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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2020 ■ HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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ONLINE COUPONS



## South Lyon adds tax abatement program

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

There are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about South Lyon's business community. Now, the city has approved a program it hopes will be a positive step to increasing economic activity.

The city council approved a commercial tax abatement program at its meeting Feb. 10. The program will allow business owners and developers to apply to the city on a case-by-case basis for some tax abatements related to the investment made at a property.

"It's good to have the procedure in

place, so that we're not working out of the hole when somebody comes and says, 'Hey I want to do this, what's your standing on having an abatement?'" Councilman Stephen Kennedy said. "I think it makes sense to have this in our back pocket there."

Adding such a program permits the

city to consider projects brought before it for potential tax reductions that could last from one to 10 years.

"Really our goal is basically to adopt a program and guidelines, not to get involved in specific projects," said Bob

See PROGRAM, Page 10A



Ronnie Yaldo dashes through XP Arena's house-of-mirrors obstacle course at AirTime Trampoline and Game Park in Novi.  
JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Earn a top score at new Novi attraction

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

What do you get when you cross "American Ninja Warrior" and a video game?

It might look a little something like the newest attraction at AirTime Trampoline and Game Park in Novi.

The entertainment space at 44255 W. 12 Mile in the Twelve Mile Crossing at Fountain Walk center recently opened XP Arena, a new adventure designed to make visitors feel like they're in a video game.

"We've had this in the works since May," said Ronnie Yalldoo, owner of the Novi facility and a Bloomfield Hills resi-

dent. "I knew there needed to be some sort of excitement.

"I knew this would be something that catches everybody's eye."

The concept is simple: players are each given a special wristband they swipe on sensors inside the arena.

See XP ARENA, Page 4A

## Athletic trainer revives prep hockey player

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

On the morning of Dec. 27, Henry Ford Health System athletic trainer Eric Schwab attended his first University of Detroit Jesuit High School hockey practice at Hazel Park Ice Arena.

"The way my schedule works, I usually stay at the school to take care of athletes that practice onsite, so I hadn't been able to get to a hockey practice yet," said Schwab, who was contracted to serve as the Cubs' athletic trainer in September. "This was during the holiday break, it was early and I used to play

hockey, so I thought I'd head out there, get some skating in and get to know the hockey players a little better."

At roughly the same time Schwab backed out of his Canton Township driveway, Cubs sophomore

See TRAINER, Page 10A

## Milford teacher mourned after sudden death at 42

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Bill James hated the gloomy weather of Michigan, but since his death, the skies have been sunny and his wife Jamie said she feels it is a sign.

"Ever since he passed, there's a fireball in the sky," Jamie said Friday. "I opened the curtains today and said, 'We love you, too, honey.' It's been sunny ever since he left, and I am convinced that is him. It's his way of letting us know he's here."

William Ray James III, a beloved husband, father, and Milford High School teacher, died suddenly Feb. 18 after suffering cardiac arrest.

He was 42.

James was hired by the Huron Valley School District as a teacher 18 years ago, along with Kevin McKenna, who is now the Milford High School principal.

"We hit it off from the beginning, he was just a very gregarious, hilarious, funny guy," McKenna said. "It was hard to ruffle his feathers, he was very positive and found the good in things."

James was McKenna's go-to guy for golf in the summer, and gave great feedback on what staff members felt was working or not working.

McKenna remembered him as a technology integrator, an innovator, and said James was an exceptional psychology teacher who was always trying new teaching strategies, offering students fun, positive ways to learn, and challenging their perspectives.

"He was engulfed in his curriculum that he loved with a passion," he said.

One of James' students, Harper Zondlak, showed McKenna a folder last week that she carries with pride, decorated with stickers given to her by James.

She is the youngest of four siblings, all taught by James, and said that he often connected with her classmates who didn't always have a passion for school and helped them enjoy learning.

"He has a super unique teaching style, nothing I had ever witnessed,"

See JAMES, Page 10A

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## Northville millage proposal focuses on school tech, security

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Instructional technology and security equipment are the two areas that will suffer or prosper the most depending on whether Northville Public Schools voters approve or deny a March 10 ballot item asking for the replacement of the district's sinking fund millage with a new one.

If passed, the new millage would extend the current 0.9519-mill levy from 2021 to 2025 and,

according to the district, provide for broader uses of the proceeds.

If approved, the sinking fund would continue to pump about \$3 million annually toward building and site repairs, instructional technology and safety and security.

The proposal evolved following legislation passed in 2016 to expand the use of sinking fund proceeds to include security equipment and instructional technology, to reduce the maximum millage rate from 5 to 3

mills, and to decrease the maximum number of years levied from 20 to 10 years.

"Since NPS wants to utilize future sinking fund dollars for instructional technology and security equipment, the millage language cannot say renewal because in fact the district will replace the existing sinking fund millage with the new millage so that those dollars can be used to fund the expanded uses," the district's website states.

### hometownlife.com

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### NOVI TWP. PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST

A public accuracy test of voting equipment will be held March 4th at 5 pm at 44020 Cottisford Road. The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and computer that will be used to tabulate the results of the election counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Derwood Haines, Novi Twp. Clerk

Publish: February 27, 2020

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## South Lyon DDA director retiring

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Bob Donohue remembers trying to work with South Lyon when he was with the Oakland County Main Street program for more than 15 years.

For the last several years, it's been a full-time endeavor working in the city in southwest Oakland County after he became the inaugural Downtown Development Authority director in 2016. During that time, he's been involved with several projects that have improved the area around Lake and Lafayette streets.

He said he's happy with the cultural change in the city when it comes to downtown's future, especially in empowering the DDA to be more involved using programs that have worked elsewhere.

But now, the Com-

merce Township resident who has spent his career working to create invigorating downtown spaces is leaving the business for good: Donohue will retire Feb. 28, leaving a short legacy of vast improvement.

"The one thing that I think is classic which attracted me, is that a town that did really nothing other than have a DDA (board) that met. ... If you don't really have a program, things will languish and you need direction," he said. "This shows you what you can expect in the future when you comprehensively manage."

Some of the highlights of his time in South Lyon include:

■ The revitalization of the former Art Craft building at 113 N. Lafayette, which had been vacant for decades and stuck out with a green paint job. The building was revitalized last year and The Lemon Tree moved down the street

and into the building earlier this year.

■ The purchase of the old RCA building at 135 E. Lake on the edge of downtown. The building had been underutilized for years and was bought last year by South Lyon resident Dan Schwegler, who plans to renovate it and add a new restaurant to the building.

■ Implementing a mindset of how important historic preservation is in a community. He said keeping buildings around that match the time frame in which they were built, instead of trying to make them look older, gives a downtown a sense of history.

"We really have come up," he said. "We manage downtown South Lyon as good as any town."

Donohue worked in Monroe and Rochester before heading to Oakland County.

South Lyon City Manager Paul Zelenak said applications have been accepted in recent weeks to replace Donohue. He said he hopes to have someone in the position shortly after Donohue leaves.

He said Donohue's work has made downtown South Lyon advance.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

FlexTech High School - Novi, a Tuition-Free Public School Academy located at 24245 Karim Blvd, Novi, MI 48375, announces its Open Enrollment period for the 2020-21 school year for grades 9-12. Applications are available at and may be submitted to FlexTech High School - Novi or by calling (248) 426-8530, during the Open Enrollment period March 11 - March 26, 2020: Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.; March 21, 2020, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; March 19, 2020 from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. If enrollment applications exceed the number of available spaces, a random selection drawing will be held at FlexTech High School - Novi on May 1, 2020 at 2 p.m.

Publish: February 27, 2020

LO-0000386-004 2x2

### CITY OF NOVI NOTICE OF MEETING OF MARCH 2020 BOARD OF REVIEW

Notice is hereby given that the March Board of Review shall convene for the Organizational Meeting at 9:00 a.m. EST, Tuesday, March 3th, 2020 in the Mayor's Conference Room/Civic Center at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road for the purpose of reviewing and correcting the assessment roll. Appointments are not taken at this meeting.

Notice is further given that the second session of the Board of Review will meet for the purpose of hearing and considering assessment appeals in the Mayor's Conference Room at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road on March 9, 10 and 11, 2020.

If you or your representative want to appeal in person, you are strongly encouraged to come into the assessing department on or before 5:00 p.m. EST, Friday, March 6, 2020 in order to schedule an appointment to ensure your time before the Board of Review. Appearances before the Board of Review are limited to five (5) minutes or less.

Petitions are available at the Assessor's Office or at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org).

NO APPOINTMENTS WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL A PETITION IS RECEIVED BY THE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT.

Written Appeals: Letters of protest will be accepted on or before 3:00 p.m. EST, Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Postmarks will not be considered. When submitting a letter of protest for the Board of Review consideration, you must attach a completed petition along with any supporting information.

All agents protesting values on property other than their own MUST HAVE written authorization from each property owner they are representing.

Persons on fixed or limited income may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes due to poverty. Applications are available at the Assessing Department, or at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org).

#### BOARD OF REVIEW SCHEDULE

Monday, March 9, 2020 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 - 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room

Located in the Civic Center, 45175 West Ten Mile Road Novi, MI 48375.

Any questions should be directed to the Assessing Department at (248) 347-0485.

Cortney Hanson  
CITY CLERK

Publish: February 13, 20 & 27, 2020

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# Small millage, but big vote for DIA tax renewal

**Christina Hall**  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

While the millage renewal being sought by the Detroit Institute of Arts — at 0.2 mills — is small, the March 10 vote has big ramifications and is not without some controversy.

Originally approved by voters in 2012 to shore up the then financially-strapped museum, it was promised as a one-time levy spread over 10 years. But that was before the game-changing Grand Bargain two years later that helped save the museum's artwork from being sold off during Detroit's bankruptcy.

Now, the DIA is asking voters in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to renew its millage for another decade — two years ahead of when the current levy is set to expire.

There is a lot at stake for the DIA — the millage represents about 65% of its operating budget. If the millage is allowed to expire in 2022, free admission to residents of the three counties, as well as other outreach programs, could go away.

Some voters cite that broken promise of a one-time tax request as a turnoff and a reason to vote no, while others say the millage has opened up the museum to thousands of visitors who previously couldn't afford admission, making it well worth renewing.

Cheryl Salinas-Tucker of Ferndale said her support "has not wavered." Her daughter, 15, grew up in the museum and she believes the DIA influenced her daughter's interest in art.

"I see the benefit of going. Ten years ago, that museum was not crowded and now, it's packed," Salinas-Tucker said. "It shouldn't just be for a few people who could get in."

She said she grew up in Flat Rock and Dearborn Heights and didn't have access to the DIA as a youth "because it was too expensive for us." She first went to the DIA when she was 18.

Because of the millage, she said, her daughter has accessed the museum for much of her young life with free general admission for tri-county residents versus a once-a-year, special occasion visit if they had to pay admission. Adult admission for non-residents is currently \$14.

But Deborah DeBacker of Troy said she's already voted no on her absentee ballot.

She said museum officials previously said this would be a one-time millage; that the original 10-year millage isn't up for renewal yet, and it's "deceitful" to be on the March ballot, when voter turnout may be low.

DeBacker said in the past, she paid an entrance fee for her children to go to the DIA; and people who are barely getting by shouldn't have to pay. She said the last time she visited the museum, it was for a special exhibit and she had to pay extra.

"It's a luxury tax, not a need," she said.

Erika Sykes of Royal Oak said she voted for the millage in 2012 because she didn't want to see the DIA sell its art. But, she said she won't be voting in favor of the renewal.

"When it was presented in 2012, it was a tem-

porary tax hike to create an endowment," she said, adding that officials promised not to renew. "I'm just expecting them to hold to their promise."

"I think the DIA is special," Sykes said, adding that she has friends who will vote yes. "Let this expire in 10 years. My impression is the DIA is not in financial crisis anymore."

When the millage was first proposed, it was to funnel an estimated \$23 million a year to the museum. The DIA was living hand-to-mouth for more than two decades after losing \$16 million in state funding dating to 1990. The Great Recession made the museum's finances become even more precarious.

To keep the museum afloat, the Legislature in 2010 passed a bill allowing the DIA, with voter approval, to levy a tax of not more than 0.2 mills for up to 20 years.

The plan was for the museum to turn its fund-raising machinery toward building an endowment, with the millage supporting operating funds. The goal was to have enough money on hand — about \$400 million — to cover 60% of the DIA's operating budget once the millage expired.

But museum leaders then didn't know about some of the changes ahead, DIA Director Salvador Salort-Pons said. One of the changes was the Grand Bargain that came about after Detroit declared bankruptcy in 2013.

That 2014 agreement involved numerous philanthropic foundations, the state of Michigan and the DIA pooling more than \$800 million to fund city pensions and avoid selling off DIA art as part of the bankruptcy.

The DIA raised \$100 million toward the Grand Bargain, with money going to pensioners instead of the endowment. In the process, the museum became independent of the city.

Salort-Pons said museum leaders years ago also didn't know relationships with the counties' service agreements "would change the culture" and provide services because of the millage support.

Salort-Pons said if the

renewal passes, the DIA can continue to focus on its service agreements, including free programs and transportation for schoolchildren and senior citizens and free general admission for tri-county residents.

The renewal is not at all or nothing proposal. If it fails in one county, it will continue to be levied in the other two counties. Services — such as free admission and other programs — probably would be cut to residents in the county where the renewal failed, although the museum could opt to go back before voters in that county.

There is a caveat in Macomb County, where the original millage passed by 50.5% (compared to much wider margins in Oakland and Wayne counties). If the renewal passes in Macomb, but fails in one of the other counties, Macomb County could decide whether — or not — to levy the millage, David Flynn, the DIA's senior

vice president of public and community affairs, said in November.

Salort-Pons said 30,000 students annually visited the DIA before 2012. Today, 90,000 visit each year with 80,000 of them from the three counties. He said there was no program for seniors before the millage.

Overall, Salort-Pons said about 300,000 visitors came to the DIA annually before 2012. Today, it has 700,000 visitors yearly. Seventy-seven percent are from the tri-county area, DIA spokeswoman Christine Kloostra said.

The museum's operating budget is \$38 million, Salort-Pons said, with the millage bringing in \$23 million to \$25 million.

"Our biggest challenge has been — and it's very interesting — people are still not fully aware of what the DIA is doing and how the millage is impacting their lives," he said.

## NOTICE OF ELECTION CITY OF NOVI, MICHIGAN MARCH 10, 2020 ELECTION

To the qualified electors of the City of Novi:

Notice is hereby given that a presidential primary election will be held in the City of Novi on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the following locations:

1	Meadowbrook Congregational Church	21355 Meadowbrook Road
2	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	41415 W. Nine Mile Road
3	Village Oaks Elementary School	23333 Willowbrook Road
4	Church of the Holy Family	24505 Meadowbrook Road
5	Orchard Hills Elementary School	41900 Quince
6	Church of the Holy Family	24505 Meadowbrook Road
7	Walsh College	41500 Gardenbrook
8	Meadowbrook Elementary School	29200 Meadowbrook Road
9	Crosspointe Meadows Church	29000 Meadowbrook Road
10	Fox Run	41000 Thirteen Mile Road
11	Hickory Woods Elementary	30655 Novi Road
12	Portsmouth Apartment Clubhouse	31170 Wellington Drive
13	Brightmoor Christian Church	40800 13 Mile Road
14	Crosspointe Meadows Church	29000 Meadowbrook Road
15	Faith Community Church	44400 West Ten Mile Road
16	Novi Civic Center	45175 West Ten Mile Road
17	Novi Civic Center	45175 West Ten Mile Road
18	Novi Public Library	45255 West Ten Mile Road
19	Legacy Church of Novi	45301 West Eleven Mile Road
20	Novi Middle School	49000 Eleven Mile Road
21	Novi Middle School	49000 Eleven Mile Road
22	Deerfield Elementary	26500 Wixom Road
23	Novi Meadows 6th Grade House	25299 Taft Road
24	St. James Catholic Church	46325 West Ten Mile Road
25	Thornton Creek Elementary School	46180 West Nine Mile Road

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Bernie Sanders  
Joe Sestak  
Tom Steyer  
Elizabeth Warren  
Marianne Williamson  
Andrew Yang  
Uncommitted

### Republican Party Candidates

Mark Sanford  
Donald J. Trump  
Joe Walsh  
Bill Weld  
Uncommitted

### And the following proposals:

#### Renewal of Oakland County Art Institute Authority Millage (All precincts):

In 2012 the electors of Oakland County approved a 10-year millage to provide County residents with services from the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) through the Oakland County Art Institute Authority.

