



**Band prowess**

Two students from the Discovery Middle School Band have been recognized for their outstanding musical achievement in auditioning for the Michigan All-State Middle School Band.

Annika Topelian (clarinet) was selected to the Michigan All-State Middle School Band, and placed fourth in the entire state on her instrument. Bronson Knowles (alto saxophone) was sixth in the state overall and received honorable mention status.

The Michigan All-State Middle School Band concert will occur in conjunction with the Michigan Music Conference Jan. 19-21 in Grand Rapids.

**Chorale tryouts**

BeckRidge Productions announces its upcoming season for Cherry Hill Singers and BeckRidge Chorale. Cherry Hill Singers is a non-auditioned choir whose rehearsals begin Monday, Jan. 16, at Cherry Hill United Methodist Church (321 Ridge Road in Canton).

BeckRidge Chorale is an auditioned choir and auditions will be held Jan. 3, 10 and 17. Their rehearsals are Tuesday nights and begin Jan. 17 at Plymouth First United Methodist Church (45201 N. Territorial in Plymouth).

Contact Kelly Fifield at [kelly@beckridgechorale.org](mailto:kelly@beckridgechorale.org) to schedule an audition or for more information about either choir.

**Arts event**

The Canton Partnership for the Arts & Humanities hosts its spring fundraiser, "Rock-n-Roll Valentine's," Friday, Feb. 10, at the Village Theater at Cherry Hill.

The event starts with a 7 p.m. reception; the concert, featuring local favorite Steve King and the Ditties, starts at 8 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now at [www.cantonvillageattheater.org](http://www.cantonvillageattheater.org). They are \$30 each or \$25 if purchased by Jan. 10.

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**Ice fest, turning 30, helped shape Plymouth's image**

By Matt Jachman  
Observer Staff Writer

You can thank a 43-year-old television news magazine for inspiring a local institution, the Plymouth Ice Festival, that now also has some years — going on 30 — behind it.

Festival founder Scott Lorenz says he was inspired 30 years ago by a segment of CBS's *60 Minutes* that spotlighted the Sapporo Snow Festival, a giant display of snow statues and ice sculptures in Japan's fourth-largest city.

"This was incredible,

because they had these giant ice sculptures that were as big as a building," Lorenz said Monday, recalling the *60 Minutes* episode.

Lorenz, then general manager of the Mayflower Hotel, which was owned by his family, envisioned staging a similar event in downtown Plymouth. He approached his father, Ralph, with the idea.

"You're crazy. It'll never work," was the response, he said. Then-City Manager Hank Graper said the same thing, according to Lorenz.

Please see **ICE FEST, A2**



FILE PHOTO  
Scott Lorenz said the idea for the ice festival, which features hundreds of sculptures, came from a segment on the CBS show, "60 Minutes."



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Volunteers Kelley Donnelly and Abby Robichaud are National Honor Society members.

**Helping at the holiday**  
Salvation Army donations help hundreds

By Matt Jachman  
Observer Staff Writer

Community generosity was on display Thursday — along with new toys and games, children's clothing and boxes of donated food — at the Salvation Army's Plymouth Corps.

It was the third day of the Corps' holiday food, clothing and toy distribution, and the tables in the gymnasium at the headquarters on South Main — the corps services not only Plymouth, but Canton, Northville and Belleville — were stocked with donations that will ensure hundreds of local children have presents to open Christmas morning, even if their parents aren't able to afford it.



The Salvation Army served over 500 families in three days.

Nearby sat boxes of donated food, packed by local high school students, to help get hundreds of families through the holidays in a time of con-

tinued economic stress. Those getting assistance went through the aisles with

Please see **GIFTS, A2**

**Downtown restaurants debut valet parking**

By Matt Jachman  
Observer Staff Writer

Restaurateurs in downtown Plymouth are offering an amenity they and city officials hope will help the perception of a downtown parking shortage.

Valet parking, Friday and Saturdays after 6 p.m., was introduced earlier this month outside Compari's on the Park and Fiamma Grille, two adjoining restaurants on Main Street. And Panache 447, a soon-to-open restaurant around the corner on Forest Avenue, will also offer valet parking after 5 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The idea, said Robert Kolo, a partner at Panache with son Blake, is to take customers' vehicles to private lots on the downtown outskirts, leaving closer-in public parking available for other downtown visitors.

"It makes it much better for the other merchants," Kolo said recently. "The valet parking will free up a lot of space for them."

Even though Compari's/Fiamma, owned by Frank Yaquinto, was the first to put the idea into practice, the idea originated with Kolo and Panache, said John Buzuvis, the Plymouth Downtown Development Authority's business operations director.

"Hopefully we'll have a pretty good indication if, in fact, this does help to mitigate some of our parking demand issues," Buzuvis said. "It's kind of an out-of-the-box concept that unless you try it, you don't know whether it'll work or not."

The valet parking is a 90-day pilot program at both places, Buzuvis said, and the concept, which involves the use of some public parking, was approved both by the DDA board and the City Commission.

Please see **VALET PARKING, A2**

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# Days, nights on the beat fast-paced for TV reporter Lange

By Stacy Jenkins  
Observer Staff Writer

Life's script couldn't have come together any better for Amy Lange. The Emmy Award-winning Fox 2 Detroit general assignment and investigative reporter hit the city streets running as a 24-year-old reporter — and hasn't stopped, or regretted it, ever since. Lange, who moved to Farmington nine years ago with her husband, Michael Shore, a Fox 2 Detroit videographer, said it's been quite a ride so far.

"There's not a better news town in the country," said Lange. "You can't make this stuff up."

Lange came to Detroit in 1998 from her first on-air news job at WEYI-TV in Flint, where she reported during the week and did weekend weather.

She knew it was going to be life-changing to come to a large, competitive market like the Detroit area.

"That was quite a challenge to go into such a big place," said Lange, who grew up in Michigan City, Ind.

Renaissance was the talk of Detroit, under then Mayor Dennis Archer.

"He seemed to have a lot of energy, and there was a lot of growth downtown, but the neighborhoods and schools still struggled," she said.

But, then "everything

went on hold" when the texting scandal of succeeding Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick broke. Lange covered the unfolding events closely, often going on "Kwame watch."

"There were many cold days, sitting outside of the mansion," she said. "And, standing outside of city hall, waiting for his vehicle to leave, just to see if we could get a comment."

"Kwame certainly is the most all-encompassing, longest and biggest story that I've had the privilege of covering."

Even after the dust settled, Lange found herself continuing to report on Kilpatrick, although he had already served jailed time and had moved his family to Texas. His recent book prompted more coverage.

"He's the story that just keeps on going," she said.

**Many rewards**

But, it's not always the big news making national headlines that make her job rewarding. Sometimes, it's the story of a struggling family or an inspiring story of someone's triumph.

"Just to be able to tell people's stories — there's no news in the newsroom, you've got to get out there and let them speak, let their voices be heard," she said. "It's liberating for people to be able to tell their stories, and it's an honor for me."



Fox 2 Detroit reporter Amy Lange enjoys spending time in downtown Farmington, where she's lived for nine years.

**Deeper perspective**

In 2008, Lange earned a master's degree in social justice from Marygrove College in Detroit. The program focused on social issues, from a global level.

The program has helped her gain insight into the deep-rooted social problems in race, class and gender that she sees every day on her beat.

"It gives me a broader perspective," she said. "I hope it continues to help me to look a little deeper and to understand. I hope I go in with a more open mind."

As an investigative reporter, she also hopes to make a real difference.

"In many ways, we can make people's lives better," she said.

When she's not reporting, Lange teaches a media and social justice class at Marygrove. And, she's active in the Home-

less Action Network of Detroit.

"It's a challenge," she said. "We definitely have too many people falling through the cracks."

Another cause close to her heart led Lange and her husband to an Emmy Award for their series on an orphanage in Haiti, following last year's devastating earthquake.

She's also been honored for her work by the Society of Professional Journalists, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and the Associated Press.

**Making a comeback**

One story hit close to home, and also earned her an Emmy — a 2009 news feature, "Spine Story — A Reporter Breaks Her Neck," her personal story, detailing life-threatening injuries she sustained after falling down the stairs at her home in June 2009.

She fell down the carpeted stairs when her shoe got tangled up in her long dress. Her husband rushed to see if she was OK. She said she was fine and just wanted to go to bed.

The next day, she and Michael drove to the west side of the state, to Saugatuck, to visit her parents for Father's Day. After getting back home, she was still uncomfortable and undecided to see a doctor.

"We didn't know for a few days that I had actually broken my neck," she said.

It was fracture at the base of her neck and the vertebrae had also twisted.

"I would never in a million years have fathomed it," she said.

She needed traction and surgery that entailed plates and screws that will always have to remain in her neck.

After just one month, she was back to work.

A couple of years later, Lange found her- self learning fast-paced, intricate dancing skills from instructor Fernando Caducio, who was her partner in the Dancing with our Local Stars fundraiser event in September at the San Marino Club in Troy to benefit the American Diabetes Association.

"It was a blast," she said. "We worked hard, getting ready for it — I had no prior experience.

I was a really inexperienced dancer."

They took second place and first place for raising the most donations.

**Living in Farmington**

Lange and her husband moved to Farmington nine years ago, just after getting married. She became involved in the pavilion committee, when plans were being made to build it in the parking lot of the Downtown Farmington Center. The pavilion and Riley Park — which replaced asphalt — are now gathering places for the community, and host to the popular Farmers & Artisans Market and many other community events.

"It's good to see that the momentum has continued," said Lange.

She said she enjoys living in Farmington, where everyone is encouraged to be involved.

"I think that's really nice," she said.

Farmington could, however, do more to attract young people to the city, she said.

"Young people have great ideas and they have that energy — we need to do more to attract them," she said.

Lange has a stepson, Alex, a freshman at Michigan State University.

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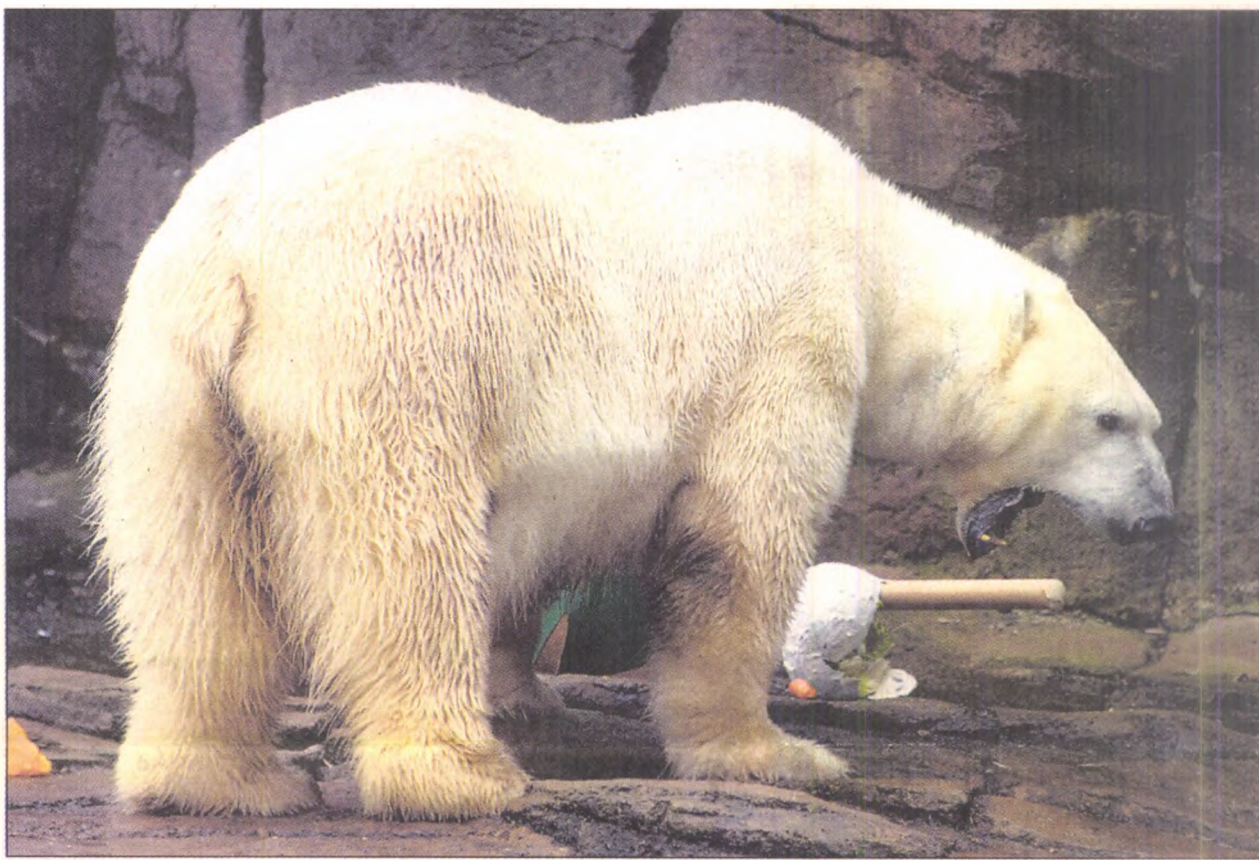
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Visitors to the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak watched as otters were fed fish treats in special holiday packages.

