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ONLINE COUPONS



Board OKs later school start times for teens

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Novi teens will have the chance to sleep a little later during the school week next fall, while some younger students will have to get up earlier.

The goal in changing school start times is to give teens better sleep, with

high school and middle school students starting and ending their day 45 minutes later.

The district began investigating changing the start times earlier this year based on medical research from organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which concluded that classes

shouldn't start before 8:30 a.m. for adolescents.

Novi High School students currently are among the earliest starters nationwide, with a start time of 7:15 a.m.

A committee studied how to more closely align with the CDC's recommendation while still taking into consideration busing schedules, child care, and

sports schedules, and ultimately proposed the following school day times for the 2020-21 school year.

The new times were adopted Dec. 19 by the board of education in a 6-0 vote. They will take effect pending contract negotiations with teachers.

See **TIMES**, Page 3A

Hometown Life in 2019



Dora Koski, right, leaps into the arms of her dad, Northville High School Principal Tony Koski, after receiving her diploma.
HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

Our top stories of the year, from business to schools

Phillip Allmen Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

What a year.

This past year has seen a lot of change in our communities. The November election ushered in new elected leaders to several communities, including Livonia, Northville and Birmingham.

There have been ups and downs. We've celebrated the opening of new restaurants, the newest graduating

More inside

Check out the Top 10 Hometown Life sports stories of 2019, **Page 1B**.

class, and we've seen projects like the Milford skate park or Novi's ITC trail come to fruition. There have been issues of a more serious nature, whether it's the loss of life, closing of local businesses or developments like the Northville Downs and Erwin Orchard properties.

There have been plenty of changes at Hometown Life, as well — eleven of our 14-member newsroom staff accepted an early retirement offer in late 2018. So our first task of 2019 was to rebuild the newsroom in this ever-changing media world.

It took longer than hoped, but the wait was worth it. We have a great staff and more people than ever visiting HometownLife.com — the digital

See **TOP STORIES**, Page 4A

Auto show launches in Novi this weekend

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If you're missing that new car smell that usually comes to Detroit each January, the Suburban Collection Showplace has you covered.

The Novi convention center is preparing for the first Southeast Michigan Auto Show, which runs Friday to Sunday. There, visitors can check out nearly three dozen vehicle brands across the new event center and Hall A of the showplace, about 215,000 square feet dedicated to all things auto.

Unlike the other auto show highlighting the newest models that usually snags headlines this time of year, this auto show is designed more for consumers looking to purchase now, opting for models currently on sale.

"The main goal for the show is just to be consumer-focused," said McKenzie Bowman, a promoter with the auto show. "We're not going to be selling vehicles on the show floor, but it's an opportunity for families to come in and see over 35 brands under one roof and shop for what they're looking to purchase."

The show will feature brands such as Ford, Chrysler, GMC, BMW, Toyota, Nissan and Kia. For those with more refined tastes, several luxury brands will also have vehicles on display, including Maserati, Jaguar, Porsche, Rolls Royce and Ferrari.

"Each brand is invited to bring their show-stopping vehicle, be it a tricked-out version of something they have or a classic car," she said.

The show's inaugural year comes as the North American International Auto Show in downtown Detroit opted to move from its January time slot to June. The show has been discussed for about a year since the NAIAS announced its move.

Bowman said the new show is not a direct result of the changes to the NAIAS, but said it made logical sense for the Suburban Collection Showplace to add an auto show in January because it's such an important time of year for automakers.

"That's a pivotal time in the market," Bowman said. "That's when people are trying to sell their new models

See **AUTO SHOW**, Page 3A

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Whitmore Lake man killed in US-23 crash

Kayla Daugherty Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Officials said a Whitmore Lake man died in a Dec. 23 crash that closed U.S. 23 south of Brighton for several hours. Police responded to a report of a crash involving a northbound Chevrolet pickup and a southbound semitrailer at 8:47 a.m. that day.

Police said the driver of the pickup, Duane Buers, 52, of Whitmore Lake, was killed in the crash.

Police said Buers had been northbound on U.S. 23 when his pickup crossed the median. The truck traveled into the cable barrier and struck a southbound 2015 Freightliner semitrailer, police said.

Officials said after striking the semi, the pickup truck was pushed back into the median, coming to rest on its side, entrapping the driver.

Police said prior to crossing the median and colliding with the semi, Buers had been involved in another collision on northbound U.S. 23 with a Ford F-250 pickup, driven by a South Lyon man.

The investigation into the circumstances of the crashes is continuing, officials said.

Linden resident Mark Tressel said he saw the crash through his rear view mirror.

"It felt like 15 minutes, it probably took 10 seconds," Tressel said.

Tressel said he did not see a collision between Buers' pickup and the semi. Rather, he said it appeared Buers' pickup was forced off the road.

He said the Ford pickup veered right and hit Buers' pickup causing it to spin out, collide with the cable barrier and then roll over six to eight times.

Tressel said he left a message with police.

No one else was injured.

U.S. 23 was closed in both directions for about five



Duane Buers, 52, was killed in a crash with a semi on U.S. 23 on Dec. 23. COURTESY OF GREEN OAK TOWNSHIP POLICE

hours after the incident.

Green Oak Township Police were assisted at the scene by the Green Oak Township Fire Department,

Michigan State Police, Livingston County Sheriff, Livingston County EMS, MDOT and Livingston Central Dispatch.

Lincoln Park man arraigned on sex assault charges

Kayla Daugherty Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Lincoln Park man is charged with six counts of sexual assault and one count of child sexually abusive activity after prosecutors said he lured and sexually assaulted a teenage girl.

Luis Santana, 24, approached a teenage girl at the Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi in April in his capacity as a perfume salesperson. He handed her a perfume sample card with his number on it, a law enforcement official testified in a hearing that led to charges.

He was charged in August, but was not arrested un-

til before he was arraigned Dec. 19.

He faces five counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count each of child sexually abusive activity and fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Santana and the reported victim began texting each other shortly after the incident at the mall and Santana sent the girl multiple pictures of his penis, according to Livingston County Sheriff's Office Detective Curt Novara.

In April, he picked up the girl from her home and drove to Lowe's Home Improvement off Latson Road in

Genoa Township.

While in the parking lot, the pair had sex multiple times and Santana told the girl, "If she wanted to make a porno he would pay her \$2,000," Novara testified.

According to Novara, the girl told Santana she was younger than 16, to which he replied, "I guess I'll be going to jail."

The Livingston Daily does not typically identify victims of sexual assault.

Santana is lodged at the Livingston County Jail in lieu of a \$200,000 cash/surety bond.

He is scheduled to return to court Jan. 28 for a preliminary exam and faces up to 15 years in prison.



Santana

hometownlife.com

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Northville Record (USPS# 396880) is published weekly (Thursday) by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 160 W Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226. Periodicals postage is paid at Detroit, MI and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Northville Record, 160 W Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226

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Subscription Rates:

Newsstand price: \$1.50

\$65 per 12 months home delivery

Home Delivery:

Customer Service: 866-887-2737

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Five suspected in Brighton Target break-in

Jennifer Timar
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Police say five people broke into the Target in Brighton before it opened the morning of Dec. 27, stealing electronics and other merchandise before fleeing after the two-minute robbery.

Police said the five suspects have not been arrested.

"The initial investigation indicates that five suspects took multiple cell phones, watches and other merchandise," according to a release from the Brighton Police Department.

Security camera footage captured images of the five people, who wore masks, as they entered the store through a broken glass entry door.

At about 5 a.m., police responded to an alarm at the store at 8043 Challis Road.

Officers found damage to two entry doors and



A security camera at the Target in Brighton captured images of five suspects breaking into the store early Dec. 27. COURTESY OF THE BRIGHTON CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

display cases in the store.

Brighton's crime scene investigation team proc-

essed the scene, assisted

by officers from Hamburg and Green Oak town-

ships' police departments.

Police say the suspects were in and out of the store in just under two minutes.

"The suspects left in a smaller, light-colored SUV in an unknown direction," according to the release.

Deputy Chief of Police Craig Flood did not release any further information later in the day, but said the break-in remains under investigation.

"We're working diligently on what leads we do have," he said.

Police are asking anyone with information to email Detective Brad Patton at pattonb@brightoncitypolice.org or call him at 810-844-5187.

CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on **January 14, 2019 at 7:00PM** in the Council Chambers of the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to consider:

PZ19-0049 (Bonner Properties LLC) Beck Rd, East of Beck Road and South of Nine Mile Road, Parcel # 50-22-33-100-013. The applicant is requesting variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 3.1.2 for front yard setback of 19 feet (30 feet allowed, proposed variance is 11 feet) and a rear yard setback of 15 feet (35 feet allowed, proposed variance is 20 feet) to accommodate the construction of a new house. This property is zoned single family residential (R-1).

PZ19-0051 (Araneae Inc/Ascension Providence Hospital) 47601 Grand River Ave, West of Beck Road and South of Grand River Ave, Parcel #50-22-17-400-046. The applicant is requesting variance from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 28-5(a); and 28-5(b)(1)(b) for a 263 Square Foot illuminated sign on the North Elevation of the building. This sign exceeds number of signs permitted and area of wall sign permitted based on setback from providence parkway drive. This property is zoned Office Service Commercial (OSC).

Publish: January 2, 2019

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'BigFoot' movie being filmed in Livingston

Brennan downfall movie in works

Jennifer Timar Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Those looking for real evidence of Bigfoot won't get it from an upcoming feature-length movie by a local media and community broadcasting company.

Brighton-based GINBC Studios founding CEO Joe Malik said his movie, "BigFoot of Island Lake," will be "a somewhat 'Monty Python'-type comedy."

He said film screenings later this year will be fundraisers for Connect Five Veterans Foundation, a local nonprofit that helps veterans in the county.

Several veterans are actors in the movie.

"The movie is also designed to help out other veteran organizations in Livingston County, and if vets from other places want to use it for a fundraiser, we can re-brand it for them to use," he said.

They have filmed many scenes at the Island Lake State Recreation Area, which spans parts of Lyon, Green Oak and Brighton townships.

After the holidays, they will complete filming scenes, including one at the Zukey Lake Tavern in Hamburg Township.

Malik said he anticipates screening the movie at the Historic Howell Theater in downtown Howell sometime in March.

Dates have not been set.

Bigfoot speaks

Erik Friesner, who plays Bigfoot, said he's not sure if the legend is real, but he is a fan of it — he collects Bigfoot memorabilia.

"It's a spoof on Bigfoot, a lighthearted comedy," Friesner, a former Brighton resident who recently moved to Waterford, said of the film. "I tried to do the best I could to imitate the videos they have of Bigfoot."

While the costume he wears clearly is fake when viewed up close, he said it may have confused some unsuspecting cyclists.

"We were out at Island Lake filming a little clip. There were mountain bikers biking through and they saw me and did a double take," he said.



Joe Malik, left, and Erik Friesner get goofy while filming Malik's upcoming movie "BigFoot of Island Lake." It is being filmed in Livingston County.

COURTESY OF ERIK FRIESNER

Improvised silliness

Malik and cinematographer Dale Adkins, of Brighton-based Daletec Studios are co-producing the movie.

Adkins said the film is unscripted.

"We do things as we go, shoot from the hip," he said.

"We let (the actors) do their own thing.

"We might give them a suggestion what to talk about, but they make it up."

He said veterans from the county are part of a fictitious search team looking for an anthropologist in the woods.

"They do the more serious stuff. They've got their real uniforms and guns. They are trying to make that look real and serious, but then we get to the Bigfoot part, which can't be serious because the costume looks fake," he said.

He said comical moments include a scene where Bigfoot finds an old pair of underwear in the woods, picks it up and sniffs it.

"We're just having fun," Adkins said. "I tried to make it like Bigfoot gets distracted easily and then remembers all the sudden what he's doing."

He said whether he would ever buy into the legend of Bigfoot depends on actual evidence. He is wary.

"They have pictures of footprints that are bigger than humans', but what gets me is when they find the footprint, it's only one. Bigfoot's got two feet, don't he?"

Brennan movie in the works

Malik is also planning to produce a movie based on the fall of former Livingston County judge Theresa Brennan.

That movie will be shot in Livingston County. Casting will begin Feb. 1.

The leading actress, Lorina Lynn, has already been cast.

Brennan pleaded guilty to perjury last month, essentially ending a 17-month courtroom drama that included ethics charges, a criminal prosecution and her removal from the bench in June.

She admitted lying to her ex-husband's attorney about asking her staff to research how to delete information from her phone.

She was charged in December 2018 with three felonies by the Michigan Attorney General's office.

Her plea comes months after the Michigan Supreme Court removed her from the bench for misconduct.

Brennan faced up to 15 years on the perjury charge, but her plea deal calls for no more than three months in jail when she is sentenced Jan. 17.

Auto show

Continued from Page 1A

and a lot of people are car shopping. So we were just going to capitalize on that time in the market."

The show is the first of its kind to happen in Novi, said Frank Novak, a marketing specialist with the Suburban Collection Showplace and the Southeast Michigan Auto Show.

While other car shows have focused on enthusiast groups and other activities, this show is the first to bring brand-new vehicles to the showroom floor in this way.

While the show has been planned for the last year, the majority of the work has taken place over the last six months. Crews at the center were preparing for the show before Christmas, laying out carpet and other flooring.

In addition to everyday vehicle names, several other companies will have a presence at the show, including Ferndale-based Bollinger Motors, which will showcase its Bollinger B1 and B2 electric trucks made from aluminum. Wixom-based Lingenfelter Performance Engineering will bring six vehicles, and Novi-based Kip Sheward Motorsports will bring several vehicles to the showroom floor.

For children, the auto show will feature a kids racetrack, a bounce house and face painting.

"If you're looking for a new vehicle, you can take your family and they would have something to do and you can also shop what kind of options there are to get a vehicle that fits," Novak said.

An invitation-only charity event will take place Friday to benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

The show is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Tickets for the show are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-11. Children age 5 and under are free. Parking at the showplace is \$5 per car.

More information can be found on its website at southeastmichiganautoshow.com.

The showplace hopes to bring the auto show back again every January. Adding such an event, Bowman said, makes sense given the facility's moniker and close relationship with its namesake.

"We always knew it was an option with our relation to Suburban Collection, and we're always looking for new and exciting events," she said.

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



The Southeast Michigan Auto Show will showcase more than 35 brands of vehicles this weekend.

COURTESY OF THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN AUTO SHOW



The Novi Community School District has approved a later start time at the middle and high schools.

HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

Times

Continued from Page 1A

■ 7:30 a.m. to 2:22 p.m. at Novi Meadows (fifth and sixth grades)

■ 8 a.m. to 2:44 p.m. at Novi High School

■ 8:30 a.m. to 3:11 p.m. at Novi Middle School

■ 9 a.m. to 3:52 p.m. at all elementary schools in the district

"It may not be perfect. We can still tweak it, but it's a great start," Trustee Mary Ann Roney said.

The district has received about 1,000 survey responses from parents in the last month since announcing the proposed change.

Superintendent Steve Matthews said there was "spirited discussion" at a Dec. 5 meeting on the topic.

Concerns included Meadows students waiting for the bus in the dark on winter mornings and scheduling. Matthews said students already wait in the dark for the school bus and that school officials realize that careful scheduling will mean continued access to athletic fields and gymnasiums for sports, although middle school practices may be shortened.

He noted there is no current waiting list for child care for Meadows students and the district will start "care options communication so (parents) can avail themselves."

While the most angst seems to come from the earlier start times for the intermediate school students and some parents suggested a change to the bus system as a remedy, that is not possible, Matthews said.

"We have too many students. Over 80 students on a bus is beyond capacity," he said. "We were asked to add buses and drivers, but we would need more than 20 additional drivers. Additionally, there is a nationwide and statewide shortage of bus drivers."

School Board President Bobbie Murphy said even if the district could afford to purchase more buses,

there would be no room in the bus garage for them.

"This is not an easy decision for any of us," she said. "This is the best we can do. Students are our number one priority. I pray our families can make adjustments that are not incredibly painful. There are sacrifices that come with having kids, and change is hard."

Treasurer Kathy Hood said she read through the more than 80 pages of survey comments and the concerns were being taken seriously.

"I understand the economic pressure it puts on families," she said "In the end, you can't fight biology and the data is clear. I think this is the right thing to do for all our kids."

While the board tried to allay concerns and said it would continue to look at tweaking the schedule and perhaps even discussing a reduction in homework, they believe a majority of district parents support the change.

"There was much, much support, and there were concerns and we have done our due diligence to find the most perfect imperfect option," Trustee Danielle Ruskin said. "This is something we can control and we will see where it goes."

