

## Dr. King's lessons still relevant in 2013

I was impacted last week by a picture I saw of the man whose memory we honor today. In the picture, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was removing a charred cross from his front yard.

Standing beside and watching him remove that cross was his son, Martin Luther III, and I wondered what that little boy might have been thinking. I also wondered what Dr. King might have said to explain it to him.



**Tom Treece**

My Bible tells me, "the steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord." As a Christian, I know I'm not a righteous man and probably never will be, but, that is what I want to be. And, even though I'm not where I want to be, I take heart knowing that at least I'm not where I used to be.

The Bible also states, "There is no one righteous, not even one."

And even though I'm sure Dr. King also fits into this category, there is one thing that makes me believe unequivocally that he, too, was trying to be a righteous man.

There are a few aspects of Christianity I'm nowhere near reflecting. First, I don't think I could ever be in a state of mind to ask for mercy and forgiveness for those who had just hung me on a cross to die for something I hadn't done.

Another aspect I struggle with is having the courage to "turn the other cheek" to one who strikes me. And yet, that basically describes the attitude and guidance with which Dr. King led the civil rights movement.

That movement, of course, caused racists to not only threaten him with burning crosses, but to carry out the action those crosses threatened on that Atlanta balcony.

One of my favorite singer/songwriters, Richard Marx, wrote and recorded "One Man," a song about Dr. King that remains one of my favorites, the lyrics of which are as follows:

"It's a peaceful thing to know that freedom as a rule belongs to me. (But) there's something very wrong when the color of a man is all you see. After all this time, how can a single voice explain ... any reason for the pain we all have seen? It's not a dream!

"So he took a stand and walked where no one else would dare to even try. It was the only way; if not for bravery the soul would surely die. Right before my eyes, he gave his life unselfishly, so that all the father's children could be free ... just like you and me.

"Before his work is done, we've got to put an end to this game of choosing sides. I want us to be one and I won't let it go until it's over; I'm here waiting!

"One man stood tall, and faced the devil with his back to the wall. And took one step closer to heaven above."

Just like Jesus — whom Dr. King also followed — he was tormented, spit upon and ultimately murdered for what he believed in. With their words, both men warned us to look at a man's heart when considering his character.

As we begin a new presidential term after our recent bitter political battle, we Americans will do well to heed their caveats.

But, what do I know?



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## Airport to shift fifth-graders to Wagar

BY DANIELLE PORTTEUS  
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Fifth-graders will move into Wagar Middle School beginning next fall at Airport Community Schools.

Supt. John Krimmel told parents recently about the decision citing concerns simply over space.

"We ran out of space," Mr. Krimmel said Thursday. "We closed Niedermeier and made that an alternative education center and we have 100 students there. Financially, we can't open that again."

This year's fourth-grade class has 180 students who will be moved into their own wing at the middle school.

An emphasis on early childhood programs, including a preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, Young 5's programs and the addition of a Great Start Preschool have limited the space available in the elementary buildings, the superintendent said.

Because of the popularity of the alternative education center, additional programs could be considered which limits the district's ability to reopen Niedermeier as an elementary school.

Wagar has space available which helps with the move.

"Right now, all of our specials like art and music are on a cart," Mr. Krimmel said, which means teachers do not have their own rooms and float to the classrooms to teach those classes.

A steady decline in enrollment has afforded additional space.

"We have dropped 237 in the last 10 years," he said. "We definitely have space here."

Wagar will be configured so that fifth- and sixth-graders will be in the same wing of the building while the seventh and eighth grades will be in another wing.

The only common areas of space will be the media center, cafeteria and gymnasium.

The two younger grades also will have a different start time beginning next year with their own busing schedule so they are not riding to school with students in seventh through 12th grades, Mr. Krimmel said.

Some parents have expressed

concerns about the move, but Airport is making the effort to keep an "elementary feel" for the fifth grade.

An orientation and open house will take place at a later date for fifth- and sixth-graders to familiarize themselves with their new building.

Shifting students to middle school is not a new concept in Monroe County. For the start of the 2011-12 school year, Bedford Public Schools moved its sixth-grade students to the junior high.

Once Airport makes the move next year, four other districts operate under a similar format. Ida, Jefferson and Dundee have fifth-through eighth-grade buildings for its students.



Clamdigger's owner Glenn Shannon boldly makes the first leap during the second annual Polar Plunge Sunday in Monroe. Plungers cannon-balled and jumped into an icy filled pool outside of Clamdigger's to help raise money for Monroe County Special Olympics.

— Evening News photos by KIM BRENT

## TAKING THE PLUNGE

130 brave frigid weather to raise \$22,000 for Special Olympics

BY DEAN COUSINO  
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There were no classes today at Summerfield High School, which is a good thing for the 65 juniors and seniors who jumped into an ice-cold pool Sunday to raise money for Special Olympics Michigan.

