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THURSDAY
 March 10, 2011

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Volume 124
 Number 59

\$1.00

PLYMOUTH
OBSERVER
hometownlife.com A GANNETT COMPANY

PIPELINE

Question of the week

Now that the city of Plymouth has opted out of the Plymouth Community Fire Department, what should Plymouth Township officials do about fire services?

E-mail your opinions to bkadrich@hometownlife.com

Hip-hop fundraiser

Metro Dance Co. is hosting a hip-hop benefit "Dance From the Heart" to raise funds for The Miracle League of Plymouth. The event is open for anyone ages 8 to adult, regardless of experience, and will be held 1-4 p.m. Saturday, March 19, at Metro Dance Co. in Plymouth.

Registration for the event is under way. Hip-hop classes are \$15 per student with 100 percent of the proceeds donated to The Miracle League of Plymouth. Anyone interested in the event can contact Metro Dance Co. at (734) 207-8970 or by e-mail at info@MetroDanceCompany.com.

"We wanted to hold this fundraiser because it directly benefits some very special children in our community," Metro Dance director Kristie Wyler said. "Our goal is to raise as much money as possible to help these children and their families enjoy good times together."

On board

Plymouth resident Angela Cusmano is one of five new members added recently to the advisory board for The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit.

Cusmano was added along with retired radio legend Dick Purtan, Janet Hasson, Jack

Aronson and William Pettit.

Cusmano is a partner and chief operating officer of Dahring | Zewe and Associates. Her investment expertise focuses on retirement planning for corporations and individuals. She and husband Dan live in Plymouth.

In 2009, The Salvation Army of Metro Detroit was involved in providing 3,181,865 million meals and 724,134 nights of shelter for the homeless. The Plymouth Salvation Army Corps serves Plymouth, Canton, Northville and Belleville.

Volunteer rakers
 The Plymouth Community United Way is seeking volunteers for the spring "Rake-N-Go" event scheduled April 30. Volunteers are invited to help clean yards and provide light labor for senior citizens in Plymouth, Plymouth Township and Canton.

The day of the event, volunteers will meet at The Salvation Army Plymouth Corps at 9451 S. Main Street at 8 a.m. to check in. The PCUW will supply a continental breakfast and yard waste bags, but volunteers are asked to bring rakes, garden tools, hedge trimmers and gloves.

To help out the day of the event, respond by April 16 to Krista at kstrobel@ameritech.net or call (734) 453-6879, Ext. 6.



PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

John Doyle is a partner in Doyle's Tavern with sister Peggy and brother Brian.

Out of the rat race

Neighborhood tavern owner finds life after corporate

BY MATT JACHMAN
 OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The path to Doyle's Tavern runs through Florida, Hawaii, California and Michigan.

John Doyle, a partner in the eponymous bar and restaurant on Fralick near downtown Plymouth, was in restaurant management for other people for years, establishing eateries in several states for the Ritz-Carlton hotel chain, the Morton's of Chicago steakhouse folks and independent restaurateurs.

His home base with Ritz-Carlton was Naples, Fla., but Doyle's favorite corporate gig was in Hawaii, where he started a Ritz-Carlton restaurant and spent a full year running it. He also opened a restaurant at the former Ritz-Carlton in Dearborn in the late 1980s.

"I've been in food and beverages pretty much my whole life," said Doyle, who graduated from Central Michigan University with a degree in hospitality management.

Now, with his sister, Peggy, and their brother, Brian, as chef, Doyle runs Doyle's Tavern, which is marking its ninth anniversary — just in time for St. Patrick's Day,



The Penn Grill is one of many establishments where patrons will be able to celebrate St. Patrick's Day next week.

WEARIN' THE GREEN

Here are some other places in Plymouth and Plymouth Township one might visit on St. Patrick's Day:

- Sean O'Callaghan's, 821 Penniman. (734) 459-6666.
- Liberty Street Brewing Co., 149 W. Liberty. (734) 207-9600.
- Box Bar, 777 W. Ann Arbor Trail. (734) 459-7390.
- Plymouth Pub, 1507 Ann Arbor Road West. (734) 453-5340.
- Bennigan's, 40441 Ann Arbor Road East. (734) 459-8907.
- Penn Bar & Grill, 820 Penniman. (734) 453-3570.
- Bode's Corned Beef House, 280 N. Main. (734) 453-1883

which is Thursday, March 17.

'GREAT LOCATION'

When they opened in 2002, the Doyles intended

their place, formerly called the Side Street Pub, to be an old-school neighborhood bar,

Please see **TAVERN, A3**

Plants' investments in township indicate things are looking up

BY MATT JACHMAN
 OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Two Plymouth Township toolmaking companies are investing nearly \$5 million in new equipment, a move company representatives said Tuesday bodes well for manufacturing, particularly in the automotive industry.

DADCO Inc. and Moeller Manufacturing Inc., both located on Plymouth Oaks Boulevard, were awarded 12-year tax abatements Tuesday on machinery and other equipment currently being installed at their plants. DADCO is planning more than \$2.9 million in purchases, while Moeller is planning to spend more than \$1.9 million.

Both of the tax breaks, called industrial facilities exemption certificates, were approved Tuesday with unanimous votes by the township Board of Trustees.

ABATEMENT COSTS

Treasurer Ron Edwards said the abatements cut in half the personal property

tax rate on the new investments, and when combined with another, smaller break awarded to a printing franchiser, will cost the township about \$30,000 over their lifespan.

"Starting last fall, things have gotten a little better," Mary Pew, the controller at DADCO, told the board. "We're very optimistic about the future."

"We're growing nicely. The prospects look good," said Joe Baker, the chief financial officer at Moeller.

Moeller employs about 130 people and is planning to hire 10 more within two years, according to its application for the tax break. Baker said the company had to lay off employees during the recession, but has hired them all back.

DADCO employs about 100 people, and is planning to hire three more within two years, its application said. Its business picks up when automakers are "gearing up for new models and

Please see **INVESTMENTS, A4**

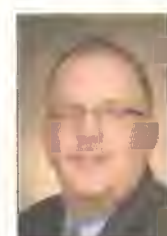
Board to meet on transition process

BY BRAD KADRICH
 OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Nearly six months after voting not to renew the contract of Supt. Dr. Craig Fiegel, the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools Board of Education will meet to start the process to find his replacement.

Board members will meet with consultants from the Michigan Association of School Boards after their Tuesday, March 22, meeting to start fleshing out ideas of what their "ideal" candidate will look like, school board President John Jackson said. The regular meeting starts at 6 p.m.; the workshop will follow.

Fiegel's original three-year



Jackson

contract expires June 30. The board voted on a controversial 4-3 ballot in September not to renew Fiegel's deal.

In November, members voted — on the same 4-3 ballot — to strip Fiegel of most of his duties and install Deputy Supt. Ken Jacobs as the district's chief operating officer.

But, to date, the board had done nothing to start the process of finding Fiegel's replacement. After being

Please see **TRANSITION, A4**

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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

Call for artists

The Plymouth Community Arts Council announces its second annual open art exhibition, Pure Art of Michigan, to be held in April. Artists are invited to submit work that highlights the unique beauty of our state.

Works will be accepted in all media except sculpture. There will be a \$10 fee for up to two entries of reasonable size. Paintings must be framed and ready for hanging and clearly identified and priced on the back. Final selections will be made by the exhibition committee.

The drop off day for exhibit consideration is Monday, March 28, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pure Art of Michigan runs from April 1-30.

The Plymouth Community Arts Council is located at 774 N. Sheldon Rd. in Plymouth. For further information, contact Nancy Pilon at (734) 455-4681, (nampilon@yahoo.com) or Tamara Trudelle at the PCAC at (734) 416-4278, tamara@plymoutharts.com.

Jazz @ the Elks

On Tuesday, March 22, Jazz @ The Elks presents the

John Trudell Jazz Quartet with John on Trumpet and Flugelhorn, Ray Tini on Bass, Bill Cairo on Drums, and Chuck Shermatero on Keyboard.

The event takes place at the Plymouth Elks Lodge #1780 at 41700 Ann Arbor Road, just west of Haggerty in Plymouth. The concerts are from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and there is limited seating so come early for a good seat for a \$5 donation with complimentary hors d'oeuvres.

For more information, go to www.PlymouthElks1780.com or call (734) 453-1780.

Hip-hop fundraiser

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fundraiser because it directly benefits some very special children in our community," said Metro Dance director Kristie Wyler. "Our goal is to raise as much money as possible to help these children and their families enjoy good times together."

Appraisal clinic

The Plymouth Historical Museum hosts an antique appraisal clinic with Ernie DuMouchelle of DuMouchelle Art Galleries in Detroit on Wednesday, March 30, from noon to 6 p.m. Items to be appraised include antique furniture, art, and small objects. No jewelry please. Appraisals are by appointment only and time slots are filling up quickly. Oral evaluations will be provided for \$10 per item; written evaluations will be provided for \$15 per item.

Call for an appointment, (734) 455-8940. The Plymouth Historical Museum is located at 155 S. Main St., just north of downtown Plymouth.

