

ds of dollars a year
her male peers.

IEF

e TV
ons to
analog
al Feb. 17

YORK | Television
who use antennas
e expecting a few
ths to prepare for
/may not have much
before their sets go
ny stations still plan
major broadcasts in
two weeks.

Congress postponed
atory transition to
V until June, it also
tions the option to
e originally sched-
e of Feb. 17.

means the shutdown
og signals, which
sters had hoped
happen at nearly
e time nationwide,
w unfold in a con-
atchwork of different
s.

akers wanted to
concerns that many
lds that receive TV
rough an antenna.
prepared. They were
dful that a govern-
ad has run out of
to subsidize digital
r boxes.

s for energy
vation

INGTON | Looking
new furnace or air
net or replace drafty
? Congress may
e you a break that
ve you hundreds of

also money to install
nels for the water
r add insulation to
— maybe even put
ill windmill

\$100 billion econom-
y package before
s includes more than
n in energy-related
ax breaks and loan
ees to spur solar
id energy develop-
id to cut energy use
thing from govern-
uildings to schools
es.

far outstrips any
ederal funding for
ograms," says Kateri
t, president for the
to Save Energy, an
onservation group.

's sinking will
e problems

AS CITY, Mo. | The
1 River is sinking,
gineers try to figure
y, the phenomenon
s to damage billions
rs in property, weak-
e and bridges, and

ions of the writer or the artist, not the Sentinel. You may write in-
vidual columnists in care of The Sentinel.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Small steps make
big energy impact



TERESA HEINZ
HOUSEL

Teresa Heinz Housel is an assistant professor of communications at Hope College. Contact her at teresahousel@gamil.com.

On Dec. 31, a glow-
ing white ball wel-
comed the crowd
gathered in Grand
Rapids' Rosa Parks Circle for
a New Year's party.

Suspended high above on
a crane, the Times Square-
style ball weighed about
450 pounds. Jim Weiler of
Westmaas Electric told The
Grand Rapids Press that the
sphere's 448 crystal halogen
bulbs required 35,000 watts,
enough to roughly power
two homes on an average
day. Area businesses spon-
sored the ball's \$50,000 cost.

However, one question
remains: At a time when
Michigan and the country
face economic challenges,
why did Grand Rapids use
a decoration requiring a
sizeable consumption of
finances and energy?

Party organizers said they
hoped the celebration would
bring people to downtown
businesses during one of
the lowest holiday spending
seasons in years. However,
the event missed an oppor-
tunity to educate the public
about energy consumption.
If Grand Rapids had truly
replicated the Times Square
ball, it would have used low-
wattage LED lights, which
use a fraction of an incan-
descent bulb's power.

The New York Times
Square ball got its green
makeover in 2007, when its
halogen and incandescent
lights were swapped for LED
lights. Kaj den Daas, the
North America chairman of
Philips, the Dutch electronic
company, said the New York
ball would use about the
same energy per hour as two
home ovens or 10 toasters.

Some may wonder why
it is important to eco-fit a
New Year's ball when Michi-
gan faces heavy unemploy-
ment and a struggling man-
ufacturing sector. I believe
that reducing consumption
and using renewable energy
are part of the country's
economic solution.

Americans lead the world
in consuming 26 percent
of the world's energy. How-
ever, goals such as reduc-
ing global warming and
finding renewable energy
sources are overwhelming

tasks. Achieving these goals
requires many small steps,
each building on the other
to make a wider impact.

In 2007, Holland's Hope
Church held an Earth Day
service. Co-pastor Gordon
Wiersma said he was sad-
dened by a reporter's ques-
tion about why a church
would care about creation.

Wiersma reflected on the
question in his sermon. "I
sense a general impression
in society about the church
that caring for creation is
not an important issue in
the church's faith, theology,
practice," Wiersma said.

"But also in the moment of
that question — and think-
ing about it since — there
has been another response
in me, one of opportunity
and gratitude and energy.
It strikes me that we live at
a moment of remarkable
opportunity for the church."

The Earth Day service
inspired Hope Church to
promote more environ-
mental education. In 2008,
the church participated in
two used electronics drives
sponsored by West Michi-
gan Creation Care. More
than 46,000 pounds of used
electronics were gathered
between both events.

Meanwhile, Grand Rapids
leads the state in getting 20
percent of its energy from
renewable sources. Like
other Michigan cities, Hol-
land installed LED street
lights in some locations, and
will hold its second citywide
Energy Week educational
event on March 14-21.

