

PLYMOUTH OBSERVER

online at hometownlife.com



Tour homes decorated for the holidays - Neighbors, B6

PIPELINE

Special session

Because many of the Plymouth-Canton Board of Education's presentations are for specific PTO and service organizations, it wanted to offer a program for the general public.

Anyone living within the P-CCS district boundary is invited to attend this special session Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. at the E.J. McClendon Education Center, 454 S. Harvey in Plymouth. Among agenda items: Swearing in of recently elected school board members.

Lessons, carols

St. John's Episcopal Church, 574 S. Sheldon Road in Plymouth, announces its annual Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent, to be held on Sunday, Dec. 6 at 4:30 p.m.

The service, which follows a format popularized by King's College of the University of Cambridge, England, alternates readings from Scripture with the singing of songs and carols appropriate for the season of Advent. Members of the church's music ministry, including Children's and Youth choirs, Handbell Choir, Parish Choir, and contemporary group SonShine, will come together to present the music for the service, under the direction of Minister of Music Julie Ford.

Jeremy David Tarrant, Organist-Choirmaster at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul (Episcopal) in Detroit, will play the church's Gabriel Kney pipe organ.

Although the concert is free of charge, attendees are encouraged to give to a free-will offering. Benefits from the concert will be donated to the Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan. Gleaners, which was founded in Detroit in 1977, distributes more than 28 million pounds of food annually through its five Metro-Detroit distribution centers.

For more information call (734) 453-0190, Ext. 16, or visit the church Web site at www.stjohnsplymouth.org

Toy drive

The Plymouth Canton Kiwanis Club is collecting toys for the Salvation Army through Dec. 8.

Bring new unwrapped toys to Citizen's Bank at 6549 Canton Center Road or Help-U-Sell Real Estate at 7120 Haggerty Road.

The greatest need is for toys or games for 10-18 year olds. If you have any questions, please contact Kiwanis at (734) 981-0460.

Renamed ice fest carves new course

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER-STAFF WRITER

With a new name, new features and new management, the Plymouth Ice Festival is ramping up for January.

The annual festival — no longer called the Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular — will have a hometown focus and marketing and sponsorship opportunities that should help organizers raise money in a tough economy, said Sam Walton of Signature Audio, who has a one-year contract to produce the show.

"We have an excellent opportunity for us to highlight Michigan as a thriving, vibrant state, and we believe this is our responsibility as a community-based nonprofit organization," Walton said.

The festival is Friday through Sunday,

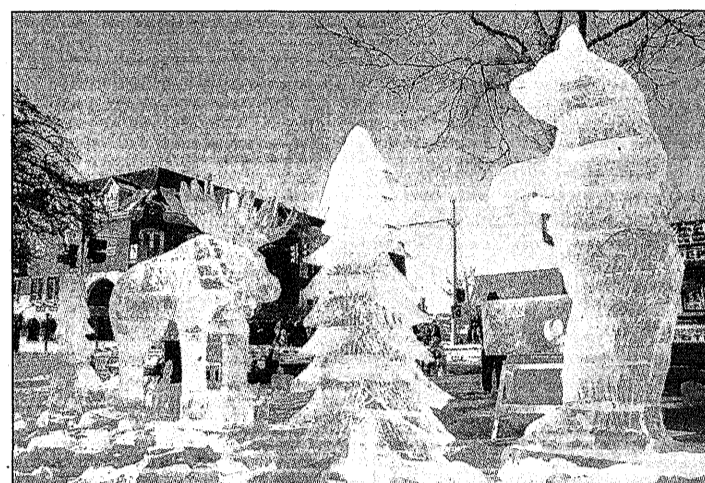
Jan. 22-24, in downtown Plymouth. Show details are still being worked out.

The festival board in September voted not to renew a deal with a longtime producer Watts Up, Inc., instead awarding Walton a one-year contract, with board members saying they wanted to reinvigorate the show.

Walton said that, whenever possible, the festival will showcase Michigan ice-carvers and Michigan products (no Japanese carvers are expected), plus provide a chance for community groups and service clubs to raise money and promote their programs.

"Plymouth is such a close-knit community that it would be impossible to revamp this event without their support," he said, citing the Plymouth Rotary, Lions Club,

Please see **FESTIVAL, A3**



The northwoods tableau certainly fit the frigid temperatures at last year's ice festival. This year's event kicks off Jan. 22.



Santa arrives, courtesy of the Plymouth Community Fire Department, and receives the key to the city.

Seasonal splendor

Santa's arrival wows kids in downtown

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER-STAFF WRITER

Santa Claus sought to reassure his biggest fans Friday evening in downtown Plymouth.

"We haven't had any children on the naughty list yet this year," said Santa after introductions onstage at Kellogg Park, where hundreds had awaited his official arrival. He pointed out a young boy in the crowd. "I know you had a concern last year," he said.

Santa — known outside the holiday season as Eric Stopa — arrived about 6 p.m. on a Plymouth Fire Department fire engine with an entourage that included a couple of children, Mrs. Claus, and a woman who introduced herself as, ahem, Christmas Carol.

Santa and high schoolers from a Plymouth-Canton Educational Park choir led the crowd in singing *Jingle Bells*, and Plymouth City



The crowd of children is ready for Santa's arrival.

Commissioner David Workman presented Santa with a key — to the hearts of Plymouth's children.

Santa said he was glad to be back. "You folks are always so wonderful," he said.

Mila Fronczak, 5, of Plymouth, got to shake Santa's hand as he left the stage. She was at the park with her father, Will, a city of Detroit firefighter, and her younger brother, David.

"I thought it was interesting," Mila said of Santa's arrival. She had never seen him arrive before, she said. (Yes she had, her father said.)

Mila sat on her father's shoulders as she waited a chance to go over her Christmas list with Santa at his small house at the park.

What was on the list? "Surprise presents and a little bit of clothes," Mila said. "I like to get presents," she added.

Before Santa's arrival, singer Gia Warner and local bands The



The P-CEP Choir warms up the crowd with Christmas carols.

Troubadours and Kris Kurzawa and Friends had entertained downtown visitors. Members of the Salvation Army's Plymouth Corps were also out, collecting donations for their Red Kettle campaign and giving out hot chocolate.

Santa's arrival was sponsored by the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce; chamber executive director Wes Graff was the master of ceremonies.

mjachman@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-2405

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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At 10:30 a.m., Plymouth is pretty quiet. Carol Adams, of Plymouth and her mom, Jane Adams, of Dearborn, walk down Ann Arbor Trail.

Plymouth shoppers seek downtown experience, avoid big-box stores

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER-STAFF WRITER

Call it the Big Box Backlash. While major chain retailers Friday dealt with 4 a.m. openings, doorbuster sales and excited, jostling crowds looking for bargains, boutiques in downtown Plymouth took a more laid-back approach.

"We're not Wal-Mart," said Charles Dare, who, with wife Elle, owns Genuine Toy Co. on Forest. "We're not going to have a doorbuster thing."

"People are doing those crazy things today with the big boxes," said Sandy Marulis, the

owner, with husband Steve, of Michigan Made & More on Ann Arbor Trail. "Today is the day of bargains."

Business seemed steady at many downtown stores the Friday after Thanksgiving, which is said to be one of the biggest shopping days of the year. Shoppers said they were drawn by the selection of shops and the downtown experience — and a desire to avoid crowds and parking hassles.

"We like walking from store to store. I don't like malls," said Michelle Ciccantelli of

Please see **SHOPPING, A3**

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"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

Kiwanis nuts

Kiwanis Club of Colonial Plymouth supports the agencies and organizations that provide assistance to many people in need as well as helping folks directly. To be able to fund these various projects, the club has many fund-raising activities. One of them is the Annual Gourmet Nut Fund-raiser being held now.

There are 1-pound and 3-pound cans of gourmet nuts for purchase by the can, case and pallet. They are great gifts for family, employees and clients. Please consider the Kiwanis Gourmet Nuts as your gift of choice this year and assist in allowing Kiwanis Club of Colonial Plymouth to continue serving those in need in our community and around the world.

The gourmet nuts can be purchased by the can at Papa Romano's, 555 W. Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth, (734) 459-2930, or by the case or pallet at Fitness Things, 1160 W.



Vatcher-Martin

Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth, (734) 455-8790. Many other Plymouth businesses will also have the Kiwanis Gourmet Nuts available for purchase at their location.

Businesses interested in participating, or anyone who needs more information, can contact Gary Walley, (734) 455-8790.

Book signing

Award-winning author/photographer Cheryl Vatcher-Martin of Canton will be autographing copies of her latest release, "The Cornstalks Are

Whispering" at the Holiday Shoppe & Craft Show 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 at the Hawthorne Valley in Westland.

Her brand new book, "The Cornstalks Are Whispering," was inspired by a local cornfield in Canton and her former residence in Massachusetts. The book garnered her a fiction award in 2008 through the Lowell Council For The Arts, in Lowell, Mich.

Additionally, her books and fine art photographs are available in Orion Township's Art Center for the holiday market which runs Dec. 7-20.

Her second solo fine art photography art show, "Expressions II" is on exhibit presently and her pieces are available for purchase at the Flat Rock Library. She'd be happy to schedule a school visit to read her books, too. She can be reached at peroin5@comcast.net or (734) 397-1626.

Martin is the owner of Pero Inc., a full service writing, coaching, editing, consulting, photography, teaching, tutoring, and publishing company. She's also a presenter and speaker. She can be reached at (734) 397-1626. E-mail at peroinc5@comcast.net. As an instructor she is offering a new children's writing course, and French and Spanish classes through Wayne-Westland Community Schools. For further information: (734) 419-2426.

Chorale auditions

BeckRidge Chorale announces auditions for the second half of its 36th season.

