

The Vindicator



Bringing the gift of song to Valley

► CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN singer B.E. Taylor, who started performing Christmas shows in 1996, brings his special talents to Victory Christian Center in Lowellville on Friday.

PAGE D8

Season's greetings at Mill Creek Park

► MILL CREEK METROPARKS' Christmas spirit is blooming at Fellows Riverside Gardens. Scattered among the decor are trees dressed up by nonprofit organizations.

PAGE B1

Tiger in the rough

► POP CULTURE, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and its forces won't rest until the vacuum is filled. That's a lesson Tiger Woods, the world's most-famous athlete, has spent the last week learning.



PAGE A4

Retirees testify about pensions

► TWO SALARIED RETIREES of Delphi Packard Electric from the Valley told a House subcommittee in Washington that their pension plans were improperly abandoned.

PAGE B5

National flavor

► GORANT CANDIES' new owners say they want to mold the local company into a national brand.

PAGE B5

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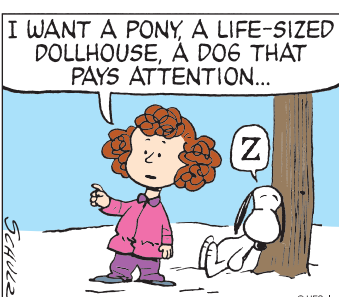
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COMING TOMORROW

► UPNEXT: It's the most-wonderful time of the year for home entertainment, when studios roll out the best DVDs and Blu-rays they have to offer. Our gift guide focuses on the strongest options.

CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

Shopping days left: **22**



LOS ANGELES AUTO SHOW | CHEVY CRUZE

OPENING NIGHT

'It's the most significant car of the show.'
CONSUMER REPORTS



Cruze oozes power with six-speed transmission, turbocharged engine.

By DON SHILLING
VINDICATOR BUSINESS EDITOR

Forget the buzz over hybrid and electric cars this week. The real story of the Los Angeles Auto Show is the Chevrolet Cruze, an industry insider said.

"It's the most significant car of the show," said Jake Fisher, senior auto engineer for *Consumer Reports*, shortly after the car was introduced Wednesday. The new compact car towers over other vehicles displayed at the show because it provides cutting-edge technology and design in a high-volume vehicle that people will be able to afford, Fisher said.

Quite simply, the Cruze gives GM a good chance to compete in small cars, he said. The car prom-

See Cruze on Page A3

THE CRITICS RAVE

Overall, it's very modern and more luxurious than we'd expect."

AUTOGUIDE.COM

The Cruze is more muscular than the Civic or Corolla."

WIRED.COM

... Dramatically improves Chevy's small-car offerings."

AUTOMOBILE MAGAZINE

INSIDE | B5: The auto industry, trying to climb out of its worst sales slump in decades, wants the spotlight on vehicles it can sell - now. At this year's LA Auto Show, which begins Friday, the emphasis is on affordable small cars and minivans.

Ex-Valley resident compiles TV guide to holiday specials

By ELISE FRANCO
VINDICATOR STAFF WRITER

Joanna Wilson is a "bona fide popular-culture expert and researcher."

That's how Wilson, a former Youngstown resident and author of "The Christmas TV Companion: A Guide to Cult Classics, Strange Specials and Outrageous Oddities," is described by her publisher, Dominic Caruso.

Caruso, who started the publishing company 1701 Press in Cuyahoga Falls, said Wilson's book was pitched as a handful of the strangest, wildest Christmas specials out there.

What it became was much more, he said.

"It encompassed so much more than I was actually expecting," he said. "She presented me with all these different entries, and the writing was so incredibly witty and funny."

