

This architectural elevation shows what the Box Bar could be if owner Chip Falcusan's plans to raze the neighboring building, formally occupied by ice cream shop American Pie, are seen through. The demolished site would be used for parking.

## Parking break for the Box

BY SCOTT GOODWIN

The question City of Plymouth officials faced recently was a complex one: how much are they willing to sacrifice history for something historical?

The answer: change is good.

After three years of squashed plans for expansion, the Box Bar in downtown Plymouth may finally get its chance to grow.

The Plymouth Planning and Historic commissions approved the Box Bar's most recent plans which call for a substantial overhaul of the small watering hole on Kellogg Park.

## Twp. announces greens, tree pick up

Plymouth Township has announced its holiday rubbish and Christmas tree collection schedules.

If your normal pick-up falls on Friday, it will be delayed one day during the weeks of Christmas and New Year's.

Christmas trees and natural wreaths will be picked up curbside, on regularly scheduled collection days during the week of Jan. 4-8 for compost disposal. The Township asks residents to remove decorations, including tinsel and other non-organic materials. No plastic tree disposal bags will be taken.

Also, the Township's Compost Program will resume weekly curbside collection of yard waste Apr. 5.

But in order to execute the plans, the Box Bar may need to knock down its neighbor, the building which formally held the ice cream shop American Pie, to make room for parking, according to Building Official Jim Penn.

Parking had been the stumbling block in the Box Bar's most recent failed plan last year. Initially, when Box Bar owner Chip Falcusan wanted to build a brewpub, the City agreed to lease the needed parking. After the brewpub proposal fell through, Falcusan came back with another proposal but was denied parking rights by the City.

Earlier this year, Falcusan offered another idea. To gain the necessary parking, he would raze the building directly east of the Box Bar.

The plan required a vote of confidence by the Plymouth Historic Commission. At their Dec. 2 meeting, the commission discussed the proposal and came to an unusual conclusion.

A motion made by Commissioner Mark Oppat allowed the Box Bar to proceed with its plans, but not until Falcusan attempted to gain an exemption from the Planning Commission on the parking stipulation. If the exemption was not given, Falcusan could demolish the building after one month. The motion passed 3-2.

But according to Penn, the Planning Commission doesn't have the authority to give Falcusan an exemption. So, on Jan. 3, the door of demolition will open and Falcusan will have the green light he has sought for three years.

The American Pie building may still be moved rather than razed, but according to Penn, no significant offers have been made.

"It's certainly a possibility under the Historic District's ordinance," he said.

Falcusan has until March to apply for the necessary permits. He was unavailable for comment.

## Still no cause found for Twp. fire

BY SCOTT SPIELMAN

What caused the 35,000-square foot building that housed Document Processing, Inc. to burn to the ground Sunday is still uncertain, but the future of the site has already been determined.

"Well, naturally we're going to rebuild the building," said Dennis Walker, general manager of the Plymouth Industrial Park where the building was located.

Larry Groth, Plymouth Community Fire chief, turned control of the site over to Walker this morning, and Walker has been

diligently trying to get everything back up to speed.

At the end of the day yesterday, neighbor Atlas Tube was running 70 per cent of its operations and Copco Steel was at 50 per cent, Walker said. Both businesses suffered minor damage in Sunday's blaze, when a fire retention wall that separated them from Document Processing collapsed.

Although damage to the neighboring business was not significant, Walker said he had both the gas and electricity to the sites turned off in a precautionary measure.

"I didn't want to take any chances with anything that might have been suspect," he said. "I just didn't want anyone to get hurt."

Fire broke out in the document shredding plant around 4 p.m. Sunday. It spread unfettered, because the old section of the building did not have a fire suppression system.

Firefighters put out the last of the hot spots Thursday afternoon, Groth said. The collapsed roof trapped fire in many places, producing smoldering areas that could only be cooled after wreckage was removed.

## Agenda

### THIS WEEKEND

- Today, the Northville Central Business Association holds its Men's Afternoon Out in downtown Northville. All shoppers are welcome, but gentlemen will receive extra attention as they shop for those special folks. Tomorrow, it's Kids Day to Shop, with the same deal for kids. Call 248-349-7640 for details.

### NEXT WEEK

- Monday, Plymouth's City Commission will meet for its regular meeting at 7 p.m. in City Hall, 201 N. Main St.
- Tuesday, Plymouth Township will hold a special meeting to approve sales of bonds to finance the new 35th District Courthouse. Call 734-453-3840 for details.
- Tuesday, Canton's Board of Trustees will meet at 7 p.m. in Canton Administration Hall, 1150 S. Canton Center Road. Call 734-397-3000.
- Thursday and Friday, government buildings will be closed in observation of the Christmas holiday.

### NEXT WEEKEND

- Saturday, the Our Lady of Good Counsel class of 1980 will hold a reunion. Call 734-455-5475 for info.

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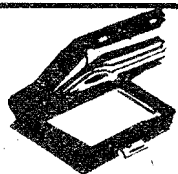
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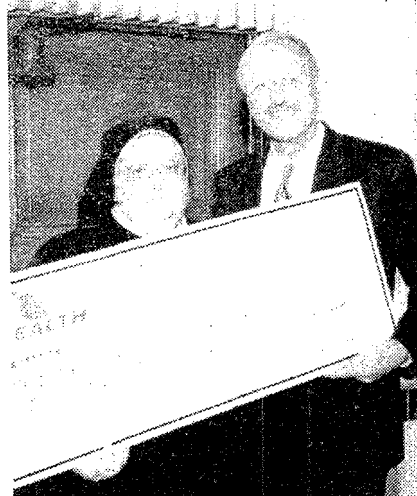
# Getting down to business

## Neighbors in business



Mary Hauk of Canton, was one of 20 farmers from across the state serving on Michigan Farm Bureau's State Policy Development Committee.

Committee members, representing a broad range of agricultural backgrounds, were charged with reviewing more than 900 resolutions this year, brought to them by 68 county Farm Bureaus in Michigan.



Jack F. Moores, Jr, president and CEO of Medhealth Systems Corporation, presented a \$32, 916 check to Sister Linda Willette, Administrator of Our Lady of Providence Center.

Our Lady of Providence Center, located in Northville Township, provides residential, educational and vocational opportunities for developmentally disabled women and children.

# La Bistecca opens Monday

*Restaurant is third upscale venture for the Costanza family*

BY SCOTT SPIELMAN

La Bistecca, located at the junction of Plymouth and Eckles roads in Plymouth Township, bears no resemblance to its previous restaurant incarnations.

The booths and big screen television are gone, replaced by tables and chairs of luxurious, lustrous wood. The previous large dining room and been divided into a dining room and bar area which are separated by French doors.

It's all part of a year-long renovation project by the new owners the Costanza family, who also own and operate Station 885 restaurant in Old Village.

From top to bottom, La Bistecca is designed to be a one of a kind operation, according to Jerry Costanza, Sr.

"It's the only Italian steakhouse in the vicinity," he said.

The type of beef it sells is also unique, according to Jerry, Jr. He said the restaurant will be the only one in the country to sell Piedmontese beef exclusively.

That beef comes from a naturally leaner breed of cattle from Italian Alps in Italy, and has less fat per serving than skinless chicken, pork or traditional beef.

"It's even been endorsed by the American Heart Association as a heart smart product," Jerry Jr., said.

But beef dishes aren't the only thing on the menu at the upscale restaurant. Jerry Jr said their will also be a selection of veal, lamb, a daily selection of fresh fish as well as some Costanza original recipes. They will also feature a wide assortment of fine wines to complement the meals, he said.

"We'll have an extensive selection of wines as far as price range and style, either by the bottle or glass," Jerry, Jr said. Dinners range in price from \$15-\$35, and bottles of wine begin at \$25, according to Jerry, Jr.

On the far side of the elegant dining room is La Bistecca's bar. Separated from the main room by a French door, the room is cigar-friendly, and even has a humidor built into the bar.

Patrons needn't worry about the smoke, however. The bar operates on a completely different ventilation system than the main dining room.

"There are more than ample smoke

filters, and it's completely sealed from the dining room," Jerry Jr said.

The luxurious bar room also features a separate piano bar, with a pianist playing live music Wednesday through Saturday.

Even though the restaurant fronts Plymouth road, it is not exactly a high profile location. That doesn't worry the Costanzas however — it's a situation they've been in before, when they opened Station 885 on Starkweather Street in 1985.

"That was the worst location we could get. No one even knew we were there," he said. "A lot of real nice, top-

notch restaurants are not as concerned with their location. People are going to come to the restaurant because of reputation, good food and service, not because of where it's located."

