

The Pontiac News

A NEWS SOURCE WITH A LOCAL FLAVOR

A BI-WEEKLY PUBLICATION VOL.1 ISSUE 5



KMR Diversity Theatre Group cast members at OCEDC Diversity Forum Luncheon

Watch Out For Holiday Scams and Fraud

Crowded stores and busy employees make the holidays a fertile period for shoplifting, ID theft, refund fraud and gift card scams.

By *Parija B. Kavilanz,*
CNNMoney.com staff writer

(CNNMoney.com) — Most people think the holiday shopping season is about the big crowds and big bargains. But there's one more seasonal hallmark that doesn't always get its fair share of publicity - big holiday crimes.

While retail crimes such as shoplifting, ID theft, returns fraud, gift card scams and organized retail theft are a year-long nuisance for merchants, industry experts caution that offenders tend to kick up their activities a couple of notches during the busy year-end gift-buying months.

"It's fairly obvious why that happens," said Chris McGoe, a professional security consultant and an expert on loss prevention who has been a consultant for some of the nation's biggest retail chains.

"The store staff is too distracted with the crowds, and shoppers are too busy hunting for bargains and aren't particularly vigilant," he said.

According to a 2005 National Retail Security Survey prepared by the Center for Studies in Criminology and Law at the University of Florida, in partnership with the National Retail Federation (NRF), retail crimes last year cost the industry more than \$37 billion dollars.

However, the report also pointed out that employee theft continues to be the main source of lost inventory for retailers, accounting for almost \$18 billion in 2005, followed by shoplifting which cost merchants \$12.2 billion, administrative error which cost sellers \$5.5 billion and vendor fraud which accounted for \$1.9 billion in lost sales.

Organized retail theft is a growing problem for retailers. It's always been around, but the creation of eBay has only exacerbated the problem, McGoe said.

This activity involves a "gang" of people who steal entire shelves of products such as

beauty care items, baby food and trendy jeans - not for their own personal consumption, but to resell them for a pretty profit.

"These criminals will create some disturbance in one part of the store to distract the staff, or even light a small fire in the rest-room," said McGoe. "Usually dishonest employees are involved in the process. If they sell the items on the street they get 10 cents on the dollar. On eBay, they can get up to 50 percent of the value."

Also, retailers tend to hire more temporary workers during the holidays to deal with the traffic surge. "Most of these workers aren't carefully screened. This contributes to activity like embezzlement or unfairly giving family members store discounts," he said.

Retailers are trying to counter the problem by implementing sophisticated technology to catch perpetrators. But McGoe said companies can still do more.

"Technology can't completely replace security staff. Companies like Wal-Mart are cutting security personnel to save costs and improve profits. This will only create loopholes for criminals," he added.

Wal-Mart did not immediately return calls for comment.

How safe are the new wave systems?

Have you used the new "contact less" payment systems yet? This is where you don't need to swipe your debit or credit card but instead simply wave it in front of a card reader and your payment is recorded.

Todd Davis, CEO of LifeLock, an ID theft prevention company, said he's aware of a few recent incidents in which the payment systems have been targeted by hackers.

"When you get in proximity of the reader, what happens is almost like a digital handshake between your card and the system," Davis said. "The retailer usually doesn't require any other form of ID from the customer."

Davis said the system can be compro-

mised if hackers successfully penetrate the system's database to get access to individual cards' security algorithms.

How does this happen? "Unfortunately it often involves people on the inside. There's a black market for such information," he said. "Once fraudsters have access to it they can use your card without your knowledge."

"ID theft is a \$50 billion a year industry and a lot of it ends up happening at the retail level," he said.

Gift card scams

The NRF estimates that gift card sales will total \$24.81 billion this holiday season, up from \$18.48 billion last year, as many more frazzled shoppers become enamored with the convenience that gift cards offers.

However, recent media reports have alerted consumers to a new gift card scam that threatens to dent their popularity. According to these reports, criminals steal the account numbers from the back of gift cards that are sold on open racks in many stores.

These fraudsters then call retailers to check that the card was activated and record the balance before using the information to buy goods online.

The NRF said the facts relating to this scam are true, but also somewhat misleading.

"Instances where consumers lose money from theft of gift card information are extremely rare, but they can happen," Joseph LaRocca, NRF vice president of loss prevention, said in a statement.

"Most gift cards are outfitted with scratch-off security codes and protective packaging, in addition to a special verification number distinguishing one gift card from another," LaRocca said. "Also, retailers have created complex back-end systems to prevent criminals from obtaining proprietary gift card information."

Bob Skiba, executive vice president of Stored Value Systems (SVS), one of the biggest providers of gift cards and card pro-

grams to 650 retailers, including the Gap (Charts), Home Depot (Charts) and Barnes and Noble (Charts), said consumers shouldn't be overly concerned about the latest incidents of gift card fraud.

"More than 95 percent of the cards that we supply to our clients have scratch off security activation codes which only the buyer should see," said Skiba. "Also, unlike three years ago, most cards today don't carry any value until they're bought and activated by the buyer."

At the same time, Skiba did acknowledge some legitimate scams consumers should know about. One involves gift cards that are sold in decorative cardboard envelopes where the card barcode appears on the packaging rather than on the card.

"The thieves remove the card from its envelope and pockets it. Then they replace the missing card with a card from another package," Skiba said. Subsequently, an unsuspecting shopper picks up the first envelope with the card and buys it.

But because the barcode was on the envelope, and not on the card itself, the shopper goes home with an inactive card, while the shoplifter now has a useable gift card in his or her pocket.

Said Skiba, "We make certain that all of our cards carry their codes on the card itself and not on the packaging."

To defeat gift card fraudsters this holiday season, the NRF suggests that consumers double check the section on the back of the card to make sure that the personal identification information isn't already scratched off.

Additionally, consumers should only purchase gift cards from reputable sources and not online auction sites where they are likely to be counterfeit or were fraudulently obtained.

See related story on page 2

Downtown Pontiac Holiday Extravaganza Parade onlookers and participants.



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Tricky Scams to Avoid This Holiday Season

During this time of the year, beware of thieves who want to steal your holiday money.

By Gerri Willis, CNN
(CNNMoney.com) — The holiday season brings out more than yuletide and cheer. Thieves are also hard at work.

We'll tell you how to avoid some new scams this holiday shopping season.

1: Beware of the new gift card scam

People will spend almost \$25 billion buying gift cards this year. And that's ushered in a whole new kind of gift card scam.

Scam artists are stealing money from gift cards before you get to use it. The Better Business Bureau says this has become an issue over the past 2 months. Here's how it works:

Thieves copy down the activation number on the back of the gift card. They wait a few days for you to buy the card and activate it. They can then use the numbers they've jotted down to go on a spending spree...online.

Protect yourself by only buying gift cards that have scratch off PIN numbers or the PIN number is behind a peel. You may also want to purchase gift cards that are behind the cashier's counter.

As always, keep your receipt. If you become a victim of this scam, you may be able to reclaim some of the money.

2: Screen your holiday greetings

With more and more people sending holiday cards out via e-mail, Cyber thieves are taking advantage and sending out their own versions of e-greetings. But this is one sentiment better left untouched.

These e-mails look like they are sent by a friend or family member, but it's really a scam artist intent on getting your Social Security number or your credit card information. It's really just a new play on the old phishing scam.

And if you're listed on social networking sites, like facebook.com or myspace.com, you may also receive e-mail messages that use the information that's posted to lure you into revealing personal data.

Your best defense is not to open any e-mail from people you don't know. Don't reveal any information...ever.

3: Don't re-enter your information

About 61 million people plan on hitting the Web rather than braving the stores this holiday season. And that means payday for a lot of scam artists. But there's a new twist.

If you've placed an order at an e-tailer like Amazon.com or Walmart.com, there's a chance you could get an e-mail stating there has been a problem with the order and you need to re-enter your credit card number, says Ed Dworsky of Consumerworld.org. But don't do it.

"No legitimate Internet seller will have you go online to re-enter your information," he says. Instead, you should call the e-tailer itself, or check your order status on the e-tailer's Web site.

4: Steer clear of charity scams

Charity scams are the number one scams this time of year, according to the Better Business Bureau. Some of the most popular scams around the holidays involve war veteran groups.

Scammers are playing on generosity people feel when they see uniformed soldiers. "It can be a very effective ploy," says Art Taylor of the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance.

Another popular scam around the holidays is police or fire fighting charities. People want the chance to give to their local heroes, says Taylor. But most of the money you donate will go right to telemarketers.

To protect yourself, don't donate to a charity that solicits door-to-door, over the phone or by e-mail. "That's not the way legitimate charities do business," says Taylor.

Instead, you should receive a letter and also look for the Better Business Bureau seal of approval. You'll also want to go to <http://www.give.org/> or charitynavigator.org, which evaluates the financial status of organizations.



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The Pontiac News Mission Statement



Publisher R. Frank Russell

To serve The City of Pontiac and nearby communities as the leading information source that empowers our community, while never compromising the principles of truth and fairness in reporting.

We measure our effectiveness based on the following core values:

- Provide leadership that contributes to the betterment of our community.
- Reflect our community in everything we do.
- Build credibility by accepting nothing less than the highest standard of excellence.
- Exercise our "watchdog" role by seeking solutions for and protecting those living within our community.
- Help our customers grow and prosper by providing useful information.

Several decades ago, Pontiac residents could pick up a newspaper and expect solid reporting

from a locally owned newspaper business with a focus on this community.

However as Michigan participated in social and political change in the United States, its media outlets moved in the opposite direction, falling victim to the corporate expansion and consolidation that was taking shape at the state, regional and national levels. Out-of-state conglomerates have bought many of the best dailies. In an attempt to keep pace with these fierce new competitors, the former Pontiac Press, changed its name to the Oakland Press, expanded its market area in order to serve the entire Oakland County community. As a consequence of this change, Pontiac experienced a void in its need for a news source with a local flavor. The birth of The Pontiac News eliminates that void and fills that need.

The Pontiac News will specifically focus on this city. Through our bi-weekly newspaper and web site, we will provide an independent perspective with a commitment to credible investigations. It will also include provocative and informative stories that others either miss or choose to ignore.

Too often, today's media spins their news coverage in a political rather than a human light. Stories and subjects are tagged as "left" or "right," ignoring the subtleties and nuances that define The City of Pontiac.

The Pontiac News will reinvigorate the credo that journalism speaks for the individual, checks abuses of power, and stands vigilant in the protection of democracy and free speech. By hosting regular editorial meetings throughout the city, and

presenting news in a community context, we will give Pontiac citizens a unifying forum from which to view and address today's issues. Knowing that Pontiac residents value news and perspectives from beyond their borders, the Pontiac News will also provide timely and provocative stories from around the county, state, country, and the world, through an independent network of writers and subscriptions to various news wire services.

Our pledge to you -- readers, advertisers, and subscribers -- is to provide socially responsible news and opinions on a human scale. With news stories from throughout the city, we will be the voice of the community, a place where Pontiac citizens can share ideas and forge solutions. Those outside Pontiac can look to The Pontiac News as a showcase for "the Pontiac way," which personifies the unique ability to solve problems and define community issues related to political, educational, religious and social matters.

Our business model is unique in its approach because Pontiac is a unique city. A bi-weekly newspaper, combined with our web site will provide you with breaking stories as they become available to us, no matter where they come from including Pontiac, Oakland County, the State of Michigan in the U.S. or around the globe.