As our cities make strides
in promoting energy use
reduction, recycling and
renewable energy, city offi-
cials must not overlook edu-
cational opportunities with
events like a New Year's party.

Speaking about the Times
Square ball, den Daas said
he hoped that the LED
technology would educate
people about lighting alter-
natives. "The whole world
looks up to New York's New
Year's Eve. I'm proud to be
able to save energy and
show off this technology to
the world," den Daas said.

Let's keep working so that
our cities can be everyday
teachers, too.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hockey families bring huge economic boost to Holland

I read the letter to the editor by Ed
Arnold in Wednesday's Feb. 4 Sentinel
about the poor experience many have
had with hockey parents. While I know
many of them are not very quiet, I say
don't get up and leave. You should look
over and see that these people are on
vacation in Holland, Mich. They are doc-
tors, lawyers and even professional hock-
ey players. And, they are here for a hockey
tournament and they bring their wallets.

A three-year-old study, which did not
include downtown Holland, found that as
a low estimate of \$4.5 million was gen-
erated by our hockey tournaments. They
bring in more money than Tulip Time for
most of Holland. And, many of the restau-
rants, hotels and stores would not be here
if it were not for hockey tournaments.

In December, I looked up at two buses
from Canada sitting in front of The Edge
Ice Arena and realized half of each bus

was filled with bags and gifts bought at
local stores. Instead of criticizing these
people, we should embrace them and
thank them for coming to Holland. I hear
from many parents how they love com-
ing to Holland for the small shops and friend-
ly people. If they were not to come back
to Holland we would lose a 24-weekend
series that books over 150 rooms per nig-
every weekend all winter long. These
studies did not include the jobs of refer-
ees, scorekeepers and others who serve
them while they are at the ice arena.

Many places have tried to run hockey
tournaments every weekend and all has
failed. The friendly and helpful people of
Holland are the reason they keep coming
back.

SCOTT MEYAL
Tournament Director
The Edge Ice Arena
Holland, Mich.

No wonder two sides in abortion debate can't talk to each other

The letter by Randy DeMaat in Mon-
day's Feb. 2 Sentinel, "Voting for Obama
made abortions more likely," is a stark
example of why dialogue between pro-life
and pro-choice advocates is so poor.

While personally and spiritually not
agreeing with the practice of abortion, I
still found it acceptable to vote for Presi-
dent Barack Obama. DeMaat's statement
that "everyone, I mean everyone, who
voted for Obama voted for abortion" is
a terrible fallacy. It completely excludes
anyone who took into account more than
one issue before casting their ballot in the
last election.

Looking at their campaign promises,
neither Barack Obama nor John McCain
would have made an effort to alter the
content of Roe v. Wade, so to declare that
a vote for Obama made abortions more
likely does not make sense given that
both candidates had similar policies on

the issue. Also perplexing was the notion
that somehow abortion is a "big busi-
ness" in America or elsewhere and that
the president was possibly hoping to
money to aid foreign governments in
abortion. In an economic climate such
as today's, I am certain that the financial
security of foreign abortion clinics is not
on the president's radar.

These blatant misstatements of fact or
overly charged rhetoric make a sensible
discussion on abortion impossible. Peo-
ple must learn to be tolerant of others' ideas
on issues, even sensitive ones like abor-
tion, and accusations of "murderer" or
"fetus lover" (though I have never heard
the latter in use) only generate more an-
imosity between the left and right. In an
already partisan country, the last thing we
need is to strengthen existing divides.

TRAVIS MART
Holland

Sentinel should put Holland High basketball on sports front

Reading Wednesday morning's paper
I was shocked to see that the front page
of the sports section featured a story
about the Zeeland East boys basketball
team. The name of your paper is The
Holland Sentinel, and if Holland High
wins a good game like they did Tuesday
night, they should be put on the front
page. Let a Zeeland paper feature their
team.

Tuesday's Holland game was one of the
most exciting games I've ever seen, but
instead of featuring it, you put a blowout

victory on the front page. Worse, when
I read the story about Holland's team, it
did them little justice. Those guys have
played their past eight games with pas-
sion and skill and have won them all. The
game Tuesday was a competitive game
and we did not steal a victory like you
said, we earned it.

If Holland's paper won't show Holland
High's accomplishments, which paper
will?

KEVIN MEYER
Holland

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters: The Holland Sentinel welcomes letters on any subject. Include the letter writer's name, address and telephone number for verification. Letters not sent over the internet require a signature. The Sentinel reserves the right to edit or reject any letter.

Maximum length: 400 words
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