Auditions will be held Tuesday, Dec. 8, 7-9:30 p.m. at Plymouth First United Methodist Church in Plymouth.



Pageant prowess

Jasmine Guajardo of Canton took top honors at the 2010 Plymouth-Canton Junior Miss competition, topping a field of nine girls while winning \$1,500 worth of scholarships for physical fitness and talent. The Salem High School student also received the "People's Choice" award. Guajardo now competes in the state program in Ann Arbor in March. Canton High School's Sarah Dix was first runner-up and won scholarships in scholastics. Victoria Reese of Salem High School won scholarships for self-expression and talent, while Mercy High School's Jenna Mizzi won for physical fitness and interview. Other winners include Kelly Larimore of Canton High School (Interview and Scholastics), Ciara Williams of Canton High School (Self-Expression), Avery Ash from Canton High School was the Spirit Winner. All contestants received a scholarship for the Be Your Best Self award.

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To get more information and to sign up for an audition go to: www.beckridgechorale.org. While there you may also purchase tickets to BeckRidge Chorale and/or Cherry Hill Singers upcoming concerts.

Toy drive

The Plymouth Canton Kiwanis Club is collecting toys for the Salvation Army through Dec. 8.

Bring new unwrapped toys to Citizen's Bank at 6549 Canton Center Road or Help-U-Sell Real Estate at 7120 Haggerty Road.

The greatest need is for toys or games for 10-18 year olds. If you have any questions, please contact Kiwanis at (734) 981-0460.

Barefoot auditions

Barefoot Productions announces auditions for "Rope," a suspense/thriller by Patrick Hamilton.

Auditions take place Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 14-15, from 7-9 p.m. at the Walker/Buzenberg Building, 240 N. Main in Plymouth.

Roles are available for six males (three from ages 19-24, one 27-30 and two 45-60) and one female (19-21 years old).

"Rope" is the 1929 suspense thriller (set in London) that inspired the classic Alfred Hitchcock film, starring Jimmy Stewart. Barefoot Productions' presentation will be performed in REAL TIME, with NO intermission. British accents will be used. Performances are Feb. 12-28.

Actors should bring headshot and one prepared monologue, if available. There will be cold readings from script. Be prepared to list any scheduling conflicts.

For more information, call 734-582-9688 or visit www.justgobarefoot.com

Corriveau coffee

State Representative Marc Corriveau (D-Northville), whose district includes Plymouth, Northville and part of Canton, hosts a coffee hour 5:30-6:30 p.m. Nov. 30 at Parthenon Coney Island, 39910 Ford Road, in Canton.

For more information, call

Saturday @ the Penn

The Plymouth Community Arts Council and the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society are presenting a series of family variety shows in downtown Plymouth. These shows are offered at 11:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month at the Penn Theater. Cost is \$4 per person.

The next performance, scheduled for Dec. 5, features special musical host Guy Louis and the Chautauqua Express with special guest performers Joe Reilly. The announcer for this performance is Tammy Trudelle.

The Penn Theater is located at 760 Penniman in Plymouth. Tickets may be purchased the day of the show. Doors open at 11:05 a.m. Show runs 11:30-1:00 p.m.

These shows are sponsored by a grant from the Wilcox Foundation, as well as by several local businesses and individuals: Quixworks, Signature Audio, Kelly & Tom Doneth, Optimist Club of Plymouth and Steve & Renee Alexandrowski.

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New Secretary of State office drawing raves

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

A line formed outside Canton's new Secretary of State office — one of Michigan's largest — before employees even opened the doors for business Wednesday morning.

Yet it didn't take drivers long to handle their business once they entered the 6,000-square-foot West Wayne County PLUS office, nestled in the Golden Gate shopping center on Lilley south of Joy.

"It was really quick," Canton resident Kerri Krafft said, after stopping in and getting her picture taken for her new driver's license.

Accompanied by sons

Cameron, 3, Ethan, 6, and Andrew, 9, Krafft first drove to the former SOS office on Ford Road near Sheldon, only to find it had been closed and replaced recently by the newer, bigger PLUS facility, which offers a wider array of services.

"I think it's very nice," she said. "It's really clean."

Plymouth resident Alison Gumbel bought her new license plate tab just inside the front door by using a credit card at the new self-serve, ATM-style machine. She didn't miss the former long lines customers used to endure prior to their birthdays.

"It was wonderful. It was the best birthday present I could have gotten," Gumbel said,

describing her visit as "excellent."

Secretary of State spokeswoman Kelly Chesney said during a telephone interview from Lansing that the new West Wayne County PLUS office is intended to get customers in and out quickly.

Here's how:
• The larger facility allows the office to place more employees at the counter when business is brisk.

• Workers often greet patrons and make sure they have the documents they need even before they reach the counter.

• The self-serve station allows customers to renew their license tabs inside the front door lobby without even

entering the main facility. The machine accepts Discover, MasterCard and Visa. "It's very easy to use," Chesney said.

• The office offers services such as same-day titles and on-the-spot driving records for people who may need them for prospective employers.

• The PLUS office has more senior staff members who can make what Chesney described as "complex decisions" once relegated to Lansing.

• Aside from business hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, the office also has extended hours until 7 p.m. Wednesdays.

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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kerri Krafft likes the changes at the Secretary of State Plus office. When sons Cameron, Ethan and Andrew are old enough to drive, they'll appreciate the changes, too.

FESTIVAL

FROM PAGE A1

Old Village Association and Special Olympics as among the groups involved in discussions. "Each one of these service organizations has their own goals and fund-raising efforts that we hope to support through their involvement with the festival."

Walton acknowledged that raising money for the festival

in the current economy is difficult, but said potential sponsors are being offered a range of marketing opportunities: signage, logos carved in ice, sculpture and event sponsorships, vending, coupon and sampling opportunities and more. There is a sponsorship opportunity for every business budget, and sculpture-sponsorship prices have been reduced, Walton said.

"Our fund-raising strategy this year is to offer better marketing opportunities tailored

specifically for our sponsors," he said.

Several features of the 2010 ice festival will be new or expanded, including:

• A "Dueling Chainsaws" speed-carving contest, which will give two sculptors just 15 minutes to carve designs that will be judged by the audience.

• A "Hot Spot" warming tent where vendors will show off their wares and offer samples, plus a larger Ice Sculpture Garden.

• A Jan. 22 opening ceremony

in which a "ribbon" of ice will be cut to signal the kickoff of the show.

Walton also plans to enlist festival volunteers from local churches, schools and athletic teams. Volunteer opportunities and other information about the festival are expected to be posted on its Web site, www.plymouthicefestival.org, by the end of this month.

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SHOPPING

FROM PAGE A1

Perrysburg, Ohio, who drove up for the day with her husband and their four children and was browsing at the Parkside Gallery, where everything is 50 percent off because of a planned year-end closing.

They weren't rushing out to the big-box stores in Perrysburg? "No thank you," Ciccantelli said.

"It's just been steady, not swamped," said Parkside owner Kal Jabara, who opened his store at Main and Ann Arbor Trail at 8 a.m. Friday

instead of the usual 10 a.m.

Christmas shoppers tend to flock to the big-box stores early in the season and get to his place later, Jabara said. "They don't worry about getting here early because they know we have a pretty good selection," he said.

"It's just good to get out of the house, enjoy the weather," said Jacquie Bolden of Plymouth, who picked up a hand-painted decorative metal fish sculpture at Parkside. "I don't do Christmas shopping," she added.

Marulis was looking forward to Saturday. In years past on the Saturday following Thanksgiving, she said, lots of people seem to step back from

the mega-shopping in order to enjoy Plymouth's small-town atmosphere. "I think it will be a bigger, better day," she said.

There weren't any doorbusters at Michigan Made, but all non-food items were on sale for 20 percent off or more. Michigan Made, directly behind Parkside, is also closing at the end of the year, as the Marulises are retiring.

At Genuine Toy, which opened in August, Charles Dare said business has increased in November, with sales about double what they were in the store's early days. There are even shortages of some items, he said, as manufacturers have cut production

because of a holiday-time oversupply in past years.

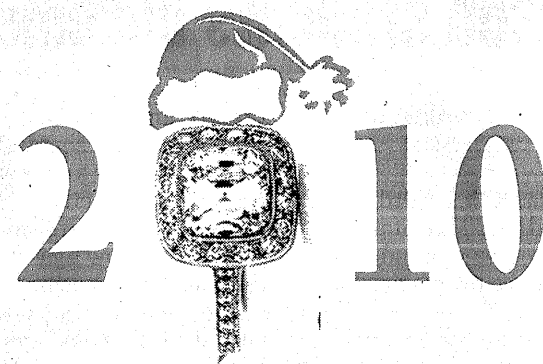
Patti Stanchina of Livonia visited Genuine Toy with her two sisters. She found the Melissa & Doug-brand toy kitchen items she was after.

Like others, Stanchina said she enjoys the boutiques and the Plymouth atmosphere over the big-box experience. Kilwin's, the confection shop that opened in Plymouth last May, was also on their list of places to visit.

"I like small shops," she said, adding, "We did stop at Target."

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EDUCATION



Among poetry winners at Dodson Elementary School are (from left) Nicholas Borninski, Tatum Cho, Lauren Wood, Avery Teatsorth, Andrew Pascaris, Nathan Janice, Joshua Agius, Amelia Carey and Megan Flanigan.

Dodson students become published poets

BY MAGGIE WUNDERLICH
CORRESPONDENT

Nicholas Koh, a third-grader from Dodson Elementary School, said he's "proud and excited to see my poem in the book."

And he's not the only one with a reason to be proud. Recently, 128 students won the Young American Poetry Contest. In addition to a monetary award, their poems were published in the annual Young American Poetry Digest.

Another third grader, Megan Trulock, said, "It feels really cool because the poem was good enough to be in a book."