Thank you for reading the TPN and taking us into your homes, schools and businesses. Please pray with us that we will do good work when reporting the news concerning the City of Pontiac and never hesitate to let us know what you think!

About The Pontiac News

The Pontiac News is dedicated to providing balanced news about The City of Pontiac and surrounding communities!

The Pontiac News was founded and established in February 2007 and will be published bi-weekly beginning in August 2007. As a major community and the county seat of Oakland County we believe that The City of Pontiac should have a newspaper that is dedicated to providing information and news about this great and historical city.

The Pontiac News is a community minded newspaper that will not only serve readers but also businesses and local organizations and will strive to be the paper of record for local municipal units including The City of Pontiac, and the Pontiac School District.

This bi-weekly newspaper, The Pontiac News, has been established to cover areas in our retail zone including Pontiac, Auburn Hills, Waterford, Bloomfield and other nearby communities (and other school districts).

The Pontiac News will be distributed to over 25,000 homes in The City of Pontiac and nearby communities and over 1,000 area businesses, organizations and agencies. We will eventually create a computer database for all addresses in the zip codes contained in the basic Pontiac News circulation area. A computer program will be designed to generate labels for all households and businesses in those zip codes in order to reach a total of more than 30,000 homes and businesses in our retail area by mail or by door to door delivery service.

In addition to better serving the business community with expanded circulation to cover the retail zone, The Pontiac News will have a great product for readers. We will often feature full 4 color pictures on the front page and occasionally elsewhere in the paper. We will also have the Associated Press wire for news features, local writers to augment our local news, and feature coverage. The Pontiac News web site will be launched in the near future to expand and supplement our news coverage and advertising reach.

We will continue to find better ways to serve our customers.

—Editorial—

Selecting and Preparing Urban Teachers – Part 2

In the previous issues of the TPN several critical action steps were listed that we feel must be taken in order to turn our school district around. This article will continue with a focus on action steps # 3) Initiate and implement a comprehensive teacher recruitment, development and training program.

By **Martin Haberman,**

Martin Haberman, distinguished Professor from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, is creator of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Teacher Education Program (MMTEP). He was one of the three founders of the SOE Urban Doctoral Program. He received the 1996 Teacher Educator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Dr. Haberman is the author of seven books and more than 200 articles and chapters. He earned his doctorate in teacher education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and holds honorary doctorates from Rhode Island College and SUNY-Cortland. Dr. Haberman is the recipient of the AACTE Pomeroy Award and has served as a Hunt lecturer. The National Teacher Corps was based on his Milwaukee Intern Program. He has developed more programs preparing more teachers than anyone in American education. His interview for selecting Urban Teachers is used in 200 cities.

Shortage of Teachers in Urban Schools

To understand the opportunities and challenges facing career-changing adults, it is important to review the complex nature of the well-documented current teacher shortage. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimate that three million teachers will be hired between 2000 and 2010. The preponderance of these will be new teachers needed to serve approximately 14 million diverse children in urban and rural poverty. (United States Department of Education, 2000). The phenomenon of an urban district needing thousands of teachers surrounded by suburbs and small towns where there are hundreds of applicants for one position has been well documented for over half a century.

Although the typical age of college graduates has risen from age 22 to age 26, it is still generally true that most of those preparing to teach are college age youth, that is, late adolescents and young adults. This analysis is not an advocacy for preventing all such individuals from becoming teachers but to shift the balance. The current emphasis remains approximately 80% still being youngsters below age 26 and only approximately 20% being older "non-traditional" post baccalaureate students or adults in alternative certification or on-the job training programs. Given the needs in urban poverty districts, this balance should be reversed so that the majority of those in teacher training would be adults over age 30. Denigrating labels such as "retreads" or "career changers" indicate the power of the misconceptions and stereotypes regarding the age at which it is generally believed that individuals should become new teachers. My best estimate is that of the approximately 500,000 traditionally prepared teachers under age 26 who are produced annually, fewer than 15% seek employment in the 120 major urban districts serving approximately 7 million diverse children in poverty. In my state, Wisconsin, the figure is 10%. This represents approximately 75,000 of the colleges and universities annual output. The research based on my Urban Teacher Selection Interview indicates further that of the 15% who are willing to apply to work in urban school districts

that only one in ten (or 7,500) of those under age 26 will stay long enough (three years or longer) to become successful teachers in urban schools. What this means is that approximately one half million youngsters under 26 in over 1,200 traditional programs of teacher education provide the 120 largest urban school districts with about 1.5% of their annual teacher output. While this is obviously a very small output from traditional teacher preparing institutions it does represent a bloc of young people who do have the potential for teaching diverse children in urban poverty and for whom the doors of the profession must remain open. But, should this population of young teachers represented by this 1.5% contribution remain as the predominant pool of future teachers or should school systems be looking for other constituencies from which to draw and develop the teachers America needs?

Several factors contribute to the "shortage" of teachers where they are needed most: i.e. in urban schools. First, the length of an average teaching career is now down to eleven years. Teachers who pursue lifelong careers as classroom teachers are now clearly in the minority. Second, in many states, the majority of those graduated and certified in traditional programs of teacher preparation never take jobs as teachers. In 1998, in Wisconsin, 71% of those graduated and certified by colleges and universities did not take jobs as teachers. (Schug & Western, 1998). In 2001 65% of the newly certified graduates did not take teaching jobs. This lower figure does not mean that more teachers entered classrooms since the total number produced in 2001 had declined by almost 20%. These non-teaching certified graduates are frequently referred to by many experts in teacher education as "fully qualified." But, if they do not take teaching positions because the jobs are primarily in urban schools serving diverse children in poverty, for what and for whom are these graduates "fully qualified?" The state licenses issued them should contain codicils or reservations such as "is prepared to teach white children not in poverty in small town or suburban school districts." Instead, all fifty states issue only unrestricted, universal licenses pronouncing the bearers qualified to teach all children of a given age, or all children in a given subject matter or all children with particular exceptional conditions. The staggering percentage of the newly certified teachers choosing to not waste their own time

or the children's time is actually a benefit since it does not inflict potential quitters and failures on children in desperate need of competent caring teachers. Newly certified graduates not taking jobs are also a clear indication that the bearers of these licenses are being much more honest about themselves and their lack of competence than those who prepared them and who insist on pronouncing them "fully qualified." In 1999 the SUNY system prepared 17,000 "fully qualified" teachers. The number who applied for teaching positions in New York City that year was zero. In 2004, the State of North Carolina met its need for 10,000 teachers (only 3,500 were certified by in-state colleges and universities) by hiring teachers from abroad through a private company that receives \$11,500 for each teacher it finds. The City of Greensboro recruits for teachers in Capetown, South Africa.

The third reason for the teacher shortage is the number of beginners who take jobs in urban schools but fail or leave. Using data from the National Center for Educational Statistics' School and Staffing Survey, Ingersoll (2001) concluded: "School staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from a revolving door—where large numbers of teachers depart for reasons other than retirement". This churn of teachers into and out of schools serving diverse children in poverty results in approximately 50% of new teachers leaving urban districts in less than five years. In my own city, Milwaukee, 50% of the more than 1,000 new teachers hired annually will be gone in three years or less. Many quit in the first year. (Haberman & Rickards, 1990).

The fourth major reason for the teacher shortage in urban schools is the shortage of special education teachers. This shortage is exacerbated by the fact that many suburbs, small towns, parochial and private schools contract out the education of their children with special needs to their nearby urban school districts. This not only increases the teacher shortage in urban districts but also raises their costs. For example, in Wisconsin and in many others the state makes a deduction in aids to the urban district for every special education class not taught by a fully certified teacher. No state imposes such a fiscal penalty when a district employs an uncertified teacher in math, science, or other areas of continuing shortage. But there is a more fundamental reason for this shortage of special

education teachers. In effect, "fully qualified" teachers prepared in traditional university based programs are systematically trained to view many of their children as somehow lacking, deviant, or having special needs. New teachers unable to connect with and manage their students will see things that are wrong with the children and their families rather than the inadequacies in themselves. Trapped by biased, limited, cultural definitions of how a normal child should develop, behave and learn language, it is inevitable that teachers would refer children they cannot connect with for testing to equally limited school psychologists who then provide the backup test scores and psychological evaluations to show that these children are not capable of functioning in normal ways.

A fifth reason for the teacher shortage results from greater career opportunities now available to women outside of teaching at the time of college graduation. Many, however, soon discover that they encounter glass ceilings and can only advance in limited ways. After age 30, this population includes many who decide to make more mature decisions than they did at age 20 and seek to become teachers of diverse children in poverty. The sixth reason for the shortage deals with college graduates of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds who have greater access into a larger number of entry level career positions than in former times. As with the population of women who perceive greater opportunity for careers of higher status and greater financial reward outside of teaching, this population also frequently experiences glass ceilings after age thirty. For instance, African Americans comprise fewer than 6% of all undergraduates in all fields and substantially fewer who decide as youthful undergraduates to pursue traditional university based programs of teacher education. But as career-changers after age thirty, racially diverse college graduates (particularly women) become a primary source of teachers for children in urban school districts. The school district employs more African American college graduates than any business in Milwaukee and this is true in many other cities. The continuing and worsening teacher shortage must also take note of the special nature of teaching fields such as math and science. Math and science teachers leave at a higher rate than others; they tend to be men seeking better opportunities in other fields. (Murnane, 1996).

To Be Continue in next issue of TPN.

Significant Board Actions For October

Recommendations Approved by the Board during October

A resolution stipulating that the Pontiac School District will continue the summer tax levy of 100% of the total school property taxes, including debt service upon the property located within the School District of the City of Pontiac. Taxing units affected by this resolution are:

City of Auburn Hills
City of Birmingham
[Bloomfield Park annexation]
City of Lake Angelus
City of Pontiac
City of Sylvan Lake
Township of Bloomfield
Township of West Bloomfield
Township of Orion
Township of Waterford

Significant Board News

Trustee Cain Sworn In

On October 10th Karen Cain was sworn in to serve as a Board Trustee, filling the position vacated by Letyna Roberts.

Annual Audit Report Presented to Board

The Audit firm of Plante Moran presented to the Board the results of their "Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2007 which confirmed \$1,760,622.00 excess revenue and other financing sources over expenditures. Meaning the District spent about 1.8% less than what it received for fiscal year 2006-07.

A well deserved "Tip of The Hat" to Mr. Cupidore, the Administrators and all of the Staff of the Pontiac School District for making this happen.

Upcoming Board Events

Saturday, December 8, 2007

Pontiac Garden Club 12:00 Noon Holiday Tea/Live Greens Decorating Party at the Creative Arts Center 47 Williams St. Cost \$20

Monday, December 10, 2007

Committee of the whole session 5:30-7:00 pm

Monday, December 17, 2007

Pontiac Democratic Club Annual Membership Breakfast 10:00AM to 1:00PM at the Family Life Center 313 Walton Blvd. Donation \$20 Regular meeting of the Board start time 5:30 pm

— What's Happening In Pontiac —



Mayor Phillips

On Tuesday, December 4th, the Annual City of Pontiac Employees Holiday Basket Program Reception kicked off at 10 am.

