

La Cage aux Folles

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THURSDAY
January 8, 2009

PLYMOUTH Observer

Plymouth District Library

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Nearly three years later, police nab pizza suspect

BY TONY BRUSCATO
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

It's a crime case not unlike those we see every night on television, i.e. *CSI: Miami* and *Law & Order*. Feb. 4, 2006, 8:30 p.m. A ski-masked gunman walks into the Hungry Howie's pizza restaurant on Main Street and orders the manager to hand over the \$150 in the cash register. He runs out the back door and leads

Plymouth and Plymouth Township police — and K-9 — on a foot chase through backyards on Simpson and Ross streets during a snowstorm. The snow makes for easy tracking of footprints, until it's snowing so hard the tracks disappear before police can catch up. The robber and the money vanish, with seemingly no clues left behind. A suspicious van is stopped, with police believing it was the getaway vehicle. There's no positive proof; however, the driver was arrested on

unrelated charges. "I think we were close, really close," Plymouth Police Detective Lt. Al Cox recalled. "We just couldn't seal our perimeter fast enough and I think he broke through. I believe we arrested the getaway driver that night, and the suspect was the getaway driver's brother. "It's one of those cases I knew I would always think about, especially if we didn't get him," Cox added. The next day, a homeowner on Ross Street reported finding two

knit hats and a pair of black gloves in a bucket. A year later, the clothing ended up being the lead Cox needed. "They were in water for almost 24 hours and I remember thinking we're not going to get anything (DNA) off of this," said Cox, who sent the items to the crime lab. "In April 2007, we got a lab report that said we had a positive hit on our suspect, who had a previous criminal history. They identified him by DNA from a hair pulled out of one of the hats."

The suspect, 30-year-old Michael Perry Cox Jr. of Plymouth Township, was extradited from Florida and is now facing a preliminary exam in 35th District Court. He's charged with armed robbery and being a habitual offender, and could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted. Cox's preliminary exam continues Jan. 23. He's being held in the Wayne County Jail in lieu of \$1 million bond.

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Adding Abe artifacts

Museum adds little-seen items to Lincoln exhibit

BY TONY BRUSCATO
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

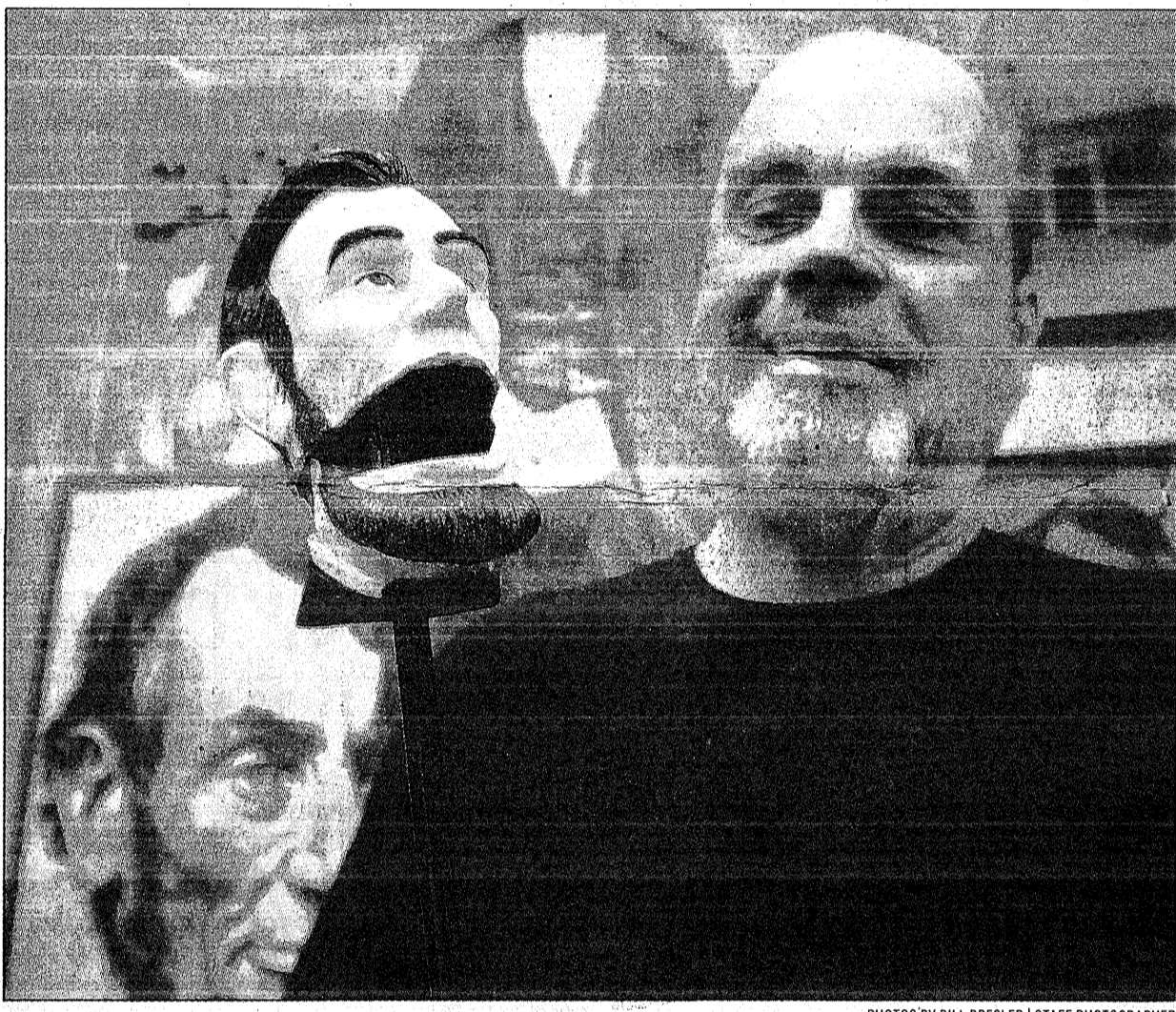
The Plymouth Historical Museum, which already has the state's largest Abraham Lincoln collection, scored another coup to celebrate the 200th birthday (Feb. 12) of the United States' 16th president. The museum will have on loan from The Henry Ford in Dearborn



It's not Kramer from 'Seinfeld,' but a painting of a younger Lincoln, before the presidency.

four pieces that belonged to Honest Abe in Springfield, Ill., which were sold before he moved to the White House in 1861. They will be the cornerstones of the "In the Presence of Lincoln" display at the Plymouth Historical Museum, from Jan. 21-Nov. 4.

"We're getting two rockers, which belonged to Abe and his wife, Mary," said Dan Packer, Lincoln curator and board member at the Plymouth Historical Museum. "Other than the assassination chair at The Henry Ford, this is second best. "There's a parlor table, mohogany with claw feet; and a mantle clock which Lincoln was standing next to when the Republican delegation



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lincoln archivist Dan Packer collects Lincoln memorabilia of a less serious nature. This Lincoln Talking Head is a best-seller at the gift shop in the new visitor's center at Gettysburg.

came to him with the nomination for president of the United States," Packer added. "Outside of Springfield, this museum is on par with major museums around the country when it comes to Lincoln." The search for the items began

when ancestors of the man who bought the pieces from Lincoln showed up the Plymouth Historical Museum looking for them. Packer led the family members to The Henry Ford, which — with Packer's help — found them in a warehouse

used to store items not on display in the main Dearborn museum. The four items have been displayed to the public before, but it's unlikely many have seen them.

Please see **LINCOLN, A3**

Kettle drive soars past 2008 goal

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

When the Plymouth Salvation Army braintrust got together and set the goal for the 2008 Red Kettle Campaign at \$235,000, the raised eyebrows came and the whispers started.

"In these kinds of financial times, you're never gonna make that," the conventional wisdom went.

If that really was the conventional wisdom, it wasn't all that wise. Benefitting from what Salvation Army officials call an "incredibly generous" community, this year's Red Kettle Campaign, the Army's biggest fund-raiser, raised more than \$244,000, an 18-percent increase over last year's campaign.

"The story there is the need is just incredible," said Maj. Jim Irvine, commander of the Plymouth Salvation Army. "Everyone is feeling that; it doesn't come as a surprise to anyone. What comes as the big surprise is how well we did in these financially hard times."

That figure is in contrast to how the overall campaign is doing around metropolitan Detroit. District Salvation Army officials noted in a release the overall campaign was some \$839,000 behind as of Dec. 29. The metro Detroit goal is \$8.5 million.

Irvine said the local Salvation Army — which serves the Plymouths, Canton, Northville and Belleville — was able to far exceed its goal by "streamlining the use of kettles" at some 20 locations around those communities "to get the best use we could" out of the kettles.

But the real push, Irvine acknowledged, was from volunteers and the donors themselves.

"We had people who knew we were hurting, and they came out nonstop to ring the bells," Irvine said. "It was people passing the kettles who knew their families were hurting. We didn't get any single big-check donations, as we've had in the past. It was all the one-dollar, five-dollar and 10-dollar donations people were putting in that made all the difference."

The donations will help the Plymouth Salvation Army finance all of its programs, including things like the Thanksgiving and Christmas family adoptions. That need, Irvine pointed out, increased dramatically this year. The Plymouth Salvation Army served 436 families (up 27 percent over 2007) and 1,037 children, some 300 more than a year ago.

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Family 'overjoyed' at 'amazing Christmas gift'

BY TONY BRUSCATO
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The Christmas season is a ready-made time for miracles.

When West Middle School music teacher Marc Whitlock picked up the phone three days before Christmas, he received the miracle he and his wife, Kellie, had been looking for.

The word from doctors at Children's Hospital in Detroit indicated their 2-year-old daughter, Macaylah — who was born with transient leukemia and had been undergoing treatment — was cancer-free.

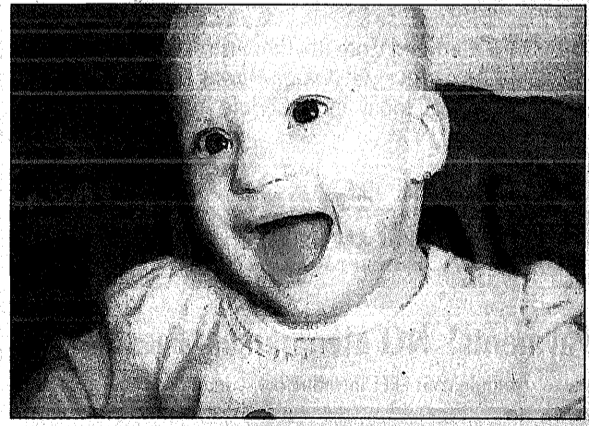
"I was so overjoyed," said Marc Whitlock. "It's what we'd been praying for over the last

year. There is no cancer in the blood and no cancer in the bone marrow. The good cells are rebuilding themselves and starting to grow. What an amazing Christmas gift we have received."

Whitlock said they still have to tackle Down syndrome and associated deafness. But, for a few days, he and Kellie want to give thanks to God and express their appreciation for all the support given his family.

"We are grateful for all those who have helped us along the way," said Whitlock. "This has taught us a lot, and we certainly plan to do our part in paying it forward."

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Macaylah Whitlock has been declared cancer-free.

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Warming Homes and Hearts

The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) is a nonprofit organization established to provide low-income families with energy assistance during crisis. For the 2007-2008 heating season, THAW distributed more than \$10,928,000 in energy assistance to more than 8,600 household in Michigan.

For every new checking account opened in January 2009, Community Financial will contribute \$10.00 to THAW.*

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USA WEEKEND

Coming Sunday:
Intriguing innovations

"Around Plymouth" is designed to announce upcoming events taking place in the community. Items will run on a space-available basis. Send details to bkadrich@hometownlife.com

Chorale auditions

The BeckRidge Chorale conducts auditions for its 35th anniversary season. Auditions will be by appointment only. Auditions for all voice parts will be held in January. Our adult ensemble is composed of members from all over southeast Michigan. To schedule an audition appointment or for more information, contact (734) 416-9885 or visit www.beckridgechorale.com.

Music at the library

The Plymouth District Library hosts the Rhapsody Music Series 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 11.

The String Trio from the Plymouth Symphony will present an all-Mozart program as part of this popular Library series, sponsored by the Friends of the Plymouth District Library. Guest musicians include Hektor Qyteti (violin), Faith Demorest (violin 2) and Brandon Cota (cello).

Registration is requested for these free programs. Call the Library at (734) 453-0750, Ext. 4.

PUPS performances

The Plymouth Community Arts Council is proud to pres-

ent the Plymouth Uptown Players in productions of "Beggar and the Wolf," "Mother Goose has flown the Coop," and "The Enchanted Cottage."

"Mother Goose" is scheduled for 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 10-11; "Beggar and the Wolf" are scheduled for 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 17-18.