Sagear scholarship

The Rotary Club of Plymouth A.M. is striving to recognize a Plymouth-Canton School district high school senior who has overcome adversity with its annual Sandra Sagear Rotary Scholarship.

Club officials are looking for students who have displayed courage, perseverance, spirit, and creativity in succeeding in achieving an education, despite a physical, mental or emotional barrier. They have also shown an appreciation of others and a commitment to their community. The recipient of this award will receive a scholarship.

The award is named after Sandra Sagear, a 1969 graduate of the original Plymouth High School who imagined and believed she could succeed as she lived everyday with Polio. To download an application, go to: <http://www.storytellerdesign.com/Portals/4/2011Application-ScholarRotary.pdf>



Barefoot Productions hosts auditions for 'Lips Together, Teeth Apart!' 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.

Barefoot hosts auditions for next play

Barefoot Productions announces auditions for its production of the off-Broadway, award-winning hit, "Lips Together, Teeth Apart!" by Terrence McNally.

Auditions take place 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at Barefoot Productions Theatre, 240 N. Main in Plymouth (the old Walker-Buzenberg furniture store).

Barefoot officials are looking for two men and two women aged from their 30s to 50s. Actors should bring a resume and headshot, if available, as well as any schedule conflicts. Actors will do cold readings from the script.

The play, to be directed by Barefoot founder Craig Hane, is about a gay community in Fire Island which provides an unlikely setting for two straight couples. Sally, married to Sam, a New Jersey contractor, has inherited the house from her brother, who died of AIDS.

Sam's hyperkinetic sister, Chloe, and her smug, aristocratic husband, John, have arrived for the Fourth of July weekend. Amidst the seemingly mundane activities, it becomes apparent that the two men despise each other because John has had an affair with Sally; Sally is panicked

and melancholy because she is pregnant and fears miscarriage; and Chloe seems determined to drive them all mad with her incessant babble.

Through monologues unheard by others, the characters reveal a desperate sense of individual isolation. Hane called the play "a blend of searing drama and poignant comedy."

Barefoot Productions also seeks technical and front-of-house crew for this production.

For more information about these opportunities or about its audition process, contact Hane at (734) 582-9688 or visit www.justgobarefoot.com.

Band looking for new members

The Plymouth-Canton Marching Band is looking for new members to join their ranks of marchers, color guard and percussionists for the upcoming 2011 season.

Throughout the 2011 season, the high school students will perform and compete in front of thousands of people and finish on the streets of New York City marching in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The PCMB will be the first band from Michigan to participate

in this historic and holiday tradition in the last 40-50 years.

Current PCMB members and staff will be hosting informational meetings in the upcoming months for students and parents interested in finding out more about the band program. The meetings will take place Wednesday, March 16; Tuesday, April 5; and Tuesday, May 17, at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth High School band room (near the big yellow semi-trailer).

Interested students only

need to attend one of the three meetings. Parents will learn about all the efforts being done to send these kids to New York with little or no money due to corporate sponsors and fundraising efforts.

Current eighth graders and other incoming student musicians and dancers interested in joining the PCMB are encouraged to attend one of these informational meetings.

For more information, visit www.pcmb.net.

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Canton's annual Liberty Fest parade faces budget ax

BY DARRELL CLEM
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Canton's Liberty Fest parade has become the latest casualty as local officials continue to swing a budget ax that already slashed employee wages and ushered in \$1.8 million in spending cuts across township departments.

Supervisor Phil LaJoy dropped the bombshell Tuesday night during a Canton Township Board of Trustees meeting, saying the community's milestone, 20th Liberty Fest will happen June 15-18 without the usual parade along Ford Road.

Abandoning the parade — a decision that appears likely to upset some residents — will save Canton an estimated \$10,000 as officials continue to chip away at a budget deficit that once threatened to swell to \$15 million by next year.

After Tuesday's meeting, Trustee John Anthony said the parade, while popular with many residents, involves a large commitment of time and expense for local police, firefighters and other employees.

The announcement signaled another reminder that Canton, after losing \$8.6 million in revenues since 2007, continues to face difficult budget

decisions even after securing employee concessions, slashing spending and imposing a 1.75-mill tax increase for police and fire services.

Canton Leisure Services Director Debbie Bilbrey-Honsowetz called the decision not to have a parade "very difficult" but added, "we are cognizant of our current economic challenges, and this is just one example of reducing a service when appropriate without negatively impacting Canton's identity."

Those involved in past parades are encouraged to contact event planners at (734) 394-5460 for information on alternate Liberty Fest group partici-

pation options.

In a welcome reprieve from festival budget-cutting, the township board approved a five-year agreement with Pennsylvania-based Zambelli Fireworks to continue providing the festival-crowning fireworks show that erupts over Heritage Park.

The fireworks show costs about \$25,000 a year, but officials say some of the expense will be paid with a 5-percent pay cut accepted this year by the seven-member township board.

Zambelli — one of several companies that bid for the fireworks show

— was rated higher based on the number and size of fireworks shells set off during the show.

Trustee Todd Caccamo noted that an alternate company, Wolverine Fireworks Display Inc., could have saved the township about 7 percent — a savings he said was appealing on the surface. Yet, he voted alongside his colleagues because Zambelli offered a larger fireworks show that officials say residents have come to expect.

"It's a signature event for Canton," Treasurer Melissa McLaughlin said.

dclcm@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-2238



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sean O'Callaghan's in downtown Plymouth is ready for St. Patrick's Day.

TAVERN

FROM PAGE A1

John Doyle said.

"I think we hit it. I think we hit our goal," Doyle said in his bar on Tuesday. "We're not pretentious."

The place was formerly the Side Street Pub, which had been around for about 30 years. A death in the family had brought John Doyle back to Michigan, and when Side Street went up for sale, he jumped at the chance.

"I thought it was a great location," said Doyle, who grew up in Northville. "The foot traffic's awesome, the people are great, the small-town feel." Doyle also likes Plymouth's downtown events, which attract thousands of people during many weekends throughout the year.

Doyle's, which has patio seating in front (it'll be open on St. Paddy's Day if the weather cooperates), attracts a good crowd of regulars, but "there's always somebody new coming through the door" as well, said Doyle.

He described the menu as "bar food-plus": there are appetizers, burgers, salads, soups, sandwiches, pizzas and a selection of Mexican dishes on the regular menu. The daily specials, he said, are where the "plus" comes in; diners on Tuesday could order a chopped

sirloin dinner, a Cajun chicken salad, or a plate of pork and vegetable potstickers.

GREEN DAY

Doyle's has a sizable beer menu, including, for those seeking Irish suds, Guinness, Harp and Smithwick's (pronounced "smiddicks"). On St. Patrick's Day, Brian Doyle will be cooking up traditional British Isles dishes for the day's specials — Irish stew, bangers and mash (a sausage and potatoes dish) and corned beef and cabbage.

Doyle's will also have a strolling trio — two bagpipers and a drummer — plus a solo bagpiper on hand during the late afternoon and early evening hours on St. Patrick's Day.

Doyle said his goal had long been to have his own place, even when he was in the corporate world. He said he's motivated by the freedom of having his own business, and that he's putting his corporate experience to work for himself.

Doyle's has a staff of 12 people, in addition to John, Peggy and Brian, and many of them come with years of experience. "They do an excellent job," John Doyle said.

Doyle's Tavern opens at 11 a.m. six days a week, and at noon on Sundays. Open until 1 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, until midnight other nights. Doyle's is at 860 Fralick; the phone number is (734) 207-9656.

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



Aaron Dworkin, founder and president of Sphinx, comes to the Plymouth Community Arts Council March 15.

Sphinx founder talks at art lunch

Aaron Dworkin, founder and president of Sphinx and a man of monumental achievements, is coming to the Plymouth Community Arts Council March 15.

A luncheon will be served at 11:30 a.m., with Dworkin's presentation to follow. Tickets are \$20, which includes a \$5 donation to the Sphinx Organization.

Sphinx Organization envisions a world in which classical music reflects cultural diversity and plays a role in the everyday lives of youth. The Sphinx Organization increases the participation of blacks and Latinos in classical music both in the concert hall as well as in the classroom.

In October 2008, the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra comprised of top alumni of the Sphinx Competition, embarked on its first-ever tour, which cul-

minated in a Carnegie Hall Concert. On Feb. 19, the Sphinx Organization presented its 14th annual competition at Orchestra Hall.

As founder and president, Aaron Dworkin has been recognized and honored widely for his vision and success in achieving his goal. He is a MacArthur Fellow, Michiganian of the Year, People Magazine Hero, and one of Newsweek Magazine's People Who Make America Great. He has recently been nominated by President Obama to serve on the National Council for the Arts.

Seating for the presentation will be limited; call (734) 416-4278 or stop by the PCAC for tickets.

The Plymouth Community Arts Council is located at 774 N. Sheldon Road, just south of M-14, in Plymouth.

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CRIME WATCH

Snowblower swiped from open garage

A homeowner on Amherst Court, near Beck Road and Ann Arbor Trail, reported the theft of a snowblower from his garage on Friday.

