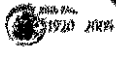


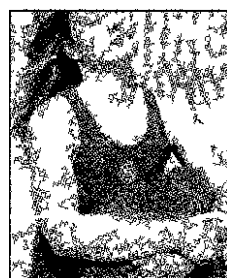
## Remembering John Paul II

Share your reflections, tributes, comments about the events of the last week with other Observer readers. E-mail your information along with your name and hometown to editor@oehomecomm.net. Comments will be published Thursday, April 14, in your hometown Observer.



## Hitting all the right notes

OBSERVER LIFE, SECTION C



## Be hip and comfy in yoga class

PINK PAGE, C8

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# PLYMOUTH Observer



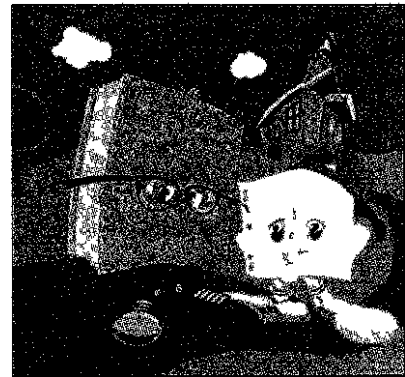
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'Bookster' and 'Pagie' are the icons for the school district's book drive.

## Publisher backs school book drive

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

A drive to collect 35,000 books to be distributed among kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms in the Plymouth-Canton school district begins Monday, with the backing of the founder of a Plymouth publishing company.

Patrick Olson, founder of Hayden-McNeil Publishing Inc., is involving the Patrick and Patricia Olson Foundation in the monthlong book drive aimed at putting 100 books in each of the district's 350 K-5 classrooms.

"There are so many things that compete for the attention of our children, and most of them aren't healthy or useful," said Olson. "And, they're not very rewarding, whereas reading is."

"It requires a habit, which needs to be developed early," he said. "Our teachers struggle mightily to get students to acquire that habit, and if these classroom libraries can help, then I'm all for it."

Olson will coordinate all aspects of the project, including providing collection boxes, posters and a

PLEASE SEE BOOKS, A4



Donna Ferguson works with Emerson School students on common chemical reactions during the science fair sponsored by Pfizer Thursday.

PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## From yawns to yucks

### Jamboree shows science, math can be fun

Science and math can be fun and exciting. No, really. "When people hear a term like chemical reaction, they think really boring," said Donna Ferguson of Plymouth Township. "But, I'm trying to show kids how chemical reactions relate to their daily lives."

Ferguson was one of nearly 500 people from Pfizer Corporation who put on 37 science and math demonstrations as part of the Science and Math Jamboree (SAM-JAM) at the company's Ann Arbor headquarters Thursday and Friday for nearly 1,500 eighth-grade students.

Ferguson, who also talks science with



Sherry Bright of Canton is ready to test the tongue's taste receptors with sour, salty or sweet solutions during the Pfizer-sponsored event Thursday.

STORY BY TONY BRUSCATO | STAFF WRITER

PLEASE SEE JAMBOREE, A6

## City budget features black ink

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

If all goes well, the city of Plymouth could have a general fund budget surplus of nearly \$515,000 at the end of the 2005-06 budget year.

However, for a city that cut \$11 million this year, and is planning to cut another \$200,000 next year, the surplus hasn't come without a price.

"So far, we've been able to hold off predicted budget deficits through a severe cutting of personnel, implementing a number of cost-savings measures and nearly eliminating capital purchases," City Manager Paul Siscock said. "Those employees who are still with us have done an outstanding job of stepping up to the plate to address the needs of our citizens."

According to Siscock, the number of full-time equivalent employees is at 55 down for the sixth year in a row as a result of reductions in city administration, municipal services and recreation. That compares to 73 employees in fiscal 2000-01. In the 1980s, the city had more than 80 full-time employees on its payroll.

Siscock said he's also considering closing or consolidating offices.

While the city has been able to balance its budget the past few years, the five-year projection by Finance Director Mark Christiansen continues to show a structural problem with the budget.

In 2006-07, the projected deficit is \$257,000. It jumps to \$416,000 in 2007-08, \$645,000 in 2008-09 and \$896,000 in 2009-10. Those numbers pale in comparison to projections made in June 2003, which ranged from \$12 million to nearly \$24 million five years later.