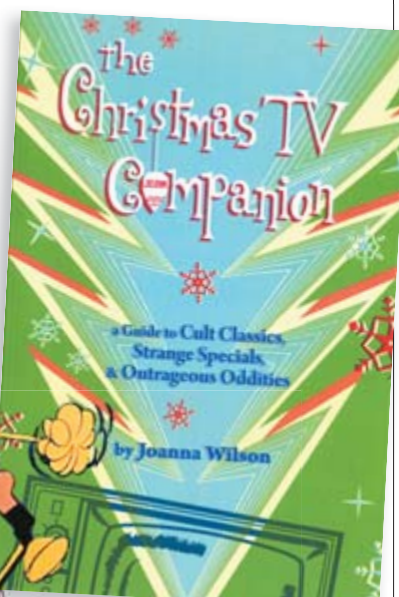
"Christmas TV Companion," released in October, is broken down into five chapters - macabre, sci-fi, animation, dark and variety. Within

those categories are hundreds of entries that discuss television specials, made-for-TV movies, shorts and feature-length films.

Wilson, 41, of Cuyahoga Falls, said the book is a small selection from a larger encyclopedia of holiday specials she's been working on since 2002.

"I'd been putting together an all-things Christmas encyclopedia," she said. "These are just all the oddball things that came out of that."

Wilson said to find the more unique and strange



Joanna Wilson's book looks at the macabre, sci-fi, dark, variety and animation.

See TV on Page A3

Mooney, Ursuline success never gets old for alums

By JOHN BASSETTI
VINDICATOR SPORTS STAFF

What do a geologist, a dentist and an engineer desire Friday?

Victory for their teams in state championship football games.

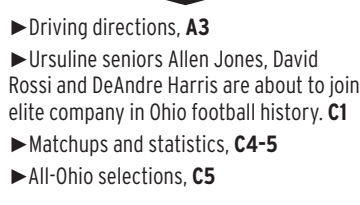
Erik Sardich, Jon Saadey and Dan Gallagher are gearing up for another stab at a title.

Sardich and Saadey are former Cardinal Mooney High School players, and Gallagher, 89, is a former Ursuline gridiron athlete.

Despite living in Stow, Sardich, a 1993 graduate, has extensive involvement in his former school, both technically and physically.

Sardich will be Mr. Hospitality in Massillon, where Mooney plays Columbus DeSales for the Division III crown.

"We've been fortunate to make it [state title game] for the fifth time in six years, so I've had a tailgate party in some



► Driving directions, A3

► Ursuline seniors Allen Jones, David Rossi and DeAndre Harris are about to join elite company in Ohio football history. C1

► Matchups and statistics, C4-5

► All-Ohio selections, C5

fashion - in the mornings, in the afternoons," said Sardich, a geologist in Akron who graduated from Kent State.

"It's a way for alumni to reconnect and for students and parents to get together," said Sardich, a player on the Cardinals' 1992 team that lost to Mentor Lake Catholic in a first-round playoff game at Niles.

See Football on Page A3

CITY SCHOOLS

Review of Webb calls for results

There must be improvement, or the district must 'move on,' the board president says.

By DAVID SKOLNICK
VINDICATOR STAFF WRITER

YOUNGSTOWN - In its annual evaluation, the city's board of education told Superintendent Wendy Webb that the school district's state designation of academic emergency "is unacceptable, and considerable strides [toward] an improvement designation must be made."

The evaluation, provided by the Youngstown Board of Education after a records request by *The Vindicator*, also states: "Anything less than meeting the defined areas noted in this memorandum will continue to be unsatisfactory to us."

Commenting on the evaluation, Anthony Catale, school board president, said, "It's a mixture of strengths and weaknesses."

At the top of the list of improvements Webb must make is "significant progress on our state report card. It's how we're gauged as a school district," Catale said.

The annual state report card, released in August, had Youngstown as the only public school district in Ohio in "academic emergency," the lowest rating the state gives. The report card gauges academic progress of students from year to year, with Youngstown meeting only two of the state's 30 educational standards.



Webb



Catale

"We haven't set a certain number of standards we want met [for the 2010 report card], but there has to be an improvement, or else we'll have to move on," Catale said.

When asked to explain "move on," Catale said the school board would "look at anything and everything. All options are on the table."

Though Catale said the school board hasn't discussed firing Webb, superintendent since November 2003, "I'm not going to take that off the table. It's always an option, but it's not being considered now."

Webb couldn't be reached Wednesday by *The Vindicator* to comment on the evaluation.

The board wants improvements "in a multitude of areas and processes that we feel will ultimately have a direct impact on our district's academic standing," the evaluation reads.

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