The Toro-brand snowblower was taken from the garage, which had been left open, between about 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Friday, according to a Plymouth Township Police Department report.

The victim told police he had left his garage door open at about 10 a.m. in order to unload some items from a vehicle in his driveway. He left the garage unattended for a short time and returned to find the snowblower was gone.

The victim pointed out that a second snowblower and a power washer had not been taken, police said.

- By Matt Jachman

FIRE RUNS

The Plymouth Community Fire Department responded to the following runs during the period March 2-8:

- Tuesday, March 8 — Rescue runs on Heritage, on Beck and on Haggerty; residential rescue runs on Briarwood and on Princeton.

- Monday, March 7 — Rescue runs at a public building on Haggerty; residential rescue runs on Starkweather, on Rockledge, on Van Buren, on Northville Road, on Princeton and on Dewey; commercial rescue run on N. Main;
- Sunday, March 6 — Vehicle accident with wash-down at Beck and N. Territorial; mutual aid run at 8 Mile and Beck; rescue runs on Northville Road, on Rocker, at Harvey and Linden, on Chestnut, on Haggerty, on Woodgrove, on Robinwood, on Nantucket and on S. Mill.
- Saturday, March 5 — Residential rescue runs on Eaton, on Starkweather, on Haggerty, on Sycamore, on Bellwood, on Greenview Place and on Ann Arbor Trail; special run at Main and Penniman.
- Friday, March 4 — Rescue runs on Plymouth Hollow, on Haggerty, on Greenview, on Russet, on Ann Arbor Trail, on Newport, on N. Holbrook, on Brentwood, on Sheridan, on Clemmons and on Oak.
- Wednesday, March 2 — Commercial rescue run on Beck; rescue runs on N. Mill, on Plymouth Road, at Ann Arbor Road and Massey, on Lilley, on Beck, on Pinetree and on S. Mill.

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Money Matters
Rick Bloom

I was doing some research this weekend and would like to share the result. The first deals with a birthday of sorts, while the second one is something that I'm always fond of — receiving something for free.

The birthday I am talking about is the bull market. It's been two years now since the stock market bottomed out and started its remarkable rise. If you go back to the first week of March 2009, the S&P 500 was below 670 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was in the mid 6,000. Fast forward to today, two years later, the S&P 500 is over 1,300 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average is over 12,200. We've also seen a similar, remarkable turnaround in the NASDAQ market as well. The market's performance over the last two years has been nothing short of incredible.

It would be nice if the U.S. and world economies were recovering as fast as the stock market. Unfortunately,

they are not. Although there are some good signs in the economy of late, (the recently released unemployment numbers), we have a ways to go before the U.S. economy can match the incredible run of the stock market. However, I have no doubt that we will get there.

The stock market has had a substantial recovery from the financial crisis that the world experienced a few years ago. Unfortunately, according to numbers I've seen, individual investors have not recovered as well. Fear that gripped individual investors during the financial crisis resulted in many people letting emotions dictate their investment decisions, which is always a mistake. I've said many times in the

past that free is my favorite word in the English dictionary. Unfortunately, in our world sometimes free means that there are conditions attached. That is why when there truly is something absolutely free that makes sense, it's something that should be talked about. I am referring to a free tax return preparation service that most people can use. For years, the Internal Revenue Service has had a program in conjunction with tax preparation software companies. This program allows individuals to go online and use free software to prepare and file a federal tax return. This is not a gimmick, it's real and it's truly free.

To take advantage of this free tax service your 2010 adjusted gross income must be less than \$58,000. That covers about 70 percent of the American public. If you meet this criterion, go to the IRS website at www.irs.gov, click on "free tax file," then follow the instructions. You are not using IRS soft-

ware, rather, you can select software from a variety of well-known tax preparation companies. These companies provide software for free and there are no gimmicks. Obviously, these companies want to try to sell you other products, however, you are under no obligation. There is no pressure because you're doing everything online.

Don't be fooled by other free tax preparation offers. The offer I'm referring to is only available through the IRS website.

It's March, which means you don't have that much time left to complete your tax return. Therefore, as we still have some lousy weather left this winter, why not use this time to complete your return. Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. Observer & Eccentric readers can submit questions at moneymatters@hometownlife.com. For more information, visit his website at www.bloomassetmanagement.com.

Suspect arrested after cashier halts would-be robbery

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

A quick-thinking cashier foiled a robbery Sunday at the Tim Horton's in Plymouth, and police arrested a suspect nearby a short time later.

Kent A. Middleton of Plymouth was charged Tuesday, in 35th District Court video arraignment, with armed robbery and assault with intent to rob. Middleton, 46, was also charged as a

habitual offender, which could increase the length of any prison sentence if he is convicted.

Judge James Plakas set a bond of \$750,000, and Middleton was being held Wednesday in the Wayne County Jail.

According to Lt. Jamie Grabowski, who is in charge of the Plymouth Police Department's detective bureau, the incident occurred just before 11 a.m. Sunday. A man walked into the Tim

Horton's, at Plymouth Road and Mill, and demanded money from the register, Grabowski said.

The man had his hands in his pockets, implying he was armed, the lieutenant said. But when the cashier set the cash drawer on the counter, he reached for it with both hands, and she quickly pulled it away, telling him to leave the store, Grabowski said.

The cashier called 9-1-1, reporting the would-be robber

was walking south on Mill, Grabowski said. Police were on the scene quickly and arrested Middleton, on outstanding warrants, at a nearby apartment complex, police said. No weapon was recovered.

Middleton confessed to the robbery while being interviewed by police, Grabowski said. A preliminary hearing in the case is scheduled for Friday, March 18, in district court.

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INVESTMENTS

FROM PAGE A1

new products," Pew said. Both companies are looking for markets around the world, their representatives said. "Everything we do now is with a global perspective," Pew said. Baker stressed that the environment remains very competitive.

BOARD APPROVAL

DADCO specializes in nitrogen gas spring technology, which is used in metal-forming and injection-molding operations. Moeller also makes nitrogen gas springs, plus metal punches and stamps and other manufacturing products. The township board also

unanimously approved a tax abatement for about \$468,000 in equipment being purchased by Allegra Network for its building on Galleon Drive.

Allegra is a franchiser of printing and graphics companies such as American Speedy Printing Centers and Signs Now, and employs about 45 people. The company plans to add 15 to 20 jobs within two years, its application for the tax break said.

The tax breaks are good tools for getting companies to invest in communities, Edwards said. He said Gov. Rick Snyder's proposal to take the power to grant such incentives away from local officials and give it to state legislators is the wrong approach.

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TRANSITION

FROM PAGE A1

ected board president in January, Jackson said he thought such decisions should wait until "things have stabilized" after a tumultuous few months for board members.

Apparently, that time has come. The MASA consultants are being brought in, Jackson said, to help board members define the qualities they want to see in their next superintendent. "They're going to help us decide the qualities and the competencies we want to look for," Jackson said. "We also

have to decide if we want to use an interim superintendent or hire a new person."

Those decisions are crucial to the district because, in addition to replacing Fiegel, board members are going to have to replace several key administrators, including Jacobs, Dr. Cindy Swift, the assistant superintendent for instructional services, and human resources chief Ray Bihun.

Board members will have to decide if they want to replace those key administrators first, or bring in the new superintendent and let that person have a voice in hiring those replacements.

Driver convicted in fatal I-275 collision

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Teri Gunn said she's seen many drunken driving cases where the driver gets nothing more than a slap on the wrist, so she could have been pardoned for worrying that might be what happened in the case of Robert Bojaj, the Farmington Hills man accused of killing Gunn's daughter, Shelby, in an Aug. 25 car crash on I-275 in Canton.

She needn't have worried. On Monday, a Wayne County jury convicted Bojaj of second-degree murder and of operating under the influence of liquor causing death.

Bojaj, 28, faces sentencing before Wayne County Circuit Judge David Allen at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 24. According to Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Athina Siringas, sentencing guidelines allow Allen to start with a

minimum of anywhere from 18.5 to 31 years; the maximum is life.

"I guess it was relief in one way," said Teri Gunn, who sat with husband Rob through the trial. "The weight is lifted, but the loss is still there. I feel like somebody's going to pay now. So many times in drunk driving cases the driver gets a slap on the wrist. That didn't happen here, and my husband and I are grateful for that."

So is Siringas, who insisted all along her case warranted the second-degree murder charge. Siringas didn't want to discuss specific aspects of the case pending the sentencing hearing, but she acknowledged her delight with the verdict.

"We're absolutely satisfied with the jury's verdict," said Siringas. "From the beginning we believed this was a murder two, and we're satisfied the jury saw it the way we saw it." Bojaj was convicted of kill-

ing 25-year-old Shelby Gunn when he rear-ended her in a crash that ended after Bojaj reportedly reached speeds of nearly 100 mph on northbound I-275 in Canton around 1:30 a.m. Aug. 15.

Witnesses testified to the high-rate of speed at which Bojaj was allegedly traveling in the dark-colored Lexus he was driving. Testimony also indicated Bojaj had a blood-alcohol content more than three times the legal limit.

