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THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020 ■ HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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## 'Not my time': COVID-19 cuts school year short



South Lyon High senior Kelsie O'Connor's final year was cut short when schools closed, leaving her unsure if events such as prom and graduation will happen. "I don't like going to school that much," she said. "But ... I have never wanted to go back to school more in my life." JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Seniors finding lack of closure

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com | USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

While Wes Miller, much like his classmates and teachers at North Farmington High School, did not see the suspension of the rest of the school year coming, he had a teacher who did. ■ Kristina Pittman, a senior AP literature teacher at North Farmington, addressed Miller's class. He could see tears in her eyes. Pittman's message was different than any other teacher he had: the school year was over. ■ They were not coming back. ■ "It was the only class that, for me, I was like, 'could this really happen,'" Miller said. "I still at the time didn't believe it." ■ But the unthinkable soon became a reality for area seniors when Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer ended in-person K-12 instruction for the remainder of the school year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

See SENIORS, Page 4A

## Virus crashes Lyon Kite Festival

Annual high-flying event was to be June 6-7

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The coronavirus pandemic continues to leave many plans uncertain, but the fate of one event is no longer up in the air.

The 12th annual Lyon Township Kite Festival, originally set for June 6-7, has been canceled, the latest in a string of 2020 events for which COVID-19 has crashed the party.

"We can't run the risk of someone getting sick," Jim Chuck, co-chair and president of Lyon Events Organization, the non-profit that sponsors Kite Festival, said. "It was the best thing to do in the interest of public safety."

Jim Chuck, co-chair and president of Lyon Events Organization

A stay-at-home order by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is currently set through April 30, leaving five weeks before the kite festival was set to take place, but Chuck and LEO Boardmember and DDA/Economic Development Coordinator Tina Archer said too much uncertainty remains.

"Since the initial order, things have changed and could change again," Archer noted. "When you talk about a public event, level of confidence and

See FESTIVAL, Page 4A

## Milford man dies in crash on I-275

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A 37-year-old Milford man died instantly early Monday morning after he drove off Interstate 275 in Plymouth Township and struck the rear of an idled semitrailer.

Michigan State Police troopers said the parked semitrailer had its hazard lights activated on the right shoulder of the northbound lanes near the Ann Arbor Road interchange.

The semitrailer's driver was not injured in the crash that happened at about 2 a.m.

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

## Advocate for families lost mom, close friend

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Suicide has long been a subject most people avoid talking about publicly, yet suicides in metro Detroit counties have increased in recent years. This is the fourth in a series of stories examining the topic.

A Livonia woman's advocacy for those trapped in the wake of suicide includes music, laughter, dancing and funny memes.

"I don't want to burn myself out. I want to keep going," said Katie Hardy, founder of Six Feet Over, a nonprofit

working to prevent and help heal suicide-stricken families, and Suck It! Suicide, which handles the group's outreach activities.

"We don't do research on our own. I don't ever expect people to come to me. I try to go to them. The unconventional, novel aspect of what we do and who we are (is) we are just people hanging out, very wearable. We try to make suicide prevention cool."

Her work started small: a Facebook page, a home office, events and T-shirts. Now, she manages a Detroit Core City

See ADVOCACY, Page 5A



Katie Hardy began the anti-suicide advocacy program Six Feet Over after the suicide death of her mother in 2003. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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## MDOT says its postponing major I-275 project to 2021

Spokesman says delay not related to coronavirus outbreak

**Shelby Tankersley** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The few drivers regularly traversing Interstate 275 right now won't have to worry about construction any time soon. A major \$50 million project planned for a stretch of the expressway between Ford and Six Mile roads, scheduled to start this month, is postponed to 2021.

According to Diane Cross, the Michigan Department of Transportation's metro Detroit spokesperson, the postponement is not in any way related to Michigan's coronavirus outbreak. Instead, the state hopes to secure additional funding to do a complete remodel of the stretch, rather than the originally planned "mill and refill" asphalt replacement.

"Mill and refill is milling down the current surface and refilling it again," Cross said in an email. "A total reconstruction removes all the material and rebuilds the road from the ground up."

MDOT doesn't know what the expanded project will cost and hasn't worked out the details yet. The project will likely take place from early spring to mid-fall in 2021 and affect drivers heading through Livonia, Northville, Plymouth and Canton.

Other MDOT projects, including four on I-94 and one on M-5, are delayed right now. Cross said most of MDOT's road work is done by contractors, who have "ever changing" staff numbers.

Though major work won't be done in 2020, MDOT will continue to repair I-275 as needed.

"Maintenance will be pothole repairs or any other issues that pop up on what is normally a very busy roadway, although currently, traffic volumes are down more than 50% on all roadways," Cross said.

Contact reporter **Shelby Tankersley** at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.

### hometownlife.com

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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 **May 12, 2020 at 7:00PM** to consider:

**PZ20-0015 (Acquira Realty Holdings) 44050 W Twelve Mile Road, West of Novi Road and North of Twelve Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-10-452-001.** The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Code Section 5.4.1 proposing to convert (3) of the seven existing loading zones into (6) parking spaces. This will continue to allow ample space for loading/unloading and would not adversely affect the flow of traffic and or loading/unloading of or deliveries. This property is zoned Office Service (OS-1).

**PZ20-0016 (Nicholas Kalweit) 23873 Heartwood Drive, West of Beck Road and South of Ten Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-29-127-006.** The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 4.19.1.E.iii to allow for 458 square feet of garage space beyond the 1000 square feet allowed by code, a total of 1458 square feet of garage space on the property. This variance would accommodate the construction of a detached garage. This property is zoned Single Family Residential (R-1).

**PZ20-0017 (Ron and Roman Inc/Guernsey Farms Dairy) 23100 Novi Road, East of Novi Road and North of Eight Mile Road, Parcel #50-22-35-301-001.** The applicant is requesting variances from the City of Novi Code of Ordinances Section 28-5(a) for 6 additional signs, 5 additional wall signs and 1 Awning/Canopy sign. The awning/canopy sign is also oversized, 72 square feet requested, 24 square feet allowable by code. 28-14(b)(1) Upgrade existing nonconforming pole sign to maintain compliance. A non-conforming sign shall not be structurally altered as to prolong the life of the sign, or in any way that would increase the degree or extent of nonconformity of such sign. This property is zoned General Business (B-3).

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10-0000288154 1st

## Roadwork proceeding, but look for speed bumps ahead

**Susan Bromley** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Road projects are moving forward in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, but look out for speed bumps ahead as revenue hits a pothole.

Work for the paving of Dixboro Road in Lyon Township has already begun, and major construction projects in other Oakland County communities, including Birmingham, Milford and Novi, will also proceed this spring and summer, although start dates are not concrete.

"Many of our projects are moving forward," Oakland County Road Commission spokesman Craig Bryson said. "We have to continually remind our people and contractors that they have to keep a 6-foot distance from others. Our people seem to be pretty committed to that. Occasionally someone forgets, and obviously it's their own self-preservation that motivates them as well."

Bryson notes the road commission, which oversees both Dixboro in Lyon and the Novi bridge project, has had no issue with its contractors. The RCO's biggest contractor, Dan's Excavating, is "moving ahead aggressively" and "making sure folks are following the rules."

The \$3.5 million paving of Dixboro Road between 8 Mile and 9 Mile roads has already begun, but Bryson said there is no schedule yet for \$2 million worth of work on preventive maintenance for the Grand River bridge over the CSX railroad in Novi.

"They could start anytime between now and August," he said.

Washtenaw County Road Commission said the road resurfacing project for 8 Mile Road between Pontiac Trail and Tower Road was to start April 20, closing the road to vehicular traffic. The project should take about two weeks.

In Birmingham, the city recently announced it has finalized an agreement with the Michigan Department of Transportation in which Angelo Iafrate Construction Company will reconstruct Maple Road from Southfield to Woodward.

Work will include sidewalk widening, traffic light improvements, replacement of existing water mains and sewer lines, improved parking, and realignment of Southfield Road at Maple to reduce sharp turns and lessen area congestion.

The city received a \$700,000 grant from MDOT for the project, the total cost of which is about \$5.5 million.

"We're pleased to continue the necessary improvements to a key segment of our aging infrastructure," City Manager Joe Valentine said. "Recent events have made it difficult to identify a clear start date, however, in current discussions with



This section of Peters Road north of the Huron River bridge in Milford is slated to be repaved by the village. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Iafrate we are tentatively targeting the week of May 4th."

Work is expected to last about four months.

In Milford, Artisan Contracting of Highland will pave Peters Road from Commerce Road to just north of the Peters Road bridge, and will also include repaving of Liberty and Leverett streets at a cost to the village of about \$1 million.

Village Manager Christian Wuerth expects the work to begin in early May.

It remains unclear how much traffic will be on the roads next month. A stay-at-home order is in effect through at least April 30.

That order may save some wear and tear on roads, but has had the adverse effect of what Bryson said will be a significant reduction in revenue for the road commission from gas taxes, its second largest source of income. He estimates as much as 30% to 50% less gas is being purchased. Vehicle registrations, the road commission's largest source of funding, is also expected to take a hit as fewer people buy new vehicles.

"We're bracing for the financial jolt," Bryson said. "We expect about a 25% cut in revenue and definitely less work being done in coming months. ... Things we would look at (reducing) are all the routine work including simple resurfacing and road and litter clean-up."

Exempt from reductions would be pothole patching, which is considered a safety issue, and major projects that receive 80% federal funding. Bryson said everything else would be on the table, but he does not expect a reduction in employees at this time.

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

## Building proposed near Eight Mile, Haggerty

**David Veselenak** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Could the area around Eight Mile and Haggerty support another new development? It appears one developer wants to give it a shot in an unusual piece of property.

Plans to build on a triangular piece of property along Haggerty Road were presented last month to the Novi Planning Commission, which was held remotely online due to concerns over the coronavirus pandemic.

The planning commission voted unanimously to approve rezoning the property from FS-Freeway Service to B-3-General Business, as well as approve a preliminary site plan for the site. Both items eventually will require approval from the city council before the project can begin.

The building would be located north of the Taco Bell on the east side of Haggerty. A small portion of the east side of Haggerty just north of Eight Mile is part of the city of Novi before Haggerty takes a small jog and becomes the border with Farmington Hills just north of the site.

The building, dubbed Morgan Place, doesn't have a specific use yet, but the petitioners have indicated several uses for the site that would be more low-traffic. Those include office space and medical.

"We've spent a lot of time on what's the best way to develop the property in regard to uses," said Brian



A rendering of the building proposed on the east side of Haggerty north of Eight Mile in Novi. COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NOVI

Biskner, one of the petitioners for the site. "Anything generating parking ... we tried to pull out of there."

The site has seen some discussions for development in previous years. Plans for rezoning the half-acre lot, as well as a site plan, were approved by the city in 2007, though the project never came to fruition. Approvals for site plans came in both 2008 and 2014, though the site plan review process was started again in 2017 and put on hold to allow the planning commission to weigh in.

Commissioner John Avdoulos said the project is a good use for an unusual piece of property.

"I have no issue with it at all and I think all the deviations that were noted here were basically all supported by the staff," he said.

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

## Firefighters: Unattended pot caused South Lyon blaze

**Susan Vela** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A South Lyon apartment fire probably started because of an unattended pot on the stove, Fire Chief Robert Vogel said.

No one was injured at the East McHattie Street blaze. Damage was estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

South Lyon's firefighters were assisting Green Oak Township firefighters on a garage fire at about 10 p.m. April 13 when they learned of the apartment fire at 151 E. McHattie St.

Firefighters arrived to find smoke coming from one of the 10, one-story apartments. Upon entry, they found smoke and fire.

They evacuated the other units and stayed on the scene for about three hours.

Lyon and Salem townships assisted. Evacuated tenants were taken to a nearby Veterans of Foreign Wars post. The American Red Cross assisted.

Contact reporter **Susan Vela** at [svela@hometownlife.com](mailto:svela@hometownlife.com) or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.



## Woman cheers others with COVID-19 rap

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Quarantined in her Novi apartment, Julie Cox wanted to lift the spirits of those surrounding her.

So, the retired school teacher and band director got to rapping and writing. In eight hours, she produced "Ode to Covid-19."

Cox, 78, shared the rap with friends at Brookdale Novi, an independent senior living facility, and soon she was the star of a video seen by more than 66,000 across Brookdale's senior living communities in metro Detroit.

