

POLPOURRI

HAVE PLANE, WILL HIRE

Magic, Clinton hitch ride on Haworth jet

It was business not politics that helped fulfill the Clinton campaign's transportation needs in Iowa last month. That's why a corporate jet from rock-ribbed Republican stronghold Holland came to shuttle former basketball star Magic Johnson and Bill Clinton to campaign appearances. A Washington Post reporter, smelling a potential illegal corporate contribution, took down the jet's tail numbers and traced it to Haworth Corp. No story, the reporter quickly learned. It was a rental agreement, the result of the campaign's broad search for a jet and a random call to another flyover state where they discovered the 15-seat Haworth Gulfstream was available. Haworth spokeswoman Julie Smith understood the intrigue, acknowledging the company's "more Republican leanings" — founder G.W. Haworth donated thousands to the RNC and GOP candidates over the years — but called the jet a "business tool."



ALL ABOUT CHOICE

Logo sets new tone

Grand Rapids Public Schools are showing off a new logo leaders say "is symbolic of the new hope, energy, and innovative changes taking place" in the district. GRPS communications czar John Helmholdt said the redesign included staff and outside suggestions, but taxpayer money wasn't used. The look is based on one of Bernard Taylor's first acts as superintendent. At a gathering of teachers he pulled off his tie, jacket and dress shirt to unveil a T-shirt reading: "GRPS, my choice!"

FROM THE LEFT AND RIGHT

Ferraro, Kristol to visit

The right hand should always know what the left is up to. So it is with the Michigan Political Leadership Program, which is tapping Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol and former Democratic vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro to headline its annual fundraising dinner Friday. Kristol has been an ardent supporter of the Iraq war and a hardliner on GOP social issues. Ferraro leaves a long liberal trail, highlighted by her failed Democratic 1984 run for vice president. She backs New York Sen. Hillary Clinton. They are to speak at Noto's Old World restaurant at breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. The events are open to the public with tickets at \$125 each.

SHE WILL BE MISSED

Terri Hegarty retires

Grand Rapids city officials bade a fond farewell to City Clerk Terri Hegarty last week. The "Sweetheart of City Hall" retired



Terri Hegarty

after 13 years as city clerk and 35 years as a city employee. Hegarty, wife of former Police Chief William Hegarty and third-generation city employee, blushed and her eyes welled with tears several times Tuesday as city officials hosted a reception for her in the lobby of City Hall. City commissioners appointed her longtime deputy, Marie Gowell, to serve as acting clerk while they sort resumes of 19 applicants. Mayor George Heartwell said he hopes to fill the vacancy by mid-April.

Youngsters test their braille talents



PRESS PHOTO/KATY BATDORFF

At her fingertips: Emma Muller competes in the proofreading portion of the Michigan Regional Braille Challenge on Saturday.

Competitors show off skills in proofreading, transcription and reading comprehension

BY AARON OGG
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Nick Stanford used his eyes not to see, but to think.

The 16-year-old Wyoming Park High School student carefully walked his fingertips over a braille document Saturday at St. Isidore Elementary School, searching for grammatical errors.

He paused, eyes darting back and forth, seemingly scanning for an answer. Soon, a flurry of thick, melodi-

ous clunking on the Braille, a typewriter with six keys. Though Nick claims he's "not a very good reader," he was confident.

"The Braille Challenge stuff is way below my level," he said. "Everything makes sense to me."

Nick was among nine area students competing in the first Michigan Regional Braille Challenge, organized by the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 456 Cherry St. SE.

He was born with Leber's congenital amaurosis, a hereditary, degenerative eye disease. So was his sister, 17-year-old Wyoming Park student Sarah Stanford, who also competed at the event.

"(The contest) helps blind people get a lot better at their reading and writing," Sarah said.

SEE BRAILLE, B2

3 CHEERS FOR BEER!

2,000 SUDS ENTHUSIASTS POUR INTO BALLPARK TO CELEBRATE MICHIGAN BREWING FESTIVAL



PRESS PHOTOS/KATY BATDORFF



Beer, here: Volunteer Jennifer Lynch pours beer samples in the New Holland Brewery tent Saturday at the Winter Beer Festival. Some 30 Michigan breweries were represented. At top right, Camila Kantz enjoys a beer and a laugh with friends.