Fifth grader Naabia Romain agreed and said, "It's exciting that my poem was in a book for the second year."

The Digest is sponsored by the National Schools Project, which was designed to promote students' interest in writing and their enjoyment of poetry. This national contest is open to students in grades 2-5, from both public and private schools, and throughout

the U.S. and Canada.

Each year, the contest has a different focus and this one was on haiku poetry.

The students' hard work paid off and now they can see their published poems.

"It's fun to have my poem published in a book," said Isabel Anderson, a third grader. "When I started writing the poem, I was just writing, and then it turned out better than I thought," said Marisa Rowland, a fifth grader.

Another fifth grader, Hunter Hall, thought it was "pretty cool because our school got the second most winning poems."

Dodson is the second school in the nation to have the most accepted poems published in the Digest. The monetary award was used to buy a large frame for a picture of the poetry contest winners.

The picture is proudly displayed in the school and "serves as a daily reminder of what students can achieve when they put forth effort", said Dodson principal Dan Carr.

According to Bonnie

Goodrich, Dodson's Reading Interventionist, several students also won the 2008 National Student Poetry Contest, sponsored by The American Library of Poetry. The poems were judged on their creativity, originality and artistic quality.

The American Library of Poetry's mission is to "continue to fan the flames of literacy in America." As an award, the poems were published in Brilliance. This is no small feat, since this national contest receives thousands of submissions from students, in grades 3-12, each year.

Goodrich said, "Our writers are thrilled to have their work published," said Goodrich, who said she believes this this experience promotes the students' eagerness to write.

As the school year progresses, the students continue to write for an "outside audience". In fact, the fourth graders look forward to their annual Poetry Night at Barnes & Noble in spring 2010. For more information about this upcoming event, please contact Bonnie Goodrich at Bonnie.Goodrich@pcsmail.

ON CAMPUS

Marshall scholar

Austin McKinney of Canton has been named as a 2010 Marshall Scholarship winner.

McKinney, a cadet 1st class (senior) at the U.S. Air Force Academy, is the 11th Marshall Scholar for USAFA. He plans to receive two separate master's degrees, one in Latin American Studies, and another in Globalization and Latin American Development at the University of London in England.

"It is an honor to be chosen for such an award," McKinney said. "I will be proud to represent the U.S. Air Force in the United Kingdom for two years."

Ranked top of the 2010 class academically, McKinney is majoring in management with a minor in Spanish. He has participated in a language immersion program to Nerja, Spain, spent a semester abroad to Tecnológico de Monterrey, a university in Querétaro, Mexico, and more recently had a role in a Georgetown University Political Science and Economics Study Program in Prague, Czech Republic.

While in Mexico he collected more than 100 hours of community service teaching children mathematics and basic English. CIC McKinney's generosity doesn't end there. He has also worked as a volunteer teacher in the local agriculture markets of Quito, Ecuador,

and mentored a child in the Colorado Springs community while serving as a member of the Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"I grew up in a service oriented family - my father was an Air Force officer and my mom was a teacher," McKinney said, adding that they "taught to always give back to others when possible."

Marshall Scholarships finance up to 40 young Americans of high ability to study for a degree at a school of their choosing in the United Kingdom each year, according to the Marshall Scholarship Web site.

Sell-a-Thon

CMU senior Ben Eberlein of Plymouth earned a second-place honor in the Pro-Am Sell-a-Thon competition at Pi Sigma Epsilon's North Central Regional Conference Nov. 7 at The Ohio State University.

Eberlein was coached on conceptual sales techniques by a sales professional, after which he presented a mock sales call to a panel of judges. Eberlein, along with six of his fellow chapter members, competed against students from the University of Toledo, Indiana University, The Ohio State University, Miami University of Ohio, Purdue University and the University of Akron.

Eberlein will receive a complimentary package for the Pi Sigma Epsilon National Convention in April, where he will have the opportunity to compete for cash prizes.

A graduate of Canton High School, Eberlein is the son of George and Mary Eberlein.



Eberlein

Pi Sigma Epsilon is the nation's only professional business fraternity for men and women interested in marketing, sales man-

agement and selling. CMU began the first Pi Sigma Epsilon chapter in the state of Michigan at CMU in the fall of 2009.

For additional news from Central Michigan University visit its online newsroom at <http://www.news.cmich.edu>

Hope College

Hope College students Kevin Souibly of Plymouth and Jessica Zomermaand from Canton, are studying off-campus during the 2009 fall semester.

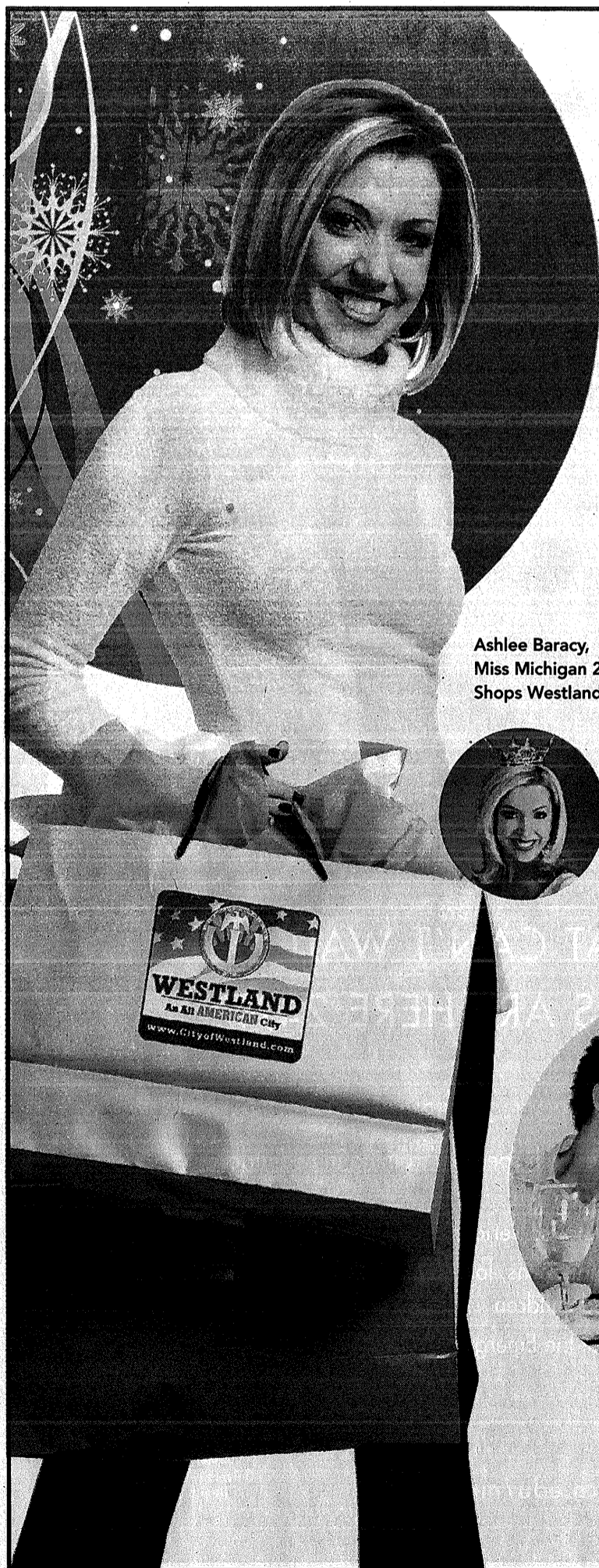
Souibly, a junior, is studying in Geneva, Switzerland, through SIT Study Abroad. He is the son of David and Carol Souibly of Plymouth and a 2007 graduate of Detroit Catholic Central High School.

Zomermaand, a junior, is studying in Buenos Aires, Argentina, through a CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) program. She is the daughter of Michael and Barbara Zomermaand of Canton and a 2007 graduate of Canton High School.

Brendan Krueger of Canton graduated Cum Laude from Hope College.

Cum Laude honors are awarded to graduates who achieved a minimum 3.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

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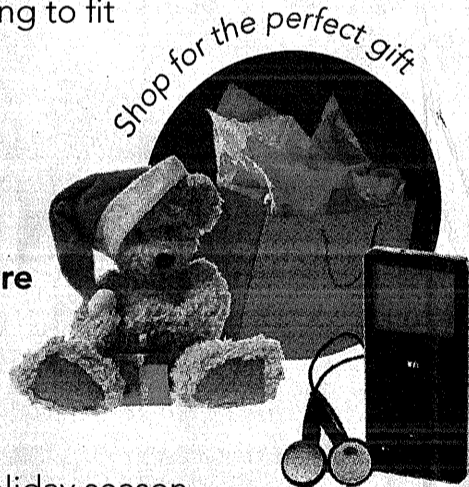
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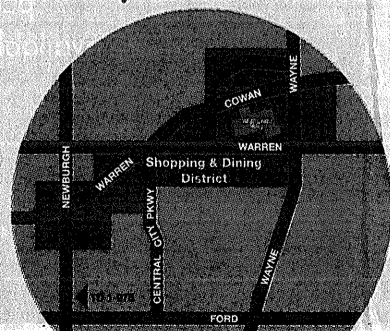
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Music an outlet for Canton songwriter

BY JULIE BROWN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

At a recent party for his 50th birthday at his Canton home, Darrel Schwandt had friends attentive and listening as he played a song he wrote, produced and performed.

"It was a contest that TACOM conducted last summer," he said of his winning entry, "The TACOM Family."

He's a civilian contractor at the Tank Automotive and Armaments Command/Life Cycle Management Command, at the Detroit Arsenal-Garrison in Warren. That's part of the U.S. Army, with Schwandt working for NCI Information Systems Inc., based in Reston, Va.

All employees at the base in Warren and other sites in Texas, Alabama, Illinois, New York and California were eligible, including civilians like Schwandt. TACOM is a tenant at the Arsenal in Warren.