Brookdale's social media staffers said about 60,000 have responded with likes, shares and comments.

"Hey Corona! You're making quite a scene - a sneaky, contagious virus unseen," Cox raps in the video, snapping her fingers as she rhymes. "Hey, Corona! We know just how to cope. By washing our hands with plenty of soap."

"We're doing exactly what doctors command. But not exactly what we had planned."

Cox moved to Brookdale Novi from St. Joseph, on the other side of the state, not even a year ago to be closer to family in Milford.

She said rap was just becoming popular with her elementary students when she started setting science lessons to rhythms and rhymes.

The band director for fifth through 12th graders scored hit after hit, writing raps - as her students called the verbal study guides - about weather and solar systems.

In one rhythmic lesson plan, she wrote a verse for every child in the class.

Her "Ode to Covid-19" is a riff on her rap about aging, which went something like this: "Hey, aging! You don't bother me!"

Cox wanted to bring some cheer and we-can-overcome sensibilities to her friends and family when she wrote her most recent rap.

"I just was moved to do something," she said. "(But) I don't want people to



These three are behind Brookdale Novi's popular video, "Ode to Covid-19." Writer and performer Julie Cox, 78, sits between Carolyn Storey, left, the facility's resident programs assistant, and Carolyn Kokko, the resident programs coordinator who recorded their performance.

COURTESY BROOKDALE NOVI

think I'm making light of the virus. It's a very serious subject."

The retired teacher's resolve shows up in her lyrics. "Hey, Corona! You will be erased. We'll send you far away without any trace."

Carolyn Kokko, Brookdale Novi's resident engagement coordinator, recorded Cox and resident programs assistant Carolyn Storey for the video.

Kokko wanted to capture the fun, enthusiastic spirit behind the rap. The other two ladies obliged with some swaying, finger snapping and fun shenanigans to offset the more serious messages.

"I was elated to be able to help," Storey said. "So there I was being my silly old self."

Cox has been connecting with daughter Kim Seyka, her son-in-law Jeff and two grandsons Carter, 21, and Casey, 18, via Facetime. The Milford family has let her know they enjoyed the COVID-19 rap and video.

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

## Oakland County jail inmates sue over housing conditions

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Some civil rights and racial justice groups have banded together to help Oakland County Jail inmates sue the sheriff over housing conditions amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attempting to release more medically vulnerable inmates, the complaint filed in U.S. District Court names Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard; Curtis Childs, his corrective services commander; and Oakland County.

Attorneys from Advancement Project, American Civil Liberties Union, Civil Rights Corps and some local law offices are backing five named inmates and others similarly situated, in the class-action suit that Undersheriff Mike McCabe claimed is frivolous.

"I am 42 years old. ... I suffer from hypertension, cardiac disease and obesity. I had a mild heart attack in 2015, and I still experience chest pains from time to time," said Michael Cameron, one of the inmate plaintiffs, in a statement that was part of the announcement about the litigation. "I am terrified that if I catch the coronavirus, I will not be able to fight it off. I worry about dying in the hospital with no family around me. I worry about who will protect my son."

The complaint - approximately 70 pages, without exhibits - highlights inmates who are suffering from ailments that include bronchitis, sleep apnea, hypertension, obesity and cardiac disease.

Cameron, 42, has been in the Oakland County Jail since January, according to county inmate information, with probation, contempt of court and narcotics-related issues.

According to the lawyers, their complaints and concerns include close sleeping quarters, unnecessary waits for medical treatment, a lack of soap and other cleaning supplies and not enough safeguards against COVID-19 infections.

"An outbreak in the jail is imminent and will cause death and devastation to countless lives," the complaint said. "Starkly, in the midst of a public health

crisis, the people currently confined at the jail have no adequate safeguards against the severe threat of this novel coronavirus.

"All they ask is to be treated humanely while they are in Oakland County's custody during this perilous time."

The groups backing Oakland County Jail inmates have filed similar complaints in Miami and St. Louis. More litigation is expected.

Bouchard and Childs could not be reached for comment. Responding for them, McCabe was not pleased.

"This is one of the biggest piece-of-crap lawsuits I've ever seen in my career," the veteran law enforcer said. "The sheriff does not release people from jail. Judges release people from jail. This is beyond belief. I'm very confident this lawsuit is ultimately going to be dismissed."

He said the allegations are "without foundation" and boasted that the Pontiac campus' three jailing facilities are known for their cleanliness and healthcare.

Inmates are getting screened for COVID-19 upon entering the jail and tested when symptoms arise. On April 17, 31 had tested positive and were being quarantined.

The Oakland County Jail, though, was not designed for inmates to stay 6 feet apart.

The sheriff's personnel have been submitting names of nonviolent inmates, some with serious medical conditions, to Oakland County judges for early release. Most on a 165-name list have been let go.

Wayne County's jailing facilities housed at least 900 inmates on April 13, compared to about 1,600 in March 2019.

Pageant Atterberry, spokeswoman for the Wayne County Sheriff's Office, said the county has been releasing nonviolent inmates and using tethers to keep track of them.

McCabe and Atterberry confirmed that Oakland and Wayne county jails have issued masks to both inmates and jail employees.

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

## Accused killer of missing woman has new attorney

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A new attorney is defending Floyd Galloway Jr., a former Berkley resident accused of killing a woman missing since late 2016.

Ellen K. Michaels is the new lead counsel, replacing William Mitchell III and Sharon Clark Woodside. Michaels' name is on a "sealed appeal with the Michigan Court of Appeals regarding Galloway's case thus far."



Galloway

The 33-year-old Galloway is a state prison inmate who pleaded guilty to a Hines Park sexual assault that happened a few months before Danielle Stislicki, 28, of Farmington Hills, went missing on Dec. 2, 2016.

"Floyd is going to get a great defense. We're taking a very aggressive approach," said Michaels, a well-established criminal defense attorney. "We are fighting this every step of the way."

She said the case isn't as straightforward as it may seem. It's unusual, she said, that a homicide conviction is being pursued when Stislicki remains missing.

Also, she questioned why the state

attorney general - not Oakland County - is prosecuting the case.

Jaimie Powell Horowitz, a homicide and sexual assault prosecutor now running for a 45th District Court judge seat, has been leading the prosecution in court.

"It certainly makes me wonder," said Michaels of those handling - and not handling - Galloway's case. "I'm excited to be on the case and I'm excited to fight the charges with my client."

Galloway was a guard at the MetLife offices in Southfield, where Stislicki worked before she went missing.

According to preliminary examination testimony, co-workers saw them in the parking lot and then driving away together in Stislicki's vehicle that last day she communicated with loved ones.

Forensic experts shared data showing cell phones for both Galloway and Stislicki were near Galloway's Berkley home in the hours after they apparently left the parking lot.

The 47th District Court's Judge James Brady ruled there was enough evidence for an Oakland County Circuit Court trial. Galloway was scheduled for that trial to begin this week but that is delayed because of the appeal.

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

## Company offers greeting cards for front-line heroes

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

In a classic display of pivoting to fit the times, a Plymouth-based stationery company is producing greeting cards designed to put smiles on the faces of heroes on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic.

Inklings Paperie, founded by Canton resident Lindsay Henry and based in the former Burroughs factory in Plymouth Township, has manufactured a series of "Healthcare Hero" cards that are printed with a heartfelt message and a scratch-off bonus on the front of the card.

The cards offer space inside for senders to write uplifting words of encouragement to everyone from front-line nurses and doctors to mail carriers and grocery store clerks.

An example of a card reads: I see how much you are giving and sacrificing right now ... (and underneath the scratch-off section) and have never been so proud to know you.

"Now more than ever before, we're seeing people who are desper-

ately trying to remain connected with loved ones amidst the current stay-at-home orders," Henry said. "A handwritten note not only offers that meaningful connection between two people, but it also becomes a tangible keepsake that they can hold on to for years to come."

"Think of all the love letters written during World Wars I and II. These are the keepsakes we'll pass along to our own grandchildren."

Inklings' project is rolling along while adhering to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's social distancing guidelines.

"Our staff of five meet using teleconferencing, and we never have more than one employee in the office at one time," Henry said. "We brainstormed for the messages on the outside of the cards and

decided on the ones we thought were most powerful."

To show its appreciation to customers, Inklings has pledged to give away up to 5,000 free greeting cards throughout April. Visit the company's website to place an online order and use the code HERO to secure a free card.

"It's so important for us to lift up those who are currently on the front lines of this crisis," Henry added. "There is tremendous power in a note of encouragement. We need to be telling our nurses, first responders, mail carriers and grocery workers, 'Thank you. We see you, and we are endlessly grateful for you.' This is something that we all can do."

The coronavirus-focused cards range from thankful to humorous.

### Notice of Public Hearing

FlexTech High School - Novi will hold a public hearing on May 7, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at 24245 Karim Blvd, Novi, MI 48375 to review the proposed 2020-2021 operating budget. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection at the above address.

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The Lyon Township Kite Festival, planned for June 6-7, 2020, has been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The festival typically draws 4,000-5,000 people over the course of two days. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

## Festival

Continued from Page 1A

comfort that attendees need."

She pointed to April 15's "Operation Gridlock" in Lansing, in which protesters gathered in and outside of vehicles around the capitol in disapproval of Whitmer's executive orders in response to the crisis.

"(The) protest is a good example of the broad spectrum of people who are comfortable and uncomfortable (being out)," Archer said. "It's difficult to gauge."

The kite festival typically draws 4,000-5,000 people over the course of two days.

### Long-term outlook

Lyon Township Supervisor John Dolan said he is "bummed" but understood the need to cancel the event, and also expressed uncertainty about events moving forward, including summer concerts in July and even possible Christmas gatherings.

Dolan believes the original stay-at-home order was "reasonable," but the latest restrictions Whitmer added, including exclusion of the purchase of

certain items at big box stores that remain open, prohibition on use of motorboats and forbidding travel to second homes, were "too much" and caused the Lansing protest.

"This country can not last shut down," he said. "I don't even know if we can last another month. The money (stimulus checks) they put out is just a Band-Aid. ... There are people out there that put their life savings in a business and overnight, it's destroyed."

He would like to see things reopened with guidelines for safety, which could include wearing masks and maintaining 6 feet of distance, as well as no summer concerts, but said the current shutdown can not continue.

"The first couple weeks, no one was stir crazy, but the next couple weeks they will be very stir crazy," Dolan said.

Still, he is proud of the township employees and residents heeding the orders and "trying to keep everyone safe," and he is wearing a mask when he is out every day checking on things around the township in case he is a person that is asymptomatic. He likens COVID-19 to "a flu virus that's gone haywire."

"I am busier than I have ever been," he said. "Our township is worth it and we will come out on the other side. ... It seems to be ticking down. Be as good as you can."

Dolan and Chuck, a township planning commissioner, are looking forward to virtual Zoom meetings in May for both the township board and the planning commission.

Neither entity has held a meeting in more than a month.

"There are things out there that developers want to move forward," Chuck said. "Our state and governor have laid out rules and mandates and that is what we need to go by. ... The fact there is no vaccine for this virus, we have to move slow."

The consideration of those factors led to the cancellation, and not just postponement of the 2020 Kite Festival, but Chuck said he is looking forward to the event's return in 2021, as well as the end of the pandemic.

"I understand the situation (the shut down order) puts small businesses in, but health and watching out for one another is paramount," Chuck said. "We'll start crawling, then walk, and then run again, but the timing is difficult to predict. We have to be prudent and do in stages. We are one of the hardest hit areas in the country, so drastic times call for drastic measures."

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## Seniors

Continued from Page 1A

Miller, driving past his high school, said he still sees classrooms full of books, waiting to be opened again when students and faculty return.

"It looks like people just walked out for the weekend and that's it," Miller said.

For the senior class at local high schools, the culmination of years of school, the time that was supposed to end with a diploma in hand, came sooner than expected.

### 'I'll see you soon'

To Kelsie O'Connor, a senior at South Lyon High School, her last Friday was not a normal one.

Each class period she was asking teachers for updates on the district's response to COVID-19. She was asking what was going on, the day after the governor's initial announcement.

O'Connor's teachers were uninformed, not knowing whether to teach their classes new material without knowing when their students would be back. A system, a response to something of this magnitude has not been implemented.

"We were all in the dark," O'Connor said. "We truly had no idea."

While there was a sense of frustration inside the school building, O'Connor left South Lyon that Friday not feeling tense, telling her friends, "I'll see you soon," and, "This will blow over."

