

Happy New Year

THURSDAY

December 30, 2010

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PLYMOUTH OBSERVER

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RESCUED DOGS
GET NEW LEASE
ON LIFE, A3



PIPELINE

Shopping trip

It was 9 a.m. on a cloudy Monday morning and 16 Vietnam veterans entered the Kohl's in Canton to go on their annual shopping trip. There they were met by store manager Lisa Grasso.

The trip was the culmination of the fifth annual Winter Clothing Drive sponsored by the Plymouth-Canton Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 528. The drive is done in combination with VFW Post 6695 in Plymouth and First United Methodist Church in Garden City.

The clothing was donated to the Detroit Veterans Center in Detroit, which provides homeless veterans with a place to live and provides them with job training and various other services to regain their stability and self-sufficiency. The VVA estimates that more than \$25,000 worth of clothing has been donated to the center since the drive was started.

This year's event included a special presentation to Grasso and Kohl's by Tyrone Chatman, executive director of the Detroit Veterans Center. Grasso also made the trip to the center to help deliver the clothing and take a tour of the facility.

Holiday hours

In Plymouth, City Hall will be closed Thursday, Dec. 30, and Friday, Dec. 31, for the New Year's Day holiday. The offices will reopen at 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 3. In the township, Township Hall will be closed Friday, Dec. 31, and Monday, Jan. 3, and will reopen Tuesday, Jan. 4.

The township treasurer's office, however, will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 31 for those who want to pay winter property taxes. The winter property taxes, though not due until February, must be paid by the end of the year in order to be deducted from federal 2011 income taxes.

As Christmas and New Year's Day are both Saturdays, there will be no holiday delays in curbside trash and recycling pickup in either community. Crews in both communities will be picking up live Christmas trees beginning Monday, Jan. 3. Trees should be set out on the regular trash pickup day, without plastic bags, ornaments, tinsel, lights or tree stands. Trees 12 feet long or longer should be cut in half.

Holiday photos

Send us your favorite holiday photos for a chance to win a prize.

Go to hometownlife.com (Get Published) and post your favorite holiday photo (or photos) with a short caption, then encourage friends and family to vote by clicking recommend under the photo. The top vote-getter will receive tickets for two to Emagine Theater (Canton or Novi). The second- and third-place winners will receive a coupon for a free four-square cheese and one-topping Buddy's pizza.

The contest ends midnight Dec. 31. Share your holiday spirit with others! Go to hometownlife.com.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The William C. Franks Furniture Store was leveled by a 9 a.m. explosion. The blast scattered debris across Wayne Road. Firefighters from Wayne, Westland, Garden City, Canton and Livonia responded to the scene.

Plymouth man critical after explosion at store

A massive explosion leveled an area furniture store Wednesday morning, critically injuring the owner and trapping two employees underneath the rubble.

Someone had reported a possible gas leak and Consumers Energy workers were in the area investigating when the explosion destroyed the William C. Franks fur-

niture store, a Wayne Road mainstay for nearly 50 years, shortly before 9 a.m.

Owner Paul Franks of Plymouth was hospitalized in critical condition following the blast.

Firefighters from Westland, Canton, Livonia, Garden City, Farmington Hills, Inkster, Dearborn Heights, Romulus and Taylor assisted the Wayne

Fire Department. The Wayne County and Oakland County Urban Search and Rescue teams also responded, along with area Homeland Security staff and Michigan State Police.

The tremendous boom could be felt for blocks, shaking homes and nearby businesses.

For full story and more photos, see pages A10-11.

Christmas fire displaces family

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

No one was hurt in a Christmas Day house fire in Plymouth that appears to have started in the chimney.

The fire was on Maple Street near Fairground Street and was reported just after 4 p.m. Saturday. While most fire damage was limited to the attic and roof area, the fire was persistent and took close to two hours to put out, said Fire Chief Mark Wendel of the Plymouth Community Fire Department.

"The fire was pretty isolated," Wendel said, explaining that because of renovations to the house over the years, there were places for the fire to hide. "It took a considerable amount of time and effort for our guys to access those areas."

Firefighters were at the scene for about four hours, Wendel said; after the initial attack, hidden hot spots were found that also had to be extinguished.

Wendel said the house does not appear to be a total loss but that "there's enough damage that it's probably going to be a while before they can move back in." The homeowners are reportedly staying with relatives in the area.

Wendel said the fire started in the fireplace chimney, and he suspects that built-up creosote — incompletely burned material from previous fire-



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fire damaged a Maple Street home on Christmas Day.

place fires — in the chimney was the point of ignition.

It's important for homeowners who use their fireplaces to have the chimneys cleaned, Wendel said; a fireplace that's used regularly should have the chimney cleaned once a year, he said.

Wendel praised the firefighters who put out the blaze.

There were six PCFD firefighters at the scene, and the fire departments in Livonia and Northville Township responded to calls for mutual aid, sending, respectively, four firefighters and five firefighters, plus equipment.

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Schoolcraft chief Jeffress helps keep college competitive

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

During his tenure as president of Schoolcraft College, Conway Jeffress has watched the facility open the \$27 million VisTaTech Center, including an expanded culinary arts department with new demonstration kitchens and a Business Development Center.

If Jeffress has his way over the next 10 years, that growth won't be limited, either, to that recent expansion.

There are big plans ahead for Schoolcraft College. Within the next few months the college will open a new driving course for Livonia police officers and firefighters, and police and fire academy students. A new fire training tower is under construction at that off-campus location on Glendale near Farmington Road.

SIM LAB

Jeffress envisions a 21st Century main campus with a facility to simulate a complete operating room in a medical facility so students can train as a nurse or technician. "That 'sim lab' (simulation laboratory) will allow you to perform many kinds of medical procedures," Jeffress said.

Jeffress hopes that vision and plans will keep

Schoolcraft competitive with other learning institutions, whether they are in Livonia's back yard or miles away. Colleges and universities have undergone a big transformation, Jeffress said, and the president wants to make sure the college remains ahead of the curve.

"Colleges are more technologically sophisticated not just in hardware or software, but programs are reflecting that sophistication," Jeffress said. "Jobs are more complex. Duties that are required to be performed tend to escalate to the next level."

Jeffress uses the nursing field as an example. "Nurses who are working the floor are doing things that were once physician-oriented," Jeffress said. "The college has altered that role to fit this reality."

CULINARY AND SCIENCE

Jeffress cites the recent visit of John Folse, a chef from Louisiana known for his expertise in Creole cookery. Jeffress listened to Folse's lecture to culinary arts students as Folse blended the culture, sociology and physics and chemistry on the preparation of a Creole dish and how the temperature of the food on the outer edges of that pot is different than the middle and the impact on the food that is cooking.

Please see **JEFFRESS, A2**



Conway Jeffress, president of Schoolcraft College, hopes to bring a medical simulation lab to Schoolcraft as another educational tool for nursing students. Jeffress, who is active in the Livonia community, spoke at the 16th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration in January.

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JEFFRESS

FROM PAGE A1

"The cooking and the food needs to be good and taste delicious, but it should reflect the culture and region it comes from," Jeffress said. "The knowledge has expanded in culinary arts. It's more than just being able to cook well."

Jeffress also wants to see a simulation of business incubation on campus. Business incubation assists in the development of a small company through support services and resources to help ensure the success of an entrepreneur.

"It would allow for businesses to get a start," Jeffress said. "The businesses would need a place to operate and they could rent out some building space. That kind of incubation would be marvelous for about a half-dozen companies."

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Jeffress also is involved in the communities served by Schoolcraft. In January, Jeffress delivered the keynote address at the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration program at the Livonia City Hall. The event was presented by the Livonia Human Relations Commission.

Elaine Livingway chairs the Livonia Human Relations Commission. Livingway said Jeffress was selected by the commission for his participation in the city of Livonia.

"He was chosen for his commitment to diversity and understanding of diversity," Livingway said at the time.

Jeffress remains active in several committees. In Novi, he has served on the Walsh College Advisory Board for the past 10 years. In Garden City, he serves on the Garden City Hospital Board of Trustees.

In Livonia, he is a longtime Rotarian and recently became active with the Fast Forward Main Street Advisory Committee in Livonia, a new group that assists small businesses.

Since 2004, he has served on the Michigan Community College Association with previous positions as president and board president.

WHAT'S NEXT

Jeffress expects next year to bring another round of discussions in the state Legislature on community colleges and a push to permit them to offer four-year degrees in nursing, culinary arts and concrete technology. Jeffress spoke recently with state Rep. John Walsh, R-Livonia, about reintroducing a bill so that Schoolcraft can offer the four-year degrees in nursing and culinary arts.

Walsh sponsored a bill last year that passed the House, but later died in a Senate committee.

"A number of hospitals are now requiring that nurses have a four-year degree," Jeffress said. "The cost of the next two years for our students would be quite enormous. They could get a degree here at considerably less cost and without any delays."

Jeffress indicated that Walsh intends to push for that legislation next year.

Jeffress said he has "no timetable" for retirement. "In my mind, I'm looking to get a number of things accomplished over the next four years," Jeffress said, namely the simulation laboratory among one of them. "When those are done, then I will do that (look at retirement)."

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IN PROFILE



Jeffress

Name: Conway Jeffress
Age: 67
Residence: Novi
Personal: Married to Louise for 42 years. The couple have two grown children, Virginia and Conway, and four grandchildren, Emily, Charles, Hannah and Curtis.

Education: Earned his doctorate and master's degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and his bachelor's degree from Washington and Jefferson College.

Professional: Appointed president of Schoolcraft College in 2001. Served 14 years as Schoolcraft's vice president for instruction and another six years as vice president for instruction and student services. Before he arrived at Schoolcraft in January 1982, he was vice president of strategic planning at the Community College of Allegheny College in Pittsburgh.

