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# NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Commission tables Northville Downs plan

Meeting ends with heated words from developer

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Controversy reigned Feb. 1 at the conclusion of the Northville Planning Commission meeting focused on The Downs

preliminary site plan review.

Following three-and-a-half hours of discussion centered on Hunter Pasteur's plan to develop the 48-acre Northville Downs property, Hunter Pasteur CEO Randy Wertheimer stepped to

the podium and delivered a heated message when Planning Commission Chair Donna Tinberg announced the meeting would be tabled until Feb. 15 because the commission's contract with the Northville Community Center, where the meeting was held, expired at 10:30 p.m.

"Our team has put too much energy

and too much time into this to have it end with a curfew and no vote," Wertheimer said. "This is an unacceptable outcome tonight. If we have to stay an extra 10 to 15 minutes, we'll pay the overtime to the staff."

See DOWNS, Page 7A

## Novi eyes Shawood Lake island for \$175K

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Novi City Council is considering buying an island in Shawood Lake for \$175,000.

Eventual plans for the island property are still up in the air, even if local leaders decide to make the purchase. Shawood Lake is a small lake on the north side of Novi that empties into Walled Lake.

City staff has identified three possible uses for the Elm Court property upon acquisition:

- Demolition and removal of the home, returning the island to its natural state and using it as a passive park.
- Return to its natural state and restrict any foot traffic and discourage access.

- Using in a more active way, including adding a fishing pier, canoe/kayak launch, pergola/picnic shelter and/or park benches and tables.

Several residents who live on Shawood or Walled lakes urged demolition of the house, which was built in 1967 and has sat vacant for several years, calling it an eyesore.

Jerry Anderson spoke at the meeting on behalf of several Shawood Lake residents, saying those residents have to stare at a blighted property every day.

"Elm Court is distressed," Anderson, a Walled Lake resident, said. "It's one portion of Novi that needs serious attention. I've been out here 44 years. We used to laugh that Novi didn't care about anything north of 12 Mile."

See ISLAND, Page 7A



The gravesite of Mitchel Kiefer has been a place for his loved ones to heal and celebrate his life since a distracted-driving incident took the Northville resident's life in 2016. ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Roadside memorials help families of victims heal

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In Canton Township, a pair of weather-beaten stuffed animals and a few tied-together pine tree branches rest near the base of a utility pole at the northwest corner of the intersection of Ford and Canton Center roads.

The makeshift memorial — flowers, miscellaneous mementos and Christmas decorations have also adorned the site — has provided a symbol of the fragility of life since Sept. 13, when a 38-year-old mother was killed instantly in an early-morning traffic accident that left a second driver with non-life-threatening injuries.

The temporary tribute is one of a few

that endure along the edges of southeast Michigan roadways, helping the victims' families cope with grief and reminding onlookers that lives can be shattered in just the blink of an eye.

"Once in a while we'll see someone put fresh flowers out there," said Ana

See MEMORIALS, Page 8A

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Staff at the the Southfield garage of the Road Commission for Oakland County get a plow truck ready for the Feb. 1 winter storm. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

# Snow plow drivers share tips, knowledge

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Metro Detroit experienced 6-10 inches of snow last week.

In that storm, and any other winter storms that remain this season, here is what to expect from the Road Commission for Oakland County – and a few things they are asking of drivers.

“At an inch to an inch and a half per hour, it’s just too much to keep up with,” RCOC Communications Manager Craig Bryson said. “We’ll hear, ‘Hey, it looks like you haven’t even plowed,’ but it covers up so quick, it’s impossible to tell we’ve been through.”

Nevertheless, they will try in the heaviest of storms, putting 100 trucks out on the roads.

As storms approach, the road commission staff of nearly 200 employees anticipates constant adjustments.

The road commission’s highest priority is clearing the 230 miles of state highways in the county: I-75, US-24 (Telegraph), M-1 (Woodward), M-24 (Lapeer Road) and M-15 (Ortonville Road), followed by multi-lane roads in the county.

Regardless of the amount of snow, Bryson said one aspect in the process is easy as there is not a lot of strategy to it: the drivers go out and just start plowing at a top speed of about 50 miles per hour.