Costanza said La Bistecca will be open Dec. 21 at 11:30 a.m. Seating will be open for lunch, but dinner reservations will be required, he said.

### La Bistecca

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Open: lunch and dinner Mon.- Fri.  
Dinner Sat.  
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**Golden goodies for the holidays . . .** Piles and piles of donated toys aren't enough to keep Mark Dowell of Mel's Golden Razor from doing his job this week. The toys are part of the Mel's annual toy donation program, that according to owner Mel Bobcean, "seems to keep getting bigger each year." (Crier photo by Scott Goodwin)



In Canton:

# Non-union workers get 4% more in '99

BY SCOTT SPIELMAN

Tuesday, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a 4 per cent increase in base salary and salary grade ranges for Canton's non-union employees.

The raise is based on a recommendation from the Merit Commission, and part of a yearly evaluation process according to Dan Durack, director of Administrative and Community Services.

"They take a look at other communities and make a recommendation," he said. "In most years it's just a wage increase, but this year the fringe benefits changed, too."

Non-union employees are department heads and administrative workers such as planners, engineers and managers. In addition to the base 4 per cent salary increase, they also received increased dental coverage.

The Merit Commission looks at comparable communities to establish their recommendations. Durack said. Municipalities of similar size and organization are studied such as Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield,

Shelby Township, Livonia and Redford Township, but it's not an exact science, he said.

"There are no precise matches," he said. "There is no community exactly like Canton. We've tried to refine it to a group of about eight or 10 communities somewhat similar in size."

Those communities may have a different organizational structure than Canton, as well, he said. A community planner may have responsibilities in Farmington different from its counterpart in Canton, for example.

Rather than survey every position, the commission uses a group of eight positions that are similar throughout all communities as benchmark positions.

The commission then factors in not only what they are paid in other communities, but where they fit into Canton's organizational structure, Durack said.

"We don't want to be the top and we don't want to be at the bottom," he said. "We try to stay slightly above average."



Workers begin the long process of cleaning up the wreckage Thursday at Document Processing (Crier photo by Scott Spielman).

## Family fought flames

Continued from pg. 3

Groth said the fire was reported by an employe who happened to stop by the business with his family. They were returning from the plant's Christmas party, which was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Schoolcraft Road.

"The family made a brief effort to put the fire out, but it was just spreading too quickly," Groth said.

Groth said the investigation was still open, although it doesn't appear to be anything suspicious about the fire's origins. It caused an estimated \$5-\$6 million in damage, including those sustained by Atlas and Copco, Groth said.

Document Processing has since relocated its offices to Livonia and has sent Plymouth employes to work at other locations, accord-

ing to John McDonnough, vice president of Document Processing.

McDonnough said he found work for all Plymouth employes. Production workers helped unload the trucks and other employes worked at other locations, he said.

The plant's operations — shredding confidential documents — were moved to one of Document Processing's four other plants, McDonnough said. The company has plants in Indianapolis, Columbus, Grand Rapids and Chicago.

McDonnough said transportation to those plants was a major concern, but is eased by the lack of snow and ice on the road.

"We didn't miss a beat," he said. "That's a good thing, especially in the Christmas season. We didn't want anyone to suffer hardship."

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# Applicants aplenty in Canton DDA Director search

BY SCOTT SPIELMAN

Last month, Canton Supervisor Tom Yack didn't think it would be an easy task to hire a Community Development Director.

Now, however, he said the township has received so many applications that it is adding another screening process to help filter some out.

"We're going to send out a questionnaire to test them on their attitude and knowledge," he said. "A lot of people go through want ads and just send out resumes everywhere. When they see a questionnaire, the strong ones sort of bubble to the top. These are the ones we're interested in."

Yack first proposed the position to the DDA board this summer. After refining the duties and responsibilities of the community development director, the new position was proposed to the Board of

Trustees last month, and approved.

The director would split their time between Canton's DDA and the remainder of the community. He or she would help oversee construction projects along the Ford Road corridor, help build business relationships along Canton's longest commercial strip and help attract diverse businesses.

He or she would also be responsible for retaining Canton's industrial base and attracting other developers to the area.

Yack initially thought the position, which has a salary range of \$35,000-\$50,000 would be difficult to fill because of the strong economy.

The City of Plymouth received more than 50 resumes during their recent DDA Director search, and Canton seems on its way to receiving at least that many.

Yack said the position could be filled as early as February.

# Long and winding chase

Continued from pg. 2

name. That name, Frank Kyle came back from the Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) with a felony warrant out of Ypsilanti for possession of cocaine, according to reports.

Marinelli attempted to handcuff Kyle, but Marinelli pulled away and fled from the car. Marinelli gave chase, and Kyle fell down in a nearby ditch. Marinelli also fell, but managed to grab the suspect's left ankle.

Kyle then kicked Marinelli's hand, breaking his grip, and renewed his flight to the east, according to reports.

Marinelli chased the suspect on foot through the Academy Point mobile home park to the I-275 freeway, where he lost sight of Kyle.

Canton dispatch contacted the Wayne Police Department and asked for assistance from their canine unit, according to Ofc. Leonard Schemanske. Canton's canine unit works during the night shift, and was unavailable that afternoon.

Dispatch also informed Marinelli that several drivers had reported the suspect fleeing across the freeway. He was later reported to have been seen in the backyard of a house on South Lotz Road.

Marinelli and Wayne Ofc. Foley and canine Ofc. Axel began to track Kyle. The track first led east through the woods, then went along the fence of a recycling center. It then turned north and circled back south a short distance later. Finally the track turned back to the west, back to I-275, according to reports.

Marinelli and Foley found the Kyle's white shirt along the track. Marinelli was informed that the suspect ran into a junk yard at Maple and Hannan roads.

Marinelli and Foley found him hiding under a large amount of scrap metal, reports said. The canine bit the suspect on the leg, and he was taken into custody without further incident, 90 minutes after the chase began.

Kyle was transported to Canton Public Safety, then to Oakwood hospital by the fire department to have the dog bite treated.

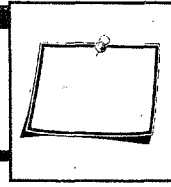
Marinelli was treated at St. Joe's Hospital for a fractured pinky finger.

Kyle was charged with resisting arrest — injury inflicted, which carries a sentence of two years in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine, Schemanske said. He will appear in 35th District court Jan. 14.



## What's Happening

To list your group's event in this calendar, send or deliver the notice IN WRITING to: The Crier, 821 Penniman Ave., Plymouth, MI 48170. Information received BY NOON FRIDAY will be used for Wednesday's calendar (space permitting).



## Events



**The Waiting...** EMI recording artist The Waiting will be in concert on New Year's Eve at Calvary Baptist Church Gymnasium. The Waiting is an Atlanta-based band that will release their third album, *Unfazed*, on December 22. They have three number one singles to their credit and have earned several award nominations and critical acclaim. Tickets are \$12 and are available by calling Brad Cannon at Solid Rock Bible Church: 734-455-7711.

### OLGC REUNION

A Dec. 26 reunion is planned for members of the OLGC class of 1980. For more information please call or email with your current address: Kathy Meade Brady at 202-546-4377 or kbrady@erg.com; Karen Detrich Gearn at 734-455-5475.

### NORTHVILLE NIGHT

Northville Parks and Recreation will again be sponsoring the second annual family New Year's Eve event called Northville Night. More than 400 people attended last year's event, which will once again be held at Northville High School. Tickets for this family event go on sale Nov. 1 at the Recreation Department and are \$10 for adults and \$8 for children under the age of 12. There will be clowns, carnival games, slot cars and miniature golf and a magic show. For more information contact Northville Parks and Recreation at (248) 349-0203.

### CHRISTMAS MUSIC DRAMA

The Father's Gift of Love, a choral drama, will be presented by the Celebration Choir, Soloists and Drama Ministry of Calvary Baptist Church in Canton. Reader's Theater, drama and contemporary choral and solo music combine to tell how the innkeeper's wife and one of the magi discover in their own ways the significance of the new born King of the Jews. The show will be Dec. 18 at 8 p.m. For more information call 734-455-0022.

## GUIDE to Entertainment

# Go PCN

Your GUIDE to commercial entertainment in the Plymouth-Canton-Northville Community. Also note community and non-profit groups' events, listed in this Crier under What's Happening.

### BOULDERS

734-459-4190; Thurs.: *Danny Cole*; Fri.: *Jim Prescott*; Sat.: *Night Flight*

### CANTON CINEMA 6

734-981-1900. "Rugrats" "A Bug's Life" "Psycho" "Jack Frost" "Star Trek"

### CLUB CANTON

734-722-0722; Wed. - Sat.: "Sierra Blue Band"

### ERNESTO'S

734-453-2002; Mon.-Thurs.: *Strolling Musicians*; Tues.-Sat.: *Live Music in Piano Bar*.

