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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020 ■ HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

School districts postpone May ballot proposals

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

School district officials in South Lyon and Bloomfield Hills announced March 20 they would not ask voters to approve millions of dollars in bonds in May.

The issues will be removed from ballots to avoid the risk of spreading coronavirus as people gather at the polls.

"All of us are experiencing extraordinary times," South Lyon Interim Superintendent George Heitsch wrote in a letter to the community co-signed by School Board President Carrie Han-

shaw. "The coronavirus pandemic is impacting everyone and forcing all residents, families, businesses and school districts to make some tough decisions."

The Michigan Secretary of State asked district officials to move the \$97.1 million proposal to the August or November election to reduce the spread

of coronavirus at polling places in May, Heitsch said.

The move was not mandated, he added, but if the district had kept it on the ballot, district residents would be restricted to voting by absentee ballot.

See PROPOSALS, Page 4A



Milford Senior Center Meals on Wheels volunteer Roberta Bearup and another helper put together 21 lunches March 17 for delivery to seniors living in western Oakland County. The service has seen an increase in demand due to coronavirus. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Meals on Wheels seeing rise in requests from homebound

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

While the coronavirus idles schools and businesses, demand for Meals on Wheels service has revved up.

Bridget Ajemian, program director for the nonprofit organization in Living-

ston and western Oakland counties, said she was not prepared for the onslaught of requests for food delivery to homebound individuals received last week.

"We didn't factor in the increase until the phone went crazy," she said. "A lot of people have called to get on the pro-

gram. This will really change things and it evolves every day."

Until the coronavirus began radically changing life in Michigan and across the country in the past weeks, about 900 elderly or disabled citizens

See MEALS, Page 4A

COLD CASES

Technology turns the solve rate

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Having spent decades hunting for the Oakland County Child Killer, Cory Williams was too curious to resist the long shot.

The retired Livonia detective ran pertinent DNA information from hair samples connecting the first and fourth victims, Mark Stebbins and Timothy King, through a genealogy database.

He was looking for people related to the hair originator. And he found them.

"If you have nuclear DNA, you're going to throw that into a genealogy website and you're going to get back a family ... maybe 20, 30, 50 people to look at," he said. "When you throw mitochondrial DNA, which is a hair fragment ... connected to the maternal line ... you're going to get thousands of families. It's such a huge number."

"I wanted to try and, sure enough, it came back with 11 million people," he paused to laugh, "... of eastern European descent."

Williams still likes what he's hearing about cold case investigators' latest explorations of DNA technology.

It's the kind of technology that helped to catch the suspected Golden State Killer and, within the past few months, helped to identify a dismembered body found decades ago in an Idaho cave as Joseph Henry Loveless, an outlaw and a murderer who was killed after escaping jail in 1916.

"Technology has advanced, so keep our fingers crossed," Williams said.

Progress

Technologies and tools for cold case investigations have come a long way since the early 1980s, when missing Etan Patz's face appeared on milk cartons throughout the nation. He was one of the first missing children to make such an appearance.

Since then, the internet has become a go-to resource. Daily routines have incorporated cell phone use.

Think of it like this: Dorothy still could get lost if swirled into a tornado. But with technology, Auntie Em's chances of recovering her have grown exponentially.

See COLD CASES, Page 6A

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Northville library launches new website

If you haven't noticed something different with the Northville District Library online, now's the perfect time to check it out.

With the coronavirus pandemic limiting children's and adults' opportunities to socialize, the library announces the launch of its revised website, designed to provide an updated, easy-to-navigate, mobile-friendly experience.

Find it at www.northvillelibrary.org

In 2019, the library conducted a user survey about the existing website to determine its most-used areas. The results demonstrated that patrons wanted a more streamlined experience where they could find what they wanted quickly and efficiently. Website analytics were also reviewed. With this information, the library's website team began working on a complete overhaul.

"We are very excited to offer this new, streamlined website to Northville residents," Library Director Laura Mancini said. "Our goal was to make it easy for the public to explore our collections and programs, and find what they are most interested in quickly, without too many clicks."

Library patrons can readily locate the "Search the Catalog" and "Downloading" functions directly in the center of the homepage.

Other pertinent information, such as library hours and events, are also prominently featured. Special attention was given to make the website easier for people using assistive technologies and devices.

Closed for coronavirus

The library is closed until further notice during the COVID-19 public health crisis. All programs, events and meetings scheduled at the library are canceled.

Normal operations will resume as soon as conditions allow.

The drop box is closed; no materials are being accepted for return. All overdue fines will be waived for materials currently checked out.

Donations will not be accepted.

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Phil Allmen, Content Strategist

Mobile: 248-396-3870

Email: pallmen@hometownlife.com

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Downtowns continue to support local businesses

David Veselenak hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

While restaurants continue to operate on a carry-out basis only, area downtowns are continuing to support businesses and visitors.

Here's what each community is doing in response to life seemingly grinding to a halt for the foreseeable future.

South Lyon

The downtown's Facebook page has been continually sharing updates from the city, as well as sharing posts made by local businesses and restaurants updating customers and tips for supporting local business going forward.

South Lyon city hall is closed to the public.

Milford

The village has suspended parking meter usage for the time being, and on-street parking in downtown Milford along Main Street is free.

The downtown development authority (meetmeinmilford.com) has compiled a full list of restaurants that are serving carryout.

Northville

The Downtown Northville Facebook page is sharing information from local businesses, as well as providing a list of restaurants serving carryout.

The page has passed along news from other enti-



Downtown Milford has suspended parking meter usage for the time being, and on-street parking along Main Street is free. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

ties such as the Tipping Point Theatre, which canceled its performance of "The Baxter Sisters" set to take the stage in April.

The page is also sharing resources for residents and businesses from the city of Northville and Northville Township.

Plymouth

The Plymouth Downtown Development Authority has compiled a list of the activity for many businesses in downtown Plymouth, updating the list on a regular basis with new information as it becomes available.

They've shared the list on Facebook on a daily basis, and have relayed information from local businesses and the city government regarding coronavirus updates.

Beaumont doctor advises 'worried well' to remain calm, treat at home

Shelby Tankersley
hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Not everyone who gets COVID-19 will end up in a hospital bed.

"The vast majority we're able to send home," said Dr. Sanford Vieder, chair of emergency medicine and director of the emergency and trauma center for Beaumont Hospital Farmington Hills. "We've had a very low percentage thus far of patients that require hospitalization and an even lower percentage that require intensive care unit kind of intervention."

Vieder said most people can manage COVID-19 in their own homes and everyone should focus on practicing

social distancing and staying home whenever possible. He did note, though, that the coronavirus pandemic is still in the early stages in Michigan.

Vieder emphasized the coronavirus is nothing to downplay and presents serious risk to some people, but the "worried well" can do their part by leaving emergency waiting rooms, hot line calls and test kits to those most at risk.

"We're looking for a specific set of symptoms to make a determination whether somebody should be admitted to the hospital," Vieder said. "They likely would have a fever, they likely would have a pretty bad cough and then the big differentiating factor is if they're short of breath. Are they having trouble breathing?"

COVID-19 test kits and personal protective equipment for medical professionals are either in short supply or approaching that limit. So, Beaumont is turning its resources to those who are most seriously ill.

"We are now reserving the test exclusively for

those ... sick enough to be admitted to the hospital because we need to know whether they do or do not have COVID-19," Vieder said.

Because of that, people with mild cases are encouraged to quarantine themselves and treat at home with rest, increased fluid intake and taking an acetaminophen tablet like Tylenol.

"If you're doing all of that and you feel like your symptoms are getting worse and, most importantly, (you're) really having a hard time breathing, really struggling to breathe, can't even walk to the bathroom without being markedly short of breath, that's your red flag that you should be seen and screened at the hospital," Vieder said.

Even if you feel fine, Vieder said, it's in everyone's interest to stay home as much as possible.

"It could go up or it could go down, and to be honest a lot of that depends on people heeding the warnings of staying home, not going out if you don't need to, so that we can limit the spread," he said.

While people fighting cancer or an underlying issue like heart or lung disease and the elderly have increased risk, Vieder thinks most people, as much as 98 percent of the population, will be just fine.

"It's true that the vast majority of individuals who are otherwise healthy, and the younger you are the better, do just fine," he said. "This turns out to be nothing more than the case of the flu or a flu-like illness and they do fine. They don't need hospitalization."

And in the name of mental health, he said, people need not dwell on bad news.

"A lot of people are focused on the bad," Vieder said. "People are focused on what they're seeing on TV and the pictures of the ICUs and people in 'moonsuits' taking care of patients that are really super sick."

"There's no question that that's really going on, I don't think we should ignore that. But what we're really kind of ignoring is that 98 percent."

Vieder said medical professionals, namely his staff in Farmington Hills, prepare for times like this and are up to the task.

As of last week, no staff members at Beaumont Hospital Farmington Hills have tested positive for COVID-19.

"We're all working long hours but we're happy to be there, we're here for the community and I would say that our morale is excellent so far, at least at Farmington Hills Beaumont," he said.

Beaumont Health is operating drive-through COVID-19 symptom screenings at some of its hospitals, including Farmington Hills, by appointment, and has a free online risk assessment test healthy people are encouraged to use instead of getting screened or calling the COVID-19 hot line.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankers@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Twitter: @shelby.tankk.

INVITATION TO BID 2020 Hillside MS / Meads Mill M.S. Signage & Gym Remodeling NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Board of Education of Northville Public Schools is accepting firm prime contractor trade specific bids for all labor, materials, equipment and all other services to complete the gym remodeling at Hillside Middle School and Signage work at Hillside Middle School and Meads Mill Middle School.

Plans and specifications may be downloaded electronically and are available for review at the office of the AUCH Construction, 65 University, Pontiac, MI 48342 248.334.2000, on or after March 16, 2020. Bid Package consists of Instruction to Bidders, Proposal Forms, General and Supplementary Conditions, drawings and pertinent trade specifications. Contact Joe D'Agostini or Shawn Debo for download instructions.

Your proposal will be accepted **NO LATER THAN 12:00PM NOON, Thursday April 02, 2020 TO: NORTHVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION - 405 WEST MAIN STREET, NORTHVILLE, MI 48167**. Oral, telephone, fax or electronic mail bids are invalid and will not receive consideration.

All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud beginning at 12:30 P.M., April 02, 2020 at the Northville Board of Education, 405 West Main Street, Northville, MI 48167.

A pre-bid walk through is scheduled for Tuesday March 24, 2020 beginning at 9:00 am beginning at Hillside Middle School main entrance lobby, 775 N. Center Street, Northville MI. This meeting is not mandatory but highly recommended. The building will be available for walkthrough observation following the meeting.

All contracts to be entered into by the Northville Public Schools must and will comply with the equal opportunity laws of the State of Michigan.

All bids must be submitted on the forms provided in the bid packet.

All bidders must provide familial disclosure in compliance with MCL 380.1267 and attach this information to the bid proposal. The bid proposal will be accompanied by a sworn and notarized statement disclosing any familial relationship that exists between the owner or any employee of the bidder and any member of the Northville Public Schools, Board of Education or the Northville Public Schools, Superintendent. The District will not accept a bid proposal that does not include this sworn and notarized disclosure statement.

Proposals must include a Treasury listed bid bond or certified check made payable to Northville Public Schools for not less than five percent (5%) of the contract for each proposal over \$24,924 and must be submitted on the bid proposal form furnished with the specifications. All proposals shall remain firm for a period of sixty (60) days.

The Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, either in whole or in part; to award contract to other than the low bidder; to waive any irregularities and/or informalities, and in general to make awards in any manner deemed to be in the best interests of the owner.

Laurie Doner, Secretary
Northville Public Schools, Board of Education

Published: March 26, 2020

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Whelan espionage trial set to begin in Russia

Kristen Jordan Shamus
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

The espionage trial of a Michigan businessman in Russia was set to begin Monday before a panel of three judges in Moscow City Court, his English-speaking lawyer, Olga Karlova, told the Free Press.

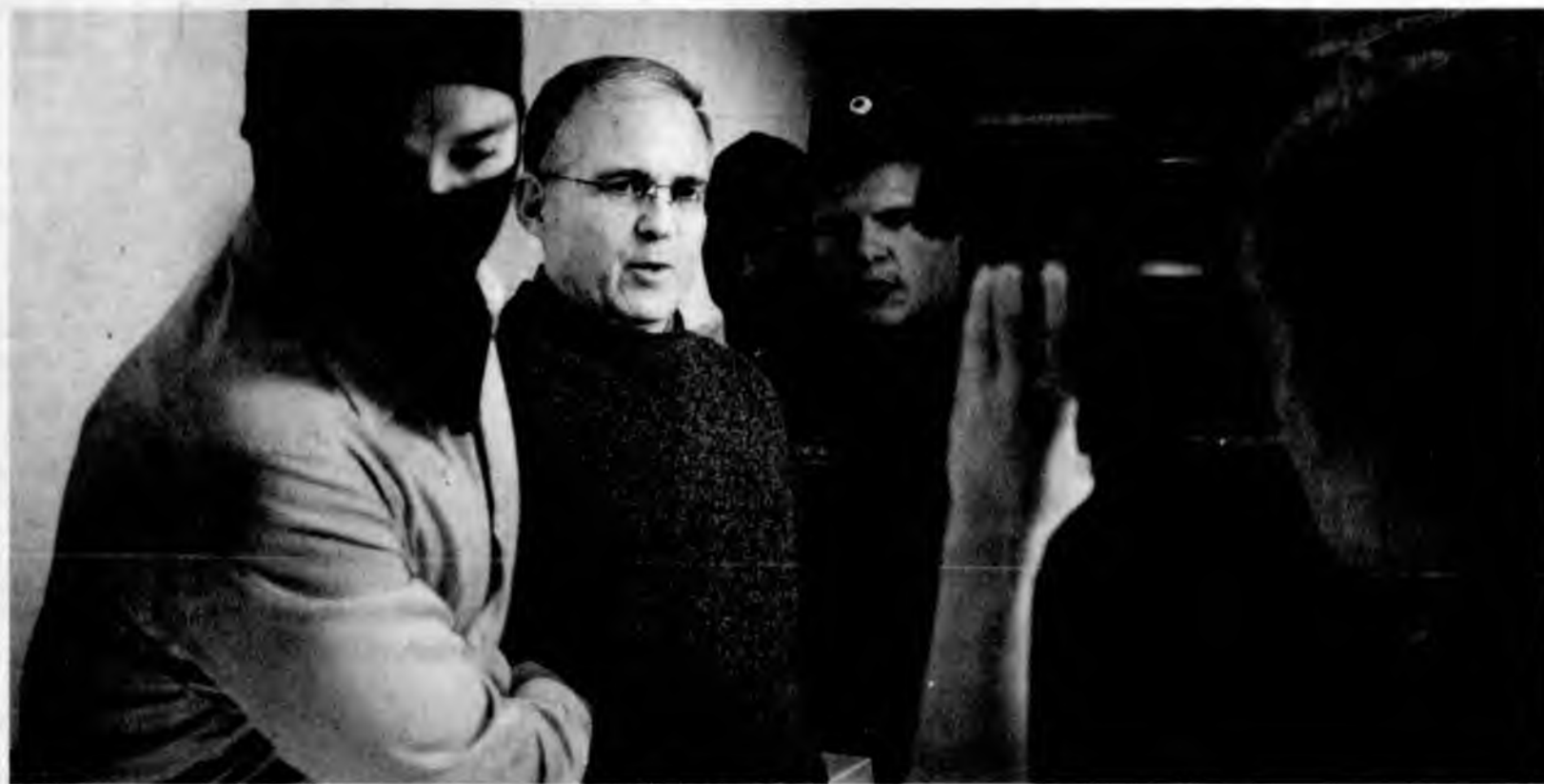
Paul Whelan, 50, of Novi has been held in a Russian prison since December 2018. The Federal Security Service (FSB) alleges it caught Whelan on a spy mission. It found a flash drive in his hotel room that allegedly contained classified information.