By the time police arrived at the scene, the Lexus was tangled in the guardrail cords in the median of I-275 just past Koppernick in Canton Township. On the right side

of the road sat the Dodge Intrepid, driven by Gunn, its rear end smashed and Gunn slumped over the wheel.

Defense attorney Paul Bernier said "it's way too early to talk about any appeal, because we have to deal with the sentencing hearing." But he said the incident carried a cost to everyone involved.

"The case is a tragedy for everybody concerned," said Bernier. "Everybody involved in this case has lost something. It's a tragedy for the Gunn family, as well as for the Bojaj family."

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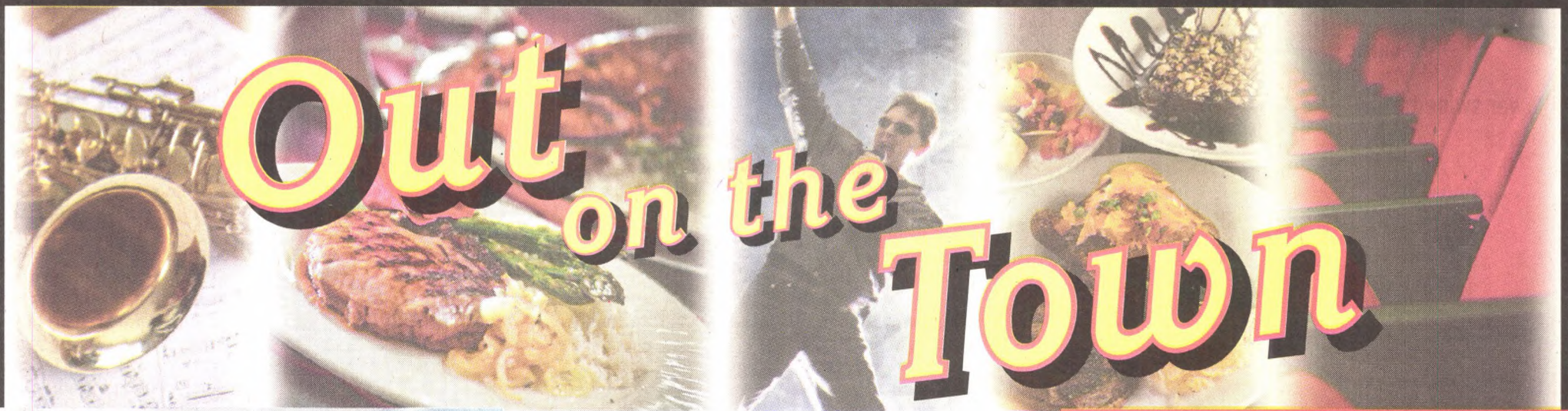
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PHOTOS BY ANN ESPINOZA

Heather Warren of Granite Transformations for kitchens and baths talks with Pradeep Krishnan of Canton.



Ken Bowerman from DTE Energy, and Micheal Hinz of Plymouth talk about energy efficient light bulbs.

Home expo senses spring is coming

BY BRAD KADRICH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

With spring approaching and people starting to think about home improvements, Mary and Joseph Doher of Redford made their way to the Canton Home Improvement Expo at the Summit on the Park Sunday to see if they could get a handle on what projects might cost.

They were joined by thousands of other people over the 10th annual two-day event, which featured some 122 vendors for everything from roofing and landscaping to windows and energy-efficient systems.

"We came by to see what's up and get an idea how expensive things are these days," said Joseph Doher, who said he's thinking about a furnace, roof and windows. "I find (the expo) very informative. It gives me a chance to talk to several contractors and to get a ballpark number on how much money I'm going to need."

For contractors, home expo

events like Canton's are an ideal way to keep their names out there. The folks at Canton Construction know how word of mouth from events like this can eventually lead to increased customer traffic. Owner John Sarnecky tells the story of a bench his crew built for contest won by a local woman. The woman told Sarnecky the bench "comes up in every conversation."

"She loves (the bench)," said Sarnecky. "It comes up in conversation, and we get calls on it. Any little thing helps."

Renee DeVos of the Canton Township building department said the 10th expo drew some 3,000 people the first day (numbers weren't available for the second day) despite an approaching storm that hit Saturday afternoon.

"It's a popular show," DeVos said. "A lot of people in March are ready to do something. They come to get ideas, because they're ready to start again."

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Angela Stambesky of Belleville getting information from Rolland Cement.



MICHELE AUSTIN

Scoop the Newshound hung out for a bit with some of the cast of the Spotlight on Youth production of Tom Sawyer, including (front, from left) Ashlyn McCann, 12, Canton, Roman Bonacorsi, 9, Plymouth, Madison McCann, 9, Canton, and (back) Danielle Paul, 13, Plymouth, Clare Shortal, 15, Plymouth, Amelia Schmidt, 12, Plymouth, Barbara Bloom, the producer/director of Spotlight on Youth.



Jasmine Torres, 3, and sister Jessica, 8, get help from their Dad at the Kid's Corner hands-on project center, sponsored by Home Depot.



Canton building inspector Alex Mano answers questions about permits and inspections.



Three-year-old Akaash Vitla tries out a piano from Evola Music.



Jason Bruce of Livonia is the new director of operations for Velvet Peanut Butter, which is available in both smooth and crunchy. He said the feedback from customers at Busch's Market in Livonia, where this photo was taken, and other stores has all been positive. "When I'm stocking the stores, I get a lot of, 'Oh I remember that as a kid!'" he said.

Velvet Peanut Butter spreads to some 500 grocery stores

BY KAREN SMITH
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Like many in Metro Detroit, Eric and Jason Bruce grew up eating Velvet Peanut Butter, made in Livonia for 30 years.

Then the company was sold in 1985 and after a series of acquisitions, the brand disappeared off store shelves.

"I thought that was criminal," said Eric, 44, adding that local brands are part of an area's identity.

So Eric bought the recipe and the rights to the Velvet label and found a manufacturer in Georgia to make it. His wife Kim took it to the senior buyer at Hiller's Market, Larry Krispin.

Hiller's bought 1,300 jars, their entire inventory, and the peanut butter sold out in two weeks. That was in 2009.

Today, Velvet Peanut Butter is available in more than 500 Michigan grocery stores, including Kroger, Meijer, Hiller's, Spartan and Busch's. The business is doing well enough that Eric recently hired his brother Jason, 41, who lives in Livonia, as director of operations. Jason is overseeing the expansion and distribution of Velvet Peanut Butter.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Eric, who has a master's degree in business administration from Eastern Michigan University and works in Atlanta in marketing for an ABC affiliate, said he expected the brand to do well, but he didn't expect the emotional connection people would have with it.

"Their grandma or their mom would serve it to them," he said, explaining the appeal of Velvet Peanut Butter, with its trademark boys, "Fresh," "Pure" and "Delicious."

Eric's favorite part of the business is getting e-mails from customers who are glad the product is available again.

"Velvet Peanut Butter takes me back to the late '60s when I rode with my mother in the car to pick my dad up from

work," wrote a customer from Rochester. "As we would approach the Velvet Peanut Butter facility (on Schoolcraft Road), mom would say, 'OK, roll the window down!' and I would crank the window down and inhale the wonderful aroma of roasting peanuts!"

Wrote a customer from Center Line whose grandparents served him Velvet peanut butter sandwiches every weekend for lunch, "It has brought back memories of simpler times and family long gone and I will be a customer as long as you make it."

Some of the e-mails come with suggestions of how to eat it - like with oatmeal or jalapeños.

WONDER BREAD

The Bruce boys, who grew up in Garden City, prefer Velvet Peanut Butter on white bread, preferably Wonder bread.

That's how they ate it in their school lunches - Eric with grape jelly, Jason just plain - and that's how they still eat it today.

"When you bite into it, it actually feels like you're tasting a peanut, and that's the thing I like about it," Jason said.

Their kids love it. Eric's daughter, Emily, 4, screams for peanut butter as soon as she sees the jar. Jason's son, Benjamin, 9, won't let anyone he knows have any brand other than Velvet in their kitchen cupboard. "From the get-go, he's been my No. 1 supporter," Eric said.

Velvet Peanut Butter was started in 1937 in Detroit by an Eastern Market truck driver who saw used peanut butter making equipment advertised for sale. The boys on the jar were drawn in the likeness of his son.

Eric's goal is to preserve the Velvet brand so it never disappears from store shelves again, and for Velvet to become the No. 1 peanut butter sold.

He's got a long ways to go - Velvet is just starting to be sold in other states - but he's

unwilling to take any shortcuts to get there.

10 PERCENT TO CHARITY

For example, he won't reduce the amount of peanut butter in the jar from 18 ounces. That goes against his company's values. And he pledges to give 10 percent of the company's annual profits to charitable efforts. Last summer, Velvet donated 10 cases of peanut butter to Lighthouse of Oakland County to help feed kids from low-income families who normally get lunch for free at school.

The company now has five part-time employees, including Eric's wife, Kim.

