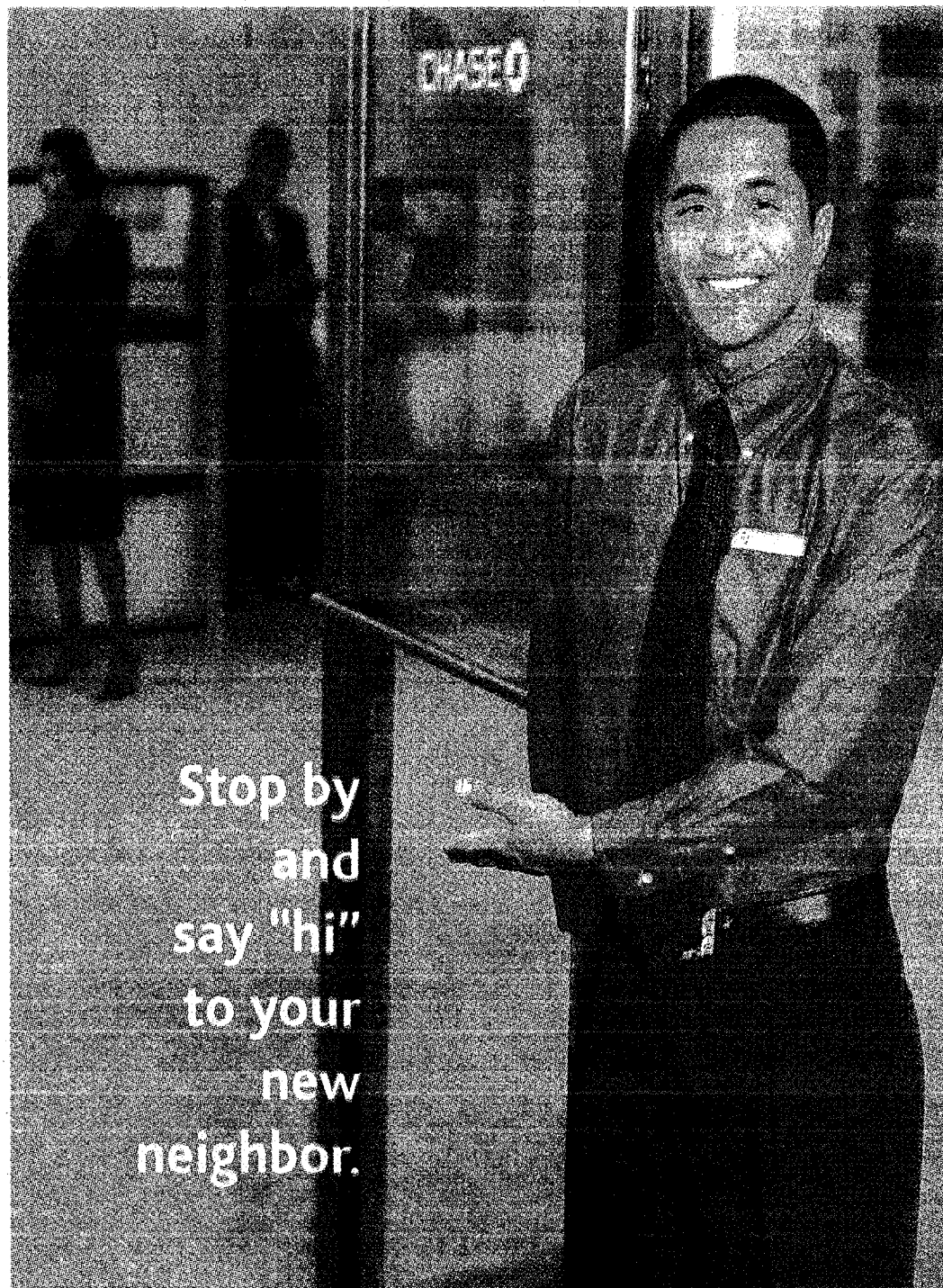
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SHOOTING

FROM PAGE A1

"Unfortunately I'm unable to describe how we've enhanced it, but we have enhanced security," DeAngelo said.

Tiderington said police were reviewing security videotape not only from the gas station, but also from surrounding businesses. Likewise, they are reviewing the tape of the 9-1-1 call, which was made by the gas station attendant.



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FRU/SAT LS 11:00
CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR (R) 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40
FRU/SAT LS 11:55
ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (PG) 12:15, 2:45, 4:55, 7:05, 9:15
FRU/SAT LS 11:25
I AM LEGEND (PG-13) 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
FRU/SAT LS 12:00
THE GOLDEN COMPASS (PG-13) 11:40, 2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:45
ENCHANTED (PG) 11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:40, 9:40
FRU/SAT LS 11:20
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LIKE NUMBERS?
there are a pile of them in today's SPORTS section
Photo

MADD message – make yuletide safe

BY JULIE BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Brenda Pendleton remembers vividly the day she was in a drunken driving crash. Pendleton's sister died in the crash, and she spent eight months in the hospital.

"I had to learn to think, talk, use the bathroom, everything we take for granted," she told those at Wayne County MADD's "Tie One on for Safety" program Friday, Dec. 7. Her sister, 24, left behind a 3-year-old son for the family to raise.

Pendleton needed 26 operations, and spent three years in a wheelchair. "I'm here today and able to walk and talk, basically do everything," said the mother of two daughters who became active with Mothers Against Drunk Driving after the crash.

"Think about other people's lives before you get behind the wheel and drive," Pendleton urged. "Drinking and driving is 100 percent preventable. Just think about your loved ones and kiss them every day."

She was among speakers at the MADD program at Westland Shopping Center, held to boost awareness of safe driving during the holidays. The day's "a pledge to everyone to drive safe and sober during the holiday season," said Ne'chole McClendon, executive director for MADD of Wayne County.

"I think it's getting better," she said of public awareness. "We still have a long way to go." MADD is involved in state legislation to put ignition locks on the cars of first-time drunken driving offenders. "We're pushing legislation to make that happen," she said.

The Dec. 7 session at the mall included a lively musical performance by Detroit School of the Arts

vocalists, the Achievers Ladies Ensemble under the direction of Sheila Sipes. "Youth is the prevention of underage drinking," said McClendon, who involves young people every year. "We want to start with the young people because they're our most precious resource."

The day also included voting on favorite "mocktail" recipes, to show that tasty drinks can be served that don't include alcohol. The top three winners were recognized. Red ribbons and ribbon decals were given out for display on vehicles.

Representing Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano, Tad Sturdivant talked about his days with the Michigan State Police and losing a trooper colleague who was hit and killed by a hit and run driver. That driver was convicted of drunken driving, said Sturdivant, deputy director of children and family services for the county.

"What punishment is appropriate and necessary to eradicate this plague?" he asked. Australia publishes convicted drunken drivers' names in the newspaper, Sturdivant said, while El Salvador has the ultimate punishment – execution by firing squad for a first offense.

Undersheriff Dan Pfannes said, "MADD has done a great job over the years in getting the message out not to drink and drive." He described extra patrols planned for the holidays and progress made: "However, we can't let up."

Two deaths were of drunken pedestrians who stepped in the path of a sober motorist, Pfannes noted. "We must also be equally mindful of taking responsibility," added Westland Mayor William Wild, noting a ride home for a drunken friend can be a life saver.

Local trumpeter blows horn in parade

Michael J. Clemente of Plymouth, a high school senior at Novi Detroit Catholic Central and four-year member of the bands there as a trumpet player and also Senior Drum Major, recently represented the Plymouth area in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

He marched and played trumpet as a member of Macy's Great American Marching Band. The band, sponsored by Macy's, is comprised of high school musicians from all over the country and leads the parade in New York City on Thanksgiving morning. Clemente was chosen as a member of the trumpet section of the Macy's Great American Marching Band for this year's parade.

The opportunity came to Clemente as a result of his participation in and achievements attained while completing a Drum Major camp program each of the past two summers at Eastern Illinois University. His nomination by camp directors to membership in this band led to his audition and acceptance for membership in this year's parade band.

Once a student is accepted for membership in the parade band they then commit to a week-long program in New York.

Their directors for the week come from Auburn University, Ohio State and many other colleges and universities as well as from a number of drum corps organizations. This gives these students the chance to work under some of the nation's top band professors and instructors as they prepare for their performances the day of the parade.

In addition to playing as they marched the entire band route, the band was a featured performer in front of the Macy's flagship store in Herald Square as part of the NBC televised coverage of this event.

Clemente is a 2004 graduate of Our Lady of Good Counsel Elementary in Plymouth and



Michael J. Clemente of Plymouth (center, in glasses with silver trumpet), a high school senior at Novi Detroit Catholic Central, recently represented the Plymouth area in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

of its music program, led by Susan Lindquist, where he got his start with the trumpet as a member of the OLCG bands from fifth through eighth grades.

His band director at Catholic Central is Greg Normandin. After his 2008 graduation from Catholic Central, Clemente plans to major in Music Education at Michigan State University.

Michael is the son of Mike and Mary Jo Clemente of Plymouth Township and has one sister, Annie, a freshman at Western Michigan University.

Video finalist

The shopping confessions are in. Over the last four weeks, secret shoppers from across the country have come forward to confess their



Craig Kerfoot

unique, devious, outrageous, funny, or heartwarming purchases they have been hiding from their friends, family, and significant others.

Five lucky contestants - including Craig Kerfoot of Plymouth - have been selected as finalists in the eBillme Shopping Confessions Contest. One will be chosen as the grand prize winner and will receive \$20,000 from eBillme and the title of the best secret

shopping confession. Kerfoot confessed the past 25 years of inadequate Christmas presents for his parents, and revealed his surprise gift this year, and the secret method of payment he used to purchase it.

"Our contest has proven that there are a lot of secret shoppers out there operating incognito from all those around them," says Marwan Frozley, President and CEO of MODASolutions. "We searched for the biggest secret shoppers, and received creative, humorous, heartwarming, and entertaining video confessions. It was a really hard decision, but we managed to narrow it down to the Top five. We are looking forward to announcing our big winner in the upcoming weeks, and granting \$20,000, right in time for the holidays."



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Pro a must to follow Medicaid recovery law

I recently heard an ad that raised my eyebrows. It dealt with Medicaid and how to deal with Michigan's new estate recovery rules. The ad said that by buying a certain product, it would allow one to qualify for Medicaid. In addition, the ad claimed to be able to shelter assets from Michigan's new Estate Recovery Law. Although there are ways to plan for Medicaid and to



Money Matters
Rick Bloom

work with Michigan's new estate recovery rules, consumers need to keep their guard up. There are people out there who are unqualified to give advice about Medicaid, but give it anyway.

For as long as I can remember, Medicaid planning has been a hot issue. For many, the issue was how to get the government to pay for nursing home expenses. In the old days, it was relatively easy to qualify for Medicaid. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on which way you look at it, that is no longer the case. The rules have tightened and it no longer is easy to qualify.

For example, in the past when the government looked at assets to determine eligibility for Medicaid, it would go back three years and look at an individual's economic data. Under today's rules, the look-back period is five years. Medicaid also is more complex today because of new estate recovery rules which allow the state to come after some assets after death of individuals who have received Medicaid.

In 1993, federal legislation mandated that states have an estate recovery rule, however, Michigan did not enact the law until this year. The law was signed Sept. 30.

Despite what you may have read about the new law, it is not punitive. In fact, it is actually pretty liberal. There are ways to properly plan to either eliminate or reduce the effect of the new estate recovery rules. The key is proper planning and for that you will need to deal with a professional, not a salesperson. For example, I have seen ads selling so-called "Medicaid annuities" claiming that they avoid the new rules. Be careful about buying these so-called Medicaid qualifying annuities, because they don't necessarily accomplish your goal. You may find the "cure" is worse than the disease.

Proper Medicaid planning requires someone who knows what they are doing and who stays current on the law. Medicaid laws are constantly changing and the rules a year ago certainly are not the rules today. Does everyone need an attorney to deal with Medicaid? No. Many times people can do it themselves without difficulty. In fact, there is a free hotline for seniors who need some advice: (800) 347-LAWS. A variety of state and federal agencies also can be of assistance. On the other hand, if you do decide to retain an attorney, I recommend one who specializes in elder law. There is a section of the State Bar of Michigan, the Elder Law section, which has attorneys that specialize in issues such as Medicaid planning.

Seniors who are contemplating applying for Medicaid should be very leery about buying any products and dealing with people who are not qualified to give advice. Proper Medicaid planning can protect your loved ones. On the other hand, a misstep can have serious financial consequences to you and your loved ones.

If you're in a situation where Medicaid may be an option, take your time and don't rush into a course of action. Get the facts, deal with people who have your interests at heart and then make a decision.

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. Observer & Eccentric readers can submit questions at money-matters@hometownlife.com. For more information, visit Rick's Web site at www.bloomassetmanagement.com. You can hear Rick from noon to 3 p.m. Sundays on WDTK-AM (1400).

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Finnish-American Singers concert rescheduled for Sunday, Dec. 23

Due to the heavy snowfall last Sunday, the Finnish-American Singers concert had to be rescheduled for Dec. 23.

Singers president Ilene Yanke says not to worry, the Bake Sale will go on as scheduled as part of the event. Finnish Christmas tarts and ginger cookies and a variety of open-faced sandwiches will be served after the concert as well along with coffee, tea and pop. The festivities take place 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 23, at the Finnish Cultural Center, 35200 W. Eight Mile, between Newburgh and Gill, Farmington Hills.

Tickets are \$10. For more information, call (248) 478-6939.

The Finnish-American Singers perform a concert featuring Finnish carols as well as classical music.

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

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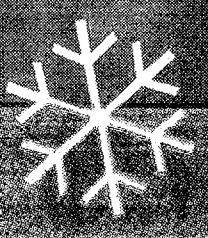
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A 'home' for the holiday

St. Dunstan serves dinner for those alone on Christmas Day

BY LEANNE ROGERS
STAFF WRITER

Judy Larry is working hard to get out the word that St. Dunstan Catholic Church is hosting their usual Christmas Day dinner for people who would otherwise be alone on the holiday.

A volunteer at the dinner for more than a decade, this is the first year Larry and her husband, Bruce, Westland residents, are coordinators for the Christmas dinner.

"We get elderly folks who call and say they are so happy that we're doing this even with all the troubles we've had — they are just so gratified," said Judy Larry, a member of the parish since the church was built in 1958.

"I don't get too emotional with the elderly people but this lady called and went on and on about how she appreciated it so much," added Bruce Larry.

The troubles are the June removal of longtime St. Dunstan pastor the Rev. Donald Demmer amid what the Archdiocese of Detroit called financial irregularities at the parish. That has triggered protests by parishioners seeking Demmer's return. Garden City Police have sought a warrant against a former employee over more than \$100,000 missing from the parish. Additionally, \$1.4 million is owed due to employee federal withholding being unpaid for five years.

Despite all the turmoil at the parish this year, there really wasn't any question about continuing the holiday tradition



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Getting prepared for the annual Christmas Day dinner hosted by St. Dunstan Catholic Church are Susan Massey (left), director of Christian Service, Judy and Bruce Larry, coordinators of the dinner. For many years, the church has hosted a Christmas Day dinner for people who would otherwise be alone on the holiday. The dinner is free but advance registration is required.

that draws 150 or more people for food and holiday companionship.

"With all the trials and tribulations since June, we tried for some normalcy. We love doing it (the dinner)," said Judy Larry, adding parishioners are fielding a full slate of volunteers to cook and serve the meal.

"We have to continue our ministry. It's our faith and our beliefs that keep us going," added Susan Massey, St. Dunstan Christian Service director, whose program helps provide food and students to help at the dinner. "There was no hesitation about continuing the dinner with all the turmoil. It's such a wonderful project to have here. It is such a welcoming day."

Since the dinner is for people who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day,

the guests are predominantly senior citizens. Along with notices in bulletins at area churches, Judy Larry said she has also faxed fliers to area senior housing complexes.

"Some of them will come decked out like New Year's Eve and others will be casual. People come from all over the place," said Judy Larry. "People come and stay for the duration to socialize."

Each year, parish members Al and Donna Spiteri spend weeks thawing, cooking, slicing and refreezing the many donated turkeys needed for the Christmas dinner. Individuals and businesses donate items for the dinner, which are served by members of the parish, as well as provide cash contributions.

"We never say no to a donation," she said Judy Larry, adding

HOLIDAY TRADITION

What: Dinner for anyone who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.

Where: St. Dunstan Catholic Church on Belton in Garden City. Belton is the second street west of Inkster Road. Take Belton south from Ford and it will dead end at the church.

When: The doors open at 1 p.m. and dinner is served at 1:30 p.m.

How: The dinner is free, but advance reservations are required by calling (734) 595-3049.

some donors wish to remain anonymous while others ask where their names will be listed.

The Larrys took over the dinner coordination duties from Mary and John Shurge, who had been in charge for a number of years.

"They retired after many years. We really thank them for their dedication," said Judy Larry. "A lot of people volunteer year after year."

Over the years, Judy Larry recalled making a lot of mashed potatoes for the Christmas dinner working with kitchen supervisor Monica Dubiel.

"She's our kitchen angel," Judy Larry said.

There is no cost for the Christmas Dinner, but advance reservations are required by calling (734) 595-3049. St. Dunstan is located on Belton, the second street west of Inkster Road. Take Belton south from Ford and it will dead end at the church.

Meals on Wheels in need of volunteers

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Wayne County program that delivers hot meals to homebound seniors urgently needs volunteers, particularly in Westland and Redford.

"In Westland, we actually have six people waiting for service because we don't have anybody to deliver to them," said Carol Scott, Wayne County Senior Services manager.

To volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program, call (734) 727-7357.

The county provides 2,800 hot meals a day to homebound seniors 60 and older who can't fix their own meals due to physical or mental disabilities, Scott said.

Seniors may make donations to the program to offset costs. Volunteers, including one 90-year-old Redford man, use their own transportation to deliver hot meals between 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. In some cases, cold lunches are brought along for weekends.

The county has a kitchen staff that works overnight to prepare the meals, which are distributed through 41 nutrition sites throughout Wayne County.

"Westland and Redford are the areas where we really need volunteers right now," Scott said, "but we could use them everywhere."

Volunteers in Westland

deliver meals from the senior Friendship Center on Newburgh near Ford, the Kay Beard Building on Michigan Avenue near Merriman and St. Bernardine of Siena Church on Ann Arbor Trail near Merriman.

In particular, the county needs volunteers to deliver meals from St. Bernardine, Scott said.

Redford meals are delivered from the Redford Community Center on Hemingway.

In all, Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver 260 meals a day in Westland and 130 in Redford, Scott said.

Aside from providing hot meals, the program also provides a safety net by having volunteers check up on homebound seniors.

"It means that somebody checks on them every day," Scott said.

Volunteers have to pass a background check, have a good driving record and "just have a good heart," she said. "It is a lot of work, especially in the winter when it's snowing."

Volunteers also have to agree to help out one day a week, delivering meals to 15 to 20 seniors. They get paid 36 cents a mile.

Some volunteers have complained that their mileage expenses haven't increased along with rising fuel costs.

"If we paid more for mileage," Scott said, "we'd have to serve less meals."

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OUR VIEWS

For the holidays, give a gift of life

By this time next week, the gift giving will have come to an end. People will have headed back to the stores to make returns and cash in on post-Christmas sales.

But there's one gift that still needs to be given, especially at this time of year. It's the gift of life, and you have to visit an American Red Cross donor center or participate in a local Red Cross blood drive to make it happen.

The holidays are a time when blood donations drop. Factories and schools are closed and people are too busy with holiday activities. But the demand for blood never takes a day off. In fact, the American Red Cross of Southeastern Michigan needs some 900 donors each day to keep its shelves stocked with blood.

Your single blood donation can help up to three people. Do you have O-positive or O-negative blood? O-positive is in demand because it can be given to 84 percent of the population. O-negative has the universal red blood cells which can be given to any patient regardless of blood type.

If you have the rare AB blood type — only 4 percent of people have it — your donations also are need. AB plasma is the universal plasma. Like O-negative, it can be given to all blood types.

It takes an hour of your time to give blood and the donor centers have hours six days a week to accommodate all schedules. Don't know where a center is? You'll find the Livonia donor center in the University Park Building at 36650 Five Mile across from St. Mary Mercy Hospital.

There are also plenty of blood drives being held through the end of the month. Consider making a donation:

- 1-7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 26, at Resurrection Catholic Church, 48755 Warren Road, Canton.
- noon to 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 28, at Busch's Market, 15185 Sheldon, Plymouth Township.
- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 28, at the Plymouth District Library, 223 S. Main, Plymouth.

If you're at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and are in general good health, you're eligible to donate. And don't worry about being too old. No one is. The Red Cross doesn't have an upper age limit when it comes to blood donations.

Donating can be as easy as calling (800) GIVE LIFE or visiting the Web site at www.givelife.org.

Blue Cross bills need more scrutiny

Attorney General Mike Cox and the United Auto Workers are not often allies. But Cox, the UAW, the Consumers Union, Health Alliance Plan, AARP and several commercial insurance companies have joined to oppose legislation tailored to benefit Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

A package of four bills to amend Blue Cross operations was hastily pushed through the Michigan House of Representatives in October with only one two-hour hearing before coming to a House vote, where it received bipartisan support. It is now before the Senate, where state Sen. Tom George, R-Kalamazoo, promises a more deliberative process.

Obviously, the degree of opposition alone warrants a more responsible legislative process. In addition, Blue Cross insures 4.2 million Michigan residents, representing 70 percent of those with health insurance, excluding Medicare and Medicaid. What happens to Blue Cross will have an impact on all of us.

The legislation would give Blue Cross more flexibility and reduce its liability on individual insurance policies — the objective being to provide better rates and coverage for those with individual policies and those currently uninsured. Blue Cross estimates that individual insurance will grow from 7 percent to 15-25 percent of the market over the next five years as employers drop coverage. According to press reports, Blue Cross claims it has lost \$52 million on these policies over the last 10 years.

Blue Cross was organized in 1939 under state statute as a tax-exempt "charitable and benevolent institution." Blue Cross is required to provide health insurance to Michigan citizens who cannot get it elsewhere and ensure that coverage is accessible and affordable for everyone in Michigan. Blue Cross currently maintains \$2.8 billion in reserves.

In a meeting with *Observer & Eccentric* editors, Cox outlined some of his major concerns with the legislation:

- Elimination of "community rating." The legislation would allow Blue Cross to institute a 10-tier system using age, health history, county of residence, etc., to determine rates. This would allow Blue Cross to set different rates based on these factors for its individual accounts. This would include "redlining," setting rates based on where a customer lives.
- Rate changes would no longer need prior approval from the state insurance commissioner and would no longer face a challenge from the attorney general's office.
- The legislation would allow Blue Cross to expand its for-profit operations.

Cox is also concerned about rising Blue Cross rates despite its record reserves. A suit by a Livonia couple is challenging a recent 24-percent average rate increase.