BY TROY REIMINK
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Wearing a large coyote fur hat and carrying a large flask that read "At least my beer is made in Michigan," Chas Thompson was in high spirits.

And why wouldn't he be? Thompson, brewer for Schmozh Brewing Co. of Grand Rapids, was among his kind — Michigan beer drinkers, who flooded Fifth Third Ballpark Saturday afternoon for the third-annual Winter Beer Festival.

"It's a beer holiday," he declared.

The sold-out event brought more than 2,000 craft brew enthusiasts to town for a meeting of the minds (and livers), during which some 30 Michigan breweries

poured out samples for the thirsty crowd.

After two years in Lansing, the Michigan Brewers Guild moved its winter party to Grand Rapids, seeking a bigger venue to satisfy growing demand.

In that respect, the event was a success, said the guild's executive director, Scott Graham. Tickets for the festival, which were \$35, had sold out by Friday night, and a few lucky procrastinators were able to snag unused tickets on Saturday.

SEE BEER, B2

Bowling alley to close

DEVELOPMENT GROUP BUYS LANES

BY SHANDRA MARTINEZ
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

HOLLAND — Holland's oldest bowling alley will close in April, weeks after turning 80 years old.

Selling the Holland Bowling Center, located at 215 Central Ave. in downtown, was a difficult decision, Jeff Reest said Saturday.

He bought the bowling alley from his father Hank Reest, who ran it with his wife, Judy, for more than 50 years before selling it in 2005. When Hank died six months later in a plane crash, the family business wasn't the same.

"Dad was the one who pulled it all together. He was our backbone," said Reest, who ran the business in addition to his full-time job at Johnson Controls Inc., where he is director of best practices. Another challenge was the investment to update the operation with new lanes, a heating system and an elevator.

The two-story, 12,000-square-foot facility will be redeveloped into commercial and retail space by its new owner Lumir Corp., Reest said.

Reest approached the Prince family-owned Lumir, the largest property owner in downtown Holland, because of its role revitalizing the downtown. He worked for Prince Corp. for 13 years before the Holland company was bought by JCI in 1996.

When Reest and his wife Kendra took over Holland Bowling Center, they decided to build on its family-friendly niche by taking the alcohol-free establishment smoke-free. Over the years, the bowling alley has been a popular destination for families especially on holidays like Christmas and New Year's Day.

Reest says he hopes to give time for the leagues to finish the season.

E-mail: smartinez@grpress.com

Taking your children to school? Stop and drop

Do your kids a favor: make them walk some extra steps

Today's kids aren't fat and lazy because they eat badly and watch too much TV.

Today's kids are fat and lazy because nincompoop parents who drive those kids to school insist on dropping them off directly at the front door, creating not only roly-poly children but also perfect examples of how to grow up and become a butthead.

And you know who you are: Every morning, after laying out

clothes and making a lunch for Precious, you buckle him or her into a pre-heated car, drive to school, and then engage in behavior so boorish and double-dang rude that perhaps you need to be schooled.

I'm not bashing kids with special needs. Nor moms and dads who motor their young ones to school by the rules. Just those who think the driveway and parking lot were created for them and them alone.

You crawl. You cavort. You cave in to bad etiquette.

Here's a big fat hint: You're not the only person in the world racing against an 8 o'clock school bell. There are others called "teachers" trying to get there, too — not to



TOM RADEMACHER

COLUMNIST

mention principals, janitors, support staff, vendors and OK, that one guy in every district who wears a funny hat, shows up at all the sporting events, and everyone knows by just one name. Like Dale. Or Watson. Or Bubba.

Which means you have no right to be the following person:

■ The dad who, because he feels he's "All That," doesn't release the kid from the car until he's absolutely

in front of the flagpole. To toss the kid out any earlier — and help quicken the flow of traffic — would be a sign of weakness. (Note: These are the same dads who live their lives in the left lane of the highway, whether passing or not).

■ The mom who, after being beside their kid for a 20-minute ride in, suddenly decides to have a long conversation with their student just as they pull curbside. Let me put this gently: "GET THE \$*(^&^* OUT OF THE CAR!!!"

■ The parent who, after pulling up, has the audacity to exit the vehicle so they can help Lil' Johnny unload his junk. Hey Skeeze — why

SEE RADEMACHER, B2