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Top stories

Continued from Page 1A

presence of our 10 Observer & Eccentric and Hometown print publications – giving us better insight to the types of stories people actually read.

We've had plenty of success in 2019. We've seen a few stumbles, as well. We're planning for far more of the former in 2020 and much less of the latter.

Here's the news staff for Hometown Life and some of their most-read stories of the year.

David Veselenak

David Veselenak is one of two reporters who remained on staff after the buyouts. Veselenak has been with Hometown Life since 2012. He covers business across our footprint, which stretches from Milford to Westland and from Plymouth to Birmingham.

Here are his top stories for 2019:

The Claddagh Irish pub closes in Livonia after 15 years

The Claddagh was a mainstay along the Livonia-Northville Township border for 15 years before it closed abruptly in the beginning of December.

New pasty shop opens at familiar spot in Livonia

After a several-month closure, Wayne Hendrickson of Bloomfield Township decided to follow in his father's footsteps in bringing a little slice of the Upper Peninsula to Livonia.

He reopened the former Weldon's Pasties in the Merriman Mall shopping center off of Seven Mile. The shop is a separate entity from the shop his father operated in the same location from 1982 to earlier this year.

My Dad Nick's Copper Country Pasty Factory pays homage to Hendrickson's father, affectionately known around town as "Nick."

Steak 'N Shake closes 24-hour restaurant in Livonia

Livonia lost one of its 24-hour businesses in April, this one affecting those who love a milkshake and burger.

Representatives of Steak 'N Shake at 17200 S. Middlebelt, just north of Six Mile, say the restaurant has closed. Signs on the door indicated the closure was not permanent, and the website still indicates that the closure is temporary.



Floyd Galloway Jr. looks at a witness testifying in his Sept. 9 preliminary exam in Farmington Hills 47th District Court. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS

World of Beer no more: Canton, Woodhaven restaurants now Maverick's

What's in a name? Apparently, confusion among customers, which has led to a moniker change for a pair of pubs in Wayne County. The World of Beer restaurants in Canton and Woodhaven have changed their names and likeness to Maverick's.

The change, which took effect in mid-November, stems from a desire to have the restaurant be known as just that: a restaurant.

Livonia man missing since Feb. 22 found dead

This March story wrapped up the investigation into a missing person report for Robert Quist, who disappeared several weeks earlier in the Five Mile and Newburgh area.

The night he disappeared, a friend called 9-1-1 saying Quist had a medical emergency. When paramedics arrived, they could not find Quist.

Susan Vela

Susan Vela joined Hometown Life in March. The veteran journalist has worked at various newspapers in Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois.

She currently covers public safety issues across our footprint in western Wayne and Oakland counties.

Here are her top stories for 2019:

Police investigate after South Lyon High senior found dead in home



Michael Fletcher, 44, of West Bloomfield, a teacher at Lakeland High, pleaded no contest to drunken driving Dec. 12. He arrived at the school intoxicated Sept. 18.

A South Lyon High School 17-year-old died by suicide in late May. Rumors swirled at the time of a suicide pact, but the subsequent investigation debunked that story.

Police: Lakeland High teacher was drunk at school with blood alcohol 4 times legal limit

A Lakeland High School teacher arrived at school Sept. 18 intoxicated. White Lake police said Michael Fletcher registered a blood-alcohol content of more than four times the legal .08% limit at about 8 a.m. that morning. He was arrested for that, as well as for a warrant dating back to October 2018 for a similar incident.

Fletcher pleaded no contest to the drunken driving charge and told the judge he "absolutely" had a drinking problem before agreeing to enter the sobriety court program, which provides intensive therapy to people who have a drinking problem.

Judge sends Floyd Galloway, charged in Stislicki murder case, to circuit court

The Danielle Stislicki case has grabbed attention she disappeared three years ago in Farmington Hills. Police have long suspected Floyd Galloway killed her. He is now on trial for her murder, even though her body was never found.

Galloway, 32, is a convict now behind bars in a separate criminal sexual conduct case.

Birmingham grad goes missing on

Lake Michigan

Jacob Sandy, a Birmingham Seaholm High School graduate, disappeared in mid-May during a Lake Michigan kayaking excursion. He was kayaking offshore when a storm blew in.

His body was recovered two weeks later, on May 29.

Four agencies involved in arrest at Kensington Metropark after chase starting in Canton

Cruising through many of our communities, pursuit of a stolen vehicle from Canton to Kensington drew a strong police presence. State troopers tried stopping the vehicle, which fled to the metropark. Officers found the vehicle on the park's bike trail, and found the suspects shortly after.

Ed Wright

Ed Wright first joined Hometown Life in 2004 as a sports writer. He returned in March 2018 as a news reporter and was the other reporter on staff after the early retirements.

He covers the Northville, Canton and Plymouth communities.

Here are his top stories for 2019:

What's in those mysterious, police-escorted caravans traveling on Haggerty, Grand River?

For several weeks in late October and early November, surface streets like Haggerty and Grand River were blocked

See TOP STORIES, Page 5A



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Top stories

Continued from Page 4A

off so 175-foot trucks with police escorts could drive through. Social media was running rampant on what it could be.

Turns out they were compressors for the Lansing Board of Water & Light's new Delta Energy Park site. They were so big, their route was restricted to surface streets from the Port of Detroit to Lansing. About a dozen trucks came through the area on the way to Lansing.

Canton neighbors ticked off at Pulte for its alleged 'breaking of promises'

With plans for a new development in Canton, a contingent of Canton Township neighbors hope to stop the plans. Residents of the subdivision turned out in September in opposition to Pulte's latest plans for a second phase to the subdivision development.

As of mid-December, Pulte was still working to receive all of its approvals to continue development.

Canton family wants others to learn from its toxic-mold nightmare

A Canton Township family wanted to warn others in this October story not to take ongoing health concerns lightly.

The family had a series of unexplained health issues for a year.

Fertility tests eventually led to the discovery that the mom had been slowly poisoned by airborne mold, which experts in the field discovered had been living in the unfinished basement and crawl space of the family's home.

Here's the latest news on Canton's plans to turn Ford Road into boulevard

Part of the deal with voters approving a tax increase for road projects was transforming Ford Road in to a Boulevard.

The latest announcement provided a tentative time line for the project. Construction could start as soon as late 2021.

Construction coming to super-busy Northville Township intersection

Traffic is always an issue. When there's construction, it's even worse.

So when Wayne County announced work on the intersection of Six Mile and Beck roads in Northville Township was starting Sept. 23, people were concerned.



The 200,000-pound compressors hauled along Haggerty Road and Grand River Avenue had people on social media wondering what was under the tarpaulins. COURTESY OF ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND COUNTY



Tedd Wallace, former mayor of South Lyon, met former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden while grocery shopping in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, on March 6. COURTESY OF TEDD WALLACE



Maureen LaFontaine, co-owner of the auto dealership empire, died Oct. 28. SUBMITTED

Susan Bromley

Susan Bromley returned to Hometown Life in February, having worked here in 2016 on a part-time basis covering Novi. In her return, she still covers Novi, as well as the South Lyon, Milford and Birmingham areas.

Here are her top stories in 2019:

Former mayor of South Lyon meets former VP Joe Biden while grocery shopping in St. Croix

Former Mayor Tedd Wallace was a snowbird, spending winters in St. Croix as a substitute teacher. In March, he ran into former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden at a local grocery store. The two had a brief exchange and Biden took time for a selfie with Wallace.

At the time, Biden was still undecided on running for president in 2020. The story was picked up nationally, with commentators speculating on whether he would reenter the political fray.

Wallace died Sept. 10

South Lyon Pumpkinfest 2019 - parade, pooches, and more

Everyone loves a festival, and the photo gallery from this year's Pumpkinfest were popular among readers, highlighting some of weekend's fun, including the parade, dog competition and more.

Maureen LaFontaine, beloved matriarch of auto empire and philanthropist, dies

The matriarch of the fast-growing metro Detroit auto empire died Oct. 28.

LaFontaine includes 34 retail franchises, five collision centers and 15 Michigan locations and employs over 1,300 people, many of whom Maureen LaFontaine considered family and who referred to her as "madre."

The LaFontaines are well-known for their philanthropic efforts and have donated generously to many local causes and projects through the years.

Maureen LaFontaine was most proud of her family. In addition to her husband and four children, she leaves 15 grandchildren.

