THE OAKLAND PRESS
MONDAY JUNE 15 2009
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TOP of the NEWS

Senior community goes green with gardens

By KRITHIKA RAJARAMAN
Special to The Oakland Press

SOUTHFIELD

The advocacy of "going green," most often found on college campuses, in big businesses and in retail, has now reached a new medium.

Senior residents of St. Anne's Mead in Southfield are turning to more organic approaches to pass their time.

Under the guidance of Gail Lutzky of The Patient Gardener LLC, senior residents are being introduced to horticulture therapy as a means to help subdue the effects of dementia.

Through St. Anne's Mead Life Enrichment Program, the residents will no longer be forced to see the negative side of their ailment but instead will be able to experience a sense of accomplishment with every session by disregarding what residents with dementia don't know, and focusing on what they do know.

The residents of the home spend time weekly to care for and nurture their gardens. Each activity that Lutzky has created for the residents is aimed to target a different level of dementia that the seniors are living with.

"I use plants, nature and related activities to improve cognitive, emotional, physical, psychological and overall spiritual health and well-being of each individual I work with," states Lutzky, a horticultural therapist.

Local youths also have helped in the garden.

"Since our average age is about 89, our group of gardeners should be very proud of the garden they are raising," reports Rick Mehrer, executive director of St. Anne's Mead. "We are also fortunate to have the raised garden boxes that were built for us as part of an Eagle Scout project."

These budding gardeners aren't just planting for themselves either.

In their gardens, the residents grow lettuce, cabbage, snap peas and more. When the gardens mature and grow fully, the residents have come up with potential plans for what they will do with their produce.

"Although we have not decided just yet, the residents may put on a little farmer's market fundraiser and sell bundles to their families and friends," said Erinn Foley, recreational therapist at St. Anne's Mead.

St. Anne's Mead, at 16106 W. 12 Mile Road in Southfield, was founded more than 40 years ago by the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan and welcomes resident of all faiths

For more information about St. Anne's Mead Retirement Home's Assisted Living, Nursing Care and Respite Care services, or to schedule a facility tour, call (248) 557-1221 or visit www.stannesmead.org.

St. Anne's Mead senior community in Southfield introduced its residents to Gail Lutzky, The Patient Gardener LLC, and now they have an organic garden growing lettuce, cabbage, snap peas and more. Under Gail's Master Gardener instruction, the seniors are nurturing their garden weekly.

NATION/WORLD

The Associated Press

Thomas Shad displays photos of his cat, Miss Kitty, Sunday in his Miami home. The cat was killed in a series of cat killings and mutilations. A 18 year-old-suspect has been arrested in the killings.

18-year-old charged in Florida cat mutilations

MIAMI (AP) — A teenager faces charges in a gruesome string of cat mutilations and killings that have horrified his neighbors and shaken animal lovers in two south Florida communities.

Weinman

Tyler Hayes Weinman, 18, was charged Sunday with 19 counts each of animal cruelty and improperly disposing of an animal body and four counts of burglary related to the deaths.

In the past month, residents in the Palmetto Bay and Cutler Bay neighborhoods have reported finding the bodies of more than two dozen cats. Police said some were likely killed by dogs. Some were missing fur — neighbors said some had been skinned — and appeared to have been cut with a sharp, straight instrument, police said.

Weinman was taken into custody at a party and was being questioned at Miami-Dade police headquarters. Four of the confirmed cat killings were reported on the street where Weinman lived.

His attorney, David W. Macey, said in an e-mail that Weinman is innocent of the charges.

Federal government takes swine flu precautions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health secretary Kathleen Sebelius says production of a vaccine for swine flu is being set up in case a vaccine program is recommended.

Sebelius says the government is making every effort to be prepared as the swine flu runs its course. She says the good news is that this swine flu seems not to be such a lethal virus.

Still, Sebelius says, the government is working with governors as well as health and schools officials in case a major vaccination program is needed.

REGION/STATE

Man disappears in Grand Traverse Bay after trying to save granddaughter

TRAVERSE CITY (AP) — Authorities are searching Grand Traverse Bay for an East Lansing man who disappeared while trying to rescue a granddaughter who fell off a boat.

WPBN-TV in Traverse City reports the accident happened about 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

The Grand Traverse County sheriff's department says the girl fell off the boat and her 61-year-old grandfather jumped in after her. It says the girl resurfaced but the man, who has a home in Grand Traverse County, did not.

Water in the area of East Grand Traverse Bay is about 140 feet deep. The Antrim County sheriff's department was bringing in a side-scan sonar device to search for the victim.