### GENITT'S HOLE IN THE WALL

248-349-0522; Live Interactive Dinner Theater: "Clueless at Christmas."

### KARL'S COUNTRY CABIN

734-455-8450; Thurs.: "Big Dave and the Ultrasonics"

### LOWER TOWN GRILL

734-451-1213; Sat.: *Glen Eddy*

### LUCILLE'S TAVERN

734-397-1988; Wed. - Sat.: *Walley Jackson*

### MARQUIS THEATRE

248-349-8110; Live Musical Theatre "Cinderella" through Jan. 17.

### PENN THEATRE

734-453-0870; Now playing: "Simon Birch"

### PLYMOUTH COFFEE BEAN

734-454-0178; Thurs.: *Del*; Fri.: *Lou Rye*; Sat.: *Family Magic*

### STATION 885 RESTAURANT

734-459-0885; Wed. - Sat.: Live music with *Wally Gibson*;

### WAGON WHEEL LOUNGE

248-349-8686; Thurs.: Open Jam; Sat.: *Ben Moore and the Blues Express*

These listings are free of charge and are accurate as of noon Friday, prepared for Wednesday's Crier. Bookings, reservations, cover charges and capacities may change, so please call to verify information. A venue wishing to be listed or to update information should call The Crier at (734) 453-6900 by noon Friday.

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PLYMOUTH-CANTON'S RADIO STATION

# Staff turnover at CSC

Continued from pg. 1

restaurant. It also includes a 15-acre plot of vacant land fronting Michigan Avenue.

Canton will tap \$1.6 million from the Community Improvement Fund, \$1.5 million from the General Fund and \$2.5 million in building authority bonds for the center.

Although Canton officials had hoped to retain Canton Softball Center employees to continue to run the center, they opted for a

severance buy out as part of the purchase agreement, Gouin said.

Gouin said Canton will hire an operations coordinator to run the facility and a sports specialist to coordinate league games, and some part-time employees to help with the day-to-day operations of the facility.

"We put in the 1999 budget the cost of those positions," Yack said. "We're going to treat them as non-township employees for

one year. We'll hire them on a contractual basis because we want to see how the facility operates."

Canton's purchase of the center precipitated the name change of the Plymouth-Canton Junior Baseball Association. The organization will be called the Canton Community Junior Baseball Association (CCJBA).

According to CCJBA president Harry Hill, the name change doesn't reflect any change in policy over who can play ball.

"That's never been an issue," Hill said. "We don't believe in turning anyone

away. This isn't the first time the league has changed its name. It's nothing new."

Hill said acquisition of the 12 fields at Canton Softball Center is a boon to both Plymouth and Canton, because it will provide better fields for play. The fields currently used by the league can now be used for practice fields, something the league didn't have before, he said.

Richard Shook, vice president of the league, agrees.

"It will give us more fields to play on," he said. "It will be a benefit to everyone in the Plymouth-Canton Community."

# Non-union raises lag behind

Continued from pg. 1

non-union workers to AFSCME and the Teamsters.

The unions will then mail those employees information about their organizations, and invitations to meeting in the near future.

After the meeting, workers who support organizing will send AFSCME a card declaring their interest.

"If we get 30 per cent of the cards saying they want us to come in, we'll call (the state) for an election," Warner said.

The election would need one vote more than 50 per cent in support of unionization to pass, according to Warner.

As most City employees get raises at higher percentages, non-union workers are "disgruntled, but not militant," about unionization, one department head said.

A clerical employee who is among the newer hires at City Hall said she is willing to hear what benefits unionization could provide.

"All the employees are looking for is to be treated fairly," one department head said.

There are currently four unions — three for police department employees, one for municipal services staff — to represent the vast majority of the 70-some workers employed in the City.

Roughly 20 of them are not unionized, mostly clerical workers, a few municipal services employees and heads of the City departments, such as the building department, and the clerk's and finance director's offices.

Over the last five years, unionized employees were given contracts that included 3 and 4 per cent raises. At the same time, increases for non-union workers have clung to cost-of-living levels — 1.7 per cent this year.

The City budget includes another 1.3 per cent to fund raises for non-union workers based on merit, or expanded responsibilities, according to City Manager Steve Walters.

Typically, five or six of the roughly 20 non-union workers are given merit-based and other increases each year, according to Carol Stone, administrative services director.

One department head said merit-based and other increases are difficult to get, because there is no set criteria to aim for.

Walters said all raises beyond the 1.7 per cent increase depend on his approval, including those department heads recommended for their employees.

As the head of City management, Walters has also been its chief negotiator. He has represented the City during the bargaining process each union enters at the end of every contract. Most contracts run for three years.

Conditions for non-union workers are set annually when the City Commission drafts its budget in April.

At that time, Walters proposes to the Commission a pay increase for non-union workers. The City Commission can then accept or modify that

## Percentage pay increases for City employees

	7/98	7/97	7/96	7/95	7/94	Avg.
Dispatchers	4	4	4	4	3	3.8
Command	2	2	4	3	2.5	2.7
DMS	3	4	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.66
Non-union	1.7	2.3	2.8	3	2.5	2.46
Police officers	4	2	2.1	0*	2.5	2.12

\* In '95, police employees opted for an increase in retirement benefits in lieu of a pay increase (Carol Stone, City of Plymouth)

figure.

City documents show that in five years, only the police officers union has received a lower average increase than non-union workers. The average raise for officers is skewed, however, by data from 1995, when officers chose to forego a pay raise in exchange for an increase in retirement benefits.

Police dispatchers, police command officers and Department of Municipal Services employees all took home raises that were, on average, calculated at a higher percentage than those of non-union workers, according to City documents.

"It's hard to feel bad about asking for more money. It's not like we're out ahead of the others," a department head said.

Unionizing is not the only approach to more equitable raises though, the department head said.

A large portion of the City's non-union employees have worked at City Hall for years, long enough to remember the last union push in the early 1980s. That vote failed, and in the 18 years since, they've continued to hold out. Until about 1991, a department head said, non-union wages were in-step with union pay.

Walters will leave his post as City Manager in January. Non-union workers might wait to see what kind of deal the new City Manager will offer them.

After all, the department head pointed out, workers have avoided unionization for 18 years. "We could always just do it later."

The employee behind the union talks said organizing could bring more than just a higher wage to employees.

Unlike the vacation time usually fixed in union contracts, non-union workers' time off is subject to management's whims, he said.

Now, the worker said, a number of variables have aligned to suggest the time is right for organizing.

But the strongest sign came in August, he said, when the City fired Tom Willette while slimming its already anemic recreation department.

"We are truly at-will employees," he said. "And the way it's been shaky lately, we want some support, some backing."

"We've got a commission that's really gung-ho to change house," the worker said. "Even the senior secretaries are like, Yeah, this is crazy."



The Residents, Staff and Commissioners of the Plymouth Housing Commission would like to take a moment to extend most heartfelt thanks to everyone in the Plymouth Community who contributed in some way to the residents of

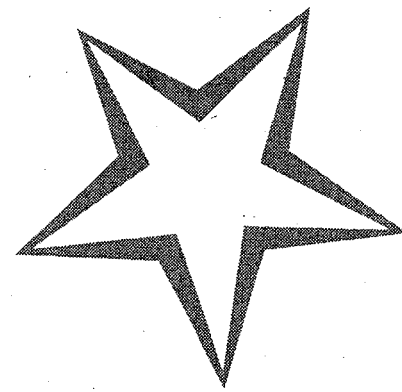
## Tonquish Creek Manor

*Thank you one and all. Our warmest wishes to you and yours for a healthy happy holiday season.*