PHOTOS BY JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



This polar bear yawns after eating his gift.



Hanna Herd (left) and friend, Abby Tyner, both 10 and from Royal Oak, enjoy watching zoo residents play with treats.

## 'Presents' offer treats, activity at zoo

Just as businesses have office parties at this time of year, the animals at the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak got down to business last week for some fun, unwrapping holiday-themed "gifts."

The occasion was the zoo's inaugural "That's a Wrap!"

Despite the rain and lack of holiday snow, visitors to the zoo seemed to still enjoy watching the animals enjoy their special treats, which were designed to be environmentally enriching, according to zoo staff.

Naughty or nice, the animals received treat-filled piñatas wrapped like holiday presents. The "gifts" were decorated with the traditional colors of Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa in universal celebration of the giving season.

The festively decorated packages and other enrichment treats were placed in the animals' habitats to stimulate natural behaviors, such as foraging and stalking.

"The wolverines will enjoy their piñata as much as the goodies inside," Animal Welfare Manag-

er Elizabeth Arbaugh said, speaking before the event. "They'll play with the box all day long, like kids on Christmas morning."

The holiday treats are among the many forms of environmental enrichment used daily at the Detroit Zoo to enhance the animals' habitats to make them more dynamic. That enrichment includes the introduction of novel and sometimes unpredictable elements, such as objects, sounds, scents or other stimuli. Those elements give the animals the opportunity to express choice and control in their environments, and to make decisions, express individuality and behave in species-typical ways.

The Detroit Zoo is located at the intersection of 10 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, just off I-696, in Royal Oak. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. now through March (closed New Year's Day). Admission is \$12 for adults 15-61, \$10 for senior citizens 62 and older and \$8 for children 2-14 (children under 2 are free).



A wolverine tears apart a sleigh filled with treats.



Yum! This Tiger unwrapped his gift at the Detroit Zoo and promptly ate it.



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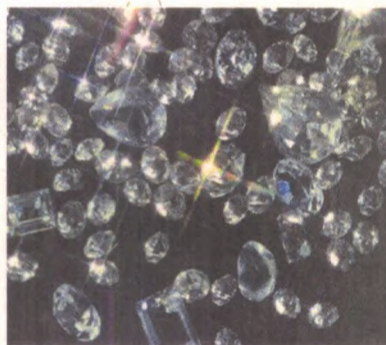
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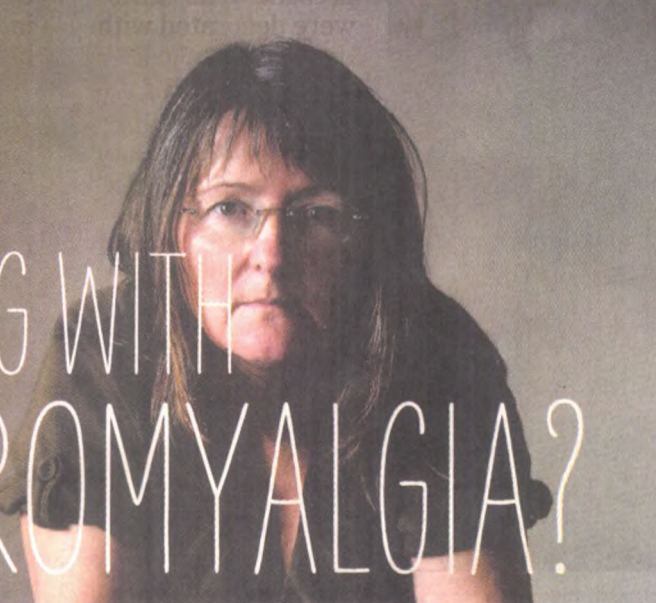
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## Some Sears, Kmart stores to close

Sears Holdings Corp. will close about 100 Sears and Kmart stores after holiday sales fell short due to a drop in demand for consumer electronics.

It is not known if any of the 100 to 120 stores slated to close are in Michigan.

Store officials at a Livonia Kmart and a Sears store at Livonia Marketplace would not comment on the report. A Sears store official in Livonia referred all questions to a public relations firm in Hoffman Estates, Ill., where Sears and Kmart is based.

A store official at a Kmart in Livonia who did not want to be identified said that store had not been notified about any closings. "Not a word," the official said. "We haven't heard any information. We've heard what you heard."

The official added that store has had a great holiday season and has a good customer base,

so if that store would close, it would be a surprise.

Likewise, a manager at Kmart in Plymouth Township said they have no information.

The company has about 2,200 Kmart and Sears stores in the U.S. and Canada, with 80 Kmart stores and 67 Sears stores in Michigan. The city of Westland has both a Sears and a Kmart.

The company said Tuesday that the cuts will make the retailers more nimble as it struggles for market share. Same store sales plunged 5.2 percent for the eight-week holiday sales period that ended Dec. 26.

Holiday sales at Kmart and domestic Sears stores fell 4.4 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

"Given our performance and the difficult economic environment, especially for big-ticket items, we intend to implement a series of actions to reduce

ongoing expenses, adjust our asset base and accelerate the transformation of our business model," chief executive Lou D'Ambrosio said in a statement.

The company kept weaker locations open while working to improve their performance but will now devote its resources to stronger stores "with the goal of converting their customer experience into a world-class integrated retail experience."

The move will generate \$140 million to \$170 million in cash as it sells inventory and real estate, the company said. The retailer also expects a noncash charge of about \$1.6 billion to \$1.8 billion due to a valuation allowance and an impairment charge on some goodwill balances for as much as \$600 million.

The stock (SHLD) was down more than 20 percent before 10 a.m. Tuesday.

## Two charged in string of bank robberies

Farmington Hills Police Chief Charles Nebus announced the arrest of two suspects believed to be responsible for a string of bank robberies in the metro Detroit area over the past few months.

Arthur Duane Payton, 44, of Detroit and Nancy Marie Barta, 33, of Westland, are charged with four bank robberies and were arraigned Dec. 16 in the United States District Court in Detroit.

They're reportedly believed to be responsible for the following bank robberies:

- Nov. 9 at the Citizens Bank at 31215 14 Mile in Farmington Hills. At 4:58 p.m., Nov. 9, a lone female suspect entered the bank and presented the teller with a note announcing a robbery. The note indicated that the suspect was armed

with a firearm. After taking an undetermined amount of money, the suspect fled the scene on foot.

Three similar bank robberies occurred in the Detroit suburban area:

- Oct. 17 at Charter One Bank in Farmington
- Oct. 20 at a Bank of America in Livonia
- Oct. 28 at Flagstar Bank in Novi

Investigators from the Farmington Hills Police Department, Farmington Department of Public Safety, Livonia Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation coordinated their investigative efforts to solve these robberies.

A federal complaint was authorized charging the identified suspects with the four listed bank robberies.

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<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #e91e63; color: white; font-weight: bold;">ADULT YOUTH LEAGUE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Every Monday @ 6:30 pm Starts Jan. 16th!</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Every child receives a new bowling ball at the end of the season!</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #e91e63; color: white; font-weight: bold;">BUMPER LEAGUE - AGES 4-8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturdays @10:00 Starts Jan. 7th Saturdays @1:00pm Starts Jan. 14th</p>

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# Crowds thin out at the mall



A Sears employee, Jan Waldron didn't have much time to look for bargains before Christmas. Now the Garden City resident had time for some shopping.

By LeAnne Rogers  
Observer Staff Writer

Now that the Christmas rush is over and people have shopped themselves out, the mall walkers have plenty of room again.

By Tuesday morning, Westland Shopping Center had a pretty empty parking lot and a pretty sparse crowd — a lot of them taking their morning constitutional.

Garden City resident Jan Waldron was among the shoppers, however. "I work at Sears so I don't get much of a chance to go into the mall," said Waldron. "So, I'm out getting the deals today. It was pretty busy yesterday (Monday) and not just returns. I started work at 7 a.m. and by 10 a.m. it was quite busy."

Waldron hadn't really started shopping yet — her husband had gotten some coffee — but the couple were heading to Kohl's to spend some Kohl's cash earned during some pre-Christmas shopping.

Bath and Body Works bag in hand, McKenzie Bowers was



Daniel Masserang of Plymouth was at Westland Shopping Center to exchange some shirts for the correct size.

ing at makeup at a mall kiosk with her sister and friend, who didn't want to be identified. They didn't go shopping on Boxing Day.

"Everyone is spent out of money," said Bowers, who wasn't surprised that the mall wasn't crowded. "I'm



Adia Ciecierski, 11, of Garden City shows off her new cell phone cover while shopping at Westland Shopping Center with her mother, Margo.

happy with what I got from Bath and Body Works. They were having a sale. We're just looking around — I'm not sure where else we will go."

Plymouth resident Daniel Masserang was at the mall to exchange some shirts for the correct

size. "We were here right at 10 a.m. I guess it was a lot more crowded yesterday," he said.

His father, Paul Masserang, commented that it was a bit surprising the mall wasn't more crowded but had made a point of not shopping on

Dec. 26.

Adia Ciecierski, 11, of Garden City came by the mall with mother Margo to pick up a cover for the tablet she received as a Christmas gift. While she was at it, Adia also got a new cover for her cell phone.

"Santa did really good this year. I told her (Adia), we're not shopping," said Ciecierski. "The deals were so great before Christmas, what do you need now?"

irogers@hometownlife.com  
(313) 222-5428



Metropolitan Opera Theater soloists, from left, Mark Vondrak, Betsy Bronson, Maria Cimarelli and Karl Schmidt.

## MOT soloists to perform at Farmington Players Barn

Imagine, favorite songs from Broadway and the cinema performed by four magnificent soloists from the Michigan Opera Theatre.

This concert will lighten your hearts with a memorable evening of fun and music at the Farmington Players Barn on Saturday, Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m. Perpetual favorites, MOT concerts at the Players Barn have sold out for many years. The concert is part of the ongoing Cultural Arts Concert Series, which concludes March 9-10 with concerts by the Irish group Blackthorn.