A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter has helped with the search.

Report: Detroit pension funds spent on travel

DETROIT (AP) — A Detroit newspaper says trustees and others who work for Detroit's two municipal pension funds have spent $380,000 on publicly funded travel in the past year.

The newspaper says it sued to get travel records and says officials continue to withhold many records.

The newspaper says Trustee Ronald Gracia spent the most, billing the General Retirement System $105,000 for travel. That includes about $55,000 for three trips to Singapore and about $19,000 for travel to Hong Kong.

Gracia said pension fund trustees have an obligation to stay educated about global economics.

The records say Gracia attended a meeting in Singapore in November on Asian oil and gas. They say he also visited Singapore in February and in March.

Woman, son, 17, killed in Detroit house fire

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit authorities are investigating the deaths of a woman and her teenage son who were trapped inside their burning home.

The fire broke out about 8:30 p.m. Saturday on the city's west side.

Authorities tell WDIV-TV the victims were a 45-year-old woman and her 17-year-old autistic son. Police say an upstairs resident used a balcony to escape. There's no word yet on what started the fire.

Canoeists' bodies found after 3-day search

TOPINABEE (AP) — Authorities have found the bodies of a couple who disappeared while canoeing on Lake Mullett in the northern Lower Peninsula.

Thirty-six-year-old Orbie Longway and 33-year-old Billie Jo Longway went fishing Tuesday in a canoe on the Cheboygan County lake. They were reported missing the next day.

The sheriff's department says its divers and divers from Emmett County recovered the couple's bodies Friday near the unincorporated village of Topinabee.

CORRECTION

It is the policy of The Oakland Press to correct or clarify stories. We urge readers to call the news desk at (248) 745-4632 if they have personal knowledge of errors.

AROUND OAKLAND

WEST BLOOMFIELD TWP.

Dems club meeting slated

The West Bloomfield/Lakes Area Democratic Club will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 17. Guest speakers will be Apryl Brown from Michigan Democratic Future and Frank Goeddeke from Michigan Health Care Reform, who will speak on "The Pathway to Health Care Reform: Single Payer Plans and President Obama's Proposals for Health Care and Insurance." The meeting begins at 7 p.m. All are welcome at the meeting to be held at the West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation, 4640 Walnut Lake Road between Orchard Lake Road and Farmington Road. Call (248) 709-2492.

— Staff writer Carol Hopkins

WIXOM

Food drive planned

A summer food drive is 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, June 18 at Level One Bank, 28345 Beck Road. Nonperishable canned food products are being accepted and will be donated to the Hospitality House food pantry. Call (248) 468-0205.

— Special writer Leah English

TROY

Free massages offered

With unemployment on the rise, stress can lead to long-term health problems. Massage is a proven method for reducing stress and improving your overall health and attitude, so Elements Therapeutic Massage of Troy wants to help jobless people in the area de-stress by providing free 10-minute chair massages 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, June 18, at Elements Therapeutic Massage of Troy, 6846 Rochester Road, (248) 828-0088. Owner Carol Glowczewski along with eight massage therapists will provide the massages to anyone who simply shows up.

OAKLAND COUNTY

Senior issues discussed

The Oakland County Senior Coalition hosts a free meeting on the increase in the county's senior citizen population 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. Friday, June 19, at the Board of Commissioners Auditorium at the county courthouse. The intent is to conduct a needs assessment of the county's aging population, and a report by research director Kurt Metzger, of City Connect Detroit, in which he says demographics point to a "Silver Tsunami" and an economic impact on transportation, health, social services and housing.

— Staff writer Charles Crumm

TODAY'S MEETINGS

- Addison Township Board of Trustees, 7:30 p.m.
- Auburn Hills City Council, 7 p.m.
- Berkley City Council, 7 p.m.
- Birmingham City Commission, 7:30 p.m.
- Clarkston Community Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- Farmington City Council, 8 p.m.
- Holly Area Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- Lathrup Village Council, 7 p.m.
- Milford Village Council, 7:30 p.m.
- Northville City Council, 7:30 p.m.
- Novi City Council, 7 p.m.
- Oak Park City Council, 7:30 p.m.
- Oakland Community College Board of Trustees, 7 p.m.
- Orchard Lake City Council, 7 p.m.
- Orion Township Board of Trustees, 7 p.m.
- Rochester Hills City Council, 7 p.m.
- Royal Oak City Commission, 7:30 p.m.
- Southfield City Council, 7 p.m.
- Troy City Council, 7:30 p.m.
- West Bloomfield Township Board of Trustees, 7 p.m.