Organizations: Serves on the Michigan Community College Association with previous positions as president and board president, Garden City Hospital Board of Trustees since 2005, Rotary Club of Livonia Board of Directors, Walsh College Advisory Board in Novi for at least 10 years, Galileo Leadership Consortium Board and Lincoln Leadership Series Committee. Jeffress enjoys reading, mostly nonfiction, in his spare time. The last book he read was "The Dumbest Generation."

Approximately 36,000 students attend Schoolcraft College. The main campus is located at 18600 Haggerty in Livonia. The college's Radcliff Center is located at 1751 Radcliff, just south of Ford Road, in Garden City. A public safety training facility used in conjunction with the city of Livonia is expected to be open later this winter on Glendale east of Farmington Road.



FILE PHOTO

Kim Summerhill, Cathy Turner and all of the other NorthRidge Church volunteers had a big packing job.

Church surpasses aid goal; there's still time to give

BY MATT JACHMAN
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

When NorthRidge Church called, the region answered.

Donors from as near as Plymouth and Livonia and as far as South Lyon and Farmington Hills helped the Plymouth Township church surpass its goal last month during Operation Christmas Child, an international effort to provide shoeboxes full of small gifts to poor children around the world.

NorthRidge had set a goal of 9,500 boxes — filled with toiletries, crayons, candy, small toys, school supplies and other things most children in the U.S. take for granted — and ended up surpassing that by more than 1,000, for a total of 10,511.

The boxes, and donations to help defray shipping costs, were from church members as well as the broader community, and were assembled at the church or dropped off there during an eight-day period last month.

"Fantastic response from

the community," said Patricia Dage, a NorthRidge member from Livonia who coordinated this year's drive.

Donations came in from Canton Township and Northville and other western Wayne County communities, as well as Novi, Farmington Hills, Farmington and South Lyon, she said. "Really all of the region," she said.

Despite a weakened local economy in recent years, Dage said donations to Operation Christmas Child have increased.

"Since the economy has been bad, actually, the giving has been up," she said.

Operation Christmas Child this year has launched a new feature, Build a Box, an online tool that lets donors who may have missed the November collection period custom-build a shoebox of gifts for a boy or girl in a poor country, plus write a personal note of encouragement. The program even lets donors track where their boxes end up.

"One more shoebox means one more child — one more life

that can have hope and joy this Christmas," David Zimmerman, Operation Christmas Child's Great Lakes regional manager, wrote in a press release. "The power of a simple shoebox gift is incredible."

Build a Box can be found at www.samaritanaspurse.org/occ. The donation is \$35. The boxes will be put together by volunteers at the Operation Christmas Child processing center in North Carolina.

"This process is unlike anything we've ever done, and it will allow even more children to receive gift-filled shoeboxes," said Jim Harrelson, Operation Christmas Child vice president.

Operation Christmas Child is sponsored by Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelism organization. Since the project's founding in 1993, more than 77 million gift-filled boxes have been delivered to children in more than 130 countries.

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2011 2011 2011 2011 2011 2011 2011 2011



Kathy McComb and Tim Fell of Livonia hold Lilly, the 4-month-old they adopted in December.

Four rescued animals get new lease on life

BY PAT MURPHY
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

The new year will bring a new life for four neglected dogs adopted by new owners this month after being rescued from a house in Redford Township.

More than 50 dogs and more than a dozen cats and rabbits were seized by animal control officers from the house at 12890 Sioux in August after neighbors complained of odors. Some were euthanized, while others were put in foster care and subsequent adoption.

"We still have five dogs ready for adoption," said Donna Law, spokeswoman for Mutts & Mutts, the animal rescue operation. "They are healthy, and they'll make good pets."

Of the five remaining, Rosco, a 10-year-old shepherd mix, is the oldest, said Law, "the other four are about 2 to 3 years old."

Two people, a mother and her son, were subsequently charged with animal cruelty and earlier this month were put on probation under a plea agreement negotiated by the Wayne County Prosecutor.

The two, Patricia and Eric Wenderski, did not intentionally neglect or abuse the animals, according to their lawyer. "They loved animals and they took them in thinking the animals would be euthanized otherwise," said attorney James Schmier, who represented Patricia Wenderski. "Sometimes owners would simply drop the animals into the (Wenderski) yard without telling anybody. The Wenderskis took them in rather than let them starve."

Both Wenderskis expressed relief when they were sentenced and their ordeal was over. Both have subsequently found new homes in the metro area and are happy to begin life anew, Schmier said.

The house on Sioux was condemned and demolished. Except for the remaining animals yet to be adopted, the episode is almost concluded, said Law.

"But it won't be a truly happy ending until those five find homes," she said.

Law was particularly grateful for the care provided to the rescued animals at the Angel Animal Hospital in Farmington Hills.

"Without that care more of them would have died," she said.



Lilly gives Tim Fell, her new owner, a friendly sniff. The 4-month-old is one of four dogs to get new owners this month after being rescued from a house in Redford Township.



Dexter, a 10-year-old Lab mix, also found a new home in December.



Cooper, a 5-month-old beagle mix, has a home and a new buddy, Bobby. Cooper was adopted by Lisa Wilson and Tim Nally of Westland.



At age 10, Rosco, a shepherd mix, is the oldest of the five remaining dogs hoping to be adopted.

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Thursday, December 30, 2010 hometownlife.com



POLICE CALLS

Canton Township Armed robbery

An employee of the Shell gas station on Michigan Avenue near Lotz was robbed at gunpoint the morning of Dec. 21 by an assailant who struck a female clerk on the head with a semiautomatic handgun, according to a Canton police report.

The woman, who wasn't seriously injured, told police the suspect walked in, brandished a gun and demanded money from a cash drawer shortly after 9:30 a.m.

The suspect struck the clerk on the forehead, then after taking money he put the gun to her back and told her to go to a back room, the police report said.

The suspect then fled the store. He was described as a black male in his mid-40s wearing a brown knit stocking hat, black leather jacket, dark pants and tan work boots.

Nativity theft

A Canton man received an unwelcome visit Christmas Eve from an intruder who stole a replica of baby Jesus from a nativity scene in his yard in the 42400 block of Saltz, just west of Lilley.

The man found the piece missing from his yard around 2 a.m. Dec. 24. He didn't know anyone who might have taken it.

Farmington Hills Liquor violation

A private party at Bonaventure Skating Center in Farmington Hills was crashed by Farmington Hills police on Dec. 20 after it was discovered that liquor was being sold and served to attendees. The roller rink does not have a liquor license and a Chesterfield Township couple who hosted the party did not obtain a one-day liquor license from the Liquor Control Commission. Party-goers reportedly became irate when the police confiscated the kegs of beer and bottles of liquor from the party.

Fraud

Logicalis in Farmington Hills reported shipping more than \$50,000 in computer system routers to a company it had done business with in the past,

but later found out the routers were mailed to a different address and the company they thought had placed the order informed Logicalis that it had not placed the order and that the mailing address was not theirs.

Garden City Suspended license

Garden City police arrested an 18-year-old Canton Township man about 11 p.m. Dec. 18 after they pulled him over at Cherry Hill and Radcliff. The officer stopped the driver after he saw that his left headlight was out. Police learned that the man was driving with a suspended license.

Theft

An employee who works at a business located at 30902 Ford accused his brother of taking his cell phone while he was at work on Dec. 16.

The man said that he only keeps the cell phone in his van because it has a GPS system.

The cell phone owner said that his brother has a problem with drugs and added that there were calls made on his phone by his brother.

Livonia Season's stealings

A drug store customer didn't display much holiday spirit on Christmas Eve when she walked into a Rite-Aid in Livonia and stole two electric shavers.

At about 8 a.m., a woman entered Rite-Aid, 27401 Six Mile, greeted the employees, then walked to the electric shavers. She selected two of them, valued at \$150 total, then walked back out of the store. She was in the store for no more than a minute.

The store's alarm was activated as she exited the store, and an employee ordered her to stop. The employee followed her to an older light blue pickup truck. After the woman entered the passenger side of the truck, the driver pulled the vehicle out onto Inkster Road and drove south. The woman was described as a black female, about 30-35 years old, wearing a beige colored suede coat and a brown knit hat.

Plymouth Township Fuel siphoned

A business on Port Street is out more than 400 gallons of diesel fuel — worth an estimated \$1,300 — after the theft of the fuel from four trucks there last week.

The fuel was taken from two semi trucks and two smaller trucks between 4 p.m. Dec. 19 and 4 a.m. the next day, according to a Plymouth Township Police Department report. More than 200 gallons were reported siphoned from one semi, about 100 gallons from the other and smaller amounts from the smaller trucks, the report said.

Westland Strong arm robbery

An employee at Kmart, 165 S. Wayne Road told police Dec. 26 that he spotted a man pick up a rifle scope and an SD card for a digital camera, then walk past the cash registers to exit the store. The employee said he stopped the man near the exit and man responded by punching him in the left eye with a closed fist.

The man then left and got into an older model tan four-door Chevrolet. A second man and a woman were in the vehicle, the employee said, which headed south on Wayne Road. The stolen items were valued at \$60.

Redford Township Break-in

The person who visited a Redford Township pharmacy over the weekend wasn't Santa Claus. This visitor apparently entered the Lincoln Pharmacy, 9331 Telegraph, by breaking the glass in the front door, then going through ceiling tiles to get into the area where medicine is stored, according to Redford Township police.

The burglary was discovered about 6 a.m. Sunday, when police investigated a sounding alarm. It appeared the intruder tried to break into the medicine area, police said, but was unsuccessful. The cash and narcotics were secured under lock and key, and nothing appeared to have been stolen.

Educate your college student about fire safety

An off-campus apartment fire killed two Frostburg State University (Md.) students Dec. 3. They were living in an apartment off-campus. This apartment was part of a building that had a restaurant on the lower level and apartments to the rear and above the restaurant. The female victim was to celebrate her 20th birthday that day. She didn't celebrate.

The fire started in a common area of the first floor. When you stay in a building with multiple tenants, you have to be concerned about your safety due to your actions and all the actions of the building's other occupants. A wood stove was the area of origin of this fire.

Imagine the excitement of moving off-campus into an apartment near campus.