The real challenge is the duration of the storm.

“We’ve got to manage human resources and it takes a toll on the equipment — trucks are running 24 hours and someone goes home and someone else is going to

**“People cut us some slack for the first 24 hours, and then if everything isn’t pristine they’re mad. This is more of a marathon than a sprint. It will take some days to get everything cleared up, including subdivisions. We just ask for patience.”**

Craig Bryson RCOC Communications Manager

be on the road,” Bryson said. “We throw everything at it as soon as the snow starts and then we go all day long.”

While the number of drivers may be fewer during evening hours, there are always trucks out plowing, and between midnight and 2 a.m., the number of plow trucks on the road starts ramping up again to get as much cleared as possible for the morning rush.

The drivers could be working multiple 16-hour shifts with only five-and-a-half hour breaks in between in a storm, Bryson said.

“This is grueling. We refer to our staff as pre-responders, because they respond before the first responders so police, fire and EMS can get through,” he said.

Mechanics, supervisors, and administrative staff are all working long shifts, too.

Bryson said there are things motorists can do to improve the situation: Stay home, and if that’s not possible at least stay out of the way of the trucks.

“Every time a storm like this hits, people run into our trucks, they try to pass them, they cut the plow drivers off,” Bryson said.

Additionally, motorists are running into the wing plows that extend out to the right side of RCOC trucks. The wing plows enable plow drivers to clear more than one lane during heavy snowfalls, but motorists who attempt to pass on the right often don’t see them in the heavy snow or in darkness.

“Please don’t pass on the right side, you are not going to win against a huge steel truck. People can be seriously injured or worse,” Bryson said.

Plow drivers are doing a critical job, but attempt to help motorists stuck in the middle of the road when they can, pushing the car with the plow truck if permitted, calling the police to help arrange for a tow, or placing some salt around a vehicle to help the driver regain traction.

There are 1,300 miles of subdivision roads in the county that require two passes. It could take another two or three days to complete clearing of the snow after a storm.

“People cut us some slack for the first 24 hours, and then if everything isn’t pristine they’re mad,” Bryson said. “This is more of a marathon than a sprint. It will take some days to get everything cleared up, including subdivisions. We just ask for patience.”

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com or 517-281-2412.

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## Two options on table for Beck Road

Susan Bromley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Novi officials currently have two options for improving Beck Road on the table. One showed a five-lane concept; the other, a boulevard with a median.

Neither was pleasing to Tee Nobles, whose home backs up to Beck Road, and whose children play in the backyard. She is concerned about safety, her home’s value and quality of living.

“I’m totally against it,” Nobles said. “When they built the Beck Road exit off 96, I was against it. They’re doing everything to benefit the

commercial traffic and not the residents.”

She added that in the 15 years she has lived there, she hears traffic noise from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Even worse, her house shakes so much she has replaced drywall three times, and the walls show more cracks.

Nobles was one of dozens of people in attendance at a meeting Feb. 1 asking questions and voicing concerns during the second “Beck to the Future” public input meeting. Some were also there to give positive feedback to Novi City Manager Pete Auger and Wixom City Manager Steve Brown, as well as a host of engineers and DPW representatives.

Carol Klausing, who resides in a Novi condominium complex near Beck Road and Pontiac Trail, was excited for im-

provements to Beck Road, although the expansive multi-million dollar project may take a few years to come to fruition as the cities await federal funding.

She pored over the five-lane concept map, which she said would be a “big help” to her and her neighbors.

“We have to have a way out (of the complex),” she said. “There are so many times we have to turn right and come back around instead of turning left. I’m just wondering what will be torn down (with expansion of Beck). If we have to move our sign, no big deal.”

Eric Szilagyi saw both the pros and cons of improvements to Beck Road.

“It’s necessary to make changes in Beck Road, because of the road surface, the access to the road, and the amount of

traffic it has, but it has to be a project that keeps residents happy,” he said. “There are two sides to this: residential and commercial. In Novi, Beck is a residential road that has been forced to become a commercial artery or roadway.”

While there needs to be a project, he wasn’t sure what was the best option. City officials aren’t sure, either.