As a result of the millage, the DIA provides Oakland County residents with free K-12 school field trips including free transportation, free senior group programming with free transportation, and unlimited free general admission. To ensure transparency, the DIA submits to an annual independent audit and posts financial reports online.

To continue to provide revenue to the DIA, which will allow these DIA services for the residents of the County to continue, the Art Institute Authority is permitted by law to seek a renewal of the millage at a rate of no more than the current 0.2 mill (20 cents per \$1,000 taxable value) on all real and personal property in the County. Revenue from this millage will be disbursed to the Art Institute Authority and then transferred to the DIA as permitted by and for the purposes set forth in Public Act 296 of 2010. It is estimated that if approved and levied, this millage renewal would generate approximately \$13,600,000 in 2022.

Do you approve the renewal of the 0.2 mill on all taxable property located within the County for a period of 10 years from 2022 through 2031?

#### NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Precincts 16, 17, 24, and 25):

##### NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SINKING FUND MILLAGE PROPOSAL .9519 MILL FOR 5 YEARS.

Full text of the ballot propositions may be obtained at the administrative offices of Northville Public Schools, 405 West Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167-1582, telephone: (248) 344-3500.

Absentee ballots are available for all elections; registered voters may contact the City of Novi Clerk to obtain an application for an absent voter ballot.

To comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), voting instructions will be available in audio format and in Braille. Arrangements for obtaining the instructions in these alternative formats can be made by contacting the township clerk in advance of the election. All polling locations are accessible for voters with disabilities.

Cortney Hanson, CMC, CMMC  
City Clerk, City of Novi  
(248) 347-0456  
cityofnovi.org

Published: February 27, 2020



### NOVI TWP. PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST

A public accuracy test of voting equipment will be held March 4th at 5 pm at 44020 Cottisford Road. The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and computer that will be used to tabulate the results of the election counts the votes in the manner prescribed by law.

Derwood Haines, Novi Twp. Clerk

Published: February 27, 2020

### NOTICE OF ELECTION NOVI TOWNSHIP

To the Qualified Electors of NOVI TOWNSHIP, County of Oakland:

Notice is hereby given that a Presidential Primary Election for the purposes of nominating candidates for the office of President of the United States, and two millage proposals will be held in Novi Twp., County of Oakland on Tuesday, March 10, from 7 AM to 8 PM. The polling place for said election is 44020 Cottisford Rd., Northville, MI 48167.

For assistance in determining the accessibility of the polling place locations and the availability of voting instructions in alternative formats such as audio and Braille, please contact the clerk's office. Person's wishing to obtain an absentee ballot may do so by contacting the Novi Twp. Clerk's office. The Clerk or their designee, will be available on the Saturday preceding the election, March 7, until 2:00 pm, the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot.

Derwood Haines, Novi Twp. Clerk, (248) 231-6210

Published: February 27, 2020

### 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 March 17, 2020 at 7:00PM in the Council Chambers of the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to consider:

**PZ20-0004 (Maen Jabboori) 26181 Mandalay Circle, East of Beck Road and North of Eleven Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-16-300-086.** The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 3.6.2.M.iii to remove vegetation from within a wetland setback. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-1).

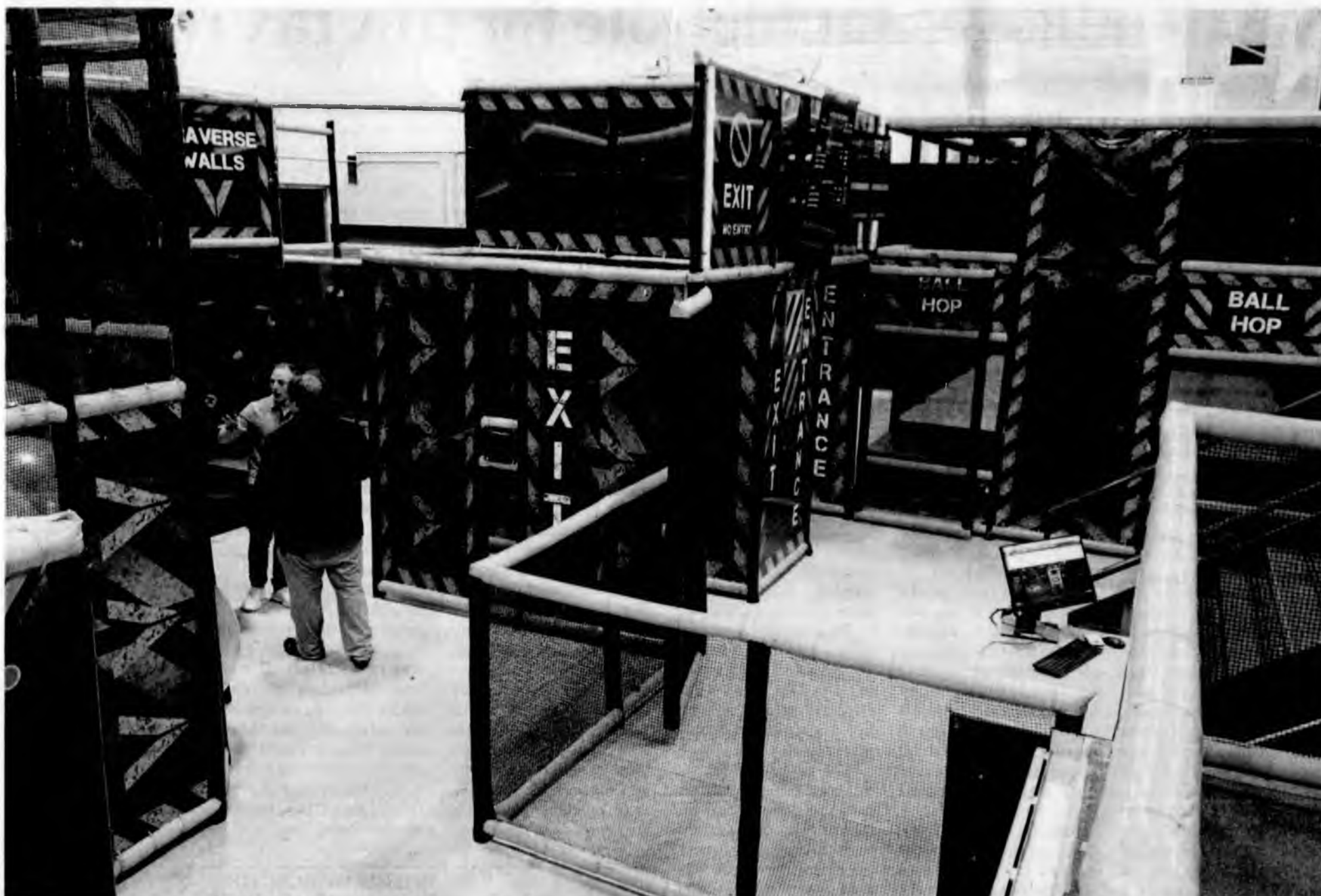
**PZ20-0005 (Michael Buca) 1501 Paramount Street, West of Novi Road and North of Thirteen Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-02-378-005.** The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 5.1.9 to allow the storage of a commercial vehicle on a residential lot. The vehicle is intended to be converted into a personal Recreational Vehicle. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-4).

**PZ20-0006 (Down Home Construction) 305 Duana Avenue, West of Old Novi Road and North of Thirteen Mile Road, Parcel # 50-22-03-481-012.** The applicant is requesting variances from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 3.1.5 for a 13'1" front yard setback, 30 feet required and for a 3'8" side yard setback, 10 feet required. These variances will accommodate the construction of a front deck. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-4).

**PZ20-0007 (Allied Signs) 40255 Thirteen Mile Road, West of Haggerty Road and South of Thirteen Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-12-200-041.** The applicant is requesting variances from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 28.5 to allow two additional wall signs (14.2 and 62.6 square feet respectively) beyond the permitted two and for an 8 foot high ground sign, 6 foot high maximum allowed by code. This property is zoned Office Service Technology (OST).

Published: February 27, 2020





"We've had this in the works since May," said Ronnie Yaldoo, owner of AirTime Trampoline and Game Park in Novi, which is home to the new XP Arena.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## XP Arena

Continued from Page 1A

Each sensor has different colors, with more challenging-to-reach sensors being worth more points. Participants can reach the sensors by entering one of 11 obstacle courses that range from walking through a small maze of mirrors to having to climb a wall. To reach the top sensor on the wall, participants must go

up 21 feet.

After each 20-minute game, players can go to the monitor outside the arena and check their scores, which will be cumulative upon every visit. Up to 70 people can play a round at a time.

Yaldoo said the arena is like nothing else in the United States. The idea came after seeing a similar attraction in Amsterdam.

The XP Arena is designed for all ages, with objectives even for small children. "Nobody's seen anything like this, so

why not try it?" he said.

Everything is padded and safeguards are in place to make sure no one gets hurt, Yaldoo added.

The XP Arena isn't the only addition made to the trampoline park.

At the same time the arena was built, Yaldoo added several arcade games to the front of the business.

The games are ticket-dispensing, meaning those who play them will receive a number of tickets as a reward. They can then be redeemed for a wide range of prizes.

The additional attractions at the trampoline park are only at the Novi location right now, though Yaldoo hopes to add more attractions to the Airtime in Ann Arbor, which he also owns. Airtime has other locations across Michigan, including in Westland, Sterling Heights and Troy.

Pricing for XP Arena is in addition to the regular Airtime admission, with specific packages available to purchase. The XP Arena can also be used for birthday parties and corporate events, Yaldoo said.

Yaldoo hopes the addition of XP Arena makes his Airtime a destination for fun. He said he's already had some guests travel several hours to give it a go, and hopes to bring others from around the state and throughout the Midwest to try it out.

"Think about it: when you go to Great Wolf Lodge, you travel. You travel for an hour or two. You go, you stay there. Why can't they do the same thing here?" he said. "You become a destination."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

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Yaldoo runs up a steep ramp as far as he can to touch a color-coded lamp. Participants completing the XP course try to gain points by reaching for lights in various mazes or obstacle courses.



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# Main Street Art moves into new storefront

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The lighting might be the first thing you notice when walking into the new Main Street Art storefront in downtown Milford.

The shop now boasts large windows in front, bringing in plenty of sunshine throughout the day. Add in the new light bulbs created just for art galleries that mimic sunlight and it's bright throughout.

"It always feels like a sunny day in here," Natalia Wohletz, the owner of the art and frame shop now at 304 Main St., said "I researched how gallery walls are lit and figured out this was the best way to do it."

That new feeling has produced a burst of creativity at the business, which opened in its new space in mid-January after being on the north end of downtown for decades.

The new space in the Liberty Building is about 300 square feet bigger than the previous shop, allowing Wohletz more space for framing in the back and a bigger showroom for art.

"The gallery space also increased, which has allowed us to put so much fine art on the wall," she said.

That artwork features only Michigan artists, a pledge Wohletz made when she purchased the business last year from previous owners Barb Moorhead and Leslie Watson.

The walls are adorned with prints of natural scenes such as paintings of lakeshores and woods, as well as Michigan icons such as the Mackinac Bridge and the Round Island Lighthouse in the Straits of Mackinac.

In addition to new artwork, the shop's roomier space will allow for some additional creative ventures: there's more room to add details to framing jobs, including adding fillets — smaller frames inside a frame on the matting — as well as French matting, which adds small, painted lines on the matting surrounding a framed piece.

"I don't think the old space felt creative enough to warrant that kind of work," Wohletz said. "Whereas now, we're really branching into really different creative projects."

She's also in the process of adding a



Main Street Art owner Natalia Wohletz frames "Tumble" (acrylic paint on canvas) in the shop's new location at 304 Main.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

computerized mat cutter, which will allow her to more quickly cut mat in a variety of shapes as required for framing.

The shop is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

The best part of the new space, said longtime employee Suzanne Gilbert, is how inviting the shop has become.

"It's been the best change, really," she said. "People walking by, they feel like

they can come in."

Wohletz said the new storefront has been a hit with the regular customers who frequent Main Street Art.

She said she's excited to have made the change and given that to them.

"They just love the new space," she said. "It's a breath of fresh air."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

**In addition to new artwork, the shop's roomier space will allow for more frame options, including adding fillets or French matting.**

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Canton Township resident Dan Calcaterra stands behind the bar at Tucker's Kitchen and Bar in New Hudson. The restaurant closed Feb. 19 and the space will soon be occupied by Jonna's Bar and Grill. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Tucker's Kitchen and Bar in New Hudson closing its doors

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Finding the right formula for crafting the perfect eatery in New Hudson turned out to be elusive for Tucker's Kitchen and Bar owners Dan Calcaterra and Harry Bowers.

The restaurant, which opened three years ago as the New Hudson Cafe before changing names and direction about a year ago, closed Feb. 19 after the owners say lack of business prevented them from continuing.

"You don't get enough people on a regular basis," said Bowers, who lives in South Lyon. "They're here, they're loyal, but they can't come every Friday night."

The restaurant at 56849 Grand River won't be empty for long: the two owners have decided to sell the business to the group that runs Jonna's Bar and Grill in Howell.

"This shows the potential of what we did do here," said Calcaterra, a Canton Township resident. "They're going to take it another step and be more of a bar and grill."

The concept was changed from a cafe to a kitchen and bar a year ago because

the two couldn't get enough people to stop in for a morning cup of coffee. Potential customers were going to other spots or simply just driving through New Hudson to get to work.

"That's why the cafe didn't work: they didn't stop," Calcaterra said. "They're commuting."

After some serious renovations, including using reclaimed wood from a former church in Detroit and the old Dearborn courthouse, the space turned into Tucker's. Named in homage to the Dr. Tucker's drugstore that had a restaurant attached to it in the 1800s, the duo hoped to attract people looking for a night out and a drink.

While the two men are leaving the restaurant business for now, they're hopeful the space can be turned into something great. They believe Jonna's Bar and Grill will do just that.

Despite closing and moving on from the experience, the two will look fondly on serving customers from around the area, especially those who came on a regular basis. They'll even miss the newcomers who recently discovered Tucker's, which happened on its last day of business.



# Soccer shops in Livonia, Bloomfield closing; Novi location will stay open

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Coming to the Soccer Plus shop in Livonia for several decades has been a way for Kristin Callaway to connect to her family.

The owner of the shop and a Rochester Hills resident, Callaway makes the drive routinely to 37629 Five Mile in Livonia to sell soccer equipment to local players. Her mother, Jan, began the shop 25 years ago, eventually adding another store at 2191 S. Telegraph in Bloomfield Township.

But even a specialty store targeting the growing soccer crowd isn't immune to the challenges facing brick-and-mortar retail: both the Livonia and Bloomfield Township stores will close in the coming weeks as a response to changing habits in the retail world. Even with an additional business - she is also in charge of a business in Livonia that makes jerseys for several of area soccer clubs - profits just haven't kept up.