"They wanted an official song," he said. A committee did judging of songs to serve as an organizational motivator, "to kind of musically give them an identity."

Schwandt's song has a patriotic flavor, instilling pride in America and work done by the staffers. He enjoyed taking the idea and developing it.

Schwandt, married to Susan, plays the guitar and has studied music on the side for years. "For the most part, it's just my own creative outlet," he said.

The "Committed to Excellence" contest required a song of three minutes or less, with Schwandt's winning entry just over two-and-a-half minutes. He received an award and a two-star letter on official letterhead, along with recognition for others who entered.

Schwandt earned bachelor's and master's degrees in telecommunications from Michigan State University with a video production emphasis. He manages media services at the base, including graphics production, photog-

raphy, video conferencing and other areas. NCI was awarded the contract in 1998 and he's been there all that time and prior to that.

It took him over a week to write the song, which he reworked to polish it. TACOM LCMC (tacom.army.mil) LCMC, headquartered in Warren, is in partnership with the Army's Program Executive Offices. It's one of the Army's largest weapon

systems research, development, and sustainment organizations.

NCI (nciinc.com) offers information technology, engineering and professional solutions/services to federal government agencies, including the military's branches and agencies ranging from the General Accounting Office to NASA.

jbrown@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-6755



Darrel Schwandt of Canton, debuting the song at Organization Day in Warren on Aug. 28. It's the annual event for employees and their families.

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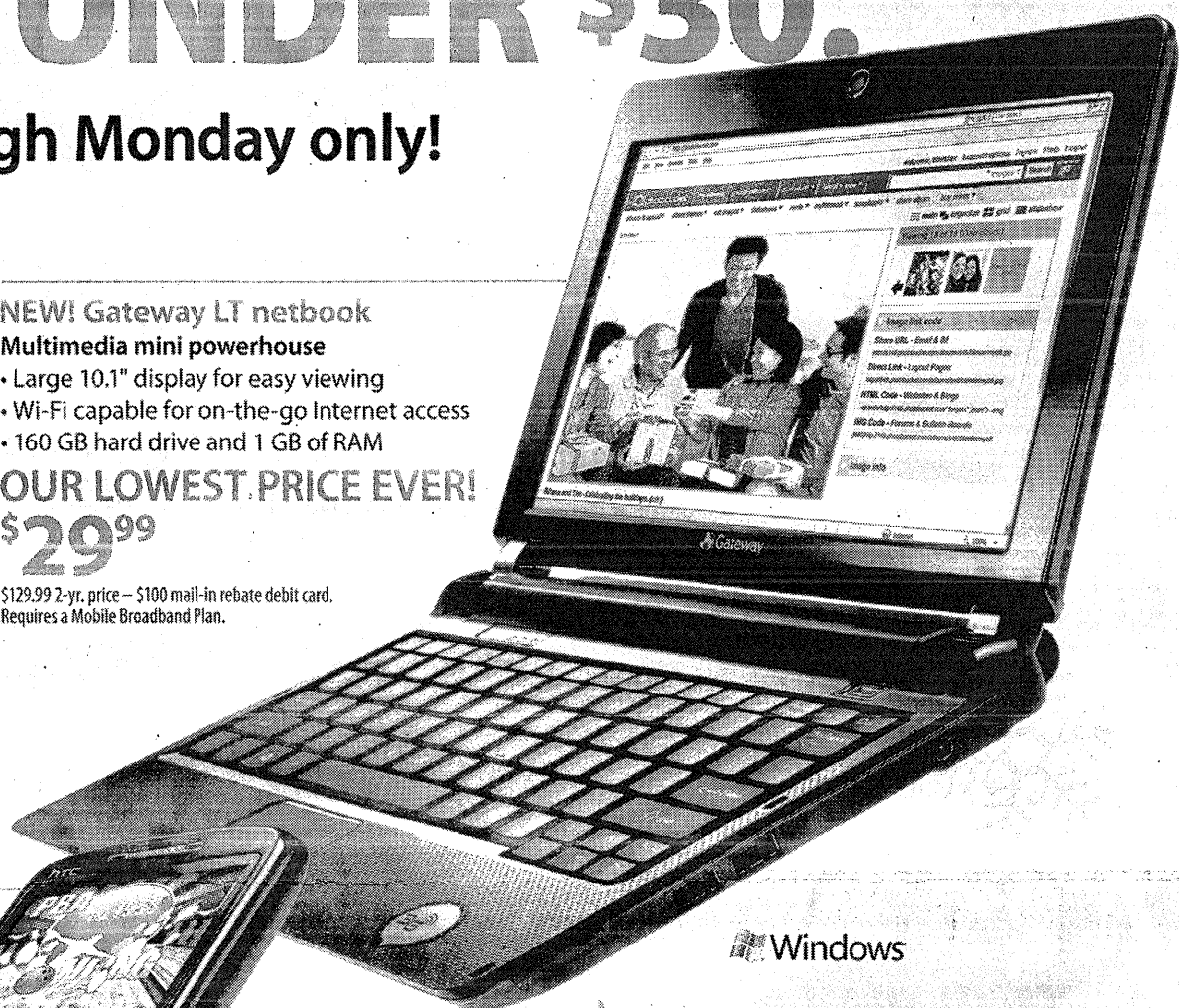
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Consider consequences when co-signing for loan

Q: Dear Rick: I have a dilemma and I would like your opinion. I am a widower with three adult children. Five years ago, I remarried. My new wife is a widow and has two adult children from a previous marriage. We are both retired and our pensions and Social Security cover the bulk of our living expenses. Our house is paid off and we need anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000 from our portfolio to maintain our lifestyle. Our combined portfolio is worth approximately \$400,000. Here's my dilemma. My



Money Matters
Rick Bloom

wife's son has asked us to co-sign a \$200,000 loan for a business venture. I am concerned that if the venture fails I will be left holding the bag. Should I co-sign the loan? If I do is there anything I can do to protect myself?

A: When you co-sign a loan for someone it is important to understand what that really

entails. Basically, a co-signer situation is no different than if you were the borrower. The bank, if there is a default, can pursue you for the full amount of the debt. Even if your wife's son declares bankruptcy and is discharged from any personal liability, that does not relieve you of your obligation to repay the debt. Co-signing on a loan is no different than actually taking the loan yourself. Therefore, in dealing with your stepson, the question you have to ask is what is his ability to repay the debt?

I am making the assumption that he does not have the necessary collateral to secure

the debt. After all, he wouldn't need a co-signer if he had adequate collateral. Therefore, the issue is his ability to repay.

One thing you have to factor into the equation is that you are putting half of your investment assets at risk. To me, that is not prudent. Even if your stepson had a good track record of repaying debt and if the business venture was viable, I would not recommend co-signing the loan. After all, if something were to go wrong, your finances would be devastated. It is highly unlikely that you and your wife would be able to maintain your lifestyle if you were forced to make good on the loan.

The question you must ask yourself is, what if the loan is not repaid. If you can say to yourself, I will not be happy if the loan is not repaid, but it will not hurt me financially, that is one thing. However, that is not the case in this situation. If there was a default

on the loan and the guarantor was required to make the loan good, there would be severe financial distress for you. It is based upon this financial distress that I recommend you do not co-sign the loan.

Just because I recommend that you do not co-sign the loan does not mean that you can't offer some assistance. If nothing more, you should suggest to your stepson that he contact the U.S. Small Business Administration. The agency has a variety of loan programs available.

In today's difficult economic times, there is still a credit crunch, finding financing is difficult, however it is not impossible.

Another alternative may be to get a group together who could collectively co-sign the loan. If that is a possibility, you can work with the bank to put limits on each co-signer's potential liability. Obviously,

the main benefit to you is the fact that you would not have a substantial portion of your assets at risk.

It is difficult to say no to a loved one. However, there comes a time when you must look at your individual situation and be a little selfish. I believe whenever you loan money, co-sign a loan or provide other types of financial assistance to a loved one, you must consider the consequences if things go bad. In this situation, if things went bad, there would be severe consequences. Your lifestyle would be jeopardized. Therefore, before you get involved sit down and realistically look at the consequences.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. Observer & Eccentric readers can submit questions at [moneymatters@hometownlife.com](mailto:money matters@hometownlife.com). For more information, visit Rick's Web site at www.bloomassetmanagement.com.

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Monday, Dec 7th
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LIBRARY WATCH

The following programs are available during December at the Plymouth District Library:

- Library closings - The Library will be closed Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 30-31.
MEDICARE D PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM, Tuesdays, Dec. 1 & 8, 10 a.m. - CVS Pharmacy will join the Library staff in helping seniors gain a better understanding of the Medicare Prescription Drug Program.
WRITING MY LIFE STORY: A SENIOR WRITING GROUP, Tuesday, Dec. 1, 1 p.m., and Tuesday, Dec. 15, 4 p.m. - Seniors can share and preserve their life stories with the guidance of Plymouth author, Jane Saylor.

PHILOSOPHY: How we know what we know, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. - Dr. Mark Hutson, Schoolcraft Philosophy Instructor will present an introduction to Epistemology, the branch of philosophy dealing with the theory of knowledge. He will discuss perception and reason, limits of knowledge and major issues in the field.

DOLLARS FOR COLLEGE/FAFSA HELP, Thursday, Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m. - Sheryl Krasnow of College and Career Counseling Associates will explain federal, state and institutional financing programs, college financial aid offices and filling out the Fafsa form.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP, Monday, Dec. 7, 7 p.m., and Tuesday, Dec. 8, 4 p.m. (spouses only program) - Social worker Chris Goldberg of Adult Well-Being Services will answer a wide variety of concerns for individuals caring for ill or aging family members.

