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Lyon Twp. to hire full-time firefighters

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Lyon Township relies almost solely on paid on-call firefighters to respond to emergencies.

That is about to change.

The township board approved initiating the hiring process for four full-

time firefighters and two full-time captains. Applications are being accepted and interview panels will be put into place while the township anticipates approval of a federal grant worth \$1.4 million.

The board formed a committee this past spring to examine adding full-time firefighters in light of a shortage of paid

on-call firefighters. It determined late last month that hiring full-time firefighters is necessary as the township struggles to recruit local paid on-call firefighters and pays for training, but then loses them to communities with full-time departments.

"Volunteer firefighters have a life elsewhere," Clerk Michele Cash said.

"Where else do we go from here? We have tried everything. We train and they go. We're growing and have to keep everyone safe."

The township currently has just four full-time fire staff, including Chief Ken Van Sparrentak and an administrative

See **FIREFIGHTERS**, Page 14A



Chef Robin Wilson and Epoch Catering need to be able to prepare a variety of dishes for different diets at the Suburban Collection Showplace. Their repertoire includes grilled asparagus, mushrooms, and squash. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Meet Suburban Collection Showplace's new top chef

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For many chefs, operating their own restaurant is the dream. Cooking for thousands of people at a time? Perhaps not as much.

But Chef Robin Wilson thrives on that challenge.

"Wrapping your head around that many numbers and stuff, it intrigued me," said Wilson, 47, of Westland. "I probably would never go back to the private sector. I did that for years, and it's not the lifestyle I want to live."

Wilson is the new executive chef at the Diamond Center in the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi. He runs

the kitchen for Epoch Catering, the company that handles food service for the convention center at 46100 Grand River.

Wilson came to Novi after spending the last several years at Cobo Center in downtown Detroit, deciding he was

See **CHEF**, Page 13A

Is it OK to claim a spot at an event by placing a chair hours beforehand?

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
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On a recent Thursday morning in Milford you could have had your choice of at least 100 empty chairs to sit in at the LaFontaine Amphitheater in Central Park.

A concert was not slated to begin until 7 p.m. and the park was quiet at 10:30 a.m., but the empty chairs, which kept increasing as people set them up and left with more than seven hours until showtime, have caused a ruckus on Facebook.

The stage is set for debate in Milford — and elsewhere too, it seems. Where do you stand, or sit?

Is it rude to save spots for hours with empty chairs left in a public park or on parade routes? Or is this small-town charm and a perk of living in an area where it is perceived as safe to leave your property unattended?

What are the rules of civility?

"This is historically what we've always done," said Kevin Crain, who with wife Janie was walking away from chairs they had just set up at the park in anticipation of the concert that night. "We're not keeping people out or in, we just want a certain spot."

Janie noted the practice of putting up chairs and leaving them empty for hours is also done for parades in town.

"I love that it's safe and honest here," she said. "People in Milford are respectful."

A Facebook post made by a woman who arrived more than 90 minutes early for a mid-July concert only to find the park packed with empty chairs had a different opinion, calling the situation "not right."

The post — one of several on the topic — attracted 360 comments and plenty of disagreement with some commenters saying that leaving empty chairs for hours to save spots was "rude," "selfish," and "wrong." Others endorsed the action as "proactive," "a great sign of a full audience" and "first come, first served."

Kevin Lawrence, who organizes Milford Parks and Recreation concerts, did not respond to questions

See **CHAIR**, Page 14A

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Milford police ID man connected to stolen work truck

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Northville Record, 160 W Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226.

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Newsstand price: \$1.50
\$65 per 12 months home delivery

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Use of a canine tracker resulted in troopers finding a suspect's shirt on the edge of the lake. Thinking the suspects swam to a nearby island, troopers used a Metropark police boat to haul at least one tracking dog there.



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The suspects surrendered after the watercraft with the tracking team was searching and a helicopter was hovering overhead.

No one was injured. Both suspects

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Lt. Doug Baaki said statues and flower pots also were wrecked.

Anyone with information is asked to call 248-437-1773.



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'Insane' gravel road speeds prompt petition

Susan Bromley [HometownLife.com](mailto:sbromley@hometownlife.com)
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Emily Davis, along with several other residents on or near Currie Road, implored the Lyon Township Board last week to lower the 55 mph speed limit on the gravel thoroughfare immediately.

"It is insane," she said. "We have a hard time getting our mail. It's very dangerous."

Davis has found a dead cat in front of her driveway between 8 and 9 Mile and also cites an incident where a car ran into the embankment while trying to pass her vehicle. She's put the family home on the market with plans to move elsewhere with her husband and five children due to safety concerns.

She is not alone in her worry over gravel road speeds. The issue has drawn complaints from residents throughout Oakland County after the state initially approved a law raising speeds on gravel roads to 55 mph in 2006, implemented the law in 2009, and subsequently made modifications.

"There has been a lot of political pressure," Craig Bryson, public information officer for the Road Commission for Oakland County, said. "Reality has shown it almost doesn't matter, people drive at whatever speed they feel comfortable, regardless of speed limit and that tends to be in the 30s."

"The state police pushed for speeds to be raised because no one was going 25 mph to begin with and it was an unrealistic speed that no one would follow anyhow."

Since the speed limit on 230 segments of gravel road in the state that were previously 25 mph were raised to 55 mph a decade ago, the number of crashes on those segments has decreased, Bryson said, "in complete contrast to residents' assertions that it would be a bloodbath with crashes everywhere."

"That has not proven to be the case," he said. "This is an emotional issue, but we follow the state law and try to allow our decisions to be driven by data and not emotion."

Speed limits on gravel roads in Michigan are now based on the number of access points, including driveways, side streets and alleys. If a gravel road has



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less than 30 access points in a half-mile stretch, it is unposted and set at 55 mph.

On Currie Road, there are about 35 homeowners in the one-mile stretch between 8 and 9 Mile Road, and Tony Verbiscus has gathered petition signatures from all but one of his neighbors to get the speed limit lowered. The residents are also asking for no passing signs and a bike lane to be added in anticipation of the road being paved in two years. He also plans to ask residents between 9 and 10 Mile roads to add their names to the petition.

Verbiscus would like to see the speed lowered to 25, where he says it used to be on the residential road before a change in state law several years ago, but on the petition is asking for 35. He said even 45 mph would be better.

"We've had three reported accidents and a fourth that was not recorded, just from people trying to turn in their driveways," Verbiscus said. "One was rear-ended by a garbage truck... We know (drivers) go 70 mph from a previous traffic study and to get to 35 is going to be pulling hair and nails. The banging

coming down the road is like a thunderstorm from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. at night. I have to powerwash my house twice a year. They hit potholes at 55 mph, trailers are swaying, it's unbelievable."

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Supervisor John Dolan agreed the speed limit should be lower, but both he and Township Engineer Leslie Zawada noted their hands are essentially tied as the Road Commission for Oakland County has jurisdiction over all roads in Lyon Township and the state sets the speed limit and changes it only with a speed study, for which she said there is a backlog of three years.

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No passing signs are unlikely and truck traffic will continue to be a challenge on Currie Road, Bryson said, as it is one of only five north-south primary roads in Lyon Township. The others are Chubb, Griswold, Napier and Pontiac Trail. All are main public roads, Bryson noted and "you have to have a really good reason to tell them they can't drive on there."

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Township officials agreed to ask the Road Commission formally to lower the speed and Bryson said a modification to the law in 2017 gives RCOC the authority to lower speeds to 45 mph if it deems the action warranted.

Bryson said the RCOC's traffic safety department would consider the request for Currie Road, examining sight distance issues, the width of the road and studying other potential safety issues. A decision would most likely be returned by October or November and "lowering to 45 is certainly within the realm of possibility," Bryson said.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Northville Record, 160 W Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226.

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Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
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A lawn service employee facing three felony charges in Novi's 52nd District Court explained to Oakland County deputies he was just doing what he had been told to do when a confrontation erupted in Lyon Township.

According to the county's arrest report, the 24-year-old man said he was hired July 25 and told to cut the lawn beyond some caution tape.

But a neighbor, 63, said she marked the start of her property because of a property line dispute.

Her son-in-law, 36, tried to stop the mower when they considered him trespassing.

He refused to follow the neighbors' request to stop mowing. When the neighbors began recording his mowing, he apparently flashed a gun and allegedly pointed the weapon at the adults and the woman's 2-year-old grandson.

Fearful, that's when police were called. Deputies arrived to find the 24-year-old gun holder mowing the lawn of the family's neighbor.

He complied with deputies who drew their guns and ordered him to stop mowing and put his hands up.

His gun was in a holster at his waistband.

He said the person who hired him told him to go beyond the caution tape. He further told deputies he retrieved his weapon from his vehicle because he felt threatened and did not like that he was being recorded.

He said he flashed the handgun but "did not point it at them."

He faces charges of carrying a concealed weapon, felonious assault, and weapons felony firearm.

Contact Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

SCENES FROM THE VIETNAM MOVING WALL

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Livonia hosted The Moving Wall, a powerful display that immortalizes the names of the 58,313 men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.

The memorial arrived Aug. 8 at Ford Field Park, escorted through town by a horde of motorcyclists and local law enforcement.

Ted Davis, the superintendent of Livonia Parks and Recreation, said the wall is a powerful sight to see.

"You're struck by the enormity, the sheer volume of names," he said. "You look at all of those young men (and women) who, at the beginning of their lives, gave so much."

"It's incredibly impactful."

Among the tens of thousands of names, 52 former Livonia residents were immortalized on the wall.



Dave Kline, left, and Rev. Earl Bolam, who are both veterans of the Vietnam War, carry the first section of the Moving Wall from a truck Aug. 8 at Ford Field. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Veterans of the Vietnam War and other visitors walk along the Moving Wall the afternoon of Aug. 8 in Livonia.

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A rendering shows the final look of proposed renovations at the Salvation Army in Livonia. COURTESY OF THE CITY OF LIVONIA

Salvation Army plans \$4M renovation of Livonia store

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's going to be a bit easier to make donations at Livonia's Salvation Army store next year.

The store, at 33600 Plymouth, is due for a major renovation beginning later this year that will expand and change the layout inside the shop.

Jacquelyn Idzior, assistant administrator for the Salvation Army's Southeast Michigan Adult Rehabilitation Center, said the shop will expand in to the vacant space attached to the building, which the Salvation Army bought in 2011.

She said they have waited for the right time to make the expansion.

"Finally, we made the decision to move forward," she said. "It's been on our radar since 2011."

The roughly \$4 million expansion will increase the size of the store by about 7,000 square feet, expanding into vacant space. The storage area for donated items will double from roughly 5,000 to 10,000 square feet, which will help accommodate the large amount of donated items brought to the store.

The changes will also make it easier for those donating to enter and exit the lot, as opposed to the current setup, which requires drivers to come out the same entrance driveway they come in.

"You'll be able to drive around the building and exit," Idzior said. "It can be a little congested. This will make it easier."

The Livonia City Council reviewed the site plan at its study meeting July 22, placing it on the consent agenda for the Aug. 12 regular meeting, meaning the plans are all but approved.

"They look great," said council Vice President Jim Jolly. "We can't understate enough how much value you add

to our local community and to the much larger community as well."

The front of the store is expected to sport a new, refreshed look, complete with a white-and-red color scheme, though Idzior said the Salvation Army still needs approval from the city's Zoning Board of Appeals for the proposed signage.

She said it will look similar to the store in South Lyon.

Currently, the Salvation Army also has stores locally in Canton, Garden City, Walled Lake, White Lake and Highland Township. Idzior said the Livonia store is one of the biggest collectors of donated goods across the region.

Work is expected to begin later this fall and will take place in a portion of the store at a time, to keep the shop open for customers and for donations. Idzior said a third of the store will close at a time for crews to work, allowing the rest of the store to operate as usual. Construction is expected to be complete by the end of next summer, Idzior said.

The store will continue to support the mission of the adult rehabilitation center run by the Salvation Army in Detroit.

Idzior said this is the first major renovation of the store she is aware of. Given its high volume of visitors and donations, it made sense for the Salvation Army to look to make some upgrades in Livonia.

"It'll look much nicer for the community and for us," she said. "(The) product in the store is some of the nicest product around. It deserves to be presented in a nice way."

"It'll also be a better shopping experience for those loyal patrons over the years."

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @david-veselenak.



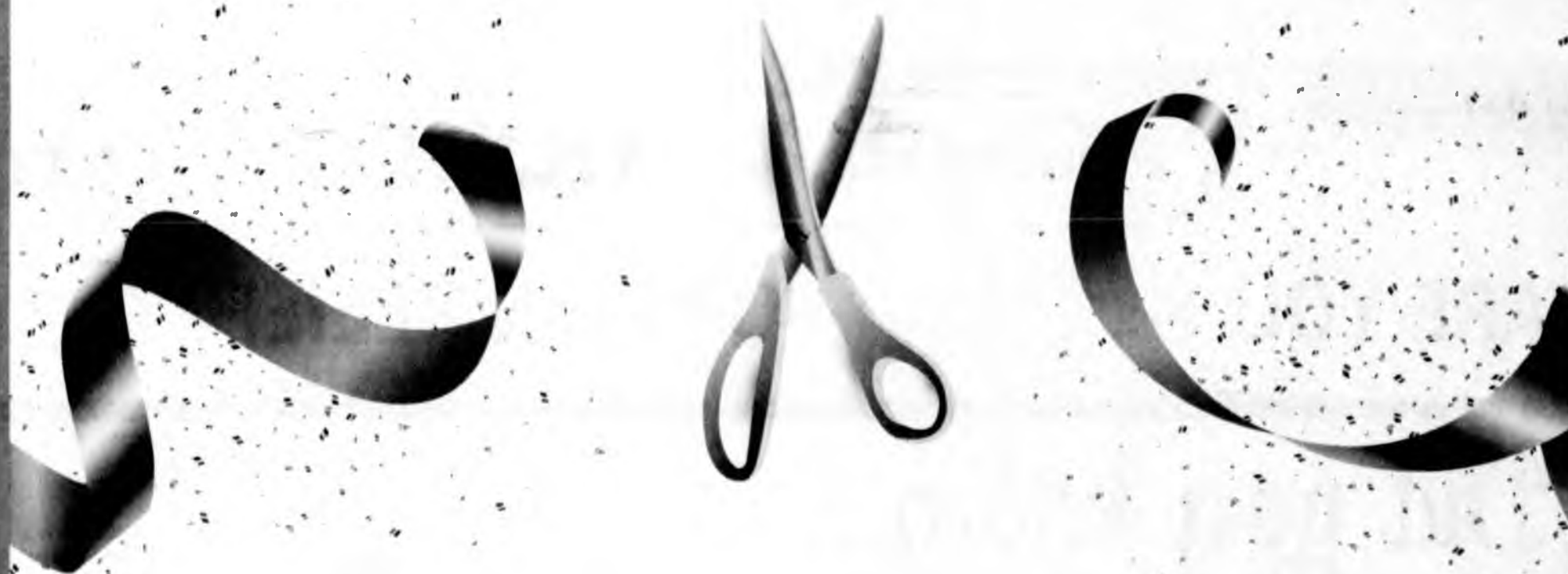
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Holy Dream Cruise, Batman!

Caped crusader's Batmobile replica to roar into Woodward car show

Susan Bromley HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Barry Barber is a financial adviser, but he drives like a caped crusader fighting crime.

The Bloomfield Township man should be easy to spot, even among thousands of cars, as he roars into the Woodward Dream Cruise this month in his Batmobile.

It is unlikely that there will be another car like this in the 25th annual cruise that draws thousands of vehicles, as Barber owns one of only six exact "genuine, blessed" replicas of the 1966 Batmobile made by Fiberglass Freaks and licensed by DC Comics and Disney.

The car has already drawn lots of attention in just the 15 times Barber has driven it since buying it from an Arizona museum in January for \$250,000.

"The first time I got gas at the BP station, so many people followed me in the gas station the owner told me to get the hell out, I was screwing up his business," Barber said Tuesday after driving his new pride and joy out from "the Bat Cave," aka his garage, and parking it in the driveway where visitors could get a better look.

The Batmobile, which has a 12-gallon gas tank and only gets seven miles to the gallon, has a plethora of details that make the superhero car unlike any other on the road.

The black two-seater car with red trim features the Bat symbol on both doors, as well as all four tire rims, to make it instantly recognizable to fans of the 1960s TV show. Further inspection reveals interior gadgets including a red Bat phone, a Bat fire extinguisher, a Bat ray projector, a homing receiver scope, a detect-a-scope and more.

There are no roof or windows on the car, but a red light beacon marks the high point on the car from a centerpiece rising behind the curved windshield and above the console.

Batfins project from the rear of the car, and between them are a flame-thrower exhaust port powered from a



Barry Barber polishes up his 2018 production of the 1966 version of the Batmobile by Fiberglass Freaks at his home in Bloomfield Township on July 30. Barber bought it from an Arizona museum in January. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

propane tank hidden in the trunk, as well as two "legit" bags containing parachutes to either side (the switch is turned off so they won't be accidentally deployed).

The Batmobile has what appears to be your average Michigan license plate, but with a click of a button, what Barber joked "you do when the cops come," it flips over to reveal the alternate identification "Bat-1, Gotham City."

Barber, 60, who said he has "always had a jones for a Batmobile" and watched the television show as a kid, finally got his toy this year. It wasn't cheap.

The Batmobile was built in 2014 by Fiberglass Freaks, which manufactures about one exact 1966 replica of the car per year. This replica had been sitting in storage at the Arizona museum for the past several years and because of this,

Holy classic car show, Batman!

When not roaring down Woodward at the Dream Cruise, the Batmobile will be on display at the Bloomfield Township Classic Car Show, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 17 at the Mercedes-Benz of Bloomfield Hills dealership on Woodward, just south of Big Beaver Road.

there was restoration work to be done to the tune of \$30,000, with updates including installation of a 383 Chevy Hydro torque engine and transmission.

Now he expects smooth sailing at the Dream Cruise with the Batmobile, which measures 19-feet-3-inches from front to back and weighs 5,300 pounds. The car causes a sensation when he

takes it out and the most common question asked is about the chassis, which came from a yellow 1986 Lincoln Continental. Barber has to drive defensively as gawking motorists take videos and pictures with their cell phones.

"When I'm stopped at lights, they'll ask permission to sit in the car," he said, and they get an answer of, "No, you can't."

When asked who will accompany him in the place of sidekick Robin at the Dream Cruise, Barber, the father of four children, said he isn't sure.

One thing he does know is that his first time driving in the Dream Cruise will be fun.

"A lot of cars get attention, but this is unbelievable," he said. "There's nobody that doesn't like it - whether you are black, white, young, old, boy or girl. ... It will be such a blast."