Livonia woman wins on 'Jeopardy!' with smarts, timing, nerves of steel

Amanda Holm won the day on "Jeopardy!" The Livonia resident was in the episode that aired Feb. 15, making a dramatic comeback in the second round. Although she missed the Final Jeopardy question, she bet wisely, beating the other contestants and winning \$13,200.

Guernsey Farms Dairy is getting \$1 million makeover, improving restaurant, adding liquor

Guernsey Farms Dairy is celebrating its 80th anniversary next year with a \$1 million makeover. It plans a facelift to the 28,000-square-foot facility that

See TOP STORIES, Page 6A

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Top stories

Continued from Page 5A

houses a restaurant, ice cream shop and milk processing plant located on three acres at 21300 Novi Road.

A new menu and liquor license are planned, as well as better seating inside. John McGuire established Guernsey Farms Dairy in 1940 in downtown Northville. In 1966, the business moved to the current Novi location. It's expanded over the years, including a 100-seat restaurant and store in 1985 to serve construction workers building homes in the area.

Shelby Tankersley

Shelby Tankersley is the most recent hire among the news staff, having started in May. She came to Hometown Life from the Oxford Leader, where she worked after graduating from Oakland University. Tankersley covers Livonia, Westland, Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Here are her top stories in 2019:

Madam Mayor: Brosnan wins Livonia's top spot by razor-thin margin

Politics dominated the Livonia landscape for much of 2019. A vocal, at times bitter, race ensued between Maureen Brosnan and Laura Toy to become the city's first female mayor. Brosnan won by less than 200 votes.

MDOT plans massive I-275 improvement project for 2020

Construction can be a challenge, particularly when it's along Interstate 275, one of the region's busiest roads for commuters. The October story reported on MDOT's invitation to residents to discuss the project that is expected to take up the bulk of the 2020 construction season.

The project stretches through Northville, Livonia, Plymouth and Canton and includes pavement and bridge work throughout the area.

Here are the two, maybe three, schools Wayne-Westland will close

Wayne-Westland Community Schools has seen its student population drop in recent years, heavily impacted by school of choice. In May, the school board approved closing Marshall Upper Elementary at the end of the current school year, and Hoover Elementary following the 2020-21 school year.



Maureen Brosnan defeated Laura Toy by 164 votes to become the first woman elected mayor of Livonia in November.

HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

Depending on enrollment numbers, Walker-Winter Elementary may close the school year after that.

Primary sets up showdown for Livonia's first female mayor

In more Livonia election coverage, this story revealed the winners of the primary election – Brosnan, Toy and Bruce Tenniswood for mayor – as well as the top eight candidates seeking a position on city council.

Man buys winning \$2 million lottery ticket in Westland

Christmas came early for a Westland man on Thanksgiving Day when he bought a \$2 million winning Classic Black lottery ticket. The life-changing ticket was bought at the Westland Food Store on 1690 South Venoy Road.

John Heider

John Heider is a veteran photojournalist who first joined the company in 1996, covering the Novi-Northville area. After a break, Heider returned to Hometown Life in late January 2019. Heider handles photographic needs across our coverage area.

Here are his top photo galleries in 2019:

Detroit Catholic Central's 2019 graduation ceremony, May 19th, Ann Arbor's Hill Auditorium

Livonia Churchill's June 2nd graduation ceremony

South Lyon High's class of 2019 June 8 commencement ceremony at EMU's Convocation Center

Heider was quite busy this past spring, running about to cover as many high school graduation ceremonies as possible.

Angela's Ristorante opens in Westland

This photo gallery accompanied a story on the opening of the restaurant, the second for owner Ernesto Magdaleno-Guzman, who wanted to open a spot in western Wayne County. He opened the restaurant Nov. 11.

Floyd Galloway, Jr. preliminary exam in the disappearance of Danielle Stislicki

Photos accompanying the preliminary exam where prosecutor's began building their case alleging he murdered Danielle Stislicki were popular.

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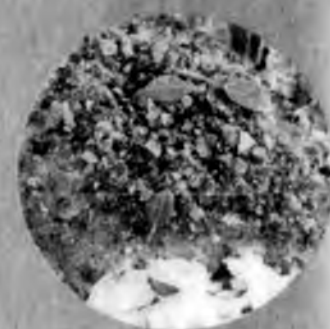
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Twins Jenna, left, and Maya Millis both contribute to Stevenson football. Jenna is a varsity cheerleader and Maya is the team's extra point kicker.



Bob Ranta, 87, of South Lyon, and his niece, Sandy Logan, 57, of Northville, run in the Detroit Free Press Marathon. SUBMITTED



Catholic Central's Kevon Davenport won his fourth state wrestling title. COURTESY OF SCOTT CONFER

Butcher gets 300th hoops win to carry on tradition

Colin Gay hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Denny Butcher comes from a basketball family. His father, Donnie, played in the NBA for the New York Knicks and the Detroit Pistons from 1961-66, coaching the Pistons from 1967-68. His brother, also named Donnie, played basketball at Auburn.

Basketball seemed to be ingrained in Denny Butcher's blood, and he followed in his father's footsteps. After 27 years as a head boys basketball coach in Michigan, making stops at Orchard Lake St. Mary's, Brandon, Walled Lake Central, Hartland and, for the past five years, Walled Lake Western, Butcher has reached 300 wins in his career.

Butcher had the opportunity to accomplish his 300th win during the 2018-19 season. But with the Warriors ending the season with losses to South Lyon and Milford, the head coach had to wait until Dec. 10 - a 57-48 victory against Plymouth Christian Academy - to get the milestone.

"I got so many texts from the members of the team that had graduated - we graduated the whole starting five last year," Butcher said. "They were texting me how excited they were and disappointed that they could not get it done for me last year."

Butcher played basketball for Lakeland High School and continued at Orchard Lake St. Mary College under head coach Glen Donahue, a Michigan Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Famer with more than 800 career wins.

Butcher learned a lot playing for Donahue, crediting his college coach for teaching him how to structure practice and perfecting the discipline of game preparation, looking at the game differently than a player does.

But Butcher always wanted to be on the court, not the sideline.

"I wanted to be a player my whole life," Butcher said. "I wanted to be like my dad. It wasn't in my cards, I just wasn't good enough."

Whether it was coaching for eight seasons at Walled Lake Central or coaching in his fifth season for the Vikings' rival Walled Lake Western, Butcher has found a home in the area.

"The Walled Lake community, in general, from a family atmosphere, the whole district is just wonderful to be a part of," Butcher said. "Great people, great administration, hard-working people."

Butcher said he is not in the coaching business for the money. He called basketball coaching the most pure form of coaching, accounting for the amount of time and energy it takes to perform well.

Growing up in a basketball family, Butcher's father knew what his son was going through.

"My father has unfortunately passed away," Butcher said. "He would love to come to my games back at St. Mary's and Walled Lake Central, and just see the joy from the kids' eyes and to see it run in my family too."

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Twitter @ColinGay17.

A year of champions



Mercy volleyball coach Loretta Vogel, left, and her team won the state title this past season. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS

Local high school teams won 15 state titles in 2019

Phillip Allmen hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's been an exciting sports year in Hometown Life land.

The northwest metro Detroit area saw plenty of success in the high school varsity sports world with a quite a few state titles.

Detroit Catholic Central and Detroit Country Day each won the championship in their respective divisions for ice hockey. Mercy High School and Birmingham Seaholm each brought home a state title for girls swim and dive.

Farmington gymnastics, Catholic Central wrestling, Harrison High bowling, Brother Rice lacrosse, Marian soccer, Novi girls soccer, Country Day girls tennis, Academy of the Sacred Heart girls tennis, Northville girls golf, Marian Girls golf, Mercy volleyball

Some other teams came oh so close.

Detroit Country Day advanced to the state football finals. Brother Rice reached the state semifinals in baseball. Westland John Glenn reached the state semifinals in wrestling. Wayne Memorial girls basketball fell in the state semifinals, as did the Salem boys and John

Glenn girls bowling teams. Milford, Lakeland and Birmingham girls skiing reached the state finals along with Bloomfield Hills boys skiers. Birmingham Groves boys swim and dive reached the finals before falling to perennial powerhouse Dexter.

Catholic Central and Marian reached the finals in lacrosse, and Birmingham girls and Cranbrook Kingswood girls made it to the semifinals, but all fell short on claiming the title.