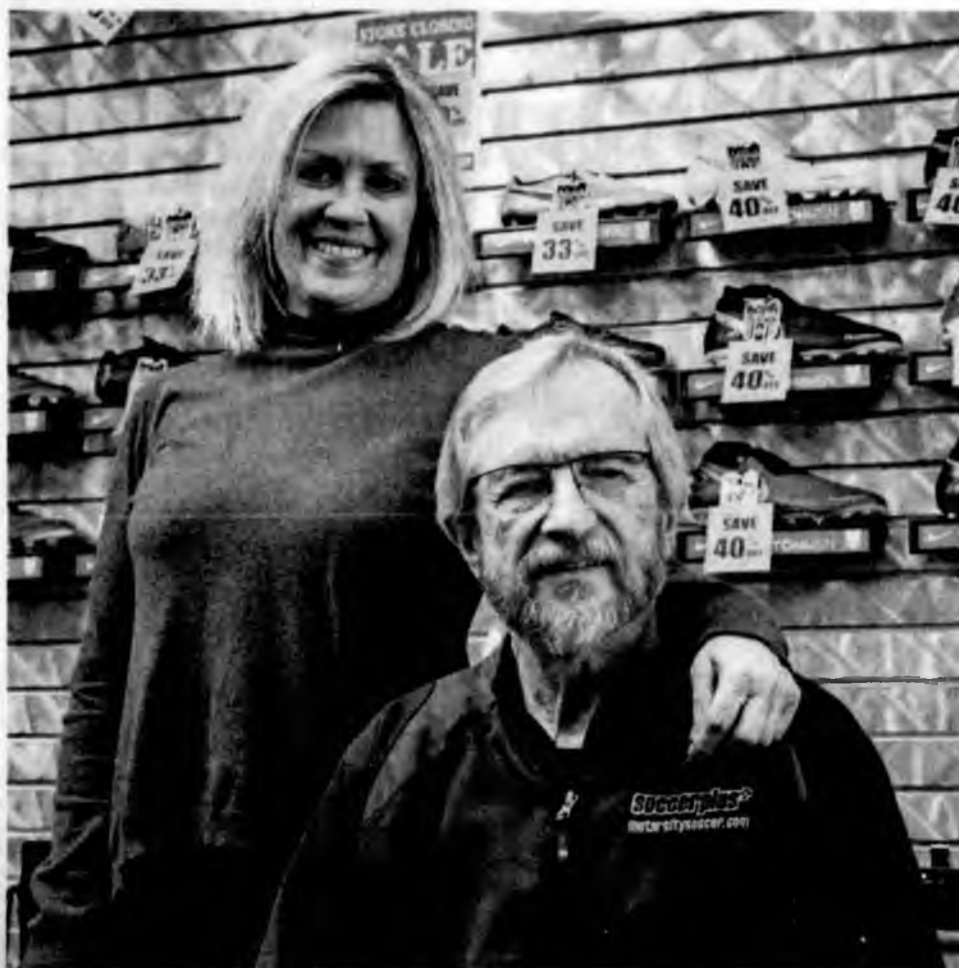
"The team side of the business has been performing well and has been profitable, but we have had to use a lot of the proceeds from our team sales to support retail," she said. "We're seeing those national trends where people are not supporting as much as they used to."

The stores sell all the necessary gear for children and adults, including shin guards, goalkeeper gloves and soccer shoes for indoor and outdoor play, as well as equipment for referees. In addition, the store offers a myriad of replica jerseys from professional and national clubs, including the U.S. National Team and popular European teams such as Manchester City and Chelsea FC.

With the closure, which will happen in early March, merchandise is marked down to as much as 75% off. All sales are final.

The store specializes in soccer, allowing Callaway to focus on bringing in high-quality brands and products that larger sporting goods stores won't stock.

"It's the whole experience," she said.



Kristin Callaway and her father, Pat Callaway plan to close their two Soccer Plus locations after decades in business. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAC/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

"It's the kids who tell their parents, 'I want to go to the soccer store.'"

Callaway, who grew up in Livonia, will remain in town on a regular basis to run the jersey business, which provides uniforms to the Michigan Jaguars, the Farmington Soccer Club, Waza FC, Bloomfield Soccer and the Garden City Soccer Club. Its factory, which operates in a 6,000-square-foot facility near Newburgh and Schoolcraft, will continue to serve area clubs.

Callaway said participating in area charitable efforts is just as important as running the business. She recalled a time when the Jaguars played a team

from Akron, Ohio, and realized they did not have all the necessary gear. Callaway said they worked with the team to outfit their opponents.

"These boys raised money and we worked with the Michigan Jaguars to donate cleats for every player on their team," she said. "We partner with our customers to give back to local communities and underprivileged abroad."

Despite the closure of the two stores, the family isn't getting out of retail completely: another store under the Motor City Soccer name remains open at 48975 Grand River in Novi, just east of Wixom Road. That store, launched in



Josh Posuniak, of Canton, an employee at the Soccer Plus store in Livonia, adjusts jerseys for display.



Soccer Plus stores in Livonia and Bloomfield Township will close soon.

2017, will remain open and continue to serve players and their families.

That's a part of the business Callaway will still continue to love: Helping families who learn the game by selecting the proper gear to prepare for their first soccer season.

"I had a couple approach me and said, 'Your dad sold me my first pair of soccer cleats,'" she said. "And now, they were bringing their 5-year-old in here to get sized for their cleats."

"We've been here so long that we have sold to generations."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com).

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# Play center pitched for vacant Novi building

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

A new children's play center has been proposed for a vacant building in the Oakpointe Plaza shopping center at 22104 Novi Road, south of Nine Mile, in Novi.

Dubbed "Novi Play," it would join an existing play center currently owned and operated by Jeff and Kate Schamanek in Rochester.

The center would have an open play area, as well as a soft-side play structure, a walking track and some games for children.

Children ages 1-12 are the target demographic, Jeff Schamanek said.

"Toddler age to younger school age is the primary market," he said. "The gaming kind of supports the siblings and even some parents (who) play to bond with their kids."

The proposal went before the Novi City Council during a special meeting Feb. 10 because of a several-decades-old consent judgment issued over the property.

The city council voted unanimously to make the proper changes to the consent judgment to allow for the business to operate in the space, which was formerly a hardware store.

Jeff Schamanek said they were excited to bring the business to Novi and expand the concept to a new area of metro Detroit.

He said they expect to sign the lease soon and hope to open perhaps as early as this summer.

"We're excited to bring the business outside of Rochester," he said. "We believe it's going to be a great fit together in working in the community and for the community."

In addition to the Rochester location



A new play center has been proposed for the former Ace Hardware building on Novi Road south of Nine Mile.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

— open since 2010 — the couple plans to open a similar facility in Grand Blanc later this year.

Several city council members were happy to see such a concept coming to town.

Councilman Andrew Mutch said it was his hope that such a center would increase business in that part of the city.

"This is my hope that this investment for Novi Play will kind of trigger some additional ... uses to come in there and really revitalize that center," he said. "Hopefully this is the start of many new businesses at this location."

Councilwoman Kelly Breen said there are plenty of families in that part of town that would take advantage of a business like the proposed Novi Play.

"I'm excited to see a facility like this come to Novi," she said. "I know that particular area has been struggling to get businesses and to retain them."

"Thank you for bringing this to Novi."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

# In praise of spontaneity: If not now, when?

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

What's the most spontaneous thing you've ever done?

For me, it was going to Hawaii earlier this month: just a few hours between the idea occurring and buying the plane tickets to depart three days later.

Snap decisions don't just happen for me. I worry. A lot. Over everything. As my husband says, "No one worries about anything as much as you worry about everything."

So how did we end up going on the most random, spur-of-the-moment adventure of our lives?

It really was a matter of time.

My husband had time off before starting a new job and I have an amenable, awesome editor who agreed to give me a week off work on less than a week's notice.

But it was also a question I think we could all ask ourselves: If not now, when?

When do you stop worrying and start doing the things you've dreamed about?

I sat down at my computer to check flights. I started innocently enough with Florida, relatively cheap and where my in-laws spend their winters.

Then I thought, "Why not dream big?"

I looked at Egypt, Peru, China, Spain, northern Europe, Caribbean cruises. I ruled them out for reasons including time constraints, weather conditions, disease outbreaks and future plans with our daughter who wouldn't be joining us on vacation this time.

What was I doing? Was I really even considering any of this?

I typed in Hawaii. Warm, never been there, always wanted to go, daughter has already been twice, AND THE WHALES ARE MIGRATING.

Wait. Wait.

Hawaii? How could I possibly just fly off to Hawaii on a moment's notice? When my husband is about to start a new job? When it's so expensive? What about the home improvements we need to make? What about more money for retirement? What about, what about, what about...?

I got up from the computer. Went for a run. And as I was heading into Birmingham, I thought about Hawaii and I thought about life and things I've always wanted to do, but never have. I thought about how we're getting older and how what I want to do is probably going to get physically harder to accomplish as the years pass.

And on my Sunday run, I came across a man walking his dog. I stopped to pet the dog and asked this man wearing a palm tree baseball cap if he'd ever been to Hawaii, and he had. He told me how beautiful it was. I actually spoke aloud what I had been thinking of doing: "I want to go to Hawaii. Maybe Wednesday. But that's crazy, isn't it?"

I kept running, laughing to myself at how ridiculous it was to even consider this. I reached downtown Birmingham and turned down Old Woodward to start heading home. I saw a woman walking a dog. I stopped again to pet the dog. And breathe.

"Have you ever been to Hawaii?"

Not really, she said. It was years ago and a stopover. I explained that I had this crazy idea to just up and go there. In three days.

And then this total stranger said the words I needed, what my heart was already telling me.

"You should," she said. "Who knows what tomorrow will bring?"

The rest of my run felt like a breeze.



The sun sets at Pupukea on the North Shore of Oahu on Feb. 2. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUSAN BROMLEY



A Hawaiian Monk Seal takes a nap on Mokolua Island Jan. 31.

Like a warm breeze off the ocean. I walked in the door, sat back down at the computer, and booked our flight and hotel.

Three days later, after frantic shopping and packing and a few more bouts of anxiety about everything that could possibly go wrong, we were on a plane. Ten hours or so later, we were landing in Hawaii, soon to be lei'd and eating the first of several seafood dinners.

The next day we went to a traditional luau where I hula danced on a stage in front of 300 strangers, ditched the diet and ate all the things (a theme of the week) without any trepidation.

We kayaked 2-and-a-half miles out into the Pacific in massive waves to a ti-

ny island whose only regular inhabitants appeared to be birds, crabs, sea urchins and an endangered Hawaiian monk seal lounging on the beach without a care in the world.

We went on a whale watching tour, and my fears of not being able to spot in the vast ocean one of the majestic beasts I'd wanted to sight my whole life turned out to be unfounded. There they were, rising out of the blue, spouting water, flashing their tails, backs and fins cresting the surface over and over again. I cried, just from the wonder of it all.

I let go of my worry about renting a car on a highly-populated island. And instead of watching the Super Bowl, we found ourselves on the North Shore,

watching a sea turtle sunbathe on the most stunning beach I've ever set foot on in a show that puts any football game to shame.

We left that beach and trekked through Waimea Valley, full of gorgeous trees and flowers, on our way to a waterfall.

As the park closed, the sun was sinking. We pulled over into a random parking lot and made our way to another beautiful beach to see a sunset that will never be repeated the same way in my life.

It was the end of another day in a place I couldn't have imagined being in 5 years ago, let alone 5 days ago.

And the next day, we would be feeling emotional all over again, being taken back to a time neither of us had lived through, but which we honored when we visited Pearl Harbor.

We hiked Koko Head, wondering if we might die on the long, steep climb on precarious, broken railroad ties to the top in our quest for incredible views, which were achieved, and Diamond Head, which seemed incredibly easy in comparison.

Too soon, we were back on the plane for the long journey home.

My husband started his new job, and I am back to work and worrying. But there's zero regrets and I feel so fortunate. More than anything, I am grateful to have been able to share all these experiences with my best friend.

We made time and memories with one spontaneous decision.

Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at [sbromley@hometownlife.com](mailto:sbromley@hometownlife.com) or 517-281-2412. Follow her on Twitter @SusanBromley10.



# Old World Olive Co. has new home in Plymouth

David Vesselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Not much is different in the day-to-day happenings at the new location for Old World Olive Company in downtown Plymouth.

When the new location really shines is during presentations and cooking demonstrations, said Kristin Holmes, store manager.

"We gained a certified kitchen," she

said. "It's very nice to have that space."

The store is now at 472 Forest Ave.

Having its own kitchen allows for better preparation for demonstrations, which are held regularly in the shop and led by Mary Spencer. The new storefront has a counter made perfectly for demonstrations, and a television and camera have been installed to better allow participants to see the lessons.

Keeping the Michigan-based company – it also has stores in Grand Rapids

and Rockford – in downtown Plymouth was always a priority, Holmes said.

"We have a great clientele here," she said.

More than 40 products are available to purchase, with many available to sample. These include a variety of olive oils and a wide array of balsamic vinegars that include pineapple, cherry and chocolate flavors.

"Everything we have is fresh," she said. "You can taste everything."

New this past week is the return of wine to the shop. Pottery from local artists is also available for purchase.

A grand opening celebration will take place at 4 p.m. today at the store.

Those interested in attending a cooking class at the shop can inquire in person or by calling 734-667-2755. Classes are \$30.

The business is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### State Rep. should be more open

I attended Rep. Matt Maddock's latest coffee hour. A tremendous waste of time. It was more of a party for his friends. Within hours, he boasted on Facebook of having over 70 constituents present.

But, Instead of speaking to the audience he slipped into a corner booth where his friends could isolate him from his constituents.

This included several large men in MAGA gear. It appeared to me less than one-third were there to ask questions of their representative. Made all the more difficult by his isolation.

People were only allowed to speak to him one or two at a time. His junior aide acted as the gateway. While I did not speak, after being granted "an audience" my friend had a question. She was turned away by one of Maddock's friends. Her seat at the table was blocked until it could be confirmed she had been cleared by the aide.

Maddock scheduled a coffee hour ostensibly to hear from his constituents. Instead he surrounds himself with his friends a gatekeeper and a bouncer. Who is Maddock afraid of? My friend is 62 and stands 5-foot-2; she posed no threat to Maddock.

Our representative wasn't afraid of his constituents; he was afraid of their ideas. We need a representative who doesn't just play to his base and is open to our ideas.

Lee Estes  
Milford

### Supports Northville millage

On March 10, Northville Public Schools will ask for the community's support to replace the existing sinking fund millage at the current .9519 millage level to directly support instructional technology and security, upgrade energy and operational efficiency and provide a healthy and safe learning environment to our 7100+ students. This is zero increase to the current sinking millage and will provide approximately \$3 million per year for planned repairs and maintenance, as well as unexpected emergency repairs to the district's real estate portfolio.

As a senior member of the board of education, I am asked to explain why we need this bond replacement. I liken it to my home improvement budget. Since we moved here in 2004 and purchased a 40-year-old builder grade model, we have replaced windows, roof, furnace, A/C unit, water heater and painted the exterior.

These are items that have occurred naturally over time but have provided more energy efficiency in our home. School buildings are no different. Without this \$15 million funding source over the next 5 years, it may limit the board's ability to add and retain district staff, provide enhanced curricular opportunities and provide a safe and healthy educational environment to our #1 special interest group, the students of Northville Public Schools.

I encourage you to visit northville-schools.org, under the March 2020

Sinking Fund Replacement Millage tab and read the Frequently Asked Questions created by the district to respond to inquiries from community stakeholders.

Of particular interest is page 5, which lists the various projects that were completed under the 2015 millage. As you can see, some of those projects were addressed under the 2017 bond proceeds, but not all.

Approval of the 2020 sinking fund will address those projects and keep our district in high demand to families wanting to experience the excellence of Northville Public Schools. In return, it will keep our property values high, and our homes in high demand.

