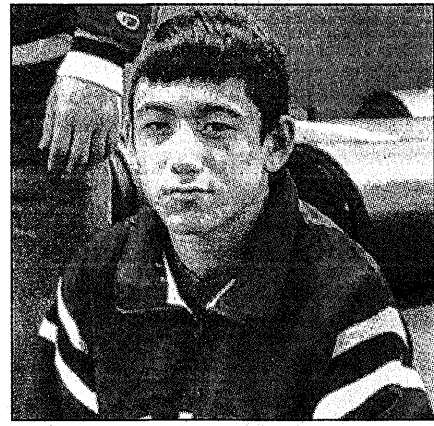


THURSDAY
December 3,
2009

The Observer & Eccentric
Newspapers
Volume 124
Number 31
75 CENTS

PLYMOUTH OBSERVER

online at hometownlife.com



State qualifier
Nick Kim will
anchor Salem's
wrestling team
Sports, B1

PIPELINE

Grinch time

The Grinch is coming to town as Century 21 Hartford South hosts a Make-A-Wish event 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 5. Children can visit with The Grinch, and cameras are welcome. There will also be refreshments and a free gift for the children.

Century 21 Hartford South is located at 15474 Haggerty in the Haggerty-Five Gateway Center at 5 Mile and Haggerty. For more information, call (734) 464-6400.

Teddy toss

The Plymouth Whalers host the 10th annual Teddy Bear Toss during the Saturday, Dec. 5 game against Sault Ste. Marie at Compuware Arena in Plymouth Township.

Fans are asked to bring a teddy bear to throw on the ice when the Whalers score their first goal.

Over the last nine years, the event has resulted in thousands of teddy bears being donated to organizations like the Children's Charities. The bears are used to comfort children at disaster scenes and during times of crisis.

Faith grants

The Plymouth Salvation Army announced that Faith Stimulus Grants will be in effect through June 30, and that funds for the newly unemployed are still available.

Criteria for the funding is: Proof of unemployment (letter of separation, documentation from state, bank statement showing automatic deposit of unemployment funds), and applicants must reside in the Plymouth, Salvation Army's service area (Northville, Plymouth, Canton and Belleville).

For more information, call the Plymouth Salvation Army, (734) 453-5464.

The Longest Word



Peter Kudlak, principal of Field Elementary, with Mark and Janet Ott from the Plymouth Canton Kiwanis Club.

Anyone who wants to know what the longest word in the English language is, or something about Millard Fillmore or the size of the state of Connecticut, can get the info from any third-grader in the Plymouth-Canton Community School District, courtesy the Plymouth Canton Kiwanis Breakfast Club.

The Kiwanis Club, for the sixth straight year, donated a dictionary to every third-grader in the 16 elementary schools.

For more information, contact Mark Ott at (734) 981-0460 or check out the Web site, www.pckiwans.org



Dana Rybicki and Pat Calisti decorate the Wilcox House.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wilcox House open for holiday gathering

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Plymouth residents and visitors can pick up a Christmas tree or a holiday wreath, grab a photo opportunity with Santa Claus and enjoy holiday treats and coffee or hot chocolate at the Wilcox House this month.

The 106-year-old house at Union and Ann Arbor Trail, across from Kellogg Park, is opening to the public for the first time.

Dana Rybicki and Pat Calisti, who in October hosted a fall-themed event that included a farmers market on the Wilcox grounds, have again rented the historic site for their Wilcox Winter Gathering Christmas tree, wreath and garland sales have begun; parts of the house will be open and Santa will be on hand to hear children's gift lists beginning Sunday.

"It's just our passion, and we're trying to get something going with the Wilcox," Rybicki said. She and Calisti have catering and event-planning backgrounds, and envision the Wilcox House as grounds as a site for wedding receptions, retirement and graduation parties and seasonal events.

They have refurbished three rooms in the Wilcox House that will be furnished with period pieces, decorated for Christmas and open to the public beginning at 10 a.m. Sunday, when Santa will begin seeing visitors.

"It's taking a look back in time," Rybicki said. Antiques on display will also be for sale, she said.

Rybicki and Calisti got family members involved in fixing up the three rooms, and hope to move further into the house as their events, and the house's restoration, allow.

"There was a lot involved. Rolled up our sleeves and got dirty," Rybicki said. "Well worth it." Admission to the house will be \$5 for adults

Please see **WILCOX, A3**

Dodging the economic bullet Loyal regulars keeping auto shop humming

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

In an era when mega-corporations and franchising firms have gobbled up many small businesses, John J. Lauerman IV is going in the other direction.

Lauerman, who has 30-plus years experience working on vehicles, is marking five years as the owner of the independent American Auto Repair on Main Street in Plymouth. He's been at the shop for more than 18 years, working for two different owners, and bought it in 2004

when it was a struggling Top Value Muffler franchise.

"It was on the verge of the doors closing, is what it boiled down to," Lauerman said of what prompted him to buy the place.

Lauerman said his shop — he has four vehicle bays and just one mechanic besides himself — is holding its own in a tough economy. He has a customer base of loyal regulars who bring their cars and trucks in for routine maintenance as well as repair work, he said.

Please see **AUTO SHOP, A3**



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Lauerman IV has been at American Auto Repair some 18 years, and purchased the business in 2004.

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Friends to gather for candlelight vigil

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Members of the Compassionate Friends know the holidays are tough times for people who've lost loved ones, especially children.

In an effort to help with the grief, The Compassionate Friends, Western Wayne County (Livonia) Chapter, sponsor a candle-lighting ceremony in Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth Sunday, Dec. 13, in conjunction with Children's Memorial Day.

"The holidays are especially difficult for parents who have lost children," said committee member Gail Lafferty. "This candle-lighting ceremony honoring them helps their memory live on."

The ceremony will include the dedication of at least two trees decorated with ornaments featuring the children's names, a candle-light vigil, a reading of the children's names, poetry and songs.

The local ceremony includes the candle-lighting at 7 p.m. in conjunction with the world-wide candle-lighting. The idea is that, as candles burn down in one time zone, they're lit in another, creating a 24-hour memorial.

Recognized in communities around the world, International Children's Memorial Day is already offi-



The Compassionate Friends sponsor Christmas trees in Kellogg Park that feature ornaments remembering children to be honored at the candlelight vigil, set for Dec. 13 in downtown Plymouth.

cially sanctioned by the U.S. Congress.

"Hundreds of families will gather near a tree specially decorated with the names of children who have died too soon," Lafferty said.

The vigil annually includes the reading the names of those lost too soon. Nearly two weeks before the event, the committee has 475 names. Organizers are recommending people arrive by 6:30 p.m. Call or e-mail candle-lighting committee members Gail Lafferty, tcfcandlelight@yahoo.com or (734) 981-4528.

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AROUND PLYMOUTH

"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

Book sale blowout

The Friends of the Plymouth District Library will hold a special used book sale Friday and Saturday, Dec. 4-5, during regular library hours.

All books will be priced to move at 25 cents each. The Library is located at 223 S. Main Street in downtown Plymouth. Friday hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.;

Saturday hours are 9:30a.m. to 5 p.m.

Luminaria sale

The Plymouth Symphony Orchestras will be selling Luminaria kits for the holiday season. Each kit will consist of 10 white paper bags as well as 10 candles. The kits can be purchased for \$5 in Plymouth at Gabriel's, Saxton's, Sideways, and The Plymouth Canton Symphony office located at 774 N. Sheldon Road.

The Luminaria kits will also be for sale in between the 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Plymouth Symphony

"Home for the Holidays" POPS concert that will be taking place in the historic Penn Theatre located downtown Plymouth on Thursday, Dec. 17.

The Luminaria kits are available through Dec. 24. For further information contact the Plymouth Canton Symphony Society at (734)-451-2112.

Wilcox gathering

Take a rare glimpse inside a Plymouth landmark, decorated in the spirit of the season. The Wilcox Home opens to the public for the first time in its 100 year history on Dec. 6 for visits with Santa and will be open additionally Tuesday-Thursday, 2-7 p.m. through Christmas Eve. Special Christmas Eve hours: noon-4 p.m.

Adult admission is \$5. Children must be accompanied by an adult to enter the home.

Bring the kids and the camera for a picture with Santa while you enjoy tasty baked holiday treats, coffee and hot chocolate. Don't miss our outdoor holiday market including trees, wreaths, poinsettias and fresh evergreen garland to bring the holiday season back to your home.

The historic Wilcox Home is located on the corner of Union



DAVID REED

Helping the hungry

Beth Sexton (left) donates canned goods to volunteers Cassie Berlin (middle) and Delaney Carr Saturday night at the Plymouth Cultural Center, where a canned food drive preceded a hockey game between Canton and Salem. All are from Plymouth. For the game story, please turn to the Sports section.

and Ann Arbor Trail, across from Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth.

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 fundraising activi-

ties. 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. 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.

Bowl with Santa

O.U.R. Camp, Inc. (www.ourcampinc.org), a specialized summer day camp for young children with developmental needs, will conduct their annual Bowling with Santa event 1-3 p.m. Dec. 13.

The cost is \$10 per bowler or \$35 for a group of 4 bowlers, which includes 2 games of bowling, shoes, hotdog and pop. Pre-registration is recommended.

Donations are accepted and all proceeds will benefit O.U.R. Camp, Inc., a 501(c)(3) company. The event will be held at MerriBowl Lanes, located at 30950 Five Mile Road in Livonia.

For more information, or to register your bowlers, please contact Jan Slattery at (734) 414-0231 or Claudia Pietron, Board President, at (734) 459-7003.

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.

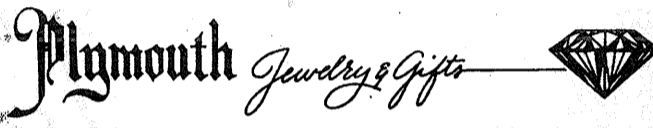
To get more information and to sign up for an audition go to: www.beckridgechorale.org.

While there you may also purchase tickets to BeckRidge Chorale and/or Cherry Hill Singers upcoming concerts.

Things get slippery around the holidays



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Friday Dec. 4th - Monday, Dec. 7th, 24 hours a day!

Bring toys for needy children to the Borders parking lot. Toys go to various children's charities and a portion of the toys collected will go to The Canton Goodfellows.

Ho, Ho, Ho and a Whole Lot More
Saturday, Dec. 5th Noon - 3pm
in the Red and Green Blocks on Canton's Ford Road

- Come see Santa at JCPenney on Ford Rd. Parents are welcome to take photos.
- Be sure to pickup your bag full of coupons at the Shop Canton Gazebo or Canton Info. Booths!
- Delight in the Amazing Clark Magician at Canton Cinema. Shows at 12:30 pm, 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm
- Enjoy a complimentary Carriage Ride in Harvard Square at Ford and Sheldon.
- Visit Once Upon a Child to see the Balloon Artist and enjoy refreshments.
- Pop into Potbellys for some live music, Clyde Brown on guitar.
- Have your face painted at Paul's Fine Jewelry and enjoy refreshments.
- Stop by WOMC 104.3FM Prize Machine and see the Amp 98.7FM promotion team in Canton Corners. You might even see "The Jazz Cat"!
- Take a break at Sign A Rama and have hot chocolate and cookies!
- Feeling crafty? Kids can make a Rudolf Ornament and warm up with some cocoa at Wedding & Celebration Creations.
- Don't forget Fido! Stop by PETCO and be sure to get your pet's picture taken with Santa. (See store for details)

Even more fun will be sprinkled through the Red and Green blocks on Ford Road. Look for the Ho, Ho, Ho sign at participating merchants on Saturday, December 5th, Noon - 3pm for specials to enhance your shopping and dining experience.

- Applebee's
- BuyBuy Baby
- Canton China Restaurant
- Comic City
- Cigar Hut
- Dollar Tree
- Donoven's Salon
- Mirage Restaurant
- Once Upon A Child
- Paul's Fine Jewelry & Gifts
- PETCO
- Potbelly Restaurant
- Red Wing Shoes
- Richardson's Sav-mor Drugstore
- Sign A Rama
- Wedding & Celebration Creations

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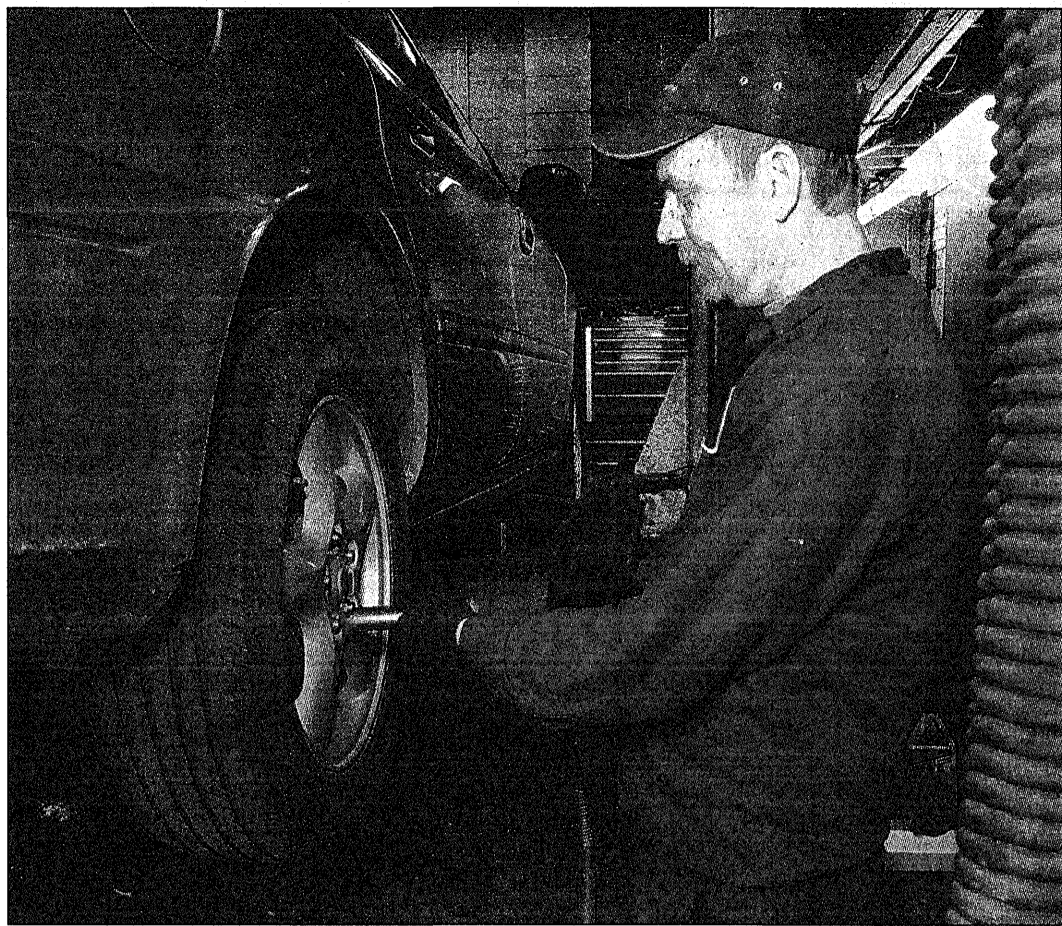
The first 10 people to present a receipt from a Canton retailer for a purchase of \$50 or more spent on Dec. 5 will receive a FREE gift.

Receipt to be presented at Shop Canton Gazebo near Canton Cinema.

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SHOPCanton



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Lauerman IV remounts the wheels after finishing a brake job.

AUTO SHOP

FROM PAGE A1

"They know my work. They trust me. They know I'm not going to sell them something they don't need," Lauerman said.

Longtime customer Roger Kehrier of Plymouth Township estimates he's had eight different vehicles serviced at the shop over about 15 years. Kehrier has nicknamed Lauerman "Honest John" and recently gave him a baseball cap with that moniker emblazoned on it.

"They do outstanding work and are as honest as the day is long," Kehrier said. He cited several examples of times Lauerman made simple, low-cost fixes to vehicle problems that might have cost him a lot more at other shops.

American Auto Repair can handle most vehicle maintenance and repair jobs, from brake replacement and tuneups to electrical work and engine overhauls (they sometimes farm out transmission work), with the exception of tire and battery replacement. (However, American Auto customers get 10 percent off at

Discount Tire at Ford Road and Haggerty.)

The shop recently got its first alignment machine. Lauerman also offers a \$20 pre-purchase vehicle inspection, in which he'll spend 45 minutes or more going over all of a vehicle's major systems and then offer his assessment.

Lauerman, of Highland, has been working on cars since he bought his first one, a 1964 Ford Fairlane, for \$86.45 at age 14. Guided by a manual, he said, he rebuilt a blown engine and later sold the car to a neighbor.

"I was just pretty much handy from day one," he said.

Mechanic Bryan Hanlon, who lives in Westland, started with the shop when it was Top Value. He went to trade school, but said most of what he knows he learned on the job from Lauerman.

"This is my career," Hanlon said. "I really love my job. I really do."

Lauerman says he's motivated by a challenge — a complicated heater core job, for example, that requires him to take out a car's dashboard.

"I take pride in the stuff that we do, especially like that," he said.

"When I'm done, nobody knows I was there," except that the car will have heat, he added.

Some customers still try to do their own vehicle repairs and maintenance, he said, though not as many as one would think in a recessionary economy.

"The new cars are hard to work on because everything's cramped under the hood," he said. They also require sophisticated diagnostic equipment and specialty tools, he said.

The shop, open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. five days a week, keeps Lauerman and Hanlon busy. Most repairs can be made on the same day. "We get 'em in, we get 'em done and we get 'em out," Hanlon said.

However, Lauerman envisions a time when, if business picks up, he'll be able to hire another mechanic.

"I haven't had a vacation in over five years," he said. "That's part of owning a business — you just don't have the time to take off."