Jason also works as rink manager and a Zamboni driver for the Livonia Hockey Association.

Eric and Kim moved to Atlanta in 1999 because of Eric's job, but they want to move back to the Detroit area to be near both their families. Eric and Jason's parents, Dominic and Claudia Bruce, are Livonia residents.

Eric hopes to grow the Velvet company to a point where he can leave Atlanta and return to Michigan to run the company full-time.

He said being in Georgia, where peanuts are grown, put him in contact with the right people to help him revive the Velvet brand and start manufacturing it.

Now he hopes the brand he brought back to Michigan brings him back here as well.

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Brick by brick: LEGO fan builds his dream town

BY SUE MASON
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Steve Grant doesn't keep track of how many bricks he's used to build his city. He knows it's a lot, but it doesn't matter as he pursues his dream of creating a New York City-style town made completely out of LEGOs.

"I've been building with LEGOs since I was a kid, but I got serious about it as a grownup in 2007," the Garden City resident said. "I used to build sets and stuff, now I build buildings."

Grant is a member of the Michigan LEGOs User Group, which meets the second Saturday of every other month at the Izakaya Sanpei Japanese restaurant in Canton. The 25 members from Redford, Garden City, Wayne, Livonia and Royal Oak and even as far away as Bay City come together to talk about displays and show off what they're working on.

They've done displays at the National Model Railroad Show at Cobo Hall - that was Grant's first ever show - at libraries in Livonia and at Brick Bashes, public hands-on LEGO Building exhibits like the one from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, March 19, at the Morris Lawrence Building on the campus of Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor.

For Grant, it was getting a computer that led him to discover LUG and other adults who shared his love of building with LEGOs. The town he has been working on includes hotels, a McDonald's restaurant and even a town square filled with people walking and kids on skateboards. It's a work in progress, its expansion limited to the size of his basement.

"I'd like to have it get pretty big, but this is what I've come up with so far," Grant said about his display. "Eventually, I planned to get a bigger house



DAVID L. MALHALAB

A member of the Michigan LEGO Users Group, Steve Grant has been building his own city one LEGO brick at a time in his basement of his Garden City home.

with a bigger basement. I have a small one right now and this has pretty much maxed it out."

BRICK BY BRICK

Grant's town is built on four 10-inch by 10-inch mounting plates attached to plywood. Built mostly of one-by-two-inch bricks, he has come to realize that the brick is the thickness of plywood and by layering the latter, he'll be able to add such details as rivers and bridges.

Grant doesn't pattern buildings after existing structures, although some LUG members like Jim Garnett of Redford go online to research specific structures. Garrett recreated the Penobscott Building and the block it sits on in Detroit. Garrett's Penobscott Building stands a whopping 11 feet tall.

With LUGs around the world, the LEGO aficionados have found that the Internet's BrickLink.com is a place to find needed pieces rather than having to buy entire sets.

BrickLink bills itself as a venue for individuals and businesses from all around the world to buy and sell new, used and vintage LEGO through fixed price services. The site, created by the late Daniel Jezek, boasts 110,622,950 items in 3,741,078 lots in 4,726 stores as of Tuesday.

REALISTIC COLORS

The one-inch by two-inch brick is the piece Grant uses the most and he tries to use the more realistic colors. A standard white brick can be had for as little as 4 cents on BrickLink, but the rarer colored bricks like the sand red brick, which was only produced for one year, can cost more than \$1 each.

"BrickLink is like the eBay for LEGO users," Grant said. "My hobby wouldn't be possible without it. Before BrickLink, you had to buy the pieces you needed as part of packages."

Of course, there's also the LEGO store in Troy that, according to Grant, "is amazing."

"I love going there," he said. For the shows, members will move their LEGO projects on the road. Sometimes there's a "catastrophe," with pieces breaking apart. According to Grant, in the world of LEGO "nothing can be painted or glued."

People interested in getting more information about the Michigan LUG can stop by the Izakaya Sanpei Japanese restaurant at 43327 Joy Road, west of Lilley Road. For more information about the group, visit its website at www.michlug.org.

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RENA LAVERTY

Officials at Compuware Arena in Plymouth Township want to get the venue more involved in the concert scene after Girl Talk sold out March 3.

Compuware Arena grows as year-round facility

When The Crofoot Ballroom and AEG Live promotions discovered that the Girl Talk concert – scheduled for March 3 at Royal Oak Music Theatre – outgrew the venue, they went looking for another place to hold the show.

They chose the 3,500-seat Compuware Arena in Plymouth Township.

Although Compuware Arena is known as a sports venue, housing the Ontario Hockey League's Plymouth Whalers, the annual Michigan Boys State High School Hockey semi-final and finals, Compuware youth hockey and other sports events, the arena has forged a reputation as a 12-months-per-year entertainment venue, holding everything from college and high school graduations, trade shows, industrial seminars and full-arena radio programs.

The arena is also home to CJ's Brewing Company, a full-service restaurant and hosts a three-screen drive-in during the summer months.

Moving Girl Talk to a venue that holds twice the attendance as the Royal Oak Music Theatre made sense to everyone involved. The concert – featuring disc jockey Greg Gillis – sold out at Compuware Arena, much to the delight of everyone involved.

"Compuware Arena is a perfect size for concerts, it has great acoustics, and a location that can't be beat," said Dan McGowan of the Crofoot. "It's 15 minutes from the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan

University, it's 30 minutes from Wayne State and downtown Detroit, and it's an easy 45-minute drive from Michigan State. Not to mention the surrounding communities are packed with rabid music fans.

"We (the Crofoot) look forward to bringing more concerts to Compuware," McGowan added. "The facility is top notch."

In the aftermath of the success of Girl Talk, Compuware Arena manager Mike Henry is looking to expand into the concert business.

"We're looking to book more shows," admitted Henry. "We hope Girl Talk is the start. We'd like people to see that we are a good venue and more acts start coming."

Not only was the arena sold out, but CJ's Brewing Company enjoyed an overflow night as well.

Not to be overlooked in the success of Girl Talk is the work of the Compuware Arena maintenance staff, who in the span of 48 hours, changed the arena from a hockey venue, to a concert hall and then back for a Plymouth Whalers game the next evening against the Saginaw Spirit. Two nights later, the Whalers hosted Windsor before a sellout crowd of 4,050.

The staff worked long and hard to clean up Compuware Arena for hockey the next evening. The only reminders of the Girl Talk show were some balloons hanging around in the rafters of the building.

Compuware Arena remains busy this week, with the

annual Michigan Boys High School Hockey Semi-Finals going Thursday through Saturday. Compuware Arena has been hosting the state finals since 2003.

"We enjoy our relationship with Compuware Arena," said Randy Allen, Assistant Director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. "There have been other facilities inquiring about (the availability of) this event, but we don't listen. Compuware Arena is a perfect fit for us. Right now, it's the perfect place, the perfect size – and more than anything else – the people make us feel welcome and go out of their way to make it work for us."

"When you do what I do for a living, the people with the facility that make you feel welcome and make it easy to be there is an important aspect of our tournament."

Division Two semi-final games will be played on Thursday at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Division Three semi-final games will be played on Friday at noon and 2:30 p.m. Division One semi-final games will be played on Friday at 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Championship Saturday features Division 2 at 10 a.m., Division 3 at 2 p.m. and Division 1 at 6 p.m.

Weekend passes for the entire event are available for \$25. Semi-Finals are available for \$6 per division. Championship games on Saturday are also available for \$7 per game.

Chamber office (850 Ann Arbor Trail). To register for the workshop e-mail teri@plymouthmich.org or call (734) 453-1540.

• **Business mixer** – Breaking the Boundaries Business Mixer - March 24 – Join 300 other business people from Western Wayne County for one of the best networking events of the year in this region. The annual Western Suburban Area Council of Chamber's "Breaking the Boundaries" Business Mixer will be at Burton Manor on Thursday, March 24, from 5-7 p.m. The event is designed for networking, where business meets business across every border in the western suburbs. This year's event will include a presentation by Carol Kocan, a Dale Carnegie trainer, on "Networking and Working the Room" from 5-5:30 p.m.

The cost to attend is just \$10, which includes food, and there will be a cash bar. Due to the overwhelming popularity of this event there are no walk-ins allowed and everyone must be pre-registered. To register for the event or to reserve exhibit space, e-mail the Chamber at teri@plymouthmich.org or call (734) 453-1540.

National distinction

TDS Telecommunications Corp. was recognized as a J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champion, one of only 40 companies to have earned the distinction this year.

To qualify for inclusion on this elite list, companies must not only excel within their own industries, but also stand out among leading brands in 20 major industries evaluated by J.D. Power.

Companies were identified based on customer feedback, opinions, and perceptions gathered primarily from J.D. Power's syndicated research as well as additional, supplemental research. To see the complete listings visit www.businesscenter.jpdpower.com/news.

BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS

Business news

Courtesy the folks at the Plymouth Downtown Development Authority:

- After a long period of being empty, Pat O'Neil has purchased the Draugelis & Ashton law offices building on Penniman as an investment. O'Neil said he plans to keep the building office space. The first and second floors are about 2,500-square-foot each. O'Neil said the 7-foot ceiling basement is finished and would be cheap office space or storage.

