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Heise: Road plan doesn't hurt schools

Michigan's roads and bridges would see much-needed repairs under a proposal approved by the Michigan House, state Rep. Kurt Heise announced.

The plan, which Heise said is a variation on one proposed by House Speaker Jase Bolger, also saves funding levels for local governments and public schools at 2015 levels.

Heise applauded the proposal for ensuring taxes collected on gasoline sales would be used to help fix the roads instead of

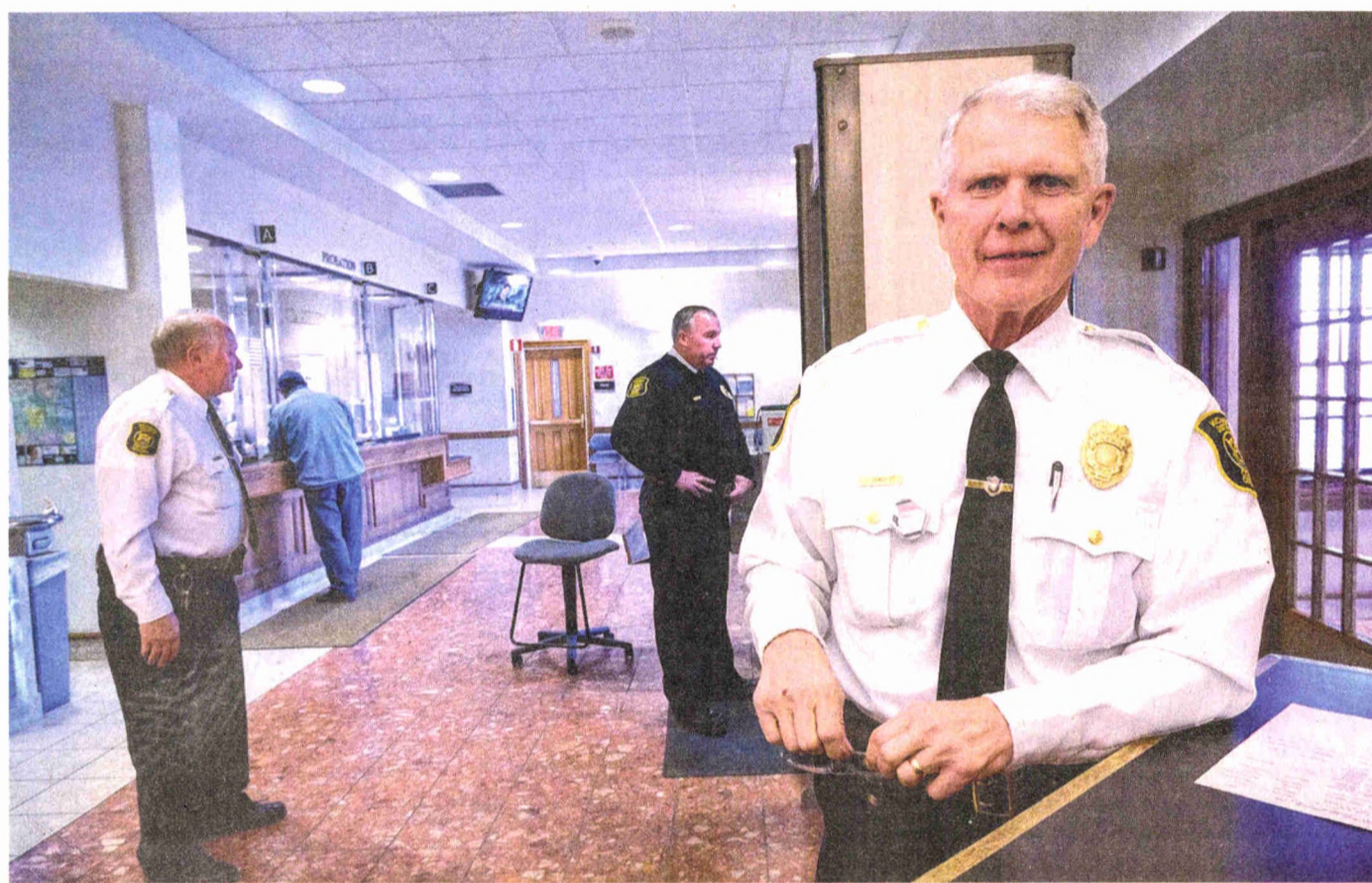
being used for other purposes. "The simple explanation for this plan is that taxes paid at the pump will finally be spent on our roads and bridges and not for other purposes," said Heise, R-Plymouth Township. "This is the kind of solution Michigan taxpayers want to see. Instead of Michigan motorists paying both a fuel tax and a sales tax at the pump, all taxes collected from gasoline sales will be going to fixing the roads, eliminating what currently amounts to a double

taxation on local residents." Under the plan, the 19-cent per gallon tax on gasoline is converted into a wholesale tax, while the sales tax on gasoline would be phased out over six years. The new plan generates to \$1.2 billion to fix state and local roads. At the same time, a provision in the proposal would protect schools and local governments from budget cuts. Additionally, the funding from this plan would be split, with 40 percent of the funds going to state roads and 60

percent of the funds going to local roads. "Our roads and bridges have been neglected for far too long and I'm proud we were able to do something in the House to change that," Heise said. "Instead of going to the taxpayers for more money, we were able to come up with a common-sense solution to fix our roads and continue funding schools and local governments without raising taxes." State Rep. Dian Slavens, D-Canton, voted against the

measure, saying the loss of sales tax on gas is going to hurt local communities and public school districts. "Getting rid of the sales tax on gas ... those dollars go to our communities and our schools," Slavens said. "We don't have any fix for the money we're going to get rid of. Where are we going to get the dollars for our schools and municipalities? That's a huge concern." But those concerned the loss

See ROAD, Page A2



Court Officer Dave Fendelet stands at the security desk. In the background, officers Frank Wren and Andy Zazula check people through the metal detector. BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Finance chief back to his roots in P-CCS district

By Brad Kadrich
Staff Writer

It took Pat Briggs a little over a year to realize he wanted to get back where he belonged.

So when Briggs, at the time an associate vice president for finance at Ferris State University, saw the posting for a job as the assistant superintendent for business and operations with Plymouth-Canton Community Schools come up, he jumped at it.

Briggs, who before moving to Ferris State over a year ago had spent 12 years at Cadillac Public Schools and a couple of years working for the Saginaw Intermediate School District, was eager for a chance to get back to the secondary level.

"I really just wanted to get back to K-12," said Briggs, who replaced Brodie Killian at P-CCS. "I feel strongly about what I have to offer."

Briggs brings a "wealth of experience" in public education finance, according to a statement on the district's

See FINANCE, Page A2

COURT'S IN SESSION

Officers help justice prevail in 35th District Court

By Jill Halpin
Correspondent

Todd Ye has good sense of humor – and that's a good thing. As court officer in 35th District Court for the past year-and-a-half, he needs it. From traffic violations

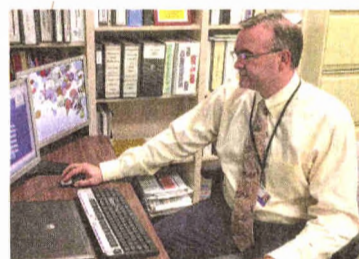
and other civil infractions to landlord-tenant disputes all the way to serious criminal cases, Ye and his five fellow court officers have pretty much seen it all – at least they hope they have. The court serves the cities of Plymouth and Northville, along with Plymouth, Canton and Northville townships, with three judges.

The six court officers, all

See COURT, Page A11



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Court officers Todd Ye and Andy Zazula clear a man entering 35th District Court in Plymouth.



BRAD KADRICH
Patrick Briggs is new on the job as Plymouth-Canton's assistant superintendent for business and operations, replacing Brodie Killian.

Christmas events provide downtown dining, shopping



PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Downtown Plymouth hosts its annual Ladies Night on Thursday, Dec. 18.

By Brad Kadrich
Staff Writer

Plymouth's "city sidewalks" will definitely be "dressed in holiday style," as the old Christmas song goes, Thursday, Dec. 11, when downtown retailers host Christmas in Plymouth.

It's the first of two holiday-style events planned in downtown Plymouth over the next couple of weeks. The other is a Ladies Night set for the follow-

ing Thursday, Dec. 18. The Dec. 11 event is designed as a "unique shopping and dining experience," with store specials beginning at 5 p.m. and continuing in Plymouth's "Winter Wonderland" until 9 p.m. It will feature a \$5 horse-and-carriage ride through downtown Plymouth streets. The Evenin' Gentlemen barbershop quartet will stroll downtown Plymouth streets singing Christmas carols and

inviting shoppers and diners to sing along. The Schoolcraft College Brass Ensemble will also play its own renditions of well-known holiday songs. And the Cherry Hill Singers will cap the evening by leading a community holiday sing. The event was organized, in large part, by the owners of Home Sweet Home (Carol Uber and Robert May), Sun &

See EVENTS, Page A2



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INDEX

Community Life..... B5	Homes..... C3	Services..... C3
Crossword Puzzle..... C2	Jobs..... C1	Sports..... B1
Education..... A4	Obituaries..... B7	Wheels..... C3
Health..... B8		

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ROAD

Continued from Page A1

of sales-tax revenue on gasoline will cut funding from schools and local governments needn't worry, Heise said.

"We recognize that by transferring gas tax from the sales tax to a monetary-based tax that, as the sales tax is eliminated over six years on the price of gas, that could result in reduction of funding for school districts and local govern-

ments," Heise said. "What the bill does is create a guarantee that school and local government funding isn't going to go below 2015 funding levels. It sets a floor, but doesn't set a ceiling. Any additional money generated by the sales tax for anything else does not go below the 2015 levels."

Heise said the House Fiscal Agency is predicting an annual growth between 2.5-3 percent. "When you translate that into revenue for the state, it more than makes up for any loss local gov-

ernments or school districts see in that time," Heise said.

Heise said the bill is a response to a plan offered by the Senate that Heise says "raised taxes too high and too fast."

"This is the second road funding plan, so the ball is back in their court," Heise said of the Senate, which will now take up this bill. "They can modify our plan or we can try a third plan. But it's pretty clear that, over the next couple of weeks, this is our No. 1 issue and both sides want

to get it done."

Slavens hopes the Senate can do something about her concerns with the bill after Bolger and House members discharged the bill quickly Thursday night.

"They didn't give us much time to look at it," Slavens said. "They just motioned to discharge the bill (Thursday) and rammed it through, which is unfortunate with lame-duck. It has to go to the Senate, so it's not a done deal yet. My hope is that once it gets to the Senate, they can fix it."

FINANCE

Continued from Page A1

website. In addition to his work at Ferris State, Briggs was the assistant and interim superintendent in Cadillac and the executive director of business and finance for Buena Vista schools in Saginaw.

He's got a bachelor's

degree in economics and management from Albion College and his master's in education leadership from Saginaw Valley State University.

He started out doing auditing work; his contact with school officials led him into the public education realm.

"When I was auditing, I got close to business managers and principals," Briggs said. "They felt good about doing good for kids."

It was that part of the job he missed at FSU, so he started looking for a K-12 district "two or three months ago." Friends from college had gone to Canton and he knew kids from the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park "do really well"

at the college level.

When he saw the job open, it seemed a natural fit.

"It's exciting," Briggs said. "Plymouth-Canton has a lot to offer. Hopefully, I can contribute to that moving forward. There are a lot of positive things I can be a part of moving forward."

Briggs' breadth of experience, including his work at Ferris, will be very helpful at Plymouth-Canton, according to Dr. Michael Meissen, the district's superintendent.

"He has deep and varied experience," Meissen said. "That will help us with improving academic output while maintaining financial solvency. His experience

in higher education should be helpful, because it broadens his perspective on public education."

Briggs comes to Plymouth-Canton at a challenging time. The district is always wrestling with a budget that's several million dollars in deficit and this year is no different in that regard.

In addition to that, the district is building a new middle school, closing four buildings (Central Middle School, Gallimore and Allen elementaries and the Tanger Center), re-purposing Gallimore and redistricting its remaining elementary boundaries.

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EVENTS

Continued from Page A1

Snow (Rob and Bob Parent), TranquiliTea (Colleen and Pat Cannon) and The Candy Trail (Sandy McGrew).

"We have so many events in Plymouth, but not much really in November and December and that's our whole season," Uber said. "I wanted to do something for the stores, get everybody to stay open in the evening and create an atmosphere through aesthetics and entertainment that would make

people want to come to Plymouth to shop and dine."

Wes Graff, president of the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce, said adding Christmas in Plymouth to the city's slate of events will do nothing but enhance the downtown's image.

"Plymouth already has such a great atmosphere for the holidays and these events will even further highlight our festive community," Graff said.

Nearly 40 businesses are participating in the event. They will be marked with a twinkling,

lit lantern that will glow outside their businesses.

Valet parking will also be available, something that will be new to events in downtown Plymouth, Uber said.

Uber was quick to point out it isn't just retailers; downtown restaurants are also getting involved. For instance, E.G. Nick's, she said, is sponsoring the horse-and-carriage rides.

"This is the first time in my seven years that we've had this whole community come together," Uber said. "It's our whole community coming together to make this happen."

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Donating stock is best option

Q: Dear Rick: Every year I sit down and do my charitable contributions. I generally write checks to four or five different organizations. Generally this time of year, I receive a bonus and I use it to make my charitable contributions. I've been notified that I will not be receiving a bonus this year, however, I still want to make my contributions. What should I do to free up some cash? I have a few different options. The first is to borrow from my 401(k) plan. I've been told at work that I can borrow what I need. My second option is to withdraw some money from my IRA. I am over 59½, so I don't need to worry about any penalties. My last option is to sell some of my Ford stock. I bought Ford stock a number of years ago when things were not



Rick Bloom

MONEY MATTERS

doing well at the auto industry and I have a substantial gain. Which option should I consider?

A: It is admirable that you are not going to receive a bonus, but you still want to help those less fortunate. Americans are the most generous on Earth because of people like you. In reviewing your situation, borrowing from your 401(k) plan is not bad, but there is a better option. One issue to be concerned with when you borrow from a 401(k) plan is whether you can continue to contribute to the plan. Many plans do not allow new contributions if there is an outstanding loan.

The second option, withdrawing from your IRA, can also have a significant downside. When you withdraw money from the IRA, it is taxed to you. Considering that you're working, it is potentially possible that withdrawing money out of an IRA can throw you into a higher tax bracket.

The third option, selling your Ford stock, will require you to pay taxes on the gain. The resulting capital gain that you would have

to pay can also cause other negative tax consequences for you.

I recommend that you donate your Ford stock directly to the various charities. In this transaction, you would receive a double tax benefit because you would not have to pay the capital gain tax (you would have been required to if you sold the Ford stock).

For those who are charitable in nature, donating appreciating securities is a great tax strategy. Not only do you receive a double tax benefit, but the charity is also in a favorable position because it would not have to pay taxes either. It is a win-win situation.

One last note and that is the question many of you may still be asking, what about the charity? From a charity standpoint, it can sell the appreciated security immediately and it will have no tax consequences.

Good luck.

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. His website is bloomassetmanagement.com. If you would like him to respond to your questions, please email rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

Canton police release sketch of knifing suspect at Meijer

By Darrell Clem
Staff Writer



Canton police urge anyone who recognizes this suspect to call 734-394-5400.

An employee outside the Canton Meijer store was cut on the face as he broke free from a suspect who held a knife to his throat during an attempted robbery that occurred shortly before 8 p.m. Tuesday, police say.

Police have released a composite sketch of the suspect in hopes of receiving tips about his identity and whereabouts.

Detective Sgt. Dan Traylor said the 23-year-old male victim was taken to a medical facility for treatment of injuries.

The employee had gone outside the Meijer store at Ford and Canton Center to smoke a cigarette while he was on break, police said. He told police he was near the east end of the store

when a suspect approached him and asked for a cigarette.

As the victim reached for his cigarettes, he told police, the suspect

brandished a knife, put it to his throat and demanded money. The victim managed to break free and run away, but not before his assailant cut him on the face, police said.

The suspect has been described as a white male, 5 feet, 11 inches to 6 feet, 2 inches tall with a thin build, blondish hair and light brown eyes. He is wearing a hoodie in the composite sketch.

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Gallimore marrow drive aims to strengthen registry

By Brad Kadrich
 Staff Writer

If there's anyone who knows the importance of next week's blood/bone marrow drive at Gallimore Elementary, it's Erica Frew.

After all, Frew watched as her 2-year-old son Gavin received a life-saving bone marrow transplant in August to battle the Shwachman-Diamond syndrome with which he was born.

And she has two other sons born with the same disease. While both are healthy at the moment, the family knows that's a situation that could change at any time. If it does, there's no way of knowing whether either brother would have a matched donor.

That's what makes drives like the Dec. 15 event at Gallimore so important, because it's a way to add names to the national bone marrow registry.



ERICA FREW

Patients like Daniel Jolivard of Haiti (left) and Gavin Frew of Canton will benefit from an increase in awareness of the bone marrow donor registry. That's one of the focuses of the annual Gallimore Elementary School blood drive.

"We don't know if they have matched donors available in the event they need a transplant," Erica Frew said. "We know the best way to increase

the odds of them having a donor when needed is to grow the registry."

And while Frew hopes to grow the bone marrow donor

REGISTRY AWARENESS

What: Blood/bone marrow drive
Where: Gallimore Elementary School, 8375 N. Sheldon, Canton
When: 2:30-8:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15
Contact: Tarita Gibson at Be the Match, tgibson@mmdp.org or 313-802-1044; or Erica Frew, teamgavinfrew@gmail.com or 313-492-4075.

registry, she knows the blood drive is just as important. Gavin, for instance, received some 40 red blood cell transfusions in 21 months since his body wasn't producing its own.

He also received two platelet transfusions in the period right after his transplant. Because it takes so much to produce one platelet treatment,

getting a good response to the blood drive is a key.

"He's been receiving intravenous immunoglobulins monthly since August and will until at least February to support his immune system with donor antibodies until it's functioning on its own," Frew said. "IVIG is a blood product ... extracted from donor plasma. It can take 1,000 donors to produce one dose."

Frew points out joining the marrow donor registry is pretty easy. All it takes, she said, is a cheek swab and a few minutes of paperwork. And it usually takes less than 90 minutes to donate blood.

The return on the investment could mean saving lives.

"The impact of these simple actions can be felt for years to come," Frew said. "You just may be someone's hero."

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P-CEP Madrigal Singers wow AAUW yule party

By Julie Brown
 Staff Writer

This coming April, the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park Madrigals will perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City, as will the P-CEP's male Festival Singers. *Dona Nobis Pacem* is their selection and fundraising is underway to send the musicians to the Big Apple.

The evening of Thursday, Dec. 4, members and guests of the Plymouth-Canton branch, American Association of University Women got to hear Christmas classics and other selections from 13 of the 22 total Madrigals under the direction of Jennifer Neumann.