Tickets are \$6 for everyone and are on sale by calling the PCAC at (734) 416-4278 or e-mailing tamar@plymoutharts.org

All performances will take place at The Joanne Winkleman Hulce Center, 774 N. Sheldon in Plymouth.

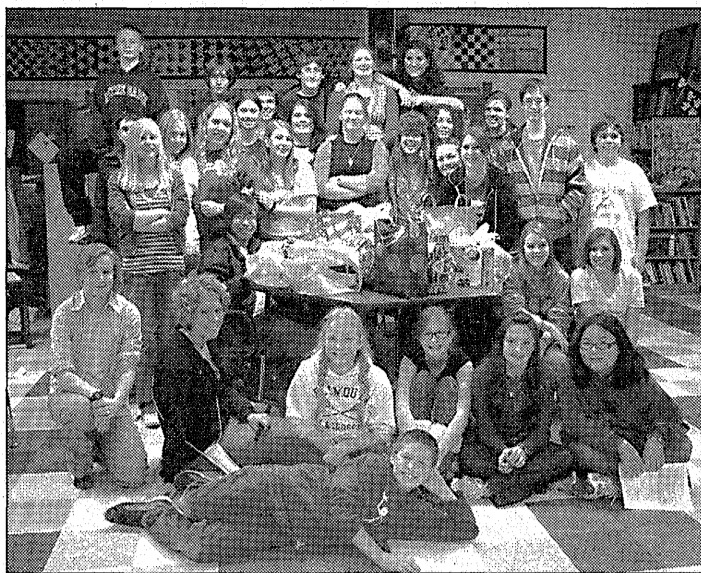
PUPs will also hold winter/spring season auditions 6-9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22. Actors must bring a short poem to read at the auditions. If your child participated in the Fall 2008 PUPs program they do not need to audition, but registration for the Winter/Spring session is required.

For more information, call (734) 416-4278.

Calling Plymouth Democrats

Take an important first step and attend a meeting to explore the potential for a Plymouth Democratic Club 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 15, at the Plymouth District Library.

Since the election, the challenges we face - and our



Fife and Drum roll

The Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps kicked off its upcoming 2009 season with a Holiday Cookie Party Dec. 15. The Corps collected items to donate to First Step in Plymouth (www.firststep-mi.org) and to Ozone House in Ann Arbor (www.ozonehouse.org). The upcoming performance season for the PFDC will include many Southeast Michigan parades and performances as well as events in Charlevoix, St. Clair, Muskegon and a weekend in Mackinaw. In August the Corps will travel on their annual 10-day tour which this year will be into Canada with performances at Fort Henry, Ontario, Montreal, and a special performance on Canada's Peacekeeping Day in Ottawa. Visit the group's Web site at www.pfdc.us for additional information.

responsibility to take action - have only become more urgent. Help us make progress on the strong grass-roots infrastructure built in Plymouth during President-elect Obama's campaign. You can connect with fellow supporters and continue to make a difference in our community and country. Please plan to attend this meeting, hosted by Plymouth Obama Campaign team leaders, and register at plymouthdemocrats@gmail.com

Genealogical Society meets

The Western Wayne County Genealogical Society meets Monday, Jan. 19, at the Livonia Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road in Livonia.

The main speaker, following the 7:30 p.m. business meeting, will be the Petticoat Ladies. Their topic will be "Mother's of Invention." This spirited group of ladies will enlighten us on what women had to go through in Victorian times. The 6:30 p.m. program will be a After the Holidays Social to visit and catch up with each other's genealogy fun. Have a brick wall? See if our members can help.

The meetings are open to the public. Guests are always welcomed.

For further information,

visit the group's Web site @ www.rootsweb.com/~miwweogs/

Saturdays @ The Penn

The Plymouth Community Arts Council and the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society present Saturdays at the Penn @ noon.

The next old-fashioned variety shows for children and families is Feb. 7, with special musical host Guy Louis and Chataqua Express and special guest performer Like Water Drume and Dance. The announcer is Timothy Thompson.

Tickets cost \$3 and may be purchased the day of the show. Doors open at 11:15 a.m. at the Penn Theatre, 760 Penniman in Plymouth. To purchase tickets before the concert or for more information on group purchases, contact Deb Madonna at (734) 377-0914. Visit www.PennSaturdays.com for more information.

Council on Aging

The Plymouth Council on Aging hosts the Detroit Institute of Art, who will present "Monet To Dali." A DIA speaker will have a slide show along with presenta-

tion of masters of art from the Cleveland Museum of Arts. Come share this cultural event 1:30-3 p.m. at the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer. Cost is \$1.00 at the door.

The Council on Aging hosts a free health screening 12:30-3:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 19, at the Plymouth Cultural Center. This will be for persons 60 years and older. Screening and testing will include Vital Signs/Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar, Urinalysis/ Cholesterol Blood Count/ Hemocult/ Hearing/ Vision and Flu Shots. Bring your physician's name, health history, current medications and your Medicare Card. RSVP to (734) 453-1234, Ext. 236.

PLAV members

PLAV Post #166, located at 39375 Amrhein in Livonia (at the southeastern corner of Amrhein and Eckles) is seeking new veteran members (the first year is offered free).

The Post meeting is the second Monday of every month (except July and August) and begins at 7:30 p.m. with a light lunch that follows the meeting. Those interested are welcome; contact Sr Vice Cmdr/Adj Roger L. Kehrier, (734) 453-2031.

Bipolar forum

Bipolar disorder can be a devastating illness, both for individuals and for families. It is a chronic disease causing unstable and unpredictable moods. The positive news is that bipolar disorder is treatable, and new research advances are under way.

The University of Michigan Depression Center and the Plymouth District Library will present a Bright Nights forum, "Understanding Bipolar Disorder," 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, at the library, 223 S. Main in downtown Plymouth.

Dr. Melvin McInnis, M.D., will present a brief overview of the illness from a clinical and genetic perspective. McInnis is the Thomas B. and Nancy Upjohn Woodworth Professor of Bipolar Disorder and Depression at the U-M Depression Center. His overview will be followed by a specialist panel discussion based on audience questions. Pre-registration for the free

event can be made by calling the library at (734) 453-0750, Ext. 4. Family members, friends and individuals with bipolar disorder are especially welcome. For more information, visit the Depression Center Web site at www.depressioncenter.org or contact Trish Meyer at meyerpa@umich.edu.

PCAC offerings

The Plymouth Community Arts Council's Winter/Spring Session starts in January.

The PCAC is bring back its camp program for children ages 5-12. The mid-winter camp runs Feb. 23-27, the spring break camp is April 13-17, and the PCAC offers snow-day camps when Plymouth-Canton school officials call a snow day due to inclement weather. All camps run 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The PCAC offers Girl Scout programs, with workshops for badges including ceramics and clay, theatre, Her Story and colors and shapes.

There are drop-in art classes with Pam Grossman. The drawing-based class takes place Mondays and Wednesdays, while the youth (ages 6-19) classes are offered Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Pottery A-Z with Jeff Burda is offered in six-week sessions for children ages 6-12, on Saturdays Jan. 24-Feb. 28, March 7-April 11, April 25-May 30.

All camps and classes are held at the Joanne Winkleman Hulce Center for the Arts, 774 N. Sheldon in Plymouth. To register for these programs stop in at the PCAC or call (734) 416-4278. More information on all programs is available at the PCAC Web site, www.plymoutharts.com

College workshop series

The Plymouth District Library will host a series of workshops designed to assist high school and college students and their parents.

"Test strategies for the ACT," Thursday, Jan. 15, 7-8:30 p.m.

"Essay writing workshop for the ACT essay," Thursday, Jan. 22, 7-8:30 p.m.

Registration is requested for these free programs. Contact the library at (734) 453-0750, Ext. 4.

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 Any person wishing to comment on this application may file his or her comments in writing with the Regional Director of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation at its Regional Office (500 West Monroe Street, Suite 3600, Chicago, Illinois 60661) before processing of the application has been completed. Processing will be completed no earlier than the 15th day following either the date of this publication or the date of receipt of the application by the FDIC, whichever is later. The period may be extended by the Regional Director for good cause. The non-confidential portion of the application file is available for inspection within one day following the request for such file. It may be inspected in the Corporation's Regional Office during regular business hours. Photocopies of information in the non-confidential portion of the application file will be made available upon request. A schedule of charges for such copies can be obtained from the Region Director.
 By: H. Douglas Chaffin
 President & CEO
 January 8, 2009

Symphony, arts council get foundation grant

The Plymouth Community Arts Council and the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society have been awarded a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation of Plymouth.

This grant will assist with the expenses to accommodate the Plymouth Canton Symphony's move to the Plymouth Community Arts Council to share space and other administrative resources. The move is expected to take place during the summer of 2009.

On Wednesday, December 17, 2008 the Plymouth Community Arts Council and the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society were awarded the check from the Community Foundation of Plymouth. The check was presented to the organizations by Stella Green, a Community Foundation Board Member. Sheila Paton,



Plymouth Community Foundation board member Stella Green, PCAC treasurer Sheila Paton, symphony director Beth Stewart and PCAC board members Si Nahra, Bill Lawton and Joanne Winkelman Hulce celebrate the \$2,500 grant the PCAC and symphony got from the foundation.

Treasurer of the Plymouth Community Arts Council and Beth Stewart from the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society accepted the check from the Foundation. PCAC Board members Si Nahra,

Bill Lawton and Joanne Winkelman Hulce were also present for the award.

Deb Madonna, PCAC Board President, is thrilled with the grant award.

"We appreciate this sup-

port from the Community Foundation of Plymouth," Madonna said. "This will enable the Arts Council and the Symphony to enhance our work together and share resources so that we can continue to bring quality programs to the community."

Beth Stewart, Executive Director of the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society said she's looking forward to the move.

"We look forward to a much closer working relationship between the Plymouth Symphony and the PCAC," Stewart said. "We appreciate the support received from the Plymouth Community Foundation to help facilitate these efforts."

Community Shares

Community Financial of Plymouth recently presented a check to the Novi Educational Foundation (NEF) to further educational programs in the local community.

Mary Collins, manager of Community Financial's Novi office, made the presentation to Peter Dion, superintendent of Novi Community School District.

According to NEF's Executive Director Bob Schram, Community Financial's contribution will be used to help defray costs for the Career Day and Reality Store programs at Novi Middle School.

"The NEF values its community partners, including Community Financial, in accomplishing its mission to make a difference for the students of Novi Community Schools," said Schram.

The donation was made possible by Community Financial's positive financial performance during 2008. The Novi Educational Foundation is among seven recipients to be given a total of \$5,300 from the credit union's annual Community Shares program.

"We are very pleased to

contribute toward educational programs that benefit students and local schools," said credit union CEO Bill Lawton. "This is another way that Community Financial is making a positive difference in the communities we serve."

Attending the check presentation, which was held at Novi's Orchard Hills Elementary, were students from Cathy Cloke's fourth grade class who volunteer at the school's student-run credit union, which is sponsored by Community Financial.

"Our partnership with Community Financial has given our students hands-on experience to learn how a banking establishment operates," said Orchard Hills Principal Paul LePlae. "Advertising, leadership and math skills are all part of the experience, and the value of saving money is at the core of this learning opportunity."



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Small busts and statues are ready for display.

LINCOLN
FROM PAGE A1

"They had previously been on display at the Logan County Courthouse, where Lincoln practiced law," said Leslie Mio, loan coordinator at The Henry Ford. "But, it's been decades since they were shown."

The Plymouth Historical Museum had to fill out a 50-page facilities report in order to get the items.

"As a result, we've enhanced the level of security in the whole building, not just for the Lincoln items, but for our displays, too," said Liz Kerstens, museum director, who said the four pieces will be put in the former doll house outside the permanent Lincoln room with special humidity and light levels to preserve them. "It's still a community museum, and nothing will take away from that, but because we will be having items we believe haven't been displayed for such a long time, hopefully the word will get out."

Along with the new items and current Lincoln room display - which includes a lock of Lincoln's hair and the dictionary he used as a child - there will be speakers and workshops during the nearly year-long celebration of Lincoln.

Kerstens is fund-raising to pay for the cost of borrowing the furniture, additional security, advertising and other costs, which she said will be in the "tens of thousands" of dollars. The major sponsor for the event is Hines Park Lincoln-Mercury.

The Plymouth Historical Museum's Lincoln artifacts were purchased in 1998 from Dr. Weldon Petz of West Bloomfield. The museum fundraised for \$150,000 to pay Petz, as well as develop and preserve the display which opened in 2002.

