

Birthdays

• Wonder which one of "The Sopranos" will sing "Happy Birthday" to actress Edie Falco, who turns 42 today.



- Presidential daughter: Julie Nixon Eisenhower, 57
- Ex-baseball pitcher: Rich "Goose" Gossage, 54
- Rapper: Bizarre (D12), 27

What's inside

- Low-fat shrimp salad is delicious, D2
- Could snootiness really be shyness?, D4
- The comics are hot, hot, hot, D5



RELIGION FEATURES HEALTH & FITNESS FOOD FEATURES ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY Tuesday, July 5, 2005 WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

Perking along



Flint Journal photos • Jane Hale
▲ Mark Farmer of Flushing (left) sips coffee at the Starbucks Cafe at 3810 E. Court St. and takes advantage of the atmosphere.

Flint native's cup is full of Starbucks responsibilities

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Employees and coffee lovers who showed up at the grand openings of two Starbucks cafes here in April had to be grateful that Wanda Herndon joined them. As senior vice president for global communications for the coffee giant, the Flint native would not be able to get around to all 9,000 Starbucks locations in two lifetimes. She never could even check out the 1,500 expected to open this year.

Herndon says it was one of her "best moments ever" to cut the ribbon at the cafe at 3810 E. Court St., barely a 10-minute drive from her father's house. (The second new cafe is at 3243 Miller Road, Flint Township. Others opened earlier in Grand Blanc and at Marshall Field's.)

It means a lot to her, she says, that the two new company-operated cafes are "providing jobs for people in my hometown."

Herndon has climbed to near the top of the corporate

► Starbucks, D2



▲ Flint native Wanda Herndon is senior vice president for global communications for coffee giant Starbucks. She says she's glad her company is providing jobs for local people.



Starbucks: Flint native's professional cup is full | D1

ladder in far-away Seattle, but a piece of her heart stayed behind.

The 1970 Southwestern High School grad recently established a scholarship for minority local students to study journalism at her alma mater, Michigan State University.

She delivered the commencement address two years ago at Mott Community College. She sits on the MSU journalism school's advisory committee and its minority affairs committee. MSU in 2002 gave her a Distinguished Alumni Award.

Herndon, 52, is a board member of the King County (Seattle) YWCA. She is a minority owner of the NBA Seattle SuperSonics and the WNBA Seattle Storm.

Before joining Starbucks, she spent five years with the DuPont Co. and 12 at Dow Chemical Co. in Midland.

At Starbucks, she oversees all corporate communications, including public affairs, media relations, internal communications and financial communications. The company has more than 9,000 cafes and licensed outlets in North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. It reported earnings of \$5.3 billion for the fiscal year that ended in October.

The company owns the Tazo tea line, Seattle's Best Coffee and the high-end Torrefazione coffee line. Torrefazione coffee was introduced at 17 Italian-style coffee bars of the same name. Starbucks bought the bars in 2003 but recently announced it would close them.

The company is in the middle of a campaign to expand its presence in supermarkets and food-service.

Starbucks, through its Hear Music unit, has packaged 100 compilations for playing in cafes and sale to the public. It has 45 "media bar" coffeeshouses, all in the

West, where customers can burn CDs from Hear Music's extensive playlist.

Starbucks sometimes is accused of arrogance and overly aggressive tactics on the way to becoming the world's largest coffee retailer and roaster. Asked if the company's sometimes controversial image has made her job challenging, Herndon emphasized the positive.

"I am proud of the fact that we pay an average of \$1.20 a pound for beans — which is about 75 percent more than the average world coffee price — assuring that growers receive a fair return.

"We bought 44 million pounds of coffee last week that was grown in accordance with high standards covering good environmental practice, worker rights and social development in places where coffee is grown.

"We gave almost \$15 million to various causes last year, including literacy, mentoring programs, environmental efforts and community development in coffee-growing areas."

Herndon told us about some of her favorite (coffee, of course) things.

Favorite coffee drink
• Tall decaf nonfat latte

Favorite coffee variety

• It comes from the Bella Vista farm in the Tres Rios region of Costa Rica, which produces the premier coffee in that country. Production is small, which means we cannot offer it year round. It sparkles.

Favorite accompaniment to Starbucks coffee

• Low-fat coffee cake

Favorite music while sipping coffee in a Starbucks cafe

• Ray Charles' "Genius Loves Company"

Favorite Flint-area haunt

• Halo Burger. I grew up on Halo Burgers and ate a lot of them at the downtown store.

Favorite U.S. city

• Flint, of course.

"I am proud of the fact that we pay an average of \$1.20 a pound for beans — which is about 75 percent more than the average world coffee price — assuring that growers receive a fair return.

— Wanda Herndon



Flint Journal photos • Jane



▲ The mid-morning view from inside the Flint Starbucks looks peaceful. Other cafes are in Grand Blanc, Flint Township and at Marshall Field's.

◀ Christina Candela of Davison serves coffee with a smile to a drive-up customer at the Flint cafe. Starbucks calls its employees "partners."



▲ Candela staffs the drive-up window at the Flint cafe, which opened in April.