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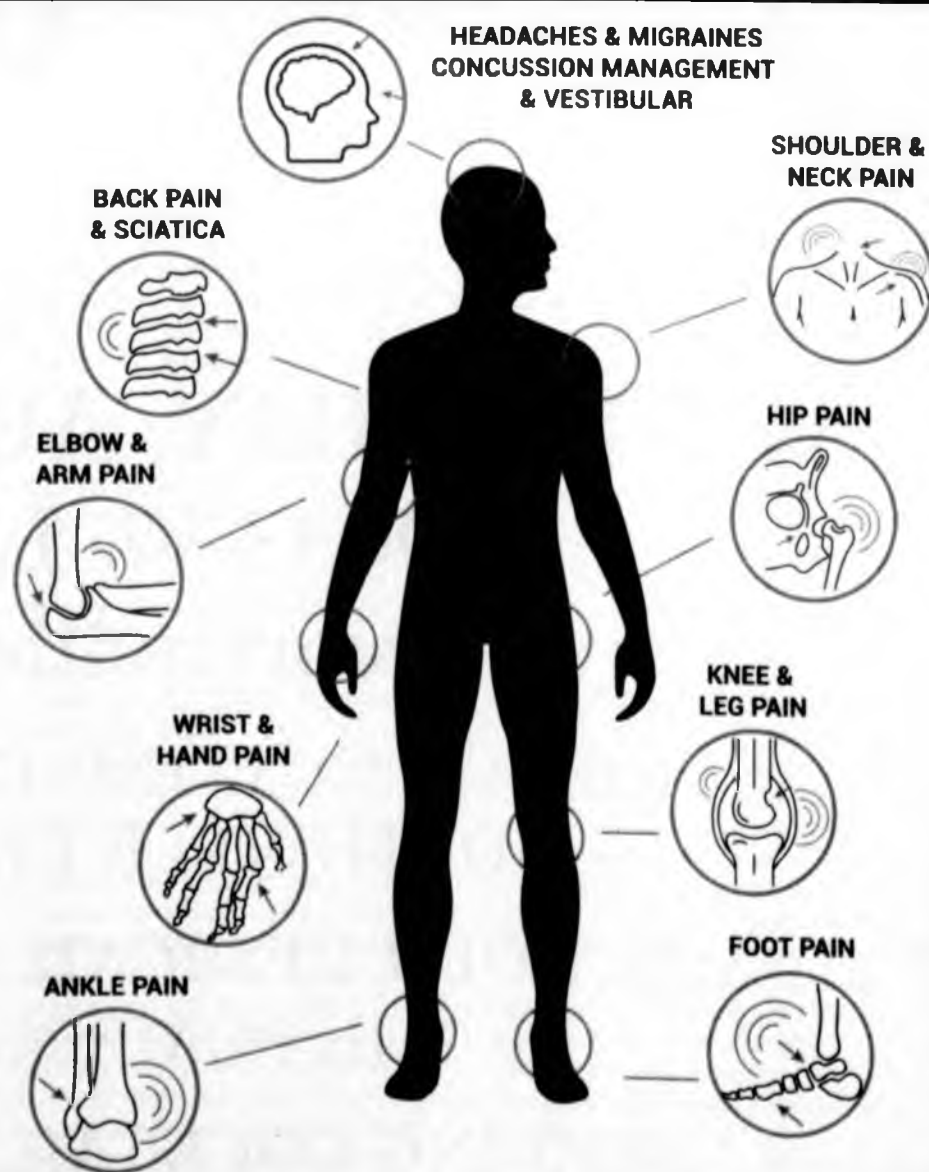
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Civil War, War of 1812 veterans to be honored

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

James D. Hood, a former Lyon Township resident, died in a Georgia prison more than 155 years ago.

On Aug. 17, Hood will be honored, with at least five other Union veterans of the Civil War, and one War of 1812 veteran, during a dedication ceremony at Jarvis Stone School in Salem Township.

"It's a way of honoring the sacrifices others have made for us in the past to allow us to enjoy the freedoms we have in America," said Terry Cwik, president of the Salem Area Historical Society. "Freedom doesn't just happen, it needs to be earned and worked on and is our responsibility to pay that forward to the future generations as well."

The soldiers being honored all have markers in three area cemeteries — Lapham, Olds, and Worden. The research to confirm their service was conducted by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, who will also perform the dedication ceremony.

Hood is the only one of the veterans that is not actually buried in one of three local cemeteries, but he is remembered on a gravestone that marks the final resting spot of his parents, Catherine and James Hood in Olds Cemetery. He was only 19 when he enlisted in Co. H, 22nd Michigan Infantry in August of 1862 and mustered, or was prepared for battle, less than three weeks later. He was taken prisoner on the battlefield in Chickamauga, Ga. on Sept. 20, 1863 and died in the Andersonville, Ga. prison May 2, 1864. He is buried in the National Cemetery in Andersonville.

John Parks, a War of 1812 veteran, also has a marker in the Olds Cemetery and will be honored.

Grand Army of the Republic veterans who will be recognized:

Harvey C. Packard, who enlisted in Co. B, 20th Michigan Infantry at age 26 in August 1862, mustered into service four days later and served until being wounded in action May 24, 1864. He was transferred from a Philadelphia hospital to Harper Hospital in Detroit in December 1864 and left the hospital in February 1865. He died in 1914 and is buried in Lapham Cemetery.

Newell Withee enlisted in the 130th Ohio Infantry Regiment at the age of 21 for 100 days. He mustered out on Sept. 22, 1864. He died in 1928 and is buried in Lapham Cemetery.

If you go

■ A dedication ceremony for the War of 1812 and Civil War veterans buried in the Salem Township cemeteries of Olds, Worden and Lapham will be at 10 a.m. Aug. 17 at the Jarvis Stone School Historic District, 7991 N. Territorial.

■ The ceremony features a bugler, gun salute and Civil War reenactors.

■ The ceremony kicks off the Salem Area Historical Society Arts & Crafts Country Fair which runs until 4 p.m.

Charles W. Hamilton, a resident of Tyrone Township, enlisted in Co. 1, 3rd Michigan Cavalry Regiment, at the age of 36 and joined the regiment at St. Louis, Mo. On April 30, 1864. He mustered out on Feb. 12, 1866 at San Antonio, Texas. He died in 1902 and is buried in Worden Cemetery.

William Huston "Will" Sweet, a 34-year-old Adrian resident, enlisted in the 4th Michigan Vol. Infantry on June 20, 1861 and mustered into service the same day. On Nov. 17, 1862, he was discharged for disability at Warrenton, Va., but re-enlisted in the 9th Michigan Cavalry Regiment on May 5, 1863 in Salem, Mich. He was listed as a prisoner of war April 1, 1865 and paroled exactly two months later. He was discharged at Camp Chase, Ohio, June 12 1865. He was laid to rest in Worden Cemetery after his death in 1914.

Philip Terry enlisted in the 44th Illinois Infantry in August of 1861 when he was 26. He mustered in September, and re-enlisted in January 1864. He transferred to the Veterans Reserve Corps in February 1865 and died in 1901.

Bill Eaton, Carpenter/welsh with SUVCW Camp 180, said the mission of the group is to keep the memory of the Civil War veterans and the sacrifices they endured for the preservation of the union alive.

"We go through cemeteries and look for gravesites of men that were born between 1810 and 1850 and try to match those with names of Civil War veterans that served during the war from the state of Michigan," said Eaton, whose great-great grandfather served with the First Wisconsin Cavalry.

He also uses ancestry.com and state of Michigan records, noting "Sometimes it's easy, sometimes it takes a lot" to confirm who has served.

Use a trusted contact to protect seniors' finances



Money Matters
Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Particularly if you're 65 or older, you may have recently been asked by your financial adviser, custodian or brokerage firm if you would like to add a trusted contact person to your account. The reason for this is that with an aging U.S. population, financial exploitation of seniors is becoming a very real problem.

In order to help seniors from being taken advantage of, the financial industry's regulatory authority is requiring that their member firms (such as Fidelity or Charles Schwab) make an effort to have their clients name a trusted contact person. It is not required that you have a trusted contact person, but the older you are, it may be something you should consider.

It's first important to understand what a trusted contact person is and what it is not. A trusted contact is not someone who can trade or access your account or make financial decisions for you. Rather, a trusted contact is someone that your financial adviser, custodian or brokerage house can contact if they see signs that may indicate that you're being financially exploited.

It is also a person that can confirm your mental or physical health status, the identity of any legal guardian, trustee or holder of a power of attorney that you may have. Unlike someone who you give power of attorney, who can make decisions and trade on your account and basically can do anything on your account that you can do, the trusted contact person cannot view your account information or make trades on your behalf.

Particularly, as someone gets up in age, they should consider a trusted contact person. However, the question is

who do you appoint?

Typically, people will name a family member; however, unfortunately, research has shown that family members are the most frequent abusers of the elderly. It's a shame, but that's the reality. Therefore, in naming a trusted contact person you may have to think out of the box and maybe think of someone who is not a family member and someone who you have not given a power of attorney to. For example, a close friend or a trusted professional. In addition, in most situations, you can name more than one person as a trusted contact.

I think if you are going to name a trusted contact person, if possible, you should name at least two persons.

Is naming a trusted contact person a perfect solution — the answer is no. However, at this point in time, it probably is the best alternative to protect seniors from financial abuse. Therefore, particularly those who are over 70 or 75 years of age, it probably is a good idea to seriously think about adding a trusted contact person onto your account.

Senior financial abuse is a growing problem in America and unfortunately, I believe it will continue to grow well into the future. It affects seniors in every social and economic class — no one is immune. There is no 100 percent solution that would protect seniors from financial abuse, however, naming a trusted contact is something that can reduce the risk, and is a good first step.

However, it is also important, maybe even more important that family, friends and loved ones of seniors keep their eyes and ears open, and if you see or suspect a senior is being financial abused, or in fact, abused in any way, that you don't stay silent; rather, you take the appropriate action.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. Email Rick your questions at rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

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New funeral home opens in Lyon Twp.

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's been a longtime dream of the Frazer family to go into business together. After several years, plenty of renovations and lots of determination, the family finally has their dream: caring for the South Lyon area families whose loved ones have died.

The family, who lives in Green Oak Township, opened Frazer Cremations and Funerals last month at 21001 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township, a full-service funeral home with a chapel.

"It's something we talked about, and now it's a reality," said Clayne Frazer, who owns the funeral home with his family. "My son and I can serve these families together and do what I've been doing for 30 years."

The goal, Clayne Frazer said, was to provide a comfortable place for area families in the South Lyon/Novi/Salem Township/Brighton area to remember their loved ones at a reasonable price. The idea came from a friend of his in Texas, who operates a small funeral home in a former 7-Eleven. Aiming for affordability, while still offering those services to celebrate someone's life, is the Frazer's family goal.

"I just felt that the cost of death care is rising. People are on fixed incomes," Clayne Frazer said. "I can provide the same quality ... that the big house guys can do at an affordable price."

Clayne Frazer, a Texas native, met his wife Julie, a former Ford model who traveled the country doing auto shows, in Texas many years ago. They decided to move to Michigan, where she was living, and started a family. He's worked for other area funeral homes, including Desmond Funeral Homes in Royal Oak and Troy, as well as funeral homes in communities such as Ann Arbor and Dexter, he decided it was time to put his own family name on a business.

So they began looking for a space, and opted for the building on Pontiac Trail north of Eight Mile, which formerly housed a welding facility among other uses. The family repainted, redid the electrical, planted trees and adapted the space to fit their needs, something they've done with a more modern look.

You won't find crystal chandeliers or



Parents Julie and Clayne Frazer will have some help from children Clayne Jr. and Skylar in operating Frazer Cremations.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

wallpaper like you might expect at other funeral homes. The look, especially inside the visitation room, sports modern decor in whites, blacks and grays. A metal board along the back of the room is designed for the magnetic hanging of photos of loved ones, similar to the traditional pushpin photo boards.

"We really wanted it to be different than traditional funeral homes," Julie Frazer said. "In the sense we wanted it to be more welcoming, and airy and bright."

"We just wanted to make sure we had a different feel."

Today, all four family members work in the funeral home, with the couple's children, Clayne Jr., and Skylar, doing their part as well. Clayne Frazer Jr., just graduated from Grand Valley State University and assists with pre-planning insurance for funerals. Skylar Frazer, a

recent South Lyon High School graduate, works at the facility in between studies at Eastern Michigan University.

"We knew we wanted to stay here," Clayne Frazer said. "It was just where we wanted to be. It's my home in Michigan."

Having a father who works in the funeral industry, the two said, always stoked curiosity from friends, who became interested as soon as they heard what their father does for a living. Clayne Frazer, Jr., said he hopes to go back to school and earn a degree in mortuary science from Wayne State University to continue on in the family business.

He said he always get asked questions whenever it comes up in conversation with people he's meeting, which tend to be more curious than anything. But for him, it's just what he's always

known.

"It's weird to me that people think it's weird, because I've never known anything different," he said. "It's a business like anything else, and it's something I've grown up with."

At the end of the day, Clayne Frazer is happy to put away his construction clothes and begin doing what he knows and does best: taking care of the deceased and their families during some of their most challenging times.

"It's extremely rewarding. It's a very rewarding business," he said. "It's very rewarding to know I can help these families hopefully get back to some normalcy."

More information can be found at frazerfunerals.com.

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Twitter @davidveselenak.

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Judge: Monroe man tried to kill Northville Twp. woman

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Monroe man faces life in prison after a Wayne County judge found him guilty of trying to kill a Northville Township woman he once dated.

Christian Andrew Gardner, 52, will be sentenced Sept. 4 in Third Circuit Court.

Concluding a bench trial, Judge Bridget Mary Hathaway found him guilty Aug. 8 of three felonies - assault with intent to commit murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and assaulting, resisting or obstructing police, along with misdemeanor domestic violence.

According to prosecutors, Gardner tried to stab a 44-year-old acquaintance at her Northville Township home on July 12, 2018.

The woman testified during a preliminary examination that she had gone shopping before returning to her condo-



Gardner

minium at night. She heard the front door open and it was an uninvited Gardner.

She testified to starting to phone for help when Gardner managed to grab and stab her.

The woman managed to escape. She asked a neighbor to call for help.

Police have said they arrived to find a man and woman outside shortly before 10 p.m.

The man retreated into the house and the woman, suffering a stab wound to the abdomen and other injuries, was treated by township paramedics before getting transported to St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia.

Gardner was arrested early the next morning after a five-hour standoff with police.

Contact Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432.

A123 Systems laying off dozens

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A123 Systems is laying off more employees as the company prepares to move into a new headquarters in Novi.

The lithium-ion battery manufacturer currently at 39000 Seven Mile in Livonia provided notice to the State of Michigan that it plans to lay off 42 employees later this year.

The layoffs are expected to take effect at the end of September and are expected to be permanent. Most of the jobs include production operators, process technicians, materials planning and logistics positions and several others.

"We expect the related layoffs to be permanent and we hope to accomplish these reductions with the least possible disruption to our employees and the community," the letter to the state read.

A message was left with A123 Systems seeking comment, but was not returned. The Livonia headquarters

opened in 2010.

The layoffs aren't the first time the company has seen a staff reduction in recent years. A123 informed the state back in 2017 it would close its facility in Romulus, laying off 200 people at that facility and the world headquarters in Livonia. The company also announced in 2017 it would move to Novi, something that is still in the works: the new building, visible from Interstate 96 just west of Novi Road, is still under construction. There's no word on when the company would relocate, though it's expected to happen later this year.

Beaumont Health is expected to take over the current headquarters. The Southfield-based health care provider had a site plan approved by the Livonia City Council in July. That new structure will consist of physician offices, an emergency room, and more.

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728.



A pre-opening party to benefit CARE House of Oakland County took place Aug. 7 before the restaurant opened to the public. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

The Morrie opens in Birmingham

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Aaron Belen said he believes he's crafted his newest restaurant to be a perfect fit in downtown Birmingham.

He's hoping the community agrees with him as he opens The Morrie at 260 N. Old Woodward, the second roadhouse restaurant bearing his grandfather's name after the first opened up three years ago in Royal Oak.

"It's like an evolution of the concept," said Belen, owner of AFB Hospitality Group that operates The Morrie. "Royal Oak was like beta, and I wanted to kind of figure out what was up. Then we crafted 2.0 to the building, the space and the community."

Today, the new restaurant boasts a modern look with a mural and decor similar to the Royal Oak restaurant. The Birmingham eatery has made some changes, with the ability to retract five 75-inch televisions into the ceiling over the bar for when musical performances are taking the stage above and behind the bar.

"This was an unbelievable opportunity to raise the stage, not only for music but for the projector that we have," he said. "Major market experience."

It includes a private dining area that's completely soundproof to the music and sounds coming from the main dining room, and has an patio that can be sectioned off for parties.

As for the food, customers can expect similar dishes at the Birmingham restaurant as they have at the Royal Oak restaurant, such as sandwiches and pizza, though there will be some subtle, more healthier changes, including a create-your-own salad option.

Executive Chef Derik Watson said there are more options for those who are vegan or gluten-free crowd on the Birmingham menu, though still stays true to its bar identity. Not on the menu in

Birmingham is the macaroni and cheese stuffed potato skins, though one can find hummus.

"We lightened up the 'bar fare,'" he said. "A lot less of the deep-fried bar food, a lot more fresh ingredients, lighter fare. Very conscientious to today's trends."

A dining experience like no other

A grand opening celebration is planned for September.

A pre-opening party took place Aug. 7 before the restaurant opened its doors to the public to benefit CARE House of Oakland County. Based in Pontiac, the organization assists abused children across the county.

Blythe Spitsbergen, the nonprofit's CEO, said the event is expected to raise thousands of dollars for the organization, as well as bring more awareness to the work the Pontiac-based organization does.

"It gets the word out about the work we do and the importance of it," she said. "It also raises much-needed funds so we're able to do our work in the community."

"People don't really think it happens in their backyard."

The space currently occupied by The Morrie in Birmingham has had a long list of restaurants that have moved out. Belen said his goal is to buck that trend and make his restaurant a destination that gives a different vibe, one that makes his customers feel like they're not in Metro Detroit at all.

"To me, when you walk into our property, I don't feel like I'm necessarily in Michigan," he said. "I think that like anything else, we want to be unique and we want to create an experience. And we want to be on the top of our game."

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Twitter: @davidveselenak.

"To me, when you walk into our property, I don't feel like I'm necessarily in Michigan. I think that like anything else, we want to be unique and we want to create an experience. And we want to be on the top of our game."

Aaron Belen Owner, AFB Hospitality Group

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The Morrie bartender Lo Zamjahn smiles as she pours a Bell's Oberon beer.



Bill Belcher, 79, of Farmington Hills, left, won a new 2019 Trax on Aug. 8.



Belcher thanks businessman and philanthropist Bill Pulte.



Belcher talks to Pulte outside of Joe Lunghamer Chevrolet in Waterford.
PHOTOS BY MANDI WRIGHT/DETROIT FREE PRESS

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Veteran car recipient: 'I still don't believe it'

Farmington Hills man gets vehicle in Twitter giveaway

Dixita Limbachia Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Bill Belcher woke up Aug. 8, he was expecting to buy a used car with a friend. Instead, the friend led him to a shiny new surprise waiting for him at Joe Lunghamer Chevrolet in Waterford.

The 79-year-old Farmington Hills resident, an Air Force veteran, was gifted a \$20,000 white 2019 Chevrolet Trax through a Twitter philanthropy pledge.

"I still don't believe it," said Belcher. "(I'm) still in shock!"

Bill Pulte, the Bloomfield Hills native behind the giveaway, thanked Belcher for his service. "You didn't have a car," said Pulte. "We heard about it and wanted to take care of you."

A friend of Belcher, Oakland County Republican Rocky Raczkowski, said he nominated Belcher for the gift. The Troy resident said he couldn't think of a more deserving recipient of this giveaway.

"(Belcher) does charitable events; he's very active in the community," said Raczkowski. "Everybody that comes

into contact with Bill Belcher always leaves with a smile."

Belcher was one of two veteran recipients in the giveaway. As a billionaire, businessman and social media entrepreneur, this isn't the first time Pulte has used his personal Twitter to give back through #twitterphilanthropy.

Many of his causes involve cash giveaways to his "teammates," that is, followers.

"Social media is used for such hate," said Pulte. "I figured why aren't we using social media for good?"