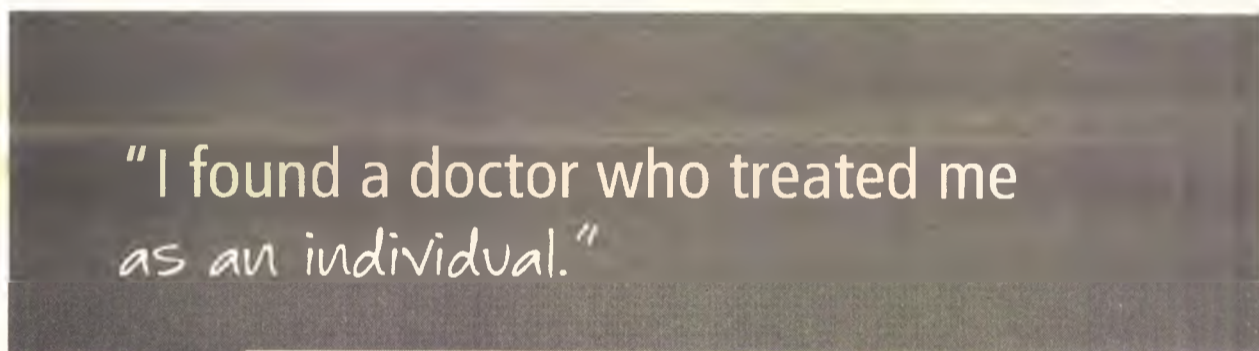
The MOT performance provides an opportunity to hear the soloists "up close and personal" in the intimate setting and wonderful acoustics of the Players Barn. MOT artists Maria Cimarelli, Betsy Bronson, Karl Schmidt, and Mark Vondrak will perform a selection of well-known songs along with drama and hilarious skits.

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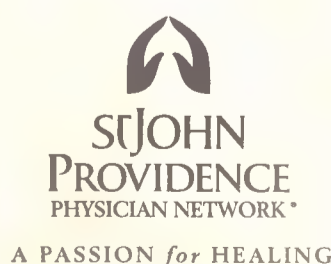
in opera entertainment and education, achieving national stature as one of the country's 10 largest opera companies.

Under the guidance of general director David DiChiera, with community programs led by Karen V. DiChiera, the Michigan Opera Theatre brings varied musical programs to the entire state of Michigan. The Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division is proud to present this special evening of excellent musical entertainment.

The Farmington Players Barn is located at 32332 W. 12 Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads in Farmington Hills. Tickets are \$19 for adults, \$17 for seniors and students. Advance tickets may be purchased at the Costick Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile, in Farmington Hills, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tickets may also be purchased at [www.rec-reg.fhgov.com](http://www.rec-reg.fhgov.com). For more information or to charge tickets by phone, call (248) 473-1848.



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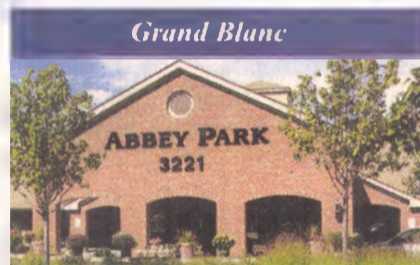
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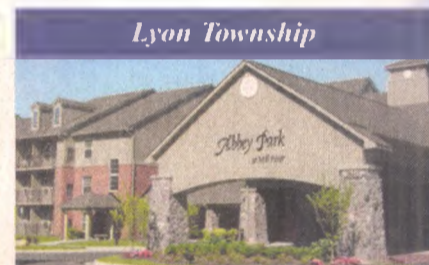
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# All Saints collects food for charity

All Saints Catholic School in Canton is making a personal connection to All Saints Parish in Detroit. Led by the school's student council, a recent food drive to benefit the church yielded 495 pounds of donated food items.

"It's nice to know you helped someone in your own community," said Valentine Vena, an eighth-grader and president of the ASCS student council. "It was great that kids of all ages participated. Even preschoolers were a part of the effort and made a difference for those in need."

Although the issue of hunger is a serious one,

the students brought some friendly competition into the picture to raise awareness about the collection campaign and spur donations. The school has two main hallways, with preschool through third grade in one, and fourth through eighth grade in the other.

The hallways "competed" against each other to see which one could donate the greatest quantity of food. The older kids won, but the true winners will be the people served by All Saints Parish.

The first hall collected 120 pounds of food, and the second hall collected 375 pounds of

food. The total weight of all the food collected for All Saints Food Bank was 495 pounds. All Saints Parish picked up the donations on Dec. 19. The food will be used to serve prepared meals, as well as sent home with people to serve their families.

"I enjoyed seeing the creativity of the kids become apparent," said Emily Wagg, a sixth-grade teacher at All Saints and a student council adviser. "We had kids designing boxes to collect the food. We didn't have a lot of time to plan. It was nice to see everyone just jump in, get together and make it happen."



Valentine Vena (from left), Hannah Cohen, Hannah Watts and Jonathan Hyman prepare the food for pickup.

Wagg added that it was good to make the connection from one All Saints to another, and that students will be looking for future opportunities to help All Saints Parish.

All Saints Catholic School's efforts were not limited to the food drive, however. Two other major initiatives — a sock drive and a coin drive — were launched during the Advent season to support local community members at St. Aloysius Parish.

"The students learn to focus on the needs of others and learn ways to help express their Christian duty to reach out to those in need," said Deacon Donald Leach, the pastoral associate at St. Aloysius in Detroit. Leach explained how the students' efforts will help about 100 people.

"These donations are aimed at our seniors," he said. "They pay for transportation to doctor and dentist appointments, help to pay co-pays at these visits, help with drug purchase co-pays, and also to allow us to purchase small

items like pots, pans and dishes for the apartment-dwelling seniors."

### Coin drive

For the past few weeks — and continuing into January — the students are encouraged to drop their extra change into collection canisters in their classrooms. The money will be collected on Jan. 20, and donated to St. Aloysius. The need is great, since other sources of funding have been lost, according to Carolyn Forrest, a seventh- and eighth-grade religion teacher at All Saints.

"I think this is important to the students because they learn more about the people in our own community who need help," Forrest said. "We know there is poverty worldwide, but the kids also discover they can help those in need who are close to them by doing small things."

### Sock drive

Also in conjunction with St. Aloysius, All Saints students have supported a sock drive. During the week of Dec. 5-9, students brought in

new pairs of socks.

"We chose to do a sock drive because we thought it correlated well with our school theme for this year, which is 'Following in the Footsteps of Jesus,'" said Jessica Kotlarek, a second-grade teacher and a leader on the Catholic Identity Committee at the school. "We also held the drive during the week of St. Nicholas' feast day, to make the connection with the tradition of leaving a shoe for him to fill."

The students collected "two very large boxes," Kotlarek said. "I was overwhelmed, especially because we did little promotion or advertising at school, and hosted the drive rather quickly. Deacon Don Leach will pick up the socks, which will be placed into backpacks and distributed."

Leach is grateful to the ASCS students. "Thank you for all your efforts," he said. "I hope we will be able to develop other ways for you to integrate yourselves into the lives of the poor in the inner city over the years to come."

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## MEDC ramps up to 'grow' Michigan

**Observer:** Tell us about the MEDC and what its mission is?

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MEDC offers a number of business assistance services and capital programs for business attraction and acceleration, economic gardening, entrepreneurship, strategic partnerships, talent enhancement and urban and community development. MEDC, founded in 1999, also developed and manages the state's popular Pure Michigan brand.

Our mission: To market Michigan and provide the tools and environment to drive job creation and investment.

**Observer:** The goal is to diversify Michigan's economy. With the state's long association with the auto industry, how are you accomplishing that diversification?

We must diversify our economy to capture

### MEDC

**Business Name:** Michigan Economic Development Corp.



Finney

**Your name and position:** Michael A. Finney, President and CEO

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**Phone and website:** (888) 522-0103, www.michiganadvantage.org; www.michigan.org

more knowledge-based jobs in areas such as health care, information, and yes, advanced manufacturing.

Our diversification strategy centers on "economic gardening," working with existing companies to find new markets for their products so they can create good-paying jobs.

**Observer:** What is Michigan Advantage and Pure Michigan?

Pure Michigan is the nationally known brand of the State of Michigan, administered by the state's marketing arm, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Since

2006, Pure Michigan advertising has described the wonders of Michigan, but in 2011 MEDC began bringing all of its activities under the popular brand, voted one of the 10 best destination brands ever by *Forbes Magazine*. MEDC has two websites: www.MichiganAdvantage.org for business and www.michigan.org for travel and tourism.

**Observer:** How hard has it been to attract new business to Michigan? What is helping or hindering your efforts?

We've been very successful at bringing new businesses to Michigan, including Magna Electronics, HP,

Gordon Food Service, Health Summit and Patriot Solar just to name a few. We've dramatically lowered business taxes and developed new tools to help companies locate and grow here.

**Observer:** What's your goal for diversifying Michigan's economy in 2012? How do you plan to achieve that?

The goal for 2012 and beyond is to make Michigan a top 10 state in employment, GDP growth, per capita income, and young adult population growth. We will continue to work in what Governor Snyder describes as "dog years." This means ramping up all the things we've put into place in terms of our economic gardening toolkit, talent initiatives and other economic development programs.

**Observer:** What has been your biggest success in 2011?

Laying the foundation necessary to reinvent Michigan: creating one of the most competitive tax climates in the country, putting an emphasis on talent enhancement, shifting our focus to economic gardening and increasing the flow of capital to help start and grow new ventures.

### BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS

#### Elected vice chair

The International Truck Parts Association has announced the election of Jake Rea of Michigan Truck Parts in Westland to serve as vice chairman of its Board of Directors. His involvement and expertise in the industry will be a valuable asset for the association's management team.

The International Truck Parts Association was organized with 46 charter member companies in September 1974, as a not-for-profit association to promote, foster, and improve relationships among sellers and buyers of trucks and truck surplus products and other parties. A major purpose of ITPA is to exchange information and to improve and advance the truck parts aftermarket.

Michigan Truck Parts is at 38658 Ford Road, west of Newburgh, Westland.

#### Food Drive

TLC Holistic Wellness at 31580 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, is holding a food drive to benefit Gleaners Community Food Bank. The goal is to collect 500 items.

Dry, canned and non-perishable food items — along with personal care items — can be dropped off at TLC through Thursday, Jan. 6.

#### Financial Boot Camp

DFCU is offering its repeating "Money Rocks at DFCU Financial" for kids 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, at its Livonia branch, 37373 Seven Mile, Livonia.

Kids will learn why saving money is important, the three things to do with your money and the cost of starting a new small business. In addition to important information on handling money, the Boot Camp includes prizes, snacks and a pizza lunch.

The boot camp also will be offered at Fairlane Branch, 400 Town Center Dr., Dearborn, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 29.

For a reservation, call (313) 322-8225.

#### MEGA assist

The Michigan Economic Development Authority (MEGA) Board has approved a tax credit amendment for the U.S. Farathane Corporation to expand at its Westland and Shelby Township Facilities and build a new facility in another location.

USF designs and manufactures highly engineered plastic fabricated components. USF provides its customers with a wide range of full service support in product design, material selection and manufacturing capabilities primarily serving the automotive, consumer goods, electronics and heavy truck industries.

The company continues to diversify itself into new markets and products through utilizing its existing capabilities and taking them to other industries.

USF received a tax credit in 2009 for its new headquarters. This year's tax credit is an amendment to the 2009 credit so that it can expand in Westland and other locations. This new expansion is expected to create 391 new jobs. The company currently has 1,033 employees in Michigan.

## The importance of teams in successful organizations

This is the second of a three-part series on the importance of teams. See Thursday, Jan. 5, for part three. The first installment was published Dec. 22.

By **Martina Bogdanoska**

Guest Columnist

In organizations, people very often reveal that it is much better to work in teams because teamwork improves execution of activities and mutual goals can be achieved faster.

It is so because no single person can have all relevant knowledge, skills and capabilities that are mutually complementary. Only in this way can a complementary team be built where its members will learn from individual differences and attain greater achievements because of them.