Cyndy Jankowski  
Northville Public Schools board of education

### Support Northville replacement millage

I live in Northville School District and urge voters to show up March 10 and support the replacement sinking fund school millage. This is a 0.9519 millage last approved in 2015 that expires at end of this year. We are asking the community to approve maintaining this millage for another 5 years 2021-2025. One hundred percent of these funds (roughly \$3 million per year) stays within our district covering facility maintenance as well as supporting security and technology needs. This is not an increase in taxes but an ask that our community maintain the level we have today.

I ask all of you to vote yes March 10. The district has been up front communicating what the funds from last 5 years were used for and has already identified what projects will be covered in next 5 years. Without approval, this will be a \$3 million annual loss to existing school funding.

Please understand that supporting our schools also helps support our community and even our home values. People want to come to Northville since we have one of the highest rated school districts in the State. Please vote Yes and help support our kids.

For more information see Northville Public School website.

Jim Mazurek  
Citizens for Northville Public Schools co-chair

### Another Northville supporter

I urge a yes vote for the Northville Schools Sinking Fund Replacement Millage on March 10.

The current sinking fund expires at the end of 2020. The current technology bond expires at the end of 2020. Recent legislation allows the combination of the sinking fund and the technology bond into a single vote. A yes vote would continue the current .9519 millage rate unchanged.

Safety, security and technology needs would be addressed by your yes vote. Be sure to vote March 10 or by absentee ballot, and vote yes for to NPS.

Roland Hwang  
Northville Township

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## Program

Continued from Page 1A

Donohue, the city's downtown development authority director. "This puts us on a par with other communities as a progressive, economic development community that offers a tool."

The proposal came after some interest in an abatement from a downtown business owner. After some research, the city administration updated the proposal and brought it back to the city council. The council voted unanimously at its meeting to approve the program.

City Manager Paul Zelenak said the minimum level of investment needed to qualify for abatements would be \$500,000. He said such abatements could be for businesses anywhere in South Lyon.

"This is the first time we've initiated something like this for the city," he said. "This is one of those incentives we can offer."

Future abatement applications would be handled individually and would require city council's approval.

Councilman Carl Richards said he had a change of heart when it came to approving the program, especially after seeing it in action.

"If this community is going to get big business or big ideas ... we have to have something to attract them," he said. "This is a great tool. I was against it initially, but I'm fully in favor of it now."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.



South Lyon City Council on Feb. 10 approved the creation of a tax abatement program for businesses. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## James

Continued from Page 1A

Zondlak said. "He was always looking to improve and after he tried a new technique, he would ask if we liked it, and if he should continue these review tests for the next class."

"We were involved with the learning process."

The stickers he gave out to Zondlak and others weren't just for perfect grades, but often just for effort, or good character traits.

She and other students are now working on their own sticker memorial to their teacher, an AP Psychology textbook which will also be filled with messages to be given to James' family.

Students loved James, McKenna said, and he was consistently nominated as a favorite staff member by Top 10 students at an annual academic brunch.

It was early in his teaching career when James met Jamie through Yahoo! personals, before the advent of dating apps. Their first date was on Halloween in 2003, after which Jamie said they were inseparable. They married 3-and-a-half months later, on Feb. 20, 2004, in Las Vegas.

After, she recalled, he would joke to others that he saved Jamie from the dancing life in Vegas, or that their relationship had been great until she learned to speak English.

"He just had such a great personality and demeanor and he knew how to treat people and he was frigging hilarious, he made me laugh," Jamie said. "He was so caring and he made me feel so loved."

The couple are the parents of Brody, 13, whom Bill James coached on a Legacy Center baseball travel team, and Bailee, 11, whose creative side was encouraged by her dad.

Although the family lived in Howell, Jamie said their children had always planned to attend Milford High School, where their father taught.

Education and his family were of the utmost importance to James, and Jamie made a vow to her husband in the hospital.

"I promised him when he was passing that they would grow up to be amazing people," she said. "I will do everything I can to make sure they get the education they deserve."



Bill James stands with his wife, Jamie, and their children Brody and Bailee. James, a Milford High psychology teacher, died Feb. 18. COURTESY OF JAMIE JAMES

**"We hit it off from the beginning, he was just a very gregarious, hilarious, funny guy. It was hard to ruffle his feathers, he ... found the good in things."**

Kevin McKenna Principal, Milford High School

Family friend Jenny Myers, whose son was on James' baseball team, has set up a gofundme to help with the future education needs of Brody and Bailee in the absence of their father.

Zondlak is dreading going back to her AP Psychology class without James there to teach, but said she knows he would want them to keep going with the curriculum.

She said that just a few days before his death, he posted a message in their Google Classroom app.

"He said, 'What are you doing to get smarter today?'" Zondlak recalled. "He was always looking for us to learn academically, socially and personally. After we take the time we need to remember him, I think he said it best, 'Are you getting smarter?'"

"We should go learn for him now."

Borek Jennings Funeral Home in Howell handled funeral arrangements.

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at [sbromley@hometownlife.com](mailto:sbromley@hometownlife.com) or 517-281-2412. Twitter: @SusanBromley10.

## Trainer

Continued from Page 1A

defenseman Conor Place was picked up at his Northville home by a teammate for the half-hour trek to Hazel Park.

"Conor's too young to drive, so he gets rides from his teammates," his dad, Ira, said, reflecting on a day that the Place family will never forget. "We were laying around watching some crappy football game on TV — one of the early college bowl games."

"It was just like any other day, until my wife's cell phone rang with a number she didn't recognize."

Just over an hour into the Cubs' high-energy practice, Conor Place collapsed to the ice, face first. His fall was not triggered by any contact, his teammates told Schwab, as he rushed to assist the fallen player.

"When I got to Conor, he wasn't talking. I made sure there was no spinal injury," Schwab said. "He had a pulse, but it was fading. Then he became unresponsive and I lost his pulse."

Schwab calmly instructed a player to call 9-1-1 as he started cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Schwab asked another player to bring him the arena's automated external defibrillator, which, fortunately, was secured on a wall in an unlocked office.

"We were lucky because if this would have happened later in the afternoon, say after 5 p.m., the office probably would have been locked and it would have been hit or miss as to whether a staff member was in the building to unlock the door," Schwab said. "The stars all lined up that day."

Following two rounds of CPR, Schwab analyzed the severity of Place's condition with the AED.

"It said he needed a shock," Schwab said. "Once I gave him a shock, his pulse came back. By the time the EMS arrived, Conor became verbally responsive. I told him, 'If you can hear me, blink your eyes.' And he blinked his eyes."

Place remained alert as the paramedics secured him to a gurney and rushed him to Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

### The terrifying call

Just moments after Place's collapse, Nikki Place's cell phone rang.



Conor Place (15) celebrates with teammates after scoring his first goal of the season in December. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT JESUIT

"Even though she didn't recognize the number, Nikki had a feeling that she'd better answer," Ira Place recounted. "It was one of the team's captains. He told Nikki that he didn't know a lot of details but that something had happened to Conor and we needed to get out there as soon as possible."

"We took off right away. We left the lights and TV on. We actually made it to Beaumont before the ambulance."

A short time later, Ira and Nikki Place were reunited with their son in one of the hospital's trauma rooms.

"I'd rather not go into details regarding what the 20 minutes were like before we got to see him," Ira Place said. "We were just so relieved that he was OK."

As the Places talked to Conor, Schwab walked into the room.

"Conor said, 'What are you doing here?'" Schwab said, explaining that the 15-year-old did not remember anything that had happened at least 10 minutes prior to his collapse.

"His dad said 'Eric just saved your life,'" Schwab said.

### Cool and calm

An athletic trainer for over seven years, Schwab is so knowledgeable about CPR and AEDs that he trains other



Henry Ford Health System athletic trainer Eric Schwab, right, was recognized by the Hazel Park Police Department for his life-saving effort that revived University of Detroit Jesuit High School hockey player Conor Place, center, who collapsed and was unresponsive during a December practice. They stand with Hazel Park Police Chief Brian Buchholz. COURTESY OF HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

trainers on how to deliver life-saving aid. However, prior to Dec. 27, he had never been in a life-and-death situation.

"Once Conor went down, I kind of went into a mode where my training just took over," Schwab said. "I did what I had to do."

"Since then, everybody is telling me how humble I am. I tell them I don't do this job for the recognition. I've been trained to deal with emergency situations."

Although Conor Place attends Cubs practices and team get-togethers, doctors have advised him to remain sidelined until they can get a better grasp of what physical ailment left him without a pulse two days after Christmas.

"Conor feels 100 percent healthy," Ira Place. "Like a lot of 15-year-olds, sports are a big part of his life, so he's anxious to get back out there. But he understands the doctors know what they're doing and there's no reason to rush back until they know exactly what it was that happened to him."

Ira Place had a hard time describing

his gratefulness for Schwab.

"I don't know if it's something that you can put into words," he said. "It was literally a life-and-death situation. If not for the things Eric did, it could have been a much different outcome. There's definitely someone up there who was looking out for us that day."

Conor Place said the health scare has changed him in a number of ways.

"I look at life differently now. I appreciate every day more," he said. "My first day back to school, the support I received from everyone was overwhelming. Even people I didn't know very well came up to me and said something supportive."

Place is scheduled to undergo a stress test the first week of March and his dad said he'll probably have to get checked out by a cardiologist periodically for the rest of his life.

"But that stuff is minor," Ira Place said. "What's important is that he's still here and he's feeling great."

Contact reporter Ed Wright at [ewright@hometownlife.com](mailto:ewright@hometownlife.com) or 517-375-1113.





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## PREP WRESTLING

# CC expects 2020 Division 1 team state title

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

The evidence of Detroit Catholic Central wrestling success is in the walls, from the banners hung from the ceiling, showcasing each of the Shamrocks' 14 Division 1 state titles to the pictures and plaques naming each individual state champion and All American to don the

royal blue and white.

But the double-doors into "The Cave" — the Catholic Central wrestling gym — shows the evidence of expected future success.

Two pieces of tape secured a thin sheet of paper against the door, a sheet of paper with curled edges, seemingly having been there for awhile.

"Through these doors walk the 2020

D1 State Champions," the sign states, with a big CC logo on top.

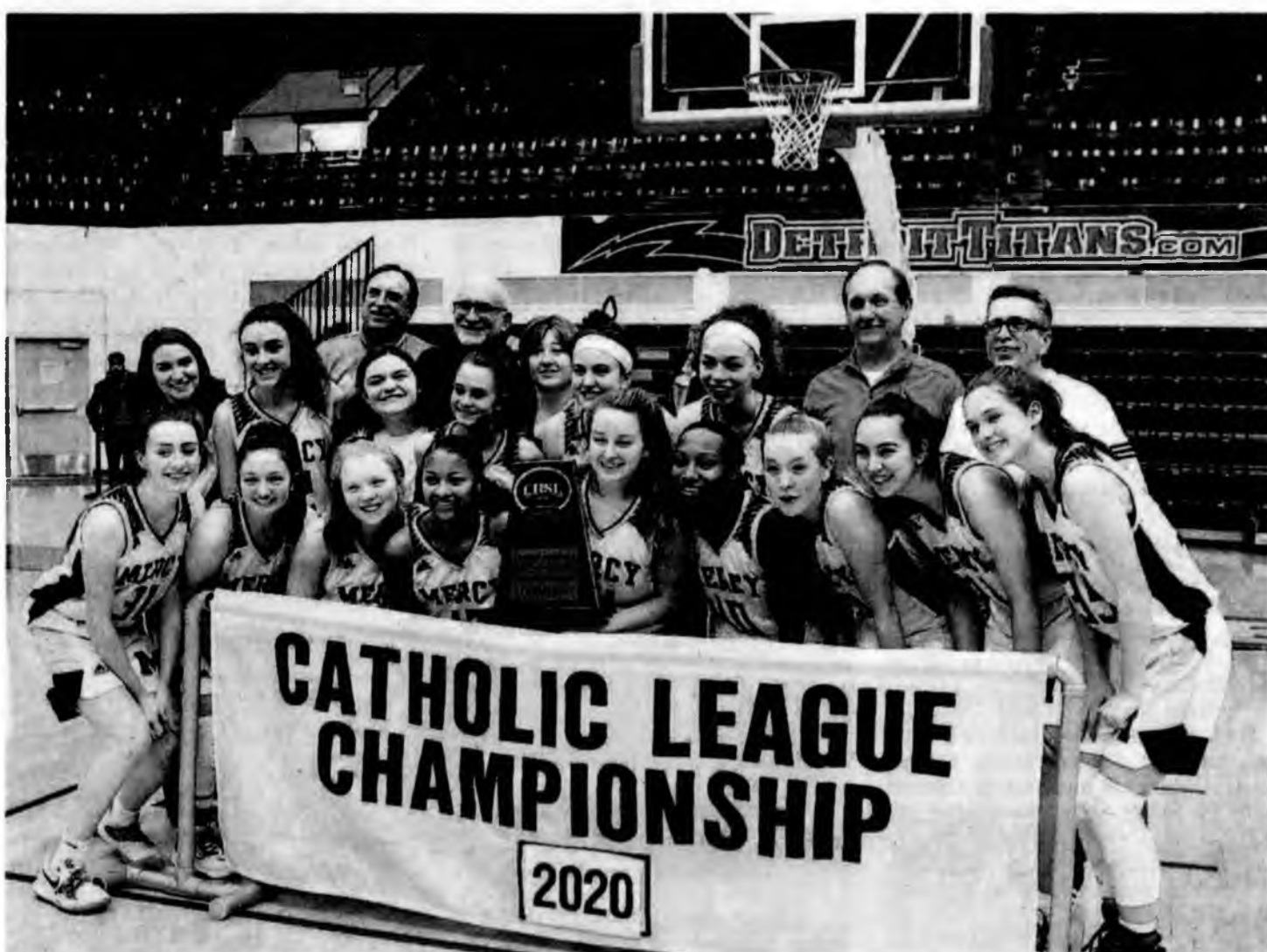
"We want to smack them in the face every day," head coach Mitch Hancock said. "Some people may say it's arrogant. We just want to engrain it in their mind."

It's what the Catholic Central wrestlers see when they walk into their locker room. It's what they see when they fill

out any sort of paperwork associated with the team — firmly placed at the top of the letterhead.

To Hancock, who has won seven team state titles in 13 years with the Catholic Central wrestling program, it's just what comes next on the schedule. So why not talk about it?

See CC, Page 28



Mercy celebrates its eighth Catholic League title in school history. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

# Mercy earns 8th Catholic League title

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Farmington Hills Mercy and Bloomfield Hills Marian have spent the majority of the 2019-20 girls basketball season answering each other.

After the Marlins beat the Mustangs by 12 points on Jan. 7, answered by a seven-point win by Marian on Jan. 28,

their third matchup of the season, the one that would decide the Catholic League Bishop title, continued that same back-and-forth play.

But when the Mustangs brought their deficit to one in the fourth quarter, Mercy (17-2) separated itself on the free-throw line, connecting on eight-of-10 attempts from the line in the final eight minutes to secure a 51-40 win against

Marian (14-4) at University of Detroit Mercy.

With the victory, Mercy earns its eighth Catholic League title in school history, the program's fourth since 2011.

Here are three takeaways from Mercy's win against Marian on Saturday.

See MERCY, Page 28

# Sheriff reopens investigation into Wayne Memorial crash

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

The Livingston County Sheriff's Department has reopened its investigation of a Feb. 8 rollover crash reportedly involving members of the Wayne Memorial High School wrestling team.

A crash report lists a single vehicle and a single driver involved in the accident, and the sheriff's office reopened its investigation after a media report surfaced saying there were allegedly other occupants in the vehicle, Sheriff Mike Murphy said.

"We have since learned there were (allegedly) other occupants in the vehicle, so that has reopened the investigation," Murphy wrote in an email. "Once the investigation is completed it will be sent to the Livingston County Prosecutor's office for review for possible charges, so it would be inappropriate for me to comment any further."