CONTEMPORARY BOOKS DISCUSSION, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m. - Members of this book discussion group are invited to read Gentlemen and Players by Joanne Harris. Copies of this book are available at the circulation desk.

ther information, please call Sue Patterson at the Library, 734-453-0750, or email spaterson@plymouthlibrary.org

VIETNAM PERSPECTIVES: OPERATION BLUE LIGHT AND COUNTERINSURGENCY, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m.; THE IA DRANG, LINEBACKER AND CAMBODIA: BLUEPRINT FOR AIR-LAND BATTLE, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m. - Raymond Schepansky, Military History Teacher from the Plymouth Canton Educational Park returns with another in-depth look at war, specifically U.S. strategy during the Vietnam war.

YOUR POETRY GROUP, Sunday, Dec. 13, 1:30-3:30 p.m. - Round table readings of poems, your own or by others, are held on the second Sunday of the month. Reader's discretion of language is asked in the works read. For more information, contact Barbara Kraft, 734-453-0750, ext. 217 or bk@plymouthlibrary.org

RHAPSODY MUSIC SERIES: GRATITUDE STEEL BAND, Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m. - These high-energy musical performers make a stop in Plymouth after travels throughout the U.S. and Europe, playing and singing Caribbean, Jazz, Latin American and African music.

DIA LECTURE, Monday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m. - The Plymouth Community Arts Council presents this monthly gathering, drawing from the Detroit Institute of Art Speakers Bureau. No registration is required.

BROWN BAG BOOK DISCUSSION, Wednesday, Dec. 16, noon - This month's discussion invites members to read Home by Marilynne Robinson. Copies of this book are available at the circulation desk.

STARS, MOONS & PLANETS, Monday, Dec. 21, 7 p.m. - He loves the skies and after this informal gathering, you will too. Plymouth resident Mike Best leads a lively discussion each month for adults and children over the age of 6.

NEEDLECRAFTERS MEETING, Monday, Dec. 28, 7-9 p.m. - Knitters, quilters, needlepointers are all invited to attend this informal group gathering. Lessons are not provided, but ideas exchanged among attendees.

Caribou toy drive benefits Goodwill

Goodwill Industries, the Plymouth Caribou Coffee and 89X are teaming to help brighten the holidays for children with unemployed parents.

The "12 Days of Christmas" campaign sponsored by 89x Radio and Caribou Coffee encourages Metro Detroiters to donate new toys for area children whose parents are unemployed and working toward new jobs with help from Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit.

Donations will be accepted at all 19 Metro Detroit Caribou Coffee locations through Dec. 8.

The toys will be available for purchase in Goodwill Industries' "Santa Shop," which offers individuals receiving employment education and training support from Goodwill the opportunity to purchase holiday gifts for their children at highly discounted prices.

"The generosity of 89x, Caribou Coffee and the people of Metro Detroit will enable our students and trainees to focus on getting the support they need to earn the jobs that will lead to better lives and future happy holidays for their families," said Lorna G. Uteley, president and CEO, Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit.

Radio personalities from 89X will appear at live remote events at a different Metro Detroit Caribou Coffee location each day during the



Chair-ity ball

Plymouth-based Mercy Street, a new, grassroots organization dedicated to "advocating for justice and mercy for the needy, ailing, neglected, misunderstood and disenfranchised in the community," hosts its first Chair-ity Ball 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, at The Tangent Gallery, 715 E. Milwaukee, Detroit.

campaign. Details on locations and times will be available at http://www.89xradio.com and http://www.goodwilldetroit.org. Anyone donating a new, unwrapped

toy to Goodwill Industries will receive a coupon for a free small coffee redeemable at any area Caribou Coffee location. Visit http://www.cariboucoffee.com to find the nearest Caribou Coffee location.

Diaper day

"I have never seen so many diapers in my life," said Laura Fawcett, librarian at Canton Public Library and mother of three. "It's a mountain of diapers."

Boxes, packages and bags of diapers, all donations from the community, towered near the front door of the Canton Public Library after its recent Diaper Day event. After the last contribution was tallied, 17,397 diapers were collected for the Detroit Area Diaper Bank.

Canton resident Marybeth Levine, founder of the Detroit Area Diaper Bank, was overwhelmed.

"It's so far beyond my wildest expectations I can't even put it into words," Levine said. "I'm so grateful to the Canton Public Library and to all of the donors whose generosity will help so many people with their wonderful gifts."

The library partnered with the Diaper Bank after connecting with Levine through social networks and in the library, where Levine's family makes frequent visits. "This kind of partnership, working with our community and making connections, is part of our mission statement and the library's core values," reports Laurie Golden, marketing and communications manager.

HOBBY LOBBY advertisement featuring a grid of various craft and home goods with 50% off and 40% off sale items. Categories include Christmas decorations, home accents, and craft supplies.

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPT. NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE. Notice is hereby given that on 12/04/2009, at 10:00 a.m., Mayflower Auto Transport, 1179 Starkweather, Plymouth, MI 48170, a public auction of the following: 1997 Chrysler Concord, 1998 Dodge Caravan, 1994 Plymouth Mustang, 1994 Ford Mustang.

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W-W parents plan to speak about school closings

BY SUE MASON
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The Wayne-Westland school board knows the plan is approved. It's a shame to see both go. They do so many things for our community," Lisa Grondy said. The school board has scheduled a public forum for 6 p.m. Monday in the Stockmeyer Auditorium on the Wayne Memorial High School campus in Wayne.

The board, which has observed the work of the committee since it started in late June, will officially receive the committee's recommendation and then hear the comments and recommendations of residents. It will take formal action on the plan at its Dec. 7 board meeting, also planned for 6 p.m. at the Stockmeyer Auditorium.

The meeting will be structured on an informational basis," school board President Skip Monit said. "We won't be in a position to answer questions. In fact, we'll be asking our own questions." The committee is recommending closing seven elementaries (Madison, Jefferson-Barns, Hamilton, Kettering and Vandenburg), turning the remaining elementaries into K-4 buildings, turning Adams and Marshall middle schools into 5/6 buildings, with Stevenson and Franklin as the remaining middle schools.

PUBLIC FORUM

What: Wayne-Westland school board public forum
Why: To receive the recommendations of the 21st Century Schools Committee and to hear comment and recommendations from the public regarding proposed school closings and boundary realignments.
When: 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 30
Where: Stockmeyer Auditorium, Glenwood east of Fourth Street, on the campus of Wayne Memorial High School campus
Information: Online at www.wccsd.net, click on the @list Century Schools Committee logo

The Grondys were among a group of parents that met last week at Jefferson-Barns school to talk about what needs to be done to convince the school board that one of the Norwayne schools needs to stay open.

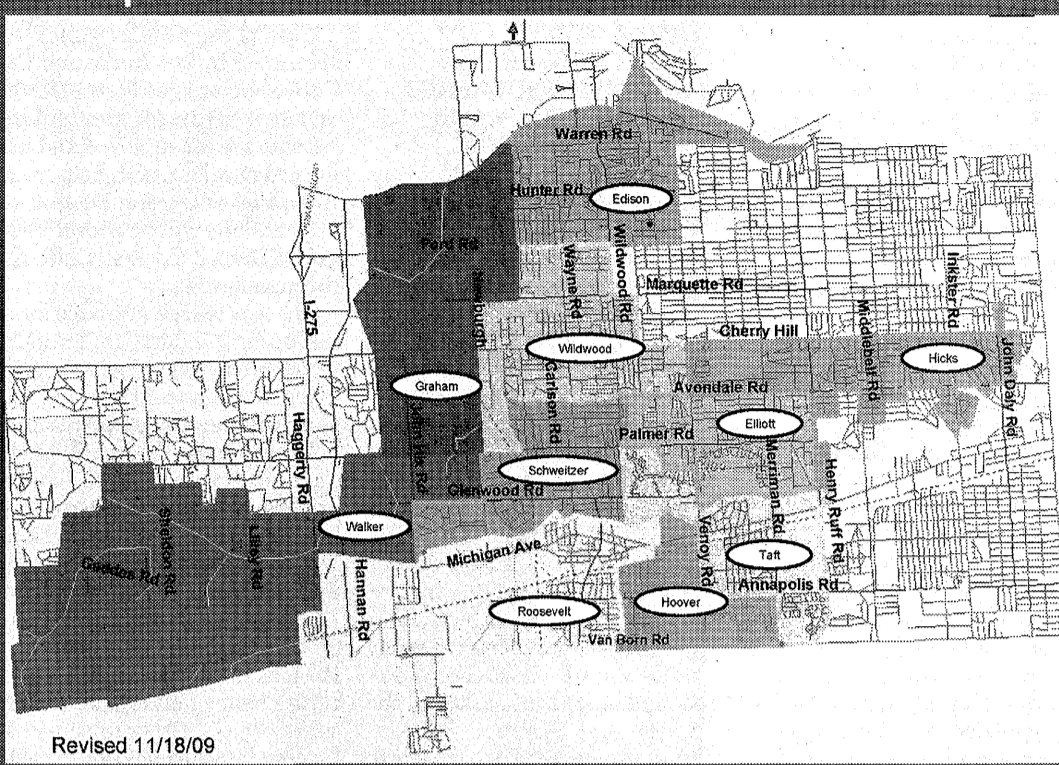
The meeting was organized by Susan Nagy and Kristi Hicks, parent representatives for the two schools on the 21st Century Committee. Both live in the Norwayne community, attended either Lincoln and Jefferson-Barns schools and have children attending the schools.

"I come from this community. One of my missions is to focus on a decision that's best for our children," Hicks said. "Our main objective is to keep one school. We hope they say, 'Let's keep one open.' Both schools were built in 1943 to serve the children of workers who worked at Willow Run Airport building bombers for the war effort. Made of block and wood, they were renovated as part of the 1998 bond issue. However, information provided to the facilities committee indicates that both schools still need more than \$4 million in renovations. Current enrollment at Jefferson-Barns is about 140 students, while Lincoln has 280 students.