While there were only two options on the table at Tuesday’s meeting, Nobles pressed for a third — no change. Auger presented another option: roundabouts at each intersection.

“This project has been in the works for 20 years,” Auger said. “... We’re running out of Band-Aids. It’s time to look at the big enchilada.”

The Beck to the Future committee meets twice a month. Auger said the committee would discuss public input at its next meeting.

Wixom City Manager Steve Brown said he didn’t expect groundbreaking on a Beck Road construction project for at least three years.

“Five might be a safer bet,” he said. “These plans are preliminary and representative of what the project might look like.”

### NOTICE CITY OF NOVI REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT PTSLU22-0003

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the representative for Covid Test Sample Collection Inc. is requesting a Temporary Special Land Use Permit in accordance with 7.6.2 of the Novi Zoning Ordinance for temporary use of the exterior property for a Covid-19 testing site at 24555 Novi Road (parcel 50-22-22-400-010) north of Ten Mile and west of Novi Road from March 1, 2022 through March 1, 2023. The property is zoned B-3 (General Business District) and the use is contrary to 3.10 and 4.19 of the Novi Zoning Ordinance.

A public hearing can be requested by any property owner whose property is located within 300 feet of the boundary of the property being considered for a temporary special land use permit.

A public hearing will be held at 10:00 am on March 1, 2022 at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road in the Mayors Conference Room. All written comments should be directed to Nina Schaffrath and must be received prior to Monday, February 28, 2022 by 3 P.M.

Publish: February 10, 2022

LO-000061002 3x3

Notice of Annual Return is hereby given by John R. Cloud, President of Northville Amateur Athletic Association, which has been designated as a private foundation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, that the Foundation’s Annual Return (Form 990-PF) is available for inspection at 16928 Yellowstone Dr., Northville, MI 48168 (Phone: 248-924-2325) during regular business hours by any citizen upon request made within 180 days of this Notice. This Notice is published pursuant to, and in compliance with, the requirements of Section 6104(d) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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# Novi public safety director wraps up 33 years with city

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

David Molloy's Irish-Catholic parents encouraged treating others the way he would want to be treated.

The ethical practice has served him well during his 33 years with the Novi Police Department, where he ascended from rookie cop to detective, sergeant, detective sergeant, lieutenant, deputy chief, chief, and simultaneously the chief and public safety director.

He's not sacrificing the golden rule before he leaves for a planned vacation and a new job as deputy director of the Michigan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas.

"Like any other day and like I've done for 33 years, I'm going to come in here and I'm going to work hard. I'm going to do my very best, every single day," Molloy said. "I'm always going to do what's right and I'm going to treat people like we want to be treated."

"The assistant chiefs, the fire chiefs, the captains and lieutenants ... they all know operational considerations. My job is just to provide them with the budget, the resources, the training and the equipment. That's what I will continue to do until the very last day."

Molloy recently announced his retirement. His last day is Feb. 18. He's looking forward to spending more time with his wife Sheryl Walsh-Molloy, who is Novi's communications director, and their children and grandchildren.

Should one of the grandchildren express interest in becoming an officer, he knows what he might say.

"You know what I'll probably tell them?" he said. "You have a front-row seat to the biggest show on Earth. You see things that a vast majority of people will never see. I'd let them know it's a great job. I love every day of it. I take great pride in wearing a uniform."

"Even with the narrative that some people are trying to paint with law enforcement right now, I think it is still one of the most noble professions you're ever going to find. It is very, very rewarding."

And fun. Molloy said he's had a lot of fun meeting a lot of great people along the way.

He wasn't planning a career in law enforcement when he began college at Saginaw Valley State University. From Sandusky, he planned a business accounting career. But when he took a criminal justice course as an elective, he was hooked.

A former Detroit police officer, Donald Bachand, who is now SVSU's president, became Molloy's mentor. Molloy became a service aide for the campus police and interned with the Michigan State Police.

Then came the Novi Police Department. Molloy gained a lot of investigative experience before taking the top-notch positions of deputy chief, chief and public safety director.



Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police David Molloy is retiring after 33 years with Novi. His last day is Feb. 18. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

**"Even with the narrative that some people are trying to paint with law enforcement right now, I think it is still one of the most noble professions you're ever going to find. It is very, very rewarding."**

David Molloy Novi Police chief and public safety director

Meanwhile, he also was becoming quite the academic. Molloy has taught at Madonna University since

2007 and has instructed other law enforcers at the Police Staff and Command Executive Leadership programs of Eastern Michigan University and Michigan State University.

"I have a thirst for knowledge. I'm a lifelong learner," he said. "I want to learn something new every single day. I also want to share information. I want to share what's been successful for me."

"I also want to tell people there's going to be failures. As long as the failures aren't fatal, learn from those. Sometimes, we even need to celebrate those. No one wants to show their vulnerability but the reality is we're all vulnerable. The more that you show your vulnerability, I think the better leader you will become."

In his time off, he enjoys golfing and reading.

When Molloy became chief in 2005, he swore he'd leave the position and office in a better place than when he got there. For the most part, he's confident he's doing that.

"We received the national and state accreditation and then the re-accreditation. I feel like it's a good time to turn it over to someone else," Molloy said. "We're really at what I would consider kind of the top of our game."

There are certain experiences he'll always cherish.

He won't be able to forget the cold cases and he'll fondly remember the triumphant investigations such as Operation Falling Star, when Novi police worked with federal agents to dismantle one of the largest narcotic trafficking organizations.

"I think the No. 1 thing I will remember is the people," Molloy said. "I've been fortunate to work with some of the finest you're going to find in police and fire."

As the public safety director, Molloy has managed a team of more than 200 sworn police personnel, firefighters and support staff. His worked with an annual budget of more than \$20 million.

During his time with the city, he saw the department grow as the population at least doubled. In terms of diversity, he's proud that 19% of the sworn officers are females.

"Ultimately, I think we're in better shape than a vast majority of the organizations," he said. "I've been very blessed to have a great career. I've been blessed to work with an outstanding public safety family. All of our police officers, firefighters, dispatchers. ... They're top notch. I'm certainly going to miss them."

An open house to celebrate Molloy's retirement will be 5:30-9:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at Suburban Collection Showplace. Find more information on that event online at [chiefmolloy2022.eventbrite.com](http://chiefmolloy2022.eventbrite.com).

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

## Northville Twp. aims to bring life to long-dormant property

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Hundreds of acres of long-dormant Northville Township property are on the verge of being revitalized.

Approximately 250 acres north of Five Mile Road near the western edge of the township as well as 322 acres on the site of the former state psychiatric hospital should experience significant progress in 2022, township Supervisor Mark Abbo said.

"For 2022, the plan really is to follow through on a lot of initiatives that were initiated in 2021," Abbo said. "The key ones include the continuing demolition work of the buildings remaining on the Legacy Park property (off Seven Mile Road). There was \$12 million worth of debt issued and we want to utilize that."

"It was great timing because it looks like interest rates are going to be rising and we got fabulous interest rates on those bonds."

Abbo said once the remaining psychiatric hospital outbuildings are demolished, the township will be able to develop 96% of the property's 332 acres with hiking and biking trails, and other recreational amenities.

Abbo said a Legacy Park committee has been established and is "diligently working to make sure that property turns out beautiful for residents and visitors from surrounding areas."

"Our overriding goal is always keeping taxes low and improving our service levels. That's always our objective."

The promotion and development of the township's Michigan Interna-



Northville Township Supervisor Mark Abbo gestures to a parcel of land at the northwest corner of Five Mile and Ridge, where the township is exploring creating a Michigan International Technology Center. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

tional Technology Corridor should see a lot of focus in the coming year, Abbo said.

"The 250 acres of the MITC property is not only located in Northville Township, it's owned by the township, which is why it is so important to us," he said.

The MITC redevelopment authority was created in 2015 to capture tax revenue to clean up the properties along the Plymouth-Northville border and prepare it for tech-related development.

Noting that the township's official list of 2022 goals will be hammered

out during a board of trustees meeting in mid-February, Abbo said he'd like to see the township set its sights on potential improvements to the public safety facility on Six Mile Road and continue efforts to guarantee that the owners of the neighboring Arbor Hills landfill eliminate odor complaints.