Whelan, a former Marine who worked in global security for auto parts supplier BorgWarner, said traveled to Russia to attend the wedding of a friend, and insists he is not a spy.

He'd been to Russia at least a half-dozen times before the trip in December 2018, and has said the flash drive was given to him by a Russian friend he'd met during his travels. Whelan said he'd been told vacation photos were on the drive, not classified information.

His twin brother, David Whelan, said his brother was set up, and the family is hopeful the trial "starts — and finishes — quickly." But amid the backdrop of the global coronavirus pandemic, he acknowledged it might not happen at all.

"The Russian Supreme Court has suspended hearing all but the most urgent cases, so Paul's trial may not actually occur," David Whelan said in an email to the Free Press. "The trial will be held in secret since the FSB claims it is an espionage case. Just like the detention hearings, the only participants will be Paul, his lawyers, the



Paul Whelan, second from left, has been charged with spying in Moscow. If convicted, he could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison. AP FILE

FSB, prosecutor, and judge."

If Whelan is convicted of spying by the Russian court system, he could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.

In a video posted to YouTube in August by Ruptly, a Russian news video service, Whelan's lawyer, Vladimir Zherebenkov, said he is hopeful Whelan will be exonerated.

"More and more information surfaces that shows it was a provocation," Zherebenkov told reporters outside the court. "It was a setup, even though the investigation committee does not agree."

He said Whelan remains in high spirits and is handling the stress of his ongoing incarceration well.

"But you know, there are things he does not understand," he said. "Our justice system is different. The way the investigation is carried out is

also different than what he is accustomed to. It's been eight months already, so quite unusual for him.

"And also he lives in conditions which are very much unusual for him. He is deprived of things he is accustomed to. He has only one hour for walking around. ... He wants justice. Unfortunately, justice comes not that often."

Whelan holds four passports. He is an American citizen who was born in Canada to British parents and Irish grandparents. The consulates in all four countries have said they are working to support him.

Canadian Ambassador Alison LeClaire and her staff visited Whelan earlier this month for his 50th birthday, David Whelan said, adding that in more than a year of incarceration, his brother has not been allowed to make a single phone call home to talk to his par-

ents or siblings.

Being unable to speak to him has escalated their concerns about his health in the prison.

"We continue to be concerned about Paul's health," David Whelan said. "He cracked a molar and has had that temporarily fixed by a prison dentist. But he still has been unable to speak with a doctor about his need for surgery" to repair an inguinal hernia.

The worldwide outbreak of COVID-19, the disease caused by novel coronavirus, has intensified Whelan's isolation, his brother said.

"The global pandemic only heightens our worries about Paul's peril and false imprisonment," Da-

vid Whelan said. "The Russian Federation government has eliminated visits from relatives to those held in pretrial detention centers like Lefortovo. Between a secretive justice system and his isolation in prison, the consular visits have been

our only regular information conduit.

"But a U.S. Embassy visit today (March 19), that had been approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was abruptly canceled. It may be some time before we learn what is happening to Paul."



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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 April 14, 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). This case was postponed from the 3/17/20 meeting.

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). This case was postponed from the 3/17/20 meeting.

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). This case was postponed from the 3/17/20 meeting.

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). This case was postponed from the 3/17/20 meeting.

PZ20-0008 (Michael Noonan) 1019 South Lake Drive, West of Novi Road and North of Thirteen Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-03-330-006. The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 3.32-10.ii.a for a proposed 180 square foot lake front shed, 100 square feet allowed by code. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-4).

PZ20-0010 (Grissim Metz Andriese Associates/ Catholic Central High School) 27225 Wixom Road, West of Wixom Road and South of Grand River Avenue, Parcel #50-22-18-200-027. The applicant is requesting variances from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 28-5(a) to allow four proposed ground signs exceeding the number of signs and the height of signs allowed. One (1) ground sign is permitted at a maximum height of 6 feet. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-1).

PZ20-0011 (Michael Thompson Design) 1310 East Lake Drive, West of Novi Road and North of Thirteen Mile Road, Parcel # 50-22-02-151-033. The applicant is requesting variances from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 3.1.5 for a proposed lot coverage of 26.8%, 25% maximum coverage allowed by code and a proposed Side Yard setbacks of 5 feet and 5.65 feet, 10 feet minimum required by code; and an aggregate side yard setback of 10.56 feet, 25 feet required by code. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-4).

PZ20-0012 (Daniel O'Conner) 48315 Nine Mile Road, West of Beck Road and South of Ten Mile Road, Parcel # 50-22-29-376-011. The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 4.1.9.1 to allow a proposed third detached building, resulting in a total of 3902 square foot increased by 1502 square feet. Two detached buildings with a total of 2400 square foot are allowed by code. This property is zoned Residential Acreage (RA).

PZ20-0013 (Eric Lewandowski) 24326 Wixom Road, East of Wixom Road and North of Ten Mile Road, Parcel # 50-22-20-301-042. The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 5.11 to install a front yard fence and driveway gate. By code a fence shall not extend toward the front of the lot nearer than the minimum front yard setback. This property is zoned Residential Acreage (RA).

Coronavirus forces downsizing of funerals, interments

Ed Wright | HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The spread of coronavirus is creating a troubling downsizing of funerals and interments, area funeral home and chapel directors revealed.

The three funeral homes under the direction of Jim Vermeulen — he oversees facilities in Plymouth, Westland and Detroit — were using the 50-person maximum per-room protocol issued by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer last week, although he emphasized, “it changes day to day.”

Southfield’s Ira Kaufman Chapel, on the other hand, was limiting its number of visitors to seven, a scenario at least partially offset by the chapel’s use of live-streaming services and burials.

Vermeulen is concerned that limiting the number of on-site mourners could be harmful in the long term for people grieving the loss of a loved one.

“I’m worried that the mental health issues from unresolved grief could far outweigh the risk of exposure (to COVID-19),” Vermeulen said. “We’re going to do the right thing. We’re going to follow the rules.”

“However, if it comes down to limiting funerals to 10 people or less, it will create more anxiety for those people who can’t interact with loved ones during some of the most anxious moments of their lives.”

Mourning in the era of coronavirus

Vermeulen said that once the number of people reaches 50 at a visitation or funeral, a second room will be made available at the funeral homes for visitors to either wait (visitation) or watch on a monitor from the second room (funeral service).

“And with technology today, there are always ways for people to connect remotely,” he said. “For instance, we recently had a granddaughter ask if she



Limiting the number of people who can attend funerals, visitations and burials could cause a long-term issue for loved ones whose grief is unresolved.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

“We’re doing everything we can to help create the best setting for people mourning the loss of a loved one.”

Jim Vermeulen Funeral home director

could livestream a funeral with her phone for a relative who couldn’t make the funeral.

“That said, there is nothing that replaces the face-to-face healing that actually being there provides.”

Vermeulen said his family’s funeral homes have been stocked with essentials such as hand sanitizer (“It’s everywhere,” he quipped) and toilet paper.

“We’re doing everything we can to help create the best setting for people mourning the loss of a loved one,” he said.

The Ira Kaufman Chapel is following the guidance of the Michigan Board of

Rabbis, which met via conference call earlier this week.

“We had a service earlier that, under normal circumstances, would have drawn a couple hundred people, but we had to limit it to seven,” said David Techner, director at the Ira Kaufman Chapel. “Overall, people have been very understanding and cooperative.”

Techner admitted that limiting mourners and fulfilling mourners’ needs is a balancing act.

“Our job now, as I see it, is to be socially responsible to the ‘N’t degree,” he said. “We want to make sure that no one who walks into our chapel is in dan-

ger. We have sanitized over and over.

“At the same time, we want to give families an experience they can look back on with fond memories. The situation we’re in is far from optimal, but we’re doing the best we can.”

Techner said the majority of funerals he oversees are conducted at the grave site as opposed to inside the chapel.

The Southfield chapel’s trend-setting practice of live-streaming burials will help family members who are prevented from attending services.

“It’s nice because family members or close friends who can’t make it to the interment can watch the video and then maybe write a note to the family of the deceased, saying ‘We couldn’t make it, but we watched online. It was a beautiful service,’ or something along those lines,” Techner said.

Livestream mourning

Techner added that the chapel also emails results of Google Analytics to family members so that they can see how many people watched and where the viewers live.

When asked whether he can envision a day when people will be encouraged to add the names of relatives and close friends who they want to attend services after they die, Techner shook his head.

“From our experience, the family already knows who the deceased would want to attend, so adding it to a will probably won’t become a popular option,” he said.

Funeral homes that have tried a drive-through visitation option have not done well, Vermeulen said.

“Most of them are closed now,” he said. “The logic is that if you can make it to the funeral home, you should come in and pay your respects to the family. ...

“We aren’t set up for it, but maybe some others will try it. I hope not, but you never know.”

Meals

Continued from Page 1A

were delivered roughly 1,500 meals per day, many getting breakfast and lunch for free or at no cost in Milford, Novi, South Lyon and Northville.

Now demand is on the uptick, while volunteers may be in shorter supply.

Many Meals on Wheels volunteer meal packers and delivery drivers are senior citizens themselves, a high-risk population for serious complications from coronavirus.

Meanwhile, the closure of senior centers across the region has left many people who gathered for lunch in a lurch.

The shutdown last week canceled events at the Milford Senior Center, director Nancy Hinzmann said, including a St. Patrick’s Day party, a veteran’s lunch and a host of other activities.

A veteran who was supposed to attend the lunch asked how to be added to the list of about 50 Milford seniors or disabled citizens who receive Meals on Wheels, Hinzmann said, a vital service which also doubles as a welfare check.

“If someone has relatives in the area, they will watch out for them and get them what they can, but others are without relatives, and on their own and that gets hard,” Hinzmann said. “Some seniors are too proud to ask someone to do something for them.”

Ruby Geissler, 78, and her husband

Arthure, 75, of Novi, have been Meals on Wheels volunteers since they retired nine years ago. Ruby currently is filling in for a paid employee staying away for safety reasons after recent travel.

The Geisslers normally volunteer one day a week, but are on call more lately, even though deliveries have been condensed to just three days a week. They deliver about 100-125 hot meals daily, now accompanied by frozen meals for use on non-delivery days to residents in Novi and South Lyon.

On St. Patrick’s Day, Meals on Wheels served corned beef and cabbage. The day after, stuffed steak was planned. Other menu items include chicken fettuccine alfredo, beef chili and beef lasagna. On Fridays during Lent, meals include salmon burgers, baked cod, tuna sandwiches and vegetable lasagna.

Ruby said volunteering is very rewarding and particularly important because she and Arthure have learned they may be the only people grateful Meals on Wheels recipients see in a 24-hour period.

“With what is going on now, we need more help,” Ruby said. “Right now we’re getting an increase based on the fact people are concerned about going out. ... We’re gonna have a problem, because of the virus, there will be fewer people to deliver. ...

“My husband and I are very healthy, we’re active, but some volunteers are very high-risk.”



Milford resident Marie Jackson, left, welcomes a Meals on Wheels delivery from volunteer Jennifer Beam on March 17. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Ajemian said Meals on Wheels needs volunteers during the coronavirus pandemic, which she believes is a “waterfall” as opposed to a “fluid situation,” as it has recently been described. Donations to the organization, which receives just half of its funding from state and federal sources, are also welcome.

“Who knows how long this will last,” she said. “It’s all speculation, but we will

do whatever we need to do. We won’t turn anyone away.”

If you need help, or want to be a helper, or to learn more, call 810-632-2155, email info@lwmow.org or visit womow.mealsonwheelsmi.org.

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com or 517-281-2412. Follow her on Twitter @SusanBromley10.





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Proposals

Continued from Page 1A

“To do our part in preventing the spread of the coronavirus, the Board of Education has agreed to postpone the May election and address South Lyon’s facility needs in a future election,” Heitsch wrote.

The same is true for Bloomfield Hills Schools, where Superintendent Pat Watson wrote in a message posted to the district’s website that the board of education decided to move a \$200.1 million bond proposal to the Aug. 4 ballot “in the best interest of public health” as the “unprecedented national health crisis unfolds.”

“Moving the vote to August will enable us to keep this important proposal in front of our community, yet move it to a time that is more suitable from both a safety and accessibility standpoint,” Watson wrote.

If approved, the Bloomfield Hills bond will enable the district to make additions and furnish facilities including a

gymnasium, auditorium, cafeterias, classrooms, secure entryways, athletic fields, and playgrounds; and will also enable the purchase of school buses and technology infrastructure.

In South Lyon, the \$98 million bond would be used for critical infrastructure needs in the district, including replacement of roofs, floors, mechanical and electrical equipment, and parking lots and sidewalks.

Additions would also be constructed at Bartlett and Salem elementary schools, as well as the Early Childhood Center. South Lyon High would get a replacement pool, while a new auxiliary gym would be built at East High School.

Heitsch noted that postponement of the bond proposal will have an adverse financial impact on the district.

“These delays will likely result in price increases for bond project materials,” he said. “In addition, postponing the election will mean ... asking voters to restore the millage rate to the 2019 level.”

“We appreciate your understanding as we work together to reduce the impact of the coronavirus.”

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Biggby Coffee in South Lyon closes

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

While many restaurants continue to offer carryout during the coronavirus pandemic, one South Lyon eatery has closed its doors for good.

The Biggby Coffee at 22729 Pontiac Trail posted on Facebook it would be closing its doors for good after opening in 2009.

"The past 11 years we've served this amazing community with a smile. And we've learned so much from opening in 2009 to now. ... But we are going to be

closing permanently," the cafe posted on Facebook on March 19. "We're so sad. But at the same time, it's best for us all.

"We love you South Lyon and can't thank you enough for the friends that are now family."

Attempts to reach the owners of the shop were unsuccessful.

The reasoning behind the closure wasn't clear, but the shop has had a history of building issues that have forced its temporary closure. The shop posted on Facebook on March 11 about a pipe that had leaked water all over the floor. There was no word on whether the

Biggby closure would affect the neighboring TCBY ice cream shop connected to the coffee shop.

The shop posted it hopes to sell the location to another operator to keep Biggby in South Lyon.

"This community is the BEST! The love and support has been overwhelming," the Facebook post reads. "(Thank you) again SL for the best 11 years we could ask for! And to our competitors, take care of my people while we transition to a new owner!"

Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com.



Money Matters
Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Stock market decline will continue in short term

It was only a month or so ago that the stock market was reaching record highs and optimism about the future of the economy was everywhere. Now, we have seen a significant decline in world stock markets and optimism has been replaced by fear.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've spoken to numerous clients about the situation. Generally, clients are concerned and confused. There also are a number of clients looking at this downturn as an opportunity.

For clients who are concerned and confused, I first explained that I have no idea when this crisis will end, nor do I know what stage of the crisis we presently are in. I will leave those issues to the experts.