"We are going to sing holiday songs and a couple non-holiday songs," Neumann said



JULIE BROWN

Some of the P-CEP Madrigals perform Thursday, Dec. 4, for the AAUW members and guests.

before the young women sang. "It's always a pleasure to come out in the community and make events bright," she added of the 11th- and 12th-graders who performed Dec. 4.

That evening, *If Ever I Would Leave You* was among non-Christmas selections. Their holiday songs ranged from *The Christmas Song* (*Chestnuts Roasting on an*

Open Fire), to *Silver Bells*, *Silent Night* and *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*.

"Whoever invites us, I always try to say yes," said Neumann, whose ensemble finished up with *Carol of the Bells*.

The student musicians have a fundraiser on tap 1:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13, at Tony Sacco's Coal Oven Pizza in

Canton, with a portion of sales funding the New York trip. The AAUW women applauded enthusiastically for the recent performance, with a standing ovation at the end. At Neumann's urging, they joined in on several Christmas songs.

The AAUW branch had its annual raffle to support its national Legal Advocacy Fund that night, said branch Presi-

dent Mickey Edell of Canton. That supports women who've faced discrimination in higher education, as well as assisting women who've been sexually assaulted in the military.

"The other reason to to enjoy camaraderie with friends new and old," she said. "And to celebrate the holidays."

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SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE
Joshua Clark of Romulus tells a Schoolcraft College audience Thursday of the life-changing injuries he suffered when a drunken driver hit him in 2002.

MADD: Avoid drinking and driving this holiday season

By David Veselenak
Staff Writer

Joshua Clark has traveled all over Michigan, sharing his story of an incident that almost left him dead.

Driving home from playing pickup basketball in 2002 near his home in Lansing, Clark was struck by a woman motorist with alcohol in her system. It left him with severe injuries that could have taken his life.

"Although I had a seat belt on, I still ended up on the passenger seat floor," the Romulus resident said. "That woman decided to drink and drive and make a selfish decision."

Clark was a speaker during the kickoff event for Mothers Against Drunk Driving's "Tie One On for Safety" event Thursday afternoon at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.

The campaign, known for its red ribbons tied to car antennas, launches in December each year, a month where alcohol tends to play a part in holiday celebrations, said Tyler MacEachran, the Michigan executive director for MADD.

"Celebrate the holidays, but make sure your loved ones and yourself survive the holidays," he said.

The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that more than 10,300 fatalities occurred in 2012 as a result of drivers with a blood-alcohol content level of more than 0.08, the legal limit in all 50 states. That fatality figure accounted for 31 percent of all traffic deaths that year.

Clark, who speaks on a monthly basis on panels and other events for MADD, shared his story of spending a month in a coma after his accident, with his family not knowing if he'd survive.

Afterward, Clark experienced some paralysis and had to work for months to regain the ability to do everyday things he had done for so long.

Fixing people's perceptions is still something that needs to be done regarding drunken driving, Clark said. Incidents involving drunken drivers are something seen "every day in our newspapers," referencing the recent death of Bloom-

field Hills School District employee Shelley Lazarus, who died Nov. 30 in Genesee County after her and her husband's vehicle was hit by someone suspected of driving with alcohol in their system.

"It's a socially accepted problem," he said. "Drinking and driving is not common sense."

Photos of individuals who had died after accidents involving drunken drivers cycled on the screen behind him as he spoke.

Karen Bonanno, program coordinator for the Livonia Save Our Youth Coalition, said it's important to keep those reminders to not drink and drive readily available, even though many in Livonia have heard that chorus since they were children.

"We've all heard the messages to not drink and drive," she said. "We've learned that from a very, very young age."

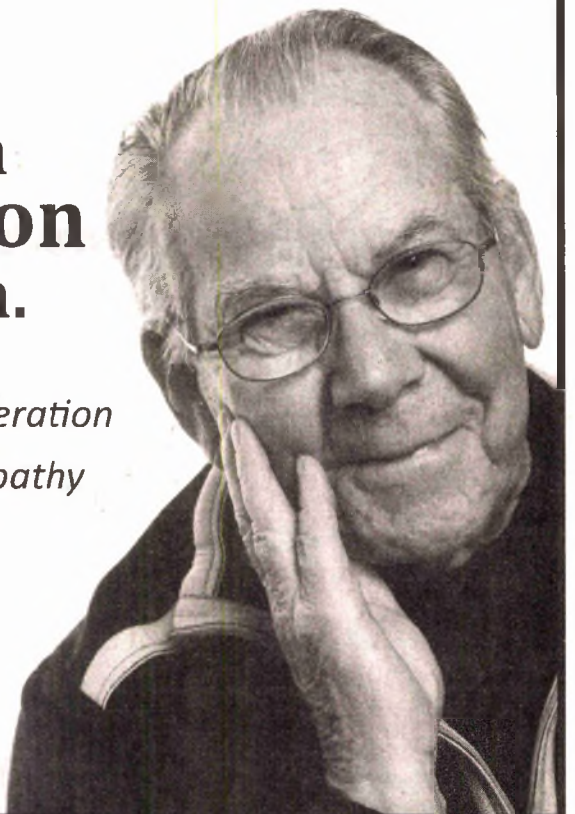
More information on the MADD campaign can be found at the organization's website, madd.org.

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PLYMOUTH-CANTON COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LIBRARY CONCERT

Date/Time: Sunday, Dec. 14, 3 p.m.
Location: Plymouth District Library, 223 S. Main, Plymouth
Details: The Friends of the Plymouth District Library present Lee Murdock and The Christmas Tree Ship Concert: Great Lakes Maritime History. Murdock combines music and stories of the inland seas, Great Lakes and port cities of the early 1900s. Murdock will also share his favorite holiday songs as part of the magical season. His song about the Rouse Simmons is the centerpiece to this concert, a story and song of hope and tragedy, of loss and renewal, as the famous ship struggled into a raging winter storm in November 1912.
Contact: Register for this free concert in advance by contacting the library at 734-453-0750, ext. 4, or online at plymouthlibra-

ry.org

FOOD/WINTER WEAR

Dates: Through Dec. 18
Locations: Nico & Vali, The Sardine Room, Fiamma Grille, Compari's, the Post Local Bistro, Sean O'Callaghan's, Penn Grill, E.G. Nick's and the Ironwood Grill in downtown Plymouth
Details: Diners at any of the participating restaurants who donate either non-perishable food or winter wear can receive 5 percent off their bills (up to \$50) in a drive to help the Plymouth Salvation Army in a drive being sponsored by the *Metro Times*.
Contact: For more information, call the Salvation Army at 734-453-5464.

BAREFOOT PRODUCTION

Dates/Times: Dec. 7 and 14 at 2 p.m.
Location: Barefoot Productions

Theater, 240 N. Main, Plymouth
Details: Barefoot Productions presents *The Desk Set*, a comedy by William Marchant which inspired the movie starring Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. All seats are \$15.
Contact: For tickets, call 734-560-1493 or go to www.justgobarefoot.com.

PEARL HARBOR CEREMONY

Date/Time: Sunday, Dec. 7, 1 p.m.
Location: Plymouth Veterans Memorial Park, in front of Central Middle School, downtown Plymouth
Details: At about 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. Plymouth time - Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked. This ceremony will "Remember Pearl Harbor." Pearl Harbor Day is a day that should be a quiet memory of those military men and women who never asked questions, but

followed orders - and died. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 6695, Plymouth Passage-Gayde American Legion Post No. 391 and the Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter No. 528 invite you and your family to attend.

BLUES @ THE ELKS

Date/Time: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7-10 p.m.
Location: Plymouth Ann Arbor Elks Lodge, 41700 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth
Details: Big Ray and the Motor City Kings bring their mix of blues, rock 'n' roll and country. The group features Big Ray Haywood on sax and vocals, Davey Fender on guitar, Mike Rupprecht on keys and vocals, Louis Eurns on drums and Richard Bright on bass and vocals. There is a \$5 donation at the door.
Contact: For more information, call 734-453-1780, go to www.plymouthannarborrelks325.com or email jazzattheelks@gmail.com.

BAREFOOT AUDITIONS

Date/Time: Dec. 8-9, 7 p.m.
Location: Barefoot Productions theater, Main near the railroad tracks in Plymouth
Details: Barefoot Productions announces auditions for *Disfranchisement*, a dark comedy by Lisa Loomer. The play deals with A.D.D. and its treatments. Roles for three men and six women. Actors should bring a resume and head shot, if available.
Contact: For more information, call Chris at 734-673-4244 or go to www.justgobarefoot.com.

JAZZ @ THE ELKS

Date/Time: Tuesday, Dec. 30, 7-10 p.m.
Location: Plymouth Ann Arbor Elks Lodge, 41700 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth
Details: This New Year's Eve event features Judie Cochill with the Ron Kischuk Trio. The group features Judie Cochill on vocals, Ron Kischuk on trombone, Tad Weed on piano and Jeff Halsey

on bass. There is a \$10 donation at the door, which includes hors d'oeuvres.
Contact: For more information, call 734-453-1780, go to www.plymouthannarborrelks325.com or email jazzattheelks@gmail.com.

ANNUAL WCGH REUNION

Date/Time: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Location: Hibachi Grill Supreme Buffet, 6539 N. Wayne Road, Westland
Details: The 30th annual Wayne County General Hospital employees holiday reunion will be held in the party room of the Hibachi Grill Supreme. There is a large choice of food selections and a senior discount. All retirees and former employees are invited to attend. No reservations are needed. You can pay at the door.
Contact: For questions, call the restaurant at 734-729-5688.



PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Game of Thrones

A tree zapped by lightning that snapped during the Plymouth Fall Festival in September has found a new purpose. The folks at Art's Tree Service spent much of Friday carving it into a throne.



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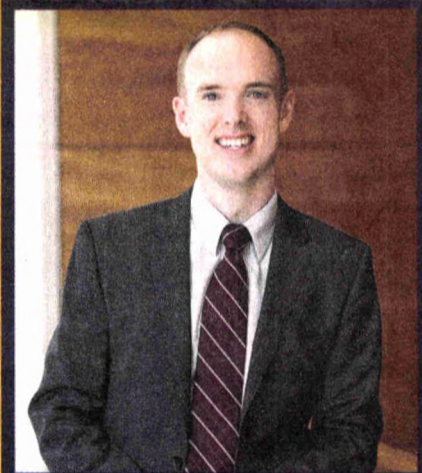


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Lack of support shutter warming center for winter

By Sue Mason
Staff Writer

For the first time in more than a decade, Lighthouse Home Missions will not open its warming center for the homeless Jan. 1.

A combination of factors, including a drop in volunteers and an increase in demand at the shelter and LHM's food pantry, led the Rev. Ruby Beneteau to close the center this year and focus on acquiring a building to provide year-round sheltering.

"We decided to take a step back and close for this winter," Beneteau said. "Rather than open and be in mid-stream and have to put them out because we didn't have enough people, we decided to not open at all and look at getting our own building."

"Our fear was that we would have a winter like last year this year and have no watchmen and then we would have to put them out in the cold," she added. "We're totally out of room."

Located at the Full Gospel Temple on Palmer in Westland, the warming center is a volunteer operation that's open Jan. 1 through March 31, providing an evening meal and a place to sleep for the homeless. It is supported by churches in Wayne, Westland, Canton, Plymouth and Livonia, which provided a meal and volunteers to serve as watchmen during the night.

Several of the churches indicated they could no longer assist with the center and there was a drop in the number of volunteers, Beneteau said.

LHM also operates a soup kitchen that's open for lunch Monday

through Friday, a food pantry and clothing bank and works with the homeless to get them assistance.

With the extreme winter weather last year, the center attracted an overflow crowd that was permitted to stay there day and night.

"We have run out of room. Last year, we had people sleeping on mats around pallets of food," Beneteau said. "We had people there night and day and that can wear on volunteers. When you have 80-90 people, that's too many for two or three people to watch."

"We were so packed, we now know we need a building," she added.

Continue work

LHM will continue to work with the homeless. They will be able to come in to eat, shower and get a clean set of clothes and a blanket. They will be able to stay at the center until the soup kitchen closes and will get a meal to take with them.

According to Beneteau, individuals can decide to throw away their clothes or throw them in a hamper to be washed and used for the next person.

"We'll do what we've always done, except allow people to sleep there," Beneteau said. "If we have a winter like last year, if it gets bad, we'll keep the soup kitchen open longer."

Once the decision was made to not open the warming center, LHM volunteer Thelma Ivey and Tim Copely began working with homeless people to get them services and find them shelter for winter. LHM has been working with other shelters and is providing bus tickets to get the homeless to the other

facilities. Both Ivey and Copely have committed to working with the warming center when it re-opens.

"We're trying to get them help and let them know in advance that the shelter won't be open this winter," Beneteau said. "We've been finding them shelter and tucking them in where we can."

And even though the center won't open Jan. 1, LHM is still in need of blankets, hats, gloves, long johns and especially tube socks to keep patrons warm. Sweat shirts and pants are also great because they can be worn under other clothing.

"Socks are the most important thing," Beneteau said. "Tube socks both men and women can wear and they can put double on. You need dry socks to stay warm."

Beneteau debunks the idea that the homeless are mainly single and drug addicts or drunks. Many are families or mothers with children who don't have the money to get a place to live. And from what she has heard, many stay in abandoned buildings and foreclosed homes.

Looking for a building

Beneteau has already been looking at buildings and has three or four in mind. However, she is waiting to see what becomes available. The goal is to open a shelter year-round.

Light House Home Missions is located at the Full Gospel Temple, 34033 Palmer, east of Wayne Road, in Westland. For more information, call 734-326-3885.

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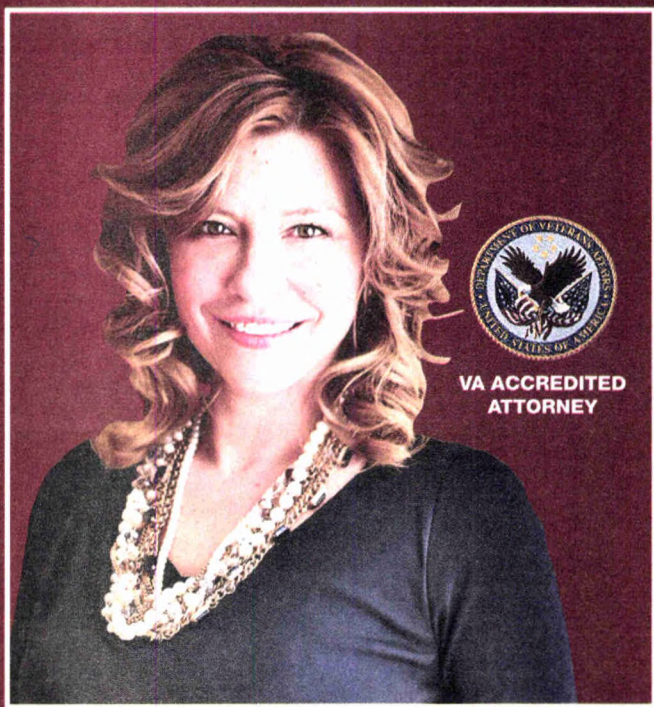
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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officer Margo Hadden worked as a Wayne County sheriff's deputy before joining the court staff.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Court officer Peggy Donohue speaks with an attorney in Judge Ronald Lowe's courtroom.

COURT

Continued from Page A1

with strong backgrounds in criminal justice as police officers or county sheriff's deputies, are on the front line of the court, responsible for providing court security and keeping order in the court, as well as working with judges to ensure that the court runs smoothly and efficiently.

That task can be challenging at times, all agree, since the busy court handles about 35,000 new cases annually.

Human view

For some court visitors, like the repeat offenders who occasionally pepper the court dockets, a day in court is old hat. For others, their visit to the court is their first interaction with the judicial system. And while the experience can be fraught with anxiety, it also provides onlookers — court officers included — a most interesting view of human behavior.

"Many walk in the doors of the courthouse and don't have a clue what to expect. And that's where we come in — trying to guide them through the process and make it as smooth and painless as possible," Ye said.

"But when they pass through that metal detector at the front door, some people just stop right in the middle and won't move forward. They just stand there like they are waiting to be transported to another dimension ... maybe Pluto or some other planet," Ye adds with a smile.

Although the frequent occurrence provides a bit of comic relief in a very busy day, Ye said that he and his peers understand and have compassion for court visitors.

"I think that people are dumbfounded: It is something new and they are anxious. It is often their first time in the court system and they can't believe that they are here," Ye said.

Providing comfort

The opportunity to provide guidance and assistance are just some of the reasons that Ye looks forward to coming into work every day. A former Wayne County sheriff's deputy for 25 years and father of two grown children, Ye lives in Livonia.

The job calls for empathy, he noted.

"I understand that it can be painful to be here," he said. "It affects their livelihood, some-



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officers of the 35th District Court include (standing, from left) Todd Ye, Andy Zazula and Dave Fendelet and (sitting, from left) Margo Hadden and Peggy Donohue.

times their personal life. We try to make them feel more comfortable with the process."

Peggy Donohue, a court officer with 14 years' experience, agrees.

"The first part of our job is security, but the second is customer service," Donohue said. "People are scared when they come in here. They have no idea what is going on; what to expect."

The chance to help someone through the system is her favorite part of the job, she said: "I see between 75-100 cases a day and it's my job to make sure they get taken care of properly."

Adjustment period

Donohue began her career as a police officer in Westland, where she met her husband, a fellow officer. After staying home and raising their two children, now grown, Donohue worked as a court clerk in Ann Arbor before joining 35th District Court.

Although going from the "the streets" to the court was an adjustment initially, the Plymouth Township resident said that she loves the opportunity to continue to work in the criminal justice system in a different capacity.

"I love the opportunity to see things from a different perspective," she said. "I'm here to help make sure that everyone gets a fair chance; that is what the justice system is about. There are a lot of good officers, good judges, good prosecutors and good defenders. If they all do their job, it all comes out right in the end. Justice happens."

Justice prevails

Frank Wren plays a large role in helping ensure that justice does happen. After serving as a Wayne County sheriff's deputy for 29 years, he joined the 35th District Court as an officer more than 10 years ago and was appointed court magistrate almost two years ago.

Although he does not render judgments, as magistrate, Wren handles a variety of duties for the court system including arraignments, informal traffic cases, both search and arrest warrants and more.

A Canton resident, he and his wife have raised two grown daughters and are grandparents to seven. He said that serving as a magistrate has strengthened his respect for the work that the court judges do on a daily basis.

"I give the judges a lot of credit. They have some hard decisions to make every day — decisions that affect lives — and I think they do a very good job," said Wren, a veteran who served four years with the U.S. Air Force from 1971-75.

The court is extremely organized and he credits the entire district court staff with creating a "very professional setting."

Not boring

That does not equal boring, however.

"It is always interesting, especially when you have a high-profile case or when there is tension between two opposing sides of a case in a courtroom," Wren said. "People might be surprised how much really goes on these communities."

"We are not the enemy; we're here to help. We are a source of information. ... We can't answer legal questions, but we can point them in the direction of someone who is able to address them."