According to the report, the vehicle was on the Interstate 96 exit ramp at the D-19 exit in Howell at 8:18 a.m. when the driver lost control of the vehicle on the curve, going into the gore (area between the highway and exit ramp) and rolling over.

The police report states the driver was going over the 70-miles-per-hour speed limit and that the road surface was covered in snow.

On Feb. 20, Wayne-Westland Community Schools declined comment on the progress of its own investigation of the incident, referring back to a Feb. 13 release it sent to parents:

"We have learned that certain of our students and staff were involved in a car accident while traveling to an athletic event this past weekend. The District is currently investigating the incident and taking appropriate steps to address this issue with those involved."

A Detroit TV station originally

See INVESTIGATION, Page 38

# Howell blows 10-point lead in boys hoops loss to Northville

Bill Khan Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

HOWELL — Howell had a ready-made excuse card, just waiting to be played.

The Highlanders weren't touching it.

Three days after clinching the KLAA West boys basketball championship with an emotional triple-overtime victory over Canton, Howell lost 53-44 at home Friday night to a Northville team that was playing for a chance to make

the league tournament.

"That's not something we're going to look at as an excuse," Howell coach Nick Simon said. "We're not ready to play; that should have nothing to do with our previous game. Maybe it's something you can talk about. It's not something we're going to talk about. It's not something we're going to allow to be a reason or an excuse for losing the game, that's for sure."

"Howell's kind of turned into a little

bit of a mini rivalry with us the past couple years," Northville coach Todd Sander said. "Almost every time we play, it's a close game, whether it's at our place or their place."

"Kudos to them. They won the division on Tuesday (Feb. 18). In some ways, I think this mattered a little bit more to our guys deep down, because they had taken care of all of their work early."

Simon's biggest concern before the game was that, if there was a letdown

after beating Canton, the Highlanders would come out sluggish. It was just the opposite, as Howell got out to a 24-14 lead midway through the second quarter and held a 31-23 lead three minutes into the third quarter before the game turned in Northville's favor.

"I think we got off to that good start and it felt like, 'Oh, yeah, this is going to be a good game for us,'" Simon said. "We

See HOWELL, Page 58





## John Glenn beats Churchill, falls to Bedford in regional

Andrew Vaillencourt  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Excitement was in the air at Temperance Bedford High School during the Feb. 19 wrestling regional semifinals and final.

In front of a packed gym, Westland John Glenn defeated Livonia Churchill 50-15 before losing to Bedford in the finals, 39-24.

Bedford advances to the state quarterfinals in Kalamazoo this weekend where it will take on Detroit Catholic Central, which won its regional by beating Canton, 80-0. John Glenn's team season, as well as Churchill's, comes to a close.

"It was a great dual, it's a great environment," John Glenn coach Bill Polk said. "We knew we were the underdogs coming in here but we knew we had a chance to win and if a couple matches go the other way we pull it off. I don't have any complaints, that's a good team and my team wrestled hard."

### Bedford rallies late

It was a tight dual meet all the way until the end between Bedford and John Glenn. John Glenn won four of the first seven matches, including earning pins in both the 285-pound weight class (Mike McVay) and the 119 (Ty Cowen).

With four matches left, the score was tied at 21. That was when Bedford took over, securing pins in three of the final four matches.

"I was hoping to steal some matches, I bumped my 189 up to 215 and he barely loses, we had to win that one," Polk said. "Then at 103 I thought we had a shot and he had him in a cradle on his back and didn't get it done and lost the match; and we lost two overtime matches. I



John Glenn heavyweight Kaleb Parker, right, takes on Churchill's Matt Wilson in the regional semifinal at Bedford High. ANDREW VAILLENCOURT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

knew we had to win those to win the dual and we didn't get them."

The tough breaks doomed the Rockets.

"I think we wrestled well," John Glenn senior Shawn Brown said. "I think the better team won. We just have to focus up and get ready for this weekend as individuals."

Brown won the meet's second-to-last match in dramatic fashion, notching a 11-9 win to close out the final team meet of his career.

"Before the match, I had it in my head that this would be my last time wrestling for Glenn as a team, so I was going to go out there and refuse to lose," Brown said. "I got caught on my back

there, but still was able to pull it out and get the win."

The jam-packed gym was full of loud Bedford students and supporters, who made it tough on the visiting Rockets. Polk said he thought his team handled the noise well.

"They have real good fans here at Bedford," Brown said. "They always bring a bunch of people out here, the whole town. This is a special environment here."

### Rockets wipe out Chargers

The KLAA East foes battled it out to start the night, and it was the East Division champions that came out victo-

rious.

John Glenn won 10 of the 14 matches and earned five pins.

"John Glenn is a real tough team, they've been here before," Churchill assistant coach Jake Meadows said. "This is our first time wrestling in regionals in 14 years, so it's tough to get these guys prepared and in the right mindset. John Glenn has been here and knows what to do."

Meadows added that he's proud of his team and that now the squad will support their individual wrestlers who are moving on in the individual tournament.

"We had a great season and honestly, now it's just on to the individual guys," Meadows said. "We have six regional regional qualifiers, we want six state qualifiers. That's what we're working toward, and everyone backs these guys."

For John Glenn, the match went about how it expected. Reaching the regional finals after losing plenty of talent from last year's stellar team was a nice boost for the program.

"At the beginning of this year, we weren't really getting respect, even though we were in the final four of the team finals last year," Brown said. "We lost a bunch of seniors. Honestly, I don't know that we anticipated getting this far but we did and I'm not surprised."

As an establish wrestling power, there's no reason to doubt the Rockets chances of being back in the regional finals next season.

"We lost a lot last year, we lost a lot the year before," Polk said. "We've been able to maintain a pretty high level of wrestling and I think that says a lot about a program, we're not just a good team every once in a while."

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at [availlenc@hometownlife.com](mailto:availlenc@hometownlife.com) or 810-923-0659.

## CC

Continued from Page 1B

"This is our championship," Hancock said. "Let's go get it."

### Expected dominance

"You ever make a snowman?"

Logan Sanom, a member of the Catholic Central wrestling team for the past three state titles, described the Shamrocks as a rolling culture, comparing it to a snowball: watching it grow with each roll.

At a micro level, Sanom said the "snowball" starts small at the beginning of the season, and with each practice, each meet, Catholic Central rolls into a state title contender. But at the macro level, for the history and culture for the team as a whole, each state championship helps the Shamrocks secure its place as a Michigan wrestling superpower.

Heading into the team state quarterfinals Friday, Catholic Central has shown that dominance.

The Shamrocks have allowed opponents to score only three points in four postseason matches against Northville, Novi, Saline and Canton.

Sanom said that while the team does not put an expectation to win a certain match, Catholic Central has an expectation to perform each and every time it touches the mat.

"We will dominate on the mat," Sanom said. "In that, there is that stan-

dard, there is that expectation that when you look up on those walls and you see all those state titles, you think to yourself 'We will dominate.'"

Since 2010, only Oxford, Brighton and Hartland have won state titles in the division besides Catholic Central.

For this senior class, including wrestlers such as Sanom, Derek Gilcher, Brendan Yatooma and Steven Kolcheff, their freshman year came after the Shamrocks' loss to Davison in the 2016 state semifinal.

"We had nothing to lose, I guess," Gilcher said.

Starting in the 2016-17 season, the freshmen class watched Kevon Davenport, Nick Jenkins and Cameron Amine each earn an individual state title after helping the Shamrocks secure its first state title since 2014.

When he was a senior, Sanom wanted to have the legacy Amine, Jenkins and Davenport had.

"It was hard to not want to follow that because you want to be as successful as them," Sanom said. "When the goal is that high, you know, shoot for the moon. If you miss, you will land on a star."

That's what this senior class has done for Catholic Central.

Since the 2016 state semifinal, the Shamrocks have defeated Davison and Brighton — for the past two years — in the state final by at least 13 points.

In his tenure as head coach, specifically over the past four years, Hancock said Catholic Central has had a level of depth no other team in the state has, seeing talent up and down the lineup.

But instead of focusing on state-title



Catholic Central's Logan Sanom tries to pin Northville's Anthony Cocca in the district semifinal. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

trophies and individual accolades, the head coach's main focus is to run the program like a Division 1 college program.

"My goal was more focused on work habits in the room, a focus on excellence, creating a standard here that kept up with what (head coach Mike Rodriguez) had created, but add to it and take it to another level," Hancock said.

Since 1988, before Catholic Central's run of seven state titles in 10 years, no team had had the consistent and sustained dominance the Shamrocks have had.

It was new territory for Michigan wrestling. It's a dynasty, instilled with the base of confidence.

That's why Hancock or anyone on the Catholic Central coaching staff does not shy away from talking about what could happen in Kalamazoo next weekend.

Instead, when you walk into the double-doors of "The Cave," you see a timer ticking down to 3:45 p.m. on Feb. 29: the start of the Division 1 team state final.

The start of Catholic Central's expected dominance.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at [cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com).

## Mercy

Continued from Page 1B

### Back and forth

As the clock ticked down at the end of the first quarter, holding on to a slim three-point lead over its rival, Mercy guard Julia Bishop threw up a prayer as the buzzer sounded from the top of the key, falling in at just the right angle to turn a one-possession lead into a six-point deficit for Marian.

Anna Herberholz saw it and, at the end of the second quarter, she answered it.

The Marian guard recorded a buzzer-beater of her own heading into halftime, getting an open 3-point look that sank through as time expired.

While that moment could have been a momentum booster for the Mustangs, Marian kept calm and composed heading into the second half.

"Composure was key, be aware of the time, but know that we have to start pushing right here, how to keep stretch-

ing that lead," Bishop said.

For Mercy, the first quarter was just enough offensively to develop a lead it would not give up over the course of the game.

After trading scores, the Marlins went on an 8-0 run, something Mercy head coach Gary Morris described as the opposite of what happened against Marian on Jan. 28.

"The last time we played them, we got off to a terrible start, so it was great to see us get off to a great start," Morris said. "I feel like it kind of helped us relax a little bit."

Defensively, Morris said, Mercy was able to mix it up just enough to keep the Marian offense off balance, using the press to help energize the team late in the game.

Despite seemingly having momentum out of halftime, Marian head coach Mary Cicerone plainly said her team struggled to find success.

"We didn't take care of the ball. We didn't rebound well, so we couldn't get out and run, and getting Anna in foul trouble, that hurts," Cicerone said. "We just didn't finish well. I've always said

this: when your teams don't score, they get all pouty and round shoulders, move slower."

### Free throws remain key

Mercy knows the importance of free throws.

Bishop sank a free-throw attempt against Divine Child in the Catholic League tournament semifinal, punching a ticket to a championship against Marian.

Instead of Bishop, it was freshman Maya White who had to keep calm and deliver for Mercy.

Holding onto a three-point lead in the fourth quarter, White went to the line, describing herself as extremely nervous, and missed two free throws.

"I felt like I was hurting the team," White said.

The freshman had a chance to redeem herself, hitting four-straight free throws to expand Mercy's lead late in the fourth quarter.

"Free throws are literally everything," White said. "It could be a game-winner — you could win or lose."

Morris said that White has developed into one of Mercy's main threats in the paint, becoming a non-traditional post player for the Marlins in her first season.

Much of that has to do with her ability to find ways to score, whether it's manipulating her body against a defender on a layup attempt or from the line.

"It's a good place to go because if you don't score, at least you have a chance to draw a foul," Morris said.

### Do or die

Cicerone views the Catholic League title game in the same way she seems to view playoff games: do or die, win or go home.

"It's a pressure game," Cicerone said. "This is the championship game, you want to win, and that's kind of what you get out of this tournament: it's do or die. You have to play well to move on or you're done."

While there is no correlation between a Catholic League title and success in

See MERCY, Page 3B



## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

## Milford hockey player earns accolades for 5-goal game

Andrew Vaillencourt  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's not often you see a hat trick in a hockey game.

It's extraordinarily rare for a player to score five goals in a game, but that's exactly what Milford freshman Mack Musialowski did against Berkley, leading his team to its 13th win of the season.

Musialowski won last week's Hometown Life Athlete of the Week award for his dazzling performance, receiving 14,899 votes (47.49 percent) to finish first in our poll. He beat out runner-up Nate Etnyre, who set a Plymouth Christian basketball school record for points in a game with 43. He received 13,558 votes (43.22 percent).

South Lyon East basketball's Nina Perl and Lucy Cronin placed third with 4.32 percent of the vote, Churchill wrestling's Invi Bella placed fourth with 3.51 percent and Northville basketball's Zach Shoemaker finished fifth with 1.45 percent.

We caught up with the high-scoring freshman and asked him some questions after his big performance:

**You scored five goals in a game recently to help lift your team to another win. Have you ever scored that many goals in a game before? What was it like?**

"No I have never scored that many goals ever, it was a very surreal feeling, I was just in complete shock that the goals kept coming and coming."

**Who is your favorite athlete and why?**

"My favorite athlete has to be Conner McDavid, just the way he plays amazes me. He has so much skill and is such a smart player."

**What is your favorite movie or TV series and why?**

"My favorite movie is step brothers. It's such a funny movie and no matter how much I watch it I'll always get a good laugh."

**What are some things you like to do for fun in your free time outside of hockey?**

"Outside of hockey I love to hang with my friends and family, I also like to play golf in the summertime."

**What year in school are you and what are your future plans? Do you want to continue playing hockey after**



Milford freshman Mack Musialowski scored five goals in his team's win against Berkley. COURTESY OF MACK MUSIALOWSKI

**high school?**

"I'm a 9th grader in the class of 2023, I would love to continue and pursue my hockey career hopefully making juniors or even making a college team which

has been a goal of mine for a long time."

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at [availlenc@hometownlife.com](mailto:availlenc@hometownlife.com) or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

## Mercy

Continued from Page 2B

the playoffs, Morris and Mercy have found recent success, earning regional championships in each of the past two seasons it has secured a Catholic League title.

For Bishop, this game was an opportunity to show the intensity Mercy has developed over the course of the season, giving opponents a preview of what they will see in the postseason.

"It definitely shows how hard we work," Bishop said. "To be able to show all of the hours we have put into the season, week after week, and being able to use that intensity, represent what we have done and what we are planning to do."

[cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com)



Mercy forward Maya White drives to the basket against Marian. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Investigation

Continued from Page 1B

reported that the Wayne Memorial wrestlers were told to keep quiet after the accident, leaving the scene of the accident on the bus, and later wrestling in the KLAA individual conference tournament at Howell High.

According to the Livingston County prosecutor's office, an issue or complaint warrant would be issued if it found a falsified police report, bringing charges if necessary.

The office stated that every case is looked at individually, but if all the facts are presented, a decision involving the falsified police report could be made, leading to a misdemeanor charge or an increase in penalty based on the particular case.

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Michigan Matcats' Carter McGlinch on the mat. SUBMITTED

## Matcats bring home 4 titles from NEMWA state finals

Collin Gay Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In the North Eastern Michigan Wrestling Association state finals in Petoskey this past weekend, the Michigan Matcats wrestling team brought home four state titles and two state runner-up finishes.

Griffin Cunningham, Carter McGlinch, Jackson Kelly and Easton Hardesty brought home state championships for the Matcats, while Emmet Fournier and Knox Plave finished in second place.

Kelly, according to head coach Steve Richardson, suffered what he described as a "horrific broken arm" during a competition two years ago. After the injury set Kelly back for an entire year, he recorded a state title for his team.

"The fact that Jackson has bounced back so quickly shows what a true competitor he is," Richardson said. "This state championship is special to all of us. Really proud of him for showing all Matcats what dedication really looks like."