Many of them still might be thawing out from taking part in the second Polar Plunge at the Clamdigger Lounge & Pizzeria and Riverfront Marina along the River Raisin.

Just as they did last year, the students banded together to support the Olympics. In 2012, 20 teenagers jumped in. This year, three times that many dressed in school colors (orange and black) and called themselves "Wu's Wonder Plungers" after Christine Wuwert, an English teacher and junior class adviser.

As soon as Josh Golkiewicz hit the water, he froze and got out right away.

"It almost put me in shock, I was shaking," the senior said afterward.

After Lucas Diver, another senior, jumped in he rushed into the changing tent and lay down by a heater. Senior Brad Sweeney, wearing a dark mask and cape, said he was already numb before hitting the water just from waiting his turn.

"It was so cold, I couldn't move," he said.

Junior Benjamin Zibbell was shaking a few minutes afterward, yet still vowing to do it again next year.

"I'm that stupid," he said.

The event almost was canceled about four hours before the start due to lack of water. High winds from the west had lowered the level of the River Raisin in the marina, making it unsuitable for jumping.

Organizers couldn't find a water supplier until the Monroe Fire Department stepped up and provided water to fill a pool at the last minute, said Stacie Ourlian, area director for the plunge.

"That was not our plan" to have participants jump in a pool, Ms. Ourlian said. "We almost canceled at 9:30."

Sarah and Rob Deoeck donated the pool. The show went on despite arctic-like conditions that prevailed with temperatures in the low 20s and wind chills on bare skin of below zero,

A total of 180 people registered for the plunge, but only 130 actually jumped, Ms. Ourlian said. Last year, 78 people dived into the river.

Plungers included police officers, coaches, school employees, athletes and family members.



Stacie Ourlian (left) leads local athlete Nate Smallwood, 15, as they and his sister, Katie Wicker, also 15, wade through the icy waters.

► To see a video of the Polar Plunge, visit [www.monroenews.com](http://www.monroenews.com)

Students at Jefferson Schools and Monroe Public Schools also took part.

The plunge, one of 28 held in Michigan, had a Relay for Life-like atmosphere, with hundreds of parents, family and friends surrounding the pool and a dunk tank to root for their favorite jumpers.

Nathan Smallwood, a Special Olympics athlete, took the plunge to mark his 15th birthday together with his sister, Katie Wicker, 15, and Ms. Ourlian.

Denny and Kathy Trease of Erie came to watch Frank Legeza of Oregon, Ohio, who at 62 was the oldest participant Sunday.

Mr. Legeza jumped with two fellow retired ironworkers — Domingo Valdez of Temperance and Derrick Garner Sr. of Toledo.

Olivia Heisler, 10, of Petersburg was the youngest person to jump, said Ms. Ourlian, who jumped in a bright orange Hawaiian outfit.

The plunge raised an estimated \$22,000 for the Olympics, which offers 21 sports for people in the county with intellectual disabilities. About 500 athletes compete in the Olympics. The \$22,000 topped the 2012 total by about \$6,000.

One by one, or in small groups of two or three, jumpers took the plunge. Most completely submerged themselves while a few got wet only up to their waist.

The costumes varied from the sublime to creative. Wearing a pink 1950s Johnny Angel costume, Debra Lee Meyer of Newport took the plunge to fulfill one of the items on her "bucket list": Don't be afraid of the cold.

## One Book author to speak in Monroe

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, author of "One Amazing Thing," this year's One Book, One Community of Monroe County selection, will be in Monroe in March.



CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI

Ms. Divakaruni will discuss her book at Monroe Community College's La-Z-Boy Center at 7 p.m. March 27.

Her appearance is one of several events planned for One Book, One Community March 18 to April 24.

In support of the literacy program, the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan has awarded the effort a \$7,500 grant.

One Book, One Community of Monroe County is an annual community reading program modeled after a similar program developed by the American Library Association.

The grant will be used to cover book purchases, programming support and the creation of a tool to assess the impact of the program on the community, a news release said.

One Book, One Community promotes the value of reading by recommending a book that links community members in a common conversation through readings, group discussions, programs and other events.

"One Amazing Thing" tells the story of nine people struggling to survive together after being trapped by an earthquake. Faced with the possibility of death, one of them suggests that they share "One Amazing Thing" about their lives.

Books are available at the MCCC bookstore, Book Nook and Books-A-Million.

Partnering community organizations include the Book Nook, Books-A-Million, the Foundation at Monroe Community College, Meadow Montessori, the MEEMIC Foundation, MCCC, the Monroe County Convention & Tourism Bureau, the Monroe County Library System, the Monroe Publishing Co. and The Monroe Evening News and St. Mary Catholic Central High School.

More details on events will be posted at [www.monroeccc.edu/onebook](http://www.monroeccc.edu/onebook) as they become available.