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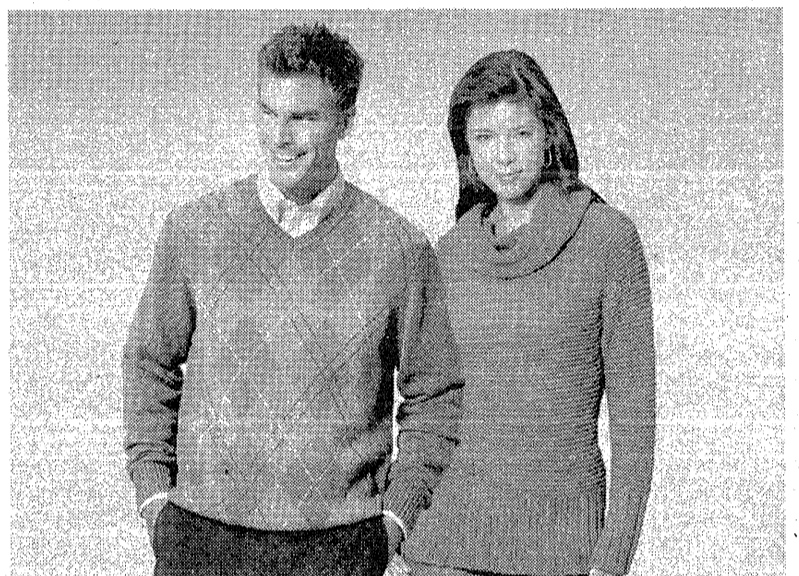
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a single sale price accessory, footwear, intimate apparel, ladies' or men's outerwear or suit or men's tailored clothing item

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Dreams to reality?

Plymouth native puts Miss America pageant hopes to TV test

TONY BRUSCATO
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Plymouth native Katie Lorenz is getting a reality check.

The winner of the Miss Illinois contest is competing with the 51 other women on the Queen Mary ocean liner in Long Beach, Calif., navigating through a series of team and individual competitions in a reality show designed to prove what it takes to be Miss America.

The four-part, one-hour episodes are being shown on the TLC television network each Friday before the pageant, which is on Saturday, Jan. 24 at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas.

Lorenz, a graduate of Plymouth-Canton Schools and the University of Michigan, now resides in Chicago. A reception in her honor at the Lotus Art Gallery in downtown Plymouth brought out

'I've been dreaming of being Miss America since I was 7 years old. I am nervous, excited, overwhelmed, thrilled, scared and every possible emotion. I want it to be here and find out what happens.'

KATIE LORENZ, Miss America hopeful

dozens of well-wishers. "It's exciting, but nerve-racking," said Katie's mother, Yvonne, who will be in the Las Vegas audience with about 50 family members and friends. "She is genuine, has a good heart and everything she does is for the right reasons. It's gotten her far in everything."

"She's a down-to-earth, really neat girl," added Sheila Osann, Katie's aunt. "She started to participate in pageants for scholarship money,

and she's done well because she's not affected by herself."

Yvonne Lorenz said while Katie liked to dance as a child, she really didn't think her daughter would be competing in pageants, let alone for Miss America.

However, Katie apparently had different thoughts. "I've been dreaming of being Miss America since I was 7 years old," said Katie Lorenz, who met 1988 Miss America Kaye Lani Rae Rafka of Monroe. "I am nervous, excited, overwhelmed, thrilled, scared and every possible emotion. I want it to be here and find out what happens."

When asked how her childhood dreams ended, the reigning Miss Illinois smiled.

"Of course, it always ends in becoming Miss America," she said.

On Jan. 24 we'll find out if dreams really do come true.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

tbruscato@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-2637 Katie Lorenz and family; brother Joe, mom Yvonne, and dad Scott.

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Publish: January 8, 2009

CANTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The following vehicles have been deemed abandoned and will be sold at public auction January 13, 2009 at 10:00 AM. The auction will be held at Westland Car Care Towing, 6375 Hix Rd., Westland, MI 48185. The vehicles will be sold as is, starting bid is for towing and storage.

Year	Make	Model	Body	VIN #
1992	Dodge	Daytona	2-Dr	1B3XW44K6NN253884
1997	Ford	F-150	P/U	1FTDX1765VKA02285
1997	Plymouth	Neon	4-Dr	3P3ES47CXVT602874
1990	Lincoln	Continental	2-Dr	1LNCM93E0LY805740
1994	Pontiac	Sunbird	4-Dr	1G2JB54H7R7591710
1991	Chevy	1500	P/U	2GCCEC19K3M1116469
1994	Ford	Crown Vic	4-Dr	2FALP74WXXR162738
1998	Chevy	Lumina	4-Dr	2G1WL52M7W9226168
1989	Ford	F-150	P/U	1FTHP25H8KLB28578
1999	Pontiac	Grand Prix	2-Dr	1G2WP12K8XF308748
1997	Ford	Taurus	4-Dr	1FALP52U8VG300556

Publish: January 8 and 11, 2009

University of Michigan Health System

Do you have FIBROMYALGIA (FM)??
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The University of Michigan's Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center (CPFRC) is recruiting and screening women diagnosed with FM to become part of our research candidate pool (referred to as our "Subject Registry"). Candidates must be at least 18 years of age and have been diagnosed with FM for at least 3 months.

Prior to enrollment in the CPFRC research registry, volunteers will be asked to complete a screening appointment.

Candidates who meet screening criteria will then be advised of up-coming studies and have the opportunity to participate in a variety of research projects to be conducted over the next 1-3 years.

Compensation is provided for completion of the screening assessment and for participation in all research studies.

To view information regarding current studies, visit "ENGAGE", the UMHS research study web-site* at:
www.umengage.org *(search by condition under "Pain Studies")

For information about the research candidate pool and/or to schedule a screening appointment contact the CPFRC at:
1-866-288-0046 or (734)998-7110

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, January 19, 2009 @ NOON, TATE & CO. Auctioneers, Executive Administrator for Extra Space Storage, will be offering for sale under the judicial lien process, by public auction, the following storage units. The goods to be sold are generally described as household goods. The terms of the sale will be cash only. Extra Space Storage reserves the right to refuse any and all bids. The sale will be at the following location: Extra Space Storage, 6729 N. Canton Center Rd., Canton, MI 48187 @ NOON.

Kurtyzk, Wayne	E162 20x20	Kitchen Set, Nordic Trak, "retro" covered stroller, toddler bike, Halloween decor, 25+ Boxes, misc. household goods.
Ray Schultz	D157 10x10	Vacuum Cleaner, 27" CRT TV, box-spring size: full, instrument case, misc. bedroom furniture, coffee table, copier and scanner, picture frame, large tote.
Great Lakes Finance c/o Tara Meabrod	H310 20x20	Cubicle dividers, Pallets, Table, Wastepaper baskets, Plastic carpet protectors.
Craig Smith	C73 5x5	Standing dolly, Skill saw, 2 ladders, misc. boxes & totes, Many misc. tools.

Publish: January 1, 2008

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED USE OF THE 2009 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS
JANUARY 20, 2009

Notice Is Hereby Given That A Public Hearing Concerning The Community Development Block Grant Program Will Be Held By The Board Of Trustees Of The Charter Township Of Plymouth At 7:00 P.M. In The Meeting Room Of The Township Hall Which Is Located At 9955 N. Haggerty Rd. On January 20, 2009.

The Purpose Of The Public Hearing Will Be To Afford The Public The Opportunity To Place Before The Board Any Proposed Use Of The 2009 Community Development Block Grant Funds.

Preliminary Indications From The Wayne County Office Of Block Grant, Wayne County Community Development Block Grant Program, Are That The Estimated 2009 Funding Allocation For The Township Will Be Approximately \$105,000.00. Wayne County Requires For 2009 That Our Request For Public Service Projects Not Exceed 19 % Of The Total Allocation. Based On That Special Requirement The Projects Are Proposed As Follows:

ESTIMATED ALLOCATION BASED ON 19% PUBLIC SERVICE CAP	
PUBLIC SERVICES	Allocation
Senior Services	\$19,950.00
Council on Aging	\$5,440.37
Senior Alliance	\$3,489.26
Transportation	\$14,509.64
Disabled Van	\$1,951.11
Senior Transportation	\$4,793.99
ADMINISTRATION	\$10,500.00
Administration	\$9,715.65
Planning	\$10,500.00
BRICK & MORTAR	\$74,550.00
Multi-year Program: Expansion & Acquisition*	\$74,550.00
TOTAL ALLOCATION	\$105,000.00

*Previously Approved

If Wayne County Determines After All Applications Are Received That Additional Funds Shall Be Available For Public Service Projects The Proposed Allocations Shall Be As Follows:

ESTIMATED ALLOCATION BASED ON TOWNSHIP PREFERENCE	
PUBLIC SERVICES	Allocation
Senior Services	\$51,450.00
Council on Aging	\$14,030.44
Senior Alliance	\$11,806.44
Transportation	\$37,419.59
Disabled Van	\$12,384.02
Senior Transportation	\$25,035.57
ADMINISTRATION	\$10,500.00
Administration	\$10,500.00
Planning	\$0.00
BRICK & MORTAR	\$43,050.00
Multi-year Program: Expansion & Acquisition*	\$43,050.00
TOTAL ALLOCATION	\$105,000.00

*Previously Approved

The Board Of Trustees Of The Charter Township Of Plymouth Upon Completion Of The Public Hearing, Will Determine The Use Of The 2009 Funds.

Any Written Comments Regarding The Proposed Use Of The 2009 Funds Should Be Directed To Susan Vignoe, Community Development Block Grant Coordinator, Charter Township Of Plymouth 9955 N. Haggerty Rd, Plymouth, Mi, 48170 And Must Be Received By Friday, January 16, 2009.

JOE BRIDGMAN, CMC CLERK
Charter Township Of Plymouth

Publish: January 8, 2009

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Be prepared, guard against financial scams

The holiday season is behind us and we're all getting back to work and our normal routines. Unfortunately, the problems of 2008 are still here.

Southeast Michigan faces an uncertain economic future, particularly with the condition of the Big Three.

Most of what is happening in the global economic crisis is beyond your control and mine.

However, there are certain things that we can control and in those areas we must be more vigilant than ever.

At the end of 2008, a major financial scam unfolded. By now, most have heard about the Madoff scandal. Bernard Madoff instrumented one of the biggest Ponzi schemes in the history of Wall Street.

Typically, these schemes are set up by flimflam artists who promise unrealistic returns and who cook the books to fool investors. According to published reports, Madoff scammed some of the wealthiest individuals in the world, as well as businesses and charitable organizations, out of a reported \$50 billion.

Although much of the information about how the scam was perpetuated for years is still being discovered, it is clear investors let their guard down enticed by unrealistic returns.

The average investor seems to believe that the wealthy are more sophisticated, immune to fraud. They can hire investment professionals who are supposed to be able to detect fraud. In my experience, the wealthy are just as susceptible as the rest of us. Investors, no matter what level of the ladder they are on, must be aware of unscrupulous individuals.

In reality it is impossible

to completely shield oneself from an investment fraud. However, there are some steps to minimize your risk.

1.) Don't invest in anything that cannot be checked independently. I like using mutual funds because I can look at a variety of independent sources regarding the fund. Investors with Madoff could not check out his investments independently. It has been reported his investment policy was a mere few lines.

2.) Don't invest in anything that does not have a track record. Three, five and 10 years are relevant.

3.) Don't invest in anything you don't understand. When it comes to an investment, take time to know how you can make money, how you can lose money and how to get your money out. One of the ways scam artists are able to perpetuate fraud is by convincing investors that the investment strategy is too complex to explain.

4.) Before investing, know the costs — what it costs to buy, hold and sell. One common thread that runs throughout every investment scam is fees.

5.) If something is too good to be true, it generally is. In the Madoff situation, investors were told that in good times, bad times, no matter what, they would get a 12-percent return. That should have raised a big red flag.

It is our responsibility to protect our money. We can't be influenced by what other people are doing or fooled by what fast-talking sales people want us to believe. Be proactive and protect yourself and your hard-earned money by doing your homework.

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. Observer & Eccentric readers can submit questions at moneymatters@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).

Boike elected Wayne County Commission chair

The Wayne County Commission Tuesday unanimously elected Commissioner Edward A. Boike, Jr., D-Taylor, as chairman of the commission. The election took place at the commission's organizational meeting for the 2009-2010 legislative session.

Boike will serve a two-year term as chair of the 15-person legislative body, and will be responsible for the commission's 72 employees and its \$11.3 million annual budget. The commission provides fiscal and legislative oversight of Wayne County's \$2.25 billion budget.

"It is truly an honor to selected chairman," Boike said in his acceptance speech. "I will work to uphold the Wayne County Charter, set policy and provide financial accountability for the taxpayers of Wayne

County." His agenda for the commission includes streamlining the organization and finding ways to make it work more efficiently and effectively.

With Wayne County facing its worst economic downturn since the Depression, Boike said the challenge facing the commission is to minimize the reduction in services and programs the county provides its citizens and its communities.

