

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2007

MEXICAN RESTAURANT MAGGIE'S KITCHEN ISN'T CLOSING AFTER ALL, B2

POLPOURRI

HE BACKS GUTOWSKI

Sullivan won't run for commission

West Side businessman and sports promoter Bob Sullivan said he has decided against throwing his hat into the ring for the 1st Ward City Commission seat. Instead, he's throwing his support behind Walt Gutowski Jr., owner of Swift Printing Co. "He's young and he believes in the same things I do. He can do the



fighting instead," said the 76-year-old Sullivan, who won a bout with colon cancer last year. Gutowski will face former Kent County Commissioner Tom Postmus and businessman Ed Kettle in the race to succeed Roy Schmidt, who is not seeking re-election after four terms in office. The filing deadline for candidates is May 15.

STOP THE SALTIES

Battling water ballasts

Gobies, lamprey and carp, oh my! Commonly called "aquatic nuisance species," the term belies the danger the non-native sea creatures pose to the Great Lakes. On Monday, a broad coalition of environmentalists



and legislators will gather in Grand Rapids to defend a law mandating ship ballasts be sterilized. A shipping group is challenging the law in court. Great Lakes United says the need to protect the lakes far outweighs the vessels' necessity for commerce. They want an all-out ban on ocean-going "salties." Sound outrageous? Not to the law's chief advocate, state Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck. "Three years ago, I'd have said, 'That's a little radical.' Now, it's probably more realistic," Birkholz said.

VISITING SENATE MEETING

Birkholz late for class

Patty Birkholz has more on her mind than protecting the lakes, which keeps her plenty busy. She arrived 17 minutes late for Friday's Senate subcommittee hearing at Calvin College and right smack in the middle of Grand Valley State University President Thomas Haas' testimony regarding higher education funding. Birkholz, who attended, even though she's not on the panel, apologized for her tardiness. "If you're late in my class at the Coast Guard Academy you get demerits," teased Haas, former dean of academics at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Subcommittee chairman Tony Stamas, a fellow Republican, was a bit more charitable. He told Birkholz she was "more than kind to attend."

EQUAL TREATMENT

Secretary Heartwell

Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell has a feminine side and he's not afraid to show it. On Tuesday, Hizzoner declared it was Equal Pay Day, the day when the average woman's wages finally catches up to what men made last year. But wait, there's more, he declared. When he became the only male on the board of the Women's Resource Center, they elected him their secretary. "It was payback," he said.

GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

Voting rundown

Plan to fill out an absentee ballot for the May 8 election? To get it by mail, you must apply no later than 2 p.m. Saturday. Request a ballot in person at your clerk's office through 4 p.m. May 7. Find out more about your registration status and polling location by plugging in your name at michigan.gov/vote.

Mix-up gives retirees a scare

SOCIAL SECURITY WITHHOLDS FUNDS FROM 8,000 PEOPLE

BY PAT SHELLNBARGER
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

The day Paul Postlewait moved back home after weeks in a hospital and nursing home, he got a letter from Social Security.

His monthly check would be reduced, the letter said, since he had been underpaying for his Medicare and prescription coverage.

Recovering from spinal cord surgery and on oxygen for a chronic lung disease, the last thing he needed was to get caught between his insurer and the government, Postlewait said.

"It was really a shock," he said. "I think the whole system is screwed

up. I'd just like to see it straightened out."

So would about 8,000 other Michigan retirees who have been receiving similar letters saying they underpaid or overpaid for a Medicare plan they signed up for through Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Getting the run-around

After getting her 74-year-old husband settled at home, Postlewait's wife, Betty, called Blue Cross Blue Shield. A Blues customer service representative said she should call Social Security. Social Security said she should call Medicare. Medicare said she should call Blue Cross Blue Shield.

"I spent all morning on the phone," Betty Postlewait said. "It's like you go 'round and 'round. It's going to be a nightmare to fix this."

A fix is in the works but could take several weeks, said Catherine Schmitt, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan vice president. Within about 10 days, the Blues will send a letter to the 8,000 or so customers caught in the mix-up, assuring them all will be worked out.

The problem was caused by a data processing company hired by Blue Cross Blue Shield, Schmitt said. That company, which she declined to name, made a data entry mistake in a master file it sent to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,



PRESS PHOTO/LANCE WYNN

Battling the system: Paul Postlewait, 74, of Georgetown Township, is fighting Medicare over how much will be deducted from his monthly Social Security checks.

TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA



PRESS PHOTOS/JOLIE MYERS

Fishermen on the Rogue River, near Rockford, hoped to catch trout they can keep on a beautiful opening day Saturday. High, fast, muddy waters made it difficult for anglers to wade and hard for the fish to see the lures. Right, Tyler Mazurek, 10, puts split-shot weights on his fishing line. Tyler, his parents, his two brothers and a friend came out to fish opening day of trout season. Brittany Mazurek, Tyler's mom, caught two fish right off the bat, so the boys made her sit out for a half hour, she said with a laugh.



Duthler started business with 3 cars

Patriarch of auto dealership family dies at 86

BY CAMI REISTER
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

GRAND RAPIDS — Julius "Joe" Duthler started selling used cars on the corner of Madison Avenue and 28th Street SE in 1947.

"We had three cars," Mr. Duthler said in an interview with The Press in 2005. "Mine, my dad's and my brother's."

Mr. Duthler, who over the course of a 60-year career turned the three-car lot into several new car dealerships, died Friday at his Grand Rapids home.

The 86-year-old suffered from pulmonary fibrosis, which slowly robbed him of his mobility and independence, said his daughter, Patricia Duthler, former president of the family business.

But, as recently as January, he still was able to go to the office once a week.

"I tell you, if it were not for this disease, he still would have been (going to work)," Patricia Duthler said.

The family sold Duthler Ford and Duthler Honda to DP Fox in 2005, but they still own Duthler Truck Center in Wyoming.

Mr. Duthler was a journeyman tool and die maker by trade, but he never worked in the industry.

"We all realized he found his life's calling in business," Patricia Duthler

SEE DUTHLER, B2



Julius "Joe" Duthler

Quilts bring warmth in difficult times

Woman makes blankets in honor of grandmother

TOM
RADEMACHER

COLUMNIST

CONNECT

■ To donate time or materials to Carin Vogelzang's quest, visit margaretshepechest.com

memory of her family.

"I remember sleeping over at her house as a kid," Vogelzang, 31, recalled. "She lived so close, I could walk over there any time I wanted. It was a special place for me and all my siblings."

Vogelzang was living in Mexico when she got a call to rush back to Grand Rapids among the last arriving at a packed hospital room. The family said their good-byes

We all deal with tragedy and hopelessness in different ways. Some of us recoil in fear or lash out in anger. Others curl up in tears. Carin Vogelzang decided, in the midst of her grieving, to reach out to an aching world — one quilt at a time.

Saturday marked the two-year anniversary of the day a pair of women knocked Vogelzang's grandmother to the ground in a Meijer parking lot. They were struggling to take the 81-year-old Grand Rapids woman's purse.

Margaret Herrema died two days later and, though both her assailants are serving prison time for second-degree murder, the painful memory of that April day is seared into the



COURTESY PHOTO

Bundle of joy: Chad Hill and Misty Knotts hold their new daughter, Anna Grace Hill. The couple were comforted by a quilt given to them by Carin Vogelzang, right, during the difficult adoption process for Anna Grace, 2, who came over from China.