These are legitimate concerns and need to be argued in a public forum. We also need to hear from the governor, who has yet to weigh in on this legislation.



Don't limit licenses

I find it amazing and discouraging that the City of Plymouth wants to limit the liquor licenses in our town.

When I first moved here in 1995 I could not even find a place to buy a hot dog or any type of meal for my then-4-year-old after 6 p.m. The town closed down at 6 p.m. The shops were very basic and most of them were struggling.

Now we have a multitude of restaurants and bars to choose from. Downtown is thriving with activity. I walk in the evenings and when I walk through downtown I see people out on the streets, coming in and out of restaurants and I have never seen any activity that I would say was disruptive.

It is the job of the police to monitor the streets. If they are busy with drunk drivers it may not be due to just our bars here and restaurants. Times have changed and that type of activity is unfortunately on the rise. One of the coolest features of Plymouth is that residents can walk uptown and have dinner, there is no need to drive.

If there is an issue with a particular establishment then that facility should be held accountable, but to limit the licenses for new restaurants is a shame. If the restaurants can make it economically they should be allowed to open. Let the market dictate the number that can survive.

We have to move forward in this town, not backward. The City of Plymouth property taxes are outrageous and the only reason to date that people have paid them is that the homes in this area appreciate.

Recently that has not been happening, due to the economy. Somehow taxes still go up. The city needs to make sure its decisions are always in the best interest of the residents, not what is convenient for the police department.

Karen O'Keefe
Plymouth

Day of reckoning

It is with amazement that I find the full-time elected officials of Plymouth Township have again voted themselves raises of 9 percent over the next two years. This is incredible in today's economic conditions, where people do not know whether they will be employed the next day, let alone guaranteed raises totaling 9 percent over two years.

I know people in this township who work in the private sector who have accepted a cut in their salary in order to save their jobs. With so many homes sitting on the market declining in value and not selling, I find it outrageous that these elected servants of the people who lost their jobs are accepting such lavish increases in their salaries.

I agree with trustee Mann and trustee Curmi that this is not the time nor is it the prudent things to do to accept such increases while their constituents are going on the unemployment line, or are accepting cuts in their salary so they

LETTERS

can survive. These three full-time PUBLIC servants should explain their attitude to the people come next election. The day of reckoning is around the corner and November 2008 is not that far away. The outcry of our people should throw the bums out.

Abe A. Munfakh
former Plymouth Township trustee

Taking all the gold

Boy, everybody else is taking pay cuts and forgoing raises during these tough times, but not our board.

Lets see, the unionized employees of the township are either in arbitration (firemen) — cannot get a contract. And the township cannot even fill the positions for firemen (seven) that are needed because of retirements, but a few can just have a meeting and

(poof) raises for the board. Let's do that for the firemen, police, DPW and everybody else that's organized. And let's use the same criteria as they did for their raises (surrounding communities).

My taxes seem to keep increasing while I see more and more houses going up for sale and setting empty or going into foreclosure. Sort of looks like the King and his Court can take all of the gold while the peasants (taxpayers) go without (services).

Parnell Johnson
Plymouth

Absolutely no raises

Not only are the majority of people in Michigan not getting raises, but we are paying for the raises of the government employees who are. This includes anyone who is paid by a state agency, local governmental body, school district, etc.

They say they work hard, and deserve raises. Apparently we're all slackers who don't work hard. Not only don't we deserve a raise, but we should be penalized further by being forced to fund their raises.

Maybe they won't be able to give themselves raises once there is nobody left in Michigan to soak but government employees.

Larry Phipps
Plymouth

Beware of this scam

It seems there are scams all over the place these days. You've won the lottery of some obscure country or a needy millionaire in Europe is seeking your help transferring funds to the United States.

These kinds of scams can be upsetting, particularly when you realize the reason they exist — because so many people fall for them.

Especially upsetting are the scams that target people who depend on Social Security benefits — and use Social Security's name in their shady dealings.

Recently, we have heard of a number of scams where individuals posing as Social Security employees call and ask for personal information like your name, Social Security number and bank account information. The caller alleges that we need this information so we can issue you additional funds or rebates or they allege that because of a computer glitch your personal information has been lost.

Another scam used an e-mail that was designed to look like it came from Social Security. It provided information about the annual cost-of-living-adjustment and directed readers to a Web site designed to look like Social Security's site so people could "update their information" — valuable information to identity thieves and criminals.

In an effort to combat such scams, we want to make one thing clear: Social Security will not send you an e-mail asking you to give us your personal information, such as your Social Security number, date of birth, or other private information. If someone saying they are from Social Security does e-mail you requesting information, don't respond. Instead, contact your local Social Security office or call us at (800) 772-1213 to see whether we really need any information from you.

Whatever you do, don't fall victim to a scam. Don't give out your personal information.

Social Security and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) take these scams very seriously. We do everything we can to stop the perpetrators and educate the public. To report suspicious activity, please call the OIG Hotline at (800) 269-0271. A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at OIG's Web site: www.socialsecurity.gov/oig.

Of course, there are times when Social Security may contact you to update your information. At such times, you will always receive prior notification from us by mail or telephone before a personal visit is made. When in doubt, contact us at (800) 772-1213 (TTY (800) 325-0778) and we can verify the identity of the Social Security employee who has contacted you.

Frances Heimes-Savickis
Social Security public affairs specialist,
Metro Detroit

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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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Sherrie Pryor, Plymouth DDA operations director, on the advantages of shopping in downtown Plymouth

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Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

Moving beyond grief and returning to hope

Grief and I locked horns in June 1995. My wife of 12 years, Ann, was diagnosed with advanced lung cancer. The doctors said she would live 18 months. Her battle would last another 41 months.



John O'Shaughnessy

Our sons were 7 and 9. They needed their mother. I needed my wife. But in the end, all of that was stripped away.

After this life-altering experience ended in 1998, I learned that you can learn to live with grief and with proper attention and determination, accept it. Many people believe they can outrun grief. If they just keep moving, maybe the pace will knock it out. Eventually, maybe it will just whimper away and leave them alone.

I learned the hard way about the circle of grief and the choices it offers. You can travel in this circle, trying to find your way back to some place that no longer exists, dismissing your feelings along the way but marching forward nonetheless thinking you are making progress. Or, you can pass through the circle, feeling the pain, letting it burn inside of you. One day, when the fire goes out, you find yourself in a new place, a better place because you allowed yourself to grieve.

In my book, *The Greatest Gift - A Return to Hope*, I try to teach the lessons I learned about grief.

Grief doesn't always start with the death of a loved one. It's an emotional effect caused by a thought. My grieving began when I heard those words "it's cancer."

I learned as I went, marking my steps with the hope that one day I would find my way back to that place we had. But after she died, that place died too, and it was time for me to find a new location.

If you are grieving, the following steps may help you find you're to living a productive life again.

Feel the pain. Grief is not something you can avoid, you have to feel it, let it sink in and actually live with you for a while.

Tears are a gift. They are a reminder how we are all vulnerable. I learned that crying felt good. The slow release of tears meant I was feeling the pain and not running from it. Tears are part of the natural progression of grief.

One day you might feel sad, another day angry, another day overwhelmed. Whatever the day and whatever the feeling, let it happen. Remember, the deeper the love, the deeper the grief. Feeling pain means you are one step closer to being well again.

Seek help. Find the right people who can help you. If you're a spiritual person, ask God for His help through prayers. Don't be afraid to lean on people who support you. They were sent to you for a reason. Kindly distance yourself from the people who are not as capable or as willing to help you. They may one day return to you, but

for now, they are not the people you need in your life.

You may also need professional help. Don't consider this a sign of weakness but rather a realization that you can't do it along.

Grief support centers like New Hope in Northville, (248) 348-0115, offer a great way to express your feelings and meet people who have had similar experiences.

When you reach out for help, you will find out that you are not alone. Deal with the pain. The old adage "time heals all wounds" doesn't apply to grief. Only time plus hard work and help can properly heal the wound. Take action after you've cried a million tears and told people about your pain. Chip away at your grief each day. Attend grief workshops and make new friends. Begin writing a journal, take long walks, and take care of yourself and your loved ones. Give yourself permission to grieve. Don't rush your grief and don't let anyone rush it for you. Over time and with hard work you'll push forward and back into life.

Make choices. Choose to live again. It's the greatest gift you can give yourself.

After Ann died I spent almost four years grieving. I wanted to live again. I wanted to have fun and resume my life minus my wife and best friend. I couldn't change what happened but I had come to accept it. I chose to move on but never let her go. A part of Ann will always be with me. I'll always be thankful for the time I had with her, not for the time that was swept away. It took me years to come to this restful place and it came with pain and suffering, but I found it nonetheless.

Move on. When you're ready take down the shrines in your house. Emotionally relocate your loved one to a place in your heart.

Studies have shown that about one-third of all people who grieve are successful at taking their life to a new and meaningful level. These triumphant survivors transform themselves. They accept what happened and allow the experience to build their character. They replace their anger and pity with meaningful purpose-driven feelings. They commit to giving back and marching forward, to serving others who experience grief. They conduct fund-raisers to bring awareness and money to a cause. They write books about their experience so others will benefit. They wrap their arms around old friends and just listen.

Adversity, big or small, affects all of us sooner or later. Some let it consume them. Others work at grief, marching through it, making good choices along the way.

When you arrive at this place, you will know it not by a smile on your face, but by a sense of happiness in your heart and the joy in knowing you are a survivor.

John O'Shaughnessy lives in Plymouth. His two sons are now grown, off to college and doing well. His book, "The Greatest Gift," can be found on Amazon.com, at Barnes & Noble and the Plymouth Book Cellar.

What sacrifices are we being asked to make?

Christmas is coming. Where is the present we should give to our country?

Where is the shared sacrifice for the common good in America today?

We send young men and women off to war.



Tom Watkins

What does it cost us? No, I do not mean the young men and women who are coming home in body bags, without a limb, a closed head injury or post traumatic stress. They are paying a huge price, as are their families.

What is the cost you and I, average citizens, are being asked to pay? Where is the shared sacrifice? I am not

referring to the costs of freedom here at home or "prestige around the world," as important as those items are to all of us as Americans. Where are the shared values, shared duties and responsibilities that all Americans are asked to commit?

Yeah, I know, it is costing us plenty in taxes and deficit spending that will be a burden on our children, our great-grandchildren. What is the daily sacrifice that we as Americans are making to support this war on terror? Have we been asked to buy "war bonds"? Conserve energy? Pay increased taxes to actually pay for our war rather than borrowing it from the Chinese and Japanese? Do without a Big Mac or a latte in order to support the troops?

Have we been asked to volunteer to serve in the military or otherwise commit to adding value to ending terrorism? To delay our son's or daughter's college education for a year or two so they can serve our country in some fashion? Have our lives even been a little disrupted? Have we forgotten the feeling we had on 9/11 when we wanted a call to action?

I believe as Americans we want to be called to do more to contribute to our collective future. We want to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Clearly, veterans groups, family members and some patriotic citizens are helping in large and small ways. But why haven't our national leaders engaged us for the common good of all? Where is the rallying cry to come together as Americans as we did in World War II to be part of something bigger than ourselves? Why haven't we been asked to plant a shade tree even if we will never enjoy its shade?

WHAT SACRIFICE?

What really made me think of this was being at Meijer recently and reading a bumper sticker on a car that read, "Proud to know an American Soldier."

What are we doing to support the soldiers? Will we know him or her and support them when they come home with lifelong physical and emotional scars? Will we have a job for them? Will we raise hell with the president and Congress to make sure they have the support, medical and mental health attention to readjust to civilian life? Does "bumper sticker" action inspire you?

It seems as long as we can put a flag decal or yellow magnetic ribbon on our car or wave an American flag on the Fourth of July, we are OK. Just don't inconvenience anyone. Someone's son or daughter is in harm's way — but let's not miss college football on Saturday, pro ball on Sunday and the sale down at the local Wal-Mart.

A CALL TO ACTION

What if this president or the next were to address the nation and say:

■ I am instituting a national service program for all young people after high school graduation to serve their country in the military or some other form of country/community service for one year. We cannot expect young people to put their lives on the line while some are waiting in the latte or concert line.

■ I am calling for an increase in your taxes to pay for our war/freedom efforts.

■ I am requiring civilians to car pool to work at least one day per week to conserve oil. It is polluting our air and feeding terror.

■ We will set a "man on the moon" goal to reduce our oil consumption drastically over the next decade; our lives just may depend on our success.

Perhaps if more of us had "more skin in the game," our energies would be focused on what all of us could be doing to preserve our freedom and make the world a safer place. A call to action would certainly get our attention and perhaps inspire a nation.

It is never too late to act. And what a Christmas present it would be to those serving our country.

Tom Watkins is a business and education consultant. He served as Michigan's state superintendent of schools from 2001-05 and mental health director from 1986-90. He can be reached at tdwatkins@aol.com.

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SPORTS

B

(CP)

Thursday, December 20, 2007

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Ed Wright, editor . (734) 953-2108 . ewright@hometownlife.com

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Ex-Wing set to help Whalers fly

Former goalie Stefan joins brother behind bench

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Nobody knows better than Greg Stefan how life can change at a whirlwind pace when you make a living in the frenetic environment of world-class hockey.

One minute last week Stefan was enjoying life as a successful assistant coach for the National Hockey League's Carolina Hurricanes.

A few phone calls, a couple of days and one major midlife decision later, he was the head coach of the Ontario Hockey League's Plymouth Whalers.

"It all kind of came out of the blue," recalled Stefan, who was chosen by Whalers president and general manager Mike Vellucci to succeed Vellucci as the team's new strategist. "I was in

Carolina and everything was going good. But I've known Mike for a long time and I always told him that if something came up (coaching-wise) to let me know.

"Well, he called me and said, 'Hey, I'm stepping down. What do you think about taking over?' I told him I couldn't make that decision, that it was up to (Carolina general manager) Jimmy Rutherford and (Hurricanes and Whalers owner) Mr. (Peter) Karmanos. That's how it started."

DECISION TIME

Before Stefan knew it, the job-change scenario was unfolding faster than a Sidney Crosby slap shot.

Please see **WHALERS, B3**



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brothers Greg (left) and Joe Stefan form the new coaching tandem behind the Plymouth Whalers' bench. Greg Stefan, a longtime Detroit Red Wings goalie throughout the '80s and early '90s, was named head coach last week. He replaces Mike Vellucci, who was promoted to governor of the franchise.

Sidelines

Underwood traded

Canton native Joe Underwood was traded last week by the Ontario Hockey League's Guelph Storm to the Saginaw Spirit for a 15th round pick in the 2009 OHL priority draft as well as a conditional sixth-round pick in the 2009 draft.

"This is the 1990-born right-handed defenseman that the Spirit were looking for," said Spirit general manager Don Edwards. "He is a steady, stay-at-home defenseman that will greatly complement our defensive corps."

Underwood played with the Detroit Compuware program during the 2005-06 season and during the 2006 OHL Cup he tallied two points in three games.

The Storm selected Underwood in the seventh round of the 2006 draft. He notched a goal and three assists and 18 penalty minutes his rookie season. Underwood has played 19 games with the Storm this season, posting two assists and six penalty minutes.

Underwood will be returning home on Dec. 27 when the Spirit take on the Plymouth Whalers at Compuware Arena in Plymouth Township. The opening face-off is set for 2 p.m.

MHSAA survey

A monthlong survey conducted by the Michigan High School Athletic Association about high school sports yielded a variety of results, but none more important than the facts that both students and adults feel the primary roles of education athletics are to let kids have fun and teach them about becoming tomorrow's leaders.

"Have Your Say: The High School Sports Opinion Poll" was an online survey in which 8,036 questionnaires were submitted from Oct. 8 to Nov. 5. The purpose was to determine attitudes toward educational athletics to assist the MHSAA in its future planning.

Students and adults agreed on the primary roles of school sports, but had their order flip-flopped. Students, consistent with other surveys by other parties, listed having fun as the primary role of these extracurricular activities. Adults responding were of the opinion that school sports should teach young people about leadership skills.

It was also felt that the level of sportsmanship was better in high school sports than collegiate sports, high school aged AAU and club sports, nonschool youth sports and professional sports, in that order.

SALEM-CANTON HOOP TIMES 2

SPLIT DECISION

Salem girls finish strong, win 38-24

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Canton's girls basketball team made a strong first impression on Salem Tuesday night.

But in the end, the Rocks left a lasting impression on the Chiefs over the final three quarters in Salem's 38-24 victory in the Phase III gymnasium.

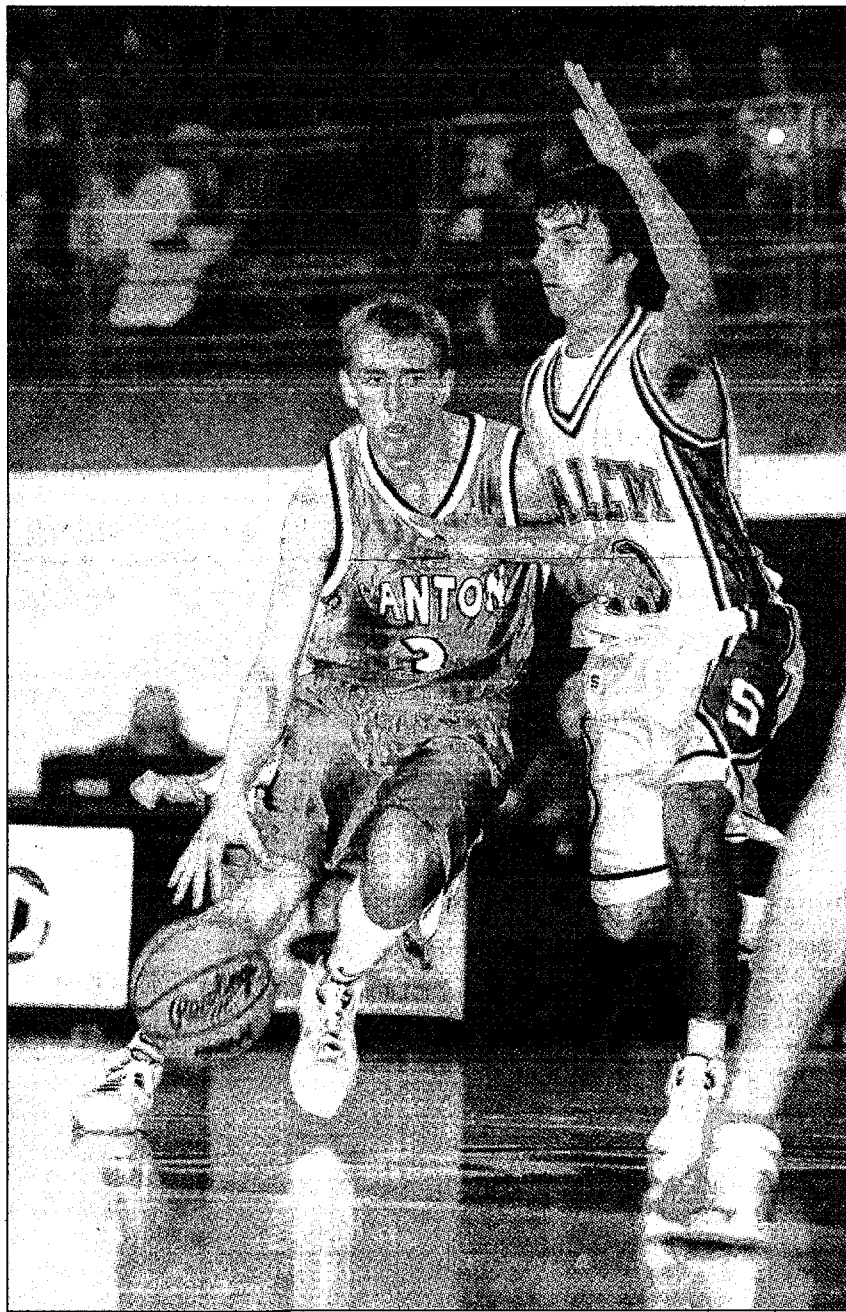
Canton rolled to an early 9-4 lead in the opening eight minutes before the Rocks took charge beginning in the second stanza and rolled to a 26-14 advantage with one quarter to play.

The victory improved Salem's record to 5-1 while Canton slipped to 1-5. Both teams open Western Lakes Activities Association divisional play Thursday when the Rocks host Westland John Glenn while the Chiefs host Northville.

"Early in the game we didn't show a lot of patience; we shot too quickly," said Salem coach Fred Thomann. "We were getting good shots, but we didn't make many and Canton was able to come down and score at the other end. We got it together the final three quarters and played very well."

The Rocks were led by their triumvirate of standouts: junior Chelsea Davis, who netted 13; and senior Alaya Mitchell and sophomore Sara Stone, who both twined 10.

Please see **GIRLS, B2**



ANDY RUBENSTEIN

Canton's Ryan Seely looks for a seam in the Salem defense as Rock senior guard Tyler Jeleniewski applies pressure during Tuesday's cross-campus clash. The Chiefs won, 71-64.

Chief boys climb over Rocks, 71-64

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Canton's boys basketball team shifted into attack mode Tuesday night against Salem.

The Chiefs attacked the backboards.

And they attacked the Rocks' ball-handlers — particularly All-WLAA forward Grant Stone, who was hounded by double and triple-teams the entire night.

In the end, Canton's aggressive style of play paid off with a 71-64 victory.

"Canton came out with guns a blazin' like they always do and they took us out of our offense," said Salem coach Bob Brodie, whose team slipped to 1-2 heading into tonight's WLAA Lakes Division opener at Westland John Glenn. "Then when they smelled blood, their pressure became even greater."

"We just didn't play very well. We were a little too selfish with the ball and we stood around and watched too much."

The impressive road victory improved Canton's record to 3-2 heading into Thursday night's WLAA Western Division opener at Northville.

"The thing I was most impressed with was how hard we played tonight," said Canton coach Dan Colligan. "We got a lot of deflections on defense and we came up

Please see **BOYS, B2**

Bridges brothers shine at the next level

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

With about 14 minutes to play in the first half of Saturday's game between Madonna University and Albion College, the chant started to fill Madonna's activities center.

In unison from MU's home cheering section it came — "D. J.'s bet-ter, ... D. J.'s bet-ter."

The look-a-like Bridges brothers of Canton, playing in a collegiate game for the first and only time, could not avoid hearing those words.

But just a couple minutes later it was Albion sophomore Andre Bridges who buried a triple while his older brother, Crusaders senior forward D. J. Bridges, watched from the sideline.

"Yeah, I heard it," said D. J. Bridges with a smile following MU's 86-80 win, which gave the Crusaders the Michigan Educational Credit Union Tournament championship. "I mean, he actually played better than me today."

"But we got the 'dub' so I'll take that anyway."

According to Andre, a shooting

guard who graduated from Canton High School two years after D. J., the fans' ribbing didn't bother him.

