

## Tech Center News

31201 Chicago Road South  
Warren, Michigan 48093  
586-939-6800

Reader Input or feedback:  
News@TechCenterNews.com  
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Deadline: Thursday 5:00 p.m.  
for the next edition of Monday

William Springer II, publisher  
and interim news editor;  
Lisa A. Torretta, operations

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## Macomb College Employee Honored For Patriotism

Bianca Mylan, department coordinator for the Macomb Community College Public Service Institute, has received a Patriot Award from Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a U.S. Department of Defense office that promotes cooperation between reservists, National Guard members and their civilian employers.

The award honors individual supervisors who support service members by providing flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, support for their families and leaves of absence, when needed. Sgt. Rachel Shilakes, a medic with the Michigan Army National Guard and an emergency medical technician lab assistant for the college, nominated Mylan for the award.

Mylan helped Shilakes by adapting the reservist's work schedule to meet her military training requirements and duties. Later, after Shilakes was injured by an improvised explosive device while deployed in Afghanistan, Mylan rallied department employees to provide Shilakes with a personal support system during her recovery.

"We are proud to have Bianca Mylan as an employee," said Macomb Community College President Jim Jacobs. "Supporting the needs of men and women in uniform has long been part of the culture at this institution."

## After 80 Years, GM Chorus Still Hits Sweet Note for Members

Milestones are to be celebrated, and this year, the General Motors Chorus, which is based in Macomb County, will be celebrating 80 years of existence.

"Eighty years young and we're still going strong," said Bill Pillar, a GM retiree and first tenor in the chorus.

He said what distinguishes this group of singers is its membership. Over time, the choir has evolved to become more of a community-based group, which still touts its GM heritage.

"I like music and I like to sing, and I really enjoy the people in the chorus," said John Bober, a GM retiree who has been part of the choir for more than 20 years.

"The ensemble is much more like a paternal organization than a music group because there's so much camaraderie between us."

Records show that the chorus was originally formed in 1933 as an employee chorus that primarily performed at GM-sponsored events.

Though the chorus is no longer affiliated with the company, its primary purpose has changed and is now focused on servicing the community with music.

Each year, the chorus gives about 25 concerts at local churches, senior centers, veterans' hospitals and other public venues. But not only that, because the choir is focused on giving to the community, it is committed to providing financial and technical assistance to high school students seeking to pursue higher vocal programs.

## Warren Library Promotes Sign-Up

There's still time to act. In honor of National Library Card Sign-up Month, the Warren Public Library has a special deal for residents signing up for a library card in September.

Those signing up for a card will get to enjoy special deals from more than 20 Macomb County businesses, including American Pie on 12 Mile, Aristocrat Transportation and Friar's Kitchen & Bakery.

To learn more about the deal, call the Warren Library administration at 586-574-456.



The GM Chorus gives about 25 concerts a year at local churches, senior centers, and veterans' hospitals.

"It gives me a good feeling to know that we're serving the community and bringing joy through the power of music," Pillar said.

He added that he's been with the group for about 30 years now.

The chorus performs a wide variety of music, including classical, spiritual and popular pieces. In 2003, the chorus produced its first CD, consisting of chorus favorites in commemoration of their 70th Anniversary.

Bober is one of the choir's composers. He's written and arranged a number of pieces that the choir has performed over the years.

"I just try to put something together musically, that Norman Rockwell would put to a canvas

when he's painting. Music is a beautiful art form," Bober said.

In 1993 and 1999, the chorus was asked to sing backup for Grammy-winning vocalist Judy Collins.

"That was a real experience for us," Pillar said. "It's amazing to think of all the things we've been able to accomplish, all of which have been member-driven."

He said the group has created a name for themselves in Southeast Michigan. They've performed alongside a number of local symphonies, have participated in benefit and charity events, as well as sung for many civic and community groups.

The membership ranges from

year to year, and has been as many as 100 people strong. For the past 30 years, the chorus has sustained its operations by patron donations, member dues and "free-will" offerings from its audiences.

Pillar said he hopes to get more GM employees and retirees involved.

The chorus is about to assemble for its fall season starting with practices in early September on Monday evenings at 6:45 p.m. in Lincoln High School (just east of Van Dyke and south of Nine Mile).

"We're really excited about this next era of the chorus," Pillar said.

To find out more about the chorus, visit [www.gmchorus.com](http://www.gmchorus.com).

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