

Lebanon Avenue in Belleville will have lane closures beginning today from West Boulevard to east of Old Collinsville Road. Resurfacing work is expected to be finished this fall.

RAMONA CURTIS EDUCATION MATTERS

Bands to battle in O'Fallon



SCHOOLS FROM all over the metro-east and as far away as Kansas City will strike up

the band Saturday at the **Metro East Marching Band Classic**.

Sponsored by the O'Fallon Township High School Marching Band Boosters, 15 bands will compete for trophies for best wind section, percussion, color guard, drum majors and overall band performance.

The event, in its 23rd year, also will include a salute to members of the Armed Forces serving overseas and a tribute to Marine 2nd Lt. John Nelson, who died in an aircraft training accident in 2002. Nelson was a 1996 graduate of O'Fallon Township High and a band member.

The Metro East Marching Band Classic begins at 2 p.m. and will be held at the O'Fallon Township High football stadium. Refreshments will be available, and tickets are \$5 for adults, \$2 for children ages 3-10 and free for children under 3....

Looking for a few good men ... or boys and girls: Prudential Insurance Co. is looking to honor middle and high school students who make a difference in their communities through volunteerism.

The **Prudential Spirit of Community Awards** are given to young people who help those less fortunate, promote health and safety, protect the environment or perform any number of good deeds.

The top two candidates in each state — one student in middle school and one student in high school — will receive a \$1,000 award, an engraved medallion and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for four days. Ten of those honorees will be selected to receive an additional award of \$5,000 in a ceremony in Washington.

Applications, which are due by Oct. 29, are available at local schools, Girl Scout councils, 4-H offices, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and various volunteer organizations. Go to www.prudential.com or call (888) 450-9961 for more information....

The Greater St. Louis Dental Society wants to **Give Kids A Smile** by providing free dental services to underserved elementary and middle school students.

Metro-east schools, churches and organizations can register children in need of free, comprehensive dental care in a two-day clinic Oct. 15 and 16 at the St. Louis University Center for Advanced Dental Education.

Call (314) 993-4527 to register or (314) 656-2775 for more information....

For any teacher who has a student who would rather write a letter to Dr. Seuss than Santa Claus, the **Letters about Literature** contest, sponsored by Illinois secretary of state's office, may be for him.

The Illinois Center for the Book will select an essayist from three grade levels — grades four through six, grades seven through eight and high school. The winners will receive a \$50 gift certificate from Target, and first-place winners will advance to the national competition, where they could win a \$500 Target gift certificate.

The deadline for entries is Dec. 4. Registration information has been mailed to Illinois schools. A teacher guide and contest participation guidelines are available by contacting the Illinois Center for the Book at (217) 558-2065 or www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

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U.S. SENATE RACE

Philosophies separate Obama, Keyes

Chicago Democrat backs gun control, expanded welfare

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Barack Obama proposed hundreds of new laws during his first six years in the Illinois Senate, only to watch them go nowhere.

Many of the proposals reflected the liberal-leaning district the Chicago Democrat has represented since 1997: universal health care, gun control and expanding welfare and insurance coverage for the poor.

Then Democrats seized control of the chamber from Republicans, and Obama became the go-to guy on some of the legislature's biggest issues, from banning the stimulant ephedra to reforming the state's death penalty system. Along the way, he won praise for creating bipartisan support on hot-button issues such as racial profiling.

Obama's alliance with Senate President Emil Jones, D-Chicago, has provided another benefit for the U.S. Senate candidate: Allowing him to sidestep some politically touchy votes.

Obama says his overall legislative record in Springfield represents the views of many Illinoisans on important issues, even though he acknowledges his legislative district leans more to the left.

"On most issues, I've really been pretty practical," Obama said.

But conservatives, including Republican challenger Alan Keyes, argue Obama's record is proof he's too liberal to represent Illinois in Washington.

Obama has the strong backing of organized labor, a potent campaign ally, thanks to his support of proposals such as increasing the minimum wage in Illinois and blocking federal rules that could have cost thousands of blue-collar workers overtime checks.