Pulte is also known to challenge politicians and public figures. And for this philanthropy pledge his target was President Donald Trump.

"If @realDonaldTrump retweets this, my team and I will give Two Beautiful Cars to Two Beautiful Veterans on Twitter." To which the President replied: "Thank you, Bill, say hello to our GREAT VETERANS!"

Pulte quickly took on the pledge and found Belcher, who was driving a friend's car until the end of the lease.



Belcher called his wife from the dealership but didn't tell her the surprise.

New shop offers CBD, incense, more

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When it came time to find a new career calling, Milford resident Jeanine Mitchell wanted something different than the corporate workflow she had gotten used to.

That desire for something new led her to her passions: finding ways to escape the hubbub of daily life and taking a few moments to relax. She's now hoping to share that passion with the community with her new store, Earth-N-Soul, which opened earlier this summer in Highland Township.

"I'm trying to bring something different to the area," she said. "It's always been in my heart to have a little mom-and-pop shop of some sort."

The store, located at 1427 S. Milford Road, has everything you need to start your relaxation journey. From incense to bath bombs and a whole wall of essential oils, Mitchell is hoping she can spread a little love across the Milford area, an area that doesn't have a shop like hers.

"There's nothing like this around here," she said. "I was excited to bring that to the community."

"I'm glad I could offer it to my community."

In addition to stocking items like salt lamps and tie-dye clothing, she carries a full line of cannabidiol (CBD) products, the newest product popping up on shelves of stores across the region marketed as a treatment for variety ailments of the body.

Mitchell said CBD is one of the bigger items she finds customers asking questions about on a regular basis, and she said she's done plenty of research before deciding to offer the substance to customers.

"This is nice because you can take it for anxiety, and the benefit is you just feel more sense of well-being and you actually will take care of your aches and pains in your body, you'll end up having more energy, you'll end up sleeping better," she said. "I'm not going to offer something to somebody I don't know about and not aware about."

After having the idea for several years, Mitchell said it took just three months to transform the shop in the



Earth-N-Soul owner Jeanine Mitchell, of Milford, talks about some of the essential oils and soaps on display in her store.
PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

strip mall north of Lone Tree Road. She moved her products in and cleaned the space before opening in June, opening the shop with her daughter, Juliana Elhage.

Today, the shop is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. More information can be found on the store's Facebook page.

For those looking for a respite from everyday life, even just for 10 minutes, Mitchell recommends you stop in and just see what they have to offer.

"We're like a little bit of hippie, a little bit of class," she said. "Our saying is, 'May your roots grow deep, and your spirit go free.' And that's what we're looking for."



Earth-N-Soul sits at 1427 South Milford Road in Highland.

Lefty's Cheesesteak now open in Milford

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's been 10 years since Sam Berry first opened Lefty's Cheesesteak in Livonia. He never imagined he'd be where he is today, opening his 10th store in Milford. It's a community he's really excited to come to.

"A lot of people asked me to open here," said Berry, the owner of Lefty's Cheesesteak. "Ever since we opened, everyone has been so patient, respectful. A lot of people are very friendly here."

The newest restaurant in Milford, located at 131 S. Milford Road, Lefty's Cheesesteak began taking aim at locals' hunger earlier this month when it opened earlier this month.

The space formerly housed a Subway restaurant, something Berry said he looks at when wanting to open a new shop. The layout is already close to what he requires of his shops.

"I'm taking over a lot of Subways, because ... it's an easy conversion," he said. "Turnaround time is pretty quick."

The store took over the lease and was able to transform it into a Lefty's in about six weeks, Berry said. That includes all the infrastructure, adding cooking equipment such as grills and fryers; and decorating the space with Lefty's branding. That includes a wall of celebrities such as Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey and Phil Mickelson, all of whom are left-handed.

It's a celebration of all things left-handed, something that can be tough to grow up being, Berry said. Between trying to cut paper with scissors and eating dinner with the family, it was tricky growing up as a lefty, he said.

"Not a lot of people really know how hard it was growing up a lefty," he said.

The location in the Village Commons shopping center at Milford and General Motors roads made a lot of sense to Berry when looking to locate in Milford, especially with the residential population increasing and the great access point on the south side of the village.



Lefty's Cheesesteak sits at 131 South Milford Road in Milford.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

"There's a lot of traffic. It's the only road off the highway that you have to come to get to downtown," he said. "It's easy in, easy access. It's right on the light."

Inside, you can find the standard menu you can expect to see at any of the other Lefty's locations. Corned beef sandwiches, burgers and chili cheese fries dot the menu, with Lefty's Famous Cheesesteak being the top menu item. That sandwich consists of steak, grilled onions with white American/Swiss cheese and topped with diced cherry peppers.

The Milford restaurant joins the White Lake one in the region, opened last year by a franchisee. In addition to the original Lefty's at Six Mile and Middlebelt in Livonia, it has restaurants in Ypsilanti, Detroit, Southfield, Waterford and Sterling Heights. Seven more stores are planned, Berry said, including in Southgate, Auburn Hills, southwest Detroit and Brighton.

Ten years after first opening, Berry said he can't believe his shops are still going strong, serving up his style of cheesesteaks to hungry customers. He knew opening a restaurant in the middle of the recession wasn't going to be easy, but is proud of where the restaurant's have come since then.

"I opened up with the economy was not the greatest," he said. "It was an uphill battle, and I had my faith."

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These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Education.

FreePreOakland.org

Child must be three or four years old by December 1, 2019.

Waterproof cast liners a game changer for kids

Jenny She Special to Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Broken bones aren't fun. Neither is having to wear a cast and missing out on loads of water activities in order to keep the cast dry.

Children's Hospital of Michigan is offering patients a solution: waterproof liners as an alternative to traditional cast liners for broken bones — and they come in several colors, too.

Waterproof cast liners are made with synthetic water-repellent material that dries out, whereas traditional cast liners are made of cotton and will grow bacteria and mold when they get wet. The liners come in red, blue, green, purple, pink, orange, yellow and black.

Patients with these special liners can submerge their casts into the water without worrying about irritation and infection, said Dr. Christopher Minnock, an orthopedic surgeon at the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

"Kids are now able to go to the pool, waterpark or lake and not have to cut back on fun water activities just because they have a fracture and need a cast," he said.

Patients with waterproof liners can avoid additional visits to the clinic to change wet casts.

While more than 200 patients have received the waterproof cast liners since the spring, the casts are not suitable for all patients.

"People that have surgery or any incision underneath the cast cannot get the waterproof casts because we worry about wound healing issues if they get wet," Minnock said, adding that waterproof casts are not available for patients in the Emergency Department.



Willow Mullins, 4, of Monroe, smiles as Children's Hospital of Michigan CEO Luanne Thomas Ewald, right, signs her waterproof cast during a checkup at the clinic on May 30. COURTESY OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF MICHIGAN

Company plans move to Novi, adding jobs

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Several dozen new jobs are coming to Novi next year thanks to the relocation of a Southfield company.

Bluewater Technologies Group, currently located on Northwestern Highway, has announced their plans to relocate to a new facility on 12 Mile near Taft next year. As a result of that move into a bigger space, the company expects to add about 81 new jobs, mostly consisting mostly of programming, sales and project management positions.

Scott Schoeneberger, a managing partner at the company, said they needed more space to bring all their employees under one roof — some currently work out of an office in Farmington Hills — and found the 12 Mile and Taft area to be the perfect fit. It's fairly accessible to its current employees as well, Schoeneberger said.

"We tried to keep it in a central area," he said. "That's kind of the heart of the center of where our employees live."

Bluewater is a company that creates technologies for special events and unique communications solutions. The company's work has been done in places such as Little Caesars Arena, Jimmy John's Field in Utica and the Nexteer World Headquarters in Auburn Hills.

The new investment is expected to be around \$34 million, according to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The company has also qualified for a \$300,000 Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant. It's also expected the city of Novi will approve a real property tax abatement for the project.

"The opportunity to host Bluewater Technologies Group would, once again, place Novi on the map as a leader in high tech headquarters," Novi Mayor Bob Gatt said in a news release. "We are excited about the possibility of bringing an additional 80 plus jobs to the community which will add to the dynamic, multi-talented workforce in Novi."

Schoeneberger said construction is expected to begin later this year, and the plan is for the company to relocate to its new office by the end of next summer.

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

Farmington Hills Police add 2 drones to arsenal

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Farmington Hills residents may notice some badged officers playing with drones at their local parks.

Of course, their "playing" is really training so they can use the high-tech gadgets for emergencies.

With about \$25,000 in drug forfeiture money, the police department purchased two drones from DJI — the Matrice 210 and Mavic 2 Pro, along with the cameras that go with them.

The Matrice 210 can hold two cameras. One zooms in for crystal clarity. The other detects thermal ranges.

The smaller Mavic 2 Pro is being used more for training and supplemental purposes.

Together, the drones can help police and firefighters track people at night, find hot spots in fires and make better decisions with overhead images of crime scenes, car crashes, barricaded buildings, pollution spills and buildings ablaze.

Farmington Hills Police Department is one of the few metro Detroit policing agencies possessing the equipment.

So far, despite drones sparking debates elsewhere over safety and privacy, residents don't seem to mind drones in the air if it means a potentially safer, more responsive community.

"They seem very positive," Lt. Paul Nicholas said about residents' feedback. "They were very excited to have that added to the police department's repertoire."

"It's not the cheapest thing in the world to get, but it's a lot cheaper than manned aircraft."

Officers David Kemp and Brian Rohrer were drone hobbyists who started exposing their colleagues to drone capabilities more than a year ago.

Nicholas was impressed and became instrumental in developing an unmanned aerial system program.

The department has 12 certified pilots who have taken a 16-hour class and passed the Federal Aviation Administration's test.

Nicholas is one of the certified pilots. He said there's something about an overhead image that really rounds out an investigation. He used car crashes to explain.

"When you're up in the air, you see the whole thing," he said. "You can see the skid marks, where the car came from, how the other car may have come in, the size of the impact. ..."

"You get real perspective of when a car really hits something hard and the debris blows out. It looks like a bomb went off from the air. It's really scary looking."

Farmington Hills' new drones have been placed in the air to grab images of the Middlebelt Road sinkhole that needed repairs.

They've also taken pictures of a chemical spill for cleanup purposes.

The Oakland County city is leading the way for other metro Detroit communities not having drones or considering future purchases.

Northville Township's Public Safety Director Todd Mutchler anticipates considering costs and benefits of drones in the future.

West Bloomfield Police Department purchased drone technology about a month ago.

"It's pretty decent technology that has become more affordable," said Curt Lawson, West Bloomfield's deputy police chief, of the drone and training covered with about \$30,000 in forfeiture money. "It does not cost the taxpayers any money."

Novi police officers made use of an Oakland Coun-



Lt. Paul Nicholas walks near the Farmington Hills Police Department's Matrice 210 drone. The drone comes with a heat signature camera. The officers operating the drone must be certified by the FAA and are permitted to use the technology only within certain altitude limits. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

ty Sheriff's drone when coping with a 21-hour standoff with a suicidal man refusing to leave his Venice Drive home last month.

Novi Public Safety Director David Molloy said drones can be useful in some tactical situations. For now, he would rather rely on partnerships and larger agencies than have the city purchase a drone of its own.

If drones are needed, he can call upon West Bloomfield, Oakland County, Michigan State Police and the Western Wayne County Hazardous Materials Response Team.

According to the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College, at least 910 state and local police, sheriff, fire and EMS and public safety agencies had acquired drones in May 2018.

Police departments made up two-thirds of the public safety agencies with drones.

There are more than twice as many public safety agencies with drones as there were agencies with manned aircraft.

Texas had 67 public safety drones on record, the most in the nation. Michigan compared with 14, half of those being for county sheriff's departments. Oakland County is included.

The Macomb County Sheriff's Office launched four drones last summer, after the report's release.

Michael Magda, a Livonia firefighter in charge of the Western Wayne County Hazardous Materials Response Team, likes drones because they can gather information without putting people in harm's way.

They also can transport medicine, life preservers and other items to people in need.

"It's a vital tool that every fire department should have," said Magda, who also teaches classes on drone use.

Contact Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

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Verizon launches pockets of 5G coverage in metro Detroit

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If you crave the fastest download speeds on your phone, Livonia is where you'll want to be. If you have the right equipment.

Verizon Wireless has rolled out 5G speeds in parts of metro Detroit this past week. They appear to be the first major cellular provider to bring the powerful speed on a regular basis to metro Detroit.

Verizon spokesman David Weiss-

mann said parts of Livonia, as well as Troy, Dearborn and around the Oakland/Troy Airport in Troy near Birmingham and Royal Oak now offer 5G services. Those areas were selected, he said, as great places to begin because of larger open areas and other factors.

"It really does its best work in public spaces," he said.

Anyone with a compatible phone or device can access the speeds, though they are currently limited geographically, Weissmann said. The coverage is first launching along the Victor Parkway cor-

ridor, which houses businesses such as Dave and Buster's, the Embassy Suites and the Trinity Health headquarters, he said. More areas of the city are expected to be covered in the coming months.

To access the speeds on the Verizon network, users will have to have one of several devices that support 5G speeds. Those include:

- LG V 50 ThinQ 5G
- Moto z3 and z4 combined with the 5G Moto Mod
- Samsung Galaxy S10 5G
- Inseego MiFi M1000

Users in that area with one of those devices on the Verizon network should experience 5G speeds, Weissmann said.

Having 5G can enable users with incredibly quick download speeds. Weissmann said he demonstrated the speeds by downloading a season of a show from Amazon Prime Video in 45 seconds on 5G, whereas he downloaded only a few episodes after 10 minutes on 4G speeds.

He said the speeds will only further technological improvements.

"It's going to bring on the fourth industrial revolution," Weissmann said.

Chef

Continued from Page 1A

ready for a different challenge.

"I just felt that I wanted to use my skills and talents to help another facility grow and excel," he said. "It was just time for a change."

He graduated from Redford Union High School and decided the culinary arts were his passion, wanting to learn everything he could about cooking. After having a child early in life, he chose to forgo earning a degree and began apprenticeships at restaurants such as the former Machus Red Fox in Bloomfield Township, known for being the last place Jimmy Hoffa was seen before disappearing.

After taking jobs in Indiana and Texas, Wilson came back to Michigan in 2012 and later started as the retail executive chef at Cobo. He became the executive chef there a few years ago, in charge of food for events like the North American International Auto Show.

"That's what kind of hooked me into the convention center world," he said. "I did my first auto show and I was hooked."

"I just loved the volume and the intensity."

Kevin Aspinall, one of the co-owners of Epoch Catering, said Wilson was chosen for the job because of his skill set. He said the company conducted a national search and found Wilson's talents to be best-suited for keeping the energy up at the convention center.

"We were looking for ... somebody

that could handle the volume of business we have here," he said. "I think he was a very good fit."

Wilson is tweaking the menus for the banquet center and the attached restaurant, as well as working with the staff currently employed in both kitchens in the convention center on the east and west side, which includes the new wing that opened nearly a year ago.

He's brought two new appetizers to the menu already, including a grits fritter with a spicy red pepper jelly, as well as a firecracker pork belly, slow smoked overnight and pan seared on a stove glazed with a peach barbecue sauce and topped with a pickled jalapeño.

While his training is more influenced by classical French cuisine, Wilson knows there are plenty of dietary adjustments needed as more people eat vegan or require gluten- or nut-free dishes. That's a trend, he said, that has been growing and isn't going away.

"You have to be versatile in this line of business," he said. "In the last 10-15 years, that particular requirement has been greatly increased."

While he took the hard route to becoming a chef, he knows the hard work he dedicated to his craft led him to where he is today. It's something he doesn't take for granted.


"I knew I wanted to do this when I was eight years old," he said. "There's something about cooking that gave me peace and comfort, and I was just always drawn to it."

Contact David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Twitter: @davidveselenak.



Robin Wilson, executive chef at Novi's Epoch Catering in the Suburban Collection Showplace, talks about his career so far and how it led to his new position.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM




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Dozens of chairs were set up and then left empty as placeholders more than eight hours before a concert Aug. 1 at the LaFontaine Amphitheater in Milford. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Chair

Continued from Page 1A

about park policy.

Pamela LaDuke, who was also setting up her chair at around 10:30 a.m., next to a chair a friend had left earlier with a ribbon on it so she could find it, was surprised to hear about criticism of what she was doing.

"Should we all come at once?" she asked. "That's dumb... The early bird gets the worm. I'm shocked that it bothers

people. It would be a zoo if we all came at once."

Facebook posters had their own ideas of how to resolve the issue, with some suggesting that people arrive early to place their own chairs, perhaps even the night before. Others recommended simply moving the empty chairs.

Milford Police Chief Tom Lindberg said he understands people are complaining about the chairs, which he adds is also commonplace prior to parades, but he looks at the situation as a positive one.

"If they are putting seats out, that's a good crowd and that is good stuff for Milford," he said. "I don't understand why people are upset... It goes back to reasonableness."

He acknowledged that police have had concerns however over what would happen if chairs were left in the park and a storm with high winds blew through.

What happens if a person, and not the wind, moves an empty chair?

"That is the risk you take," Lindberg said, noting there is no ordinance against moving chairs. He adds that if

any chairs were still out there on Friday, they would be deemed abandoned and DPW employees would remove them.

Jeff Garner was removing his own chair that he had set up earlier after a change in plans. He said he hoped there wouldn't be any alteration of rules, as the concerts, of which there are three left this season, would no longer be "fun and festive." He planned to be back plenty early for Thursday's show, when Magic Bus, a late 1960s tribute band, is playing.

"For them," he said, "people will set up their chairs the night before."

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Lyon Township firefighters push a new engine into the station in March. COURTESY OF LYON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Firefighters

Continued from Page 1A

assistant. In 2018, the department responded to more than 1,400 calls.

"What is left besides to hire full-time firefighters?" Treasurer Patricia Carcone asked. "We have to make sure our residents are safe and well-protected. This might just be the time for that."

Hiring full-time staff will ensure there is fire coverage around the clock, proponents said, as well as eliminates gaps in the current schedule, improves firefighter safety, coverage at both stations, and quickens response times. It will improve the township's ISO score, resulting in lower insurance premiums.

Van Sparrentak estimates an annual salary for each of the four full-time firefighters at \$44,164 with an additional \$7,000 in benefits. The two fire captains would each have an approximate salary of \$58,512, plus the same benefit package.

The fire chief and the board are anticipating word soon from FEMA that they are approved for a 3-year, \$1.4 million Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant which would help pay for those new full-time firefighters.

The current fire department budget is about \$1.7 million, made possible after

voters approved a 2014 tax increase that runs for 10 years.

The SAFER grant would pay for 75% of the firefighters' salaries in the first and second years, and drops to 35% funding in the third year.

If approved, the grant would give Lyon Township 10 full-time employees in the fire department, with nine firefighters to respond to emergencies.

The board members said they would keep their commitment to the full-time firefighters even after the grant ends.

"These are families and careers," Carcone noted. "It's great if we get the grant, like a bonus, but if we do hire them, we need to take care of them and keep them and go forward."

Van Sparrentak said Lyon would remain a combination fire department with paid on-call firefighters. He added that the requirements to be a paid on-call firefighter have never been greater, resulting in a shortage due to the percentage of calls that have to be responded to while these individuals also juggle their full-time jobs and families.

All applicants must complete a profile with EMPSCO and score at least 80% or higher on the written test and meet other training and licensing qualifications to be eligible for an interview. Applications must be submitted by Sept. 6, and Van Sparrentak hopes to have his new full-time staff in place by early November.