The team offers three major benefits:

1. It develops human potential at maximum level
2. It causes synergetic effects
3. It enables continuous improvement

Every team must address the following criteria:

- Personal identify of the team
- Membership involvement
- Influence, control, mutual trust
- Understanding, mutual loyalty

Every team goes through four phases of development: chaos, formality, maturity and team development. To achieve goals of successful work, relationship toward clients, innovation and motivation of the employees, managers should form different teams.

The teams should be formed by managers and should realize the goals of the organization. These teams include:

- Management (executive director, vice president and department heads)
- Research and Development

(members who have expertise in developing new products)

- Working groups (employees that report to one supervisor)
- Self-governing groups (employees who observe their own activities and the quality of produce and services they are providing)

The number of members in a team may be an important determinant of motivation for members and their commitment to the work of the group. There are several advantages to maintaining a relatively small group — between two and 10 members.

Compared with members of large groups, members of small groups tend to communicate more easily with each other and they can coordinate their efforts to be more motivated, satisfied and engaged. In these groups, it is easy to share information and to perceive the significance of personal contributions to the success of the group.

Recognizing these advantages, Muhvold Nathan, senior vice president for advanced technology at Microsoft Corp., found that eight is the ideal number of members for teams in research and development.

In choosing the appropriate size of the group, managers try to get the benefit of small groups while also forming groups with sufficient resources to achieve goals and have a well-developed division of labor. As a general rule, the groups should have more members than necessary to achieve the division of labor and resources necessary to meet the objectives of the group.

**Martina Bogdanoska** is pursuing her research doctoral degree in the field of human resource management within health care. She is an inspirational academic interested in transforming health care through innovative thinking. She holds a doctoral degree in dentistry and a master's degree in health management.

**Next week: Every team needs a leader**



Mike is a 29-year-old young professional. He says he's not as smart as his smartphone — yet.

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## OUR VIEWS

# Look to us for the local news that matters

With 2011 just about in the rearview mirror, it's time to start looking forward to the new year. And 2012 certainly promises to be a big one for Southeast Michigan and the nation as a whole.

The staff here at the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers* is certainly anticipating a great 2012 — and looking forward to bringing all the news that matters to our readers. As always, our goal is to provide our readers with the most up to date look at the news stories that impact our local communities. Not only in our award-winning print editions, but also on our website, [www.hometownlife.com](http://www.hometownlife.com), which is

updated daily with breaking news stories.

For years, the so-called experts have been predicting the demise of the newspaper industry. And for sure, we've experienced some tough times in recent years — just like many other industries. But our commitment to our readers has never waned, even in the face of a faltering economy that has forced us to make some difficult changes. But we are still standing, and we thank all of our readers for standing with us. We are looking forward to a new year that promises to be filled with extraordinary news stories.

For the first time in what seems like an eternity, the economy — both locally and nationally — is on the upswing. Let us hope that continues. Far too many people in Michigan have been hurt by layoffs and lost income since the beginning of the "Great Recession" and we could certainly use some good news on the economic front. It will be nice to report some good news on that front this year, especially how an improved economy will mean brighter days for our communities.

Elections also promise to be big news in 2012. Many local, state and federal offices will be up for

grabs. We hope to see an informed electorate head to the polls in the August primary and November general elections. While most of the national media will focus on the presidential race, we know that state and local campaigns will have a more direct impact on our readers, especially as it relates to taxes and services. You can look to us to provide the political coverage that hits closer to home.

We realize in most cases our newspapers are the only source when it comes to local news coverage. We take that responsibility very seriously. That's why we have reporters at school board and city

council meetings, prep sporting events and all the other happenings that are important to our readers.

In 2012, we invite our readers to become more involved. Whether it is a letter to the editor or a comment on our website, we want everyone's voice to be heard. That's what we are here for. We just ask that everyone respects the opinions of others — even when you might not agree.

As we turn the page on another year, we hope you will continue to look to us as your trusted news source. We are proud to be a part of our communities. And we thank you for trust.

## COMMUNITY VOICE

# What is your wish for the New Year?



"I guess just another happy, healthy New Year for me and my family."

**Matthew Stabile**  
Farmington Hills



"Get a job and keep one. That's my focus right now. I moved from Traverse City and I'm looking for job opportunities."

**Scott McCloskey**  
Livonia



"I wanted the Lions to make the playoffs; now that they're there, I want them to do well in the playoffs."

**Christa Bekker**  
Canton



"It's going to be mostly what it is every year - to organize at home."

**Mona Smith**  
Garden City



"Personally I wish the world would know the Christmas season is a celebration of Christ's birth and his message to the world."

**Eric Moore**  
Livonia



"Generally, I don't make them."

**Rob Bloomfield**  
Westland



"I don't have one, I don't usually do one."

**Julie Forthun**  
Garden City



"Just a safe and healthy family."

**Hunter Stabile, 9**  
Farmington Hills



"I think to be more patient with my children and keep up with the yard work."

**Kimberly McDonaldson**  
Westland



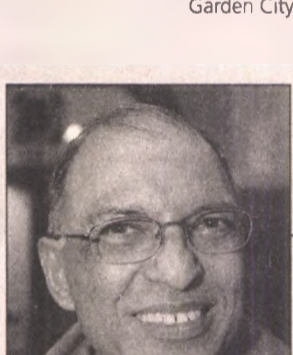
"Peace for families. A lot of families don't have that."

**Susan Stoney**  
Plymouth



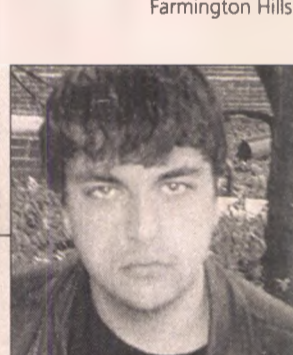
"Truly for people to co-exist with a real conscience and awareness of the true meaning of life, because there is so much negativity. There's more to life than just themselves."

**Jennifer Westcott**  
Livonia



"Just a happy, peaceful life. I'm semi-retired, so just enjoy life, why not?"

**Rajendra Shah**  
Farmington Hill



"I want to quit smoking, and hopefully I'll get into the University of Michigan to study medicine."

**Michael Awad**  
Plymouth



"For me, it's to make time to work out and make use of my gym membership."

**Ashlee Baracy**  
Westland



"I hope maybe to just try and eat healthier and not be on a diet."

**Barb Wlosinski**  
Garden City

# Teamwork vital for money worries

We've had our silent night. Now the area is about to get a whole lot noisier, and it won't just be from the revelry on New Year's Eve.

As a troubled year is ending, a challenging one is beginning throughout the region. Frequently, as individuals voice their New Year's resolutions, a big one is always to lose weight, but that was high on Gov. Rick Snyder's list even before the end of this year.

The kind of weight the governor had in mind was that from unnecessary expenses and duplication of service in our towns and schools. Officials railed bitterly against making awards in revenue sharing and aid to education dependent on meeting criteria

showing moves to reduce expenses by sharing the burden of providing services. Most officials pointed out that their schools and local governments have already done just that.

But the truth is that the state budget has become skinny, skin and bones, if you will. It is providing the spine of structure, but little else for local entities.

Perhaps in a way this is better than the bulimic feeding frenzy of past years for funding for sustenance of services that may have been able to have been fed a more healthy diet. But who is to say what nutrients are essential and which are icing on the cake?

Well, the one good thing is that

the governor has left it up to communities and schools to devise their own diet. The problem is that it has been a forced crash diet. So that noise you are about to hear as the New Year begins is likely to be from the gnashing of teeth as the budget process begins for the next fiscal year.

There is an image with a puzzle that involves a group of people sitting in a circle around a pot of food. Each person has a spoon, but it is a very, very long spoon — far too long to dip into the pot and then bring the nourishment to an individual's own lips.

The puzzle is: Will those people starve and go into receivership? Or will they find a solution

to their collective problem? The answer to that puzzle is the one all schools and governments must embrace.

In the case of the pot of food, the people sitting around it discovered that the spoon may be too long to feed themselves, but it was just right to feed the person opposite them.

Local officials are all sitting around a pot of money, diminished though it is. As many times as they have called for cooperation, it is more essential now than ever.

Local officials will always have their own spoons, but they will have to come up with ways to make sure we all get our daily bread.



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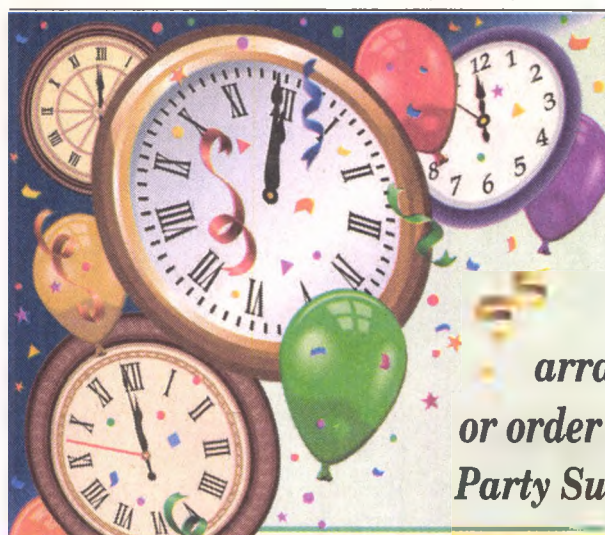
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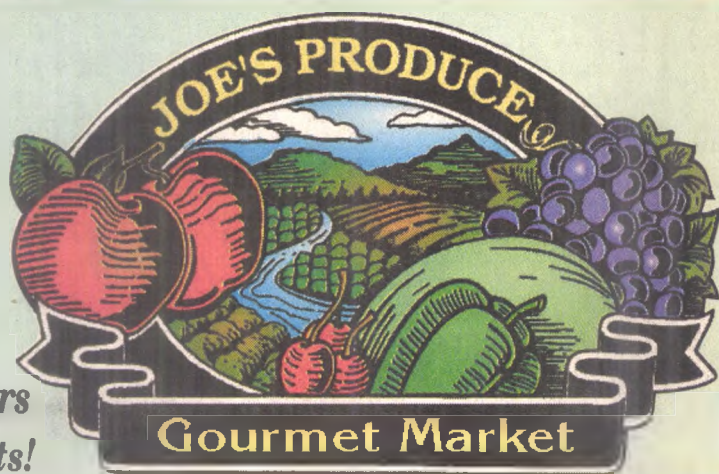
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Everyone at Joe's wishes you a very Happy & Healthy New Year!

Prices good through January 1, 2012











## New adult troupe debuts on youth stage in Livonia

By Sharon Dargay  
 O&E Staff Writer

Motor City Youth Theater's new adult offshoot — Motor City Musical Theatre — will debut Friday, Jan. 6, 2012 with a little-known Stephen Sondheim play.

"When we heard the rights for the show had been released, we wanted to get in on that. It's a rarely-performed piece ... a rare treat. It's the first time it will be performed in Michigan, and possibly even in the Midwest," said Dave Cowan, a cast member who's also handling publicity for the show.

The play, *Saturday Night*, with Sondheim's lyrics and music, was set to debut on Broadway in the mid-1950s and would have introduced Sondheim, then 25, to theatergoers for the first time. When one of its lead producers died in 1955, the show was shelved until 1997 when a small professional theater in London, England produced it for the first time.

The story, written by Julius and Philip Epstein, authors of *Casablanca*, tells the story of Gene, a dreamer and a Wall Street clerk, who convinces his lonely, dateless friends to invest in the stock market during the spring before the 1929. Gene uses their money in a series of impulsive purchases, and is lured back to the real world by a developing romance.

Performances are scheduled for 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Jan. 6-7 and 13-14, 2012 and 2



Elyse Moon (standing) portrays "Helen" and George Abud is "Gene" in the Motor City Music Theatre production of Stephen Sondheim's "Saturday Night." They're surrounded by cast members who play Gene's friends.

p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8 and 15, 2012, at the Grantland Street Playhouse, 27555 Grantland, Livonia. Tickets are \$17 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students. Call (313) 535-8962 for reservations or e-mail to motorcitymusicaltheatre@gmail.com.