"I tried not to think about it that much," he noted. "It's in the back of your head, but I've got to keep my focus on my team the best I can."

TAKE THAT

Before halftime, Andre silenced the home crowd by draining all three of his attempts from behind the arc. Andre wound up with 11 points, in only 16 minutes on the floor.

D. J. could smile wider afterward, since his eight points and seven rebounds contributed to the Madonna victory.

Crusaders head coach Chuck Henry said it was a "fun" experience to have the siblings battling it out, with the stands including their parents Denis Sr. and Linda and younger sister Kayla (a standout freshman for Canton's varsity girls basketball team).

"I know the Bridges family," Henry said. "Andre's been in our gym working out with our kids. I just thought it was neat. I was hoping we'd end up playing them for the championship."

"... plus D. J.'s a senior, so if it

was going to happen this was the last chance and the only chance. Fortunately for D. J., he'll have bragging rights for the rest of his life."

Despite the Britons falling short of taking the tournament, the experience indeed was a once-in-a-lifetime thing for Andre — as well as for D. J. and the rest of their family (watching from their seats, but definitely not chanting).

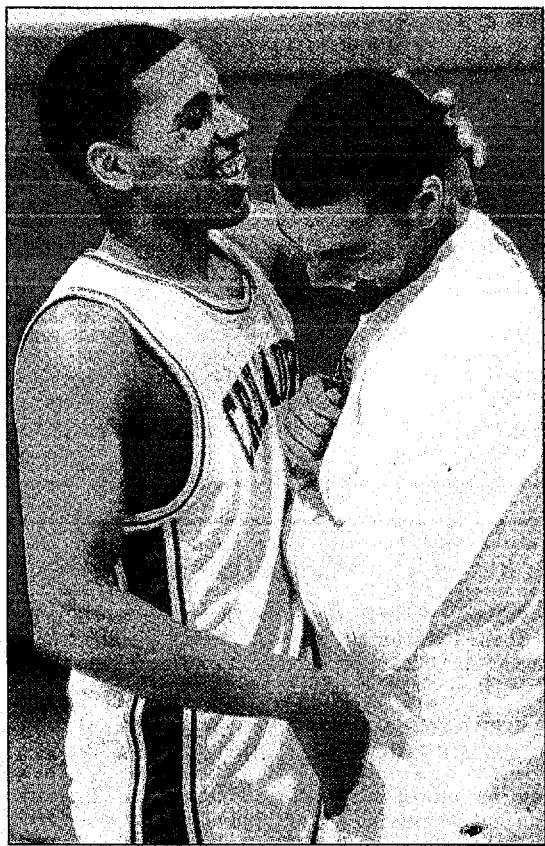
"Oh yeah, for sure," said Andre about the family reunion of sorts. "We never got to do it on a scale like this before, it was real fun looking over and seeing him there. ... It was weird."

SOAK IT IN

Both said they got together for a while on Friday, the first day of the tournament, and talked about the possibility of going up against each other in the title game.

When they knew it was definitely going to happen, their parents also made sure to chime in with some advice on being able to enjoy such a rarity.

Please see **BRIDGES, B3**



MU SPORTS INFORMATION

Canton alums D. J. Bridges of Madonna (left) and Andre Bridges of Albion get together for a lighthearted moment following Saturday's game, the only time the siblings will face each other in the collegiate setting.

PREP HOOP

Late 3's won't fall for Wildcat boys

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

If Hollywood ever decides to make Tuesday night's boys basketball game between Plymouth and Walled Lake Central into a feature-length movie, they could call it, "The Case of the Elusive Three."

Trailing by three points with less than a minute to play, the Wildcats misfired on a trio of potential game-tying treys before falling to the host Vikings, 50-46, in a Western

Lakes Activities Association contest.

The loss dropped the Wildcats to 1-4 while Central improved to 2-3.

"We couldn't get a three to drop when we really needed one," said Plymouth coach Tom Van Wagoner.

Plymouth's Brandon Roberts led all scorers with 18 points to go along with his five rebounds. Senior guard Navraj Sandhu also had a productive night, netting 17 points.

"Brandon and Navraj both

stepped up with big games," said Van Wagoner. "We're looking for a third player to step up and help them with the scoring. If that happens, we can be very good."

Central was led by senior guard Cory Rzeznick, who tallied 16 points, 12 of which came via the three-ball.

Plymouth led 7-6 after one quarter before falling into a 25-23 halftime hole. Central extended its lead to 38-31 with eight minutes to play.

To say the opening stage

of the game was played at a deliberate pace would be a vast understatement.

"There was probably one shot attempted in the first four minutes by both teams," Van Wagoner revealed.

The Vikings won the game at the free throw line, where they canned 11-of-18 attempts.

The visiting Wildcats visited the line just four times, sinking three.

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WHALERS

FROM PAGE B1

"Mike made a few phone calls and then the ball really got rolling," said Stefan, a Detroit Red Wings goalie from 1981 to 1990. "Within a few days the decision was up to me whether to come back or stay there. The more I thought about it, the more I realized what a great opportunity it would be for me."

"Is it something I'll do forever? I have no idea. Am I going to enjoy it? I hope so. Am I going to be good at it? I hope so. Am I glad I made this decision? Definitely, because this is something I've always wanted to do."

Vellucci said he considered resigning as coach prior to this season.

"But then people would have said, 'He's quitting because they're not going to be very good this year,'" Vellucci said. "Well, we're having a good year (the Whalers are 19-9-2-2), so I felt the time was right to make the change."

"The things I'm going to miss the most are the day-to-day interactions with the players at practice, helping teach them to become better players and better people. I'll miss it, but at the same time I'm confident that Greg will do a great job."

FAMILIAR FACE

Stefan is no stranger around Compuware Arena. Before joining the Hurricanes coaching staff full time two years ago, he served as an assistant coach and director of player development for the Whalers. He also served a five-year stint as a coach with the franchise from 1993-98.

"I was a player personnel guy here along with Mike before I left for Carolina, so I know half this team quite well," he said. "One of my priorities now is to get to know the players I don't know real well yet — their strengths and weaknesses. I've already learned a lot in the three games I've coached here, but I still have a lot to learn."

Stefan will be assisted by his younger brother, Joe, who joined the Whalers' this past off-season as Vellucci's top assistant.

EASY CHOICE

Once Vellucci decided to relinquish his coaching duties, the decision about who he wanted to replace him was as clear as a freshly Zambonied sheet of ice.

"Once I made the decision to step down, I knew Greg was the guy I was looking for," said Vellucci, who was promoted to governor of the franchise. "He's very familiar with a lot of our players already, his brother (Joe) is our assistant coach and he was a member of this organization for several years. Plus, he and I think a lot alike, so I knew it would make for a smoother transition."

"I was very happy with the way the team performed," said Canton coach John Cunningham. "To get an easy win this early in the season with a very young team is nice."

Piwowar was outstanding in her first high school meet, chalking up three nine-plus scores on the way to an all-around total of 35.45. Canton's Mallory Hudak earned a first in the vault with an 8.65.

NOT-SO-EASY CHOICE

The decision to hang up his whistle did not come easily for Vellucci, who guided the Whalers to an OHL championship this past spring.

"Some people think I stepped down because I'm sick — well, I'm not sick," said Vellucci, who was the only executive in the OHL to carry the president, GM and head coach titles. "It's something I've been considering for a while now. With all the jobs I had, it became too much. There were so many time constraints."

"Until now, I've always told myself, 'I can do it, I can do it.' But it got to be too much. I think this is the best decision for me, my family and the Whalers."

"I'll be leaning on Joe a lot to help me learn about the team since he's coached them for half the season already," said Stefan. "It will be fun coaching with him."

"I can't say enough about Mike and the job he's done here. He's a great coach and a great general manager. And if he ever wants to get back into coaching, I think he'd do an excellent job at the next level."

Greg Stefan and his wife, Diana, reside in Farmington Hills. They are the proud parents of two sons: Joseph, 19, and William, 9.

Plymouth girls fall to Walled Lake Central, 41-30

Plymouth's girls basketball team came up empty in its bid to jump over the .500 mark as the Wildcats dropped a 41-30 decision to visiting Walled Lake Central Tuesday night.

The Wildcats dropped to 3-4 on the season.

Plymouth led 11-8 after one quarter and 19-16 at the half before the Vikings stormed back to outscore their hosts 25-11 over the final 16 minutes.

Freshman Katie Moss (10 points) was the lone Wildcat to score in double figures. Central's Brooke Gustafson led all

scorers with 13.

Plymouth managed to drain just one three (from Troi Davis) while connecting on 3-of-6 free throws.

The Vikings, on the other hand, buried four triples and were nearly perfect from the charity stripe, swishing 9-of-10.

BRIDGES

FROM PAGE B1

"We told them to leave it on the floor, to have a good time," Denis Sr. said. "But at the end of the day, you're still brothers and you're still best friends. So that's what we wanted, and that's what we got."

"We're just blessed to be able to watch them have fun and enjoy."

In fact, during the hammer-and-tong non-conference men's basketball game, there were few opportunities for on-the-court bantering.

"We made a few comments, but nothing too bad," said D. J. "I told him I was going to talk a lot, but I didn't talk too much."

"I was proud of him, he played pretty well even though they didn't win."

D. J. added that he'll always look back on the game, but not just for going up against Andre.

"Oh yeah, I'll definitely look back on this," D. J. continued. "One of my dad's dreams was always for us to play on the same team. But he got to see us play against each other, so that was pretty good."

"My mom actually said she wasn't going to come to the game, but she decided to show at the last second. That was pretty cool, too."

Canton gymnasts vault to 2-0 start

Canton's girls gymnastics team improved its record to 2-0 Tuesday night with a resounding 133.35-68.15 triumph over Hartland.

The Chiefs swept at least the top five places in all four events.

The winners were paced by freshman Robyn Piwowar, who compiled an all-around point total of 34.95. The talented ninth-grader placed first in the floor exercise competition (8.8) and on the balance beam (8.75), while turning in runner-up efforts on the vault (8.55) and the uneven bars (8.85).

Senior Jessie Murray also excelled, placing second in the all-around (33.15) thanks in large part to a gold-medal performance on the vault (8.65).

Canton's Cathy Huang ruled the bars, winning with an 8.95.

Other all-around scores for the Chiefs were compiled by Huang, who finished third with a 32.85; and Mallory Hudak, who was fourth with a 31.30. Hudak's best showing came on the floor when she tied for second with Murray

with a stellar 8.75 score.

On Saturday, the Chiefs opened the 2007-08 campaign with a 132.9-121.65 victory over Vassar.

"I was very happy with the way the team performed," said Canton coach John Cunningham. "To get an easy win this early in the season with a very young team is nice."

Piwowar was outstanding in her first high school meet, chalking up three nine-plus scores on the way to an all-around total of 35.45. Canton's Mallory Hudak earned a first in the vault with an 8.65.

THE WEEK AHEAD

- BOYS BASKETBALL**
Thursday, Dec. 20
Canton at Northville, 7 p.m.
Salem at Westland John Glenn, 7 p.m.
Livonia Franklin at Plymouth, 7 p.m.
PCA at Light & Life Christian, 7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 21
Canton Agape at Inter-City Baptist, 8 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 27
Salem at Allen Park Journey, 7 p.m.
Canton Agape at Immaculate Conception Christmas Tournament, TBA
Friday, Dec. 28
Salem at Allen Park Journey, TBA
Saturday, Dec. 29
Canton Agape at Immaculate Conception Christmas Tournament, TBA
- GIRLS BASKETBALL**
Thursday, Dec. 20
Northville at Canton, 7 p.m.
Westland John Glenn at Salem, 7 p.m.
Plymouth at Livonia Franklin, 7 p.m.
PCA at Lenawee Christian, 7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 21
- BOYS HOCKEY**
Thursday, Dec. 20
Canton at Northville at Novi Arena, 7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 21
W.L. Western at Salem at Plymouth Cultural Center, 8:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 22
Canton at Gabriel Richard at Vost Arena, 7:30 p.m.
Plymouth at West Bloomfield at Orchard Lake Ice Arena, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 29
Plymouth at Ottawa at Bell Knapp Ice Arena, 5 p.m.
- WRESTLING**
Saturday, Dec. 22
Canton at EMU Varsity Tourney, 9 a.m.
Saturday, Dec. 29
Salem Individual Tournament, 9 a.m.
- BOYS SWIMMING**
Thursday, Dec. 20
Canton at Saline, TBA
ONTARIO HOCKEY LEAGUE
Thursday, Dec. 27
Whalers vs. Saginaw Spirit at Compuware Arena, 2 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 29
Whalers at Saginaw Spirit, 7:11 p.m.
- WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL**
Friday, Dec. 21
Rochester College at Madonna, 7 p.m.
MAJOR INDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE
Saturday, Dec. 22
Detroit Ignition at Chicago Storm, 8 p.m.
TBA - time to be announced.

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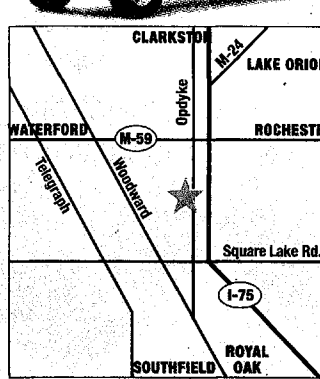
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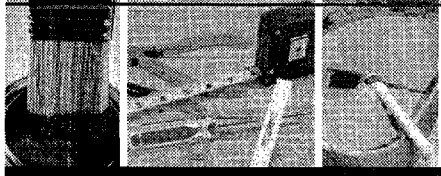
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GM Employee 39 Month Lease	REAR WHEEL DRIVE 8T3887				4 WHEEL DRIVE 8T3866			
	Down	10,000 Miles	12,000 Miles	15,000 Miles	Down	10,000 Miles	12,000 Miles	15,000 Miles
\$3000	\$179	\$191	\$211	\$3000	\$204	\$218	\$239	
\$2000	\$206	\$220	\$240	\$2000	\$232	\$246	\$268	
\$1000	\$235	\$248	\$268	\$1000	\$261	\$275	\$296	
\$0	\$263	\$277	\$314	\$0	\$289	\$303	\$325	
Non Employee 39 Month Lease	\$3000	\$211	\$225	\$245	\$3000	\$239	\$254	\$275
\$2000	\$240	\$253	\$274	\$2000	\$268	\$282	\$304	
\$1000	\$268	\$281	\$301	\$1000	\$296	\$311	\$332	
\$0	\$296	\$310	\$330	\$0	\$325	\$339	\$382	

*** 1st payment, sec. dep. & down pmt due at delivery. See box below for total due.
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\$3000	\$304	\$341	\$341	\$3000	\$342	\$348	\$359	
\$2000	\$246	\$247	\$250	\$2000	\$257	\$246	\$253	
\$1000	\$151	\$154	\$159	\$1000	\$151	\$160	\$164	
\$0	\$56	\$62	\$69	\$0	\$63	\$63	\$70	
Non Employee 39 Month Lease	\$3000	\$341	\$350	\$354	\$3000	\$354	\$354	\$360
\$2000	\$250	\$253	\$258	\$2000	\$253	\$267	\$264	
\$1000	\$159	\$160	\$165	\$1000	\$164	\$161	\$170	
\$0	\$64	\$60	\$70	\$0	\$70	\$73	\$82	

*Prices include applicable rebates plus destination. GM employee purchase. **Lease with option to purchase at term for pre-determined amount. Net incentives plus tax & lic. Excess miles @ 25¢ per mile. Lessee responsible for damage, wear & tear.

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24 MONTH LEASE

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\$2000 DOWN \$204 PER MO.**
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NOW \$25,129*

24 MONTH LEASE

SIGN & DRIVE \$334 PER MO.**
\$2000 DOWN \$205 PER MO.**
 GET \$500 CASH BACK! \$2639.14 Due at Signing!

2008 EDGE FWD SE

Automatic O/D trans, 3.5L V6 eng, 17" painted alum wheels, P235/65R17 BSW tires & more. Stock #8T3035 Was \$26,094
NOW \$22,589*

24 MONTH LEASE

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2008 EXPLORER XLT 4 DOOR 4X2

Air, illum. visors, 4.0L SOHC V6 eng, 5 spd auto trans w/O.D. P245/65R17 A/S tires, 17" cast alum whs. Stock #8T5005 Was \$27,710
NOW \$21,004*

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SIGN & DRIVE \$338 PER MO.**
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 GET \$500 CASH BACK! \$2700.47 Due at Signing!

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NOW \$25,603*

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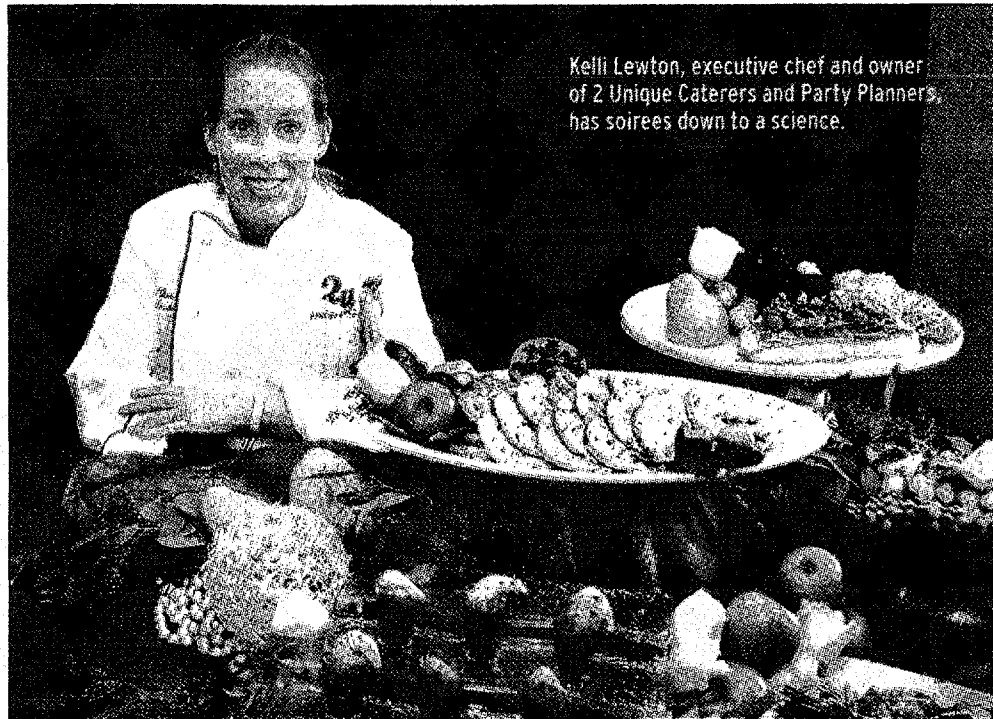
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Kelli Lewton, owner and chef at 2 Unique Caterers and Event Planners in Royal Oak, has created her own list of "The 12 Days of Christmas," a set of guidelines on how to plan your holiday gathering or New Year's party. These tips apply at any time of year whether the event is a bridal shower, summer cookout or dinner party.



Kelli Lewton, executive chef and owner of 2 Unique Caterers and Party Planners, has soirees down to a science.

DAY 12

■ MASTER CHECKLIST

Every great event has great beginnings. A master plan and checklist are keys to success. Your list may include rentals, inventory of china, linen, serving pieces, and a timeline for when tasks should be completed to ensure there's no last minute running.

DAY 11

■ MENU PLANNING

The most crucial part of a holiday feast is, of course, the food. Family favorites are always in demand, but this is the time to gather recipes you've wanted to try, and if necessary, experiment. When menu planning, have a good mix of items to fit everyone's varied tastes, including a few selections which are on the lighter side. Try to make some dishes in advance. Many items, including baked goods and chutneys, can be made well in advance. Don't forget to order special meat or bakery items so you're not disappointed on your last-minute shopping trip to your favorite market.

DAY 10

■ BUY BEVERAGES

Purchase all your beverages. Remember to buy beer and wine at room temperature and then just ice down an hour prior to guest arrival in coolers or party tubs. It is hard enough to store all the extra food items in the refrigerator without having to work around cases of pop, beer and wine.

DAY 9

■ MAKE CALLS

Your event is close enough now to the date that you can call family and friends to remind them about times and such. It's also a great time to assign tasks for family members to help with the preparation.

DAY 8

■ BAKE AND FREEZE

It's a great day for holiday baking. Cookies and breads freeze great. Bring out your special holiday tins. Sweet-filled tins make great gifts.

DAY 7

■ PICK UP DRY GOODS

Beat the last-minute grocery store frenzy and pick up all your dry goods such as paper products, coffee, tea, and canned and frozen items. Make any last minute purchases you may need for your table.



days of party planning

DAY 6

■ Plan your holiday tabletop. You can use phone books or boxes turned upside down placed on top of a base line tablecloth. Arrange risers on the table and cover with additional pieces of festive holiday linen, thus creating different levels as a stage for your platters, bowls, etc. Think about your centerpiece (how about some fresh pine branches placed between risers or holiday ribbon cascaded about?) Candles are always a nice touch. Colors and textures will lend to your festive holiday table. Think of your table as the stage and the food as the actors.

DAY 5

■ CLEAN

Gather china, serving pieces and linen. Double check for cleanliness and don't forget to polish the silver. This is also a good day for starting some cleaning, and to find your favorite music.

DAY 4

■ BUY FRESH PRODUCE

The last place you want to be stuck on Christmas Eve (or the night before the party) is the grocery store. Go today and buy your fresh produce and dairy products. Don't forget the eggnog and cinnamon.

DAY 3

■ PICK UP ORDERS

Pick up your fresh meats and any special orders for cakes that you may have placed. Start processing vegetables, pick your green beans, cut your carrots, parsnips, etc. If you peel apples or potatoes in advance, make sure you store them in water with a little lemon juice.

DAY 2

■ LET'S GET COOKING

Go ahead and blanch your vegetables and place them in re-heating pans with a little salt, pepper and butter so that on the day of the party all you need to do is reheat in oven or microwave and serve. You could also put a little water in the bottom of the pan and steam on the stovetop for a few seconds. Boil, mash, stir and bake. Get all your side dishes ready to go. If you can make sauces ahead of time — go for it! Clean lettuce and greens and store with a wet towel covering them. Clean and season any raw meats so they will be oven ready. Set the table.

DAY 1

■ HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Because you were a planner, you can leisurely roll out of bed to enjoy the spirit of Christmas or your special event. Your table is set; your side dishes are ready to go, your silver clean, plates out, beverages to be iced one hour before. The only thing left is to meet with family, and coordinate your meat preparation with mealtime so that all runs smoothly. If you are a guest and a non-kitchen participant, show courtesy and gratitude and help clean dishes and put the food away, or volunteer your children to help out. It will be a nice holiday gesture.

Shipping treats? Tips to prevent crushed cookies

BY JENNIFER FORKER
FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Planning to bake and ship a little love this holiday season?