American Auto Repair is at 618 S. Main, Plymouth. The phone number is (734) 451-7330.

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

WILCOX

FROM PAGE A1

and free for children, even to see Santa Claus. Children must be accompanied by an adult; bringing a camera is encouraged.

The Wilcox House will be open for the Winter Gathering 2-7 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday until Wednesday, Dec. 23, with special Christmas Eve hours of noon to 4 p.m.

In addition, Santa will be available inside the house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, 2-7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11 and Dec. 18, from noon to 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12 and Dec. 19, and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13 and 20.

The Christmas tree, wreath and garland sales take place on the grounds outside the house and no admission fee is required. Hours will be posted on the front gates. Tree delivery is free to homes in Plymouth.

Christmas tree fund-raiser
Plymouth's Veterans of



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dan Rybicki makes sure the Christmas trees are secure on their stakes.

Foreign Wars Post 6695, 1426 S. Mill, is selling Christmas trees this month. The post has Scotch pines, Douglas fir and Fraser fir trees on hand, starting at \$25 each. The sale is 2-6 p.m.

weekdays and noon to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays on the grounds at the post.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Officer serves up tips on avoiding holiday crime

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

While the streets, stores and malls are filled with Christmastime shoppers, diners and charitable donors, would-be thieves and cheats are looking for a good season, too.

It's crimes of opportunity, such as the theft of a gift from an unlocked car, or the theft of a credit-card number by a dishonest service worker who copied it while the buyer was distracted, that Officer Tony Angelosanto wants to head off.

Angelosanto is Plymouth's crime prevention officer — he has a regular patrol beat as well — and says a few common-sense, but sometimes neglected, practices can help shoppers keep themselves, their money and their valuables safe in the stores and on line over the holidays.

Although street smarts are always recommended, playing it smart when shopping by phone or the Internet, when using credit cards and the like, or when approached for charitable donations, would also serve Plymouth residents well. Plymouth has few violent personal crimes, such as muggings and purse-snatchings; crimes of fraud are more common, Angelosanto said.

To protect oneself from those types of crimes, Angelosanto advises:

- Always take the customer copy of credit-card receipts, in order to safeguard the number and in order to compare the receipts with charge statements later. When surrendering your card to make a purchase, make sure you know who has it and that it's returned.
- Know the company you're dealing with when shopping by phone or on line, and make sure a shopping Web site that asks for vital information, such as credit-card

numbers, is secure. Never give out personal or financial information to someone who solicits you via telephone or the Internet, as they could be lying about their intentions.

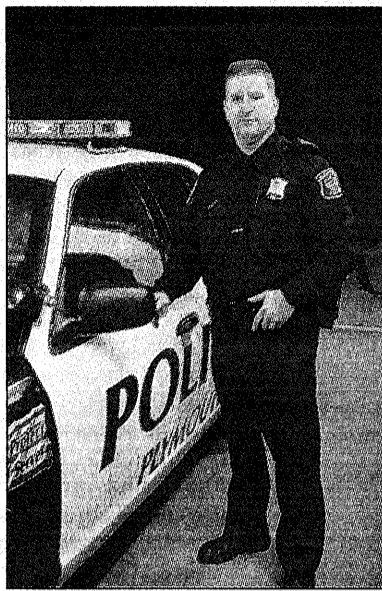
- Make sure the charity to which you're being asked to donate is legitimate; even in-person charity solicitors, such as those going door to door, must be licensed in both Plymouth and Plymouth Township, Angelosanto said. If they're not, politely refuse them and call police.

- Shred or tear up unwanted credit-card offers before throwing them out, so no one who may later find the offer in the garbage will be able to start an account in your name. Don't send out vital information via e-mail or over cellular phones, which are not considered as secure as land lines.

- Be wary when at an automatic teller machine, for example, or when using a credit card at a gas pump; the person behind you may be trying to get a look at your card, and someone who appears to be using a cellular phone may actually be snapping a photo of the card.

Angelosanto also offered these tips to increase personal safety while shopping:

- Park in a lighted area as close to the front of your destination as you can. Walk in the center of a parking-lot aisle, which will make it more difficult for a person who might be lurking behind a vehicle to surprise you.
- Don't shop alone late at night, know your surroundings, avoid alleysways and stick to well-lighted areas. Walk with confidence.
- Be aware of who's around you when in a crowd. People distracted in crowds or when standing in long store lines can fall prey to pick-pockets.
- Stop, look and listen to size up your surroundings when, for example, entering a parking structure or leaving your own garage to walk



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officer Anthony Angelosanto.

into your house after arriving home at night.

- Don't carry more than you need when it comes to cash and credit cards. Women should carry a short-strapped purse and hold it firmly under one arm, and men could carry their wallet in a front pants pockets.

- Don't leave valuables in plain sight in vehicles, and don't leave vehicles unlocked. Don't have deliveries left outside your home; either make arrangements to accept the delivery in person or have it left with a trusted neighbor.

- Keep a cellular phone handy, and have the police emergency number, 911, programmed into it on speed dial. Also, carry keys tightly when approaching your parked vehicle; you could hit the panic alarm in an emergency, Angelosanto said, or use a key as a weapon if attacked.

The police department in Plymouth offers vacation checks to residents who are traveling during the holidays — or at any time. A vacation check involves officers stopping by regularly to make sure doors and windows are secure and nothing is amiss. For more information, call Angelosanto at (734) 453-1234, Ext. 526.

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

Bedding uncovered after suspect denies stealing it

A 47-year-old Westland woman was cited as a shoplifting suspect after a security guard at the Kmart in Plymouth Township accused her of taking bedding from the store's Jaelyn Smith collection without paying for it.

The incident occurred shortly after noon on Friday at the store on Ann Arbor Road, according to a Plymouth Township Police

Department report. The suspect, as she had a young child with her, was not jailed but issued a citation to appear in court later, police said.

The guard told police he had witnessed the woman pick up the bedding items — two pillows, a set of sheets for a queen-sized bed, plus a queen-sized coverlet — and put them into a bag she had brought with her, then into a shopping cart. She paid for some other items — gum, cereal and a soft drink — he said, and tried to leave the store.

The guard confronted her in the vestibule, he said, and called police. She denied the theft, he said, and the guard pointed out the suspected stolen items.

Car break-in

A 20-year-old Northville Township woman lost her purse and its contents, including cash, a passport and a digital camera, in a break-in of her car in the township on Friday.

The purse was reported stolen from the woman's 2002 Honda Civic, which was parked outside the Max & Erma's Restaurant on Beck Road near Five Mile. A passenger-side window of the car had been smashed out, police said.

Car vandalized

A 2000 Mercury Sable was "keyed," that is, deliberately scratched, as it sat outside a house on Wendover Drive in Plymouth Township on Thanksgiving or the next day.

The vandalism occurred between 9 a.m. on Nov. 26 and 5 p.m. the next day, the owner told police.

The car was sitting in both his drive-

way and the street during that time, the owner said.

By Matt Jachman

FIRE RUNS

The Plymouth Community Fire Department responded to the following runs during the period Nov. 25-Dec. 1:

- Tuesday, Dec. 1 - Vehicle accident with wash-down on eastbound M-14 east of Sheldon; vehicle accident at Ann Arbor Road and Lilley; grass fire on westbound M-14 east of Sheldon; mutual-aid rescue run on Hanford; special run on Haggerty.

- Monday, Nov. 30 - Residential rescue runs on Wilson, on Park, on C Drive and on Maple; commercial fire on Holbrook; vehicle accident on southbound I-275 at M-14; commercial rescue run on Ann Arbor Trail.

- Sunday, Nov. 29 - Residential rescue runs on Haggerty, on Dunn, on Newport, on Northville Road and on Ann Arbor Trail; vehicle accident with extrication on Five Mile; vehicle accident on Dunn Court; single-family fire on Sunset; mutual-aid run on Mill; rescue on Westbriar.

- Saturday, Nov. 28 - Rescue run at a public building on Haggerty; residential rescue runs on Byron, on Ford, on Maple, on Wing and on Gloucester; vehicle accident on Joy Road; vehicle fire on northbound I-275 north of Plymouth Road; industrial rescue run on Sheldon.

- Friday, Nov. 27 - Residential rescue runs on Northville Road, on Marlowe, on Eastside, on Sheridan, on Amhurst Court, on Persillia, on Irvin, on Haggerty and on Burroughs; rescue run at a public building on N. Territorial.

- Thursday, Nov. 26 - Residential rescue runs on St. Andrews Square, on Lilley, on Russell and on Heritage; vehicle accident at Ann Arbor Trail and Mill.

- Wednesday, Nov. 25 - Residential rescue runs on Erin, on Sheridan, on Byron, on Betty Hill and on Fox Creek; fire on Jib; rescue run on Brougham; commercial rescue run on General Drive.

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Santa Claus is coming to town at Dixboro General Store from noon to 4 p.m. on Dec. 5-6, 12-13 and 19-20, with a special reindeer appearance on Dec. 13. Call 734-663-5558 or visit www.dixboro.com.

Clarification

On the Nov. 12 Thanksgiving Traditions holiday page A6, the story, "A twist on tradition," should have read:

"Completely submerge the bird in a large container for about six days."

Executive Chef Jim Moschini of the Culinary Arts Institute at the Art Institute of Novl does not recommend the use of a paint bucket for this task. He also recommends refrigerating the turkey at all times during the brining process.

DAZZLE YOUR GUESTS WITH HOLIDAY ETIQUETTE TIPS 101

You've spent the entire day cooking the perfect holiday feast. But it's an hour before your guests arrive, and you find yourself standing in front of the table, listening to a little nagging voice in your head.

Does the knife go on the left, fork on the right, or is it the other way around? Is that centerpiece too tall? Should I go ahead and put food on table before guests arrive, or do I wait until everyone gets here?

If you can't answer those questions, don't feel alone. In today's eat-on-the-run world, you're not the only one to flunk holiday etiquette.

"Table manners have become a lost art," says etiquette expert Jill Slatter. "Think back 15 or 20 years ago, families gathered every evening for a proper meal. But these days we're all stretched so thin juggling work, school and home, most folks don't have time to sit down together, so when holidays roll around no one's sure what to do at a formal meal."

Slatter is an etiquette coach at Greensboro, N.C.-based Replacements, Ltd., touted as the world's largest supplier of old and new china, silver, crystal and collectibles. The company is bombarded with questions this time of year from folks looking for a crash course in

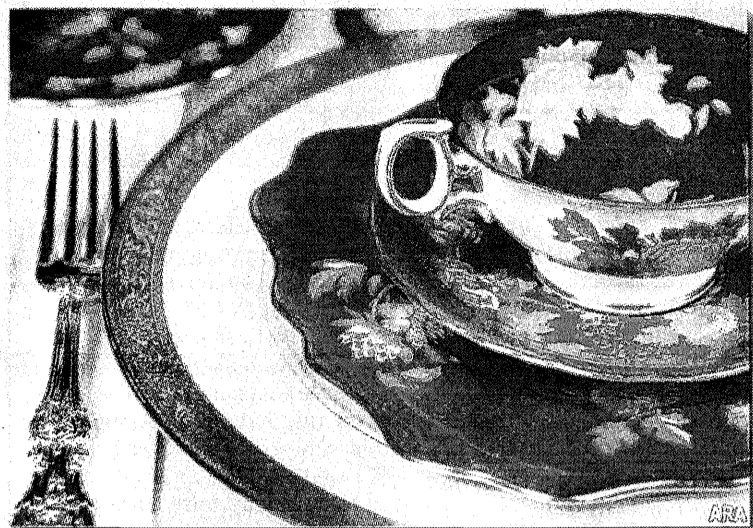
proper manners and table settings. Based on the most frequently asked questions, Slatter offers this quick holiday etiquette 101 to give you insight that will dazzle your guests.

Set the perfect table

- Forks to the left, knives and spoons to the right. Only set out utensils that will be used for various courses. "If you're not serving soup or salad, you certainly don't want an extra spoon or fork in your place setting," Slatter says. "Not only will those get in the way, the extra utensils may confuse your guests."
- The bread plate goes on the left of the dinner plate, glasses on the right.

- Wait to pour. Water glasses should be the only glasses filled before your guests arrive. Iced tea, wine and other beverages should be poured once everyone is seated. Wine should be filled halfway, not to the rim.
- Salad and bread should be the only food on the table when your guests arrive.

- Courses are generally served in the following order in the United States: appetizer, soup, salad, main course, dessert.



Are you the hostess with the mostest?

- Remember, the hostess always sits last.
- Unscented candles are a great part of holiday decor, but should only be lit during the evening. "Another thing to keep in mind, flickering candles are more than a distraction, those can cause headaches," warns Slatter. "That's why you never want to place burning candles directly in front of your guest, and make sure you situate the flame below eye level."
- Centerpiece too tall? Sure those flowers you spent hours arranging are pretty, but will only get in the way if your guests have to crane their necks to look at each other. Make sure your guests can see over any table adornments.
- Passing isn't just in football. Always pass food around the table counter clockwise to the right and refrain from serving yourself first. Always pass the salt and pepper as a set, even if you're only asked for one.

Be a gracious guest

- Avoid the smear. Female guests should blot their lips before sitting down at the table. This will keep you from getting lipstick stains on linen napkins or glassware.
- Wait for the signal. Your host will let you know when it's okay to begin eating. They may make a prayer or

statement or start by passing a dish.

- If you're not sure which utensil to use with each course, start on the outside and work in toward the plate.
- If you need to excuse yourself temporarily, gently place your napkin in your chair.
- Signify you're finished with the meal by placing napkin to the left of the dinner plate, and your fork and knife side by side diagonally across your plate with the sharp side of the knife blade facing inward and the fork tines down.

"One of the most panicked questions we hear concerns what to do if you accidentally break a piece of the host's dinnerware," adds Slatter. "You should certainly offer to replace the broken piece especially if it has sentimental value for the host or hostess."

Slatter says don't lose hope if your host doesn't know the name of the pattern or the manufacturer—you can always take advantage of Replacements' free pattern identification service.

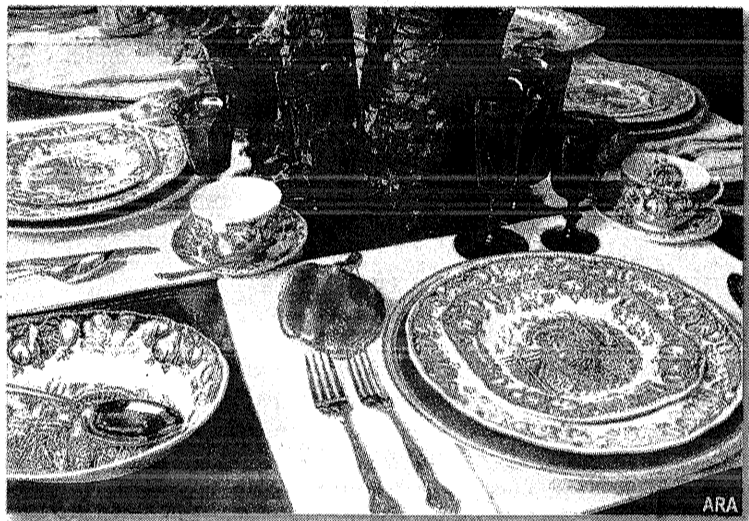
If you're still in doubt about holiday etiquette 101, a cheat sheet is just a mouse click away. You can find place setting guides outlining the correct layout for all meals at www.replacements.com, under the site's "neat things" tab. With these tips in mind, you're sure to throw the perfect gathering.

— Courtesy of ARAContent

Tips for lighting

For specific holiday-themed drama, explore the latest seasonal decorations powered by LED lighting. "New color-changing technology now allows lighting designers to have the ability to specify custom color scenes or shows to set a particular mood for festivities," says David Wilkins, president and CEO of American Lighting in Colorado. "Whether you desire a red roofline or one that fades from red to green and back to red, color-changing LED technology offers creativity like never before. You can produce the exact ambience you like at any moment during your party or gathering this season."

— Courtesy of ARAContent



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Country star Aaron Tippin to play benefit for injured soldiers

BY KURT KUBAN
STAFF WRITER

Country music singer Aaron Tippin, known for his patriotic-themed music, will be headlining an upcoming Christmas show that will benefit soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Tippin will perform his songs at Operation Injured Soldier's inaugural Christmas Spectacular Dec. 11 at Laurel Manor in Livonia. The event, which begins at 7 p.m., will help the South Lyon-based non-profit organization's efforts to send injured soldiers and their families on vacations, to sporting events, and

CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

- **When:** 7 p.m., Dec. 11
- **Where:** Laurel Manor in Livonia
- **Tickets:** \$75 (includes dinner)
- **More info:** For more information about tickets or sponsorship, call (248) 437-1144 or visit www.injuredsoldiers.org.

on hunting, fishing and camping trips. The trips are provided at no cost to the soldiers.

According to Operation Injured Soldier's Pam Bijansky, who also owns Parkside Cleaners in South Lyon, this is the biggest fundraiser the group has ever held. She said the reason they decided to do it is because more and more soldiers are coming home with injuries suffered in



Aaron Tippin with Al Hogan and Pam Bijansky of Operation Injured Soldier during Tippin's tour earlier this year.

America's two current wars. Many of the soldiers are suffering from post traumatic

stress disorder caused by head injuries, and have had a difficult time adjusting back to

everyday life. The point of Operation Injured Soldier, according to

Bijansky, is to help with that adjustment, and help the soldiers and their families recon-

nect. "There is just a huge, huge need. People don't even understand," Bijansky said. "It's not just the soldier, it's their families. If they have drifted psychologically, they need a family vacation. They need to bond again as a family."

Bijansky said many of the trips the group is able to send the soldiers and their families on are donated. However, the group still has to pay for transportation and other related costs.