### Hands-on actors

The cast includes mostly students and graduates from drama programs at Wayne State University and Oakland University, as well as a few actors from Windsor, Ont., Canada. They're involved in all facets of the show, including set-making, props, publicity and costuming.

"Everything is being done by the cast itself. We don't have to go through a hierarchy of who would normally make these decisions," Cowan said. "It's a nice change of pace and gives us more freedom. It's a blast."

Motor City Youth Theatre founder, Nancy Florkowski, told friends at Wayne State University a few years ago that she wanted to form an adult troupe.

"We got together, pooled resources and found a play we all wanted to do," said Cowan, a Wayne State University graduate who also teach-

es at the Youth Theatre. "We'll sprinkle in two or three (adult) shows a season."

### Cast, crew

Jeremy Ryan Mossman of Windsor directs and appears in the show. Other cast members are Wayne State students George Abud, Luke Rose, Matthew Miazgovic, Andrick Siegmund, Aaron Glenn, Dan Finn, Allison Fisher, Sydney Machesky, and Kendall Talbot; Oakland University student Elyse Moon; and Windsor resident Nathaniel Cedroni. Wayne State grads Adam Crinson designed the



A group of dateless friends are talked into investing in the stock market, in the show "Saturday Night."

play to stage at this time because the expanding income gap between the rich and the poor, along with the protests against Wall Street provide parallels to the story.

sets and Megan Amadon designed costumes.

Florkowski serves as artistic director and her husband, Fred Florkowski, is technical director.

Cowan said *Saturday Night* is the perfect

"The jokes are still funny," he said. "We're excited to have an audience. We've been rehearsing since October and we're ready to take the show to the next level."

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### GET OUT

Continued from page B6

'40s and '50s; free refreshments. Dance lessons cost \$6; dance and lessons are \$11; dance only is \$7 for guests, \$6.50 for associates and \$6 for Moon Dusters members; upcoming special dances include a New Year's party. Call for details  
**Contact:** Joe Castrodale, club president, (248) 968-5197

### Film

#### PENN THEATRE

**Time/Date:** 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 29 and Jan. 5, 2012, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., Friday, Dec. 30; and 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31  
**Location:** 760 Penniman Ave., Plymouth  
**Details:** "The Big Year," \$3  
**Coming up:** "Puss In Boots," 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 6, 2012; 4:45 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 7-8,

2012; and 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012; all seats \$3  
**Contact:** (734) 453-0870; www.penntheatre.com  
**REDFORD THEATRE**  
**Time/Date:** 8 p.m. Jan. 6, 2012 and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Jan. 7, 2012  
**Location:** 17360 Lahser, just north of Grand River Ave., in Detroit  
**Details:** "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," tickets \$4  
**Contact:** (313) 537-2560

### Museums

**CHARLES H. WRIGHT**  
**Time/Date:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday  
**Location:** 315 E. Warren Road, Detroit  
**Details:** Dance Theatre of Harlem, through Dec. 31; the play, "There Goes the Neighborhood," runs Jan. 7-8, 2012. Regular museum admission is \$8 for adults, 13-61; and \$5 for youth, 3-12, and seniors, 62 and over. Members and children 2 and

under are admitted free  
**Contact:** (313) 494-5800  
**CRANBROOK**  
**Time/Date:** 2 p.m., Thursday-Sunday  
**Location:** 39221 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills  
**Details:** Docent-guided public tours of Saarinen House, a rare integration of art, architecture, design and nature, depart from Cranbrook Institute of Science front desk. The tours are about 90 minutes long and take place rain or shine.  
**Contact:** (248) 645-3200 for house tours; http://science.cranbrook.edu

**PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL MUSEUM**  
**Time/Date:** 1-4 p.m. Wednesday and Friday-Sunday through Dec. 31  
**Location:** 155 S. Main, Plymouth  
**Details:** "A Red Ryder Christmas Story" features vignettes of scenes from the film, "A Christmas Story," information about the his-

tory of Red Ryder BB guns, which were sold by Daisy Manufacturing Company of Plymouth, and artifacts of the 1940s. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students, 6-17  
**Contact:** (734) 455-8940

### Music

#### THE ARK

**Time/Date:** Crossroads Ceili, Bua and Nic Gareiss, Dec. 29-30; The Fred Eaglesmith Traveling Show, Dec. 31; Black Jake and the Carnies, Jan. 6, 2012; Jill Jack Birthday Bash, Jan. 7, 2012; Deep Fried Pickle Project, Jan. 8, 2012; Bitch & Ferron, Jan. 8, 2012; Paul Cebar Tomorrow Sound, Jan. 11, 2012; An Dro, Jan. 12, 2012; Mountain Heart, Jan. 13, 2012; Theo Katzman: Songwriting Workshop, Jan. 14, 2012; The Yellow Room Gang, Jan. 14, 2012; Bearfoot, Jan. 15, 2012  
**Location:** 316 South Main, Ann Arbor  
**Contact:** (734) 763-8587; www.theark.org

#### BASELINE FOLK SOCIETY

**Time/Date:** 7-9:30 p.m. the third Saturday of the month  
**Location:** JWH Center for the Arts, Plymouth Community Arts Council, 774 N. Sheldon, Plymouth  
**Details:** The show includes open mic performances and Circle of Friends, this month's featured performer. Admission is \$5. Annual memberships are \$25 for individuals and \$50 for families and offer free admission to monthly concerts  
**Contact:** Mike Mullen at (248) 719-3464

#### FARMINGTON PLAYERS BARN THEATRE

**Time/Date:** 7:30 p.m. Jan. 14, 2012  
**Location:** 32332 12 Mile, Farmington Hills  
**Details:** "From Broadway to Hollywood with the MOT" features soloists "up close and personal" in an intimate setting. Tickets are \$19 for adults, \$17 for seniors and students. Advance tickets

are available 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, at the Costick Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile, Farmington Hills. Tickets may also be purchased at www.recreg.fhgov.com or by phone at (248) 473-1848  
**Coming up:** Blackthorn, March 9-10, 2012  
**Contact:** https://recreg.fhgov.com or (248) 473-1848

#### MICHIGAN PHILHARMONIC

**Time/Date:** 2 p.m. Jan. 15, 2012  
**Location:** St. John's Seminary Chapel, Plymouth  
**Details:** "Miniature Masterpieces" features music, such as Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," and Mahler's "Songs of a Wayfarer," performed by the chamber orchestra. A new work, "Changes," by Michigan-born composer, Andre Myers, also will debut. Tickets are \$22 general, \$18 senior and \$10, student  
**Contact:** (734) 451-2112; www.michiganphil.org

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### February 2012

**"Are You My Mother?" by ArtsPower**  
2/11/2012 11:00 AM  
\$12 Adult, \$11 Senior/Youth, \$8 Group

### March 2012

**Kenya Safari Acrobats**  
3/30/2012 10:00 AM \$8/person.  
3/30/2012 7:30 PM  
\$25 Adult, \$20 Senior/Youth/Group, \$19 Early Bird Special by 1/30/12

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- Richard Connema, critic for *Talkin' Broadway*



"It was an extraordinary experience... the level of skill, but also the power of the archetypes and the narratives were startling. And of course it was exquisitely beautiful."  
- Cate Blanchett, Academy Award-winning Actress



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- Oscar-Winner Robert Stromberg, Production Designer for *Avatar* and *Alice in Wonderland*

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Shen Yun Performing Arts is touring the leading venues in over 20 countries on 5 continents, including the Lincoln Center in New York and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

## Celebrate New Year with tasty, nonalcoholic drinks

AAA's popular "Great Pretenders Party Guide" is available as a digital publication to help party hosts plan festive holiday gatherings — including tips on how to help reduce drinking and driving deaths and injuries.

The free guide includes drink recipes from AAA-Diamond rated hotels and restaurants that are appropriate for year-round festivities as well as holiday gatherings. It also offers advice to help party hosts monitor alcohol consumption among guests.

Drunken driving continues to be a serious problem on roadways and is a factor in more than one-third of all traffic deaths. Among the safety tips for party hosts:

- If despite your best efforts, some of your guests have had too much to drink, arrange for a ride with another guest who is sober, call a cab or have them stay overnight.
- Choose a reliable "bartender" who will keep track of the size and number of drinks that guests consume. Don't let guests mix their own drinks.
- Plan activities like party games to engage people and make for less active consumption of alcohol.
- Serve foods that act as a buffer to alcohol. High protein foods such as cheese and meats are best because protein stays in the stomach longer slowing alcohol absorption.
- Always offer nonalcoholic drinks or "mocktails" for designated drivers and others who prefer not to drink alcohol. Sparking grape juice is a good alternative to champagne.

The digital guide is located at [AAA.com/Pretenders](http://AAA.com/Pretenders).

Recipe cards, which include a nonalcoholic drink and promote the digital guide, are available at AAA branches statewide.

Here's a sampling of recipes:

### Sparkling Pineapple Sunset

Submitted by Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island

- 1 cup pineapple juice
- 1 cup Perrier
- Splash of grenadine
- Cherry for garnish

In a large glass filled halfway with ice, add equal parts pineapple juice and Perrier (or any sparkling water). Shake well. Add a splash of grenadine. Garnish with marashino cherry.

### Magic Punch

Submitted by Dakota Magic Casino and Hotel, Hankinson, N.C.

- 1½ ounces pineapple juice
  - 1½ ounces cherry juice
  - 2½ ounces orange juice
  - 2½ ounces cranberry juice
  - 1½ ounces lemon juice
  - 1½ ounces 7-Up
  - 2½ ounces nonalcoholic margarita mix
- Blend all ingredients. Pour over ice.



### A Refreshing Twist

Submitted by Ameristar Casino Hotel, Council Bluffs, Iowa

- 4 mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 5 ounces ginger ale
- 5 ounces green tea
- 1 lime wedge

Lightly muddle mint leaves and sugar in bottom of a pint glass with a splash of green tea until all of the sugar is dissolved. Fill glass about half full of ice and add ginger ale and remaining green tea. Stir and top with squeezed lime wedge.

### Creamelon

Submitted by Sixteen, Trump International Hotel & Tower, Chicago, Ill.

- 3 cups chopped seedless watermelon
- 1 cup chilled green tea
- 1 cup chilled cream soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon light brown sugar
- Ice cubes

Blend everything on a low speed and serve in a tall glass. Garnish with big watermelon slice.

### Sweet Texas Juice

Submitted by Amarillo Bar-B-Que, Bellevue, Neb.

- 1 part pineapple juice
- 1 part cranberry juice
- 1 part freshly squeezed lemonade
- Cherry for garnish
- Ice cubes

Fill large glass with ice. Add one part pineapple juice, then one part cranberry juice. Top with lemonade. Garnish with cherry.

### Baja Sol Cranberry Cooler

Submitted by Baja Sol Cantina, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

- 4 cups cranberry juice
- 1 cup pineapple juice
- 3 cups ginger ale
- 1½ cups orange juice
- ½ fresh lime (squeezed)

Combine all ingredients in pitcher. Serve over ice in a sugar-rimmed glass.

## Submit an apple recipe to win a mixer, bragging rights

The Michigan Apple Committee is accepting recipes through Jan. 31, 2012 for its annual Michigan Apple Amateur Recipe Contest.

"We're looking for original Michigan Apple recipes that will wow the judges," stated Denise Donohue, Executive Director of the Michigan Apple Committee. "Each year recipes submitted

are different and possibly more creative than the previous year."

Amateur cooks may send recipes that highlight Michigan-grown apples, to the Michigan Apple Committee via mail or e-mail. Mailed entries must be received before Jan. 31, 2012 at Michigan Apple Committee, 13750 S. Sedona Parkway, Lansing, MI 48906. E-mail entries must

arrive at [Staff@MichiganApples.com](mailto:Staff@MichiganApples.com) before 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2012.