DAVE FENDELET
35th District Court officer

Arbor Police Department prior to joining the 35th District Court.

He, too, cited the efficiency of the court, crediting "the people behind the glass" for their hard work.

"It really is a very well-functioning court," he said.

Zazula said his experienced colleagues play a role in keeping the court operating effectively.

"We all come with a lot of experience. Our backgrounds are all very strong; we've had a lot of training," he said, and although "it's a different sort of environment, we are still there to help and make sure the justice system is working."

He also noted the contrast to his previous job as a police officer.

"It is a huge difference from apprehending — catching bad guys — to facilitating with court function," he said. "When

we don't have an incident, it's a successful day."

Dave Fendelet served as a police officer for the city of Northville prior to joining the 35th District Court almost 11 years ago.

"I thought it was a good way to stay in law enforcement and work as part of the criminal justice system," said Fendelet, a Canton resident who raised three now-grown daughters with his wife.

Serve and protect

Although the role he now plays has changed, it is still centered firmly around the concept of both "serving and protecting," he said. "We are here to help people, whether it is by keeping them safe or helping people navigate their way if this is their first experience in the court."

He enjoys the varied aspects of the position, whether dealing with victims of a crime or a simple traffic offense.

He said he is hopeful that visitors to the court recognize that court officers "are a source of information."

As frightening as the court can appear to some, "We are not the enemy; we're here to help. We are a source of information. If someone is lost as to what to do next, we will help them. We can't answer legal questions, but we can point them in the direction of someone who is able to address them," he said.

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- P-CEP Varsity Field Synthetic Turf Replacement and Running Track Resurfacing
- P-CEP Varsity Field Lighting and Sound System Replacement

will be received at the office of Mr. Patrick Briggs, Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations, Plymouth Canton Community Schools, 454 S. Harvey, Plymouth, MI 48170 until 1:30 P.M., local time on Thursday, December 18, 2014 at which time they will be opened, read publicly and tabulated.

Bids received after this time and date will be returned unopened.

Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted.

This Project will consist of separate sealed bids for the following Bid Divisions of work:

- 102: Asphalt Paving / Site Utilities
- 143: Electrical Stadium Lighting / Sound System
- 166: Synthetic Turf Replacement
- 167: Track Surfacing

Bidding documents prepared by TMP Architecture, Inc. will be available for public inspection at the office of the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc., 24317 Indoplex Circle, Farmington Hills, MI 48335; the Dodge Plan Room, Construction Association of Michigan (CAM), Reed Construction Data, and Builders Exchange, Lansing.

Bid Documents will be available beginning at 12:00 P.M. on Tuesday, December 2, 2014 via the following:

- Bidders may obtain one (1) set of 1/2 size bidding documents beginning at 12:00 P.M. on Tuesday, December 2, 2014, by contacting the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc., at (248) 427-8400.
- Bidders may download bid documents from Gradebeam.com free of charge by contacting the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, Inc., at (248) 427-8400 to obtain log in information for access to the project documents.

Bids are to be submitted in a sealed envelope. The bid division(s) being bid is/are to be identified on the outside of the envelope.

There will be a pre-bid meeting held on Tuesday, December 9, 2014 at 10:00 A.M. at the office of the Construction Manager, McCarthy & Smith, located at 24317 Indoplex Circle, Farmington Hills, MI 48335. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the project, schedule and to answer any questions that bidders may have. All Bidders are encouraged to attend.

All bids should include 2 copies (1 original, 1 copy) of the Proposal Pricing Form (Section 00 41 26), Proposal Execution Form (Section 00 42 00), and the Iran Economics Sanctions Act Affidavit. **The Proposal Execution Form provides a space for the bidder to disclose any familial relationship as required by Section 1267 of the Revised School Code, as amended, MCL 380.1267, and this form must be signed and notarized in order for the bid to be accepted. The Iran Economic Sanctions Act Affidavit form may be found in section 00 42 10 of the Bidding Requirements & General Conditions Manual.**

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security, in either the form of a bid bond or certified bank check, in the amount of five (5) percent of the amount of the bid, payable to Plymouth Canton Community Schools, as a guarantee that if the proposal is accepted, the school district is secured from loss or damage by reason of the withdrawal of the bid or failure of the bidder to enter a contract for performance. Further, the bidder will execute the contract and file the required bonds within ten (10) days after notice of award of contract.

If awarded a contract, the successful bidder may be required to furnish a Performance Bond and Labor and Material Payment Bond. Plymouth Canton Community Schools reserves the right to reject any or all bids received and to waive any informalities and irregularities in the bidding.

Publish: December 4, 2014

PLYMOUTH DISTRICT LIBRARY 223 S. Main Street Plymouth MI 48170 2015 LIBRARY CLOSINGS

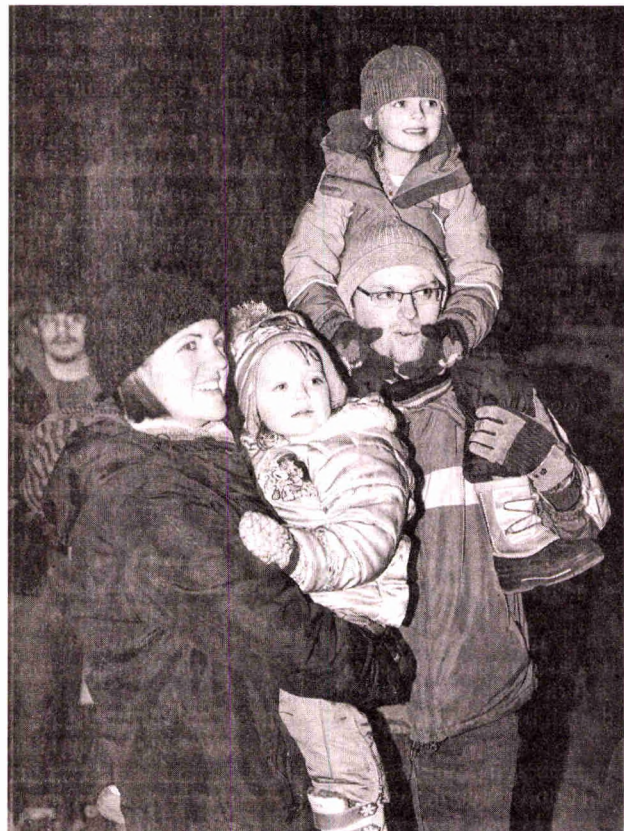
- January 1 (Thursday)
- March 13 (Friday)
- April 5 (Sunday)
- May 24/25 (Sunday/Monday)
- July 4 (Saturday)
- July 12 (Sunday)
- September 6/7 (Sunday/Monday)
- September 12/13 (Saturday/Sunday)
- November 26 (Thursday)
- December 24/25 (Thursday/Friday)
- December 31; January 1, 2016 (Thursday/Friday)

- New Year's Day
- Staff In Service Day
- Easter
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Art in the Park
- Labor Day
- Fall Festival
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- New Year's Day

Publish: December 7, 2014

LO-000221209 3x2.5

LD-000221278 3x8



The Budden family from Canton enjoys holiday music at the Canton tree-lighting.



Cole Bongard of Canton poses with the Grinch.



Seeing Santa for the first time is not much fun for Jacob Cabble of Canton as even Santa is surprised by his response.

Canton tree-lighting kicks off holiday season

By Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

Ella Budden of Canton will celebrate her sixth birthday Christmas Eve. She got an early gift Wednesday evening as she and sister Kenzie, 3, saw Santa, sang Christmas carols and decorated cookies during Canton's 36th annual holiday tree-lighting ceremony at Summit on the Park.

Their parents, Stephen and Renee Budden, have taken them to Canton's holiday kickoff for four straight years.

"It's actually for us the start of the Christmas season," Stephen Budden said. "I think of it as a tradition."

The family joined an estimated 800 to 1,000 people who celebrated the tradition as Santa arrived in a Canton fire truck and joined Supervisor Phil LaJoy and township mascot Bartlett the Beaver to turn on the lights of a holiday tree outside the Summit.

The crowd watched as a fireworks display of sorts erupted over the Summit, sending confetti streamers raining down, while others began gathering inside the building

for activities such as making arts and crafts and watching Tim the Balloonatic, who transformed balloons into creations of life-sized carolers.

"The kids loved it," said Laura Mortier, Canton Leisure Services recreation specialist.

Children watched holiday ventriloquist Richard Paul, while some families shopped a tree-lighting marketplace for mittens, handmade snowmen, glass ornaments, holiday jewelry and, of course, holiday sweet treats.

Organizers reported no glitches as Canton officially started the holiday season amid an upbeat atmosphere throughout the Summit.

"Everything was extremely smooth-running," Mortier said. "It brings everybody together, for sure. It was really successful."

The tree-lighting event was sponsored by Atchinson Ford, Community Financial, The Goddard School and Jack Demmer Ford.

dclcm@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @CantonObserver
734-972-0919



The BeckRidge Chorale and Cherry Hill singers perform for the first time at the 36th annual tree-lighting event Wednesday in Canton.



Santa waves to the crowd as he arrives at the Summit in Canton for the 36th annual tree-lighting.



Nicholas and Leo Provenzano of Canton are thrilled as Santa arrives at the Summit in Canton for the tree-lighting.

Canton father accused of abusing daughter set for trial

By Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

A jury trial has been set for a 33-year-old Can-

ton father who could face up to 10 years in prison if he is convicted of abusing his 8-week-old daughter.

Barring a plea deal, Vincent Joel French II is facing trial Feb. 11 in Wayne County Circuit Judge Ulysses Boykin's courtroom on two counts of second-degree child abuse, court records show.



French

As he awaits the outcome of his case, French remains jailed with a \$500,000 cash bond that was set when he was formally charged in October with abusing his baby girl.

Police Lt. Michael Steck-

el has said the child had been taken to a hospital after she suffered three fractured ribs and a fractured femur in her right leg.

Authorities have said the baby's wounds already had started to heal when she was taken to a hospital.

Canton police Lt. Chad Baugh said the incident happened at The Cross-

ings, an apartment complex southeast of Joy Road and I-275, on Canton's far north side.

Police learned of the alleged abuse from Child Protective Services, which had been notified by the hospital.

Aside from the felony child abuse case, French also faces misdemeanor charges of fourth-degree child abuse and domestic

violence in 35th District Court involving his 7-year-old stepdaughter, police have said.

Baugh has said none of the charges are linked to French's 9-year-old stepson.

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TOM PRESENTS: DOUBLE FEATURE OF A CHRISTMAS CAROL (1938) CHRISTMAS IN CONNECTICUT (1945)
SUN. 12/7 2:00 & 7:00 PM

PILOT ERROR: 4:30 & 7:00 PM
MON. 12/8, TUE. 12/9 TH. 12/11

HORRIBLE BOSSES 2 (R)
11:15, 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:35
FRI/SAT LS 11:55

PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR (PG)
11:25, 11:45, 1:50, 2:10, 4:05, 4:40, 6:30, 6:55, 9:00, 9:20

HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 1 (PG-13)
12:30, 4:00, 7:00, 9:45
FRI/SAT LS 11:15

DUMB AND DUMBER TO (PG-13)
11:35, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50
FRI/SAT LS 11:35

BIG HERO 6 (PG)
11:05, 1:30, 4:15, 6:45, 9:10
FRI/SAT LS 11:35

INTERSTELLAR (PG-13)
FRI/WED 11:00, 2:30, 6:05, 9:30
SAT 11:00, 2:30, 6:05
MON/TUE 11:00, 9:30

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To all residents and other interested parties: Agendas and Minutes for the Charter Township of Plymouth Board of Trustees Meetings are available for review online at www.plymouthtwp.org under Agendas/Minutes and in the Clerk's Office at Plymouth Township Hall, 9955 N. Haggerty Rd., Plymouth, MI.

Regular Meeting dates in 2014: December 9.

Special meetings, if any, will occur on Tuesdays, unless otherwise posted. The public is invited and encouraged to attend the Board of Trustees Meetings.

Nancy Conzelman
Township Clerk

Publish: December 7, 2014

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PUBLIC NOTICE Regular Meeting

The Plymouth District Library Board will hold its regular meeting December 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Friends Room on the main level of the Library at 223 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI 48170.

The Plymouth District Library will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days notice to the Plymouth District Library. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Plymouth District Library by writing or calling the following:

Sandra Young, Administrative Assistant
Plymouth District Library
223 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI
734-453-0750 x 217

Publish: December 7, 2014

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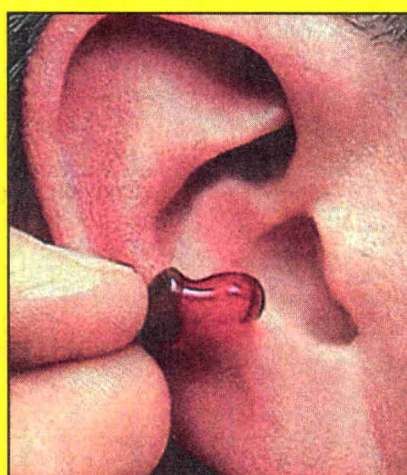
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U.S. Marine returns to St. Raphael School

By Sue Buck
Staff Writer

Tyler Dwyer, fresh out of boot camp, returned to St. Raphael School in Garden City for a visit.

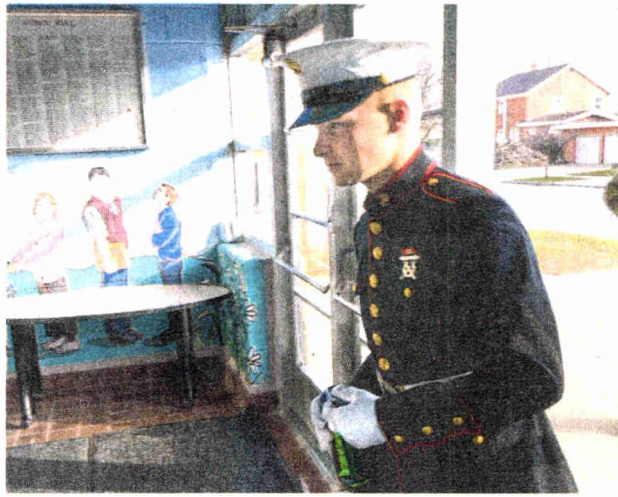
"He was my third-grade student," said Judy Rausch, who now teaches second grade at the school.

A new Marine, Dwyer came to meet Rausch's class of 11 students. Dwyer, 19, was Rausch's student about 14 years ago.

"We have been praying for him and sending cards while he was in Marine boot camp," Rausch said. "I have a song and book ready to present to him on this day. He is our prayer buddy."

For two weeks, the class practiced *Proud to be an American*, a song by Lee Greenwood.

"They are very excited," Rausch said.



Tyler Dwyer, fresh out of Marine boot camp, returns to his elementary school at St. Raphael.

Student Gabbie Chavez, a Canton Township resident, said just that. "I am so excited," Chavez said. "I never met a soldier. Since he is a soldier, he seems really interesting. Since he is a soldier,

he is fighting for freedom."

The students made special U.S. flags made out of Popsicle sticks to wave.

Upon Dwyer's arrival, Rausch welcomed him to



Tyler Dwyer's third-grade teacher, Judy Rausch, greets him.

second grade.

With Rausch at each student's side, the students all asked Dwyer a question.

Nicholas Choi asked why Dwyer wanted to be a Marine.

"My country has given so much to me in my life, so I figured I have the responsibility to give back to my country," Dwyer said.

The students offered the Guardian Angel's prayer and were surprised to learn that Dwyer carried that same prayer in his breast pocket.

Rausch prayed that God wrap his arms around Dwyer as the class continues to follow him on his journey.

It's a great feeling to graduate from boot camp in Parris Island, S.C., where he spent three months, though he missed his family during this time, Dwyer said.

Having a chance to ask his own questions, Dwyer asked the stu-

dents how they liked second grade and, particularly, how they liked Mrs. Rausch. They gave her an 'A.'

Dwyer recalled sitting at the same types of desks when he was in the third grade. Rausch arranges the students basically from shortest to tallest.

Rausch was complimentary of Dwyer as a young child. "He was a pleasure to have," Rausch said. "He was very polite and nice and very eager to learn."

After Dwyer graduated from Cabrini High School in Allen Park, he enlisted in May 2014. "I wanted to see the world," Dwyer said.

The class plans to follow Dwyer through combat school and finally his deployment. He will go to South Carolina and then to California to become a combat engineer.

Dwyer's parents - Tom, an owner of Graphinity in Farmington

Hills, and Amy, a homemaker - and his brother Zachary (who are Westland residents) and some parents from Rausch's classroom also came for the special visit.

Three years ago, Rausch had a military mom, Erin Meadows, who went to Afghanistan. "We Skyped with her in the classroom because her daughter was in my class," Rausch said. "Every Wednesday when she was in Afghanistan, we would talk to her on the computer. It was late at night in Afghanistan."

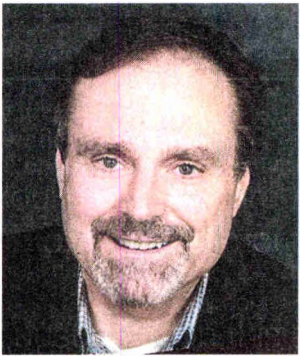
When Meadows came back from Afghanistan, she came to meet the kids. And that is how Rausch started communicating with the military.

When people found that out, they started sending Rausch photos of other soldiers which are now pinned to a classroom wall.

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Local artist still throwing clay – after 50 years

By David Veselenak
Staff Writer

Barb Gibson began working with hobby ceramics in the 1970s. While she enjoyed teaching the craft to many students, she found herself wanting to learn more, especially using other materials.

"I spent many years with hobby ceramics," the Livonia resident said. "I taught all over. It was great. But then, I wanted to really know clay."

During her 50-year career, Gibson has thrown thousands of pieces out of clay. A life-long artist, she still sells pieces she creates.

She attended Schoolcraft College and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to earn several degrees and began teaching and creating works to sell at shows.

Along with her family,

they would get into a motor home her husband purchased for their travels and head off to various locations around Michigan and the country.

"We did about 35 shows a year for 30 years," she said. "It was wonderful. We made wonderful money and in the winter we'd go to Florida and we'd take the motor home."

Growing up next door to someone involved in using materials, Gibson said she became fascinated with it.

"I lived next door to a woman who was doing it and I just thought, 'Oh, I want to do this,'" she said. "So I went to her house when she had classes, she was right next door and I did it. I said, 'Oh, this is what I want to do.'"

While she does not do many shows these days, she still finds time to sell

at shows in Plymouth as well as the Potters Market, taking place this weekend at the pavilion in the Southfield Municipal Center complex, 26000 Evergreen, moving from Madison Heights, its home in previous years.

"We are now able to bring additional well-known Michigan potters on board, as well as new young potters we are excited about," Carol Fitzpatrick, co-manager of the market, said in a written statement. "The wider aisles will afford a much more comfortable layout. We know everyone will love the new look and feel of the Potters Market."