"We have had so many people step up with time shares and guided hunting trips, but we had to turn them down because we couldn't afford to send the soldiers," she said.

And that is why Bijansky is hoping for a good turnout at The Christmas Spectacular. Her goal is to get 1,000 people to attend the event. She believes Tippin's star power will help.

Tippin agreed to do the show when members of Operation Soldier and some of the soldiers attended one of his concerts earlier this year. He was already scheduled to be in the state to do a Dec. 12 show in Roscommon.

Bijansky is also still looking for a local choir that might be interested in singing Christmas carols during dinner.

Tickets for the show are \$75, which includes a full dinner. There will be a cash bar available. Bijansky said the group is still looking for corporate sponsors for the event. Currently Hines Park and Abbey Park at Mill River are the two main corporate sponsors.

"Every penny goes back to our guys," Bijansky said.

People can also buy tickets and donate them so injured soldiers can attend the event and see Tippin perform.

"A lot of people have already donated their tickets. Half of the room will literally be filled with our injured heroes," Bijansky said.

For more information about tickets or sponsorship, call (248) 437-1144 or visit www.injuredsoldiers.org.

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Country music star Aaron Tippin will be singing his patriotic songs at Operation Injured Soldiers Christmas Spectacular Dec. 11 at Laurel Manor.

NEWS BRIEF

Ornament artwork

Children can explore their artistic talents and lend a hand to a worthy cause on Saturday at the Plymouth District Library.

The Plymouth Area Jaycees are sponsoring a free ornament-decorating event from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the library. Children, accompanied by a parent or guardian, can drop by and decorate an ornament or two to give as gifts or hang on the Christmas tree.

The Jaycees will also be collecting gift cards to donate to First Step, the program that offers assistance and support to the survivors of domestic violence in Western Wayne County and Downriver communities. A donation is not mandatory.

The Plymouth Area Jaycees is a newly recognized Jaycees chapter for men and women ages 21 to 40 who work or live in Plymouth, Plymouth Township or surrounding communities and want to strengthen leadership and organizational skills, contribute to the community and build professional and social networks. The group is recruiting new members; a former local Jaycees chapter folded in 2007.

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*Based on Medicare's Plan Quality and Performance Rating 2009 Survey conducted by the federal Medicare program. To see full results, go to "Compare Health Plans" on www.medicare.gov

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Raising a village

Salem grad uses Peace Corps stint to help others

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The first time James Leddy applied to join the Peace Corps, the Peace Corps lost his paperwork.

Figuring it was some sort of omen, Leddy returned to seeking work in the field for which he'd gotten a degree from Michigan State University: International relations.

Then death claimed his grandfather, the one person who'd most supported his idea to serve. Leddy, a graduate of Salem High School and a resident of Canton, put his name back in for consideration.

Six weeks later, in March 2007, Leddy was in El Salvador.

"It's gone by so quick," said Leddy, who was home for a couple of weeks before returning to his village. "At first, seconds seemed like hours. But looking back, it's gone by so fast."

While his grandpa may have been the most ardent supporter of Leddy's decision to join the Peace Corps, he wasn't the only one. Lifelong friend Erin Williams, no stranger to the concept of public service herself (her dad is Canton Township Trustee Pat Williams), found out when her parents talked to Leddy's parents.

"I think it's a fantastic fit for (Leddy)," Williams said. "His family has always been giving and caring, and that's how Jimbo is. It just kind of made sense."

His service has gone by quick enough that Leddy, 24, isn't sure he wants it to be over. He has begun discussions with Peace Corps officials aimed at extending his service.

And that's because he loves what he's doing in El Salvador. He lives among the villagers in Santiago De Chile, a farming community that plants largely coffee. He works in a school, teaching fourth- and fifth-graders about decision-making and planning ahead.

"It gets kids to start thinking," Leddy said. "A lot of kids just follow the crowd. I get them to use their imagination."

His teachings roam a gamut from giving pet vaccinations to brushing teeth. He's taught sex education and he's worked with neighborhood associations, "basically training them not to need me," Leddy said with a laugh.

After a two-week visit home, though, Leddy is back in Santiago De Chile, where he's needed perhaps more than ever. Shortly before Leddy's sojourn home, his "home-away-from-home" was buried in a mudslide that destroyed a large portion of the village. It destroyed communities and devastated - in some cases wiped out - entire families.

In an area already ravaged by poverty, the disaster was crippling.

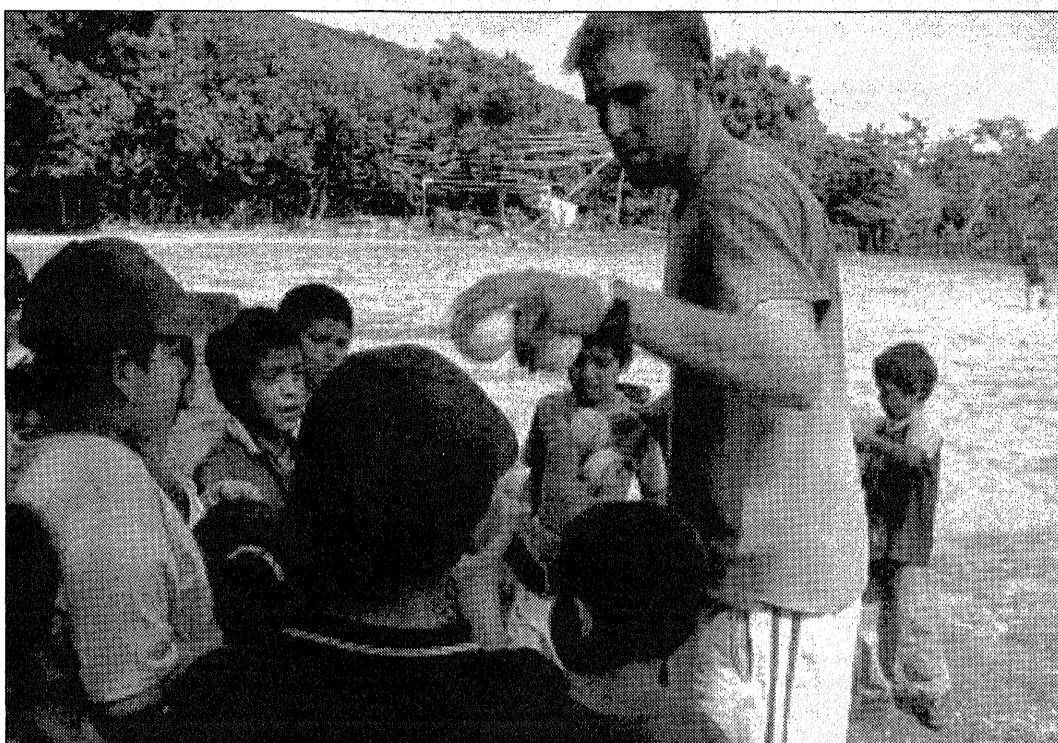
"In one night ... thousands of people have been left without homes, without food and water, without clothes," Leddy wrote on his blog (www.jimboleddy.blogspot.com). "Entire communities have been erased. Entire families have passed away. Crops that Salvadoran farmers use to feed their families are ruined."

While devastating to the community he'd spent 20 months helping, the experience also affected Leddy. Existing on the side of a volcano, the village was susceptible to the kind of disaster that struck after torrential rains. Leddy resisted, but Peace Corps officials ordered him off the volcano.

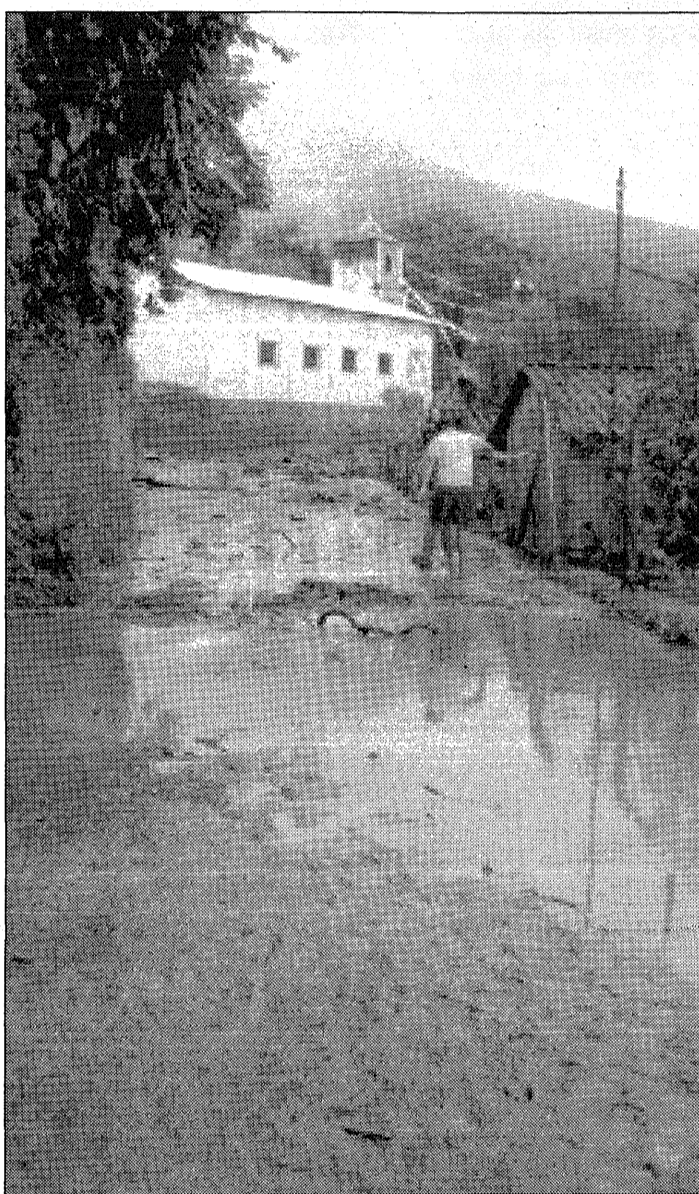
"When I was on the volcano that day, I wasn't scared, I was just thinking about getting off," Leddy said. "The second I got into that Peace Corps car, I wanted nothing but to go back."

And back he's gone, with fellow Peace Corps volunteer and friend Dave Hannon, who did his service in Afghanistan. Leddy, who with Williams organized a fund-raiser to help the village while he was in Canton, and Hannon will assess the damage and the need, and Hannon will help raise money when he gets back.

So far, the Peace Corps is



James Leddy of Canton, a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador, tries to get the troops organized for a baseball practice.



The heavy rains and mud decimated the El Salvadoran village where Canton's James Leddy works for the Peace Corps. The village needs houses built, clothing and food.

resisting letting Leddy actually live in the village, fearing for his safety. But they are letting him go back into the village to help, which is his big purpose in life right now.

"I want to get these people back on their feet," Leddy said, pointing out the kind of help needed is building houses and clothing and feeding the villagers. "This was a poor community before the tragedy. We need to get them at least back where they were."

Leddy has post-Peace Corps goals, too. He was figuring he'll get his master's degree in either Argentina or Spain, then come home and use it in international business.

But his experience in El Salvador may be affecting him more than he'd bargained. "The more I work with these kids," he said, with a broad smile creasing his face, "the more I think about teaching."

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

Event funds will help villagers

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

When James Leddy was planning a trip home to Canton from the El Salvador village he's helping as a Peace Corps volunteer, the plan was to chill out, see some friends and family and enjoy the time home.

After the village where he lives was devastated by torrential rain and mudslides, though, Leddy decided he'd spend the time at home trying to help his home away from home.

So he and longtime friend Erin Williams kept up a dizzying pace to organize a fund-raiser at The Crow's Nest in Canton to try and raise money to help the villagers in El Salvador.

All the effort paid off: The fund-raiser, held last week before Leddy returned to El Salvador, raised more than \$4,000. The Crow's Nest, according to Williams, ended up donating 10 percent of its pro-

ceeds from the evening.

Among the crowd were Canton Township Supervisor Phil LaJoy and Williams' father, Canton Township Trustee Pat Williams.

"It went very well," said Williams. "Lots of people came out to help, people from our neighborhood and friends from high school and college."

Leddy said it will "take thousands and thousands of dollars" to help get the village back on its collective feet. Houses need to be built and villagers need to be clothed and fed.

Leddy and fellow Salem grad, friend Dave Hannon, also a Peace Corps volunteer (he did his duty in Afghanistan) traveled back to El Salvador this week to assess the damage. When he gets back, Hannon and Williams will organize more fund-raisers.

"I want to get these people back on their feet," Leddy said. "This was a poor community before the tragedy. We need to get them at least back where they were."

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EXTRA SPACE STORAGE

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, December 21, 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.

Owens, Stephon/ Owens Concrete	B40	10x15	Generator, cooler, 4 rims, 4 tires (new), backpack-leafblower, misc. industrial tools and landscaping equipment.
Prpich, Hollyanne/Mark	C90	10x25	TV repair supplies, various electronics, 20+ Televisions.
Yarwood, Anthony (Tony)	C95	10x25	Golf Clubs, electric scooter, brown granite countertops, 2 outdoor chairs, 2 kitchen chairs, misc. tools and household goods.
Milliner, Bewildow	C96	10x4	Twin size mattresses, low-profile box spring & frame. Nightstand, 7+ totes, misc. household goods.
Owens, Stephon/ Owens Concrete	G273	10x30	Bowflex, stationary bike, treadmill, 27" CRT TV, Full size sleigh bed and bedroom suite, Full size pillow top-mattress and bed spring, golf clubs, charcoal, grill, entertainment center, receiver and cd changer, misc. garden and household goods.

Publish: December 3 & 10, 2009

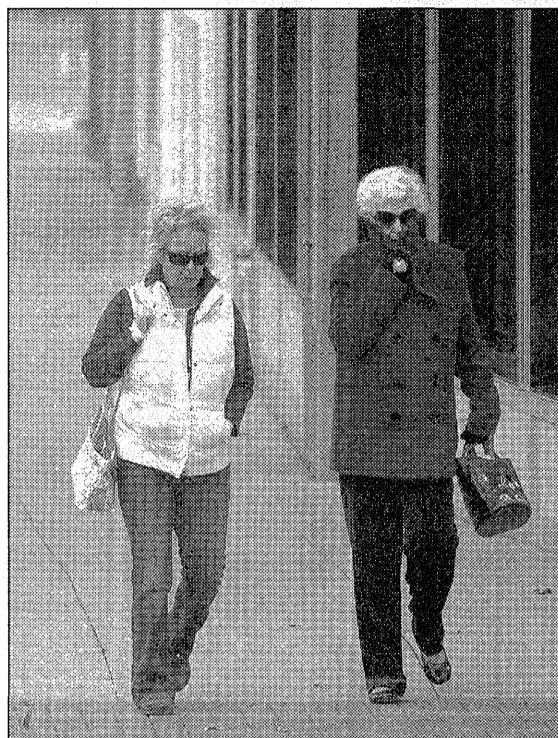
LOCAL OPINION

online at hometownlife.com



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

OUR VIEWS



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Shopping locally, as Carol Adams of Plymouth and her mom, Jane Adams of Dearborn, did Friday along Ann Arbor Trail is a way to help local businesses survive and thrive.

Shop locally this holiday season

Many people will be cutting back on spending this holiday season because of the economy.

They have less money for gifts, decorations and festive foods than they have had in past years. Some may even be cutting out gift-giving entirely.

That isn't all bad. Simpler celebrations may mean people will focus more on the true meaning of each holiday.

However, people still need to purchase food even if they don't host extravagant parties. And, many people invariably will still buy gifts for their loved ones, even if they spend less than they have in the past.

We encourage readers to shop locally this holiday season, whether it be for food or gifts or both.

By doing so, they will help local businesses, which, in turn, will benefit them.

If every Michigan household spent \$10 each week on Michigan-made products, \$37 million would be put back into the local economy on a weekly basis, according to the grassroots Made in Michigan Movement.

More money is kept in the community because locally owned businesses purchase from other locally owned businesses, service providers and farms. Purchasing locally helps other local businesses to grow.

When businesses grow, they hire more people. Small local businesses are the largest employer nationally.

Local businesses also support the local community, donating money and/or services to local schools and service organizations benefiting local children and other residents.

And, customer service is usually better. Local business often are willing to order items specially for customers or offer more services than national chains.

In downtown Plymouth, Michigan Made & More features nothing but products with a Michigan connection. Businesses in Plymouth, being encouraged by the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Authority, have been pushing a "shop Plymouth" agenda for ages now. Local business owners understand it makes good economic sense to buy locally.

The local shopping started on Black Friday, the traditional start to the Christmas shopping season. When you make your holiday shopping plans, plan to buy as many gifts on your list as possible from local merchants.

Your gifts will not only benefit your loved ones, they'll also help the local economy and put local merchants in a better position to survive and, we hope, thrive in the new year.

COMMUNITY VOICE

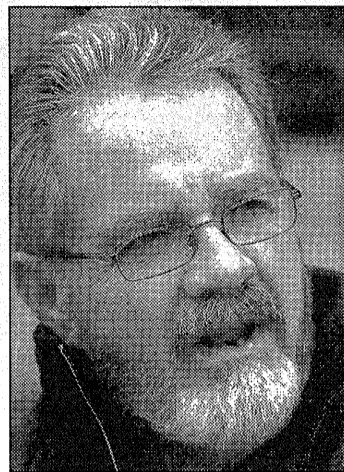
Are you planning to spend more, less, or about the same on Christmas gifts this year?

We asked this question outside the U.S. Postal Service branch office in downtown Plymouth.



"We're going to stick with our cutbacks from last year."