The South Lyon senior said she severely underestimated the potential of what the coronavirus could lead to.

And with that, the frustration returned.

"The first two weeks were horrible," O'Connor said. "It was not fun to sit through because I think, for me at least, every day I was just sick to my stomach wondering whether or not I would be able to go back."

O'Connor does not really know what her next steps are. She said it's hard to think about in a time like this, but that she will likely attend a community college and work, aspiring to move out west to Colorado.

Wanting to get out of the state of Michigan sooner rather than later, the South Lyon senior made it clear that school was not her favorite place to be.

But now, there is no place she would rather be.

"I don't like going to school that much," O'Connor said. "But, honestly, I have never wanted to go back to school more in my life."

### 'Closure would have been nice'

Emma Lenning, a senior at Plymouth High School, a part of the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, knows she will not get to experience the same senior year as most get to.

She likely will not get a spring break trip, a prom, an in-person graduation where she walks across the stage to get handed a diploma, signifying the end of a life chapter.

Lenning remembers watching senior classes of old leave the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park early on their last day from inside of a classroom, longing to leave with them.

It was a sense of finalization that leaves Lenning longing for that experience.



"I don't want the virus to define my time at Franklin because I think that overshadows the great things that did happen over the last four years," Livonia Franklin High student Jacob Cox said. He is headed to Central Michigan in the fall, where he's hoping to be a force on its hockey team. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

"Most people are still really upset about it," Lenning said. "Everyone is still talking about how senior year is pretty much ruined. Most people want to redo it, almost - only the second semester, though, just to get the whole prom, spring break, graduation type thing."

Looking back, Lenning is grateful. She is thankful for the untraditional experience of going to high school at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park - having to travel building to building for different classes throughout the day, describing it as a "big family."

She said the school, the years spent there, the friends she has made and the things she has done mean so much to her.

Lenning's next steps are set in stone: she will play soccer and study business at Tiffin University.

But with the school shut down cutting Lenning's senior year short, she leaves wanting one thing.

"Closure would have been nice."

### Remembrance

While Jacob Cox is going through much of the same issues as his high school senior counterparts around the area, that's not what he wants to remember his time at Franklin High School by.

"I don't want the virus to define my time at Franklin because I think that overshadows the great things that did happen over the last four years," Cox said.

Instead of COVID-19, Cox looks back to Feb. 12.

A senior on the Franklin hockey team, a team that had three coaches in four years, a team that won only four games in his junior season, Cox looks back to a game he says represents the love of high school athletics perfectly.

Inside a packed Eddie Edgar Ice Arena, filled with faculty and students, Franklin beat its rival - Livonia



"Everyone is still talking about how senior year is pretty much ruined," said Plymouth senior Emma Lenning. "Most people want to redo it, almost - only the second semester, though, just to get the whole prom, spring break, graduation type thing." COURTESY OF EMMA LENNING

Churchill - 2-0, one of nine wins this season for the Patriots.

"To play that game in front of what I felt was our entire school there supporting us, staff members, I look at that and think that's what high school is about."

Cox will remain in that sports realm in college, hoping to play hockey while studying broadcasting and journalism at Central Michigan.

Cox said he is prepared for the next step, but it's not something he would like to be doing at this point. Instead, he wanted two more months of high school before he said he had to worry about

anything else.

"Everyone talks about when you graduate high school, the real world starts now," Cox said. "Since high school is over, the real world is kind of starting now."

But looking back, it's not the COVID-19 he will remember. It's being on the ice at Eddie Edgar Ice Arena Feb. 12.

### Next step

Miller, a senior at North Farmington, feels like the transition to online classes for his final months of high school is helping him prepare for college.

"Everything is on your terms," Miller said. "If you don't want to go to class, you don't have to go to class. It's all a self-discipline thing, and that's all that college is."

Miller said he is planning to attend Michigan State to be a part of the residential business community. He said it's good to know what is coming next, but that he's worried about the next steps of college: whether or not orientation will happen or if he would have to take first semester classes online.

But he feels he will fit right in to whatever comes his way his freshman year at Michigan State.

"At this point, you are just jumping in with the sharks," Miller said. "Just the way that I am as a person, I think I'll be ready."

But driving past North Farmington again, the emotions struck him again. Even though he may be prepared for college, it's not something he wanted to shift his mindset to yet.

"I knew I was going to have to move on in two months," Miller said. "But it was just not my time."

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## Advocate

Continued from Page 1A

headquarters with, if any, a few assistants.

"There's a huge hole in the area," she said. "There's support groups and there's walks and there's research and that's pretty much it. We're the only nonprofit in the U.S. (that) helps families after a loss when it comes to financial help.

"We help with funerals, biohazardous cleanup, unpaid time off work, memorial services, urns ... anything to do with loss."

She has come to trust some experts and is reaching about 10,000 to 15,000 people a year with information about available resources, crisis lines, and other helpful avenues.

Hardy presents her groups at more than 180 events a year.

Since its official 2013 debut, Six Feet Over has financially helped about 30 families — nine of them in 2019.

Hardy said today's average assistance amount is about \$3,000 per family. A flyer on her Facebook page puts the average closer to \$5,000.

"We gave \$180 to a family once. That brought it all down," she said, breaking into laughter.

Her five-year plan is to have chapters throughout the state. She'd like to go national.

They're intense goals for someone whose exposure to suicide and mental illness began with her mother, Kathy Simpson.

Hardy grew up near Joy and Middlebelt roads in Westland and remembers her mother as a "smoking, drinking lady" who, like her daughter, loved to work, loved to be busy and loved to get stuff done.

But she was diagnosed with manic depression when her children were young.

Hardy said her mother was "phenomenal" when she was OK. But that wasn't most days. The majority of time, Hardy remembers her mother targeting her in ways many females are targeted.

"It was mostly how awful I was," she said. "I was too fat. I was too ugly. I was too dumb. I was never going to do anything with my life. Nobody was ever going to love me. That kind of stuff."

"I think, for her, it was how she was



Photos of Kathy Simpson are arranged on a table at Katie Hardy's Livonia home. Simpson, Hardy's mother, died by suicide in 2003.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

**"Find those people who would let you talk. Keep talking about your person. Use their name. You can tell funny stories about them. You don't have to forget about them."**

Katie Hardy

taught to parent. Also, mental illness is just weird. And sometimes people target one particular person. It's really strange like that."

The family officially wrecked in 2003. Her father gave up on his marriage, leaving his wife in February 2003.

Her brother left for the Coast Guard. "Then it was just my mom and I in the house," Hardy said. "That was oil and water. I wasn't happy."

At about 20 years of age, she moved to Denver, where family lived and the happening myths of literary hero Jack Kerouac thrived.

By the end of that year, her father would call to say her mother died. It would take a few days before someone finally told her it was by suicide.

Hardy lost others, including a close friend, to suicide. Her personal coping methods became those first steps to-



**"There's a huge hole in the area," Hardy said of the lack of advocacy for people affected by suicide. "There's support groups and there's walks and there's research and that's pretty much it. We're the only nonprofit in the U.S. (that) helps families after a loss when it comes to financial help."**

ward advocacy.

"It was the best thing that ever happened to me besides my husband," she said. "I got really lucky. What I hear most is that we're doing things differently."

Hardy is grateful society is opening up about those who take their own lives.



One of Hardy's favorite photos of her mother.

### About this series

Suicide has long been a subject most people avoid talking about publicly, yet suicides in metro Detroit counties have increased in recent years.

This is the fourth in a series of stories examining the topic.

When her mom died, the funeral director suggested telling people that she had a heart attack and changing the obituary language so no one would know.

"He did not want it to be talked about at all," Hardy said. "That's changed over time. Now it's seen as this is something that's important. It needs to be documented. It's not embarrassing. It's a way that people die."

"We just need to do better at supporting people."

Her mom's birthday is in April she expected to shed a tear or two.

She offers this advice to others:

"Find your people. I was 20 when my mom died. I was not the support group kind of person. But I leaned on people. They let me lean. They let me talk about the yucky stuff and share my emotions and didn't get freaked out by it."

"Find those people who would let you talk. Keep talking about your person. Use their name. You can tell funny stories about them. You don't have to forget about them."

"You also don't need to glorify them as a person. Remember it all. Bring it all on. I think, for me, most importantly, don't let anybody tell you it's time to stop grieving."

Contact reporter Susan Vela at [svela@hometownlife.com](mailto:svela@hometownlife.com) or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

## Redford coronavirus survivor shares her story

Shelby Tankersley [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Not long ago, Chilah Harper was wondering if her life was going to end sooner than later.

"There were nights where I was afraid to go to sleep," the Redford Township resident said. "I thought I was going to die in my sleep."

Harper, 43, works as a nurse technician at the John D. Dingell VA Medical Center. Though she has no underlying health conditions, she says coronavirus is the hardest illness she's faced.

"It was the most horrific illness I've ever had," she said. "It's been very traumatizing for me. Even as a nurse, I can't understand the thought of being around someone who has on a face mask or a face shield right now, because it was very scary."

As of April 5, Wayne County had 3,023 confirmed cases of COVID-19, not including those from Detroit, with 135 deaths, according to the state.

The state does not release recovery numbers. But, Harper says her story is proof that recovery is possible.

On March 16, Harper came down with flulike symptoms. The next day, she was screened at Beaumont Hospital Dearborn for flu and coronavirus. When she tested negative for flu, she started getting nervous.

"I started with basically just having regular flu symptoms but they were wildly and severely worse than a regular influenza bout," Harper said. "My fever was 103, I had terrible body aches and pains. The body aches were to the point that my fingers hurt and the soles of my feet hurt. I had lost my appetite almost instantly. I felt paralyzed."

By March 22, Harper had lost 12 pounds and was struggling to breathe, so she drove herself to Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. There, she began a nine-day hospital stay.

In the hospital, she faced respiratory failure, sepsis, pneumonia and dehydration, all related to COVID-19. The floor she was on, Nine South, usually functions as an orthopedic floor. But she said the staff stepped up and gave



Redford Township resident Chilah Harper says COVID-19 is the hardest illness she's ever fought. "There were nights where I was afraid to go to sleep," she said. "I thought I was going to die in my sleep."

JUNFU HAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS

everyone "superb" care.

"They basically saved my life," she said.

Though she's home now, Harper still doesn't feel 100% and her doctors think it'll be weeks before she feels truly healthy again. But, she's happy to be home with her two daughters, at least one of whom has tested negative for the virus, as they mourn the loss of her youngest child's grandmother to COVID-19.

As she continues to survive in the face of the virus, Harper said the public needs to take it seriously.

"It is very serious," she said. "I would say everyone right now should treat the next person as though the may have the virus... You don't know who your neighbor has been around or who your neighbor's neighbor has been around."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Reader wants freedom back

I cannot live like this all summer. My residence is not a jail.

In Michigan I fear government more than the virus.

The "stay home, stay safe" message makes sense for a few days or weeks maximum.

Rather than "flattening the curve" and dragging this agony all summer and into the fall, if medical facilities and staff need to be beefed up let's create reserve capacity and get them whatever tools they need.

Government cannot protect us from everything. We assume risks every time we drive, ride an airplane or engage in sports. The virus statistics do not justify a panic; more people are dying of cancer and heart disease every day than from the virus.

So what's the risk?

Based on some recent studies, there is a 25% to 50% chance I will not have noticeable symptoms. (I may have already been exposed and recovered without my knowledge.)

When I do get the virus and have a cough or other symptoms, as with most I likely will not need to go to the hospital. In a short time I can get on with life knowing I've overcome the virus.

If I'm one of the few unlucky people who need hospitalization, the hydroxy-chloroquine drug seems to have a high success rate in curing patients quickly.

If that doesn't work, hospitals should soon have plenty of supplies and ventilators to treat me. With no major pre-existing conditions, my likelihood of death is minimal.

If I do die, as a committed Christian I have the joy of being in heaven versus the tyranny of living in Michigan.

I will not give up my whole summer out of fear. I want to enjoy life, enjoy summer fun and be with friends without fear of a \$1,000 fine or jail time if I congregate with another family or neighbor. My son is banned from visiting his girlfriend. My other son with autism cannot mentally survive much longer isolated in one place with no structured activity.

I'm 70 and want to enjoy my remaining years. People in communist North Korea may have more freedom than Michiganders. The government logic to restrict freedom may never end. Re-



strictions could go on all summer and be reinstated the next time a virus comes along.