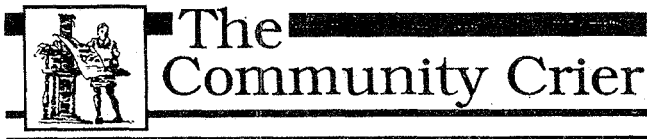
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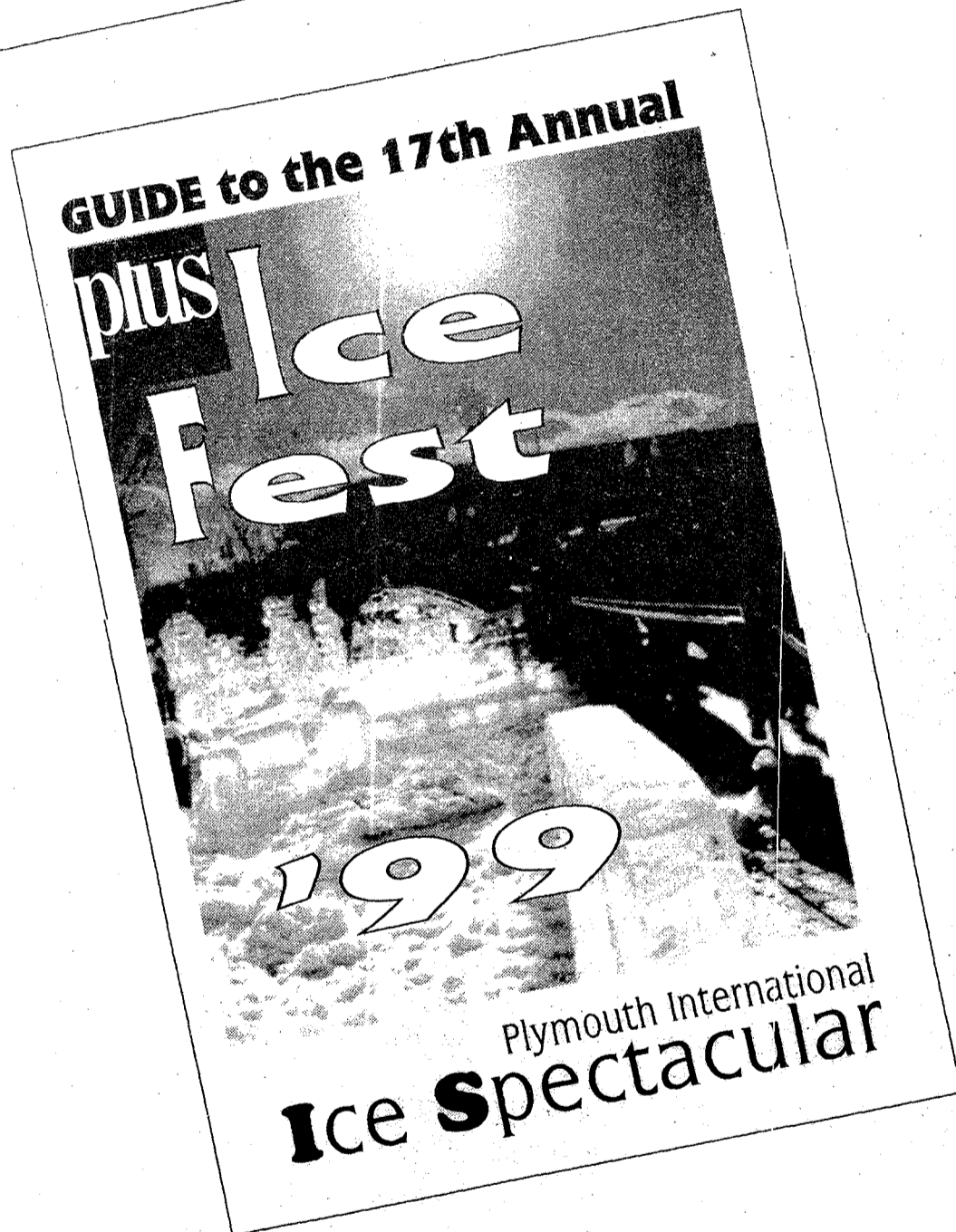


# Year in Review 1998

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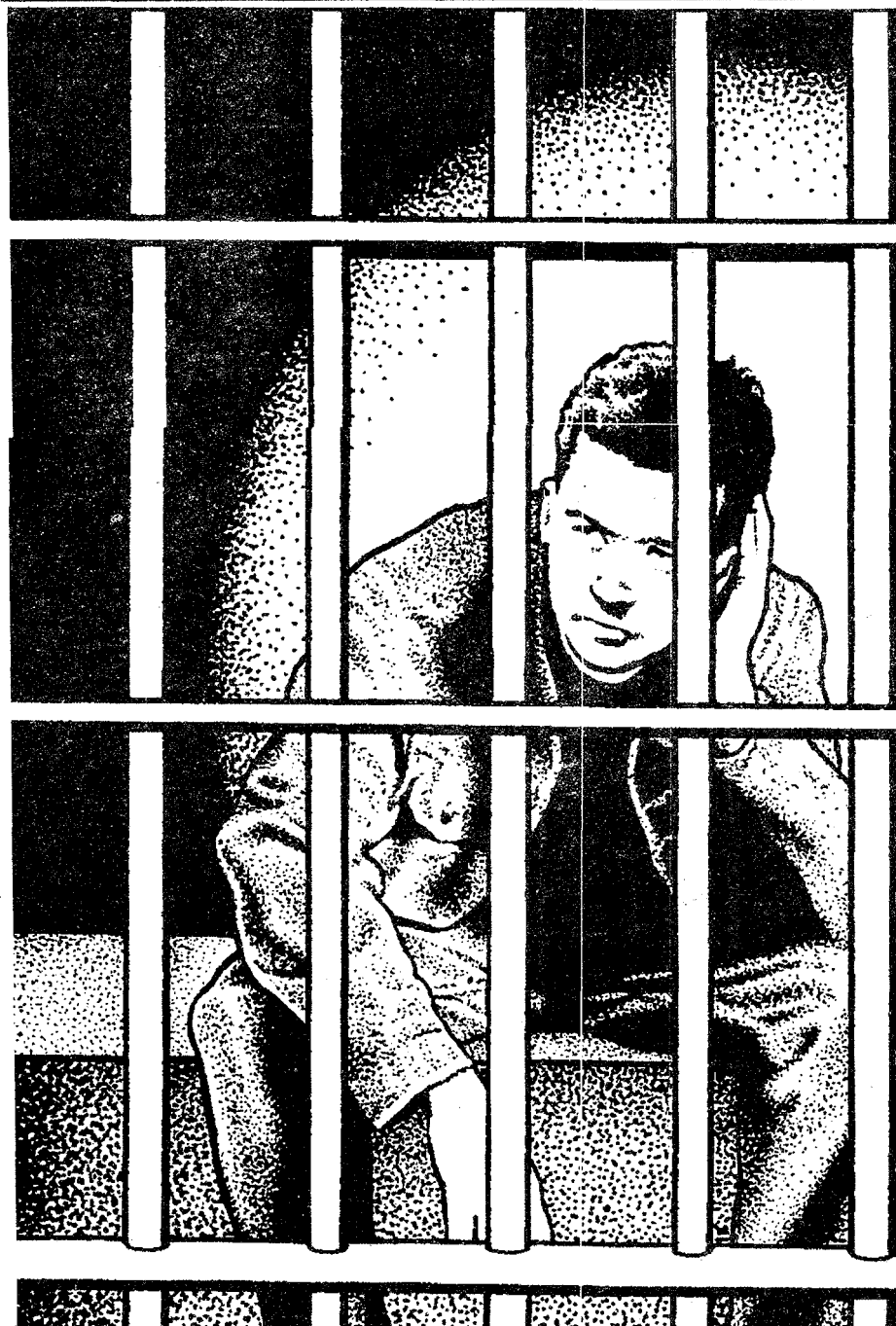
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Canton • (734)455-3200



# Community deaths

## Obituaries

For more information on listing a paid obituary notice in The Crier, contact your funeral director, or call (734) 453-6900.

### MARY ROSS HILL

Mary Ross Hill, a Plymouth resident, died Dec. 12, 1998 at the age of 86.

Mrs. Hill was born Dec. 22, 1911 in Scotland. She was an executive secretary at the Chrysler Corporation. She was a member of Risen Christ Lutheran Church.

She is survived by her daughters, Carol Ann Benner of Elm Grove, WI, Patricia (Bob) K. Conrad of Plymouth; sisters, Barbara Cole of Royal Oak; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Kenneth F. Hill; and sister, Nan Cash.

Services were held at Risen Christ Lutheran Church in Plymouth with the Rev. David W. Martin and Mr. Hugh McMartin officiating. Burial was at White Chapel Cemetery in Troy. Arrangements were made by the Vermeulen Funeral Home in Plymouth. Memorial contributions can be given to Risen Christ Church—Building Fund, 46250 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth, MI 48170-3446 or the Salvation Army, P.O. Box 384, Plymouth MI 48170.

### HAROLD E. KENDALL

Harold E. Kendall, a Plymouth resident, died Dec. 14, 1998 at the age of 79.

Mr. Kendall was born April 27, 1919 in Cadillac, MI. He was a supervisor at the Michigan Bell Telephone Company for 44 years. He retired in 1982. He came to the Plymouth community in 1955 from Standish, MI. He was a member of the Pioneers

Barber Shop Quartet. He loved to fish, hunt, and sing with the barber shop quartet. He also sang at wedding and funerals with his sisters. He was active with his son in the Boy Scouts — an interest that he continued for many years after his son finished.