The annual event, which bills itself as "largest pottery sale in the country," will feature more than 140 potters showcasing their work. The final day is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Gibson said this will be her first time at the Potters Market and she is excited to see a new type of show.

"I like how they run it," she said. "A lot of unique stuff, a lot of great stuff."

"I don't do too many art shows anymore. I miss that the most."

A large, Civil War-era home that served as a hospital on Six Mile in Livonia became the perfect place for Gibson to continue her love of art.

A resident of Dearborn Heights at the time, Gibson and her family moved to Livonia several decades ago to her current home, where she would teach ceramics and pottery, as well as work on her own pottery as well.

"We finished the garage off and that's where I taught," she said. "It had a heater and a bathroom. It had everything."

But with traveling, she wasn't always home to enjoy it, though Gibson said she loved traveling to cities from the East Coast to the Great Plains.

"New York and Chicago, all the big cities were great," she said. "But so were (smaller) places like Cleveland; Cleveland was wonderful."

The culture of art



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One of Barb Gibson's large pieces uses at least three clay techniques: thrown, extruded and built up.

changes depending on the decade and location, Gibson said. The best time for selling her pieces? The 1980s.

"The '80s were the best. Unbelievable," she said. "It was just a great time. Art shows were flourishing and people loved going."

Today, she calls many art shows "pitiful," showing items that appear to be knockoffs made overseas.

The downturn in the economy also shifted Gibson's strategy as well: instead of focusing on items she really wanted to express herself through, she's gone to

creating items with an everyday use.

Items such as soap dishes, bowls and coffee cups fly off the shelf at shows, she said, as opposed to some of her more decorative pieces.

"For me, I had to let the art go and go to functional stuff," she said. "I've seen huge changes. And that was the main one, that people don't have money, they want to buy small stuff, they want to justify what they buy by buying functional work."

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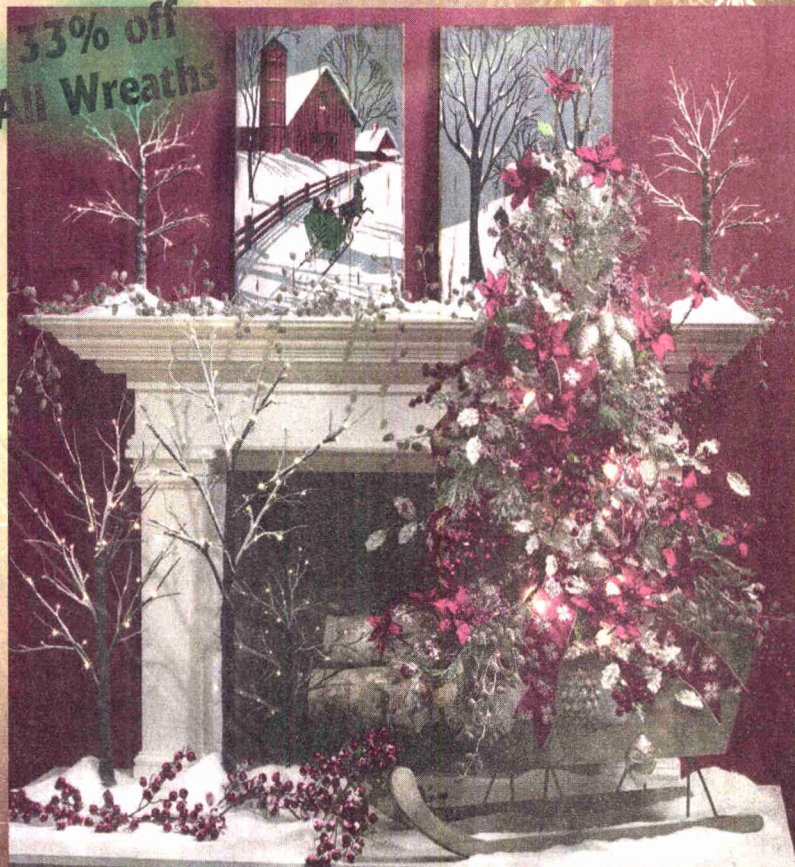
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BOYS BASKETBALL PREVIEW - PART 1

Rocks changing on the fly

Graduation of several starters won't slow re-tooled Salem boys cagers

By Tim Smith
Staff Writer

The rest of the KLAA won't need to worry about the Cole twins any longer, but the Salem Rocks still should be a royal pain to their rivals.

At least, that's what veteran head coach Bob Brodie is banking on as the 2014-15 varsity boys basketball season opens 7 p.m. Tuesday with a nonconference matchup at Ann Arbor Skyline.

"We're anxious to get started and see what we have," Brodie said. "Get a said mea-

suring stick with that first game and see what happens."

Last year's squad was pretty good, going 17-6 with a KLAA Central Division and district championship to add to the Salem trophy case.

"You don't do that with slouchy players," Brodie said. "We lost the two Cole brothers (Brady, Connor), a good forward in (Alec) Winfrey, a post player in (Michael) Hoover.

"And Alex Kenrick, he was a good player for us too off the bench. With those guys gone we got some holes to fill this year."

Power trio

The only returning starter is 6-3 senior forward Tyler Brooks, who will man the post along with 6-4 senior forwards Jake Lenders and Allante Wheeler.

"Right now we've got Tyler Brooks, who started for us last year," Brodie noted. "He's going to play inside, along with Jake Lenders, who saw a lot of action at power forward.

"And, of course, Allante Wheeler who didn't start a lot last year, but he always finished for us. He's a tough player to contend with. He can play inside or out and has good skills overall."

Brodie said Brooks, Lenders and Wheeler are "athletic, they

run the floor well, they're all 6-3, 6-4, so they have decent size and they have playing experience."

Salem's backcourt duties will largely be handled by senior guards Jake Stropes and Jon Swift. Both will be called upon either to run the offense or get open for shots, because Brodie does not designate point guard.

"Stropes and Jon Swift will handle the guard position," Brodie said. "It's to be determined how well they can run the floor for us, handle the defensive end, shoot the ball and lead the team.

"In our offense we don't have a true point guard. We



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Taking an outside jumper during a 2013-14 contest is Salem's Tyler Brooks, who returns to help lead this year's Rocks.

See ROCKS, Page B4

BOYS BASKETBALL PREVIEW - PART 1



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Plymouth senior post player Deji Adebisi (No. 5), shown from a game last season, will be a catalyst again this year.

PREP GYMNASTICS

Chiefs win tri-meet

Defending champions open new season with impressive showing

By Tim Smith
Staff Writer

John Cunningham smiled a lot last season, and with good reason — his Canton varsity girls gymnastics team won the state championship.

Early indications are he'll be in a good mood quite a bit in 2014-15, too, judging by Tuesday's tri-meet victory over Northville and Waterford.

The Chiefs led the way with 145.975 points, besting Northville (131.9) and Waterford (126.825). The event took place at Plymouth High School.

"Excellent meet for such an early start to the season," noted Cunningham, in an email to the *Observer*.

Canton took places 1-4 in the all-around, indicative of the strong showing. In first was Allison Kunz (36.75), followed by Maddie Toal (36.6), Hailey Hodgson (35.225) and Stephanie Cox (34.775).

All told, the Chiefs swept the top six places on beam and floor and took five out of six on bars and vault.

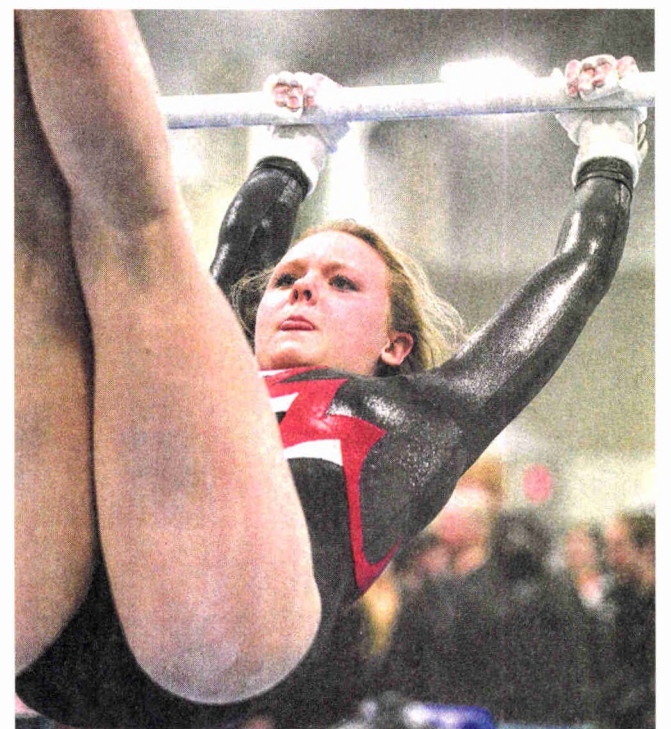
Kunz won uneven parallel bars with a 9.25 while also taking second on floor (9.3), third on balance beam (9.2) and third on vault (9.0).

Toal garnered firsts on floor (9.65) and vault (9.1) along with third on bars (8.75) and fourth on beam (9.1).

Hodgson tied for first on vault with a 9.1 and came in fourth on floor (9.075). She placed sixth both on bars (8.35) and beam (8.7).

Cox finished fourth on bars (8.75), fifth on beam (8.8) and sixth on floor (8.925).

See CHIEFS, Page B3



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Canton senior Jocelyn Moraw, shown from last season, helped the Chiefs to victory in Tuesday's tri-meet.

TIPPING POINT

Could this be season Plymouth gets over the hump?

By Tim Smith
Staff Writer

No matter how hard Plymouth's varsity boys basketball team tried last season, the ball wouldn't fall through the cylinder when points were needed most.

The Wildcats finished 9-11, but had a number of grueling, close losses that could have gone the other way with a trey here, a dunk there.

Now comes the 2014-15 season, the sixth at the helm for Mike Soukup. He and his players appear energized and ea-

ger to score and — hopefully — soar in the KLAA South Division.

Soukup only smiled when asked if he thought the current Plymouth squad could finally enjoy an offensive break-

See PLYMOUTH, Page B4

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SPORTS ROUNDUP

Salem girls lacrosse meeting Dec. 11

A player/parent information meeting pertaining to the 2015 Salem girls lacrosse team is slated for Thursday, Dec. 11.

The meeting is at 7 p.m. on the second floor (Room W2112) at Salem High School for all those interested in trying out for the varsity or junior varsity teams.

No previous lacrosse experience is required.

For further information, go to salemgirlslacrosse.com or gopccs.net.

Haeger Baseball Training Dec. 22-23

Madonna University baseball coach Greg Haeger is hosting Haeger Baseball Training on Monday, Dec. 22, and Tuesday, Dec. 23, for youngsters ages 8-13.

The camp (\$100 for one session each day; \$150 for both sessions each day) is set for the Madonna gymnasium, located at 36600 Schoolcraft Road in Livonia.

Sessions will be 9-11 a.m. (session 1, pitching)

and 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (session 2, hitting).

Lunch will be offered (pizza, Gatorade) at the daily fee of \$5.

In the pitching session, youngsters will work on mechanics, throwing programs, mentality and proper grips. In hitting sessions, work will commence on proper mechanics, stance, approach and bunting.

To register, go to www.haegerbaseballtraining.com.

MU women cagers defeat Concordia

Lindsey Hernden pumped in a game-high 21 points Wednesday night to lead the Madonna University women's basketball team to a convincing 79-58 triumph over host Concordia University.

The 5-foot-6 freshman guard from Romeo made 8-of-16 shots from the floor and dished out four assists as the Crusaders improved to 5-2 overall and 4-1 in the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference.

The Crusaders, who jumped out to a 37-17

halftime advantage, also got 18 points and six assists from junior guard Michele Hayes (Inkster/Southfield-Lathrup).

Justice Dean (Garden City) chipped in 12 points and eight rebounds, while junior center Erin Menard (Livonia Churchill) pulled down a team-high nine rebounds.

MU won despite shooting only 25-of-77 from the floor (32.5 percent) and 20-of-31 from the foul line (64.5 percent). The Crusaders committed 20 turnovers.

Concordia (1-9, 0-6) got 11 points from Brianna Rowe, while Mara Mulroy added eight points and eight rebounds.

The Cardinals made only 20-of-66 shots from the floor (30.3 percent) and 15-of-25 free throws (60 percent). Concordia had 23 turnovers.

Concordia downs Madonna men

Andrew Patrick scored 13 points to lift host Concordia University (5-4, 4-1) to a 50-47 WHAC men's basketball triumph over cold-shooting Madonna University (3-7, 1-4).

The Crusaders connected on only 34 percent from the floor (18-of-53) and made 8-of-12 free throws.

Whalers road trip

Fans of the Plymouth Whalers have a chance to take a road trip to Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. and Saginaw with the OHL team March 13-14, 2015.

The cost is \$140 for members of the Whalers Booster Club and \$150 for non-members. The deadline to sign up is Feb. 25 (sign up behind Section 115 at Computware Arena on game nights).

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Elite runners set fast pace in boys cross country

FIRST TEAM

Chaz Jeffress, Salem: Rivals across the KLAA can't be too thrilled to



Chaz Jeffress Salem

know that Jeffress still has one more season to display his elite-level running skills. Jeffress certainly

did that and more in his junior season for the Rocks. He climbed the ladder of achievement all season, winning the Wayne County, KLAA and regional championships along the way.

And he followed all that with his culminating achievement. He set a personal best and Salem team record of 15:30 at the Division 1 state finals at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn.

That earned him ninth place overall and an all-state honor.

All told, Jeffress enjoyed the most successful individual season in the history of Salem's varsity boys cross country program.

"Chaz is a talented and dedicated individual who has continued to improve throughout his career," coach Steve Aspinall said. "Although he had a ton of success this season he has set some very high goals for the future and will work tirelessly to achieve them."

"It was enjoyable to watch him compete this year and we are looking for even greater things in the future."

Matthew Pahl, Plymouth: Desire to improve and excel kept the senior Wildcat making



Matthew Pahl Plymouth

strides and shaving seconds all the way to the state finals at MIS.

Pahl's best time of the year was 15:45, attained at those finals in Brooklyn. With that all-state finish, good for 24th overall, he reached the top of the running charts for the history of the program.

He displayed his penchant for getting faster as the season went on, finishing second at the Wayne County Champi-

onships (16:06) in early October and then placing fourth at the D1 regionals later in that month with a time of 16:01.

Of course, then came the exclamation point a week later at the state finals.

Pahl, holder of five of 20 top times in Plymouth team history, became the program's eighth all-state runner since it was launched in 2006.

"Matt is the type of guy that knew what he wanted and put the necessary hard work that was needed to get to the goals that he wanted," coach Jon Mikosz said.

Tony Floyd, Franklin: The junior galloped to a sensational season, which



Tony Floyd Franklin

was highlighted by a school-record effort of 15:51 at the KLAA Conference Meet.

He also qualified

for the Division 1 state meet, where he placed 73rd in 16:21, and his 16:55 was good enough for a runner-up finish (behind only teammate Keenan Jones) in the Livonia City Meet.

"Tony is a very hard-working and gifted runner who has established himself as one of the top runners in our area," said Franklin coach Walt Reasor.

"As the new school record holder, Tony has demonstrated to our team what the benefits of confidence and dedication can do. I expect even greater accomplishments out of this outstanding student athlete next season."

Devin Gibson, Wayne: The senior closed his high school career in spectacular



Devin Gibson Wayne

fashion by finishing no lower than second in the Zebras' six dual-meet victories.

He won the Crestwood Charger Invitational (16:02) and the River Rat Open (15:52.9) and took third in the highly-competitive Wayne County Championships. Gibson has a stellar 3.42 grade-point average.

"Devin was very motivated this year to accomplish both individual and team goals," said Wayne coach and Devin's dad, Tom Gibson. "Devin and Malik Jordan pushed each other during practices and meets to achieve their goals."

"Devin has put his mark on Wayne Memorial's cross country program. He broke the home course record with a 16:48.9 against John Glenn and broke the 31-year-old school record by running 15:52.9 at the River Rat Open.

"Devin, along with the other top seniors, worked with the underclassmen on strategy and running techniques to leave their legacy on the program."

Malik Jordan, Wayne: Jordan combined with teammate Devin Gibson



Malik Jordan Wayne

to give the Zebras a potent one-two punch. Among a long list of senior-year accolades were second-

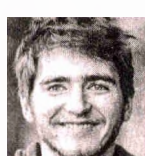
place efforts in the Charger Invitational (16:11) and River Rat Open (16:01.) and third-place performances in the Warrior Classic (17:04.4) and Carlson Marauder Invite (16:48.0).

"Malik is a mentally tough young man, running over 1,000 miles this past summer to prepare himself for the season," said Tom Gibson. "He balances cross country with JROTC where he is the Raider Team Commander."

"Malik is a motivating person and helped his teammates throughout the season. Malik finished his career with the second-fastest time in school history for the 5K with his 16:01.1 at the River Rat Open run at Willow Metro Park.

"In his second year of cross country, Malik realized his potential and the strategy of racing a competitive 5K where he broke 17:00 eight times this season."

James Weekley, Harrison: Weekley ran a personal record time of 16:07 and placed sixth in the regional race at Willow Metropark. He went to the Division 1 state meet for the second straight year and was



James Weekley Harrison

54th with a time 16:11.

Weekley also had first-place finishes at the Shamrock and Huron invitationals, and he won all three OAA Blue Division jamborees.

"James had an outstanding season and really continues to be one of the outstanding cross country runners in the area," coach John Reed said.

"He is definitely looking forward to an exciting track season and his senior year in cross country."

Keenan Jones, Franklin: The senior qualified for the Division 1 state



Keenan Jones Franklin

meet for the third time and finished in 119th place with a time of 16:40.

In addition to winning the Livonia City Meet for the second consecutive year (16:45), Jones placed second in the KLAA Conference Meet (16:25) and 10th at the D1 regional (16:21).

"Keenan has been a leader by his hard work and commitment to improving his times since he joined our team four years ago," said Reasor.

"He could always be counted on to perform at the highest level and place where our team needed him to do so at every meet. I will truly miss Keenan and look forward to hearing of his successes in college."

Erik Grisa, Stevenson: Grisa's final season of high school cross country was highlighted by his



Erik Grisa Stevenson

13th-place finish (16:28.7) at the Region 6 race that earned him a spot in the D1 state meet.

He turned in a career-best 16:26.9 clocking at the Coaching Legends Invite at Huron Meadows and earned ninth- and 11th-place finishes at the Wayne County Championships and Kensington Conference Finals, respectively.

"Erik had an outstanding senior season," said Stevenson coach Chris Inch. "He was an incredibly consistent performer."

"All of his hard work paid off with a trip to state meet. I am extremely proud of how Erik finished out his cross country career at Stevenson."

Luke Green, Stevenson: Green's final season was splendid as he ran a career-best 5K of 16:36 at the KLAA Kensington



Luke Green Stevenson

Conference Meet before taking 17th at the Region 6 race in 16:45.1.