Just as our ancestors came to America for freedom, perhaps our family will be forced to move to another state where civil liberties are respected.

**Kenneth Howse**  
Livonia

## Concerns with protest

Like so many in the Huron Valley community, we know people who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and have numerous friends in the healthcare field who are going to work each day, putting their own health and the health of their families at risk. We are grateful for what they and other essential workers are doing to keep us going.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has had to make some tough decisions, none of which are politically popular. We believe she has made these decisions based on the scientific data available and the advice of medical experts. She has put people before politics.

Unfortunately, our State Rep. Matt Maddock and his wife Meshawn, a leader in 11th District Republican Party, have used the pandemic to promote their political agenda. The rally April 15 was not about opening up businesses as they would lead us to believe. It was a political stunt that put people's lives in danger, complete with President Donald Trump and confederate flags, swastikas and AK-47s.

This shameful display disrespects

health care workers, the sick and those who have lost their lives to this virus. As the Maddocks celebrate the national press they received for Michigan, the rest of us grieve, because we know we are better than this.

**Robert and Sherri Masson**  
Milford

## Whitmer shows leadership

What is leadership? A leader looks at data collected by experts and makes decisions for the common good. During a pandemic, the common good means saving lives.

From the beginning Gov. Gretchen Whitmer recognized the economic hardships and sacrifices people would have to make in order to flatten the curve. Asking Michiganders to give up their daily routines, miss family traditions and take a hit financially was not a stand that could be considered politically popular by any calculation, but she made it.

That's leadership. She prioritized human life. She, along with other governors, realize what President Donald Trump, Rep. Matt Maddock and his wife do not. It's not about political party or ideology. It's not about rallying your base and taking advantage of a crisis to gain political capital. It's about saving the lives of those people who drive our economy. The economy will recover; the loss of life cannot be reversed.

**Allison Rose**  
Milford

## Protest concerns misplaced

No one should have to choose between putting food on their table and keeping their family safe from a deadly virus. On April 15, Meshawn Maddock organized a protest against Michigan's coronavirus protective measures, but the protest was misplaced.

The problem is less about easing restrictions and opening the economy, and more about wage disparity. People who could work remotely or had the ability to set aside a safety net are managing. Yet, over half of Americans live paycheck to paycheck.

Michigan's household income has fallen dramatically, from 9.7% above the national median in 1999 to currently 5% below. The governor has a tough job in leveling restrictions that will safely open our economy as fast as possible.

Instead of contributing to the spread of the virus, Rep. Matt Maddock would best serve his constituents by pushing measures (expedite unemployment benefits, promised relief funds, and small business assistance) which would allow people to stay safe and weather this crisis.

**Nancy and Paul Czech**  
Wolverine Lake

## Vote against protest supporters

Reps. Matt Maddock (R-44, Milford) and Julie Alexander (R-64, Jackson), and Sen. Tom Barrett (R-24, Shiawassee, Ingram) undermined the health of the people of Michigan by encouraging, promoting and participating in the plan to block traffic in Lansing. What they really did was block the front line and essential workers in the city from doing their job. The rest of the city was staying home and staying healthy.

These politicians have entrenched themselves in a deep political ideology so it doesn't occur to them that the real people they are effecting is the first responders, the essential workers and health officials in Lansing. They were thoughtless about targeting a single Michigan city in their hysteria to politicize our predicament, evidence they are isolated and unresponsive to the people of Michigan.

They should be heartily voted out.  
**Constance Lippert**  
Milford

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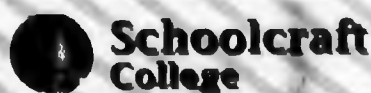
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# First responders honor hospital workers

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

As Michigan battles the coronavirus pandemic, health care professionals are under an immense amount of pressure as they work to save lives in difficult work environments.

To recognize that work, first responders from around Wayne and Oakland counties participated in a solidarity drive at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia on April 16.

"Many of those people at hospitals have the same worries and concerns that everybody else in the world has, but they face it every single day," said Dave Heavener, Livonia fire chief. "We want to reach out to those staff members and let them know that they're not in this alone and we're all going to get through this together. We just want to make sure that they know they have our support."

Police and fire personnel from Livonia, Westland, Wayne, Redford, Canton, Plymouth, Northville and Novi drove to St. Mary Mercy's campus, lights flashing and sirens off, to show support. "The Star-Spangled Banner" was played as well.

"There's always been that sense of unity between the fire, police departments and us working in the hospital. We all come together to walk alongside our community in times of sickness and fear like we're experiencing right now," said Nick Nickolopoulos, a veteran and the chief nursing officer and vice president of patient care for the hospital. "We couldn't do it without them and I hope they all know how much we appreciate them out there."

Similar drives have happened at hospitals in Farmington Hills, Taylor and West Bloomfield as people rally around health care workers.

"There's been a growing effort



Members of the Livonia Fire Department personnel salute during the playing of the national anthem on April 16 at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia.



St. Mary Mercy personnel gather in front of the Livonia facility on April 16 to enjoy a parade given for them - organized by Livonia's police and fire departments.

PHOTOS BY  
JOHN HEIDER/  
HOMETOWNLIFE  
.COM

throughout communities to acknowledge hospital staff," Heavener said. "In the EMS world in general, we happen to have a very long-standing relationship

with hospitals, and especially St. Mary's hospital because they're right in the center of our city."

Nickolopoulos said though working



Cathy Brandy holds a supportive sign for the workers St. Mary Mercy.

in a hospital is incredibly stressful right now, he's proud of the St. Mary Mercy team.

"I'm not sure I have the words to describe the pride I feel to be part of this team here in the St. Mary's family," he said. "To be a registered nurse alongside these, I can't say anything but heroes ... is something I've been amazed with."

Nickolopoulos said it's difficult work, but work everyone knows needs to be done.

"They're tired, they're weary," he said. "But they keep their spirits up."

As health care workers keep up the good fight, Heavener hopes solidarity drives and other signs of unity remind people that everyone is living through this historic time together.

"It is really important that everybody remembers we are all in this together and, by showing support together, it'll just make it that much easier for us all to get through it," he said.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.

## Clerks expect slow election results as absentee ballot numbers rise around state

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

During the 2016 presidential primary, Livonia issued 5,307 absentee ballots. During the same election in 2020, the city gave out 13,477.

When Michigan voters passed Proposal 3 in November 2018, adult residents gained the ability to vote absentee without reason and register to vote as late as Election Day itself. And while clerks love that voting is easier, it makes their jobs harder.

"Our permanent list is growing daily," said Livonia Clerk Susan Nash. "I mean, daily now we're getting people asking about, especially now with this pandemic."

### Counting ballots

Absentee ballots can't be opened until after polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day. So in August and November, especially as communities consider all mail-in elections during coronavirus, people might wait a while to get results out of Michigan.

"I think you're absolutely going to be waiting if we do not put laws in place that are going to help us process these ballots," said Farmington Hills Clerk Pam Smith, who encourages her staff to process 200 absentee ballots an hour.

Clerks are hopeful about Michigan Senate Bill 757, which would give clerks in larger municipalities, 40,000 or more people, some ability to pre-process absentee ballots early if it's passed.

"To be able to at least start opening them, even if we don't process them prior to election day, is going to be huge," Smith said. "It is going to be a huge help to clerks across Michigan."

But for smaller communities, not much would change.

"The ability to open the envelopes before 7 a.m. Election Day would be great. ... But the bills apply to communities with a population of (4)0,000 or more, and I don't have a population of (4)0,000 or more," City of Northville Clerk Dianne Massa said.

### Registering voters

Another source of hold-ups in March was same-day registration.

"I think the biggest struggle for us was trying to answer all of our calls with our own staff and then trying to do same-day registration," Smith said. "We

"I think you're absolutely going to be waiting if we do not put laws in place that are going to help us process these ballots. ... To be able to at least start opening them, even if we don't process them prior to election day, is going to be huge."

Pam Smith, Farmington Hills clerk

registered 172 people that day, and that line was kind of pretty constant all day."

Livonia had the same issue.

"We couldn't get to the other things because we had so many people registering to vote," Nash said.

Smith warned for really large communities, same-day registration can be a huge hold-up.

"If you talk to cities like Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Grand Rapids who had over a 1,000 people in line to register and their last person didn't register didn't register until 10:20 p.m. and then they still have to get a ballot and vote, they're not even getting their last ballot in until 10:30 p.m.," she said. "So you're not even able to shut down and get any results until that time."

### More staff, organization

Smith, Massa and Nash said they want to hire more temporary workers for elections so their staffs can focus on more specialized work.

"I want to have stations set up where I have a place for, if you're just here to register to vote this is where you go or if you're here for an absentee ballot this is the line you should be in," Nash said.

Smith added that it would be nice to give people a break, too.

"These people are already working 13, 14 hours," she said. "You can't expect them to go and work 20 hours when the majority of them are probably over the age of 65."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.



Todd Jaranowski, president of Ford subsidiary Troy Design and Manufacturing, oversees the production of face shields at TDM's plant in Plymouth Township. COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR CO.

## Plymouth company shifting production to make face shields

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

There is a noble level of American-made mass production unfolding inside the four walls of Plymouth Township's massive Troy Design and Manufacturing facility.

Beginning March 23, TDM's Sheldon Road facility shifted focus and began producing face shields that are shipped out to front-line responders battling in the war against coronavirus.

From nurses and doctors at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital to emergency medical technicians in New York City, the shields are protecting essential workers from coast to coast.

"It's been a very cool experience," said TDM President Todd Jaranowski, a resident of Milford. "From the design process to the production and delivery process, it's been a team effort. It's especially nice knowing that our products are helping the heroes on the front lines."

Thorough safety precautions and a spirits-boosting "Wall of Heroes" have been implemented at TDM to ensure the employees' physical and mental health, Jaranowski said.

Upon entering the plant, workers must walk through a thermo scanner that can detect even the slightest fever. All employee work stations are spaced at least 6 or 7 feet apart to maintain the minimum social distancing required by medical professionals.

"First and foremost, we have the safety of the employees in mind when they walk in the plant," Jaranowski said. "Every worker is equipped with the proper PPE: a face shield and medical gloves."

The "Wall of Heroes" is a source of inspiration to the workers. What

started out as a small wall space dedicated to newspaper clippings and letters from recipients of the face shields has spread into an massive monument to how much the workers' diligence is appreciated.

"Once employees become comfortable with the safety of the work environment - something that happens very quickly - their pride and morale has been outstanding," Jaranowski said.

"And when they look at all of the 'thank you' clippings, letters and Facebook post from medical personnel across the country, well, that makes them even more proud of what they're accomplishing."

As of April 14, there were 500 employees working and producing the masks, Jaranowski said.

"We have two shifts, so we're working pretty much around the clock," he added. "We've even had volunteers from our UAW workforce and Ford and TDM salary staff supplementing our full-time employees."

Jaranowski heaped huge praise on Ford's logistics team that has made the complex job of distributing the shields to the hospitals most in need a smooth operation.

The facility is expected to assemble 2.5 million masks this week alone and 5 million to 6 million shields next week due to the hiring of additional workers: 120 this week and 100 are waiting in the wings to start work next week.

"As it is now, we can't build enough," Jaranowski said, when asked how long the face shield assembly will continue. "We'll be making them at least for the next couple of months; after that, it's a bit of an unknown."

As a subsidiary of Ford, TDM, under normal circumstances, builds prototypes for future model vehicles.