Michelle Tapp
Plymouth Township



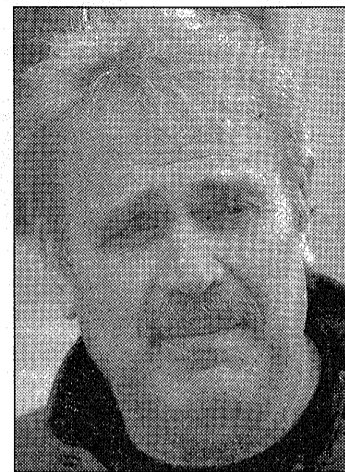
"I'd say about the same. We've never been huge gift people."

Brian Williams
Plymouth



"Less. Income down."

Amanda Sonnega
Plymouth Township



"About the same. I didn't hit the Lottery, so I can't spend more."

Ron Cook
Plymouth Township

LETTERS

Zonta thanks

I would like to thank you for the wonderful article that ran in the *Observer* Sunday, Nov. 29 ("Zonta members reach out to women, girls, mark milestones").

I received several calls about the article and interest in Zonta. What a great boost for our club members who have worked so hard on the many projects we do to help improve the status of women.

Thanks again.

Sally Randall
Zonta Area 3 director

(Note: For more information about Zonta or to attend a meeting, call Sally Randall at (734) 464-3728. You can also visit www.zonta.org or www.zonta15.org/northwestwayne.)

Too much influence

The health care industry is plying Congress with huge amounts of money to protect that industry's interests.

These are some statistics that I have read:

Some \$1.4 million per day is spent by the health care industry to lobby Congress. The health care industry has hired six lobbyists for every member of Congress. These people are paid to protect the interests of

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We welcome your Letter to the Editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content. Submit letters via the following formats.

Web: www.hometownlife.com

E-mail: bkadrich@hometownlife.com

Blog: You may also let your opinions be heard with your own blog at hometownlife.com.

Deadline: Letters must be received by 9 a.m. Monday to be published in the Thursday edition.

the health insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry and other corporations that make up the health care industry.

Max Baucus, who is a Democrat from Montana, is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. Five of his former staffers are involved with companies in the health and insurance sectors. Max Baucus has received over a million dollars from health care and insurance companies. Even worse, 23 members of the Senate Finance Committee receive millions from health care interests.

We can put a stop to this kind of influ-

ence by writing or calling our Senators, urging their support of the Fair Elections Now Act (FENA). When we show our outrage over the influence of corporate lobbyists in Congress this type of influence peddling will stop.

Doreen Lawton
Plymouth

Cox is wrong

If as Attorney General Mike Cox says, the 2002 Manoojian affair is just "gum on my shoe which will wear off if I just keep walking," is far from being accurate. Unless and until our attorney general comes clean about what actually happened at the Manoojian Mansion and subsequent death of Tamara Greene, he is unfit to even run as our next governor. If this matter has been covered up and Cox is involved, this is obstruction of justice. The citizens of Michigan cannot tolerate possible obstruction of justice from our own top cop.

There are substantial discrepancies between the sworn testimony from State Police Detective Mark Krebs and statements made by Cox. Cox is likely to get more gum on his shoes if he continues to dismiss this as an "urban legend."

Gerald and Dolores Maxey
Farmington Hills

From Lansing, we need less talk, more action

The lyrics of country great Toby Keith's song *A Little Less Talk and a Lot More Action* popped in my head when I heard the Legislative Commission on Government Efficiency had released its draft report, *Charting A Way Forward: A Path Towards Fiscal Stability For the State of Michigan*.



Tom Watkins

After 18 months of kicking the can down the road, yet another report is produced telling state leaders what and how to reform government.

Our state leaders are not without a multitude of reports to choose restructuring ideas or government reforms from — what they have is a great shortage of political will to make the tough choices that will address the long-standing structural problems confronting this state. Certainly, this report has a number of worthy recommendations. Many of the ideas have been around for years without being acted upon.

The Legislative Commission on Government Efficiency was created by 2007 PA 96. The nine-member commission is charged with making recommendations on how to consolidate and make more efficient state department functions and services. Its final report to the House, Senate and Gov. Jennifer Granholm is due Dec. 1. Only two of its nine mem-

bers — Senate Fiscal Agency director Gary Olson House and Fiscal Agency director Mitch Bean — are from the government. The rest were appointed from the private sector.

There have been countless studies and recommendations from distinguished organizations including: The Center For Michigan (www.thecenterformichigan.net/); The Michigan Leaders for Michigan/formerly, Detroit Renaissance (www.businessleadersformichigan.com); The Citizens Research Council (www.crcmich.org); The Mackinac Center (www.mackinac.org); and my own report I wrote as state superintendent of schools in 2004 that stated our school funding system was unsustainable and we must address the runaway health and pension costs and share services and consolidate districts to have adequate resources to invest in 21st century education (www.michigan.gov/documents/michiganschoolfunding_110803_7.pdf).

Each of these reports clearly spell out ways for Michigan to make sensible changes in state and local government that enable us to live within our means while making meaningful structural reforms.

In 2007, Gov. Granholm appointed a bipartisan Emergency Financial Advisory Panel, co-chaired by former governors William G. Milliken and James J. Blanchard, to review the state's financial crisis and offer recommendations

on how best to avoid similar crises in the years ahead. You guessed it — she never acted on her advisory panel's thoughtful recommendations.

There are even recommendations left over from the Secchia Commission in the 1990s under Republican Gov. John Engler that have yet to be implemented.

If the Legislative Commission on Government Efficiency would have taken their "efficiency" charge seriously, they would have met, reviewed the above reports, e-mailed them to the governor and Legislature telling them to implement the recommendations already on the table and disband.

Michigan continues to lose jobs in roaring tsunamis and replace them in tear drops. We have lost nearly a million jobs in the last decade and have the highest unemployment in the nation at 15.3 percent. We are caught up in a perfect storm of losing businesses and people together with the taxes they pay. Michigan gets less populated, less educated, and poorer because of people fleeing our state. The families who are leaving are the people the state desperately needs to kick-start our economic rebound — young, well-educated high-income earners.

Few organizations relish change and will go to great lengths to avoid facing the consequences. Clearly this has been the case with Michigan's elected leaders. They behave as though nothing has changed, when everything has changed.

We don't get action from the governor or Legislature; we get yet another study that is destined to gather more dust created by the unemployed fleeing not just a state with a lack of jobs, but a state with leaders that fiddle as those without work burn through their unemployment checks as the hope for a productive future slips away.

Those that think we can simply cut or tax our way out of these problems are delusional. It is change-or-die time for Michigan.

Clearly, there is little constituency or lobby for change. Yet, we must reform, restructure and reinvent Michigan to position ourselves for the hyper-competitive, disruptive, global, innovative economy that is coming at us at warped speed.

As I return to China next week, rest assured, they are not slowing down waiting for Michigan's leaders to get their act together and — well, lead. They and other states and nations are moving forward.

Inaction has consequences. The time for studies, delays, debates and talking is over. We need the governor and Legislators to dispense with the "whole lotta talk — and produce a lot more action!"

Tom Watkins is a business and education consultant. He served the citizens of Michigan as a state superintendent of schools, 2001-05 director of the mental health department, 1986-90 and an elected member of the Wayne County Charter Commission, 1980-82.

PLYMOUTH OBSERVER



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/ Publisher

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Gifts, etc.

Holiday etiquette for the 'others' in our lives

BY WENDSY VON BUSKIRK
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One day last summer, my son, then 3, ran out to greet the mail truck. His face fell when he discovered none of the mail was for him. A few days later, he got a stamped card from a "secret admirer." I knew the culprit was Cathy, our sweet mail carrier. That kind of thoughtfulness earned her a nice tip at Christmas.

But Cathy's been transferred, and now it seems a different postal worker visits our home each day. So, is it necessary to tip the mailman this year?

In the season of giving, it's natural to buy presents for close family and friends, but what about the other people in our lives, such as babysitters, teachers, personal trainers, dog groomers and coworkers?

I spoke with two local etiquette experts to find out.

According to Ramona Lawrence of Blessings of Etiquette in Southfield Lathrup, gifts should be given only to people who are extra special.

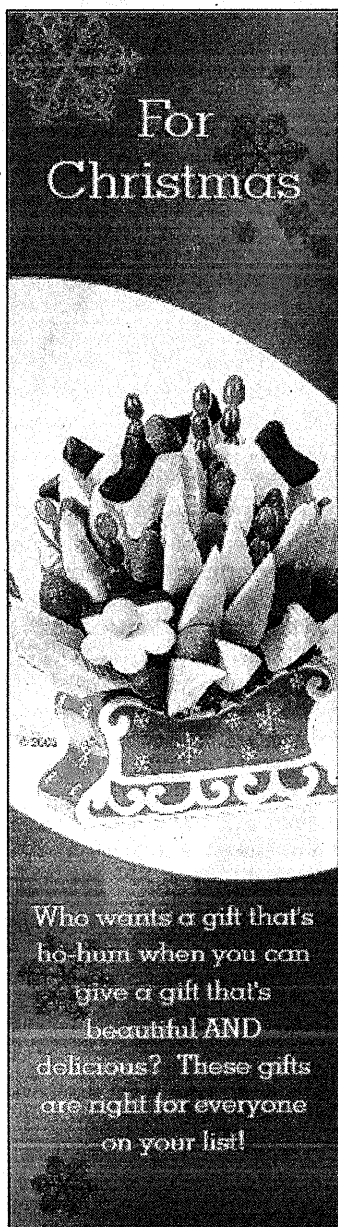
"You cannot personally thank everyone who has provided you with a service throughout the year, but if continuously you've been pleased with that service it's nice to show your gratitude at the end of the year," she said.

The key is to tailor gifts to each individual.

"It comes from the heart when you can do some type of research, get to know that person and what they like," she said. "When all else fails I don't think you'll find too many people who'll say they don't want money."

CASH FOR CHRISTMAS

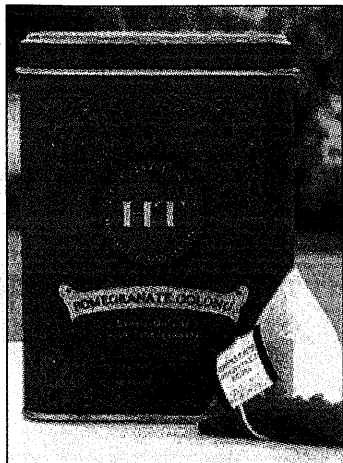
When it comes to giving gifts of cash, etiquette experts agree it's standard to double



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your normal tip or payment. For people like your shampoo girl, manicurist, hairdresser or pet groomer, that would mean twice the usual tip, or the cost of a basic service like a haircut; for a housekeeper or babysitter, an extra day's pay. A beloved nanny should be



Find Harney & Sons teas at TranquillTea in Plymouth.

compensated an extra week, if possible.

Good etiquette dictates that you personalize a gift of money with a nice card.

"If you're just giving cash, I suggest you write a note to that person and let them know how you feel about them. It just adds that special touch," she said.

And while it's nice to tip a bit more generously this time of year it isn't necessary to go out of your way to pay the guys at the car wash, the barista at the corner coffee shop, or the groomer who always has a treat for Fido.

"I would tip them extra if I'm using them during the holiday season, but I wouldn't make an extra trip to go see them," Lawrence said. "As far as the amount, everyone has to face how much they can give."

Of course there are some instances when cash isn't appropriate, such as in the workplace or at your child's school. In those cases, creative and thoughtful gifts go a long way.

BUSINESS OF GIFTS

Denise Anne Taylor, owner of Competitive Advantage, Inc. in Birmingham, special-

TOKENS OF APPRECIATION

Simple gift suggestions for people who take care of you year round:

Yoga teacher: Harney & Sons teas, 20 bags for \$8.75 at TranquillTea in Plymouth

Dog groomer: Special Dog ornament with a photo of their favorite client, \$12.50 at Hallmark in Livonia

Boss: Starry Sleighride with fresh and chocolate dipped fruit, \$100 at Edible Arrangements in Farmington

Client: Motivational letterpress print, \$12.50 at etsy.com

Babysitter/children's teacher: Visa gift card, accepted virtually everywhere

izes in business etiquette. She said the holidays are a nice time to show your appreciation to supervisors, co-workers and clients.

"If you have special people who throughout the year are always there for you providing support, I think it's nice to acknowledge them," she said. "Give them little incentive items, just to say 'thank you,' especially if they go above and beyond."

Fitting gifts include items that can display on their desk, like a paperweight, photo frame, or a small vase. Or, fill a basket with office supplies, such as notebooks, colored paper clips and novelty pens.

Holiday ornaments are also an inexpensive choice.

These ideas also can be applied to teachers.

Taylor warns against buying extravagant gifts for supervi-



Find this Special Dog ornament at Hallmark in Livonia.

sors in an effort to curry favor. Instead, look for a token that reflects a hobby like golf or tennis.

Or, take up a collection to purchase something nicer for a beloved boss, but don't expect everyone to put money in the pot.

"Some people don't feel comfortable contributing to a larger gift. That can be awkward. I don't feel anyone should be compelled to contribute. Make

sure you include everyone, and give everyone the opportunity to decline," she said.

For clients, Taylor suggests a bottle of liquor, a tin of pistachios, or a tray of homemade cookies they can share with the rest of the office.

If you're not sure about diet restrictions or allergies, opt for something healthy like a basket of teas or an Edible Arrangement stocked with chocolate covered fruit.

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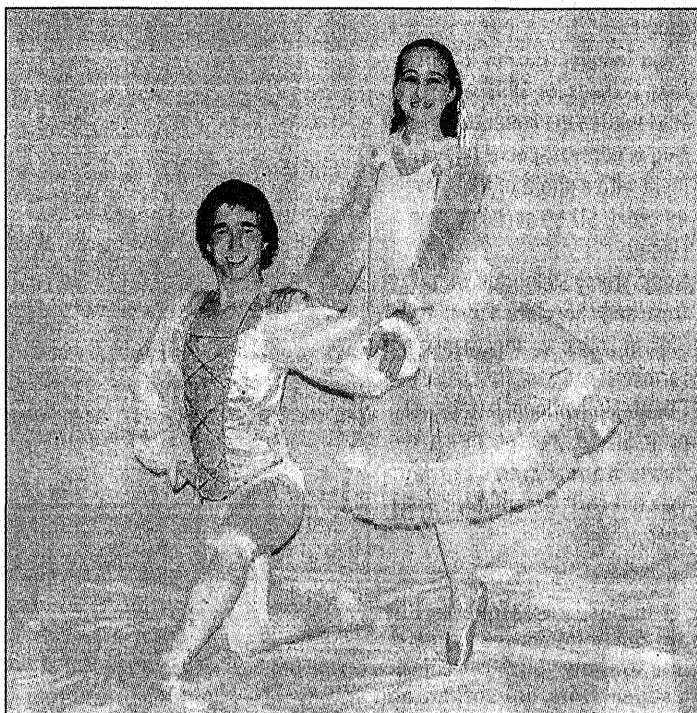
Local dancers highlight 'Nutcracker' performances

The Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company presents two performances of the Nutcracker Ballet with the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra.

Audience members can follow Clara as she journeys with the Nutcracker Prince from her home through the Land of Snow. The Snow Queen and the Snow Flakes send them to the Magic Kingdom where she is entertained by a vast array of dancers and honored by the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

The Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company and the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra will perform the Nutcracker at the Salem High School Auditorium 2 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 4-5. Both performances will be followed by a Sugar Plum Parade. Audience members will have the opportunity to meet the dancers on stage. Tickets are \$18 for adults and teens, \$12 for children and \$2 for the Sugar Plum Parade.

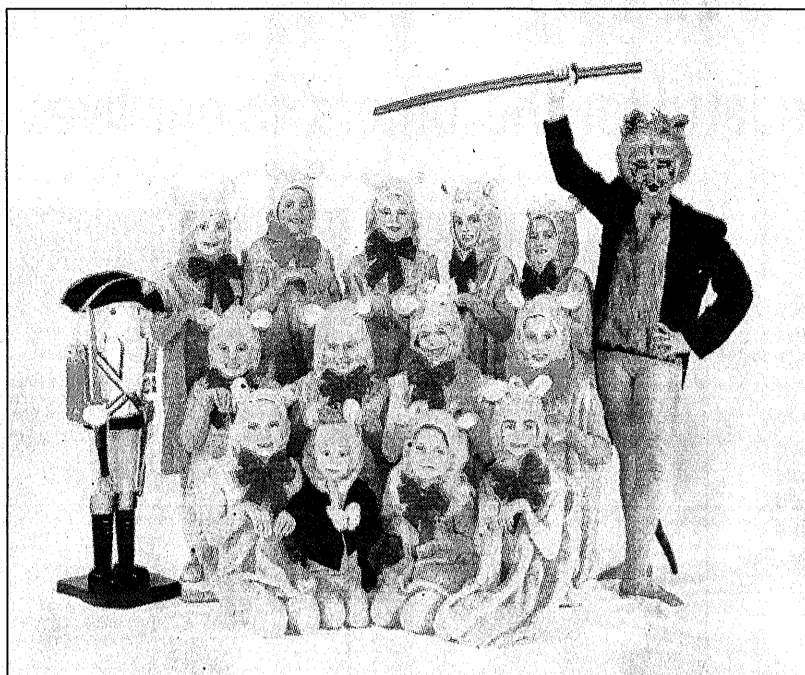
Calin Radulescu and Elizabeth Kelley will be the



Lauren Hansen of Canton and Triston O'Day Snow Queen and King in the Plymouth Canton Ballet Company's production of 'The Nutcracker.'

guest dancers for the performances. Radulescu will dance the part of the Cavalier, while Kelley will dance the

Sugar Plum Fairy. The dancers are from Grand Valley State University. Radulescu is a faculty member at the University



The 'Mice' - Gretchen Fancher, Alivia Davis from Belleville, Emma Kuechler, April Gee, Megan Rivera, Sarah MacIntyre, Hannah Harrigan from Canton, Elliana Krohn from Redford, Bethany Beaudoin from Westland, Jillian Sypula, Merry Lynne Patterson from Romulus, Mary Beer from Livonia, Claire Burton from Birmingham, Gavin Smith from Grosse Ile, Rat King, Amanda Woodward from Wyandotte and the Nutcracker is from China - take to the Salem High School stage Friday and Saturday for 'The Nutcracker.'

and Kelley is a member of the University Dance Company.