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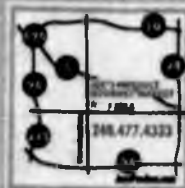
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What to watch for in Lakes Valley Conference

Andrew Vaillencourt

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Football is back.
High school games in the area get underway Aug. 29 and practices started Aug. 12. The Lake Valley Conference, made up of nine teams, held its media

day on Friday, August 9, giving us a look inside the programs ahead of the season.

The coaches picked South Lyon to repeat as conference champions, followed by Lakeland, Walled Lake Northern and Walled Lake Western.

Here's a detailed look at each team in LVC:

Lakeland

Head coach: Joe Woodruff, fourth season

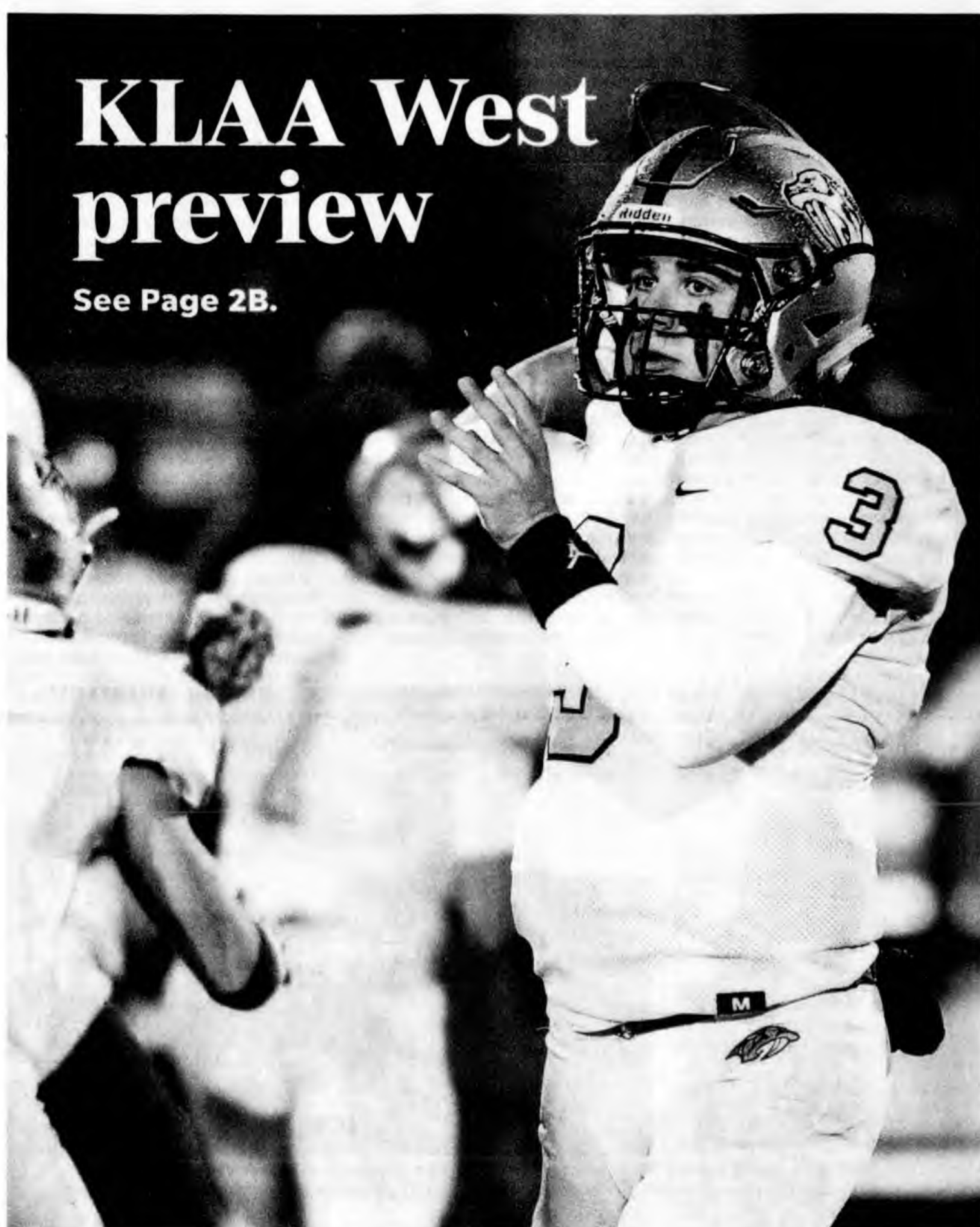
Last year's overall record: 7-4 (T-2nd in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 at Walled Lake Western

Players to watch: FB/CB Dakota

Meyers (Sr.), DB/RB/K/P Leo Skupin (Sr.), WR/DB Miker Sherrill (Jr.), WR/DB Austin Broughton (Sr.), LB/OL Drake Schultz (Sr.), DL/OL Noah Reed (Sr.), DL/OL Alex Broome (Sr.), RB/DB Shane Ellis (Jr.), OL/DL Colin Carlson (Jr.), DB/WR Nate Dostal (Jr.), DB/WR Brendan

See LVC, Page 2B



KLAA West preview

See Page 2B.

Plymouth quarterback Nick Downs threw for a pair of touchdowns in the Wildcats' 35-13 win over Salem last season. The Wildcats will open this football season at 7 p.m. Aug. 29 at Wayne Memorial. COURTESY OF DAVE DONOHER



Brighton head football coach Brian Lemons talks at Novi High on Aug. 7.



Canton defensive coordinator Matthew Sexton talks Aug. 7.



Hartland High football coach Brian Savage speaks during KLAA media day.



Howell High head coach Aaron Metz speaks to reporters at the event.



From left, Northville High head football coach Matt Ladach; Novi High football head coach Jeff Burnside; Plymouth High football coach Brian Lewis; and Salem High football coach Justin Reed speak during the Kensington Lakes Activities Association's annual media day Aug. 7 at Novi High. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



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What's on the horizon for KLAA West Division football?

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Football season is right around the corner, with practices kicking off August 12 and games beginning August 29.

The Kensington Lakes Activities Association (KLAA) held its annual media day Aug. 7 at Novi High School and gave writers a chance to learn about the 16 teams and what to expect for this upcoming season.

It is the second year the league has 16 teams, split into East and West divisions after the additions last year of Belleville, Fordson and Dearborn.

Those newcomers made their mark, as all three made the playoffs and Belleville won the conference championship.

The pre-season coaches poll picked Belleville to repeat as conference champions. Here are the coaches' full division picks:

East:

1. Belleville
2. Franklin
3. Fordson
4. Churchill
5. Stevenson
6. Dearborn
7. John Glenn
8. Wayne Memorial

West:

1. Canton
2. Brighton
3. Plymouth
4. Northville
5. Novi
6. Hartland
7. Howell
8. Salem

Here is a breakdown of the West Division:

KLAA West

Brighton

Head coach: Brian Lemons, fifth season

Last year's overall record: 7-3

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Churchill

Players to watch: OT Nate Hoffman (Sr.), LB Zach Pardonnet (Sr.), LB Cole Riddle (Sr.), DE Luke Stanton (Sr.), QB Colby Newburg (Sr.), Matt Jontz, Ian

Hummel

Lemons' 2019 outlook: "We'll have a large roster again this year which will provide us depth, we're playing a tough schedule. We hope that each week, our work ethic proves as valuable as talent. We have a great group of guys."

Canton

Head coach: Andrew LaFata, second season

Last year's record: 6-4

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Dearborn

Players to watch: RB-LB Aran Patrick (Jr.), LB Tim Pennington (Sr.), OL Kazy Putnam (Sr.), QB-S Ben Stesiak (Sr.), TE-LB Jake Vickers (Sr.)

Defensive coordinator Matthew Sexton's 2019 season outlook: "We're transitioning our offseason into the season. We had a very strong offseason, it was tough as new coaches to come in in May and really not have an offseason. We're bringing our culture in. ... We're building cultural and trusting relationships. That's what we've done all offseason, these guys have my back and I have theirs. We're ready to take that next step. ... We've set our expectations high and we're ready to compete in one of the best conferences in Michigan."

Hartland

Head coach: Brian Savage, eighth season

Last year's record: 3-6

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Fordson

Players to watch: OL-LB Griffin Neuer (Sr.), QB Collin Arnold (Sr.), WR Logan Tobel (Jr.), WR-TE Zach Linfield (Sr.)

2019 season outlook: Looking to shake up things after some down years, Hartland will take the field at 12:01 a.m. Monday to begin official practices. Among the players on the field will be D'Arcy, who is back for his second year as starting quarterback, and Tobel, an all-county receiver. The strength of the team is an offensive line that returns all five starters. "We want to get started early," Savage said. "We've got some business to finish. We're going to have our JV and varsity out there Aug. 12 under the lights. Coaches will be drinking

coffee and we bribed them with breakfast at 4 in the morning." - Bill Khan, Livingston Daily

Howell

Head coach: Aaron Metz, 12th season

Last year's record: 4-5

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Franklin

Players to watch: OL-DL Mason Nelson (Sr.), OL-DL Philip Pietila (Sr.), OL-DL Grant Porter (Jr.), RB Jonah Schrock (Sr.)

Metz's 2019 season outlook: "Offensively, we return five offensive starters ... defensively, we return four, so we'll have to fill some holes. ... We've had a great offseason, one of our best. We had a great group of kids. We return a lot of linemen. That's a good group to coach. Those are kind of the quiet leaders, the guys who are there to work and grind it out."

Northville

Head coach: Matt Ladach, 12th season

Last year's record: 3-6

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at John Glenn

Players to watch: RB-DE Rob Husband (Sr.), QB Nick Lauderback (Jr.), LB Adam Saghir (Sr.), C-DL Demir Tagani (Sr.)

Ladach's 2019 season outlook: "This year will be my first time as a coach that we'll have less than 50 players. It'll be much less than we're accustomed to. ... It's not something we're used to at Northville. We're only returning one starter on each side of the ball. I like to look at it two ways, the kids that have chosen to play football for Northville High School are kids that have exhibited the toughness and willingness to meet the demands and expectations that we have within our program. I like to coach tough kids. ... This year's group of seniors is a tremendous group."

Novi

Head coach: Jeff Burnside, seventh season

Last year's record: 2-7

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday,

Aug. 29 at Livonia Stevenson

Players to watch: QB-DB Josh Erno (Sr.), RB-LB Malik McGhee (Jr.), RB-LB Gavin Parenti (Jr.), OL-DL Tommy Phimister (Soph.), RB-DB Alex Vargas (Jr.), LB Matt Wright (Sr.)

Burnside's 2019 season outlook: "We have challenges with our population, we're hoping to have 30-35 kids on varsity. These guys, our whole team has bought into we above me. I feel very confident in our team this year. ... Our numbers may not be very large, but our attitude and heart will be there for us every night this season."

Plymouth

Head coach: Brian Lewis, second season

Last year's record: 6-4

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Wayne Memorial

Players to watch: DB Alec Beshears (Sr.), DE Ivan Davis (Sr.), QB Nick Downs (Sr.), DB Nathan Janke (Sr.), WR Mike Mathias (Sr.), LB Logan Walkley (Sr.)

Lewis' 2019 season outlook: "I think for us, success is getting better every day and seeing where it takes us. Success for our kids to come together and believe in something bigger than themselves, and see if we can do some things that even they might not have thought were possible in previous years."

Salem

Head coach: Justin Reed, second season

Last year's record: 2-7

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 at Belleville

Players to watch: OL-DL Jackson King (Sr.), OL-DL Evan Kirkpatrick (Sr.), DB-QB Tyler Overaitis (Sr.), OL-DL Josh Williams (Sr.)

Reed's 2019 season outlook: "We've been preaching this summer that once it's taught, to continue to remember that so we don't have to go back and relearn it. We're trying to get better every day and with each opportunity. We'll look a little different than last year, we're getting new guys out on the football team."

Contact Andrew Vaillencourt at avallenc@hometownlife.com.

LVC

Continued from Page 1B

Shaw (Sr.), DB/RB Merrick Shaver (Sr.), TE/LB Mike Tyrell, QB Tate Farquhar (Soph.), QB Jordan Shaw (Sr.)

Woodruff's 2019 season outlook: "As far as success goes, we always want to be playing our best football by the end of the year. We want to let the season last as long as we possibly can and reach our potential, whatever that is. We want to be able to say we won the games we should've won and not have a lot of regrets at the end of the season."

Milford

Head coach: Garfrey Smith, second season

Last year's overall record: 1-8 (8th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 at Walled Lake Northern

Players to watch: DB/WR Sebastian Naughton (Jr.), RB/LB Connor Heitman (Jr.), WR/DB Ben Coloske (Jr.), DB/RB Erik Kramar (Sr.), OL/DL Trevor Leigh (Jr.), OL/DL Cam Matthews (Sr.), WR/DB Gavin Mudge (Sr.), WR/DB Nick Oslin (Sr.)

Smith's 2019 season outlook: "We expect to continue to rebuild our program from the bottom up. Obviously we're at the bottom in a tough league, we're looking to continue to move up. ... We're coming after everybody this year and that's our plan."

South Lyon

Head coach: Jeff Henson, ninth season

Last year's overall record: 10-1 (1st in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 at Walled Lake Central

Players to watch: QB Connor Fracassi (Sr.), LB Jack Schafer (Sr.), LB Mitch Komorous (Sr.), OLB Jesse Powell (Sr.), WR Brendon Lach (Sr.), DB Jake Newman (Sr.), DB Brendan Dancer (Sr.), OL Jacob Klingler (Sr.), OL Caleb Baker (Sr.),



At left, Lakeland High football coach Joe Woodruff stands with two of his players at the Lakes Valley Conference pre-season media day Aug. 9. At right, Milford High coach Garfrey Smith stands with four of his players at the event. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



South Lyon High head football coach Jeff Henson stands with a few of his varsity players.

DB Steven Shelton (Sr.), DT Gus Taylor (Jr.), DB Isaac Nooe (Sr.)

Henson's 2019 season outlook: "We're excited about the success we had last year and we want to build on that. We've had a great offseason and I attribute that to our senior class, where we

return 26 seniors. We have a great group of kids. We return 15 starters, nine on defense and six on offense."

South Lyon East

Head coach: Joe Pesci, fifth season

Last year's overall record: 6-5 (4th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 at Waterford Mott

Players to watch: QB/DB Ayden Oli-

See LVC, Page 2B

LVC

Continued from Page 2B

ver (Jr.), RB/LB Donovan Wright (Sr.), OL/DL Jonah Westlund (Jr.), WR/LB Drew Ranson (Sr.), WR/DB Dorian Armstrong (Jr.)

Pesci's 2019 season outlook: "The first thing for us is to stay healthy, we don't have a lot of depth. Our 11 starters on both sides of the ball are kids we believe can play at this level and they're going to compete and get after it from week to week against these other teams. If we stay healthy we should be right there in every game. We're just going to keep trying to improve. ... We won our first playoff game in school history and we want to keep building on that."

Walled Lake Central

Head coach: Josh Perusse, first season

Last year's overall record: 2-7 (7th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. South Lyon

Players to watch: OL/DL Raffy Karoumi (Sr.), OL/DL Dragi Cickovski (Sr.), RB/LB Austin Wilson (Jr.), TE/DL Blake Nelson (Jr.), ATH Ryan Nelson (Soph.), QB/CB Haden Lane (Jr.), WR/DL Mitchell Strohl (Jr.), OL/DL Jacob Ayar (Jr.), OL/DL Rafael Davish (Jr.)

Perusse's 2019 season outlook: "We have good kids this year and that's really what it boils down to, the quality of the kid and helping them become the best that they can. It's cliché, but I'm a firm believer of the winning taking care of itself. We're focusing on the things we feel will equip them for later on in life."

Walled Lake Northern

Head coach: Joe Boulus, third year

Last year's overall record: 4-5 (T-5th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Milford

Players to watch: OL/DL Kyle Arnoldi (Sr.), OL Grant Smith (Sr.), DL Alex Hunt (Sr.), WR/TE Seamus Conway (Sr.), LB Matt Isom (Sr.), P/K Andrew Moran (Sr.), OL Devin Uhrich (Sr.), S Cole Seaburn (Sr.), OL Bobby Long (Sr.), LB Jeremy Kay (Sr.), WR Austin Chuckla (Sr.), LB Ian Szakis (Sr.), RB Nyle Elgert (Sr.), DB/RB Ryan Corneliuss (Jr.), RB/



South Lyon East head coach Joe Pesci stands with two of his players.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

LB Joey Tetreault (Jr.)

Boulus' 2019 season outlook: "When I started three years ago, I brought up seven sophomores. I was waiting for the year that they'd be seniors and say hey, this can be our year. Hopefully this can be it. The league is phenomenal."

Walled Lake Western

Head coach: Alex Grignon, second season

Last year's overall record: 8-4 (T-2nd in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Lakeland

Players to watch: QB Zach Trainor (Jr.), WR/S Calvin Brown (Sr.), WR/DB Justin Gabriel (Jr.), RB/LB Brandon Camfield (Sr.), LB/RB Tony Williams Jr. (Sr.), WR/LB Bryce Mosely (Sr.), DT/OL Justin Collier (Sr.), OL/DL Carson Garmon (Sr.), OL/DL Kyle Campbell (Sr.), OL/DL Josh Jefferson (Sr.), OL/DL Harley Wilt (Sr.), DB/RB Momodou Colley (Sr.), WR/DB Cameron Kinaia (Jr.)

Grignon's 2019 season outlook: "We've bought into the big we, little me philosophy this year and we're trying to put the team first before any individual goals. ... We've had tremendous growth and character I think in the program as a whole, we're very excited about this fall."

Waterford Kettering

Head coach: Kenny Schmidt, second year

Last year's overall record: 1-8 (9th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 at



South Lyon's Brenden Lach, right, goes up for the grab defended by South Lyon East's Jon Carter during game action last season. COURTESY OF JERRY REA

North Farmington

Players to watch: WR/DB DJ Hamler (Sr.), WR/DB Brendan Teal (Sr.), RB/LB Larry Platt (Sr.), LB Sam O'Brien (Sr.), OL/DL Spencer Steward (Sr.), RB/S Demajia Thomas (Jr.), QB Eli Hilliard (Sr.), RB/LB Carter Ellis (Sr.), K/P Jack Schram (Sr.), S/WR LaMarr George (Sr.), WR/S Eric Craft (Jr.)

Schmidt's 2019 season outlook: "Last year we struggled, but we were in a lot of the games, close games and we were young. We have a lot of guys coming back. Eight starters on defense and seven starters on offense."

Waterford Mott

Head coach: Chris Fahr, eighth

season

Last year's overall record: 4-5 (T-5th in LVC)

Season opener: Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. South Lyon East

Players to watch: QB Ashton Tong (Soph.), RB/CB Keone Sanders (Jr.), RB/LB Xaiyon Styles (Jr.)

Fahr's 2019 season outlook: "We have to get back to our core values. We lost some toughness last year and that's my fault. When you create a problem, you have to fix it. So we've had a tremendous offseason. ... The kids that are left are great kids."

Contact Andrew Vaillencourt at avaiilienc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

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What to expect this season in KLAA East Division football

Andrew Vaillencourt
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Kensington Lakes Activities Association (KLAA) held its annual media day Aug. 7 at Novi High School and gave writers a chance to learn about the 16 teams and what to expect for this upcoming season.

It is the second year the league has 16 teams, after the additions last year of Belleville, Fordson and Dearborn.

Those newcomers made their mark, as all three made the playoffs and Belleville won the conference championship.