Interested parties can contact Terry Poli at (734) 620-6286.

- Hands on Leather is hosting a Brighton jewelry promotion through March 20. Receive the exclusively designed black-and-white scarf when you make a single Brighton purchase of \$100 or more-while supplies last. This beautiful 100% silk scarf is versatile and long enough to wear as a belt.

- The Cupcake Station, which now has more than 5,000 Facebook fans, gave away 150 free cupcakes Thursday to those who stopped in and said "5,000 fans."

- Diva Day 2011 takes place April 2 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Retailers should let Teri Fry, teri@plymouthmich.org, at the Chamber know by March 18 if you plan to participate. She is ordering 500 boas this week and posters should be ready sometime next week.

- Charter One Bank in Downtown Plymouth will be featuring R.S.V.P. as their Local Business of the Month for the month of March. Stop into the branch anytime during the month of March to find out why Charter One Bank



All in the family

The Petersons of Plymouth, (from left) Cindy, Mark, Morgan and Miranda, made the Canton Home Expo a family affair over the weekend. The annual expo, held at The Summit on the Park in Canton, featured more than 120 vendors consulting on everything from landscaping and roofing to windows and green technology. Officials said some 3,000 people attended the first day.

thinks R.S.V.P. is so great and, while you're there, enter a drawing for a \$25 R.S.V.P. Gift Card. The winner will be chosen from all entries received at the end of the business day on Thursday, March 31.

- This month's monthly wine tasting dinner at Grape Expectations Wine Bar is Chilean wines. It's four courses and four wines for \$45 per person. Dinner is at 7 p.m. on March 15. For more information call the GE Wine Bar at (734) 455-WINE.

Dance reservations

Registration for the Metro Dance Company Summer 2011 dance season is now open. Classes available for all ages 2 ½ - adult and begin the week of July 11. Register in person, by phone at (734)

207-8970 or online at www.MetroDanceCompany.com.

Metro Dance Company is located in Plymouth on the corner of Mill (Lilley) and Ann Arbor Trail, just outside downtown Plymouth.

Career change?

Out of a job? Changing careers? Become a real estate agent and be ready for the upcoming real estate boom.

Remerica Hometown will be presenting a pre-license training class beginning soon by Real Estate Professional Education Group, LLC, at 41025 Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth.

Call today for a reservation or a private interview. Call Judy at (734) 459-6222 or e-mail judycourtney@remerica.com.

CHAMBER CHAT

State of the Community

The popular annual State of the Community lunch, set for March 23, is an opportunity to join fellow business people and community leaders as we hear about what to expect from our community in the coming year. Change is a way of life for our local elected officials as governments reinvent themselves due to lower tax revenues and state budget cuts. We invite you to join us to hear how you will be affected by the changes coming and how to be part of a brighter future for our region.

Speakers include Plymouth Township Supervisor Richard Reaume, Wayne County Commissioner Laura Cox, Plymouth Mayor Dan Dwyer and Plymouth-Canton Community Schools Superintendent Dr. Craig Fiegel.

The event runs noon to 1:30 p.m. and the cost to attend is \$20. The luncheon will be held at Plymouth Manor, located at 345 N. Main St. To attend this event, please contact the Chamber at (734) 453-1540 or e-mail teri@plymouthmich.org.

Upcoming events

- **Multimedia marketing** – Many marketing campaigns hook potential customers with catchy slogans or pictures. While snappy text and design might make a customer take a second look, it does not always convert a customer lead into a sale. Print, radio, TV, direct mail and internet are all parts of a successful marketing campaign, but how you put it together dictates your success. This workshop will show you how to get the biggest impact with your target audience for the money spent.

This Business Development Series workshop is scheduled 8:30-9:30 a.m. March 22 at the

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HOMETOWN WEEKLIES

Scoop's Hound Dog Highlights!

**Welcome
Boys and Girls!**
This month's contest features:
**Hide & Seek
with Scoop**

Hey kids!

Search the month of March
for Scoop in your

LOCAL NEWSPAPER.

List the dates and page
number you find
Scoop on!

**March is
National Reading
Month!**

Celebrate by reading about your
hometown in this newspaper.

**Win Fun
Prizes!**

Send your entries including your photo for
the Hide & Seek Contest to:

Scoop the Newshound

c/o: Michele Austin
41304 Concept Drive
Plymouth, MI 48170

Deadline for submissions: 3/31/11

All entries need to be received by close of the business
day on March 31st, for winners to be announced in the
April Scoop's Hound Dog Highlights.



**Hide & Seek
with Scoop!**

Youth Name: _____

Youth Age: _____

Youth Community: _____

I found Scoop on page(s) _____
on date(s) _____

Parent's information to contact winning entry:
(Phone, email, home address)

Selected winners will have their name, age, hometown and
photo in the next Scoop's Hound Dog Highlights.

Lucky winners from last month's contest



Brandon Falk
Age: 7 1/2
Milford
My dog Gabby guards our
house and lets me lay on her
when I am tired.



Maia Claiborne
Age: 9
Livonia
My dog Ginger makes me
feel safe and plays hide n'
seek with me.



Joshua McKay
Age: 10
Canton
My dog Benjiman loves
playing catch outside and
greets me with a hug when
I come home.



Natalie Aulicino
Age: 10
South Lyon
My dog Vasco is special
because he is a hospital
therapy dog.

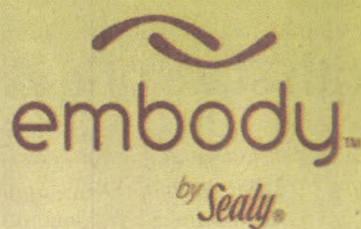


Grace Snell
Age: 10
Novi
My dog Juliet is special
because she likes to play
with me and my other dogs.

Scoop, the newshound, will be offering contests on a monthly basis. Look for Scoop's Hound Dog Highlights page monthly in this newspaper!

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ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, March 10, 2011

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HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Contact Editor Sharon Dargay

Voice Mail: (313) 222-8883

E-mail: sdargay@hometownlife.com

Comment online at hometownlife.com

Celebrate St. Paddy's Day with song, dance

BY SHARON DARGAY
O&E STAFF WRITER

St. Patrick's Day is a family affair for Mick Gavin of Redford. The Redford resident and expert fiddler will perform with two sons and a daughter-in-law at the 26th annual St. Patrick's Day Irish Fest in Westland.

He'll also make sure the audience experiences a family-friendly atmosphere.

"It's not a big booze-up," said Gavin, who claims too many St. Patrick's Day events focus too much on alcohol consumption. "It's cultural. You will see world class Irish musicians performing music that you will find only in Ireland. You will not find that authentic style of music any place else in Michigan unless it's someone on tour."

"We have from babies to 90-year-olds. You don't have to be Irish to celebrate the patron saint of the country. We don't have a Mass or service but it's later in the afternoon and kids after school are welcome."

The festival will run from 3 p.m.-midnight Thursday, March 17 at the Hellenic Cultural Center, 36375 Joy, east of Newburgh, Westland. Admission is \$10 for adults. Children attend for free.

The family-friendly atmosphere doesn't mean it will be a totally dry event.

"We'll have Guinness of course and Baileys Irish Cream, wine," Gavin said.

Hot dogs, corned beef, pizza and full corned beef dinners round out the menu.

MUSIC MENU

The musical fare will include local dancers as well as guest musician Sean Gavin, 24, Mick Gavin's son, who just returned from three years on



Musicians will play authentic Irish party music, folk tunes and ballads at St. Patrick's Day Irish Fest in Westland. That's fiddler Mick Gavin of Redford at left, foreground.

the road, touring with Celtic Legends, an Irish music and dance production, plays whistle, flute and pipes. He's also a member of Nicgaviskey, and of the traditional Irish music ensemble Bua.

The show also will include Sean's brother, Michael on

fiddle, guitar, banjo and vocals; Michael's wife, Colleen Gavin, an All-Ireland champion on flute, whistle and pipes; All-Ireland champions Kelsey Lutz on fiddle, Siobhan McKinney on harp, and Colleen Burke on harp; baladeer Eddie McGlinchey and



Sean Gavin



Kelsey Lutz, (left) on fiddle and Siobhan McKinney on harp will perform at the 26th annual St. Patrick's Day Irish Fest in Westland.

Mick Gavin on fiddle.

"Sean was enthusiastic about music from day one. When he was 4 years old we'd have to hide our telephone calls about gigs because when he heard me talking on the phone he'd say he'd want to go."

His son was 4 years old when he began playing at house parties with other family members. Two years later he learned to play fiddle from a college student who was staying with the family. Another student taught him flute and work with the uilleann pipe soon followed.

"The uilleann pipe is a bagpipe. It's a Celtic cousin to the Scottish Highland pipes, but

it's much quieter than the big pipes," Gavin said. "The Irish pipe is complicated. There's a bellows and an air bag. You pump the air into the bag with the bellows under one arm, the air bag in the other. Your two elbows work in coordination. The chanter reed is similar to an oboe reed."