"We need to make our voices heard," Nagy said. "We all have biases about what schools should be kept open. Ours is that one of the schools in Norwayne needs to be kept open." Nagy initially questioned the decision to close both schools at the committee meeting Nov. 17, saying that it would have a negative impact on the community.

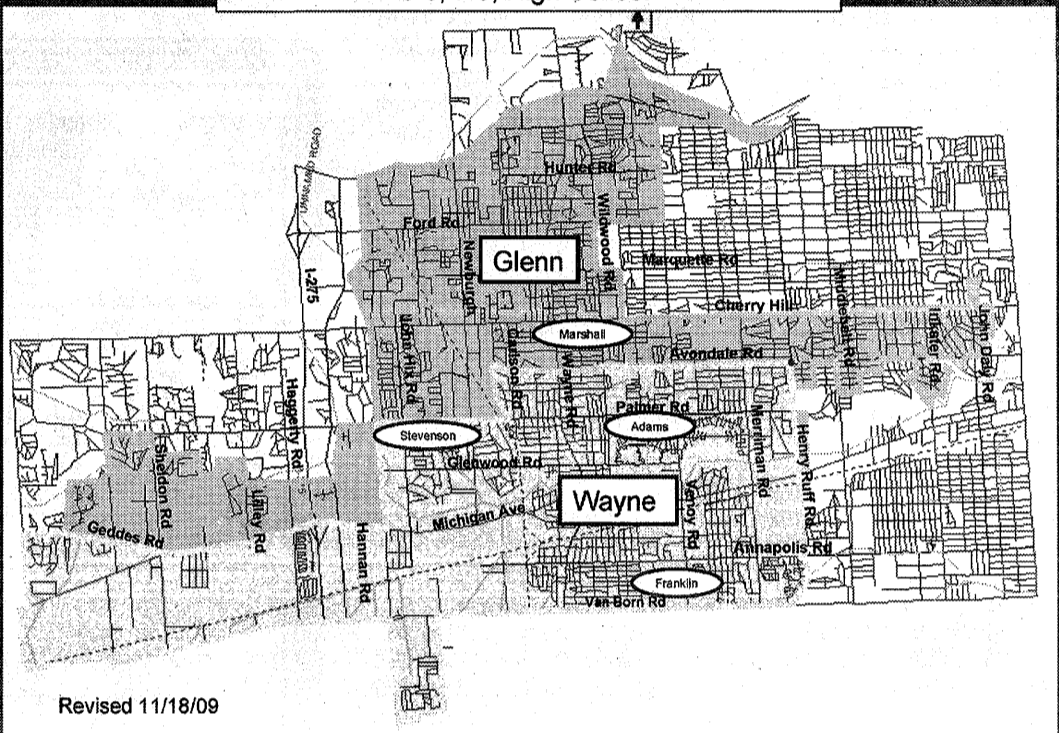
Nagy and Hicks have been meeting with residents of the Norwayne community since the meeting to "just try and get the word out" about what is proposed. They're concerned some of their neighbors consider the proposal a done deal. "We just trying to spread the word that the school board's mind isn't made up," Nagy said.

Proposed K-4 Attendance Boundaries



Revised 11/18/09

Proposed Attendance Boundaries: 5-6, 7-8, High School



Revised 11/18/09

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THURS. 12/3 8:00 PM

OLD DOGS (PG)
12:55, 3:00, 5:05, 7:10, 9:25
FRISAT LS 11:25

FANTASTIC MR. FOX (PG)
11:05, 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:15, 9:20
FRISAT LS 11:20

NINJA ASSASSIN (R)
12:30, 2:45, 5:05, 7:30, 9:50
FRISAT LS 12:00

3 THUR 12:30, 2:45, 5:05

THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON (PG-13)
11:00, 12:00, 1:40, 2:50, 4:20, 5:45, 7:00, 8:45, 9:40
FRISAT LS 11:30

THE BLIND SIDE (PG-13)
11:05, 1:45, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45

3D DISNEY'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL (PG)
11:45, 2:15, 4:40, 6:50, 9:15
FRISAT LS 11:30

'Tis the (shopping) season

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

While the retail district in downtown Plymouth and more established retail stores in Canton raked in the Black Friday bucks amid expectations based on past performance, other outlets were still figuring out the post-Thanksgiving shopping atmosphere.

Take Hobby Lobby, the craft and home decorating store that opened in March on Ford Road in Canton.

The store welcomed Black Friday as part of a two-day sale. It opened on the biggest shopping day of the year at 8 a.m.

With no previous holiday shopping experience on which to draw, store officials were simply waiting to see how it went.

"This is our first Black Friday in Canton, in metro Detroit, really," said Nicole Raftery, the store's co-manager. "It's been fairly steady, but

we don't really have any expectations. It's our first Christmas (season) here, so we're just waiting to see what happens."

Hobby Lobby opened some six hours after sisters Colleen Myles of Canton and Eileen Veit of Bay City got started. The siblings were shopping at Westland Mall, where Colleen was babysitting bags while Eileen shopped.

"We take turns with the stuff, we need to make a car run," she said.

The two sisters started their day at 2 a.m. at Toys R Us, and had managed to make it to Kohls, JC Penney, Sears, Bath and Body Works and Macy's before stopping at The Children's Place. They planned to end their day at Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi.

"We've been doing this for 13-14 years," she said. "We always go through the ads and create a plan of attack so we can get in and get out. It's a yearly tradition."

bkadrich@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-8899



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Linda Archambeau, of Canton, Dawn Davenport, of Ypsilanti Township, and Tracy Archambeau, of Belleville, stopped for a bite to eat at the Westland A and W after hitting the sales.



Marilyn Best, of Canton, takes a break at Westland Mall.



Taking a break at Westland Mall is Colleen Miles of Canton.



Carina Berg and daughter Charlotte, 4, look at the trees in Kellogg Park. Not pictured is Dad, Falko Berg, who is looking at a different tree.



Deea Coleman and daughter Anzenique Rogers of Canton started shopping at 4 a.m. At 8 a.m. they were at Westland Mall.



Carol McKinley, at right, brought daughters Jessica Sheila and Tasha for early morning shopping at Westland Mall.



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Nov 23 – Dec 11

Salvation Army Angel Giving Tree located in the East Court. Stop by the Angel Giving Tree in East Court right beside the Santa Set. The Angel Giving Tree will be here until Friday December 11. The Salvation Army and You helping to make a child's Holiday a little brighter.

Nov 23 – Dec 21

Kroger Sleigh of Giving located in the East Court. Your donation of non-perishable foods will be passed along to families in the City of Westland for the holiday season. Donations are being accepted at the Customer Service booth located outside of Macys until Dec 21. Your donation enters you into a drawing for a center gift card. See Customer Service for more details.

Dec 1 – Dec 24

Angela Hospice Tree of Life located in the East Court. Beginning Tuesday, December 1st through December 24th shoppers are invited to participate in the Angela Hospice Tree of Life. Stop by the Angela Hospice display next to Santa to participate. You may write the name of a loved one on a gold angel ornament and place it on the tree in honor or in memory of someone special. Information about free grief support programs offered by Angela Hospice is available as well.

Dec 15

Gift Wrap for Men 101 located in the East Court 6pm-8pm. Westland Shopping Center and Magic 105.1 are taking away the excuse that you cannot wrap a gift because you are a man. Join Mike Bradley from Magic 105.1 as gift wrapping experts show how to wrap gifts of all sizes. We encourage all the men in the community to stop by, with gifts that you have purchased from the center of course, and be shown how you can wrap it like a pro, and then it is your turn to give it a try. Prizes will be given to the best wrapped gift, the best attempt to wrap a gift and other fun games that we will think of on the night.

Center Hours in GREEN
Santa's Hours in RED

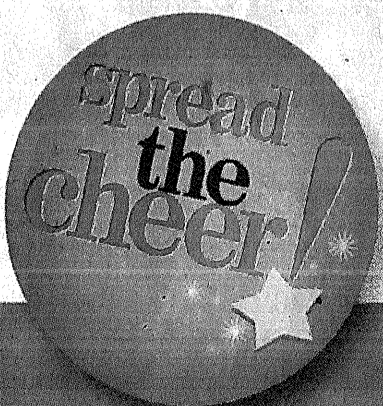
DECEMBER 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov. 29 10am-7pm 11am-5pm	Nov. 30 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	1 Pet Night with Santa 6pm - 8pm 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	2 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	3 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	4 Tie One On with MADD 11am-1pm, East Court 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	5 Hot Item Give-Away Look throughout the Center for ways to win! 10am-9pm 11am-8pm
6 Hot Item Give-Away Look throughout the Center for ways to win! 11am-6pm 12pm-5pm	7 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	8 Fee-Free Gift Card Day! 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	9 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	10 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	11 10am-9pm 11am-8pm	12 8am-10pm 11am-8pm
13 10am-7pm 11pm-5pm	14 9am-10pm 10am-8pm	15 Fee-Free Gift Card Day! 9am-10pm 10am-8pm	16 8am-10pm 10am-8pm	17 8am-10pm 10am-8pm	18 8am-11pm 10am-8pm	19 7am-11pm 9am-8pm
20 9am-9pm 9pm-8pm	21 8am-11pm 9am-8pm	22 8am-11pm 9am-8pm	23 8am-11pm 9am-8pm	24 <i>Santa's Last Day!</i> 7am-6pm 9am-5pm	25 <i>Christmas Day</i> Mall & Office CLOSED	26 8am-9pm
27 11am-6pm	28 10am-9pm	29 10am-9pm	30 10am-9pm	31 10am-6pm	Jan. 1, 2010 10am-7pm	

For further details regarding these events and other great happenings at Westland Shopping Center visit our website at: www.westlandcenter.com

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2009-10 GIRLS BASKETBALL PREVIEW



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mainstays for the 2009-10 Salem varsity girls basketball team will be Brett deBear (left) and Sara Stone. Both players look to help the Rocks continue last year's success.