He is survived by his wife, Madeline of Plymouth; son, Jay (Mercedes) of Romulus; brother, Robert of Jackson; sisters, Natalie Koch of Jackson, MI, Loraine Sulpher of California, Aunt, Annabelle Moffit of California; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Arrangements were made by and services held at the Schrader-Howell Funeral Home with Pastor Drex Morton officiating. Burial was at Riverside Cemetery in Plymouth. Memorial contributions can be given to the Parkinson Foundation, 3990 John R. Detroit, MI 48201.

### EARL GEORGE "JOE" OTT, JR

E.G. "Joe" Ott Jr, a former Plymouth resident, died Dec. 12, 1998 at the age of 76.

Mr. Ott was born May 17, 1922 in Fostoria, OH. He was a controller for Essex International in Detroit for more than 30 years, retiring in 1979. He was a WWII Navy Veteran and a former member of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, and the Plymouth Rotary. He was also a member of AARP.

He is survived by his son, Richard J. Ott of Glendale, AZ; daughters, Mary Beth (John) Gilles of Plymouth, Denice A. Ott of Oak Park, IL; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild; sisters, Shirley (Tom) Dale of Denver, CO, Eileen Huber of Napoleon, OH, Mary Lou (Bill) Peper of Holgate, OH, and Dorothy Baringer of Melvindale, MI. He was preceded in death by his son, Stephen Ott.

Services will be held at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Napoleon, OH with Father Patrick Scharf celebrant. Internment will be made at St. Augustine Catholic Cemetery in Napoleon, OH. Arrangements were made by Walker Mortuary, Inc. Memorial contributions can be given to the American Lung Association or to the charity of choice.

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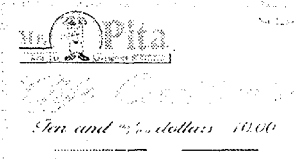
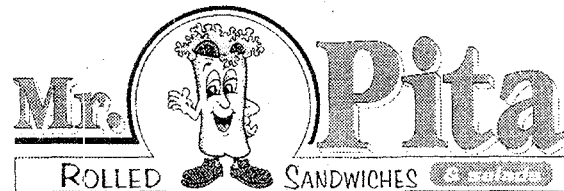
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### Curiosities

**The Crier carrier** who does the greatest job, with the greatest amount of December collections will win **Whalers Tix!**

ICE FEST

IS

JAN. 13-19

"Funny how people have their peculiarities about bed."—Ted Boloven, 1998 (Yes, an accountant said that! Ask him!)

"It's not a question of locking your door, you just have to keep your house clean."

—Anonymous about "neighborliness" in Plymouth-Canton-Northville.

"The ornaments of a house are the friends who frequent it."—Ralph Waldo Emerson

If LINDA L. decides to quit clerking, she's got a fallback gig—Music Promoter.

—Bryon Manilow

KIM: furnace: ? Call BVP, A.S.A.P.

### Curiosities

"SHE CAN TALK almost as well as I can stand."—Anonymous from the floor after the party.

LIAM KIRKBRIDE writes his wishes to Santa and sends them over the fax machine waves—thanks Ed for the consideration.

MINNESOTA CADY'S & ILLINOIS PEARSON'S: We await your arrival!

TO EVERYONE: Have the best holiday ever!

Santa told me Liam has been the very best kid on the block!

To my favourite kids, Zak, Darcy and Scott:  
Merry Christmas from GRAMMA

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes to all!

Mom: Happy Birthday Love, Zak

### Curiosities

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Thanks to everyone in The Crier/Comma, staff for being playmates and foster parents while Liam's mommy works from time to time.

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Living Science Foundation – animal keeper 20 - 30 hrs. per week, \$5.50/hr. to start, in Plymouth (734) 207-8291, 1320 Goldsmith, Plymouth, MI 48170.

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\$7.50 per hr. • Must be 17 or older. Games are held weeknights.

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# Curiosity drove lighting

Continued from pg. 1

he talks about the response his lights inspire from those driving by.

It's hard to imagine he's not exaggerating at least a little bit when he talks about "bumper-to-bumper" traffic through his neighborhood. But those who slowly drive beneath the branches are sure to find others doing the same, drawn like moths to the lights they see high above the rooftops along Joy Road and Main Street.

"Kids come by and they get out of their cars and start playing in the yard," he said. Part of the fun for those who stop to talk, Finney said, is trying to guess his secret.

"The first year I did it, I saw a guy uptown I used to run around with," he said. "He asked me, 'How'd you get 'em up so high? I told him, Well, I used to have a trained squirrel, but somebody ran him over.'"

The friend had to pause for a minute when he found a dead squirrel in the back of Finney's pickup (he had cleared it from the street in front of his house). And since then, it's been hard to get a straight answer out of The Lightman. Creating fabulous answers brings a playful light to his eyes that's as bright as his trees.

*My nephew came by after deer hunting one afternoon. I looked up at the tree and I told him, Get your bow out for a minute.'*

**- Ron Finney**  
*The Lightman*

nephew found the test arrow about a block away near Main Street.

While mindful of public well being, Finney still thought his idea would work. With a little ingenuity and fewer foot-pounds of firepower, Finney developed the technique that has taken holiday lighting to new heights in Plymouth Township.

A small section of metal piping weights the arrow down, improving control and reducing its range. At the tip he tapes some 12-pound fishing line that leads back to a rod and reel.

Then, it's fire away.

The arrow soars up over the tree, and back down to his yard.

Finney untapes the arrow, and ties the fishing line to a length of sturdy nylon rope with about 100 feet of white lights at the other end. Then, he simply reels in the line and the rope, and watches the lights go up.

When they're stretched out straight, he cuts the fishing line and lashes the nylon rope to a tree or another anchor point in his yard. In years past, Finney has run as many as 35 separate lines from ground to treetop.

"I have more fun for \$100 worth of lights than anybody in

Plymouth," he said. So much fun, in fact, others have volunteered their help over the years.

"I came out once and found a box of lights on front porch with a note saying, 'Please Mr. Lightman, install us'."

Finney's friend Carl Pursell, a Plymouth resident and longtime U.S. Congressman, also had a hand in the design. One segment of blinkers hangs above Finney's driveway.

"That was Carl's idea," he said.

All told, the display adds about \$60 to Finney's electric bill each month, he said. It requires a bit of work to string them up, a gradual process that begins sometime in November and ends when he takes them down sometime in January. In between, Finney replaces strings blown out by the wind or torn down by the occasional rowdies.

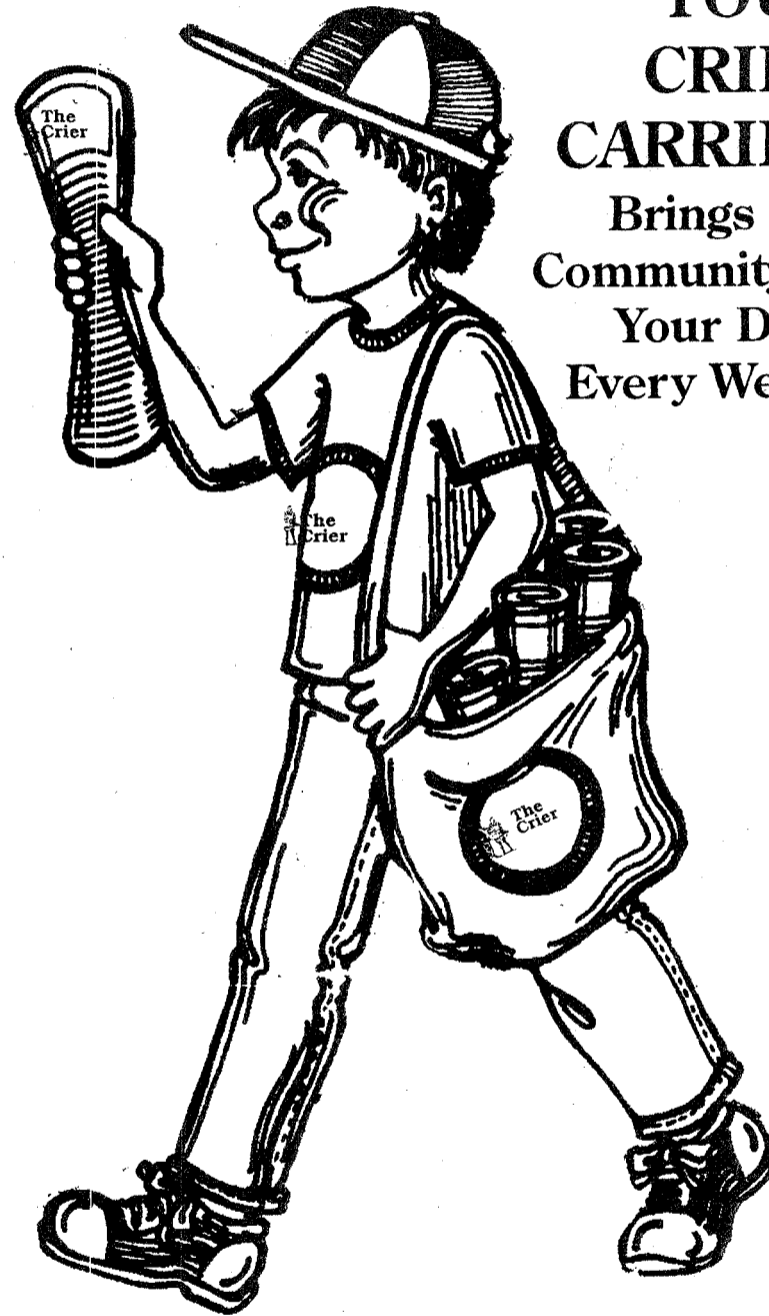
But he says he plans to keep up the his work, literally. Driving down Rocker beneath the lights is becoming a tradition for those who know.