ONLY IRISH

Gavin tried to steer his son into classical as well as Irish music and enrolled him in one-on-one classes with a classical flute teacher when he was 12.

"One day I said Sean you're doing well. But the Irish folk music had taken root in him.

He said, 'Dad, I don't want to be a classical flute player. I want to play Irish music.'

Gavin said his son and many other young American Irish musicians today pursue the purest forms of Irish music and are "digging deep" into its history.

"They're singing songs in Gaelic."

Gavin, his family and other musicians will perform mostly upbeat party songs, favorite folk tunes and ballads during the show in Westland.

"Most of the people who come to us are family people. They bring their children. I think they like a mixture of music."

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Redford THEATRE



Ashlyn McCann (left) is Joe Harper, Brett Moore is Tom Sawyer and Connor Sherman is Billy Fisher in the Spotlight on Youth production of "Tom Sawyer" March 10-14 at the Village Theater in Canton.

Theater presents Mark Twain collection, story

Fans of Mark Twain and his work will get two reasons to celebrate this weekend. Spotlight on Youth will present *Tom Sawyer* Thursday-Sunday March 10-13 at the Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill, in Canton.

A collection of Mark Twain memorabilia, owned by Bob Nelson, a Westland resident, also will be displayed in the art exhibition area of the theater during the run of the play.

"I began by buying three books at the Dawn Treader Book Shop in Ann Arbor, and things just snowballed from there. My collection

currently includes 170 of these items and continues to grow," Nelson stated. "Part of the collection appeared in the companion book to the Mark Twain PBS documentary by Ken Burns. During the spring of 2005, a significant portion of the collection formed a feature museum exhibit."

The play is designed to appeal to all ages and offers action and adventure for young audience members, as well as a good story to keep adults interested. It runs about 1½ hours and has an intermission. It's the perfect length of time for small children who can't sit still long.

The cast includes Brett Moore of Plymouth as Tom Sawyer and nearly 40 children from Canton, Plymouth, Belleville, Westland and other local communities.

Curtain is at 7 p.m. Thursday-Friday, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, and at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Tickets are \$13-\$15 each, available by calling the Village Theater Box Office at (734) 394-5300 or (734) 394-5460; online at www.spotlightplayersmi.org or in person at the Summit on the Park, 46000 Summit Parkway, Canton or one hour before show time at the theater.

GET OUT!



Canton concert

Jazz singer Kathy Kosins will perform Friday, March 18, at the Village Theater at Cherry Hill in Canton.

April 2

Contact: (734) 261-0555, www.kickerscomplex.com

Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle

Time/Date: Sean Patton, March 10-12; Lowell Sanders, March 17-19; Erik Griffin, March 24-26; Lynne Kopplitz, March 31-April 2

Location: 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak
Contact: (248) 542-9900, www.comedycastle.com

CONCERTS

The Ark

Time/Date: Corey Harris and the Rasta Blues Experience, March 10; Theo Katzman, March 11; Ellen Jewell, March 12; Blackthorn fundraiser for the American Cancer Action Network, March 13; Peter Karp & Sue Foley as He Said, She Said, March 14; Abigail Stauffer, March 15; Richard Shindell, March 16; Sonya Kittchell, March 17; Scythian, March 18; The Victor Wooten Band & The Clarke Band, March 19; The California Guitar Trio & Fareen Haque, March 20; The Juliets, March 22; Po' Girl & Peter Mulvey, March 23; May Erlewine & Seth Bernard, March 24; The Spring Standards, March 25; NewFound Road, March 26; Madcat, Kane & Maxwell Street, March 27; Steve Poltz, March 28; Dala, March 30; Matt Wertz, March 31

Location: 316 South Main, Ann Arbor
Contact: (734) 763-8587; www.theark.org

Barn Theatre

Time/Date: 7:30 p.m. March 10-12
Location: Farmington Hills Players'

Barn Theatre, 32332 12 Mile in Farmington Hills

Details: Blackthorn performs Celtic music; tickets are \$19 for adults and \$17 for seniors and students
Contact: (248) 473-1848

Baseline Folk Society

Time/Date: Third Saturday of the month

Location: The JWH Center for the Arts, Plymouth Community Arts Council, 774 N. Sheldon, Plymouth

Details: Eight "Open-Mic" performances plus a featured group perform. Sign up for open mic from 6:15-6:45 p.m.; show starts at 7 p.m. Individual membership is \$25 and includes monthly concerts from September through May. Otherwise, admission to each concert is \$5 at the door. Family memberships are \$50 and include monthly concerts
Contact: (248) 719-3464 or mjmmullen@yahoo.com

Chamber Music Society of Detroit

Time/Date: Pre-concert talk, 6:45 p.m., concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 26
Location: Seligman Performing Arts Center, located on the campus of Detroit Country Day School, 22305 W. 13 Mile, Beverly Hills

Details: This concert marks the debuts of both cellist Zuill Bailey and pianist Piers Lane in metro Detroit and on the Chamber Music Society of Detroit series. They'll play music by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Rachmaninoff and Roberto Sierra. Single tickets range from \$43-75; \$25 for students
Contact: (248) 855-6070

Euchre tournament will award cash prizes

The Canton Lions Club will present the Southeast Michigan Euchre Tournament Saturday, March 12 at the Plymouth Elks Club, 41700 Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. with registration ending at 7 p.m. and games beginning at 7:15 p.m. The ante is \$20 if pre-registered by Thursday,

March 10 and \$25 afterward. Walk-ins are welcome.

The total of the antes collected will be split between the Canton Lions Club and winning players.

The group also plans to give away an additional \$1,900 in prizes through a raffle ticket sale and a free door prize drawing.

Free bar snacks and free pizza slices will be available during the tournament. The cash bar will feature low prices for soft drinks, beer, wine and cocktails.

For more information call Linda Obrec at (734) 945-6685 or e-mail questions or new registrations to lionsclubeuchre@yahoo.com.

ART

City Gallery

Time/Date: Through April 8; gallery hours are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Location: In the Costick Center at 28600 W. 11 Mile, Farmington Hills
Details: Work by Stephen Deeb, head of the art department at North Farmington High School
Contact: (248) 473-1856

Northville Art House

Time/Date: Through March 26. Hours are 1-5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday

Location: 215 W. Cady in downtown Northville

Details: Beyond The Blueprint: Architects' Other Art, showcases the works of Metro Detroit artist-architects, including Dennis Michael Jones, a visual artist and educator in Plymouth who continues to balance his architectural work with his art

Contact: (248) 344-0497

Village Theater at Cherry Hill

Time/Date: Through March 29; gallery hours are 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday

Location: 50400 Cherry Hill, Canton
Details: Pressed flower artwork of Shelley Xie, a self-taught artist and resident of Canton

Contact: (734) 394-5300

COMEDY

Go Comedy!

Time/Date: Various show times Wednesdays thru Sundays

Location: 261 E. Nine Mile, Ferndale
Details: Improv most nights. Open mic/jam session show for improvisers is 10 p.m. Wednesdays

Contact: (248) 327-0575; www.gocomedy.net

JD's House of Comedy

Time/Date: Various show times Wednesday-Saturday evenings

Location: 25333 W. 12 Mile, inside Star Theatre complex, Southfield

Details: Stand-up shows, 8 p.m. Thursday and 8 p.m., 10:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday; Apollo amateur night, 8 p.m. Wednesday

Contact: (248) 348-2420 or www.ticketmaster.com

Joey's Comedy Club of Livonia

Time/Date: 8 p.m. Mondays, open Mic; 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Local Legends; 8 p.m. shows Wednesdays, Thursdays; 8 p.m. & 10:30 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays

Location: 36071 Plymouth Road, Livonia

Details: LA Hardy, March 9-12; Mo Mandel, March 16-19; Mark Sweeney, March 23-26; Chill Challis, March 30-

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is coming to Laurel Park Place Mall April 15th through 17th. Here is your opportunity to showcase your books and novels to thousands of shoppers and book lovers. Join us for this fun filled weekend of literature and prose. Workshops on publishing and marketing plus celebrity book signings and readings

Register for the 2011 Author Networking Summit. This event will bring best authors, publicists, motivational speakers & marketing specialists together to share their skills and intellect to help you take your writing to the "next level," twenty informative sessions taught by ten literary professionals are scheduled for this weekend. Learn where the industry is heading and how E-Books are impacting the future.

Authors are given the opportunity to publicly address on our main stage, mall patrons and promote their writings.

Register before March 15th and be entered in the drawing for a "free" author table at our Cleveland, Nashville or Kingston, New York festival. Author applications for the Michigan Spring Book festival and the 2011 Author Networking Summit are available on our website. Download one today!

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Thursday, March 10, 2011

hometownlife.com

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Contact Editor Sharon Dargay

Voice Mail: (313) 222-8883

E-mail: sdargay@hometownlife.com

Comment online at hometownlife.com



from IRISH pastures comes a pot of gold

Yes, there's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It's found in each blade of grass growing in Ireland's lush pastures. Small herds of cows graze freely, and the milk, rich in beta-carotene from the grass, produces butter and cheeses of an exceptionally golden hue.