"By cutting \$12 million in expenditures last year, that had a huge impact on those future projections, and the same thing is true this year with further cuts," Christiansen said. "Each time we make cuts in our structural costs, it will continue to bring those numbers down."

"But, because our revenues are flat, it will continue to be a problem," he added. "And each year will demand some additional levels of cuts until revenues rise again, or expenditures are low enough to eliminate the problem."

Along with the projected budget surplus of more than a half-million dollars, the city also has a \$550,000 budget stabilization fund which can be used in extreme emergencies.

City commissioners will be reviewing the proposed \$66 million budget at 6 p.m. Monday at City Hall. Other budget sessions are scheduled for Thursday, April 14, at City Hall; Monday, April 18, at the Cultural Center; and Thursday, April 25, at the Municipal Services Center. All sessions begin at 6 p.m. and are open to the public.

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## Incumbent, newcomer square off in race for school board

### Technology, money top incumbent's list

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

Tom Wysocki would like to see the Plymouth-Canton school district expand the use of technology for students, parents and educators.

"Technology is changing so fast, and the kids coming through now are exposed to so much more information than we were in the past," said Wysocki, the school board vice president seeking a second four-year term in the May 3 election. "We need to bring the schools up to that point so we can satisfy their craving for information."

Wysocki said if he's re-elected, he'd like to see the board spend more money on technology.

"To this point, we haven't chosen to spend money on it because it's more expenditures," Wysocki said. "But, even a simple thing like a



Wysocki

parent having access to a Web site so they know what's going on in the classroom grades, test scores, everything that's going on in the classroom. "All of this information could be made available, instead of sitting in the grade book," he said. "We can put a lot more information in the hands of parents."

While technology is a priority on his list, Wysocki admits the major challenge the next several years will be money.

"If funding doesn't change or improve for us, we're going to be facing some big deficits," said Wysocki. "We're going to have to find other revenue, or make some

PLEASE SEE WYSOCKI, A4

### Challenger: Budget, Central key issues

BY TONY BRUSCATO  
STAFF WRITER

Emily Florence has lived and breathed education all her life, and that's one reason she and her family moved to Canton Township.

"My father was an administrator, all the way up to superintendent, and my mother was a teacher, so there was no option while growing up," Florence said. "We were going to be educated, and we were going to be educated well. And, it's something that's important to me now that I have children."

Florence, a mother of four, is challenging incumbent Tom Wysocki for the single four-year seat on the May 3 school board ballot.

"We moved here primarily because of the schools, and it's important for me to stay on top of this," Florence said. "The school board is a good way for me to greatly get involved."



Florence

She's prepared for tougher issues as a member of the Board of Education.

"Budget, obviously, is the big issue with all the federal and state cuts that have been made," Florence said. "We need to maintain a budget that will enable us to employ the top quality teachers, educators and administrators. Keeping them happy, but also keeping within our budget."

"Also, the expansive growth in the district, building new elementary

PLEASE SEE FLORENCE, A4

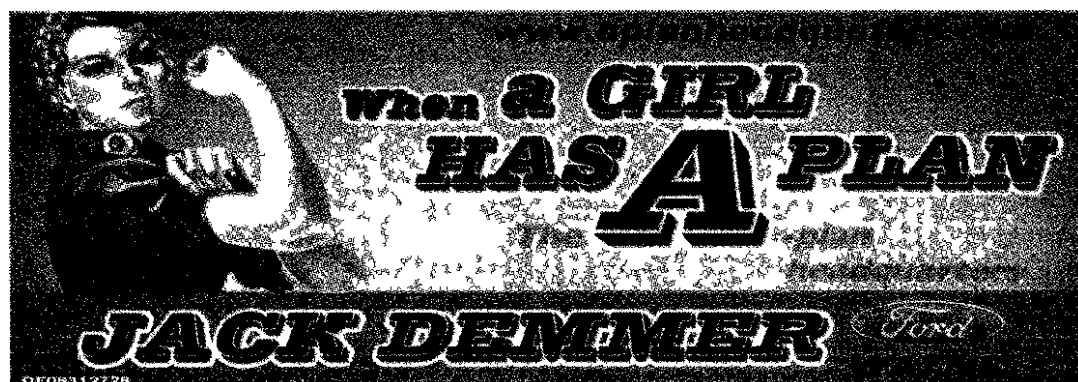
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### Coming Thursday in Filter

#### Velvet Revolver:

Their wild public lives haven't calmed them in fact they're looking to make music that's as hard as ever.