However, one thing I do know is that we will get out of this crisis like we have every other crisis our economy has faced. Investors tend to have short-term memories and they forget that we've had market meltdowns in the past.

We also shouldn't forget that it was only about a dozen years ago when we were hit by the Great Recession. Even though the crisis we face is unique, we can learn from past meltdowns. Markets will eventually regain their strength; however, it doesn't happen all at once. It takes time and patience.

Because of this I've told my clients that sometimes the best course of action during volatile and uncertain times is to do nothing. For people who have balanced, and diversified portfolios based upon their goals and objectives (as all my clients have), they have time to let the markets rebound.

The question is, do they have the patience? It has been proven time after time that investors who take a long-term approach will be successful.

For as long as I've been in the investment world, I have believed that investors should not let fear or greed dictate their investment decisions.

For clients who are looking at taking advantage of the current situation, the first thing I tell them is it is impossible to predict when the market has hit bottom. Investors who are looking at taking advantage of the current market can either convert an existing IRA into a Roth IRA, make their 2020 IRA contribution now, or invest new money in the market.

These are trying times. However, it is imperative that you take a long-term approach and do not let emotions dictate your actions.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. If you would like Rick to respond to your questions, please email rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

A homeschooler's tips on learning



Shelby Tankersley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

So, how many people have a ton of respect for grade-school teachers right about now?

COVID-19 has many of us stuck at home for most or all of the day. Schools in Michigan are closed until at least April 13, and I know plenty of parents who are adjusting to having their kids at home all the time and quasi-homeschooling.

Homeschooling, or helping kids retain what they've been learning in school while the country practices social distancing, isn't easy. Trust me, I know.

My mother homeschooled my little sister, Emily, and me for the majority of grade school. Looking back on those years, I now see that my education was unique in a lot of ways.

So, here are my tips, and some from my friends, on how to keep your kids engaged while they learn from home:

Teach them a real-life skill

When I started my freshman year of college, I was flabbergasted at how many people didn't know how to do laundry or cook the simplest of meals (I'm looking at you, Easy Mac).

If kids or teens don't know how to fold a shirt, wash dishes, vacuum, make spaghetti, cook a chicken breast or write a check, this is a great time to teach them.

"Invite them into the family team," said Kristin Stocking, who is currently eclectically homeschooling a 12th-grader and a sixth-grader. "We all use the house, we all get responsibility. It's a team effort."

Don't try to recreate the classroom

Your district may or may not be giving your child school work right now. If they are, reach out and ask the professionals how they handle kids in the classroom. Kids spend a ton of time with their teachers, so those teachers probably know what motivates your child.



Shelby Tankersley was homeschooled for most of her grade school years.
COURTESY OF MARY TANKERSLEY

"Don't be afraid to email the teachers and ask for tips (or) advice," said Alexis Epps, a homeschooled graduate.

And in the context of coronavirus, don't feel like you have to become a professional teacher.

"You're not trying to recreate what they do in a public school in your home at your kitchen table," Stocking said. "It's not the same thing. When you're at home, one of the most important things to remember is you can learn through playing. ... That's how kids learn. They learn by doing."

Learning doesn't have to come from a book

Especially for kids 8 and older, documentaries, Legos, video games like Minecraft or board games like Monopoly and Scrabble are great ways to exercise the brain and have a little fun along the way.

And there's no shortage of hands-on activities that can reinforce what kids are learning in school. Check out Pinterest for ideas on everything from science experiments to writing prompts.

"Practice what they know," Stocking said. "Have them read every day even if they don't like to read. Let them read the recipe for the chocolate chip cookies

you're making. Or build something with their Legos. There's all kinds of alternate ideas you can make with Legos that didn't come in a kit."

While government agencies have encouraged us all to practice social distancing, there's also nothing wrong with taking your kids outside, doing a scavenger hunt or playing soccer.

Be patient with kids, yourself

Whether it's school-related or not, it's hard to be together every minute of the day. My sister is one of my best friends, but we argued all the time as kids because we spent so much time together.

"Relax and take it easy step by step," said Kate Lundy, who has her 10th- and 12th-grade sons schooled at home in an all-online program through Oxford Public Schools. "Instead of looking at the big picture where you get overwhelmed, we take it one day at a time."

Take advantage of the free stuff

Coronavirus has prompted music halls and museums to release some concerts online and virtual tours for free because it's not safe for large gatherings to take place.

The Philharmonie Berlin, Metropolitan Opera, The Louvre and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History are just a few cultural resources going online for free. If you have internet access, take advantage of it.

"They really are taking the time to explore the world without having to travel, I guess," Lundy said. "It's been pretty cool because then it prompts conversations within our house."

Enjoy it

I'm not a parent. But I do know that people grow up, life changes and kids don't get to be kids forever. We're also living through a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic and likely won't have this excuse to spend all day with those we live with again.

Enjoy being together, because life won't always be the way it is right now.

"We all wanted this time off, and now we've got it," Lundy joked.

Cold cases

Continued from Page 1A

Cold homicide case investigations frequently start with a missing person. "(And) as far as missing persons investigations, I think the absolute biggest component is the internet," said Michigan State Police Lt. Sarah Krebs, founder of Missing in Michigan. "The advancements in technology with the internet is just insane, how much more information we can share and how much quicker these people are found, because of it."

She mentioned a case from Nov. 15: A University of Michigan coed went missing in the middle of the night.

Krebs learned she was missing around 7 a.m. A notice was placed on social media. Media picked up the story. She was found within an hour, "alive and well."

"I can tell you 20 years ago that wouldn't happen," Krebs said. "Today, these shares go so fast and get into the right people's hands where they can locate the person reasonably fast. That's probably the biggest advancement."

Technology's possibilities

Nowadays, forensic experts can help prosecutors connect pieces of their case because of the latest DNA, camera and cell phone technologies.

About this series

Cases get colder and tougher to solve as time passes without significant clues. Crime statisticians warn of a cold case crisis. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the nation has about 250,000 unsolved murders, and the number rises by several thousand each year. This is the last in a series of stories looking at some of the cold cases in metro Detroit.

That will be the case later this year, when prosecutors take Floyd Galloway Jr., 33, of Berkley, to trial for the murder of Danielle Stislicki, 28, of Farmington Hills.

During a preliminary exam, prosecutors presented evidence indicating that Galloway malevolently waited for Stislicki in a parking lot outside the MetLife offices where she worked in Southfield.

He had worked as a security guard there and witnesses have said they saw the two talking on Dec. 2, 2016, near a vehicle with its hood up, and then driving away together.

Stislicki hasn't been seen since.

Galloway is already in prison for assault, kidnapping and criminal sexual conduct because of a 2016 Hines Park attack.

Yet experts have said Stislicki's DNA appeared on Galloway's master bedroom carpeting, and technology placed their cell phones near each other the day

she is thought to have died.

Farmington Hills police have said they won't discuss the case until its conclusion.

However, without the technology, "we wouldn't be able to work cases like we do today," said Detective Sgt. Chad Double.

DNA testing boundaries

DNA samples from blood, semen and saliva can prove pivotal in prosecuting cold homicide cases, and DNA testing became a serious investigation strategy late in the last century.

DNA sleuthing has intensified since the April 2018 capture of the alleged Golden State Killer in California.

An investigator entered crime-scene DNA from the guilty party into the online Florida-based GEDmatch database. People use the site to enter their DNA profiles and genealogical data to find familial matches with other users.

The investigator found users matching as a distant relative, possibly as close as a third cousin. The process of elimination began.

Krebs likes what she hears about advances in crime-solving technology.

"I really think it's going to change the face of cold cases in the future," she said. "It's so incredible. Who would have ever thought that that would be plausible?"

"The only problem with it for law enforcement is it's so expensive. We're

talking thousands of dollars for the testing, for the research."

For now, Michigan departments are outsourcing the genealogical detective work. Krebs sees that continuing until departments have the technology in their own labs.

Forging the way

Michigan State Police recently made a news splash by announcing genealogy research helped detectives identify "I-196 Jane" as Marcia Bateman, 28, of Oklahoma City.

Some of her remains, which were discovered in 1988 less than two miles from Lake Michigan, were used so a company could run the DNA data through GEDmatch.

A different entity, the DNA Doe Project, then began research on a long list of possible distant cousins.

"The genealogy research told us who she was within six weeks," Detective Sgt. Scott Ernstes said. "It's going to be a game-changer for law enforcement."

He is managing up to \$18,000 in MSP funds to identify the remains of several other people recovered throughout southwest Michigan. He continues to promote the use of genealogy databases and researchers for cold case investigations.

Contact reporter Susan Vela at sve-la@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanve-la.

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Gannett launches website to help small businesses

Brett Molina
USA TODAY

Gannett, the owner of USA TODAY and more than 260 daily local media properties, is launching a nationwide effort to help communities support local small businesses during the coronavirus crisis.

The media company announced Monday a new website, supportlocal.usatoday.com, that will allow users to select local businesses in their community to support by buying gift cards for use at a later time. Visitors and business owners can also add local businesses to the platform.

"We feel that local businesses are

such a core part of the fabric of the country and the communities we all live in," said Kevin Gentzel, Gannett's chief revenue officer. "They really are a reflection of the heartbeat of America."

Last Wednesday, Gentzel and Mariabel Perez Wadsworth, president of Gannett's news division and publisher of USA TODAY, wrote a joint op-ed in USA TODAY urging local communities to support small businesses during the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ground everyday life in the U.S. and other parts of the world to a halt. More than 33,000 cases of illness have been reported in the U.S. and more than 400 people have died.

Small businesses have been hit hard. Many shut down to help curb the spread of the virus, though essential businesses have largely remained open, including grocery stores, gas stations and pharmacies, some with shortened hours to clean and restock. Many restaurants are also open but only offer takeout or delivery orders.

Dinner reservation app OpenTable released new data showing just how severe the situation is for restaurants throughout the country.

Sit-down dining at U.S. restaurants that participate in the company's reservation system have screeched to a halt. Reservations and walk-ins on Saturday, March 21, were down 100% from the

same day in 2019, according to OpenTable.

Lawmakers are working on emergency packages to help small businesses cover expenses as they remain shut down while consumers shelter at home and practice social distancing.

On Saturday during a White House coronavirus task force briefing, President Donald Trump said he talked with thousands of small-business owners about the crisis in a conference call. He also has spoken with restaurant industry representatives.

"I assured them my administration is doing everything within its very considerable power to support them and their employees," Trump said.



Stephen Johnson, a 2006 Birmingham Groves graduate, has been living in China for the past five years. Here, he visits the Great Wall of China. Currently he is living with his family in Michigan, waiting to return to work. COURTESY OF STEPHEN JOHNSON

Birmingham graduate who taught in China lives in limbo

Susan Bromley HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Life in America has been turned upside down by COVID-19 over the past weeks, but for Stephen Johnson, the first sign things were going seriously awry came Jan. 23.

The 2006 Birmingham Groves grad was walking into the school in China where he teaches fourth graders English when he was greeted with a thermometer.

He, along with all other staff members, had their temperatures checked. "It was weird," Johnson said. "The first thing I said was, 'This could be bigger than I thought.'"

It was the last day before the school's break for the Chinese New Year. That night, as he got on the train in Guangzhou, authorities checked his temperature again, and then again upon his arrival at airport security as he headed out on a planned two-week vacation to England.

During a 30-hour layover in Malaysia, "things were blowing up on how big the virus was in China," but Johnson still thought it was overblown. By the time he arrived in London, he had a message from his school: Do not come back to China, school is closed indefinitely.

Nearly two months later, the schools in China are still closed, and Johnson, who was originally due back to work Feb. 10, remains in limbo.

Back to America

The 2006 Birmingham Groves grad has been living on the run from coronavirus, although the ripple effects of COVID-19, now a pandemic, caught up to him, and everyone else in Michigan, this week.

He is relieved he was at least able to get back to the United States.

After leaving London, Johnson stayed in Malaysia for a few days to meet the 14-day waiting period away from China to avoid a quarantine. However, upon his return to America, he had his most anxiety-inducing experience yet as a Singapore customs clerk went over his passport meticulously, calculating dates.

"She literally went through every China stamp I had," he said. "It was nerve-wracking."

At the Singapore hotel, his temperature was checked again in the lobby.

Just as he thought he was finally

home free, about to land at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, the pilot made an announcement that passengers should remain in their seats as there would be a U.S. Customs border security check.

"I was like ... 'I know this is going to be me,'" Johnson said.

He was the third of eight names called who were told to exit the plane first, all of whom shared a common history of travel to China.

Upon confirming who he was and that he had not been in Wuhan, where the coronavirus outbreak originated, Johnson was finally free to go with his father to the family home in Southfield, where he has been living for the past month, and where he will remain for the foreseeable future.

Closed for months

Johnson's original return to China on March 2 was postponed. Then he was told school in China would reopen after more than two months, on March 30. He made plans to fly back this weekend so he could be back in the country for the two weeks required before returning to work, but then received notification the Chinese authorities were enforcing an even stricter quarantine policy.

"The government there is God," Johnson said. "We would have to stay in the apartment for 14 days with the government checking on me, and I would have to arrange for food to be delivered. You literally can't even walk out the door. It's a harsh policy, and two weeks in my apartment sounds like a layer of hell I don't want to subject myself to."

His school employers have said they understand if he doesn't return and support the decision.

In the meantime, he continues working from home, sending video lessons to his 23 students via an app, with students returning assignments to him the same way.

This is teaching in the era of coronavirus, an instruction plan that is now catching on locally as some schools plan for virtual learning.

Johnson also joins staff meetings online, although they are held on China time, meaning often at 3 or 4 a.m. in Michigan. He admitted he slept through Friday morning's meeting.

American-Chinese differences

There are aspects of life in China that would gall many Americans, such as lack of food safety standards, Johnson

said. He has seen dead pigs transported on bicycles through the streets, and cockroaches climbing on walls in one of his favorite noodle restaurants.

There is also a lack of free speech and press freedom that Chinese accept in a way Americans would not, Johnson added.

News out of China is regulated by the government, and so, Johnson said, word of mouth is the most-relied-on communication. He continues to receive news this way and has been told that coronavirus cases have "stabilized," but temperatures continue to be checked, citizens are required to wear masks in public, and only now are restaurants starting to reopen.

Johnson said out of all the people he knows in China, not one has a confirmed case of the virus, and he is not worried that they, or he, will contract it.

"I am not concerned about the virus, but more about the way life is getting upended because of it," he said. "Everything happening here now, happened there two months ago. ..."

"China received a lot of criticism from the west for how heavy-handed its crackdown was, putting people on lockdown and not letting them travel, but at the same time, it may have worked. Life seems to be normalizing."

Johnson hopes to return to finish his teaching contract, which ends in July 2021, but for now he rides an emotional roller coaster, and his cat, Marshmallow, is cared for by a friend in China. He continues to pay his apartment rent and is still taking lessons in Chinese.

He moved to China five years ago after feeling stuck in a rut and ready for a change and adventure. Living in China, he said, requires a curious personality and willingness to be somewhere completely different from what Americans are used to.

"You have to be willing to accept that some things are beyond your control and can't be changed," he said.