Friends, furniture, gatherings and classes all were all on the minds of these young adults. Fire safety was not. There were no smoke alarms in the building, and the cause of death for both victims is listed as smoke inhalation. Ten other building occupants managed to escape this early morning fire through some stroke of luck or planning. One of the victims called 911 at least twice, stating they were trapped in their apartment by the fire.

Let's go back and replay this fire for the sake of learning from it. If possible, go to your child's college and take a look at their dorm room or off-campus housing from the viewpoint of a concerned parent. The students will get a chance to worry about furniture arrangement, classes and the other details. Very few young adults at this age consider fire safety. Look at the room from the point of view of emer-



Tom Kiurski

gency escape. Tell your child the actions to take to escape the building, and have them practice it. This includes opening the windows and other doors that

normally aren't used just to make sure they have practiced it. Check the building for smoke alarms. While there should be smoke alarms in college dorms and off-campus apartments, don't leave this to chance.

Even if your child is leaving one room for another in "just a semester or two," smoke alarms are inexpensive insurance items. If you forget to take them down when your child leaves, consider it a gift of safety for the next occupant.

These are the first campus-related fire fatalities of the 2010-11 academic year, which started Aug. 1. There have been 142 fatalities involving college students since 2000. Other common factors in campus fire deaths include improper disposal of cigarettes and alcohol impairment. Working smoke alarms increase the chances of students waking up and taking appropriate actions while there is still time to do so. They buy time when time is at a premium.

I am sure these two students had hoped to celebrate the birthday in a quite different fashion. If you have college students, take action and share these lessons on fire safety. Make that her birthday present to you and your family.

Tom Kiurski is training coordinator for the Livonia Fire Department.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tai Chi Classes

Time/date: 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Jan. 3-6

Location: Michigan Tai Chi Association, 38121 Ann Arbor Road, Livonia

Details: The non-profit Michigan Tai Chi Association is offering Tai Chi classes for beginners. Dues are \$40 per month.

Contact: (734) 591-3530

Chorale Auditions

Time/Date/Location: 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 4, at the Village Theater, 50400 Cherry Hill in Canton and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 11, at Plymouth First United Methodist Church, 45201 N. Territorial in Plymouth Township

Details: BeckRidge Chorale will be conducting auditions. Sign up for an audition at www.beckridgechorale.org.

Mask Fitting Clinic

Time/Date: 5-6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 5

Location: Sleep Disorders Center of Michigan, 35600 Central City Parkway, Suite 103, Westland

Details: Attention CPAP and BiPAP users. Did you know that most insurances cover new supplies every year? Have you been wanting to try a new style of mask, but don't know how to get one? Garden City Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center can help. Visit 5-6 p.m. any Wednesday for a free mask-fitting clinic. No appointment is needed.

Contact: (734) 458-3330

DAR Meeting

Time/date: Noon Saturday, Jan. 8

Location: Meeting Rooms A and B, Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, Livonia

Details: Oakland Community College Emeritus Professor Dennis Fiems will speak on The Great Pandemic of 1918 during this meeting of the John Sackett Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Bring a sack lunch. Dessert and beverage will be provided. The meeting starts at 12:30 p.m.

Contact: jbcheyne@oaklandcc.edu; (248) 820-9156

Family Fun Day

Time/Date: 1-5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8

Location: Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's Camp Linden in Deerfield Township

Details: Family members of all ages can spend an afternoon at Camp Linden, enjoying sledding, broomball, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snow sculpting and snow

painting, along with hot chocolate and s'mores around a fire in Hunter Lodge. Indoor and outdoor activities will be available. Prior membership in Girl Scouting is not required. Families of four can join in the fun with a registration fee of \$20 - \$5 for each additional family member. As a special incentive, any girl or adult who joins Girl Scouts through Family Winter Fun Day will receive a \$5 discount on the \$20 registration fee to become a member of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Camp Linden is located 30 minutes from Flint and 45 minutes from Ann Arbor. Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan serves girls living in several counties including Oakland and Wayne. Pre-registration is required by Monday, Jan. 3.

Contact: (800) 49-SCOUT, ext. 7261; pgrubaug@qshom.org

Play Auditions

Time/Date: 6:30 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Jan. 10-11

Location: Inspire Theatre inside Warren Road Light and Life Church, 33445 Warren Road, east of Wayne Road, Westland.

Details: The theater is looking for five men and five women ages 18 to 70ish for its upcoming production of "The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940." No singing or dancing involved. Arrive on time and come prepared to do cold readings. The plot concerns several showbiz folks that have been gathered into a mansion house to flush out a serial killer. As the events unfold, there are bits from the past that seem to come back and haunt some of the characters. Once folks start dying off, the madcap search to find the killer begins. The performances are scheduled for March 4-6 and 11-13.

Contact: (734) 751-7057; inspire@inspiretheatre.com

Fibromyalgia Group

Time/Date: 1-3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13

Location: Merriman Road Baptist Church, 2055 Merriman, south of Ford, Garden City

Details: Dr. Howard Schubiner from Providence Hospital and author of "Unlearn Your Pain" will be the guest speaker at the Metro Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Support Group meeting. The group meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the church. There are no dues, but donations are accepted.

Contact: (734) 981-2519; www.MetroFibroGroup.com

Genealogical Society Meeting

Time/date: 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 17

Location: Livonia Senior Center,



Ban-Joes of Michigan to perform

The Ban-Joes of Michigan will perform at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16, at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road, Livonia. The free program is being sponsored by the Friends of the Library. The group of banjo players started meeting in basements in West Bloomfield and has grown to more than 100 players. Now one of the largest banjo groups in the Midwest, it plays all over the Detroit area.

15218 Farmington Road, Livonia

Details: Learn about the best web sites and strategies to find your ancestors via the U.S. Census without leaving home during this meeting of the Western Wayne County Genealogical Society. Also, find out the different avenues of research necessary to pursue the complete picture of one's genealogy. Meetings are open to the public. Guests are always welcome.

Contact: www.rootsweb.com/~miwvcgs/

Cancer Program

Time/Date: 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19

Location: Allan Breakie Medical Office Building on the campus of Garden City Hospital, 6245 Inkster Road, north of Ford Road.

Details: Look Good ... Feel Better is a free, non-medical, brand-neutral, national public

service program created to help individuals with cancer look good, improve their self-esteem and manage their treatment and recovery with greater confidence. The Look Good ... Feel Better meets the third Wednesday of each month. The program is free of charge.

Contact: (734) 458-4330.

New Hope Seminar

Time/Date: 6 p.m. Wednesday,

Jan. 19

Location: New Hope Center for Grief Support, 315 Griswold, Northville

Details: Attorney Ron Thompson of Thompson-Platte will offer a legal perspective regarding the many issues someone might face when someone they love dies. These include minimizing tax consequences, dealing with decedent's creditors, methods to best protect surviving family members and the issues involving updating wills and trust. Seating is limited. Call to register.

Contact: (248) 348-0115

Master Gardener Class

Time/Date: Jan. 27-April 28

Location: Executive Office Building Conference Center at the Oakland County Service Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford.

Details: The MSU Extension Oakland County Master Gardener Training Program is a 13-week class, which meets 6-10 p.m. Thursdays. The application fee is \$25, and the class fee is \$300. Application deadline is Jan. 3. Class may fill up before the deadline.

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Author offers women 'Pocket Guide to Safety'



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Placing gifts around a Christmas tree, clearly visible through a large window, is an open invitation to a thief, according to Carla Thompson.

BY SUE BUCK
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Westland resident Carla Thompson probably could have been a police officer.

She has a keen sense of potentially dangerous situations, and she has an avocation for crime prevention. She doesn't take personal safety for granted.

Thompson, 29, who grew up on the west side of Detroit, also spent years living and traveling alone and working at night before marrying her husband, Andre.

Never a crime victim herself, Thompson, who has held jobs in the auto industry, has written a \$4.95 purse-sized handbook, called *The Busy Woman's Pocket Guide to Safety, Safety Tips for Women on the Go*.

All busy people have one major unsafe thing going against them, she said. They are easily distracted.

"They are a criminal's best target because they are so busy, they are running to the next destination," Thompson said. "They are not thinking in the moment."

One of her biggest sore points are people walking around using their cell phones, especially in parking lots.

"They are not paying attention to what is going on," said Thompson, a former Bloomfield Hills resident.

She is constantly thinking about safety.

Her book has been covered by other

media, too. She tackles a variety of topics, everything from where to live, letting repairman in and precautions once they are inside, shopping tips, gas stations and repair shops, entering attached or detached garages and dating, to name a few.

She advises that before letting a repair person in, call the company and ask for the name of the repairman they are sending over. And put personal information and financial statements away when a repairman is in the house, Thompson said.

"I have done a lot of research and watched the news," she said. "As things get worse, we have heard about more killings and robberies."

HOLIDAY TIPS

After opening Christmas presents, Thompson recommends that people rip the boxes up and place them in a dark trash bag.

"People take their new plasma TV boxes and put them right in front of the curb, letting everybody know what they got for Christmas," she said. "It might be impressive to your neighbors, but you may as well hold up a sign to a thief and say, 'Come on over here.'"

Boxes from game systems and computers are also a lure.

When displaying a Christmas tree through a window, make sure the Christmas presents under the tree aren't visible. When transporting gifts in your car put a blanket over the gifts

so that people cannot see them.

If maintenance people need to come to your house during the holiday season, put away your purse, gifts and financial information.

"Everybody looks, it is only natural," Thompson said.

"Shop in places with good lighting and lots of traffic," she said. "Always be suspicious of people sitting in cars or watching other people."

When you're doing a lot of shopping and you want to put packages in the car, she advises that you move your car and then go back into the store.

"There might be someone out there watching you," she said.

WATCHING YOU

Thompson is not afraid to make eye contact with people.

"I'm a people watcher," Thompson said.

Thompson has a degree in finance from the University of Detroit Mercy and her master's degree in business administration from Oakland University. She is also available for speaking engagements.