The company dancers are drawn from many communities in the Metropolitan Detroit Area, including Plymouth and Canton. Approximately a dozen dance studios are represented.

"It is a pleasure to be able to bring these dancers together for this performance," said artistic director Dawn Greene. "Their backgrounds may be different, but we are proud that they can gel into a ballet corps in just a few rehearsals."

Reid Conlon of Canton will dance the role of the

Nutcracker, with Makenzie Marinkovich of Grosse Ile who will perform as Clara. Conlon is the current Dance Masters Great Lakes Regional Teen Mr. Dance and Marinkovich is the Dance Masters Great Lakes Regional Jr. Miss Dance.

Lauren Hansen of Canton is a student at Salem High School. She will dance as the Snow Queen with Triston O'Day of Detroit. She has been a scholarship recipient at the LA Dance Magic Dance Convention. Triston has danced with the Madison Ballet, Boston Ballet Ensemble and the Detroit Metropolitan

Opera House. They will dance the Snow Pas de Deux and in the Waltz of the Snow Flakes. Hansen will also perform as a soloist in the Spanish Variation from the Magic Kingdom.

Tickets can be purchased at the Plymouth Symphony, 774 N Sheldon, (734) 451-2112; Joanne's Dance Extension, 42020 Koppernick in Canton, (734) 455-4330; Dancewear Gallery, 44926 Ford Rd in Canton, (734) 207-7730. Tickets can be ordered directly from the Plymouth-Canton Ballet by phone at (734) 676-7233 and online at www.plymouthcantonballet.org.

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HOLIDAY BRIEFS

Send memories

The holiday season is upon us and, through the hustle and bustle, we're asking our readers to let us be a part of their celebration.

We're asking readers to send us their favorite holiday memories and photos to the *Observer* for the special holiday edition we're planning for Thursday, Dec. 24.

Did you get a favorite gift for Christmas, or do you have a special memory of Hanukkah? Is there a special tradition your family has that makes the season merry and bright? Share those memories with

your neighbors through us. Send your items — be sure to include a photo, if you can — to *Observer* editor Brad Kadrich at bkadrich@hometownlife.com

Santa letters

Santa Claus has started to make his list, although sources tell the *Observer* that, while he's far from check it twice, he is waiting by his mailbox for youngsters' gift lists and letters.

The *Observer* wants to make sure Santa Claus knows what children would like this Christmas and is asking youngsters to send us letters to him. We will publish the

letters in the newspaper during December before sending them on to the North Pole.

The letters should be sent by e-mail and include a snapshot of the child writing the letter. They can be a list of toys, a holiday greeting for the Jolly Ol' Elf or whatever information youngsters want Santa to have.

Send Santa correspondence to bkadrich@hometownlife.com and be sure to put "Letter to Santa" in the subject line. Letters can also be sent the old-fashioned way, via postal service, to Letter to Santa, c/o Brad Kadrich, 615 W. Lafayette, Second Level, Detroit, MI 48226.

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THURSDAY
December 3,
2009

SPORTS, FILTER, FOOD

SECTION B
(CP)

HOMETOWN LIFE

Tim Smith, editor, (313) 222-2637
tsmith@hometownlife.com

2009-10 BOYS WRESTLING PREVIEW

Rocks ready for new era

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

When Greg Woochuck looks at his roster, the Salem varsity wrestling coach sees a lot of youngsters new to the team. But when he delves deeper, he discovers the first-year guys are about as experienced in the sport as they can be.

And he notes that Salem's last state champion, Jeremy Henderson, started on the varsity in ninth grade.

That's a plus, he said earlier this week while his team geared up for the 2009-10 opener Saturday at the Lake Orion Invitational.

"We're pretty young, over 40 percent are first-year kids," Woochuck said. "But we have some freshmen in this year who have more matches and competitive matches than my last state champ in 2006 (Henderson)."

Those promising freshmen — Danny Kemp (starting at 125 pounds), Austin Banfield, Tyler Gross and Cody Korpus — cut their wrestling teeth both in the district middle school program and club teams.

Woochuck said they have the fundamentals down pat, so now all they need to do is figure out they can hang with the older athletes.

"It looks like a good thing for the future, but I'm dealing with getting their confidence up right now," he said. "But our last state champ started as a ninth-grader."

Of course, returnees from last year's 15-8 team (6-2 in the KLAA) will be the leaders who hopefully will help the Rocks remain competitive.

Senior Nick Kim, who finished eighth in the state meet, will start at 112.

But the Rocks have a number of other returnees to provide plenty of experience and depth.

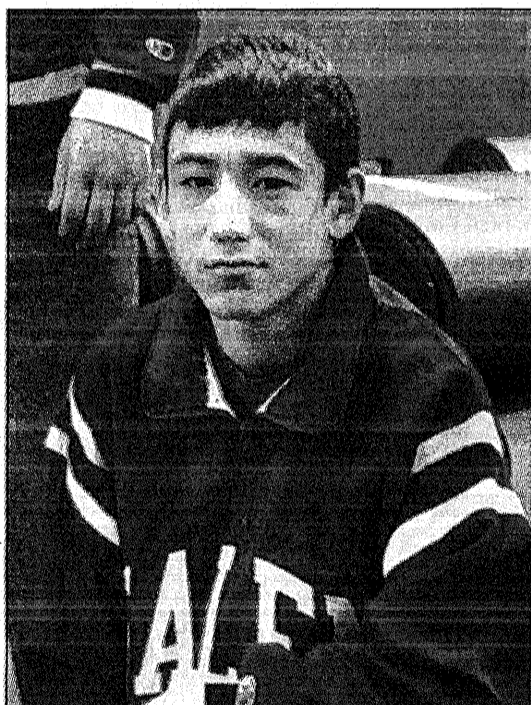
In the upper weight classes, sophomore Nick Giannini (189), senior Blake Abbey (215) and senior Adam Turner (285) are back.

Also returning are seniors James Middleditch (135), Devin Stratton (130), Joe Williams and Brad Sugg (battling it out for 152), Colin Gross (160) and Chris Sweet (171). Competing with Sweet for honors at 171 is junior returnee Cody Mandelka.

Juniors Josh Marhofer (145), Dylan Hatcher (145) and sophomore 140-pounder Josh Kuhn also bring previous varsity experience.

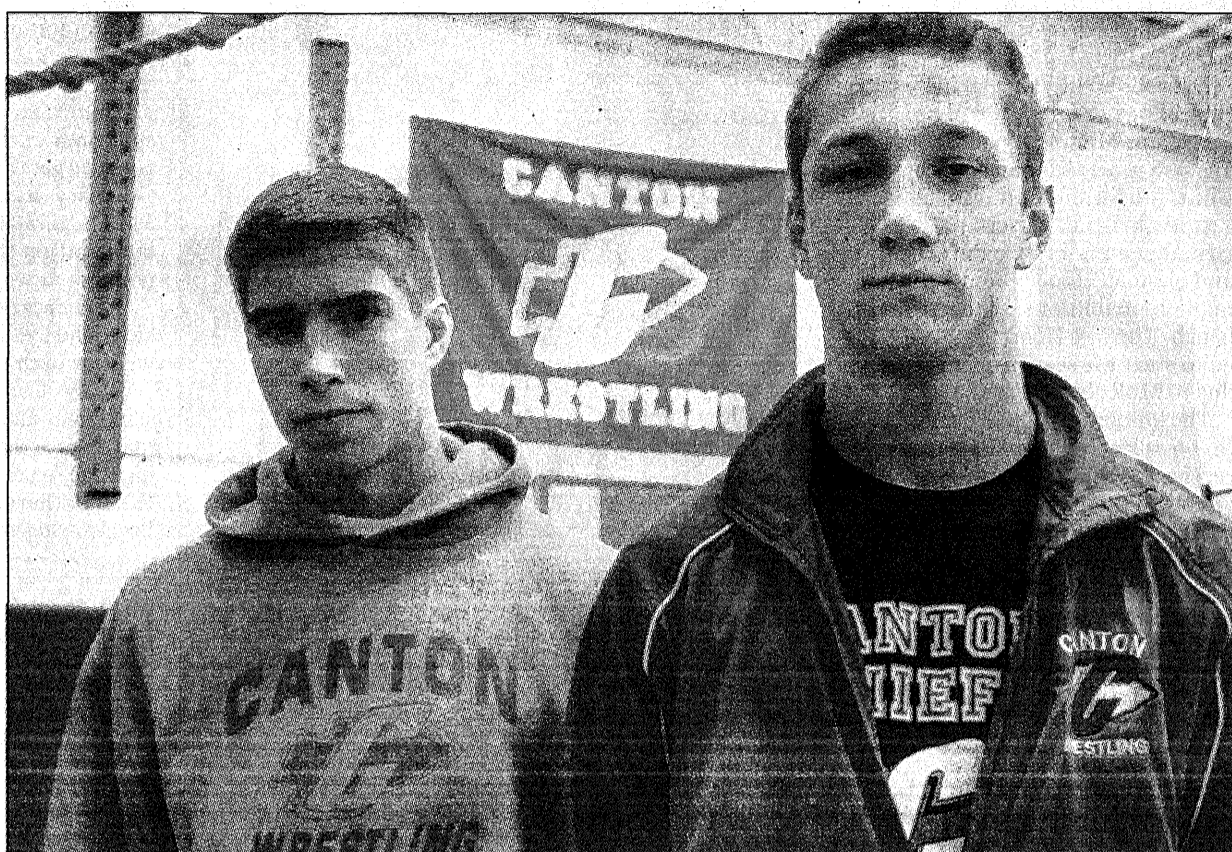
Woochuck is penciling three other first-year wrestlers into the lineup. They are senior James Bushaw at 135, freshman Alex Arbel at 103 and freshman Mike Karizat at 125.

tsmith@hometownlife.com



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Although much of this year's Salem wrestling team is new to the team, the Rocks still feature 2008-09 state qualifier Nick Kim.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Back again this year for Canton are key wrestlers from last year, Brent Winekoff (left) and Donnie Watkins. Both are seniors coming off strong seasons.

Tough quintet to spark Chiefs

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The Canton Five will be back, and that means bad news for other KLAA wrestling teams in 2009-10.

After the Chiefs came within an eyelash of going for a team state championship last season, the core of that excellent team (25-11) will be looking to get there this time.

"We just missed going to the team state championships in Battle Creek by the sixth criteria," said Canton second-year head coach Cory Mancuso. "We tied (Westland) John Glenn and then lost in criteria (rules applied for seeding)."

Spearheading that tough quintet of returnees are seniors Donnie Watkins and Brent Winekoff, who will move up the latter from 135-to-145 pounds and 145-to-160, respectively.

Watkins, currently ranked No. 1 in the state at 145, finished third at the state meet last year as did Winekoff (at 160).

The latter is ranked No. 2 in the

state in his new weight class and is ticketed to wrestle at Eastern Michigan University.

Also back are senior 125-pounder Waleed Faraj (eighth-place at 112 last season) and senior 171-pounder Keith Zech, a state qualifier.

Augmenting those four will be junior Anthony Abro, a regional qualifier in 2008-09 who will fill the 189 spot.

Mancuso knows he has a gifted cast of seniors to lead the Chiefs. Other seniors include Connor Jackson, back at 130 after taking a year off, Mitch Wolksi (140) and 285-pound powerhouse Julius "Mad-Dog" Maddox in the heavy-weight class.

But the coach is looking forward to how the younger members of the team step into the varsity limelight.

"We have a very talented senior group and some very talented, hard-working freshmen and sophomores that will impact our lineup this year for the first time," Mancuso said. Starting at 103 will be freshman

Richard DeMarois. Battling it out for the 112 position are ninth-grader Marc Przyblski and sophomore Keshav Patel.

Two sophomores face no such competition and are expected to start.

Zach Marsh will wrestle at 135, filling the void left when Watkins moved up to 145.

The 152-pound spot will go to Sean O'Keefe.

Another sophomore who is in the mix is Alex Eimers, who is competing with junior Daniel Filippelli for the honors at 119.

Rounding out the lineup is junior 215-pounder Ben Poirier.

Mancuso said some of his weight classes are very strong and the others feature wrestlers with "a lot of potential. It should make for a fun year. I envision my wrestlers winning a lot of matches."

Canton opens the season with a Thursday match at Riverview.

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Plymouth grapplers determined to avoid slow start

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The talent is there and so is the work ethic, which brings a smile to the face of Plymouth head wrestling coach Quinn Guernsey.

The Wildcats started slowly and went only 10-16 in 2008-09, the first season with Guernsey at the helm.

But with the start of a new season (Wednesday in a quad meet at Dexter), he is enthused about an intriguing mix of experience and fresh faces. There's renewed determination among those who are back and don't want to repeat what happened a year ago.

"A lot of the guys wanted to get better," Guernsey said. "We only graduated four guys, so the return-

ers all pretty much decided themselves that they'd like to get better.

"And then we had a few freshmen come in who are pretty solid freshmen and are going to be impact wrestlers for us."

Guernsey said his wrestlers got after it hard during the off-season in order to report to workouts in top-notch shape, too.

"We've got to hit the ground running this year," he said. "We're already pretty much where we were at the middle of the season last year."

If there is a new outlook, a lot of the credit goes to senior tri-captains Rob Barackman (160), Brandon Crowther (152) and Ryan Schultz (140).

"All should have pretty good years," Guernsey said. "When they

wrestle well, they can go with anybody and they're excellent team leaders."

Sophomore Said Youssef definitely can go with anybody, moving from 103 in 2008-09 (when he was an all-conference selection) to 119 this year.

"He's a real talented kid, he worked hard in the off-season to get bigger and stronger," the coach said. "Last year he was at 103 and was a little undersized. Now he's a legit 119."

Definitely not undersized are senior 285-pounders Wally Epler and Jordon Birman, two heavyweights good enough to start. Epler probably would have been an all-conference pick last year had

Please see PLYMOUTH, B2

GAME WRAPS

Boys hockey

PLYMOUTH 4, SOUTH LYON 2: In this KLAA matchup Tuesday, the visiting Wildcats scored two third-period goals to break a 2-2 tie and improve to 5-0 on the season.

Colin Wright scored about seven minutes into the third for the winner and Ryan Renault added an empty-netter with one second to go.

"I thought we played really strong and controlled the majority of play," Plymouth head coach Paul Fassbender said. "We forechecked with a lot of intensity and protected the puck well."

That was how Wright netted the tie-breaker, on assists from Ryan Bauer and Cody Hunt. The line cycled the puck down low and kept constant pressure on the Lions' defense.

"Then Colin came out of the corner, skated in front of the goal and went five-hole" on the South Lyon goalie, Fassbender said.

Scoring in the first period for the Wildcats was Zach Gambrell (from Tyler Sanders and Ryan Brown), while Hunt scored a power-play tally in the middle period from Sanders.

Making 22 saves for the victory was goalie Mike Justus.

SALEM 4, FARMINGTON UNIFIED 4: After building leads of 3-0 and 4-2 Tuesday at Plymouth Cultural Center, the host Rocks gave up a pair of goals to Farmington Unified and wound up in a tie.

"We started off very well, but faded late in the game," said Salem head coach Ryan Ossenmacher, whose team is 2-0-1 going into Friday's rematch with Canton (8 p.m.) at the Arctic Edge.

ICE CUBE INVITE: Plymouth captured the Ann Arbor Ice Cube Invitational with a 3-2 victory Saturday against Waterford Kettering, improving to 4-0 on the young season.

Ryan Brown, John Deal and Ryan Bauer scored for the Wildcats, with Zach Vojcek earning the victory in goal.

Plymouth reached the tourney championship game with Friday's 4-3 overtime victory against Utica Eisenhower.

"We pretty much dominated (Saturday), the reverse of yesterday when I think we were outplayed and snuck out a win," Plymouth head coach Paul Fassbender said. "We gave up a late goal on the power play, which you can't do (to make it 3-2)."

"Then we had to hold on the last minute or two, but we played OK. We moved the puck well."

Against Eisenhower, the Wildcats forced overtime when Zach Gambrell scored with 1:10 to go in the third and Ryan Brown tallied the winner in OT after taking a feed from Tyler Sanders.

"It was a great game, we found a way to win," Fassbender said.

Girls basketball

PLYMOUTH 61, WEST BLOOMFIELD 59: Proficiency from the free-throw line down the stretch Tuesday night enabled the

Please see WRAPS, B2

Tough start for off-target Rocks

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Ice cold from the get-go, host Salem struggled against Brighton in Tuesday night's girls basketball opener and lost 49-37.

The Rocks missed their first 10 shots from the floor and only made in the vicinity of 25 percent of their field-goal tries all night.

"I wasn't disappointed with how we played, because our effort was fantastic," veteran Salem head coach Fred Thomann said. "I was disappointed that we didn't finish shots. I was disappointed that we didn't talk nearly as well as we should or could."

"But it's day one and it's a starting point."

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Sara Stone and Brett deBear, the Rocks' senior leaders, did manage to score 13 and 11 points, respectively. But they only connected on a combined 9-of-35 attempts.

After the game, Thomann sat with the two players and talked about turning the page.

"What I was telling them, as veterans, as three-year players who have played on championship teams, it's up to them to lead," Thomann said. "Get us in the right direction, get us started and just continue to play hard."

SAME SCRIPT?

