

## WHOM TO CALL: LIFESTYLE STORIES

Do you have questions? Comments? Ideas for stories about coping with life? If so, call Angela Mullins, city editor, at 989-6257.

# LIFE

# Teaching with a beat



Times Herald file photo

**HANDS-ON:** Friday is the deadline for participants in the 11th annual Art on the Avenue sponsored by MainStreet Port Huron Inc.



## Theater prepares for *South Pacific*

Now calling all cockeyed optimists: You could land a role in St. Clair Theatre Guild's production of *South Pacific*.

Auditions for the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical will be 7:30 p.m. Sept. 11 and 12 at the guild's building in Klecha Park, 1456 Goffe St. Callbacks will be Sept. 13.

Set on a Pacific island during World War II, the show opened on Broadway in 1949. It features such popular songs as *Some Enchanted Evening*, *Bali Ha'i* and *There is Nothing Like a Dame*.

Sue Daniels is directing the production. Jean Bastian is musical director and John Klecha is producer.

Performances will be Nov. 15, 16 and 17 at the East China Center for the Performing Arts, 1585 Meisner Road, East China Township.

For more information, call (810) 329-2630 or visit [www.sctg.org](http://www.sctg.org).

## Macomb ballet has auditions scheduled

The Macomb Ballet Company will have auditions in September at its new home in the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts.

The nonprofit ballet company previously was housed at director Ann Parsley's dance studio in Clinton Township. This season it is moving its rehearsals and performances to Macomb Community College's theater.

The season includes a production of *The Nutcracker* in December and *Les Sylphides* and *Peter and the Wolf* in May.

Auditions are 11 a.m. Sept. 15 for ages 14 to 25. Auditions for the Junior Macomb Ballet Company will be 6:30 p.m. Sept. 26 for ages 8 to 11 and 7:15 p.m. Sept. 26 for ages 12 and 13. Dancers must be the required age by Jan. 1.

All auditions will be in the Black Box theater at the center, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. For more information, contact Parsley at (586) 805-0671 or [ann@deparasley.com](mailto:ann@deparasley.com). For more information on the junior ballet, contact director Amber Megna at (586) 808-3142 or [ambergmagna@yahoo.com](mailto:ambergmagna@yahoo.com).

## Art on the Avenue contest ends Friday

Friday is the deadline for MainStreet Port Huron's art contest in conjunction with the 11th annual Art on the Avenue juried art fair.

The contest theme is Port Huron's sesquicentennial. All forms of art are acceptable for the contest, as long as the dimensions are no larger than 22-by-28 inches and it is matted, framed and ready to hang. Artists also should include their name, address, phone number, age, the artwork's media and title, whether the item is for sale and the sale price.

The contest is open to students in ninth through 12th grade and adults, with separate judging for the two age groups.

The work will be displayed in the MainStreet Port Huron Welcome Center, 223 Huron Ave., through Aug. 25. It then will be moved to the Seaway Terminal, 2336 Military St., Port Huron, for the Coast Guard Appreciation Dinner.

For more information, call MainStreet Port Huron Inc. at (810) 985-8843.

— Bill Chapin



Times Herald photos by WENDY TORELLLO

**EASY AS 1, 2, 3:** Jennifer Tuttle explains how the MathMosis board game is played Sunday evening at her New Baltimore home. Tuttle, an elementary school teacher, developed MathMosis in her own classroom to help teach multiplication to her students.

## Educator creates innovative music CD designed to help children with math

By CRAIG DAVISON  
Times Herald

Jennifer Tuttle of New Baltimore was watching TV one morning when she saw Jake Steinfeld, of *Body by Jake* fame, being interviewed about his Live Your Dream Contest.

Tuttle, who teaches first and second grade at Atwood Elementary School in Macomb Township, had developed a way to teach math through music and other methods in the classroom but didn't have enough money to market the idea as a business.

The \$250,000 in prize money offered for the best business idea entered in the Live Your Dream Contest made Tuttle think, "Oh, why not, I'll give it a try."

There was one problem: the deadline for entries in the contest was 11:59 p.m. that day.

So she bought Steinfeld's book, *I've Seen a Lot of Famous People Naked and They've Got Nothing on You!*, learned how to write a business plan and submitted her plan online at 11:29 p.m.

Shortly after that she was on a plane to New York City for a series of interviews as one of the

### A CLOSER LOOK MATHMOSIS

For more information or to buy MathMosis items, visit [www.mathmosis.com](http://www.mathmosis.com). Items also can be bought by calling (877) 220-MATH.

top five contestants. Her game was in the running against ideas such as a balance beam for children and a computer program to help people get a real-estate license.

