

THE WEEKEND



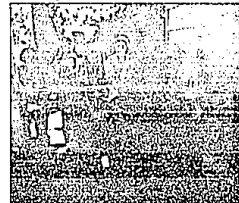
FRIDAY
Enjoy the Disney Spectacular, shows featuring Mickey & Mouse, 1-5 p.m. today through Sunday during the 10th anniversary celebration of Laurel Park Place mall, Six Mile Road one-quarter mile east of I-275, in Livonia. Call (734) 462-1100 for more information.

SATURDAY

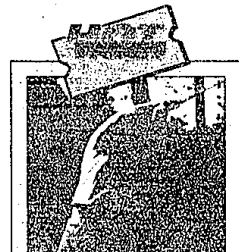


Jack Everly conducts the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in a "Tchaikovsky Spectacular" with fireworks, 8 p.m. at Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills. Gates open 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$8 to \$50, call (313) 576-5111, (248) 377-0100 or (248) 645-6666.

SUNDAY

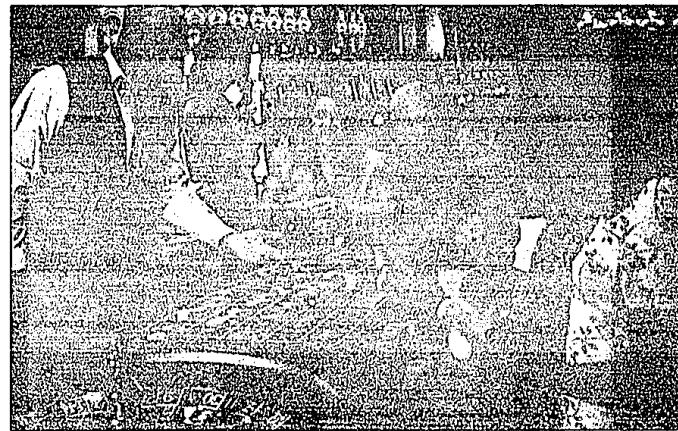


Learn more about African-American culture and traditions during Celebration of Emancipation at Greenfield Village in Dearborn. The Village is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission \$12.50 adults, \$11.50 seniors age 62 and older, \$7.50 kids ages 5-12, children under 5 and members free. Call (313) 271-1620 for information.



Hot Tip: The Highland Games on Saturday at Greenmead Historical Village, Newburgh at Eight Mile Road, offers three stages of entertainers including 20 bagpipe bands, pipers, drummers, and over 200 Highland dancers. Gates open 8:30 a.m. and close after 6 p.m. ceremony. Admission \$8 in advance, \$10 at the gate. Children under 12 free with adult. Call (313) 886-4703 for advance ticket information. On the Web visit www.hIGHLANDGAMES.com

HOW GRAND



Let the games begin: Roulette is just one of the games offered at the new MGM Grand Detroit Casino.

Cast members proud of MGM Grand Detroit Casino

BY KELLY WYONIK
STAFF WRITER
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On a media tour of the MGM Grand Detroit Casino, Barrie Borovsky, vice president, food and beverage and property administration apologizes for being hoarse, and unable to speak very loudly.

"We had a pep rally," said Borovsky. But what his voice lacks in volume is made up in enthusiasm. On Tuesday, July 27, just two days before the opening, Borovsky who lived in Redford and moved to West Bloomfield when he was 12, is a man in a hurry. The clock is ticking and he's got a lot to do.

Details are important to him, even something as seemingly small as an MGM sticker on a waste basket. He takes a minute to look at the just attached sticker, nodding his approval, pleased with how it looks.

He's excited about the casino, and walks quickly as he leads reporters through five kitchens and three restaurants, proudly pointing out many state-of-the-art features that will allow the staff, called "cast members" to feed up to 8,000 guests a day.

Bob Strom, executive chef, and a resident of West Bloomfield, follows and sometimes takes the lead.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, not only for the people who are such an important part of our team but for guests who will, I promise you, be absolutely delighted," said Strom. "Even those who aren't here to enjoy the experience of gaming at one of the best facilities in the world will be drawn to the MGM Grand Detroit Casino. It will be one of the best places to

MGM Grand Detroit

WHERE: 1300 John C. Lodge service drive at Abbott, one block south of Michigan Ave. From southbound Lodge Freeway (I-75) exit Bagley St. Casino entrances on Third St. and Abbott.

OPEN: Seven days a week, 24 hours a day. No one under 21 years of age will be admitted to the casino.

PARKING: Free valet parking for 1,100 at casino. City-owned lot corner of Bagley and First St. for 1,500; city-owned lot at Abbott and First St. for 220. Privately-owned lots, Bagley and Third St., Plaza and Third St. 200 spaces in each lot, available 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday-Friday, 24 hours on weekend. Free shuttle buses run 24 hours a day from parking lots to casino. Parking free with validation at the main cage across from the Studio Bar on the main casino floor.

FOR INFORMATION: Call (313) 393-7777 or toll-free (877) 888-2121. On the Web www.mgmgrand.com

ON THE WEB: Visit the Michigan Gaming Law Web site www.michigan-gaming.com for updates on Michigan casinos and links to other gaming sites.

enjoy fine dining in Detroit. That's a fact."