"Our task is to balance the needs and resources available for all 43 communities and be attuned to their needs," he said. "We must seek additional funding sources to improve roads, maintain drains, fight foreclosures and redevelop underutilized properties."

A common denominator for all 43 communities is

the need for jobs, and Boike pledged that the commission would work in partnership with County Executive Robert Ficano to diversify Wayne County's economy, create new employment and generate additional tax base.

Boike said Wayne County would emerge from the current economic storm by being strong and united. "We are not a county of city and suburb. We are one Wayne County," he said.

Boike is the longest-serving member of the commission. He was first elected to his seat in 1988, and has been re-elected 10 times by the voters of district 15. His district includes Brownstown Township, Flat Rock, Gibraltar, Huron Township, Rockwood, Romulus, and Taylor.



Edward Boike

At the meeting today, commissioners also elected Keith D. Williams as vice chair of the commission and Ilona Varga as vice chair pro tempore.

Zoo's a delight, even in winter

When the weather outside is frightful, the Detroit Zoo's Wild Winter Weekends are sure to be delightful. The annual series of events will be held on the second weekends in January, February and March, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Ford Education Center.

Wild Winter Weekends offer entertainment for the entire family and are a fun way to experience the magic of the Detroit Zoo in the wintertime. Visitors can enjoy their favorite animal habitats, both indoors and out, as well as activities such as children's music, keeper talks, games and crafts. All activities are free with regular zoo admission.

Wild Winter Carnival — January 10 and 11. Wild Winter Carnival kicks off the series of weekend events with face painting, carnival games, ice carving demonstrations by Henry Ford Community College and the roaming entertainment of Zeemo's One Man Circus.

Wild Winter Mardi Gras — February 7 and 8. Celebrate Mardi Gras the Detroit Zoo way. Live entertainment, storytelling and a colorful parade are just a few of the fun activities. Kids can create a special Mardi Gras mask for the parade and collect a few prizes, too.

Wild Winter Zoobilee — March 7 and 8. Come celebrate the animal kingdom at Wild Winter Zoobilee. Enjoy animal arts and crafts, face painting, animal enrichment activities and talks by the zoo's expert keepers. Live performances by Gemini both days round out the weekend's festivities.

The Detroit Zoological Society is a nonprofit organization that operates the Detroit Zoo and Belle Isle Nature Zoo. Situated on 125 acres of naturalistic exhibits, the Detroit Zoo is located at the intersection of 10 Mile and Woodward Avenue, just off I-696, in Royal Oak.

The Detroit Zoo is open daily 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. November through March and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April through October. Admission is \$11 for adults 15 to 61, \$9 for senior citizens 62 and older, and \$7 for children ages 2 to 14; children under 2 are free.

For more information, call (248) 541-5717 or visit www.detroitzoo.org.

Who put the MOCK in Democracy?

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Map showing location at intersection of Sheldon Rd and Ford Road, near I-275.

Intriguing innovations

From an all-electric car to a mobile alarm clock, see what everyone will be talking about in 2009.

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OUR VIEWS

Schools should have moved with S'craft

When the Plymouth-Canton Board of Education voted last month to move its elections from odd-year May to every November, Trustee Dianne Gonzalez was the only dissenter, arguing instead for even more cost savings by moving to even-year Novembers.

We agree with Gonzalez.

Plymouth-Canton had been splitting the \$100,000 cost of an odd-year May election with Schoolcraft College. However, Schoolcraft trustees recently voted to move to even-year November elections to reduce their cost to zero, because they would coincide with national elections.

Had they chosen to remain with odd-year May elections, Plymouth-Canton would have had to absorb the \$100,000 price tag themselves. By moving to odd-year Novembers, district officials estimate elections will cost \$84,000 in the odd years, when there is no national election.

As trustees were making the decision to move to every November, Gonzalez was arguing — correctly, in our estimation — that some \$16,000 in cost savings wasn't enough.

Shifting to even-year Novembers certainly has its complications. It would have meant pushing the next election to November 2010, which would have added 2.5 years to everyone's term. Trustee Nancy Eggenberger's argument — "We need to give (the community) the opportunity to vote on school board members" — is a valid one. However, considering voter turnout is generally in single digits, one can wonder whether voters would really care if terms were extended.

The other argument against even-year November elections doesn't hold much water, in our opinion. The idea that even-year elections "would encourage political parties to influence our elections" suggests they don't already. Would a political party be dissuaded from exerting its influence, if it so chose, just because the elections are in off-years? We don't think so.

The problems with a move to even-year November elections were easily solved. The district, which has for years decried its dearth of cash, had the opportunity to save itself \$100,000 every two years.

Gonzalez was right — they should have taken it.

Had they chosen to remain with odd-year May elections, Plymouth-Canton would have had to absorb the \$100,000 price tag themselves. By moving to odd-year Novembers, district officials estimate elections will cost \$84,000 in the odd years, when there is no national election.



LETTERS

Lions Club thanks

The Plymouth Lions Club would like to thank community members for the overwhelming support shown during our Candy Cane sales event that was held Nov. 28-29.

With your help, we had a very successful fund-raiser. And in these hard times, we appreciate every dollar and dime.

Collected funds will be used to support the many projects Lions conduct throughout the year. Some of the community programs include First Step, Penrickton School for the Blind, Plymouth High School Scholarships, and Leader Dogs for the Blind.

Your donations will truly make a difference. Thank you for helping us help others!

Debbie Baudino-Dowling
Plymouth Lions Club

county's CEO with a taxpayer slush fund to "buy votes" or punish or reward commissioners or communities.

4. County park funds have been used on questionable projects, some may be contrary to the ballot language.

5. No legitimate county process exists to consider and grant community projects.

6. A significant portion of the parks millage is spent on operations not capital improvements.

7. The county has not increased general fund park funding in years.

Given all the facts I believe that the commission's actions were justified. I also believe that in 2010 taxpayers should reject renewing this millage.

Tom Yack
Canton

this decision to "save money" doesn't end up costing anyone who travels Ford Road their life or the lives of their families.

Robyn Lamb
Canton

We need to regain confidence

This economic crisis that we are in needs to be put to an end! Many homes are being foreclosed on here in Michigan. If we don't straighten all of this out soon, we may just enter another depression.

All of this is happening because our stock market is down (which makes it extremely hard for companies to make enough money they need to pay the workers and pay for the utilities they need). Until our confidence rises in the stock market, we could stay this way for quite a while. We need to put money back into the stock market in order for it to get better. Also, consumer confidence is what everyone needs right now. As soon as everyone is confident in the stock market, they will invest in it once again. This would also help people keep their jobs and stop from going bankrupt. Right now, everyone is scared, they fear that if they invest their money, that they will lose it.

People are crawling under a bunker and pulling metal sheets over their heads because they think the sky is falling. Also, in a recent study, students were asked the question of whether they would have \$3,000 in their pocket today, or have an 80 percent chance of getting \$4,000. Most of the students took the \$3,000. This is because the fear of losing money is bigger than gaining money. This is true about what is going on now because people are taking their money out of the stock market now before they lose all of their money. Remember, if we don't put money in the stock market now, it will only take longer for it to improve!

Tommy Parrelly
Canton

Legislature has to begin work on holdover issues

The state Legislature has no time to waste as it digs in for a session that's bound to be both complex and controversial.

While the budget will be an ongoing struggle, there are other issues for legislators to address immediately, without waiting for the governor's State of the State address. Consider the following three holdovers from last year.

■ **Smoking ban:** If ever there was ample evidence of the influence of lobbyists, it was found in the struggle over whether to ban smoking in all work places. But there are two clear facts that legislators need to focus on.

First, smoking and indirect smoke kills people; and, second, other states have found that prohibiting smoking doesn't kill business.

Obviously, exceptions need to be made for such businesses as smoke shops, but this isn't rocket science.

■ **Absentee voting:** The concept is clear — namely, to increase voter participation by making voting more accessible to all through absentee voting.

Given today's technology, there is no logical reason why people have to stand in line, sometimes for hours in heated contests, to vote. Voting should not be a test of fortitude, but a commitment to democracy.

■ **School aid:** State funding for education is like buying a car and not knowing whether you'll have enough to pay for it. Here's why: School budgets uniformly run with a budget year that begins July 1. State school aid, however, isn't approved until October and even then there are sometimes cuts made mid-year.

The problems have been exacerbated by the poor economy and a Legislature that can't make up its mind, but the real solution is to pass legislation requiring that districts be given solid numbers before their new budgets go into effect.

All it will take is leadership, good common sense and the right attitude to resolve all three issues.

Taking business elsewhere

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, I shopped in downtown Plymouth and enjoyed lunch with two longtime friends. My reward for supporting the local Plymouth economy was a \$15 ticket for parking in the same spot for over two hours.

When I called City Manager Paul Sincock to complain, he conceded the two-hour parking rule is intended to discourage employees from monopolizing parking spaces, but is usually relaxed during the holidays.

I told him I was a customer who just spent \$200 supporting the local establishments. Mr. Sincock rejected my request to rescind the parking ticket.

So, as I finished my Christmas shopping ... I will instead take my business to Canton, Northville, or Novi.

John Vraniak
Plymouth Township

Don't renew parks millage

I would like to respond to the *Observer's* recent shallow and simplistic editorial ("Ordinance on park funds alters intent of millage," Dec. 25) regarding a proposed Wayne County Commission ordinance to return 25 percent of the parks millage to funding communities.

The editorial contends the ordinance represents bad public policy and would divest funds from the intended purpose. It also suggests that voters approved the millage for improvements to county parks.

Consider the following:

1. Special county-wide millages are bad public policy. They are typically vaguely written, widely interrupted and seldom deliver on their promises.
2. It is not unusual for 25 percent or more of the millage to be spent on non-county projects.
3. The parks millage provides the

Plowing decision wrong

I have lived on Ford Road since 1966. On Friday, Dec. 19, it was the worst I have seen it. I understand that there was a storm that day, but to only plow it once, and then to not clear the shoulder of the road ...

We didn't get our mail on Friday, I saw the mail lady, as I drove by her, get out of her vehicle and walk to a box, thinking to myself, is she really going to do that all the way down Ford Road. I got my answer a few minutes later, as she gave up and drove by my house and all of my neighbors. I can't blame her, the post office has strict rules about the shoulder being cleared. I don't know if we had a plow come by on Saturday, but again the shoulder was not plowed and our mail was again not delivered. The snow on the shoulder is not my responsibility and it's too dangerous to even consider shoveling it. Is this how it's going to be all winter?

Ford Road is a main thoroughfare. How can it be placed on the list as a "blue" road? The real question I have, is why, if we are only going to get minimal plowings, doesn't Wayne County at least do it right and include the shoulder of the road. I also got stuck on the shoulder of the road trying to back into my driveway on Friday, so I can get a "running start" to get out the next time. It is dangerous enough pulling in and out of a Ford Road driveway on a sunny, dry day. Having to "rock" my car or dig it out on the shoulder is a death trap.

Ford Road and its intersections have always been dangerous, how can Canton Township allow them to become even more of a hazard in inclement weather? Why can't Wayne County see the error of this decision? How many accidents or deaths will have to occur before someone does something to change this situation back to the plowing contract we had before?

I've seen a lot of accidents and deaths at Ford and Beck. It took years to get a light there. I sure hope that

QUOTABLE

"I'm a little shocked ... It's still a huge expense on the district, and it's only saving a small amount of money in changing to every November. The only true savings to the district and to the budget and to the students of this district is to do it even-November."

— Dianne Gonzalez, Plymouth-Canton Board of Education trustee on the board's decision to move to odd-year November elections, a move that will still cost the district some \$84,000 every two years

PLYMOUTH
Observer

GANNETT

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Grief support center gets new home

BY PAM FLEMING

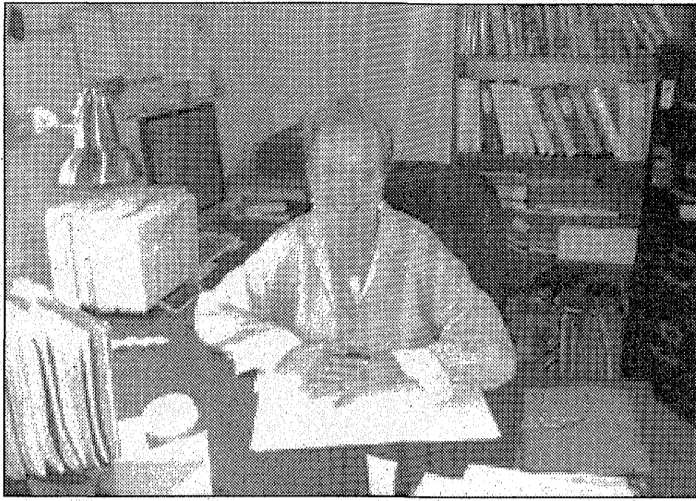
NORTHVILLE RECORD STAFF WRITER

Cathy Clough and her staff at the New Hope Center for Grief Support are got a nice Christmas present this year.