Plymouth girls soccer reached the

See CHAMPIONS, Page 2B

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Members of the Novi girls soccer team prepare plant a few kisses on their trophy. They won the state title this past season. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS



South Lyon right fielder Nate Logan gets ready to scoop up a base hit that reached him in foul territory during the MHSAA All Star Game.



Brother Rice's Tito Flores locks a pop-up into his mitt while playing center field during the all-star game.



Detroit Country Day players crash into the O-line of Grand Rapids Catholic Central during their Division 4 MHSAA state final. Country Day lost, 44-0.



Former Stevenson High hockey coach and Redford Union High administrator Mike Humitz died Jan. 1, 2019, at 54.



Farmington High freshman Jasmine Ajagbe wears a Mardi Gras-style mask for the school's Homecoming Parade.

Champions

Continued from Page 1B

finals, too, before a loss to Novi, one of the top teams in the country.

In girls tennis, Bloomfield Hills, Sea-holm and Cranbrook Kingswood all earned a spot in the state finals before falling to the eventual champions. South Lyon girls golf and Cranbrook Kingswood boys tennis each reached the finals but couldn't eke out that last victory.

Individuals shined, as well, like Catholic Central's Kevon Davenport winning four straight individual wrestling title, Plymouth's Carter Solomon winning the individual boys cross country championship or Northville's Emily Roden and Mercy's Greta Gidley winning individual swim titles, to name a few.

There's been a lot of excitement internally, too. Why? It's a new sports staff. Longtime sports reporters Brad Emons, Marty Budner and Tim Smith accepted early retirement offers at the beginning of 2019.

Andrew Vaillencourt and Colin Gay have grabbed the baton in the local sports world. Vaillencourt started in February and Gay joined the team in August.

Vaillencourt, an Indiana Hoosier, can be reached at avaiillenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt. Gay, an Ohio State Buckeye, can be reached at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @ColinGay17.

General sports information, stats and game results can be sent to livsports@hometownlife.com (both Andrew and Colin will receive the email) and also follow @htlsports on Twitter to catch all the sports updates.

Top 10 stories of 2019

We appreciate our sports readers who helped make 2019 our strongest one yet. Online, we had more readers than ever, something we expect to continue in 2020.

Here's a look at the most popular local sports stories read on hometownlife.com.

Farmington High Homecoming football game canceled after Pontiac incident

A shooting in Pontiac the day before the Farmington vs. Pontiac high school football game prompted Pontiac's decision to cancel its road game. Farmington proceeded with its homecoming activities like the parade and tailgate.

Farmington had two bye weeks this season, a relatively uncommon happening. The Falcons earned a spot in the playoffs, beating North Farmington in the opening round before falling to U of D Jesuit in the district finals.

Detroit Catholic Central soccer forfeits seven games after self-reporting

ineligible player

The private high school in Novi contacted the Michigan High School Athletic Association this fall to report the school had an ineligible player on its soccer team at the beginning of the season. That resulted in the team — at the time ranked seventh in the state — forfeiting seven games.

The team showed plenty of success, earning a spot in the postseason regional finals where the Shamrocks lost to Novi High School.

Video of fight after Brother Rice-Catholic Central hockey game hits social media

Catholic schools have been in the news quite a bit in recent weeks for less than ideal reasons. Among them? A video circulating online apparently shows a brawl breaking out between students at Birmingham Brother Rice and Detroit Catholic Central following a Dec. 7 hockey game between the two schools at USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth.

Snapchat footage reposted on Twitter shows a group of students fighting, many wearing orange. Plymouth Township police were still investigating the incident. Catholic Central released a statement stating that "two of our students were attacked by a group of individuals who do not attend our school." Brother Rice declined to comment on the incident.

Michigan high school football playoff projections through week eight

With one week left in the regular season, everyone wanted to know whether or not their favorite team was poised to make the high school playoffs.

Livonia Stevenson twin sisters take on Friday night football as player, cheerleader

Twin sisters Maya and Jenna Millis prepared for Friday night football, hopeful for a Livonia Stevenson victory.

The twist — Maya plays on the football team, while Jenna is a member of the cheer team.

In Maya's first year on varsity football, she tallied 25 points: 22 extra points and a field goal.

"We've always been waiting for the year we're both on varsity and I can cheer her on," Jenna said. "It's so cool, all of my friends know she's my sister so when she kicks we all go crazy, it's so much fun."

Local baseball players shine in Michigan High School All-Star game at Comerica Park

It was a night to remember for the 50 Michigan High School baseball all-stars who closed out the season at Comerica Park in Detroit this past spring.

The East All-Stars came out victorious, defeating the West, 11-3.

Almost a dozen players from the Hometown Life coverage area participated in the game, nine on the East and two on the West. Two of the game's biggest contributors hailed from the Plymouth-Canton school district.

The East squad also featured two area coaches. Leading the East was Li-



Brother Rice's Mike Cosgrove runs by Catholic Central's Justin Petouhoff during the state title boys lacrosse game. DAVID DONOHER/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

vonja Franklin's Matt Fournier, who was joined by John Glenn coach Lawrence Scheffer as an assistant.

To add even more local flavor, Novi's Sophie Psiakis sang the National Anthem and God Bless America.

This South Lyon man, 87, was in a class by himself at Free Press Marathon

Bob Ranta was in a class by himself at the Free Press Marathon Sunday as the only person age 80 or older to finish the race: 26.2 miles in a time of just under 8 hours, 19 minutes.

The race was his 21st Free Press Marathon, and his 91st marathon overall, which includes 26 ultra marathons, in 38 years of running. He has also run countless smaller races and also competes in triathlons, including four in 2019.

Salem interim AD Tim Baechler fires football coach Justin Reed

Losing seasons are never fun. After the Salem Rocks went a combined 2-16 in the past two seasons, Salem interim Athletic Director Tim Baechler fired coach Justin Reed. Injuries didn't help this fall; the entire JV team was promoted to the varsity team toward the end of the year.

Baechler was the Canton football coach for 20 seasons before retiring af-

ter the 2017 season. He took over as Salem AD after Brian Samulski left to take the same position this fall at Northville High.

Hockey community, Redford Union Schools mourn loss of Mike Humitz

It was a sad start to the new year when Mike Humitz, who had been gravely ill and fighting cancer in hospice, died New Year's Day. Humitz, who coached at Livonia Stevenson High for three seasons (2004-07), not only left a legacy in hockey, but also in education as an assistant principal at Redford Union High School.

MHSAA high school football playoff bracket announced

With the regular season over, the Michigan High School Athletic Association announced who made it to the playoffs with hopes of making it to Ford Field and a state title.

Locally, 15 teams earned a playoff berth. Only one, Country Day, made it to Ford Field, though the team fell short in the finals.

Starting next year, the MHSAA will use a new point system to determine the playoffs.

Contact content strategist Philip Allmen at pallmen@hometownlife.com. Follow us on Twitter @hometownlife and @htlsports.

Northville state champ swimmer eyes Olympics

Andrew Vaillencourt
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Northville freshman swimmer Emily Roden is making waves.

In her first year as a high school swimmer, the young star captured first place in the 100 butterfly in the state finals to become a state champion. She recorded a 55.43 to secure the top spot.

A talented swimmer since she began swimming at Goldfish Swim School at age five, Roden rose quickly through the ranks to become one of the top area swimmers and member of the Novi Sturgeons club team, which she's been a part of since she was seven. Now at Northville High, she's a key member of the team that placed eighth in the state.

The 100 fly is her best event, recording a personal best in the KLAA conference meet. However, she's had two chief competitors in her quest to be the state's 100 fly champion: freshman Rhian Russell from Rochester Adams and sophomore Brady Kendall from Plymouth.

Roden has been competing against the two swimmers for years now, especially Kendall. They traded victories during the season as Roden came out on top in a regular season dual-meet and Kendall winning at the conference finals. A year younger than Kendall and faced with another star freshman in Russell, Roden knew she'd have to be at her best to earn first place.

"I remember finishing and looking up at the board and seeing that I was in first, it was really exciting," Roden said. "Even though this is my first year in high school, I've been racing some of those girls during club season, so I knew some of them and to finally beat them was really exciting. When I got out of the water, all of my friends were around and they jumped on top of me and were screaming, it was one of the best feelings I've ever had in my entire life, just to feel the entire team behind you and see everyone so happy for you."

It was an incredible moment for Roden, who now knows she has the pressure of being a defending champion next year.