Borovsky grew up in the hospitality industry, working at a family-owned business, Schnafer Lanes in Dearborn. He's home after being away for 15 years working as assistant vice president of food and beverage at MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

This isn't Strom's first casino opening. He helped open the Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort in Atlantic City and the Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut.

"I've sampled every buffet in Atlantic City and Las Vegas and

none of them comes close to what we will have here," he said. "In three months, the competition will be flying in from Las Vegas and Atlantic City to copy what we have here."

Glamor

Glamorous is a word used frequently to describe the MGM Grand Detroit casino. The former IRS office building at the Lodge Freeway, between Michigan Avenue and Abbott, was completely gutted to create a magnificent Art Deco-inspired interior that mirrors the great movie palaces of the 1930s.

Lights from 2,351 slot machines flash inviting guests to try their luck at Monopoly, Wheel of Fortune and Elvis. You can play the 6 cent slots or gamble on one of the \$500 slot machines. Beneath your feet is a wild geometric patterned carpet that reflects the honey-gold color scheme throughout the casino.

It's easy to lose track of time; there aren't any clocks around. Dealers take bets at 83 gaming tables including blackjack, craps, roulette and baccarat. Care is taken to make sure guests have "a Grand time." After awhile it gets a little annoying. How many ways can you put the word "Grand" into a greeting? You'll be surprised.

The elegant lobby is your gateway to two floors of games. Take the escalator to the second floor where you'll find most of the games and slot machines. Three restaurants — Neyla A Mediterranean Grill, The Hollywood Brown Derby, the MGM Grand Buffet, more slot machines and table games can be

Please see CASINO, E2



Weird Al Yankovic

Yankovic normally a funny guy

Weird Al Yankovic performs 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 13, at the Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills. Tickets \$22.50 pavilion, \$12.50 lawn. Call (248) 377-0100 or www.palacenet.com on the Web. Visit Weird Al Yankovic's Web site www.weirdal.com

BY ARA TOPOUZIAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Believe it or not, talking with "Weird Al" Yankovic is like speaking to any other person. During a telephone interview with this well-known comedian/songwriter who will be performing Aug. 13 at the Meadow Brook Music Festival, the same question kept coming up in the back of my mind. Why would anyone want to be called "weird?"

"I live in Hollywood. My name is like an oxymoron because they are more weird than I am!" said Al. To friends and fans Yankovic is known as "Weird Al," a name he adopted in college.

Yankovic looks a little bit different these days. He had laser surgery and ditched his glasses. The mustache is gone, and he styled his frizzy hair.

"I am the new AL2KI!"

— Weird Al Yankovic

allowed to reinvent herself every 15 minutes, I figure I should be good for a change at least once every couple of decades," said Yankovic. "I am the new Al2KI!"

Yankovic, who follows a long line of comics including Spike Jones, Stan Freberg, and Allan Sherman, has never disappointed audiences. His concerts are filled with new surprises and feature material from past recordings and his new album.

Yankovic's recently released 10th album, "Running With Scissors," is already 16 on the Billboard charts. On the album, Yankovic capitalizes on some major musical and motion picture releases.

His first track is a parody of "Star Wars: The Phantom Menace." "The Saga Begins" is to the tune of "American Pie," and it's hilarious.

Yankovic searched the Internet and found hundreds of "Star Wars" Web sites where he obtained information about the latest trilogy.

He had enough information to write "The Saga Begins," released six weeks after the movie was in theaters.

"I suppose I could've done 'Pretty Fly For A Jedi'; but this movie is an instant classic and I just felt it needed to be paired with a classic rock

Please see YANKOVIC, E2

WORLD MUSIC

Festival showcases 'African Rhythms' at Orchestra Hall

African Rhythms Summer Festival

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, Aug. 6-7 and 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 12.

WHERE: Orchestra Hall 3713 Woodward Ave., Detroit

TICKETS: \$15 to \$25, call (313) 576-5111.

Schedule

■ Sam Mangwana and Abdullah Ibrahim Friday, Aug. 6

■ Ladysmith Black Mambazo Saturday, Aug. 7

■ Africa Fete featuring Baba Maal, Oliver Mtshali, the group Kogele with Taj Mahal and Tournai Diabate Thursday, Aug. 12

BY ARA TOPOUZIAN
SPECIAL WRITER

On a break from a sound check where he is getting ready to present a concert in New York City, Congolese singer Sam Mangwana calls from his manager's cell phone.

He speaks in a tense, monotone voice until the conversation turns to the meaning of his music. Then, he opens up a little, but the tension is there. For Mangwana, music is an expression of his life struggle for liberation in Africa.

"World music is a stage where musicians can explain their feelings," said Mangwana who is

one of the featured artists at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's second annual African Rhythms Summer Festival, Aug. 6-7, and Aug. 12 at Orchestra Hall in Detroit. "As an artist, I am waking up Africa with my music. We want peace, without peace we'll never move forward as a nation."

Also performing is pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a 10-piece a cappella group from South Africa.

Deciding which African musicians from around the world to feature at the festival was no

Please see RHYTHMS, E2



Ladysmith Black Mambazo