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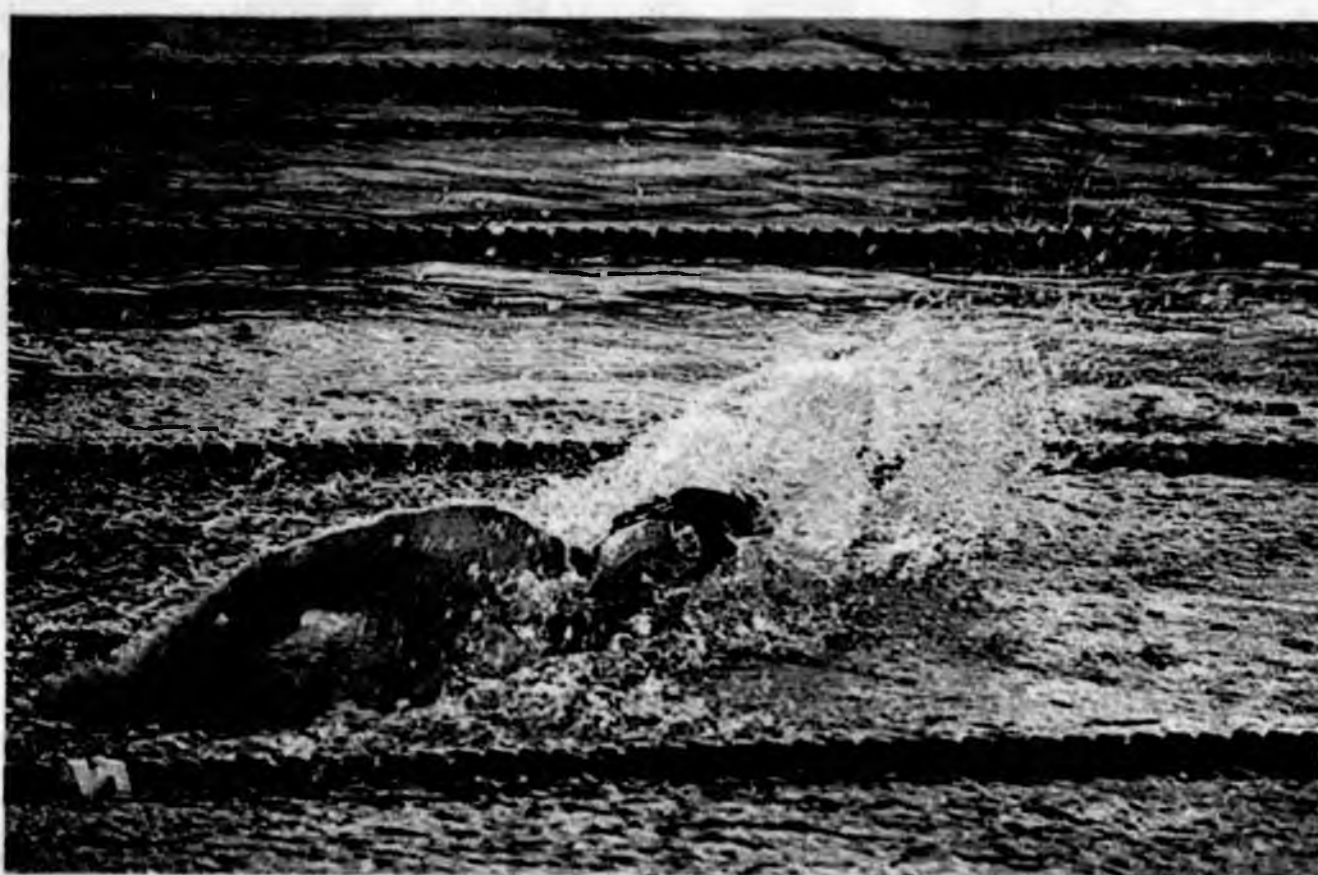
# Sports

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After qualifying for this year's swimming state finals – which ended up being canceled – Zane Peecher said will try and shave nine seconds off his 500-yard freestyle time for 2021. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ZANE PEECHER

## DREAM DELAYED

Livonia Stevenson's Zane Peecher qualifies for swim state finals – before coronavirus canceled event

Collin Gay Hometownlife.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

**Z**ane Peecher was nervous for his first individual state meet. ■ The Livonia Stevenson junior swimmer made it his goal in his third year with the Spartans to make the state cut in the 500-yard freestyle. When he did this season, at the KLAAs boys conference meet on Feb. 27, Peecher became the only swimmer in Livonia high schools to earn a spot in the state meet. ■ On March 12, Stevenson coach Jeff Shoemaker was preparing for a one-on-one practice with his state-bound swimmer before his phone started to blow up. One day before the state meet began at Oakland University, the Michigan High School Athletic Association postponed – and later canceled – all winter postseason events due to the coronavirus pandemic.

By the time Peecher entered the locker room, he had already heard the news.

"He was like, 'Oh well, oh well,'" Shoemaker said. "But you know how a kid is, his reaction will be to blow it off, but deep down inside, he's pissed."

To Peecher, anger and frustration were not the first feelings that came to mind. It was relief, relief from the nervousness that plagued him as he approached the next day's meet.

But as reality sunk in, the confidence that brought him to the attempt at the pinnacle high school swim meet returned.

"I thought I could really do something," Peecher said. Peecher, though, has already made a major impact in his third season at Stevenson.

Prior to the start of the year, Peecher was named the

See PEECHER, Page 3B



Peecher will try for his second-straight state meet next season after the MHSAA canceled the winter postseason.

## CC swim seeks closure to season

Team had chance to secure first state title before meet called off

Andrew Valliencourt Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

The day before the Michigan state swim meet was scheduled to take place, swim teams around the state received bad news: the state finals were canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The news was especially disappointing for the Detroit Catholic Central Shamrocks, who had a chance to secure the school's first-ever state title in the sport after finishing as the runner-up last year by a mere .06 seconds to West Ottawa.

CC was considered the favorite by many, led by senior captains Mario McDonald and Conor Brownell.

"We would've won and there's no one can convince me otherwise," Catholic Central coach Jessica Stoddard said. "After losing by .06 and losing to West Ottawa, (Ann Arbor) Pioneer had a great team and Ottawa had a great team, but there's nothing that would've stopped these guys this year, nothing."

Stoddard is in her third year as the CC coach. Her teams finished seventh and second in the state in her first two seasons. Her first reaction to the finals being postponed was disappointment that there wasn't a way to get the meet in, given it was just a day away.

"After it was announced we had our last practice at the pool and the kids swam," Stoddard said. "I sat on deck for like an hour and half after everyone left and just cried because it was so much. As a coach, we give up so much from our family and our lives in general, it made me so sad we didn't get that

See CC SWIM, Page 2B

"We would've won and there's no one can convince me otherwise. ... There's nothing that would've stopped these guys this year, nothing."

Jessica Stoddard, Catholic Central coach

## School's esports team emerges despite sports cancellations

Catholic Central holds meetings online after abrupt end to year

Collin Gay Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Detroit Catholic Central saw what esports was doing around the world: the amount of money and notoriety streamers and gamers were making, the amount of influence it had on those at

the high school age.

Catholic Central saw its own success story: watching as Nick "Nickmercs" Kolcheff exploded as a pronounced streamer who has accumulated 2.01 million YouTube subscribers and 3.3 million Twitch followers.

Athletic director Aaron Babicz saw an opportunity to continue the legacy of the Shamrocks virtually, something he said he should have started years ago.

"The time was right four years ago," Babicz said.

But with the emergence of coronavirus closing the school building for the remainder of the academic year and with the Michigan High School Athletics Association ending the winter sports postseason and the spring sports season, the expectation for the Catholic Central esports team was raised to a new level.

Instead of only trying to establish itself as a nationally-recognized esports team, this team is now the sole representation of the Shamrocks during this

unprecedented season.

"I'm like, 'Guys, in a matter of two months, you went from being a new program to carrying the flag for Detroit Catholic Central athletics,'" Babicz said.

Carrying the flag

That was something head coach Stephen Juncay was ready to tackle.

A graduate of Catholic Central, the

See ESPORTS, Page 6B





## CC swim

Continued from Page 1B

closure.”

McDonald, who will swim at Ohio State next year, was one of four seniors on CC's team.

“It was really just heartbreaking because we'd come so far. We were ready to take it back. It was really hard to hear that,” McDonald said. “I was more heartbroken that it was just over and I'd never be swimming with my team again. The weekend before was my last time and I didn't even know it.”

Once school was canceled officially for the rest of the year, both Stoddard and McDonald knew the season was likely over as well.

CC started off the season with a loss to West Ottawa, a result Stoddard says really woke the team up. They had a lot of work to do if they wanted to become state champions.

From there, the Shamrocks continued to improve, and by March were clearly the at the top of their game.

The loss of state final times will especially hurt the team's juniors who are in the midst of being recruited.

“For the juniors especially this is heartbreaking because they were the ones that needed to get recruited and needed that meet more than anyone,” McDonald said. “It puts them behind in the big scheme of recruiting because a lot of states already had their state meets before things got canceled.”

That junior class was Stoddard's first as the school's coach. They, along with this year's seniors, have helped bring the Shamrocks to new heights. Stoddard gives much of that credit to her captains.

“Conor and Mario are two of our captains and those guys have been really the reason we've gotten to where we are, their leadership, their examples,” Stoddard said.

They won't be able to lead CC to a state title in 2021, but told the younger members of the team that there's nothing stopping them from achieving that goal.

It doesn't take away the pain of losing the state meet, but at least for McDonald, he's confident he knows what the outcome would have been.

“I'm positive we would've won,” McDonald said. “After what happened last year I know what my team would have done that weekend would've been nothing short of remarkable.”

### Meet the CC state team

The Shamrocks seniors and members of the state team didn't get their final meet, but we've put together a list of those team members with a comment from Stoddard on each swimmer:

#### Mario McDonald, Senior

■ Stats: 5-time All-State, 8-time All-American (can't be all state this year or he would have been nine, as you earn it at the state meet but did earn five All-American honors this season 50/100 free and 200 Medley Relay and 200/400 freestyle relays).

■ Mario will be swimming at The Ohio State University next season. He is also a team Captain. Was a No. 1 seed in all four of his events going into the 2020 state meet: 50 and 100 freestyle and the 200/400 freestyle relays. He is also the current team record holder in all four, and league record holder in the 50/100 free and 400 freestyle relay. He also won all four of his events at the Oakland county meet and broke the county record in the 100 freestyle.

■ “Mario has only been swimming year round for 3 years. His potential is nowhere near reached. I am sad for him because he didn't get a meet this year that he was rested for to really let it loose and see what he could do. State meet was his meet and my heart broke for him because that was where he was going to rewrite the record books with his teammates. Mario swims for his brothers and always puts them first in everything he did this season. It gives me peace that he will be continuing his swimming career and that I will get to see him swim in college, but his what he leaves behind is bigger than a state championship. He leaves behind what CC swim and dive is and the standard that we all strive for.”

#### Conor Brownell, Senior

■ Stats: 7-time All-State, 5-time All-American (can't be all state this year or he would have been 11-time, 4-time All-American this year). This year he was all American in all three relays (200 medley, 200 freestyle, 400 freestyle) and 100 butterfly. He was ranked 1st in the 100 fly and 200 and 400 yard freestyle relays going into the meet and was 4th in the 200 freestyle. He will be swimming at Oakland University next fall. He is the team record holder in the 100 butterfly and 200/400 freestyle relays. He is also a league record holder in the 100 fly 200



The Detroit Catholic Central Shamrocks had a chance to secure the school's first-ever state title in the sport after finishing as the runner-up last year. COURTESY OF JESSICA STODDARD

**“I was more heartbroken that it was just over and I'd never be swimming with my team again. The weekend before was my last time and I didn't even know it.”**

Mario McDonald, senior on Catholic Central's swim team

and 400 freestyle relays. Conor won three events at Oakland counties.

■ “Conor is a 2-year captain. The only other person in the history of the program to be a captain as a junior was Jack Walsh, who went on to be an All-American and team captain at Stanford University. Just like Mario, he has been a very important part of raising the standard of this program. Conor sacrificed individual swims his sophomore year to swim all three relays helping the team earn all state in all three events. That year were were the only team to have all three relays in the top eight. I am sad for Conor because he was swimming times from a push that were faster than his seed time in the 200 freestyle going into the state meet. Conor always puts the team first and always does what is best for the whole before what is best for himself. He deserved a different ending but I am so proud of all he has done. I will never forget his 100 butterfly from the Catholic League meet where he dropped almost two seconds, went automatic All-American and broke Jack Walsh's league and team record at CC. I am so happy I can see him swim in college, that will make the pain a little less for me.”

#### Brian Hussey, Senior

■ “Brian was one of our three senior captains. Brian was All-State and All-American last season in the 200 freestyle relay. He was All-State as well in the 200 medley relay and a state finalist in the 200 IM. This year Brian broke the team record in the 200/400 freestyle relay and was an All American in both. He was a part of the 200 and 400 free relays that won leagues. He qualified for states in over five events but this season Brian was a team player swimming so many events for the team and where we needed for success. Brian was going to be a very important part of our state team. We pulled him from two individual events and were going to use him in three relays. The psych sheet wasn't reflective of him in all three relays but he was putting up times that would final at states at practice. His 50 butterfly time at practice would have finale in the 50 free, that's how fast he was swimming. He was swimming out of his mind. Brian is not swimming on in college but I want him to know how much it meant to me and his teammates that kept pushing through, even though it was hard. I know Brian is going to go on and do something amazing with his life and I am excited for the adventures he's about to go on.”