Still, Johnson maintains a positive outlook as schools close, social gatherings and events grind to a halt, and businesses tell employees to work from home as the U.S. tries to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"The gears (of society) stopped, but now in China it is starting to rev up again, but not as full speed as it was," he said. "I feel like the U.S. will do that, too."

sbromley@hometownlife.com



Phil Allmen
Content strategist
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Support small businesses through coronavirus pandemic

From the one-of-a-kind boutiques in Milford or Plymouth to the variety of lip-smacking restaurants in Livonia, Canton or Birmingham – and countless places in between – the northwest suburbs of Detroit are a special place.

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We all have the chance to support these local businesses during the coronavirus pandemic; to thank them by helping them stay in business.

To make it easier, Hometown Life's parent company launched a platform at supportlocal.usatoday.com to connect those who want to help with the businesses that need it.

Both individuals and businesses can add to the listing already started there. All a business needs is a website link and a way to purchase gift cards or takeout food.

We've heard from so many people wanting to help. Here is a way to do it from the safety of our homes.

Always, but especially now: Support local.

Phil Allmen is content strategist for Hometown Life, part of the USA TODAY Network.

Police warn of COVID-19 scams

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Scam artists are finding inspiration in COVID-19, which has some local law enforcement agencies warning their residents to take caution.

Livonia police said they've heard of people eager for COVID-19 statistics opening emails that infected their computers with viruses and malware.

In a Facebook video, Livonia Police Officer Cameron Koss said the criminal emails contained links to bogus websites fashioned after one managed by John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has reported that an Oakland County resident contacted her office to report being approached over the phone by scammers wanting to provide a COVID-19 test kit. The Oakland County resident was asked to prepay for the kit.

Nessel also has warned of scammers spoofing – or posing with legitimate government phone numbers – and calling residents to offer medications.

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Sports

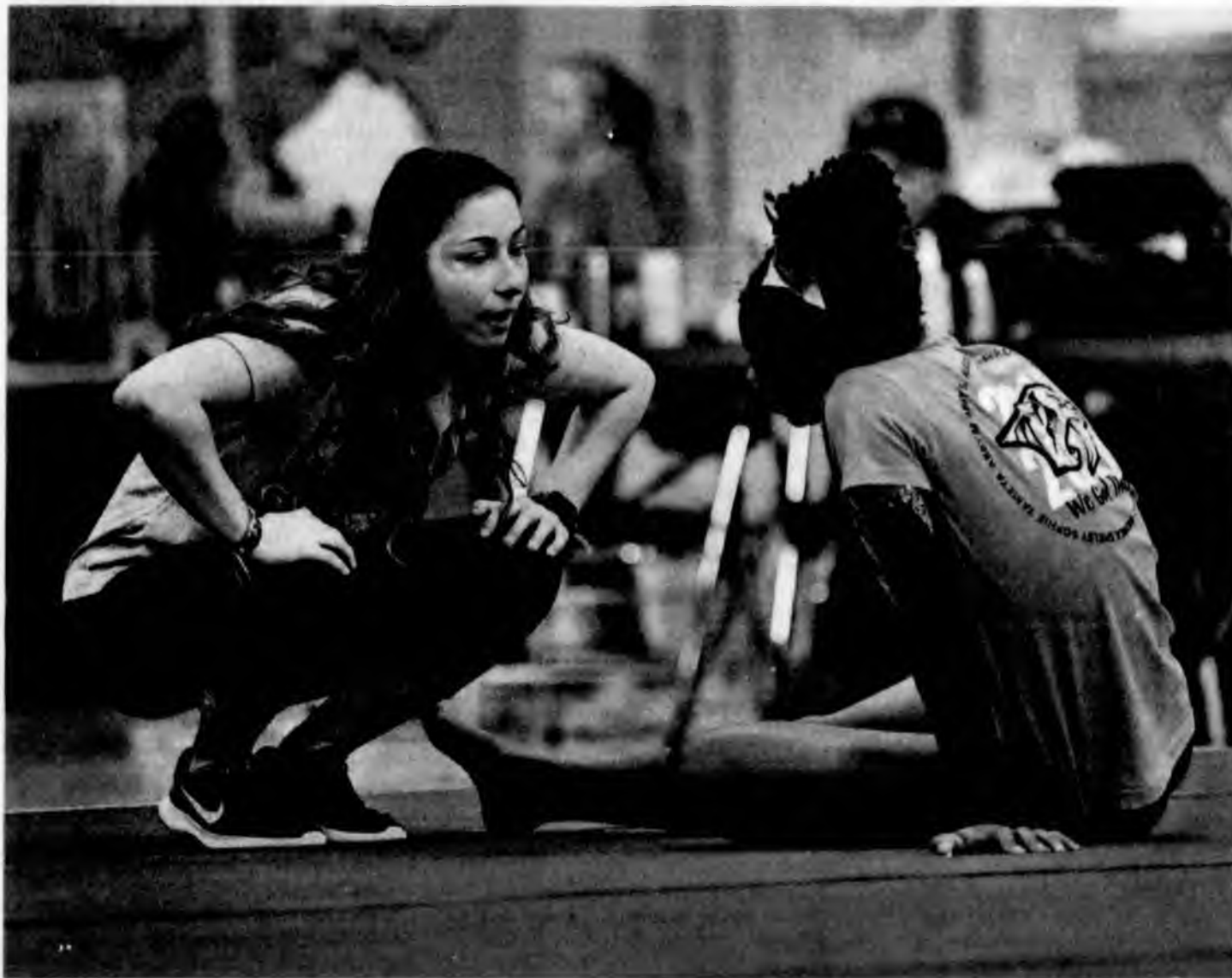
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GYMNASTICS



Plymouth gymnastics assistant coach Adrian Hartford, left, joined the staff a year after graduating from high school. PHOTOS COURTESY OF VINCE PULTORAK

Coaches bring youth to Plymouth's regional title

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

All Adrian Hartford wanted was remain a part of the team.

As her four years with Plymouth gymnastics came to an end, Hartford approached then-head coach Alyssa Burke, asking to help in any way she could during her freshman year at Schoolcraft College.

Burke agreed, but ended up leaving for another teaching job over the summer, leaving the Wildcats after one season.

But Hartford remained, helping first-year head coach Joe Wolfram coach Plymouth to its first regional title March 7, beating Northville and Livonia Blue for the top spot in Region 3.

"I was in shock," Hartford said. "I was like, 'Oh my gosh, these girls really stepped up and showed that they have the top spot.' I was crying, I was like, 'Oh



Hartford celebrates a Plymouth gymnast's successful routine.

my gosh, they actually did it."

One year removed from high school, Hartford provided an atmosphere for Plymouth gymnastics that many of the girls on the team were not used to. As a

recent graduate, Hartford had to find the balance between relatable friend and coach relatively quickly.

And at the beginning of the year, this proved to be a challenge.

"Sometimes, the girls didn't take me seriously because I used to be a teammate," Hartford said. "I was still friends with them, but at the same time I was like, 'OK, you have to listen to me, too, because now I'm your coach.'"

For Ella Seale, a junior captain, knowing Hartford was only part of her reluctance.

Coming into a season with Hartford, an 18-year-old assistant coach, and Wolfram, a 23-year-old head coach, Seale, along with the rest of the team, was a bit worried about the level of experience the Wildcats' coaching staff had.

See YOUTH, Page 2B

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Canton senior's 11 points in one game seal deal

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Facing a team with more size in the opening round of the playoffs, Canton senior Sean Mullen was called on to start for just the third time of the season — and it was a good thing he was.

Mullen was on fire to start Canton's first round game against Detroit Catholic Central and scored a career high 11 points to lead the Chiefs to victory. His performance was enough to earn him Hometown Life Athlete of the Week honors.

The outing was extra special for Mullen, who has several family members who attended CC. Safe to say he'll have bragging rights.

Mullen received 11,700 votes in our poll (71.54 percent) to win the award. Milford skier Madeline Melody finished second with 2,167 votes (13.25 percent), Farmington gymnast Sydney Schultz placed third with 1,870 votes (11.43 percent), John Glenn basketball's Jalen Johnson came in fourth. Northville basketball's Grant Mathiesen and South Lyon East's Nick Branton placed fifth and sixth.

We caught up with Mullen and asked him some questions:

See ATHLETE, Page 2B



Canton's Sean Mullen goes up for a rebound against CC. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

High school seniors cope with losing postseason

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A week ago, the sports world continued turning, at least at the high school level.

Teams throughout Michigan took the court. With the emergence of coronavirus in the state of Michigan, conversations about limiting the number of fans in the gym for the district final and on, possibly leading to teams playing in

empty gyms for the remainder of the season had already started.

But for 32 minutes, basketball remained the same.

In the hours that followed, the Michigan High School Athletics Association joined the rest of the world, suspending all postseason tournaments immediately and indefinitely, leaving state titles in boys and girls basketball, hockey, boys swim and dive, and girls gymnastics unfilled.

For three seniors on the Canton, South Lyon East and Northville boys basketball teams, they had no idea that when they stepped off the court after their district-semifinal wins were likely the last time they would ever step on a high school court as a player.

'There's no way'

Last Thursday afternoon, Canton senior forward Jake Vickers got a text

from his mom saying the playoffs have been suspended.

He looked at it, saying, "There's no way."

"I thought it was fake at first," Vickers said.

Vickers always knew it was a possibility, watching as sports at the college and professional level shut down because of COVID-19.

See POSTSEASON, Page 3B

Get More Sports

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KLAABOYS BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

The KLAABasketball season is in the rear-view mirror and with the state playoffs suspended until further notice, it's time to turn our attention to some of the honors earned by area athletes. Quite a few Hometown Life area student-athletes have been named to the KLAABoys basketball all-conference team, led by Northville, Canton, John Glenn and Livonia Stevenson which each have three honorees. Howell won the conference championship, defeating Canton in the title game. Belleville won the East division. Here is the full list, broken down by division:

KLAABest

■ Connor Bush, Belleville, Senior, Guard
 ■ Lorenzo Wright, Belleville, Senior, Guard
 ■ DaJon Johnson, Belleville, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Mario Johnson, Belleville, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Kyle Holt, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
 ■ Jalen Johnson, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
 ■ Deonta Pearson, John Glenn, Senior, Forward
 ■ Evan Bradford, Stevenson, Senior, Forward
 ■ Evan Asante, Stevenson, Junior, Guard
 ■ Steven Shimko, Stevenson, Senior, Guard
 ■ Niemer Hamood, Dearborn, Senior, Guard
 ■ Jack Melton, Dearborn, Senior, Guard
 ■ Donte Foreman, Wayne, Junior, Forward
 ■ Ty Fournety, Wayne, Senior, Forward
 ■ Zak Maisari, Fordson, Senior, Guard
 ■ Dom Ufferman, Franklin, Junior, Guard
 ■ Jordan Garcia, Churchill, Junior, Guard
Honorable Mention:
 ■ Jalen Williams, Belleville, Senior, Center
 ■ Asonta Hargrove, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
 ■ Luke Merchant, Stevenson, Junior, Forward
 ■ Brandon Bacon, Dearborn, Senior,

Guard
 ■ Riccardo Covin, Wayne, Senior, Center
 ■ Ali Farhat, Fordson, Senior, Center
 ■ JJ Carpenter, Franklin, Senior, Guard
 ■ Chase Loving, Churchill, Junior, Guard

KLAABest

■ Bobby Samples, Howell, Senior, Guard
 ■ Tony Honkala, Howell, Senior, Guard
 ■ Peyton Ward, Howell, Senior, Guard
 ■ Jake Vickers, Canton, Senior, Forward
 ■ Ben Stesiak, Canton, Senior, Guard
 ■ Cole Vickers, Canton, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Zach Shoemaker, Northville, Senior, Forward
 ■ Grant Mathiesen, Northville, Senior, Guard
 ■ Domenic Rodriguez, Northville, Senior, Guard
 ■ Kyle Hamlin, Hartland, Junior, Guard
 ■ Trevor Lewis, Hartland, Senior, Guard
 ■ Owen Ehman, Brighton, Junior, Guard
 ■ Jake Edwards, Brighton, Senior, Forward
 ■ Matt MacLellan, Plymouth, Senior, Forward
 ■ Bruce Turner III, Novi, Senior, Forward
 ■ Ryan Len, Salem, Senior, Guard
Honorable Mention:
 ■ Griffin Smith, Howell, Senior, Guard
 ■ Lake McIntosh, Canton, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Brady Withey, Northville, Senior, Forward
 ■ Lucas Batten, Hartland, Senior, Forward
 ■ Jacob Klonowski, Brighton, Senior, Forward
 ■ Jacob Smith, Plymouth, Senior, Forward
 ■ Varun Reddy, Novi, Senior, Guard
 ■ Garrett Smith, Salem, Senior, Forward
 Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com.

KLAAGIRLS BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

The KLAABasketball has long been one of the best girls basketball leagues around with the success in recent years by Hartland, Brighton and Wayne Memorial.

The conference was strong again this year and saw Hartland come out on top as conference champions. Wayne won the East division.

The league has released its all-conference selections for the 2019-20 school-year. Wayne leads all Hometown Life area teams with four selections.

Here are the full all-conferences teams broken down by division:

KLAABest

■ Alana Micheaux, Wayne, Junior, Forward
 ■ Jordan Wright, Wayne, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Lachelle Austin, Wayne, Junior, Guard
 ■ Mayla Ham, Wayne, Freshman, Forward
 ■ Justina Szalkowski, Dearborn, Senior, Forward
 ■ Erin Moran, Dearborn, Junior, Forward
 ■ Malak Alhajj, Dearborn, Junior, Guard
 ■ Kayla Osen, Churchill, Senior, Guard
 ■ Nasya Thomas, Churchill, Junior, Forward
 ■ Keke Buggs, Churchill, Senior, Forward
 ■ Kerry Donehue, Stevenson, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Josie Piergentili, Stevenson, Senior, Guard
 ■ Tara Bourdage, Stevenson, Senior, Forward
 ■ Emily Esker, Franklin, Senior, Guard
 ■ Erin Young, Franklin, Sophomore, Forward
 ■ Diana Saleh, Fordson, Senior, Forward
 ■ Taylor Watkins-Johnson, John Glenn, Junior, Guard
 ■ Hunter Conway, Belleville, Junior, Guard
Honorable Mention:

■ Amina Ferris, Dearborn, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Molly Behan, Churchill, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Julia Nowak, Stevenson, Junior, Guard
 ■ Kalin Bates, Franklin, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Batoul Reda, Fordson, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ India Grissom, John Glenn, Guard

KLAABest

■ Whitney Sollom, Hartland, Senior, Center
 ■ Madi Moyer, Hartland, Senior, Forward
 ■ Nikki Dompierre, Hartland, Senior, Guard
 ■ Amanda Roach, Hartland, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Sophie Dziekan, Brighton, Senior, Center
 ■ Sydney Hetherton, Brighton, Senior, Forward
 ■ Elaine Halonen, Brighton, Senior, Guard
 ■ Maeve St. John, Howell, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Kaylee Wendel, Howell, Sophomore, Guard
 ■ Evelyn Pennala, Howell, Junior, Forward
 ■ Sophie Zelek, Plymouth, Senior, Guard
 ■ Kyra Brandon, Plymouth, Junior, Guard
 ■ Morgan Thompson, Northville, Senior, Center
 ■ Ellie Thallman, Northville, Senior, Guard
 ■ Jenna Daschke, Novi, Senior, Guard
 ■ Mattison Joyner, Salem, Junior, Guard
 ■ Katie Currie, Canton, Senior, Forward
Honorable Mention:
 ■ Isabella Vogt, Brighton
 ■ Bryta Mathes, Howell, Sophomore
 ■ Ella Riley, Plymouth, Junior
 ■ Avery Tolstyka, Northville, Junior
 ■ Madison Diton, Salem, Senior
 ■ Nina Pacheco, Canton, Senior
 Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

Youth

Continued from Page 1B

"I think we were all kind of hesitating, like, 'Do they know what they are doing?'" Seale asked. "Will it be OK?"