Each year, a committee of city employees works diligently to provide Holiday Baskets for city residents who may, unfortunately, be going through difficult times financially and otherwise. This year is the 2nd annual coat drive as well with receptacles at the Municipal & Health Credit Union; Joe Lunghammer Chevrolet at Summit Crossings; in the Community Development Block Grant offices in City Hall; and at three of the fire stations in the city.

This year is even more significant for Pontiac families due to the economic climate of the city and the State.

On Saturday, December 15th, over 500 families will receive holiday baskets as a result of the efforts of city employees and the City Employees Holiday Basket committee. Coats, toys and gift certificates will be distributed as well.

Subsequently, on Tuesday, December 4th, the sponsors and contributors of the program will be recognized at a reception in the lobby of City Hall, and my question is, who can assist us in providing media coverage for this event?

Please feel free to contact Wisetta Neill at 248-758-3030 if you have any questions regarding these activities.

3rd. Annual Pontiac Regional Chamber Holiday Open House

The 3rd. Annual Pontiac Regional Chamber Holiday Open House will be held Thursday, December 13th from 10 - 6 at the chamber office, 402 N. Telegraph Rd in the Oakland Pointe Shopping Center. Chamber members, board members, area business leaders, government officials and members of the community are cordially invited to stop in with their coworkers and friends for refreshments. A Chinese Auction with great prizes will take place as well as a 50/50 drawing and business card exchange.

If you would like to promote your business by donating a raffle item for the Chinese Auction please contact Claudia Brady at the chamber office 248-335-9600 x 13, or claudia@pontiacchamber.com



Pontiac Chamber staff - L-R - Audrey K. Coon, Rosemary Gallardo, Claudia Brady, Mandy Neaves

We Must Restore the Federal/Local Government Partnership

By Eric Coleman Commissioner, District 23 - Southfield

If you listen carefully to the 2008 presidential candidates seeking their respective party's nomination for president of the United States, there has been something missing. There has been almost no mention of issues important to local governments and the residents they serve.

This is a grave concern to me as an elected official here in Oakland County as well as president of the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Yes, we are one nation under God, but we are also a nation of counties. Three thousand sixty-six counties to be exact. And for millions of Americans, it is county government that delivers services that are most relevant to their lives.

It's past time for the presidential candidates to address critical issues directly affecting our communities.

Where do they stand on critical local government issues such as: access to healthcare, aging infrastructure, overburdened criminal justice and courts systems, disaster preparedness and the increasing challenges our emergency responders are facing?

I would sure like to know what they think. As a voter and taxpayer, I am certain that you would like to know too.

What about immigration? It's a federal responsibility, clearly, but the impact and costs fall directly on counties.

I would like to see the presidential candidates during a debate answering questions about how their home counties are suppose to appropriately and effectively deal with – and pay for – providing more hospital beds, more emergency room doctors and nurses, more sheriff deputies, more classrooms and expanded public transportation systems as a result of exploding local populations?

A recent NACo survey found that two-thirds of county officials said that illegal immigration is a "very serious problem" for the United States.

The survey also found that revenue and taxes (39 percent) and unfunded state and federal mandates (21 percent) were the two most important problems facing counties.

But we have heard almost nothing from

the candidates on the effect of immigrants on local communities, local taxes and revenue challenges and unfunded mandates.

To her credit, Sen. Hillary Clinton did address the nation's counties at the NACo annual conference in July in Richmond, Va. All presidential candidates were not only invited to attend, but were actively lobbied to come and address our association. (A few months earlier, during NACo's Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., Sen. Biden, Sen. McCain and Rep. Kucinich spoke to NACo members.) We need more dialog about these important local issues moving forward.

At times in the past, counties and the federal government have worked together to address local issues and the shared challenges we face as a people. But in recent years, sadly, that partnership has become almost non-existent.

Mandates from the federal government have continued. Funding to assist counties with these efforts has decreased. Local officials are left with few options other than to raise property taxes and fees or cut much-needed services.

To their credit, county officials are trying to get some attention. NACo, in partnership with the state associations of counties, has launched the 2008 Presidential Election Project to reach candidates seeking to become president and get them to focus on county issues. The goal of the project is to "Restore the Partnership" between the federal and county governments.

I am pleased that more than 700 county officials from across the country have participated in presidential campaign events to interact with campaign staff and the media to elevate county issues.

Our hope is that the candidates address our county issues and once the new administration is in place in January 2008 that they have a sense of what's important to you and me in our home counties.

It's our way to help "Restore the Partnership" between counties, the White House and Congress. You can help too by voicing your concerns to your Congressional representatives and the presidential candidates.

Eric Coleman, commissioner, Oakland County, Mich., is president of the National Association of Counties.

— Did You Know —

African Popes

There were three African Popes who came from the region of North Africa. Although there are no authentic portraits of these popes, there are drawings and references in the Catholic Encyclopedia as to their being of African background. The names of the three African popes are: Victor (183-203 A.D.), Gelasius (492-496 A.D.), and Mechiades or Miltiades (311-314 A.D.). All are saints.

Pope Saint Victor 1

Saint Victor was born in Africa and bore a Latin name as most Africans did at that time. Saint Victor was the fifteenth pope and a native of black Africa. He served from 186 A.D. until 197 A.D. He served during the reign of Emperor Septimus Severus, also African, who led Roman legions in Britain. Some of the known contributions of Victor were his reaffirming the holy feast of Easter to be held on Sunday as Pius has done. As a matter of fact, he called Theophilous, Bishop of Alexandria, on the carpet for not doing this. He also condemned and excommunicated Theodore of Byzantium because of the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ. He added acolytes to the attendance of the clergy. He was crowned with martyrdom. He was pope for ten years, two months and ten days. He was buried near the body of the apostle Peter, the first pope in the Vatican. Some reports relate that St. Victor died in 198 A.D. of natural causes. Other accounts stated he suffered martyrdom under Servus. He is buried in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City near the "Convessio."

Pope Saint Victor 1 feast day is July 28th.

Pope Saint Gelasius 1

Saint Gelasius was born in Rome of African parents and was a member of the Roman clergy from youth. Of the three African popes, Gelasius seems to have been the busiest. He occupied the holy papacy four years, eight months and eighteen days

from 492 A.D. until 496 A.D. Gelasius followed up Militades' work with the Manicheans. He exiled them from Rome and burned their books before the doors of the basilica of the holy Mary. He delivered the city of Rome from the peril of famine. He was a writer of strong letters to people of all rank and classes. He denounced Lupercalia, a fertility rite celebration. He asked them sternly why the gods they worshipped had not provided calm seas so the grain ships could have reached Rome in time for the winter. He wrote to Femina, a wealthy woman of rank, and asked her to have the lands of St. Peter, which had been taken by the barbarians and the Romans, to be returned to the church. The lands were needed for the poor who were flocking to Rome. His theory on the relations between the Church and the state are explained in the Gelasian Letter to the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius. He was known for his austerity of life and liberality to the poor.

There is today in the library of the church at Rome a 28 chapter document on church administration and discipline. *Pope Saint Gelasius 1 feast day is November 21st.*

Pope Saint Miliades 1

Saint Miltiades was one of the Church's Black Popes. Militades occupied the papacy from 311 to 314 A.D. serving four years, seven months and eight days. Miltiades decreed that none of the faithful should fast on Sunday or on the fifth day of the week because this was the custom of the pagans. He also found residing in Rome a Persian based religion call Manichaenism. He furthered decreed that consecrated offerings should be sent throughout the churches from the pope's consecration. This was call leaven. It was Miltiades who led the church to final victory over the Roman Empire. Miltiades was buried on the famous Appain Way.

Pope Saint Miltiades 1 feast day is December 10th.

—What's Happening In Oakland County—

Oakland County Web Site Named Among Best of the Web for 2007



Patterson

Oakland County's web site www.oakgov.com ranks among the best government sites in the country according to the Center for Digital Government.

Oakland's online portal took second place in a Best of the Web ranking of more than 3,000 county government web sites in the nation.

"Once again, this ranking confirms that we are on the right track in serving our citizens. By using advanced technology wisely and efficiently, Oakland County is saving time and money within government operations and also for citizens doing business with the County," said Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

Oakland County's user-friendly site offers a wealth of information and services, all easily searchable to help citizens quickly find what they need. County Podcasts keep citizens informed of new County government services, special seasonal programs, and important events. Mobile Services provides critical information for the County's most on-the-go citizens. Oakland County

also received a 2007 Digital Achievement Award for its Mobile Services program (<http://www.oakgov.com/mobile/>) from the Center for Digital Government.

"We've worked very hard to make Oakland County a leader in eGovernment solutions. To be ranked second in the nation is an honor that recognizes the achievements of the many creative people throughout County government who are dedicated to making Oakland a great place to live, work, play, and do business," said Phil Bertolini, Oakland County CIO and Deputy County Executive.

Fast Facts – Oakland County Web Site:

- More than 22,000 individual web pages
- Over 12,000 government publications, documents, forms and reports
- Average 2.6 million unique visitors each year
- 19.2 million unique page views in the last 12 months
- Site visitors from 48 countries worldwide

Find out more about Oakland County's online resources at <http://www.oakgov.com>.

The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute focusing on information technology and best practices in local government. The Best of Web is an annual awards program that recognizes the most innovative local government portals.

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"Big Three" County Clerks Meet to Discuss Election Issues



Johnson, Garrett and Sabaugh Pledge to Fight for Voters and Good Government

Oakland County, Mich. (Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2007) – In what is believed to be a "first," the county clerks for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties met Tuesday to look at ways they can work together to improve elections.

Ruth Johnson, the Oakland County Clerk/Register, was joined by Macomb County Clerk/Register Carmella Sabaugh and Wayne County Clerk Cathy M. Garrett.

"Do we agree on everything? No," said Ruth Johnson, the Oakland County Clerk/Register. "But we're going to work on the things we do agree on – what's best for voters. Every vote, every voice, needs to be heard."

Together, the clerks represent nearly half of Michigan's \$7.1 million registered voters. The group is bipartisan – Johnson is a Republican while her fellow clerks are Democrats. They represent all walks of life in Southeastern Michigan. The women, each a veteran political figure, agreed to leave politics at the door.

"We look forward to working together to benefit our citizens," said Sabaugh. "We all

agree on how important elections are to Democracy."

"This collaborative meeting of the clerks from the three largest counties was long overdue and the first of many to come," said Garrett. "It's not about party affiliation; it's all about good government."

The clerks already joined efforts earlier this week to fight proposed legislation that would have changed school election dates, undermining progress that has been made toward consolidated elections. They supported a proposal that would have saved the state as much as \$6 million annually and improved voter turnout by "piggybacking" school board elections onto state and general elections.

Issues discussed Tuesday included everything from challenges with the new voting machines to the Presidential Primary election and training.

The group will be meeting on a regular basis. Johnson can be contacted at (248) 858-0560. Sabaugh can be reached at (586) 469-7939 and Garrett can be contacted at (313) 224-6262.

—From the County Seat—

The next regular Board of Commissioners Meeting will be held on Thursday December 13, 2007, at 9:30 a.m., in the Board of Commissioners' Auditorium

Dear Friends,

Today, there are many issues impacting the quality of life in Oakland County. As your commissioner, I look forward to sharing information that will help you become healthier and more active, not only in Pontiac, but also, in Oakland County. In this feature, learn about the commissioners' efforts to provide healthier food choices at restaurants. We are also looking for interested individuals to serve on the newly formed Women's Commission for Oakland County.