If you want to make sure your cookies don't end up as crumbs by the time they get to your friends and family, the type of cookies you make can be as important as how you wrap and pack them.

So here's what you need to know:

THE COOKIES

Experts were reluctant to herald one variety of cookie over another, but all agree — sturdiness is key. This isn't the time for brittle, delicate or thin cut cookies with intricate woven sugar decorations.

Whether shipped by the U.S. Postal Service or a private carrier, your package will travel along sundry conveyer belts, be exposed to hot and cold, get handled by several people and possibly rattle for many miles in the back of a truck.

The UPS Store has compiled a list of baked goods its shippers say can take the tumbling and temperatures. They recommend molasses cookies, peanut butter cookies, shortbread, sugar cookies, brownies, biscotti, puffed rice treats and drop cookies, which tend to be thick and dense.

Also, think small. Small, thick cookies are less likely to break than large, thinner cookies.

And don't mix soft and hard cook-

ies, according to the Web site TroopCarePackage.com. The moisture in the soft cookies can make hard cookies, such as biscotti, go soft.

Frosted cookies ship fine, if you use royal icing, a decorating icing made from powdered sugar, egg whites and lemon juice.

For food safety reasons, try meringue powder (available at most craft and baking stores) instead of the raw egg whites called for in most recipes. This icing also can serve as an excellent glue for adhering decorations to cookies.

THE PACKING

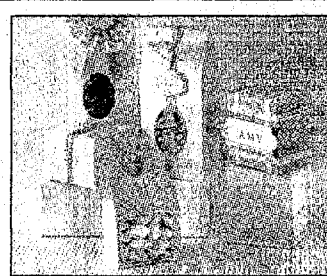
The key to shipping cookies is to wrap each one separately. This helps cushion the cookies, prevents them from sticking together and allows you to ship a variety of cookies without the flavors mixing.

For the wrapping, there are plenty of options. Try parchment paper to create sleeves or envelopes for each, which also could be attractively tied with ribbon.

If your cookies need to travel some distance, freshness may be a concern. In that case, consider cling wrap or press-and-seal-style wraps, which lock out the air and lengthen the life of baked goods.

Once wrapped, the cookies should be arranged (don't crowd) in a small box or canister. If there is extra space in the box, use crumpled waxed paper, which cushions and

Please see **SHIPPING, D4**



CUTE AS A COOKIE

If you plan to give gifts of homemade goodies this year, check out Martha Stewart's line of gift packaging.

The Martha Stewart Crafts line, which is sold at Michaels craft stores and online, has a box, bag or wrapper for seemingly any edible gift possibility, from goodie bags to cookie boxes.

The products are simple, attractive and assemble quickly. Most also include the sorts of flourishes that add wow-factor to any gift — coordinated labels, ribbons, stickers, cellophane windows, etc. And on Nov. 2, the line was expanded with various holiday-themed packaging, including red and white baker's twine, cookie boxes with multiple compartments and cookie envelopes (big enough for one or two treats).

The Martha Stewart Crafts packaging ranges from \$3.99 to \$29.99. Visit <http://marthastewartcrafts.com>.

— J.M. Hirsch, AP food writer

Sweet Holidays

BY J.M. HIRSCH
AP FOOD EDITOR

Homemade cookies make for ideal holiday gifts, and they're just as much fun to make as to give. Warm up the oven, enlist help from the kids, and let these recipes inspire a delicious season.

GINGERBREAD FAMILY KIT

Give the gift of hassle-free fun with these gingerbread family kits. You do the least exciting part (baking the cookies), and let your recipients do the decorating. Package the cookies (one for each member of the family, and don't forget pets) with small candies and decorating gels.

Start to finish: 3 hours (1 hour active)

3 cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
½ cup sugar
1 large egg
¾ cup molasses
Candies and tubes of frosting to decorate

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Set aside.

In another large bowl, use an electric mixer to cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and molasses and beat until well combined. Gradually add the flour mixture, beating until incorporated.

Divide dough into four pieces and wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

One at a time, on a lightly floured surface, roll out each piece of dough to ¼ inch thick. Using cookie cutters of people and pets, cut out gingerbread cookies. Combine scraps and cut additional cookies.

Use a spatula to transfer the cookies to the prepared baking sheet, placing them about an inch apart. Bake 8 to 12 minutes, or until just lightly brown at the edges.

Cool cookies on baking sheet for 1 minute, then remove to wire racks to cook completely. Repeat with remaining dough.

To assemble the kit, line a 9-inch square plastic container with tissue paper. Add enough undecorated

Please see **RECIPES, D5**

RELIGION

FROM PAGE D2

Morning prayers

7:30 a.m. Tuesday-Friday, at New Beginnings United Methodist Church, 16175 Delaware, corner of Puritan, Redford. Please join in as participants start day with prayer. Call (313) 255-6330.

J.O.Y. meeting

The J.O.Y. Builders (Just Older Youth, ages 50 plus) meet 11:30 a.m. the third Thursday of the month for lunch, fellowship and fun, at Riverside Park Church of God, 11771 Newburgh at Plymouth roads, Livonia. Call (734) 464-0990. All are welcome to join in. There is no charge, although organizers ask that you bring a luncheon dish to share.

Higher Rock Cafe

Second and fourth Friday of the month, doors open at 7:30 p.m., live bands begin at 8 p.m. presented by Salvation Army of Wayne/Westland,

2300 S. Venoy, between Michigan Avenue and Palmer. For information, call (734) 722-3660 or visit www.tsa.higherrockcafe.4t.com.

Uplifting church services

Want a unique church experience? Join in Sunday mornings at 10:45 a.m. for a service that will lift your entire family, but be prepared for what will happen after just one service. An open discussion 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Classes available for all ages, child to adult. Riverside Park Church of God is at 11771 Newburgh (corner of Plymouth Road), Livonia. Call (734) 464-0990.

Worship service

10 a.m. Sundays, at The Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, 29425 Annapolis, Westland. Sunday School, 29425 Annapolis, Westland. Sunday School for children. For information, call (734) 728-3440.

Youth wanted

Tweens and teens age 12 and up are invited to join in various youth activities held at Riverside Park Church of God, 11771 Newburgh Road (corner of Plymouth), Livonia. Come to one of the regular classes on

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. or Wednesdays at 7 p.m. For details, call (734) 464-0990.

Sunday worship

10 a.m. at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, 29425 Annapolis, Westland. For information, call (734) 728-3440.

Sunday services

Pastor Dan Strength leads services at Living Water Church (Pentecostal Church of God), 11663 Arcola, one block west of Inkster Road on Plymouth Road. Sunday School is 10 a.m., followed by worship at 11 a.m. Bible study 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Call (734) 425-6360.

Farmington Women Aglow

Meets the second Monday of each month 7-9:30 p.m. at the Longacre House on Farmington road between 10 Mile and 11 Mile, Farmington Hills. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Call Vikki for more information at (248) 497-7755. Farmington Aglow is a Christian women's groups.

Worship services

Sunday worship services are at 8 a.m. (traditional) and 10:30 a.m. (contemporary), at Grace Lutheran

Church, 46001 Warren, between Canton Center and Beck, Canton. For more information, call (734) 637-8160. Sunday school and Adult Bible Study at 9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study series: Heaven Can't Wait.

Worship services

Praise and worship 10 a.m. Sunday, at Westwood Community Church, 6500 Wayne Road and Hunter, Westland. Contemporary music and casual dress. Children church and nursery. Call (734) 254-0093. Doughnuts and coffee served.

Celebrate Recovery

Ward Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Northville launches Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery program helping men and women find freedom from their hurts, habits and hang-ups (addictive and compulsive behaviors), meets every Friday evening for 6 p.m. dinner (optional), 7 p.m. praise and worship, 8 p.m. small group discussion, 9 p.m. Solid Rock Cafe (optional coffee and desserts). Child care during Celebrate Recovery is free and available by calling (248) 374-7400. For information, visit www.celebraterecovery.com and www.wardchurch.org/celebrate.

celebraterecovery.com and www.wardchurch.org/celebrate.

Sunday service

All are welcome to attend worship service at 10 a.m. Sunday in the sanctuary at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 27475 Five Mile, one block west of Inkster, Livonia. For more information, call (734) 422-1470.

Worship service

At 10:30 a.m. Sundays at New Beginnings United Methodist Church, 16175 Delaware at Puritan, Redford. Congregation is hearing lessons from 1 Peter. Call (313) 255-6330.

Adult literacy classes

Adult and English as a Second Language literacy classes are available for those wishing to improve reading, writing and English conversational skills. Open to adults age 18 and over. Trained tutors available for day or evening. For information, call Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City at (734) 421-0472. Leave your name and phone number and someone will contact you.

Personal ministry

Due Season Christian Church is a

nondenominational, multicultural, full gospel church that offers Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. and Tuesday night Bible study at 7:15 p.m. Services are currently held at Stevenson High School on Six Mile, west of Farmington Road, Livonia. All are welcome. For information, call (248) 960-8063 or visit www.DueSeason.org.

Scripture studies

From 7-8:30 p.m. Mondays in the lower level of Our Lady of Loretto Church, Six Mile and Beech Daly, Redford. Call (313) 534-9000.

TOPS

Stands for Take Off Pounds Sensibly, meets at 7 p.m. every Thursday evening at St. Thomas a' Becket Church, 555 S. Lilley, Canton. Weigh-in is from 6:15-6:55 p.m. It is a weight support group that encourages members to lose weight and keep it off. Call Margaret at (734) 838-0322.

Learner's Bible study

At 7 p.m. Mondays, in Room A101, at Ward Presbyterian Church, 40000 W. Six Mile, Northville. Call (248) 374-5920.

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Clarenceville United Methodist 20300 Middlebelt Rd. • Livonia 248-474-3444 Pastor Beth Librande

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Cherry Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church 33144 Cherry Hill, Garden City MI 48135

First Church of Christ, Scientist, Plymouth 1100 W. Ann Arbor Trail, Plymouth, MI

St. James Presbyterian Church, USA 25350 West Six Mile Rd. Redford

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For Church Directory changes and information regarding advertising in this directory, please call Donna Hart (734) 953-2153 the Friday before publication.

To mail copy: The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or Fax to (734) 953-2121

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Getting ready for home remodeling and renovations

It is never too early to begin planning for home remodeling and renovation projects. Large to mid-sized projects such as kitchen remodeling (kitchens are often thought of as mid-sized in the remodeling industry) should take as long as twelve to eighteen months to fully plan. In this column we will look at a rough timeline for a planned renovation. Of course all projects are different. You should tailor this planner to suit your needs.



Ask Dad
Harry Jachym

■ **Twelve to eighteen months** before starting the project begin to evaluate your needs and wants. Look through magazines, home improvement and home design stores. Use the internet. You can even visit new housing developments and walk through the models. You may want to develop a file of your ideas.

■ **Ten to twelve months** is when you should begin to work out the budget for the project. Keep in mind that cost over runs are far more common than being

under budget. Start looking for potential contractors. I find the best source is to ask friends, family and work-mates for recommendations. Look for well established contractors but don't rule out new comers. Everyone has to start some place. Many new contractors can offer quality work at reasonable prices.

■ **At four to six months** refine your plan. Have drawings prepared by a designer or architect. When the drawings are complete, begin interviewing contractors. Be sure to check their references, licenses, insurance and other legal documents. If possible visit a job they have done that is similar in size to your project. This is also a good time to contact your local building department to see if there are any special variances needed for this project. Check with lending institutions about any necessary financing.

■ **From one month to three months** before your plan-to-start date get bids from the potential contractors. Once you have selected the contractor decide on start and finish dates. Review the contract and if necessary, consult an attorney before signing. I can't stress enough, if you are at all uncomfortable with any contractor, walk away from them. Hiring someone you are not comfort-

able with can make an already stressful situation, which a remodeling project is, unbearable. You probably will not be satisfied with their work in this case anyway. Select and order (or have the contractor order) any cabinets, appliances, doors and windows needed for the project. Obtain financing if necessary.

■ **At least one month before** be certain the contractor is on line and has begun the permit process. Arrange for storage of personal belongings and other items not necessary for everyday life, especially those items that may get in the way of construction or get damaged. Take a few moments to relax. For the next few weeks to months, there will be strangers in your house most days. These strangers will be making a mess in your house. Your life is about to change. There will be times during the project that you might say to yourself "what was I thinking" but in the end your new project will be a joy.

Have a great holiday season!

Harry Jachym writes Ask Dad, a column on home issues ranging from repairs and maintenance to building and remodeling projects. He is a Plymouth resident. Send any questions or comments to Jachym at askdad@comcast.net.

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SUN, 12/23 • 6 PM vs. ROCKETS

- Antonio McDyess Red Jersey to first 7,500 fans courtesy of Bob Evans

FRI, 12/28 • 8 PM vs. PACERS

- Pistons NBA Finals MVP Poster to first 7,500 fans courtesy of DTE Energy

CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE AT THE PALACE

MON, 12/31 • 3:30 PM vs. BUCKS

- Pistons Rookie Poster to first 7,500 fans courtesy of Bud Light

FOR TICKETS, CALL 248-377-0100, VISIT THE PALACE BOX OFFICE, ANY TICKETMASTER LOCATION OR LOG ON TO PISTONS.COM

SHIPPING

FROM PAGE D1

helps absorb excess moisture. Small hat boxes, and a number of other options, can be found online at places such as The Container Store, where lidded white gift boxes start at \$2.49 and round, metal tins start at \$3.29.

THE RULES

The most important rule is to take your time, says Marc Haymon, a baking instructor at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. Baking and shipping on the same day is bad; the cookies will stick or be too moist.

Haymon advises baking the cookies the evening before mailing them, which gives them about 12 hours to set up.

THE MAILING

Next-day or second-day service is best to mail cookies, according to the shipping companies. UPS recommends shipping by air, not ground, because fewer people will handle the package and it'll get to its destination faster. It, too, can air ship a package of cookies in one to three days.

For more information, visit the UPS Web site at <http://pressroom.ups.com/holiday/faqs>; the United States Postal Service at www.usps.com; or FedEx Corp. at www.fedex.com.

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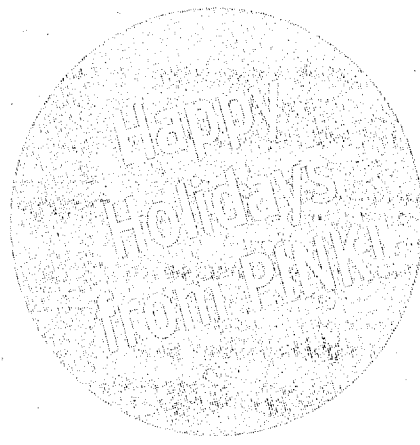
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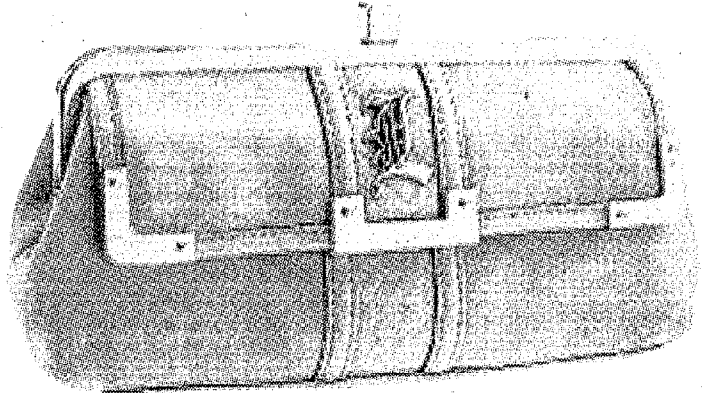
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pink picks

- Wear It!**
Rich jewel tones
- Click It!**
shopvogue.tv
- Don't Wear It!**
Puffy winter coats that make you look chubby
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A Christmas Story



MALLS AND MAIN STREETS

Last-minute gift ideas

Christmas is just five days away, and if you're like me, you still have some shopping (not to mention wrapping) to do. If you still need some ideas for last-minute shopping, here's a "Malls & Main Streets" rundown of holiday retail news:

MALLS

Macy's at Twelve Oaks Mall is hosting a unique Flea Market through the end of December, where shoppers can browse an eclectic array of carefully selected goods, from antique to modern, vintage to vinyl, and global to provincial, ranging from \$20 to \$500. Find kitchenware and garden items from the South of France; artwork from Europe; furniture from Morocco; hand beaded tribal works from Africa; bone-inlaid furniture from the East Indies, and more. The one-of-a-kind merchandise departs from the usual Macy's fare, and is worth a look.

While you're at Twelve Oaks, stop by some of the mall's newest stores, including Donna Sacs, Go! Toys & Games, Dale & Thomas Popcorn and See's Candies. Martin + Osa's first Michigan location offers a sophisticated selection of clothing and accessories for men and women. And if you have a 15 to 25-year-old girl to buy for, check out Michigan's first aerie by American Eagle at Twelve Oaks. The aerie collection includes bras, undies, camis, hoodies, robes, boxers, sweats and leggings for the young AE girl. The new aerie i.t. line of workout and fitness wear is available now too.

If you're venturing to Eastland, Fairlane or Oakland malls for your shopping, be sure to hit Steve & Barry's, where everything in the entire store is on sale for \$8.98 and under throughout the holiday season. That includes Sarah Jessica Parker's BITTEN line, and the new EleVen line by Venus Williams, along with winter wear, sweaters, jeans and more for men, women and children.

MAIN STREETS

It's always important to support local businesses, so make a date to finish your shopping in one of the area's charming downtown shopping districts. Plymouth, Northville, Royal Oak, Farmington Hills and Rochester are among the burghs decked out in holiday finery, with festive window displays and lighted trees. Downtown Birmingham's Santa House is open for business, while carolers and free horse drawn carriage rides add to the fun. If that weren't enough incentive to visit, the city is continuing its first-ever "Magic of Birmingham" event. From 6-8 p.m. tonight, shoppers will be stopped at random on the street and showered with gifts.

Merchants have donated gifts with a combined value of over \$20,000, including leather wallets, soaps, restaurant gift certificates and more. Top prizes include a piece of jewelry from Astrein's Creative Jewelers valued over \$1,000; and a weekend at the Townsend Hotel.

While you're there, stop by The Claymore Shop for Psycho Bunny ties sure to be hit with hip businessmen. For the HGTV addict on your list, visit Hagopian's showroom on Old Woodward and check out their wide variety of plush pillows. The selection ranges from floor pillows to beautiful antique Kilim pillows, made from fragments of antique rugs, each with a story of their own. Prices start at \$39.

And make the extra effort to get to Birmingham's rail district, where EllieBeans offers the beautiful and colorful Penzo Pottery line. Made by artisans in South Africa, the pottery helps support free trade while sprucing up your table.

AND MORE ...

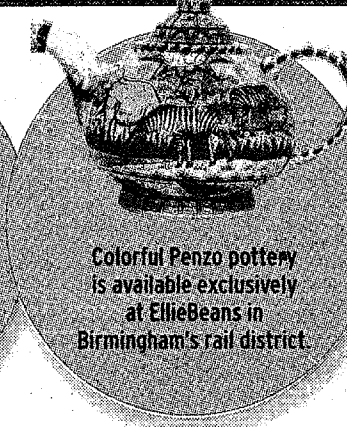
For the outdoorsy type, make a stop at the new TWC Sport and Surf shop, which recently moved from Keego Harbor into a new



Get the latest gear for the slopes at the new location of TWC Sport and Surf in Sylvan Lake.



This 1928 Le Mans die cast model is among finds at the Walter P. Chrysler museum.



Colorful Penzo pottery is available exclusively at EllieBeans in Birmingham's rail district.



Hagopian World of Rugs carries more than floor coverings, including a line of beautiful decorative pillows.

building owner Tim Shepard purchased and renovated in Sylvan Lake (the old Salvation Army building on Orchard Lake Road).

The original TWC was an acronym for "The Windsurf Shop," but the store has evolved to carry gear for paddle boarding (surf boards you stand on and paddle with a long paddle), snowboarding and skateboarding, along with many unique-to-Michigan clothing and accessory lines that have made their Michigan debut at TWC.

For the animal lover, consider a gift from the Detroit Zoo.

The zoo is offering a variety of gifts that support the Detroit Zoological Society and preserves wildlife, including Breakfast with the Butterflies (\$75 per person), animal "adoptions" (\$40 includes a plush animal, fact

sheet, and personalized photo certificate), gift memberships to the zoo (\$40-\$85), or personalized brick pavers, benches, and brass butterfly medallions to commemorate loved ones.

For the car buff, shop the Walter P. Chrysler Museum Store in Auburn Hills.

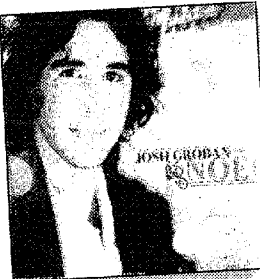
The shop offers exclusive sculptures, prints, die-cast models, home accessories, jewelry, apparel, books and more, all celebrating car culture.

The museum's current "Cars, Trees & Traditions" exhibit makes it worth a special trip.

If you have fodder for the Observer & Eccentric's "Malls & Main Streets" column, send it to Wendy Von Buskirk at 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Mich., 48150, or wvonb@hometownlife.com.

Tote It!
L.A.M.B. 'Glazed Love - Ancona' Frame Clutch

Hear It!
Josh Groban Noel



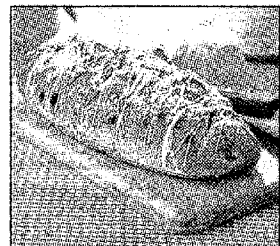
Kick It!
Pura Lopez 'L230' Pump

Drink It!
Silknog - soymilk eggnog

Accessorize It!
Long gathered gloves



Face It!
Mario Badescu Honey Moisturizer



Eat It!
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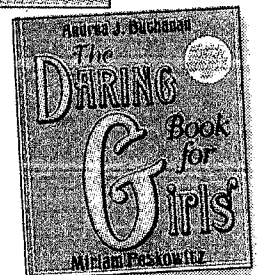
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Yeohlee Fall 2007

The designer Yeohlee is known for creating luxurious, wearable, and travel-friendly clothing, like this black rice embroidered metallic taffeta catenary coatdress. Her Fall 2007 collection was inspired by the architecture of Barcelona, and is available at Lynn Portnoy, 29260 Franklin Rd., Southfield. Call Lynn Portnoy at (248) 353-2900 or learn more at <http://yeohlee.com>.



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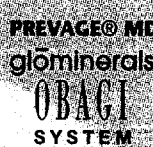
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Pursuing The Chase



Janessa Touchet is Marie in the "The Nutcracker" at The Fox.

Try a new holiday tradition this year

All of my own excitement and anticipation was mirrored in my nieces' eyes as we hurried out of the cold and into Detroit's opulent Fox Theatre Thursday night. My sister, two of her three children and I went to see a holiday classic, *The Nutcracker*, performed by The Cincinnati Ballet and the Michigan Opera Theatre.