"As far as our public safety headquarters building, there are definite needs. We have to discuss how we want to accommodate those needs," Abbo said.

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



The southwest corner of Five Mile and Ridge.

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NORTHVILLE

The City of Northville Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing to receive public input on several requests in regard to the City of Northville Zoning Ordinance:

- On premises zoned R-1A, First Density Residential District on property located at 20240 Clement Rd., Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-002-03-0060-302. The applicant is seeking a variance to construct a deck on the rear of the house. The variance needed is 16 feet from the rear yard setback requirement in Section 15.01.
- On premises zoned PR-2, Performance Regulated Industrial District No. 2, on property located at 700 Doheny Dr., Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-004-02-0004-002. The applicant is seeking three variances to construct two additions onto the existing structure at this address. The variances needed are: 14 feet from the front yard setback requirement, 11.6 feet from the side (west) yard setback requirement, and 8.7 feet from the side (east) yard setback requirement in Section 15.01, and the requirement that expansions of a non-conforming structure must meet the ordinance requirements, or as permitted by the Board of Zoning Appeals, in Section 22.01.
- On premises zoned R-1B, First Density Residential District on property located at 374 N. Rogers St., Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-002-02 0439-000. The applicant is seeking a variance to construct a new residence with an attached garage facing the street that is located 6.5 feet ahead of the front facade of the front exterior wall. The variance needed is 10.5 feet from the requirement to place an attached garage at least four feet behind the front exterior wall of the residential dwelling in Section 18.26.
- On premises zoned R-1B, First Density Residential District on property located on the south side of Dubuar St., west of N. Rogers St. and abutting the western boundary of the City of Northville, Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-002-02-0376-301. The applicant is seeking a variance as a condition of lot split approval to divide this parcel into two parcels without frontage on a public street per the requirement in Section 18.03.

The public hearing will be held on March 2, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the City of Northville Municipal Building Council Chambers, 215 W. Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167, 248-449-9902. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the variance requests.

The variance applications are available for review at the City of Northville Building Department during normal business hours of 8am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday, local prevailing time or on the City's website [www.ci.northville.mi.us](http://www.ci.northville.mi.us) (go to Services, Building and Planning, Board of Zoning Appeals).

Written comments to the BZA pertaining to the proposed variance requests must be submitted by 4:30pm, March 1, 2022 to the City Clerk at the above address, or using the City Hall drop box, or emailed to [dmassa@ci.northville.mi.us](mailto:dmassa@ci.northville.mi.us).

DOMINIC SILVESTRI, CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

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LD-000038/1098 348





# Residents speak out against proposed Novi childcare center

David Veselenak [HometownLife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Transforming a nearby golf clubhouse into a children's learning center near Don Jorgensen's neighborhood isn't what he or many of his neighbors want to see.

The president of the Maple Hills association, whose members live near the Maples Golf Club off 14 Mile in Novi, was one of many people who spoke before the city's planning commission against the proposal that would see an IXL Learning Center open in the clubhouse.

"I think we'd like a business there, just not this business," he said.

The plan has been met with criticism from neighbors in the nearby residential development, with hundreds sending letters to the city and appearing at the Jan. 26 planning commission meeting at the Novi Civic Center.

The center's proposal included transforming the clubhouse into a learning center that could accommodate between 125-175 children a day, which exceeds the allowance permitted by the city in that type of zoning district.

In addition, the proposal would convert the nine-hole golf course into open green space, as the course is not expected to reopen for golfers this spring.

"We're not going to change the clubhouse building. We're not going to change the property of the golf course. We won't affect the wetlands," said David Landry, an attorney for the petitioner. "We're not going to build any building on the golf course. It's going to remain as open space."

The development dates back decades with the golf course and many of the residential properties developed around the same time. The clubhouse formerly held a restaurant, which closed several years ago. The golf course also went through a period of closure nearly a decade ago, when it was shuttered for three years before reopening. IXL Learning Centers operate facilities in Northville Township, Birmingham, Green Oak Township and Howell, among other locations.