Mattie McKinney Hatchett, Oakland County Commissioner

Trans Fat Cooperative Effort Works to Build a Healthier County

The Oakland County Trans Fat Awareness and Reduction Group have created a survey that will be distributed by the Oakland County Health Department to more than 4,000 area restaurants. The goal is for restaurants to provide a greater variety of healthier food choices on their menus. This collaborative effort could have an impact on the health of county residents and help save lives. Since Cardiovascular Disease is the number one killer in Oakland County, the objective of this effort is to combat diseases like this.

The surveys will be used to help the Trans Fat Reduction Group assist participating restaurants in identifying healthy and Trans Fat free food choices for consumers. These choices will be highlighted at each establishment and recognized on restaurant menus with a special gold heart designation.

Restaurants that want to modify their menus to create healthier food options will be given the opportunity, for a minimum fee, to have recipes analyzed by Henry Ford Health Systems. Data collected from the surveys will be analyzed and only restaurants meeting the healthy and Trans Fat free criteria will be eligible to receive the gold heart designation.

The Oakland County Trans Fat Awareness and Reductions Group consists of the Oakland County Health Department, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the Oakland County

Intermediate Schools District, Henry Ford Health Systems, Big Rock Steak and Chop House representing area restaurants, dieticians and health educators.

Oakland County will work with Henry Ford Health Systems to provide an educational packet for restaurant owners and consumers about the benefits from healthier dining options.

Women's Commission for Oakland County Seeks a Pontiac Resident to Serve

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners seeks citizens to serve on the newly formed Women's Commission for Oakland County. The commission will focus on various issues pertaining to women in Oakland County. I, along with members of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners will each appoint one representative from our district.

The goal is to attract a diverse cross-section of Oakland County's population from stay-at-home moms, seniors, entrepreneurs, and working women to serve on the commission.

Anyone interested in applying for a position on the commission should contact their local commissioner. All applications must be received by **Friday, December 31, 2007. For more information, anyone interested should contact me at (248) 802-0980 or by email at mattiehatchett@aol.com.**

Get involved and make a difference. Share your talents.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

Commissioner Mattie McKinney Hatchett represents the 10th District on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners which encompasses the city of Pontiac. The Board of Commissioners is the governing body for Oakland County approving county policies and budgets.

To apply or receive more information about these positions, submit an application, no later than Friday, February 17, 2006. To obtain an application, go to www.oakgov.com, and click on the Board of Commissioners, then click on the Boards, Commissions, and Committees link. Click on application form and print out the form, or call 248-858-0104 to request an application.

Mail completed application forms to: Oakland County Board of Commissioners 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Dept. 470 Pontiac, MI 48341 or fax to 248-858-1572.

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—What's Happening In Lansing—

Friends,

Listed below are the latest reports on what is occurring in state government and how it affects you. I hope you will find it useful and informative. If you have any comments or questions, please let me know; I would be more than happy to accommodate your request.



Melton

Democratic Reforms Pass the House

HB 5006: Rep. Marc Corriveau (D-Northville); passed 107-1. As part of the Democratic Caucus' Reform package, this measure strictly prohibits the personal use of a state owned or leased vehicle. The bill applies to all branches of Government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. In addition, the assignment of a motor vehicle cannot be made on the basis of public office held, job classification, job title or as a management requisite or employment benefit. **HB 5005:** Rep. Terry Brown (D-Pigeon); passed 107-1. A second part of the Democratic Caucus' Reform package, this bill prohibits the furnishing of cars or car leases at state expense to judges at any level, from district court judge to Supreme Court justice.

Eliminate Vehicle Registration Signature Requirement & Associated Fine

SB 79: Sen. Ron Jelinek (R-Three Oaks); passed 109-1. This bill eliminates the requirement that the owner of a vehicle sign the vehicle registration certificate. Currently not having one's vehicle registration signed results in a civil infraction, which is punishable with a fine up to \$140.

Lottery Retailer Prize Payouts

HB 5102: Rep. Barb Farrah (D-XXX); passed 97-10. House Bill 5102 would prohibit lottery retailers from giving additional jackpot-prize payouts to the holder of a winning ticket. A licensed lottery retailer could not give money or any other thing of value other than the prize to the holder of a lottery ticket. A violation would result in a suspended or revoked license.

Bureau of Fire Services

HB 5036: Rep. Richard E. Hammel (D-Mt. Morris Twp.); passed 74-36. This bill deals with the unfinished business of financing the Bureau of Fire Services, which was created by the Legislature last year. The bill would give the state Fire Marshal authority to establish fees charged by the Bureau.

Special Education Students Rights

SB 571: Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland); passed 107-0. This bill clarifies that the expulsion or suspension of a special education student would not diminish any rights (rather than due process rights, as provided under current state law) of a special education pupil under Federal law.

Michigan Merit Standard- Transfer Students SB 403: Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland). This measure establishes standards and procedures by which a student transferring to a public high school from a private or an out-of-state school could have some of the requirements of the new high school graduation requirements waived under some circumstances. The student would still have to have at least two years of equivalent standards, would have to take a math class in his or her last year of high school, and meet certain other conditions specified in the bill.

Multi-Line Reforms – Health Insurance

HB 5284: Rep. Barb Farrah (Southgate); Passed 84-22. **HB 5285:** Rep. Joe Hune (R-Hamburg Twp.); passed 84-22. Both of these House bills would allow Blue Cross' subsidiaries, such as the Accident Fund, to offer more than one kind of insurance. It also would amend the Insurance Code to strike similar language regarding the workers' compensation subsidiary.

Individual Market Reforms – Health Insurance

HB 5282: Rep. Virgil Smith (D-Detroit); passed 89-17. **HB 5283:** Rep. Edward Gaffney (D-Grosse Pt. Farms); passed 90-16. House Bill 5282 would establish a tiered rate band system for individual health insurance, and put a cap on rate increases within the bands. An insurance company can only move the individual's price within that band. This is intended to prevent individuals from facing prohibitively expensive rates if they experience an illness or injury while they are covered.

The bill would also create a Guaranteed Access Health Benefit Plan fund to subsidize insurance for high-risk individuals who do not have health insurance coverage. The fund would be financed by requiring "carrier assessments" on insurance companies, based on their share of the individual market. The fund will provide at least four different health plan options.

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Thank you for your time, Tim Melton - Democrat, State Representative
29th House District – Pontiac & Auburn Hills
888-MELTON-4
timmelton@house.mi.gov

—What's Happening In Washington—

Meet Senator Carl Levin



Levin

PRINCIPLE

In an editorial about Carl Levin, the Detroit News wrote, "He has been above reproach personally and has stuck to his principles, even when they were unpopular. Principled leadership, no matter what political ideology it comes from, is sorely needed in Washington."

LEADERSHIP

Carl Levin is the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, where he has earned a reputation as a strong supporter of our national defense and an effective waste fighter. He was an early and consistent advocate of efforts to prepare the American military to combat terrorism and other emerging threats of the post-Cold War world. Senator Levin has been a strong advocate on behalf of our service men and women.

The National Guard Association of the United States presented Senator Levin with its 2004 Harry S. Truman Award for distinguished service in support of national defense. The award cited Levin's "long-standing, diligent and impassioned commitment on the readiness, morale and welfare of our military forces, their families and the modernization of our armed forces" that has had an "unparalleled and direct positive impact to the defense capabilities of the National Guard."

In January 2003, the Secretary of the Navy cited Levin's "exceptional service to the Navy and Marine Corps" in presenting him its Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest award given to a civilian. In December 2002, WorldBoston, formerly the World Affairs Council of Boston, presented Levin with the 2002 Christian A. Herter Award in recognition of his role following September 11, 2001, in ensuring a bipartisan response to the threat to the United States. The Herter Award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to improving international understanding.

Senator Levin also serves as the chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on

Investigations of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. For the last six years, he has directed his staff in a comprehensive money laundering investigation, which has led to strengthened U.S. anti-money laundering. In addition, Levin's work has supported international efforts to detect and stop money laundering and terrorist financing.

In 2002, Levin led Congress' most in-depth examination into the collapse of Enron. His investigation exposed how Enron used deceptive accounting and tax transactions to report better financial results than the company actually experienced. The subcommittee's investigative work contributed to the accounting and corporate reforms enacted in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in July 2002. Levin also initiated an investigation into gasoline price spikes, and in April 2002 he issued a 400-page report and chaired hearings detailing how U.S. retail gasoline prices are manipulated. In 2002, Levin began a three year investigation into the mass marketing of abusive tax shelters by KPMG and other professional firms, which was cited by The Washington Post as "a path-breaking inquiry . . . that served as a road map for prosecutors." Levin is also a member of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee and an ex officio member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Levin is perhaps best known for his efforts to make our government both more efficient and more ethical. He authored the Competition in Contracting Act, which has led to significant reductions in federal procurement costs. His Whistleblower Protection Act protects federal employees who expose wasteful practices. Levin also helped author the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights, which protects individuals and small businesses from IRS harassment. He was the principal author of the Ethics Reform Act in 1989, which simplified and strengthened ethics requirements for the legislative and executive branches of government and prohibited members of Congress from accepting honoraria from special interests. He has never ac-

cepted honoraria from special interests, and in 1995 he persuaded the Senate to adopt a strong ban on gifts to senators and paid trips.

That same year, he won passage of strict disclosure requirements for lobbyists in the Lobbying Disclosure Act, the first major overhaul of those laws in 50 years. In December 2001, the Council on Government Ethics Laws recognized Senator Levin's leadership in this area by awarding him its highest honor. That same month, Taxpayers for Common Sense bestowed its annual "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" award to Senator Levin and his colleague Senator John McCain for their bipartisan effort to cut inefficient Defense Department spending.

Carl Levin believes we must expand educational opportunities for all Americans if our nation is to remain strong and productive. He has fought for increased funding for the Head Start preschool program, Title I for educationally disadvantaged students, and Pell Grants and loans for college and vocational school students. Senator Levin has been a strong advocate for the effective use of technology in K-12 schools and helped create the Consortium for Outstanding Achievement in Teaching with Technology, a groundbreaking Michigan partnership helping teachers master technology skills. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of School to Work programs, which have created a public-private partnership to prepare students for the demands of the modern workplace. He has won critical federal support for the Focus: HOPE Center for Advanced Technology, a world-class manufacturing training facility in Detroit.

Carl Levin has worked to strengthen Michigan's industrial economy and to protect the environmental treasures of "the Great Lakes State." As a co-chair of the Senate Auto Caucus and the Senate Auto Parts Task Force, Levin has been one of the most insistent voices in Washington calling for tough action to open the world's markets to American goods. Levin has been a longtime advocate of programs that provide for joint government-industry partnerships in development of advanced vehicle technologies. These efforts led to the establishment of the Army's National Automotive Center in Warren, Michigan, which has played an important role in developing advanced technolo-

gies for military use in conjunction with the private sector.

In his role as co-chair of the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, Levin has fought to protect this irreplaceable natural resource for Michigan and the country. In 1990, Levin authored the Great Lakes Critical Programs Act, which authorized the Great Lakes Initiative to create new standards of environmental protection for Great Lakes waters. Levin also helped win passage of the Great Lakes Legacy Program in 2002 to clean up contaminated sediments. Levin has also worked to secure funding to prevent new introductions of aquatic invasive species including zebra mussels, milfoil and Asian carp.