Rocks return intact, ready to roll

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Fred Thomann loves the way his Salem girls basketball team finished the 2008-09 season — 12 wins in 14 games. This time around, a nice start would be nice, too.

"Every season is a work in progress," said Thomann, beginning his 26th season coaching the Salem girls varsity. "Last year, we started 1-6 and ended up winning the (KLAA) championship and had a great finish to our season and really should have won the districts."

Salem opens 7 p.m. Tuesday at home against Brighton.

Virtually the entire roster played last season (Salem's overall record was 13-8). That means the Rocks have a good chance to continue that winning feeling from the '08-09 stretch run.

Despite the graduation of

key players Chelsea Davis (starting at Wayne State), Victoria Brotz and Tracy Whalen, the defending KLAA Central Division, Kensington Conference and association champs do have some outstanding returnees.

At the top of the list are senior forward-guards Sara Stone and Brett deBear (both seniors) along with last year's solid sixth player, Rachel Norman, who will start this season.

"Sara Stone is as good a player as there is in the area, in the league," Thomann said. "She's outstanding and has a chance to be recruited by Division 1 schools."

"Brett deBear is extremely talented and is going to go somewhere to play basketball, we just don't know where."

In addition to the 5-10 Stone and 5-9 deBear, the Rocks will be banking on Norman (5-9). All three are considered

"perimeter players" who can hit the glass hard.

"Norman has had a fantastic camp," he said. "So we have three key players that have really stepped up. Now we have to get the rest of the group to step up."

Two of those players include 6-0 senior Tabitha Mann and promising 5-9 freshman Breanne Beaver, expected to share low-post responsibilities.

In the mix for the fifth spot are Heidi Schmidt, Katelynn Krause, Alyssa Garbarino and Lily Burnstein. Those players also bring versatility, one of the Salem hallmarks.

Rounding out the varsity is Alyssa Silletti.

MIX AND MATCH

Thomann emphasized that there is no point guard, per se, with most of his roster schooled in running an offense.

"Our guards are kind of

interchangeable," he said.

"They're all perimeter players, but they all can play inside. ... Whoever has the ball is the one running the offense."

To that end, the Rocks will bring a hybrid style, with players able to either shoot from the outside or play smash-mouth basketball in the paint depending on the opponent and situation.

Brighton will soon find out which Salem team they'll have to face.

"We had a really good pre-season scrimmage against some very good teams," he said, "and we have a tremendously competitive early season schedule and then we're going to get into our division."

"Hopefully we can do well there and get ourselves lined up for the conference tournament and then the association (tourney)."

tsmith@hometownlife.com

Young guns

Plymouth kids could be all right

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

There is no crystal ball for Plymouth varsity girls basketball coach Ted Sturdivant to peer into as the 2009-10 season opens.

Sturdivant lost current Division 1 player and defensive standout Shaakira Haywood among nine graduated players from the 2008-09 team that went 9-13 yet won a state playoff game for the first time in school history.

On the other hand, he still has senior co-captains Stacey Klonowski (5-9 forward, 8 points, 7 rebounds), Troi Davis (point guard) and 5-8 forward Danielle Desilets, now a starter after being a key backup for last season's team.

But the second-year Plymouth coach is optimistic the Wildcats can compete in the KLAA South, with a roster of high-intensity, high-speed players who he promises will push the envelope at both ends of the floor.

"We're a young team," Sturdivant said. "But we'll bring enthusiasm and nonstop action to our approach to basketball."

Those wanting a glimpse of that exciting style might want to catch the season opener, 7 p.m. Tuesday against visiting West Bloomfield.

Setting a pretty high standard for those youngsters are his go-to group of seniors, led by Klonowski.

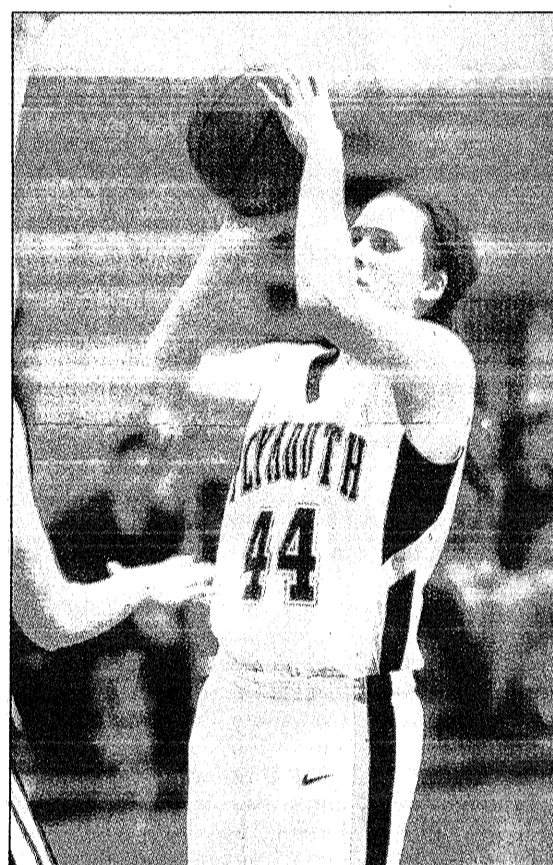
"We'll go as Stacey goes," Sturdivant said. "She was a player that worked hard under the basket and she had a ton of offensive rebounds and putbacks (last year). She is our best player."

PRIME POTENTIAL

Among other big piece of the puzzle are Davis, who the coach looks "to keep us in an uptempo game," and Desilets — "a tough, tough player."

That doesn't diminish what 5-8 junior small forward Alex

Please see **HOOPS, B2**



One of Plymouth's go-to players this season will be senior forward Stacey Klonowski, shown during a game last year.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Canton returnees ready for encore in KLAA South

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Yes, Canton's varsity girls basketball team went 20-3 last season. Yes, the Chiefs have all their players returning. But don't expect head coach Brian Samulski or his players to take anything for granted during the 2009-10 season, which opens 7 p.m. Tuesday at Saline.

"The girls have high expectations for the season," stressed the fifth-year coach. "But they understand that nothing comes easy, and even though everyone is back this is a new season."

Having a strong returning cast should be enough for KLAA South opponents to worry about, let alone a team that doesn't mind a good sweat.

"We will continue to work hard, compete, play the right way," said Samulski, "and challenge ourselves to become better

players and a better team."

Four players from last year's All-Observer team will again be in the forefront.

Junior forwards Kari Schmitt (an average of 10 points, 8 boards last year), Sara Schmitt (7.8 points, 6 boards), CarolAnn Sexauer (9 points) and junior guard Melanie Pickert will be tough for opponents to shut down.

Pickert is a solid defender, last season averaging 2.5 steals per contest (along with 4 points, 2 assists).

Also chipping in up front will be junior forward Kayla Bridges (5.1 points, 4 boards) who "has a great feel around the rim."

DEPTH AT GUARD

The Chiefs have a bevy of guards to work in tandem with Pickert in the backcourt.

Samulski said senior guard-forward Alyssa Cottrell "brings outstanding energy and (is a) good defender." Last year, she averaged three points and three rebounds.

Senior guard Lindsey Winters is a perimeter player who can score from outside and should be able to improve on her 2008-09 average of just under three points per contest.

Yuki Krolicki and Kelly Larimore, both senior guards, will help the cause on defense and offense, respectively while sophomore guard Robyn Mack (3.5 points, 2.2 assists) has "outstanding vision on the court."

Sophomore guard Jesse Larner likely will split time between the varsity and junior varsity this season.

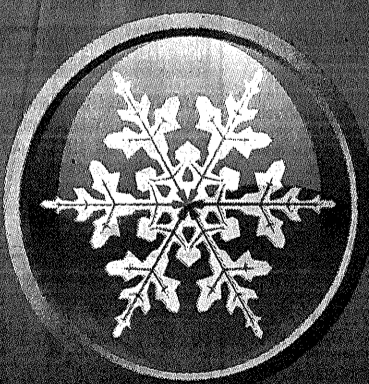
"It should be a solid, fun, and challenging season," Samulski added.

tsmith@hometownlife.com



Canton's Melanie Pickert (No. 15) is one of several key returnees for the Chiefs this season.

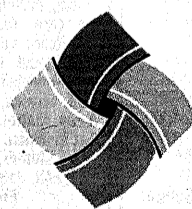
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Early surge lifts Penguins to 1st win

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

With most of the team finally together, the Plymouth-Canton-Salem varsity girls hockey team exploded for four first period goals on the way to an 8-3 win over Walled Lake United in the Penguins conference opener.

Senior defenseman Jordyn Moore was the big gun, scoring a three goal hat trick and assisting on another. Scoring two goals was senior defenseman Shauna Siebert.

The victory at Arctic Edge in Canton followed two one-sided defeats to open the season, in which the Penguins (1-2-0, 1-0-0) were outscored by a total of 14-1.

"The girls played great," said PCS head coach Mary Beth Johnson. "I just wish we would have played this way on Saturday (7-0 at Port Huron). It would have been a completely different outcome."

PCS got on the board at 3:47 when junior defenseman Sarah



JOHN KEMSKI

Sarah Coleman (foreground) leads a rush for the Plymouth-Canton-Salem Penguins girls hockey team Tuesday night with teammate Ellexus Montoya trailing. The Penguins defeated Walled Lake United, 8-3 for their first regular season victory.