Recipes will be judged on taste, originality, preparation, and apple significance.

The top three highest-scoring recipe winners will receive a KitchenAid stand mixer. Their recipes also may be featured on cards distributed by the Michi-

gan Apple Committee at select retailers and farm markets in the Midwest.

Cooks can visit [www.MichiganApples.com/contests](http://www.MichiganApples.com/contests) for more information.

Need a little inspiration to enter the contest? Here are recipes for three previous winners, Pure Bliss Apple Ginger Scones, Skillet Apple-Cherry Pie, and Baked Apple Stuffed French Toast.

### Skillet Apple-Cherry Pie

Created by Donna Bardocz of Howell  
7-8 Servings

- Refrigerated pie crust (15-ounce box)
- ½ cup dried cherries
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- ½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup (4 tablespoons) cherry preserves
- 4 tart Michigan baking apples, such as Golden Delicious, Gravenstein, Baldwin, Macoun, Northern Spy or Winesap, washed very well
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar (for sprinkling on top)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Combine the dried cherries, pecans, ½ cup brown sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl and set aside.

Select an ovenproof skillet that measures 9 inches across the bottom and 11-12 inches across the top. A cast-iron skillet works well and makes a home-style presentation. Melt the butter in the skillet over medium heat, and then stir in the other ½ cup of brown sugar and cherry preserves. When the mixture is bubbling evenly over the surface of the pan — 30 seconds or so — remove pan from the heat.

Do not peel the apples; the peels will help them to hold together. Halve them top to bottom, however, and core each half. Spoon some of the cherry-walnut mixture into each apple half, compacting it with a finger.

Quickly invert the stuffed apple halves and place them cut side down in the skillet. You should be able to get 6 or 7 around the outside and 1 in the center. Finely dice the remaining apple half, if left over, and scatter the pieces between the apples. Sprinkle the leftover cherry-nut mixture between the apples.

Between two sheets of waxed paper, converge and roll together both top and bottom pie crusts to form one 12-inch circle. After removing the top sheet of waxed paper, invert the pastry over the apples, center it and peel off the other sheet of paper. Lifting the edge of the pastry, either tuck the edge straight down along the inside of the pan or pinch it to crimp the edge. Poke two large vent holes in the pastry with a paring knife, twisting the knife to enlarge the holes slightly.

Lightly brush the pastry with the milk and sprinkle surface with sugar. Place the pie directly on the center oven rack and bake for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees and bake until the top crust is golden brown, another 25 minutes.

Transfer the pie to a cooling rack and let cool for at least 30 minutes or to room temperature before serving.



### PURE BLISS Apple Ginger Scones

Created by Nadine Mesch of Mount Healthy, Ohio

- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons cold butter
- 2 Gala apples, peeled and finely chopped
- ¼ cup candied ginger, chopped
- 1 egg
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1½ teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large mixing bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder and

salt. Using a cheese grater, grate the cold butter into the flour mixture. Stir. Add chopped Gala apples and candied ginger. In a small bowl mix together the egg, cream and lemon zest. Gently mix into apple mixture. Stir until dough forms. Knead dough 6 times. Place on parchment paper, form into an 8 inch round. About 1 inch thick. Cut into 8 wedges; separate slightly.

Bake for approximately 15 minutes until just lightly golden. Cool slightly. Combine powder sugar and lemon juice, drizzle over scones.



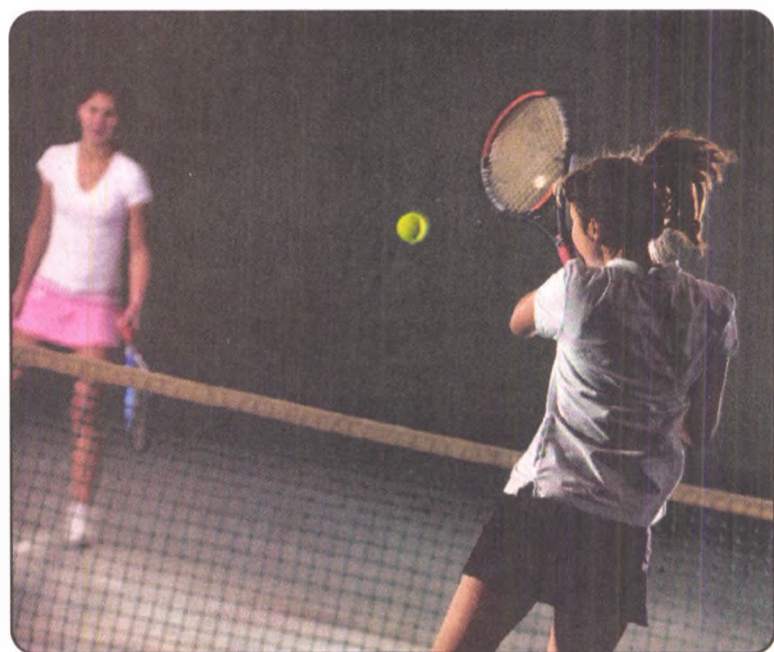




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# WITH Constance Marie

**Switched at Birth** tells the story of two teenage girls who discover they were accidentally switched as newborns in the hospital. Constance Marie stars as Regina Vasquez, the mother of Daphne Vasquez who is deaf and from a working class background in contrast to the wealthy and privileged Bay Kennish.

People may not know that your career launched in the Los Angeles underground breakdancing scene when you were selected to perform on tour with David Bowie. Did you ever think that break would lead to roles in acclaimed films and hit TV shows?

Never ever did I believe my life/career would be where it is today. I feel very blessed and lucky. I am truly proud of most of the projects that I have worked on and their impact on audiences.

Your daughter Luna Marie is nearly three years old now. Has real-life motherhood changed the way you approach the role of Daphne's mom on *Switched at Birth*?

I have played a lot of mothers, but since becoming one, only now do I understand how delicate, wonderful and all consuming that love is! I think having a baby has made me a better actor.

Do the class and socio-economic differences on the show resonate with you based on your own experiences growing up?

Yes, growing up as a third generation Latino American, I know what it is like to fit halfway into two diverse cultures. I have also lived in both low and high economic levels. That is why I was attracted to this show. To be able to explore those issues and the level of difference between the hearing and deaf cultures and communities—it was very different.

Is it the kids or the parents who have a harder time grappling with those differences and the shock of being switched at birth?

I think everyone is shocked and struggles to deal with the switch. I love the fact that the show really presents the question: What is more important—nature or nurture? After 15 years, is your child any less your child just because you do not share the same DNA?



**Switched at Birth** returns Tuesday, January 3 at 8/7c, only on ABC Family.



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# ASK AMERICAN PROFILE



**Q** I would like to know something about **Doug McClure**, who played Trampas on *The Virginian*.

—Ann Brown, Troy, Idaho

The Glendale, Calif., native appeared in more than two dozen films, including *South Pacific*, *Gidget*, *Shenandoah*, *The Land That Time Forgot* and *Maverick*. He starred in three additional TV series—*Overland Trail*, *Checkmate* and *Barbary Coast*—and was a guest actor on dozens of other shows. McClure, who married five times and had two daughters, died of lung cancer in 1995 at age 59. “Anytime I laid eyes on Doug, I couldn’t help smiling,” his *Virginian* co-star, James Drury, once recalled. “He was the finest guy I ever knew.”

**Q** What is singer **Jackie DeShannon** doing now?

—Dorothy Spotswood, Mexico, Mo.

DeShannon, 69, recently released *When You Walk in the Room*, an album with a stripped-down treatment of her hit songs, including “Put a Little Love in Your Heart” and “What the World Needs Now Is Love.” “I recorded them like I stopped by your house for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, kind of strumming and singing,” says the native of Hazel, Ky. Outside of her music, she works with The Seeing Eye, which provides guide dogs for the blind. She and her husband, film composer Randy Edelman, live in Beverly Hills, Calif., and have a grown son.



**Q** What can you tell me about **Patrick Warburton**, who plays Jeff Bingham on *Rules of Engagement*?

—John Rogers, Waycross, Ga.

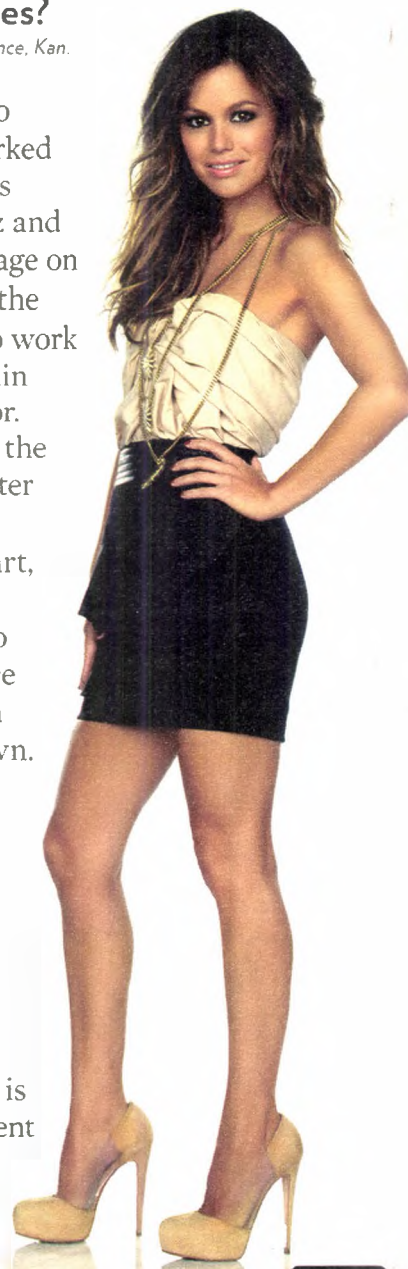


Warburton, 48, was born in Paterson, N.J., grew up in California and studied marine biology in college. He became known in his role as Elaine Benes’ boyfriend, David Puddy, on *Seinfeld*, and he played the title role in the TV series *The Tick*. He has provided his deep, booming voice to several animated films and video games, and he’s now in his sixth season on *Rules*. Warburton and his wife have four children ranging in age from 11 to 19.

**Q** I enjoy **Rachel Bilson** on *Hart of Dixie*. What attracted her to this TV series?

—Kerry Bradley, Lawrence, Kan.

Bilson, 30, who previously worked with producers Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage on *The O.C.*, says the opportunity to work with them again was a big factor. Plus, she liked the fish-out-of-water element to her role as Zoe Hart, a doctor from New York who sets up practice in an Alabama Gulf Coast town. “I loved the story and I loved all the characters,” Bilson says. “My biggest thing is comedy, so I like that there is a humor element to it.”



For more news about your favorite stars, shows, movies and musicians, visit [americanprofile.com/celebrity](http://americanprofile.com/celebrity)



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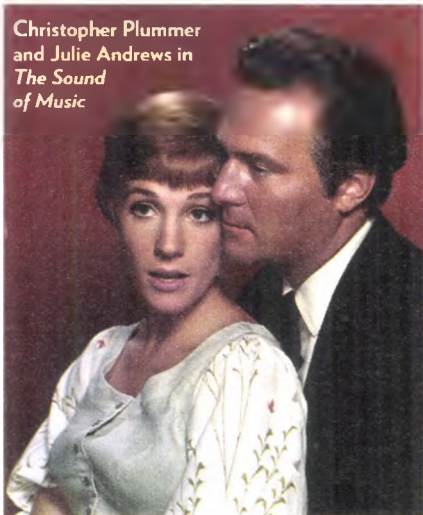
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Christopher Plummer and Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*



**Q** What can you tell me about the actor who played the father of the von Trapp children in *The Sound of Music*?  
—Joyce Escoe, Sevierville, Tenn.