Addiction to illegal drugs continues to plague our society. Senator Levin authored a provision in the Drug Abuse and Treatment Act of 2000 to enable qualified physicians, under strict conditions, to prescribe and dispense from their private offices - rather than centralized clinics - new anti-addiction medications such as buprenorphine that suppress the craving for heroin.

SERVICE

Carl Levin was born in 1934 in Detroit, where he graduated from Central High School. In 1956, he graduated with honors from Swarthmore College and graduated from Harvard University Law School in 1959. He practiced and taught law in Michigan until 1964 when he was appointed an assistant attorney general of Michigan and the first general counsel for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. He then helped establish the Detroit Public Defender's Office and led the Appellate Division of that office, which has become the State Appellate Defender's Office.

He won election to the Detroit City Council in 1969, becoming its president in 1973 by winning the most votes citywide. In 1978, he won an upset victory over the number two Republican in the U.S. Senate. He was reelected in 1984, 1990, 1996 and 2002.

FAMILY

Carl Levin married Barbara Halpern in 1961. They have three daughters: Kate, Laura and Erica, and five grandchildren. His brother Sander has served in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1983.

— Educational Matters —

The Six Habits Of Fiscally Responsible School Districts

The Six Habits of Fiscally Responsible School Districts is an article that was written by Dr. Kirk A. Johnson and Elizabeth Moser of The Mackinaw Center for Public Policy, a nonprofit research and educational institute headquartered in Midland, Michigan. This article continues from the fourth issue of TPN. This week's article continues with the second part of Habit 4 - Fiscally Responsible Leasing of School Buildings and Facilities.



Moser



Johnson

Habit 4: Structure Capital Costs Effectively

The fourth habit of fiscally responsible public school districts is effective capital cost management. Capital costs include a host of fixed school resources, including classroom buildings, administrative offices, some durable school equipment, and the land underneath school buildings.

Fiscally Responsible Leasing of School Buildings and Facilities

Another option for public school districts is leasing. In leasing, districts sign contracts with private developers or other entities that own land and/or multipurpose buildings that could be used for schools. Optimally, such leases should be medium to long term, as schools would not want to move very often, and the private property owner would want to assure a return on the investment. In effect, this arrangement is a good example of a

public-private partnership.

These partnerships allow communities to upgrade their public school facilities at substantially lower costs and in less time than purely governmental efforts typically require. Although few, if any, traditional public schools in Michigan have leased school buildings, many charter schools have done so.

For example, the Morey Charter School in Shepherd, Michigan has signed two leases for its buildings from a private foundation. The leases are timed to coincide with the charter renewal, so the leases are only for a few years. Maintenance agreements are negotiated annually; currently, the landlord takes care of major maintenance and repair as well as maintaining well and septic systems and yard upkeep. This year, the charter school itself is taking care of snow removal.

Nova Scotia offers the clearest example of how public-private partnerships facilitate school construction. By the end of 1998, as many as 41 new schools had been either completed or approved for construction under their Public Private Partnership program. The schools are "turnkey" operations - the facility is fully operational when the lease begins, complete with all classroom furnishings, such as desks, shelves and chalkboards; computers wired to the Internet and the inter-school electronic network; furnished administrative offices; landscaping; and athletic facilities. The school system provides the teachers, aides, principal and administrative staff and maintains full control over the curriculum and all other educational services and decisions.

The chief advantages of this arrangement for Nova Scotia's school system is the speed with which it is able to upgrade its school facilities and the average 15 percent savings it achieves through leasing arrangements with

the private developers/owners. The school system leases the facilities for 20 years at a predetermined rent that is lower than the capitalized cost of construction and furnishings.

If such an approach were implemented in the United States, the potential savings could be greater than the 15 percent Nova Scotia realizes, because private financing and ownership of the structure would allow school systems to avoid additional costs imposed by federal and state mandates. Such mandates include prevailing wage laws, environmental regulations, and minority set-asides, which often add substantially to the costs of design and construction of publicly funded buildings.

Florida provides an example of such an arrangement. Using an approach similar to Nova Scotia's plan, plus money provided by the community to build the school, the per-student construction costs for a single charter school in Florida fell between 22 percent and 34 percent below the state average for constructing public elementary schools. These savings were due largely to a series of innovative design efficiencies.

If school districts want to lease facilities, they should be especially mindful of four important issues. First, leases should be at least three to five years, and even longer if the lease provisions are sufficiently good for the school district. In return for a 10 to 20 year lease, most districts should be able to have a new school built, since the developer should be able to recoup the cost of the building in that amount of time.

A second issue to consider is maintenance. One of the allures of leasing is that if the facility becomes rundown or otherwise unacceptable for educating children, then the district does not have to sign another lease. Facility maintenance can and should be negotiated either into the lease or negotiated

competitively with an outside company. Most property owners would insist on this, as they have a financial interest in the upkeep of the property. In the Morey Charter School case, the owner does most of the maintenance work.

Third, lease costs should not be financed through bonding. Rather, they should be paid out of current operational funds, the same way as debt service would be paid if a new building were financed through bonds. Capitalizing lease payments through bonding defeats the potential cost savings of leasing, as school districts would have to pay interest on top of the full-capitalized cost of the lease.

Finally, an obscure provision of the 2001 federal tax cut bill allows private developers limited access to tax-free bonds to pay for this kind of building activity. Michigan could allow up to roughly \$10 million worth of these bonds to be used for school building purposes, but this would likely require a vote of the Michigan legislature. Other states, such as Virginia, have enacted such legislation.

In short, leasing may be less expensive than buying, and leasing space protects school districts from future enrollment changes and allows flexibility in facility acquisition. Leasing also has the advantage that the private sector may be able to provide these facilities more efficiently than the public sector. On the negative side, leasing assures building expenses in perpetuity, while school bonds used for purchasing buildings will be paid off after a length of time.

The next issue of TPN will continue with -Habit 5: Participate in the Schools-of-Choice Program

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- Help Your Child To Read Better and Get Better Grades and Test Scores In School.
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- Hundreds of parents have already used this handbook and are now helping their children succeed in school, friendships and in sports.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- This handbook is a must for the concerned parent who wants to help their child succeed in school.

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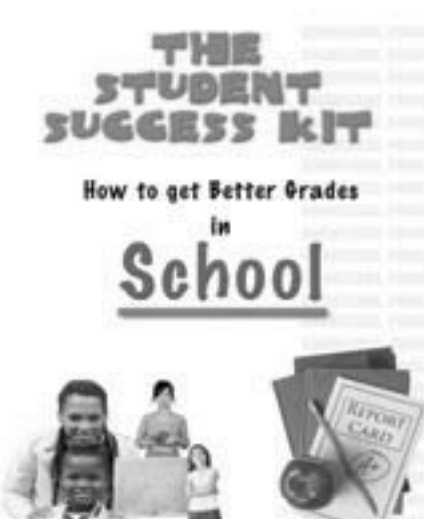
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- How To Prepare For Class
- What To Do After Class
- What To Do During Classes
- Test Taking Strategies
- Contains Tear Out Worksheets and Charts To Help You Get Better Grades

TYPICAL READER COMMENT:

- After reading and applying the material in this handbook my grades went from a (D-) to a (B+).

IRON CLAD GUARANTEE:

- If you are not completely satisfied with this handbook after you have it for 10 days you may return it for a full refund.

IT WORKS!

- Hundreds of students have already used this handbook and are now getting better grades in School.

REVIEWER COMMENTS:

- This handbook is a must for the serious student who wants to get better grades in school.

Clip Coupon and mail to: The Youth Development Institute P.O. BOX 431016 - PONTIAC, MICHIGAN 48343 email: YDIyouthDevelop@aol.com

Please send Me _____ Copies of **THE STUDENT SUCCESS KIT** AT \$14.95 each plus \$2.00 Postage and Handling. It is my understanding that if I am not completely satisfied with the book after 10 days of receipt, I can return the book undamaged for a full refund.

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— Educational Matters —

A Perspective on Why Our Children Can't Read and Write! Part 5 Illiteracy: An Incurable Disease or Education Malpractice?

By Robert W. Sweet, Jr. Co-Founder & Former President

The final installment of this article continues from the fourth issue of TPN where the focus was on "What answers are provided by the research, and how educators have responded to the research. The focus of this final part is on "Moving From What's New to What Works".

(Illiteracy is defined as the inability to read or write at a level that allows one to function at a certain level in the society). (Literacy is the ability to read and write. In modern context, the word means reading and writing in a level adequate for written communication and generally a level that enables one to successfully function at certain levels of a society).

Robert Sweet is a former senior official at the U.S. Department of Education, White House domestic policy advisor to President Reagan, head of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency under President Bush, and former high-school teacher. In July 1997, he resigned as President of the foundation to become a professional staff member on the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

"Learning to read is like learning to drive a car. You take lessons and learn the mechanics and the rules of the road. After a few weeks you have learned how to drive, how to stop, how to shift gears, how to park, and how to signal. You have also learned to stop at a red light and understand road signs. When you are ready, you take a road test, and if you pass, you can drive. Phonics-first works the same way. The child learns the mechanics of reading, and when he's through, he can read. Look and say works differently. The child is taught to read before he has learned the mechanics — the sounds of the letters. It is like learning to drive by starting your car and driving ahead. . . And the mechanics of driving? You would pick those up as you go along." —Rudolf Flesch, "Why Johnny Still Can't Read," 1981

Moving From What's New to What Works
From the early 1960's to the mid 1980's,

the Reading Reform Foundation was in the forefront of efforts to apply research findings to the teaching of reading. Since that time, hundreds of teachers and thousands of children have benefited from the practical application of the sound, proven, techniques of reading instruction the Reading Reform Foundation has promoted. In 1993, The National Right to Read Foundation picked up the phonics torch and is carrying the message to the nation, that direct, systematic phonics is an essential first step in teaching reading. Below are just a few of the success stories that can be told, and the implication for the nation's schools should be crystal clear.

If children are taught intensive, systematic phonics at an early age, until it is automatically applied in the reading process, then illiteracy is dramatically reduced, comprehension improves, and remediation is virtually unnecessary, except for very few.

Example # 1: ask Mary Musgrave, Principal, Gallegos Elementary School, Tucson, Arizona

Mary was a teacher in the Sunnyside School District for fifteen years where achievement in reading, math, and writing was always last. "People would say, 'Well, it's these children.' That offended me because I subscribe to the idea that God don't make no junk." She was appointed to a study committee to come up with recommendations on how to improve achievement levels, and one suggestion that the committee approved was to introduce "phonics." Mary had been taught that phonics was "grunt and spit," and that children taught phonics had no fluency in reading and, even if they could read they had no comprehension or understanding. Many other policies were adopted by the review committee, including ways to involve parents, improve discipline, and strengthen teacher training, but the most important policy was the introduction of intensive, systematic phonics. After four years the results were unassailable.

The school was open to everyone in the district on a "first-come, first-served" basis; the capacity was 623 students; 58 percent were minority students; many children came

from low-income families; no federal money came to the school other than the school lunch program; there were no learning disabilities teachers, and no need for them; there was no bilingual education because everyone spoke English, and even if children didn't speak English when they came into the school, they did when they left; the grading system had a higher standard than the other 18 schools in the district, and yet 33 percent of students on the district Honor Roll were from Gallegos; and perhaps most important of all, 46 percent of the students in the intermediate grades were former special education students. After one year, only four students remained in the special education category.