Here is a look at all who placed in the NEMWA state finals:

Wyatt Morantes - third place  
Emmet Fournier - state runner up  
Kiernan Ryznar - third place

Griffin Cunningham - state champion

Knox Plave - state runner-up  
Wesley Honiss - fourth place  
Carter McGlinch - state champion  
Alex Ehrman - third place  
Jackson Kelly - state champion  
Anthony Madaffer - third place  
Tayden Plave - fourth place  
Skylar McGlinch - fourth place  
Easton Hardesty - state champion

### In earlier action

Emmitt Fournier, Griffin Cunningham, Wes Honiss, Carter McGlinch, Jackson Kelly and Easton Hardesty each finished in first place at the Feb. 15 postseason event in Freeland.

"In the 10 years of competing at this event, the Matcats have been a force," head coach Steve Richardson said. "Some of our veterans like Carter and Skylar McGlinch, Anthony Madaffer, Tayden Plave, Camden Pinter and Easton Hardesty are right at home at NEMWA."

"It's nice to see some new faces like Kiernan Ryznar, Luke Main and both Caccavaro boys setting us up for the future. We love the NEMWA league and always show well."

cgay@hometownlife.com

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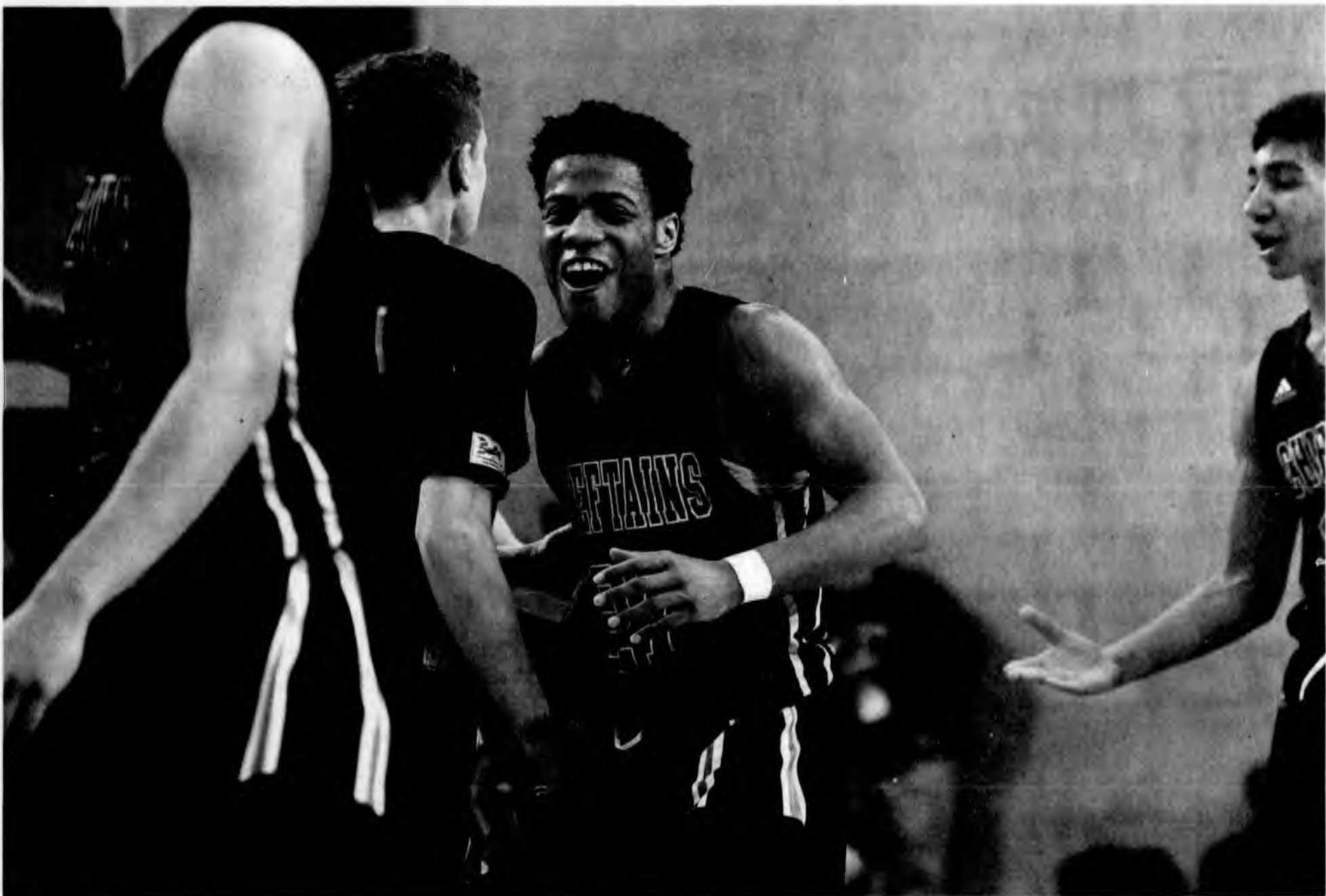
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Okemos' Noah Pruitt, center, celebrates with teammates after being fouled with seconds left during the fourth quarter on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at Caledonia High School. NICK KING/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

# HS district basketball seeding gets thumbs-down

**Mick McCabe**  
Special to Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

No. 1 River Rouge and No. 3 Detroit Cass Tech are in the same Division 1 boys basketball district as Dearborn Fordson, but the chance of them playing each other in the district opener is less than zero.

Ready or not, here we go. The Michigan High School Athletic Association is entering the world of seeding when it comes to March Madness.

This means opening night district matchups in previous tournaments like No. 1 Saginaw vs. No. 2 Saginaw Arthur Hill, which was an incredible way to begin, will not happen again.

This is the first time the MHSAA is attempting to seed the basketball tournament, but we're talking baby steps here. It's not seeding past the district level, and it is seeding only the top two teams in order to place them on opposite sides of the bracket.

"The goal was to do two things," said Andy Frushour, the MHSAA's director of brand management and computer-geek-in-waiting. "One was to use a computer formula to identify the top two teams and the second was to make sure those two teams couldn't play until the district final."

If responses on Twitter are indicative of anything, it seems the coaches are not pleased with this new process.

"It is baffling to me that @MHSAA can get MPR basically figured out & mess up the simple part: creating the brackets. Top seeds don't get a bye, every team placed NOT using MPR but alpha order instead @BCAMCoaches @LeeTsports @FullCrtCoverage @gobtlights @PGHMichigan @MickMcCabe!" — SniderC (@SniderC) February 16, 2020

The immediate reaction was one of puzzlement in why the No. 1 seed won't automatically receive a first-round bye and why the entire district isn't seeded.

Guaranteeing first-round byes was a deal-breaker with the MHSAA's representative council, which would have killed the entire seeding process if that were attached.

"We don't want to give extra benefits to those 1- and 2-seeds," Frushour said. "It's essentially a blind draw like it's always been. Will it change in the future? Maybe. I think coaches will want to see it changed, I don't know if administrators will."

For seeding purposes of the top two teams in each district, the MHSAA devised the Michigan Power Rating, which is the same system it used for the boys soccer tournament in the fall.

It is a relatively easy formula: A team's winning percentage, opponents' winning percentage, and the op-

## The Super 10

Free Press special writer Mick McCabe picks the 10 best basketball teams from around the state, regardless of division:

### Boys

#### SCHOOL

1. River Rouge
2. Flint Beecher
3. Clarkston
4. Detroit Cass Tech
5. Orchard Lake St. Mary's
6. Benton Harbor
7. Ypsilanti Lincoln
8. Grand Rapids Catholic Central
9. Grand Rapids Christian
10. Grand Blanc

REC	DIV
17-1	1
18-1	3
16-1	1
17-1	1
16-1	1
156-2	2
15-2	1
15-2	2
16-1	2
15-3	1

### Girls

#### SCHOOL

1. Detroit Edison
2. East Lansing
3. Hartland
4. Farmington Hills Mercy
5. Pewamo-Westphalia
6. Detroit Renaissance
7. Adrian Lenawee Christian
8. Port Huron
9. Grand Rapids West Catholic
10. East Grand Rapids

REC	DIV
17-0	2
17-1	1
17-1	1
16-1	1
15-2	3
17-2	1
15-1	4
20-0	1
17-1	2
18-1	1

ponents' opponents' winning percentage are the only factors used.

In order to have time to adjust officials' assignments, among other arrangements, the MHSAA used all of the girls' results through Feb. 15. The boys' final MPR deadline was Feb. 22. (All of the girls and boys district pairings are on the MHSAA's website on each sport's specific page.)

To assure the top two seeds are on opposite sides of the bracket, the MHSAA used a blind draw to establish placement in a bracket. The remaining three teams were placed in alphabetical order for another draw.

There are different draws for five-, six- and seven-team districts.

The boys tournament has a different setup. In their five-team districts, the No. 1 seed has a first-round bye; the No. 2 seed plays in a quarterfinal game March 9.

Each season, a new draw will be used to establish district placement.

The MHSAA had a trial run using seeds in March

2019 and the results mirrored what happened with the seeding process in soccer.

"In 43 of 64 soccer districts, No. 1 played No. 2 in the final," Frushour said. "When we tested this for basketball last year, we found the same thing. When No. 1 and No. 2 were on the opposite sides, two-thirds met in the finals."

One thing to remember is the MPR is strictly a mathematical equation that sees only wins and losses. People will vehemently disagree with some of the seedings because the strengths of particular leagues are not a factor.

"It just may be what the numbers see in terms of strength of schedule just doesn't correlate to what people see on the court," Frushour said. "In most cases the numbers do a great job of being unbiased and only seeing wins and losses."

How a team begins and ends the season could have a bearing on its MPR. The best example of that is last season's Ypsilanti Lincoln boys, who got off to a slow start before catching fire. None of its games played the final two weeks would have been factored into its MPR.

Lincoln would not have been a district top-2 seed, but it went on to win the Division 1 state title.

The natural question is where will the seedings go from here? Will it be taken to the regional level?

That is something coaches seriously want. "Just getting into seeding at all is a good first step," Frushour said.

Seeding a region could involve as many as 24 or 25 schools.

Coaches in the metropolitan Detroit area argue that seeding a region will add only an average of a few miles to a team's travel.

But take regions from the Upper Peninsula or areas in northern lower Michigan and the results are dramatically different, with distances of more than 100 miles between some schools.

Don't forget, added travel is something the MHSAA's representative council is dead-set against.

For now we begin the girls and boys tournaments knowing only that we won't have marquee matchups Monday night and we likely won't have many significant showdowns until the district finals on Friday.

"We anticipate we'll have No. 1 vs. No. 2 in the finals, but the great thing is it's not guaranteed," Frushour said. "They still have to win. So you're still going to get upsets."

Yes, but the problem with seeding is the marquee matchups will not be spread throughout the week. They all will be confined to Friday, which will make Friday the 13th in March an interesting day in the boys tournament.

## Howell

Continued from Page 1B

took our mind off the prize. It was tough for us to get back in it. They were focused the whole game and kept clawing and grinding."

The Mustangs went on a 12-0 run to take a 38-33 lead early in the fourth quarter. Howell got within 40-39 on two free throws by Tony Honkala with 3:21 left in the game, but Northville put it away with an 11-1 run.

"We finally came together as a team, really started playing team defense," Northville senior Grant Mathiesen said. "We just started clicking on offense, too. Free throws were huge tonight, too."

"We didn't make too many, but down the stretch, we made some that gave us the win."

Mathiesen scored 15 of his game-high 23 points in the second half. Zach Shoemaker had 22 points for the Mustangs, who got scoring from only four players.

"They're certainly our two leaders," Sander said. "We kind of go as they do, which really isn't fair to them, but they draw a lot of attention."

Honkala had 21 points and Bobby Samples nine for Howell.

While the outcome was relatively meaningless for the Highlanders, the lessons they can take from the game are not.

"Mental focus has to be there the entire game," Simon said. "There's a lot of hoopla before the game. That's a good mental test for us."

"It's something that will help us get better in the future. We have to do a better job of getting mentally tough, myself included."



Howell's Peyton Ward, right, tries to rip the basketball from Northville's Max Barnes' hands while Howell's Bobby Samples defends.

GILLIS BENEDICT/LIVINGSTON DAILY





Avery Thom, of St. Clair Shores, plays in a giant sand box at last year's Outdoorama at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS

## Family fun highlights Outdoorama

**Andrew Vaillencourt**  
HometownLife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The show that celebrates Michigan's conservation heritage returns to Metro-Detroit today through March 1 when the 47th annual Outdoorama sets up camp at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

Conservation and family fun remain the foundation of Outdoorama, but the show also features hundreds of boats, marine accessories, hunting and fishing gear, informative and entertaining seminars, and guides and outfitters from across the country and beyond. Whether it's watching the thrilling head-to-head Timberworks Lumberjack competitions, seeing some of the largest bucks taken in 2019 at Big Buck Night-East (Thursday only), enjoying an up-close encounter with Live Birds of Prey or attending one of the non-stop Educational Seminars there is something for everyone at Outdoorama.

Patrons will find some of the best deals of the year at Outdoorama, too. With over five acres of boats, hunting and fishing gear, outfitters and guides from across North America and beyond.

A diverse lineup of entertaining seminars provide hours of education for anglers, hunters, wildlife watchers and their families.

"Since 1973, Outdoorama has been providing southeast Michigan residents with an opportunity to enjoy family fun, conservation and outdoors education all under one roof," Show Manager Ben Nielsen said. "Families often visit Outdoorama together and enjoy a wide variety of hunting gear, fishing gear, boats, motors, and accessories, hands on activities and a full slate of continuous seminars on everything from hunting and fishing to picking morel mushrooms and managing your land for wildlife. We're excited about this year's show and can't wait for the doors to open at 1 p.m. on February 27."

Returning to Outdoorama this year by popular demand is the Timberworks Lumberjack Show. These lumberjack world championship competitors use the same skills used in logging camps in the 1900s to thrill the crowds with entertaining dialog and head-to-head competition in skills including log rolling, pole climbing, ax throwing, crosscut sawing, and more. The Timberworks Lumberjacks have nation-wide appeal and have appeared on television shows including Wide World of Sports and Fox and Friends.

Outdoors TV stars Jimmy Gretzinger and Jenny Olsen also return to Outdoorama to tape this year's version of Big Buck Night-East, an annual family sta-



Ron Foss greets visitors to his display at last year's Outdoorama.

ple on Michigan Out-of-Doors TV. The show will be filmed on Thursday evening beginning at 7 p.m. It's free with admission and doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Also returning by popular demand is a Locked Antler Display, featuring over 20 sets of locked antlers from white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk and moose.

Commemorative Bucks of Michigan measurers will be on hand all four days of the show providing free scoring of trophy deer, bear, elk and turkey. Patrons who have their trophies scored are encouraged to display them on the Outdoorama Buck.

The Michigan B.A.S.S. Federation Nation will again provide one of the best indoor Trout Ponds in the state. For a nominal fee kids can try their luck at catching a live rainbow trout. In addition there is a pellet shooting range and a crossbow shooting range with certified instructors offering free lessons on shooting.

There also is an archery range for kids, staffed by members of the Michigan Bowhunters Association, and a rock climbing wall.

Do battle with a Great Lakes king salmon or dorado at Outdoorama on the Michigan Charter Boat Association's Virtual Fishing Simulator, or learn to tie flies at the Michigan Fly Fishing Club's Fly Tyer's Corner.

Live wild animals and birds of prey will be on display by the Howell Nature Center and the Michigan Hawking Club.

Planning an out-of-state trip? Outfitters Expo provides show patrons with nearly unlimited family vacation and adventure travel, including hunting and fishing destinations throughout North America and beyond. You can book a

fishing trip to Canada, an elk hunt in Idaho, a family houseboat adventure in Kentucky, or a safari in Africa.