Coming into his first season as a head coach, Wolfram knew the ages of two members of the coaching staff were not typical, saying that assistant and head coaches are usually in their late 30s.

But Hartford knew the answer.

Instead of being the older authority figure — like former Plymouth head coach Pam Yockey — to which she was accustomed, Hartford and Wolfram created more of what she calls a "friend-on-friend environment," interacting and relating with the athletes in a way that people 15 to 20 years older could not.

Instead of standing away from the team during meets, watching a player compete, Hartford was in the middle of the Wildcats bench, cheering on her team. She ate lunch with her players, creating a level of open communication that junior captain Maisie Swafford may not have been used to, but needed.

"There wasn't much superiority because of Adrian being our teammate," Swafford said. "It was that we all had the same goal in mind. We all knew what we wanted and Adrian was able to coach us and be the coach that we needed."

Hartford took techniques from old coaches she played for, putting her own spin on them to create a brand new coaching voice one year out of high school.

But she was honest, saying there were bumps in the road along the way, from helping Wolfram adjust to the high school gymnastics level as opposed to club gymnastics from which he had

come, to getting used to each of their coaching styles.

"It was frustrating through the first couple weeks," Hartford said. "We figured things out, the girls figured things out. They started working together a lot more. By the end of the season, we just had a lot of fun together and a lot of fun doing the sport."

Ideal ending

When regionals came around, Wolfram had a work conflict at his job at Gym America in Ann Arbor, Hartford took Plymouth to the Region 3 final by herself.

She expected her team to finish in the top three, securing a bid in the state final, but did not expect to compete for the top spot with a team like Livonia Blue.

As the meet neared its conclusion, Hartford began to tally up their scores. She saw Plymouth at the top.

Hartford immediately texted Wolfram.

"I almost cried when I found out they got first," Wolfram said. "I was so overwhelmed and just proud of all the effort they put in and the hard work throughout the season. It really did pay off."

Seale remembers sitting in a circle with her teammates, waiting to be crowned regional champions. When Plymouth's name was called, everyone burst into tears, hugging each other and their assistant coach.

Hartford remembers the reaction of the other coaches who were there competing with their teams, watching opposing coaches look at their bench in an awestruck manner, saying, "Oh my gosh, they just won. They have an 18-year-old coach."

"We kind of snuck up behind them and were like, 'Hey, we're regional

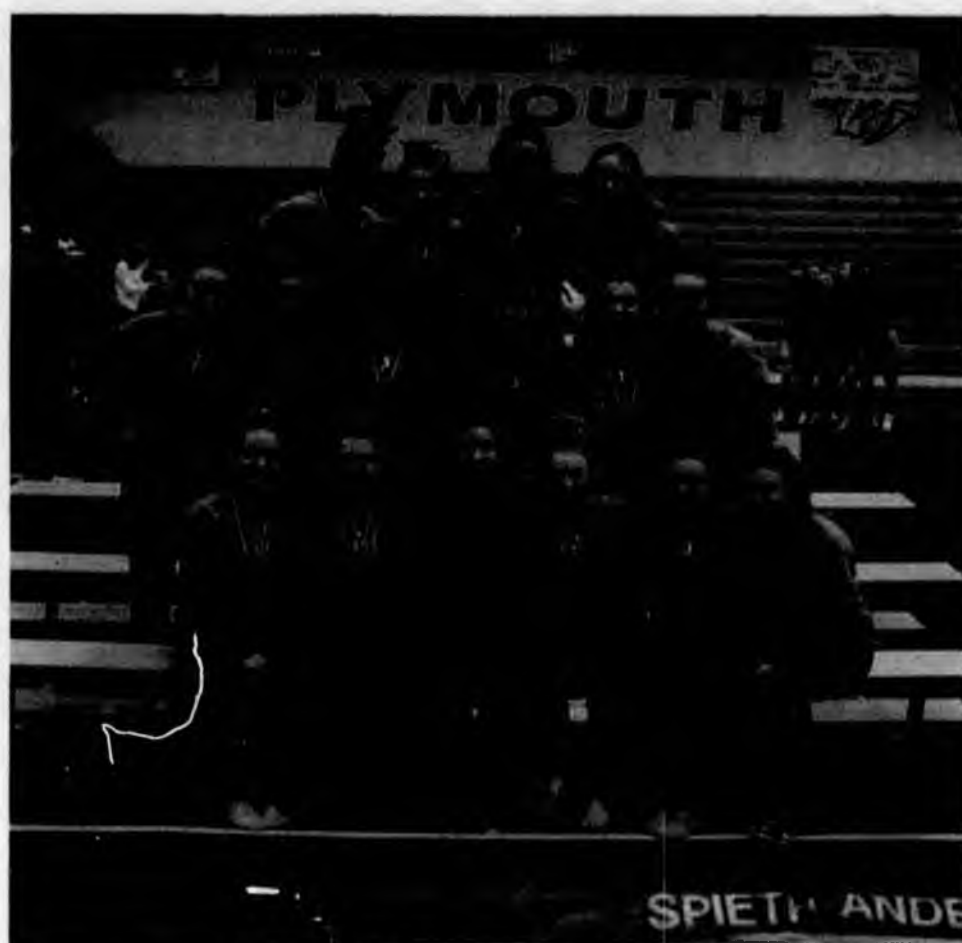
against them was awesome."

How difficult is it to have your senior season cut short due to the ongoing coronavirus situation? How has the team handled the situation?

"Having the coronavirus situation affect my senior season has been really tough. Especially one game shy of a possible district trophy coming back to Canton.

"It's been a while since we were able to raise one at Canton and that's been all of ours main goal since the start. Our team's been remaining optimistic on the fact we can play again.

"We'd love that chance to play in the championship game against Northville."



Plymouth gymnastics celebrates its first regional title in program history. COURTESY OF ROB SEALE

champs," Hartford said.

Plymouth likely will not have an opportunity to show what it can do with the momentum of a regional championship in the state finals because of the winter postseason suspension by the Michigan High School Athletics Association.

Hartford and Wolfram will not have an opportunity to cap off their first year of coaching together with a state title.

However, for both coaches — both said they will return next season — this regional title showcases an increased expectation for the years ahead.

For Hartford, Plymouth ended her first season in the best way possible.

"At least we ended the season with a bang," Hartford said.

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

Athlete

Continued from Page 1B

After coming off the bench most of the season, you started Canton's first playoff game against CC and had your best outing of the year. Describe your feelings on knowing you played a huge role in advancing past the Shamrocks?

"It was truly an amazing feeling. Our team really fought hard and dug in when needed against CC. That's a team whose record doesn't reflect who they are and we knew that heading in. To have one of my better high school career games

Who's your favorite athlete and why?

"My favorite athlete is Derrick Rose. I've always been a fan of his since I was real young. I used to love all his flashy dunks and the way he dominated the game when in Chicago. But as I've grown older, I've also admired his determination to bounce back from injuries and downfall. He's had that never give up mentality that I try and instill in myself."

What do you like to do for fun outside of basketball?

"Outside of basketball, I enjoy hanging out with family and friends. I also enjoy playing video games on the PS4."

What's your favorite movie or TV

show and why?

"My favorite movie of all-time is Rudy. It's one my dad and I have watched numerous times and it never gets old. The determination he showed in the story is truly amazing. It's an awesome story of a walk-on."

What are you plans after high school? Headed to college?

"My plans after high school are to attend Michigan State University in the fall. I plan to study either law or business. Still currently deciding on that aspect."

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

Benton Harbor's 'Scooby' Johnson named Mr. Basketball

Mick McCabe Special to Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Carlos "Scooby" Johnson became the 40th winner of the Hal Schram Mr. Basketball award Monday.

The award, named for the former Free Press sports writer who covered high school athletics for over 40 years, is given to the state's top senior by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

Johnson, 6-foot-6 and signed with Butler, accumulated 2,949 points in the vote and Flint Beecher's Jalen Terry was second (2,760 points), Orchard Lake St. Mary's Lorne Bowman II was third (2,312), Matt Nicholson of Clarkston was fourth (1,678) and Tyson Acuff of Detroit Cass Tech was fifth (1,497).

Only BCAM members are permitted to vote. Johnson had 413 first-place votes and Terry had 306.

This is the third time a Benton Harbor player is Mr. Basketball and each of them have come 15 years apart; Anthony (Pig) Miller won it in 1990 and Wilson Chandler in 2005.

"Before I got to high school, I knew Wilson and Pig had won this," Johnson said. "I think it's a blessing for me and a big accomplishment as a high school player to look forward to."

Johnson, who averaged 25 points, 11 rebounds, six blocks and three steals a game this season, is known as Scooby by people in Benton Harbor and it is from the TV show "Scooby-Doo."

"I've been called that as long as I can remember," he said. "It came from my dad; it was his name, too, because he liked the show. After a while I became a fan of 'Scooby-Doo,' too."

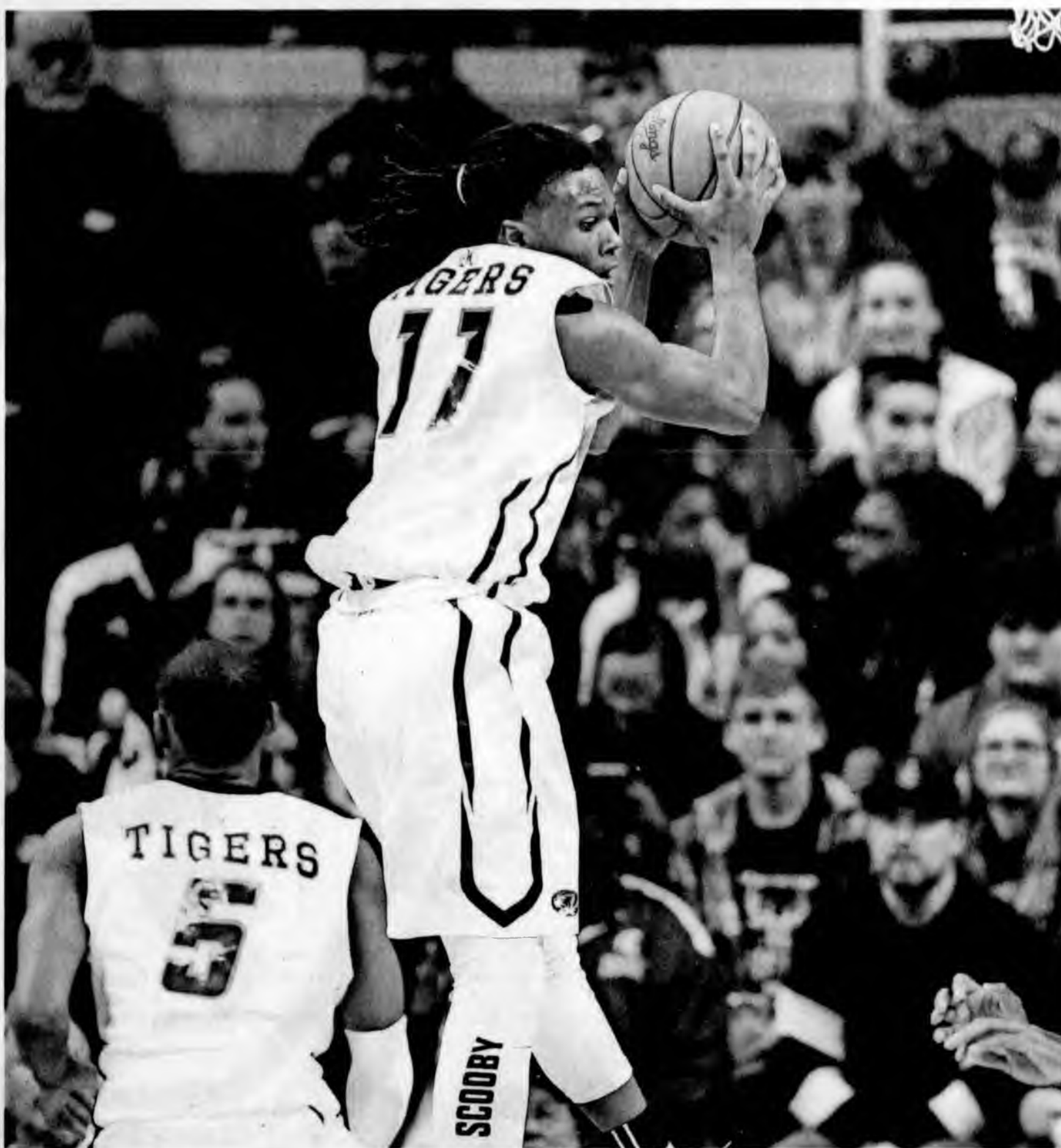
Benton Harbor coach Cory Sterling first saw Johnson play when he was in the fourth grade and playing alongside Sterling's fifth-grade son.

"I knew Carlos was something special then," he said. "I just kept my eye on him. I knew he'd do great things, not just for the basketball program, but for the city. He's involved in a lot of stuff."

Johnson turned down offers from Michigan and Michigan State and signed to play in college at Butler.

"Butler, it kind of made me feel like I was back at home," he said. "And then there were the relationships I built with the people there and the coaches."

This season, the Tigers were ranked



Benton Harbor's Carlos Johnson during the third quarter against River Rouge in the Class B MHSAA semifinals in 2018.
DETROIT FREE PRESS FILE

No. 1 in Division 2 and had advanced to the district final before the state tournament was put on hold.

Johnson is hoping that it can be resumed so he and his teammates might experience another state title.

"It's every high school team's goal to be holding that trophy at the end of March Madness," he said.

Postseason

Continued from Page 1B

But when it became a reality, it did not hurt any less.

"It's tough, man," Vickers said. "Knowing that I might have played my last high school game and I didn't know it at the time just shows that you can't take anything for granted."

"This season was very important to me. We had a chance to do what no other team in Canton history has done. I played with my brother; this was the first time being able to play with my brother, so for it to end so quickly, it's tough."

Canton had been rolling, winning four of its past five games — falling to Howell in the KLAA tournament final by four points.

In the first practice after the announcement, Vickers, along with the other senior captain Ben Stesiak, made it their priority to boost morale. Vickers said he wanted to keep his teammates' heads up, encouraging them to stay positive during the time of uncertainty.

Vickers gave the underclassmen a glimpse into what he expects his legacy at Canton will be.

"We've always been built around being hard-working," Vickers said. "We don't always have the biggest guys, the most athletic guys, but we always find a way to get it done."