Christopher Plummer, the Canadian-born star of stage, screen and TV, portrayed Captain von Trapp opposite Julie Andrews in the 1965 movie musical. The 81-year-old actor has won two Tony Awards and two Emmys and was nominated for an Oscar in 2009 for his role as Leo Tolstoy in *The Last Station*. Among his other movie credits are *The Insider*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *National Treasure* and *Murder by Decree*, and the TV miniseries *The Thorn Birds*. Now you can see him in the new movie *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. The father of actress Amanda Plummer lives with his third wife in a 100-year-old converted barn in Weston, Conn.

**Q** I was young at the time, but I remember a TV Western series called *Pistols 'n' Petticoats*. Who were the women who starred in it? My friends think I'm making it up!  
—Diane L. White, Kinston, S.C.

You've got a great memory—especially considering that *Pistols 'n' Petticoats* lasted only a handful of episodes before its short run on CBS ended in 1967. The half-hour comedy starred Ann Sheridan, Ruth McDevitt and Carole Wells.



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# Exercise Through Menopause

By Linda Wasmer Andrews

**EXERCISE CAN HELP** ease the transition through menopause while promoting better overall physical and emotional health. If you're a midlife woman, there's no better time than now to get fit.

"Find activities you really love," says Tamilee Webb, star of numerous fitness DVDs and author of the book *Tamilee Webb's Defy Gravity Workout*. "Look for activities that don't impact your joints as much as the things you might have done in your 20s," adds Webb, who's in her early 50s. "For instance, you might try walking instead of jogging, or water aerobics instead of a regular aerobics class."

Talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program, especially if you are a woman over 50, are overweight or have a medical condition such as heart or lung disease. Then go have some fun with these activities.

• **Get off the beaten path.** Venture a lit-

tle farther afield for walks and bike rides, and explore the hills and trails within a day's drive of your home.

• **Go out and play.** If there's too much snow for walking and cycling, try snowshoeing or cross-country skiing instead.

• **Winterize your exercise.** If staying toasty is more your style, bring your favorite summer sport inside for the winter. Pedal a stationary bike, jog on a treadmill, swim in an indoor pool or walk around the mall.

• **Let yard work do double duty.** Heavier lawn and garden chores, such as digging, hoeing and raking leaves, can work your muscles and burn calories.

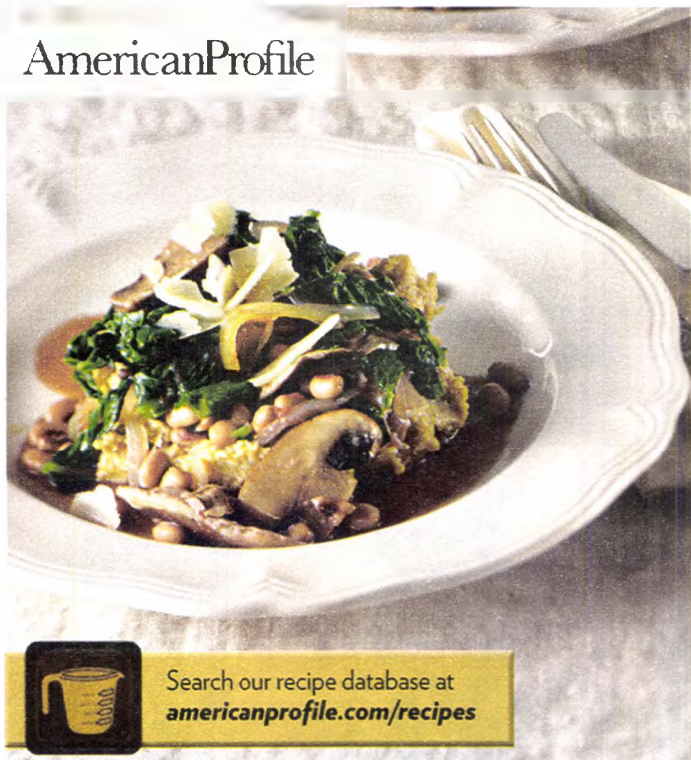
• **Make your workout child's play.** Kids really know how to make the most of outdoor playtime. Join your children or grandchildren for jumping rope, inline skating, a snowball fight or a game of H-O-R-S-E on the basketball court.



MEDIA BAKERY

## RECIPE

### AmericanProfile



MARK BOUGHTON PHOTOGRAPHY/TERESA BLACKBURN STYLING

## Mushroom and Black-Eyed Pea Ragout

A ragout (ra-GOO) is a thick stew of meats or, in this case, vegetables. It's great served with creamy grits, polenta or mashed potatoes.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3 tablespoons olive oil  | 1 tablespoon tomato paste   |
| 1 large onion, sliced vertically   | 2 (15-ounce) cans black-eyed peas, drained  |
| 1/4 pound shiitake mushrooms, tough part of stems removed, thickly sliced            | 1/2 teaspoon salt   |
| 1/4 pound mixed mushrooms (such as cremini, baby bella and oyster mushrooms), sliced | Coarsely ground black pepper  |
| 4 garlic cloves, crushed   | 1/4 teaspoon honey  |
| 3 cups mushroom or vegetable broth   | 1/8 teaspoon Tabasco  |
|  | 1 bunch hearty greens (kale, turnip, mustard or chard) washed, thinly sliced and blanched |

1. Heat oil over medium heat in a large nonstick skillet. Add onion, mushrooms and garlic; saute until onions are soft, about 5 minutes.

2. Add broth, tomato paste, black-eyed peas, salt, pepper, honey and Tabasco; bring to boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until sauce thickens slightly. Stir in greens; cook until thoroughly heated.

Serves 6.

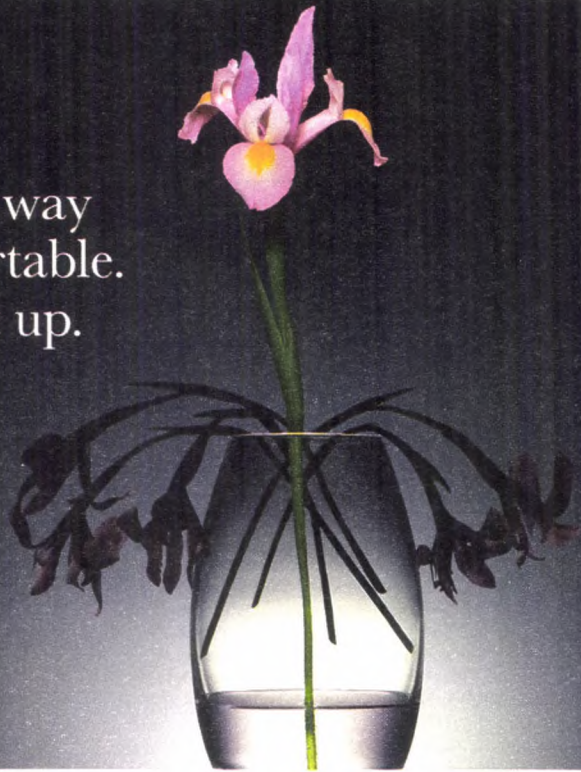
—Recipe by Crescent Dragonwagon, Saxton's River, Vt.

Nutritional facts per serving: 250 calories, 8g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 10g protein, 39g carbohydrates, 8g fiber, 400mg sodium.



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Ask about a prescription that can help you create your *own* lubrication.

is a problem for many women after menopause. That's because low levels of estrogen can cause vaginal walls to become thin and dry. But when used twice a week, prescription Premarin<sup>®</sup> Vaginal Cream treats painful intercourse due to menopause by supplying a blend of estrogen directly to the vaginal tissues. While you use it, it helps your body restore its natural ability to create lubrication. That's something no over-the-counter product was designed to do.

To learn more, ask your doctor and go to [www.premarin.com](http://www.premarin.com)

**Important Safety Information:**

What is the most important information I should know about PREMARIN Vaginal Cream (an estrogen mixture)?

- Using estrogen-alone may increase your chance of getting cancer of the uterus (womb)
- Report any unusual vaginal bleeding right away while you are using PREMARIN Vaginal Cream. Vaginal bleeding after menopause may be a warning sign of cancer of the uterus (womb). Your healthcare provider should check any unusual vaginal bleeding to find the cause
- Do not use estrogen-alone to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, strokes or dementia (decline in brain function)
- Using estrogen-alone may increase your chances of getting strokes or blood clots
- Do not use estrogens with progestins to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, or dementia
- Using estrogens with progestins may increase your chances of getting heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer, or blood clots
- Using estrogens with progestins may increase your chance of getting dementia, based on a study of women age 65 years or older
- You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment with PREMARIN Vaginal Cream

PREMARIN<sup>®</sup> Vaginal Cream is used after menopause to treat menopausal changes in and around the vagina and to treat painful intercourse caused by these changes. It should not be used if you have unusual vaginal bleeding, have or had cancer of the breast or uterus, had a stroke or heart attack, have or had blood clots or liver problems, are allergic to any of its ingredients, or think you may be pregnant. Most common side effects include headache, infection, abnormal pain, back pain, accidental injury, and vaginitis. Each gram contains 0.625mg of conjugated estrogens, USP.

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### ABOUT PREMARIN<sup>®</sup> VAGINAL CREAM

PREMARIN Vaginal Cream is a medicine that contains a mixture of estrogen hormones. PREMARIN Vaginal Cream is used to treat menopausal changes in and around the vagina and painful intercourse caused by these changes. This information does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your menopausal symptoms and their treatment.

### IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about PREMARIN Vaginal Cream (an estrogen mixture)?

- Using estrogen-alone may increase your chance of getting cancer of the uterus (womb). Report any unusual vaginal bleeding right away while you are using PREMARIN Vaginal Cream. Vaginal bleeding after menopause may be a warning sign of cancer of the uterus (womb). Your healthcare provider should check any unusual vaginal bleeding to find the cause.
- Do not use estrogen-alone or estrogens with progestin to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, strokes or dementia (decline in brain function).
- Using estrogen-alone may increase your chances of getting strokes or blood clots.
- Using estrogen-alone or combined with progestin may increase your chance of getting dementia, based on a study of women age 65 years or older.
- You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly about whether you still need treatment with PREMARIN Vaginal Cream.

### DO NOT START USING PREMARIN VAGINAL CREAM IF YOU:

- Have unusual vaginal bleeding
- Currently have or have had certain cancers

Estrogens may increase the chance of getting certain types of cancers, including cancer of the breast or uterus. If you have or have had cancer, talk with your healthcare provider about whether you should use PREMARIN Vaginal Cream.

- Had a stroke or heart attack
- Currently have or have had blood clots
- Currently have or have had liver problems
- Are allergic to PREMARIN Vaginal Cream or any of its ingredients
- Think you may be pregnant

Tell your healthcare provider:

- If you have any unusual signs of vaginal bleeding
- About all your medical problems
- About all the medicines you take
- If you are going to have surgery or will be on bedrest
- If you are breast feeding

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF PREMARIN VAGINAL CREAM

Premarin Vaginal Cream is only used in and around the vagina; however, the risks associated with oral estrogens should be taken into account. Serious, but less common side effects include:

- Breast cancer • Cancer of the uterus • Stroke • Heart attack • Blood clots
- Dementia • Gallbladder disease • Ovarian cancer • High blood pressure
- Liver problems • High blood sugar • Enlargement of benign tumors

Some of the warning signs of these serious side effects include:

- Breast lumps • Unusual vaginal bleeding • Dizziness and faintness
- Changes in speech • Severe headaches • Chest pain • Shortness of breath
- Pains in your legs • Changes in vision • Vomiting • Yellowing of the skin, eyes, or nail beds

Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of these warning signs, or any other unusual symptoms that concern you.

