

## Any Inking?

A local writers group finds ways to succeed. C9

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# Observer Life



Short  
comings

Renee  
Skoglund

## A time to be grateful

I love Thanksgiving. I love cutting up the celery, onions and mushrooms for my turkey dressing the night before. I love making my signature Cranberry Waldorf salad. I love setting the table with the anticipation of dining for hours with family and friends who barely wait for their second and third helpings to digest before calling for dessert.

I am grateful for all these "loves."

Most of all, I am grateful for each dawn that wipes clean the slate of human frailty and provides me with the clear horizon of a new day.

Last week, I set aside a few hours to ask people for what they were most grateful. Their collective response focused on family, friends, faith and the flag. Their words say it best.

"I'm grateful with what I have, no more or no less," said Charlotte McCourt, 56, of Garden City, who works at Harvey's Deli in Plymouth. "I could be a lot worse off, so I never want much. I'm not out to be rich. I just want to pay my bills, keep a roof over my head and be happy. I got my health, got my husband, and we don't fight."

Dan Sarb, 46, owns Harvey's Deli. A deli guy by day and Harley dude by night, Sarb is a busy, straight-talking man. I caught him between customers' orders.

"I'm grateful for my health. I'm not getting any younger. I'm grateful for family and friends, and especially to live in America," he said.

A quick stop at the University of Michigan Health Center in Canton produced these responses:

"I am grateful for my family," said phlebotoomist Tara Borchardt, 23, of Canton. "My mom has cancer, and she's been in remission, so I'm thankful for that. We're all healthy and can be together this year."

Fellow phlebotoomist Jeannette Koch, 31, of Farmington Hills was grateful for "just my family and my faith in God."

When I got back to the office, I called my 84-year-old mother, Margaret Cartier of Redford. I didn't tell her that her reply would be plunked down in the middle of a column. She's been there before.

"What I would give thanks for is the wonderful husband God gave me and the two children who were so honorable and never gave me any trouble," she said. "I also have the memories of my own good mother and father and all my sisters and brothers."

Well said, mom. Thanks. Next, I spoke with Bobby Mason, 8, of Westland and his sister, Carolee, 6. Their mother works at the Observer as the Westland/Garden City editor.

"I'm thankful for my family and my friends, especially Zack. He has a really cool bike, and he plays with me a lot," said Bobby.

Carolee's reply was a mixture of Thanksgiving gratefulness and Christmas expectation.

"What I'm really thankful for is another baby (dolly) that talks. And I'm thankful for my friends, and I'm thankful for my kitty, Sneakers, and my dog, Willie, and my

# PASTIES!

## Church members roll the dough for favorite fund-raiser

BY RENEE SKOGLUND  
STAFF WRITER

All you had to do was follow your nose to the kitchen in Newburg United Methodist Church in Livonia a few weeks ago and you knew there was something good baking. Pasties.

More than two dozen church members gathered in the downstairs kitchen to make over 1,000 pasties for the church's thrice yearly, two-day fund-raiser, which began in 2000. Everybody had their roles: dough maker, ingredient mixer, dough roller, pasty filler, transporter and baker.

Of course, some people did double duty: The dough rollers crimped the pastry shut, and the baker poked the necessary vents in the pasties before they were baked. There were no complaints, and everything ran as smoothly as a Henry Ford assembly line after payday.

"It's a chance for people of all ages to meet each other and work together. It's about fellowship," said Tom Eland of Plymouth, who, along with his wife, Pat, was in charge of pasty publicity.

Bob and Marie Jenkins of Westland, church members for 31 years, started the fund-raiser after visiting a church in Flint whose members made pasties. It took a few visits before the couple had the art of pasty-making down pat.

"As of today, we've made a little over 10,000 pasties," said Bob, referring to the total amount since the pasty tradition began.

### KITCHEN TALK

As in most kitchens around dinner-time, this one was full of chatter. You just can't stand elbow-to-elbow with someone without talking. However, above the steady hum of conversation were shouts of "FILLER!" and "TRANSPORTER!", which quickly brought the appropriate worker trotting over.

Munching a bagel for quick energy, Bill Britton of Farmington Hills, the official dough-maker, added batches of flour, Crisco, salt and water to an over-worked mixer.

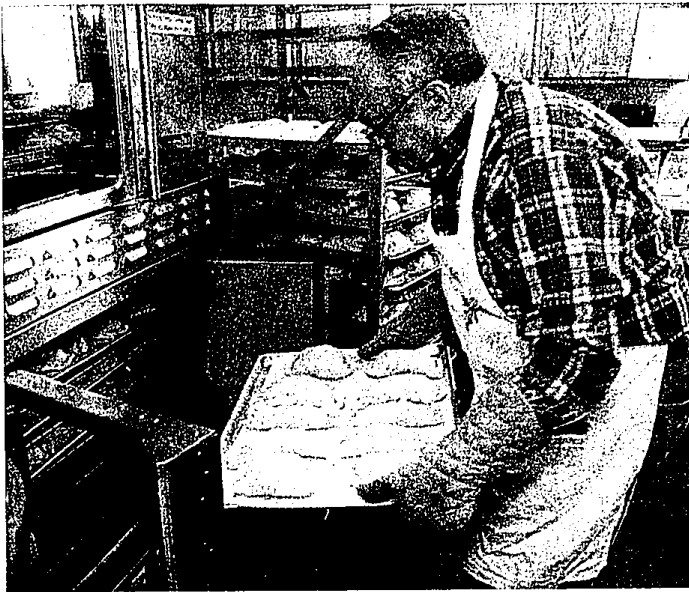
"I fall behind," he said. "We need another machine."