Besides, he points out, unlike the icicle lights and luminescent deer that appear in several of the Township's posh western neighborhoods, Finney's display is one of a kind.

"That's what really amazes me," he said. "Nobody's copied it."

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# The Crier



# Sports

## All-American Pioneer too much for Canton hoop

### Chiefs fall to 1-2 with loss

BY SCOTT GOODWIN

How often can you hold an opposing player to 29 points and feel that you controlled him pretty well?

When that player is LaVelle Blanchard, the 6-7 Ann Arbor Pioneer forward with all-American potential.

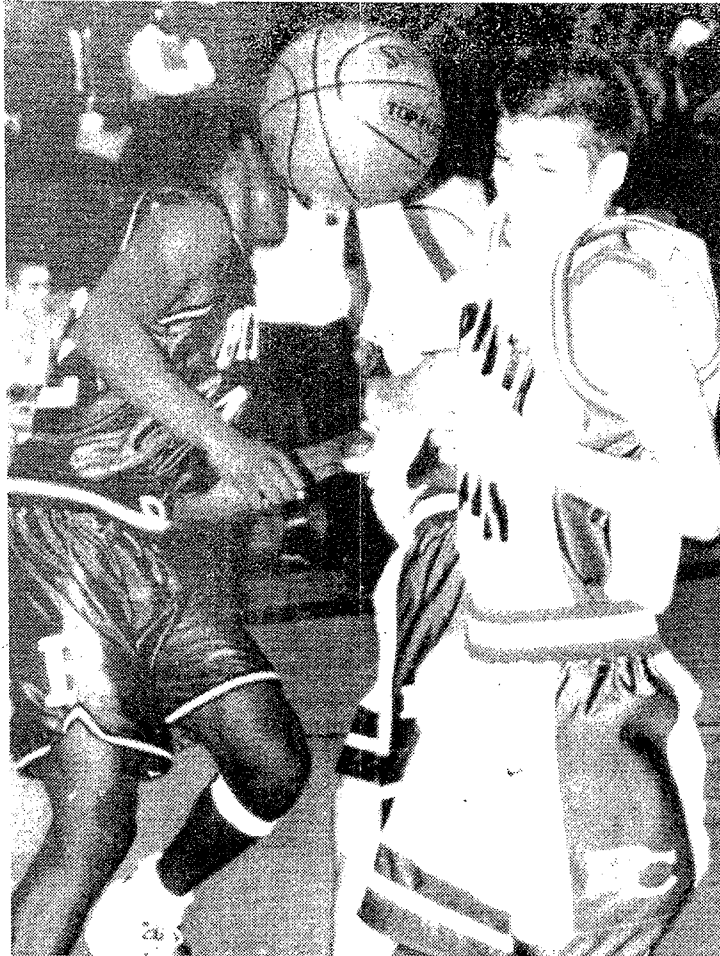
Nonetheless, Blanchard did score 29 Thursday night, pushing his state-title contending team past a young Canton squad, 71-57.

Chief Junior Jason Waidmann continued his early season scoring surge with 21 points, while Joe Cortellini and Mike Major each added 10.

"We played well at times," said Canton coach Dan Young. "But we were inconsistent."

The loss drops Canton to 1-2 on the season, the only win coming against Wayne Memorial in an overtime opener. "I think we're still figuring out how to win in the big games," Young said.

Canton will drive north next Monday and Tuesday to compete in the four team Traverse City Tournament.



A common sight for the Chiefs Thursday night, recovering after a Pioneer basket. The Chiefs had their moments, according to coach Dan Young, but they were too far and few between to overcome Pioneer's talent. (Crier photo by R. Alwood Jr.)

The other teams include Holland, Traverse City Central and Saginaw.

## Salem freshman Drake debuts strong as Salem places second, Canton third in season's first meet at Ann Arbor Pioneer

BY SCOTT GOODWIN

Canton Gymnastic coach John Cunningham doesn't want to mince words about his crew's third place finish at Thursday's quad meet in Ann Arbor.

"We just weren't mentally in the meet," he said. "We had a really good practice (Wednesday), but today they looked they just came off the street."

Cunningham said he had hoped his team could have topped the 130 point mark, a score that would have given them a first place finish.

But instead, they came in at 123.65, four points behind meet champion Pioneer and second place Salem. Ann Arbor Huron was last with 118.65.

Freshman Melissa Drake showed all her potential and more for the Rocks, taking first in three of four events. She was second in bars with a score of 8.8.

Despite only a few weeks of practice, Canton junior Liz Fitzgerald took third on the vault with 8.5 and fifth on beam with a 7.75.

## GYMNASTICS

"Everybody but Drake fell off the beam," Cunningham said. "It was like they were being blown off."

Amy Driscoll had a pair of third place finishes on floor and uneven bars, with scores of 8.75 and 8.45 respectively.

Salem's April Aquinto took fourth on floor at 8.7 and fifth on bars at 8.15.

Cunningham said he was impressed with some of his younger performers, although they didn't place. In particular he mentioned Maggie Bette, a freshman expected to do great things in the future.

Despite his team's lackluster performance, Cunningham is still confident.

"I've seen teams play terrible one day and two days later play like olympians," he said. "We'll get better. I think we'll be a top ten team by the end of the year."

Canton will play a rematch with Freeland today that was cancelled last week.

## WHALER OF THE WEEK



#36 RIGHT WING

Tommy Valtonen

A rookie forward chosen by the Detroit Red Wings in the second round of this year's NHL draft Valtonen is the Whalers leading scorer for rookies. He was chosen by team Finland this past week to play at the World Junior Championship.

Whaler of the week chosen by The Crier editorial staff and Brought to you by:

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## Sports shorts

### \*\*\* WHALER CONTEST \*\*\*

Hey kids. How would you like to have lunch with a Plymouth Whaler? Better yet, how would you like to have a Whaler bring you lunch at your school?

Well, you might have your chance, if you can get those creative juices flowing and produce a poster that shows your Whaler spirit.

The contest is open to all boys and girls in kindergarten through sixth grade.

There are three age groups and a winner will be chosen from each. The winners will receive a pair of tickets to a Whaler game and T-shirt. They will also be introduced to the crowd on the Dec. 29 game.

Plus, a Whaler will bring them lunch at their school.

So get those pens and pencils rolling. The Whalers need your help.

Entries can be dropped off either at Compuware Sports Arena on Beck Road or at The Community Crier offices in Downtown Plymouth, 821 Penniman Avenue.

Every entry should include the artist's name, school, grade and favorite Whaler.

The deadline for the poster contest is Dec. 23.

### PLYMOUTH-CANTON CO-ED VOLLEYBALL STANDINGS

As of 12-14-98:

**East Division:** Back Again, 6-0; Crows Nest, 6-0; We Dig, 5-1; Toe Jams, 4-2; Progressive, 3-3; Single Spirit #1, 0-6; Team 3, 0-6; Back Yard Gang, 0-6.

**West Division:** Thud, 5-1; CRRC, 4-2; Lost B's, 4-2; Buddy's, 3-3; Single Spirit #3, 3-3; Six Pack, 2-4; Crossfire, 2-4; Single Spirit #2, 1-5.

### RACQUETBALL LEAGUE

Canton parks and recreation department is sponsoring a Men's winter racquetball league at Body Rocks in Livonia.

The league begins Jan. 13 and will run for 13 weeks. Court times are from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. The cost is \$100 per person. Call 397-5110 for more information.