Thousands of years before the Irish discovered potatoes, dairy cows, milk and butter were being woven into the fabric of Irish society, according to the Cork Butter Museum in Cork City, Ireland. The Cork Butter Exchange, a market created by the merchants of Cork City in 1769, was in its time, the largest butter market in the world, exporting as far away as Europe and America.

Today, dairy products continue to play an important role in Irish cooking. Cooperatives of farmers, creameries and cheesemakers provide delicious Irish butter and cheeses throughout the U.S. under the Kerrygold label.

Here are some iconic recipes from some stars of Irish cooking, using Kerrygold cheeses and butter. To learn more about Kerrygold, and for where-to-buy information, visit www.kerrygold.com/usa.

ROASTED ROOT VEGETABLE SOUP

Serves 4 to 6

"You can substitute pumpkin, turnip or celeriac for the swede (rutabaga), or just use a mixture - this is a very flexible recipe."

- Neven Maguire, chef/owner of the renowned MacNeen House and Restaurant in Blacklion, County Cavan, Ireland; popular TV cooking star and cookbook author

1 small swede (rutabaga) cut into cubes
2 carrots, cut into cubes
1 parsnip, cut into cubes
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) Kerrygold Irish Butter
1 onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 quart (4 cups) vegetable stock
1/2 cup single cream (or substitute half and half)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place swede, carrots and parsnip on baking sheet and drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season generously and roast for 25 to 30 minutes until golden brown and tender, shaking baking sheet occasionally to ensure even cooking.

Meanwhile, heat remaining tablespoon olive oil and butter in large heavy-based pot, and add onion, celery, garlic and thyme. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes until softened but not browned, stirring occasionally.

Add roasted root vegetables to pan and then pour in stock. Bring gently to boil, then reduce heat, cover and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes until completely tender, stirring occasionally. Puree with a hand blender until completely smooth.

To serve, stir cream into soup. Gently heat through and season to taste, then ladle into warmed bowls.

Note: You don't have to add the cream if you're watching the calories, but you might need a little extra stock to thin the soup.

CHEESE TOASTIES

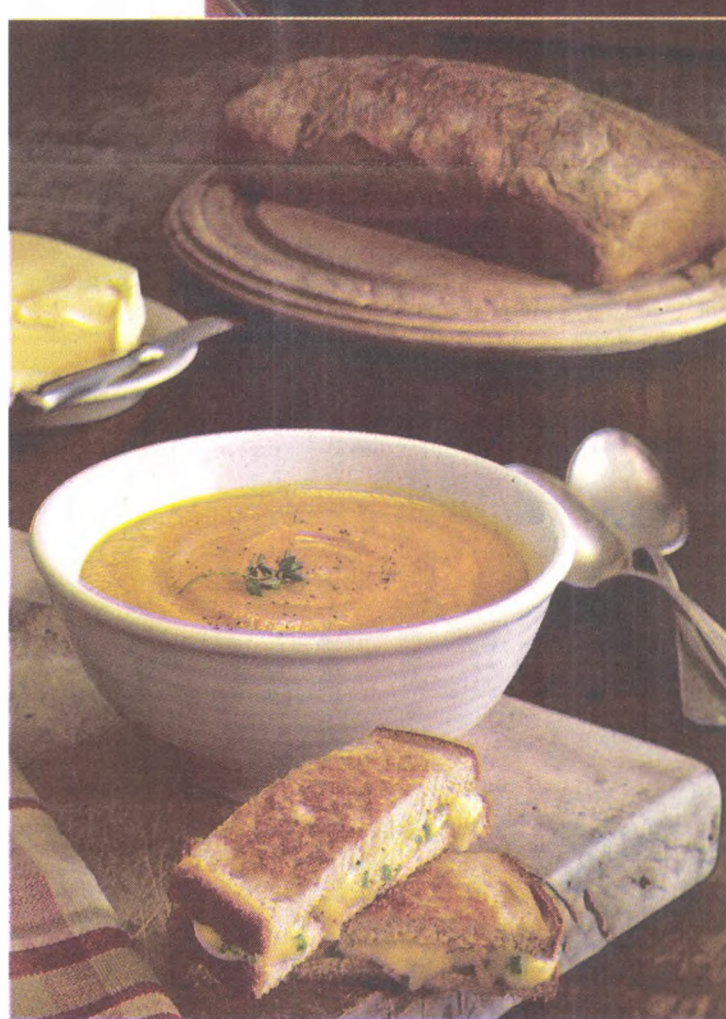
Serves 4 to 6

4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) Kerrygold Irish Butter
8 slices firm, country-style white bread
1 package (7 ounces) Kerrygold Dubliner Cheese, grated
1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Butter bread and arrange cheese over half of the slices, buttered side down. Sprinkle with chives and cover with remaining slices, buttered side up.

Preheat a griddle or large non-stick frying pan and cook sandwiches two at a time 2 minutes each side until golden brown and cheese has melted. Keep hot.

To serve, cut the cheese toasts into fingers.



Brown Soda Bread, Roasted Root Vegetable Soup and Cheese Toasties.



Rhubarb Crumble.



Dubliner Shepherd's Pie.

BROWN SODA BREAD

Makes 2 loaves

"This is an all-purpose and relatively foolproof recipe based on several I collected while researching 'The Country Cooking of Ireland.'"

- author Colman Andrews, whose Irish cookbook won the 2010 James Beard Foundation award for Best International Cookbook and Cookbook of the Year

3 1/2 cups stone-ground whole wheat flour preferably Irish or Irish-style
1 1/2 cups unbleached white flour, preferably Irish, or pastry flour, plus more for dusting

3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon softened Kerrygold Irish Butter, plus more for greasing
1 1/2 to 2 cups room-temperature Buttermilk

Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix wheat flour, white flour, baking soda and salt together in a medium bowl. Work butter into mixture with your fingers.

Form a well in the middle of flour mixture and pour buttermilk into the well. Form your hand into a rigid claw and stir dough slowly but steadily in a spiral motion, starting in the middle and working outwards. Dough should be soft but not too wet or sticky. (Start with 1 1/2 cups buttermilk, gradually adding, if necessary, to achieve the right consistency.)

Turn dough out onto a floured board. Flour your hands lightly, then shape dough into a flat rectangle about 2 inches high. Cut dough in half lengthwise with a wet knife, then gently push each half into a lightly greased glass or foil loaf pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until the tops of the loaves are nicely browned.

Serve this bread with plenty of Kerrygold Irish Butter.

DUBLINER SHEPHERD'S PIE

Makes 4 to 6 servings

"Our family loves a hearty shepherd's pie after a long day working on the farm. Because our cows produce milk to make Kerrygold Dubliner Cheese, we like to add some shredded Dubliner to the potato crust."

- Donal Murphy, Kerrygold dairy farmer, Bandon, County Cork, Ireland

Potato Topping:
1 1/4 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 tablespoons Kerrygold Irish Butter
1/2 cup milk
1 cup shredded Kerrygold Dubliner Cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt

Filling:
1 pound lean ground beef
2 tablespoons Kerrygold Irish Butter
1 medium onion, chopped
4 small carrots, peeled and sliced 1/4-inch thick
2 tablespoons flour
3/4 cup Guinness Stout
3/4 cup beef stock
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed

Preheat oven to 375°F and lightly butter an 11- x 7-inch baking dish. Cook potatoes in boiling water for 15 minutes or until very tender; drain well. Mash with butter and milk until smooth, then stir in cheese and salt and set aside.

Crumble beef into a medium skillet and cook until no longer pink; remove from skillet and set aside. In same skillet, melt butter. Add onion and carrots; cook for 10 minutes over medium heat to soften, stirring occasionally. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute more.

Add Guinness, stock, thyme and salt; cook and stir until mixture is slightly thickened then stir in peas and cooked beef. Spoon into prepared baking dish then spread potato mixture over the top. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until top is lightly browned.

RHUBARB CRUMBLE

Serves 6

"Crumbles are the ultimate comfort food. Vary the fruit according to the season."

- Darina Allen, founder of the world-famous Ballymaloe Cookery School in Shanagarry, County Cork, Ireland

Filling:
1 1/2 pounds rhubarb, cut in 1/2-inch slices
1/2 cup sugar

Crumble:
4 tablespoons (1/4 cup) Kerrygold Irish Butter
4 ounces (scant 1 cup) white flour, preferably unbleached
1/2 cup superfine sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. In bowl, mix filling ingredients; turn into a 1-quart (4 cups) capacity pie dish.

Rub butter into flour just until mix-

ture resembles coarse breadcrumbs, then stir in sugar.

Sprinkle this mixture over rhubarb in the pie dish. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes until topping is cooked and golden. Serve with whipped cream and soft brown sugar, or try stirring a little Amaretto into your cream.

Recipe adapted from the "Ballymaloe Cookery Course Book" published by Kyle Cathie.

- Courtesy Family Features