The pre-season coaches poll picked Belleville to repeat as conference champions. Here are the coaches' full picks:

East:

1. Belleville
2. Franklin
3. Fordson
4. Churchill
5. Stevenson
6. Dearborn
7. John Glenn
8. Wayne Memorial

West:

1. Canton
2. Brighton
3. Plymouth
4. Northville
5. Novi
6. Hartland
7. Howell
8. Salem

Here is a breakdown of the East Division teams:

Belleville

Head coach: Jermain Crowell, fifth season

Last year's overall record: 12-2

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Salem

Players to watch: Damon Payne, OL-DL; Tyrece Woods, DE-TE; Christian Dhue-Reid, QB; Desmond Stone, Derrick Agures, Darion Murray, Jefferey Price, Jason Johnson, Brendan Deasferandez

Crowell's 2019 outlook: "Last year wasn't a bad year, but it didn't quite meet what our expectations were. We're still working. We don't really have an idea of what type of team we have until we put the pads on. We have a lot of guys coming back with experience."

Livonia Churchill

Head Coach: Bill DeFillippo, seventh season

Last year's overall record: 7-3

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Brighton

Players to watch: Brendan Lowry, Shane Morelli, Josh Barr, Mitch Regan, Dylan Curran, Bryce Dix

DeFillippo's 2019 outlook: "Like most years, it'll come down to health and how we respond to adversity. The challenge that we face in this conference is that we usually end up playing six playoff teams in nine weeks. We had three teams in our division that won district titles last year, five that made it to the playoffs. We have a very challenging schedule."

Dearborn

Head Coach: John Powell, seventh season

Last year's overall record: 5-5

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Canton

Players to watch: Tommy Guajardo, Ali Saad, Jake Tafelski, Shane Veith, Ronnie Puczkowski, Zein Bazzi

Powell's 2019 season outlook: "We return four all-league players and eight seniors that were big parts of last year's teams. This team has a lot of experience, they're wonderful players, but more importantly, they're leaders in the weight room, on the field, in the classroom and in the community. We lost two games on the final play last year, and we're looking forward to changing that this year. We know we're in for a dogfight week in and week out. ... They key to our season is to build depth. We have to stay healthy."

Fordson

Head Coach: Fouad Zaban, 13th season

Last year's overall record: 10-2

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Hartland

Players to watch: Hassan Mansour, James Wheeler, Brandon Thomas, Ali Baiz

Zaban's 2019 season outlook: "Our key to the season is to get healthy. Before the beginning of the season, we lost our senior quarterback to a broken elbow. hopefully he'll get back soon. Ultimately, the way we do things, you have to work. We work on the basics, if you're there to put the work in, we have an opportunity to have success."

Livonia Franklin

Head coach: Chris Kelbert, 18th season

Last year's overall record: 7-5

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Howell

Players to watch: Jacob Kelbert, Jake Swirple, James Carpenter, Grant Gibson, Erik Reaves, Evan Pittenger, Aaron Mass, Kyle Fugedi, Trevor Whisman

Kelbert's 2019 season outlook: "We're looking to have another positive, successful season. The development of our youth along with the continued development of our upperclassmen is going to be key for us, those young guys being able to step up and fill some positions. For us always, we've struggled in the past in starting fast and starting strong, that's been our focus. We want to continue building and continue developing our kids and the success we've had over the last few years."

John Glenn

Head coach: Steve Waller, fifth season

Last year's overall record: 4-5

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Northville

Players to watch: Justin Hart, Jordan Mitchell, Justin Morrison, Kayleb Parker

Waller's 2019 season outlook: "Getting our seniors and underclassmen to come together, the chemistry, getting those younger guys to grow, it's going to be tough in this division. Last year we went 4-5 and all five of our losses were to the other playoff teams in the division, so the goal is to improve on that, knock one of them off and get in the playoffs."

Livonia Stevenson

Head coach: Randy Micallef, seventh season

Last year's overall record: 1-8

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Novi

Players to watch: Nick Broome, Evan Beck, Caden Woodall, Lucas Kyle, Anel Mujovic, Dylan Johnson, Michael Brady

Micallef's 2019 season outlook: "I think the biggest thing is staying healthy and competing each and every week. We've got a lot of kids you saw a lot of playing time last year because of some of our injuries, so we have some experience. We want to build on that and learn from what we went through last year to be successful."

Wayne Memorial

Head coach: Jari Brown, first season

Last year's overall record: 0-9

Season opener: 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 29 vs. Plymouth

Players to watch: Mitez Williams, Quinicy Davis

Brown's 2019 season outlook: "What we're trying to do at Wayne Memorial is place a strong foundation and build this program from the ground up. It's been a tear down of everything from the equipment shed to everything that we do in the weight room, we want to continue focusing on building and getting ready for next week. We've done a lot of relationship building with the players."



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING NORTHVILLE DISTRICT LIBRARY COUNTIES OF WAYNE AND OAKLAND, MICHIGAN

ON THE ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020.
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS IN THE LIBRARY DISTRICT OF THE NORTHVILLE DISTRICT LIBRARY.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Trustees of the Northville District Library, County of Wayne, Michigan, will hold a public hearing on Thursday, the 22nd day of August, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Carlo Meeting Room of the Northville District Library, Northville, Michigan, to consider the approval and adoption of the operating budget of the Northville District Library for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Copies of the proposed budget are on file with the Library Director at the Northville District Library, 212 West Cady Street, Northville, Michigan, for inspection during regular library hours. At the public hearing, all citizens, taxpayers and property owners of the Northville District Library District, comprised of the City of Northville and the Charter Township of Northville, shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard regarding the approval of the budget.

THE PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE RATE PROPOSED TO BE LEVIED TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED BUDGET WILL BE A SUBJECT OF THIS HEARING.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Trustees of the Northville District Library, Counties of Wayne and Oakland, Michigan.

ROBERT SOCHACKI
SECRETARY
NORTHVILLE DISTRICT LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Any citizen requesting accommodation to attend this meeting, please contact Laura Mancini, Library Director, at 248-349-3020, Extension 206.

To obtain this notice in alternate formats, please contact Laura Mancini, Library Director, at 248-349-3020, Extension 206.

Publish: August 15, 2019

LO-0000363087 3x8

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL THE NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (ALSO REFERRED TO AS THE DISTRICT OR NPS IN THESE DOCUMENTS) WILL ACCEPT PROPOSAL FOR:

2019-20 FRESH MADE PIZZA FOR LUNCH SERVICE

The RFP specifications and bidding documents will be made available on line at: www.michigan.gov/sigmavss or www.northville.k12.mi.us.

Proposals should be submitted to Michael Zopf, Assistant Superintendent, Northville Public Schools. Proposals are to be submitted no later than 11:00AM, Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at the Board of Education Office (Old Village School, 405 W. Main Street, Northville, MI 48167). The District will not consider or accept an electronic proposal, or a proposal received after the date and time specified for submission.

The Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part; or, for reasons of establishing uniformity, delivery time or preference, to award the contract to other than the low bidder.

The contents of the RFP and Bidder's (also referred to as Vendor in these documents) Proposal will become contractual obligations, if a contract ensues. Failure of the Bidder to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the award.

In compliance with MCL 380.1267, the proposal shall be accompanied by a sworn and notarized statement disclosing any familial relationship that exists between the owner or any employee of the bidder and any member of the board, or the superintendent of the school district. Additional certifications and acknowledgements are required, and the Board shall not accept a bid that does not include these disclosures, certifications and/or acknowledgements.

All bids shall be firm for at least sixty (60) days from the date of opening of bids. Length of time required for completion shall be specified in the bid. All bids submitted must meet or exceed all specifications herein.

Bids are to be submitted on our Bid Proposal Form, signed by the bidder, in a sealed envelope clearly marked. Two (2) copies of the Bid Proposal Form should be addressed to the attention of:

Mr. Michael Zopf
Northville Public Schools
405 W. Main Street
Northville, MI 48167
"2019-20 Fresh Made Pizza for Lunch Service"

One (1) copy of the bid package should be retained for your files. Any questions regarding bid specifications should be referred to Ms. Carrie Morfino, morfinoca@northvilleschools.org, 248-344-3692, between 8 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. EST.

LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

Publish: August 11 & 15, 2019

LO-0000363086 3x8

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NORTHVILLE

The City of Northville Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing to receive public input on the following request in regards to the City of Northville Zoning Ordinance: To consider a variance request on premises zoned R-1B, First Density Residential District, located at 305 W. Dunlap, Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-002-01-0500-000. The applicant is seeking a variance to construct a residential building addition in the rear yard setback. The variance needed is 1.8 feet from the requirements in Section 15.01.

The public hearing will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the City of Northville Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 215 West Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167, 248-449-9902. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the variance request. The variance application is available for review at the City of Northville Building Department during normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, local prevailing time. Written comments pertaining to the proposed variance request will also be received at the above address.

DOMINIC SILVESTRI, CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Publish: August 15, 2019

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MICHIGAN VETERANS

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Don't Delay! You could be overwhelmed with medical expenses, no longer able to care for loved one, or just need some help. You may be eligible for important benefits. Call Now!

WHEN: Thursday, August 22nd, 2019

TIME: 11am

WHERE: Novi Public Library

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Salem High football players Dante Doute, left, and Evan Kirkpatrick, along with the rest of their teammates, continued an annual tradition this week by going away for the first three days of football camp. This year, the team traveled to Grand Valley State University for its opening practices. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Salem football takes practices to GVSU

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Salem football team is continuing an annual tradition this week by going away for the first three days of camp.

Second-year coach Justin Reed said the school has been traveling to various colleges around the area for summer camp since 1974 and decided this year to take his team to Grand Valley State University.

"We stay at the same facility that

their players do, we use their game field for practice," Reed said. "It's a bonding thing, a way for our guys to get away from all the other distractions and start off football the right way."

Reed attended GVSU and said he wanted his team to be able to experience and take in the campus and facilities the same way he did.

Each of the last two years, Salem has gone to Ohio Northern and the year before, trekked to Adrian.

"One of the motivators is coming together as a team," Reed said. "This is to

me, is the greatest team sport in the world, so when they can get away from home and really bond together as a team, I think that's going to be our main focus and why we've done it in the past."

There are plenty of starting jobs to be won during camp, starting with quarterback, where Reed says he has not made any kind of decision on who will start. These position battles will likely last until later next week. Salem's first game is on Thursday, Aug. 29 at Belleville.

At GVSU, players will eat meals together and have team activities at night,

giving them the opportunity to bond off the field.

"Success to me this year is going to be when you look at the product that we put out on the field, is the effort there by our student-athletes, do they play with passion and play together," Reed said. "We're trying to build that togetherness of the guys and I think when you look at our games and we're playing that way, it'll be a successful year."

Contact Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Twitter: @AndrewVcourt.

Google Search can do so much more

Check out 7 things you probably didn't know



Tech Talk
Kim Komando

Google is way more powerful than most people realize. Regular searches are helpful, but they don't even scratch the surface of Google's abilities. Sometimes, your basic search inquiries may not be enough or you need a tip to get the best results.

Fair warning: You can't mention Google without also mentioning tracking. Fortunately, a slew of sites and services compete with Google and don't track you.

But if you'd like to distance yourself from Google Search itself, tap or click here for search sites that don't track you.

That said, there is a range of cool Google tricks you can use to narrow your results even further. It's high time you learned what your search bar could do.

1. Get more options on your Google search results page

With rare exception, Google will spit up thousands of links for any search. This is great, in theory, but most relevant information shows up on the first couple of pages. So what happens if you don't find what you're looking for in the first few seconds? You get annoyed, and you wonder what the issue is – bad search, or Google being weird?

One way to mitigate this feeling is to expand the number of results on the first page, so you don't have to click through as many individual pages to find what you're looking for.

Simply click **Settings** underneath the right-hand side of the search bar on your results page and you're taken to a page where you can adjust the number of results you see. Move the slider in the direction you want, but note that the more results you select per page, the slower Google will appear to run.



If you want literal search results, all you'll need to do is activate Verbatim searches. You can also type your search terms in quotation marks. GETTY IMAGES

2. Search verbatim for more refined results

Sometimes Google doesn't exactly "get it" when it comes to your search terms. The search engine tends to rely on context, after all. If you want more literal search results, all you'll need to do is activate **Verbatim** searches.

This makes it that all search results must have your search terms included exactly as they appear. To activate Verbatim searches, click **Tools** on your results page, then hover over **All results** and click to select the **Verbatim** option. Alternatively, you can also type your search terms in quotation marks for the same effect ("like this").

3. Remove old searches from your search history

I have covered how to remove your Google search history many times, but the company has made it easier to remove specific searches from your history (so you don't end up with weird advertisements or irrelevant results on future searches).

To make the change, visit Google's **Delete activity** page. When you follow Google's instructions and click the **Try it link**, you'll be able to search for specific topics and delete them by clicking the **three dots** symbol.

Now you'll have cleaner results and more relevant ads when you browse.

4. Search for books, news, and movies

Most people know how to find images and videos, using the tabs at the top. But Google knows how much the internet loves different kinds of media, so the search engine has curated specific topics to bring you more relevant results about what you're looking up.

Take Books and News, for example. Right under the search bar (if you don't already see Books), you can click the menu item that says **more** to search among books and news articles specifically – much like you would with an image search. This prevents you from seeing results that aren't related to what you're looking for.

As for movies, Google handles its

searches without any extra work on your part. Simply type in the name of a movie, and you'll be greeted with cast info, links to Wikipedia, and even showtimes and tickets if it's a movie that's still in theaters.

5. Plot directions right from your Google search bar

You're probably already familiar with Google Maps, but did you know you can get directions without even needing to open Maps itself? All you need to do is type in "directions to (destination) from (location)" and the search engine results will take care of the rest.

You can switch between car, public transportation, and walking directions if you choose to.

6. Instantly translate in your search bar

Google is fluent in multiple languages, and its abilities improve every day. You can quickly convert text from one language to another – and with astonishing accuracy – by adding one word to your search: type **Translate (phrase) into (language of choice)**.

This is extremely handy in case you come across an unfamiliar bit of language on social media, or want to send a greeting to a friend in a foreign language.

7. Search within specific websites

This is one of the handiest features that Google offers. Sometimes, you want to find something specific on a certain website – but let's say it doesn't have a search feature of its own. Wouldn't it be convenient if every website had its own Google search bar?

Well, nearly every website that isn't on the dark web can be searched via **site-specific** searches (even our very own Komando.com!) add **site:(website)** to the beginning of the search, and you'll quickly narrow down your results from the world wide web into just what you're looking for. Happy hunting!

For daily tips, free newsletters and more, visit Kim Komando's website at Komando.com.

What it's like to swim with AR goggles

Dalvin Brown
USA TODAY

One summer weekend, I was granted two-day access to a nearby resort-style fitness facility with a deluxe indoor pool. So I went for a swim – while connected, of course.

Before leaving my apartment, I grabbed my iPhone, packed a pair of swimming trunks and headed toward the door before realizing, “I forgot to charge my goggles.”

Yes, charge them – the same way you would your smartphone or your smartwatch. FORM, developed by a Vancouver-based startup, is what happens when your typical pair of swim goggles receive a total 2.0 upgrade. The water-friendly gadget is packed with hyped up tech like machine learning, augmented reality and real-time performance metrics.

I wanted to find out if the nifty eye-wear from the future would live up to the hype, and the results were, well, interesting.

Why?

As a person who's always connected and who doesn't enjoy fitness without a way to track my metrics, I hoped these goggles would make lengthy swim sessions less lonely and boring. While my Apple Watch does a perfectly fine job with providing detailed dive metrics, it's tough and awkward to peer at your wrist while swimming.

Also, it's difficult for companies to seamlessly integrate augmented reality into workouts without bulky headsets, so I was skeptical.

How does FORM work?

When you put on the goggles, you're supposed to see tiny lime green letters floating in your line of sight. The company says it uses “waveguide technology,” whatever that means, to make sure you can focus.

You use two tiny buttons on the right side of the goggle to adjust settings like brightness and pool length. The device has about 16 hours of battery life.



What was it like?

It seems like FORM got the formula right.

At first glance, I thought the digital renderings looked cheap. But as I began swimming, the whole experience felt much more premium. It was dreamy to see little numbers unobtrusively count my calories burned and laps swum no matter where I looked.

Visually, I felt sort of like an aquatic

robot prototype or something.

I ran my Apple Watch Series 4 in Pool Swim workout mode while I trying out FORM just to compare the two. Both the smartwatch and smart goggles reflected the same number of calories burned.

However, FORM picked up the moment I began swimming, and the metrics were faster to respond to my rests than my Apple Watch. The goggles didn't even fog up or let water in.

While attempting to connect the



Julia Russell, left a trainer at Life Time athletic club in New York City, tries out the new FORM AR Goggles. At left, the goggles keep track of metrics while you swim. ROBERT DEUTSCH/USA TODAY

gadget with the smartphone app, I had a few connection issues, which happens occasionally when pairing devices via Bluetooth. Eventually, everything paired fine and the app categorized my swims.

Do you need AR goggles?

Overall, swimming with FORM felt special. But then again, I was in a luxurious water club home to both Olympic swimmers, one-percenters and a few ordinary people like myself.

Still, the goggles felt like something new, while remaining familiar.

Does everyone need a pair of \$199 augmented reality goggles? No, unless you are a competitive athlete or just really serious about tracking your swims down to the millisecond.

Are they nice to have? Absolutely. So if you want a more purposeful or engaging experience while swimming, then maybe give them a go.

Just don't forget to charge them.

HOW I BECAME A ...

Drunk Elephant has made her a skin care maven

Our series “How I became a ...” digs into the stories of accomplished and influential people, finding out how they got to where they are in their careers.

Susannah Hutcheson
Special to USA TODAY

From starting little businesses while her children were young to eventually being the founder and chief creative officer behind one of the fastest-growing skin care brands in the industry, Tiffany Masterson has always had a knack for growing a brand, even though she never expected to do so. After developing a personal interest in product formulation and the science behind skin care and clear skin, Masterson built the brand Drunk Elephant based on the six ingredients that she found interfered with skin. Just a few years later, the neon lids and clean products she created can be found on vanities and in Sephora stores everywhere.

USA TODAY caught up with Masterson to talk about everything from catching the entrepreneurship bug to building a brand based on following your gut.

Question: How did you get your start with entrepreneurship?

Tiffany Masterson: I was a stay-at-home mom, and my youngest was around 6 or 7 at the time. I was kind of trying to find ways to start a little business here and there, and the businesses I tried to start were hilarious. I tried to start a business cleaning out people's pantries where I would go and eliminate the bad things from their pantries and replace them with good things, called Holy Pantry. I did that, and then I started a meatball and lasagna catering business for a while, and then I started selling a bar cleanser at some point.

That woke up this passion in me for in-

gredients – I already had it, because I had it with food and with my diet and the way I ate – but I got super interested when I started selling this bar cleanser. I started studying products and studying the roles of ingredients, trying to get to the root of why people's skin acted the way it acted and responded. What were the potential ingredients that caused certain skin behaviors? It was just this organic path that I took.

I had rosacea and typical skin issues that people have, acne-prone, sensitive skin, and an elimination diet for my skin is kind of what I ultimately did, identifying ingredients that my skin didn't like and studying what they were and why – trying to find supporting evidence that that could really be why. I started trying to help people choose products based on that. I was selling this bar cleanser and telling people, use this oil or this serum, trying to find products that would help people's skin.

Q: What was the process like with starting Drunk Elephant?