After coping with a too-small space for years, the staff will move soon to a historic house at 315 Griswold Street.

Members of the Northville Historical Society will lease the home to the business. City council approved the lease agreement in a 3-1 vote on Monday night, and John Baird, chairman of the New Hope board, gave final approval on behalf on Tuesday. Michele Fecht voted against the proposal, and Nancy Darga was asked to abstain from voting as she is a member of the Northville Historical Society Board.

"There is some work that needs to be done on the home," Clough said. "We have a crew of skilled volunteers who will be doing the work, which includes making the building



Cathy Clough of Plymouth will soon see her New Hope Center for Grief Support in Northville moving to its new home.

handicapped accessible and also putting in some support beams." The center director is not sure exactly when the move will take place. The goal is to perhaps move to the new location in February.

The long-term goal for the house on Griswold is for it to be turned into a historical museum. Archives are cur-

rently stored in the temperature-controlled garage of the home.

Historical society members entered into discussions with the center in the fall of 2007 regarding leasing the main floor of the city-owned house for an office for the center.

"We're anticipating this move with great joy so we can

expand our services to the community," Clough said.

The space the center now occupies at 113 E. Dunlap since May 2000 is about 500 square feet for four paid staff and an abundance of volunteers. The center offers grief support services to adults and children who are grieving after the death of a loved one. All the services are offered at no charge. For more information, call (248) 348-0115.

In January, the Board of Zoning Appeals granted a use variance to allow an office use for the grief support center.

The same month, city council approved a rental agreement with New Hope, subject to review and approval by the city attorney, proof that the organization is nonprofit and that all building permits are obtained and an occupancy permit is issued prior to the staff moving into the house.

New provisions were later negotiated, including the extension of the lease from one year to four; the rent being

reduced from \$375 a month in the first year and \$400 month in the second year to \$325 in the first year and \$350 in the second, third and fourth years.

New Hope will now pay for electric and gas, with the city paying for water, sewer and garbage. (The city was responsible for all utilities under the original agreement.)

The center would also be required to give the city a year's notice if the staff decides to end the lease.

Society members want to lease the property to generate revenue to offset maintenance and utility costs for the building. The lease agreement will generate \$3,900 in new revenue for the society in the first year and \$4,200 in year two, less the expense of upgrading the house for office use.

Chris Gazlay, president of the historical society, said that the society's budget is zero for operating Mill Race Village, and that members have been forced to dip into the endow-

ment to run it.

Fecht voted against the rental proposal because she thought it might set a dangerous precedent, with other counseling centers currently leasing property in the city at decidedly higher rents.

"I don't think we can be in the business of subsidizing counseling centers," Fecht said. "I think you're putting a Band-Aid on a much bigger issue (the lack of funding for Mill Race Village). The city owns the property and the building, and there are better ways of providing a better revenue stream (for the village)."

Mayor Chris Johnson, however, favored the deal.

"You do have the potential for a conflict (with other city businesses), but I think this is a real effort to squeeze every nickel that's out there (for the society). I would be willing to try this out," he said.

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Patterson hints at run for attorney general

BY KURT KUBAN

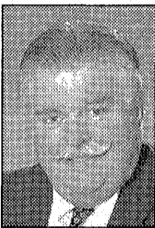
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

State Sen. Bruce Patterson says he is seriously thinking about running for Michigan attorney general in 2010.

The Republican senator from Canton, who is in his second term, says he is "kicking around the idea" and will make a decision in the coming months.

"I've got some people interested in helping me get elected to the position," Patterson said Wednesday from Texas, where he is on a business trip.

Patterson, who also served



Patterson

two terms in the State House of Representatives before running for the Senate, said he has a long interest in law enforcement, and running for attorney general makes sense for him. He will be term limited in the Senate after his current term expires in 2010.

"It's a logical progression for me," he said of the attorney general position. "I want to serve, but I don't need to serve.

I just need some time to think it through."

Patterson turns 62 next month, and has had some health problems in the last year. He was diagnosed with diabetes in May, but has been taking medication. He said he has lost about 40 pounds and is exercising regularly.

At this point it appears his main opposition to get the Republican nomination will be former Congressman and outgoing Appeals Court Judge Bill Schuette, who is considered the frontrunner, and State Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, who has

yet to announce his intentions. Patterson and Bishop, who will also be term limited in 2010, have had an ongoing feud over the course of the last year, beginning when Bishop failed to support Patterson's attempt to thwart Livonia's annexation plans of the former state psychiatric hospital property in Northville Township.

Bill Ballenger, editor/publisher of the Inside Michigan Politics, said Schuette is the man to beat at this point, but that it is still early.

"Right now, hands down, I would say that Bill Schuette

would have the upper hand to get the nomination," he said. "But we still have 20 months before this thing plays out."

Ballenger points out that the winner of the nomination will be selected at the Republican convention, not by voters, so candidates will have to court support "among real insiders, not the rank and file Republicans."

He said not to count out Patterson, because he comes from an area that has clout in Lansing.

"Patterson has a chance. He comes from a better geographical area than Schuette.

Western Wayne County is a real fertile area. There are lots of voters, and they have influence on what happens in Lansing," Ballenger said.


Patterson said he has a lot of respect for Schuette, who hails from the Midland area, and has known him for the better part of 20 years. But Patterson said he is also respected in Lansing.

"I think I have the credentials with people in Lansing. My reputation is one of being brutally honest and being tenacious when it comes to getting to the bottom of an issue," he said.



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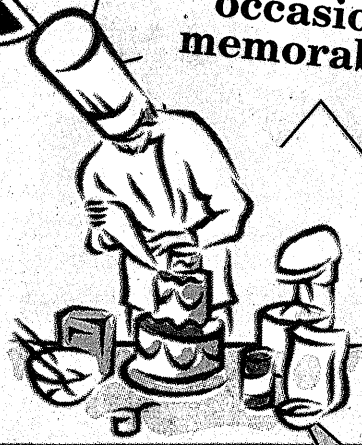
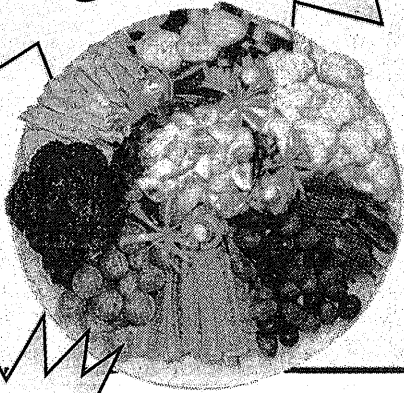
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Strictly Business

BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS

Top showplace
 This year Home & Garden Showplace recognized four exceptional retailers as Regional Members of the Year at True Value Company's Fall Market held in Atlanta, Ga. Among the businesses honored: Plymouth Nursery Home & Garden Showplace in Plymouth. The award recognizes stores with positive sales growth, program participation, and garden center excellence and leadership in 2008. Home & Garden Showplace also announced Transpac Imports, Inc. as the New Vendor of the Year and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company as Allied Products Vendor of the Year. Yankee Candle Co. was named Home & Garden Showplace Vendor of the Year. Vendor of the Year Awards are given for sales performance and growth, as well as support for and participation with Home & Garden Showplace and its retailers.

Breakfast, anyone?
 One of Plymouth's newest restaurants, Nico & Vali on Wing Street just east of Main Street, is now open for breakfast Monday through Friday starting at 7 a.m. They will continue to serve breakfast on Saturdays starting at 8:30 a.m.

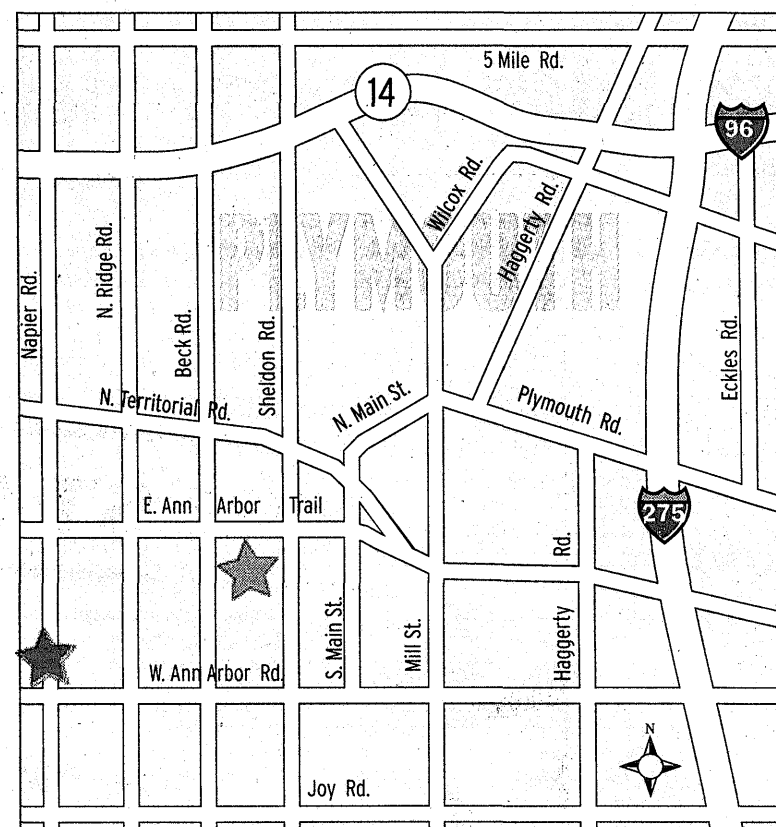
Chamber status
 The annual State of the Chamber Breakfast takes place 7:30 a.m.

Thursday, Jan. 29, at The Inn at St. John's.
 At this event you will learn from our leadership about what your Chamber has planned for this upcoming year and how you can become involved. Last year the breakfast attracted 180 members, making it one of the best networking opportunities of the year. The cost to attend the event is just \$5 and you will receive a full breakfast. Reservations must be made by Monday, January 26th. Cancellations must be received 48 hours prior to the event, since the chamber is liable for all meals.
 To register, please contact the Chamber at teri@plymouthmich.org or at (734) 453-1540. The Inn at St. John's is located at 44045 Five Mile.

On-line services
 Citizens Bank has launched its latest convenient on-line banking tool, Online Account Opening. Personal checking, savings and certificate of Deposit (CD) accounts can now be opened through Citizens Bank's Web site banking program. Clients can visit www.citizensbanking.com to see the latest CD rates and account comparison charts to determine the best account for them, and then click to open the account. The new account can be funded from an existing Citizens Bank account or

from any other financial institution. Citizens Bank is part of Citizens Republic Bancorp, a diversified financial services company providing a wide range of commercial, consumer, mortgage banking, trust and financial planning services to a broad client base.

Web site launch
 International Minute Press recently launched a new Web site (www.myprinter.intlminutepress.com) which features several customer utilities designed to enhance customer service and provide a more efficient way to do business with the company. Customers now have 24-hour access to request estimates, place orders or send files directly from the home page. The site was developed as a result of testing done by print buyers and their preferences. As a result, the site features an additional Resources & Support section filled with helpful information of interest to print buyers and marketing professionals. International Minute Press provides a full range of printing and marketing services. The company, which began business on Five Mile Road in Plymouth Township in 2003, now operates in a larger facility at 1058 South Main Street in Plymouth. For



SEND IT

Get in on the new Strictly Business page of the *Plymouth Observer* by sending us your business news, promotions, events or milestones. It's simple: Just e-mail all of the details to editor Brad Kadrich at bkadrich@hometownlife.com and he'll take care of the rest. Our new local business page runs each Thursday in your *Plymouth Observer*. We welcome comments and suggestions, too. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

more information about their company, visit their Web site at www.myprinter.intlminutepress.com or call them at (734) 414-6203.

Making a difference
 New Liberty Bank executives and employees hoping to make a difference in the lives of less-fortunate

families dressed the part in October, November and December, raising \$460 to purchase clothes and toys to donate to the Salvation Army. During this period, as part of the bank's Casual Fridays, employees were allowed to wear jeans if they donated to the cause. The bank also

held a "White Shirt and Tie" Day, in which the bank donated \$5 for each employee that participated. New Liberty Bank is located at 1333 W. Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth. New Liberty Bank can be reached at (734) 455-1511, or on the web at www.newlibertybank.com.