#### August Thielking, Senior

■ “August was an assistant captain this year and was a three event finalist at states last year. This season he was slated to swim the 200 IM and 100 back at states. He would have been top eight in the state in the 100 back. He didn't swim the 100 back at our league meet to help us score points in the 500. He won the 200 IM at league meet. August was all state last year in the 200 medley relay. August will go on to swim at Kalamazoo College next year and will be one of the best swimmers on the team. I know he will be successful in the pool and in the classroom.”

#### Christian Dunaitis, Junior

■ “Christian is a 2-time state finalist

for CC and 3-time state qualifier. He improved so much this season and was going to have the meet of his life. I am so proud of all he has been through this season from the death of his grandfather to coming back and going best times at counties. I know he will be an integral part of the team next season and I can't wait to see what his senior year brings. He worked so hard every single day in and out of the pool and his attention to detail was outstanding. I know he would have been all state in the 100 breast.”

#### Joey Dombkowski, Junior

■ “Joey was having the season of his life this past year. Going best times, breaking a minute in the 100 breast and improving almost every time he swam. He was going some pretty crazy times at practice, faster than his meet times. Joey was on the 200 medley relay that was All-American this season, the seed time for the medley again was not reflective of the time we went earlier in the season to strategically be beside the fastest team at prelims so I knew if we needed to move any of our swimmers around for finals. Joey is going to be a beast next year. I want him to know how proud I am of him, and even though it was disappointing that we will finish this next season. He is very quiet but very loud with how hard he works and how fast he swims. Joey is a three-year state qualifier and would have been all state in the medley relay as well as 100 breaststroke.”

#### Matthew Kozma, Junior

■ “Kozma did not swim his events at leagues. He always likes to swim his off events the week before. This bums me out like Conor because he would have just blown up his times at states. He was going times at practice I have never seen him post before. Kozma would have been top two in all four of the events he swam. He was one of only two ninth graders three years ago to be All-State as a freshman. Last season he was All-State in four events bringing his total to five All-States (would have been four more this year). He was All-American last year in the 400 free relay, and this season in the Medley and 400 free relay so 3-time All-American. Kozma's work ethic is incredible, in the pool and in the classroom. He is so competitive and I love throwing challenges at him because he rises to all of them. I know what he will do next year and I am so happy to have him one more season. He is the current team record holder in the 400 freestyle relay. Kozma is an outstanding leader and really gave his all this season, I know it will pay off next year.”

#### Sean Egan, Junior

■ “Sean qualified for his first states in the 50 freestyle and was slated to swim prelims for the 200 freestyle relay to allow Dallas to get enough rest for the 100 back. Dallas was going to swim it at finals as there was more time with awards. Sean worked so hard for the team and again like all of my juniors, I'm so happy he will be back next year to help finish the goal we set for ourselves three years ago. Sad for Sean as he was hoping to make the CC baseball team this year, he was working so hard on both. Sean should have snuck into top 16

in the 50.”

#### James Lindenberg, Junior

■ “James just missed qualifying last year and was so excited to make the team this year at league finals in the 100 free. We didn't completely rest James for leagues, just enough to cut. He would have been so fast at states and we were hoping to get him into top 16 like Sean. He's been a tremendous team player this year swimming whatever we need him at meets for the best interest of the team.”

#### Dallas Fisher, Junior

■ “Dallas is one of our most versatile swimmers on the team. He state cut in multiple events and was a state qualifier the past three years and state finalist last year. This year he was All-American in the 200 freestyle relay and broke the team record. He was also Oakland County Champ in the 200 medley relay. Dallas kind of flew under the radar in some of his events because of the talent we have, but there is no doubt in my mind he would have went 1-2 with Conor in the 100 butterfly. Dallas is going to make a run at a lot of records next year and really help lead our team to an amazing 2021 state finals.”

#### Kilian Bishop, Sophomore

■ “Kilian made his first state team this year in the 100 back and just really swam out of his mind. He was injured pretty early in the season and we didn't even think he would finish the season. We swam at Ottawa and most of our meets without him. He would have dropped so much time at states and for sure scored points. I am so proud of how he overcame that obstacle and how positive he was through it all. I know he is going to be a huge part of our teams success in the years to come and know he's going to come back and be a force to be reckoned with next year.”

#### Nolan Gresens, Sophomore

■ “Nolan is a second year state qualifier and had an early season injury that set us back a little but he was coming back and would have been on fire at state meet. He overcame so much and has really used this experience as a positive for next season. Nolan was on the Oakland County winning 200 medley relay and qualified for states in three events this season. His 100 fly was his best event but I know come next season, he will step into the freestyle relays nicely.”

#### Alex Lampi, Sophomore

■ “Alex was such a nice surprise. He didn't swim last year, and not only did this year, but qualified for states and would have been top 16. Alex really came into his own and I am so happy and blessed he decided to swim for us this year. In the off season our focus with him will be his second event and obviously contributing to the relays. The sky is the limit for Alex.”

#### Jason Per, Freshman

■ “Jason was just incredible. Never dove before and made states ... as a freshman.” He is part of our awesome freshman squad in diving and I know he would have scored this year and will only continue to improve. Watching him dive was breathtaking. His feel for the water, it was incredible. I'm so happy and blessed that he did this and I really can not wait to see him tear it up next year.”

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillien-court at [avaiilienc@hometownlife.com](mailto:avaiilienc@hometownlife.com) or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt. Send story ideas to [Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com](mailto:Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com).



# Novi brings life to community with flip of switch



**Colin Gay**  
Columnist  
HometownLife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Turn on the lights at the football and soccer fields each night at 8:20 p.m. – 20:20 in military time – for 20 minutes to honor the senior class. The idea seemed like a no-brainer for Novi athletic director Brian Gordon.

Honestly, he felt it was the least he could do. Gordon saw the emotions from the class of 2020, watching as their final year evaporated in an instant due to the coronavirus pandemic. Why not give the students, the teachers, the community, 20 minutes of normalcy for what would have been the remainder of the school year. Twenty minutes of what could have been.

The Novi High School football field seemed like it had been waiting for this moment for the entire day.

The gate was open. The field was pristine with soccer goals on each side – lacrosse goals placed in front of it.

The field was expectant. It was waiting for more than one gate to be open, for people from all around the community to flood into the stands, to watch high school sports, something we all took for granted.



And when the lights turned on, life sprung upon the school again.

It didn't matter about the empty parking lot or the sidewalks that had not been walked on in weeks. It didn't matter that the majority of the Novi community, like the rest of the state of Michigan, remained in their homes Friday night, observing the "stay-at-home" order Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declared for the remainder of the month of April.

No matter the circumstance on this cloudy spring night in April, the field was ready to go.

But 20 minutes later, the escape ended. The lights turned off. The parking lot, the football field, the high school building, it all became dark again.

**Novi High School turns its football field lights on for 20 minutes each night to honor the senior class, whose final year was cut short because of COVID-19.**

COLIN GAY/  
HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Reality set back in.

It was a quick reminder of the world we live in. Schools are empty. Roads are empty. The world is not even close to being the same as it was not that long ago.

Just over a month ago, athletic teams across the state were preparing to perform under these lights, on these very Friday nights. Instead, after 20 minutes, the lights were shut off.

For the 2020 senior class, those athletes that will not touch their high school fields and courts again, their lights were shut off prematurely. Usually wins and losses determine that for a team – the players controlling their team's destiny and how long they play for.

This time, though, the end was out of their control.

Gordon did not come up with this idea to honor the senior class. He said that he got it from the athletic department in Royal Oak, who apparently got it from a group of schools from Texas.

The Novi athletic director said he would love to see this trend spread around the region, saying that schools in Pinckney and in Clarkston, even smaller colleges in the state have adopted this nightly ritual.

The lights themselves are not going to bring the spring season back. It's not going to decide which high schools would have gotten state titles in ice hockey or girls basketball, in baseball or girls soccer.

But for 20 minutes, Novi sends a message.

Through just a simple flip of a switch – or in Gordon's case, a push of a button on a phone app – he reminds the community of the good times and what could have been.

It's a reminder that the lights will remain on for longer than 20 minutes soon.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at [cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com) or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @ColinGay17. Send game results and stats to [Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com](mailto:Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com).

## Peecher

Continued from Page 1B

captain of the team, something that is not normal for a team with multiple state runner-up finishes in its history and two All-American seniors last season.

Despite being younger than the normal captain, Shoemaker thought Peecher's commitment was what he needed this year, saying that the junior brought extra fortitude with him into the role from his time spent on the football field in the fall.

As a captain, Peecher is not a yeller. He leads by example, giving the occasional message to the team to

boost morale.

"Not a speech, but like, 'All right, boys. This is going to be a tough set, but it's going to make us better,'" Peecher said. "And then dive right into the young stuff."

Peecher, personally, saw himself in the best shape of his life heading into the state finals.

At the KLAA Boys Conference Meet, he set personal bests in five of the six races he participated in, setting KLAA records in both the preliminary and final rounds of the 100-yard freestyle. Peecher placed fifth in the finals at 500-yard freestyle and eighth in the 50-yard freestyle, according to College Swimming.

Shoemaker said that his goal for Peecher in his first state meet was to

shave off a few seconds on his 500-yard freestyle and place in the top-16.

However, Shoemaker's main goal for his junior swimmer was for him to become familiar with the size and magnitude of the state meet.

"As long as you are introduced to it and you can see it and you become accustomed to it," Shoemaker said, "then when you go the next time, you have a little bit of background."

"For a lot of kids, they are there to perform for one meet. It's more than crucial for them to see it, to have been there, to get the jitters out, look at the crowd, look at the big venue: state meet, the pinnacle of the season."

Transitioning into his senior season, Peecher's goal is to be all-state, to shave nine seconds off his 500-yard freestyle

time and finish in the top eight at the state finals in 2021.

It's something he believes is 100% achievable, working during the football season to lift, gaining strength that he hopes will help him ahead of his final high school swim season.

To Shoemaker, who expects Peecher to be right back to where he is now as a senior, he approaches this year's state finals, or lack of one, as a building block. It's something he will encourage Peecher with.

"You know what, we got shafted last year, so this year, you have one shot. This is it," Shoemaker said to Peecher. "The past is done. There is nothing you can do about it. Now, you got your senior year."

"Last shot. This is it right here."

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## Esports

Continued from Page 1B

current junior at University of Michigan Dearborn has made an impact of his own in the gaming community. Juncaj was an esports semi-pro team owner, leading 60 team members as it competed in games such as Fortnite, Rocket League and Super Smash Bros.

Juncaj saw a chance for Catholic Central to participate in an exploding global phenomenon, taking advantage of the six-figure scholarships colleges around the country were giving out to gamers and streamers.

With already 20 students interested before Juncaj took the head coaching job, the team grew exponentially, expanding to as many as 90 players interested before the official tryout.

While his team is the only team left at Catholic Central competing, he does not feel a level of pressure to win.

"Instead of pressure, it is more like this is our time to shine," Juncaj said. "I don't think any of the kids feel too pressured. I think most of them are excited to showcase what they can do."

Catholic Central is trying its best to put players in the best position to succeed, buying equipment for 10 game stations for the school's library, including custom-built gaming PC's and brand new monitors.

When CC sophomore Tristan Toma arrived for the first practice, seeing what was at everyone's disposal, he knew this team was more than just a club.

"I was like, 'Wow, this is really it. We're doing this,'" Toma said.

However, the game stations have yet to be used, with the school closing shortly after they were installed.

But that has not stopped the Shamrocks from competing.

Catholic Central has participated in a number of competitions, with Toma placing ninth in a Super Smash Bros. tournament on April 2, and later first in a small 10-man tournament.

Darin Koz also took third place in the Northwood 1v1 Rocket League tournament on April 3.

The Shamrocks have played different teams from New Jersey and Arizona, and were originally scheduled to participate in the Michigan High School Esports Federation Rocket League and Super Smash Bros. playoffs before they



The Catholic Central esports team meets via Zoom during the school shutdown. COURTESY OF STEPHEN JUNCAJ

were both canceled.

For now, Juncaj's message is simple. "The goals that we set out is to play, play, play," Juncaj said. "That was the message that we sent home to everyone was like, 'Listen guys: we understand that this is CC and we're trying to win everything. But the No. 1 thing we have to do is go out and compete this year.'"