"The way that I teach about safety is to teach people how to think about safety," she said.

Contact Thompson at www.thebusy-womanspocketguide.com, or carla@thebusywomanspocketguide.com, or P.O. Box 772, Garden City, MI 48135

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BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The downtown area of Wayne, at Wayne Road north of Michigan Avenue, resembled a war zone following the explosion at Franks Furniture.

'I thought an airplane had crashed into us'

BY KURT KUBAN, LEANNE ROGERS
OBSERVER STAFF WRITERS

Furniture store explosion felt for miles

Furniture store owner Paul Franks is hospitalized in critical condition as rescue workers searched for two employees trapped in the store destroyed by a gas explosion Wednesday morning.

"We're very concerned about additional collapsing of the building, so they are searching very carefully," said Wayne City Manager John Zech, who didn't identify the missing people except as store employees.

Just moments after 9 a.m. Wednesday, a massive explosion leveled the William C. Franks Furniture Store on Wayne Road just south of Glenwood in the city of Wayne. The tremendous boom could be felt for blocks, shaking homes and nearby businesses.

Emergency personnel from at least seven different communities, including Canton, Westland, Garden City, Taylor and Romulus, as well as the Michigan State Police, responded to the scene.

Wayne Asst. City Manager Robert English said around 7:30 a.m., several Wayne Department of Public Works employees reported a strong gas leak on Second Street and Chestnut, several blocks from the furniture store.

The Wayne Fire Department and Consumers Energy were notified, and were searching for the source of the leak when the explosion took place a minute or two after 9 a.m. — the time the store was scheduled to open.

Debris from the explosion was strewn more than 100 yards from the store. Within minutes of the explosion, many people from the surrounding neighborhood and business community had flooded into the streets to see what had happened. Police and fire personnel quickly shut down Wayne Road from Glenwood to Michigan Avenue. Much of the building was blown into Wayne Road.

Reports that the explosion killed a passing motorist were incorrect, Zech said.

"We know there were a couple of motorists passing by at the time of the explosion and there were some injuries, but they are believed to



A crowd gathers around the explosion site.

have been minor," Zech said. "We don't have a lot of solid information. Windows at some adjacent businesses were blown out, but there were no injuries at other businesses."

Emergency personnel had evacuated everyone from nearby businesses, and went door-by-door to make sure everyone was OK.

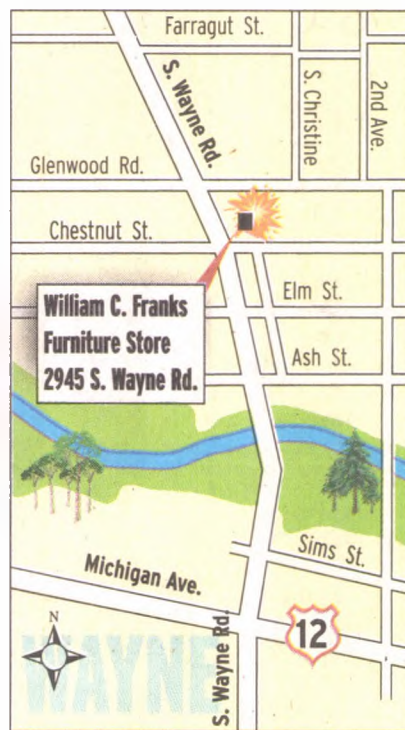
THE BLAST

John Rowland, who owns Jack's Sporting Goods about a block away from Franks, said the explosion rocked his store. Trophies and plaques fell off the wall and his lights flickered on and off.

"I thought something hit my building. It was really something. To be honest, I thought an airplane had crashed into us," he said.

Some people were posting on Facebook that they heard the explosion miles away.

Neighbors gathered Wednesday morning at Rocky's Family Dining on Wayne Road, just north of Palmer. Owner Chris Gjoka said he felt the explosion at his building, located a



half-mile from the store. "It shook the building. It was a

boom," he said. "I didn't know what was going on, it was like 'wow.'"

Henry Strong was driving Wednesday morning from his home in Jackson, anxious to find out exactly what happened — and if his friend of 35 years, Paul Franks, was alright.

He feared the worst, though, knowing that the Franks Furniture owner and his daughter opened the store every morning together at 9 a.m.

"I'm devastated right now," Strong said. "I can't believe it happened."

MUTUAL AID

Emergency crews from surrounding communities, including Canton, Garden City and Westland, responded to the blast.

Garden City's initial response was with the Automatic Aid Engine and two personnel, when the dispatcher heard the radio traffic of the explosion, Garden City Fire Chief Catherine Harman said.

"Monitoring radio traffic, it became clear that there were multiple injuries and Wayne was requesting MUSAR (Michigan Urban Search



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Police officers from Wayne evacuated residents from the neighborhood behind the store. A strong odor of natural gas hung in the air at 10:30 a.m., an hour and a half after the explosion.

and Rescue) response," Harman said. "We had a MUSAR team member on duty. He, with other firefighters, was immediately sent to the scene by Captain London."

RELIEF DISPATCHED

The Plymouth Corps of the Salvation Army sent a canteen truck and a three-person crew to the scene of the explosion, to aid the first-responders — police officers and firefighters — and those affected by the blast.

The truck provides drinks, snacks and dry socks and gloves, said Laurie Aren, the Plymouth Corps' director of family and community ministries.

The store explosion is being blamed on a natural gas leak, and fears of a secondary explosion prompted Wayne officials to evacuate nearby buildings and send people there to the city's community center. Aren said she was awaiting word on whether a second Salvation Army crew would be needed there.

"There's a chance they may need more support or emotional and spiritual counseling," she said.

Staff writers Sue Buck, Karen Smith, Darrell Clem, Matt Jachman and Stacy Jenkins contributed to this report.



BUD SOMERVILLE

Emergency crews lined up in response to the explosion at Franks Furniture in Wayne.

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

OBSERVER

Karen Smith,
Community Editor
Susan Rosiek,
Executive Editor
Grace Perry,
Director of Advertising

OUR VIEWS

2011: Make it a year of change, solutions

As 2010 winds down, local residents are talking about what the state and, in particular, the southeast Michigan region needs in 2011.

The start of a new year is often about personally resolving to lose weight, pay off debts, save more, volunteer more, study more, be kinder, etc. We all know the drill.

January 2011 signals a new beginning for the state. Gov-elect Rick Snyder takes over Jan. 1. He'll have a Republican House and Senate, so Michigan residents are expecting progress. Since

being elected in November, Snyder hasn't wasted any time tackling issues, announcing appointments and getting ready to hit the ground running. He has a tough task ahead, but Michiganders are hungry (and hoping) for change and some good news.

Snyder has said several times he's not looking for incremental change, but rather "sound structural change."

We believe local city, township and school officials need to heed Snyder's words and resolve to act in 2011. As Snyder stated in

a recent interview, "The old way of doing things just doesn't really work."

The new way of doing things needs to be looked upon as opportunities, not as threats upon someone's turf. Elected officials are in office to serve and to lead. Many have done so in these tough times. Some, however, have been reluctant to propose and/or enact major changes needed. We encourage local municipal and school leaders to be bold in 2011. Look for solutions that will move cities, townships and school dis-

tricts forward.

As Snyder stated recently, "Stop focusing on what went wrong and who to blame." Instead, look to the future and solutions that people can buy into.

The last 10 years have delivered all but the knockout punch to our state and region, reeling from high employment, foreclosures and business failures. No one community or school district has been untouched by the economy. It was enough to drive even the most optimistic persons to flee. And according to the recent-

ly released census data, many did just that. Nearly 54,000 residents left Michigan in the past 10 years. The ramifications will present other challenges in terms of clout in Congress and loss of federal dollars. It makes the Snyder administration's job that much more difficult.

Moving Michigan municipalities, school districts and businesses forward is a tall task, but it can be done. A lot needs fixing, but it can be done.

Resolve to make 2011 a year of real change.

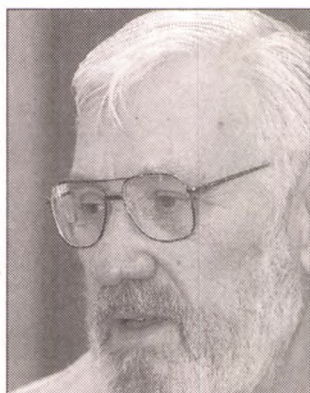
COMMUNITY VOICE

How do you plan to celebrate on New Year's Eve?

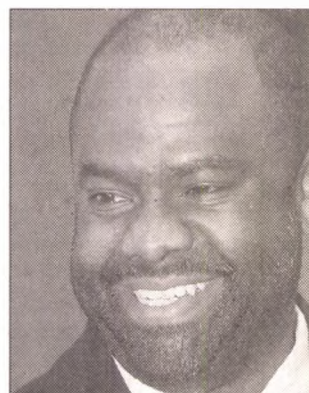
We asked this question at the Plymouth Coffee Bean Co. in downtown Plymouth.