A sign protesting a potential childcare facility at the golf clubhouse in Novi is left in the council chambers after a planning commission meeting Jan. 26.

Among the issues raised by nearby residents were traffic concerns with such a center at peak drop-off and pick-up times, especially with the current clubhouse and residential properties sharing the same road connector.

"It's coming off of our residential property. It's going to block residents from coming in and out," resident Laura Miller said. "We already see the congestion on Novi Road."

Landry said parents won't pick up or drop off children all at the same time, and many will have multiple children per car, reducing the amount of vehicles in the parking lot at any given time. He said the proposed usage would see less traffic than the previous uses, considering it would only be used during the week and closed on holidays.

"This is a less intensive use than a restaurant, bar and golf course," he said. The request from IXL Learning Center is for an amendment to the original Planned Unit Development for the site. That change of use was not recommended by the city's planning staff to the commission, citing the number of students at the site would exceed the city's allowance.

The four planning commissioners at the meeting agreed, voting to recommend a denial of the change to the city council. Commissioners cited several reasons for the denial, including issues surrounding traffic and the impact it could have on that part of town, as well as safety concerns.



Residents hold up signs to speak out against a proposed childcare facility at the golf clubhouse off 14 Mile in Novi. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



The site of the former clubhouse of the Maples of Novi golf course in Novi. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Commissioners cited several reasons for the denial, including issues surrounding traffic and the impact it could have on that part of town, as well as safety concerns.

"It's coming off of a drive that is not that big off of 14 Mile Road. It's just not making sense," Commissioner John Avdoulos said. "I think the size of it and the fact that it's not allowable within the RA zoning district that we currently have, it makes it difficult for me to approve this."

Commissioner Michael Lynch said he wanted to make sure the golf course property, which snakes through the community, is taken care of properly moving forward. He expressed dismay over the failure of the course to stay open.

"As far as the clubhouse goes, I do agree you have a right to come in and petition the commission for a different type of use," he said. "I'm not willing to even consider another use until (we decide) what we're going to do with the main part of the community, which is the golf course."

The recommendation now goes to the city council for its final decision on the proposed changes.

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

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# Owners of longtime Plymouth candy shop are ready to retire

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's a bittersweet time for Cindy and Everett Smith.

The Plymouth Township couple has been in charge of Kemnitz Fine Candies for decades, with Cindy Smith working at the shop for more than half a century. But after the thousands of cherry cordials and other sweet treats, the couple decided it's time to retire.

"It's tough. More on her because she's been at it for 53 years and I've only been at it for 18," Everett Smith said. "I'm a rookie."

Cindy Smith began working at the store as a teenager, preparing and selling all kinds of goodies before she and her husband took over the store in 1999. Since then, they've spend time at the retail location at 896 W. Ann Arbor Trail and their production kitchen in a former church building in Plymouth's Old Village neighborhood. It's there the Christmas treats, nougat and chocolate bunnies are crafted before heading downtown for sale.

George and Betty Kemnitz began the company in the 1950s, making candies in their basement. They moved to the current location in the late 1950s. Another owner purchased the building and the Smiths bought the business in 1999.

The shop has been a longtime staple for candy buyers in the Plymouth area, with the couple getting to know many shoppers over the years. Cindy Smith said many longtime customers have stopped by since the closing announcement was made and expressed sadness they won't be around the shop anymore.

"A little lady came in when I was there and she said, 'Oh, I'm so mad at you,'" she said. "I go, 'I'm sorry.'"

They've grown not only in selling candy in Plymouth but mailing orders across the globe.

"In December, I go to the post office every day, taking packages," he said. "One day, I took one to four different places: one was to South Carolina, one was to Texas, one was to California and one was to Massachusetts."



Everett Smith looks at a vat of melted milk chocolate at Kemnitz Fine Candies.  
JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Christmas and Easter are their biggest holidays — they make "thousands of bunnies" for Easter, Cindy Smith said — with Valentine's Day mixed in as a busy season, as well. Those looking to buy sweets for their sweet this year will have to make it in before they close Feb. 12.