Night and day

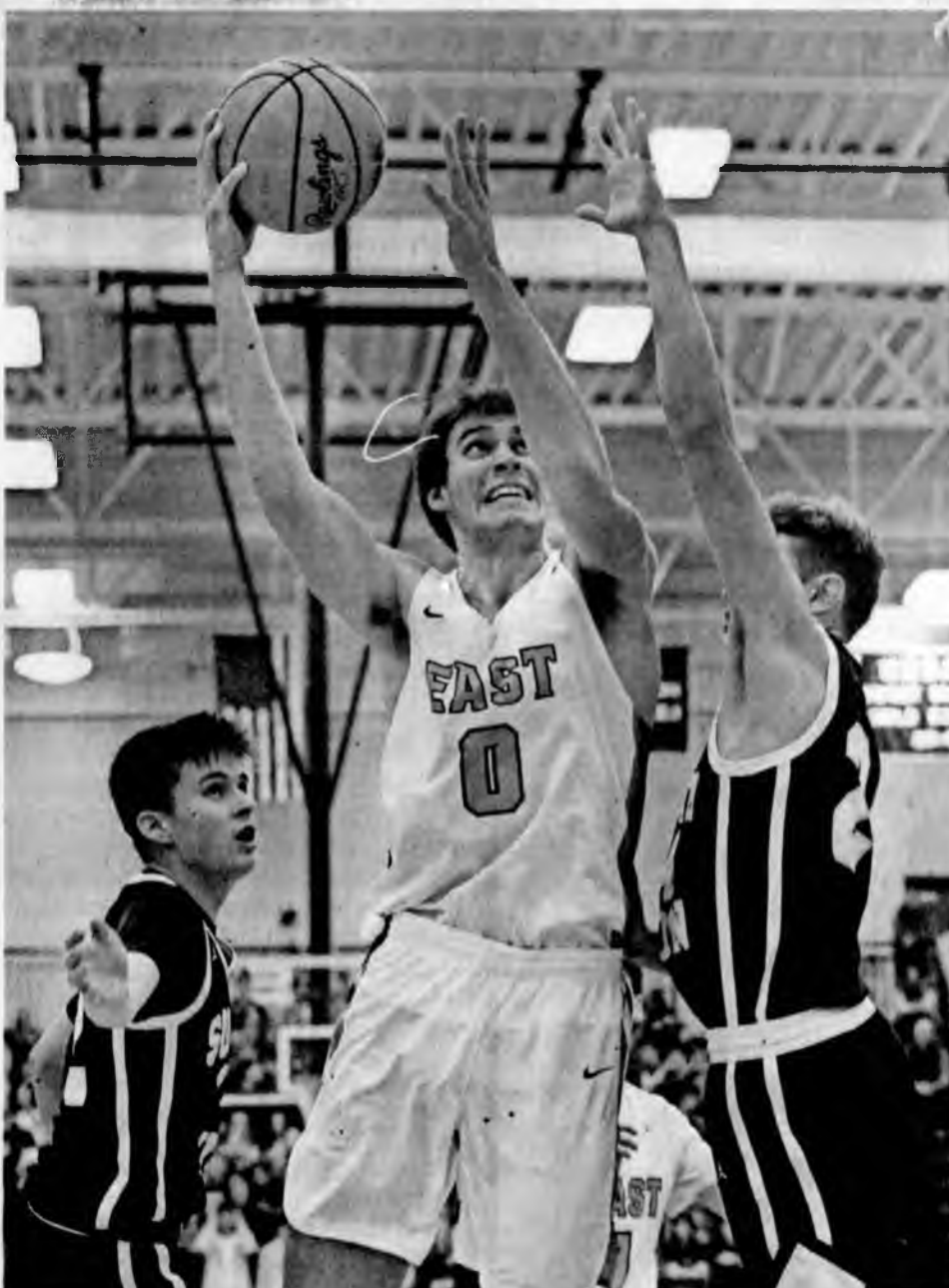
Nick Branton had just woken up from a midday nap.

The South Lyon East senior forward had just helped the Cougars beat rival South Lyon in overtime. He remembered the loud student section at Brighton, giving it their best effort to win the season series against the Lions.

But just after waking up, possibly thinking about a district final game against Ann Arbor Skyline, Branton got a call from his teammate.

"I could hear it in his voice, he was pretty distressed about it," Branton said.

The teammate told Branton about the suspension, about how South Lyon East's season — the first winning season in the program's history — could be over.



South Lyon East's Nick Branton puts up a hook shot during game action earlier this season. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

"Every other year, we knew when the season was up because we had lost. It really felt as if it was over," Branton said. "This year, I just don't think it has kicked in yet because there is a slight possibility. It doesn't feel like it's over."

When Branton looks back at this team compared to teams' past at South Lyon East, it's a night-and-day difference.

Over the course of his final season with the Cougars, Branton said he helped the senior class set a precedent

in terms of playing as a team, caring about the teammates around you, ingraining something that was not evident in the teams of five or six years ago.

With that approach, South Lyon East had the chance to do something no other team had before: win a district title.

But that mentality has defined Branton's time with the Cougars. To him, it's not about building a legacy for the school, but building a legacy for those he played with.

"I just want to be remembered by my

teammates, once we have all gone off and done our own things," Branton said. "I'm not striving to be remembered by East."

The future

Zach Shoemaker had all the same feelings as many high school athletes: anger, confusion, sadness.

But when the suspension was called, Shoemaker, along with the rest of the Northville senior class, was called for a meeting with head coach Todd Sander.

They talked about life, about the coronavirus and how it was affecting the world.

They talked about future plans, about basketball and how it might be over for this group.

More importantly, though, they talked about the future of Northville basketball. They talked about the junior class, how they can be best equipped to succeed next season.

For Shoemaker, it was not about him. It was about what was coming next.

"The juniors, they don't really get to play a lot, but they work hard every single practice, running through different team stuff, defending really well, running their defense really well, giving us a really good look at what teams might play," Shoemaker said.

The six Northville seniors set the expectation.

The Mustangs came into the district final against Canton with an 18-4 record, winning each of their six games.

"We were the best team Northville ever had," Shoemaker said. "We were the hardest working group. Like I said, rewrite history: 22 years since the last district title, and I feel like we really could have had it."

But deep down, Shoemaker said, he had a gut feeling that it would be the end.

So, he shifted the focus on what was next, to continue the trend that he and the other seniors set.

"We are just a really tough, knitty group," Shoemaker said. "We work hard, really all day, every single practice."

That's the expectation Shoemaker leaves to the junior class.

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



Tim Erkkila of Brighton spent the past winter playing for the Fairbanks Ice Dogs of the North American Hockey League. He will spend the next four seasons playing for Northern Michigan after making a commitment to the Wildcats.

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‘Leap of faith’ takes Brighton’s Erkkila to NMU

Bill Khan Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Marquette has always felt like home to Tim Erkkila.

The three-time all-state defenseman from Brighton has family in the Upper Peninsula’s largest city and a sister who will graduate from Northern Michigan University in December.

But to secure a college future in familiar surroundings, Erkkila had to venture 3,700 miles from home — to Alaska.

After graduating from Brighton last year, Erkkila spent the past winter playing for the Fairbanks Ice Dogs of the North American Hockey League.

He will spend the next four seasons playing for Northern Michigan after making a commitment to the Wildcats this week.

“It’s always been a dream of mine to play college hockey in the U.P.,” Erkkila said.

“Northern just had a strong history of success in hockey and academics. Their coaching staff made a really strong pitch. In talking to them, I thought it’d be a good fit.”

Erkkila is the second Livingston County all-stater from the Class of 2019 to commit to Northern Michigan, joining Hartland’s Joey Larson.

Larson spent the season with the Chilliwack Chiefs of the British Columbia Hockey League, but Erkkila moved even farther from home to pursue his hockey dreams.

“It was nerve-racking, for sure,” Erkkila said. “It was kind of a leap of faith, but looking back I’m definitely glad I took it.”

“It was really cool. You never really experience Alaska until you go there and live there for a little bit. Just to get a

feel for it, to live outside the Mitten, was pretty awesome.”

While living in Alaska with a host family, Erkkila took a year off from academics to focus on hockey.

“To start my academic career is going to be really nice after taking a year off,” said Erkkila, who was an academic all-stater in high school. “Taking another year would’ve been tough to get back into balancing school and hockey.”

Erkkila had two goals, 16 assists and a plus-31 rating in 49 games this season. He had five points in his last seven games.

At Brighton, he had the green light to jump into the attack. He was the Bulldogs’ second-leading scorer as a senior with nine goals and 18 assists in 27 games.

“I was happy with how I played defensively,” said Erkkila, the only Livingston County player to make the all-state Dream Team twice. “As the season went on, I thought I increased my play offensively. I think my coaches were happy, as well.”

“Going into college, the main focus is going to be to lock it down in my own end and do the little things right that they recruited me for. From there, I’ll try to up my game offensively.”

Erkkila helped Fairbanks post a 38-11-2 record, good for first place in the Midwest Division and third overall out of 26 teams in the NAHL.

His season ended when the NAHL cancelled the remainder of its schedule because of the coronavirus. Erkkila arrived back in Brighton Wednesday.

“It was pretty devastating news to hear it was canceled,” Erkkila said. “We had a really good group. We definitely would’ve made a pretty deep run. It feels like a little bit of unfinished business.”

Technology is on the front lines of COVID-19 fight

Jennifer Jolly
Special to USA TODAY

Police in China are using Robocop-style helmets embedded with AI to spot someone with a fever from 16 feet away. A restaurant in L.A. has been checking people's temperatures at the door with an infrared non-contact thermometer. And a hotel near Texas Medical Center in Houston just deployed germ-zapping robots to sanitize guest rooms and common areas. In the war against the spread of the coronavirus, tech gadgets and telemedicine services are getting fast-tracked to the front lines.

High-tech help ready and waiting

It's been a whirlwind few months for Dr. Samir Qamar. I first met the family practice physician and health tech CEO this past January at CES, where he showed me a new device pending FDA approval called MedWand.

Tucked away inside a gadget just slightly larger than the average computer mouse, 10 medical-grade diagnostic tools and a powerful high-definition camera allow a physician to examine you virtually, no matter where you are in the world. It can listen to your heart and lungs, measure respiratory rates and blood oxygen levels, take your temperature, scan your skin and even peer at your tonsils. All of this information gets sent in real-time to your doctor who watches, listens, and interacts through a secure video portal on their computer.

At the time, Dr. Qamar told me the Tricorder-like device would likely get FDA approval by mid-to-late summer 2020.

"This is the future of healthcare," he said in January. "I can sit right here in Las Vegas and examine a patient on a battlefield. This will save lives."

Little did he know, just a few weeks later, he and the rest of the medical community would be waging war on a global pandemic called the coronavirus. "MedWand has specific diagnostic instruments to remotely examine coronavirus patients, so we filed for an emergency use authorization with the FDA that would allow us to get these devices into the right hands, right away."

While they wait on the approval proc-



MedWand was on display at CES 2019.
RODDY BELLLOCH

ess that could take anywhere from a few days to a few months, Dr. Qamar and his team are assembling "quarantine kits" that include the MedWand – already housed in an antimicrobial casing – along with UV sanitizers, glucometers, and blood pressure kits.

"We have the right tool at the right time and we can deploy fast. There's no learning curve. It's a web-based software with military-grade encryption, so it can be ready really quickly. It can help with triage, monitoring people in quarantine, and for examining people for other conditions without bringing them into a potentially contaminated area."

Doctoring from a distance

Halfway across the world, doctors in Israel already are using a \$300 consumer device called Tyto to monitor people from afar. "Once the COVID-19 outbreak started, we knew we had to immediately adopt the best possible technologies to remotely examine infected patients in quarantine," Dr. Eyal Zimlichman, chief medical officer and chief innovation officer at Sheba Medical Center in Israel wrote in an email.

Dr. Zimlichman's team is using Tyto to help treat nearly a dozen people quarantined nearby after being aboard the coronavirus-infected Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan. "Tyto Care has given us unprecedented clinic-quality insight into the health of our patients from afar. This not only helps keep our medical staff safe but helps prevent exposure between patients and the spread of the virus among the public."

"Investment in telehealth has exploded

since the outbreak," Jason Bellett, co-founder and COO of Eko Health, told me over the phone. "We've had more than three-times the in-bound requests already," he added. Eko is a Berkeley, California based health-tech company that created an FDA approved next-gen digital stethoscope with an AI-powered cardiac screening platform – similar to Shazam for heartbeats. The devices range in price from \$200 to \$350 and if prescribed by a physician, are often covered by insurance.

Bellett said his company has sold about 40,000 devices since 2016, and that they're being used in more than 4,000 hospitals, but never has demand or urgency been this high. "We expect that number to triple as we respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and continue to equip health systems with the tools they need to monitor patients virtually, reduce the strain on the system, increase access to patients in rural communities, and limit unnecessary exposure for patients by keeping them at home," Bellett added.

A doctor in the house

Telemedicine apps that connect people to doctors, nurses, and therapists over the phone or by video chat have been around for more than a decade but are only just now getting pushed to the forefront of health care. Late last week, the Trump administration said it would waive certain federal rules to make it easier for more doctors to provide care remotely and nearly every major medical center in the United States is ramping up the use of virtual visits to deal with the pandemic.

Apps such as Doctor on Demand, HealthTap, Teladoc, Amwell, and others that provide virtual physician visits through an online platform or patient portal are also seeing a steady rise in demand. But messaging and video-only calls can be limited, and many more services and gadgets are ready to fill in the gaps.

"We've had a 210% increase in calls this past week," said Nick Desai, CEO of Heal, a company that offers video calls with a physician and in-person doctor visits to your home. Heal operates in some of the regions hardest hit by CO-

VID-19 cases including the Silicon Valley in Northern California, New York City, and Seattle, Washington. But he says that the recent surge in house calls goes far beyond coronavirus concerns.

"The majority of people who need healthcare in America right now likely don't have coronavirus," he said. They need (to see a doctor) because their child is sick, or they have diabetes or even food poisoning, and the worst place for anyone to be during this time is in an urgent care clinic, doctor's office or emergency room."

Heal can usually get a healthcare provider to your home within a few hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week and operates in more than a dozen cities, including Manhattan, San Francisco, LA, Seattle, and Atlanta. It's covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare, for a co-pay that averages between \$0 and \$30. If it's not covered, the in-home visit cost is \$159.

As the pandemic unfolds around us, more hospitals and clinics are urging people with less severe symptoms and non-life threatening conditions to stay home, in order to limit potential exposure and put less of a strain on the healthcare system overall. The demand is growing so quickly that beginning March 23, Desai says Heal will offer \$19 video chats for anyone in any state or region where it already operates, including Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Georgia.

Heal also provides longer-term in-home monitoring – that could come in especially handy for seniors or people with pre-existing conditions such as heart disease or diabetes – through a service it calls the Heal Hub. "The Hub itself is a plug-in device that looks like a nightlight. It has a 4G chip inside and Bluetooth as well," Desai explained.

In order to get it installed in your own home though, a Heal doctor has to prescribe it and a medical technician has to install it and make sure patients know how to use it. "We can track respiratory rate, heart rate, pulse ox, and more, in real-time. Your doctor – your actual Heal doctor who has seen you at home or via a telemedicine visit – gets your vital signs in real-time. They know if you're sick before you do." Desai said the Hub is usually covered by insurance as well, including Medicare.

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Michigan family locked down in Italy

Jeff Seidel Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

A military family from Michigan has spent more than a week locked down in a three-bedroom apartment in northern Italy, a country that has more coronavirus deaths than any other in the world.

"It's like being in the beginning of an apocalyptic video game," said Master Sgt. Craig Farner, 37, who grew up near Flint and is now in the Air Force stationed in Italy.

"Waiting for the zombies to come marching in," said his wife, Sarah Farner, 34, who grew up in Milford.