On an episode of the TV

show *Fox and Friends* in February 2006, Tuttle was announced the winner of the contest. There would be one small snag, though. After the name of her proposed business — Multiplication Madness — was announced on TV someone else trademarked it later that day.

Tuttle in need of a new name, settled on MathMosis.

MathMosis evolved from Tuttle's teaching at Atwood, as she realized

children have several different learning styles from visual to analytical to musical.

Tuttle said she used her music background and a call-and-echo approach to see if the children would learn how to count by threes.

"By the end of second grade, they knew how to find the answer for multiplication," said Tuttle, who is on a leave of absence from teaching to take care of her two young

children. "That kind of started the whole system."

MathMosis continues that approach with a CD full of songs about how to count by fives and other numbers, so when the children learn the lyrics of the song they're learning fundamentals of multiplication.

"We've been doing it with our ABCs, we need to do it with our 123s," Tuttle said.

Other products, including posters, DVDs and board games, will be produced in the future to help with further styles of learning, she said.

The CD has been a hit in more than just Tuttle's class at Atwood. JoAnn Agosta, a fellow teacher, tested it in the classroom at the end of the year. Agosta said the kids really enjoyed the pop-friendly tunes.

"The kids loved it," Agosta said. "I'll use it again next year."

But Agosta of Harrison Township saw the CD make the biggest impact when she took it home during the summer and

played it for her 2-year-old daughter, Adriana.

Agosta said Adriana loves the music and by singing along with the songs she's "accidentally" learning math at a very early age.

"Not that she knows what counting by fives means, but she knows the tune," Agosta said.

Tuttle said getting students to listen to the CD before they go to school is a way to give them a head start.

"The concept behind this is start earlier," Tuttle said. "This gives them a strategy."

"By the time they get to school, they'll have the foundation they need."

Contact Craig Davison at (810) 989-6276 or [cdavison@gannett.com](mailto:cdavison@gannett.com).



**TEACHER'S AID:** Jennifer Tuttle and her daughter Emma, 4, play with the MathMosis puppets in the living room of her New Baltimore home.

## Trip to Mayan ruins provides an unexpected lesson



**ALICE GREENE O'NEIL**  
I'M NOT DEAD YET

choben due to limited information. By my third opportunity, I said "might as well

It is said you can't judge a book by its cover. The same holds true for Mayan ruins and tourist information available about them.

Twice, while in the Yucatan, I chose not to visit Chac-

since I'm nearby."

Upon arriving at the parking area, it looked exactly like the photo I had been shown — a sign and a distant lone pyramid that appeared common as far as Mayan ruins go. Our guide started with basic Mayan history and then gave us time for photos. The entire time I was thinking "this was a waste of a day." Humm, was I wrong.

As we were led to the opposite side of the pyramid, its appearance changed. The guide then gave a lecture including information I did not know. My interest was piqued immediately.

The singular pyramid was akin to an entry that

announced the name of the area. There were high steps leading to a throne protected by a thatched palm roof. Here, the high priest would sit and oversee everything from planting and harvesting to what name a child should be given.

As the guide led us into the jungle of mahogany and banyan trees behind the pyramid, she stopped beneath a towering tree. Pointing out the aged man-made slash marks that scarred its trunk she explained the tree's history.

We were standing in a grove of Manikara chicle trees — an important fruit tree to the Mayans. They

harvested its milky sap — cooking and then chewing the sugary, sticky substance.

Yup, we were standing in a grove of "Chiclet" trees. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana and his son added flavor to the sap of chicle trees and launched the chewing-gum industry in the late 1800s. By 1930, the industry peaked with the United States importing some 14 million pounds of cooked chicle sap to make chewing gum.

The Mayan harvesting processes had guaranteed the continued life of the trees, but not so when we started harvesting and importing; thus many trees were lost to careless prac-

tices.

As we continued to walk, an amazing mostly-restored Mayan community unfolded around us.

The Yucatan government no longer permits archaeologists to rebuild the fallen structures. It was a treat to see the reconstruction. Archaeologists create a line to indicate where the reconstruction starts on each structure. The rebuilt areas of Chacchoben had a mystical sense. Multiple pyramids, each with a specific purpose, appeared.

Here, the guide explained how the structure's top symbols align with the sun and the moon at given seasons

or important dates. The Mayan calendar is celestial and complex; a study all of its own which will no doubt receive news coverage as we approach Dec. 23, 2012 — the Golden Age.

Even the pyramid cornerstones had a specific purpose. When the sunlight and shadow hit specific stones it signaled the time to plant or the time to harvest.

Chacchoben translates to "the place of the red corn."

Contact Alice Greene O'Neil, 62, continues to recover from spinal-cord damage that, for a time, left her paralyzed and with other disabilities. She refuses to let it slow her down.