I grew up under the assumption that this tried-and-true fairy tale set to Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's elegant and familiar score was an annual event for most families. Not so in the Rochester Hills home where I grew up. Sure, we were exposed to plenty of arts and culture.



Noise Patrol

Stephanie Casola

My father was an avid fan of opera - and could be found singing along to Pavarotti while stirring his famous spaghetti sauce on any given Sunday morning. Still, somehow *The Nutcracker* eluded us year after year.

Having a close relationship with my sister Paula - whose daughters have been known to balance a bevy of dance classes with school and other activities - it was time to change that.

And so there we stood, before the grand Christmas tree in the gilded entrance. My 6- and 7-year-old nieces Amelia and Angela wiggled about in excitement as Paula and I navigated the crowds to our seats. The sets were striking from the very start. In the opening sequence, the magical toymaker wasted no time before transforming life-sized dolls - a ballerina, a nutcracker and a mouse king - into smaller versions and boxing them up as gifts.

Suddenly we were peering into the window of a grand estate, and introduced to our heroine, Marie.

We looked on at the family's annual Christmas party - or as my niece Amelia described it "the ball" - the same party where Marie receives her beloved nutcracker as a gift. The children fawn over her in envy and her mischievous brother breaks the doll. But the toymaker fixes it just in time. And Marie drifts to sleep with her regal nutcracker by her side.

What ensues next, of course, is Marie's fantastical dream filled with candy cane colors, brave toy soldiers and stunning sugar plum fairies. In her dream, she shrinks to a tiny size. We watch the Christmas tree grows ever-bigger, making room below it for the battle between the Mouse King and the Nutcracker.

The Nutcracker transforms before our eyes into a prince, and somewhere between their journey to the Land of Snow and The Land of Sweets the music truly begins to take hold. *The Nutcracker March*, *The Sugar Plum Dance*, and *The Waltz of Flowers* are demonstrated with such lively, pointed perfection. Marie turns into a lovely ballerina princess as the show moves forward.

While the lavish two hour production proved a tad long for a school night, it surely captured our attention. The delicately dancing snowflakes, one enormous gown, and a high-flying sleigh bed made this version of *The Nutcracker* a pure joy to experience. Certainly worth the wait, it's a holiday tradition I plan to repeat.

This is the time of year Stephanie Angelyn Casola finds herself eating candy canes for breakfast and watching and laughing at "Elf" repeatedly. She writes about pop culture for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and can be reached at (248) 901-2567 or scasola@hometownlife.com.

THE HOLIDAYS SWEETEST TREATS

We look forward to them every year - that song, movie or TV special that just gets you in the holiday spirit. From *The Nutcracker* to *The Grinch*, *The Little Drummer Boy* to *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, the list could be endless. This year the Filter staff and contributors shared a few of their favorites, some can't-miss holiday fare:

Ken Abramczyk, Filter editor: For a fave song he chose "Happy Xmas (War is Over)." "You're driving home by yourself in the darkness on a December night, this song pops on the radio, and it still stirs and moves 30-plus years later. Incredibly reflective and still poignant in its message of world peace and unity, and we still miss you, John." As for movies, he named "It's a Wonderful Life." "I'm not a big fan of Christmas movies, but this film depicts such a strong sense of faith, family and community, and promotes goodwill that I still watch it. In these jaded and busy times, it's easy to forget about your community and neighbors. Frank Capra reminds us of how one life (and our own) touches others in many ways, directly and indirectly."

Stephanie Angelyn Casola, Filter Staffer: "I'm a sucker for silly holiday fare. Give me the leg lamp in 'A Christmas Story' (OK, not literally), the familiar sound of Who's down in Whoville and a black and white version of 'It's a Wonderful Life' for the zillionth time and I'm a happy girl. But growing up on those fantastic claymation Christmas specials - well it just isn't the holiday season until I see the Heat Miser and Snow Miser battle it out in song via 'A Year Without a Santa Claus.'"

Hugh Gallagher, Managing Editor: "The best Christmas movie, despite being played a gazillion times on television, cruelly colorized by Ted Turner and viciously lampooned by every comic in need of a punchline, is 'It's Wonderful Life.' The movie is always misunderstood as an uplifting holiday fable. It's really a despairing film about someone at the end of his tether until he realizes the value of every life. The scenes where Jimmy Stewart has his breakdown and the scene on the phone with Donna Reed are among the best ever filmed."

"The worst Christmas song is 'Grandma Got Runover by a Reindeer' but everyone agrees on that or should. The best, I have a strong feeling for the traditional hymns but on the secular side 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' as sung by Judy Garland to little Margaret O'Brien in 'Meet Me in St. Louis' is

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Inside this week's

PURE ENTERTAINMENT
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Cyrus Chestnut roasts on his piano (not an open fire) as he performs Vince Guaraldi's classics from "A Charlie Brown Christmas," while "Barbie at the Symphony" introduces children to classical music.

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Juno takes a warm look at a sensitive topic - teen pregnancy.



Rhythm Corps, known best for its song "Common Ground," only performs once every few years. The band plays Dec. 22 at the Royal Oak Music Theatre.

Rhythm Corps reunites for rare show with Sponge

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Michael Persh doesn't want to sound like a hippie when he reminisces about the positive energy created on stage between his band Rhythm Corps and its audience.

But when band members performed back in the 1980s, they were trying to accomplish something; capture a moment and spark that feeling of "one-ness" that happens only rarely during magical concert moments.

Rhythm Corps, a modern rock band that packed Detroit nightclubs in the '80s and received moderate national recognition for its peace song *Common Ground*, is reuniting for one show Saturday, Dec. 22 at the Royal Oak Music Theatre. The band will share the stage with Platinum hit-makers Sponge.

The show is Rhythm Corps' first in six years.

RHYTHM CORPS & SPONGE

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When: Doors 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 22, showtime 8:30 p.m.

Where: Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th Street, Royal Oak

Tickets: \$22, general admission, all ages welcome, www.royaloakmusictheatre.com

Choose the set list: Rhythm Corps has asked fans to pick the songs performed that night. Visit www.motorcityrock.com to cast your vote.

Both bands share philosophies about trying to create something unique on stage.

"Our shows were always community," Persh said humbly. "I was putting out something to draw you in. We always felt on stage the desire to break a barrier. To give our energy to the audience, and feel theirs thrown toward us. . . and give it right back. We would get this emotional loop happening. I always felt that we were



1990s hit-makers Sponge

all in it together, in the same room, and we maybe could all get something out of it."

"It was an idea, a concept," Persh said.

It was something he felt only by a handful of other musicians.

"Anyone who loves music can remember particular moments at concerts that were magical. I felt it seeing U2 at Harpo's and Bob Geldof at the Royal Oak Music Theatre. Both frontman were so out there. . . they took a risk, they had a fearlessness to be vulnerable and to completely try to get into that emotion."

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Please see **BANDS, E9**

Hot Ticket

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Skaters enjoy Campus Martius Ice Rink during the holiday season. Read Get Out inside Filter for rink hours and admission.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra rings in the holidays

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Holiday spirit isn't hard to come by for Robert Kinkel of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. He finds plenty of that in the reaction of fans, the joy and energy that comes from each of the band's performances this time of year. Though he admits it's hard to be far from family around Christmas, he enjoys meeting fans after the evening shows and hearing how TSO's music has become such a tradition.

The band will tour this year from Nov. 1 to Jan. 6. About half-way through the schedule already, Kinkel called in Dec. 12, from a stop in Greenville, S.C. to reflect on the 11 years since TSO got its start.

"I'd been working with Paul O'Neill and Jon Oliva as a session keyboard player when we started working on *Christmas Sarajevo 12/24*," he said.

TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA

When: 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 26
Where: The Palace of Auburn Hills, 4 Championship Drive, Auburn Hills.
Tickets: \$39.50 to \$49.50, call (248) 645-6666 or visit Palacenet.com.

Kinkel co-wrote what's now become a TSO anthem while the musicians were in the rock band Savatage.

The holiday song made such a strong impact on Top 40 radio that they were asked by to record a Christmas rock opera album.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra was born from that idea.

The group defied boundaries, melding genres from heavy metal to blues, hard rock to jazz, even making room for a children's choir.

"It felt great to have that kind of freedom," said Kinkel. "We put it together,

On
stage



Spend the holidays with The Trans-Siberian Orchestra this year.

put our heart and soul into it and worked around the clock for eight months. It was a labor of love and so exciting to be able to do it."

The Trans-Siberian Orchestra formed in 1996 and has been touring since 1999. The band is currently working on its fifth album. Time has given rise to more devoted fans and the live show continues to evolve.

For the first half of TSO's non-stop 2½

hour production the band performs its debut *Christmas Eve and Other Stories* (1996) in its entirety. The second half of the show is more fluid. The band incorporates music from *The Christmas Attic* (1998), *Beethoven's Last Night* (2000), new songs from the forthcoming *Night Castle* CD and often a surprise cover song. Kinkel said they continue to work to keep

Please see **MUSIC, E6**

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PURE PICKS DEC. 20-26

20 There's only a few days left for Greenfield Village: Holiday Nights - it ends Sunday, Dec. 23. Visit the spectacular event at The Henry Ford, Dearborn. Admission prices are \$8.50-\$12.75. Call (313) 982-6001 or visit www.thehenryford.org.

21 Local rockers Greenstreet with Lime Regal and Jeff Tessler bring in good cheer to the Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave. in Ferndale. Doors 8 p.m., Tickets are \$8. Visit <http://www.greenstreetband.com/>.

22 The Plymouth Historical Museum presents family fun with the exhibit *A Red Ryder Christmas Story*, inspired from the popular 1980s film *A Christmas Story*, where little Ralphie longs for a Red Ryder BB gun, also Santa Claus appears Saturdays through Dec. 22, 1-4 p.m. at 155 S. Main in Plymouth, (734) 455-8940.

24 Spend Christmas Eve at Campus Martius Ice Rink, and it's even open on Christmas Day. Cost is \$6-\$7 for rink access and \$3 for skates. It's located on Woodward Avenue between Fort Street and Michigan Avenue in Detroit. Call (313) 962-0101 or visit www.campusmartiuspark.org.

25 The film *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly* opens today and is the remarkable true story of Jean-Dominique Bauby (Mathieu Amalric), a successful and charismatic editor-in-chief of French *Elle*, who believes he is living his life to its absolute fullest - when a sudden stroke leaves him in a life-altered state. As time passes, he begins to discover how his life's passions, his rich memories and his newfound imagination can help him achieve a life without boundaries.

26 Popular local band The Hard Lessons play at 7 p.m. at St. Andrews Hall, 431 East Congress Street, Detroit, (313) 961-8137.



ETIENNE GEORGE/COURTESY OF MIRAMAX FILMS.

Mathieu Amalric plays French editor Jean-Dominique Bauby in Julian Schnabel's "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly."



John Fitzpatrick, owner of Touch of Light in Ferndale, shapes molten glass at his studio.

Glassblowing demonstrated Saturday

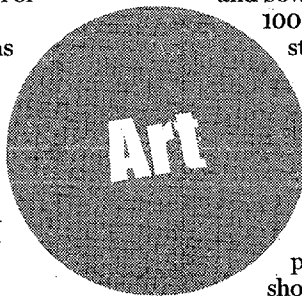
As part of its Holiday Glass Show, which runs through Dec. 29, Touch of Light in Ferndale will hold glassblowing demonstrations 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 22.

Visitors can observe glass blown as molten glass at 2,100 degrees will be carefully gathered onto blowpipes, then formed and blown into colorful shapes using old-world techniques. During the public demonstrations, an assistant will explain the process and answer questions.

Included on display in the gallery are paperweights, sun catchers, perfume

bottles, oil lamps, beautifully colored vases and bowls, and a rainbow of more than 100 hand-blown ornaments. Prices start at \$15. Everything on display is made by hand on site.

Touch of Light is located at 23426 Woodward, a half-mile south of I-696 in Ferndale. December hours are 6-9 p.m. Mondays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays. For last-minute shoppers, the gallery will also be open 12-5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 23 and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 24. For more information, call Touch of Light at (248) 543-1868, visit www.touchoflight.com or send an e-mail to tolstudio@yahoo.com.



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MUSIC

FROM PAGE E4

the show fresh.

The band's live shows have earned comparisons to everything from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera* to The Who's *Tommy* with more lights and pyrotechnics than a Pink Floyd concert. "I think it's the kind of thing that takes care of all of your senses," said Kinkel. "At the end of the night, you're completely satisfied."

Trans-Siberian Orchestra has gone from a simple tour consisting of seven

performances and one semi truck to 140 shows and 13 trucks. "It's become bigger than I could've dreamed at the time," Kinkel said.

What's more, the music appeals to people of all ages. It's become a family tradition. Kinkel attributes its widespread and growing success to the vast array of musical styles, storytelling, the visual spectacle of the ever-changing live show and the level of performance. "There's something there for everybody," he said.

The stage is so large it's impossible to take it all in if you're sitting in the first 20 rows. "We also work to make sure there's no second class seat in the house," O'Neill stated in a press release. "The impact is

as powerful in the back of the house at a TSO show as it is in the orchestra section, due to the tremendous efforts we put into staying ahead of the pack with our staging and pyrotechnics, and, of course, the passion of our players."

Kinkel said: "We're really looking forward to coming back to Detroit." It's one of the cities TSO has visited since the tours began. The production has grown out of the Detroit Opera House and into the Palace of Auburn Hills, where the band is set to perform two shows on Dec. 26 this year.

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Meeting John Waters

Amy Yokin from Bloomfield Hills attended a Meet & Greet with John Waters last week at the Crofoot in Pontiac. The filmmaker presented his one-man show on Dec. 13 garnering plenty of holiday cheer to a packed audience that seemed to know his films by heart.

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Jazz pianist plays for 'Peanuts' this weekend

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

The holidays tend to bring about plenty of nostalgia. It's a time of tradition - and for many - holiday specials like *A Charlie Brown Christmas* help make the season shine. Jazz pianist Cyrus Chestnut is no exception.

The music featured in that classic Charles Schulz cartoon was crafted by a master, Vince Guaraldi. And it certainly resonated with Chestnut from the first time he heard it.

"He was my introduction to jazz at the age of 6," he said, calling from his Baltimore home on Dec. 11. "I always loved the characters and the cartoon. I loved the saga of Charlie Brown. He was very relatable. I always hoped he would get the Little Red Head Girl."

Chestnut will share his own take on Guaraldi's memorable score at the Max M. Fisher Music Center on Dec. 21, as he performs music from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. He'll be accompanied by bassist Dezron Douglas and drummer Neal Smith. The Detroit Symphony Orchestra will not be part of this production.

This is Chestnut's second visit to Orchestra Hall, but first as a featured performer. "I always

CYRUS CHESTNUT: A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

When: 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21.

Where: Orchestra Hall, Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Tickets: \$19 to \$60, call (313) 576-5111.

What else: Stay in the holiday mood with Detroit Symphony Orchestra's *The Night Before Christmas* featuring conductor Thomas Wilkins. Showtimes are 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 22 at Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$10-\$27, call (313) 576-5111.



Thomas Wilkins

cal and later studying jazz at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. He graduated with a degree in jazz composition and arrangement and earned a number of prestigious awards. Following college, Chestnut worked and performed with some of the biggest names in the business - Dizzy Gillespie, Branford Marsalis, Isaac Hayes, James Moody and vocalist Betty Carter. While all of the musicians inspired Chestnut, he said Carter made the strongest impact on his career. She urged him never to become complacent and always to try something new, he said.

Chestnut signed with Atlantic Records in 1993 and released the albums including *Revelation*

have a good time in Detroit," he said. Chestnut began playing piano at the early age of 3. By high school he knew he'd stumbled upon a career. "I wanted to go out for football and the band director got to me first," Chestnut said. "So I was a part of the football game but I wasn't crushing through the offensive line or the defensive line, I was part of the marching band line."

Since then he continued pursuing music, beginning with classi-



Cyrus Chestnut will make you feel like a kid again with the music of Vince Guaraldi's "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

(1994), *The Dark Before the Dawn* (1995), *Earth Stories* (1996) and in 1998 his self-titled album.

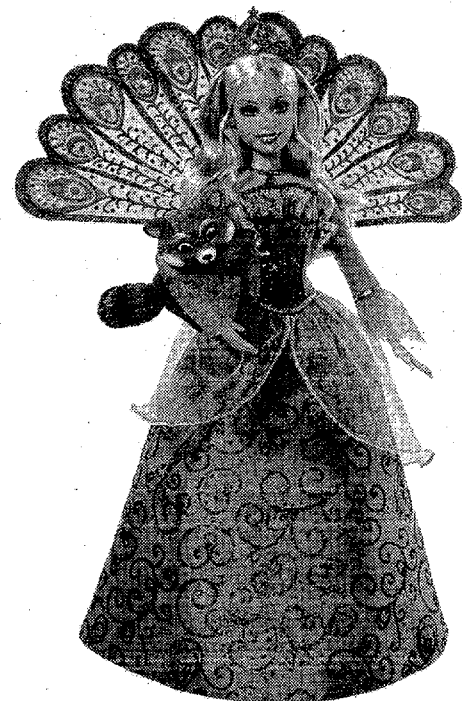
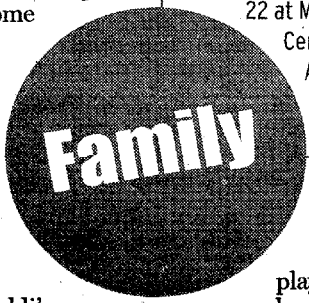
But he traces his introduction to freeform style, to jazz, all the way back to Guaraldi. In 2000, on the 50th anniversary of Charles Schulz's creation of the Peanuts cartoon, Chestnut was approached to perform songs from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. He gladly

accepted.

"It brought me to a very special time in my life," he recalled, adding that those songs and characters carry meaning for so many people.

As for the upcoming performance, Chestnut said: "It's become somewhat of a seasonal thing."

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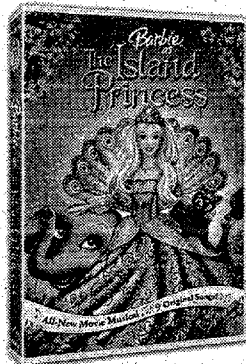


'Tea Before Barbie' served at Orchestra Hall

Princess Barbie won't be in attendance, but she'll help promote classical music Sunday at a special event.

Princess Barbie was expected to hold court at a "Barbie Tea" at Orchestra Hall at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 23, but she will be unable to attend the tea, part of a special one-day-only event, *Barbie at the Symphony*, designed to introduce children to classical music.

During *Barbie at the Symphony*, families can hear the Detroit Symphony Orchestra perform music from *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and other classics while watching corresponding scenes from



Barbie "Princess" movies on a big screen. Girls are invited to dress up like Barbie for a tea and costume contest before the show.

"Tea Before Barbie" will be staged 1-2:30 p.m. in the Robert A. and Maggie Allesee Rehearsal Hall at The Max. Just \$5 per person includes tea, coffee, hot chocolate and kid-friendly finger foods. All participants in the Best-Dressed Barbie costume contest will get two tickets to their choice of a National City Young People's Concert later in the season. One grand prize winner will receive a full subscription for

four to the rest of the YPC concerts this season, and an upgrade to box seats for the Barbie show that afternoon. Barbie "Princess" films feature an animated Barbie singing and dancing to well-known musical scores with ballet sequences choreographed by Peter Martins of the New York City Ballet. "Barbie at the Symphony" is arranged, composed and conducted by maestro Arnie Roth, musical director and principal conductor of the Chicagoland Pops Orchestra of Rosemont, Ill.

Tickets for *Barbie at the Symphony* are \$19 to \$50 and may be purchased at the Max M. Fisher Music Center box office, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit; by phone at (313) 576-5111; or online at www.detroitssymphony.com.

Wendy Von Buskirk

BANDS

FROM PAGE E3

special frontman have - like Bono and Geldof - are rare. But Sponge's Vinnie Dombroski has it, and Persh does too.

THE HISTORY

In its heyday, Rhythm Corps signed with Pasha/CBS Records and the band's biggest hit song *Common Ground* was heard worldwide during the 1988 Olympics.

But time went on and the bandmates, while remaining friends, succeeded in other areas. Today Persh enjoys a successful career with E! Entertainment in Hollywood. Greg Apro, guitarist, and Richie Lovsin, drummer, also live in California and have families. Bass player Davey Holmbo enjoyed a stint in Hollywood before settling in the natural surrounds of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

They've expanded their lives beyond the Rhythm Corps moment.

Sponge gained international notoriety with its album *Rotting Piñata*. Hits like *Plowed* and *Molly (16 Candles)* fueled massive airplay on radio stations and were in heavy rotation on MTV. The album went Gold and the follow up CD *Wax Ecstatic* include the hit songs *Wax Ecstatic* and *Have You Seen Mary?*

Sponge is currently finishing a double CD featuring both live and studio recordings.

"We were honored that Sponge wanted to share the stage with us," Persh said. "We didn't know if we would want to with them or them with us ... but after talking

with (Dombroski), we realized we share some similar thoughts on music."

Based out of pure curiosity, Persh spearheaded the idea to let fans create the setlist for the show. It's expected that everyone will want *Common Ground*, but who knows, perhaps lesser known songs like *Broken Halos* or *Entertainment* will be highly requested. Go the www.motorcityrock.com, listen to the songs and vote.

The band mates have been practicing their songs on their own for the past few months, with everyone living in separate cities. Now for the last week, they've prepared for marathon rehearsal sessions.

"Eight, 10 hours a day was the way we did it back then," Persh said. "We're ready to get back into that. I was never one to just stand there and stare at my sneakers. We were always deadly serious about our shows."

Perhaps that's why the Rhythm Corps' fans were so loyal.

"We believed the romantic ideology of everything we sung and everything we did. When we had our fists in the air along with everyone else ... we believed in it."

And now, as Rhythm Corps grew up and made successes out of themselves, they don't want to lose touch with that romanticism.

"With families and new focuses, we realize we aren't always allowed the freedom to be so wrapped up in ourselves our other passions," Persh said.

"But we thought now is a good time to check the rear-view mirror and see if that guy with his fist in the air is still there. I'm not out of touch with who I am, it's more of a reconnecting."

And the fans will be there re-connecting too.

TREATS

FROM PAGE E2

the best. Isn't it weird that the saddest stuff makes the best Christmas material?"

Lana Mini, Filter Staffer: "Anyone who thinks Christmas music is too sugary hasn't heard U2 singing 'Christmas, (Baby Please Come Home)'. Bono's upbeat passion in that song is both sexy and festive.

Anyone who paid attention to music in the '80s remembers Band-Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas.' Hearing the smooth vocal transition from Simon LeBon to Sting to (again) Bono, is both heart-warming and -breaking, and can cause any crabby driver or shopper to realize how fortunate they really are. All because of the great Bob Geldof.