Despite losing to the KLAA Lakes

Conference Bulldogs, who started five seniors, the Rocks can point to last season as evidence one loss isn't the end of the world.

"Last year they beat us by 14 points, and we ended up playing for the association championship and they didn't," Thomann said. "So we think we've got to do the same thing this year. We have to use this as a stepping stone to get better."

Despite Salem's early struggles making shots (the first points came with 3:12 left in the first on a putback by Stone), Brighton did not take full advantage due to turnovers and terrible free-throw shooting (1-of-8 in the first).

Please see ROCKS, B2



DAVID REED

Way to go

After scoring late in the first period Saturday night to give Canton a 2-1 lead over Salem, goal-scorer Jordan Smith (No. 5) is congratulated by teammates at the bench. The lead didn't hold up as the host Rocks won 4-3 at Plymouth Cultural Center. For the story, please turn to B3.

Eagles girls cage team eager to soar PLYMOUTH

FROM PAGE B1

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Seven players from last season's Division 4 district winners graduated and the landscape has changed in the Michigan Independent Athletic Conference with the influx of several teams from the former Metro Conference.

But Plymouth Christian Academy girls basketball coach Carol Gerulis remains as confident as ever that the Eagles can continue to be a very competitive squad in 2009-10.

"I think we can compete in our conference," said Gerulis, whose team opened the season Tuesday night at Livonia Clarenceville.

PCA will be spearheaded by 5-10 sophomore center Kristin Malcolm and junior point guard Brianna Harris, two key players from the 2008-09 team. Malcolm (12 points, eight rebounds last year) is nursing an ankle injury, however, and will miss the first week or so of action.

"Between the two of them, they will be the keys to our season," the fifth-year coach emphasized.

Harris averaged five assists and six points last year for the

Eagles, and will be counted on to orchestrate PCA's offense.

Gerulis is asking guards Jenna Abraham and Karen Windle to do what Malcolm did last season — make immediate contributions as freshman players.

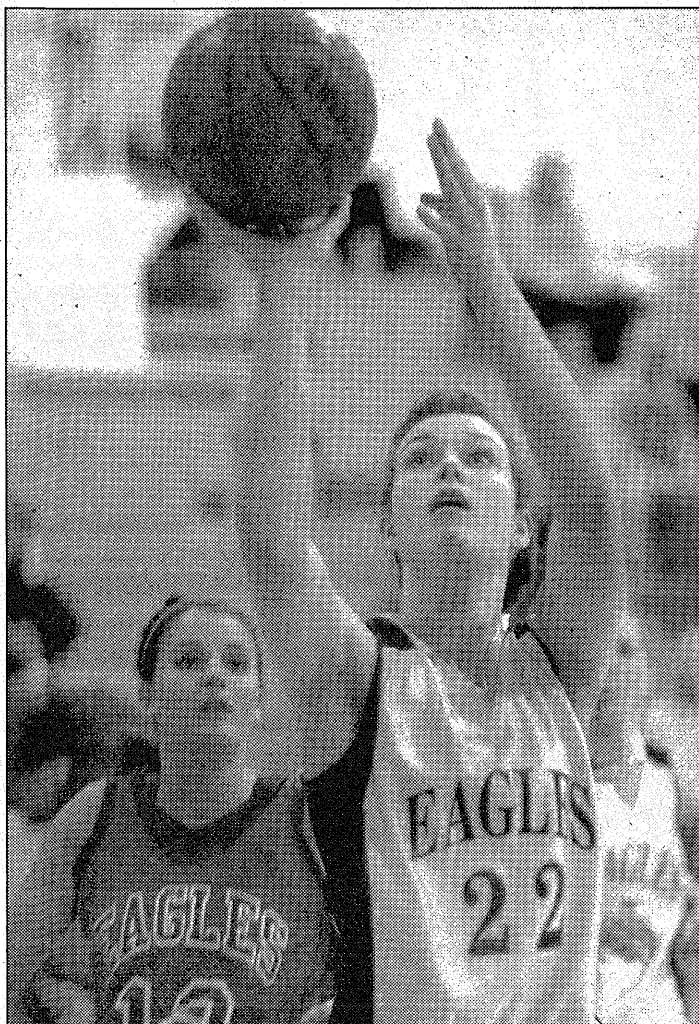
"I think they're going to handle it (varsity) OK," Gerulis said. "They are two pretty strong guards."

Expected to divide playing time at power forward will be 5-8 senior Michaela Wheeler and 5-6 junior Bethany Hale while two former Canton Agape Christian players (senior centers Brooke Purcell and Saquaiia Hood) could make contributions off the bench. The 6-4 Hood was slated to start the season opener due to Malcolm's injury.

The amount of playing time that 6-0 Purcell and Hood receive "depends on how they adapt" to their new team.

Meanwhile, PCA's list of opponents this year include newcomers Ann Arbor Greenhills, Lutheran Westland and Grosse Pointe Woods University-Liggett among others. But if Malcolm and Harris excel as expected, the Eagles should be in the mix all season, Gerulis added.

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Going up for a basket during a game last season is Plymouth Christian forward Kristin Malcolm, one of the team's mainstays entering 2009-10.

he not cracked a rib late in the season.

"We're really expecting him (Eppler) to have a great year," Guernsey said. "And our backup heavyweight (Birman) is pretty good, too. We're going to have trouble finding both of them matches."

He does expect both to see a fair amount of action and both be entered in the districts.

"Until then they're going to split time a lot and they're both going to get their chances," Guernsey said. "Wherever we can I'm going to take them both and get them as many matches as we can."

"It's a heckuva problem to have when you have two guys who are both that talented."

The Wildcats will plug in some freshmen who should make noise right away, including Alec Breckenridge at 112 and Chase Kallil at 125. Breckenridge is going toe-to-

toe with Youssef in the room during practices, showing Guernsey the ninth-grader won't back down in competition.

Junior 103-pounder Shadi Jammoul will be "a man wrestling a lot of boys this year. We're expecting him to have a good year."

And ditto for seniors Curtis Crosier (171) and Brendon Varner (189).

"We're hoping for them to have good, solid years and beat who they should beat," Guernsey said. "They both work hard."

Other teams might have flashier, more accomplished wrestlers. But Guernsey likes the makeup of his squad.

"We don't have the showy kids who are returning state champs," he said. "But we've got a lot of high-quality, 30-win wrestlers on our team, which will make us tough to wrestle."

"We're a very balanced team from top to bottom."

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Canton cage fighter heads up TXC/Gladiatorial Games

Josh Fisher representing Mash Gym in Redford and Lee Trombley of East/West Martial Arts in Canton are just two of the fighters on the card this Saturday as the TXC/Gladiatorial Games IV, Cage Fighting Championship comes to Rock Financial Showplace in Novi.

In all, 15 fights make up the night's card, including four bouts carrying championship implications.

Fisher will battle 155-pound champion Tony Zilinski of Northern Combat Club, while Trombley will square off against Josh Roberts of The

System Gym for the vacated light heavyweight division title.

The mixed martial arts competition features full contact combat allowing a wide variety of fighting techniques. Rules allow use of striking and grappling techniques both while standing and on the ground.

"This is an exciting sport and the reaction from the first three Gladiatorial Games was great," said Christopher Trainor, promoter for Gladiatorial Games IV. "People left asking 'When is the next one?'"

Tickets are available and more information on the evening's activities may be

obtained by calling (877) MMA-TIXX.

Proceeds from the event will help benefit needy families this holiday season through charitable organizations such as Toys for Tots and Gleaners Food Bank.

"When we heard about Gleaners and Toys for Tots being at this event we were excited and we wanted to be part of this holiday spirit," said Anthony Burke, event sales manager for Rock Financial Showplace. "We will give a coupon for a free hot dog to anyone who makes a donation at the door."

THE WEEK AHEAD

- GIRLS BASKETBALL**
Thursday, Dec. 3
A.A. Huron at Salem, 7 p.m.
A.A. Greenhills at Ply. Christian, 7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 4
Ladywood at Flint Powers, 7 p.m.
PREP HOCKEY
Friday, Dec. 4
Salem vs. Canton at Arctic Edge, 8 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 5
PCS Penguins vs. Bloomfield Hills, 3:15 p.m.
at Royal Oak Lindell Arena
Plymouth at Lake Orion, 6 p.m.
Ladywood at Port Huron, 4 p.m.
PREP WRESTLING
Thursday, Dec. 3
Canton at Riverview, 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 5
Lake Orion Invite, 8 a.m.
Rocket Duals at John Glenn, 9 a.m.
Clarenceville Quintet Meet, 9 a.m.
Columbia Central Invite, 9 a.m.
Grand Blanc Invitational, 9 a.m.
Blissfield Invitational, TBA.
ONTARIO HOCKEY LEAGUE
Friday, Dec. 4
Plymouth at Saginaw, 7 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 5
Sault Ste. Marie vs. Plymouth (Teddy Bear Toss) at Compuware Arena, 7:05 p.m.
MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Friday, Dec. 4
(WHAC/MIAA Challenge)
Olivet College at Madonna, 8 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 5
Schoolcraft at Owens (Ohio), 3 p.m.
(WHAC/MIAA Challenge)
Alma College at Madonna, 2 p.m.
WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL
Friday, Dec. 4
(Schoolcraft College Invitational)
K'zoo Valley vs. Kennedy-King (Ill.), 5:30 p.m.
Schoolcraft vs. Sinclair (Ohio), 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 5
Schoolcraft Invitational, 1 & 3 p.m.

ROCKS

FROM PAGE B1

It was 13-9 Bulldogs after the first and Salem got into enough of a groove to take a short-lived lead (15-13) following a jumper by deBear, a nifty finger roll through the paint by Stone and two free throws by junior Heidi Schmidt.

But Brighton outscored Salem 8-2 the rest of the quarter, with six of those points via free throws, to go up 21-17 at the half.

Early in the third, Stone stopped and popped from the top of the key to put the Rocks to within one point (21-20).

BUILDING THE LEAD

From there, the game unraveled for Salem as Brighton went on a 15-4 run to take a 36-24 lead.

Doing much of the damage during that stretch was senior forward Angelo Bisaro, scoring six of her team-leading 13 points.

Brighton went up 38-27 after three and held serve the final eight minutes.

Other key players for the Bulldogs included senior point guard Kirsten Tripp (11 points), senior forward Anna Mattson (nine points) and senior forward Allyson Lloyd (six points, eight rebounds).

Tallying five points in her first varsity game for Salem was Breanne Beaver, but she fouled out late in the third.

Stone led the Rocks with 13 rebounds and three blocks, while deBear registered four assists.

The Rocks get back into action at 7 p.m. Thursday against Ann Arbor Huron, also at Salem.

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WRAPS

FROM PAGE B1

host Wildcats to capture their season opener.

Senior forward Danielle Desilets canned 7-of-8 tries from the line and wound up with 13 points to pace Plymouth.

Also in double figures was Stacey Klonowski (12 points), while Alex Roberts and Isis Haywood tallied nine each. Chipping in with eight points was Troi Davis, while Katelyn Watson contributed six points.

CANTON 53, SALINE 13: The visiting Chiefs opened the season with offensive and defensive dominance against Saline, going up 16-5 after one quarter and then outscoring their opponent 15-0 in the second for a commanding 31-5 advantage at halftime.

Kari Schmitt sparked Canton with 19 points, five boards and five steals, with other top contributions from Robyn Mack (nine points, three rebounds) and Alyssa Cottrell (eight points, four steals).

"Defensively, we were pretty solid," Chiefs head coach Brian Samulski said. "The Schmitt twins (Kari and Sara) and (Kayla) Bridges did a great job on their best player. ... Overall, it was a great team effort, all nine players (who saw minutes) scored."

CLARENCEVILLE 40, P. CHRISTIAN 32: Livonia Clarenceville turned to its defense Tuesday night to score this come-from-behind victory over Plymouth Christian in the season-opener for both teams.

Trailing 28-17 at halftime, head coach Brady Gustafson's cagers turned the fortunes in their favor in the third quarter as the Trojans outscored PCA 9-4 to climb to within six heading to the final quarter of play.

In those last eight minutes, the Trojans held the Eagles without a basket of any kind, while scoring 14 of their own to walk away with the win.

Jenna Burgess topped Clarenceville on both ends of the court as she recorded a double-double with 10 points and 20 rebounds.

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DAVID REED

Canton junior forward Garrett Bryden (No. 11) rips a shot past Salem senior defenseman Ryan Blakey (No. 2) during Saturday night's contest at Plymouth Cultural Center. The host Rocks held on for a 4-3 win.

Rocks survive late Canton scare

BY TIM SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

It was that close, Saturday's white-hot intense varsity boys hockey tilt between host Salem and Canton at the Plymouth Cultural Center.

The Chiefs trailed 4-3 in the KLAAs crossover and were on the power play with a minute left and their goaltender on the bench for an extra attacker. Waves of Canton forwards jammed the goal but just couldn't get the puck behind Salem senior netminder Steven Manser, and the Rocks escaped with the 4-3 win to improve to 2-0.

"Anything could have happened, they could have scored, we could have scored (into the empty net) and I guess that's what a game like this is all about," said Salem head coach Ryan Ossenmacher. "Positioning-wise we did a nice job at the end. We crowded in front of the net and made it as hard as possible for them to get a shot through.

"The more legs that are in there the less opportunity it has to go in the net."

Canton (1-2) also missed the open net and hit a crossbar along the way, to the dismay of Chiefs head coach Jeremy Majszak.

"Sometimes the puck's with you, sometimes it's not," Majszak said. "The net was there, we hit a couple cross-bars, a couple posts, couple times hit some skates."

He might have been embellishing things a bit, but there's no denying the Chiefs did pour on the pressure after Salem broke a 3-3 tie at the 13:00 mark of the third.

"After they scored we went out there with more of a sense of urgency," Majszak continued. "We were down in their end the last five minutes of the game."

WINNING FEELING

That game-winning goal came when senior defenseman Matt Hull pinched in and zinged a shot over the

glove hand of Canton sophomore goalie Max Sexton (30 saves). On the play, a Salem shot bounced behind a Canton defenseman in the slot and Hull found himself with the puck and room to shoot.

"Somehow the puck ended up behind (the defenseman)," Hull said. "I just came up, took a good shot on net and it happened to go in.

"It's a real good feeling, especially hearing the crowd go wild and everything afterward."

Just before Hull's goal, the Chiefs turned up the offense during a power play but Manser (35 saves) was equal to the task.

Manser snared a pair of drives by senior defenseman Kyle Korte (1 goal, 1 assist), sandwiched around a nifty pad save against junior D-man Jimmy Lafontaine (1 assist) from the top of the right circle.

"Our first four games, two scrimmages, two regular season games, Steven's played each one and each one he's played extremely well," Ossenmacher said. "He's bailed us out of a lot of situations."

That game-ending scrum indicated how close the play was throughout the evening.

Salem opened the scoring at 3:50 of the first when junior forward Matt Downey crashed the crease to put one behind Sexton.

Canton finally registered a shot on goal at the eight-minute mark and off the ensuing faceoff knotted the contest. Manser stopped a shot, but slick junior forward AJ Rosales (1 goal, 1 assist) put the rebound in.

The Chiefs entered the first intermission up 2-1 on a power play marker by junior forward Jordan Smith.

Salem came out with more urgency in the second and got the equalizer just 27 minutes into the frame. Senior forward Josh Jarvela (2 assists) had a shot turned aside, but senior forward Mario Macari (1 goal, 1 assist) deposited the rebound behind Sexton.

RUSH JOB

Just a minute later, the Rocks went up 3-2. Senior forward Steve Haburne chipped the puck out of his own end and junior forward Ryan Quigley picked it up in the neutral zone and rushed down the left wing.

Quigley skated into the left circle and buried his shot over Sexton's blocker.

It nearly became a 4-2 Salem lead, but the apparent goal was wiped out by a penalty.

And Canton made good on that turn of events, scoring at 11:57 on the power play to make it 3-3 after two stanzas.

Rosales dished the puck back to Korte, standing halfway between the walls in front of the Salem blue line. His slapper zipped through the pads of Manser, who appeared screened on the shot.

Early in the third, Sexton came up with a string of clutch stops — including a pokecheck to thwart a dangerous rush — to keep his team close.

But Manser held the fort at the other end, right down to the perilous final seconds.

"We played pretty well, we had our spurts," said Ossenmacher, whose team won 2-1 over Southgate Anderson in the Nov. 25 opener. "For the second game of the season I thought that we played pretty well.

"We still have a lot to work on, with our consistency and our positioning."

Majszak didn't like the loss, but he did like the way his young team competed.

"Obviously on the scoreboard we lost, but it was a back and forth game that could have gone either way," he said. "Max stood in there and made some big saves and so did their goalie.

"The big shining point of tonight is we didn't give up the last five minutes even after they scored that goal."

Both teams will have a chance to face each other again 8 p.m. Friday at Canton's Arctic Edge.

Mach 10

Shamrocks, coach enjoy 10th championship

BY JEFF THEISEN
SPORTS WRITER

In an extreme clash of styles Saturday at Detroit's Ford Field, Novi-Detroit Catholic Central used brute force to conquer finesse to capture the high school's 10th State Championship.

The Shamrocks — who barely survived OT against Canton in the Nov. 14 regional final — knocked off pass-happy Sterling Heights Stevenson 31-21 thanks to a stingy defense and a ground game that racked 360 yards while holding the Titans to minus-five yards.

"It was a fantastic year," said CC head football coach Tom Mach, at the helm for all 10 Shamrocks titles. "It was a very, very tough game. We knew Stevenson was an excellent football team in all areas.

"I feel fantastically fortunate to be in this situation. I thank all my kids for doing such a great job. They were one of the best football teams I've coached as far as camaraderie, hard work, getting along and sacrificing for each other."