The inescapable conclusion: teach intensive, systematic phonics!

Example #2 - ask Charles Micciche, former Superintendent of Schools in Groveton, New Hampshire

When Mr. Micciche became Superintendent of Schools, in Groveton, New Hampshire, he served one of the 20 poorest counties in the country. He was charged by his School Board to "do something" about the poor reading scores, which were then averaging in the 45th percentile. Everyone, including teachers, parents, and board members, was dissatisfied. After considerable study and research, he concluded the following: "At a point in our not-too-distant past - some would put the time in the 1920's or '30's - a conflagration was let loose in our nation's classrooms, a bonfire of confusion in the form of a new reading method, look-say, or whole word, which devastated the reading ability of several generations of children, which blackened the landscape of reason, which has given us the scarred legacy we recognize today as illiteracy."

But rather than wring his hands in despair, or ask for more money, Mr. Micciche and his teachers decided to try intensive, systematic phonics. After a two-week training course, about a third of the primary teachers wanted to try the system. Within three months, the success of their children was so dramatic, all of their colleagues joined in the

trial program. Another full year's trial was conducted, and the test scores climbed to, and remained at, the mid-to-high 60th percentile range. At the urging of the staff, and with the enthusiastic support of the parents, intensive phonics was in, and "look and say" was out.

The success of intensive systematic phonics was evident in the improvement of academic achievement, but another side benefit not to be overlooked was its cost-effectiveness. The old "look and say" system was costing about twenty dollars per child per year to maintain. The cost of the new program over an eight-year period amounted to an average annual cost of less than three dollars per pupil. All of this for a program that worked, satisfied the staff and community, lifted reading scores to the mid-sixties on standardized tests, and gave remarkable reading power and enjoyment to the children.

The inescapable message: teach intensive, systematic phonics!

Example # 3 - ask Sue Dickson, author and former first-grade teacher

"In college I had been taught that phonics doesn't work, that the English language is too complicated to be taught that way, and I swallowed that reasoning hook, line and sinker. . . . So, during my first two years as a teacher, I didn't use any phonics. But in 1954[sic], my mother bought a book by Rudolf Flesch called 'Why Johnny Can't Read.'" At first Sue rejected his recommendations. After all she was "the one. . . with the teaching degree." Finally she decided that she had to do something because ". . . I was losing whole groups of students through the cracks. . . . I decided I would give phonics a try. But I was so scared. My professors had been so adamantly against it. [But the result was that] my class had scored so high on the standardized tests that the [school] administrators thought I had cheated [in reporting my test scores]!" She never went back to teaching "look and say" again.

Then she began to develop her own system of teaching reading, using the principles of phonics, but also using music to make it

See Read on page 11

THE STUDENT SUCCESS WORKSHOP

HOW TO GET BETTER GRADES IN SCHOOL

A Workshop For Students By The Youth Development Institute

THIS WORKSHOP WILL HELP THE STUDENT TO IMMEDIATELY

- Get Better Grades In School
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- Test Taking Strategies

TYPICAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT COMMENT:

After attending and applying the material that was presented at this workshop my grades and study habits improved.

REVIEWER COMMENT:

This Workshop is a must for the serious student who wants to get better grades in school.

IT WORKS:

Hundreds of students have already attended this workshop and are now getting better grades in school.

I am interested in enrolling in THE STUDENT SUCCESS WORKSHOP!

Please contact me at the address listed below, with the time, date and location of this workshop.

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____ Date _____ Student Grade _____ Student Age _____

The Youth Development Institute (YDI) - P.O. BOX 431016 - PONTIAC, MICHIGAN 48343

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THE PARENT SUCCESS WORKSHOP

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- Help Their Child To Read Better and Get Better Grades In School
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- Getting Along With Others.

TYPICAL PARENT COMMENT:

After participating and applying the material presented in this workshop my ability to help my child has increased significantly.

PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS:

This workshop is a must for the concerned parent who wants to help their child succeed in school, friendships and in sports.

IT WORKS:

Hundreds of parents have already attended this workshop and are now helping their children succeed in school, friendships and in sports.

I am interested in enrolling in THE PARENT SUCCESS WORKSHOP!

Please contact me at the address listed below, with the time, date and location of this workshop.

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____ Date _____ Student Grade _____ Student Age _____

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-What's Going on Around Us

MADD Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving

Submitted by Deon Dinkins

Mothers Against Drunk Driving recently launched a bold new initiative designed to eliminate one of the nation's deadliest crimes. MADD's national campaign to eliminate drunk driving is to literally wipe out drunk driving in the United States.

Despite a more than 40% decline in alcohol-related fatalities since MADD was founded in 1980, every year 13,000 people are killed by drunk drivers with an illegal alcohol concentration of .08 or above and countless others are injured. As a nation, our efforts to prevent drunk driving have stalled.

MADD's plan to eradicate this public health threat requires new strategies to complement current methods. This four-point plan concentrates on:

- **Intensive high visibility law enforcement**, including twice yearly crackdowns and frequent enforcement efforts that include sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols in all 50 states;

- **Full implementation of current alcohol admission interlock technologies**, including efforts to require alcohol ignition interlock devices for all convicted drunk drivers. A key part of this effort will be working with

judges, prosecutors and state driver's license officials to stop the revolving door of repeat offenders;

- **Exploration of advanced vehicle technologies** through the establishment of a Blue Ribbon panel of international safety experts to assess the feasibility of a range of technologies that would prevent drunk driving. These technologies must be moderately priced, absolutely reliable, set at the legal BAC limit and unobtrusive to the sober driver; and

- **Mobilization of grassroots support**, led by MADD and its 400+ affiliates, to make the elimination of drunk driving a reality. MADD is uniting drunk driving victims, families, community leaders, and policy makers in the fight to eliminate drunk driving.

MADD was founded in 1980 in response to one woman's loss of her daughter to a drunk driver in California. MADD soon grew into a nationwide organization with almost two million members and supporters and with more than 600 affiliates in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain. Since MADD was founded, traffic deaths have dropped by 44 percent and

helped save over 300,000 lives, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

General Statistics

- Nationwide in 2006, 17,602 people died in alcohol-related traffic crashes.
- In Maryland in 2006, 268 individuals died in alcohol-related crashes. These deaths constituted approximately 41 percent of total traffic fatalities.
- Alcohol-related crashes kill almost 50 people a day – one death every 31 minutes.
- Each year, another 275,000 people are injured in these crashes.
- About three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.
- Economic costs of alcohol-related crashes are estimated to be \$114.3 billion yearly.
- Impairment is not determined by the type of drink, but rather by the amount of alcohol ingested over a specific period of time.
- Drunk driving is the nation's most frequently committed violent crime.

Youth Statistics

- Alcohol use is the number one problem among young people.

- In 2005, 2,035 youth (aged 15-20) were killed in alcohol-related crashes, accounting for more than 35 percent of all traffic deaths in that age group.

- Underage alcohol use is more than likely to kill young people than all other drugs combined.

- The younger an individual starts drinking, and the greater the intensity and frequency of alcohol consumption, the greater the risk of using other drugs.

- Youth who drink alcohol are 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug, and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than young people who never drink alcohol.

- Illegal consumption of alcohol by minors led to 3,212 deaths and 2.4 million other harmful events in the lives of American families in 2001.

- Underage drinkers account for about 16 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S. annually.

- 33% of nearly 200,000 students surveyed said that their parents often do not set clear rules. Half said they are not disciplined routinely when they break the rules.

For more information, please visit www.madd.org or call (800) GET-MADD

Read from page 10

easier for the children to learn the letter sounds. It took her thirty years to perfect the system, but now hundreds of teachers are using her program "Sing, Spell, Read and Write" with thousands of children, from Maine to California, Michigan to Texas! One school system in Mississippi that used the program in 1988 found that students who were first graders in 1987 improved their reading performance by 42 percentile points on the Stanford Achievement Tests. Reading comprehension improved 34 percentile points, and spelling went up 30 points.

The message is clear: teach intensive, systematic phonics!

Example #4 - ask the thousands of satisfied customers of "Hooked on Phonics"

In 1984, Sean Shanahan's son came home from school very upset, so upset that he threw up his supper. This went on for several days, and finally after much discussion with his son, and the school officials, the answer came. His son couldn't read. His frustration was so great it made him physically ill. In desperation, Sean, who had learned to read using phonics, decided to make a tape of the letter sounds, set to music, for his son to practice. Within a few weeks, his son could read. Word spread, and soon neighbors borrowed, or copied the tapes, and their children began to read as well. And thus, "Hooked on Phonics" was born. Thousands of "Hooked on Phonics" products have been shipped, and thousands of grateful, satisfied customers sent letters of appreciation for the gift of reading they received. A passing phenomenon, one might ask? No, just common sense, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the truth about how children learn to read.

The inescapable message: teach intensive, systematic, phonics!

Which federal programs impact illiteracy?

According to the Congressional Research Service, federal assistance for adult education and literacy programs is primarily authorized through the Adult Education Act (AEA). The AEA serves 3.5 million people annually, with an FY92 appropriation of [\$155] million. Compensatory education (Chapter 1) is specifically targeted toward

low-income families, and teaching reading is a major emphasis of this program. The FY96 funding for Chapter 1 is \$6.9 billion.

Several major studies that have addressed the extent of illiteracy have been funded by the federal government over the years. These include the "National Assessment of Educational Progress," "Follow Through," the "Adult Performance Level" (APL) study, and most recently, the Commission on Reading report, "Becoming a Nation of Readers," which provided a synthesis of reading research and the present state-of-the-art of reading instruction.

The cumulative amount of money spent on illiteracy by the federal government over the past 25 years has been staggering. The following programs are only the tip of the iceberg:

- Chapter I, cumulative funding from 1966 to 1996 = \$90.5 billion.
- Right to Read, cumulative funding from 1971 to 1981 = \$220 million.
- Bilingual education, cumulative funding from 1967 to 1996 = \$3.2 billion.
- Special Education, cumulative funding from 1975 to 1996 (federal & state) = \$370 billion.

The six government agencies that provide the most funding for the problem of illiteracy are: The U.S. Departments of Education (29 programs), Labor (3 programs), Health & Human Services (12 programs), Justice (2 programs), Defense (5 programs), and State (2 programs).

In the National Literacy Act of 1991, the U.S. Congress established the National Institute for Literacy, with a recommended budget of \$5 million and the goal of developing:

"...integrated programs of research and development, identification and validation of effective practices, technical assistance, and dissemination activities designed to improve adult literacy and basic education skills needed for productive employment and citizenship."

Although the purpose of the National Institute for Literacy is laudable, it is unlikely that progress will be made toward a literate America, unless there is an acknowledge-

ment that research has already validated effective practices in teaching an individual to read. What we need is action, not more research, more talk, and more wasted taxpayer dollars!

Now is the time for action!

The overwhelming evidence from research and classroom results indicates that the cure for the "disease of illiteracy" is the restoration of the instructional practice of intensive, systematic phonics in every primary school in America!