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS Q&A

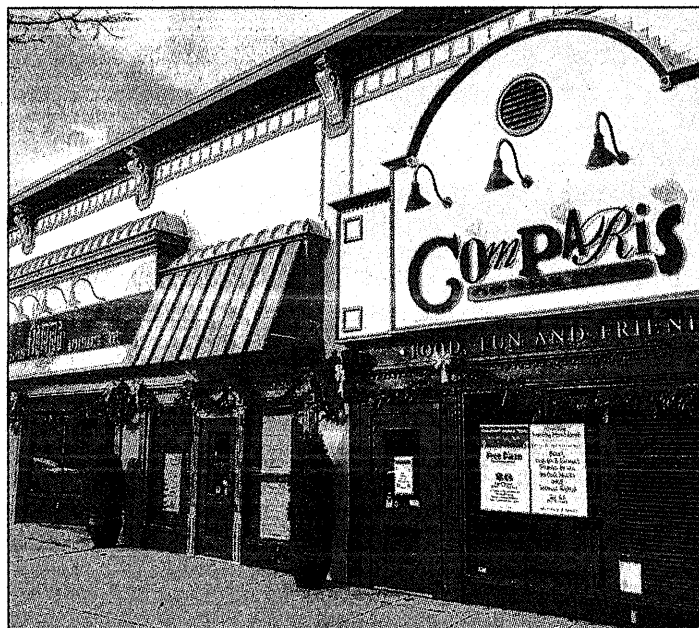
Eateries continue a family tradition

Observer: Tell us about your business, including the types of services and/or products you feature.
 Compari's/Fiamma: We provide dine-in and carry-out, we also do private parties and catering.

Observer: What makes your business unique? Do you serve a special niche?
 Compari's/Fiamma: It's family owned and operated. We pride ourselves on our customer satisfaction.

Observer: How did you first decide to open your own business?
 Compari's/Fiamma: I carried on in my father's footsteps.

Observer: How did you decide to locate in the Plymouth community?
 Compari's/Fiamma: We loved the intimate and unique setting.



Compari's and Fiamma Grill are in the heart of downtown Plymouth.

BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS



Best and brightest
 For the second straight year, Soil and Materials Engineers has been named one of Metropolitan Detroit's 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For by the Michigan Business and Professional Association. The awards honor companies in southeast Michigan for their 'exceptional work environment and exemplary human resources practices.' Accepting the award from the MBPA's Jennifer Kluge (right) were Elaine Nading and Sherri Fountain.

CHAMBER CHAT

Credit union opens middle school branch

Meads Mill Middle School in Northville recently celebrated the grand opening of the school's student-run credit union in partnership with Community Financial of Plymouth.

Meads Mill is the second middle school within Northville Public Schools to partner with Community Financial's student-run credit union program which provides students a convenient way to get into the savings habit and gives volunteers an excellent opportunity to learn career skills.

According to Mary Kerwin, education partnership coordinator at Community Financial, students who volunteer to work for the student-run credit union participate in an extensive application and interviewing process.

Seventh grade students from Laura DeMarti's Math Enrichment class were given the opportunity to learn valuable career skills when applying to fill the volunteer positions of branch managers, marketing representatives, tellers, bookkeepers and computer operators.

"We ask them a series of questions including what skills and qualities they can bring to their student credit union positions," said Kerwin. "By going through this process, they gain a better understanding of what it takes to prepare for the future."

"The credit union is a great



Community Financial and Meads Mill Middle School in Northville celebrate the grand opening of the student-run credit union. Principal Dr. Sue Meyer cuts the ribbon with the help of seventh grade student volunteers and, in the back row, (right to left) Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services Mary Kay Gallagher, Teacher Laura DeMarti and Mary Kerwin, Community Financial education partnership coordinator.

learning opportunity for the students and helps to provide good personal skills, the importance of saving as well as a better understanding of finances, how banking works and the basics of how money circulates," said DeMarti.

"It's great to have this partnership with Community Financial," added Principal Dr. Sue Meyer. "The PTA helped out with the interviewing process and their support is also appreciated."

Five of Northville's elementary schools have student-run credit unions which feed into similar programs at Meads Mill and Hillside Middle Schools and, subsequently, to Northville High School.

Kerwin said, "Our program is designed to help students build on their financial skills

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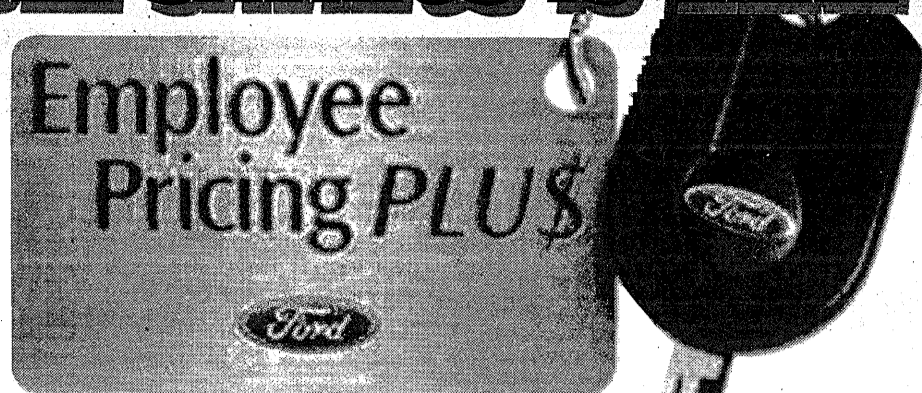
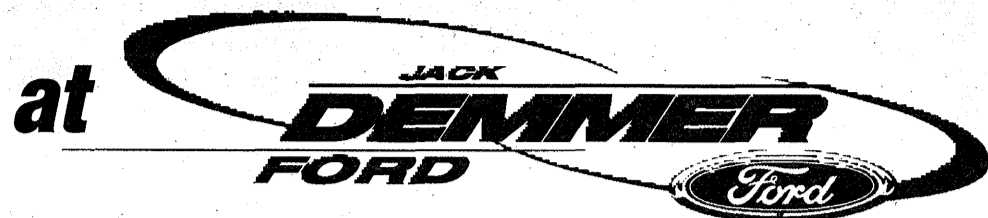
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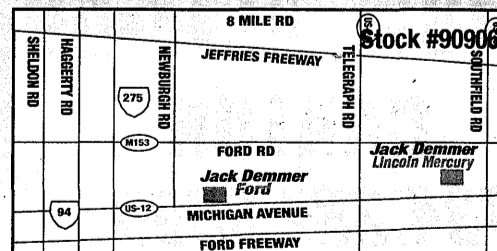
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Discover Port wine styles

Typically, Port is a sweet, red, fortified wine made in the Douro Valley of northern Portugal. European laws require that it be labeled Port. For the U.S., Federal law mandates that it be labeled Porto or Vinho do Porto.



Focus on Wine
Ray & Eleanor Heald

There are two basic Porto styles: bottle aged and barrel aged. Vintage Porto, aged in the bottle, usually requires decanting before serving. Tawny Porto is barrel aged and ready to drink when opened. Reserve Porto is barrel aged for four years, then bottled. It tastes like a young Vintage Porto and is ready to drink when opened.

Reserve Porto is a delicious dessert wine, especially enjoyable after dinner on its own or with a blue cheese like Stilton.

We recommend Graham's Six Grapes Reserve Porto, \$23, for its notes of ripe plums and cherries, great concentration and long finish. Dow's Trademark Finest Reserve Porto, \$20, shows strawberry fruit with subtle spice and a slightly dry finish. Smith Woodhouse Lodge Reserve Porto, \$20, boasts youthful

WINE PICKS

Tapena, at \$10 per bottle, is an innovative brand offering expressive fruit-forward, dry wines from SPANISH indigenous grapes -- best with tapas, small plates meant for sharing.
2007 Tapena Verdejo -- grilled salmon, lemon chicken and light cheeses, including chevre.
2007 Tapena Rose -- calamari frito, manchego cheese and pan-seared scallops.
2006 Tapena Garnacha -- lamb or beef satay.
2006 Tapena Tempranillo -- grilled lamb skewers or garlic prawns.

and even 40 years old.

All aged Tawny Portos are blends of older wines chosen for their complexity and younger wines selected for fruitiness. Indicated age is the average of the blended wines used to achieve a desired balance of flavors. Colheita Tawny Porto is produced from a single harvest.

The following Tawny Portos include suggested retail prices for a 750mL bottle. Purchase 375mL bottles and try more than one. It's also fun to try two from the same producer with different ages to notice style evolution with more barrel age.

Try: Dow's 10 Year Tawny, \$33; Graham's 10 Year Tawny, \$35; Smith Woodhouse 10 Year Tawny, \$31; Dow's 20 Year Tawny, \$56; Graham's 20 Year Tawny, \$57; and Smith Woodhouse 1994 Colheita, \$46.

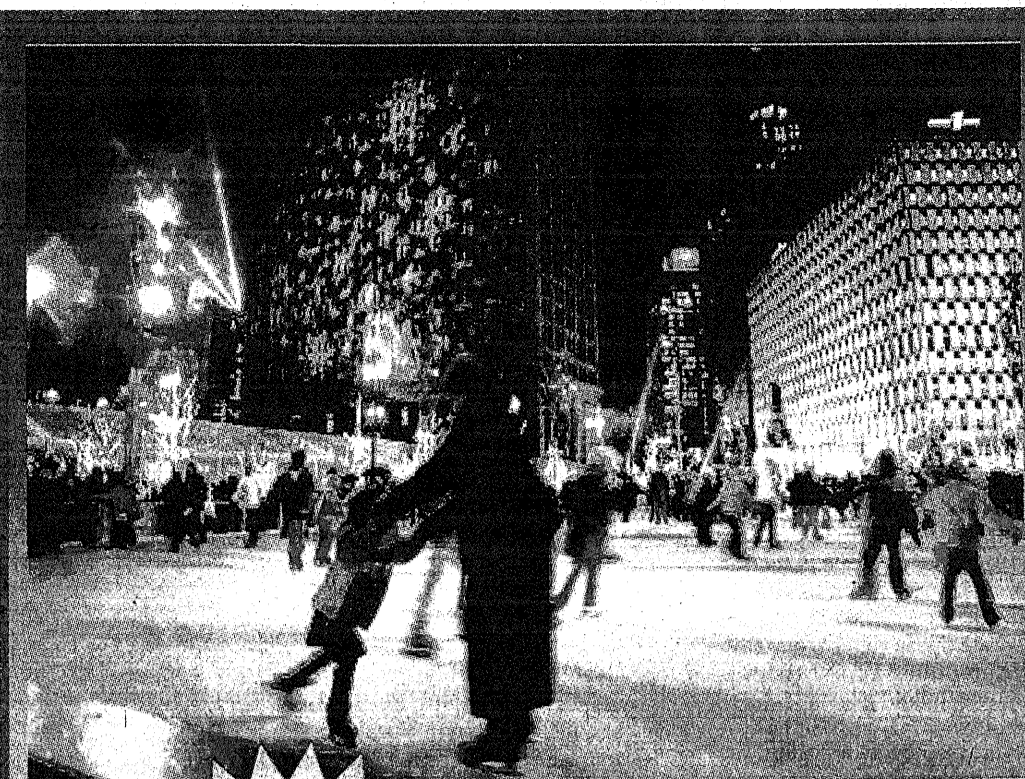
Since Porto is fortified (18-20 percent alcohol), it will keep four to six weeks after being opened, and older Aged Tawny may keep up to four months in the refrigerator. Bring it to cellar temperature before serving.

Eleanor & Ray Heald are Contributing Editors for the internationally-respected Quarterly Review of Wines and Troy residents who write about wine for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Contact them by e-mail at focusonwine@aol.com.

blackberry fruit with a smooth, elegant finish that ends with a hint of mint. Burmester Jockey Club Reserva, \$32, is very drinkable with highlights of plums, dried cherries and cranberries.

TAWNY AND CHOCOLATE

Chocolate does not pair with red wine. The exception is Tawny Porto, which has lost its intense purple color while barrel aging a minimum of eight years and takes on a golden-amber hue and a silky, nutty character. Aged Tawny Porto has maturity levels, noted on the bottle, as 10, 20, 30



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LA CAGE
FROM PAGE D1

shopping, trying to find just the right shoes to match the array of colorful ensembles his character wears throughout the two-hour show.

Costuming is key — from the showgirl-style of the drag chorus, called the Cagelles, to the elaborate coats worn by Zaza to a more traditional look for the conservative-in-laws-to-be.

Michael Ameloot of Detroit took on the task of costuming for this show. He began researching the piece during the summer and sewing began as early as August — even before auditions were held. He was able to borrow some elaborate opera robes from Stages St. Louis professional theater company, which lend a lavish look to the performers. Ameloot guessed there will be about 60 costumes in the show, including a Ziegfeld-influenced finale full of feathers. He said the show lends itself to a certain level of glitz and opulence that audiences don't normally see on stage.

FUNNY IN PINK

Costuming reveals much about characters and in this rendition, Ameloot chose to draw subtle parallels between Jean-Michel and his father-in-law to be Edouard Dindon, played by Gary Mach of Beverly Hills. "It ties him to his father-in-law as opposed to his parents."