Less serious, but common, side effects include:

- Headache • Breast pain • Irregular vaginal bleeding or spotting • Stomach/abdominal cramps, bloating • Nausea and vomiting • Hair loss • Fluid retention yeast infection • Reactions from inserting PREMARIN Vaginal Cream, such as vaginal burning, irritation, and itching

These are not all the possible side effects of PREMARIN Vaginal Cream. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

### HOW TO USE PREMARIN VAGINAL CREAM

PREMARIN Vaginal Cream is a cream that you place in your vagina with the applicator provided with the cream.

- Take the dose recommended by your healthcare provider and talk to him or her about how well that dose is working for you.
  - You and your healthcare provider should talk regularly (for example, every 3 to 6 months) about the dose you are taking and whether you still need treatment with PREMARIN Vaginal Cream
1. Remove cap from tube.
  2. Screw nozzle end of applicator onto tube.
  3. Gently squeeze tube from the bottom to force sufficient cream into the barrel to provide the prescribed dose. Use the marked stopping points on the applicator to measure the correct dose, as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
  4. Unscrew applicator from tube.
  5. Lie on back with knees drawn up. To deliver medication, gently insert applicator deeply into vagina and press plunger downward to its original position.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a brief summary of important information. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Go to [www.premarinvaginalcream.com](http://www.premarinvaginalcream.com)
- Call 1-800-934-5556

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## TIDBITS

*Did You Know...*

**ILLINOIS**—Ottawa (pop. 18,768) erected a memorial statue in September to the “Radium Girls,” women who worked for the now defunct Radium Dial and Luminous Processes during the 1920s and 1930s. Many of the women, who painted glow-in-the-dark watch dials with radium-laced paint, died of radium poisoning. The monument was spearheaded by Madeline Piller, who became captivated by the women’s story during an eighth-grade history project and launched a campaign to honor them.

**INDIANA**—Pioneer boot maker Herman Joseph Justin was born in 1859 in Lafayette (pop. 67,140) and moved to Texas in the 1870s to repair and make cowboy boots. By 1910, H.J. Justin & Sons boots, then made in Nocona, Texas, were sold in 26 states, Canada, Mexico and Cuba, for \$11 a pair.

**IOWA**—Kinnick Stadium at the University of Iowa in Iowa City (pop. 67,862) is named after 1939 Heisman Trophy winner Nile Kinnick, who died at age 24 during a flight training mission as a

reservist with the Naval Air Corps Reserve. Kinnick ended his football career with 1,674 yards rushing, 18 interceptions (an Iowa record that lasted half a century), and an average of 39.9 yards per punt. Kinnick’s likeness is on the coin that is tossed at the start of every Big 10 football game.

**KANSAS**—Arma (pop. 1,481) is located at the center of a rich bituminous coal deposit and before its incorporation in 1909 was known as Rust, a coal camp established in 1886.

**MICHIGAN**—Gymnast Jordyn Wieber, 16, of DeWitt (pop. 4,507), won the women’s all-around gold medal at the 2011 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships in Tokyo.

**MINNESOTA**—Seth Brown, a math teacher at Wavzata (pop. 3,688) West Middle School, won a 2011 Milken Educator Award, sometimes called the “Oscars of Teaching,” which comes with a \$25,000 cash prize. Brown was honored for creatively using technology in his classroom and his work to overcome gaps in student achievement.

**MISSOURI**—Marjorie Allen, who turned 94 in September, began teaching kindergarten in 1939 in Normandy (pop. 5,008) and continues to serve as a substitute teacher. The Normandy School District honored Allen as Citizen of the Month in September for 72 years in the classroom.

**NEBRASKA**—Founded in 1879 as an ROTC unit, the Cornhusker Marching Band at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln is one of the oldest marching bands in the nation.

**NORTH DAKOTA**—Panoramic views of the Pembina Gorge, Pembina River and surrounding forestland can be enjoyed from a scenic overlook, completed in October, at Tetrault Woods State Forest near Walhalla (pop. 996).

**OHIO**—Lake Erie Correctional Institution in Ashtabula County is the first state prison in the nation to be sold to a private company. Tennessee-based Corrections Corporation of America bought the prison for \$72.7 million in September.

**SOUTH DAKOTA**—Dahl Arts Center in Rapid City (pop. 67,956) features artist Bernard Thomas’ 180-foot oil-on-canvas cyclorama mural, which depicts 200 years of U.S. economic history. Painted in a circular space, cycloramas were a popular late 19th-century art form designed to provide a panoramic view of a historic scene, battle or site. Banker Arthur Dahl commissioned the mural during the 1970s.

**WISCONSIN**—Wausau (pop. 39,106) has the highest average credit score among U.S. cities, according to the State of Credit list released in October by credit bureau Experian. The average Wausau resident scored 789 on a scale of 501 to 990.

WINNER OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

Wrangler

# Shoot 'n Score Photo Contest

Lauri Shultis  
Dannebrog, NE

American Profile asked readers to submit their best school sports shots. Lauri’s photo captured the drama and joy of the big win.

For more winning photos, visit [americanprofile.com](http://americanprofile.com)



# Acts of Kindness

Quiet deeds by friends, neighbors and strangers

BY TIM GHIANNI

**EACH YEAR**, *American Profile* asks readers to share stories about thoughtful and compassionate deeds that they experienced or witnessed during the last year. Here are a few of our favorites.

## Hats off!

When Karie Martens died at age 25 in Greeley, Colo., she left behind a legacy of love and a lot of yarn that has warmed the hearts and heads of 400 children whom she never met.

"My daughter did a lot of knitting and crocheting. She always had several projects going at a time," says Tami Martens, her voice cracking while talking about the young mother who died suddenly of a virus in 2010.

Left with boxes full of yarn in a rainbow of colors, Tami, 50, eventually searched online for a knitting enthusiast who could put her daughter's needlework supplies to good use. The quest led her to Liz Gardner, 56, a disabled woman living in nearby Evans who wanted the yarn for charitable knitting projects.

When the women met outside of a Walmart store in Greeley, Tami shared stories about her daughter's love for both children and knitting. Tami also talked about her work as a librarian at Mountain View Elementary School, in Longmont,



Students at Mountain View Elementary School, in Longmont, Colo., sport new winter hats knitted with yarn left behind by Karie Martens (inset, far left), a young mother who died in 2010.

Colo. (pop. 86,270), where 70 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

"Because I have recess duty at the school and I see that so many of the children don't have hats, it always has been my wintertime dream to have a hat for every child," she confided to Gardner, who suddenly found her new knitting mission.

Six months and 400 hats later, Gardner was invited to a school assembly to watch teachers hand out her warm, colorful hats—each lovingly woven with Karie's yarn.

"This is a way that I can give back to little kids who don't have nothing," Gardner explains.

Karie would have approved, says Tami, who attended last January's assembly, along with Karie's daughter, Mae, then 3.

"Karie loved kids." Tami says. "And to see her yarn on each of the kids' heads, well that brought two of her loves together."



// Liz Gardner (left) knitted 400 hats after Tami Martens donated her late daughter's yarn.



## A gift for Lucille

Living in a nursing home and battling cancer, Lucille Johnston, 85, dreamed of attending Christmas Eve worship services at her church, though she knew that she could not be exposed to crowds since chemotherapy treatments had compromised her immune system.



// Lucille Johnston

A longtime member of First Christian Church in Kerrville, Texas (pop. 22,347), the widow told the Rev. Jay Dozier during a pastoral visit in 2010 that "she just wanted to be with her church family one last time."

To Dozier, 42, Johnston's request was one Christmas gift the congregation could find a way to deliver. So, in between preparing his sermon for the service, he worked on Dec. 23 to sanitize the "cry room" adjoining the sanctuary and designed for nursing mothers to worship through a one-way glass.

On Christmas Eve, friends brought Johnston to church, pushing her wheelchair through a secluded rear entrance and into the isolated room. During the service, the pastor made a special point to administer communion to Johnston in person.

Remembering that happy moment, Johnston wrote *American Profile* last Jan. 13, describing how Dozier's compassionate deed had "changed my sadness to happiness" on Christmas Eve. She died Feb. 15.



// The Rev. Jay Dozier went the extra mile for an ill church member in Kerrville, Texas.

## Soul food

To Sinda Craig, 65, of Carville, La. (pop. 701), ladling food is like "spreading love."

So Craig wasn't about to hang up her frying pan when she retired after 30 years of cooking for patients in a local residential hospital.

"She feeds everyone," says neighbor Daisy Goodlow, 72, who with husband Palmer, 85, are among the beneficiaries of Craig's love for cooking. "We live just down the street and she's brought us pork chops, chicken, turkey, everything on Sundays and holidays for the last 14 years."

When she retired in 1996, Craig looked around her neighborhood for people who needed a little help. "I just chose to do something good," she recalls.

"Every Sunday I get up in the morning around 4 o'clock, and I cook before going to church," she explains. After church, she heaps food onto plates and makes her door-to-door deliveries.

Craig also dishes out food during the holidays,



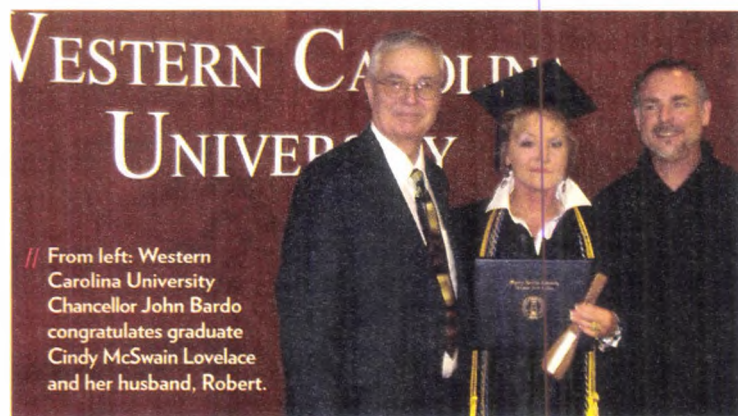
from New Year's Day to Christmas, and even on Super Bowl Sundays. When there are leftovers, "I open the door so anyone can come in," she says. "I always got plenty."

## Graduation day

After more than five years of working toward a college degree while battling a brain tumor, Cindy McSwain Lovelace, 45, was devastated when a record snowfall forced Western Carolina University to cancel its graduation ceremony in Cullowhee, N.C. (pop. 9,428), for the first time in the school's history.

One of 600 students scheduled to receive her diploma on Dec. 19, 2009, Lovelace, who lives in Dallas, N.C., was staying with her husband, Robert, in the Dillsboro Inn, about 10 miles from campus, when they learned the disappointing news on the eve of her scheduled graduation.

Moved by Lovelace's determination to earn her degree, innkeepers T.J. and Terry Walker made a quick phone call to university Chancellor John Bardo's office, asking about alternatives and sharing that Cindy had finished college with a 4.0 grade point average, in spite of a tumor that had left her face partially paralyzed. When the chancellor called back to ask if they could reach the snowbound campus, the Lovelaces piled into the Walkers' all-wheel-drive car and plowed through the powder to the administration building, where the chancellor waited in a boardroom. There, during a half-hour graduation ceremony for one, Bardo presented Lovelace with her diploma while her husband and the Walkers watched proudly.



// From left: Western Carolina University Chancellor John Bardo congratulates graduate Cindy McSwain Lovelace and her husband, Robert.

"When my name was called, it was overwhelming," recalls Lovelace, who now is employed by Gaston College in her hometown. "One of the things that leaves you speechless is to know there are still such kind people in the world."

Bardo, who since has retired as chancellor, says he was honored to be part of the impromptu ceremony. "This woman had worked too hard; her life had been difficult enough without having this disappointment," he says. "It truly was a special day." ★

### Tell us about those good deeds!

Has someone performed an unexpected act of kindness for you lately? *American Profile* would like to hear stories about the compassionate acts that readers have experienced during the last year. Mail a brief letter describing the event, along with your full name, address and telephone number, to: Acts of Kindness, c/o *American Profile*, 341 Cool Springs Blvd., Suite 400, Franklin, TN 37067.

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