"We either celebrate it at our house or my friend's house. We just get together and have a lot of fun. We always watch the ball drop - you kind of have to."
Adam Martin, 18
Farmington Hills



"I usually spend it with grandchildren and my son and daughter."
Larry Frayer
Canton



"Sleeping - that's it."
Jay Barker
Belleville



"I'm going to South Carolina to see friends and family."
Kathy Brunton
Canton



"My girlfriend and I, it's our fifth anniversary. We're going to Clarkston to a group party. ... It's a bunch of friends from college. ... We usually meet up on New Year's Eve."
Matt Showalter
Plymouth Township



"Probably by myself. ... I don't have any plans. ... I would be going somewhere warm. It's entirely too cold here."
Leah Esslinger
Plymouth



"Family and friends. Watch the ball drop."
Andrea Skupski
Plymouth Township



"Have fun. Be with people I know."
Mike Moore
Canton Township



"We were asked by friends to go to their lake house in Holly, but we were making plans to go to Pittsburgh to see friends but they have plans. So now we have nothing to do."
James Bohnwagner
Garden City



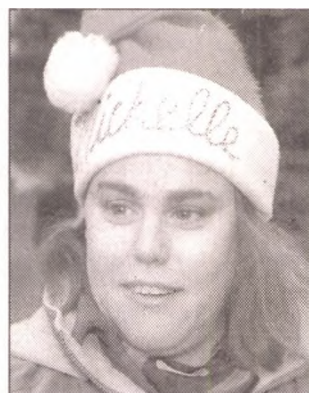
"I'll spend it with good friends, playing cards and gossiping, all the good stuff."
Michelle Jones
Garden City



"We're going up north to visit relatives."
Cheryl Piendzia
Garden City



"Usually we get together with friends and play games and enjoy the friendship."
Jeff Quattro
Westland



"I'm in church on New Year's Eve. At midnight we say prayers and then eat breakfast."
Michelle Sample
Westland



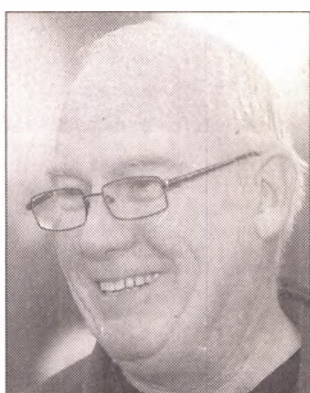
"Sometimes we spend it with kids and family at home ... most times."
Rebecca Connole
Westland



"I just spend quiet time at home. I watch TV and rent videos. I come to the library and get old movies to watch like Oliver Twist."
Cheryl Ryba
Livonia



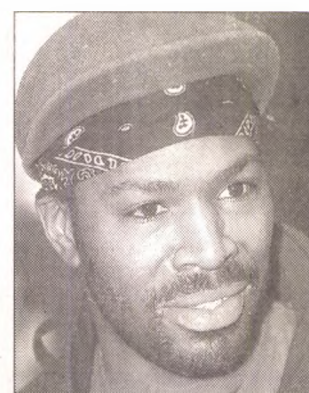
"We always fondue with our kids - chocolate fondue. It's very exciting."
Debbie Stevenson
Canton



"This year I think we are just going to spend it with family, quietly."
Jim Bezy
Southfield



"I'll be staying home with the kids. We'll stay up and watch the ball. This will be the first time my son Alex will be staying up late (for New Year's)."
Lee Duncan
Livonia



"Usually we have family members over for dinner. We stay up late and watch the ball drop."
Leonard Brame
Livonia



"I'll be staying home with the family. We'll watch the ball drop and have a good meal with family and friends."
Martin Roedel
Livonia



It's about time

After nearly 10 years of obstruction and delay, recalcitrant Republican Congressional legislators reluctantly agreed to provide funds to treat the health problems of 9-11 first responders. Of course, these benefits have been delayed for nearly 10 years and many of the first responders are already dead.

Senator Tom Colburn had led the Republican opposition to this bill, stating, "it is not compassionate to help one group while robbing future generations of opportunities." This logic is difficult to follow.

The real blocker of this bill was the Chamber of Commerce, which, through its Republican subsidiaries, blocked this legislation for nearly 10 years, as the bill will be paid for by eliminating a loophole that currently allows American companies to flee overseas to avoid paying taxes. The Chamber of Commerce has long opposed closing this loophole.

America not only recognized the heroism of 9-11 first responders but belatedly saw fit to acknowledge the severe health problems caused by 9-11. A worthy Christmas present.

Gerald and Dolores Maxey
Farmington Hills

Petition Chrysler

I read with dismay the article about Livonia auto dealer Colleen McDonald.

Livonia Chrysler Jeep was unfairly closed by Chrysler and when Ms. McDonald took her case to arbitration as prescribed by law, she won. Now she's getting the runaround from Chrysler.

I urge all the citizens of Livonia to contact their representatives and Senators and let them know how you feel about this miscarriage of justice.

This dealership was well-run and well-maintained and provided many jobs and tax revenues to the city of Livonia. I urge our City Council and mayor to get some petitions going to send to Chrysler. I'll be the first to sign. I'd also tell Chrysler that the city of Livonia will no longer purchase any Chrysler products until they (Chrysler) does the right thing by Ms. McDonald. Lastly, I would ask - where's Levin, Stabenow, Granholm and even McCotter when this city needs them to speak up?

Ken Trepanier
Livonia

The Forgotten 99ers

It was Dec. 30 when I felt this strong urge to call my husband. Normally I would've dialed his office phone, but instead felt compelled to call his cell with an unsubstantiated knowing; that sick feeling that sits in your stomach as if you've just swallowed bricks was screaming something was wrong.

He answered immediately. His normal upbeat voice sounded deflated and telling with just his simple "Hi."

"They let you go?"

"I hate you," he said, laughing. Sometimes it was

just too hard to turn the intuition off.

"I am on my way home," he said, serious again.

That was Dec. 30, 2008.

I can't say that my husband is a saint. He is typical Pisces - opinioned and mouthy, but also is a quick learner, loves to work hard and has a heart of gold. And although he didn't love his job at the time he was let go, he was happy to have a job. He had an array of medical issues he was dealing with and the stress of the loss made matters even worse when the insurance was cancelled.

It will be two years now that my husband has been actively seeking employment, to no avail. Recently President Obama signed into law the bipartisan compromise bill that will extend current tax rates for two years and extend federal unemployment benefits for the next 13 months, but my husband is not included in this bill as he is considered a 99er or a Tier V.

And so just a week before Christmas, all benefits were immediately stopped. No savings in the bank. No 401K. No money.

I can't speak for others within the same situation, but my husband was not taking advantage of any situation or looking for a handout. He is a 50-year-old man with a limited college education who simply cannot find employment. Application after application has resulted in not one phone call in the last two years. And being self-employed myself, we sat down after hearing the news and just sobbed. Do we take back the little bit of presents that we did buy our four kids? How do you scrape more of what has already been scraped off? Being a believer in miracles, I simply prayed.

And that is where we stand today. We only pray that a job comes through; that miracles are heard and that we can have a Merry Christmas just like we know those who voted this bill in will be having. But I have a feeling that as they look at their large Christmas trees, go on their ski or tropical vacations and exchange diamonds and cashmere, those of us will be forgotten.

Kristy Robinett
Livonia

Beautiful message


A recent edition of the *Detroit News* mentioned that Lyndon Village in Canton had made the coordinated effort to both decorate their neighborhood for Christmas, as well as honor our soldiers both home and abroad.

My family and I took a drive through Lyndon Village at Beck and Warren and they did a wonderful job. They always do quite a bit of decorating, but this year, all decked out in red, white and blue, it was a beautiful message. Thank you to the neighbors in Lyndon Village for your lovely message at this special time of the year.

Melissa McLaughlin
Canton



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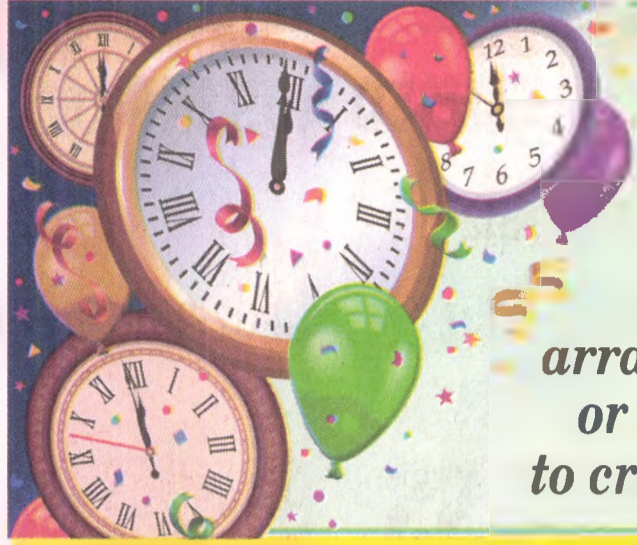
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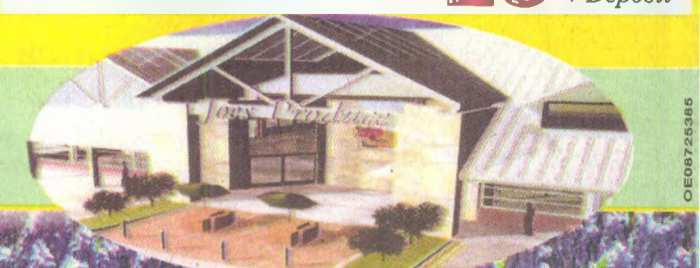
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ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, December 30, 2010

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Contact Editor Sharon Dargay

Voice Mail: (313) 222-8883

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Comment online at hometownlife.com

New Year's Eve gala combines film, networking, fun

BY SHARON DARGAY
O&E STAFF WRITER

Your resume and photo may come in handier than a noise-maker and party hat this New Year's Eve at the Sheraton Hotel in Novi.

"Come prepared ... there are going to be a lot of people here," suggests film producer Bill H. McKinney of Michigan-based Global Pictures.

While aspiring film actors, crew, writers and filmmakers party at the first annual Michigan Film Gala on Friday, Dec. 31, they'll also have an opportunity to network with established industry insiders.

The event, presented by Specs Howard School of Media Arts and Global Pictures, will include an all-day screening of Michigan-made feature films and film trailers, a panel of guest speakers, meet and greet, dinner and networking party that will ring in the New Year.