Coleman scored, taking a pass from freshman forward Beth

Johnson. Less than two minutes later,

Moore assisted on senior forward Kara Bongiovanni's goal and it was 3-0 at 7:38 when Moore scored her first of the night (from junior forward Tory Campbell).

Walled Lake finally got one past PCS freshman goalie Cortny McAdoo when Katie Acheson scored with 43 seconds to go in the period.

The Penguins expanded the edge to 6-1 after two, with goals by Moore (from Coleman) and junior forward Jennifer Fedon, who beat Wild goaltender Christina Karagozian. Drawing assists were Moore and Siebert.

In the final frame, Siebert got it going with a marker at 4:11, from Campbell. But Walled Lake chipped in a goal at 6:37, with Emma Crone scoring.

The teams traded goals after that.

PCS made it 8-2 when Moore capped off her hat trick, with the helper going to Bongiovanni.

A half-minute later, Walled Lake's Melissa Phalin finished the scoring for the evening.

IN BRIEF

Precision Baseball clinic

Baseball players take note: Precision Baseball in Canton recently announced an eight-week Progression Clinic on pitching, catching and hitting — to feature members of Eastern Michigan University's coaching staff.

Those coaches include assistant coach Aaron Hepner and assistant coach/recruiting coordinator Andrew Maki.

Areas where pitchers can expect improvement include: increasing velocity and arm strength; changing speeds; improving control and learning proper warm-up techniques.

Batters can increase power, hit to all fields, reduce strikeouts,

make good contact and recognize a fastball instead of a changeup or curve.

Meanwhile, in the catching department, instructors will focus on blocking, receiving, throwing, calling a game and being quick behind the dish.

All ages are welcome to sign up for the clinic, which begins Monday, Nov. 16 (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.) Sessions are every Monday and Friday and are \$15 per session, per player and \$225 for all 16 sessions if paid up front.

For more information, send an e-mail to info@precision-baseball.com or call (734) 459-5921. Precision Baseball is located at 7835 Market Street in Canton.

Tournament win for '96 Crush

Literally 'Crush-ing' the tournament title hopes and dreams of their opponents, the '96 Canton Crush Bantam A hockey team Nov. 15 claimed the Motown Cup Series tournament.

The Crush, led by head coach Dave DiRezze and assistant coaches John Megdan, Tony DesJardin and Dave Cramer, went 3-0-1 in the tourney, defeating the Waterloo Wolves 5-3 in the championship game.

Earlier in the tourney, the Crush pounded Waterloo 7-2. Canton's squad was the first to defeat the Wolves this season. Waterloo left with a 14-2-3 record.

In their first game of the three-day tournament (Nov.



Members of the tournament-winning '96 Canton Crush Bantam A hockey team include: (first row, from left) goalies Eric VandenBosch, Jacob Ponder; (second row, from left) Mike Scarpello, Dylan Glenday, Jon Clark, Brendan DiRezze, Ryan DesJardin, Matt Goldin, Nick Heffron; (third row, from left) coach John Megdan, coach Tony DesJardin, Cameron Clark, C.J. Myers, Taylor Turner, James Sheridan, John Megdan, Cameron O'Donnell, Josh Kramer, coach Dave Kramer and head coach Dave DiRezze. Not pictured is Bryan Eastman.

13-15), the Crush tied Belle Tire South, 5-5.

Later in the weekend, Canton defeated the Pickering

Panthers, 6-1.

Tournament games were played in Brownstown, Southgate and Joe Louis Arena

in Detroit.

Canton's home rink is the Arctic Edge on Michigan Avenue.

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New Look, New Feel For Ford Taurus In 2010

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CAReport



By Tenisha Mercer
Avanti NewsFeatures

The once mighty Ford Taurus met a tragic demise in 2007, when Ford Motor Co. scuttled the popular sedan from its lineup. Now, the venerable Taurus is back with a vengeance and an all new redesign. And it's clear that Ford is taking no prisoners with the re-launched Ford Taurus.

Can the Ford Taurus reclaim the title that it once held?

If the 2010 redesign is any indication, Ford just may have a fighting chance. The Dearborn automaker has set its sights clearly on its import brethren – and its target may be in reach.

Indeed, the Taurus has gone through many changes. It went from frumpy to frumpier and was eventually relegated to rental car fleet status. By the 2007 model year, the once mighty moniker was replaced by the smaller Fusion and the Five Hundred.

A few years can make all the difference. Now, Ford is pulling out all the stops. The Ford re-launch isn't just about a car; it's about the glory that a best-selling sedan can once again bring. For more than two decades, the Ford Taurus reigned sedan supreme, selling more than 7.5 million cars.

But can it rule again?

The revamped Taurus has a new look, a new platform and a host of other features that Ford hopes will set it apart from the rest – and help it regain its crown as the most popular sedan in the United States (It lost that title to the Toyota Camry in 1997).

The revamped Taurus might help Ford regain ground lost to Japanese automakers with an appetizing package that combines luxury and performance.

Let's start with the Ford Taurus SHO (Super High Output). It's big, it's bad and it's

bodacious. It packs a powerful punch, thanks to a new drivetrain – the V6 EcoBoost engine with direction injection V-6 and twin turbochargers. You'll need all that power, because the SHO is built for speed with a 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine. And that's what makes the SHO so unassuming; you might not even know it has this much speed, since it doesn't differ much look wise from the standard Taurus.

But some things aren't as they appear. The engine doesn't lie. Take a passenger with you; she might not believe that all that power exists under the hood of the Ford SHO. Take the SHO out for a friendly whirl in the carpool lane, but then take it out for a high throttled spin – without the kids! – when you're pushing it to 60 mph in just 5 seconds.

The SHO cabin doesn't scream luxury, but it doesn't scream cheesy budget car, either. That's because from the roof to the floor, it's bathed in quality materials. Automakers can go cheap on the finer, interior parts of an automobile, and usually you can tell.

With the SHO, it's the finer details that make the difference. The dashboard of the SHO is made of soft plastic, but patterned metal insets give it a richer appeal. Even the basic steering wheel is special. It comes with a few extra touches such as a touch-screen LCD with a map, audio system and climate control.

Now let's get to the seating. The SHO feels, in a word, comfortable. Comfortable enough to ride Grandma in the front seat, but also comfy enough for a girls' night out. The seats are plush.

The Taurus SHO earned a reputation as a workhorse sedan. Yet, it wasn't particularly an exciting design aesthetic. Functional? Yes.



The Ford Taurus SHO (Super High Output) is built for speed with a 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine.

Ooh-ahh in the design department? No, just hohum. Now that the high-performance SHO is on the market, things have changed.

The SHO design is strong and muscular. It's nothing like its wimpy Taurus predecessor design. And check out these details: HID headlamps with nickel-finish lamp bezel; a rear decklid spoiler; and 19-inch aluminum wheels. It gets even better inside with aluminum foot pedals and dash trim, suede seats and an adjustable seven-color ambient lighting.

The SHO is, dare we say, right at home with its foreign counterparts such as Audi and Lexus. And that's exactly where Ford wants to be.

Out on the road, the Taurus SHO feels comfortable. Its plush seats feel like overstuffed easy chairs. There's also an option for multi-contour seats with massage functions. Feels so comfortable that you might not want to leave. The Taurus has a nifty new feature called BLIS, a blind spot warning system borrowed from Volvo. You know those blind spot mirrors that you buy from the auto store? Toss 'em. This safety feature will issue a warning if a car is in the lane next to you.

The Taurus SHO also comes equipped with a navigation system turned tricked out on board information system. Enter an address without lifting a finger, thanks to the voice commands. View maps in 2D or 3D or listen to directions in text-to-speech. This isn't your average navigation system.

It comes equipped with an external feature that makes listening to morning drive time traffic obsolete. A live traffic feature on the onboard information system shows traffic incidents and streams live traffic info. It won't

direct you around the traffic obstacles, though, unless your route is programmed.

So long as your local traffic powers provide updated traffic information, it's immediate traffic gratification. That's not all, though. This GPS works with the Sirius Travel Link feature to show nearby gas stations along with gas prices. You also get access to weather reports, movie times and sports scores.

One more mention about the power: You get 365 horsepower at 5500 rpm and 350-pound-feet of torque at 3500 rpm. Usually, this would mean low fuel economy, but not in this case. EPA numbers aren't public for the SHO yet, but we think it's likely that fuel economy can reach 21 mpg on the highway.

Not bad for a turbo-charged V6 engine. We can't say enough about the impressive engine output. Its all-wheel drive keeps suspension respectable, but it could deserve a bit more fine tuning. We expected the Taurus to be a bit more nimble, especially during turns. The Taurus is chock full of safety features such as BLIS and a rearview camera.

Will the Taurus reign again? With this all-star lineup, it might only be a matter of time.

Write Avanti NewsFeatures auto critic Tenisha Mercer at avantil054@aol.com or tenishamercer@yahoo.com

2010 Ford Taurus
Vehicle class: Sedan.
Power: EcoBoost, twin turbo, 3.5 liter V6 engine.
Mileage: Anticipated 21 mpg highway.
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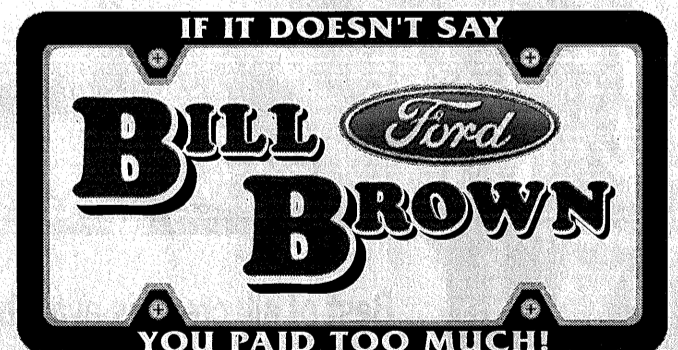
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