Established in January 1993, the sole purpose of The National Right to Read Foundation is to eliminate illiteracy in America by returning direct, systematic phonics to every first-grade classroom in America. To accomplish this objective will take the collective effort of parents, teachers, legislators, and public-minded citizens all across America. Unless we change the way

our children are being taught to read, we run the risk of becoming a nation of illiterates, unable to compete in the international marketplace, and with increasing dependence on government support at home.

Here's what you can do:

1. Establish a chapter of The National Right to Read Foundation in your community.
2. Identify parents, teachers, and community leaders who are successfully teaching phonics to children at home or in the classroom.
3. Organize workshops where trained teachers can share the benefits of phonics instruction with parents, teachers, school board members, and the press.
4. Teach your child to read at home, before he or she goes to school.
5. Submit an article to your local newspaper describing how your child learned to read using phonics.

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—Health Watch—

Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise

By Selvy Hall



Selvy Hall

Dec. 1, 2007 was World AIDS Day. This was the 19th observance. Thank you for observing a moment of silence and/or praying for those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, or those who have died from the disease.

Every 13 minutes someone contracts HIV

There have been more deaths due to HIV/AIDS than all wars combined

How can we stop AIDS?

- Stop gossiping, judging and discriminating
- Get educated, get tested, get treated
- Visit or call someone living with HIV/AIDS or the family of someone who died from the disease
- Make a financial donation to the Selvy Hall Foundation (we operate by donations and volunteers)

PO Box 430714, Pontiac, Michigan 48343
(248) 613-0889
• Contact the foundation for a workshop and HIV testing

Refreshments provided. Event open to the public.

This event is free. For other events please call 800-872-2437

I am truly blessed to say that I have survived for twenty years with HIV.

HIV will not control who I am, what I do, where I go or how long I live. Only God has that kind of control. So for those of you living with HIV take a stand today and say "I will no longer be held hostage by HIV, society or ignorance".

I am truly blessed and grateful to have had so much support and love. Since the inception of The Pontiac News, I have received so many words of encouragement, smiles and hugs as I'm walking thru Walmart, at the bank and other places.

To Sam of People's Market, I thank you. Whenever I enter your store you always give me that warm smile and tell me how blessed I am. It blesses me that people who are not in my immediate circle have me in their thoughts and prayers.

Love is what keeps so many of us pressing on and knowing we can make it. I refuse to allow negative people or thoughts into my life.

Remember love conquers all and I know that it is because of God's grace and mercy that I am still here today.

'My diagnosis is not until death'. But for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. (John 11:4)
(Note; part 2 of Sickle Cell article will be appear in late Dec issue)

—Senior Citizens Matters—

When your Grandchild's Parent is in Prison

There are more than 721,000 parents living behind bars. Where are the children of these prison inmates? It depends. When Dad is in prison, most children live with Mom. When Mom is in prison, many children live with grandparents and other relatives.

Are you raising grandchildren who have a parent in prison? Your grandchildren are dealing with a lot right now, aren't they? Their needs may seem overwhelming to you. Don't despair. There are steps that you can take to help your grandchildren cope with what is happening in their lives.

What to Tell the Child

When a parent goes to prison, children want to know what happened. It's always best to tell the truth. If you make up a story to protect your grandchildren, it could backfire. The story may not make sense to the children. Kids are smart. They'll know you're hiding something from them and they may imagine that it's something far worse than what really happened. This could make them nervous or afraid. Or, the grandchildren may hear the real story from friends in the neighborhood. Then they will feel that you have betrayed them.

Remember, children of incarcerated parents need stability in their lives. They also need to know that they can trust the people around them. Don't let white lies damage the trust your grandchildren have in you.

How much should you tell? Give young children a simple explanation of what happened. Older children can handle the complete story. Most kids will understand what you mean when you say that the parent did something wrong and is being punished.

Not everyone in the family will agree on what to say to youngsters. You will have to work this out with other family members. Help the family come to a decision that is best for the children.

Dealing with Difficult Emotions

Your grandchildren will probably feel many conflicting emotions when their parent goes to jail. They may feel angry and ashamed that the parent has done bad things. But, at the same time, they could remain very loyal to the parent. They may be afraid that they will never see the parent again. They could fear that you may leave them too.

What can you do to help? Let your grandchildren know that you love them and that you're not going anywhere. Listen when they want to talk about their parent. Let them know that it's "okay" to feel the way they do—even if their feelings are different from your feelings. A child may miss his or her parent and want to see the parent often. On the other hand, you may be angry at the parent and want no contact. You and your grandchild don't have to feel the same things. But you must respect the child's feelings. Don't try to change those feelings.

Ongoing Communication

Helping your grandchildren stay in touch with their parent helps everyone. The children will feel loved and connected to their family. They'll have a chance to make peace with what the parent has done. This will help them adjust more easily when the parent comes home. Staying in touch could even help the parent turn his or her life around. Inmates with strong family ties usually do better after they leave prison.

Your grandchildren can talk with an in-



carcerated parent on the telephone. Or they can swap letters with the parent. Help the children keep a list of things they want to tell Mom or Dad. This will make it easier to write letters or make phone calls when the time comes. Mail cards on special holidays. Send report cards and other school papers, too. Remind the parent to send cards on the children's birthdays.

Think about taking the children to visit the parent in prison. This might not be an easy thing to do. The prison might be far away from where you live. Getting there may cost money. Plus, the prison may not be very child-friendly. Try to go anyway. Studies show that children do better at home if they can visit a parent in jail. Kids usually think that prison conditions are much worse than they really are. Seeing a parent in prison can set their minds at ease.

Several organizations sponsor programs that make it easier for children to visit their parents in prison. Find out if the prison has these programs.

If the Child Doesn't Want Contact

Some children don't want to have any contact with a parent who is in jail. There could be many reasons for this. Maybe the child didn't get along with the parent before the arrest. The child may not like going to the prison. Older kids may think prison visits are boring.

Don't force the child to visit. But don't give up too easily, either. Try to gently convince the child to stay in touch by phone or mail. Not having any luck? Don't bring up the subject for a few weeks. It may help if the parent tries to reach out to the child.

Has the child been abused by a parent? Then don't pressure the child to visit, call or write. Instead, get counseling for the child.

Problem Behaviors

Sometimes children act differently after a parent goes to jail. They may cry more often. They may withdraw. They may get into fights. Are you concerned about these changes? Then speak with your health care professional. Be sure to tell that professional about your family situation. This will help him or her assess the child. Does the doctor feel that your grandchild could benefit from counseling? Ask if the child can see someone who has experience with inmate parents and their children.

Contact - AARP Grandparent Information Center (888) 687-2277 - Article copied from AARP website www.aarp.org/grandparents

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-Voices in the Community-

**ENCOURAGER'S CORNER:
Thanksgiving; Seasoned with
Appreciation, Garnished with Gratitude®**



Dianthia Spann

I do realize that upon release of this article that the actual Thanksgiving holiday will have already passed, but it is my desire to release a spirit of thanksgiving and thankfulness upon the greater Pontiac area. Thanksgiving, appreciation and gratefulness are all words that come to mind when you think about Thanksgiving, not to mention food, family, fellowship and of course football, which all equates to fun. What a splendid time of reflection, a calm lengthy careful consideration of just how good God has been to you, to me and to all our loved ones. I've literally taken a seat to write this piece with such a spirit of gratitude. I count it a privilege to share how very much I appreciate every experience that has occurred in my life. I know that may sound odd since every encounter has not been, what one would consider as positively rewarding, yet what's been gleaned as a result is unconditionally priceless. With deep appreciation I address you and it is my prayer that no matter what these challenging economic times may have brought your way, I say, you still have much to be thankful for. We get so busy adding up our troubles we forget or negate to count all our blessings. What comes to mind when you think of Thanksgiving? What do you have to be thankful for? Yes, I am asking you my

friends to reflect, sit back and take some time to ponder and mediate over everything that life has dealt you; good, bad and even indifferent. While you are pondering, remember to season it with appreciation and thanks, followed by an arising from your seat and no matter what surfaces, garnish it all with gratitude.

As one that takes great delight and pleasure in her cooking ability I realize it takes the correct amount of seasoning to make a dish perfect and once its finished, presentation is everything. In the process of preparing it, if one ingredient is omitted then it could completely change not only how it looks but also how it tastes. Then again it could taste simply wonderful but if it is given to you and it looks hideous and unattractive then you really wouldn't give it a chance.

So it is with thanksgiving, appreciation and gratitude. The seasoning and the garnish that make all of life a very worthwhile dish must allow the sweet flavor, the zesty pizzazz, of your thankful attitude to become something that others would find themselves craving. Be appealing or better yet even contagious with your approach towards life.

William Shakespeare says "O Lord that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!"

O to have a heart full, complete or abundantly provided with ever an attitude of praise and thanksgiving regardless of what is going on, what has gone on or what will go on in the future, but still in all things give thanks.

Have a wonderful holiday season, reach out and be a blessing, share the love and open your hearts to the new. Be the seasoning and garnish for someone else.

A Voice in the Community

By Ken E. Corr

First, I would like to wish all of our readers of the new Pontiac News a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I would also like to thank the publisher, Frank Russell, for the opportunity to express myself through my articles and poetry.

I chose "The Homeless" and "Don't Drive Drunk" for this edition simply because it is the time of year when it would be nice if we went out of our way to do something special for the less fortunate. Most of us, including myself, couldn't fathom what it would be like to be homeless, to perhaps live in a shelter or in more extreme cases, out in the elements. Perhaps we'll entertain a healthy debate over who needs help. As a man once said, "Just because one is homeless, doesn't make them helpless." In the words of the late Reverend Eddie McDonald, "Help somebody!"

The other poem entitled "Don't Drive Drunk" was chosen because people seem to think they have a licence to drink as much as they want in the name of celebration.

Merry Christmas . . . Happy New Year . . . Happy Kwanzaa!
Ken E. Corr



Corr

The Homeless

When I think of the homeless
In the land of plenty,
Where some have it all
Yet some don't have any.

The homeless are people
Just like you and me.
They just don't have a home
That's how cruel life can be.

I once heard a sermon
On the flip side of life.
One can be up today
And be down overnight.

We all should remember
Life has no guarantees,
You or I could be homeless
That's the truth, if you please.

Those that have
Should help those that have not.
I'm sure we all know this
Though it seems we've forgot.

We must help the homeless
They are people you see . . .
We should never forget
It could be you or me.

The World According to Joe Cool

Hi Pontiac - Joe Cool here. Many thanks



Joe Cool

for the many favorable comments regarding my previous definition of the "Global Marketplace" and ways to find your "niche". In this article, let's talk about Networking in the local marketplace with worldwide implications. I am going to describe a recent "happenstance" occurrence that I have no doubt will be of benefit to Pontiac in the not-too-distant future.

The event: Rick Weaver, President of MBC Global and I were invited to attend and exhibit at the recent Michigan Professional Women's Network 2007 Expo in Southfield. While at our booth, a well-known businessman from Detroit began asking us about our involvement in the global marketplace. Through his questions, it was obvious he was "searching" for information that would assist him in the expansion of his business. Through dialogue we discovered his quest was the development of "business ties" between the United States, the Caribbean and Africa. WOW!! My mind immediately went back to my two previous articles in The Pontiac News describing the development of business opportunities of local Pontiac companies in Ghana and Nigeria. The story gets better.