"Obviously I feel like I have to keep it now, since I'm a freshman there's only one way to go and that's down and I



Northville freshman swimmer Emily Roden won the state championship in the 100 fly. COURTESY OF BRIAN MCNEFF

don't want to do that," Roden said.

For the Mustangs, Roden also swims the 200 free and is part of the 400 free relay and 200 medley relay. She set a personal best of 1:51.60 in the 200 free during the conference championships, as well as a personal best 54.97 in the 100 fly.

Close with many of the older girls on the team, Roden said she hopes to someday be one of the upperclassmen that younger teammates can look up to the way she does Northville's current group of juniors and seniors.

"I came into high school not really knowing what to expect, but it was a lot of fun," Roden said. "A lot of my friends are older than me, so it's fun to be in relays with juniors and seniors. They really motivate you more and push you. I aspire to be like them and swim as fast as them."

She said she spent a lot of time during the high school season improving her turns and her lower body strength. Her coach, Brian McNeff, says she has a great work ethic and is a powerful swimmer.

"The way that she moves through the water, it looks a lot easier than other

people because of the strength that she has," McNeff said.

Being part of a team was a positive change as well after being used to the individual focus at the club level.

"I feel like the team atmosphere really changed me a lot because we're all motivating each other and not being so individualized, it's more team-oriented," Roden said. "It was a big change but I liked it a lot."

Roden has a lot still to accomplish in her high school career, but she does want to swim in college and has her eyes on an even bigger prize: the 2024 Olympics.

Her goal is to make the cut at Olympic trials and see where that takes her. McNeff said he absolutely believes it's something Roden can achieve, adding he wouldn't put a limit on anything she can do in the future.

Part of her love for swimming is tied to a former Olympic swimmer, Missy Franklin. Roden said she's always admired her, some of that stemming from a movie called Touch The Wall, which features Franklin in her journey to the 2012 Olympics.

"She's great to have on the team,"

McNeff said. "She came in with a lot of hype, she had a lot of friends on the team that were telling me about her, so we knew the talent, but you never know what kind of trainer or type of person they are, but she was great right from the start. She works extremely hard at practice, fit in right away with the rest of the girls and always seemed like she was having a great time."

Now that the rest of the state is well aware of how talented she is, Roden will have a target on her back as other swimmers hope to take her spot as Michigan's best butterfly swimmer. That won't bother her, though. She plans to continue having fun and swimming fast.

"She's very humble," McNeff said. "She had no clue about where she was ranked going into the state meet or anything like that, she just wanted to swim fast and do what was best for the team, so I thought that was really cool. She really seems happy to be at the meets and be a part of the team, she wanted to have fun and swim fast."

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at avallenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

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Some Livonia residents wary of 5G technology

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A group of Livonia residents is hoping to prohibit, or at least limit, 5G's presence in the city.

5G, or fifth-generation cellular wireless, is the newest and most advanced mobile data speed option.

Livonia City Council recently unanimously approved an ordinance amendment requiring a permit for small cell wireless facilities or for smaller cellular antennas attached to infrastructure like streetlights.

Councilman Scott Bahr also asked council to send the issue to the economic development, strategic planning and technology committee, which it did after another 7-0 vote.

A large group from the audience, mostly parents of children who have physical or learning disabilities, spoke to encourage council to use Ordinance 543 to limit 5G.

"I just cannot consent to this 5G being forced into my home and affecting my daughter," said resident Amy Ciavaglia, adding she has a daughter with disabilities. "Her health will deteriorate. She can't use cell phones, she can't use tablets of any kind or she develops tics within minutes."

Another woman said 5G towers could adversely af-

fect her son, who has a form of epilepsy.

"He's very sensitive to everything. Eating a potato chip, the full moon, a storm can cause a seizure, and any seizure can become life threatening for him," said resident Amanda Ordaz.

Dr. Angie Colbeck, a retired pediatrician, and Dr. Jeremy Shaft, a chiropractor, also spoke out against 5G.

"I just beg you guys to please look at this very, very seriously," said Shaft. "The health of our community and our people are at stake here."

Bahr insisted the ordinance as it stands does nothing to make it easier for 5G installations.

"As we stand right now, there's 5G being installed in this city without us doing anything," he said.

"There will continue to be 5G installed in this city as a result of this ordinance change. What this does allow is for us to have a say on a few things."

But, Councilwoman Cathy White noted there are limits to how far the city can go.

"Federal and state officials have limited our authority and this ordinance amendment is our attempt to exert what remaining authority we have to put some restrictions on this," she said.

If council is to take the issue up again, it will be after the matter leaves the committee.



Oliver VanBelle, center, stands with his bus driver, Bev Zack, right, and his parents, Ryan and Brooke.
ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Special-ed bus driver and student share special bond

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

One morning last week as Brooke VanBelle was getting her 6-year-old son Oliver ready for school, she looked at the clock and saw she was running "maybe a minute or two late."

That could evolve into a major issue, with some school bus drivers running on a schedule and not particularly fond of waiting.

But not Oliver VanBelle's bus driver, Bev Zack.

"When we opened the front door, the bus was already there, the door was open and the kids were chanting, 'O-li-ver! O-li-ver!'" VanBelle said. "It was just the coolest thing."

Zack was the orchestrator.

Parents will always feel a bit apprehensive when they send their kids off to school in the early years, especially when those children have special needs - Oliver was born with Down syndrome.

But Zack's warm personality toward Oliver ignited a special bond that has grown into a rare mutual admiration between bus driver and student.

"Bev is so awesome," Brooke VanBelle said. "She gives Oliver a giant hug every day."

"I would imagine with a typical child it would be hard sending them off to school, but especially with Oliver, it's so nice to know that they're with people who love them."

Oliver's dad, Ryan VanBelle, said his son's affection for his bus driver carries over to the weekends.

"She makes it fun for him, so he wants to go to school every day," Ryan VanBelle said. "On weekend days, Oliver will ask us, 'Bus? Bev? Bus? Bev?' And we'll tell him, 'No, you have to wait until Monday.'"

Zack, who has been a bus driver for Plymouth-Canton Community Schools since 2013, said she requests the routes that transport children who have special needs to and from their schools.

"I love them and their parents," she said of the students she drives. "They're what wake me up in the morning. They give me a reason to get up in the morning."

"I would do this job even if they didn't pay me."



Oliver's photo from the 2016 C.S. Mott Children's Hospital calendar graces the big screen at New York City's Times Square. COURTESY OF VANBELLE FAMILY

These kids inspire me."

Zack said the hardest part of her job is the last day of school when she realizes she may be saying goodbye to students for the last time, depending on the route she is assigned the following school year.

"Oh my gosh, I'm tearing up now just thinking about the end of this school year," she said. "The last day is horrible."

"I miss every single student."

Zack said she has grown especially close to Oliver because, well, who wouldn't?

"His parents, who I love too, told me that when they ask him who he wants to pray for at night, sometimes he'll say, 'Bus driver Bev,' which just warms my heart," she said. "When I pick him up at Workman (Elementary School), when he sees me, he'll start yelling, 'Beb! Bebi!' He calls me 'Beb.'"

"Oliver is just so sweet. The older kids on the bus always want to be the ones who sit by him."

Oliver's photogenic smile landed him in a C.S. Mott Children's Hospital calendar in 2016 and on the big screen at New York City's Times Square.

Contact reporter Ed Wright at 517-375-1113 or edwright@hometownlife.com.



Money Matters

Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

How will SECURE Act affect your retirement?

With all the childishness and bickering in Washington, it's hard to believe that anything can pass on a bipartisan basis. However, that is exactly what happened this week when Congress finally passed and sent to the president a piece of legislation known as the SECURE Act.

The president is expected to sign the legislation, which will be the first major piece of legislation in over a decade that deals with how people save and handle their retirement. The SECURE Act, which stands for Setting Every Community Up For Retirement Enhancement, is mostly designed to make it easier to save for retirement.

Like in every form of legislation, there are some good things and some not so good things.

The first major change is that the new law will increase the age of minimum required distributions. In the past, you had to begin withdrawing from your retirement accounts when you turned 70½. Under the new law, the age would be raised to 72.

The SECURE Act also eliminates the age cap for traditional IRA contributions. Under the old law, once you turned 70½, you were no longer eligible to invest in a traditional IRA. Now, as long as you're working, you'll be eligible to contribute into your traditional IRA.