Other notable performances for Green included a 15th-place showing at the Wayne County Championships and a 13th-place finish at the Kensington Conference event.

"Luke has been an instrumental part of our team's success the past three seasons," said Inch. "He and Erik (Grisa) gave us a nice one-two punch up front this season. He fell just short of qualifying for the state meet individually. Now, if only I can find a way to get him to run track in the spring."

Noah Engerer, Salem: The senior ran in Jeffress' shadow all season, but he wound up getting a



Noah Engerer Salem

good dose of the spotlight anyway.

Engerer, a four-year varsity stalwart for the Rocks, finished

strong enough to land a spot in the top-30 of team history with his personal best of 16:41 — established at the KLAA Championships.

He also finished 12th at the Wayne County Championships, 17th at the conference championships and 21st at regionals.

"This season, Noah successfully filled the role of our No. 2 man," Aspinall said. "From October on, he ran and trained with a purpose and his times showed his determination."

ALL-AREA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY FIRST TEAM

Chaz Jeffress, junior, Salem; Matthew Pahl, senior, Plymouth; Tony Floyd, junior, Franklin; Devin Gibson, senior, Wayne; Malik Jordan, senior, Wayne; James Weekley, junior, Harrison; Keenan Jones, senior, Franklin; Erik Grisa, senior, Stevenson; Luke Green, senior, Stevenson; Noah Engerer, senior, Salem.

SECOND TEAM

Jon Alessandrini, senior, Churchill; Jonny Dalton, senior, Plymouth; Ethan Byrnes, freshman, Plymouth; Michael Gibson, senior, Wayne; Uriel Figueroa, senior, Wayne; Billy Toth, senior, Canton; Mike Roberts, senior, Canton; Matt Dottavio, senior, Plymouth; Nabil Ahmed, senior, Salem; Zac Clark, sophomore, Canton; Ammar Chishty, senior, Canton.

COACH OF YEAR HONORABLE MENTIONS

Churchill: Matt Cohan, Josh Musson, John Sas; Stevenson: Nathan Ward, Alex Mikonczyk; Canton: Nick Socha, Shane Andrews, Sean Carey; Plymouth: Alex Zoltowski, Joey Maciag; Salem: Jason Rogers, Jacob Kubinski, Griffin Skaff; Ply. Christian: Joseph Fanelli; Farmington: Maxx Merlino; Harrison: Dimitri Przeslawski, Dakota Kelly; North Farmington: Robert Irwin, Derek Abbott; John Glenn: Bob Biber; Wayne Memorial: Jamie Caranza.

absolute pleasure to coach over the last four years and he has left a tremendous impact on the program. Noah began as a talented freshman with potential and ended as a seasoned senior veteran."

COACH OF THE YEAR Tom Gibson, Wayne Memorial: The fourth-year head coach led the

Zebras to an ultra-successful season as Wayne finished 6-0 to capture the

KLAA South Division

title in addition to placing first in three weekend events: the Warrior Classic, Crestwood Charger Invitational and Carlson Marauder Invitational. Wayne also took second in the 28-team Wayne County Championships.

"I am very proud of this team," said Gibson, whose top group of runners included his twin sons, Devin and Michael. "This honor is a tribute to every member of this team."

"Going into the season, we felt it could be a special year. With six returning runners on a team of 12, the boys came together to put themselves in a position to be competitive."

"The boys' commitment, work ethic, dedication and confidence made for a solid season from start to finish."

PREP BOYS HOCKEY

Plymouth tops Novi to win battle of the 'Cats

Third-period surge sparks Plymouth to third consecutive victory, 5-3 over Novi

A three-goal flurry in the third period lifted Plymouth's varsity boys hockey team to its third straight win, 5-3, over Novi on Wednesday at Arctic Edge Arena.

Twice, the Novi Wildcats tied the game in the final period, and twice, the Plymouth Wildcats responded with a go-ahead goal on the next shift. Plymouth entered the third

period leading 2-1, but Novi forward Brad Hofelich tied the game with a power-play goal 46 seconds into the period. Plymouth forward Andrew Jossey scored 27 seconds later, tipping in a shot by defenseman Kyle Kozler for a 3-2 lead. Senior forward Josh Smith also assisted on Jossey's third goal of the season.

Hofelich tipped in a shot by defenseman Timothy Hole with 3:06 left in regulation to tie the game, 3-3. It was Hofelich's third goal of the game.

Smith gave Plymouth the lead for good 15 seconds later when he fired in his first goal of the season. Jossey and for-

ward Mitchell Lopetrone set up the winning goal with 2:51 left in the game.

Forward Alex Bump added an insurance goal one minute later, poking home a rebound off a shot from defenseman Jared Merandi. Defenseman Ben Chafin also assisted on Bump's third goal of the year.

Plymouth outshot Novi 35-27. Goalie Jared Maddock made 24 saves for his second win of the season.

"We didn't want to take too many chances with them because of the firepower they possess and I thought we did a decent job of limiting their quality chances during the

game," Plymouth head coach Gerry Vento said. "When they did get them, Maddock made some timely saves."

Hofelich opened the scoring 8:26 into the first period with a breakaway goal. Kozler tied the game with his first goal of the season at the 13:39 mark on a shot from the blue line that deflected off a Novi skate. Forward Drew Brace and Smith assisted on the goal.

Lopetrone gave Plymouth a 2-1 lead 5:35 into the second period when he buried a centering pass from Jossey. Smith also assisted on Lopetrone's third goal of the season.

Smith, the team captain,

finished the game with four points.

"No doubt Josh was our catalyst (Wednesday)," Vento said. "He is our leader with this team and this is the type of game where leaders shine, and Josh sure did in every aspect of the game."

Vento added that everyone on his bench contributed to the victory, which improved Plymouth's record to 3-1. "As a group, this was by far the best game played by our defensemen," he said.

Plymouth's next game is 5:30 p.m. Saturday against Rochester Unified at Arctic Edge.

PREP GIRLS HOCKEY

Penguins show no mercy in 10-1 win over Ann Arbor

Seven PCS players earn multiple points in rout

By Tim Smith Staff Writer

The Plymouth-Canton-Salem Penguins varsity girls hockey team took it easy early on against Ann Arbor Huron-Skyline Tuesday at Arctic Edge Arena.

That's because the Penguins carried a modest 2-0 lead into the second period.

But from that point on, PCS put on a scoring show,

blitzing their opponent with eight tallies to go up 10-1 after two frames. That also ended the game via the mercy rule.

Earning her first victory was Penguins goalie Kaitlyn Isom, who watched while her teammates peppered Huron-Skyline goalies Adira Cohen and Veronica Zeimet with 37 total shots on goal through 30 minutes.

Scoring three goals and assisting on another for PCS (3-1 in Division 2 of the Michigan Metro Girls High School Hockey League) was Loren

Hitch.

Contributing a pair of markers each were Serina Eadeh and Shannon Schuit (who also assisted on another goal for a 3-point game).

Other Penguins with multiple points were Elizabeth O'Donohue (one goal, one assist), Alexis Pheaney (two assists), Michelle Cirino (one goal, one assist) and Morgan Gagnon (two assists).

Also scoring for PCS was Paige Sweet.

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Whalers edged by Mississauga

A 44-save performance by Plymouth Whalers goalie Alex Nedeljkovic was not enough Friday night, as host Mississauga scored twice in the third period for a 4-3 victory.

The Whalers (10-15-1) got off to a fast start in the Ontario Hockey League contest, when forward and Los Angeles Kings prospect Matt Misteles scored two goals in the first period (including one on the power play).

Mississauga (12-13-1) got on the board before the end of the frame and then tied things up at 2-2 in the second before Plymouth regained the lead 3-2 on a marker by Sonny Milano (one goal, two assists), from Matthew Watson.

Sam Babintsev evened things up again, with five minutes elapsed in the third and the Steelheads netted the winner at 7:19 when Jared Walsh sent a shot past Nedeljkovic.

CHIEFS

Continued from Page B1

Also, Jocelyn Moraw took the top spot on beam with a 9.4 and came in third on floor (9.25) and vault (9.0).

Jana Hilditch came in sec-

ond both on bars and beam with scores of 8.85 and 9.3, respectively.

Katie Dickson's 8.975 on floor earned her fifth place and Rachel Socia placed sixth on vault with an 8.6.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

Mercy Marlins rally in fourth to defeat Rocks

By Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

Farmington Hills Mercy pulled off its second, three-point victory in as many games Friday, rallying in the fourth quarter to defeat visiting Salem in girls basketball, 49-46.

Senior guard Taylor Jones scored 12 of her game-high 27 points in the final period as the Marlins (2-0) overcame a 36-32 deficit after three and outscored the Rocks, 17-10.

Trailing the entire game, Mercy was behind 17-13 after one quarter and

29-19 at halftime. Jones had 21 of her team's 30 points in the second half.

"It was very similar to the game the other night (55-52 win over Waterford Mott) in that we struggled in many respects, but the kids kept battling," Mercy coach Gary Morris said.

"Toward the end of the third quarter, we got a group that did a nice job for us defensively — Jones, Sierra Wangler, Lauryn Hauncher, Katie Bryce and Claire Murray."

Wangler and Hauncher scored six points each; Jordan Johnson and Jordyn Schluter chipped in three apiece.

Salem had three players in double figures — Shara Long (14), Hayley Rogers (10) and Jamyra Wilson (10). Lasha Petree nearly made it four with nine points.

"We controlled the game for 30 minutes and let it slip away with two to go," Salem head coach Lindsay Klemmer said. "It is very frustrating because we played so hard and poised throughout it all, but couldn't close it out. Mercy's defense was tough and forced us into turnovers that led them to easy scoring."

The Marlins won the game at the

free throw line, going 16-for-19. The Rocks were 11-for-26. Jones was 9-of-9 at the foul line.

"We struggled in a lot of aspects of the game, but I thought we kept battling," Morris said. "We finally hit some shots. Obviously, Taylor was the one doing that primarily, but some other kids chipped in with some buckets."

"We kinda willed this one out in a way. Credit goes to some of our younger kids in terms of fighting hard. We didn't give up. At times we could have."

GIRLS BASKETBALL

JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO
Canton's Bre Donehue (No. 25) is in the middle of this scrum for the basketball Thursday against Bloomfield Hills Marian.



Canton routed in rematch, 66-25

Class A champion Marian takes it to young Chiefs in opener

By Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Canton picked up where it left off last season, losing to Bloomfield Hills Marian.

Last time around, the Chiefs lost to the Mustangs in the Class A girls basketball final at Breslin Center.

A much-different Canton squad, having lost four key players to graduation, lost 66-25 to Marian in the 2014-15 season opener Thursday.

Junior guard Natalie Winters led Canton with seven points, while Erin Hult and Briana Finn tallied five each. For Marian, Kara Holinski scored 16 points.

"They brought back their entire state championship team except for one girl, and those girls just played together really well," Kevin Palmer said, following his first game as Canton head coach. "But we had some new girls stepping up that played well today."

Marian broke out to a 26-2 lead after the first quarter, demonstrating dead-eye shooting from the perimeter. The Mustangs connected on six triples in the contest.

"They (Chiefs) did a lot of things really well, unfortunately Marian just made the plays," Palmer lamented. "We forced them to try and be an outside shooting team and they shot the heck out of the ball from three."

"More credit to them, they were the state champs last year for a reason and they're the favorites this year for a reason."



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO
Canton's Brianna Finn (No. 23) dribbles down the floor while Bloomfield Hills Marian players try to chase her down.

Things improved for Canton in the second quarter, with the Chiefs winning that frame 13-8 to trail 34-15 at halftime.

Unfortunately, Marian started the second half just how it started the first — in total control. The Mustangs poured in 20 while giving up just two to pad their lead to 54-17 after three stanzas.

The fourth was closer (12-8 in favor of the Mustangs).

"We're young, it's going to be a process of us improving and getting better," Palmer noted. "This was one of those games we had to experience in order to get to where we need to be as a team."

last year and he's pretty dominant right now in our practices.

"He's going to come forward pretty quick, I think. ... He's a load inside right now."

Others in the mix for low-post minutes are senior forwards Joe Miazek (6-3, 190) and Evan Klenk (6-2, 195).

"He (Miazek) saw time for us last year," Brodie added. "He's grown and gotten stronger so we're looking for minutes from him."

"And there's Evan Klenk, another senior, who came in and gave us 3-4 minute bursts every quarter for us. They're strong players, they'll help us out off the bench."

Salem's bench brigade is seven deep, which affords Brodie the luxury of resting players and going with matchups.

Rounding out that group are junior small forward Matt White and sopho-

more forward Cameron Grace.

"We got Matt White, also coming off the JV team, he will (do) power forward a little bit," Brodie said. "Cameron Grace is a sophomore, we brought him up because we think he's ready to play at this level. He's used to the game speed."

"Obviously, his time will be a little bit more limited than it would be if he were playing JV ball right now. But he accepts the challenge and we look for good things from him."

Depth crucial

Brodie expects all of his players to be ready to answer the call at any time, crucial to how well the Rocks succeed this season.

"A lot of these players got a lot of playing time last year," Brodie said. "We go pretty deep all the time off the bench. They've seen the court, they've

seen action.

"Our size is going to be OK inside. And we're going to be big at the guard positions. The question is how well are they going to jell together?"

After the opener at Skyline, the Rocks are idle until visiting Wayne Memorial on Tuesday, Dec. 16. Redford Thurston is on the slate for Thursday, Dec. 18, at the Livonia Franklin-hosted Christmas tournament.

"Right out of the blocks it's going to be tough," Brodie emphasized. "When we get into our division (in January), we'll have crossovers with Canton, they'll be loaded. Northville's going to be tough again this year."

"We're going to learn pretty quick what this team's made of because of the competition we're playing."

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PLYMOUTH

Continued from Page B1

through.

"It remains to be seen, we haven't played any games yet," Soukup said. "In the summertime we didn't struggle to score, we got a lot of guys returning with experience."

"All five guys who started last year are returning so you'd hope we wouldn't struggle as much to score. But you never know until you light up the clock and roll it out there."

Teaming up

He'll find that out 7 p.m. Tuesday, when Plymouth visits Redford Union (where Soukup once coached).

"We were 9-11 last year, and a lot of our losses were single-digit," Soukup stressed. "We were always close, four, three. So, hopefully the added experience will help us get over the hump in a lot of those situations. A lot of these guys have been through the battles and know. That's the biggest key, experience."

Another key for the 2014-15 Wildcats will be embracing cohesiveness and maintaining a "We Greater Than Me" mentality.

"That's kind of our team slogan this year, our group is more important than our individuals," Soukup said.

Setting the tone in the locker room, on bus trips to away games and on the floor will be tri-captains Deji Adebisi (senior forward), Josh Reynolds (senior guard) and Randall Aikins (senior guard). All are returning starters.

"These are going to be the guys that will make us go," Soukup said. "More importantly from the leadership aspect, too. Deji's done a nice job of embracing that. Obviously his role on the football team probably helped with that, he was the quarterback."

"He's done a great job so far this season. He may not be our most valuable player, but he's our most important guy. He's the emotional barometer for us. The guy that gets going. And Josh and Randall assist in that."

Soukup added that Reynolds and Aikins will be on-court barometers, too.

"Josh is poised for a really good year," the coach continued. "He's put in a lot of work on his own as well as with us in the offseason, both in his own personal game and in the weight-room."

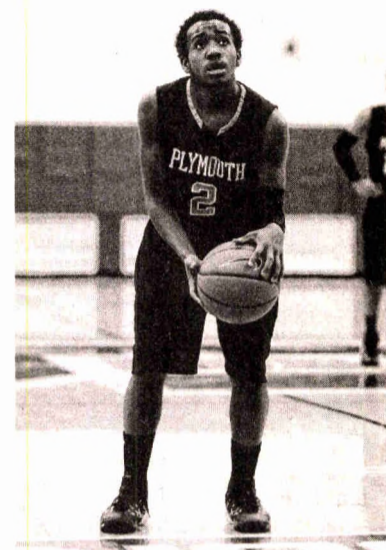
"Randall has as well. There's some smaller schools looking at them, so I'm sure that helps motivate them to play well."

Junior gems

Augmenting the tri-captains in the starting lineup will be 6-2 junior guard Brent Davis and 6-foot junior guard Chris Walls — a standout athlete and football wide-out, a favorite wide-out target for quarterback Adebisi.

"We got some of that toughness (from football) that he (Walls) brings," Soukup said. "And Brent Davis is one of the better athletes that we've had around here."

Where the Wildcats might have an edge in the KLAAs South Division this year is the fact the bench is eight deep. That gives Soukup more confidence to put



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO
Plymouth's Randall Aikins is one of several key returnees for the Wildcats.

pedal to the medal.

"We kept 13 this year and we should play all 13 guys," Soukup said. "We have very good depth, that is one of the big strengths of our team."

"We got a good mix of experience and young guys who can bring some energy and push the starters, which is something we didn't have last year."

First off the bench many times will be 6-1 junior guard Armani Tate, a JV player in 2013-14. He brings defense and toughness.

Ditto for junior guard Pete Carravallah, who played on the JV last year. "He (Carravallah) comes off the bench to provide a little bit of scoring punch, plus toughness and defense."

Another option for reserve minutes is senior wing guard Khalil Newell, a bench guy last season.

"He's another guy who worked really hard in the off-season and I hope he's poised for a good year," Soukup added.

Vying for minutes in the post will be senior center Cameron Anstess while junior guard Frank Brown (JV last year) is described by Soukup as "a very good glue guy, coming in and providing energy."

Expected to chip in when needed are junior guard Julian LeDoux, junior guard Jeremy Abraham and junior forward Brennan Brooks.

"The way we're going to play this year, more up-tempo, a lot will depend on everybody to get minutes," Soukup said.

And soon enough, Soukup and assistant coach Ryan Ballard will find out whether the winning culture they've been pushing for finally comes to fruition.

"If our group achieves success, individual success will follow," Soukup said. "We've been trying to get our folks to buy into that and change our program culture."

Starting Tuesday, the coaches will see for themselves whether that winning attitude leads to victories on the basketball court.

STUDENTS FREE ON DEC. 16: All current Plymouth High School students who present a valid student ID will be admitted free to the Wildcats' home opener at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 16, against South Lyon East.

Student tickets for the rest of the season will be just \$3; tickets are \$5 for adults.

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ROCKS

Continued from Page B1

kind of let everybody bring the basketball and share the ball, we run that motion offense. We don't really put the heat on one player being the point guard."

Benchmarks

Available off the bench to help out Stropes and Swift will be junior guards Calin Crawford and Freddie McGee, both on last year's junior varsity squad. "They're pretty quick, Calin led the JV team in most categories."

Brodie also has some inside options, including the intriguing 6-6, 195-pound junior center Kenny Topolovec.

"Kenny's our biggest player," Brodie said. "He was dynamite at the JV level

Farmington girl dances top 'Nutcracker' role at Michigan Ballet Theatre

By Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Rachael Freedman will dance one of her dream roles this month with Michigan Ballet Theatre.