# Ambassadors drop two, but stay in first

BY NICK GISMONDI

One of the things that makes the NAHL such an exciting league is that from game to game there are no certainties in the outcome. All the teams are talented this season, making every night a challenge. The Ambassadors found this out over the weekend hitting a chip in the ice going 0-2 against Cleveland and Springfield.

On Saturday the Ambassadors took on last year's biggest rival: the Springfield Jr. Blues. The Blues have a talented team up front that taunts such offensive power as Nic Boileau, who leads the team in goals (16), assists (21), and points (37). And T.J. Latorre, who has 13 goals this year.

Early on, Saturday, it was the Ambassadors that struck first when Mark Mink netted his 15th goal of the season at the 5:14 mark of the first period. They increased the lead to two when they scored again at 10 minutes later, when Steve Jackson found the net for his 16 goal of the season, tying him for the team lead. J.J. Swistak was credited with the assist on a perfect neutral-zone pass.

The second period was back and forth with the Jr. Blues applying most of the pressure. Springfield closed the gap when Bo Chessman netted one at the 13:39 mark, off the pass by Latorre.

In the third, Springfield tied the game at two apiece when Latorre scored his 14 of the season. After a five minute overtime the game was sent into a shoot out. Compuware hasn't had much luck in this area all season with three losses in all three attempts. Jackson, Shouneyia, Vogt, and Redwood shot for the Ambassadors, but came up blank against Brian Rogers who stopped 15 shots. Boileau and Tony Giacalone found the net for the Jr. Blues and boosted them to their 18 win of the season, defeating Compuware 4-2. Compuware did pick up a point on the night.

On Friday the Ambassadors were matched against the Cleveland Barons who have been a tough team all season long. And, as it seems to be a matter of custom this year for the Ambassadors, they again fell in overtime, 2-1.

Ambassador rookie goalie Tom Fortunate got his first start in the NAHL this night and performed well turning away 13 shots.

The first period was a slow one for both teams. The Ambassadors fired eight shots on Will Hamelc, who played extremely well, and in the first Cleveland only found the net twice.

In the second period, Baron's star Ryan Fultz, who also leads the league in goals opened the scoring on a blast

from the point which gave him his 18 of the season, off the pass of Joe Rakowicz to make it 1-0. Then six minutes later Andre Robichaud (who will be playing for the Plymouth Whalers over the next several weeks) tied the game for the Ambassadors when he scored his second goal of the season when he let a rifle go from the point that caught the inside post at the 14:36 mark.

The third would go with out any scoring, and at the end of regulation, it was tied at 1-1, with the shots in favor of Compuware 30-12.

The teams were headed for OT. The Ambassadors got the first rush down on Hamelc but the puck was poked away and Nick Jardine made a pass out of his own zone to neutral ice for Jim Slater who then brought it up the middle as Colin Shields broke in wide to the left. Slater threw the pass across and beat a sliding Fortunate for the OT game winner to give the Barons their 15th win of the season.

Despite the 0-2 weekend for Compuware, they did get one point for the shoot out loss, and are still in first place in the NAHL with a record of 19-6-3 and 41 points, still three ahead of the Soo who lost to Grand Rapids over the weekend. Compuware's next games will be this Friday and Saturday in Chicago against the fourth place Freeze.

## WHALER WATCH

### OHL STANDINGS (Through Dec. 17)

WEST	W	L	T	Last 10	Pts.
PLYMOUTH	24	4	2	8-2-0	50
S.S. MARIE	17	10	3	5-3-2	37
SARNIA	17	11	3	8-1-1	37
LONDON	13	19	0	5-5-0	26
WINDSOR	10	19	3	3-6-1	23
EAST	W	L	T	Last 10	Pts.
OTTAWA	26	4	2	8-2-0	54
PETER.	20	12	0	7-3-0	40
BELLEVILLE	16	11	6	5-2-3	38
OSHAWA	16	12	2	7-3-0	34
KINGSTON	10	21	1	3-7-0	21
MIDWEST	W	L	T	Last 10	Pts.
GUELPH	23	10	0	7-3-0	46
OWEN SOUND	16	15	3	4-6-0	35
ERIE	16	15	1	3-7-0	33
KITCHENER	9	21	2	2-8-0	20
BRAMPTON	4	25	1	1-8-1	9
CENTRAL	W	L	T	Last 10	Pts.
BARRIE	25	5	2	8-1-1	52
NORTH BAY	12	18	3	3-7-0	27
SUDBURY	10	17	4	2-7-1	24
TORONTO	10	18	4	4-6-0	24
MISSISSAUGA	1	28	2	0-9-1	4

### Around the OHL

- The clear leader in the rookie of the year race this season is Sheldon Keefe of the Toronto St. Michaels. Keefe is second in the league in scoring (behind the Whalers' Harold Druken) with 31 goals and 29 assists.
- The OHL Bell All-star Cup will be held Jan. 27 at new Sarnia Sports facility. The 40 all-stars will be selected in January.

### WHALER STATISTICS

**Team Leaders:**  
Goals: Druken (38)  
Assists: Colagiaco (39)  
Points: Druken (64)  
PIM: LaLonde (92)  
+/-: Druken (+30)  
GAA: Holsinger (2.15)

### CATCH OF THE DAY

The Plymouth Whalers are currently ranked sixth in the CHL's Top Ten poll. Two other OHL teams are ranked higher: Ottawa and Barrie.

### UPCOMING GAMES:


- Tonight at Sarnia (7:30 p.m.)
- 12/27 at Brampton (6:30 p.m.)
- 12/29 at home versus London (3 p.m.)

### League Leaders

#### Goals-against-average

NAME, TEAM	#
Szuper, OTT	1.98
Kotyk, OTT	2.05
Holsinger, PLY	2.15
Finley, BAR	2.33
MacDonald, PBO	2.84
Hewitt, SAR	2.84

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# Community opinions

## Underpass debate misses point

*Faster Sheldon Rd. would open 'floodgates' in residential area*

EDITOR:

In response to your request for "Whaddya Think" feedback, regarding the split between Plymouth City and Township responsibility for the Sheldon Road railroad underpass, I respectfully submit — given all the rhetoric of late — everyone is overlooking a critical consideration.

In the area of Sheldon Road around Ann Arbor Trail, eighteen wheelers are now tearing up the road, throwing pieces of concrete roadway up to and beyond the sidewalks. Some are pieces small enough to put out an eye, some are large enough to seriously injure or perhaps even kill a small child. Drivers regularly speed at 50 and 60 miles per hour in this area, totally disregarding the speed limit, even when it's supposedly reduced and police-enforced during to/from school travel times.

Because grossly increased traffic has unfortunately evolved Sheldon road to this current state, what are we going to do to assure the safety for our children who walk along Sheldon on a daily basis to Bird and West schools?

In the name of progress, the entire community is missing the fact that we have created a very dangerous

corridor along an area of Sheldon, which is essentially a residential neighborhood. Consequently, I maintain we should be looking to spend some of these federal, state, county, Township and City funds to alter the way traffic flows through this area. This, versus opening the

*In the name of progress, the entire community community is missing the fact that we have created a very dangerous corridor along an area of Sheldon.*

floodgates, so to speak, with a railroad underpass before we address badly needed safety reforms and someone gets grievously injured or killed. Granted, the underpass is needed. I have been inconvenienced as much as any Plymouth resident by Sheldon trains. However, there are more important considerations here!

When will we ever learn that while growth is good, we need controlled and responsible growth? Where has the urban planning been while the Sheldon corridor in Plymouth has gone ballistic? In fact, where has the urban planning been while the entire Metro Detroit area is evolving into gridlock? The metro area is fast approaching a Chicago-like situation where it's going to be extremely tedious to get from one side of the area to the other because we aren't being smart about how we are managing our traffic flows as a result of our rapid growth.

Plymouth is no exception.

Most importantly, of course, is what we can do to make the Sheldon Road corridor between Junction and Joy roads safer; especially around Ann Arbor Trail, where the schools are. The proximity of pedestrians to the road in this area demands many traffic reforms that are beyond the scope of this letter.

But, it remains that we must do something to ensure the safety of these pedestrians, especially our children, and this should take priority, planning-wise and spending-wise above any consideration for a railroad underpass.

ERIC V. THUMA, SR.

## The swallows of San Juan Plymouth

The sun seems to set so early this year, earlier than other years, although I know that's not true. And despite the recent un-winterlike temperatures, the cold season for me is defined as much by the chill as it is by the darkness.

But the early sunset provides a unique opportunity. On clear days, when I leave for work, the sky is already turning orange, pink or both.

My truck is usually parked on the second level of the parking deck in downtown Plymouth, and from its lofty height, I can see above the trees and most of the buildings. Even on winter days, the sunset beams bright up there.