Antique and classic fishing tackle will be on display at Outdoorama, some of which has its roots right here in southeastern Michigan. Got some antique lures lying around? Bring them in and have Antique Tackle Expert Terry McBurney appraise them for you. There also will be several vintage boats and vintage motors on display at the show.

An added bonus for Outdoorama patrons is free crossover admission to the 14th annual Cottage and Lakefront Living Show, held concurrently at Suburban Collection Showplace.

More than 75 seminars are scheduled over the four days and cover topics ranging from fishing and hunting to mushroom hunting, training your bird dog or grooming your land for wildlife or hunting. All seminars are free with admission and many in-booth demonstrations attract crowds throughout the show.

Headlining the All-Star Seminar Lineup are deer hunting experts John Eberhart (Bowhunting Heavily Pressured Whitetails), Tim Andrus (Getting Ready for Deer Season Now), Tony LaPratt (What You Need to Know for Killing Mature Bucks) and Tom Richardson (The Art of Calling Deer). They'll be joined by turkey hunting expert and calling champion Seth McCullough (Turkey Hunting and the Life Cycle of the Wild Turkey), Joel Piatek (Duck Hunting the Swamps of Lake St. Clair), and expert dog handler Len Jenkins (Training Your Dog to Hunt).

Mushroom expert Theresa Maybrier, America's foremost authority on mo-

rels, will teach Outdoorama patrons how to identify morels, where to find them, how to prepare them and how to preserve them in her "Morel Hunting" seminars.

On the fishing side of the seminars are professional walleye experts Mark Romanack (Trolling for Walleyes), Mark Martin (How to Catch Walleyes Wherever You Go) and Lance Valentine (Detroit River Walleye Basics). Some of the other fishing seminar leaders are Jake Romanack (Modern Salmon Tactics), Wayne Carpenter (No Secrets on Lake St. Clair) and Kevin Backus (Muskie Trolling Tactics Proven by Homer LeBlanc).

John Borkovich, a retired conservation officer and book author, also will be presenting seminars at Outdoorama.

Kids and adults enjoy collecting the commemorative Dardevil spoons that Eppinger Manufacturing Co. in Dearborn hands out each year on Thursday and Friday to the first 500 show patrons. On Saturday and Sunday the first 250 patrons will receive a K&E Bass Stopper lure from Stopper Lures in Hastings.

The show that celebrates Michigan's great outdoors is Feb. 27 through March 1. Admission is \$12 adult, \$5 for children ages 6 to 14, and children 5 and under will be admitted free. Show hours are Thursday, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information visit <http://www.Outdoorama.com> or call (616) 447-2860.

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at [avaiilienc@hometownlife.com](mailto:avaiilienc@hometownlife.com) or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.





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# Sports league producing tears of joy

Inclusion, camaraderie are creating a movement

**Shawn Windsor**  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As soon as the ball splashed through the net, he turned to the crowd with his arms raised, then ran back down the court, his head toward his family.

Michael Manning was smiling. And skipping.

Manning, a special education high school student, had just made a basket in a game that looked and sounded and just like a varsity basketball game.

You'd be smiling and skipping, too.

And that was the point, or at least one of many at the Kensington Lakes Activities Association's Unified Sports League tournament on Thursday night at Novi High School, where general education students (peers) join special education students (athletes) to play basketball, but also to promote understanding, inclusion and, frankly, camaraderie between students who probably wouldn't interact much.

What started as an idea with Special Olympics Michigan has turned into a movement that's spread to more than 60 high schools and several conferences, thanks to the work of educators, coaches and parents, but particularly to the work of Novi and Brighton's athletic directors, Brian Gordon and Jack Thompson.

The pair were at an education conference in Traverse City a few years back when Dan Ekenon, the senior program director for Special Olympics Michigan, gave a talk about the value of unified sports. At some point during the presentation, Thompson leaned over to Gordon and said, "we could do this at a league."

"And (Gordon) was like, 'yeah,'" said Thompson.

Both already had held a few unified games, some scrimmages, some against area schools. And both had seen the reaction in their respective gyms.

Here was a chance to expand and treat the unified games as any other sport in their high schools. Not long after the talk, Thompson invited Ekenon to a KLAA meeting to make his pitch. Thompson told his fellow athletic directors that bringing unified sports went beyond giving opportunity to special needs students.

"It will change the culture and tone in your building," he said.

The set-up for basketball is simple: anyone in the school can play, but only two peers can be on the court for a team at any given time. The peers are there to facilitate play. They don't shoot or dribble much. They mostly pass.

And encourage, and high-five, and cheer, as does everyone else in the gym, anytime a player does something positive.

On Thursday night, 10 teams from the KLAA arrived in the late afternoon for the tournament. After a round-robin set up seeding for elimination games, Brighton and Belleville were the last teams left. Brighton won at the buzzer on a 3-point shot. The teams gathered for photos with the trophy.

The games move quickly, despite heavy substitutions to accommodate deep rosters — sometimes as much as 20 kids will sit on a bench.

There is no traveling. Or double-dribbling.

No backcourt violations or inbounds violations or out-of-bounds violations. No violations at all, really, and no reason to blow the whistle, except to end the quarter or the half or the game.

It's glorious for the refs, who also work varsity games and hear every imaginable invective from coaches and parents.

"Humbling," said Steve Pasden, an official from Hazel Park, who was slipping on his black shoes and striped shirt at the scorer's table before the first game Thursday afternoon. "I have a cousin who has Autism and he doesn't get to interact with people much. This program gives these kids a chance to do that."

Pasden loves the break from the vitriol in the crowd, of course. And runs up and down the court — never blowing his whistle — grinning.

Here, coaches clap for every basket, whether it's for their team or not. And parents cheer for everyone, no matter the uniform.

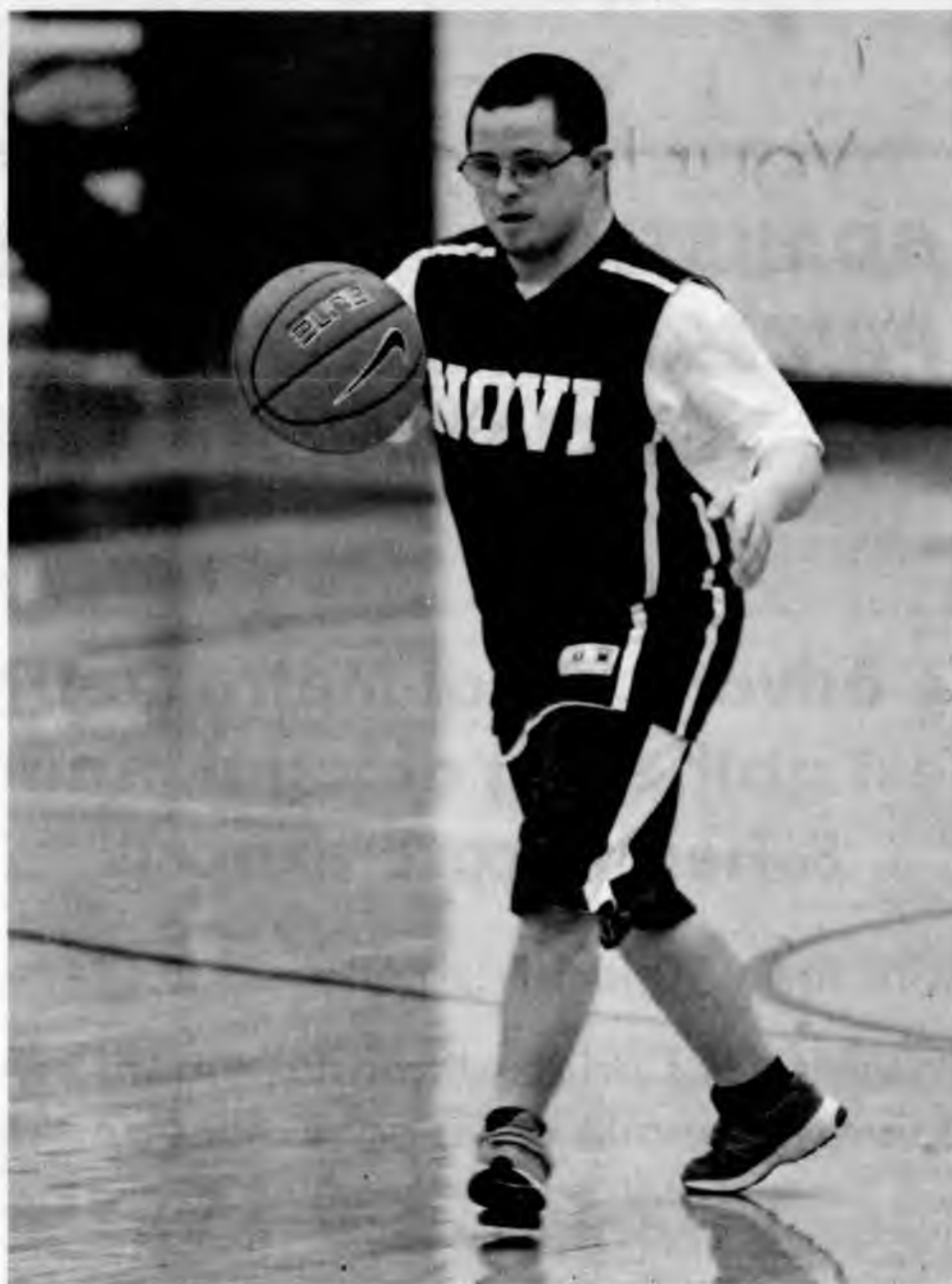
The kids compete, certainly, and want to win. They dance and skip and turn to the crowd after made baskets. It's a show. Of course, it's a show. It's basketball.

And they get to step on the stage, wearing their school's uniform, a possession that's easy to take for granted, until you see unified athletes walking



Novi teacher Amanda Squires, an assistant coach for Novi's unified basketball team, watches the team play.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NOVI COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Michael Manning dribbles during a KLAA Unified Sports League game at Novi.

down the halls during school hours wearing one.

In this way, it's a symbol of inclusion, of being part of something larger, a choice that's always been available to general education students, whether through sports or theater or the math club, but has remained elusive for special needs students.

Yet the chance to jump into the daily fray of a high school doesn't just benefit those taking the leap. The ripples extend far and wide.

"This is more than about sport," said Thompson. "... This is about breaking down barriers regardless of handicap or gender or sexual orientation or race or religion."

And if you looked around Thursday night, you'd have gotten a pretty good

glimpse of what he was talking about. From the sounds of joy to the cheers for everyone to the enthusiasm in the voice of the public address announcer, who called out every basket as if a game winner.

Parents brought poster-board signs and extended families, as Jennifer and Bill Zagon did to cheer on their 15-year-old son, Daniel, whose grandfather, Bill Sulkowski, never misses a game.

"It's just so cool," Sulkowski said. "My wife and I never miss a game. We love to watch their expressions, how excited they get, and we get to know their personalities."

As Sulkowski talked from the stands, his grandson raced up and down the court, dribbling, always looking to get to the rim. When he made a basket, he'd

turn and bask in the glow.

"It's given him confidence," Jennifer said.

"It's given him an avenue for other students to get to know him," said Bill.

Think about that for a moment, especially if you're a parent, and how easy it would be to take that for granted, to assume the world will recognize your child for who he or she is.

Unified sport changes this.

And for the peers who see it up close? Nothing is better.

"It's a blast," said Abbey Pheiffer, a junior at Novi who is playing her second season of Unified Sports. "To see the joy ..."

Well, yes, to see the joy. To spread the joy, too. Or at least spread word of what it's like, as she and her fellow peers do during school.

It's why you'll see general education students mingling with special education students in the hallways of Novi's high school, and why you'll see that in nearly every school that adopts the program. Though it doesn't end there.

Kids from both populations gather at the same lunch tables, after school for pizza, in the evening at bowling alleys. And not just unified athletes and peers, but unified athletes and everyone.

That leads to more understanding, which leads to less bullying.

"You rarely see it in our school," said Gavin Parenti, a junior at Novi.

Thompson sees the same in Brighton.

At Brighton, games are held during the last hour of class, in front of the entire school, as happened when his team visited Hartland. The team entered the gym to the sound of their own fight song, played by their rival school.

"You don't see that every day," said Thompson.

Neither do you see referees tearing up, or coaches wiping their eyes, or an entire gym grow silent while a student in a wheelchair gets wheeled under the basket, and gets help tossing the ball through the net.

Then erupt.

In most ways, said Ekenon, "it looks and sounds like any other varsity sport. That's the magic right there."

Magic that can lift a high school, and a community, in ways that may seem obvious, but aren't always easy to achieve. This is the power of sport, yes, but it's the power of inclusion at heart.

"This provides an opportunity to show that there is more to this (life) than yourself," said Thompson. "... Winning is cool. But today is so much more than just about who walks home with the KLAA trophy."



# Registration open for Novi Youth Baseball League

Andrew Vaillencourt  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Novi Youth Baseball League's 2020 season is rounding third and heading for home as spring gets closer. Registration for the 2020 Novi Youth Baseball League season is currently open, and players who register by March 5 will receive a \$10 discount.

NYBL's teams are assembled through division drafts which allow the teams to be competitively balanced. The spring season will begin practices in April, league play starts the first week of May, and the season wraps up with playoffs and all-star games in late June.

NYBL baseball is an opportunity for players to learn baseball fundamentals and sportsmanship while having fun. The NYBL offers baseball for all skill levels at six divisions based on the players' age: Pinto Division is a machine pitch division for players 6-8 years old; Kid pitch baseball begins with Mustang Division (9-10 year olds); and continues with Bronco Division (11-12 year olds); Pony Division (13-14 year olds); Colt Division (15-16 year olds); and Palomino Division (17-18 year olds). The league's home games are played at ITC Community Sports Park located at Eight Mile and Napier Roads.

The Novi Youth Baseball League was founded 1957 as the Novi Little League and is the oldest youth sports organization in Novi. NYBL President Brad Leidal said the organization is looking forward to building on their 2019 successes.

The NYBL's Colt Division team was champion of the Intercity Colt League and the league's Palomino team was runner up in the Canton Baseball Association. The Novi Heat, NYBL's Travel Baseball Program, had 12 tournament championships and 15 tournament runner-ups during 2019. The NYBL held their first mid-season celebration day this past year and also expanded their partnerships with neighboring communities including the Lakes Athletic Baseball League and Huron Valley Youth Baseball & Softball League. The NYBL also partners with the Northville Baseball Softball Association and the South Lyon Junior League at certain age



Registration for the Novi Youth Baseball League is now open for the 2020 season. COURTESY OF BRAD LEIDAL

groups.

Leidal discussed the leagues' partnerships, "Our Pony, Colt and Palomino Division teams have competed in intercity leagues for many years. This season most of our divisions will have cross-city games. The kids and coaches really enjoy these games as it gives our players the opportunity to play new teams and at new fields. We've had great partnerships with Northville, South Lyon and Lakes and last fall we were able to add a cross-city partnership with Huron Valley. We really appreciate the support and relationships we've built with our neighboring communities Board of Directors and we look forward to continuing and growing these partnerships in 2020."

The NYBL is a community based, non-profit organization run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors. The NYBL promotes the fundamental principles of sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork that can be applied throughout life. Novi residency is not required. The NYBL

also offers opportunities to parents or volunteers looking to get involved and make a difference in their community.

Leidal discussed the importance volunteers have in the success of the league, "Volunteers are the backbone of our league. It takes a lot of effort to make the league run smoothly. A lot of the work is behind the scenes and people don't realize what goes into making each season a success. We're always looking for new volunteers to help us make this a great experience for our players. Many of our current Board members have been involved for many years and now their kids are getting older and we're looking to pass the baton to a new generation of leadership."

There are many volunteer opportunities for people who are interested. These opportunities include coaching, umpiring, team managers or helping with off-field activities such as league communications.