"I love *The Nutcracker*. It is my favorite ballet," said the North Farmington High School junior. "I've been watching the role of Clara since I joined the company when I was 7. I always wanted to do it. I didn't think it would happen."

Rachael, 16, will take on the principal role in one of two MBT casts that will perform the Tchaikovsky ballet Friday-Sunday, Dec. 12-14, at Oxford High School and Dec. 19-21 at Avondale High School in Auburn Hills. The Christmas-themed fantasy tells the story of Clara and her adventures with a nutcracker-turned-prince, an evil Mouse King, a Sugar Plum Fairy and the magical Land of Sweets.

Rachael, daughter of Mark and Mary Freedman of Farmington, has danced in five previous productions of *The Nutcracker* with MBT, taking "baby steps" through the years toward solo and principal roles.

"It starts with being a little girl and coming on as an angel and walking across the stage. And then in the party scene in the first act, I've been one of the friends and I've been Clara's brother," Rachael said. "I've been a Chinese dancer, and also Spanish.

"Every year it gets bigger and bigger, working your way up from little groups to solos and now a principal role."

Rachael and other MBT company members rehearsed all solos in the show when practices began. They danced while director Cornelia Sampson watched, took notes, and then created her cast.

"Rather than have formal auditions she watched and saw who fit into the roles," she said. "I'm much more excited than anything."

Rachael said that although dancing can be hard work, she always has fun whether she's in rehearsals or on stage.

"I think about how grateful I am to dance this role. It puts a smile on my face," she said. "I've always had a passion for dance."

Young dancer

She and her twin sister, Lindsey, a music student at Interlochen School of the Arts, began dance classes when they were 4 years old.

"I never wanted to stop. I remember loving it," Rachael said. "It was ballet I started

The Nutcracker

What: Rachael Freedman of Farmington portrays Clara in the Michigan Ballet Theatre production

When: 7 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 12-14 and 19-21

Where: Dec. 12-14 performances at Oxford High School Fine Arts Center, 101 Charger Loop, Oxford, and Dec. 19-21 shows at Avondale High School Performing Arts Center, 2800 Waukegan, Auburn Hills

Details: With music by Tchaikovsky, *The Nutcracker* tells the story of Clara, who sees her toy nutcracker come to life and become a prince after she defends it from an evil Mouse King and his army of mice. The prince takes her to his kingdom, the Land of Sweets, where she is treated to a celebration of sweets from around the world and is crowned.

Tickets: \$32 for adults, \$28 for seniors and children. All tickets are sold in advance

Contact: 248-652-3117; michiganballettheatre.com

with and that is mainly my focus now."

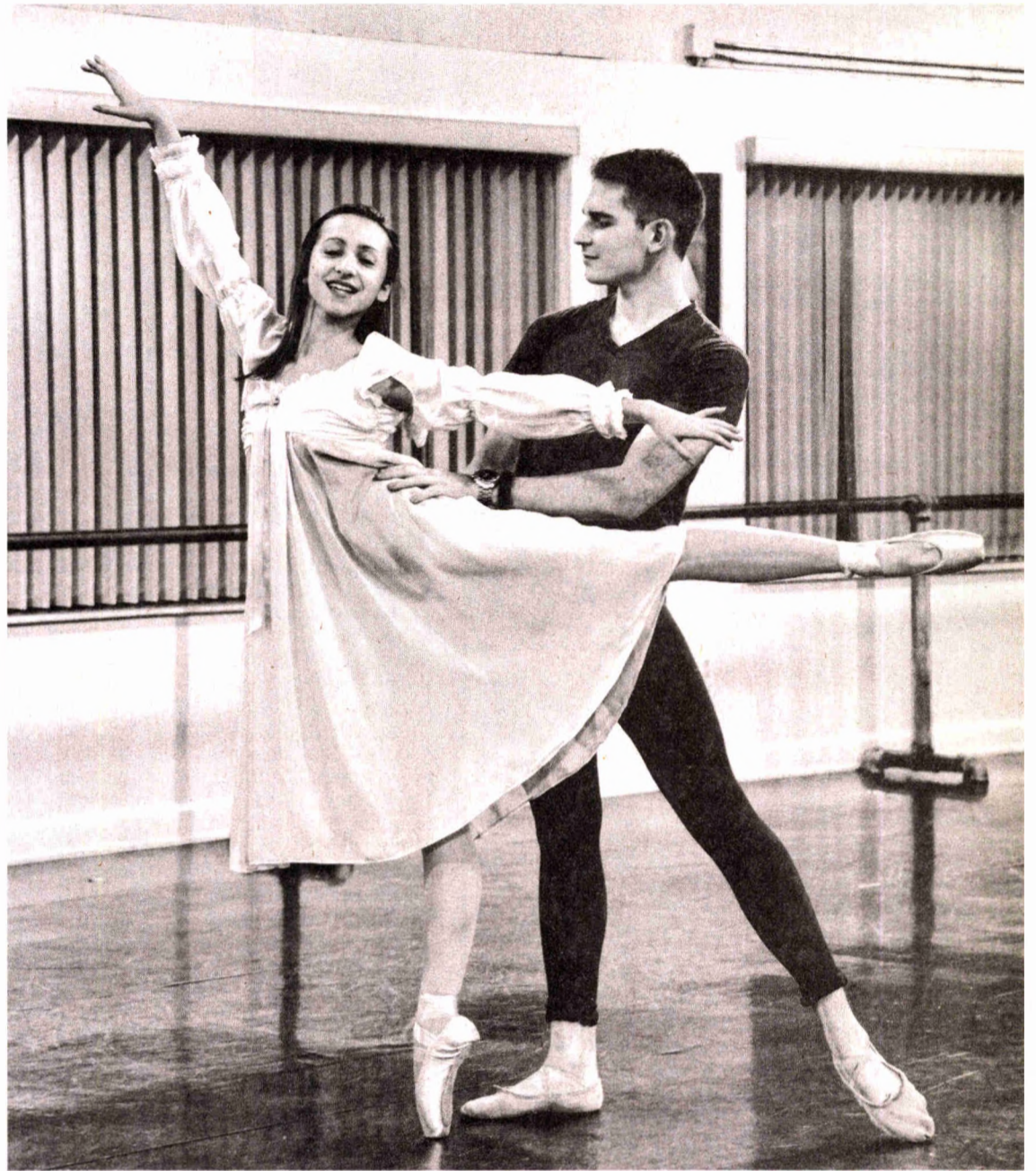
She took ballet instruction at Cornelia's School of Dance in Keego Harbor, switching to its sister school, Rochester School of Dance, MBT's home. She danced in MBT's junior company, worked her way up to its second company and then apprenticed before becoming a full company member. This is her second year with a solo role in a full-length ballet. In the production, she also dances with a partner, the Nutcracker Prince, played by Andrew Kaczmarek, a guest artist who has performed with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. When she isn't on stage portraying Clara, she'll perform other, smaller roles in the alternate cast.

All about dance

Rachael describes MBT as a pre-professional company. Many of its graduates have found employment in professional dance theaters or have gravitated toward dance-related careers.

"It's like my second home. My dance friends are some of my best friends and my teachers are like family," she said.

Rachael takes nine ballet classes a week, dancing Monday-Thursday, and rehearsing for *The Nutcracker*, Saturday-Sunday. She also studies jazz dance and lyrical dance and is a member of the hip hop team



Rachael Freedman of Farmington rehearses "The Nutcracker" with Andrew Kaczmarek, a guest performer who has danced with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.



A previous production of "The Nutcracker" at Michigan Ballet Theatre.

at North Farmington High School.

"I'm always dancing. I find myself in the middle of a (hip

hop) practice running through *The Nutcracker*. The thing about dance is that everything is based off ballet. Ballet is the

center of every style of dance."

She'll perform a ballet solo in February at the Youth America Grand Prix dance competition in Chicago, Ill. She also hopes to fit in time for North Farmington's school musical this year.

Rachael both sings in the school choir and is a member of 6 Degrees North, a six-girl a capella group. She recently auditioned for North Farmington's coffee house show scheduled for January.

Meanwhile, she hopes audience members will catch a bit of Christmas spirit when they watch MBT's production of *The Nutcracker*.

"I hope they see just how hard we've worked and how excited we are to put on this show."

Pet rescue collects food, supplies for animals, people

By Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Mutts and Mutts Rescue League of Redford will bring Santa Claus and pets together at two area pet supply stores for photos this month.

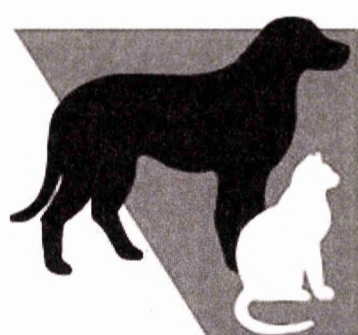
Santa will pose with pets from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 20-21, at Pet Supplies Plus, 14835 Telegraph, Redford, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 13-14 and 20-21, at Petco, 2005 W. Eight Mile, at Woodward, Detroit. Cost is \$10.

Donna Law, Mutts and Mutts founder, is running a pet food and supply drive in conjunction with the photo sittings.

"We will take any kind of dog food, canned or dry, paper towels, bleach, 13-gallon garbage cans," she said. "Cat food, too."

Law said whatever Mutts and Mutts doesn't use will be shared with other animal rescue organizations. Her group also aids a handful of financially distressed families that need help feeding their animals. She also feeds a small colony of feral cats, making sure they have hay, fresh food and water every morning before she heads to her job as a caregiver in Northville.

Law and her husband founded Mutts and Mutts in 1997 and the organization earned non-profit status in 2001. Law said



PET PROJECTS

her animal rescue takes dogs and cats that have been given up by owners or released by shelters. Volunteers foster the dogs until they are placed in permanent homes. Mutts and Mutts also maintains some of the adoptive cat housing at Petco on Eight Mile at Woodward in Detroit.

"I have cats there on a daily basis. I have two units there," she said.

Helping the homeless

Law doesn't just serve homeless animals. She has a heart for down-and-out individuals who spend their days along Eight Mile between Southfield Road and Woodward Avenue. She's asking for donations of food and blankets in addition to pet food and supplies.

"There are people up and down Eight Mile just like you

and me. They've got a story. Not everyone on a street corner does drugs and drinks," she said. "You don't always have to hand them a dollar. You can hand out a blanket or a sandwich from McDonald's. It may be the only thing they've eaten today. Some of them live in a shelter and some in abandoned homes."

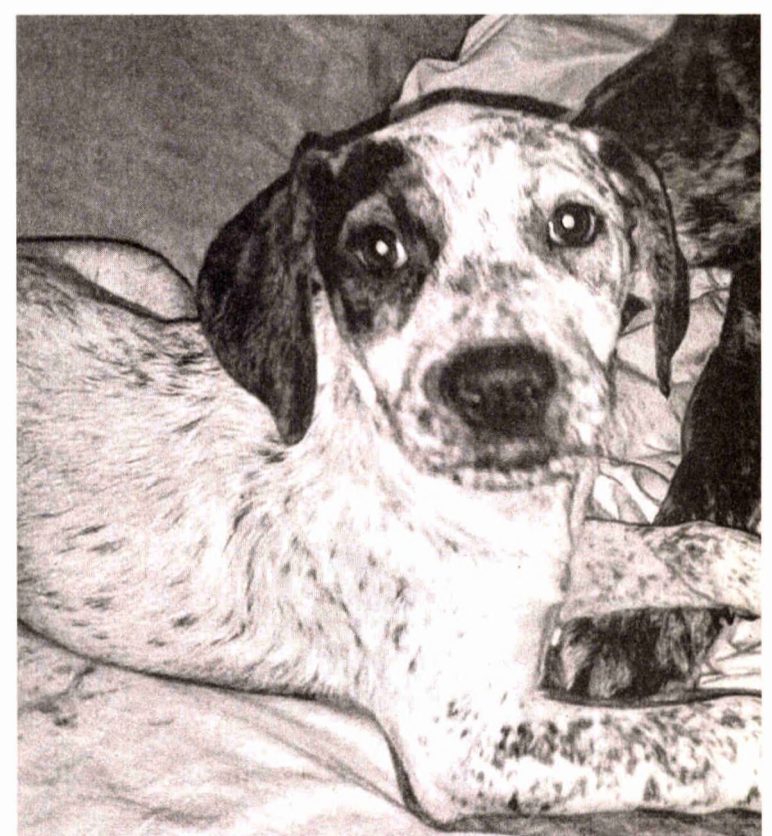
She figures she helps approximately 10 individuals on a regular basis along with others stationed near the busy road that divides Detroit from Southfield and Ferndale.

"We've cooked on the holidays and given them prepackaged food. I always give them a garbage bag and I've said, if I'm giving you things, don't make a mess."

She said she recently gave pizza to one man, and a donated coat to another. She has since seen the man wearing the coat. The day she handed him the garment another driver stopped behind her, honked and then gave her an energy drink.

"Paying it forward," she explained. "If only everyone did a little, helped one person a month. It's something I've always done. Maybe it's how my mom raised me. We were raised on tough love and hardly any money. Service has always been a passion."

She's asking for donations of blankets, towels, sheets, pre-packaged foods, cans of



Spike is one of the adoptable dogs cared for by a Mutts and Mutts foster parent.

foods with easy-to-open tops, and hand wipes. Both donations for homeless pets, persons and shelter supplies can be donated to Mutts and Mutts at Pet Supplies Plus in Redford and the Petco store at Eight

Mile and Woodward. "Please support animal shelters and rescue groups nationwide," she added.

Check out Mutts and Mutts on Facebook. Contact Law at dmuttsmutts@aol.com.



Farmington Hills residents Linda Pelowski and her husband, Larry, attend the Our Town Art Sale. Linda exhibited her paintings at the show.



Livonia residents Erin O'Brien and her husband, photographer Eric Boehm, shop at the Birmingham Community House Our Town Art Show.




Farmington Hills resident and artist Andrea Tama (left) and Goldner Walsh Event Corporate sponsors Tim Travis and Peggy Kerr enjoy the Our Town Art Sale. Tama is an acrylic painter at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

Local artists sell their works at annual Our Town show

PHOTOS BY JULIE YOLLES

Arthritis Today
JOSEPH J. WEISS, M.D.
RHEUMATOLOGY
 18829 Farmington Road
 Livonia, Michigan 48152
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TREATING BACK PAIN

At present the medical approach to low back pain is as follows:

- a short period of rest
- trial of physical therapy (PT)
- referral to pain clinic
- evaluation by a back specialist

A short period of rest means short: no more than one day. If a person with back pain stays on his or her back longer, that person loses more in strength and stamina than gains from restricting tension on the back.

A trial of PT includes heat and massage. PT clinics may say they can strengthen back muscles but the medical literature does not confirm that any regimen works. What PT does is to teach one how to stand and walk, using the front, i.e. the abdominal muscles to maintain a proper posture. Such a gait relieves strain and fatigue on the back muscles.

A back pain patient referred to a pain clinic can expect to undergo epidural steroid injections. These procedures, working on the assumption of treating nerve root irritation, target the spinal nerves that come from the spine and travel into the low back and legs. Usually the pain specialist will inject the back area in a series of three injections, and then repeat the cycle 3-4 months later.

The last resort is an evaluation by back doctors trained either as orthopedists or neurosurgeons, who devote themselves to surgery of spine. A number of devices and operations for back pain exist, but to date no surgical approach has proved its superiority.

It appears that the most successful therapy for low back pain is time, with time measured not in days or weeks but in months.

LO-000221608

Early bird holiday shoppers seeking unique, one-of-a-kind art from local artists clamored to the Our Town Art Show at the Community House in Birmingham its "Art in Vogue" Opening Night Party. Birmingham artists Robert Dempster and Barbara Heller co-joined the event which featured 340 pieces of art by 161 talented Michigan artists selected from more than 900 entries.

Holiday gift ideas? Many of the juried artists at the Our Town show have been selected to be artists in residence at The Community House and their art is on display and available for sale throughout the year. Call 248-644-5832 or go to tchservices.org for more. The winter catalog is online to review.

Julie Yolles
 SOCIAL SCENE



winner of over 100 international awards, including three Tony Awards and one Grammy Award. The *Wicked* cast album makes a great stocking stuffer and features Kristin Chenoweth as Glinda the Good Witch and Idina Menzel — your kids will know her as Elsa from *Frozen* — as Elphaba. Buy advance tickets of *Wicked* at www.broadwayindetroit.com or www.ticketmaster.com/wicked or by calling 1-800-982-2787.

For adventurous and money-savvy fans, take note of a special day-of-performance lottery for a limited number of orchestra seats at \$25 each (cash only). This includes all performances Dec. 10-Jan. 4. Arrive two and a half hours before each performance at the Detroit Opera House. Have a valid photo and/or



Jason and Lori Sosnowski of Redford browse the Our Town Art Sale in Birmingham.

school ID for your name to be placed in a lottery drum. This is an in-person only lottery; limit two tickets per person.

Gala benefit

"I can see your Halo Glow" at the 61st annual White Christmas Ball. The Fontbonne Auxiliary of St. John Hospital and Medical Center will host its black-tie gala on Saturday, Dec. 13, at Cobo Center, Grand Ballroom. This year's Ball will purchase a new breast ultrasound machine for the

Liggett Breast Cancer Center at St. John Hospital and Medical Center. Tickets are \$300 for dinner and afterglow and \$125 for Afterglow (9:30 p.m.-midnight). For tickets, call 313-343-3675 or email raegan.movinski@stjohn.org.

Contact Julie Yolles at socialscenejulie@gmail.com or leave a message at 248-642-9465. Send invitations to Julie Yolles, Social Scene columnist, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 615 Davis Ave., Birmingham, MI 48009.

Guide to Employment

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Help Wanted - General

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Help Wanted - Medical

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Wanted to provide medical care to patients at Royal Oak, MI hospital

Send resume: **Beaumont** HEALTH SYSTEM Mr. Woolsey, HR 16500 W. 12 Mile Rd. Southfield, MI 48076

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Help Wanted - Medical

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Help Wanted - Medical

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WEDDING



Shirley Yao and Aaron Bedell on their wedding day

YAO-BEDELL

Shirley Yao and Aaron Bedell were married Oct. 25, 2014, at Planterra Conservatory in West Bloomfield.

Shirley is the daughter of Fayi Yao and Bin Wu of Westland. Aaron is the son of Tom and Karen Bedell of Livonia.

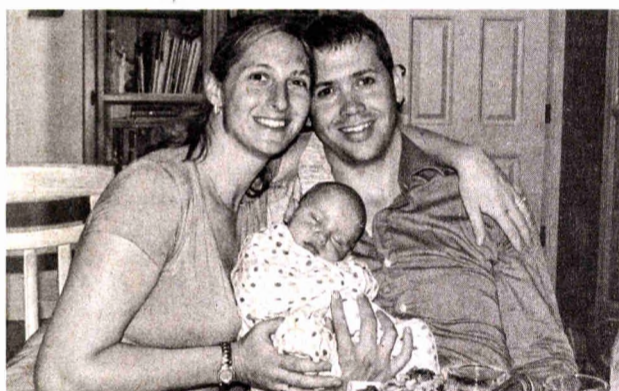
Shirley and Aaron both graduated from Churchill High School in 2006 and the University of Minnesota: Twin Cities in 2010. Shirley earned a master's degree in genetic counseling in 2012 from Wayne State University and works as an

oncology genetic counselor at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper. Aaron is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of chemistry at Princeton University.