Those votes and his support for some of Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's increases in business taxes and fees have drawn low scores from business groups. The Illinois Manufacturers Association, for example, gave Obama a 75 percent favorable rating in 2001 but just a 12 percent rating last year.

"When it's a labor versus business issue, he's not going to be on the side of the small business," said Kim Clarke Maisch, director of the Illinois chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business.

Obama says he wants businesses to thrive but acknowledges employees are his main concern.

"There's no doubt my sympathies lean more toward workers than corporations," Obama said.



Obama's key votes

A look at some of the issues state Sen. Barack Obama, a Chicago Democrat running for the U.S. Senate, has sponsored or voted on during his eight years in Springfield:

Budget and taxes

Voted 'Yes' to raise the minimum wage in Illinois from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.50 an hour over two years. (SB600, 2004)

Successfully sponsored a 5 percent earned income tax credit for low-income working families in 2000; successfully sponsored measure to make the credit permanent in 2003. (SB1935, 2003)

Voted 'Yes' for a proposal by Gov. Rod Blagojevich to close \$300 million worth of tax breaks for businesses. (HB848, 2004)

Voted 'No' on making permanent the repeal of the state's 5 percent sales tax on gasoline. (SB1867, 2000)

Health care

Voted 'Yes' to having Illinois endorse stem-cell research. (HB3589, 2004)

Successfully sponsored the Health Care Justice Act, a study of ways to implement a universal health-care system statewide. (HB2268, 2004)

Voted 'Present' on three bills changing rules on abortion procedures, including requiring care for the fetus if it was born alive. (SB1093-SB1095, 2001)

Miscellaneous

Voted 'No' on letting people claim a self-defense protection in court for using a gun in their homes despite local weapons bans. (SB2165, 2004)

Voted 'No' to request by telecommunications giant SBC to raise rates on its competitors for providing local service. (SB885, 2003)

Unsuccessfully co-sponsored ban on discrimination in employment, public accommodations and housing based on someone's sexual orientation. (SB101, 2003)



Keyes' top issues

A look at some of the issues important to Alan Keyes, a former diplomat and talk show host from Maryland, now running for the U.S. Senate as a Republican:

Budget and taxes

Supports the repeal of the 16th Amendment — the one that cleared the way for the federal income tax. Keyes says the nation's "oppressive and humiliating tax system" is a "socialist scheme" and should be abolished. He would replace it with a national sales tax.

Health care

Believes abortion is murder and would make no exceptions for rape or incest.

Economy and labor

Supports right-to-work laws. Supports a law that would allow small businesses to band together to bargain with health insurance companies and get the same price breaks that big companies receive.

Favors using tariffs to protect American jobs from being sent overseas to lower-wage countries.

Miscellaneous

Opposes gay marriage. Would work to abolish 17th Amendment to the Constitution allowing ordinary voters to elect U.S. senators. He would go back to the old system under which state lawmakers picked senators.

Takes a dim view of most gun control measures and has urged legislation that would make it easier for Illinoisans to keep guns on the night table and defend themselves in court if charged with a crime for shooting a home invader.

Reversed his position on abolishing the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He says the agency's bureaucracy has been improved by the Bush administration.

GOP candidate opposes abortion, federal income tax

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Alan Keyes would ban abortion and gay marriage, take back the Panama Canal, repeal the federal income tax and even leave the selection of U.S. senators up to state lawmakers rather than ordinary voters.

The 53-year-old Republican candidate for U.S. Senate, a former diplomat and talk show host from Maryland, preaches conservatism with a provocative edge. It's a style that suits Keyes, who has found success as a commentator while losing previous bids for president and U.S. senator in his home state.

"Would you want somebody to kill you because your father committed rape?" said Keyes, who believes abortion is murder and would make no exceptions for rape or incest.