But the results are worth the effort, everyone agreed. The Newburg United Methodist pasties are the best around. "I think we put more ingredients in them," said Bill.

"It starts with the dough and then the rollers. You can't roll the dough too thin or too thick," said Tom Eland.

"It's all about the crimping," yelled out a roller from the back of the kitchen. "It has to be sealed tight or the juices leak out."

For Marie Jenkins, a tasty pasty is



PHOTOS BY JIM JACZFIELD/OBSERVER

Clarence Fagan loads another tray of pasties into the ovens.



Elizabeth Dumont waits as Bob Duncan fills a waiting pasty.

about the meat.

"We now get the meat from Larry's Foodland in Livonia. Oh, it's such very good quality. It's wonderful. When we first started out we got meat with some gristle. But this is good," she said.

### THE REAL THING

By 10 a.m. pasties were everywhere—on the counter waiting to be baked, in the oven, and on tables in another room cooling off. It was pasty heaven.

Better yet, these were the real pasties. "These are the traditional Cornish pasties," said Pat Eland. "There are a lot of knockoffs around."

So what goes into an authentic Cornish pasty?

Forget the carrots, said Pat. A Cornish pasty has just potato, rutabaga, onion and beef. As for a topping...

"We have people say they use chili sauce, salsa, Cheez Wiz, or beef or mushroom gravy," said Marie.

"The people who are true Yoopers do not use gravy," said Pat.

"Plain ketchup is all they need!" blurted Dave Jensen of Westland, a transporter who handled the pasties as if they were newborn babies.

After a short break, the volunteers reassembled in the kitchen. They had another 500 pasties to make to fill the day's orders. This fund-raiser was a record-breaker. They had so many orders (thanks in part to a notice in the Observer Newspaper), they had to put their own church members' requests on hold.

When they run the fund-raiser again next January and March, they'll have to recruit more volunteers. They'll also need another industrial-size electric mixer.

### GROCERY LIST

It takes a lot of ingredients to make 1,000 pasties. Marie Jenkins recited her grocery list: 240 pounds of coarse-ground chuck, 300 pounds of unbleached flour, 300 pounds of Idaho Russett baking potatoes, 100 pounds of rutabaga, 100 pounds of Spanish white

onions, and 23 3-pound cans of buttered-flavored Crisco. Not exactly a call-in order.

The volunteers believe that practice has made their pasties perfect. They get few complaints.

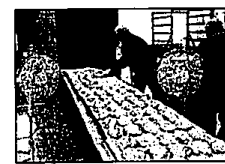
"The first thing people ask us is what is in them. They always have stories about their mother's or grandmother's pasties," said Pat Eland.

"They don't want carrots in it," said Bob Jenkins.

Defending the Newburg United Methodist pasty to the last crumb, Pat added: "Sometimes people say, 'Do you make vegetarian pasty?' No!"

There was nothing to defend. The pasties were delicious, mounds of meat and veggies tucked into a pillow of dough. But the pasties are about more than ingredients. They're about fun and fellowship. And that's what makes them so good.

Newburg United Methodist Church will hold its next pasty fund-raiser Jan. 16-17, 2003, with orders placed Jan. 7 and 8; and March 13-14, with orders placed March 4 and 5. Pasties are \$3 each. Call the church office at (734) 422-0149. The church is located at 36500 Ann Arbor Trail, Livonia.



Jerry Huqueley, left, and Lou Kovach set the freshly baked pasties out to cool. The fans speed the process along.



Rolling Pin Brigade members are (from left) Jackie Stuart, Bea Huqueley, Doris Johnson, Marie Lobb and Helen Jeanne Doane

## Hills woman overcomes obstacles in life to write novel

BY JONI HUBRED  
STAFF WRITER

Call Cynthia Simmons a survivor.

It's the only way to describe the Farmington Hills woman's journey through a childhood stolen by poverty and abuse, an attempted suicide at age 11 and a teen-age marriage that eventually left her a single mom. Now, she's a published author, writing the kinds of books that literally transformed her life.

Simmons will sign copies of her first romance novel, "Anything, My Love" 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1, at Gabriela's in downtown Plymouth.

Life should have calmed down a little by then.

"The rabbit's in here," Simmons says during a guid-

ed tour of her spacious home, wherein reside the aforementioned dwarf rabbit, its mother (one of three household cats), three dogs, a bearded dragon lizard and a fair number of fish in more than 600 gallons worth of aquarium tanks. "It sounds crazy, but they're not all mine."

Daughter Misty was to take about half of the animal-women she and her husband move into a new home with their infant son.

"Raising my kids helped my confidence a lot," Simmons says of her adult life.

Married at 17, she gave birth to her oldest son, Jimmy, when she was barely 18. At first, the idea of mingling with other parents scared her to death.

"Little by little, things worked out. People carried on

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conversations with me."

While that might not seem like much to most adults, Simmons considered it nothing short of mirac-

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