The maid of honor was Brittany Clos and the bridesmaids were Erica Tomassi and Britney Morgan. The best men were Adam Bedell and Robert Halperin and groomsmen were Graham Hone. The usher was Kevin Yao.

The couple currently resides in Plainsboro, N.J. The newlyweds plan a honeymoon trip to Barcelona, Spain.

BIRTH



Kim and David Grevell of Brisbane, Australia, welcomed son, Janos Joseph, on Oct. 9. Kim is formerly of Canton.

JANOS JOSEPH PANKO GREVELL

Janos Joseph Panko Grevell was born Oct. 9, 2014, at Mater Hospital, Brisbane, Australia. He weighed 7.7 pounds. Proud parents are

David and Kim (Panko) Grevell of Brisbane, Australia.

Grandparents are Margo and Richard Panko of Canton and Paul and Lynne Grevell of Brisbane, Australia.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

ART POTTERS MARKET

Time/Date: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7
Location: The Southfield Pavilion, 26000 Evergreen at Civic Center Drive, between 10 Mile and 11 Mile, Southfield
Details: Nearly 35,000 pottery items by 145 potters are available for purchase. Includes from pots, vases, platters, tiles and mugs to bird baths, jewelry, ceramic framed mirrors, sculpture, lamps, tile-topped tables and more. Admission is free.
Contact: 248-554-4470; thepottermarket.com

VAAL HOLIDAY SHOPPE

Time/Date: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, through Dec. 14
Location: Visual Arts Association of Livonia (VAAL), 37653 Five Mile, Livonia
Details: One-of-a-kind holiday gifts created by area artisans include pottery, fiber, hand-blown glass, jewelry and other accessories, wood items, clothing, ornaments, framed and unframed art and more. Items in every price range
Contact: 734-838-1204; vaalart.org

DANCE CENTRAL CITY DANCE

Time/Date: 6 p.m. Dec. 18-19, 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 20, noon and 4 p.m. Dec. 21
Location: Village Theater of Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton
Details: Central City Dance's Christmas Spectacular includes dance, music and more. Tickets are \$23
Contact: 734-459-0400; centralcitydance.com

THE NUTCRACKER

Time/Date: 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7
Location: Salem High School auditorium, located in the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, on Joy, west of North Canton Center Road, Canton
Details: Plymouth-Canton Ballet Company, with the Michigan Philharmonic; tickets are \$25 for adults, \$18 for children and \$3 for the Sugar Plum Parade, held after the show
Contact: plymouthcantonballet.org

FILM PENN THEATRE

Time/Date: Weekends through December
Location: 760 Penniman, Plymouth
Details: *It's a Wonderful Life*, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7; *Miracle on 34th Street*, 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Dec. 12-13, and 4:45 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14; *Christmas Vacation*, 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, and 7 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19; *The Polar Express*, 4:45 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 20-21. All seats \$3
Contact: 734-453-0870; www.penntheatre.com
REDFORD THEATRE
Time/Date: 8 p.m. Dec. 19 and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec. 20
Location: 17360 Lahser, just north of Grand River Ave., in Detroit
Details: *White Christmas*, \$5; Santa visits the theater — bring your camera
Contact: 313-898-1481

HISTORY PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Time/Date: 1-4 p.m. Wednesday, Friday-Sunday
Location: 155 S. Main, Plymouth
Details: "Twas the Night Before Christmas exhibit runs through Jan. 11, 2015. Santa visits every Sunday until Christmas. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$2 for ages 6-17
Crafty Elves Workshop: Children, ages 5-11, can make gifts and decorations at 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 14. \$10 per child. Sign up online or by calling the museum
Contact: 734-455-8940

HOLIDAY LIGHTS LIGHTFEST

Time/Date: 6-10 p.m. Friday-Sunday, through Dec. 31, excluding Dec. 25
Location: Along four miles of Hines Drive; enter at 7651 Merri-man, between Warren road and Ann Arbor Trail in Westland
Details: Drive by 55 holiday light displays; admission is \$5 per car
Contact: 734-261-1990; parks.waynecounty.com

Passages

Obituaries, Memories & Remembrances

How to reach us: 1-800-579-7355 • fax 313-496-4968 • www.mideathnotices.com

Deadlines: Friday, 4:00 p.m. for Sunday papers • Tuesday, 4:00 p.m. for Thursday papers
Holiday deadlines are subject to change.



ALDER, JEANETTE ULRICH

Age 93, died on November 22, 2014, in Livonia, Michigan. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she earned degrees at Towson State and Columbia University. Her career as an educator spanned over four decades with the Weehawken (N.J.) public schools, where she served as classroom teacher, supervisor of elementary education, and elementary school principal. The latter years of her professional life were spent training teachers nationwide in in-services on writing techniques developed in Weehawken. Upon retirement, she moved to Michigan. She was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, Richard. She is survived by a sister (Mary Foyles) of Greenville, N. Carolina, sons Richard, Jr. (Jane) of Westland, Michigan and John (Dorothy) of Fairbanks, Alaska, in addition to four grandchildren, Jason (Jenny), Erik (Stephanie), Charmagne (Ryan), Theodore, and three great-grandchildren, Kianna, Willow, and Garrett. In keeping with her wishes, her body was donated to the University of Michigan Medical School. A memorial service at Timothy Lutheran Church, Livonia, Michigan, will be held at some future date. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (<http://www.lssm.org/lssm/donate>). View obituary and share memories at www.rgrgharris.com

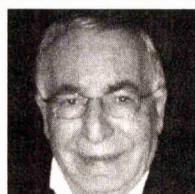
BARAN, STAN

December 3, 2014. Loving husband of Fran. Dear father of John, Jacqueline, Kathleen and Marjori. Also survived by six grandchildren and two sisters. griffinfuneralhome.com.



DUNDON, CHRISTOPHER EDWARD

Age 40, died suddenly December 2, 2014. Graduated from Seaholm High School and Summa Cum Laude from Western Michigan University. Most recently worked as Senior Director of Development and Alumni Relations for University of Montana School of Business. Previously worked for Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Northern Michigan Hospital Foundation. Loving husband of Denise (nee Coon). Devoted father of Anna Catherine and Henry James. Dear son of Robert and Barbara. Brother of Mark (Olena), Michael (Adriane) and Caroline. Also survived by four nieces and nephews. Family will receive friends Friday 2-8 p.m. with scripture service at 7 p.m. at A.J. Desmond & Sons (Vasu, Rodgers & Connell Chapel), 32515 Woodward (btwn 13-14 Mile), 248-549-0500. Funeral Mass Saturday 10 a.m. at Holy Name Church, 630 Harmon, Birmingham. Memorial tributes to Dawn Farm, 6633 Stoney Creek Rd. Ypsilanti, MI 48197 or Common Ground, 1410 St. Telegraph Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302. View obituary and share memories at DesmondFuneralHome.com



ALHERMIZI, ISAAC

Affectionately known as "Ike" to the greater Detroit community, passed away on December 3, 2014. He is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Nouria Kizy Alhermizi, and their children Vickie Alhermizi (Mohammad Alcaptan), Mark Alhermizi (Mary), Tina Alhermizi, Vivian Kasmikha (Oday Kasmikha); and their grandchildren, Maximilian Alhermizi and Zoe Kasmikha. Ike was born in Baghdad, Iraq and immigrated to the United States in 1965. He studied at Lewis College of Business in Detroit while working for relatives in the grocery business saving money to one day open his own store. His hard work paid off, leading him to build the iconic and successful, Ike's Party Shoppe in Southfield and own Pomeroy's Fish Market in West Bloomfield. With all of his success, he never forgot about his family and friends back in Iraq. He was instrumental in assisting many people move to the U.S. by helping them acquire Visas, find jobs and homes. Ike was very proud to be a U.S. citizen, which led him to be very active in politics and the Republican Party. In addition to running for local and state office, he was a member of the "Say YES to Michigan" and The Wetlands committees. His tireless efforts as a fundraiser and advocate for Republican candidates earned him the honor of being a distinguished guest at both the Reagan and Bush inaugurations. Ike cherished his family and was an avid believer in the importance of education and hard work. He continuously stressed this importance to his children who have degrees from Wayne State University and the University of Michigan. Ike's children continue his legacy by instilling these same values and beliefs in their children, nieces and nephews. In his later years, Ike was an active and beloved member of the Gas Station TV team, a company started by his son. Ike was always there to lend a helping hand and impart words of wisdom to the team. To those that knew Ike, he will best be remembered for the way he would always make you feel welcome in his home or place of business. He always had a friendly smile, a twinkle in his eye, a kind word to say and delectable food and drink to be shared. May he rest in peace. Memorial Visitation Sunday, December 7, 2014. The Family will be receiving guests for lunch and visitation from 2:00-7:00 p.m. at Shenandoah Country Club in W. Bloomfield.

FORAN, M. NORMA

May 25, 1925 - December 5, 2014. Arrangements by Schrader-Howell Funeral Home, www.schrader-howell.com.

SARTEN, NICHOLAS DARYL

32 years of age, was born in Detroit on December 2, 1981 and passed away in Westland on November 26, 2014. Survived by his sisters, Stefanie Sarten (and partner Elisha Kranz), Cara Sarten (and fiancé Douglas Williams), other family, and many friends. Predeceased by his father Daryl Sarten, mother Janice Sarten, and brother Shawn Sarten. Private memorial held.



HERREN, DOROTHY JEAN

Age 93, a lifelong resident of Farmington, died December 3, 2014. Beginning her career in the 1940's as a hairdresser, Dorothy Jean established Jean's Bellaire Beauty Salon in the 1950's and enjoyed serving her clientele until her retirement in the 1980's. Beloved wife of the late James Herren; devoted mother of Larry Herren; loving grandmother of Devon "DJ" Herren; also survived by a loving family consisting of numerous step children, nieces and nephews. Sadly, Dorothy Jean was also preceded in death by her daughter, Diana Chaffen Buharb and her brother, Donald LeDoux. Visitation Wednesday, December 10, 4-8 pm and Thursday, December 11, 2-8 pm, at the Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, 23720 Farmington Rd., (btw. 9-10 Mile Rds., just N of Grand River), downtown Farmington (248-474-5200). Funeral service Friday, December 12, 10 am also at the funeral home. Interment Oakland Hills Memorial Gardens. In lieu of flowers, memorial tributes suggested to the Michigan Humane Society or Reverence Hospice. heeney-sundquist.com



PETTEYS, MARIBETH MAGEL

died Sunday, November 30, 2014 in Canton. Of late, she taught french to home schooled children and worked as a case manager for persons with guardian/ conservator. She taught at Agape Christian Academy, West Bloomfield High School and Simpson Jr. High. Briefly, she owned Macomb Sewing Center in Downtown Mt. Clemens. Her passion was leading groups, especially students, on European trips after having raised her children in Mexico and Geneva Switzerland. She was known as the Skippy Traveler and required all of her travelers to carry only one roll on bag, gaining recognition as an educator in this genre. She founded Shear Intensity, an athletic apparel company and devised patterns based on weight. The University of Michigan used her compression pants for 6 years. Born in Detroit, she graduated from Highland Park High School and attended Albion College before graduating from Eastern Michigan University. She earned a Masters in Family Life Education at Eastern Michigan University and a Masters in French from Euro Centre University, Paris, France. Predeceased by her beloved husband Donald Petteys, she is survived by daughters Alicia Moore Erion, Diane Moore (Mike) Gaubatz and son Michael Sean Moore. Six grandchildren; Michael David Moore, Emily (Bryan) Harris, Kalen (Lauren) Erion, Lacey (Mark) Hughes, Justin Andrew Erion, and Beau James Erion. Six great grandchildren, sister Martha Peterson of Livermore California, and brother N. Richard (Lou) Magel of Georgetown Texas. Seven nephews and six nieces. A celebration of Maribeth's life will be on Monday, December 8th, 2014 at Geneva Presbyterian Church, 5835 N. Sheldon Rd., Canton, MI 48187, (734-459-0013). Visitation 1-3 p.m., service at 3 p.m. followed by food and fellowship. Her ashes will be interred at the Church at a later date. Donations to the Church.

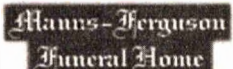


VAN BOVEN, CAROLYN DANT SNYDER

November 26th, 2014. Carolyn lived a vibrant 81 years. Her genuineness, deep faith and thoughtful ability to communicate well with people touched many lives in so many ways. Carolyn was born in Detroit, Michigan on June 24th, 1933 to M.E. "Shorty" Snyder and Vivian Dant Snyder. She attended Adams Elementary, the Kingswood School in Birmingham and graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. There she met the love of her life, Peter John Van Boven, Jr. After Peter had a stroke, as a result of a sporting accident, she cared faithfully and lovingly for him for 20 years. They were married 3 weeks short of 50 years when Peter passed. She lived all of her adult life in Ann Arbor, Michigan and North Palm Beach, Florida. She was a faithful follower of Jesus, an optimist and philanthropist. Carolyn was generous with her time and energy and resources. She enjoyed spending time laughing and living life to the fullest measure. Her accomplishments include, but are not limited to: membership of Kappa Kappa Gamma in college and served on the alumni board of the Beta Delta Chapter for many years. She served as President of the Thrift Shop in Ann Arbor, was a G Chapter member of PEO. Carolyn sat many years on the board of the Lost Tree Chapel in North Palm Beach, serving a term as president. She was on several organizing committees for numerous fund raising causes. Carolyn was an astute businesswoman, world traveler, and had a deep love for the ocean. She will be missed by many, but she leaves us all with her inspiring attitude of gratefulness to God in every circumstance. Peter and Carolyn had three children. She was predeceased by Charles, and survived by Andrea Van Boven Madden of South Hamilton, Massachusetts and James of Chicago Illinois. Carolyn was a loving and proud Grandmother to her two Grandchildren Kathryn of New York, New York and Alex Madden of Columbus, Georgia. Memorials will be held in early 2015 in Ann Arbor, MI and in North Palm Beach, FL. Details to follow. Cards may be sent to 11270 Turtle Beach Rd #3, North Palm Beach, FL 33408. Instead of flowers, gifts may be sent to Lost Tree Chapel, 11149 Turtle Beach Rd, North Palm Beach, FL 33408 or First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, 1432 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

WOLFF, WILLIAM

Born in Detroit, November 14, 1944 to the late Edwin and Mary Wolff, died suddenly on December 4, 2014, age 70. A graduate of Cass Technical High School, he received a B.A. at University of Michigan in 1966, and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from U-M in December, 1967. Bill was a teacher for the Ann Arbor Public Schools from January, 1969 until retirement in June, 2001. For many years, he was an adjunct professor of Humanities at Washtenaw Community College. He volunteered with many organizations. Bill is the dear brother of Richard (Marilyn), Margaret (Carl) Peltier, Charles, Robert (Kathy), and the late Edwin, Molly, John, and James. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. He leaves this world with gratitude to God, and to his dear family and friends, in the hope of resurrection to eternal life. Visitation Sunday 12 noon to 9 p.m., and Monday 2-8 p.m. at MANN'S-FERGUSON FUNERAL HOME, 17000 Middlebelt Road (S. of 6 Mile), Livonia. Share a memory at www.mannsfuneralhome.com.



A loving tribute

Honor the Memory and Celebrate the Life of passed loved ones by placing a Special Holiday Tribute. The Observer and Eccentric/Hometown Weekly Newspapers will be publishing a Special Tribute during the holidays. Here is the perfect opportunity to share your thoughts of loved ones who hold a special place in your hearts.

In Loving memory at the Holidays

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Call 800-579-7355 Fax: 313-496-4968 email: oeobits@hometownlife.com

Family time can be stressful time; ways to cope

By Julie Brown
Staff Writer

Families love each other, but they can also get on each others' nerves.

"Absolutely. It's almost like a given that's going to occur," said Janet Terry, clinical manager for the Pontiac office of Oakland Family Services.

"We see everybody all at this time of year," said Terry, who holds a M.S.W. degree from Wayne State University as well as a bachelor's degree in social work from Madonna University. "It can bring up unresolved issues in the family. There's always stress. There's going to be stress when you have interaction with other people."

Talking over differences is key, said White Lake resident Terry. Families can outline their strengths and weaknesses. Changing traditions is often helpful.

"Maybe you're the one who hosts the party all the time," she said. Someone else could host this year, prepared food could be used instead or food tasks could be delegated. "It's really about the gathering," Terry said.

Michele Potter does therapy for Heron Ridge Associates of Plymouth and is a licensed master social worker. Potter holds bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Michigan State University.

"We tend to put more pressure on ourselves because we have these unrealistic expectations," said Plymouth resident Potter, in the field since 1987. "We get angry, we get frustrated. You need to acknowledge your feelings both to yourself and the other people you may have a connection with."

In some cases, Potter said, you may need to take a breather and get away, "anything to restore an inner calm."

Unresolved grief can be an issue at the holidays, as it's readily apparent that person is no longer here. If grief hasn't been processed, Terry said, it can add to depression.



Feeling the pressure of the holidays? You can learn ways to cope.

ILLUSTRATION BY RANDY MASTERS

"Stress is just one of those symptoms," she said. Professional help may be needed if you have ongoing irritability, lack of energy or sleep disturbances. Suicidal thoughts should immediately prompt an emergency room or Common

Ground response, Terry emphasized.

"Go out and take a walk. Literally take a big breath," she said of coping skills for everyday use.

Potter said it's good to set aside family differences, rec-

ognizing others also face stress, "even if they (family members) don't live up to your expectations. And understand that if mistakes happen it's not ruining the holiday. It's quite possibly making new memories for your family."

Good health habits such as exercise all year long should continue through the holidays, the women agree. "You don't want to abandon your healthy habits just because it's the holiday season. That just adds to your stress and your guilt," said Potter.

Terry, who has 10 years of experience, is also a certified addiction counselor. She noted some people have relapses with alcoholism or drink more than normally during the holidays.

"It's not going to be good for your body or your mental health," Terry said. She also sees abuse of marijuana and prescription drugs. "We've definitely seen an increase in prescription pills, the abuse of those."

Coping skills can range from listening to music, taking a walk or reading a book. Some people do need professional help, she said.

Potter is seeing clients worried about another rough winter. "Last winter was so horrible," she said. "They're just dreading another winter and the depression that can set in with that. It may not be the horrible winter we had last year," added Potter, who also reminded clients to enjoy fall.

Terry agreed unrealistic images of the holiday season in our heads are a problem. "We all have a picture in our mind. We need to step back and lower those expectations."