"But, there's a lot of bad songs out there. And, I'm going to make a lot of people angry by admitting: Bruce Springsteen's 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town' is no longer charming. It was cute and creative the first 50 times I heard it. But now hearing Bruce cracking up in laughter while trying to get through the chorus, because he's just so jovial; well, it's just annoying. The only time it's fun is hearing WRIF's Mike Clark imitate it."

Dave Varga, Filter contributor: "Ok. I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that 'A Christmas Story' is the best holiday film ever. I plop down and watch parts of the 24-hour marathon of its showing every single year. Hanging so many

classic childhood memories/traumas together onto one film just makes it a special trip down memory lane. Who hasn't suffered through the stupid clothes our parents made us wear (thankfully, not a pink bunny outfit!); the stupid double-dog-dares on the playground; the agony of forgetting our list when we finally got to talk to Santa; and mom warning you that 'You're gonna shoot your eye out' and then having it happen? The humor is alternately dry, slapstick and bawdy. Plus, it's narrated in such a smart-aleck, yet affectionate tone. It's a gift that keeps on giving. My runner-up? the original cartoon of 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' with Boris Karloff's voice and the irrepressible Max the dog.

"When it comes to music, I have plenty of favorites: 'Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)' by Darlene Love; 'Little Saint Nick' by the Beach Boys; 'Blue Christmas' by Elvis; and 'Merry Christmas Baby' by (now here's a surprise) Bruce!

"Among those songs that curdle my egg nog? 'Step into Christmas' by Elton John, 'Wonderful Christmastime' by Paul McCartney, and 'Christmas is a Time to Say I Love You' by Billy Squire. Yech, yech and triple yech."

Wensdy Von Buskirk, Features Editor: For a favorite holiday song she chose 'The Little Drummer Boy' as sung by David Bowie and Bing Crosby. "The harmonies between Crosby and Bowie in this classic Christmas carol are wonderful. The video was a favorite when I was little, and the lyrics mean even more now that I have a child of my own."

Try these live-ly holiday gifts

Looking for a great last-minute gift that would suit your sweetie or the whole family? Dial up or drive to the nearest theater and purchase tickets to a drama, a musical or a rousing holiday show.

Instead of tearing open boxes filled with gifts your loved ones won't remember next year, make it a memorable holiday by sharing the experience of a live performance.

Here are some of the best staged productions to see this season, and into the new year:

A Christmas Carol: Experience Meadow Brook Theater's annual holiday tradition, through Dec. 24. The theater is located on the campus of Oakland University, Rochester Hills. Call (248) 377-0300 or visit www.ticketmaster.com, for more information, visit www.mbtheatre.com.

Disney's The Lion King: Feel the love as *The Lion King* roars through the Detroit Opera House, through Jan. 6. The Detroit Opera House is located at 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Tickets \$15 to \$72, call (313) 237-SING.

Doubt: John Patrick Shanley's haunting struggle of doubt and certainty runs through Dec. 30 at the Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Tickets \$17-\$20, call (313) 868-3686.

Forbidden Christmas: This brand new show from the creators of *Forbidden Broadway* spoofs holiday classics, Broadway hits and easily-recognizable celebrities, and it runs through Dec. 31, at the Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$39.50, call (313) 963-9800 or visit www.gemtheatre.com.

Stephanie A. Casola



Celebrate New Year's Eve!
8 pm-2 am
\$65 per person
Hot & Cold Hors d'oeuvres
Prime Rib of Beef
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Green Beans Almondine
Premium Cocktails
Party Favors
Champagne Toast @ Midnight
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Pre-paid tickets **\$28.95**
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CE08573146

For a good time, race for The Chase

BY WENDY VON BUSKIRK
STAFF WRITER

If you're looking for a hotspot where you can relax and be yourself, hit The Chase Bar & Grill.

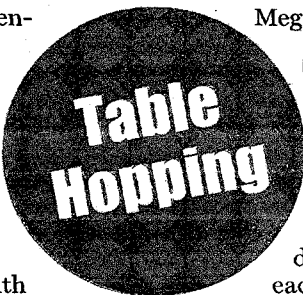
The new Northville tavern encourages guests to leave their pretensions at the door. Whether you're wearing a suit and tie, or T-shirt and jeans, you'll feel welcome to stop by and stay awhile.

"We were going for a very comfortable, cool atmosphere," said co-owner David Bastianelli.

Mood at The Chase is set with soft blue lights that ring the ceiling and island bar, adding depth to otherwise basic decor. Bistro tables along the windows are perfect for two, but The Chase is large enough to accommodate parties as well. A semi-private room in the back is great for large groups.

Throughout the bar, 18 plasma HDTVs broadcast virtually every sports network

known to fans — NFL Sunday Ticket, NBA League Pass, ESPN Full Court, NHL Center Ice and Nascar Hot Pass among them. Request a Sun Dog transistor box for your table to tune into the audio of your choice. Entertainment also includes an extensive Touch Tunes Juke Box and MegaTouch games at the bar.

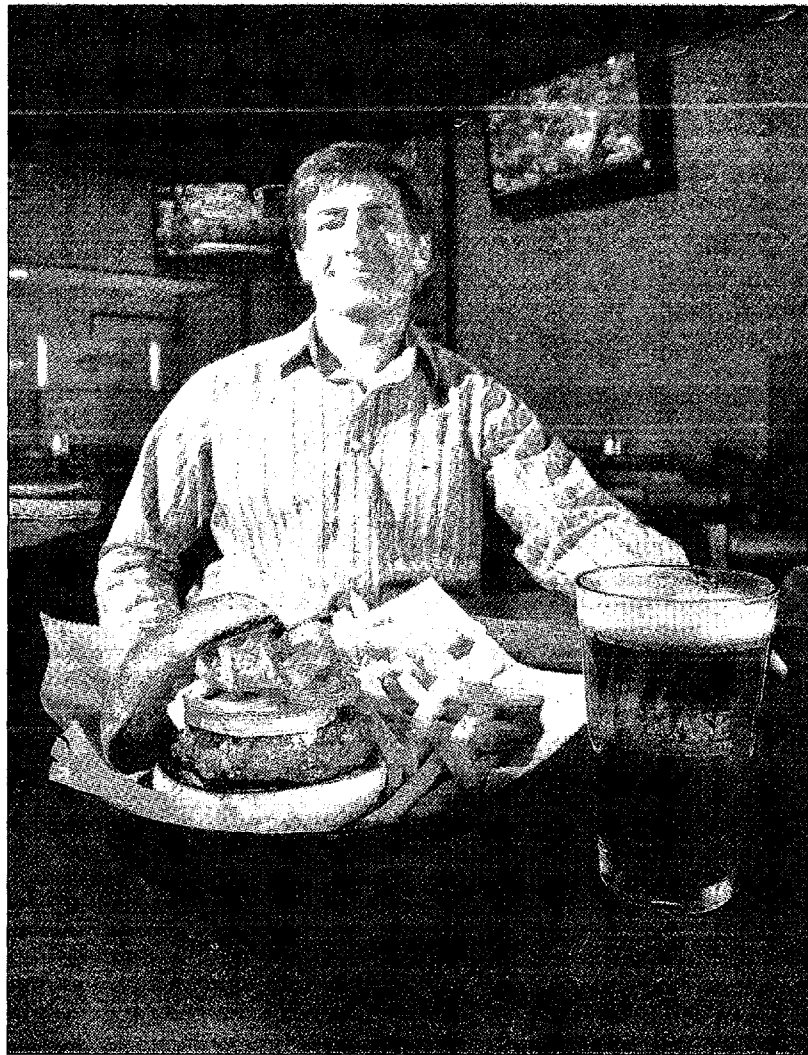


BANDS AT THE BAR

On weekends, The Chase is testing live bands to find one that strikes the right chord. On Friday and Saturday nights, tables are moved to make way for a dance floor, but until 9 p.m. each evening, The Chase is family friendly.

An extensive menu overseen by chef James Williams means people can visit for the food as well as the fun. Bar appetizers include chicken wings, chicken strips, potato skins, quesadillas, calamari, cheese sticks and steak bites. Beer-Battered

Please see **CHASE, E11**



BILL BRESLER
STAFF
PHOTOGRAPHER

Dave Bastianelli (shown) and his partner Bret Konol recently opened The Chase Bar and Grill in Northville. Pictured is their Blue Cheese Burger, served with Chase fries.

nicco and grand circus media present

BUMP

Dec 31
2007-08
9:00 - 3:00
313-963-1400
313-962-2323

LIVE new years eve
the
ATHENEUM

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Grand Ballroom
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Detroit, MI

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TOAST
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CHASE

FROM PAGE E10

Vidalia Onion Rings are a worthy splurge.

Burgers are big and juicy, served with Chase fries and a pickle. Build your own with a Boca, turkey or beef patty, adding your choice of toppings and sauce. For the lunch crowd, sandwiches range from Classic BLTs and Chicken Caesar Rollups to Meatloaf Sandwiches and Corned Beef. Ask for your favorite served on a freshly-baked pretzel roll.

For a heartier meal, entrees include Grilled Flat Iron Steak with Caramelized Onions and Chase Fries, Cajun Chicken Alfredo, and Italian Sausage with Peppers and Creamy Polenta.

And don't forget pizza and calzones. The Chase makes batches of dough daily, and customers are welcome to create their own pizzas or choose from the specialties — Meatza Pie, Chase Pie and Penny's Veggie Pie.

The menu is rounded out with salads, kid's meals, Chase chili, and desserts like Fried Cheesecake.

CARRYOUT, TOO

According to Bastianelli, everything is available for carry-out, and The Chase has a special SDM liquor license which means you can order a six pack to go, or cap an unfinished bottle of wine and take it with you.

For Bastianelli, The Chase is a dream

THE CHASE BAR & GRILLE

133 Main Street, Suite 102, Northville
(248) 347-5993

Hours: Monday-Wednesday 11 a.m.-midnight (or later); Thursday-Saturday 11 a.m.-2 a.m.; Sunday noon-midnight.

Menu: Burgers, sandwiches, pizza, calzones, salads, appetizers and entrees, \$6.95-\$16.95. Children's menu, \$5.95, includes fries and drink.

Specials: Monday Night Football Parties with drink specials; Tuesday night karaoke; Live bands Friday and Saturday nights. Carry-out available, including beer and wine.

come true. He's wanted to open his own restaurant ever since he worked at a bar in Santa Barbara, Calif. named — you guessed it — The Chase. Bastianelli spent 20 years in the building industry until he was able to convince his long-time best friend, Brett Konol (also a builder), to partner with him on The Chase.

"The building business slowed down, and I talked him into it," he said. "This was what I always wanted to do."

Now that the restaurant is up and running, Bastianelli and Konol are already planning for warmer weather, when they'll offer patio seating along with motorcycle and classic car nights.

Until then, their cozy, friendly bar is the perfect place to chase away the winter blues.

Ring in the new year

Enjoy a special dinner or stay to ring in the New Year at one of the Epoch Restaurant Groups dining establishments:

Tribute in Farmington Hills: Dinner reservations for New Years Eve will be accepted for 5:30 until 9:30 p.m. A full A la Carte menu, as well as, the Chefs' Tasting menu will be specially prepared by new executive chef Rich Travis. Tribute is located at 31425 Twelve Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. Call (248) 848-9393. Reservations are recommended.

Forte in Birmingham: You can choose to have an early dinner, prime time seating or join in on the New Year's Eve party. A limited menu with three seatings at 4:30, 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. with reservations confirmed with a \$20 deposit, (refundable through Dec. 27.) Early seating from 4:30 until 6:30 p.m. is \$40 per person and includes soup or salad, choice of selected entrees and chef's dessert sampler. Alcoholic beverages, taxes and gratuity are additional. Prime time seating is \$65 per person and includes all of the above plus an appetizer platter for the table. Party time seating from 9 p.m. until midnight is \$100 per person which

includes dinner, live music and dancing to the band Hidden Agenda, party favors, champagne toast at midnight and a "slider buffet" at 1 a.m. Entrée choices include filet, (6 ounce for early seating, 10 ounce for others,) whitefish, salmon, shrimp and lobster pasta, short ribs, chicken picatta, and surf & turf, (available for the 9 p.m. seating only.) Forte is located at 201 S. Old Woodward in downtown Birmingham. Call (248) 594-7300.

Epoch Events Catering at the Diamond Center inside the Rock Financial Showplace in Novi: Bring in New Years 2008 in the

Diamond Ballroom at the Rock Financial Showplace. Featuring a premium open bar, ball drop on large video screen, complimentary hors d'oeuvres and various buffets served all night from 8pm until 3 a.m. Live entertainment features Steve King & the Dittlies playing music from the 80's & 90's, DJ's Capt'n20, Prevu and Blake George. Valet and coat check are available. Cocktail chic attire is suggested. VIP guests will receive gift bags from contributing sponsors. Cost for the event is \$100 per person.

For reservations, please call 1-866-396-3115 or the Diamond Center at (248) 348-5600, Ext.: 200.

CITY Bites

1 UNDER

Banquet Facility (Formerly Sandtraps on 5)

"The Ultimate New Years Experience"

Ring in the New Year "2008"

Monday December 31, 2007 7:00 pm to 2:00 am

Buffet Menu:

Luscious Salads & Seafood Bar:

A Variety of House Salads, Shrimp Cocktail, Smoked Salmon, Oysters On the Half Shell, Imported & Domestic Cheese Display, Tropical Fruit Display and Yogurt Dip.

Carving Station:

Prime Rib of Beef and Stuffed Pork Loin, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Wild Rice Pilaf, Vegetable Medley, Four Pepper Pasta Chicken Alfredo, Selection of Homemade Breads and Rolls.

Desserts:

A Large selection of Homemade Cakes, Tortes, Cheesecakes, Mini Pastries....and Much More!

\$34.95 per person plus tax and gratuity, (Not valid with any coupons)

Reserved seating for groups of eight or more. Open seating for small groups.

RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

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35780 Five Mile Road • Livonia

2 Free Drink Tickets - Cash Bar

Champagne Toast

Balloon Drop at 12:00 with prizes

Dinner Buffet at 7:00 - 9:30

Live D.J. Entertainment

Party Favors

Omelet Station at 1am

Send, fax or e-mail items for consideration in Get Out! at least two weeks in advance to Ken Abramczyk, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, fax (248) 644-1314 or e-mail kabramcz@hometownlife.com. Be sure to include a short summary with details of the event, address of the event location, date and time, a phone number and/or Web site that members of the public can contact for more information.

ART EXHIBITS

Cranbrook Art Museum: "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future," North American premiere of Saarinen's work at Cranbrook, and collection of furniture, photographs, drawings and models, through March 30, \$10 adults; \$5 teens and full-time students with ID; children 12 and under are admitted free with adult admission, 39221 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, call 1-877-GO-CRANbrook (1-877-462-7262) or visit www.cranbrook.edu.

Flint Institute of Arts: "Art of Collecting" exhibition, through Dec. 30, more than 200 paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures on consignment from galleries in Detroit, Chicago and New York, \$7 for regular museum admission, 1120 E. Kearsley, Flint (810) 234-1695.

Henry Ford Centennial Library: "Eclectic Endeavors," 43 pieces of watercolors and life drawings of Barbara Eko Murphy, through Jan. 26, 16301 Michigan Ave., Dearborn (313) 943-2330.

MOCAD: "Words Fail Me," exhibit with messages in different forms, curated by Matthew Higgs, through Jan. 20, 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (313) 832-6622, www.mocadetroit.org.

Oakland University: New Paintings by Dennis Michael Jones, exhibit through Dec. 23, 208 Wilson Hall, Rochester, www.oakland.edu/ouag, (248) 370-3005.

Oakland University: "Image & Text," OU Biennial Faculty Exhibition, opening reception, 6-8 p.m. Jan. 12, through Feb. 24, artists' panel 6 p.m. Jan. 29, 208 Wilson Hall, Rochester, www.oakland.edu/ouag, (248) 370-3005.

Southfield Public Library: Early American Toys, Tower Lobby; "Witness for the Nameless," photography and poetry by Edna Garte and Norman Dubin, Bookends Cafe; Holiday Magic, collection of holiday-themed dolls from the collection of Alan Toubeaux, WOW Wall, First Level; South Africa, photography by David Doolittle, Second Level, Gallery Wall; Glass Display, Third Level; writers' display, Third Level, Southfield Municipal Complex, 26300 Evergreen, www.sfldlib.org, (248) 796-4224.

ART GALLERIES

Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center: "Art & Artifact," "Black and White Drawings," artwork by Emily Pelton and BBAC students, opening night reception 6-8 p.m. Jan. 11, exhibitions run Jan. 11-Feb. 1, 1516 Cranbrook (between 14 and 15 Mile roads), Birmingham www.BBArtCenter.org, (248) 644-0866.

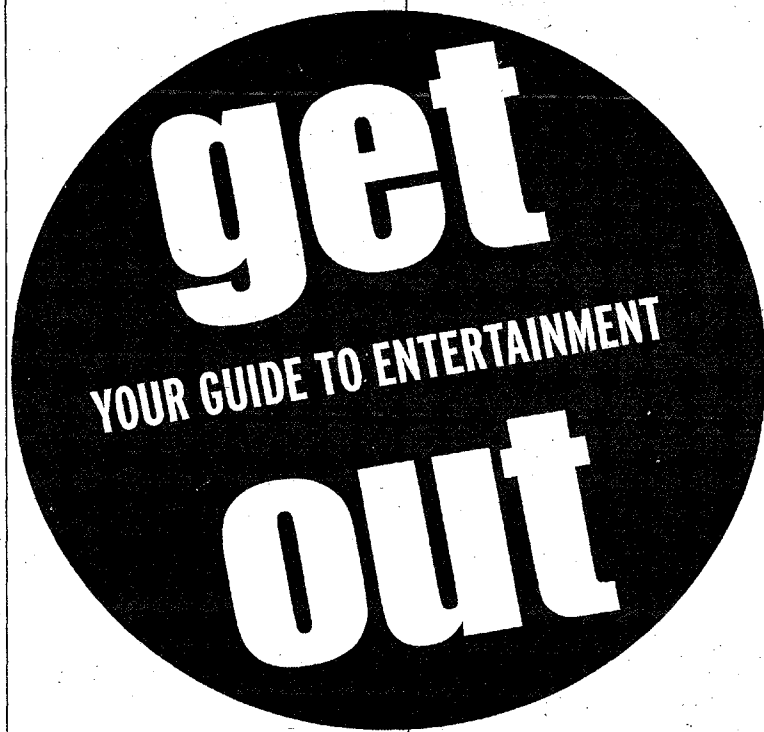
@POP Gallery: "Six Artists in the Tradition of Art School of the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts," exhibit through Dec. 31, 4160 Woodward Ave., Detroit, myspace.com/cpopgallery.

D & M Art Studios: "Surviving Deployment," portraits by Erin Dillenbeck, many of her fiancé Ryan Keeseey, is on active duty in Iraq, through Dec. 31, 8691 N. Lilley, Canton (734) 453-3710.

Farmington Hills City Gallery: "Remembrance," a mixed media collection by Carolyne Miller, through Jan. 31, Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, (248) 473-1856.

Hilberry Gallery: "50/50 Paintings" by Ivin Ballen, exhibit through Jan. 5, 700 Livernois, Ferndale (248) 541-4700.

Hill Gallery: Dennis Oppenheim, through Jan. 12, 407 W. Brown, Birmingham, (248)



540-9288.

Lawrence Street Gallery: "Little Things Mean a Lot," through Dec. 28; 22620 Woodward, Ferndale (248) 544-0394, www.lawrencestreetgallery.com.

Lemberg Gallery: "Thinking in Color," through Jan. 5, 23241 Woodward, Ferndale (248) 591-6623, www.lemberggallery.com.

Paul Kotula Projects: Iris Eichenberg's "Elizabeth," through Jan. 5, 23255 Woodward, Ferndale, (248) 544-3020.

Paint Creek Center for the Arts: "Object, Inc.," group show with nine Michigan artists, 407 Pine, Rochester, (248) 651-4110, www.pccart.org.

The Print Gallery: Joyce Lieberman, oil paintings, through Jan. 18, 29173 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield www.EverythingArt.com, (248) 356-5454.

River's Edge Gallery: Christmas Art Bash, David Austin demonstrates pottery, painter Nancy Byrum features endangered species series, Inner Journey fine art photography show, 6-10 p.m. Dec. 21; 3024 Biddle, Wyandotte, www.artattheedge.com, (734) 246-9880.

Sherry Washington Gallery: David Fludd, "New Paintings and Drawings," through Dec. 31, www.sherrywashingtongallery.com, (313) 961-4500.

ART, ETC.

Detroit Institute of Arts: Guided tours in January, 1 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; 1, 6 and 7:30 p.m. Fridays, 1 and 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, (313) 833-7971 for membership information.

Touch of Light: Glassblowing demonstrations, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Dec. 22, part of Holiday Glass Show, through Dec. 29, 23426 Woodward (1/2 mile south of I-696), Ferndale (248) 543-1868.

BALLET

Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts: St. Petersburg Ballet of Russia (Jacobson's Ballet), 8 p.m. Jan. 10-11, \$30-\$50 (buy one get one free), Ticketmaster.com, 350 Madison, Detroit, (313) 887-8500, www.musichall.org.

BOOKS

Barnes & Noble: Lee Thomas, author of "Turning White: A Memoir of Change," 7 p.m. Dec. 21, 500 S. Main, Royal Oak (248) 336-9490.

CHORAL

University Musical Society: Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Detroit Symphony Orchestra, UMS Choral Union, Michigan State University Children's Choir, March 21; call for brochure at (734) 764-2538 or visit www.ums.org.

Farmington Hills Youth Choir: Auditions for choir, 5 p.m. Jan. 16, Longacre House, Farmington Road, between 10 and 11 Mile roads, call (248) 473-1859 for information.

CLASSICAL

Detroit Symphony Orchestra: A Summer's Dream, Jan. 4-6; Ehnes Plays Barber, Jan. 10, 12-13; Fantastique Dutoit, Jan. 24-26, Max Fisher Music Center, Detroit. Visit www.detroitssymphony.com.

Plymouth Canton Symphony: Symphony Society's Youth Artist Competition, application deadline Jan. 21 for Feb. 3 competition at Evola Music, 7170 Haggerty, Canton, three divisions of senior instrumental and senior piano (grades 10-12) and junior combined (grades 7-9), must reside in Clarenceville, Livonia, Northville, Novi, Plymouth-Canton or Wayne-Westland, winners get scholarships, for information, visit www.plymouthsymphony.org or call (734) 451-2112.

Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra: Young Artists String Competition, auditions 4-9 p.m. Jan. 8-10, Wilson Violins, 725 S. Adams, Birmingham, application deadline is Dec. 31, download applications at www.bbso.org.