Mach's attire isn't all tried-and-true. His character will find his way into a pink polka-dotted "Shirley Temple dress," too.

"I was familiar with the movie," said Mach, "not really the play." He said the message is much more

personal in this format, and the music — hardly present in the 1996 film *The Birdcage* — makes for a "beautiful score."

Mach said: "I find myself humming it, and I really only sing one song. It's a great story."

Meyers said he spent time honing his vocal skills on songs like *Mascara*, with six complicated verses. "It keeps going and going," he said.

Bloomfield's Betsy Todd directs the show, working closely with choreographer Valerie Mould of Royal Oak and musical director Priscilla Benson of Beverly Hills. Todd promised a happy ending. "Its definitely more of a comedy," she said.

ROYAL OAK GEM

Todd is proud to be a member of Stagecrafters, working with the troupe since the 1980s. She is also proud of The Baldwin Theatre.

"There is no other theater like this. It is a 'Little Fisher.'"

La Cage aux Folles features a cast of 27. Todd said the dance scenes are sure to delight audiences.

Meyers, who has performed with Stagecrafters since 1997, said the audience is "going to love the Can-Can. It's a wonderful number."

Overall, the show shares a message of love and family. And that remains a timely topic, according to Meyers. "The world is changing," he said. "I hope the audience sees the humor of the story and, especially with the passage of Prop. 8 (banning same-sex marriages) in California, I hope they see that love is not limited to a male and a female. There is all sorts of love in the world."

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GET OUT

Send items for consideration in Get Out! at least two weeks in advance to Lana Mini, Observer & Eccentric and Mirror Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009, or e-mail lmini@hometownlife.com.

ART

- Arnold Klein Gallery:** 32782 Woodward, Royal Oak, (248) 647-7709.
- Art Leaders Gallery:** 33030 Northwestern Hwy., West Bloomfield, (248) 539-0262, www.artleaders.com.
- Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center:** 1516 Cranbrook (between 14 and 15 Mile roads), Birmingham, www.BBArtCenter.org, (248) 644-0866.
- Birmingham Conference Center:** 31301 Evergreen, Birmingham, (248) 647-2380.
- Bohemian National Home Gallery:** 2009 Tillman, Detroit, (313) 525-5253, www.jeromium.com/bohouse.htm.
- Cary Gallery:** 226 Walnut, Rochester, (248) 651-3656.
- Cass Gallery:** Works by Robert Edwards, Kip Kowalski and Richard P. Mylenek, through Jan. 10, 4620 Cass Ave., Detroit, (313) 831-1400.
- CPDP:** 4160 Woodward, Detroit, (313) 833-9901, www.cpdp.com.
- Detroit Artist Market:** 4719 Woodward, Detroit.
- DEM Art Studio:** Bob Ross-style painting classes, 1-5 p.m. one Sunday per month; free fine art portfolio assessments for college-bound students, 28691 N. Lilley, Canton, (734) 453-3710, www.dmartstudio.com.
- Farmington City Gallery:** Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile, (248) 473-1856.
- Farmington Community Library:** 23500 Liberty, (248) 553-6261, www.suzannebaumman.com.
- First United Methodist Church:** 1589 W. Maple, Birmingham, Gallery@VT: Village Theatre at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton, (734) 394-5300, www.canton-mi.org/village-theater, www.wsg-art.com.
- Galeria at Orchard Lake:** Building 8, Orchard Lake Schools, 3535 Indian Trail, Orchard Lake, (248) 683-0345.
- Habitat Galleries:** 4400 Fernlee, Royal Oak, (248) 554-0590, www.habitat.com.
- Janice Charach Gallery:** Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, 6600 W. Maple, West Bloomfield, (248) 432-5448.
- Lawrence Street Gallery:** 22620 Woodward, Ferndale (248) 544-0394, www.lawrencestreteetgaller.com.
- Livonia Arts Commission:** Fine Arts Gallery, second floor; Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, (734) 466-2490; Livonia Arts Commissioners, Livonia City Hall, 33000 Civic Center Drive, (734) 466-2540.
- Lotus Arts Gallery:** Artists Charles H. Pabst, Thomas Arvid and Sergio Furnari (a life-sized version of the Lunchtime on a Skyscraper sculpture), now showing, 995 West Ann Arbor Trail, Plymouth (888) 889-4ART, www.lotusartsgallery.com.
- Next Step Studios & Gallery:** Featuring glass works by Kaiser Suidan, Craig Paul Nowak, John Gargano, Susan Beiner and many others, 530 Hilton, Ferndale, (248) 342-5074, www.nextstepstudio.com.
- Northville Art House:** 215 W. Cady, (248) 344-0497, www.northvillearts.org.
- Oakland University Art Gallery:** at 208 Wilson Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, (248) 370-3005.
- Paint Creek Center for the Arts:** 407 Pine, Rochester, (248) 651-4110, www.pccart.org.
- Paul Kotula Projects:** 23255 Woodward, Ferndale, (248) 544-3020, www.paulkotula.com.
- Pewabic Pottery:** 10125 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, (313) 822-0954, www.pewabic.org.
- Plymouth Community Arts Council:** 774 N. Sheldon Road, Plymouth, (734) 416-4278, www.plymoutharts.com.
- The Print Gallery:** 29173 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield, (248) 356-5454, www.everythingart.com.
- Progressive Art & Frame Design:** 1511 North Main, Clawson, (248) 435-0944, www.progressiveart.net.
- The Scarab Club:** "Year of the Weasel," featuring works by Carl Butler, Jeanne Bieri, Todd Erickson, Jerome Ferretti, Mary Fortuna, Matthew Hanna and Arturo Rodriguez, through Feb. 15, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit, (313) 831-1250 or www.scarabclub.org.
- Susanne Hilberry Gallery:** Works by Zak Prekop, Elena Pankova, Ryan McLaughlin, Michael Wetzel, Matt Connors and Paul Bloodgood, through Feb. 7, at 700 Livernois, Ferndale (248) 541-4700, www.susannehilberrygallery.com.
- Tangent Gallery:** 715 E. Milwaukee St., Detroit, (313) 877-4377, www.tangentgallery.com.
- The Community House:** 380 S. Bates, Birmingham, (248) 644-5832, www.communityhouse.com.
- Visual Arts Association of Livonia:** Livonia City Hall, 33000 Civic Center Dr., (248) 348-4550.

BOOKS/LITERATURE

- Birmingham Area Seniors Coordinating Council and Center:** 2121 Midvale, Birmingham, (248) 203-5270.
- Borders Ann Arbor:** 612 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor, (734) 668-7652.
- Borders Dearborn:** 5601 Mercury Dr., Dearborn, (313) 271-4441.
- Borders Farmington Hills:** 30995 Orchard Lake Road, (248) 737-0110.
- Borders Novi:** 43075 Crescent Blvd., (248) 347-0780.
- Barnes & Noble Royal Oak:** 500 S. Main, Royal Oak.
- Campus Martius:** Saturday Book Club, Campus Martius, next to the Computare Building, Detroit, http://www2.wsupress.wayne.edu/news.php/

CHAMBER

- Birmingham Temple:** Pianist Christopher Atzinger, April 4; Charlie Gabriel Quartet with Vocalist Joan Bow, May 2; 28611 West 12 Mile, Farmington Hills, (248) 788-9338, www.vivaceseries.org.
- Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings:** "Fun and Games," 3 p.m. Feb. 22; Birmingham Unitarian Church and 4 p.m. March 1; Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Detroit; "String Sundae," 3 p.m. March 29; Birmingham Unitarian Church and 3 p.m. April 5; Grosse Pointe United Methodist Church; "Schubert and Spice," 3 p.m. April 26; First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham; Final Concert, 8 p.m. June 20, Seligman Center, (248) 559-2095, www.detroitchamberwinds.org.
- Hagopian World of Rugs:** Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings presents "Nightnotes," 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 9, Jan. 30, March 13 and May 8, (248) 559-2095, www.detroitchamberwinds.org.
- Seligman Performing Arts Center:** Denyce Graves, mezzo-

soprano, Jan. 24; ATOS Trio, Feb. 7; Garrick Ohlsson, piano, March 21; Guarneri String Quartet, April 11; Pacifica Quartet with Erik Ronmark, saxophone, April 18; Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio with the Miami String Quartet, May 16; Yefim Bronfman, piano, May 30. All concerts 8 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets, \$25-\$75. 22305 West 13 Mile, Beverly Hills, (248) 855-6070 or visit www.ComeHearCMSD.org.

CHORAL

- Beckridge Chorale:** 45700 Six Mile, Northville, www.beckridgechorale.org or call (734) 416-9885.
- Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts:** 350 Madison, Detroit, (313) 887-8500, www.musichall.org.
- Farmington Community Chorus:** Seligman Performing Arts Center of Detroit, Country Day High School, 22305 W. 13 Mile, at Lahser, in Beverly Hills, (248) 669-4146.
- Farmington Hills Youth Choir:** Wexford Hills, Costick Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile, in Farmington Hills, (248) 473-1859.
- First Presbyterian Church:** Psalteries of Psalms, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 9; How Can You Keep From Singing?, 4 p.m. Feb. 8; Pipebusters w/organist Tom Trenney, 7:30 p.m. April 17; Music for a Cathedral, 7:30 p.m. May 22, 1669 W. Maple, Birmingham, (248) 644-2040 x 136, ttrenney@comcast.net.
- Plymouth Oratorio Society:** First United Methodist Church, 45201 N. Territorial Road, Plymouth, (734) 455-8353. Monday the 12th. (And every Monday until April 27). Rehearsals for their 23rd season that includes Performing Beethoven's "Ninth Sym." with the PSO March 14. Pieces by Mozart, Pachelbel, Holst and Parry, performed on May 3. Scores can be purchased at the rehearsal. For more info, call (734) 455-8353.
- Rackham Choir:** "An Affair to Remember," Feb. 14, Club Venetian, Madison Heights; "Dear Mrs. Parks" with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, March 6-8, Orchestra Hall, Detroit; "The Armed Man: A Concert for Peace" with original film, April 5, Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Dearborn, www.rackhamchoir.org.

CLASSICAL

- Orchestra Canton:** "Mozart's Birthday Bash," 8 p.m. Jan. 24, Village Theatre at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton, (734) 394-5460.
- Chamber Music at the Scarab Club:** Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church, 17150 Maumee Ave., Detroit, (248) 474-8930, www.scarabclub.org/chambermusic.
- Chamber Music Society of Detroit:** Seligman Performing Arts Center, 22305 W. 13 Mile, Beverly Hills, (248) 855-6070, www.ComeHearCMSD.org.
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra:** Max M. Fisher Music Center, box office at 3711 Woodward, www.detroitso.com, (313) 576-5400.
- Fox Theatre:** Andrew Rieu and his Johann Strauss Orchestra, 7:30 p.m. May 19; tickets \$82-\$162.

Max M. Fisher Music Center: Americans Here and Abroad, Jan. 9-11; From Russia With Love, Jan. 15-18; Marvin Hamllisch, Jan. 22-24; Oundjian & Beethoven, Jan. 30-31; Mendelssohn & Mahler, Feb. 6-8; Pops Season features: All You Need is Love, Feb. 12-15; Pops Goes Las Vegas, March 19-22; The Music of Billy Joel & More by Michael Cavanaugh, April 16-19; A John Williams Adventure, March 14-17, 3711 Woodward, Detroit, (313) 576-5111 and online at www.detroitso.com.

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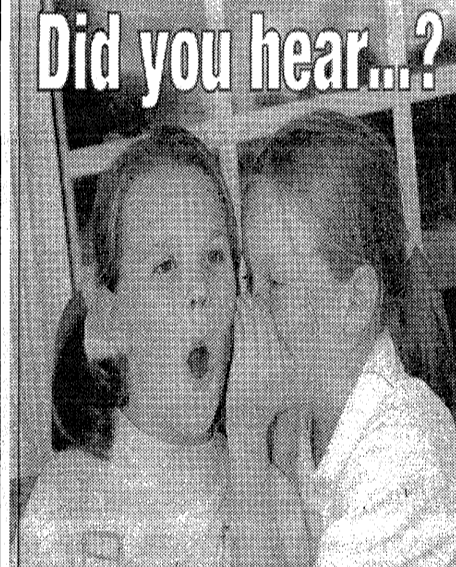
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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Opening Friday, Jan. 9:

Bride Wars: Liv (Kate Hudson) and Emma (Anne Hathaway), best friends since childhood, are always there for each other, through good times and bad. Even their respective bridal engagements happen within hours. Together they plan their weddings, each to take place at New York's ultimate bridal destination, the Plaza Hotel. But a clerical error and subsequent clash in wedding dates pits the two brides against each other in a competition that quickly escalates into all-out war. Also starring Kristen Johnson, Bryan Greenberg, and Candice Bergen. Directed by Gary Winick for 20th Century Fox. This film is rated PG.