It was on this parking deck that I found myself during a recent sunset. It had just begun and much of the sky was still a bright blue, but there was promise of more spectacular color to come.

Unfortunately I was in a rush, as I had been all day. Hectic, hectic, busy, busy, move. I had a whole schedule of events planned for the evening and I couldn't spare a minute to pick a dollar from the ground.

I jogged to my truck, put the key in

the door and was all ready to drive away from a day's worth of mind-twisting work when I heard a whoosh sound and froze.

It sounded like an empty garbage bag dragging on the ground. I turned around. It was a bit windy, but I could see no bag. The lot was mostly empty with only a spattering of cars and no whooshing-type devices.

I brushed the sound off as my imagination and opened the door. But before I got into the truck the noise came again. Whoosh, then flutter, flutter, flutter. I turned around again and again there was nothing. But this time, I caught something from the corner of my eye.

They moved in such perfect sequence, that, at first, I thought they were one giant being. Mind you, I only thought this for a second. A giant, 30 by 30 foot black creature hovering over downtown Plymouth probably would have appeared on the front page of this paper. No, instead, I saw that it was a flock of birds, very active, athletic birds.

They turned and twisted, rose and fell, and never landed. I had seen birds fly

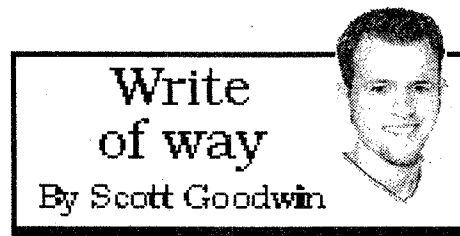
like this before. But I had never heard birds fly like this. It was a strange sensation, the soft Doppler effect of a hundred flapping wings.

During the summer, Kellogg Park fills with a symphony of bird calls, so much so that by August it almost becomes blasé. But in December, when most of our feathered friends have gone to their respective southern retreats, noises of nature stand out like blast of warm wind.

So there they were, out over the Mayflower Hotel, then whoosh past the parking deck, diving around the post office, then whoosh over the parking deck again. Not one bird wavered from the complicated flight path.

To compare them to a squadron of fighter planes would be too simple. No human could emulate this trick. This was instinct, millions of years of evolution at work.

I hopped up into the back of my truck to watch. Several other people came out to their cars as I sat there, business-type folk with suits and other professional gear. They probably thought I was some bohemian freak, staring at the sky and



taking notes. But I paid no attention and neither did the birds.

Over the next several weeks, I saw the birds again and again, always at dusk, never before. I didn't know what type of birds they were, pigeons for all I knew. But like a good friend, they greeted me everyday with their twilight terpsichore.

That first night, the sun fell below the horizon, but I could still see the birds in the purple light. They hopped on the cold, holiday air, bounced over the holiday lights and did their own avian two-step to the downtown Christmas carols.

It was dark by the time I left and the moon had risen over Kellogg Park. I jumped down from my truck bed and got into the car. I was late for something. I had forgotten to what. But by then, I didn't care.



# Community opinions

## 'Short on sellers, long on spirit'

*Editor's note: This letter was written in response to 'Goodfellows: 1st time charm' which appeared in the Dec. 9 Community Crier and recounted Scott Spielman's experience as a Goodfellow volunteer*

**EDITOR:**  
Just a note to thank you not only for the article you wrote in The Crier, but mostly to thank you for donating your time (a precious commodity these days) to "stand around" selling Goodfellows papers in

Canton. As you know, we were short of sellers, but long on spirit and all of you did a fantastic job.

I think you really emphasized a point that I have always tried to stress — if you give of yourself to help others once, the feeling you get is a real "warm fuzzy" and you'll want to come back again and again.

All of the Goodfellow volunteers are folks who believe that the real Christmas spirit is about helping those who need a hand at Christmas time. We think that all kids, not just our own, should have a great holiday.

I thank you again most sincerely, and I'm happy to welcome you to the Goodfellows club — a really fun way to get in the Christmas spirit.

NANCY SPENCER

P.S. We're up to 120 households to gift this year! God bless you!

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## The Community Crier



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## Thanks for clean-up

**EDITOR:**

I am writing on behalf of the staff of the Old Village Development Authority to express our appreciation to the students at Starkweather Education Center.

Once a week a group of students come out and clean up the whole Knights of Columbus Park which surrounds our office (the old Fire Station #2).

I am impressed by their enthusiasm for this community service work and for keeping the Old Village area looking neat and inviting. I look forward to seeing them outside my window each week with their rakes and shovels.

SHERRIE PRYOR  
OVDA STAFF

## I believe in father Christmas

Dear Santa,

First of all let me apologize to you for the late letter. I know the sleigh is probably already overburdened with toys and goodies for all, and you are willing your skin to grow thicker as your psyche yourself up for your miraculous, midnight ride.

My letter is late this year because of the unseasonably warm weather. As I'm writing it, there is a fine dust of snow on the ground, and Christmas is only a week away! Pretty short order, I know, but I do have a short list, and I hope you can fill it because the things I ask for are not for me.

Okay, not *just* for me.

•First of all I would like to see some faster progress along Canton Center Road. It was supposed to be finished by Thanksgiving, and workers had barely started it by then! Then the county said they were going to call off the project until spring. Now they're still working on it.

Maybe what I really need is Wonder Woman's magic lasso, so I can get the truth from the public relations flunkies at the Wayne County Department of Roads.

Barring that, perhaps you can conjure up a small patch of ice — not enough to cause any serious damage, mind you — just enough so my car will slide off the precarious edge they have so thoughtfully excavated for us nervous winter motorists. Again, not a serious accident, just enough to damage my typing finger and ensure I could no longer perform my job effectively. (I would enjoy an early retirement on the Wayne County payroll, if you get my meaning.)

•I'd also like you to bring a little more good cheer, especially to property owners. The owner of the Speedway gas station lot on the corner of Ford and Lilley, for example, could use some. All that is halting the widening of that intersection is the acquisition of his right of way, and he refuses to sell it.

I admit, Santa, to a little bit of naivete in this area. I don't think if I was a property owner I would be so stingy about my borders.

## Off the cuff By Scott Spielman



And I don't see why a business on that corner wouldn't want to have the intersection improved. A wider, more efficient intersection means improved traffic flow, increased safety and less people cutting through the parking lot.

And I also don't see the purpose of refusing to sell, or holding out for an unreasonable sum. The township has the right to condemn a property or in this case an easement) for the public good, and offer the owner a fair market value for it. They're going to get it anyway; being a little less difficult saves everybody time and money. It could even save some lives — especially at that intersection.

•More volunteerism. The Goodfellows has a smaller crowd of paper sellers than usual this year, and I can't remember when I've seen so many empty Salvation Army stands. There are a lot of needy families, even in our own prosperous area. (It's infectious, too. My brief stint with the Goodfellows left me craving more. I hope when The Crier staff goes on its annual Christmas shopping spree for needy families, that Ed lets me push the cart).

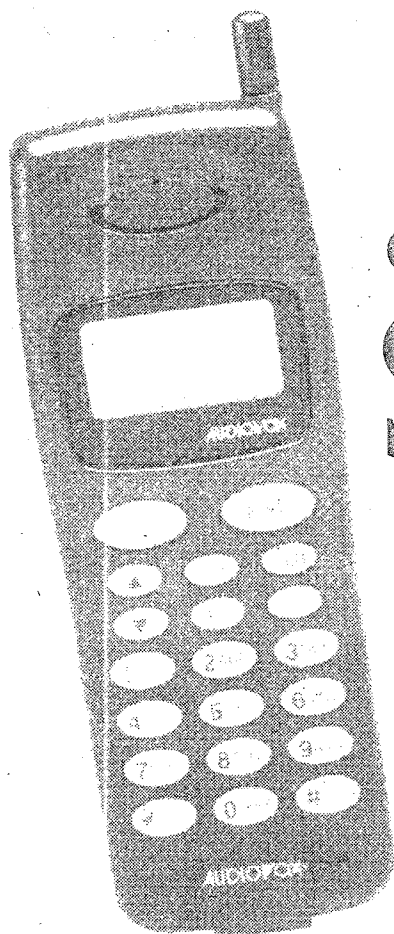
•Peace on Earth, and the safety of everyone from our community — and all others — who are facing conflict in the Middle East. Maybe your portliness can engineer an end to it as quickly as possible.

Well, that's it for me. As I said, a short list, and nothing your elves actually have to build. Its something to think about as you bring holiday cheer to all of P-C-N.

p.s. I'll leave out some cookies, but the milk will be in the fridge.

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