The businessman is from the Caribbean and he immediately (the same day) introduced me to an African Professor who is in the process of developing a major US-Africa International Business Conference. As the African Professor is Ghanaian, I immediate-

ly asked my trusted Ghanaian business colleague, Mr. Kofi Annorh, President of Divine Breeze to speak with the Professor. After one business meeting, a formal Press Release was distributed worldwide providing information on the Conference and potential ways that we could work together. I always had in mind the City of Pontiac and the many ways local companies could be introduced through the Conference and subsequent meetings with key personnel.

The story continues. A few days later, I was introduced to a membership-based organization in Detroit, which includes local community leaders from many African countries. The Executive Director of the organization is Nigerian and when I shared my story about working with Chief MKO Abiola of Nigeria in the 1980s on Telecommunication Systems for the Nigerian Signal Corps and the Federal Police, he was taken aback as he also worked very closely with the Chief. I will provide more information as available about opportunities with this organization in future issues.

WOW! That is what I call local networking with international implications in a very short period of time. Is your current networking techniques developing new contacts for you in the global marketplace? Do you own a small company that wants to expand? I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss the role for your product/service in MY world, the global marketplace. With your ideas and my exposure/networking throughout the global marketplace, let's be successful and give back to the community!! Send your requests to Joe Cool at ThePontiacNews@sbcglobal.net and I will answer in future columns.

Ask Elaine.com

By Elaine Smith-Wright

Mrs. Smith-Wright started out as a Mass Communications major at Oakland University and now holds a B.A. degree in Nursing Home Administration and the Certificate of Gerontology and Sociology of the Aging from Wiley College along with a MBA Degree from East Texas Baptist University in Management. She also holds a Certificate in Filmmaking, Screenwriting and Directing from the Motion Picture Institute of Michigan.



Dear Elaine:

My husband smokes like a train. I've tried to get him to stop, the doctor says he needs to quit and everywhere we go, he's not allowed to smoke inside. He wants to quit but he doesn't do anything to try and stop. My biggest fear is that he smokes in bed and I'm afraid he'll set us both on fire one night because he wakes up in the middle of the night and lights one up and is usually quite drowsy. There are holes in my Down comforter, burn marks on the couch and the sink in the bathroom but he doesn't seem to care. His brother just had one lung removed and has lung cancer, but it doesn't faze him one bit because it's not him. I want him to stop. Our whole house and my clothes all smell like smoke. What else can I do?

**Signed:
Smells Like Smoke But I Don't**

Dear Smells Like Smoke:

I'm so sorry, but unless he's ready to quit, there's nothing no one else can do. I hate to think that it would take a fire to get his attention, but for some people smoking is such an addiction just like any other drug to the point that they will smoke until the very end. Pray for him, offer to get him some counseling and purchase a self-help book and give it to him as a gift. Ask him to pay for all of the items he has destroyed and see if that will get his attention. If you're willing to go for more drastic measures, start sleeping in another bedroom and tell him it's because you can't breathe or because you're afraid that he's going to set the bed on fire and at least this way, if he burns himself up, you'll have a chance to escape if you're sleeping somewhere else. He really needs help and a lot of times a patch or gum or even a hypnotist is not enough. Do all that you can to help him before it's really too late.

Good Luck

You can write to Ask Elaine.Com at: ThePontiacNews@sbcglobal.net

—Sports—

OCC Raiders Men's Basketball Team defeats St. Clair County CC 78 - 74 after suffering 4 straight losses!



OCC Men Basketball Team members and assistant coach Chris Riley and Head coach Frank Russell

After opening the 2007-2008 season with 2 wins against Rochester College and Lorain (OH) County Community College the Oakland Community College men basketball team has experienced 3 straight losses.

On 11/07/07, Grand Rapids CC defeated the OCC Raiders 107 to 76. Oakland Community College was led in scoring by Victor Boss with 20 points and Donte Campbell with 19 points and 11 rebounds. Grand Rapids was led by 5 players in double figures including Keithan Jackson with 18 and 12 rebounds, Jance Payne 18 points and 7 assists, Brad Whitby with 15 points and Tylor Trobaugh with 12 points.

On 11/10/07, the OCC Raiders were defeated by Lorain (OH) County Community College 75 to 73. Jeff Vaughn led the Raiders in scoring with 27 points and in rebounding with 17.

On 11/17/07, Owens Community College defeated the OCC Raiders by a score of 74 to 68. DeAndre Hall (Pontiac Northern) paced the Owens Express with 23 points and 14 rebounds. Three players scored in double figures for the OCC Raiders including Donte Campbell (Pontiac Central) 27 points and 6

rebounds, Jeremy Wilson (Southfield High) with 10 points and 8 rebounds, and Lawrence Hicks (Pontiac Central) 10 points and 8 assists.

On Saturday 12/1/07, Muskegon CC defeated the OCC Raiders 71 to 51 at Highland Lakes. Justin Greene (Birmingham Groves) led the Raiders with 12 points and 4 assist. Jeff Vaughn (Pontiac Central) contributed 8 points. Muskegon was led by 3 players in double figures including Ricky Anderson (17), Deondray Brown (14) and Andre Evans (10).

On Wednesday December 5 OCC Raiders ends 4 game skid by defeating St. Clair CC 78-74. The Raiders were paced by Justin Greene (Birmingham Groves) with 19 points, 8 rebounds and 8 assist. Jeremy Wilson (Lathrup) scored 17 points and Lawrence Hicks (Pontiac Central) scored 15 points. St. Clair was led by James Scott with 22 points.

The Raiders Next home game will be against Grand Rapids on Friday December 7 at Highland Lakes @ 7:30 pm. Followed by Delta College on Monday January 7 also @ Highland Lakes.

— Employment Opportunities —



Human Resources Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency, 196 Cesar E. Chavez Ave., P.O. Box 430598, Pontiac, MI 48343-0598
Email: EMPLOYMENT@olhsa.org
(248) 209-2615 FAX Website: www.olhsa.org

The Pontiac News is in need of contributing writers and other staff - See list below!
Send your resume to
ThePontiacNews@sbcglobal.net

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

The Pontiac News is looking for highly self-motivated, enthusiastic, strong customer skills individuals to build our outside sales team. This position will report to the Advertising Manager. This is an Entry-level sales position with onsite training - NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY BUT PREFERRED.

DIRECTOR OF SALES

The Pontiac News, a community newspaper based in the City of Pontiac Michigan, is seeking a highly motivated, results driven Sales Director. This position is accountable for assisting with the direction, coordination and control of advertising for TPN and the management of sales and support staff to ensure the attainment of advertising sales goals.

ADVERTISING MANAGER

The Pontiac News seeks, an advertising manager. The person who fills this position will be responsible for growing classified revenue through outbound sales (cold calling), handling incoming advertiser calls, and executing sales strategies. The candidate selected must be able to work independently, be well organized and work efficiently in a deadline environment. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record in sales either in an outside media sales capacity or inside sales business development environment.

Get Your Team Ready for the 1st Annual Welcome Back to School 5 on 5 Basketball Tournament

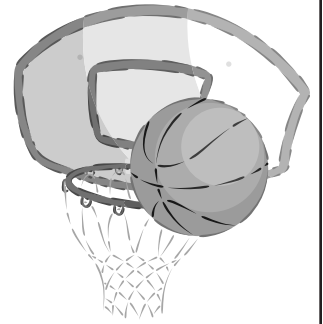
Presented by: The Lady Panthers & Sky's
The Limit Community Foundation

Date: Saturday January 26, 2008 from 8am until 8pm @ Pontiac Central High School's Fieldhouse and Auxiliary Gym
Girls and Boys ages 9 through 15 – Teams by various age Division

Cost: \$195 per team with referee fee included

For more information or to register contact: Reggie Green – 248-495-4511 or Chris Riley 248-636-5054

This is a three game guarantee tournament. The top two teams in each division will compete for a team trophy and medals!



—Community Calender—

Bloomfield Hills/Woodward Estates Neighborhood Association Meeting

Velma Stephens - Chairperson

Saturday, December 8, 2007, 1pm – 2:30 pm

Franklin Elementary School

Guest Speakers:

Calvin Cupidore

Interim Superintendent School District City of Pontiac

April Hernandez

President Pontiac School Board of Trustees

Sandy Michael McDonald & Just Friends

8th Annual Holiday Extravaganza – 9pm – 2am
Saturday, December 8, 2007 @ The Luxurious 30

North Saginaw Street, Downtown Pontiac

Live Jazz – Holiday Buffet – Cash Bar - \$500

Cash Money Tree Give-A-Way

Music By D.J. Chuckie – Hosted By Leonard

Smith - Tickets \$20 Advance - Call 248-896-2775

Contact
248-758-1411

or

ThePontiacNews@sbcglobal.net
To list your Event

We're Here for Life



North
Oakland
Medical
Centers

Dear Community Members:

Since 1910, when North Oakland Medical Centers became Oakland County's first hospital, we have always prided ourselves in our ability to deliver high-quality health care and health-related services.

We are aggressively working towards retooling our service offerings and arranging for a long and successful future. Our vision has always been that North Oakland Medical Centers will provide superior health care in a welldefined set of services for the citizens of Pontiac and northern Oakland County.



JOHN GRAHAM

Our hospital has many outstanding programs of which we are proud including:

- Our family medicine programs;
- Our teen health centers based right in Pontiac High Schools;
- Our ambulatory care center in Waterford and radiology services in Clarkston;
- Our development of a 40-bed Long Term Acute Care Unit in partnership with Select Specialties;
- Our inpatient services in medicine, surgery, psychiatry and rehabilitation.

As you may know, we have also entered into an affiliation with St. Joseph Mercy Oakland to further improve the delivery of health care to the greater Pontiac community. It is a major part of our strategic plan to ensure the future viability of North Oakland Medical Centers. We believe it will be more beneficial to our community to collaborate rather than compete.

As you can see by the plans that are underway, we are building a path to a successful future. North Oakland Medical Centers is here to serve the community for generations to come.

Respectfully,

John Graham
Chief Executive Officer
North Oakland Medical Centers



We are NOMC, We're Here for Life.

Call or visit us...

MAIN CAMPUS

(248) 857-7200

PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE

(877) 999-6662

WEB SITE

www.nomc.org

Community Events

Oakland County Employment Diversity Council Luncheon



OCC Basketball Team members @ OCEDC Event with Dr. Patricia Dolly OCC President Auburn Hills



Claudia Buckley OCEDC Event Chairperson talks with Tammy Seals of Kelly Services at KMR Diversity Theatre Luncheon at Troy Hilton



John Almstadt Manager Oakland County Michigan Works (Event Sponsor) with Tom Kimball Board Chair and guest at OCEDC Luncheon at Troy Hilton



OCEDC Board members with KMR Diversity Theatre Group



KMR Diversity Theatre Group with Event Chair Claudia Buckley



KMR Diversity Theatre Group on stage during Luncheon

Ruth Ramsey's Retirement Party



Ruth Ramsey (City of Pontiac Retiree) at Retirement Party with Mark Payne



Ruth Ramsey with Mayor Clarence Phillips at retirement Party



Ruth Ramsey (center) with husband-elect Chester Bechum and friend Mattie Lasseigne

Holiday Extravaganza Parade - Downtown City of Pontiac



City of Pontiac Fire Fighters



PNH Marching Band



James Madison Middle School