It was also the first title for Mach and the Shamrocks since 2003, two years before the school moved from Breakfast Drive in Redford.

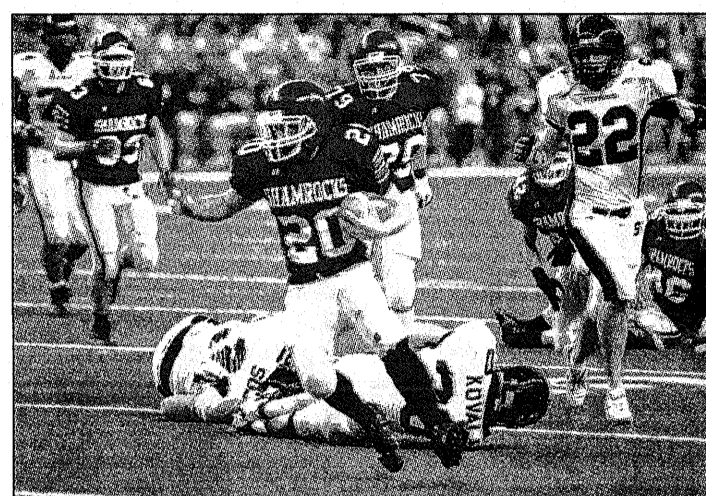
"They're all the same, but this one in particular, since we're experiencing it now, is a great, great feeling," said Mach.

The running back tandem of inside-bruiser Niko Palazeti and outside speedster Anthony Capatina carried most of the load in the Division 1 final. Palazeti carried 34 times for 146 yards, while Capatina racked up 188 on 20 carries. Both scored two touchdowns each.

"It's like pure joy," said Palazeti. "It's indescribable. It's the greatest feeling in the world."

It was the second-best output of the year for Capatina. He ran for more than 200 yards against Livonia Franklin.

"It's amazing," said Capatina. "It's the best feeling I've ever had in my life."



Novi-Detroit Catholic Central's Anthony Capatina (20) finds daylight in the Sterling Heights Stevenson secondary during Saturday's Division 1 football final. Capatina scored twice as the Shamrocks captured their 10th state title, including their first since exiting Redford in 2005.

I've ever had in my life."

The game started in favor of the Titans. A long kickoff and a 32-yard pass on the first play from scrimmage by star quarterback Jason Fracassa set up a field goal just moments into the contest for Stevenson.

But it would prove to be the only points of the half for the Titans.

GRINDING IT OUT

The Shamrock offense pounded out a possession time advantage of 17:29 to 6:31 for the Titans in the first half alone.

The opening drive for the Shamrocks featured seven runs by Palazeti and four by Capatina, finished off by a two-yard run by Capatina with 4:30 remaining in the opening quarter.

Following a three-and-out by Stevenson, the ground-pounding continued.

This time Capatina toted the ball five times with Palazeti carrying four times and finishing it off with a one-yard plunge barely more than three minutes into the second quarter.

Stevenson put together a solid drive on the next possession, but wound up missing a 34-yard field goal.

The same thing happened to the Shamrocks, when Justin D'Agostino's 35-yard field goal

was blocked.

The final major momentum switch of the half came via a blocked punt by Scott Byrne, giving the Shamrocks the ball at the Titan 14 with 2:18 remaining in the half.

Four plays later, Palazeti scored from the one for a commanding 21-3 halftime lead.

Stevenson made its best run in the third quarter, holding the CC offense off the scoreboard.

A 20-yard field goal by David Brown and a 75-yard pass from Fracassa to D.J. Mersham pulled the Titans within one score. Fracassa also hit Marcus Beaurum for the two-point conversion to trail 21-14.

But the Shamrocks got things rolling again with their third 12-play drive for a score.

The key play of the drive came with CC facing a fourth-and-one from its own 30. Quarterback Sam Landry snuck the ball for two yards for the first down.

Seven plays later, Capatina followed a Palazeti block on the edge for a nine-yard score and a 28-14 lead.

On the next play from scrimmage for Stevenson, Shamrocks defensive back Andrew Nelson stepped in front of a receiver on a deep ball for an interception.

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SPORTS ROUNDUP

Teddy Bear Toss

The Plymouth Whalers return home Saturday to host Sault Ste. Marie at 7 p.m. in the annual Teddy Bear Toss game.

Fans are encouraged to bring a new stuffed animal to Compuware Arena. The Booster Club also will have teddy bears available to purchase at the game and fans can throw them on the ice once the Whalers score their first goal.

It's a magical moment for fans and for families in need across Wayne County. All toys will then be donated to the Plymouth Community United Way children's charities.

Holiday hoops camp

The Plymouth High School Basketball Booster Club announced it will be hosting its Holiday Basketball Camp, 1-3 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28 through Wednesday, Dec. 30 at the PHS gymnasium.

Up to 50 boys in grades 5-8 are eligible to sign up. The cost of the camp is \$50. For more information and to register, contact booster club president John Nadratowski at (734) 844-3212.

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We Sell & Service:

Theater troupe inspires laughter

BY SHARON DARGAY
O&E STAFF WRITER

Inspire Theatre stages its plays in a church.
A former church pastor founded and directs the group.

And proceeds from this weekend's run of its current show, an original comedy about a pair of former televangelists, will help needy families at Christmas.

But that's where the similarity ends between the four-year-old theater troupe and church-based drama programs.

"We are an aspiring community theatre group," said Len Fisher, founder and artistic director.

The group rents performance space at Westland Warren Road Church and has produced such favorites as *Godspell*, *Father of the Bride* and *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Fisher penned the current show, *KORK-TV*, which ran two weekends and continues with encore shows at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 and 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 6. Tickets are \$12 and a portion of the proceeds will be used to help needy families.

"After talking with my pastor, Ron Wrightson of Life Church in Canton, I realized that there were many families in our area who are struggling even to put food on the table, much less buy presents."

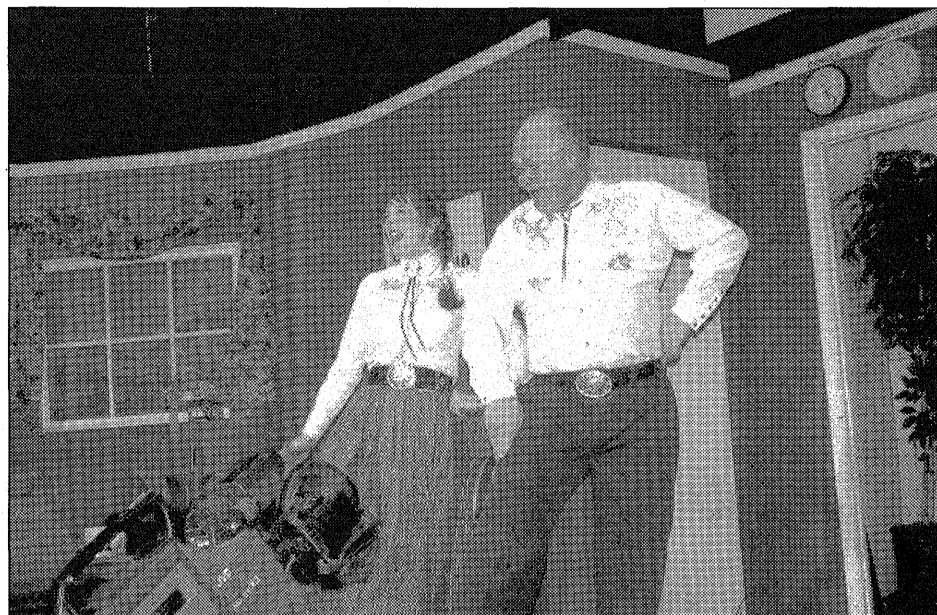
He said although the current show "is great fun" the troupe wanted to "give something back" to the community.

WACKY CHARACTERS

KORK-TV is a farcical comedy about two convicted former televangelists who are ordered to turn around a failing local television station as a part of their community service project.

Among the characters they must deal with are a narcoleptic weatherman, a priest who has his own bluegrass aerobics show, a flirty receptionist, a sportscaster with Tourette syndrome and a handyman who likes explosives.

How does a comedy about fallen evan-



Deanna Lee and Bill Peterson in *KORK-TV* at Inspire Theatre.

gelists play in a church setting?

"I'm not really certain and I've not questioned it," Fisher said.

"It's reality that preachers fall from grace, so that's not a stretch. The characters are likeable enough so people accept them."

Some of the characters grew out of an improv class the troupe held last year. Fisher gave his cast a setting — television station — and they improvised scenes.

"We laughed until our sides hurt. I said this is too good. I've got to make this into a play."

FORMER PASTOR

Fisher, a Westland resident, said he found he had a gift for teaching through drama after the church he had pastored was closed. He had always been active in community theater and had produced shows at churches. He knew it was time to start his own troupe.

"It was a now or never moment. I called everyone up and said, hey, we're going to start a theater."

He said the characteristics that made him a "mediocre pastor" have turned him into a "good director."

"I push and shove people. I tell them, just remember when I push and shove you, it's not to make you feel good but to make you look good."

"I watch people who are timid and shy and I get them on stage and push and shove them and drag them to places they want to go, but have never been before. Then, in a performance, they steal the show. It's a wow moment for them."

Fisher works with a core group of about 25 actors and crew members. There are no membership fees, but the troupe pays its dues through "sweat equity."

"We do everything to make it fun," Fisher added.

He's working on his second original play. Auditions will be slated this month, with rehearsals starting after Christmas. The show is scheduled for Valentine's Day weekend.

For more about Inspire Theatre visit www.inspiretheatre.com.



Elizabeth Fisher in Inspire Theatre's current production, *KORK-TV*.

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Sat. 4 p, Sun 11a

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10:00 a.m. Christian Education for all ages
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Parish Office 734-420-0131
Office Hours M-F 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
www.nativitygocchurch.org CE0884818

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Childrens Sunday School: 10:30 a.m.
Pastor: Dr. Jimmy McGuire
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Sunday School 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.
Nursery Provided
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The Rev. Dr. Victor F. Halboth, Assistant Pastor CE0882857

Risen Christ Lutheran

David W. Martin, Pastor
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The WMUZ Word Station
For additional information visit www.wardchurch.org CE0882877

For Information regarding this Directory,

please call Donna Hart at 248-437-2011, Ext. 247 or e-mail: dhart@dnps.com

CE0882870

Plymouth Strictly Business

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Art & Ideas Contemporary Art Gallery & Studio will feature the work of artist-in-residence Shaqe Kalaj.

Gallery challenges conventional wisdom

Art & Ideas Contemporary Art Gallery & Studio, a new art gallery and teaching studio located between Plymouth and Northville, hosts its grand opening 7-11 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5. In the midst of troubling economic times, the opening of an art gallery may surprise some, but that hasn't deterred Art & Ideas' director and owner, Mike Tolinski, nor its artist-in-residence, teaching artist Shaqe Kalaj.

The gallery, located just north of Plymouth's Old Village, will be showcasing over 40 of Kalaj's drawings at this first opening and exhibition, which will be followed periodically by new openings and shows of Kalaj's work throughout 2010.

"It's always the right time

to open an art gallery," said Tolinski.

Kalaj agreed. "Art is always important," said Kalaj, who believes art can address all issues of life, among them health, family and emotion. "One of my slogans is 'Art equals Life.'"

Kalaj's own "content-based" art could be described as surrealistic and figurative (focusing on the human form, especially the emotions revealed by the face and body). She has shown her work for years at galleries and museums throughout the Detroit area and the U.S., and internationally.

Functioning also as a "teaching studio," Art & Ideas has also scheduled small art classes to begin in February,

where one-on-one attention by Kalaj will be the key feature. She has taught several such classes to adults and children for over a decade.

Saturday's grand opening will include a short talk by Kalaj at 7:30 p.m., followed by music, food and socializing. Art & Ideas is located at 15095 Northville Road in Plymouth Township, in Provincetown Center. It's across from Phoenix Lake, just north of the eastbound 5 Mile Rd. intersection, right at the intersection where northbound Edward Hines Drive ends at Northville Road.

For a map, directions, and other details, see www.artandideasgallery.com or call (734) 420-0775 (gallery) or (734) 634-8117 (cell).

Flexible spending, medical savings accounts have pluses

Now that Thanksgiving is behind us there are some tax planning opportunities to consider as 2009 winds down.

Whether it is converting existing IRA money into a Roth IRA or implementing such tax moves as making an estimated payment on State of Michigan taxes before the end of the year, the time is now. One area that many people need to consider before the end of the year is flexible spending accounts.



Money Matters
Rick Bloom

A flexible spending account is generally set up through an employer and it allows pre-tax dollars to cover certain non-reimbursable expenses such as health care. Although flexible spending accounts can save money, they have one downside — if you do not use the money before the end of the year you lose it. Although a few years ago the Department of Treasury did pass new regulations that allowed employers to extend the time period in which flexible spending accounts can be used, not all companies have done so.

If you participate in a flexible spending account you should review the plan provisions and determine your remaining balance.

Many people are surprised how money can be used in flexible spending account. Over the last few years, what is a permissible expenditure has been expanded. For example, you can use flexible spending account money to pay for LASIK eye surgery, sunglasses and in many situations a doctor-recommended weight-loss program. The key is to look at your plan to determine what qualifies. If you have questions, talk to the human resource representative at your company.

Many people are confused when it comes to the difference between flexible spending accounts and medical savings accounts. Although they sound similar, they are not. Medical savings accounts have much greater flexibility than flexible spending accounts. For example, in a medical savings account you

are not required to use your contribution on a year-by-year basis. If you have a balance, the amount remains in your account and you can use it for years down the road. Flexible spending accounts don't have that same feature.

I am frequently asked if an employee should take advantage of a flexible account. My answer is yes. Flexible spending accounts give individuals an opportunity to use pre-tax dollars to pay for certain expenses. For someone in the 28 percent tax bracket, using pre-tax versus post-tax dollars represents a 28 percent savings right off the top.

The key, however, is how much to fund these accounts. Because flexible spending accounts have the use-it-or-lose-it feature, be smart with the dollars you contribute. Consider the expenses you incur that can be covered. That is the amount to contribute. It does not always make sense for an individual or even a family to contribute the maximum. In fact, because of the use-it-or-lose-it feature, I recommend contributing a little less than you expect to use.

Used effectively, flexible spending accounts offer individuals or families a great opportunity to save on taxes. However, like many tax items, when they're not used properly they end up costing you money.

It would be nice if there was one type of flexible account with standard terms. That is not the case. There are many types of plans with different terms and conditions. The key is to understand your plan and use it effectively.

One last note, if your employer does not offer a flexible spending account, discuss it. In addition, if your flexible spending account does not cover certain out-of-pocket health care expenses, talk to your employer about changing the plan. You would be surprised how easy it is for employers to make changes.

Don't forget the end of the year is upon us. If you have any tax moves, don't delay, now is the time. Good luck!

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

CHAMBER CHAT

Gift certificates

A great way to keep money in the local community this holiday season is to give Chamber Gift Certificates that can be used at over 80 stores and restaurants. The Chamber sells



Wes Graff

over \$60,000 a year in certificates that are used as great gifts for coaches, teachers, friends, family and coworkers. Gift certificates can

be purchased in any denomination at the Chamber office Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

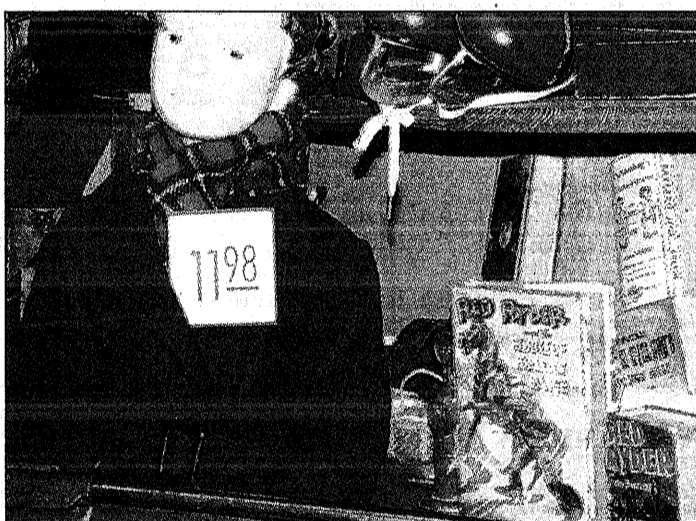
For additional information or to order gift certificates to pick up, please call the Chamber at 734-453-1540.

Economic breakfast

The December 2009 Good Morning Plymouth Community Breakfast will again take a glimpse into our economic future. The event will feature local experts who work directly in fields critical to our economy. This year we have also added to the line up of speakers State Representative Marc Corriveau to discuss the impact of decreasing state tax revenues on the Michigan economy.

- Speakers include:
- Government: Representative Marc Corriveau
 - Financial Institutions: Bill Lawton, Community Financial
 - Real Estate: Jeff Glover, Keller Williams Realty, Jeff Glover & Associates
 - Investment/Stocks: Steve Alexandrowski, GEM Asset Management, LLC
 - Auto: To be announced

These breakfasts normally draw 50-80 people and provide an excellent opportunity for networking. On December 10 the breakfast will be from 7:30-9 a.m. at Independence Village located at 14707 Northville Rd. (South of Five Mile Rd.). To attend this event, please call (734) 453-1540 or e-mail teri@plymouthmich.org. The cost is \$12.00 and can be paid in advance. Cancellations must



The Plymouth Historical Museum is showcasing the 1983 classic, "A Christmas Story," in its new exhibit.

be received 48 hours prior to the event, since the Chamber is liable for all meals.

This event is sponsored by TDS Metrocom and Independence Village.