The new legislation has increased the tax credits available to small businesses to offset the cost of retirement plans. In the past, small businesses that started a retirement plan were only able to get a \$500-a-year credit. Now, the maximum is \$5,000. The SECURE Act also allows small businesses to join multiple employer plans. Hopefully, this will lower the administrative cost to small businesses and make it easier for them to offer some sort of retirement savings plan.

Stretch IRAs will be eliminated. Under the old rules, if you inherited a non-spouse's IRA, one of the options that you had with regard to distributions was to take distributions over your life expectancy. This allowed many people to defer the taxes owed on IRAs for decades. That is no longer going to be an option. According to the SECURE Act, all inherited IRAs must be distributed within 10 years of the IRA owner's death. The surviving spouse will continue to have available favorable types of distribution options.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. His website is bloomassetmanagement.com. You may email Rick at rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

Obituaries



Barbara Johnston Babich

NORTHVILLE - Passed away peacefully, after a short illness, surrounded by family. Beloved wife of David Babich. Dear sister of Michael Johnston, David Johnston (Christine) and the late Kevin Johnston. Daughter of the late Buddy and Gertrude Johnston. Survived by many loving family members, friends, and her furry companion, Jake. Barbara was an outstanding teacher for 34 years, a lover of dogs, yoga, U2, travel, reading and learning. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Lupus Research Alliance or the Humane Society of Huron Valley. A celebration of her life will be held in the Spring. Share a "Memorial Tribute" with the family at www.griffinfuneralhome.com



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Nation's largest fishing show coming to Novi

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The largest pure fishing show in the country returns to the largest freshwater fishing market in the country when the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit drops anchor Jan. 9-12 at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

More freshwater fishing licenses are sold in metro Detroit than any other similar geographic region in the country. So it makes perfect sense that the largest pure fishing show in the country would set its hook in Metro-Detroit.

"With last year's expansion at Suburban Collection Showplace we've now got seven full acres of fishing boats, fishing tackle, fishing gear, fishing vacations, fishing seminars, and factory-direct exhibits," says Show Manager Ben Nielsen. "This show is perfect for anyone interested in fishing, from beginners to tournament pros."

Looking for a fishing boat? Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit has over 250 different boats on display from 40 manufacturers so patrons can shop and compare. Get the best preseason deals and manufacturer rebates at the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit.

"This is the place to buy your fishing boat," Nielsen says. "If you want a boat in the spring you need to order it in the winter to ensure spring delivery and the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit is the place to find your best deal."

The Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit is well known for its extensive seminar line-up presenting seminars every hour on five seminar stages including Lake Ultimate and the Hawg Trough. Nearly every Michigan game fish species will be covered - free with show admission.

Headlining this year's all-star seminar lineup are national bass fishing personalities and Michigan residents Kevin VanDam and Mark Zona. VanDam, a four time Bassmaster Classic Champ and seven time B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, will make a special appearance on Thursday, Jan. 9, only. Zona, host of Zona's Awesome Fishing Show and a regular on several ESPN Outdoors shows, also will make a special appearance on Friday, Jan. 10, only.

Joining these two celebrities in the



The Ultimate Fishing Show is coming to Novi's Suburban Collection Showplace from Jan. 9-12. COURTESY OF BILL PARKER

seminar lineup are bass professionals Joe Thomas, Wayne Carpenter and Gerry Gostenik along with nationally acclaimed walleye experts Mark Martin, Mark Romanack and Lance Valentine, ice fishing specialist Brian "Bro" Brosdahl and many other national and local fishing experts.

This year's show features the largest ice fishing display in the state at the greatly expanded Ultimate Ice Fishing Village. Along with a Shanty Truckload Sale, there also will be a vast variety of augers, electronics, tackle and gear for sale. Manufacturer exhibits from Clam, Otter, Ardisam (Eskimo), Frabill, Striker and more will be on hand all four days of

the show to answer questions and explain the features of their line of ice fishing equipment.

Some of the other highlights of the show include, Lake Ultimate, the Hawg Trough, Ultimate Bass, Walleye and Salmon Clinics, Fish Cleaning Demonstrations, a Virtual Fishing Simulator, a Stocked Trout Pond, Fly Casting and Fly Tying Lessons, Shore Lunch Fish Fry and much more.

Want to attend the show for free? On Thursday, Jan. 9, admission is free for patrons who bring six cans/boxes or four pounds of non-perishable food items to donate to the annual Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger food drive.

The food will be collected by volunteers from local conservation organizations and donated to the Red Cross and area food banks.

Show hours are: 1-9 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission: \$12 adults, \$5 children 6-14, free for children 5 and under. On-site parking is \$5.

For more information, visit www.ultimatefishingshow.com or call 800-328-6550.

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlencourt@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

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Ready to be a consultant? 3 questions to ask yourself

Eric Titner
thejobnetwork.com

Most of us have career paths that are full of both carefully planned moves and unexpected twists and turns. What often seems like a concrete plan today can change completely tomorrow based on new opportunities, changing industry conditions, shifting economic forces, and a host of other variables that are both in our control and beyond our reach.

Often, the key to long-term success in today's ultra-competitive and rapidly shifting work world is to pay careful attention to these variables, stay flexible, and pivot as needed.

This is often easier said than done, but if handled properly, it can really set you up with a deep understanding and appreciation of your field. One fork along the professional journey that many of us face is the decision regarding consulting.

But are you ready to become a consultant?

This question often arises after acquiring decades of experience, and we start thinking about whether the time and conditions are right to "pay it forward" and help others benefit from our hard-earned wisdom and expertise. Or maybe the consulting field may just be a great next career move at your current juncture.

Whatever your situation, careful consideration and planning is always a wise approach before deciding what your next career move should be. So, if you're at a crossroads and are wondering if consulting is right for you, then consider asking yourself the following questions to help you make the right decision.



GETTY IMAGES

What are the needs and demands in your field?

The truth is, not all industries and professions are created equal. What works well in some fields may fall flat in others — and consulting is no exception. Before deciding on consulting as your next big career leap, do some careful research and take your industry's temperature. Has there historically been a need or demand for industry consultants, or are you breaking new ground? Is there a clear path and entry point to consulting that makes sense for you, or do you en-

vision a challenge with barriers to overcome? Once you have a clear picture of the needs and demands of your specific industry — both in the short term and over the long haul — you can figure out if a move to consulting makes sense.

What do you have to offer?

Not all consultants are created equal, and in a potentially crowded field that likely contains a wealth of qualified, credentialed, and well-connected consultants, how do you stack up? Take a careful look at your prospective brand

and value proposition should you leap into the consulting arena. What do you offer that would help you stand out from the competition? Have you gathered the requisite industry knowledge and expertise to warrant the move? Are you going to be able to convince other potential clients to choose you over the competition to meet their needs? If your answers to these questions are clear and compelling, then it's a good sign that you're ready to be a consultant.

What are your goals?

Take a close look at your reasons for wanting to be a consultant. Are you genuinely excited about sharing your wisdom and experience with others, or are you just in it for the money? Is this a full-time professional shift for you, or are you just looking for additional work on top of your regular schedule? Are you pursuing consultancy out of necessity in a volatile job market, or is this something you're genuinely passionate about? These are important questions to ask yourself when deciding about whether or not to become a consultant — your answers will speak volumes about the motives underlying your decisions, which will go a long way to determining how genuine and effective of a consultant you'll likely be.

Are you ready to be a consultant? Only you can truly know the answer, but if you honestly ask yourself the questions covered here and proceed carefully, you're setting yourself up to make the best possible decision for your professional success within your field of expertise.

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.