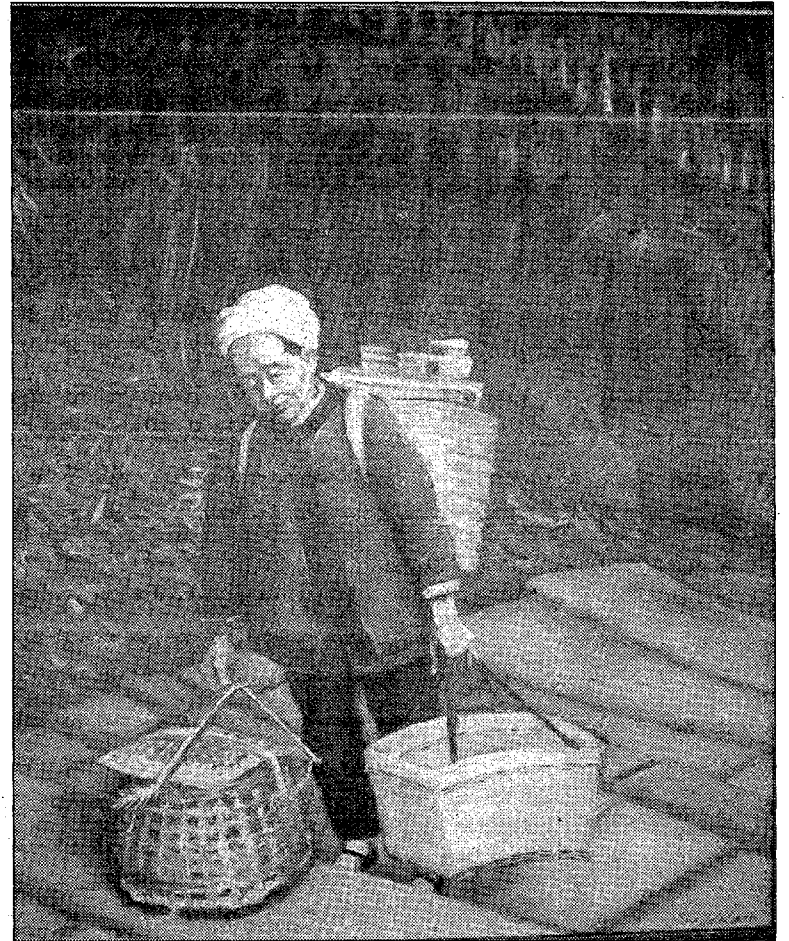
Plymouth Symphony Orchestra: "Blissful Baroque," Jan. 19, Village Theater at Cherry Hill, Canton. With this mid-winter program, favorite tunes from George Fredrick Handel will be in abundance.

CLUBS

The Blind Pig: The Von Bondies with Freer, Jan. 9, 208 S. First St. Ann Arbor: (734) 996-8555.

Bosco: Enjoy noWax nights at 7 p.m. every Wednesday, no cover, 21 and over only, 22930 Woodward in Ferndale, www.thebosco.com, (248) 541-8818.

Eden Nightclub & Ultralounge: Friday night party with DJ Ryan Richards, 10 p.m. guest celebrity hosts and DJs; DJ Urban Chris in the Garden Room, DJ Pannos in the Ultralounge accompanied by percussion-



"Chinese Old Woman" is one of the works from Susan Hershberg Adelman, who practiced pediatric surgery for 28 years, then pursued jewelry and painting. Her work will be displayed Jan. 9 - Feb. 2 at Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave. in Ferndale. Call (248) 544-0394 or visit www.lawrencestreetgallery.com for information.

ist Jared Sykes, 10 p.m. Saturday, 21061 Woodward Ave, Ferndale (248) 541-7674.

Edison's: Aaron Vaughn, Dec. 20; Code Blue, Dec. 21-22; Rick Stel Project, Dec. 27; The Randy Brock Group, Dec. 28-29; The Snakes, Dec. 31; Larry Lee, Jan. 3; Robert Penn, Jan. 4-5; The Blue Kings, Jan. 10; bugs Beddow Band, Jan. 11-12; Mystery Train featuring Jim McCarty, Jan. 17; Aaron Vaughn Band, Jan. 18-19; The Randy Brock Group, Jan. 24; Bazooka Charlie, Jan. 25-26; John D. Lamb Band, Jan. 31; 220 Merrill, Birmingham (248) 645-2150.

Ginopolis on the Grill: Don Swindell and Shuffle Play, with Swindell, Sheila Brown, Mike Lorenz and Jake Reichhart, 7:30-11:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 27851 Middlebelt at 12 Mile in Farmington Hills, no cover, (248) 851-8222.

The Magic Bag: Anti-Freeze Blues Festival featuring The Hodge Brothers Reunion, The Erich Goebel Band, The Grandmasters and Mike Espy/Yakety Yak, Jan. 4 and Bettye Lurette, Johnnie Bassett, The Laith Al Saadi Band, Count Bracey & The Pleasuretones and The Front Street Blues Band, Jan. 5, \$25 each night, 22920 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (248) 544-3030.

The Magic Stick: Detroit Sounds and Spirits, Dec. 21; Few and Far Between, Dec. 22; Xxxmess Spagtacluar, Dec. 23; Troy Gregory and the Stepsisters, Dec. 26, 4120 Woodward, Detroit, (313) 833-9700.

O-Zen Lounge: Formerly the Buddha Lounge; Hot 'N Ready with DJ U.N.I. hip hop soul, Thursday; Insomnia Music, hip hop, soul, old school, Friday; Super Sonic Smooth Music with DJ Shug, Saturday; karaoke with Chez, Sunday; '80s and Rock N Roll; bring your CDs, Tuesday; and Energetic House with DJ Tony Bell,

Wednesday; www.ozenlounge.com, 21633 W. Eight Mile, Detroit (313) 535-4664.

Sky Club: Tango, salsa, and Latin dancing every Wednesday beginning at 8 p.m., located above Sangria's Restaurant, 401 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak, (248) 543-1964.

COMEDY

Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase: L.A. Hardy, Dec. 20-22; Jim Wiggins, Dec. 27-29; Cash Levy, Dec. 31; 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor (734) 996-9080, www.aacomedy.com.

City Theatre: Earthquake, Dec. 28-30, \$32.50, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (248) 645-6666

Fox Theatre: Cedric the Entertainer, Dec. 31; Chris Rock, Feb. 29, 2211 Woodward, Detroit, \$65.50-\$99.50, Ticketmaster.com (248) 433-1515.

Historic Holly Hotel Comedy Club: Warren B. Hall, Dec. 21-22; Chrissy Burns, Dec. 28-31; Dean Mink, Jan. 4-5; Kevin Naughton, Jan. 11-12; Keith McGill, Jan. 18-19; Gary George, Jan. 25-26; 110 Battle Alley, Holly (248) 634-5208.

JD's House of Comedy: Stand-up shows, 8 p.m. Thursday and 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday; Apollo amateur night, 8 p.m. Wednesday; 25333 W. 12 Mile, inside Star Theatre complex, Southfield, (248) 348-2420 or www.ticketmaster.com.

Maxie's Sunday Night Comedy Shoppe: Warren B. Hall, Dec. 23; Chrissy Burns, Dec. 30; Steve Bills, Jan. 6; Kevin Naughton, Jan. 13; Keith McGill, Jan. 20; Gary George, Jan. 27; 2500 W. Hill Rd. (just west of U.S. 23), Flint (810) 232-2500.

Michigan Theatre: Bob Saget, 8 p.m. April 19, mature audiences, \$29.50-\$39.50, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor, (248) 645-6666.

City Theatre: Earthquake (Dec. 27-30), Ticketmaster.com, (248) 433-1515.

The Second City: The Best of Second City-Detroit, on Sundays, (Mondays and Tuesdays for group booking); The Second City's Dysfunctional Holiday Revue, shows throughout November and December, 42705 Grand River Avenue in Novi, (248) 348-4448, www.secondcity.com.

CONCERTS

The Fillmore-Detroit: Omarion with Ja Rule and Trey Songz, Dec. 30; 6 Love and Special Sauce, Jan. 18; Lenny Kravitz, Jan. 27; The Green 17 Tour with Flogging Molly, Feb. 9; Angels and Airwaves with Meg and Dia, The Color Fred, Ace Enders, Feb. 23; Jann Arden, Feb. 26, 2115 Woodward, Detroit. Call (248) 645-6666.

The Fox Theatre: B.B. King, Feb. 16; Jill Scott, March 21, 2211 Woodward, Detroit, Ticketmaster.com (248) 433-1515.

Joe Louis Arena: R. Kelly with Neyo, Keyshia Cole and J. Holiday, Dec. 22; Kid Rock, Feb. 8-9; Linkin Park with Coheed and Cambria, Feb. 16; Foo Fighters, Feb. 24, (248) 645-6666, www.ticketmaster.com, OlympiaEntertainment.com.

The Palace: Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Dec. 26; The Doodlebops Live, Jan. 20; Matchbox Twenty with Alanis Morissette and MTEMATH, 6:30 p.m. Feb. 2; The Spice Girls, Feb. 16; Bon Jovi with Daughtry, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 20; Avril Lavigne with Boys Like Girls, March 22, (248) 645-6666 or Palacenet.com.

Masonic Temple Theatre: 500 Temple Ave., Detroit. (248) 645-6666.

Michigan Theatre: James Blunt, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. (248) 645-6666.

Ford Community & Performing Arts Center: A Valentine's Rock 'N' Roll Spectacular with Sonny Turner (former lead singer of the Platters), The Vogues, The Diamonds, The Reflections, Jack Scott, Lou Christie, Bill Haley's Original Comets, Little Peggy March, The Marcels, 5 and 8 p.m. Feb. 16, \$27-\$67, 15801 Michigan, Dearborn (313) 943-2354 Ext. 1.

St. Andrews Hall: The Verve Pipe, Dec. 21; The Hard Lessons with The Muggs, Great Lakes Myth Society, Dec. 26; Rusted Root, 8 p.m. Dec. 29; Necro with Psycho Realm and Danny Diablo, Jan. 11; The Mars Volta, Jan. 23; The Editors, Jan. 26; Matt Nathanson, Feb. 5, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, (248) 645-6666.

DANCE

Detroit Dance Collective: Collage Concert, Jan. 12-13, Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, \$12-\$45, (734)259-9659.

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble: EDE Center for Dance opens at new location in January at 103 South Street in Rochester, open house, noon-4 p.m. Jan. 12; parent recognition night at 6 p.m. that evening, dancers perform at 2 p.m., \$15 registration will be waived to those who register for dance classes that day, classes offered are Mom & Tot, Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet, Ballet, Pointe, Pre-Pointe, Modern, Jazz, Hip-Hop, Tap, Social Dance, Boys classes and Tone & Stretch, (248) 852-8850, www.ede-dance.org.

Eisenhower Dance Ensemble: NewDanceFest VI, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 26; Bright Side of the Road, 8 p.m. April 5, various locations, call (248) 852-5850 or see www.ede-dance.org.

Farmington Hills Ballroom Dance: 8-11 p.m. Dec. 21, Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, \$10.

Joe Louis Arena: Dancing With the Stars Tour, Jan. 5, Detroit, \$52.50-\$168, (248) 645-6666.

Detroit Opera House: African Footprint, Jan. 19-20, 1526 Broadway, Detroit \$15-\$75, (313) 237-SING, www.MichiganOpera.org.



The St. Petersburg Ballet of Russia (aka Jacobson's Ballet) will entertain metro Detroit dance aficionados Jan. 10 and 11 at the Music Hall Center for Performing Arts, 350 Madison in Detroit. Tickets are \$30-50 (buy one, get one free) and are on sale now at Ticketmaster and the Music Hall box office. Call (313) 887-8500 for information.

FAMILY

Fox Theatre: Sesame Street Live presents "Elmo Makes Music," Jan. 25-Feb. 10, Tickets \$12-\$32, 2211 Woodward, Detroit, Ticketmaster.com (248) 433-1515.

The Palace of Auburn Hills: Disney On Ice Presents: High School Musical The Ice Tour, Feb. 29-March 2, Palacenet.com, The Palace Box Office and all Ticketmaster centers, (248) 377-0100.

Outdoorama: Feb. 28-March 2, Rock Financial Showplace, 46100 Grand River, Novi, \$9 adults, \$4 children 6-14, www.Outdoorama.com, (800) 328-6550.

Ultimate Fishing Show: Jan. 10-13, Rock Financial Showplace, 46100 Grand River, Novi \$9 adults, \$4 children 6-14, www.UltimateFishingShow.com, (800) 328-6550.

FUND-RAISERS

Teddy's Time Square: Rock for a Cause, auction benefits the Sabrina Black Foundation, with tickets for Trans-Siberian Orchestra, autographed Metallica guitar, autographed book by Nikki Sixx, sports memorabilia from Sports Authentics in Troy and painting by John Rios, framed and signed by TSO, also rock music by the Allies, 7 p.m. Dec. 21, 45841 Hayes Rd., Shelby Township, (586) 247-0900, www.teddystime.com.

HOLIDAY SHOWS

Greenfield Village: Holiday Nights, Dec. 20-23, The Henry Ford, Dearborn, \$8.50-\$12.75, (313) 982-6001 or www.thehenryford.org.

Holiday Blues Showcase: Pete "Big Dog" Fetters, Motor City Josh with Stacia Petrie, the Matt Besey Band and bugs beddow with the Skye Island Band, 8 p.m. Dec. 26, Memphis Smoke, 100 S. Main, Royal Oak, (248) 543-4300. \$5 donation suggested, proceeds benefit the Motor City Music Foundation.

Home for the Holidays: This 5th annual showcase supports local animal shelters Almost Home and Cinder Fund. Pat O'Brien, Scott Kinson, J. Graves, Elise McCoy, Aremonta Hesselrode, Jeff Cox and Matt Hughes will perform 9 p.m. Dec. 21, 313jac/Jacoby's, 624 Brush Street, Detroit, 18 and older, (313) 962-7067.

The Fox Theatre: Cedric the Entertainer, 9 p.m. Dec. 31, OlympiaEntertainment.com, the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena box offices, Hockeytown Authentics in Troy (without service charge) and at all Ticketmaster locations, including Macy's and Ticketmaster.com. To charge tickets by phone, call (248) 433-1515.

Rochester: Big, Bright Light Show every night through Dec. 31, Main Street north of Avon Road, www.DowntownRochesterMI.com.

Plymouth Symphony Orchestra: Home for the Holidays concert, 7 p.m. Dec. 20, Penn Theatre, \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors, and \$10 for children, (734) 451-2112, www.plymouthsymphony.org, or in person at 470 Forest Avenue, Suite 18, Plymouth.

Fox Theatre: Too Hot to Handel, featuring Rackham Symphony Choir, 2 and 8 p.m. Dec. 22, \$21-\$78, OlympiaEntertainment.com, the Fox Theatre and Joe Louis Arena box offices, Hockeytown Authentics in Troy (without service charge) and at all Ticketmaster locations, including Macy's and Ticketmaster.com. To charge tickets by phone, call (248) 433-1515.

JAZZ

Arturo's Jazz Theatre: Jesse Palter Quartet, 7 and 9 p.m. Dec. 20, 25333 W. 12 Mile, Southfield, (248) 357-6009.

Baker's Keyboard Lounge: Spencer Barfield & Friends with Don Mayberry (bass) and Djalio Djakate (drums), Wednesdays, 20510 Livernois (at Eight Mile), Detroit (313) 345-

6300.

Cliff Bells: Scott Gwinell and his 16-piece jazz orchestra, 9:30 p.m. every Wednesday, 2030 Park (near Comerica Park), Detroit (313) 961-2543.

Kwanzaa Jazz Concert: Barry Harris Trio, 7 p.m. Dec. 29, First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4605 Cass (at Forest), Detroit, \$25 donation, \$5 child under 12, includes afterglow, (313) 833-9107.

Pi Restaurant: D-Lee and Deb Alane, Dec. 21-22; Sheila Landis, Dec. 28-29; 28875 Franklin (southwest corner of 12 Mile and Northwestern Hwy.), Southfield (248) 208-7500, www.piosouthfield.com.

Detroit Windsor Jazz Club: Saturdays at Shield's (1-4 p.m.), Chuck Moss and the Paint Creek Jazz Band, Jan. 5; Ray Heitger and the Cakewalkin' Jazz Band, Jan. 19; Kerry Price and Friends, Feb. 2; Rick Bryant, Feb. 16; \$10 cover, 25101 Telegraph, Southfield (248) 356-2720.

MORE MUSIC

Palmer Woods: Six-concert series of jazz, classical and world music in five Palmer Woods homes and Detroit Golf Club, jazz vocalist Shahida Nurullah and Friends, 8 p.m. Dec. 22, series is \$100, \$25 per concert, palmerwoods.org, (313) 920-4864.

AJ's Cafe: Alex Winston, Dec. 28, 240 W. Nine Mile, Ferndale, (248) 399-3946.

Detroit Institute of Arts: SSM 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Jan. 4, admission \$8, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit (313) 833-7900.

Hill Auditorium: Mos Def and the Mos Def Big Band (hip hop), 7:30 p.m. Jan. 21, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor \$25-\$45, (734) 764-2538, ums.org.

Oakland Community College's Performing Arts Program: Illrd Tyme Out, Jan. 25, Williams and Clark Expedition, April 11; Rhonda Vincent and the Rage, May 2, perfor-

mances at 7:30 p.m. Student Center Arena, Highland Lakes Campus in Waterford except for Vincent, which will be at the Orchard Ridge campus, \$20; (248) 341-2270.

Music Hall Center for Performing Arts: Amel Larrieux and Dwele, Jan. 31, 350 Madison, Detroit, \$35-\$55, Ticketmaster, (313) 887-8500, www.musichall.org.

First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak: Caberet with Sunny Wilkinson, Feb. 1; Detroit Dance Collective, 529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak (248) 541-0108.

Nardin Park Music Series: Brandon and Rich Ridenour, trumpet and piano, 2 p.m. Jan. 27, Nardin Park United Methodist Church, 29887 W. 11 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills (248) 476-8860 for information.

MUSEUMS

Detroit Institute of Arts: Julie Mehretu: City Sitings through March 30; the online store is open at www.diashop.org, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call (313) 833-7900.

The Henry Ford: "Best of Friends: Buckminster Fuller and Isamu Noguchi," through Jan. 15, at 20900 Oakwood Blvd., west of the Southfield Freeway and south of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. Additional charges and varying hours for entry to Greenfield Village, Ford Rouge Factory Tour and IMAX Theatre. Call (313) 982-6001 or visit www.hfmvgv.org.

Plymouth Historical Museum: A Red Ryder Christmas Story, also Santa Claus appears Saturdays through Dec. 22, 1-4 p.m.

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm: Adams Road Mastodon in special exhibit, one year after discovery by road crew at Adams and M-59, through January 2008, 1-4 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays, 1005 Van Hoosen Road (off of Tienken Road, one mile east of Rochester Road and one mile north of Downtown Rochester), (248) 565-4663, www.rochesterhills.org.

University of Michigan Museum of Art: Persian Visions: Photography from Iran, through Dec. 30, 1301 S. University Ave., Ann Arbor.

Cranbrook Science Museum: Featured exhibit is It's a Nano World. Permanent exhibits include planetarium, nature center and Bat Zone Conservatory, 39221 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, general admission \$5-\$7, planetarium, \$1-\$3, (248) 645-3200 or www.cranbrook.edu.

Detroit Science Center: Extended Our Body: The Universe Within exhibit; new IMAX is Sea Monsters: A Prehistoric Adventure; Mummies: Secrets of the Pharaohs begins in IMAX Jan. 12, call (313) 577-8400 or visit <http://www.detroitssciencecenter.org>.

OPERA

Detroit Opera House: "La Sonnambula," March 28, April 2, 4-6; "La Rondine," April 19-20, 23, 25-26; La Traviata, May 10-11, 14, 16-18; all at 1526 Broadway, Detroit. Visit www.michiganopera.org.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Ann Arbor Book Festival: The Author Lunch series kicks off with Deborah Rodriguez, author of Kabul Beauty School, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 8, Dahlmann Campus Inn, \$50, 615 E. Huron, Ann Arbor, www.aabookfestival.org.

Campus Martius Ice Rink: Skate away from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 10 a.m. to midnight on Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. Sunday through Jan. 1. The rink remains open through March with altered hours. Cost is \$6-\$7 for rink access and \$3 for skates. The rink is located on Woodward Ave. between Fort Street and Michigan Avenue in Detroit. Call (313) 962-0101 or visit www.campusmartiuspark.org.

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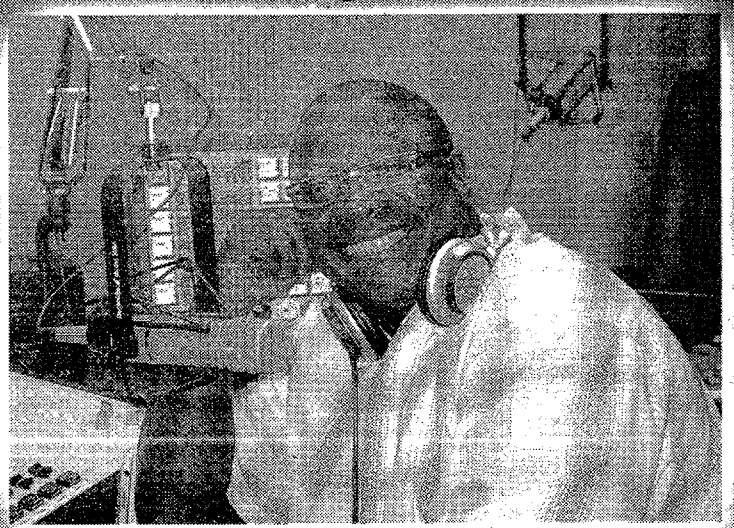
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'Juno's' writer, director don't shy from topic of teen pregnancy

BY STEPHANIE ANGELYN CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

Juno, which hits theaters Dec. 21, offers a heart-felt and unflinching look at the life of one outspoken teen in the midst of an unplanned pregnancy.

The movie marks a promising debut for screenwriter Diablo Cody. Prior to this she gained attention as a blogger and author of the memoir *Candy Girl: A Year in the Life of an Unlikely Stripper*. She

and director Jason Reitman (*Thank You For Smoking*) stopped at Birmingham's Townsend Hotel Dec. 12, to discuss the film - which just earned Golden Globe nods for Best Picture-Comedy, Best Actress in a Comedy for Ellen Page and Best Screenplay, as well as six Critics Choice Award nominations.

Stretched out on a couch Cody explained how the script developed from a single image - the idea of a young offbeat pregnant teen sitting across from an "uppity yuppie couple" who find themselves in the awkward position of auditioning to become adoptive parents. Cody said while she often doesn't have a specific direction in mind when it comes to her work, she knew just how *Juno* would end from the start.