His strongly held positions are one of the reasons conservative state Republicans brought him into the race in August after the party's more moderate leaders failed to find an acceptable homegrown candidate to replace Jack Ryan.

His selection to oppose Barack Obama, a liberal-leaning state lawmaker from Chicago who is a rising star in the Democratic Party, offers a stark philosophical contrast for voters in Illinois, who have typically backed moderate candidates for statewide office and have leaned Democratic in recent elections.

"He looks at issues in a way that is not political but philosophical," said conservative activist Tom Roeser, a Keyes supporter. "When he does it, he gets in all kinds of trouble, but he doesn't care."

His views have kept Keyes in the headlines through three Senate campaigns in Maryland and two presidential races. He says sooner or later voters will see how right he is.

Unlike Obama, who has an eight-year voting record in the state legislature, Keyes' positions have largely been outlined in his past campaigns, speeches and public appearances, delivered with the flair of a media veteran.

Even fellow conservatives wince at some of Keyes' positions, such as his call to exempt blacks from federal taxes for one or two generations as reparations for slavery.

"We would part company with him on that," said Richard Lessner, executive director of the Virginia-based American Conservative Union. But he says 95 percent of the Keyes philosophy is in tune with the conservative group.

Love for cars benefits DARE program

By NICKLAUS LOVELADY
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EDWARDSVILLE — There was so much chrome inside and outside the 1955 Bel Air, Lou Hogan couldn't help but see himself drooling in amazement as he admired the cardinal red classic.

The Edwardsville man's oohs and ahs over the perfectly polished car joined the hundreds of others heard during the 13th annual Edwardsville Police DARE Benefit Car Show.

About 200 of the finest and rarest cars were on display during the fund-raiser for the Edwardsville school district Drug Awareness Resistance Education program.

In some of the previous car show events, the group was able to raise as much as \$8,000, said Sarah Yates, co-chairman of the event. This year the goal was to raise \$10,000, which Yates thinks was reached.

"People come out because they know it's a benefit for



ZIA NIZAMI/News-Democrat

Kent Barnett and his son, Steven, look at vintage cars during the DARE show Sunday in downtown Edwardsville.

DARE, and they know how important DARE is," Yates said.

Mike Collins, a DARE instructor and Edwardsville Police officer, said the car show is the biggest fund-raiser for the program each year. The money from the event goes toward educational books, T-shirts and an end-of-the-year picnic for DARE students.

"If we didn't have this fund-raiser, I don't know how we

would get those books for our kids," Collins said.

Kent Barnett of Wood River and his son, Steven, walked through the rows of wheeled wonders. Kent Barnett was looking for ideas he could use on a classic Chevelle he and his son are restoring.

"It's amazing what some of these guys have done and how much money they've put in to their cars," Barnett said.

St. Louis Symphony to celebrate 125th year

Orchestra overcomes financial, other troubles

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — In the last five years, the St. Louis Symphony faced bankruptcy and the loss of its musical director to a fatal illness.

But the orchestra has survived those challenges and will celebrate its 125th anniversary in season-opening performances this week.

The symphony, especially under the musical direction of Leonard Slatkin, enjoyed national and international acclaim. But four years ago, the symphony was nearly bankrupt, with lots of debt, yearly operating losses and a pitiful endowment for a world-class orchestra.

In May 2000, the symphony board launched a capital campaign and secured a \$40 million challenge grant from the owners of St. Louis-based Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

In June, board Chairman Virginia Weldon said the symphony still faces financial challenges, but is on firm financial footing.

The symphony also lost its musical director, Hans Vonk, who served from 1996 until his declining medical condition forced his retirement in April 2002. He died of a rare neurological condition at age 63 last month.

After Vonk's departure, the symphony endured a period of mild artistic drift as guest conductors came and went. But its music director-designate, David Robertson, promises to bring the orchestra to even higher levels of achievement.

The opening week will include a free performance Thursday in Forest Park and three concerts during the weekend at Powell Symphony Hall. Slatkin, the symphony's conductor laureate, will lead all of them.