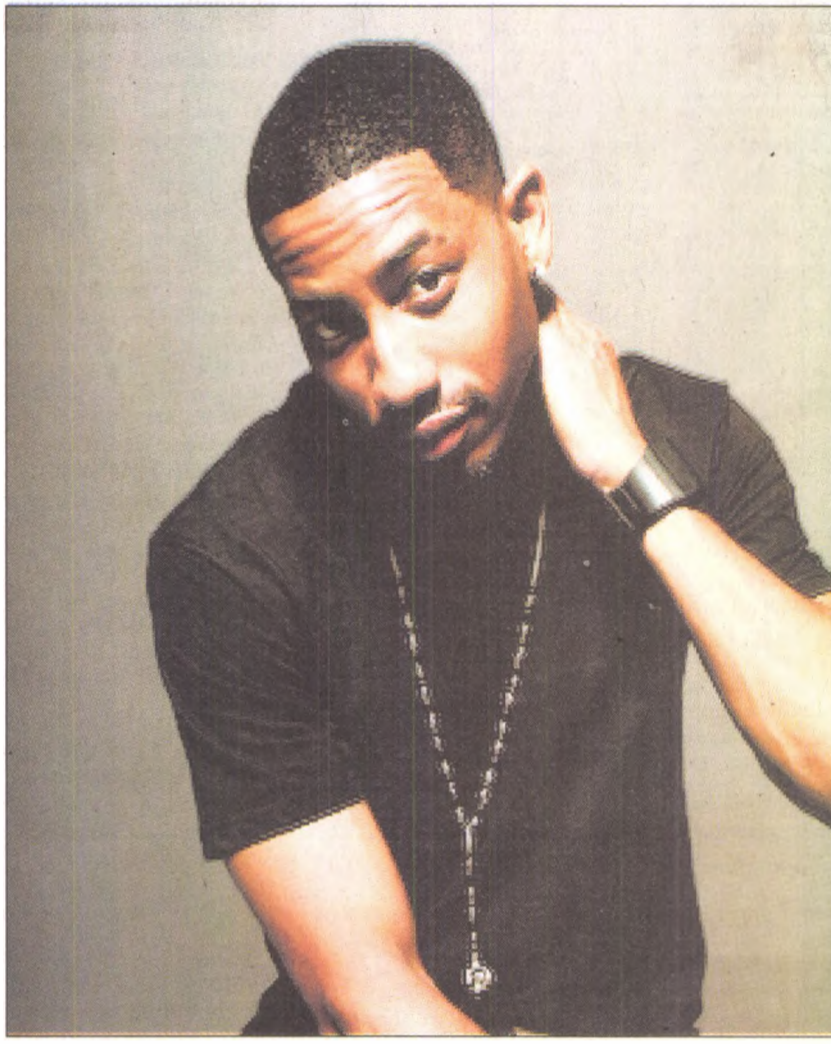
Actor/comedian Brandon Jackson, a West Bloomfield High School graduate whose film credits include *Roll Bounce*, and *Tropic Thunder*, will host the event.

McKinney said breaking into the film industry would have been easier for himself and business partner Twan Williams if they could have attended a similar networking party a few years ago.

"We had to learn on our own," McKinney said. "The connections we'll bring in — you'll get to meet them in person. Who knows who will get picked up for a project. It might be a producer getting a project funded. It's all about connecting the dots."

GUEST SPEAKERS

In addition to Jackson, Tanya Ryno, a former producer for the film unit at *Saturday Night Live*, will be on hand. While at *SNL*, Ryno worked on Robert Smigel's TV Funhouse, *GoLords* Puppet series and commercial parody segments. She also served as production supervisor for six short films directed by Martin Scorsese, Woody Allen, Edward Burns, Spike Lee, Jerry Seinfeld and



Brandon Jackson is hosting the Michigan Film Gala New Year's Eve.

Kevin Smith.

Other guests include Rod L. Harrell, a publicist and president of RLH Talent in Los Angeles, Calif.; Brenda Perryman, a former drama teacher at Southfield High School who casts film talent; Janaya Black of the Trinity Film Festival; Ruth Daniels of Emagine Theatres; Darryl Farmers, a composer for Disney; and Susan Frishman, an entertainment attorney.

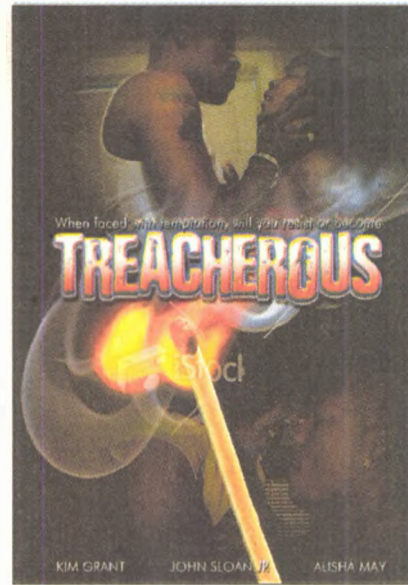
"We'll have panelists who will take questions from the audience," Williams said. "You'll get information and be able to go out and apply it."

MICHIGAN FILMS

He and McKinney founded Global Pictures in 2008. McKinney had been in Los Angeles the previous year to meet with Jackson and others already working in the film industry on the West Coast, include Mark Adkins, brother of comedian and actor, Sinbad.

"He opened our eyes as to what we needed to do," McKinney noted.

Since then they have secured financing for several films, teamed with a crew on a horror movie and produced the locally-made *CornerStore*, which is tentatively scheduled for release May 19, 2011.



"Treacherous" is among the films that will be screened at the Michigan Film Gala on New Year's Eve in Novi.

They'll screen the movie trailer dur-



"Tough" is among 10 feature films that will be screened at the Michigan Film Gala in Novi.

MICHIGAN FILM GALA

What: Movie screening, meet and greet, networking party, dinner and New Year's Eve gathering

When: Showcase of feature films and film trailers starts at 9 a.m., Dec. 31, followed by a meet and greet reception from 7-8 p.m., dinner at 8 p.m. and dance party from 10:30 p.m.-2 a.m.

Where: Sheraton Hotel, 21111 Haggerty, Novi

Details: Hosted by actor Brandon T. Jackson, whose screen credits include "Tropic Thunder," "Roll Bounce" and "Big Momma's House 3." Special guests include Tanya Ryno, a writer, producer, director and Rod Harrell of RLH Talent

Tickets: Individual VIP tickets are \$200 and include the dinner, dance and room package; couples pay \$250. Tickets for the dinner and dance only are \$200 per couple and \$150 per person. Party tickets only are \$75 per person

Contact: www.michiganfilmgala.com or call Bill McKinney at (248) 667-1016

ing the show case on New Year's Eve.

"There have been over 90 films made in Michigan, but a lot didn't use local talent," Williams said. "In *CornerStore* 100 percent crew and 98 percent talent was from Michigan."

Williams said local filmmakers need to show California-based producers — who simply use Michigan "as a back drop and cash cow" — that

the mitten state has capable actors, crews, and producers of its own.

"We want to make sure people who don't know each other in the (Michigan) film industry get to know each other and band together," McKinney added.

Both men say the Michigan Film Gala is the perfect place to start forming that network.

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A GIFT FROM A DIVINE LAND

THERE WAS A TIME long, long ago when China was known as *Shen Zhou*—The Land of the Divine. The arts and the culture there were considered so exquisite and so vibrant that they could only have been bestowed by the heavens. And thus the people of the land strove to hold themselves to a higher standard so as to be worthy of such gifts. Today, Shen Yun brings these gifts to you.

Perhaps it is the quiet gentleness of the heavenly maidens that reminds us of a better time and a better world. Perhaps it is the conviction of warriors dashing across the plains that tells us that good always defeats evil in the end. Or maybe it's just the timeless stories of courage and compassion, kindness and kinship.

Whatever it is, Shen Yun has touched the hearts of millions. "I cried a few times," one audience member confessed. "What I saw was power, honesty, and integrity—I am grateful for that." The show has graced some of the most prestigious stages in the world, from the Royal Fes-

tival Hall in London to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Shen Yun is more than just the world's premier classical Chinese performing arts company. It is an experience you won't want to miss.

A PERFORMANCE 5,000 YEARS IN THE MAKING

A performance by Shen Yun is traditional Chinese culture as it was meant to be: a study in grace, wisdom, and all the virtues distilled from millennia of Chinese civilization. The classically trained dancers, musicians, and singers of Shen Yun Performing Arts share a vision: to revive and restore Chinese culture to its former, glorious state.

Based in New York, Shen Yun Performing Arts is distinguished by its conscious effort to remain independent of China's communist regime, which has abused and impoverished the arts for decades. In fact, a show like Shen Yun's can no longer be found in China today. As one well-traveled New Yorker noted: "I've seen China before with my eyes, but this show had me experience China with my soul."

For those who find all things Chinese a little foreign, never fear. The show is based on Chinese culture, but the values it portrays belong to all of humanity.

ONE OF THE MOST DEMANDING ART FORMS IN THE WORLD

No other art form in the world boasts such strong expressive qualities and diversity of technique as classical Chinese dance. It takes years of rigorous training to master the many leaps, flips, and delicate gestures. Dancers must also be versed in Chinese culture to achieve the bearing needed to bring ancient legends and heroic figures to life.

In addition to the classical forms, Shen Yun features the distinctive colors and styles of ethnic and folk dance. Choreographers draw upon over 20 dynasties and 50 ethnic groups to create pieces that range from the northern steppes of Mongolia to the lush forests of Yunnan. Among the most impressive elements of any Shen Yun show are the large-scale ensemble pieces in which dozens of dancers appear to move as one body across the stage.

Shen Yun has also created its very own brand of story-based dance, which often deals with universal, thought-provoking themes. As one distinguished ballet dancer noted, "There's a lot of depth and meaning. It's a new realm of dance."

TWO GREAT CLASSICAL MUSIC TRADITIONS ONE FRESH, UNEXPECTED SOUND

Some remarkable instruments such as the *pipa* or *erhu* date back more than 3,500 years, but the reality is very few Chinese instruments have made it to the world stage. To remedy this, the composers of Shen Yun bathe the distinctly Chinese sounds in a rich sea

of Western strings, percussion, woodwinds, and brass. The result? A new and mesmerizing sound.

Each season, the composers create over 20 original scores. They work closely with the choreographers to ensure a seamless blending of the music with each and every dance.

EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTS

"There's just something about them," audience members often remark.

