

# Detroit Free Press

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**METRO FINAL**

WEDNESDAY

May 1, 2002



Chance of rain. High 52. Low 43.

**DETAILS, 9D**

**Tigers 9**  
**Royals 3**



**MITCH ALBOM ON CHELIOS, FISCHER**

Wings' elder defenseman watches over the young Czech.

**SPORTS, 1C**

**THURSDAY: YZERMAN CARD**

**Manoogian kids return**

Children of ex-Mayor Roman Gribbs have a romp through the mansion and relive their 1970-74 stay.

**ROCHELLE RILEY, 1D**

**Ads put heat on dioceses**

Billboards and bus ads will soon pop up all over town in a group's campaign to have women ordained as priests.

**LOCAL NEWS, 1B**

**Keep upbeat with your pet**

Shopping this weekend's adoption fair at the zoo? Remember that today's trainers stress rewards over penalties.

**LOCAL NEWS, 1B**

**Don't blame us - oil execs**

Industry leaders deny a Senate panel's finding that they manipulated supplies to drive up gasoline prices.

**BUSINESS, 1E**

## Property taxes to be paid earlier

Starting in '03, date shifts to July; owners to get a onetime cut

By **DAWSON BELL**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

LANSING — Gov. John Engler signed two bills Tuesday, changing the collection date of state school property taxes from December to July.

Some home owners had advance warnings of the change in recent weeks when notices from their mortgage holders began arriving with word that their property tax escrow payments would increase to cover the earlier tax collection.

The change, which takes effect in summer 2003, would boost funding for public schools in the 2002-03 academic year. It allows the state to fulfill a pledge to raise per pupil funding \$200 to a minimum of \$6,700.

At a signing ceremony at a Lansing elementary school, Engler said: "Schools and taxpayers are the winners."

The Legislature overwhelmingly passed the bills last month.

Please see **TAX, Page 6A**

### ESCROWS, EQUITY

If you're one of the 650,000 Michigan home owners who have a mortgage with an escrow account, you may qualify for ending escrow payments and paying your property taxes directly instead.

If the equity in your home is at least 20 percent, most lenders will waive the escrow requirement. Some will waive it with 15 percent. That equity can come from your down payment but also from the increased value of your home over time.

If you put down 10 percent when you bought a home, you could qualify for an escrow waiver if the home's value has increased another 10 percent since its purchase.

Why would you want to avoid escrow payments? Tax escrow accounts essentially put money in a noninterest-bearing account to pay future tax bills. You're better off putting the money in an interest-bearing account and paying the taxes yourself.

The downside of paying yourself is that you need to set aside money so you can pay the big bills when they come due.

### AN AWESOME SIGHT

## Galaxies far, far away



**ABOVE:** About 300 million light-years away, galaxies that collided engage in a celestial dance.

IMAGES FROM TELESCOPE'S NEW CAMERA GIVE GLIMPSE OF UNIVERSE IN ITS INFANCY



Photos by NASA via Agence France-Press

This massive pillar of dust is relatively close to Earth, only about 2,500 light-years away. Scientists say traveling the length of the cone would be equivalent to making 23 million round trips to the moon.

FREE PRESS NEWS SERVICES

WASHINGTON — As rich in color and detail as a tapestry, the first snapshots from a powerful new camera on the Hubble Space Telescope reveal the collisions of swirling galaxies, columns of glowing gas and dust and bright newly forming stars.

Before a space shuttle mission to install the camera in March, NASA predicted that the \$76-million Advanced Camera for Surveys would improve tenfold the 12-year-old telescope's power of observation.

"When we saw the first images, my colleagues and I were stunned," said Holland Ford, an astronomer at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the new camera's chief scientist. "We knew the Advance



The shape of this galaxy called tadpole changed after it merged with a smaller galaxy. It's 420 million light-years away.

Camera for Surveys would be good, but we underestimated how extraordinary the images would be."

Ford said that the improved imager opens a window into deep

space that allows humans to look back almost to the start of the universe, about 13 billion years ago.

