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# BOWL MANIA

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# The Detroit News

Monday, December 3, 2007

detnews.com

Metro Final

## Raging Grannies honk off Ferndale



Nancy Goedert of Ferndale protests the war. Goedert was ticketed for encouraging drivers to honk in response to her signs. Photos by Elizabeth Conley / The Detroit News

### Peace activists fight city over right to urge sympathetic drivers to toot horns

By JENNIFER CHAMBERS | The Detroit News

#### FERNDALE

A close inspection of Nancy Goedert's picket sign shows she encourages passing drivers *not* to honk if they support peace.

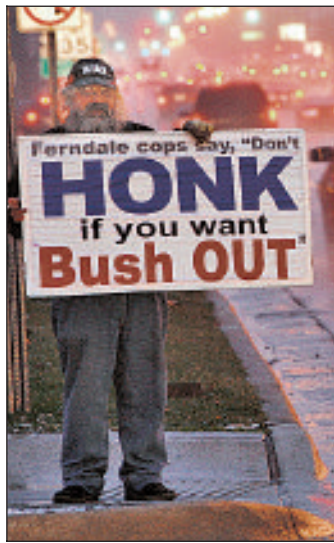
Yet the 74-year-old social activist and her fellow vigil keepers, their signs hoisted high above Woodward Avenue, drew a symphony of beeps and toots from dozens of enthusiastic motorists for more than an hour on a recent weeknight, thanks to the bigger, bolder letters that spell out "HONK FOR PEACE" and spread Goedert's true message.

Despite Ferndale's controversial ban on honking in response to political protests, Goedert's smaller addendum — "Ferndale cops say don't" —

allows Goedert to spread her anti-war message until a federal court decides whether honking car horns are a protected form of free speech.

"We have a right to political expression. That's what honking is," said Goedert, a Ferndale retiree and member of the activist group Raging Grannies who was ticketed in June for holding a sign that asked motorists to honk.

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Despite being arrested for a July 3 protest, Victor Kittla continues to hold signs at Woodward and Nine Mile.



Madalyn Ruggiero / Special to The Detroit News  
Brent Vasicek made a career change to become an elementary school teacher four years ago.

### Fewer males in teaching ranks

■ Low status and pay, stereotypes blamed for steady decline among elementary instructors.

By CHARLES E. RAMIREZ  
The Detroit News

**CLINTON TOWNSHIP** — Miami Elementary fourth-grade teacher Brent Vasicek is a rarity among his colleagues in Michigan.

He's a member of a shrinking demographic among public ele-

mentary school teachers: men.

"I've noticed there are fewer men who are teachers," Vasicek, 34, said. "You don't see as many men teachers in elementary schools as you do in middle and high schools or colleges."

Men steer clear of the profession primarily because of gender stereotypes and economics, according to experts. And the trend may have profound consequences for children — especially young boys.

Vasicek, who had been work-

ing in the medical industry for about a decade, said he changed careers and became a teacher because he found he had a passion for instructing children and making a difference in their lives. He's been in the classroom about four years.

Bryan Nelson, an author and executive director of MenTeach in Minneapolis, believes men resist the profession for three main reasons. MenTeach is a national

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## Ford takes risk going upscale with Volvo

By BRYCE G. HOFFMAN  
The Detroit News

Ford Motor Co., after abandoning plans to sell Volvo Car Corp., now wants to move the brand more upmarket in a bid to boost sales and profits. But it is a risky strategy that is making Volvo executives in Sweden jittery because it could alienate traditional buyers.

Last month, the day after Ford said it would keep Volvo — at least for now — the chief of Ford's European operations flew to Sweden to deliver a tough-love message to the folks in Gothenberg.

Inside the ultramodern *Volvo-hallen*, some 300 of Volvo's top managers sat uneasily in blond wooden chairs as Lewis Booth ran through a few slides detailing the company's third-quarter financial results. Once again, Volvo had failed to turn a profit.

His message was simple and direct: Volvo must become com-

petitive on costs and revenues and it must do it by becoming a legitimate premium alternative to rivals like Lexus, BMW and Mercedes-Benz — not by reinventing Volvo, but by intensifying its focus on safety, simplicity and Scandinavian design.

"It's not a change of direction, it's just building on what they've got," Booth, chairman of Volvo Cars and president of Ford's European division, told The Detroit News. "We're looking to take customers from everybody. We're not going to achieve it by mimicking our competitors. We're going to achieve it by being what Volvo is — a strong Swedish brand with the values of that society."

Some executives in Sweden worry that by trying to transform Volvo from a near-premium brand into a full-fledged luxury marque Ford will damage Volvo's

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## SALES SLIP: No 'must have' holiday gift

■ Retailers struggle to create buzz in season that lacks Pet Rock panache; electronics still popular.

By NATHAN HURST  
The Detroit News

**ALLEN PARK** — Tickle Me Elmo is nearing adolescence and Furby is heading down the path of the once-hot Pet Rock. And while the Nintendo Wii and Sony PlayStation 3 video game systems are enjoying strong sales, they're still so last year's news.

With no single hit item captivating consumers this holiday season (the digital photo frame just doesn't pass the test), retailers have been forced to get creative in how they generate buzz for products to capture shoppers' attention.

Some are pushing broad categories in hopes of increasing sales for many items, while others are hoping that simply calling an item "hot" will catch on with customers.

Mostly though, stores are increasingly turning to discounting of perennially pop-

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Getty Images

Tickle Me Elmo tickled retailers in 1996.



Getty Images

PlayStation 3 was on lists in 2006.

### IN OTHER NEWS

■ There's a DVD for everyone on your holiday shopping list. 1F

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