



Presidential favor: The Burley family of Livonia met recently with President George W. Bush after Bush learned 12-year-old Gretchen had lost an autographed campaign poster when the family's home burned in January.

Fire brings family, president together

BY ALICE ASHMORE
STAFF WRITER
ASHMORE@OJ.OJ.COM

In an odd turn of events, a devastating house fire last January led to a Livonia family meeting with President Bush.

Among other things, the fire destroyed an autographed Bush campaign poster belonging to 12-year-old Gretchen Burley.

"I was really sad about it," she said.

She now has something better than a poster — a roll of pictures of herself and her family with the president.

"I'm very excited about the pictures. We were talking — he was just like a normal person," Gretchen said.

The president also signed an official photo of himself for her at the event.

She had acquired the signed poster during the presidential campaign when her family took

part in a Bush rally in Pontiac.

"I like what he stands for," she said. Gretchen attends Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington Hills.

State Rep. Andrew Rackowski, R-Farmington Hills, arranged the meeting between the president and the Burleys.

The family was included in the "meet and greet" party that welcomed the president and the first lady to Selfridge Air National Guard Base last Monday. Others in the party included Gov. John Engler and his wife and Secretary of State Candice Miller.

"I'm still numb," was the reaction of her father, Doug Burley, to the Monday morning meeting.

"The whole thing, the Secret Service, the limousine, the plane..."

He was told that, "President Bush felt bad about it (the loss) and wanted to meet Gretchen."

The Burleys were required to

submit their social security numbers a week beforehand to receive clearance from the Secret Service. "They even wanted to know what kind of car we would be driving."

Burley was surprised at the amount of time the president spent with his family. "We talked for about five minutes before he got into the limousine. The access we were granted was unbelievable."

He said he would "absolutely treasure" the time he got to spend with the president and first lady Laura Bush.

"That he took the time to meet with us and tell us he was sorry about the fire," Burley said.

"I thanked him for the tax cut," Burley added.

Bush was in Detroit to speak at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Monday.

CAMPUS PIPELINE

LAMAR GRAD

Amanda Ault of Farmington Hills earned a degree in kinesiology from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

ALMA AWARD

Aaron Ryceroff of Farmington Hills earned a second runner-up award at the recently held Students in Free Enterprise Regional Exposition and Career Oppor-

tunity Fair. Business education projects were presented to a panel of judges that included chief executive officers, presidents and vice-presidents of numerous companies from around the United States.

MADONNA GRADS

The following local residents graduated from Madonna University in May:

Both Comai, Denise Kimball, Jennifer Loverman, Vera Luuksted, Annette Peruchetti, Anna Casadol, Meghan Erickson, Carolyn Payne, Rebecca Pesci, Jennifer Poertner, Sherrine Thomas, Samantha Tunstall, Amber Wills, Anna Wolska and Dina Zamezyk.

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