Masterson: Through that whole process of being interested in that and the function of skin itself – reading about how it functions best and what it needs to function – I met with my brother-in-law, who was the investor behind the bar that I was selling. I said, “Look, I think that I've learned enough ingredients and I think that we could do this ourselves. I think I could design some products myself based on the ingredients I've learned so much about, and let's do this!” kind of thing. He was in.

I didn't know the typical process because I'm a housewife in Houston, but I actually wrote down in my computer all of the ingredients to each product. I had six products I wanted to launch at the same time – to me, instead of launching one product I wanted to launch a full skin



Tiffany Masterson built the brand Drunk Elephant based on the six ingredients that she found interfered with skin. DRUNK ELEPHANT

care solution for people that wouldn't have to look around at all – because my philosophy was so distinct. I was trying to avoid these six ingredients that were out there in kind of everything. I couldn't find a brand that didn't contain at least one of them, and I really believed that these six ingredients were at the root of people's skin issues.

We launched the six (products), and it took a long time, and it was a lot of trial and error. I had the products made, and we launched our own website in late 2013 – drunkelephant.com – and for about a year, I listened to feedback. I wanted to really be an open book: here's what we are, this is what we use, this is what we avoid.

I did that for a year, really learned about the products a little more and tweaked a few of them, tweaked some packaging, and then went to Cosmoprof in 2014, and that's where I met Sephora. They were attracted to the bright colors, I believe, and they told me at the conference, “Look, we're not picking anybody up for 2015.” It was kind of a bummer, maybe they'll change their mind type thing – and they did. They called me two weeks later, and said they'd tried the products and really felt strongly that it was a line they wanted to support.

They brought me in in January 2015, and now we're almost five years with Sephora. That's really how it all started.

Q: What does a typical day look like for you?

Masterson: I am more involved in product development, social media, very heavily involved with design and marketing. I'm here in Houston with my design and marketing team, and I do a combination of helping to manage the social accounts, take conference calls, and do creative off-sites at my house. I don't go into the office right now. We're moving into a big office because we outgrew the office that we had, so I stay at home. My creative juices really flow at home.

A typical day is taking conference calls, working on new products on my computer in my family room. If I need to cook dinner, I'll cook dinner and sit back down; if I need to drive somebody somewhere, I'll go do that; and a lot of times I'll take conference calls while I'm exercising. It's really working all day.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your job?

Masterson: It's really fun. I love what I do so much because it doesn't feel like a job. It's one of those things that you wake up for and you get out of bed for. I mean, I get out of bed because I have four kids, a husband, and a dog, but I'm excited every day to open up my email; I'm excited every day to go on social media and see what's going on with Drunk Elephant, and I'm excited to work on new projects.

Q: To what do you credit your success?

Masterson: I followed my gut from day one. One, the products work – in my opinion, they work. We have a cohesive brand and a brand with a strong DNA – we really know who we are. I don't look around at what other brands are doing; I don't look around at trends.

Q: How do you balance work, life and such a busy schedule?

Masterson: I find (balance) because I really try to do this from my home. I try to spend quality time with my children, even if it's just a five-minute, face-to-face, going in their room and sitting on their bed because everybody's had a hectic, busy day. They're older now, and they're busy, too.

Q: What advice would you give to someone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

Masterson: Follow your gut and be yourself.

You could be ingenious, ridiculous or nefarious



Steve Strauss
Columnist
USA TODAY

Who woulda thunk that a simple backlink on a website would change the world?

Not you, not me, but to two Stanford graduate students, that link was the key and the magic, and in that, there is a very valuable insight for entrepreneurs big and small.

It was 1995. Larry Page and Sergey Brin were grad students in computer science trying to find a seemingly simple solution. There had to be a better way to locate what you were looking for on what was then known as the World Wide Web. Back then, the option was to type a search term into the search engines of the time (Alta Vista, Ask Jeeves, Lycos, etc.) and then wade through scores of irrelevant pages that these sites would cough up.

The results were usually a waste of time because early search engines ranked sites based on how many times a searched term would show up on a web page. Given that, early webmasters quickly figured out that all they had to do was stuff a page with searched terms, and voila!, their page would get ranked high.

It was ingenious, ridiculous and nefarious all at once.

Trying to sell some boots? Then simply repeat and stuff the page with the term "boots," its synonyms and related words (galoshes, waders, mukluks, shoes, hiking boots, ski boots, footwear, foot gear, combat boots, blah, blah, blah) and you just might strike Internet gold.

"Keyword stuffing" made for some not only horrible search results – page upon page uselessness – but equally, it caused early web designers to create some truly awful web pages and content creators to create equally horrible content.

Larry and Sergey figured there had to be a better way. In early 1996, the two began to work on writing code for a different sort of search engine, one that would not look at keywords, but instead would 1) rank a page based on how many other pages linked to that page and 2) look at how reliable those sites were.

Entrepreneurs, difference is your magic to build upon

Larry Page and Sergey Brin realized that an actually valuable web page was one that other people had found good enough to link to; if a lot sites about hikes and hiking linked to a specific page about boots, that was likely a more valuable page about boots than some stuffed one. And if, say, the U.S. Geological Survey linked to that page too, then it really was probably very good. From such things empires are born. An insight, an idea, a better way, a different way, can change the world. And if nothing else, it can change your world.



GETTY IMAGES

They thought that being different was the key.

They were right.

Larry and Sergey realized that an actually valuable web page was one that other people had found good enough to link to; if a lot sites about hikes and hiking linked to a specific page about boots, that was likely a more valuable page about boots than some stuffed one. And if, say, the U.S. Geological Survey linked to that page too, then it really was probably very good.

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nothing else, it can change your world.

Working out of their dorm rooms, using cheap, borrowed computers and maxing out their credit cards, Larry and Sergey named their new search engine Google, after the math term "Googol" (1 followed by 100 zeros.) Its first home was the URL Google.Stanford.edu.

So, just what was the value of that little insight, of that secret sauce of linked pages and thus a better search engine?

■ Larry and Sergey are worth a combined \$100 billion today.

■ Google's parent company Alphabet is worth almost \$1 trillion dollars

■ Whoever you are, wherever you are,

you likely used Google today.

No, you are not going to create the next Google, but that's not the point. What you can and should do is examine what it is that makes your business unique, different and special and double down on that.

That's where the magic waits.

Steve Strauss is an attorney, popular speaker, and the bestselling author of 17 books, including *The Small Business Bible*. You can learn more about Steve at MrAllBiz.com, get even more tips at his site *TheSelfEmployed*, and connect with him on Twitter at @SteveStrauss and on Facebook at *TheSelfEmployed*.

It's smart to allow personal tasks at work

It may seem inefficient, but it's actually a smart move for your business

Maurie Backman
The Motley Fool

As an employer, it's natural to want to get the most out of your employees during the workday. The more productive they are, the more your business benefits. In fact, when you're on the management side, you may not take kindly to catching your employees engaging in personal tasks during the day, whether it's scheduling appointments, answering emails from friends, or confirming weekend plans. But actually, doing personal tasks during the workday is pretty common – and also pretty necessary.

A good 77% of professionals today feel that personal activities have become a workday necessity, according to Captivate's Office Pulse new survey. (Those elevator and lobby displays you see in big office buildings? That's what Captivate does.) If your policy is to discourage workers from going this route, here are a few reasons why you may want to rethink that.

1. They'll be less stressed

Stress can be a huge distraction for workers to contend with, and the more your employees feel they're falling behind on life's many tasks, the more anxious they're apt to be. By giving your staff some leeway to tend to personal matters at the office, you'll remove one layer of stress and help them better focus on the work they need to be doing for the bulk of the day.

2. They'll be more flexible with you

These days, close to half of full-time U.S. workers spend 50 hours or more on the job. It's no wonder, then, that so many professionals need to tap into the workday to deal with personal matters. But remember, if you want your work-

ers to be flexible by staying late at the office as needed or logging on during weekends to deal with emergencies, then you need to be willing to grant that same leeway. And that means letting employees tend to personal tasks during the day without repercussions.

Keep in mind that certain items can only be dealt with during business hours. For example, scheduling doctor appointments can't be done in the evenings when offices are closed. The more understanding you are about the need to incorporate personal tasks into the workday, the less pushback you'll get when employees are asked to give up more of their limited free time for work purposes.

3. They'll be less likely to abuse sick days

The purpose of granting workers sick days is to give them ample time to recover from illnesses and avoid spreading germs in the office. But if you're not willing to look the other way when employees use work time for personal matters, then your staff members might get into the habit of calling out sick when their personal to-do lists start growing out of control. Rather than run that risk, you're better off allowing employees to spend a little time dealing with personal matters during the day, all the while keeping up with their regularly scheduled tasks.

It's one thing for workers to spend hours each day dealing with non-job-related matters. But if your employees do so within reason, there's no sense in giving them grief for it. If anything, making it clear that you condone a little personal time during the workday could be just the thing that keeps your employees happy and drives them to do the best job possible on a whole.

The Motley Fool has a disclosure policy. The Motley Fool is a USA TODAY content partner offering financial news and analysis. Its content is produced independently of USA TODAY.

iPhones less than \$200 still out there

On a budget? Don't forget about the SE

Jefferson Graham
USA TODAY

Many readers were with Mike Harbour in response to our recent piece about iPhone budget options. In the wake of the September demise of iOS support for the iPhone 6, many consumers are scrambling for an alternative.

"I saw no mention of the SE, the little wonder that will be supported by iOS 13," noted Harbour, of Fort Worth, Texas. "They're even cheaper used than iPhone 8 models on eBay; I bought one last month."

This is true. In our article, we were looking at the available iPhone options currently being sold by Apple – the iPhone 7 and 8 – and the most current entry-level model, the \$750 iPhone XR.

The SE was discontinued by Apple last September. While clearance models periodically show up on Apple's website, the SE is currently unavailable on Apple.com.

But Harbour is right. There are still plenty of SE units available, both new and used, all over the web in the \$150 to \$200 range. That's a good fifth of the cost of a new XR, Apple's lowest-priced larger and more powerful, entry-level model.

Let's take a good look at the SE.

The SE was introduced in March 2016 as a small, budget option for iPhone consumers who preferred a compact 4-inch handset to the newer, larger 4.7-inches and up phones. It was originally priced at \$399.

The SE is a retro iPhone lover's dream. It still has the coveted headphone jack, long gone from current iPhone models, a Home button and Touch ID, both of which have been discontinued on the current X series of phones. The most recent SE sold for \$350, with 32 GB of storage, an A9 processing chip (the same one as on the iPhone 6), 12-megapixel camera and



The iPhone SE came out in 2016. APPLE

ability to interact with Siri and use Apple Pay.

The 2018 introduced iPhones – the XS, XS Max and XR – have a more powerful A12 chip, which is designed for gamers, augmented reality and apps that require a lot of processing power, like recording long slow-motion videos and viewing them immediately.

While Apple is out of stock for the SE, others offer new/used versions:

■ Amazon has a used SE with 64 GB of storage for \$149.

■ Walmart's model is \$109, but it has only 16 GB of storage.

■ Target's model is tied to a prepaid phone plan from Simple Mobile, has 32 GB of storage and sells for \$125.

■ eBay offers several new models for \$179.76.

Compared to the older iPhones being offered by Apple on its website, this is a bargain. The iPhone 7, which has a larger 4.7-inch screen and more powerful A10 chip, starts at \$449 with 32 GB of storage. It was first released in 2016, the same year as the SE.

The more recent iPhone 8 (released in 2018) starts at \$599 with 64 GB of storage, an A11 chip, same 12-megapixel camera and 4.7-inch screen.

Apple also sells the larger 6.1-inch iPhone XR (\$750), the 5.8-inch XS (\$999) and 6.5-inch iPhone XS Max (\$1,099), as well as the Plus size models of the 7 (\$569 and 5.5 inches) and 8 (5.5 inches and \$699.)

Online reviewers can be sued

Companies fight back after negative comments



Tech Talk
Kim Komando

Online reviews are a blessing and a curse. When they're glowing, a single review can boost business and improve morale. A bad review can be hurtful and drive away customers. Since many reviews are anonymous, the web is full of unfiltered vitriol, and people are getting savvy that you cannot trust negative reviews.

Not to mention all the reviews that are actually fake, even on mainstream sites like Amazon.

Some businesses have taken action, and the results are controversial: commenters have found themselves sued by the companies they panned. Citing "slander," proprietors have litigated against their critics with a SLAPP lawsuit (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) – and it's changing the whole dynamic of online commentary.

Such reviews are already a heated issue when sites like Peeple make reviews ultra-specific and extremely personal.

Here's the inside scoop, and what it means for regular consumers and their willingness to speak their minds on the web.

SLAPP suits: Protection against libel, or a threat to free speech?

Reviewing a business on the web is reflexive, at this point, for many of us. If we're happy with a product or service, we want the people responsible for knowing how we feel. We also want to share our opinion with the rest of the internet, to help others decide where to spend their money.

The internet can be a negative place, of course, and many people turn to online reviews as a way to vent a recent frustration. Many of these reviews come off as abusive and defamatory rants, which is almost always inappropriate and in poor taste.

A legal filing is a pretty dramatic response. This type of lawsuit is referred to by legal analysts as a SLAPP lawsuit. Rather than proceed with litigation with the intention of winning, the plaintiffs in SLAPP suits rely on brute force and superior resources to convince defendants into retracting their comments or backing down completely.

The suits are often crafted to be complicated, lengthy, and expensive for participants. So if a person doesn't have the means to defend themselves financially, they often have no choice but to give in to the demands of the plaintiff – which usually comes in the form of damages, apologies, and removing the "offending" review or comments.

How have SLAPPs affected internet reviewers?

SLAPP suits have had a noticeable effect. Several reviewers from around the web have found themselves on the wrong end of SLAPP lawsuits based on comments they've left on websites like Yelp and Google. Typically, these suits take a good deal of time to resolve and often leave defendants with high legal bills that exceed their ordinary cost of living.

In an interview with "CBS This Morning," Yelp user Tom Lloyd opened up about a lawsuit he received after leaving comments about a veterinary practice in Florida. After spending six hours of his dying dog's life without finding a surgeon to save him (the lead surgeon had gone on vacation), the practice told Tom that there was nothing they could do. He left a negative review only to be hit with a SLAPP suit for defamation.

As of now, Tom currently owes \$26,000 in legal bills from the ordeal. He's far from the only individual threatened with SLAPP suits in recent years, however.

One woman in Texas was sued for thousands of dollars after leaving a negative review at a loan agency. Another man was sued for \$125,000 after he left an unsatisfactory review for a flooring job that was, in his own words, "botched."



Some online commenters have found themselves sued by the companies they panned. GETTY IMAGES

The plaintiff usually demands some form of damages, apologies, and removing the "offending" review or comments.

Legal codes are changing

SLAPP lawsuits are starting to get attention in many jurisdictions. As of today, 28 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. territory of Guam have added anti-SLAPP statutes to their legal codes. These statutes are designed to help defendants navigate and potentially dismiss the suits should they become involved in one.

States with anti-SLAPP statutes currently include Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma,

Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Washington.

If you find yourself hit with a SLAPP suit in the future, your best bet is to check your state's laws and know your rights before proceeding with legal assistance.

Our ability to publicly dissent is a cornerstone of American society. Without it, big businesses become the ones that set the standard for acceptable discourse. It's up to all of us to ask ourselves if this is something we're really comfortable with.

How to write a fail-safe review

First, if a service or product infuriates you, wait a few days so you can calm down. We say all kinds of inadvisable things in the heat of the moment, and we often regret these comments later, lawsuit or no.

Second, make sure that your review is factually accurate. Do not use hyperbolic language or embellish the events that occurred. Liable is difficult to prove, but any exaggeration will work against you in a legal arena.

Finally, use good judgment. One bad waiter doesn't mean the whole restaurant was terrible, and every business has its off-days. If customer service is truly awful, think of the review as a caution for others, not as a soapbox to make yourself feel better.

Respectful discourse is endangered everywhere, especially on the internet. No one should be sued for an honest opinion, but you can almost always provide criticism without being cruel.

What digital lifestyle questions do you have? Call Kim's national radio show and tap or click here to find it on your local radio station. You can listen to or watch the Kim Komando Show on your phone, tablet, television or computer. Or tap or click here for Kim's free podcasts.

Learn about all the latest technology on the Kim Komando Show, the nation's largest weekend radio talk show. For her daily tips, free newsletters and more, visit her website at Komando.com.

'Harry Potter,' AR games bring magic to smartphones

Info is superimposed on your environment

Marc Saltzman
Special to USA TODAY

You see them walking around your neighborhood: smartphone users with device in hand, seemingly focused intently both on the screen and the world around them. Every so often, they stop, tap or swipe, and then move on.

Welcome to the world of augmented reality (AR) gaming.

When seen through the lens of your smartphone's camera, these games fuse the virtual with the physical, by superimposing digital information on top of the environment you're in.

The most popular AR game example so far is "Pokemon Go," which transported animated characters and items onto your sidewalk or beside you in a park. It's incredibly immersive, fun, and often social.

So, what's new, you ask? Here's a brief look at some new AR games and a couple of high-profile titles debuting soon for both iOS and Android. All games are free to play but offer optional in-app purchases.

'Jurassic World Alive'

Dinosaurs have escaped from Jurassic World and are stomping through cities like yours.

This is the premise of Ludia's "Jurassic World Alive," a popular geo-location AR game loosely based on the Jurassic World feature films. To date, the game has been downloaded more than 17 million times worldwide.

It's your job as a member of the Dinosaur Protection Group (DPG) to explore your surroundings and find these prehistoric beasts, use a virtual drone to collect DNA samples, and then create hybrid creatures in your lab to take



"Harry Potter: Wizards Unite" lets you cast spells in augmented reality. WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT



Hunt dinosaurs in "Jurassic World Alive." LUDIA

down these dangerous threats in epic battles – you can also wage head-to-head dinosaurs battles with others.

You are also on the hunt to find supply drops on the map, as those earn rewards such as in-game currency and battery life for your drone.

New features were added in late June, including Sanctuaries, which allow you to feed dinosaurs (with hapless goats!), as well as other new ways to interact with them. You can also play with other gamers; working cooperatively, you'll earn more DNA and build up your dinosaur collection.

'Harry Potter: Wizards Unite'

Niantic, the same studio responsible for "Pokemon Go," has recently partnered with WB Games San Francisco (as part of Portkey Games) to launch "Harry Potter: Wizards Unite," a mobile game inspired by the J.K. Rowling books and iconic movies.

As a new recruit of the Statute of Secrecy Task Force, you'll be tasked with aiding witches and wizards from across the globe to solve the mystery of The Calamity – the appearance of magical artifacts, creatures, people and other "Foundables."

You'll glance at a map that shows you where Foundables are, at various real-world locations, prompting you to cast a variety of spells to capture and return them to the wizarding world. Along the way you'll find virtual Inns that replenish Spell Energy, ingredients used to brew new potions, and keys that unlock new locations.

While you can play alone, Wizarding Challenges are real-time cooperative multiplayer battles against dangerous foes. You'll team up with other witches and wizards, and fuse your complementary abilities to overcome tougher threats.

'Angry Birds AR: Isle of Pigs'

While it's less about walking around and collecting items, "Rovio's Angry Birds: Isle of Pigs" – the 19th game in the Angry Birds franchise – uses your smartphone or tablet's camera to bring the bird-flinging fun to the real world.

The green pigs have once again stolen bird eggs, and so you'll need to destroy their fort using your trusty slingshot and brave birds – each with its own abilities – to destroy the wooden for-

ress.