At a time when the influence of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism was strong in the Middle Kingdom, art was a means to explore the connection between mankind and the higher universe. Poets and artists cultivated virtue and engaged in study and meditation because they believed that to create true art worthy of the heavens, there must first be inner beauty and purity.

Today, the artists of Shen Yun follow in that noble tradition. Their training regimen requires focus and a mindful lifestyle. Many draw inspiration from traditional cultivation practices such as Falun Dafa, which teaches truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance.

Among the company's artists are many winners of international competitions in dance, music, and singing, as well as accomplished choreographers and composers. No other Chinese performing arts group in the world can boast such a remarkable body of talent.

A BRAND NEW PRODUCTION FOR 2011

Months of training and preparation culminate each winter when Shen Yun debuts a spectacular original production with all new dances, costumes, and music.

Experience the extraordinary.

Westland theater troupe holds auditions

No singing or dancing is involved, but actors auditioning for Inspire Theatre's *The Musical Murders of 1940* should prepare for cold readings.

Auditions are set for 6:30 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Jan. 10-11, 2011 at Inspire Theatre, 33445 Warren Road, Westland.

The cast will include five men and five women, ages 19-70.

The plot concerns several showbiz folks that have been gathered into a mansion

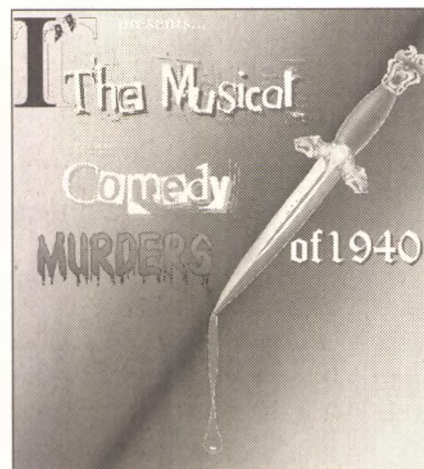
house to flush out a serial killer. As the events unfold, there are bits from the past that seem to come back and haunt some of the characters. As they begin to die off, the madcap search to find the killer starts.

Characters include Helsa Wenzel, the maid; Elsa Von Grokssenkneuten, owner of the mansion and financial backer of many musicals; Nikki Crandall, a chorus girl; Bernice Roth, the perpetually thirsty lyricist; Marjorie Baverstock, the


Broadway producer; Michael Kelly, undercover cop; Patrick O'Reilly, who claims to be an Irish tenor; Ken De La Maize, a "typical" director; Eddie McCuen, an unemployed comedian and Roger Hopewell, composer for "White House Merry-Go-Round."

Performances are scheduled for March 4-6, 2011 and 11-13, 2011.

For more information call (734) 751-7057 or e-mail to inspire@inspiretheatre.com



Auditions for Inspire Theatre's next production are Jan. 10-11, 2011.



**CITY OF GARDEN CITY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Garden City Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2011, at 6:58 p.m., in the Council Chambers, at the Civic Center, 6000 Middlebelt Road, Garden City, Michigan. At the hearings, all interested persons shall have an opportunity to be heard.

The purpose of the Public Hearings is to solicit public comments on the following:

- 10-010, Text Amendment.** To amend the Zoning Ordinance by adding Section 154.165, Outdoor Seating and Dining.

Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and should be addressed to: The Office of City Council, City of Garden City, 6000 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI 48135.

For the complete proposed text amendment you may refer to the City Council Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2010 on www.gardencitymi.org, also available at the Garden City Clerks Office, 6000 Middlebelt, Garden City, MI. 48135

ALLYSON BETTIS
Treasurer-City Clerk

Post: December 30, 2010

Publish: December 30, 2010 OE08724506 2x4.5

Royal Oak concert rescheduled in Plymouth

Look for bigger sound, bigger lights and a huge dance floor when the Girl Talk concert, originally scheduled at the Royal Oak Music Theatre, moves to Compuware Arena in Plymouth Township.

The show is scheduled for 8 p.m. Thursday, March 3, 2011. All tickets that were bought for the original event at the Royal Oak Music Theatre will be honored at the door.

"A Girl Talk show is a huge crazy party, and we are incredibly excited to double the size of the party by moving the show to the Compuware Arena in Plymouth," stated Dan McGowan of the Crofoot, a music venue in Pontiac. "We are equally excited to produce a show for the first time in this beautiful arena. The show, a co-promotion with AEG Live, is the first of what we hope is a long series of great concerts at Compuware Arena."

Since 2008, Gregg Gillis — known as Girl Talk — has played almost 300 shows and hardly taken a full week off from the road. He employs a small crew of stage hands who launch toilet paper, propel confetti and balloons, and inflate oddly chosen props into the audience. The show has been described as the craziest house party ever.

Tour stops the last couple of years include the Vancouver Olympics, large festivals such as Coachella, Austin City



At a Girl Talk concert, it's typical to find toilet paper, inflatable objects and confetti launched into the audience.

Limits, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, Rothbury, and Detroit's Movement 2008. Girl Talk appears with Max Tundra and Junk Culture on

March 3, 2011. All ages are welcome. Compuware Arena is located at 14900 North Beck, in Plymouth. Tickets are \$24 and

are available at www.ticketweb.com; (734) 453-8400. For questions regarding the Royal Oak tickets call (248) 399-2980, Ext. 13.

The City of Garden City Parks and Recreation Commission has scheduled a Public Hearing:

**Tuesday
February 1, 2011
7:30 PM**

Maplewood Center
31735 Maplewood
Garden City, MI
48135-1709

**Notice of a 30-Day Public Review Period
and Public Hearing
City of Garden City Parks and Recreation Commission**


Notice is given to any and all interested parties that the draft City of Garden City Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be available for review and comment for 30 days beginning December 30, 2010 at the Parks and Recreation Department Office, Maplewood Community Center, 31735 Maplewood and at the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 6000 Middlebelt Road, Garden City during regular business hours or online at Gardencitymi.org.

The Parks and Recreation Commission will hold a public hearing on February 1, 2010 at Maplewood Community Center, 31735 Maplewood Garden City, to hear comments on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The City of Garden City is preparing a five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan in accordance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources requirements. When completed, the plan will serve as a guide for the acquisition and development of facilities and programs over the next five (5) years.

All interested parties may submit comments in person or in writing to the Parks and Recreation Department at Maplewood Community Center, 31735 Maplewood Garden City, MI, 48135-1709. Please contact the Department 734 793-1854 with questions or comments.

Publish: December 30, 2010 OE08724506 2x4.5



**CITY OF GARDEN CITY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Garden City Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, January 10, 2011, at 6:56 p.m., in the Council Chambers, at the Civic Center, 6000 Middlebelt Road, Garden City, Michigan. At the hearings, all interested persons shall have an opportunity to be heard.

The purpose of the Public Hearings is to solicit public comments on the following:

- 10-00, Text Amendment.** To introduce the proposed ordinance amendment Section 154.164, Home Occupations.

ORDINANCE # 10-00

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND B154.164 HOME OCCUPATIONS OF CHAPTER 154 OF TITLE XV OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDEN CITY.

WHEREAS, the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, P.A. 110 of 2006, as amended, authorizes a City Council to adopt and amend zoning ordinances that regulate the public health, safety and general welfare of persons and property; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of Garden City held a public hearing on December 9, 2010 to consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of Garden City, to amend Section 154.164, Home Occupations; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission transmitted a summary of the comments received at the public hearing and its recommendation of approval to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined at its meeting of _____, 2011 that enacting said Zoning Ordinance Text amendment is in the best interests of the public health, safety and welfare of the City residents:

THE CITY OF GARDEN CITY HEREBY ORDAINS:

That Section 154.164, Home Occupations is added to Chapter 154 of the Code of the City of Garden City as follows:

Section 154.164 Home Occupations

(A) Home occupations may be permitted as an accessory use in the R-1, One-Family Residential and R-2, Two-Family Residential districts, subject to the following:

- No employees other than those living on the premises are allowed.
- Delivery vehicles used to deliver goods to a home occupation are limited to automobiles, passenger vehicles, mail carriers, and express package carriers. Deliveries are limited to an average of once a week.
- Home occupations are not allowed outside of the interior of a structure. An approved garage or accessory building may also be used for storage of materials, supplies, goods, or equipment incidental to the home occupation.

(B) The following uses shall be permitted as home occupations:

- Home offices for such professionals as architects, doctors, brokers, engineers, insurance agents, lawyers, realtors, accountants, writers, salespersons, and similar occupations.
- Personal services, including hair or nail care, tutoring, music and art classes.
- Workshops for tailors, dressmakers, milliners, and craft persons, including weaving, lapidary, jewelry making, cabinetry, and wood working.
- Repair services, limited to watches and clocks, small appliances, computers, electronic devices, and similar small devices.

(C) The following uses are expressly prohibited as a home occupation:

- Motor vehicle, recreational vehicle and/or boat repair, bump and paint shops, and salvage and/or storage yards.
- Kennels and/or veterinary clinics.
- Medical or dental clinics.
- Retail sales of merchandise.
- Eating or drinking establishments.
- Adult uses and sexually oriented businesses.
- Growing of Medical Marijuana as a qualified caregiver under the Michigan Marijuana Act, Law 1 of 2008
- Uses similar to the above listed use, or any uses that would in the determination of the Community Development Director, result in nuisance factors as defined by this ordinance.

(D) Home Occupations shall not include:

- Outdoor displays or storage of materials, goods, supplies, or equipment used in the home occupation.
- The use of machinery or equipment not commonly incidental or accessory to a residential dwelling.
- Changes or alterations to the character or appearance of the residence.
- Parking that cannot be accommodated on the site.
- Signs unless expressly permitted by Chapter 153, Sign Regulations.

REPEAL:
All Ordinances or parts of other ordinances in conflict herewith and the same are hereby repealed.