"These are among the best images of the distant universe humans have ever seen," he said.

One of the four images taken reveals a pair of colliding galaxies 420 million light-years from Earth. A flowing tail of stars, hot dust and gas trails 280,000 light-years behind the swirling, newly merged star system dubbed the Tadpole.

A light-year is the distance a ray of light travels in one year, about 6 trillion miles.

The most spectacular feature of the Tadpole image is the backdrop, a vast collection of thousands of faint gold, blue and red-tinged gal-

Please see **UNIVERSE, Page 7A**

## Detroit braces for global talks

Top industrial nations head for Motor City to face energy obstacles

By **ALEJANDRO BODIPO-MEMBA** AND **SUZETTE HACKNEY**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

With delegations from the eight leading industrial nations arriving in Detroit today to discuss global energy challenges, law enforcement officials tightened security and practiced riot-control techniques in case the conference draws a violent protest.

The Group of Eight Energy Ministers conference to be held Thursday and Friday at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center Hotel is the culmination of a year-long effort by the Bush administration to convene such a meeting, the first since a Moscow gathering in 1998.

The international summit on

- Michigan seen at forefront of energy's future. **Tom Walsh, 1E**
- Editorial: Relative comfort. **8A**

energy and environmental issues is taking place in the city that made its name and fortune from the combustible engine.

The role of Detroit's automakers in the energy debate will be a key theme. The agenda will include discussions about the emerging technologies that will eventually fuel cars.

"We're pretty excited about the conference providing an opportunity for discussion about the energy future," said Bernard Robertson, senior vice president for engineering technologies for DaimlerChrysler AG's Chrysler Group. "We've worked closely with Gov. Engler with his NextEnergy project, which we feel goes

Please see **ENERGY, Page 3A**

## Rochester tract is an oasis of two-parent families

New subdivisions enjoy a sense of community and a lifestyle long gone

By **AMY KLEIN**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

There is a place where strangers wave hello while pushing strollers, where children gather for games of catch and their fathers play Friday night poker — a place where the sidewalks cut a measured grid through emerald lawns and swing sets are the only things dotting the skyline.

It is not a movie set or an episode of "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," although it can feel that way. It is Census tract 1913 — a narrow swath in Rochester where two subdivisions sprouted in the past five years.



PATRICIA BECK/Detroit Free Press

The Dymm family takes a bike ride through their Rochester neighborhood. They live in an area where 97.1 percent of the homes with children are headed by two parents. It's the highest percentage in metro Detroit.

It is also a statistical phenomenon. Along streets named Beaver Creek and Tulberry Circle, 97.1 percent of families are headed by married couples — the highest concen-

tration in metro Detroit.

In an era of high divorce rates and plenty of stable one-parent homes, in an age when the federal government is proposing incentives

to get married, what is with all these old-fashioned family settings?

"Wow, this is really uncommon. I've never heard of a percentage that high," said Pamela Smock, a

University of Michigan associate professor of sociology and a research scientist at the Institute of Social Research who has examined families, marriage and divorce.

Of the 448 households with children in the tract, 435 are headed by two adults. In Michigan, only about 67 percent of households have two parents; in Oakland County the number rises to 77 percent.

Social scientists and historians say the demographics of tract 1913 shed some insight into the anomaly. When the census was taken in April 2000, the median age in the tract was 35, with more than one-third of the residents under age 18. About 90 percent were white.

Income, however, is one of the most telling signs of two-parent, married families because wealthy couples are less likely to divorce,

Please see **TRACT, Page 7A**

### INDEX

Bridge .....	6D
Business .....	1E
Classified .....	1F
Comics .....	9D, 10D
Corrections .....	2A
Crossword .....	9D
Editorials .....	8A
Horoscope .....	6D
Jumble .....	5F
The List! .....	2D
Movie Guide .....	5D
Obituaries .....	5B
Sports .....	1C
TechToday .....	2A
Television .....	4D
The Way We Live .....	1D
Yak's Corner .....	10D

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