Laughter when something goes wrong, such as with food, can help, she said. "Just step back and enjoy the moment. This is not a time for rigidity in the way we think about things," Terry said.

Potter noted that sometimes "no" is the magic word. "There are so many demands on us in the season," she said. "Be willing to turn down some invitations if it's going to overwhelm you. And remember what's important, what the season is truly about. It can help you keep things in perspective."

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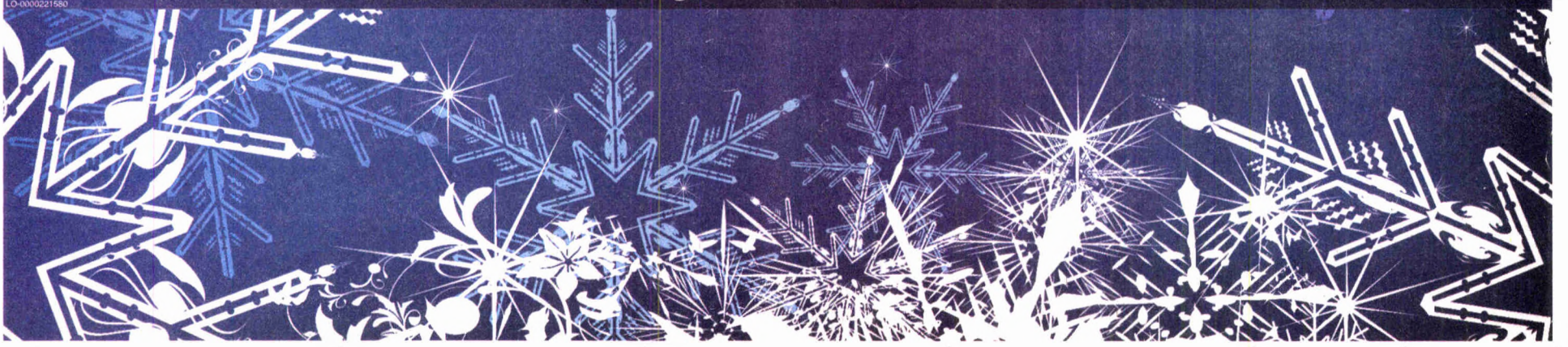
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By Aimee Hosler
Contributing Writer

What makes zoos and aquariums so special? Sure, they make great recreation spots, but that's only the beginning. According to the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, research shows that zoos and aquariums boost scientific literacy and attract groups traditionally underrepresented in the sciences.

They also study, rehabilitate and care for animals with a mind for conservation and preserving and protecting endangered species. Another major public benefit of zoos and aquariums: They pack a mean economic punch. The AZA reports that the facilities it accredits generate \$16 billion in economic activity each year and support more than 142,000 jobs. For budding scientists and animal lovers, these jobs are true passion professions, each with its own unique challenges and rewards.

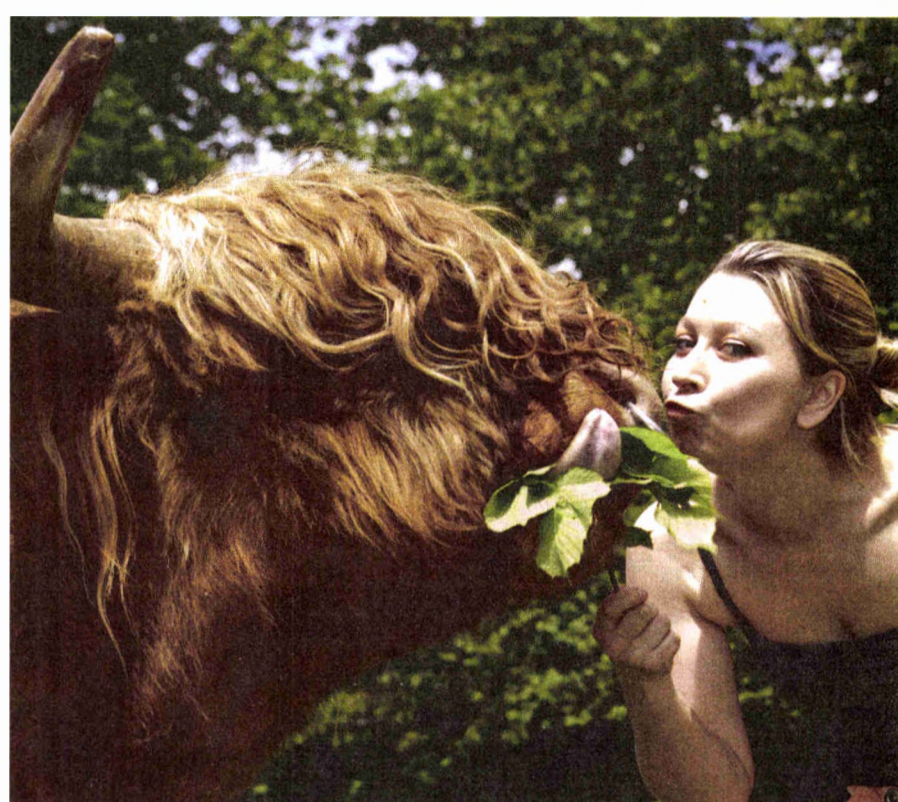
Human fascination with wild-life starts young and can last a lifetime, which is precisely why zoos and aquariums attract such a wide range of visitors. And behind every exotic creature and meticulously planned exhibit is a team of dedicated workers. The AZA notes that not all zoo and aquarium jobs are particularly glamorous. Some require a great deal of physical strength and the kind of dedication needed to carry workers through round-the-clock shifts, even in the crummiest weather. The payoff, of course, is that the work can also be incredibly rewarding, and from a scientific or conservation standpoint, downright important.

Here are just some of the jobs found at zoos and aquariums, along with their typical education requirements.

1. Zookeeper or aquarist

Those who want to work closely with animals might consider becoming zookeepers or aquarists. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, these professionals tend to much of an animal's daily care. They feed

6 wild jobs for



animal lovers

and monitor animals, clean and maintain habitats and may even work directly with the public answering questions or giving demonstrations. The BLS reports that most zoos and aquariums require keepers to hold at least a bachelor's degree in an area such as biology or animal science. Susan Danhauser, director of human resources at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens, told the University of Florida that even when a degree is not required, it can give candidates an edge in what can be an incredibly competitive job market.

2. Animal trainer

Animal trainers in zoos and aquariums have important jobs. Yes, they train animals for public performances, but they also work with scared and even dangerous animals so that they can safely co-exist with the keepers, veterinarians and other professionals who care for them. The BLS notes that though some animal

trainers are not required to earn college degrees, requirements vary. Marine mammal trainers, for instance, usually possess at least a bachelor's degree in marine biology, animal science or a related field.

3. Zoologist

The AZA lists scientific research as one of the primary benefits of both zoos and aquariums, and this is precisely where zoologists come in. According to the BLS, zoologists study animals, their behaviors and their habitats -- as well as the impact humans have on them. Many specialize in one particular kind of animal. Cetologists, for instance, study marine mammals, while herpetologists specialize in amphibians and reptiles. Entry-level zoologists must have at least a bachelor's degree in zoology or a related field, though they will likely need a master's to advance. Some even hold a Ph.D.

4. Veterinarian

Veterinarians in zoos and aquariums provide the same services as they do for the public, but the animals tend to be more exotic. They examine animals for overall wellness and diagnose and treat those who are sick or injured. The BLS reports that all states require veterinarians to earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree and become licensed to practice. Licensing requirements vary, but invariably require candidates to pass the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination.

5. Veterinary technician

Veterinary technicians help veterinarians diagnose and treat animals. Along with examining and treating "patients," they often perform medical tests -- but only under the direction of a licensed veterinarian. The BLS reports that vet techs typically need at least a two-year associate degree, though many positions require a

bachelor's. Like vets, vet techs must be licensed to practice.


6. Curator

Zoo and aquarium curators are perfect examples of professionals who play a vital role in their organizations, but rarely, if ever, work directly with animals. Curators plan, acquire and direct exhibits and may at times oversee or conduct research or educational activities. The AZA reports that while general curators oversee an institution's entire animal collection, animal curators manage a specific portion of its collection, say, mammals, birds or reptiles. The BLS notes that most curators earn at least a master's degree in a discipline relevant to the field, though some employers prefer candidates with doctoral degrees.


Aimee Hosler writes for OnlineDegrees.com. This article was originally published on OnlineDegrees.com.

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Applications may be picked up in the City of Wayne City Hall, 3355 S. Wayne Rd., Wayne, MI 48184. An application form is also available on our website: www.ci.wayne.mi.us/personnel_dept.shtml. Applications must be completed in its entirety and on file in the Personnel Department by 4:00 p.m. on December 15, 2014. No faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted. No resumes will be accepted without written application form.

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- ACROSS**

 - Mexicali locale
 - Legal org.
 - Tampa Bay pro
 - Toll
 - Goose egg
 - No matter which
 - Woolen fabric
 - Ate fast
 - Neutral color
 - Family mem.
 - Neatnik opposite
 - "Nice job!"
 - Branch of sci.
 - Miser's cache
 - Mi. above sea level
 - Pop singer — Grant
 - Ozarks st.
 - Aardvark prey
 - Brownish fruit
 - Rich — Croesus
 - Give — break

ACROSS

 - Portion of a circle
 - Salsa go-with
 - Finale
 - Cousins of "um"
 - Official imprint
 - Dash off
 - News morsels
 - Apparition
 - Opera villain, usually
 - Galley mover
 - Jungfrau, e.g.
 - Hops stems
 - Top seed's reward
 - Fleur-de- — Zola novel
- DOWN**

 - Lib. collection
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 - Leaping mouse
 - High-school math course

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	N	E	B	A	S	C	P	A	S
O	L	E	O	E	S	P	R	A	N	I
O	M	E	N	A	N	A	T	I	C	A
A	R	S	O	N	R	O	B			
			L	Y	I	N	G	S	O	L
S	L	E	D	N	E	S	T	E	G	G
L	U	I	S	M	U	D	E	L	L	E
E	L	E	A	N	O	R				
D	U	N	A	H	E	A	D			
			U	T	A		U	S	A	G
B	U	R	R	O	W	E	D			
O	R	E	S	K	O	I		E	Z	R
B	E	L	A	S	E	T		D	E	E

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	50		51		52		53			
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60			61			62				
63			64					65		

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SUDOKU

7			6				1	3	
				4		9			
1	8		2		3		7	4	
9	1	7	3		5				
3									
4		2	7	6	8	3	9		
8						5	3		
	3			7	1	8			
								6	

Level: Beginner

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O	D	W	S	O	Y	O	J	F	A	T	N	B	A	L	L	O	O	N	S
N	A	R	O	C	I	C	T	F	G	F	A	M	I	L	Y	F	D	X	E
T	E	K	S	D	A	T	I	N	A	T	I	T	T	E	F	N	O	C	U
T	Y	Y	D	G	T	L	A	C	U	R	R	E	N	T	N	J	L	C	W
M	I	R	N	E	Y	N	T	R	E	N	G	A	P	M	A	H	C	A	Y
P	S	L	E	L	C	R	U	L	B	B	I	T	H	H	X	B	A	L	R
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R	I	V	F	I	C	R	U	C	M	L	Y	G	L	L	K	J	N	I	
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V	I	W	O	M	L	O	I	W	S	V	O	P	H	A	M	Y	H	L	B
I	J	I	G	M	V	S	O	U	T	W	J	G	N	I	G	N	I	S	O
V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	Y	D	N	H	B	W	P	T	A	X	E	S
H	Y	R	A	S	R	E	V	I	N	N	A	D	E	C	E	M	B	E	R

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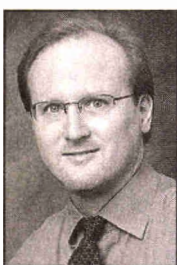
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Car Report

Clicking on All Cylinders, Nissan Is Ready For Its Return To Super Bowl Advertising in 2015



By Dale Buss

This might be the best time for Nissan to return to Big Game TV advertising since its last appearance there in 1997. So that's exactly what a dream team of experienced Super Bowl marketers is doing, after Nissan announced the purchase of a 60-second spot during Super Bowl XLIX on NBC, on February 1 from Phoenix.

One major reason the timing is good for Nissan is that it has been



Nissan is revving up excitement for its return to the Super Bowl.

on an absolute sales tear in the U.S. this year. In early December, the company actually reported that it already had exceeded its previous annual record sales total for Nissan and Infiniti combined -- during just the first 11 months of 2014. Hot sellers have included Sentra, Versa, Rogue, and Frontier, the compact Nissan pickup that is starring in a once all-but-forgotten segment that is enjoying new currency these days.

The other reasons for the timing include the significant history with Super Bowl advertising for other brands that is enjoyed by Nissan's current marketing brain trust; the need for some brand sharpening -- and the fact that the Big Game stage apparently will be less crowded with automotive brands than it has been in several years, with Volkswagen leading a handful of notable car-brand defections so far.

Plus, the Big Game gives Nissan a great chance to extend its "Big Moments" advertising strategy which lately has seen it sponsoring U.S. college football's Heisman Trophy, for instance, and expanding its multimedia engagement with NBC's hit show The Voice.

"What's the biggest media moment we can own?" Jeremy Tucker, Nissan USA's vice president of marketing, told me. "Now is the time to do this, and we've got something to say."

Expect a 60-second spot by Nissan that's oriented more toward brand positioning than specific products.

"Nissan cars will always be the stars of our ads, but this will be about the brand overall," Tucker explained.

One reason for that approach, presumably, is the brand arguably is saving its biggest new-product introductions for 2016 instead of next year. It does have major overhauls of the Titan pickup and Maxima full-size sedan planned for 2015. But while the Titan remake will be timely given how robust the U.S. pickup-truck market has been, Maxima has ranked this year as only Nissan's fourth-best-selling car nameplate.

And the ad will extend rather than deep-six the company's recent messaging about innovation and excitement. In fact, Nissan's brand identity could use some sharpening in a U.S. market whose mainstream is getting increasingly competitive as each make attempts to keep the auto-sales boom going with somewhat higher levels of incentives and other promotions.

"It's an opportunity for us to continue to reinforce" those themes, Tucker said. "We're committed to doing that in all aspects of what we do, whether it's The Voice or advertising with the NFL. We will bring that brand DNA to life consistently."

It's an exciting time for the brand, which reported (along with Infiniti) setting a new U.S. full-year sales record for 2014 with one full month remaining. "Besides that sales excitement and our marketing 'moments,' we've got new products



Rogue is a hot model in the hot compact-SUV segment.

and an engaged dealer body," added Tucker, whose background in the marketing business included working for Disney, PepsiCo and Procter & Gamble.

Nissan has a "rock star" team in place to make the best use of a Big Game spot, claimed Tucker, who came to Nissan in September after serving as vice president of strategic marketing for Disney Consumer Products, Disney's franchise-based retail business. He said that, while at PepsiCo, it was "his baby" to nurse the "Crash the Super Bowl" user-generated TV commercials that have been a big hit for its Doritos brand.

Additionally, Nissan's senior vice president of sales and marketing, Fred Diaz, joined the company last year from Chrysler, where he was chief of the Ram brand and learned a thing or two about the impact that

Super Bowl commercials can have for a brand. "We have a diverse bench of talent who know what it means to produce a breakthrough spot," Tucker said. "We'll deliver."

Did the attrition that has hit the ranks of automakers planning to advertise in Super Bowl XLIX also affect Nissan's decision to go for it? Not so much. "The conversation about this year's Super Bowl started soon after the last Super Bowl," Tucker said.

"We wanted something that would capture the essence of the Nissan brand and was worthy of the Super Bowl stage and would celebrate Nissan as a company, that would be compelling for America," he added. "We need to entertain and engage hearts and minds and do something special and stand out from the pack."

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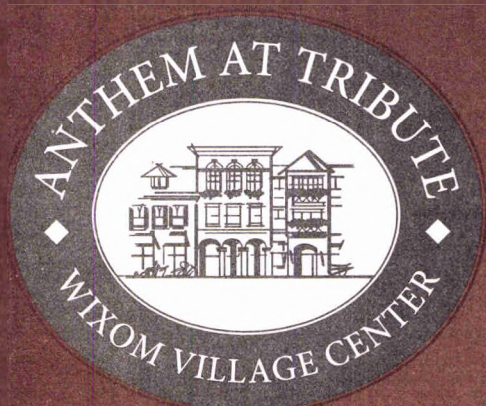
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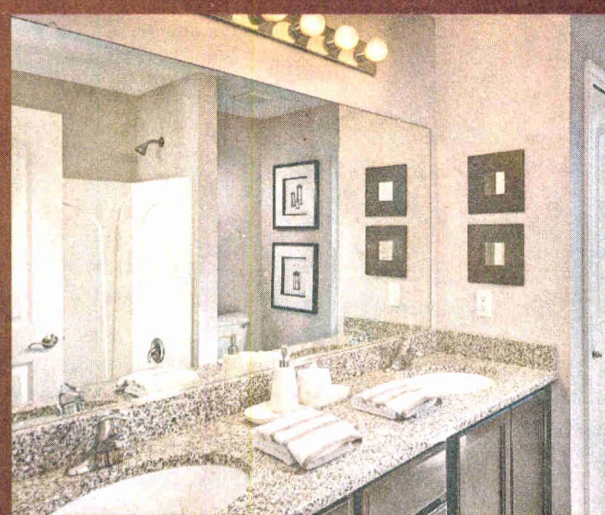
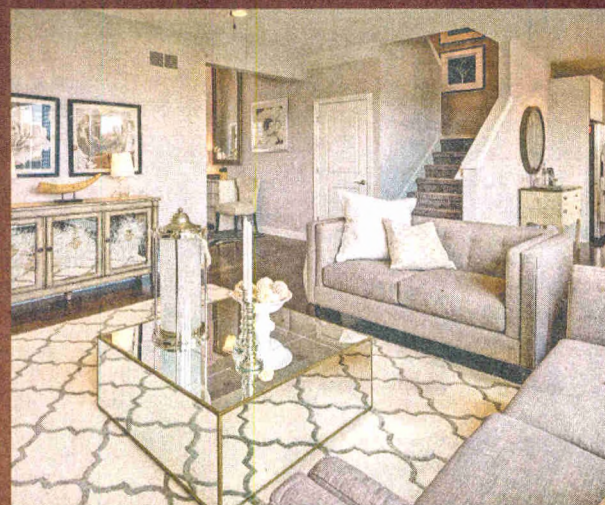
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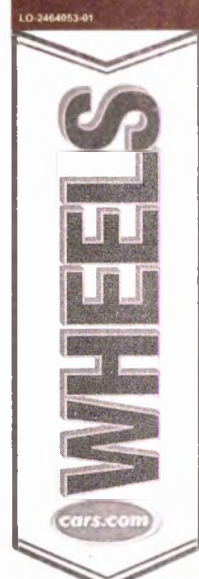
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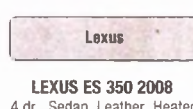
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