

# Benefit helps young comic, NFHS grad now paralyzed

BY SUSAN B. TAUBER  
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Mark Herman doesn't have much to laugh about these days. The young comic, 26, is struggling to make it through each day.

Last March, after having good success as a comedian in Chicago, Herman was in a fitness room working out with weights. A chest press bar fell against the back of his neck, crushing his fourth and fifth cervical vertebrae and leaving him paralyzed from the neck down, according to Jodi Caden. Caden's sister, Kari, is a friend of Herman's.

For the first few months following the accident, Herman was dependent on a ventilator to help him breathe. He lived until July in different hospital and rehabilitation settings.

The graduate of North Farmington High School and Eastern Michigan University is currently living again with his mother, Alice Herman, in West Bloomfield. She's his primary caregiver, a role she knows from taking care of her husband and Mark's father, Bert Herman, who suffered from Lou Gehrig's disease. He died in 1998.

The family is struggling with the emotional, physical and

financial hardships caused by Mark's accident.

"He is just a very personable, friendly, outgoing person," Suzanne Leibovitz said about her brother. "I don't know if there's a word to describe him. He has always been the caregiver and the advice giver. He made friends everywhere and he was doing so well in Chicago."

Friends and family members who have known the Hermans for years and people who have never met them have rallied together to help.

The most recent outpouring of support is a fund-raiser to help defray some of the enormous

costs involved in the patient's treatment.

"The family is in financial straits," said Caden. "Their medical insurance policy has imposed stringent limitations on what it will cover. It doesn't cover many things he needs, such as supplies and 24-hour health care, which can cost about \$15,000 a month."

The event is a strolling supper and auction from 5 p.m. to midnight Saturday, Oct. 6, at Designs Unlimited, 3160 Hagerly Road in West Bloomfield.

Tickets, available at the door, are \$95 for a friend ticket and \$160 each for a Benefactor tick-

et. To make reservations, contact Caden at (248) 624-7300. People who want to contribute to the Mark Herman Irrevocable Trust Fund also should call Caden.

"Every dollar raised goes toward the fund set up through Variety charity for Mark," Caden explained.

Restaurants donating food for the evening include Assaggi, Big Daddy's Parthenon, Come's Ginopolis, The Golden Mushroom, Leo's Conoy Island, Morels, No. VI Chop House, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Starbucks, Tomatoes Apizza, Sizzling Sticks and Trevar-

row Hardware.

A pianist, disc jockey and singer will provide entertainment.

Guests will be able to bid in a silent auction for such things as a California getaway with a walk-on TV appearance, a hot air balloon ride, a signed guitar by Melissa Etheridge, a day at the sea on a private yacht with lunch and dinner included and much more.

## Dog park expert invited

Anno Fracassa, the president of the Warren Animal Rights Commission, will speak locally about the issues and challenges she faced in her two-year struggle to get the recently opened Warren Dog Park on 12 Mile Road west of Van Dyke into reality.

The park, which opened on Aug. 8, has proven to be a tremendous success, as well as generating a profit after only a little over a month of operation.

According to event organizer George Sarkisian, the presentation will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 9, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The location is still to be determined; the meeting is open to the public.

For information, leave a message with your name and telephone number for Sarkisian at: 248-626-9137.

## Professor says retaliating will be difficult

BY TIM SMITH  
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Unlike the bombing of Pearl Harbor, American retaliation for the Sept. 11 airplanes-as-missiles assault on New York City and Washington, D.C. will be difficult — if not nearly impossible — to accomplish.

"We haven't had ... anything we can associate it with," explained Schoolcraft College political science Professor William J. Burke. "Pearl Harbor, that was devastating, but in a different way. That was more military," during wartime, with Japan an easy-to-distinguish assailant.

Nobody knows yet who spearheaded the terrorist acts, although many fingers are seemingly pointing toward Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden.

But Burke also said the disaster underscores the wide cultural gap between the capitalistic United States and Middle East and that Americans very well might have to give up precious freedoms in exchange for security.

Those were some of the conversations taking place in political science classrooms taught by Burke and Professor Alexander Thomson.

"One of the topics we're going into is individual freedom," said Burke, who described his students as being stunned and "aghast" about the terrorist attacks. "Every society has to make the choice between freedom and security, and this really brings that lesson home."

The one-or-the-other choice, continued Burke, seemingly is now "in the offing."

Thomson, a Farmington resident now in his third year on the Schoolcraft faculty, agreed that "In the long run, the fundamental question that comes to mind is, 'Are Americans willing to give up some measure of individual freedom in response to this thing?'"

Students came back into Thomson's class following a short break about 9 a.m. that Tuesday, and soon found out what had transpired. The class congregated around a television, watched CNN coverage, and then thoughtfully delved into various discussions.

The speculation that the attacks were leveled by "a group of individuals who tend to be suicidal suggests something more religious and fundamental than secular. It seems American culture is being attacked," Thomson said.

"If it does anything," Burke said, "it does dramatize the difference between the culture of the Middle East today and the Western world."

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