"Except for you can turn the video game off," Craig said.

I was talking to them on the phone on Thursday — my afternoon, their night — and it felt like I was talking to the future — er — a version of the future we all hope doesn't happen in the United States.

They have been locked down in their apartment for more than a week in a village near Aviano, Italy. They can go out for groceries, medical appointments and for work (if government approved).

But people keep dying. Italy's death toll hit 3,405 on Thursday, surpassing China for the most deaths related to the coronavirus, making it the world's deadliest center of the outbreak, according to USA TODAY.

"I feel like I'm in a cloud," Sarah said. "You know, not quite numb but you just feel like you're in a cloud. Like, is this real life?"

A car passed through their village on Thursday evening, alerting residents to the latest restrictions, as somebody shouted into a bullhorn, repeating a message in Italian: "Stay in your houses!"

They are stuck in an apartment near the center of the village along with their two children: Myla, 5, and Lucius, who will turn 9 next week.

But Lucius' birthday party has been put on hold.

"Which he's sad about, of course, because his friends can't come over," Craig



Sarah Farner, left, Master Sgt. Craig Farner and their children visit the Roman Coliseum. PHOTOS COURTESY OF FARNER FAMILY

said, "and we can't have a party; we can't even go to the store to buy him presents. We're trying to get some stuff online but you can't go shop in Italy right now."

"You can go grocery shopping, but it needs to be the necessities," Sarah said.

Viral sensations

Craig and Sarah have become a viral sensation during a horrific viral pandemic.

They recorded a video talking about their experiences, expecting that it would be viewed by some family and friends, but it went viral and it has been viewed more than 27,000 times.

"We didn't expect that first video to blow up the way it did," Sarah said.

There is something comforting in the video. In the midst of a worldwide horror, they give off a calm, unemotional vibe, talking about everything they are facing. They were recorded sitting on a couch. She was drinking white wine. He was wearing a Michigan cap and drinking Yuengling.

In some ways, it was meant as a public service announcement for America. At first, they were just trying to make sure everybody was taking this seriously.

They have done a second video and hope to do another this weekend. Because the situation changes every day. More limitations went into effect on Thursday.

"Things are coming fast and furious," Craig said. "We know that more is coming. ... So I think things are definitely going to get worse. And I think it's gonna last for a while. It could be a couple of months in my opinion."

"It's very surreal," she said.

Disposing bodies. But no funeral

The Italian health system is overwhelmed. Hospital workers are having to decide who gets medical treatment, in essence, who lives and who dies.

"So you imagine this," Craig said. "You have a family member who comes down with coronavirus. They go to the hospital. (Doctors say:) 'Hey, we're not

gonna be able to save this person because of their issues.' And they die."

But there are no funerals.

"The military is taking them in containment vehicles, driving them off," Craig said. "They're disposing of the bodies. ... There's no final, you know, goodbye for the family members. They're taking them straight away. And that's it."

People have begun to chastise each other on social media pages for being out in public.

"They're taking screenshots of people out running and publicly chastising people, sending it to the police," Craig said. "There is a percentage of people that are in that panic mode, even though it's legal to go run by yourself, as long as you weren't near anybody, or at least it was as of today."

Their kids are handling it as best they can. Schools are canceled and they are trying to home school, which hasn't been easy. The kids get bored and have the occasional meltdown, but they have been trouper.

"They are both very social and they just miss their friends," Sarah said. "They want to be back in class."

All stores in Italy are closed, except those selling groceries and pharmaceuticals.

"I feel like I'm talking to the future, but I hope not," I said. "What is the one thing you wish you would have known two weeks ago?"

It wasn't the need for toilet paper. It wasn't food.

It was the need for exercise equipment.

"Home gym equipment," Craig said. "You can't go to the gym."

Obituaries

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

Judith "Judy" Misslitz

BIG RAPIDS - Judith "Judy" Misslitz, age 80, of Big Rapids, passed away at Altercare of Big Rapids on March 14, 2020, after a lengthy battle with ALS. She was born August 2, 1939, the daughter of Clifford and Anna (Hess) Cook. Judy graduated from South Lyon High School in 1956. She married Robert Misslitz on December 9, 1957, in South Lyon. Together they made their home, raised their family and were very involved in the South Lyon community.



Judy worked several jobs over the years, but the common theme in all of them was service to others. She cooked for the youth group at South Lyon First United Methodist Church where she was a member; the Kiwanis Club of South Lyon; as well as for many gatherings in town. Judy had a passion for people, and undoubtedly never met a stranger, just friends she hadn't made yet.

After retirement, Judy and Bob travelled the country in their 5th wheel trailer, from the East Coast to the West Coast, they had camped in 44 of the 48 contiguous United States. They belonged to the Carriage RV Club and enjoyed being outside. Judy's other passions were gardening, quilting, and animals, especially her beloved dog, Berky.

She will be missed by all who knew her. Judy is survived by her four children, Mike (Tammy) Misslitz of South Lyon, MI, Bob (Jeana) Misslitz of Greenville, MI, Rich (Kathy McGuire) Misslitz of Manchester, MI, and Susan (Don) Guernsey of Big Rapids, MI; nine grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; two siblings, Jill Dieffenbach of Fayetteville, NC, and Jack (Marilyn) Cook of Middlebury, IN; as well as many nieces, nephews, extended family and good friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Bob.

A celebration of life is being planned for a later date.

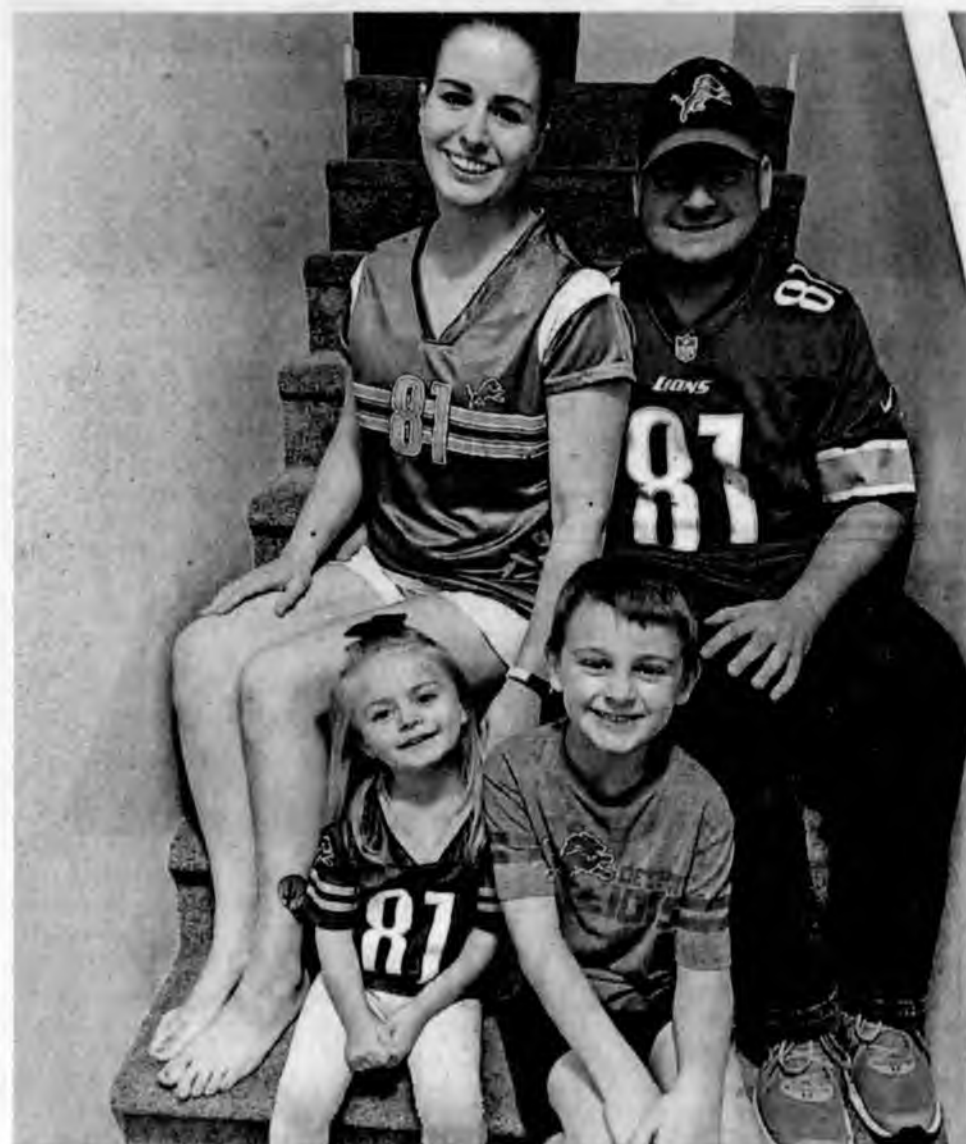
In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations to the ALS Association of Michigan or St. Jude Children's Hospital in Judy's name.

To leave an online condolence or share a favorite memory of Judy, please go to www.SimpsonFamilyFuneralHomes.com.

Michael Thomas Etheridge

MILFORD - Michael Thomas Etheridge passed away peacefully at his home in Milford on Friday, March 13, at the age of 81. He was born on August 5, 1938, in Monessen, Pennsylvania, and lived in Milford since 1994. Michael was predeceased by his parents, Torrance and Thomas Etheridge of Redford, MI. Michael's ashes will be placed in the Etheridge Family plot in the Belle Vernon Cemetery in Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania. The family wishes to express its sincere thanks for the love and kindness shown to Michael by his caregivers: Carrie Chambers, Karen Schang, and Karen Felix. Arrangements entrusted to the Lewis E. Wint & Son Funeral Home, Clarkston.

*May
Eternal
Rest
be
Granted*



The Farners are on lockdown in Italy, stuck in an apartment.

Do a little spring cleaning of your finances

Tips you can use
to help save money

Erin Lowry
Special to USA TODAY

As you shake off those winter dol-drum, put away the snow boots and prepare to deep clean the house, you can add a new technique: spring cleaning your financial house.

It's so easy for us to put our financial lives on autopilot and fail to evaluate the ways we're spending and the products we're using. So, once a year you should set the practice of running a financial audit to determine which products and services you no longer use or could switch to get a better rate.

To get started, you want to print out a year's worth of bank and credit card statements. A true audit needs to be run by having all of the financial information in front of you.

Audit your statements, realistically

Search for both monthly and annual fees you pay and make note of any services you no longer use. And be honest with yourself. This should be about what the real version of yourself utilizes, not the idealized version who reads The New Yorker cover to cover each week and doesn't let it just stack up in an overwhelming pile in the corner. Do the math on how often you go to the gym vs your monthly membership fee and see if it's still worth the cost per visit.

Nix the subscriptions and memberships that aren't currently serving you. Next, write down ones that you use, but for which you can probably find a better deal.

Bonus points if you go through all the statements with different colored highlighters and track patterns in your spending habits. This can be especially eye opening if you're struggling to free up money to put toward savings and/or debts.

Ditch and switch

While you have all those bank statements in front of you, it's good to look



Prepare to negotiate on everything from insurance to cable and internet to cell phone service. Shop around and see if you can get a better deal elsewhere.
GETTY IMAGES

for any recurring fees you're getting charged by your bank. It's 2020, there's just no reason for you to be paying a monthly fee on your checking or savings accounts. You shouldn't even be jumping through hoops like having a minimum daily account balance or a certain amount of monthly direct deposits.

Maybe a \$12 monthly fee for checking or an \$8 monthly fee for savings doesn't sound like much, but that's up to \$240 that can easily go toward other goals.

Speaking of savings, that \$240 should be routed to a savings account with a higher interest rate than the paltry 0.01% to 0.06% offered by many traditional brick-and-mortar banks. Today you can get 1.60% to 1.70% annual percentage yield, or APY, on a savings account.

That means if you have \$1,000 in your savings account, it's the difference between 2 cents and \$4.08 earned in interest in a year. On \$10,000, that's \$1 compared to \$170. It's not get-rich-quick money, but hey, it adds up.

Internet-only banks like Ally and Capital One 360 offer more competitive checking and savings accounts. Marcus by Goldman Sachs also offers a competi-

itive savings account.

These banks are just as safe and carry the same Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) insurance as the brick-and-mortar banks you're used to. The only catch is if you work in a cash-heavy job and need to be able to deposit bills. You could always use a brick-and-mortar for checking and set up a savings account with a better interest rate.

Evaluate your credit cards

Speaking of the need to potentially ditch and switch ... are the credit cards in your wallet the best ones for your spending patterns?

The easiest option is a flat-rate cash back card on everything (for example, one offering 2%), but if you're willing to play the game a bit, you can also look for cards that offer higher cash back for the bigger line items in your budget, like groceries or gas or dining out.

Put a sticker on each card to remind you for which type of spend you should use it. This is an especially helpful practice for any cards that offer rotating cash-back categories.

Personally, when I'm not focused on

It's so easy for us to put our financial lives on autopilot and fail to evaluate the ways we're spending.

racking up points for travel, I save up cash back all year to subsidize my Christmas gift budget.

You should also consider closing any cards with a steep annual fee that doesn't actually provide benefit. A fee might make sense if it's, say, for an airline card and you get free checked bags. You'll likely see a short-term drop in your credit score for closing a card, but assuming you have other lines of credit (like another credit card), then you'll rebound quickly. Anxious about closing it? Try negotiating the fee with the credit card company because they want you to keep it open, too!

Negotiate better deals

Prepare to negotiate on everything from insurance to cable and internet to cellphone service. Shop around and see if you can get a better deal elsewhere. If you secure a better deal, then you can try to go back and negotiate with your provider or just pull another ditch and switch.

Save your saved money!

The final step to spring cleaning your finances is to actually put all your saved money into savings. For monthly payments, like saving \$20 a month by switching cable providers, you can automate an extra \$20 a month to get routed into your savings account. Or apply it to any debts to pay off.

Another technique to make this more of an annual challenge is to set up a new savings account specifically for the money you save spring cleaning each year. That way you can see it really start to accumulate and even put it towards something exciting like a family trip or a splurge item you may not have otherwise purchased.

Erin Lowry is the author of "Broke Millennial Takes On Investing" and "Broke Millennial: Stop Scraping By and Get Your Financial Life Together."

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Eric Titner
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If you're responsible for hiring at your company, your goal is crystal clear: seek out and retain the very best available talent in your field in order to meet the requirements of your open positions and the needs of your business – all in an effort to help your organization push past the competition and lead the pack in your industry.

It's an important goal – and an achievable one – provided your approach to recruitment is well developed and razor-sharp. That said, some recruiters tend to get "tunnel vision" when hiring and approach each recruitment effort with a pre-determined notion of the sort of candidate they'd like to hire. While this can reflect a carefully thought out strategy, it can also be a big mistake. Simply put, approaching any recruitment effort with a canned idea of what sort of person would be ideal for a given position can limit your ability to seriously consider candidates outside of this narrow frame – including folks who may ultimately turn out to meet and even exceed your expectations.

A key demographic that often gets placed out of focus and relegated to the sidelines during recruitment initiatives are older workers. It's an unfortunate reality of today's modern workplace – older workers run into a range of biases that work against them when out in the job market, and they often face a real uphill battle to be taken seriously when in between jobs and looking for their next opportunities.