"Let's get our name out there, let's keep playing. This is the time to showcase what you got."

### Playing together, apart

The Catholic Central connection. The brotherhood.

These are things that Fulton has seen struggle since the closing of the school. As the students remain at home, his goal is to keep students engaged, to keep their heads up even though, as he said, they are "bummed out" right now.

"It's a part of our spiritual DNA as a school that when things get tough, we have to lean in on each other,"

"When I got this in an email, with kids saying, 'I finally found my fit. Thank you guys so much for starting this,' I'm like, 'That's it. I'm all in, 1,000 percent.'"

**Aaron Babicz**  
Detroit Catholic Central athletic director

Fulton said.

While the esports team has goals to meet, its purpose, during the school shutdown, has been to foster community.

In the gaming world, it's known as playing together, apart.

"I do think it's kind of been an outlet for people to make new friends and to find new people to play with," Juncaj said.

After the school closed during the week of the esports team's tryouts, Juncaj has not turned anyone away, grouping teams in terms of skill level. He has been communicating with his team via Zoom and Discord, a Zoom-like program for the gaming community.

"I've gotten to know a lot more kids and I know a lot of kids that go on computers who aren't in physical sports, like myself, aren't as vocal and wouldn't be out there as much," Catholic Central junior Dylan Boer said. "Not the entire time is behind a screen, but maybe for some kids it makes it easier to talk to some other kids behind a screen and develop a friendship."

While the long-term goal may be to become a nationally-recognized team, Babicz said, looking back, he would receive emails from students, saying they did not truly have a fit at the school.

For a time in which the world has stopped and the Catholic Central community has been separated physically, this esports team has brought the community back to the school.

"When I got this in an email, with kids saying, 'I finally found my fit. Thank you guys so much for starting this,' I'm like, 'That's it. I'm all in, 1,000 percent,'" Babicz said.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at [cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com) or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @Colin-Gay17. Send game results and stats to [Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com](mailto:Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com).

Steven Schwab, of Westland, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1, inspects a lighting unit for a pre-staging area in front of Naval Hospital Rota in southern Spain. PHOTO COURTESY OF CAINE STORINO



## Westland native helps fight pandemic in Spain

**Shelby Tankersley** [hometownlife.com](mailto:hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Steven Schwab, a Westland resident, enlisted in the Navy last year. He's the son of a Navy SEAL with a brother in the Navy and felt like it was the right time to serve his country.

Little did he know he'd end up aiding the coronavirus fight in Rota, Spain.

"Me and the Seabees here in Rota assisted the hospital on base by setting up a tent that is being used for screening patients for COVID-19," he wrote in an email interview. "Maintaining the power and lighting for the hospital tent has been one of our main efforts. Here at camp we're enforcing social distancing and limiting the number of people we come in contact with to prevent any further spread."

Schwab, who has called Westland home for about 16 years, is a graduate of Wayne Memorial High School. His background in landscaping led him to being a Navy Seabee as a constructionman, builder striker (BUCN).

"We construct buildings and other structures, assist with humanitarian assistance if needed, and support security in theaters of operations," he wrote. "We're the forward-deployed Seabee battalion now so we're here in Spain to be ready to respond to anything that we're called upon to do."

"I really enjoy the hands-on type of

work that we do, and I enjoy seeing my work improve the quality of life and safety for those we serve."

In Spain, the World Health Organization reported 172,541 cases of coronavirus, with 183,056 deaths and 70,853 recoveries, as of April 15.

Schwab said he doesn't have a lot of contact with people and is taking social distancing precautions. While they can enjoy free time as usual, Schwab and the other BUCNs are trying to better themselves and hone their skills.

"We're being strict with hand sanitizing and cleaning our work spaces thoroughly," he wrote. "It's affecting people by limiting our extra-curricular activities like back home, but we're using this time to push for qualifications and getting licenses for equipment."

To those back home in Westland and throughout Michigan, Schwab encouraged people to stay the course.

"Just be safe and take the proper precautions to prevent the spread of the virus and to follow the recommendations of health care providers," he wrote. "I believe that we will get through this by not losing faith and keep pushing forward one day at a time."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.

## Metroparks plan closures if parks become too crowded

**Steve Pepple** Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Officials at Huron-Clinton Metroparks say they will close individual parks temporarily as needed to protect visitors as the weather warms up and the park system becomes more crowded. Metroparks police and staff will also enforce social distancing rules.

Employees in the 13 metroparks spread across southeastern Michigan will actively monitor park attendance and "enforce intermittent closures to certain areas — or entire parks — when attendance is too high or visitors are not following critical social distancing guidelines," Metroparks Director Amy McMillan said in a news release Monday.

She said the Metroparks system is committed to remaining open during Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-home order, which allows residents to visit parks to exercise.

"We know residents need these wide-open spaces and outlets now more than ever," McMillan said. "Countless studies show the value of just being in the outdoors to boost mind, body and spirit, especially in times of immense stress and change."

McMillan said the Metroparks Police and park staff will be performing parking lot counts three times a day at each park that the parking lots don't exceed 60% of their capacity.

If that capacity is exceeded throughout the park, it will result in a temporary closure and entrance gates will be closed, she said. Depending on the time of day, the park may remain closed or reopen as visitors leave.

"Our plan will almost certainly adjust with time," McMillan said. "We are paying attention and managing in real time the most current concerns and our plan will shift as concerns change."

McMillan said the park system has already implemented numerous other safety measures to protect visitors and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, including:

■ Closed all interpretative center



Kensington Metropark in Milford is a popular destination, especially as the weather improves. Park officials are trying to prevent overcrowding at the various parks. HOMETOWN LIFE FILE PHOTO

"We are paying attention and managing in real time the most current concerns and our plan will shift as concerns change."

**Amy McMillan**, Metroparks director

buildings, such as nature and farm centers, as well as restrooms, food service, playgrounds, golf and disc golf courses, volleyball courts and offices.

■ Closed boat launches to motor boating.

■ Canceled all Metroparks public programming through June 5 to coincide with school closures.

■ Offering free admission on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the Stay Home, Stay Safe executive orders.

■ Starting summer hours so Metroparks are open longer each day, giving residents more options for their visit.

■ Having Metroparks police officers patrolling regularly and reminding visitors about safe social distancing practices as needed.

■ Implementing a requirement for all toll booth attendants and police officers to wear a face mask and encouraging all other staff to wear one as well. Staff are asked to have a face mask in their possession to use if they come within six feet of co-workers or visitors.

The Metropark system is made up of 13 parks in Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.



Featuring a rattan-crafted frame and rope weaving, the Marigny rattan bench is a decorative and functional piece. \$598 at anthropologie.com.

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## the job network

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### 6 questions recruiters ask – and how to answer them

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

While you can't anticipate which exact questions you're going to be asked in a job interview situation, recruiters can actually be pretty predictable and consistent when it comes to their interview content. Recruiters are trying to figure out whether you'll be a good fit for their openings, so the baseline questions are often very similar. With a little prep, you can be ready for the universe of most common questions.

#### 1. Tell me about yourself

This is a common icebreaker in just about any "getting to know" you setting, not just interviews. It's always smart to have your elevator pitch ready to go. Don't worry about providing a comprehensive autobiography for this question...that is definitely not what the recruiter is after. The question is meant to assess how you present yourself, not necessarily the information you present (though that's certainly important too).

The best way to approach this one is to have a two-minute or so spiel that summarizes your professional career so far, your biggest accomplishments, and your goals. Be brief; your resume will speak for itself, and you'll be getting other questions as well. Think of it as your opening statement.

#### 2. Tell me about your current (or most recent) job

Again, this is ground that will be covered in your resume, so you don't need to go into every daily detail of your current work life. It's best to give a quick overview of what you're doing now—your main areas of responsibility, your



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biggest accomplishments or achievements in your current role, and even what you like and dislike about the job itself. This isn't a sounding board for your gripes about your current employer, but you can talk about what works for you overall—and what doesn't.

#### 3. What's your biggest achievement?

This is an opening for you to humble-brag about what you do well and what you've accomplished. But it also tells the recruiter something about your professional values and how you present yourself. Before you interview, come up with three or four specific accomplishments that you can point to as examples. Before your meeting with the recruiter, review the job description to decide which of your accomplishments can be tailored to that specific company.

#### 4. What's your biggest weakness?

One of the recruiter's challenges is

finding people who will fit in well with job openings they're working to fill, or for potential future openings. They're sensitive to company cultures and values, and when they talk to you, they want to know that you're able to present well.

So, when you're asked about weaknesses or failures in your past, it's not about getting you to admit to something. It's about seeing how you've tackled challenges in your career, how you've gotten past them, and what you've learned. Recruiters also have very strong BS detectors, so if you answer "what's your biggest weakness?" with "I work too hard" or "I love my job too much," you're likely to get an eye roll (even if they don't let you see it).

The key here is to identify what you're continuing to work on in your career. We all have those spots where there's room for improvement. So, this could be something like, "I tend to take on too much by myself, so I'm continually looking for ways to help create space for my team members to work together

on projects." The important thing is focusing on what you know is an ongoing challenge for you, and what you're doing to work on it.

#### 5. What is your next step?

This is a question that isn't necessarily about specific opportunities or job openings, but rather to find out what you might be looking for. It's a chance to let the recruiter know your immediate (and future) career goals so that they can help you find a good fit, wherever that may be.

#### 6. Are you working with other recruiters?

This is a question of self-interest for any recruiter, but it also tells them a lot about what kind of job searcher you are. If you are actively working with any other recruiters, you don't have to hide that fact. But if you're working with a lot of recruiters and have been for a long time, it tells the recruiter that you might be a constant candidate, which can be problematic. It's better to be honest here, but before you even get to that point consider working with fewer recruiters of better quality.

The key to answering any question from a recruiter is preparing. Always have specific points about yourself and your career, and don't forget to rehearse them! The recruiter interview is all about how you present yourself, so you want to make sure it's as smooth and knowledgeable as possible.

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

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# THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

**ACROSS**

1 Outlook  
7 Opponents  
13 Rolling Stones  
20 Despire  
21 Funny in a twisted way  
22 Shrinking salt lake in Asia  
23 "Does this medication act as a sedative at all?"  
25 French painter Henri  
26 Pops  
27 Dark warrior Kylo of sci-fi  
28 Magical elixir that turns people into mouselike rodents?  
30 Sun or moon  
32 People using paste  
35 — Moines  
36 26th letters, to Brits  
37 The singer of "Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'" was nosy?  
41 Caustic liquid  
44 Mogul  
45 Football field

47 Loss of the sense of smell  
52 Out of kilter  
53 Upkeep of a kitchen stove?  
57 Peter of Herman's Hermits  
59 Freeman of "Angel Face"  
60 "... roughly"  
61 Landscaping tool used by a large company?  
68 Culinary mushroom  
69 Not ingested  
70 Coll. in Lower Manhattan  
71 First letter  
73 Follies show that turns someone who rudely interrupts a chat?  
78 Ruckuses  
79 Teeny power source  
81 Nation in "The Hunger Games"  
82 Captured during a revolt?  
87 Frosting tools  
92 Bit of conjunctivitis medicine

93 Ballesteros of golf  
94 Pages transmitted by PCs  
95 Gave the heave-ho to  
97 Cost to buy an airline ticket?  
101 FBI workers: Abbr.  
105 Cooke of soul  
107 Actor Chuck  
108 Small child  
109 Arsons?  
113 Some refinery input  
114 Bummed  
116 Emilio of Hollywood  
117 Apt things to feel when solving this puzzle?  
123 Really dumb  
124 6-Down plus one  
125 State tree of New Jersey  
126 — Pilate (biblical official)  
127 Most tender  
128 Wisenheimer