Not Easily Broken: This uplifting drama about love and family is adapted from the book of the same name by renowned pastor and author Bishop T. D. Jakes. It stars Morris Chestnut & Taraji P. Henson. This film is rated PG-13.

The Reader (Expands): In post-WWII Germany, teenager Michael Berg becomes ill and is helped home by Hanna, a stranger twice his age. Michael recovers from scarlet fever and seeks out Hanna to thank her. The two are quickly drawn into a passionate but secretive affair. Michael discovers that Hanna loves being read to and their physical relationship deepens. Hanna is enthralled as Michael reads to her from *The Odyssey*, *Huck Finn*, and *The Lady with the Little Dog*. Despite their intense bond, Hanna mysteriously disappears one day and Michael is left confused and heartbroken. Eight years later, while Michael is a law student observing the Nazi war crime trials, he is stunned to find Hanna back in his life — this time as a defendant in the courtroom.

As Hanna's past is revealed, Michael uncovers a deep secret that will impact both of their lives. The film stars Ralph Fiennes, David Kross and Kate Winslet, and is directed by Stephen Daldry. This film is rated R.

Revolutionary Road: Adapted from the revealing novel by Richard Yates, this is an incisive portrait of an American marriage seen through the eyes of Frank (Leonardo DiCaprio) and April (Kate Winslet) Wheeler. Yates' story of 1950's America poses a question that has been reverberating through modern relationships ever since: Can two people break away from the ordinary without breaking apart? Frank and April have always seen themselves as special, different, ready and willing to live their lives based on higher ideals. So, as soon as they move into their new house on Revolutionary Road, they proudly



JAMIE TRUEBLOOD

After finding a place to hide their dog, Friday, Andi (Emma Roberts) and her brother Bruce (Jake T. Austin) wind up giving shelter to most of the strays in town in the DreamWorks Pictures comedy "Hotel for Dogs."

declare their independence from the suburban inertia that surrounds them and determine never to be trapped by the social confines of their era. Yet for all their charm, beauty and irreverence, the Wheelers find themselves becoming exactly what they didn't expect: A good man with a meaningless job whose nerve has gone missing; a less-than-happy homemaker starving for fulfillment and passion; an American family with lost dreams, like any other. Driven to change their fates, April hatches an audacious plan to start all over again, to leave the comforts of Connecticut behind for the great unknown of Paris. But when the plan is put in motion, each spouse is pushed to extremes — one to escape whatever the cost, the other to save all that they have, no matter the compromises. Directed by Sam Mendes from a screenplay by Justin Haythe, this movie is rated R.

The Unborn: Casey Beldon (Odette Yustman) hated her mother for leaving her as a child. But when inexplicable things start to happen, Casey begins to understand why she left. Plagued by merciless dreams and a tortured ghost that haunts her waking hours, she must turn to the only spiritual adviser, Sendak (Gary Oldman), who can make it stop. With Sendak's help, Casey uncovers the source of a family curse dating back

to Nazi Germany, a creature with the ability to inhabit anyone or anything that is getting stronger with each possession. With the curse unleashed, her only chance at survival is to shut a doorway from beyond our world that has been pried open by someone who was never born. Writer/director David Goyer gives a terrifying glimpse into the life of the undead in this supernatural thriller that follows a young woman pulled into a world of nightmares when a demonic spirit haunts her and threatens everyone she loves. This film is rated PG-13.

The Wrestler (Exclusively At The Birmingham 8): Back in the late '80s, Randy "The Ram" Robinson (Mickey Rourke) was a headlining professional wrestler. Now, 20 years later, he ekes out a living performing for handfuls of diehard wrestling fans in high school gyms and community centers around New Jersey. Estranged from his daughter (Evan Rachel Wood) and unable to sustain any real relationships, Randy lives for the thrill of the show and the adoration of his fans. However, a heart attack forces him into retirement. As his sense of identity starts to slip away, he begins to evaluate the state of his life — trying to reconnect with his daughter, and striking up a blossoming romance with an exotic dancer (Marisa Tomei) who is ready to start a new life. Yet all

this cannot compare to the allure of the ring and passion for his art, which threatens to pull Randy "The Ram" back into his world of wrestling. Director Darren Aronofsky presents a powerful portrait of a battered dreamer, who despite himself and the odds stacked against him, lives to be a hero once again in the only place he considers home, inside the ring. This film is rated R.

Opening Friday, Jan. 16: **Chandi Chowk To China** (at the AMC Livonia 20): The first ever Bollywood Kungfu comedy takes you on a madcap Journey from the by-lanes of Chandni Chowk in Delhi, to Shanghai, the Great Wall and rural China, marrying in its wake hilarious gags, breathtaking action, spectacular locations, and heart stirring emotions. Directed by Nikhil Advani, stars Akshay Kumar, Deepika Padukobe, Mithun Chkkraborty, Ranvir Shorey and Gordon Liu.

Defiance: Based on an extraordinary true story, this is an epic tale of family, honor, vengeance and salvation in World War II. The year is 1941 and the Jews of Eastern Europe are being massacred by the thousands. Managing to escape certain death, three brothers take refuge in the dense surrounding woods they have known since childhood. There they begin their desperate battle

against the Nazis. Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber and Jamie Bell star as brothers who turn a primitive struggle to survive into something far more consequential — a way to avenge the deaths of their loved ones by saving thousands of others. This is rated R.

Hotel For Dogs: Emma Roberts, Jake T. Austin, Lisa Kudrow, Kevin Dillon and Don Cheadle star in this smart, funny comedy adventure that shows how far love and imagination can take you. When their new guardians forbid 16-year old Andi (Roberts) and her younger brother, Bruce (Austin) to have a pet, Andi has to use her quick wit to help find a new home for their dog, Friday. The resourceful kids stumble upon an abandoned hotel and using Bruce's talents as a mechanical genius, transform it into a magical dog-paradise for Friday — and eventually for all Friday's friends. When barking dogs make the neighbors suspicious, Andi and Bruce use every invention they have to avoid anyone discovering "who let the dogs in." Based on the book by Lois Duncan and directed by Thor Freudenthal, this film is rated PG.

My Bloody Valentine 3D: Ten years ago, a tragedy changed the town of Harmony forever. Tom Hanniger, an inexperienced coal miner, caused an accident in the tunnels that trapped and killed five men and sent the only survivor, Harry Warden, into a permanent coma. But Harry Warden wanted revenge. Exactly one year later, on Valentine's Day, he woke up... and brutally murdered 22 people with a pickaxe before being killed. Ten years later, Tom Hanniger returns to Harmony on Valentine's Day, still haunted by the deaths he caused. Struggling to make amends with his past, he grapples with unresolved feelings for his ex-girlfriend, Sarah, who is now married to his best friend, Axel, the town sheriff. But tonight, after years of peace, something from Harmony's dark past has returned. Wearing a miner's mask and armed with a pickaxe, an unstoppable killer is on the loose. And as his footsteps come ever closer, Tom, Sarah and Axel realize in terror that it just might be Harry Warden who's come back to claim them... Presented in stunningly real, cutting edge 3-D projection, the film stars Jensen Ackles, Jaime King and Kerr Smith. A remake of the 1981 horror classic, it is directed by Patrick Lussier and produced by Jack Murray. This film is rated R.

Notorious: The life and death story of Notorious B.I.G. (a.k.a. Christopher Wallace), who came straight out of Brooklyn to take the world of rap music by storm. This film is rated R.



Where available by deadline, features are listed.

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON [PG13]
MARLEY AND ME [PG]
THE SPIRIT [PG13]
VALKYRIE [PG13]
DOUBT [PG13]
YES MAN [PG13]
SEVEN POUNDS [PG13]
THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX [G]
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL [PG13]
CADILLAC RECORDS [R]
FOUR CHRISTMASSES [PG13]
TWILIGHT [PG13]
BOLT 3-D [PG]
QUANTUM OF SOLACE [PG13]
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BEDTIME STORIES [PG]
THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON [PG13]
DOUBT [PG13]
MARLEY & ME [PG]
THE SPIRIT [PG13]
YES MAN [PG13]
SEVEN POUNDS [PG13]
SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE [R]
THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX [G]
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL [PG13]
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GRAN TORINO [R]
YES MAN [PG13]

VALKYRIE [PG13]
THE SPIRIT [PG13]

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[6-9]

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Clean and green

Nature is the new best seller when it comes to soaps, lotions and potions

BY SUSAN STEINMUELLER
STAFF WRITER

If you're seeking to use lotions, potions and soaps this year that are safer for the environment — and you — there's an increasing number of products to choose from.

Just keep in mind that when a product says organic or natural, it doesn't always mean the same thing.

"There's definitely a spectrum of natural and organic products," said Bridget Peters, assistant manager and cosmetic buyer at Troy's independently owned Good Food Co.

Andrea Brassert of Troy, who founded her online luxury soap company, Lavandrea, in 2007, would agree.

"Organics is a loosely defined term," she said, and there are few governmental regulations.

A company committed to being organic often has products, packaging and practices that reflect its product.

They include Lush, a fast-growing fresh handmade soap and cosmetics company founded in England.

"Lush has been passionate about the environment since it was founded 13 years ago," said Jennifer Graybeal, representative for Lush. She termed it "greenwashing" when a company labels itself organic without being so.

Lush has locations in The Somerset Collection, Troy, as well as Macy's in Novi and Sterling Heights.



At left, Lush's Charity Pot of hand and body cream, goes into a charitable fund to support animal rights, environmental protection and humanitarian concerns. At right, The Body Shop's Africa Spa Rich Body Balm is an all-over moisturizer made with Community Trade ingredients.

The English Countryside Lush bath bomb is vegan and petal-packed, with geranium, precious orris (made from iris roots) and sandalwood.



Andrea Brassert wants people to enjoy the benefits of aromatherapy and the therapeutic benefits of essential oils through her high quality line of handmade, organic bath products, Lavandrea.

the beauty industry. It works globally with community trade suppliers and helps thousands earn a sustainable income.

Its vegetable-based products include Body Butter, Peppermint Foot Lotion and Hemp; area stores are in major malls in Troy, Sterling Heights, Novi and Auburn Hills.

The Lush founder, previously associated with The Body Shop, has similar beliefs. Proceeds of Lush's Charity Pot of skin-softening hand and body cream go into a fund to support animal rights, environmental protection and humanitarian concerns.

Typically, organics also don't test products on animals and use recycled products and minimal packaging.

ORIGINAL APPEAL

The appeal of organics is catching on. Graybeal says Lush is rapidly growing.

More than 30 stores opened in the U.S. in the past few months.

Brassert said in the last two years, people have become "more receptive" when she talks about organics.

"People understand more about organic products. I think people are definitely seeking it. If we don't start thinking and living in those terms, the planet will be in trouble and so will we."

ssteinmueller@hometownlife.com

CLOSE TO NATURE

Simply stated, high-quality organic skin care products are made with organic, or natural, ingredients, they say.

They differ from most commercial soaps and beauty products in that they're made without harsh chemicals, dyes, fragrances and detergents. Those can irritate the skin and are not healthy for the environment.

Peters suggests that "a good place to start" when buying organic products is to buy those with recognizable ingredients.

"If you can tell where things come from," that's a good thing, she said.

"Read the labels," Brassert said. "Any reputable company will list them."

Brassert had allergic reactions to dyes and fragrances in commercial soap. She uses

homegrown herbs and pure, essential oils distilled from organic, freshly harvested herbs. She grows the lavender for her products in the backyard of her home.

A GOOD VALUE

The purer the product, the higher the price can be. Reasons include that it may be made in small batches to ensure quality and freshness.

Peters tries to bridge the gap at Good Food Co. "We have soaps by Pure Life Soap Co. They are reasonably priced," she said of the organic soaps, which are petroleum-, paraben- and alcohol-free.

Brassert said with organics flooding the marketplace, resulting organics can be "insipid," losing their original appeal of revitalizing and restoring the body as a whole.

She said her premier collection of goat's milk soap, body butter, goat dust and bath bombs will allow people to really enjoy "the benefits of aromatherapy and the therapeutic benefits of essential oils." (available at www.lavan-

drea.com.)

That makes her soaps a bargain, she said, with the most expensive priced at \$12.

At Lush, Graybeal said the handmade, vegetarian ingredient soaps are "a great value." The price depends on the kind bought and how big a piece is sliced from a main bar.

In contrast to mass market soap with a 70-percent soap content, Lush has a 30- to 35-percent soap content, she said — healthier for skin and the environment.

They contain "the finest essential oils we can get," as well as fresh fruits, vegetables and other natural products.

Bath bombs are the most popular item at Lush. The vegan, petal-packed English Countryside bath bomb is \$5.95.

HELPING OTHERS

Buying organic can also mean that the business contributes to "ethical" business practices.

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