According to a recent study by AARP, "Two out of three workers between ages 45 and 74 say they have seen or experienced age discrimination at work, and job seekers over age 35 cite it as a top



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obstacle to getting hired. And if you happen to work in the high-tech or entertainment industries, your chances of experiencing age discrimination are even higher."

Clearly, this is an issue that deserves more attention – especially since most of us plan to be gainfully employed and reach this demographic at some point in our career journeys.

They come with a wealth of skills and knowledge

Beyond a desire for fairness, there are real benefits to taking older workers seriously. Experienced workers typically

come "pre-loaded" with a wealth of hard-earned abilities that they've likely acquired across a wide range of professional opportunities – all which can be put to effective use for your business if they're given the opportunity. Also, it's time that some of the clichés about older workers finally got put to rest and placed in the dustbin of history, because they simply don't stand up to the evidence. These include the notions that older workers are stuck in the past with rusty, outdated skill sets and lack the energy and drive needed to keep your business agile and running efficiently into the future.

They're motivated to stay current and engaged

The truth is many people well older than the millennial age make a real effort to keep their skills and abilities current and cutting edge in their industries. And in terms of energy and motivation, many older workers have their younger counterparts beat, as they're driven by a desire to squash the old notion that older equals out of the loop. They also often come backed by a temperament that includes a level of appreciation, maturity, patience, and flexibility that they've honed over years of experience.

They're often less fickle and more dedicated than newbies to the industry

Older workers can also typically be counted on to use sound, careful logic, and rational thinking when making key decisions. And when it comes to longevity, older workers are more likely to stick it out and help your business grow over the long haul, as compared to younger employees who tend to jump between jobs more often. Given the considerable expense of replacing and onboarding new employees, hiring older workers may just be a sound financial investment for your business.

When you take all of the factors listed here into consideration, it's clear that a case could – and should – be made for taking older workers seriously when making recruitment and hiring decisions. Keep your options open and your biases at bay the next time resumes of all ages cross your desk.

Eric Titner has been an editor and content creator for more than a decade. His primary professional focus has been on education- and career-related topics.

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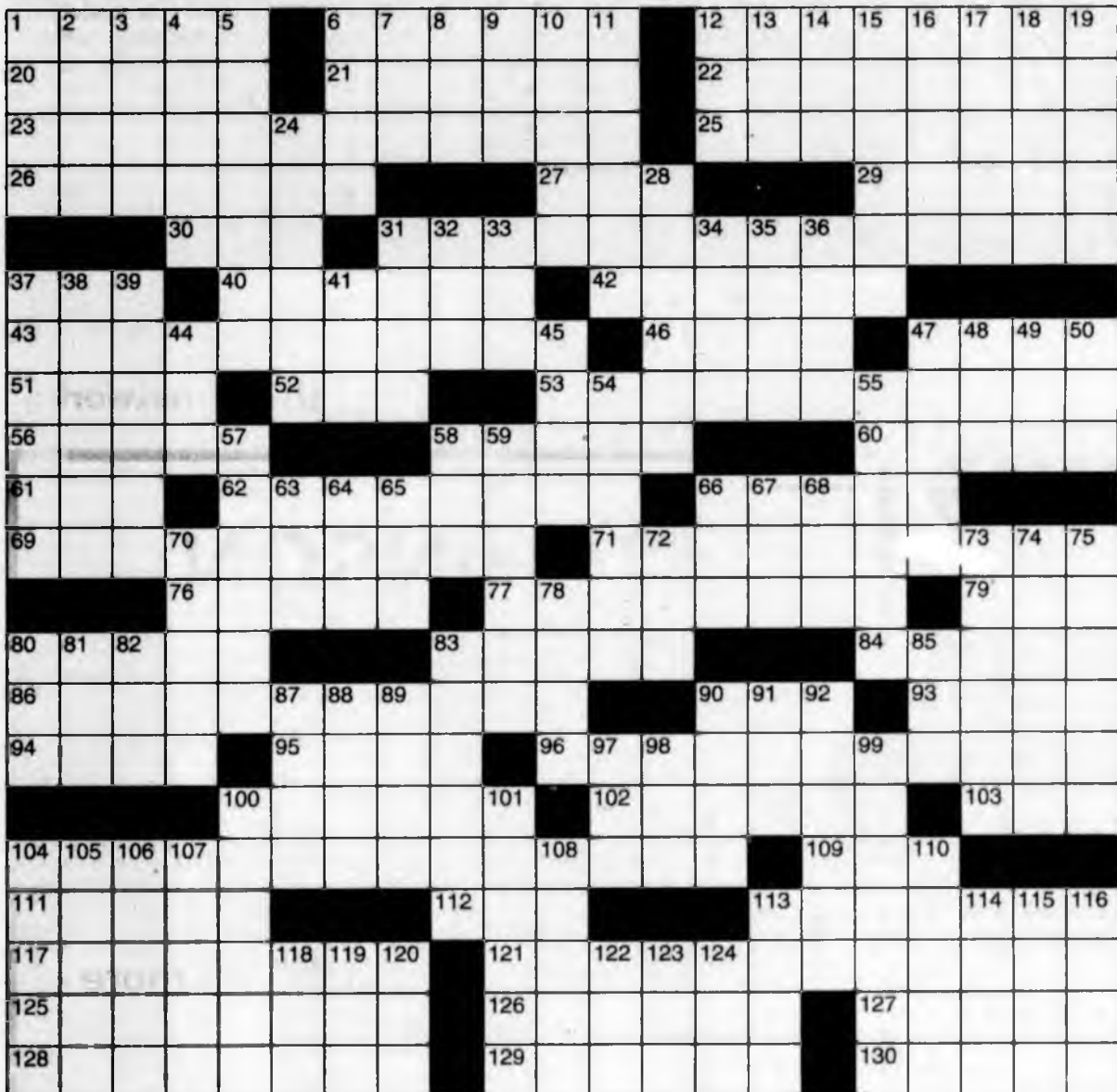


THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

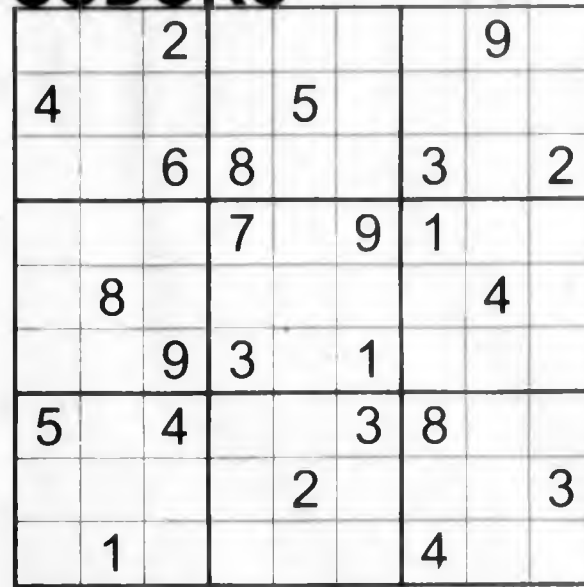
ACROSS

- 1 "Rabbit food"
6 Back-and-forth talk
12 Cold case solvers, often
20 Oven maker
21 Source of weather upheaval
22 This instant
23 MTV's first Latina video jockey
25 "Don't go anywhere"
26 Dresses up
27 Cubs' and Eagles' gp.
29 Mazda two-seater
30 Common conjunction
31 Social-climbing snob on "Keeping Up Appearances"
37 Gp. in the Arab League
40 Funny Conan
42 Blends to mush
43 35th president's mother
46 Banjoist
47 Inking
51 Carve — career
52 Post-Q string
- 53 "The Sea, the Sea" novelist of 1978
56 Highway jam
58 Adhesive rolls
60 German king called "the Great"
61 Verb suffix in London
62 When Hamlet's soliloquy is recited
66 — New Guinea (island nation)
69 Lil' Abner's mother
71 Friend of Lucy van Pelt and Patty
76 Beef up
77 Clout
79 Gold, in Peru
80 "You can't — train"
- 100 Shorthand whiz, in brief
102 Poe's "radiant maiden"
103 Cleveland-to-Raleigh dir.
104 Aunt of Harry Potter
109 DJ's platters
111 Level, grassy plain
112 Pub fixture
113 Ball-shaped blooms
117 Aim for
121 Hippies (and an alternate title for this puzzle)
125 Tidied up
126 Novelist Gay
127 Trashed stuff
128 Declared
129 Declared
130 Busybody
- 9 Ignited
10 Last year before the first century
11 Busybody
12 HMO VIPs
13 Petty peeve
14 — Khan
15 Lymphoid organ in the neck
16 Moral code
17 Sort not to be trusted
18 Eggy cake
19 Elbow grease
24 "Giant" novelist Edna
28 Wolf-headed Egyptian god
31 Inking
32 "— haw!"
33 Common conjunction
34 Uno plus dos
35 Ship's wheel
36 Romeo
37 Bit of expert advice
38 Writer — May Alcott
39 "Your Best Life Now" author Joel
41 ICU figures
44 Water, to Watteau
45 "Gadzooks!"
47 Dog collar attachment
48 Part of many an emoticon
- 49 Friendly introduction?
50 Sushi tuna
54 Keanu of the screen
55 Driving paths
57 Check-giving time at work
58 Fri. follows it
59 Arid target
63 Film dancer Charisse
64 Wee kid
65 Ring victory, for short
66 Cooking vessels
67 Muhammad —
68 Guitar piece
70 Overly sweet
72 Suffix with journal
73 Celebrity tributes
74 Fighting forces
75 1983 Lionel Richie hit
78 Film holder
80 Health club
81 Blue Jays, on sports tickers
82 Decide
83 Triumph in the end
85 Keeps
87 Tube-shaped pasta
124 Suffix with journal
- 89 Senator Paul
90 Big Apple's city and state: Abbr.
91 "I'd say," in a text message
92 Coarse sack material
97 Unwell
98 Spike of films
99 They may cry "Uncle!"
100 One napping noisily
101 Inserted plant shoots
104 Main course of action
105 Nobody — (mine alone)
106 Spanish bar appetizers
107 Link up
108 Messy impact sound
110 MIT business school name
113 Historical slave Scott
114 — facto
115 Countertenor
116 Filter slowly
118 Strip doc
119 Golf prop
120 Singular
122 Ending for Motor
123 Soggy
124 Suffix with journal



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

SUDOKU



Difficulty Level ★★

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!

POISON WORD SEARCH

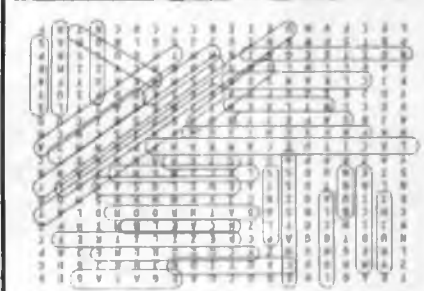
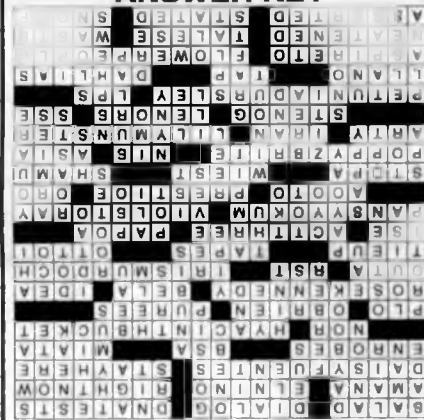
T E A O L H E B G C G A E G A R A G B V
Z Y M H O U C A U T I O N J N H J G N G
L R E G H U N Z Y C N E G R E M E J B P
N U D T O G A P C R E Z I L T R E F T
M J I H C O T L Z H C A E L B M I H P Z
C N C B L N S A B A T H R O O M O L A T
E I I U A O I N C J V F N H R H S M O O
N L N R T O S T A E N I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

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

WORDS

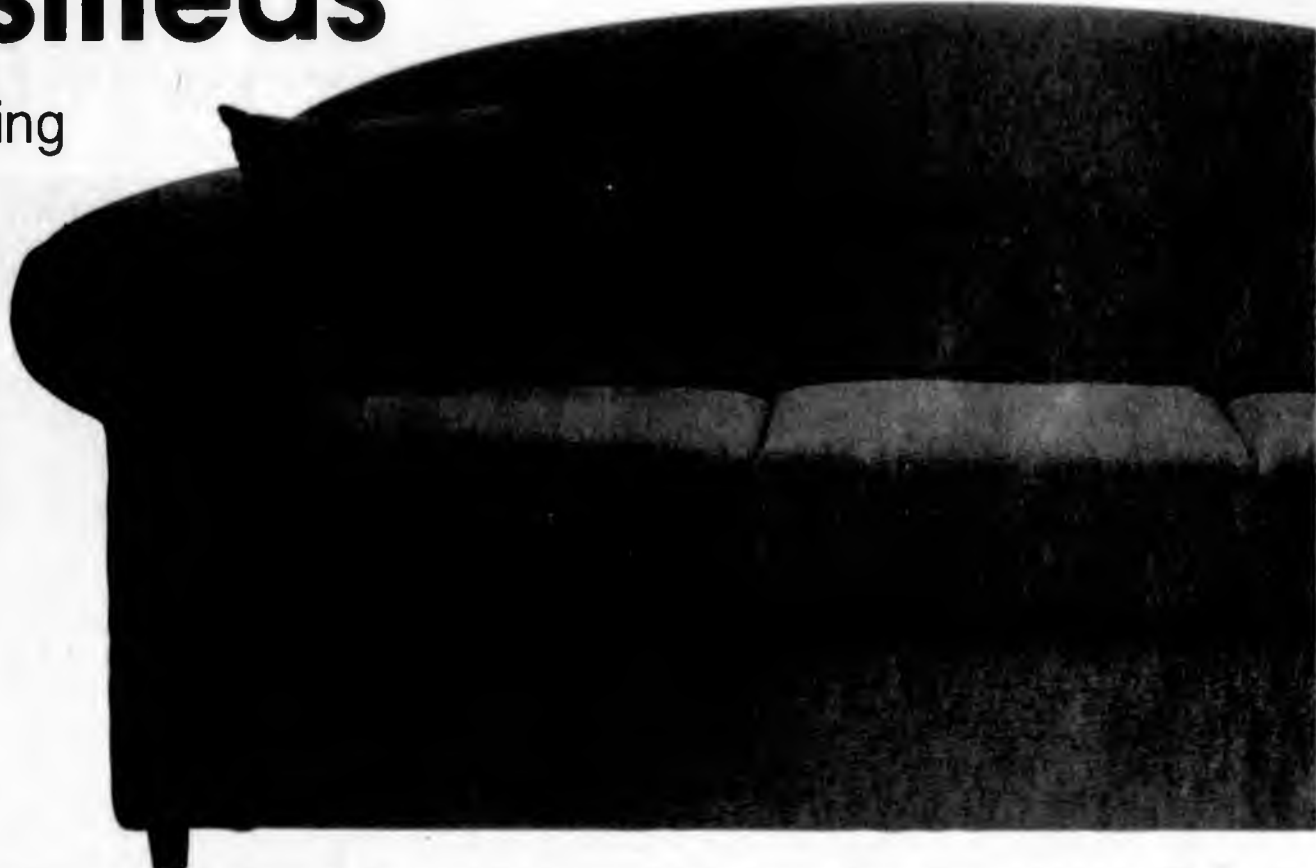
ACCIDENT
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BATHROOM
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BURN
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