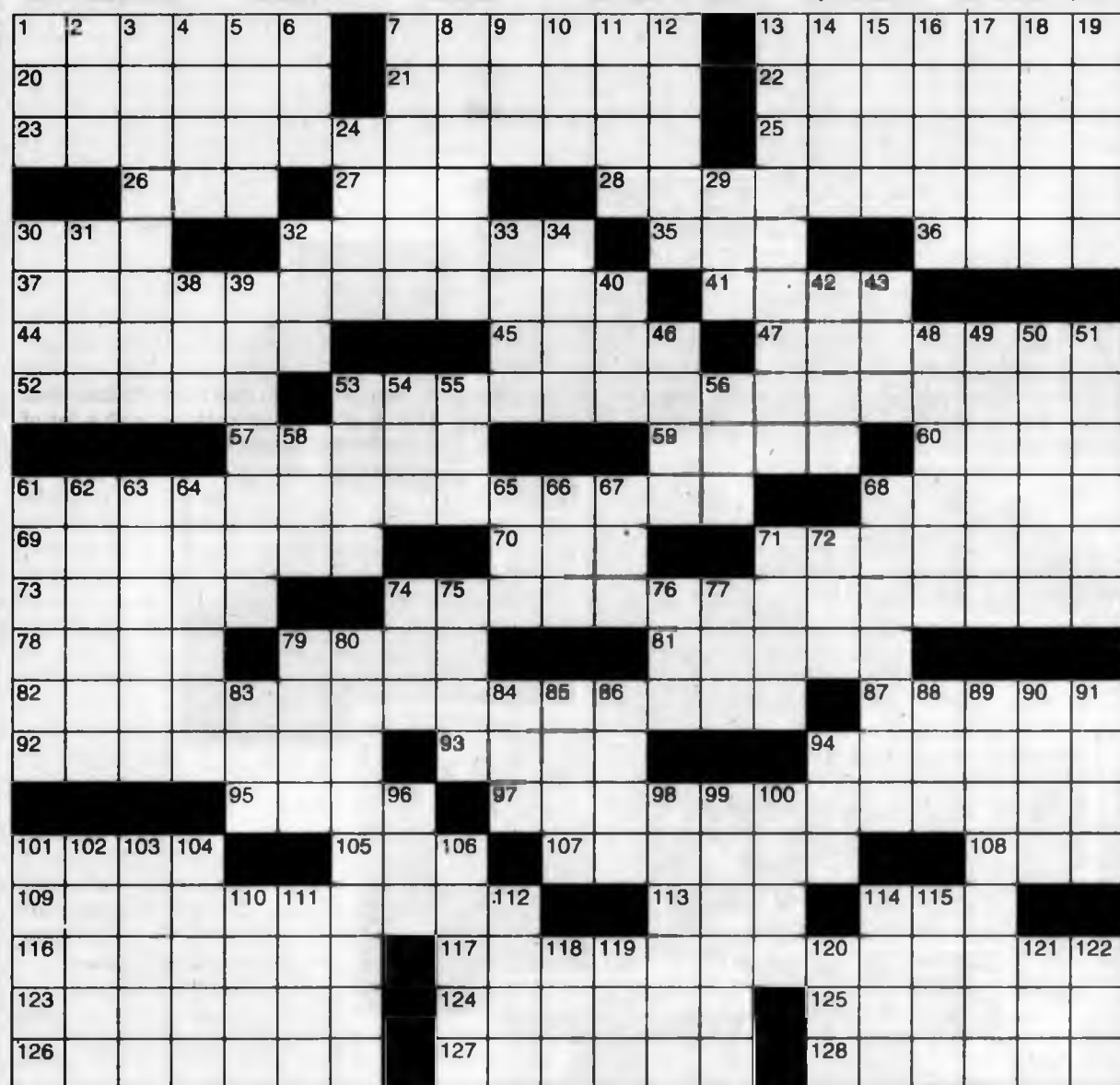
**DOWN**

1 — Baba  
2 "Mayday!"  
3 Avenged  
4 Kett of comics

5 Neighbor of Sudan  
6 What X may mean  
7 Creep higher, as shorts  
8 Wrinkle remover  
9 "I do," e.g.  
10 Sothem of "Kid Millions"  
11 Actor Schreiber  
12 Young cod  
13 "Misery" star  
14 Give — (care)  
15 Cat, to Juan  
16 Ostentatious showiness  
17 "Charlotte's Web" actress Davis  
18 Turf anew  
19 Carnille Saint —  
24 Annual: Abbr.  
29 Meadow  
30 Eight: Prefix  
31 "Wide Sargasso Sea" novelist  
32 With 118-Down, child of a boomer  
33 Emma Peel player  
34 Withered  
38 Jane in court

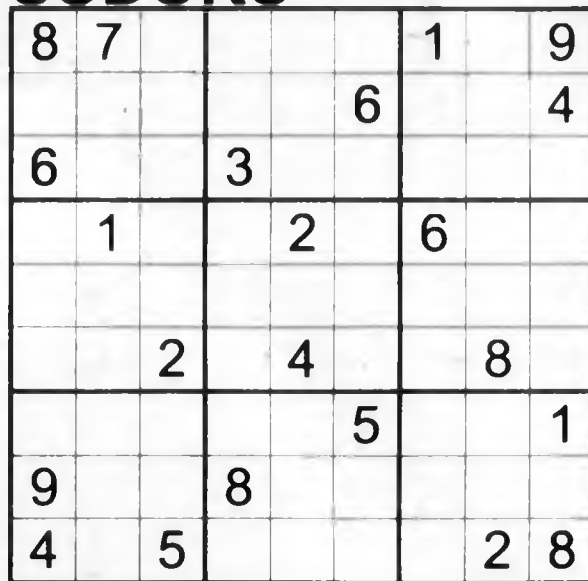
39 Something hit by a basso  
40 Lightly lit  
42 Swenson of "Benson"  
43 John in court  
46 Title for 33-Down  
48 Not rough  
49 — Melodies (old toons)  
50 Pant-leg line  
51 Coral rings  
53 Bicolor horse  
54 Busy insect  
55 Once named  
56 Fish-fowl link  
58 Some refinery input  
61 Run, as an art exhibition  
62 In the future  
63 Rescind  
64 Waited a bit  
65 Ltr. holder  
66 Henna or anil  
67 Chap  
68 Orange Bowl loc.  
71 Motels  
72 San Francisco's — Valley  
74 Astros, on scoreboards  
75 Rock blasters  
76 Unseal, in poetry  
77 Old Egypt-Syr. alliance

79 "Life is like — of chocolates"  
80 They're large in large-print materials  
83 Pro-gun org.  
84 Sports arbiter  
85 Tennis' Lendl  
86 Blood fluid: Prefix  
88 Coral islet  
89 Way out of a building  
90 Nevada city on I-80  
91 USAF NCO  
94 Bad grades  
96 Flow barrier  
98 Wears away  
99 Set straight  
100 Movie  
101 Tons  
102 Painter's undercoat  
103 Tarte — (apple treat)  
104 Artery insert  
106 Some viral trends  
110 Roman 107  
111 Brand of lens solution  
112 Farm tower  
114 Banana part  
115 Verdi opera  
118 See 32-Down  
119 Eden evictee  
120 Hosp. areas  
121 Cable TV's — Geo Wild  
122 Cloud's place



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

## SUDOKU



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!

## STAND-UP WORD SEARCH

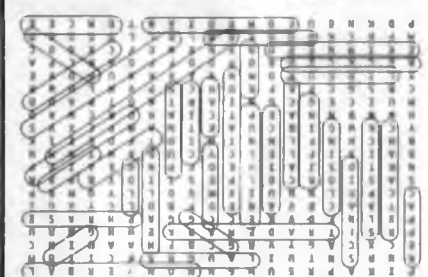
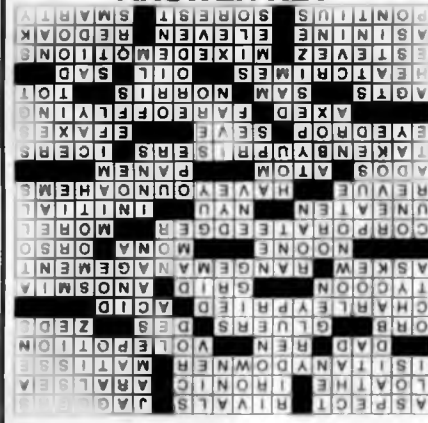
F I K A P R S U W G H N O N V E R B A L  
R N R S N T U I L A U G H S K C I T G M  
E C X C A G Y V R G C B F H A A U I H C  
P R S E T R A D E M A R K E M H G B R U  
P E L N F D V K E C C G G A P H R A S E  
A T A A C B V A N E O F B D L C Y X G I  
C C P R L N H U I X M V D L L Y O M R P  
S A S I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

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

## WORDS

AUDIENCE  
BEAT  
BIT  
BOMB  
BOOKER  
CALLBACK  
CAPPER  
CHARACTER  
CLOSING  
COMEDIAN  
COMEDY  
CRITIC  
CROWD  
EMCEE  
EXPECTATION  
FLOP  
GAG  
GIG  
HACK  
HEADLINE  
HECKLER  
LAUGHS  
LINEUP  
MICROPHONE  
NONVERBAL  
OPENER  
OPEN MIKE  
PHRASE  
PUNCHLINE  
REGULARS  
RIFFING  
ROLL  
SCENARIO  
SLAPSTICK  
STAND-UP  
TRADEMARK

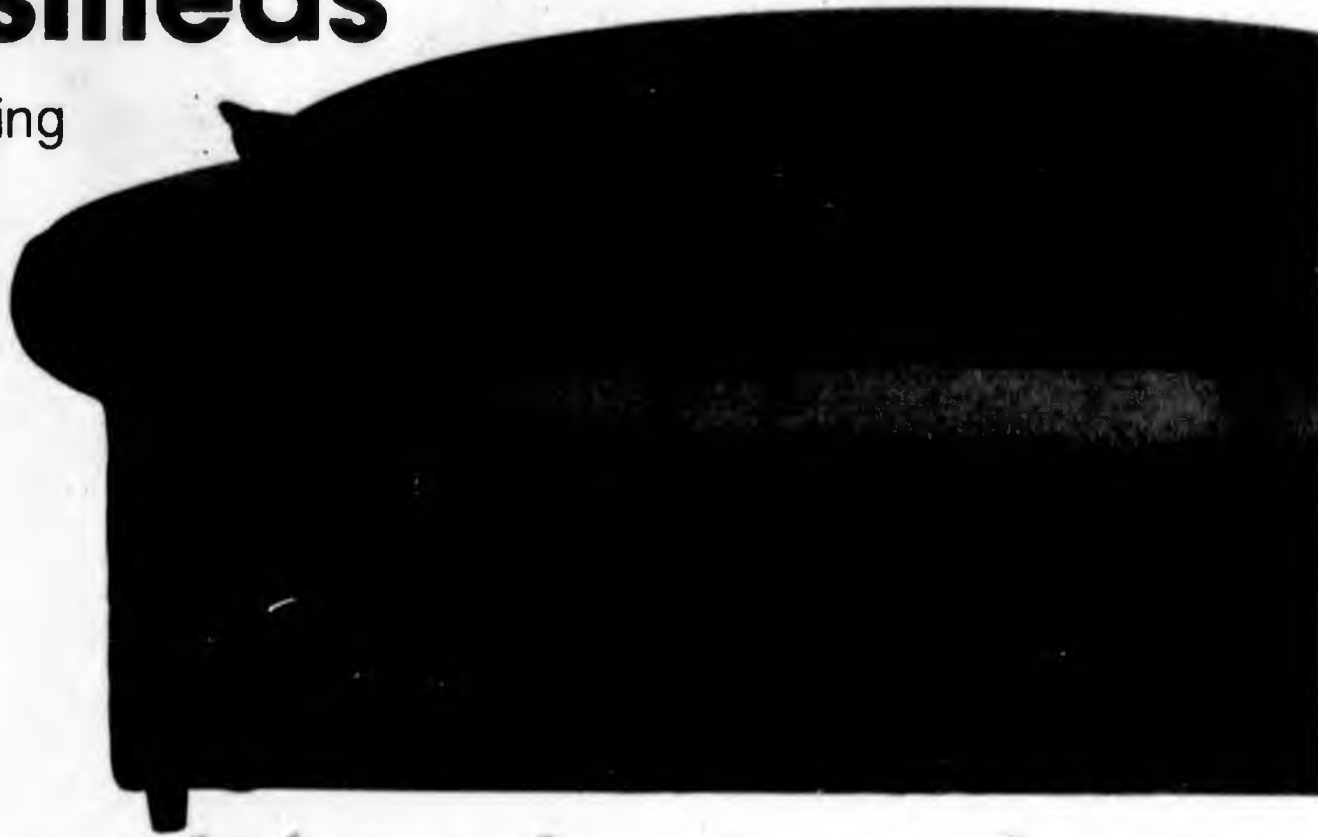
## ANSWER KEY



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

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