SEVERABILITY:
This Ordinance and the various parts, sentences, paragraphs, sections, and clauses it contains are hereby declared to be severable. Should any part, sentence, paragraph, section or clause be adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by any court for any reason such judgment shall not affect the validity of this Ordinance in whole or in part thereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

Furthermore, should the application of any provision of this Ordinance to a particular property, building, or structure be adjudged invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction shall not affect the application of said provision to any other property, building, or structure in the City, unless otherwise stated in the judgment.

EFFECTIVE DATE:
This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication according to law.

Written comments may be submitted prior to the public hearing and should be addressed to: The Office of City Council, City of Garden City, 6000 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI 48135.

For the complete proposed text amendment you may refer to the City Council Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2010 on www.gardencitymi.org, also available at the Garden City Clerks Office, 6000 Middlebelt, Garden City, MI. 48135

ALLYSON BETTIS
Treasurer-City Clerk

Publish: December 30, 2010 OE08726492 4x11

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Comment online at hometownlife.com

One-pot wonderful: Winter perfect for casserole cooking

Some call it "casserole cooking," others "the one-pot wonder." Regardless of what you call it, one-pot cooking is the quintessential fall and winter cuisine and it's a favorite method of meal preparation for moms across America because of its ease of use and versatility.

According to a recent NPD Group study, Americans are dining out at restaurants less and finding themselves cooking more at home. With more meals to cook, home cooks are hungry for simple solutions to prepare meals for the family. Because of its ease of use, cooks have come to love the convenience of one-pot cooking. It's a great tool for putting a delicious dinner on the table with less to clean up.

Cast iron pots were the original tool used for preparing hearty stews and casseroles, but it was a challenge to precisely manage the temperature. Today, one-pot cooking has evolved into non-stick multi-cookers that can steam vegetables, sear and cook meat, prepare rice, make stews and warm sauces all in the same pot. With the introduction of advanced heating technology, the cookers can precisely control varying heat.

George Foreman, the maker of electric grills, recently expanded to include healthy cooking appliances such as a skillet, panini press and countertop oven, as well as multi-cooker that has taken one-pot cooking to a whole new level.

"We found that our customers were looking for a product that could do it all — sear meat, saute vegetables, steam rice all in one pot, and that's how the George Foreman Healthy Cooking Smart Kitchen was born," says Carmen E. Garcia, senior director of marketing for George Foreman - USA & Canada. "Moms like me love this appliance because of its versatility and ability to help us put a healthy meal on the table for our families, without the hassle."

The Smart Kitchen comes with a tempered glass lid with an adjustable steam vent for monitoring cooking progress and controlling steam; and includes a "sear" button for meats, making it even easier to prepare a healthy meal in minutes. Its easy-to-use one-touch digital Intelli-Probe controls have settings to make an assortment of foods, as well as variable settings up to 500 F for stews, soups and sauces making one-pot cooking easier and more convenient than ever.

The holidays can be stressful, but healthy cooking doesn't need to be. Try this recipe for Arroz con Pollo (Chicken with Rice) that features a blend of lean chicken for protein, vitamin C-packed tomatoes and fat-free steamed rice. It is a complete meal with only 380 calories per serving and is packed with vitamins and minerals.

For more delicious recipes, visit www.georgeforemancooking.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GeorgeForemanHealthyCooking.



Arroz con Pollo

ARROZ CON POLLO

(Chicken with Rice)
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 40 minutes
Makes four to six servings

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon butter
1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1½-inch flat pieces
1 cup long grain white rice
1½ cups coarsely chopped white onion
1¼ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
½ cup white wine
½ cup diced red bell pepper
½ cup sliced pimento stuffed green olives
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon each: chili powder and ground cumin

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 (4-ounce) can diced green chiles
½ cup salsa
Chopped fresh cilantro and sliced green onions (optional)

Directions:

Set multi-cooker to the browning setting and add butter and chicken; cook for 10 minutes or until chicken is browned, turning once or twice. Stir in rice and cook for five minutes more. Stir in onion, broth, wine, bell pepper, olives, seasonings, garlic and chiles; cover and cook on the simmer setting for 20 minutes. Turn off heat and let stand for five minutes. Stir in salsa and sprinkle with cilantro and green onions, if you like.

Corn tortillas may be warmed in the steamer basket. Place over the cooked chicken and rice and let warm during the five-minute stand time.

— Courtesy of ARA

Ham it up with green eggs and ham

"Do you like green eggs and ham?" To answer the enduring question and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Dr. Seuss's classic Green Eggs and Ham, The National Pork Board has teamed up with celebrity chefs Michael Symon and Melissa d'Arabian to bring the story to life with tasty new recipes inspired by the book.

If you're looking for recipes that your family will want to eat on a boat, in the rain or on a train, check out these new hammy creations:

- Ham Sandwich with Greens and Eggs, courtesy of Michael Symon: Wake up to a warm breakfast sandwich that combines crisped Black Forest Ham with a fried egg, melted cheese, pesto and greens.

- Ham and Green Egg Mini Tartlets, courtesy of Melissa d'Arabian: These surprisingly easy-to-make ham and egg spinach tartlets, with bread instead of pie crust, can be made ahead of time for an on-the-go meal.

Ham is a versatile option for breakfast, lunch or dinner since it pairs well with many flavors. From bone-in to boneless, from fully-cooked to fresh, whipping up deliciously good, healthful meals with ham is a snap.

For more information, including Green Eggs and Ham recipes from Mitzi Dulan, RD, CSSD and top food blogger, Jaden Hair (ham sushi anyone?), visit www.TheOtherWhiteMeat.com. You can also follow The National Pork Board on Facebook at facebook.com/TheOtherWhiteMeat and @allaboutpork on Twitter.

GREEN EGGS AND HAM MINI TARTLETS

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 12 to 14 minutes

1/3 cup finely chopped fully-cooked ham
4 1/2-inch-thick slices soft white sandwich bread, crusts removed
2 tablespoons butter, softened
1/2 cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
2 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
3 tablespoons grated fresh Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon 2% milk
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
4 medium eggs
Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Press white bread with palm of hand until flat and doughy, and butter both sides. Gently place in 2 1/2-inch muffin cups or 4-ounce ramekins, pressing to form 4 individual tartlet crusts.

Mix spinach, cream cheese, Parmesan cheese, milk, and garlic powder in small bowl; set aside.

To assemble tarts: divide ham among the 4 bread cups in muffin cups. Crack 1 egg into each tartlet crust, season with pepper, and top with a generous spoonful of spinach mixture. Bake in oven for 12 to 14 minutes or until egg whites are firm, but yolks are still moist. Cool slightly. If using muffin cups, remove from cups to serve.

Recipe courtesy of Melissa d'Arabian



— Family Features

These Local Businesses and the Observer & Eccentric/Hometown Weekly Newspapers would like to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable New Year's. But please remember to be responsible and bring everyone home safe!

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Brian Hinzman,
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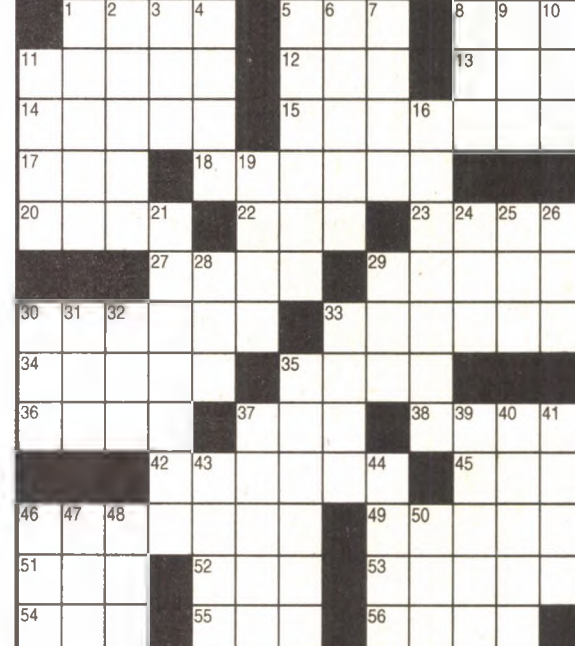
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 - Distinct period
 - Burst of laughter
 - Long white robes
 - Agreeable smell
 - Garbage haulers
 - Pole vault and javelin
 - Boxer Griffith
 - Week da.
 - Use a keyboard
 - Caesar's man
 - Organ valve
- DOWN**
- Pores
 - Desktop symbols
 - Sticky substance
 - Tool handle
 - Muscle cells
 - Coliseum
 - Learn about
 - Blonde shade
 - Elf-sized

Answer to Previous Puzzle

DAD	AMI	CHAP
OVAL	UHS	LANA
MOLE	GOSHAWKS	
NYMPS	ANNAS	
OAT	HUG	
CLINT	SESSION	
DEB	VEX	DNA
SOMALIA	TASTE	
IAN	BED	
REALM	PALACE	
ADLIBBED	GUNG	
PEON	MSG	ERGO
SNUG	WOE	SRA

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- Arith. term
- au lait
- Durable wood
- Bull Run fighters
- Aerie hatchlings
- Untold centuries
- Invoice no.
- Vegas
- Peggy or Brenda
- Wide st.
- Play the ponies
- Alcott girl
- Clothing defect
- Mark's successor
- Summit
- Grape growers
- Henry VIII's house
- Ominous signs
- Golf scores
- Lacoste of tennis
- Numskull
- Magna — laude
- Frequently
- Autumn mo.
- Mauna —

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Word Search — Pirates

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

- ahoy buccaneer crossbones marauder raid
blackbeard bullion gold parrot skull
booty buried map pillage

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS HERE

Sudoku

Word Search

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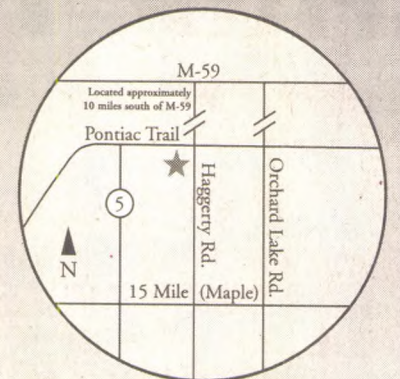
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