In it, she chose to explore "that crystalline moment when your friends are everything." The spot-on high school dialogue was inspired by the secret language she shared with her own friends as a teenager.

Reitman said he was a bit intimidated to meet Cody at first. "She seemed so cool and the script was so well-written," he said, sporting a faded *Ghostbusters* tee shirt. But the two clearly made a great filmmaking team. Reitman mentioned he'll be producing Cody's next movie - a horror flick titled *Jennifer's Body*.

From *Juno's* opening sequence, animated images

following actress Ellen Page in her red hoodie, the movie pulls you right in. As the charismatic title character, she's got that younger-than-her-years look, and so does Michael Cera (*Superbad*) as Bleeker, the father of her unexpected child. It all lends a bit of tension and reality to the film as the two wrestle with their grown-up decision. Reitman said he thought of Page first for the role, having seen her performance in the

film *Hard Candy*. "There was no second place," he said. "It was just Ellen."

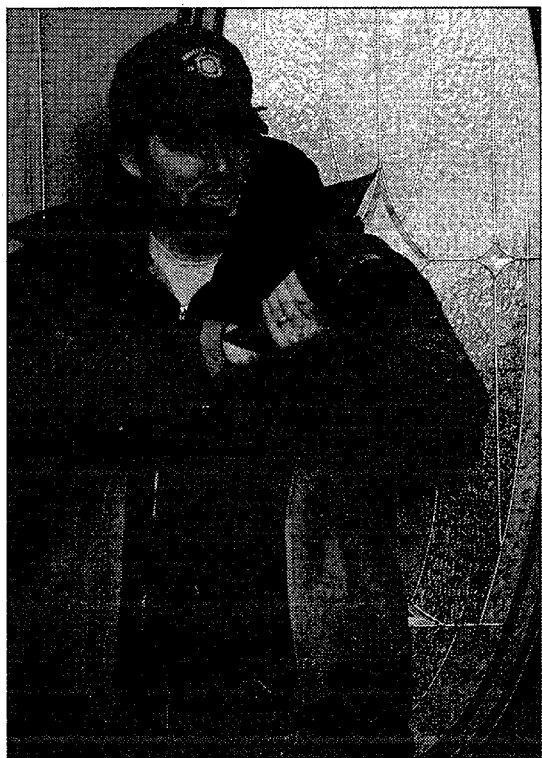
The story is amplified by a pitch-perfect cast. Allison Janney plays Bren, Juno's stepmom who springs into action when she decides to have the baby. J.K. Simmons, whom Reitman calls a "teddy bear in real life," plays the most understanding father in the world, Mac. And the seemingly-perfect couple looking to adopt, Vanessa and Mark Loring,

Please see **FILM, E18**

Film



Ellen Page and Michael Cera play unlikely potential parents in "Juno," the story of a pregnant 16-year-old.



Jason Reitman directed this whip-smart comedy with a heart, "Juno."

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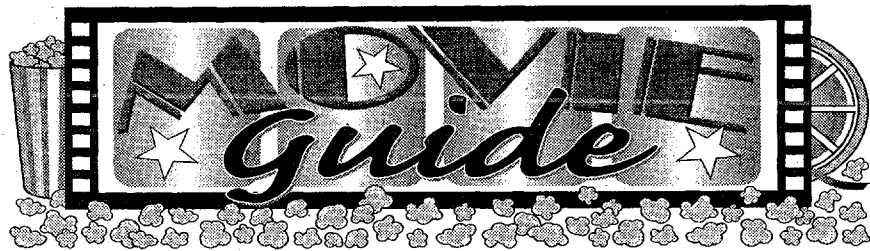
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Theater offers puppet show for kids, bad opera for adults

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Want to hear some horrible opera? Think of it as Ed Wood in the music world.

The same group offering that entertainment (the opera, not Ed Wood) will host a puppet show for kids.

Performance Network Theatre first presents puppeteer Maureen Schiffman's *A Multi-Cultural Holiday* at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 22. It's an all-ages show

that's part of PNT's *Saturday Series for Young Audiences*, and is preceded by a puppet-making workshop at 10 a.m.

In the show, Schiffman plays the mandolin, sings and interacts with a variety of puppets, including Coco, her well loved, kazoo playing, fuzzy monkey. Her positive and playful program engages children through music, movement and story-telling.

Schiffman has performed her original thematic shows throughout North America since 1980. An writer of more than 24 original shows, Schiffman is a member of the Detroit Puppeteers Guild, Children's Music Network and National Association of the Education

of Young Children. Tickets are \$7 for children and \$10 for adults.

THE OPERA

Then from Jan. 10 through Feb. 10, is the premiere of Stephen Temperley's *Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins*.

Performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. and matinees at 3 p.m. on Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays.

Florence Foster Jenkins may be the worst soprano the world has ever heard. A self-proclaimed coloratura soprano,

her voice wasn't even mediocre. She couldn't carry a tune and her sense of rhythm was questionable.

Yet, in 1944, she sold out Carnegie Hall.

Critics trashed her. Yet one critic admitted that everyone there had a "pleasant evening."

Jenkins died one month after her Carnegie Hall debut. Her famous quote was:

"Some may say that I couldn't sing, but no one can say that I didn't sing."

Souvenir: A

Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins traces the relationship between Jenkins and her accompanist, Cosme McMoon, who grew from Jenkins' embarrassed employee into an admirer and friend.

"When it came to singing," McMoon once explained, "she forgot everything.

Nothing could stop her. She thought that she was a great artist."

The show stars Naz Edwards and Fred Love.

"People will be amazed at how famous this woman was even though she couldn't sing," director Jim Posante said.

"The big payoff at the end will astonish the audience."

Tickets are \$25 to \$37 can be ordered at the Performance Network Box Office

at (734) 663-0681, online at www.performancenetwork.org

or by coming to Performance Network Theatre (120 East Huron St., Ann Arbor)

Monday-Saturday 10-6 or one hour before a performance.

On Stage



Popular puppeteer Maureen Schiffman performs.

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FILM

FROM PAGE E15

takes the form of Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman. "They were beautiful even in black and white," Juno announced, spotting their ad in the local penny saver.

Reitman said while the actors "all come from different worlds," they all had an innate ability to underplay the characters, to demonstrate subtlety that's key to the film.

The movie is wrought with imag-

es that stick - scenes where Juno attempts a fake-hanging with a rope of licorice, only to bite tenaciously through the candy; moments where she calls to "procure a hasty abortion" while dialing on her hamburger-shaped phone.

Just when you think you know where the movie is going, Reitman said, "it switches on you. It completely takes a right turn."

Cody and Reitman manage to brilliantly balance what might've been a heavy story with humor and heart. As schoolmates begin to notice Juno's

physical changes one asks Bleeker: "Did you hear Juno McGuff is pregnant? Did you hear it's yours?" and without skipping a beat says "You should grow a moustache."

And the relationship between Bleeker and Juno holds tight to that awkward, sweet sort of love that might only be associated with high school hallways.

"When this is all over, we should get the band back together," he tells her, adding.

"We could always get back together, too. That's an option."

The audience is constantly reminded that no matter how serious the situation gets, Juno's just a teenager trying to get by. Trying to do what's right.

"It's a movie about maintaining your innocence," said Reitman, son of famed director Ivan Reitman.


"People seem to think it's about growing up too soon, but it's about holding onto innocence as long as you can."

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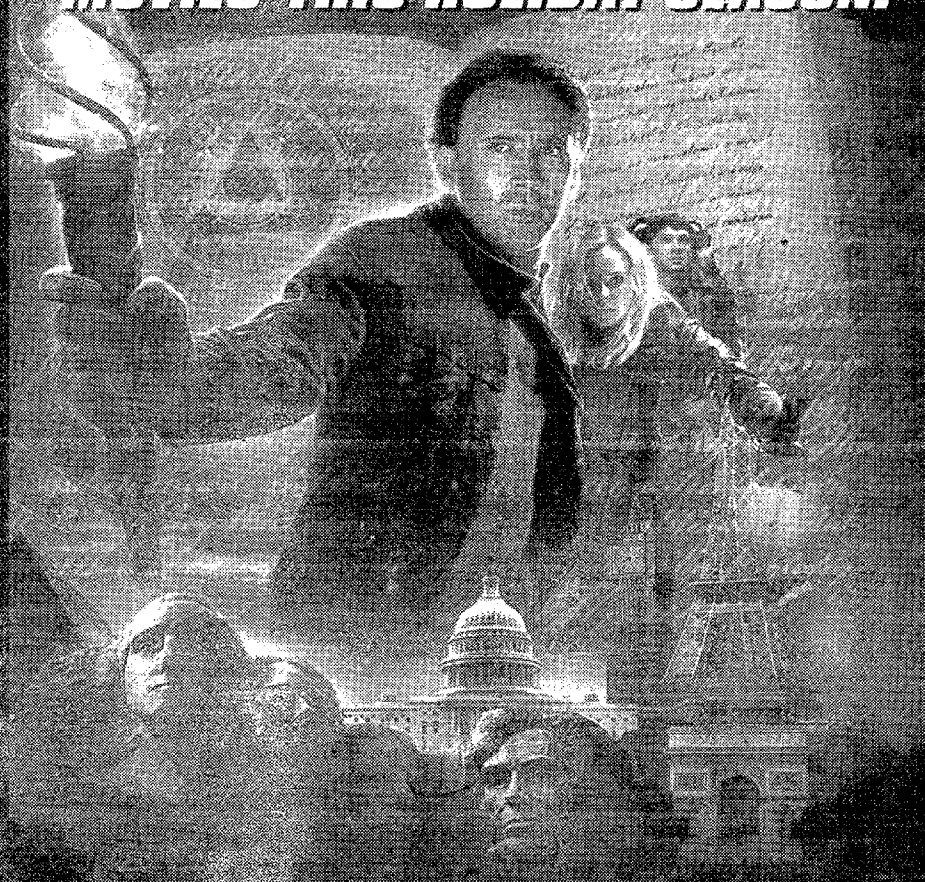
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'Alvin and the Chipmunks' one of few family-friendly flicks

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Capsule reviews of current films:

"ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS"

Are singing chipmunks really so different from Britney Spears? In *Alvin and the Chipmunks* our furry, little singing friends have been turned into something like tiny Justin Timberlakes. They say "sup playa," perform with Madonna-style headset microphones and even suffer from that chronic tour-canceler: "exhaustion." By placing somewhat realistic-looking, CGI-animated chipmunks in a live-action film, director Tim Hill (who helmed the 2006 flop *Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties*) hopes to enliven the old chipmunks, created nearly 50 years ago by Ross Bagdasarian Sr. After their tree is chopped down and brought to Los Angeles, they are soon taken in by out-of-work musician Dave Seville (Jason Lee). He's offset by comedian David Cross, who plays a music executive with skewering sliminess. The biggest failure of the film is the animation of the caroling critters, who are essentially without expression. But in this bloody holiday season of murderous barbers, ruthless oilmen and harrowing Texan killers, where is a family to go? Families looking for distraction could do worse than *Alvin and the Chipmunks* — particularly because of Cross' performance. Better yet, they could all sit down for six seconds and watch the real chipmunk star of 2007: the famed CGI-free *Dramatic Chipmunk* on YouTube. PG for some mild rude humor. 92 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Jake Coyle, AP Entertainment Writer

"I AM LEGEND"

So if we must watch the last man on Earth wandering about aimlessly, it may as well be someone who can hold our attention like the charismatic Will Smith. (Vincent Price and Charlton Heston took on the role with less success in previously cheesy adaptations of the Richard Matheson sci-fi novel, 1964's *The Last Man on Earth* and 1971's *The Omega Man*, respectively.) While Smith certainly conjures both pathos and absurd laughs as Robert Neville, a military scientist whose immunity to a deadly virus leaves him stranded in Manhattan with only his trusted German shepherd for companionship, it's the visual effects in director Francis Lawrence's film that truly dazzle.

CGI-enhanced images of Times Square, Washington Square Park and Tribeca, eerily silent and still and covered in weeds, provide a haunting set-up. Then come the Infected — the ones who didn't die from the virus but rather were transformed into shrieking, flailing crazies who only come out at night (Dash Mihok is their hairless leader). And here's where *I Am Legend* turns from a quiet meditation on the nature of humanity into a B-movie schlockfest. It's also a bit too convenient that when Neville eventually runs into other people, it's a beautiful woman (Alice Braga) and her son, who are about the same age as the wife and daughter he lost during the city's frantic evacuation. PG-13 for intense sequences of sci-fi action and violence. 100 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Christy Lemire, AP Movie Critic

"THE KITE RUNNER"

Director Marc Forster's exceedingly respectful adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's international best seller has both a subtle, captivating naturalism and some convenient plot turns that are difficult to overcome. Screenwriter David Benioff (*The 25th Hour*) remained largely faithful to Hosseini's story about the friendship between two boys in Afghanistan just before the 1979 Soviet invasion, and the way one's betrayal of the other haunts him for decades to come. When Forster focuses on the kids, wealthy Amir (Zekiria Ebrahimi) and the family servant's feisty son Hassan (the irresistible Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada), *The Kite Runner* is light, sweet, charming, yet it darkens plausibly with danger lurking around every corner. Once it follows Amir as an adult (Khalid Abdalla), living as an aspiring writer in San Francisco with his ailing father (the formidable Homayoun Ershadi), the tone turns draggier — which is understandable, given that Amir remains wracked with shame for his childhood transgression. But that means it also loses its earlier energy. *The Kite Runner* does succeed, though, in providing a vibrant window into a world we might not have known and might have felt daunted to seek out. PG-13 for strong thematic material including the rape of a child, violence and brief strong language. 122 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Christy Lemire, AP Movie Critic



GET OUT

FROM PAGE E13

Detroit Historical Society: Scholar Series with Loren Estleman, author of "Amos Walker's Detroit," and photographer Monte Nagler, 6-8 p.m. Jan. 8, free for DHS members, \$10 others, 5401 Woodward, Detroit (313) 833-1801, or visit www.detroithistorical.org/thingstodo.

Detroit Historical Society: Behind the Scenes Saturday tour series, Buhl Building, Jan. 12; and studios of Conservation and Museum Services where conservator Kenneth Katz restores artifacts, documents and paintings, Jan. 19; Wayne County Courthouse, Jan. 26; \$20 DHS members, \$25 guests, reservations suggested with required payments, (313) 833-1801, or visit www.detroithistorical.org/thingstodo.

Joe Louis Arena: "Saltimbanco Cirque Du Soleil," Jan. 23-27, Detroit, \$37.50-\$67.50, (248) 645-6666.

Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular: dozens of statues carved from a single block of ice, Jan. 25-27, downtown Plymouth.

Dearborn Inn Marriott: 50th Anniversary of the White Rose Ball, presented by Hungarian Arts Club, music by Harmonia, club will acknowledge all former debutants and escorts at special reunion ball, Feb. 2, if you know of former debutants or escorts, have them call (248) 352-0927, call for tickets and information or visit Hungarianartsclub@hotmail.com.

The Palace of Auburn Hills: The Harlem Globetrotters, Dec. 30; The Bridal Celebration, Jan. 6; Suburban Michigan Spring Home Show, Jan. 12-13; Motocross, Feb. 9; Longhorn World Championship Rodeo, Feb. 14-15, visit palacenet.com or call (248) 645-6666.

THEATER - COLLEGE

University of Detroit Mercy Theatre Company: "And Neither Have I Wings to Fly," Feb. 1-17; "The Play About the Baby," March 28-April 6; 8425 W. McNichols, Detroit (313) 993-3270, theatre.udmercy.edu.

THEATER - COMMUNITY

The Farmington Players: "Chapter Two," Feb. 15-29, March 1-8; "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," April 25-27, May 1-17, ticket hotline, (248) 553-2955, www.farmingtonplayers.org.

Marquis Theatre: "Jungle Book," through Jan. 27, \$8, 135 Main, Northville (248) 349-8110, www.northvillemarquistheatre.com.

St. Dunstan's Theatre Guild: "A Streetcar Named Desire," Jan. 18-26; "The Cemetery Club," March 7-15; "Greater Tuna," April 11-19; "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," May 30-June 14; (248) 737-3587 or www.StDunstansTheatre.com, 400 Lone Pine Rd., Bloomfield Hills (248) 737-3587, www.stdunstanstheatre.com.

Stagecrafters: "Cabaret," Jan. 18-Feb. 10, 415 S. Lafayette, Royal Oak (248) 541-6430.

Village Players of Birmingham: Three Tall Women, Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize winning drama, 8 p.m. Jan. 11-12, 18-19; 2 p.m. Jan. 13 and 20; \$15; Village Players Playhouse, 34660 Woodward, Birmingham (2 blocks south of Maple), (248) 644-2075, www.birminghamvillageplayers.com.

Wild Swan Theatre: "Strega Nona and the Magic Pasta Pot," Jan. 24-26; 410 S. Maple, Ann Arbor (734) 995-0530, www.wildswantheater.org.

THEATER-PROFESSIONAL

Detroit Opera House: Richard Loring's "African Footprint," Jan. 19-20, 1526 Broadway, Detroit, \$15-\$75 at (313) 237-SING (7464) or online at www.MichiganOpera.org.

Gem Theatre: "Forbidden Christmas," through Dec. 31, 333 Madison Ave, Detroit, call (313) 963-9800. Visit online at www.gemtheatre.com.

Broadway Onstage Live Theatre: "Corpse," Jan. 11-Feb. 9; "Weekend Comedy," Feb. 22-March 29; "Escanaba in Da Moonlight," April 11-May 17; \$16, 21517 Kelly Rd. (at Toepfer) in Eastpointe, ticket reservations recommended, (586) 771-6333.

Fisher Theatre: "Whistle Down the Wind," Jan. 8-27; Mamma Mia! Feb. 12-24, at 301 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit (313) 872-1000, www.BroadwayinDetroit.com.

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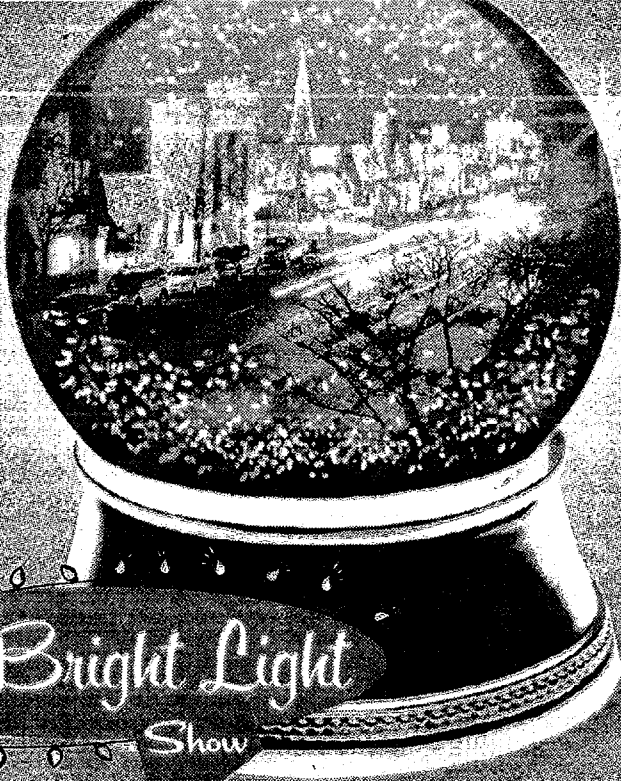
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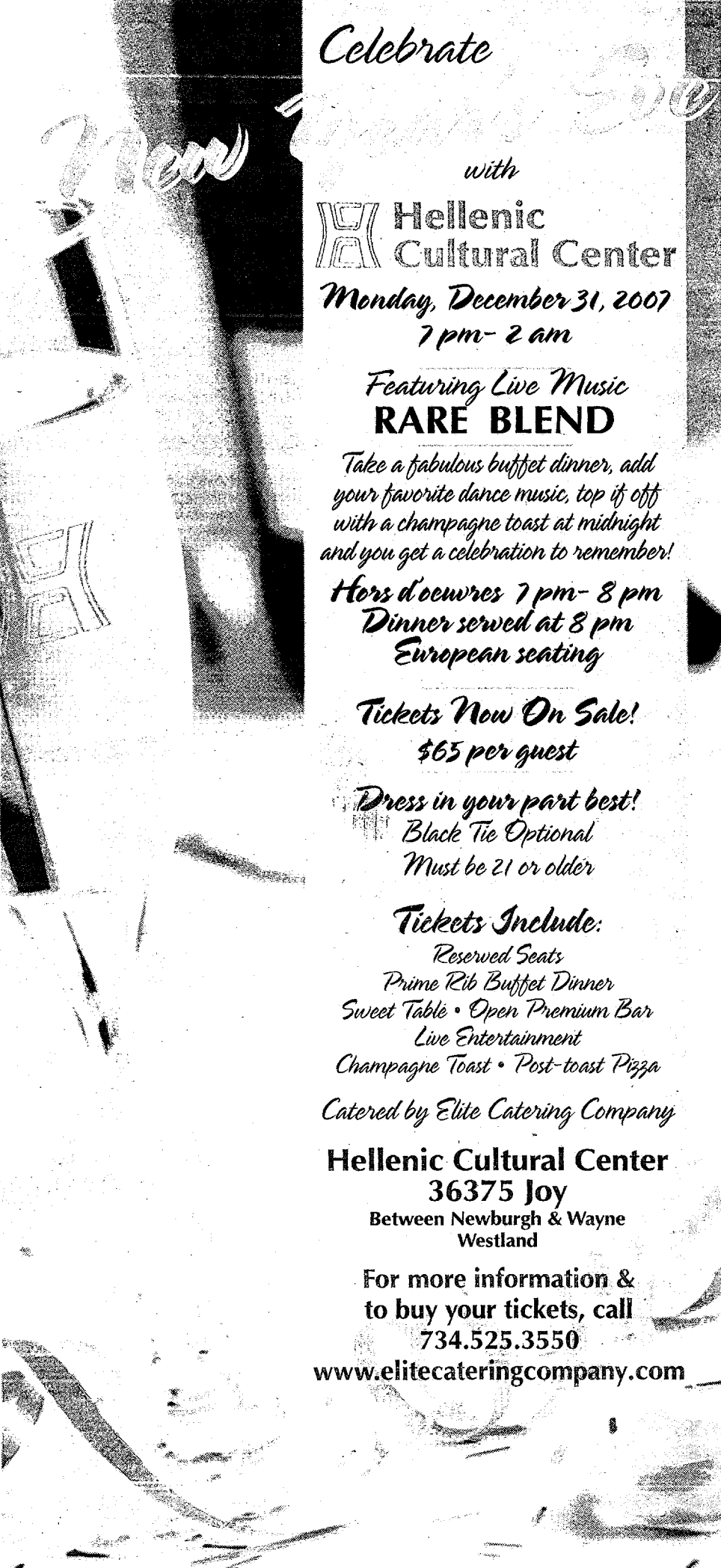
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