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THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

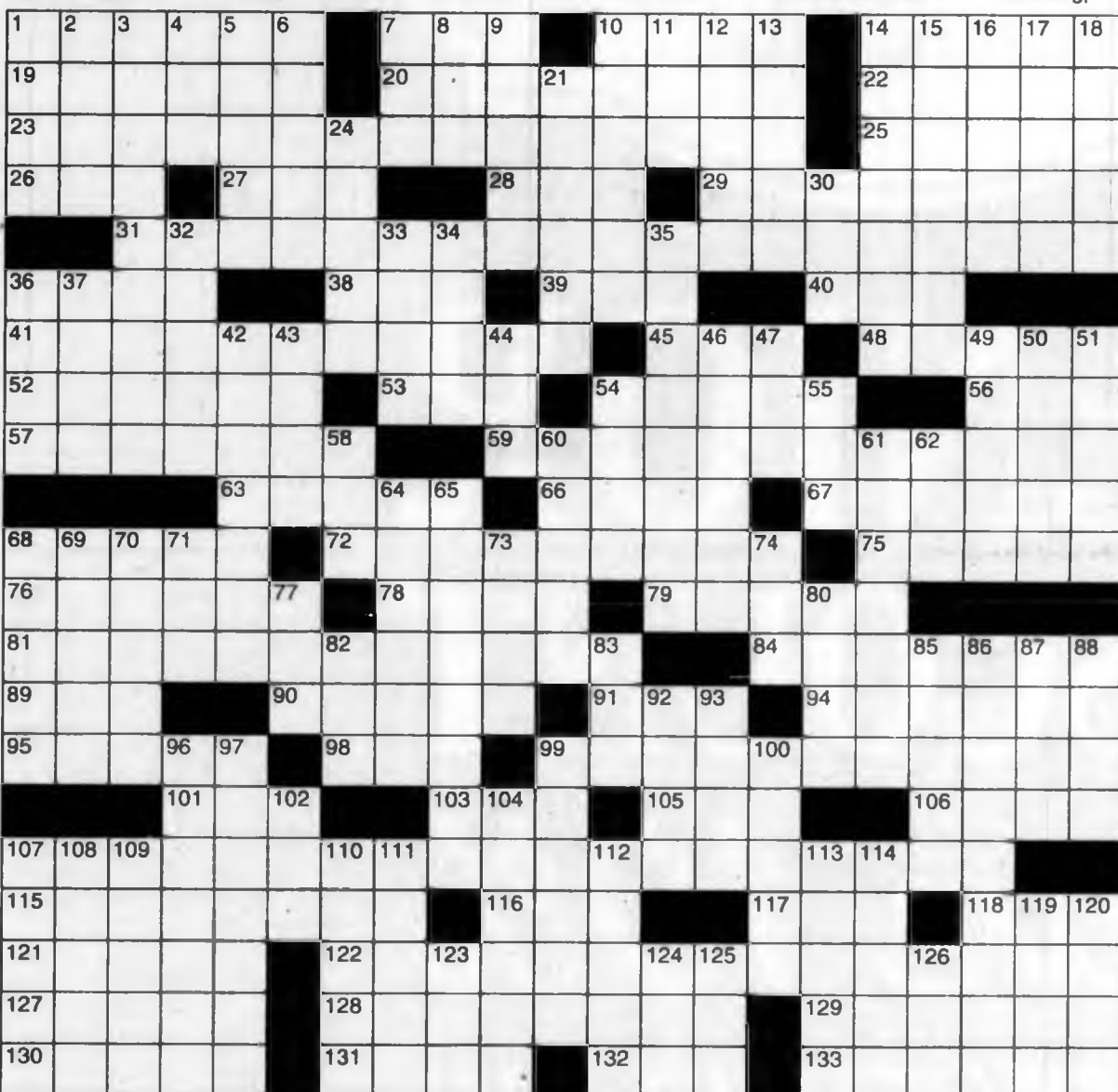
CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Pillager
7 Branch of Buddhism
10 Mosque minister
14 Stallone role
19 Large lizard
20 Shirt-pocket audio player
22 Wine coolers
23 Gasohol, e.g.
25 Italy's largest port
26 Apartment, e.g.: Abbr.
27 Sculling need
28 That, in Spanish
29 America's Cup sport
31 Passed-on value system, say
36 Ever and —
38 "The Fresh Prince of — Air"
39 Volkswagen hatchback
40 Ellipsis bit
41 Serious moral offense
45 Big Apple airport code
48 Superbright colors
52 "Relax, Gil!"
53 — Kippur
- 54 Song of thanksgiving
56 Drink sample
57 Tattoos and piercings
59 Journalistic profession
63 Childbirth assistant
66 Two-spinoff CBS series
67 Quit sleeping
68 Very manly
72 Like gross profits ... or how the ends of eight answers in this puzzle might appear
75 Digital greeting
76 Illicit love affairs
78 Helen's city
79 4-point Scrabble piece
81 Events to move merchandise for charity
84 Redgrave of film
89 Ending for Canton
90 Leg bone
91 Pro hoops gp.
94 Tested the weight of by lifting
- 95 Take hold
98 Flanders on "The Simpsons"
99 Bucolic byway
101 Here-there linkup
103 Madam's partner
105 Plains tribe
106 Shady giants
107 Earnings not allocated for necessary items
115 Very brave
116 Adam's partner
117 Suffix with northwest
118 Provided with a meal
121 Razor-honing band
122 It may be trespassed on
127 Move around like a baby
128 Bristlecone, for one
129 "Tru" subject
130 Made of turf
131 River through Flanders
132 37-Down part: Abbr.
133 Neighbor on "Seinfeld"

DOWN

- 1 Perjurer, e.g.
2 Leer at
3 Earned more points than
4 — Bo (fitness system)
5 Register, to a Brit
6 Rushed toward
7 Pimple
8 Start for dermis
9 Many a fiction book
10 Newborn
11 Egyptian — (certain cat)
12 In the blink of —
13 Grinding tooth
14 "You said it!"
15 Transparency film
16 "MIB" part
17 Ride to bust
18 Plains tribe
21 Fashion
24 Caribbean isle
30 "El —" (1961 epic film)
32 Oct. 24 observance
33 Count (on)
34 Besides that
35 Boisterous merriment
- 36 Hail — (yell "Taxi!")
37 Western mil. alliance
42 Dancer Duncan
43 Roman despot
44 Global financial gp.
46 Reaches
47 Jacuzzi sigh
49 Honshu port
50 Saltpeter
51 Fork out
54 Purple-brown
55 School lobby gp.
58 Soaking spot
60 One way to serve ham or pastrami
61 "It's Pat" star Julia
62 Tic-toe linkup
64 Leaves alone
65 "Yes, sorry to say"
68 Former fillies
69 Entertain
70 Tailed orbiter
71 Engine noise
73 Dancing girl in "Return of the Jedi"
74 VII times II
77 Boss of a cpl.
80 Actor Bert of "The Wizard of Oz"
82 A, to Wilhelm
- 83 — cone (frozen treat)
85 Actor — Zimbalist Jr.
86 Robbed
87 Stitched line
88 Counts up
92 Wave-tossed bobber
93 Voting "no"
96 Exclusive group of people
97 Lack of a response
99 Fancy tie
100 Copier ink
102 Agent, for short
104 "The nerve!"
107 Wafers, e.g.
108 Prelim
109 Fine fiddle
110 Prone to tilt
111 "The Wire" actor Elba
112 Trendy again
113 Earthen pot
114 Comparable (with)
119 Feminizing suffix
120 Batik artisan
123 Feminizing suffix
124 Ending for cannon
125 Cribbage pin
126 Green-minded gp.



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



Difficulty Level ★★

1/02

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!

FIREPLACE WORD SEARCH

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

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

APPLIANCE
BLOWER
BRICK
BTU
CHASE
CHIMNEY
CIRCULATION
COMBUSTIBLE
CONVECTIVE
EFFICIENCY
ENERGY
EXHAUST
FACADE
FIREBOX
FIREPLACE
FLUE
FUEL
GAS
HEARTH
HEATER
IGNITE
INSERT
KINDLING
LIVING ROOM
MANTLE
PILOT
PIPE
RADIANT
SOURCE
STONE
TEMPERATURE
THERMOSTAT
VELOCITY
VENT
WOOD

ANSWER KEY



6	8	3	4	5	2	9	7	1
2	1	9	3	6	7	8	4	5
4	7	9	1	8	6	2	3	5
1	3	4	7	9	6	2	5	8
7	6	8	9	2	1	4	3	5
5	9	2	8	7	3	1	6	4
9	2	1	6	7	9	3	8	4
3	5	6	2	8	4	1	9	7
8	4	7	1	3	5	9	6	2

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Novena

Prayer to Holy Spirit
Holy spirit! You who solved all problems, who lights all roads so that I can attain my goal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me and that in all instances of my life. You are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank You for all things and to confirm once again that I never want to be separated from You, even in spite of all material illusion. I wish to be with You in eternal Glory. Thank You for your mercy towards me and mine. The person must say this prayer for 3 consecutive days, the favor requested will be granted even if it may appear difficult. This prayer must be published immediately after the favor is granted without mentioning the favor, only your initial should appear at the publication. Publication promised. -G.D.B.

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