You'll first lay down the game "board" onto, say, a kitchen table, desk, or outside on the ground (you can even make the game larger or smaller to best fit your space). Then it's time to walk around the 3-D structure to find the best place to attack, such as a TNT box, before swiping your finger down the screen to stretch back and release the slingshot.

The new island environment includes jungles, deserts and snowy hideouts. Unfortunately, it's not available for Android gamers just yet.

More augmented reality fun coming soon

There are two more hotly anticipated AR games on the horizon:

■ Due out sometime this summer, "Minecraft Earth" will be a free-to-play augmented reality title that lets you see, build, collect and play Mojang's Minecraft masterpiece – but the 3-D digital bricks, people, animals and items will be layered on top of the real world around you, like holograms. The game can be played solo or with friends, in tabletop mode or with a much larger full-size view. Players can sign up for the closed beta now at earth.minecraft.net.



Netflix has a "Stranger Things" AR game planned for 2020. NETFLIX

■ Launching at some point in 2020, Netflix and Next Games will debut "Stranger Things," a location-based, puzzle role-playing AR adventure that will challenge you to explore The Upside Down, hidden all around in your daily travels to work, school, and at home.

Announced at the Electronic Entertainment Expo a couple of weeks back, you'll be able to work together with other players to overcome "emerging evils." Details are scarce at this point, and Netflix declined an interview with USA TODAY, but this game might satiate demanding fans of the supernatural TV series.

Apps coordinate custody with your ex

Tech makes breaking up not quite so hard to do



Personal Tech
Edward C. Baig
USA TODAY

The end of summer brings with it a surge in another kind of ending. August is, sadly, one of those months when divorce filings spike.

For those going through a breakup, there can be a lot to manage, from emotions to expenses.

And while tech doesn't have all the answers, it can help ease some of the strain, whether you are seeking legal counsel, sharing custody of the kids, or even still trying to get past the sting of a nasty breakup.

These apps and web services represent a good sampling of the choices out there, though no option is likely to fit the bill for every divorce or if you have kids, co-parenting situation.

OurFamilyWizard

OurFamilyWizard includes several potentially useful tools for parents raising kids separately together.

For example, you'll find an interactive calendar that may help determine which parent gets the kids during the holidays, special occasions or whenever.

Another is an expense log for tracking the costs you share — being able to reimburse the other when one parent takes the child to the doctor, for example.

Parents can upload receipts and invoices and, in some circumstances, (for an added fee) make payments inside OurFamilyWizard.

There are other sections to store medical histories, insurance information, emergency contacts, and school schedules.

Parents can communicate with each other through a secure message board.

And because you and your former partner may not exactly be civil to each other, a ToneMeter feature can flag emotionally charged language before you send off a message you may regret.

ToneMeter costs \$10 per year, on the



OurFamilyWizard lets you share a calendar with your ex and monitor child care. OURFAMILYWIZARD

top of the \$99 each parent pays for OurFamilyWizard on an annual basis.

coParenter

Retired California Judge Sherrill Ellsworth is among those behind another co-parenting iOS and Android app that aims to avoid conflict.

One coParenter feature lets a parent send a secure, non-trackable notification to the other parent, whenever picking up or dropping off the kids. Smart filters can help keep communications between the parties clean.

You can also make requests to the other parent directly inside the app to, say, swap weekends or alter other visitation plans. If the two of you can't come to an agreement about that or much else, you can tap Get Help to summon

live on-demand mediation or coaching.

Since you may have trouble getting your ex to agree to even join you in the app, a SoloMode option lets one parent take advantage of the available tools when the other has no interest in participating. Any messages then sent to that non-participating parent are dispatched from a separate SMS phone number.

The basic monthly tab is \$12.99.

AppClose

AppClose features many of the tools found in other co-parenting apps, including the ability to manage parent-kid schedules, make pickup and dropoff requests and to send date-stamped real-time messages. The big difference is everything is free, at least for now. The fine

print inside AppClose's terms of service leaves open the possibility that a paid version of the app could come.

CEO Igor Litinsky told USA TODAY that courts are ordering use of the app on a daily basis, and "we intend to maintain this model for the foreseeable future. Of course, we are not a charity. So we do have monetization plans, but they do not include charging co-parents to use the app or sell their information to third parties for marketing purposes. Without disclosing competitive information, we can say that these plans may include charging professionals who are part of the ecosystem."

SupportPay

The name gives it away. This automated platform is all about managing, tracking and paying child support and alimony. Though it helps to have both parents participate in the app, only one actually is required to do so.

SupportPay's pitch to the parent who receives child support is to show the other "just how expensive your children really are." And part of the pitch to the paying spouse is that you can view receipts to see where the money is actually being spent, presumably for the kid.

There's a free version of the app, but among its restrictions is a limit of uploading just two expenses per month. For unlimited expense entries and other benefits, you're looking at a premium annual rate of \$19.99 a month per parent, reduced by \$5 to \$14.99 a month if you pay annually.

TalkingParents

For most couples, it's a given that you and the ex won't always see eye-to-eye. But in theory, anyway, you both have the kids' best interest at heart, so communication is key.

Whether you are on amicable terms or not, TalkingParents records your exchange with a co-parent and are time-stamped when you sent them and when the other person reads them. If need be, they are admissible in court.

Though the service is free, a premium plan you'll need for certain features costs \$4.99 a month.

Best mobile video games for summer travels

Marc Saltzman
Special to USA TODAY

We're smack-dab in the middle of summer, so you might be considering a road trip with family or friends.

Along with snacks, good tunes and perhaps spare change for toll booths, don't forget there are some awesome mobile games to help passengers pass the time between cities (or while lounging in a hotel room).

Played on smartphones and tablets, these digital diversions can also help reduce the "Are we there yet?" from the backseat.

Here's a look at a few recommended downloads for both iOS and Android (unless otherwise specified). Be aware all these games are free, but most support optional in-app purchases to unlock additional content or to remove ads (or both).

'Ghost Pop!'

Halloween may be months away, but you'll no doubt fall for the charm of PlaySide's "Ghost Pop!," a hauntingly fun game about staying alive as long as you can.

Easy to pick up but hard to put down, you'll navigate down a spooky road and confront various ghosts in your path. Armed only with a flashlight, you'll aim the beam in their direction to pop them. You'll need to twist your body around to ensure you get every single one. If they touch you, it's game over.

"Ghost Pop!" offers unlockable protagonists, larger boss battles to tackle and coins that can be exchanged for power-ups.

It's super fun — and can be played with just one hand.

'Looney Tunes World of Mayhem'

Think the Tasmanian Devil can take on Foghorn Leghorn? Is Bugs Bunny stronger than Marvin the Martian? Or what about pitting longtime enemies Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote against each other?

You can find out which cartoon character reigns supreme in "Looney Tunes World of Mayhem," a turn-based multiplayer role-playing game (RPG) from



Your favorite Saturday-morning cartoons are now interactive in "Looney Tunes World of Mayhem," a turn-based multiplayer role-playing game. SCOPELY



In "Mr. Bean Solitaire Adventures," your goal is to play solitaire to help Mr. Bean work his way across the country. POINTVOUCHER

Scopely

Players create a dream team of animated fighters, challenge others and then use a variety of over-the-top weapons ripped from Saturday morning cartoons — including falling anvils, ray guns, runaway trains, and, of course, ACME-branded dynamite — to

inflict as much damage as possible on the opposing team.

There's a surprising amount of depth. Players can unlock more than 100 characters (each can also be upgraded), build their own "Toon Towns," find crates full of goodies, and play a mode called Arena that lets you com-

pete in round-robin competitions for rewards.

'LEGO Hidden Side'

LEGO's new Graveyard Mystery playset (\$29.99) fuses brick-building fun with the magic of augmented reality.

The 335-piece buildable LEGO model works with the optional "LEGO Hidden Side" app for smartphones or tablets. Once downloaded and installed, the app triggers your device's camera. Point it at the playset, and it seemingly comes alive. You'll see animations on the statue and tombstones, ghosts to collect, games to play and mysteries to solve.

You can even walk around the Graveyard Mystery playset to discover hidden items superimposed on top of the physical toy — when viewed through your device's camera lens.

LEGO says the app (which does not offer in-app purchases) will enjoy continuous updates. Graveyard Mystery is the first of eight AR-supported Hidden Side playsets.

'Mr. Bean Solitaire Adventures'

Available exclusively for Android (for now), Pointvoucher Studio's "Mr. Bean Solitaire Adventures" stars an animated Mr. Bean — the hapless character played by U.K. comedian and actor Rowan Atkinson — in a solitaire card game that's easy to learn, even for younger players.

In fact, it's reminiscent of other mobile solitaire games (like Big Fish Games' Fairway Solitaire) — where you must tap a card that's one higher or lower than the card you've flipped, such as placing an 8 or 10 on a 9. This game, however, also adds a silly story about Mr. Bean accidentally arriving in the U.S., and traveling from New York to other cities like Honolulu, San Francisco and New Orleans.

Along with hundreds of levels, the game lets you earn Bean Bucks and stars, unlock virtual prizes, use special power-ups and bonus cards, and more.

The only downside to the game is its constant nagging to sign up for a Pointvoucher account to save game progress and play on multiple devices (the game remembers your progress, anyway).

Law could hold back 3rd-grade students who struggle to read

Mark Johnson Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

LANSING — A controversial reading law takes effect this school year and Michigan State University researchers say it could lead to thousands of students having to repeat third grade.

That is, if parents and administrators don't find a way to push the child through to fourth grade.

Michigan's Read by Third Grade law, approved in 2016, requires schools to identify students struggling to read through school-issued tests, then give those students individual reading improvement plans, access to early literacy coaches and a reading intervention program, among other resources.

It leads up to the Michigan Student Test of Education Progress (M-STEP) in the third-grade year.

Third graders with cut scores of 1,252 or lower in the English and language arts portion of the test could be held back.

Additional reading help will be recommended for students scoring between 1,253 and 1,271, but they will not be considered for retention.

Less than half of Michigan's third graders — 44.4% — met last year's reading proficiency standards.

Holding a student back is a decision that, ultimately, comes down to an administrator's discretion. Local superintendents say they are doing everything they can to avoid student retention.

"That's a big, big choice," said Adam Spina, Williamston Community Schools superintendent. "We will cross that bridge when we get to it in the spring. That is something that we would very closely have to evaluate."

What happens to 'deficient' readers?

M-STEP results come out in the spring, as will notices to those parents whose children fall short of "proficient" in the English and language arts section.

The notices will warn parents that their children could be forced to repeat third grade. But some loopholes could push them on to fourth grade anyway.

There are eight ways a student who falls short might still move up a grade, like if the student was already retained in kindergarten through third grade or if the student has an individualized educational plan. Exemptions also apply for students with less than three years in English language learning courses.

Students also could advance if the superintendent agrees with a parent who argues moving the student on would be in the student's best interest.

"Retention is a very, very serious decision and it's a decision you make with a whole host of factors with reading being one of them," said Lansing School District Superintendent Yvonne Caamal Canul, who will retire before the retention decisions are made for her school district.

MSU study shows thousands of third graders could repeat

A Michigan State University study shows superintendents across the state could soon be faced with that tough decision.

MSU Education Policy Innovation Collaborative researchers analyzed last year's M-STEP scores, finding that 2,000 to 5,000 students statewide did not score "proficient" in the English and language arts section and would be recommended for retention under the new law.

That includes seven to 11% of African-American third grade students and up to 10% of special education students, according to the study.

While the retention numbers appear concerning, researchers pointed to the true reason for the law and the help it could give Michigan students.

"The purpose of the law is not punitive. People have focused a lot on the retention numbers," said Katharine Strunk, professor of education policy at MSU and co-director of EPIC.

Caamal Canul considered the law another example of overreach by state legislators.

"We are all focused now, not that we haven't been, on making sure students read from the grade from which they leave," she said.

Lansing schools have literacy specialists placed in schools, issue reading proficiency tests during the year and monitor struggling students between the tests, Caamal Canul said. But reading proficiency rates still have remained stagnant for the school district for the

past several school years.

Michigan Department of Education Data shows less than half of the district's third grade students, just 29.6%, scored proficient on the M-STEP English and language arts section last year. It's up from 24.4% in the 2016-17 tests.

Caamal Canul questioned whether M-STEP scores are accurate indicators of whether a student is a proficient reader. She doubts whether there is any alignment between school reading programs and what the M-STEP determines is third grade reading proficiency.

Williamston Community Schools saw 71.9% of third grade students scoring proficient on last year's M-STEP. Early childhood literacy is a calling card for the school district, Spina said.

His district will continue reading efforts and assure students get the help they need to avoid retention. Spina would consider "a whole slew of caveats" before deciding if retention is in the best interest of the student.

Administrators at Eaton Rapids Public Schools — where third graders scored an overall 49.4% English and language arts proficiency rate on the M-STEP last year — are taking a proactive approach by simulating the outcomes a year ahead of time.

They placed about 22 incoming third graders expected to score lower on the M-STEP in a class with a specialized literacy teacher who will provide a curriculum geared toward helping the students, Eaton Rapids Superintendent Bill DeFrance said.

Helping students read statewide

Struggling readers aren't unique to local schools. Students around the state struggle to reach their reading goals, said Tanya Wright, an associate professor of language and literacy at MSU's Department of Teacher Education.

Many reading problems come down to two aspects of reading — actually reading the word and comprehending the meaning. Some students can do one but struggle to do the other, Wright said.

"This also means that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to supporting children who are having difficulty learning to read," she said in an email.

Bill DiSessa, Michigan Department of Education spokesperson, said initial third grade reading legislation concerned him since early discussions included a provision to automatically retain all third grade students not reading up to their reading level.

He supported the benefits of the law, including intervention for struggling students and a focus to increase reading levels statewide, a move that he hopes will make Michigan one of the top in the country when it comes to education within the next decade.

Assuring a student can read by third grade proves crucial to the rest of their educational career, DiSessa said.

"A child learns to read by grade three and after that reads to learn," DiSessa said. "If there is a problem ... sometimes it affects the rest of the child's education and development moving forward."

"It's very important that children read to learn by grade three."

Obituaries

To place an ad, call 586-826-7171 or visit mideathnotices.com/place.php

Diane Kathleen Cort

MILFORD — Diane Kathleen Cort, age 77, a longtime resident of Milford and a former resident of Detroit and Redford, died peacefully in her home on August 5, 2019 after a suspected heart attack. She was a longtime member of the Women's Auxillary of the Milford American Legion and worked as a Pathology Secretary for Detroit Riverview Hospital for many years. Diane was thoughtful, gentle and giving. She cherished her family and friends and will be missed by many, especially her husband of 60 years, Dennis Cort; her daughter, Denise Pattison; her dear grandchildren, Amanda (Brian) Tesso and Mykenna Pattison; great-grandchildren, Brady, Macy and Molly, as well as nieces, nephews, extended family members and dear friends, including her feline companion, Minnie. She was preceded in death by her parents, Thomas Foley and Marie (James) Caven; brother, James Foley and sister, Patricia Kirby. A Funeral Service was held at Lynch & Sons, Milford on Tuesday, August 13, 2019. Memorial contributions may be made in her name to the American Heart Association. For further information, phone Lynch & Sons, Milford at 248-684-6645 or visit www.LynchandSonsMilford.com



Daniel H. Vogel, Sr.

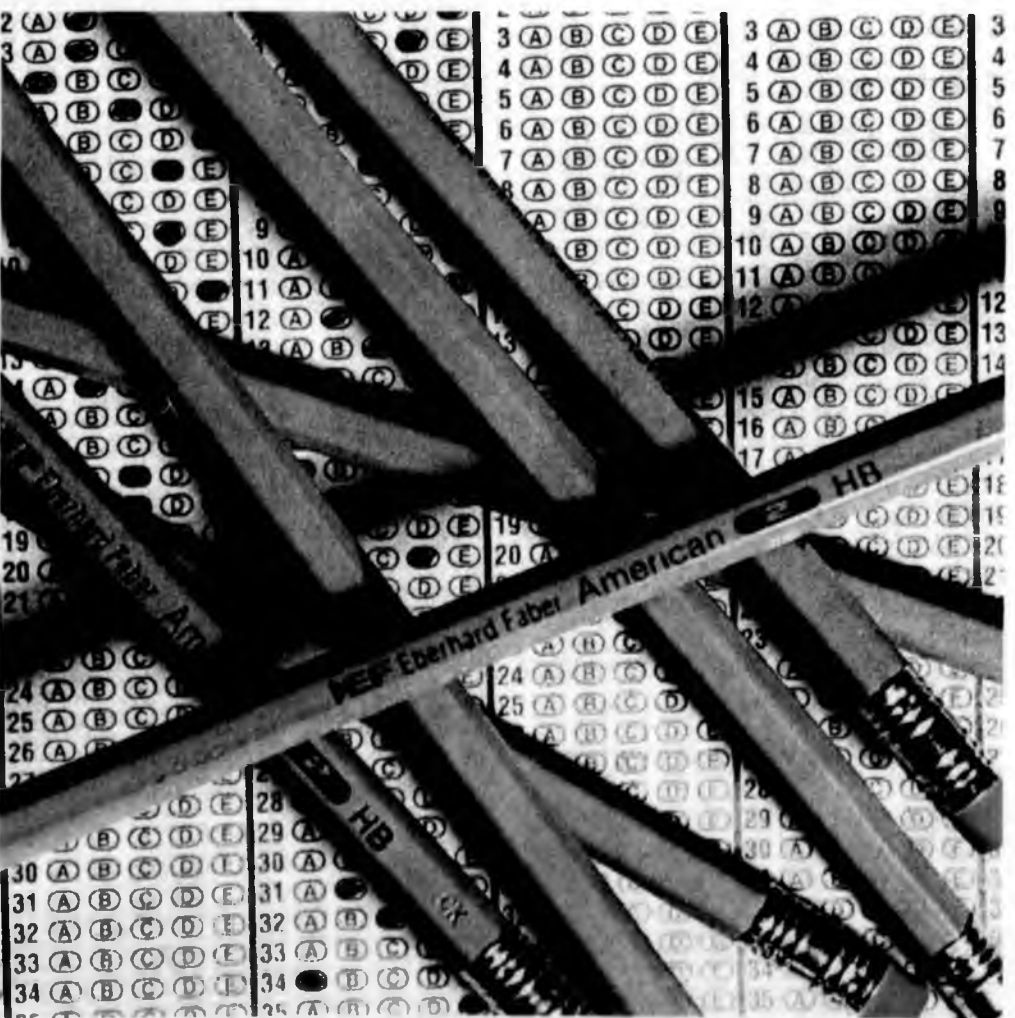
SOUTH LYON — August 11, 2019. Age 87. Beloved husband of the late Mabel. Loving mother of James R. (Modesta), Bonnie I. (Randy) England, the late Barbara A., Suzanne M. (Thomas) Poole, Daniel H., Jr. (Lori). Proud grandfather of 10, great-grandfather of 20 and great-grandpa of 2. Also survived by 3 nephews. Preceded in death by brother William.

Visitation will be on Saturday, August 17, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. until the time of funeral service at 12:30 p.m. from the Keehn-Griffin Funeral Home, 706 W. Main Street, (W. of Grand River Ave.), Brighton.

Memorial contributions may be made to the VA Hospital — Ann Arbor or Shriner's Hospital.

Share a memorial tribute with the family at keehnfuneralhome.com.

KEEHN-GRIFFIN
L.J. GRIFFIN FUNERAL HOME, INC.



Michigan's Read by Grade Three law goes into effect this school year and could hold back thousands of third grade students who fail to score "proficient" on the M-STEP. FILE / DETROIT FREE PRESS

Why vehicle destination fees are skyrocketing

Higher wages, bigger trucks, shipping blamed

Kelsey Mays
Cars.com

If you haven't shopped for a new car lately, you might balk at an item near the bottom of the window sticker: the destination charge.