"The more people who are willing to help makes it easier on all of us," Leidal

said. "We can work with anyone who is interested to find a fit based on their availability."

Leidal stated the NYBL's Board of Directors is very excited to get started with the 2020 season.

"Since last fall our Board has put in a lot of hard work to make the upcoming season a great experience for the kids. Our coaches and volunteers do a great job working with all players whether they're brand new to baseball or an experienced player. This is a sport we love, our coaches look forward to teaching the game to the players, seeing how they improve over the course of the season and learn to come together and play as a team."

To register for the upcoming spring season, or to inquire with any questions, visit the NYBL website at [www.noviyouthbaseball.com](http://www.noviyouthbaseball.com).

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at [availlenc@hometownlife.com](mailto:availlenc@hometownlife.com) or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

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Rev. Marsha M. Wozniak, Lead Pastor  
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### How hiring trends for 2020 will affect your job search

Kate Lopaze  
[thejobnetwork.com](http://thejobnetwork.com)

As baseball sage Yogi Berra once said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." This feels especially fitting for the fast-spinning cycle that is hiring and job seeking, with technology and social media making it feel like things are shifting constantly. But there are already some trends showing for 2020, which you should keep in mind for your own job hunt this year.

#### Economic uncertainty

Recession or no recession? Economists are conflicted about whether there's trouble on the horizon. Companies are tending to be cautious, though, and may be trying to adopt leaner, meaner hiring and recruiting strategies for the year.

An economic downturn may also mean more applicants in the pool for fewer jobs. Still, don't let that discourage you. While companies may be flooded with applicants for open positions, they tend to receive more unqualified or stretch applicants during this time as well.

Building a strong application package (tailored resume, detailed skills, and experience, strategic application submissions) can help you differentiate yourself in that pool, even if the economy is trending downward.

#### Going mobile

We do virtually everything on our phones these days: shop, research, communicate, order food, get news and information, etc. And in fact, 81% of U.S. adults own a smartphone, so employers are trying to go where the candidates



GETTY IMAGES

are. That means mobile outreach is becoming a major recruiting priority for companies. For companies that have relied more on desktop websites and platforms to attract and process applicants, this also means that they'll be optimizing their sites for mobile use.

For your own job search, you should be open to using these new mobile technologies to find and take advantage of opportunities as they come. Your resume should be clear and easy to read on a number of different platforms (large screen or small), and easily acces-

sible to you when you're on your phone or tablet and away from a computer.

#### Focus on culture

Skills and experience will always be among the most important determining factors in the hiring process, but companies are increasingly looking for people who will be good cultural fits as well. From a worker perspective, this tends to make companies more employee-friendly – instead of a cold cubicle farm that takes your work and spits you out

at the end of the day.

Sussing out a company's culture while you're still in the initial research phase can help you a) figure out if you would enjoy working there, and b) develop talking points if you're called in for an interview. Check the company's website to read up on its history, mission, vision, values, and the like. You can also look at review sites like Glassdoor or Salary.com to see what others say about what it's like to work there. Corporate boilerplate and subjective stories from ex-employees likely won't give you the whole picture of a company's culture, but it should give you some basic knowledge about what the company expects from its employees, what its priorities are, and other bits of knowledge you can use to show you'd be a great fit.

#### Emphasis on diversity

Most companies are prioritizing diversity, both in the traditional sense (gender, ethnic, religious) and in the kinds of perspectives they hire. If you can, call out the ways you could contribute to the diversity of the company and the unique skills or experiences you bring.

As always, a little prep goes a long way in your job search, no matter what's happening in your industry or in the hiring economy in general. The more care and curation you bring to every job application, the more successfully you'll be able to capitalize on these trends and land the right new job. Good luck!

Kate Lopaze is a career advice journalist for [TheJobNetwork.com](http://TheJobNetwork.com) where this article was originally published. She investigates and writes about current strategies, tips, and trending topics related to all stages of one's career.

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13 Song from "Kiss Me, Kate"  
21 Broadcasting range  
22 Still too hot to eat, maybe  
23 United States territory  
24 Teasing a bit  
25 Disease treatment using tiny-scale technology  
26 Drop off  
27 Warhol of pop art  
28 Blowup stuff  
29 Put in a pile  
30 Shiny balloon polyester  
32 Croaking creature  
36 Restaurant seen in "Manhattan"  
38 Arm-twist  
43 Rare lunar phenomena  
46 Evaluation with a money-back guarantee

48 Medium for Rembrandt  
49 Brand of fleece-lined boots  
50 "The Thin Man" novelist  
51 Procedures to detect a hazardous household gas  
53 Writer Kesey  
54 TV host Ripa  
55 Even way to finish  
56 Streaming media format  
60 Verbalizes  
61 Twirl in the opposite direction  
64 Car sticker abbr.  
68 Incidentally  
69 "Faust" author  
71 Step on it  
75 Place  
76 Crossover SUV similar to the Chevy Equinox  
79 Org. for university cadets  
81 Expert  
83 Former first lady Carter  
84 Tennis, chess or bridge

86 Left on a voyage  
87 "Affirmative, captain!"  
88 Diagram showing data as nested rectangles  
90 Biological bristle  
91 Pitiful  
93 Tropical devil ray  
95 Waitress on "Alice"  
98 "Pity!"  
102 "Uh-uh"  
103 1985-91 "Saturday Night Live" cast member  
107 Master musicians  
109 Notches on surfaces  
110 Like the period between 1918 and 1939  
111 Deadlocked  
112 Tuna snarer  
113 Like hand-eye coordination

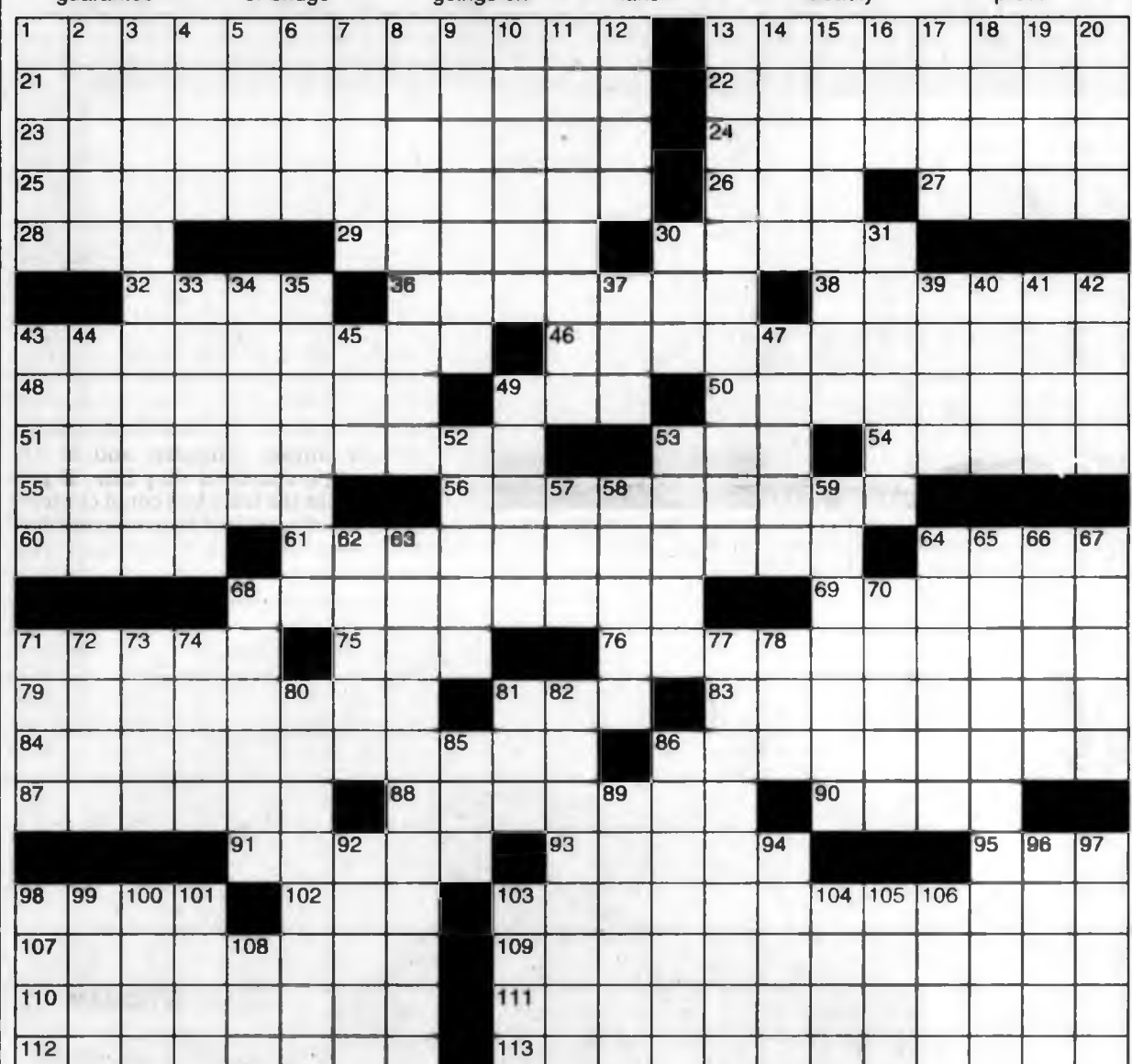
## DOWN

1 Not sufficient  
2 Child bearer  
3 Time of noteworthy goings-on

4 Architect Saarinen  
5 Pare down  
6 Walk back and forth  
7 "Yikes!"  
8 Contribute people  
9 Pressure units  
10 Beethoven symphony in E flat  
11 Ann of "All That Jazz"  
12 Shop lure  
13 Fried egg preference  
14 Actress Tatum  
15 Cold applications to sprains  
16 Drop off  
17 Hit for the Kinks  
18 Lena of "Alias"  
19 Peddle from a stall  
20 Avant-garde  
30 Body of eau  
31 Painter Mark  
33 Transplants, in a way  
34 Neighbor of a Saudi  
35 Thyroid gland swellings  
37 Egg yolk  
39 U.S. border lake

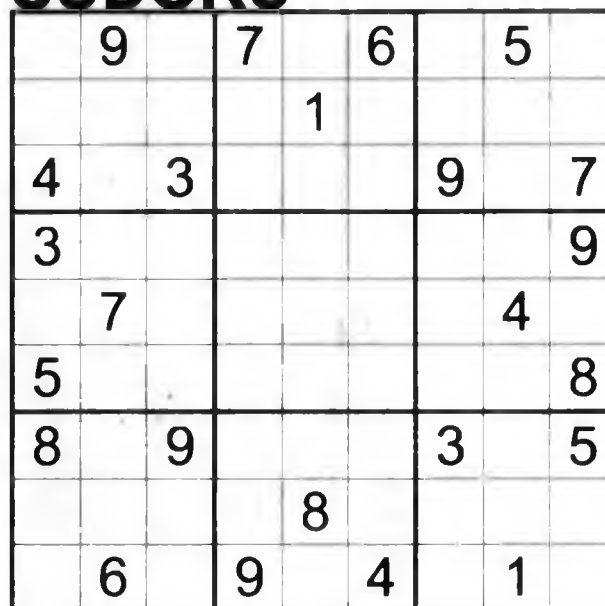
40 Currency unit of Cambodia  
41 Give a ring  
42 — May (Jed Clampett's daughter)  
43 Karloff of old films  
44 Jungle vine  
45 With 78-Down, 2,000 pounds  
47 Gospel singer — Patty  
49 People online  
52 Foot the bill  
53 Top 40 DJ Casey  
57 "— recall ..."  
58 Narrow shelf  
59 Eats  
62 Some bridge hands  
63 Casual top without a circular collar  
64 Red wine  
65 Keeps out of debt  
66 Cologne's river  
67 Md. neighbor  
68 Expert  
70 Pontificate  
71 Epic tale  
72 Supplicate  
73 One-named model who wrote "True Beauty"

74 Inises' places  
77 Entered stealthily  
78 See 45-Down  
80 Famed  
81 Heady brew  
82 Roberto of baseball  
85 Great anger  
86 Ashen look  
89 City across the Missouri River from Bismarck  
92 Tabulae — (blank slates)  
94 "— Is Born"  
96 Slowly, in scores  
97 Brian in the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame  
98 Hertz rival  
99 Conga-dancing formation  
100 Intro drawing class  
101 "Nana" actress Anna  
103 "Buenos —"  
104 Timbuktu's nation  
105 News tidbit  
106 "Stretch" car  
108 Suffix with press



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

## MANAGE TIME WORD SEARCH

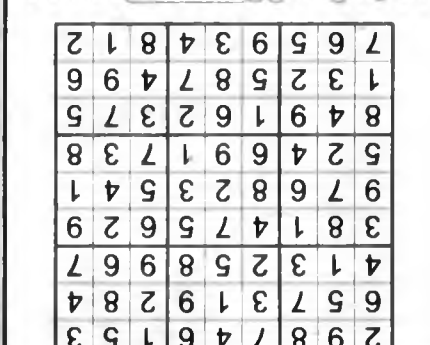
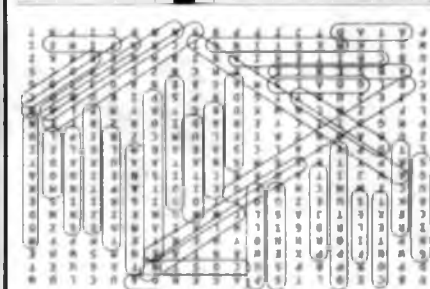
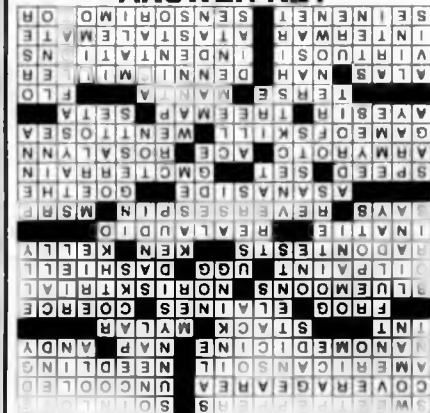
D B C E O L T S P A G E N D A U C L U W  
D P O R P B P S U C O S T N T D G U E T  
G W N F P P X E W A N T A E N M S W H E  
N P T I O R H N O Y H E R T E T M P F M  
I R E L R O G I L H L A I A M N E G Z O  
C E X E T J A S L C W N D N E I Z N W D  
R K T S U E Z U O T T O N I G R I S E  
U C Z W N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

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

## WORDS

ABSENCE  
ACTION  
ADDRESS  
ADJOURN  
AGENDA  
APPOINTMENT  
BALANCE  
BLUEPRINT  
BUSINESS  
CLEAN  
CODE  
CONTEXT  
COST  
CRITERIA  
DAILY  
DATA  
DURATION  
ESTIMATION  
FILES  
FOLLOWUP  
GOALS  
MANAGEMENT  
MEETING  
MODEL  
MODERATION  
OPPORTUNITY  
ORGANIZED  
PLANNING  
PRIORITIZE  
PROCRASTINATE  
PROJECT  
SCHEDULE  
SOFTWARE  
SOURCING  
TIME  
TRACKER

## ANSWER KEY



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For sale, Electric Mobility chair, \$850  
obo, 734-437-8302

Get results.  
Advertise in  
CLASSIFIEDS!

## Novena

Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, you who makes me see everything and who showed me the way to reach my ideal. You who gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and you who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. Amen. Thank you for your love towards me and my loved ones. Say for 3 consecutive days without mentioning your petition and your prayer will be answered. Promise to publish this prayer. Also wish to thank Blessed Mother, St. Joseph and St. Jude. Thank you St. Jude for all favors received. J.M.

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INCLUDES 6 HUSHPUPPIES, CHOICE OF A 402 SIDE AND A ROLL & BUTTER.

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