

MIDLAND DAILY NEWS

Sunday, June 26, 2011

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Boys State alum watches grandson graduate program

Editor's note: From June 19 to June 25, 267 high school juniors attended The American Legion's Boys State, held at Northwood University.

Coverage of several Boys State events, including their trip to Michigan's State Capitol Building in Lansing, where the young men used the actual House Chamber to enact sessions of a mock Congress, will be featured in a future edition of The Daily News.

By **BYRCE MARTIN**

for the Daily News

It was a special moment for Charles Gerds as he watched his grandson graduate from the American Legion's Boys State program Saturday, the same program Gerds graduated from 74 years ago.

The 74th annual Boys State program, which began June 19, concluded Saturday with an awards ceremony and closing remarks. The 267 boys who attended the week-long event marched into the Bennett Center at Northwood University with excitement.

Jesse Spencer, a high school junior from Goshen, Ind., cheered with the crowd as his grandfather, Gerds, was recognized

SEE "BOYS STATE," PAGE A2

REVIEW

Steve Martin, with the Steep Canyon Rangers

By **STEVE GRIFFIN**

for the Daily News

Steve Martin told his Midland Center for the Arts audience Friday night that he'd been on that stage before, "forty years ago, when I was touring as a stand-up comedian."

That he still is, he proved Friday, with his banjo a double-threat in front of the masterful bluegrass band, the Steep Canyon Rangers.

Martin had set a light-hearted tone right off, walking up to the mic, scanning the packed hall, and telling the audience, "If I'd known there were going to be so many of you, I would have practiced."

He then launched a thoroughly enjoyable concert in which terrific bluegrass music and deft comedy were both at home.

As other reviewers have noted, Steve Martin is a solid, if not stellar, banjo player. While he says in interviews he's a learned musician, not a natural one, he is a natural entertainer — and that's who and what the Midland crowd came to see,

But when Martin, alone on the stage, picked "Great Remember" in claw-hammer style, the technique proved evocative just as he had promised, nearly

SEE "MARTIN," ON PAGE A2



THOMAS SIMONETTI | tsimonetti@mdn.net

Left to right, Vice President Sandra Warner, Vice President Anne Herron and President Sue LaBonville of Allis Information Management. It is one of several female-owned businesses that have recently been named one of Michigan's 50 Companies to Watch.

Bringing back BUSINESS

Three Midland women-owned businesses named in Michigan's 50 Companies to Watch focus on strengthening the economy and shifting revenue back to Michigan.

By *Ariel Black*

More on A3

After Allis Information Management was founded by Heddy Allis in 1979, the tradition of a woman-run business is still evident with a female president and two female vice presidents.

Sue LaBonville, president of the global business intelligence firm, said Heddy was a chemist who first began the company out of her home, translating technical journal articles into layman's terms.

"One of Heddy's techniques was to hire women who wanted something to do when their kids went to school," said Vice President Sandra Warner. "It was easy to start."

Allis Information Management has moved from several locations, but has been comfortable in a spacious building at 204 W. Wackerly since 2000. They cater to Fortune 500 companies, small privately-owned businesses, industry trade associations, public relations and consulting firms, and human intelligence officers.

The company was named one of

Women-led tradition continues with president, vice presidents of company

Michigan's 50 Companies to Watch in 2008, and Warner credits the business' success to establishing long-term relationships with clients.

"We're known for our customer service dedication," said Vice President Anne Herron. "It was really nice to know that as small as our business is, we're not insignificant in comparison with the big guys. We can contribute to the economy and feel like we're a part."

She also said the award meant a lot to employees, and the whole staff would share in the recognition.

Herron, who has been with the company for 14 years used to work for The Dow Chemical Co. in analytical chemistry, but made the switch to Allis Information Management when looking for more flexibility in her schedule.

"It was just that time in my life. I

Over the past several years, Midland businesses have appeared numerous times on Michigan's 50 Companies to Watch list with 15 businesses awarded. New-Tech, Allis Information Management and SPACE Inc. have all made a name for themselves as successful women-owned businesses in the community, and all owners place a heavy emphasis on growing the economy in Michigan.

Other businesses awarded in Midland from 2006 to 2009 are AEGIS Environments, The Apothecary Shoppe Pharmacies, Dendritech Inc., FS4 USA, C M Rubber Recycling, Caltech Industries, The Savant Group, Falcon RME, Omni-Tech International, GANTEC Inc., Ingenuity IEQ, and Precision Torque Control.

was ready to have my second child," she said. "Here, we have a really good work environment, and when you offer that respect and flexibility to your employees, they in turn give 110 percent to the customers."

LaBonville said the company was awarded the Top 50 around the same time the economy was tanking, however, she did notice some growth. There were more full-time people, said LaBonville, who hopes to see controlled growth in the future of the business.

"We still have empty space here to fill," she said. "There is some room to grow."

Allis Information Management has a business intelligence team, marketing support, and an in-house information technology staff, Herron said. Of the 22 employees, 16 are women, LaBonville said.

Conservative pundit Coulter wraps up book tour in Auburn

By **JON BECKER**

for the Daily News

Love her or loathe her — there doesn't seem to be an in between — there's no denying that high-profile conservative pundit Ann Coulter knows how to energize a crowd and elicit reaction, good or bad depending on your politics.



Coulter was in Auburn Saturday evening, the last stop on her five-city tour of Michigan to promote her latest book: *Demonic: How the Liberal Mob is Endangering America*.

Though she said ear-

LAMONT LENAR |

for the Daily News

Ann Coulter signing books in Auburn Saturday.

lier this week on the Sean Hannity Show on Fox that she was going to Michigan to sell books, not have fun, the outspoken political commentator seemed to be enjoying herself as she skewered President Obama, especially on the economy, and, of course, her favorite target: Liberals. Even First Lady

Michelle Obama was not spared from Coulter's biting wit.

Noting that detainees in Guantanamo Bay are gaining about 10 pounds on average, she wondered if it "was a prison camp or freshman year in the dorms at Michigan State."

SEE "COULTER," ON PAGE A2

Monday: Thunderstorms

by Victoria Wilson
Siebert Elementary



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