Dick Scott for Tots

From now through Dec. 14, Dick Scott Automotive Group will be collecting toys for the Toys for Tots organization. On Saturday, Dec. 5 they will host a special one-day only holiday event and toy drive at each of their dealerships. As a thank you for bringing in your new unwrapped toy donation on Saturday, Dec. 5 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. you'll receive a coupon for \$10 off on your next oil change at any Dick Scott Dealership. They will have a Marine on site to greet visitors and Santa will be available for free photos compliments of Dick Scott Automotive Group between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Please do not bring any stuffed animals, as they can no longer be distributed because they can harbor germs. Please note that Toys for Tots is always in need of gifts for 9 to 12 year old boys and girls. Craft or hobby kits, makeup kits, electronics and CD's, are great choices.

Dick Scott has convenient locations in Plymouth, Canton and Fowlerville.

Santa is back for the Holidays

Santa roared into town on a fire engine to meet hundreds of children and their families in the Kellogg Park, and he'll spend lots of weekend time through Christmas Eve greeting children at his house along Main Street just outside Kellogg Park.

Santa's House is sponsored by DMC Family Care Associates and First Choice Urgent Care. The Chamber of Commerce hosts Santa's House and the Walk of Trees in Kellogg Park.

Real Life holiday

Real Life Plymouth is partnering with local businesses, organizations and individuals to introduce "A Real Life Christmas" for Plymouth area families who are experiencing financial hardship. They are currently seeking donations of unwrapped gifts, gift certificates or money to purchase gifts. They also need help promoting the program, finding families who are in need and assisting parents as they select gifts. For more information visit www.reallifeplymouth.com or call (734) 927-0300.

Wes Graff is executive director of the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce. He can be reached via e-mail at wes@plymouthmich.org or by calling (734) 453-1540.

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Breakfast with Santa In Your Pajamas

Friday, December 18 - Saturday, December 19



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 Breakfast with Santa for two adults and two children
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Santa is Coming to Our Livonia Branch Saturday, December 5th!

10:00 a.m. ~ 12:30 p.m.
 37401 Plymouth Road
 (Corner of Newburgh)

- Free Pictures With Santa
- Free Stocking Filled With Candy & Surprises
- Free Snacks & Refreshments
- Bring in this ad and receive the first \$5.00 to open your account (not redeemable for cash)

To open an account, bring in the child's Social Security card.

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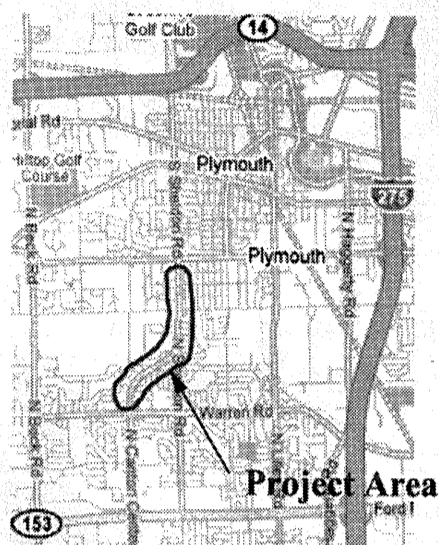
Detroit Artist Market
Location: 4719 Woodward Avenue, in the Detroit Cultural Center
Contact: (313) 832-8540 or visit www.detroitartists-market.org
Costick Center
Time/Date: Through Jan. 8, 2010; gallery hours are

GET OUT

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday
Details: The work of multimedia artist Susan Warner
Location: 28600 W. 11 Mile, in Farmington Hills
Contact: (248) 473-1856
Lotus Arts Gallery
Location: 995 West Ann Arbor Trail, downtown Plymouth
Contact: (888) 889-4ART (toll free) or (734)453-5400

WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
TOWNSHIP OF CANTON
ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING
FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE
**SHELDON CENTER ROAD
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**
(FROM SOUTH OF CANTON CENTER ROAD TO JOY ROAD)

CANTON TOWNSHIP
Monday, December 21, 2009
5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
at the
Township of Canton
Administration Building
Lower Level, Meeting Room E
1150 Canton Center S.
Canton Township, MI 48188



The Environmental Assessment will be available for review during normal business hours beginning December 3, 2009 and ending January 15, 2010 at the following locations:

Township of Canton
Administration Building
1150 Canton Center S.
Canton Township, MI 48188

Canton Public Library
1200 S. Canton Center
Canton, MI 48188

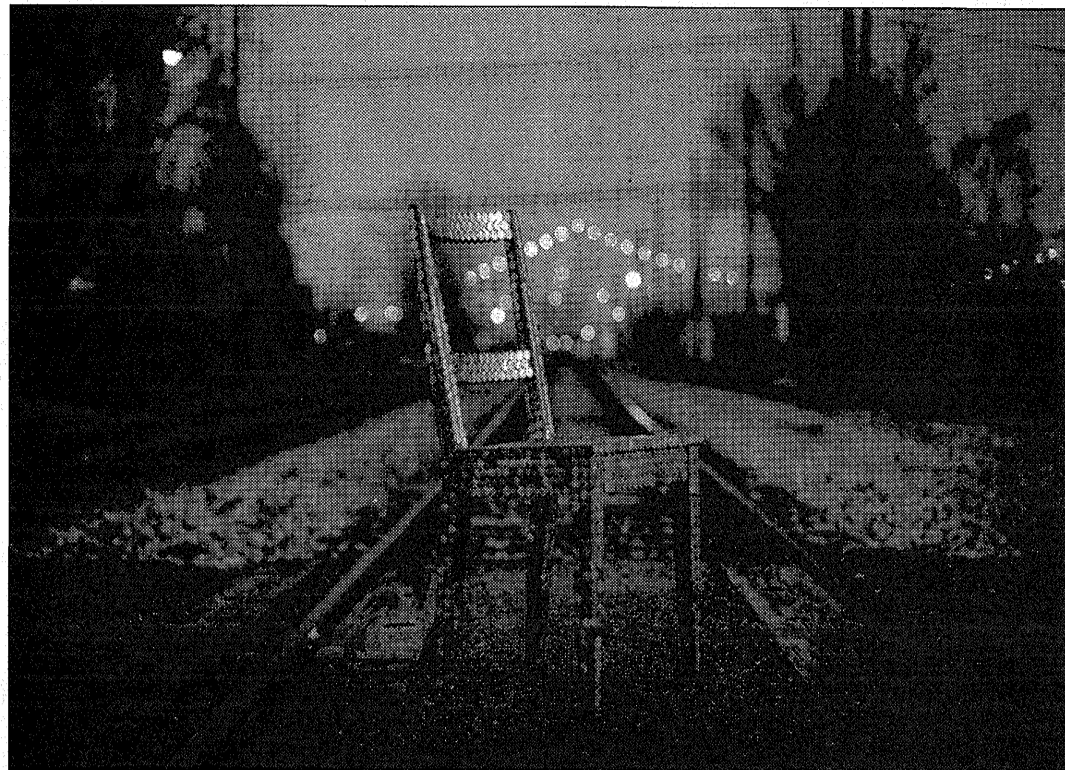
Wayne County
Department of Public Services
Field Engineering
Permit Office
33809 Michigan Ave.
Wayne, MI 48184

The Environmental Assessment is available for viewing on the Wayne County web site at <http://www.waynecounty.com/mygovt/dps/>. Look for News Releases.

Comments may be made in person at the aforementioned hearing or in writing to Kenneth M. Kucel at Wayne County Department of Public Services, Engineering Division, 415 Clifford, Detroit, MI 48226 or by email to SheldonCenterEA@co.wayne.mi.us
Written comments must be submitted no later than January 15, 2010.

Publish: December 3 & 10, 2009

060982199-3d5



A chair covered in pennies is among the pieces that will be auctioned at The 1st Annual Chair-ity Ball.

Sculpted, painted chairs auctioned to help veterans

BY SHARON DARGAY
O&E STAFF WRITER

Grace Stanzak figured it was a natural coupling: promoting art and literacy while at the same time spotlighting social issues.

The Plymouth mom and artist created a charitable organization, called Mercy Street, to get her idea off the ground. And then she waited until she found the perfect beneficiary for the organization's inaugural fund-raising event.

She heard an interview with the head of the Michigan Veterans Foundation about homeless veterans and knew "that's who I should help."

"When I heard that veterans are at least a third of the homeless in Michigan, I just thought it was disgraceful in some respects, tragic mainly," she said. "The Michigan Veterans Foundation and Veterans Haven in Wayne are actually trying to build a section of housing for soldiers that have families and have no place to go."

"Somehow we need to do better as a country for our veterans."

She hopes funds raised through The 1st Annual Chair-ity Ball, will make a difference in veteran's lives.

Kimberley's Catering will provide food and Charles Wickens, The English Auctioneer, will auction the 70-some chairs

that have been transformed into abstract art and functional, decorated furniture by 60 artists. The event will run 7-10 p.m., at Tangent Gallery, 715 Milwaukee, in the New Center area of Detroit. Tickets are \$20, available in advance by calling (734) 276-1842, as well as at the door.

"They are plain, simple Ikea chairs," Stanzak described the unusual canvass. "They aren't fancy chairs."

Transforming the simple furniture was left up to the artists. The pieces run the gamut, from paint-splattered pieces, to mosaics and sculptures.

"We've had a ball, a lot of fun doing this," Stanzak said. "I think the people who'd want to come would have a heart for homeless veterans or just for veterans. And also, people who love art and want to get something unique for their home office, studio or to give as a gift."

Among her favorite chairs are a spiky piece turned on its head and placed on a pedestal.

"Most are functional and you can sit on them. Or they are functional looking but something you might want to set in a corner."

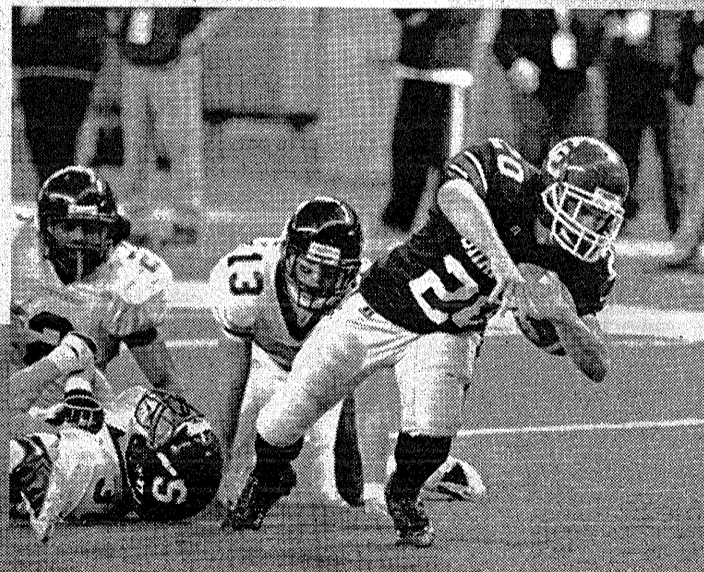
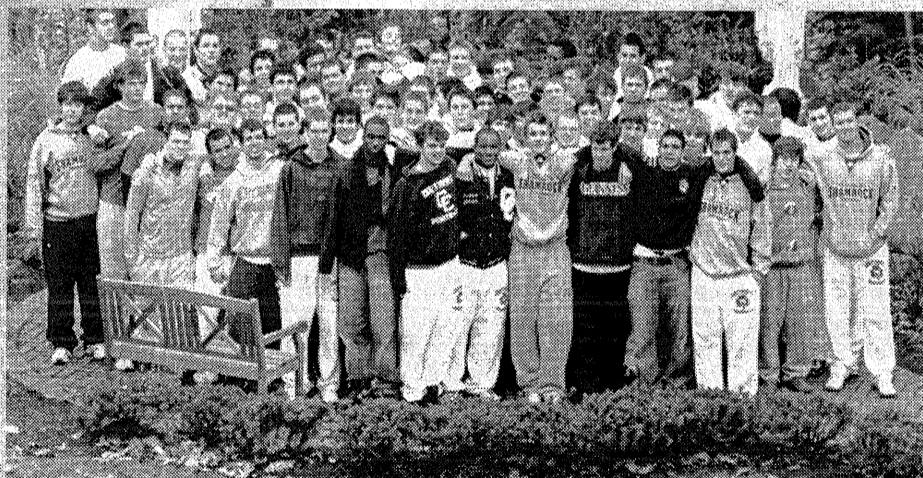
Several chairs on display now. Look for them at Westchester Barber Shop, 580 Forest, Plymouth and Plymouth Coffee Bean Company, 884 Penniman, Plymouth, and Haven, 863 Penniman, Plymouth, as well as at Mudgie's, 1300 Porter Street, Detroit.

CONGRATULATIONS

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Concert offers symphony, dance, seasonal carols

BY SHARON DARGAY
O&E STAFF WRITER

The Livonia Symphony Orchestra's upcoming performance on Saturday, Dec. 5, is more than just a seasonal concert — it's a community event.

Students from the Bunny Sanford School of Dance in Livonia will share the stage for the first half of the show; members of the Livonia Youth Philharmonic will play with the musicians on two numbers; singers from Clarenceville High School will carol. There's even an afterglow buffet at Corsi's Banquet Center.

"We did want to make it a family type thing," said Rose Kachnowski, symphony board president. "It's nice to be able to bring in the high school we're performing at. And the Livonia Youth Philharmonic, we try to get them to sit side by side with seasoned musicians once a year. This is a good concert for us to do that."

"We've had relationship with Bunny Sanford's School of Dance for many years. They are superb dancers. They make a contribution to the concert."

Although the dance school's students will perform their own full version of *The Nutcracker* at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Dec. 19 at Stevenson High School, 33500 W. Six Mile, in Livonia, they'll also dance several well-known selections during the first half of the Livonia Symphony concert at 4 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5, at Clarenceville High School, 20155 Middlebelt, in Livonia.

"This is our second year," said dance teacher Marie Rabey, describing the school's participation at "The Sounds



Dancers perform "snowflakes," a selection from "The Nutcracker." They'll dance the routine Saturday, Dec. 5, at a Livonia Symphony concert.

of the Season," the symphony's Christmas show.

"It feels quite new to us. We're excited because we're dancing with live music. It's a different feeling. You hear the music differently. It brings the ballet more to life."

KEEPING IT TOGETHER

With only one dress rehearsal, student dancers "have to get used to it quickly" and learn to follow the conductor. Rabey said Volodymyr Shesiuk, Livonia Symphony conductor, "knows ballet" and keeps an eye on the dancers, making sure the music is in synch with their steps.

About 50 students will dance in the symphony show.

"We're doing our snow scene and act two. Act two has all

the famous numbers — the Russian dance, the Chinese dance, the dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy."

Dancers range in age from 7 to adult. Most are in middle school and high school.

"I did it for over 17 years downtown with the Detroit Symphony. It's a part of my holiday. The whole feeling you get with the steps and the costumes evoke holiday," Rabey said. "I'm excited for my students. Between the music, costumes and around it's entertaining all around."

AFFORDABLE

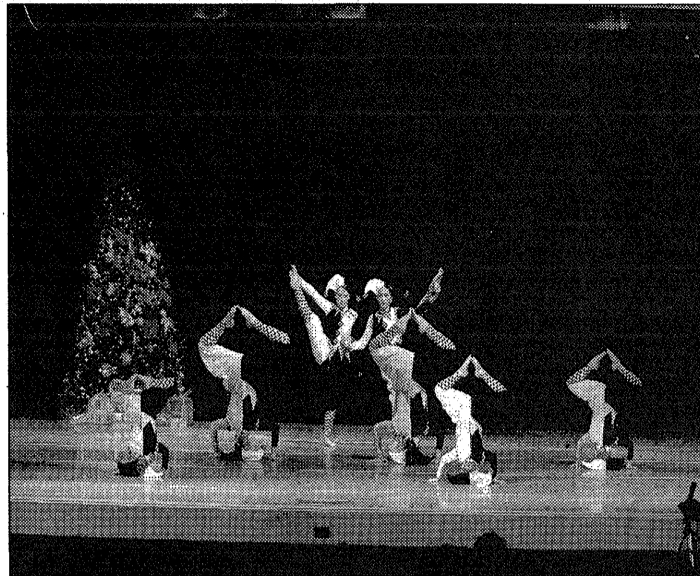
Kachnowski pointed out it's also reasonably priced entertainment. Adult tickets are \$17; children and students pay \$5.

"Regardless of age, it's \$5. Our concerts are one of the most affordable around," she said. "Even \$17, to see a full-blown production and all the community involvement, it's well worth it."

Christmas corsages will be available at the concert for a donation. Kachnowski said "it's a little something extra... giving back to the community."

The symphony contributes in an even bigger way to young musicians in the community by allowing members of the Livonia Youth Philharmonic to play with them.

"They're coming in to do a side by side. The young musicians will be sitting with the adults," said Linda Ignagni, personnel director



Students from Bunny Sanford's School of Dance perform an acrobatic routine from "The Nutcracker." Dancers will team up with the Livonia Symphony for a performance on Saturday, Dec. 5.

for the Livonia Symphony and a string specialist for the Livonia Youth Philharmonic. "The kids will do *White Christmas* and *Silent Night*. It will be exciting for them."

"This will be a great concert especially for someone who has never come to a live concert. When the orchestra starts to play, it's like Wow!"

Tickets for the concert are

available at all Livonia libraries, Livonia Drugs, 33525 Five Mile, or at the door on concert night. For more information, leave a message on the symphony hotline at (734) 421-1111.

Tickets for the afterglow buffet at Corsi's are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. To make a reservation, call Kachnowski at (734) 591-0266.

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As a community bank, First Place Bank is finely attuned to the unique circumstances of our local communities. While we're all facing tough times in this economy, keeping food on the table has been harder this year for many of our neighbors. In fact, food banks are reporting a 30 percent increase in people seeking assistance, many of them for the first time.

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