Once a nominal fee of around \$500, such charges have ballooned in recent years. Destination charges on the top three best-selling cars through May 2019 – the Chevrolet Silverado, Ford F-Series and Ram pickup – are more than \$1,500 apiece.

Think that's steep? You're not alone.

Consider the 10 best-selling cars each year from 2013 through 2019, by Automotive News' tally. Sales-weighted destination charges averaged \$899 for the group in 2013, but they're up to \$1,289 today. Over six years, that's up nearly 45%. By contrast, J.D. Power's average new-car transaction prices increased only about 16% over the same period, while general inflation increased just 10%.

Zoom in on the 10 best-selling models each year, and median dealer-advised prices on Cars.com are up just 12% during the span – from \$32,840 in May 2013 to \$36,779 in May 2019. Index everything to 100, and here's how that compares to the increase in destination charges and inflation:

A profit play?

It wasn't always this way. When we reported on destination charges in 2013, such fees had inched upward during the prior decade (2003-12) at an average annual clip of 3.3%, or roughly on pace with the increase on overall new-car prices. But from 2013 to 2019, that's anything but the case: Fees have increased at an average annual rate of 6.2%.

Building cars is a relatively low-margin business. Are automakers trying to find an extra line item to wring out some profit? Tyson Jominy, who heads up J.D. Power's data consultancy, thinks not.

"I don't think many people realize that D&H (destination and handling) is intentionally a profit-neutral activity," Jominy wrote in an email to Cars.com.

Automakers, he said, "aren't supposed to hide profit in the field. An (automaker) attempts to set a rate that is the average across its portfolio to ship vehicles to all parts of the country."

It's possible to book a small profit or loss if those estimates are off, but if automakers "did their job perfectly," he added, "that would be a secondary impact, not the goal."

Shipping industry expenses rising

So why are rates going up? It's not due to the cost of fuel. Diesel fuel, a major factor in trucking costs, has actually fallen in price during the span.

But other factors are at play, said Sean Cabin, of vehicle-transportation firm RCG Logistics.

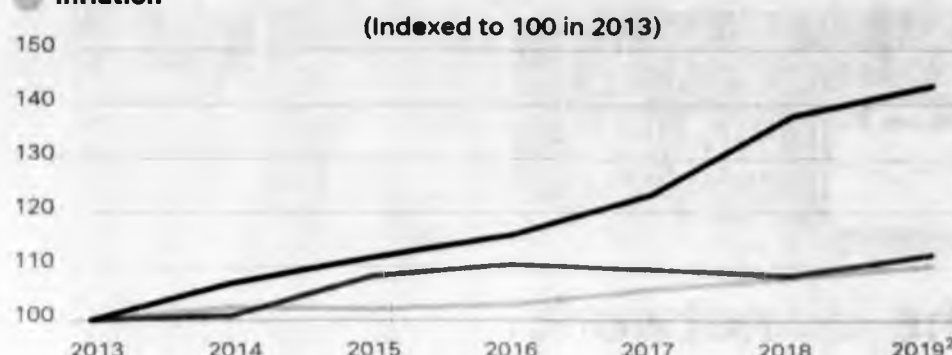
"The modest cost reduction (in diesel fuel) during the last year is more than compensated by tight driver and new equipment markets," said Cabin, RCG's chief compliance officer. "These bottlenecks have caused many carriers to reduce their driver hiring requirements and added further risk when purchasing essential equipment."

Vehicle transporters "must also factor in the standard increased cost of doing business caused by insurance rate increases, ELD (electronic logging device) compliance and maintenance," he added.

J.D. Power's Jominy points to related costs: higher wages, pricier trucks and less personnel in the shipping industry. He also pins much of the increase on the ballooning size of vehicles.

Destination charges outpace inflation

- Top 10 Best-selling Cars: Average destination charge¹
- Top 10 Best-selling Cars: Median Cars.com-advertised price
- Inflation



1 – sales-weighted, 2 – Year to date, through May

SOURCE: Automaker data, Automotive News sales data, Cars.com inventory, CPI inflation calculator
KARL GELLES/USA TODAY

Bigger cars, bigger cost

"Vehicles are bigger and longer across the board, including sedans," he said. "It's the opposite of airlines, who are able to squeeze more passengers into every flight to stay competitive by adding seats. It's like (automakers) are taking seats out of every flight, so prices are going up."

What's more, larger types of vehicles are diminishing the number you can fit on a train or trailer. Pickup trucks, vans and SUVs comprised about half of new-car sales in 2013, according to Automotive News. Through the first five months of 2019, they account for 7 in 10 sales. "The mix of trucks and SUVs in transport is pushing the rates higher," Jominy said. "When you could fit 100 vehicles on a train or 10 to a trailer, now you can fit fewer at every step of the delivery process, which adds cost."

Those shopping full-size pickups will bear the brunt of that cost. Destination fees ran for years between \$900 and \$1,000, but they've escalated well into four-figure territory in recent years:

In some cases, those fees reflect line-up-wide costs. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, the parent company of the Ram brand, charges \$1,495 across a range of model-year 2019 products, just a stone's throw from the Ram 1500's \$1,695 fee. In other cases, meanwhile, pickups carry a steep premium. Ford charges \$1,595 for destination on the F-Series, but less than \$1,100 on most of its SUVs, and under \$1,000 on cars like the Fiesta and

Fusion.

GM falls somewhere in between, charging \$875 for cars like the Chevrolet Cruze and Malibu but \$1,195 for SUVs like the Chevrolet Equinox and Traverse. Any way you cut it, full-size pickup trucks from the Detroit Three have some of the industry's steepest destination fees.

We reached out to all three automakers regarding the fees. GM did not immediately respond to our questions. J. Yan Cadiz, a spokesman for Ford, pointed to higher transportation costs for larger vehicles, as well as "high overall demand for rail (and) truck transport in this country."

'The total pricing package'

Jeff Bennett, a spokesman for FCA, declined to comment on components of the destination fee but said it's only a part of the larger picture.

"You can't look at any single element of the pricing equation," Bennett wrote in an email. "Rather, look at the entire equation, which includes MSRP, incentives, options, transportation and financing terms. Vehicle pricing is about the total pricing package."

Perhaps the best advice for shoppers? As early as possible in the process, insist on the vehicle's final price out the door, including all taxes and fees. That's our practice when we shop anonymously each year for the vehicle Cars.com chooses for the annual Best Of award.

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How to cope with a crowded, competitive job market

Eric Titner
thejobnetwork.com

In a perfect world, the notion of being involuntarily "in-between jobs" wouldn't exist. We'd all have our ideal dream jobs with the exact salaries, benefits, and responsibilities we wanted — and nothing would ever go wrong to threaten our positions throughout our professional journeys.

It's a nice dream for sure, but we all know that it's not a perfect world, which is especially true when it comes to today's job market. It's crowded, cut-throat, ultra-competitive, and often downright unfair out there, and can be pretty tough to navigate.

Things get especially difficult when you're in-between positions and on the job hunt — on top of the stress of being unemployed and the uncertainty surrounding when your next great opportunity will pop up, knowing how to cope with a crowded job market and its constantly shifting rules can be a real challenge.

If you're in this boat, don't let the stress and anxiety of the situation overwhelm you. Instead, keep reading to pick up some valuable ideas for coping and making it through.

Prioritize your search

The truth is, conducting a proper, full-scale job hunt is not a part-time affair — it should be your primary focus if you really want to open up the doors to new opportunities. This includes crafting your job materials like cover letters and resumes until they're just right, hunting high and low to unearth available openings in your industry and field, and continually tweaking and refining your approach as needed based on the



GETTY IMAGES

feedback and results you receive. Here's the bottom line: make sure you're investing the right amount of time, energy, and effort to your search and, if possible, put off other things in life that aren't as important until your job hunt starts to bear fruit.

Get flexible

Sure, most of us have a target position or ideal job in mind at the onset of our job searches, but for most of us hitting the bullseye right in the center doesn't always happen. If you're narrowing your search so much that you're only looking at jobs that exactly match your dream scenario, you're likely doing yourself a real disservice. Conducting a more flexible and expansive job search — which includes a wider swath of jobs that are related to your industry, background, and skill set — sets you up for a greater chance at success.

At the onset of your job search, invest some time in a purposeful brainstorm-

ing session with the goal of expanding your range of prospective positions. Trust us, thinking outside the box will be time well spent. You just might surprise yourself by landing an opportunity that turns out to be even better than you could've anticipated.

Use all of your resources

While most of us are now good at using public tools for job searching (like job posting sites and the career pages of companies we're interested in), many of us still fail to use the full arsenal of tools at our disposal. Not using your professional network to help find a job can put you at a tremendous disadvantage when facing a crowded market. A comprehensive job hunt in today's ultra-competitive field needs to include all of your available resources, which must include all of the personal and professional contacts you've acquired throughout your life. Sure, keeping up the hunt on the usual online channels is

important, but these days, more and more opportunities arise through personal contacts — and what better way to get around the crowd than through people who already know you and can vouch for your abilities and strengths? You never know who among your network may be aware of an opening that's just right for you, so be sure to leave no stone unturned.

Consider an alternate plan

It's always admirable to be dedicated to a goal — and this is especially true when you're on the job hunt. But sometimes having a backup plan is a wise strategy. If the job market in your field is especially competitive right now and opportunities are few, then consider an alternate route. This can include widening your search to include other positions in the same orbit as your target field or even trying something completely new until things get less crowded and intense. You may also want to journey down the entrepreneurial route and start your own business, leveraging your background or personal interests and being your own boss. Who knows — what may start out as a side project or short-term opportunity may turn into a lifelong pursuit.

Today's job market is a tough one: Many fields are beyond competitive and crowded, with a ton of qualified candidates for every open position. If you're facing this problem, then consider using the strategies and advice presented here to help you wade through the crowds to find your way to employment.

Eric Titner has been an editor and content creator for more than a decade. His primary professional focus has been on education- and career-related topics. He currently lives in New York City.

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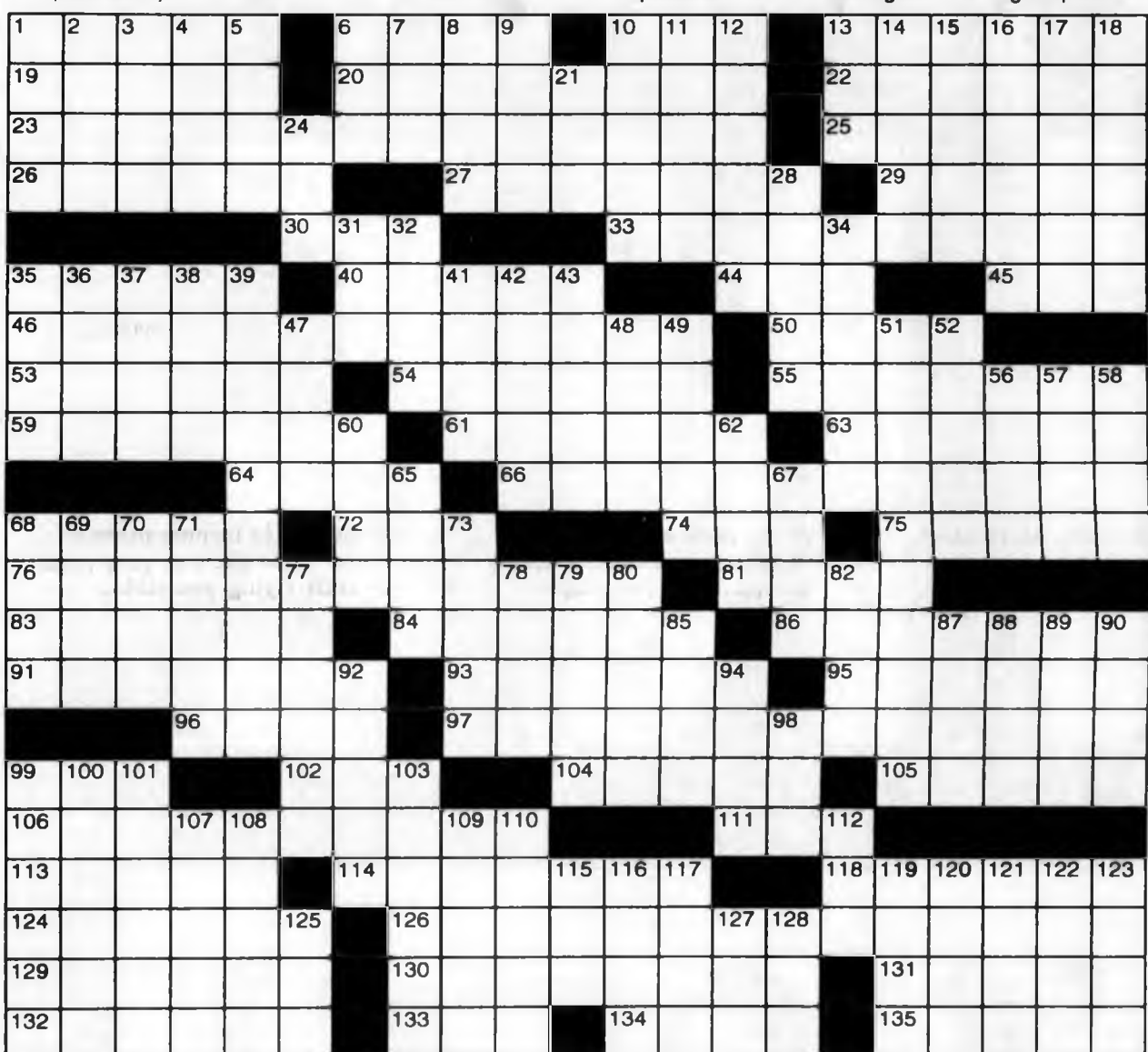
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59 Kindly
61 Shoplifts or embezzles
63 Three-horse wagon
64 Lead-in to byte
66 Cap required to be worn to gain entry?
68 Author Nin
72 Be liable to
74 Big antelope
75 Teal relatives
76 Impudent actress who played Cleo?
81 — bad example
83 Furtive observation
84 Having some replacement parts?
86 Hybrid citrus
91 Perilous stuff to skate on
93 Lethargy
95 Nomadic sort
96 Iraqi, say
97 Walk just beyond a northern Austrian city's border?
99 Pick, with "for"
- 102 Stir-fry tidbit
104 Dumbbells
105 Many-time golf champ
106 Small squirt of a zero-calorie drink?
111 With 37-Down, fin-footed mammal
113 "Tiny Dancer" singer John
114 Road show groups
118 Uncrowded
124 Sadness
126 Classic figure-skating painting?
129 Sculpted torso, maybe
130 White rat's condition
131 Chavez of labor
132 "Plus" qualities
133 Vote "for"
134 The whole nine yards
135 Additional
- 6 Fitting
7 — tai
8 Whizzes
9 Of right mind
10 Wrist or hip
11 Letter after G, spelled out
12 Eye steadily
13 It airs "The Conners"
14 Witch's "vehicle"
15 Bugs is one
16 Lure
17 Watery, as a membrane
18 Unit of lyrics
21 Gp. backing guns
24 Had a bite
28 Heavily built
31 "Better Call Saul" aier
32 Chicago mayor — Emanuel
34 Some low clouds
35 Melville captain
36 Grand party
37 See
111-Across
38 Oscar winner
39 Event for artisans
41 They follow pis
42 Gossip spreader
- 43 Fathered, as a foal
47 Nastase near a tennis net
48 Chomsky of linguistics
49 1983 Woody Allen role
51 Beef dish in a sour cream sauce
52 Make right
56 Spirit
57 Wrings (out)
58 Astonish
60 Gator cousin
62 IRS form info
65 Spin — (emulate Spider-Man)
67 Raw beef fat
68 Assist in evil
69 Have a bite
70 High peaks, in Italian
71 Menzel who voiced Elsa in "Frozen"
73 Fixes text
77 He drew L'il Abner
78 Rioter's haul
79 How a loss may be marked
80 Nada
82 Root for poi
85 "Far out!"
87 Grand party
88 Old film actor Jannings
- 89 Give for a bit
90 Tiny pasta
92 Roger of film review
94 Dull routines
98 Mao — -tung
99 City in west Texas
100 Aviators
101 Aquarium favorites
103 Windpipe
107 Rich dessert
108 Animal nose
109 Actor Peter O'—
110 Fitness program with Latin music
112 Hearth waste
115 — gow (casino game)
116 City of central Sicily
117 Actress Loretta
119 Tempo
120 TV's Trebek
121 Corrode
122 Sky twinkler
123 Biblical prophet
125 Craven of horror films
127 Prefix like "equi-"
128 Celebrity gossip site

DOWN

- 1 In amongst
2 Lose power
3 Allies' foe
4 Eagle cousin
5 Persian Gulf ruler



For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at (517) 702-4247 or smcclellan@michigan.com. Want more puzzles? Check out the "Just Right Crossword Puzzles" books at QuillDriverBooks.com

SUDOKU



Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

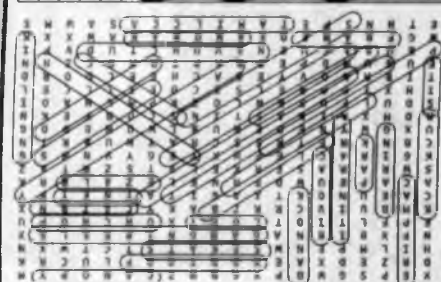
CAMP SITE WORD SEARCH

X E P S G W B P Y G B M Z C A N O P Y M
D R Z E D X A E X O B T O O F L U C R X N
H I L M P E N W S E K A T S T C T W X N
N F X D I B N A G A B G N I P E E L S X
E P F L T I O T L O F T X O H C N O P U
K M B U I V C R K Z B A K Y C A I R N X
C A E U N O K T X A G I T A T N E T F Y
A C A P E U W D F N N E L E Z A L B R K
S W R A R A S F R K E L V T S Z R T A Z
K G I R A C L E F H X Y E G Y V N H S G
C B N K R E T R S S C R A Y N U A R T N
U X G W Y N E D E R U B L W O N E D D G
R D M X A I N A S T I N S C O B F E K N
S D U L F U S E N L O Z K P M L N A O I
I H X I O O R E L S I C O E I L C E L
T I R R N O V Y E E A C H E E L D O R D
E U G U M D P E O B A P T R X S C Z H N
P E U S A C U E N E V O H C T U D V F I
W G F R A M E O E A N O R A K A W X X K
E T H N S P E T A M I L C C A S A W M S

WORDS

ACCLIMATE
ADVENTURE
ALL-SEASON
ANORAK
BACKCOUNTRY
BAFFLE
BANNOCK
BEARING
BIVOUAC
BLAZE
CAIRN
CAMPFIRE
CANOPY
CLIPS
DENIER
DUTCH OVEN
EMBERS
FOOTBOX
FRAME
GROUNDSHEET
HOLLOWAY
ITINERARY
KINDLING
LANTERN
LOFT
NOSEUMS
PARK
PONCHO
PURIFIER
RUCKSACK
SITE
SLEEPING BAG
S'MORES
STAKES
TENT

ANSWER KEY



9	6	2	8	4	1	9
9	4	7	1	6	9	2
1	8	8	4	2	9	6
7	8	9	9	4	2	8
2	9	4	8	1	6	8
6	1	8	7	9	8	7
8	9	1	6	9	4	2
4	7	9	2	8	1	6
8	2	6	9	8	7	9

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