The hope, though, is that the closure isn't permanent. The couple actively seeks a buyer to take over the business

and keep the legacy going in Plymouth.

Their desire is to sell the business — recipes and all — to a buyer looking to keep the candy shop open. It's all about finding the correct fit, Cindy Smith said.

"I want to make sure it's the right person," she said.

The store is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday until Feb. 12.

# Griffin Claw Brewing Co. uses leftover paczki for new product

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Birmingham's biggest brewery is paying homage to a Polish delicacy with its latest limited offering.

Joining the likes of another local vodka maker, Griffin Claw Brewing Company has distilled a small batch of paczki-flavored vodka to accompany its annual release of a paczki-flavored stout. The vodka, Sin/Repent/Repeat — which shares the same name as the stout — came about after staff had leftover paczki from brewing the beer.

Brewers tossed them into a still with some vodka to create a unique blend perfect for celebrating Fat Tuesday in a few weeks.

"It was just like, 'Yeah, why not,'" said Chris Lasher, marketing director for the brewery. "We touched it up with a little flavoring at the end."

The vodka is made with a variety of paczki from Troy's Polish Market, including strawberry, raspberry and prune. Lasher said they did not have a lot of leftover paczki to use, so the flavor is subtle.

"It's pretty good," he said, adding that notes of vanilla are prevalent in the flavor. "It's not overpowering or anything like that."

It's a limited batch of only a few dozen 750 mL bottles. Bottles can be purchased beginning Feb. 15 at the Birmingham taproom at 575 S. Eton or at the Rochester Hills clubhouse at 2265 Crooks. The cost is \$35, Lasher said.

The batch is inspired by another local distillery known for its Paczki Day vodka.

Detroit City Distillery has brought its Paczki Day Vodka back this year for a fifth time to mark the holiday, which falls on March 1 this year. That product has sold out within minutes in recent years of being available.

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# Westland gym changes lives through boxing

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Boxing isn't just about being able to throw a punch. It's about being able to take one without losing your cool, too.

Most of the kids at Kronk Boxing Gym in Westland aren't trying to be Rocky Balboa. But regardless of whether they're there for boxing lessons or fitness, the life skills they learn in the ring will follow them for the rest of their lives.

"Boxing teaches a lot of discipline," said Chris Raymond, the program's mentor. "If you're going to be a good boxer, you've got to put a lot of time in. You can't pretend to be good at boxing. If you do, you're going to jump in the ring and get your ears boxed off."

Kronk, a well-known name in the boxing community that's churned out a host of world champions over the years, partnered with the Norwayne Boxing Gym in the Jefferson-Barnes Vitality Center, 32150 Dorsey St., in October.

Kids ages 8 to 18 can come to Kronk after school and learn to box from professionals for free. In return, they promise to do well in school and be good at home. Local high school students are on site for free tutoring, too.

"Everybody learns differently, and there's different ways to teach," Zakya Wilson, one of the tutors, said. "Having fun with it is one of my favorite things. Seeing them being excited about learning and finally getting something is the best part for me."

The gym also pays for equipment and, if kids compete, travel to competitions.

Jeff Styres, who owns the gym and started Norwayne Boxing Gym, would like to see Kronk's brand become even more well-known than it already is and impact kids all over metro Detroit. The gym is also looking to start a paid boxing program for adults.

"Kronk is the world's most famous boxing gym of all time," Styres said. "We'd like to restore the glory that Kronk once had and, more importantly, impact more kids than we were before."

Raymond, formerly the chief probation officer for the City of Westland, says one of the ways the gym tries to prepare kids for a future is teaching them to set



Terry Kinney, center, trains boxers in the ring at Kronk Boxing Gym in Westland. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

goals. He likes to get all of the students thinking about where they want to be in five years. The gym encourages kids to consider college, trade school or the military.

"They need to understand how many choices they have," Raymond said. "A lot of times, if they're not taught to think that way early on, then they don't think about their future. It makes life a lot easier if you can goal set."

According to Raymond, those lessons normally translate to more confidence and better grades. Some boxers use the program to get in shape, learn to defend themselves or cross train.

Many of the program's referrals come from the kids themselves. Teens at a variety of skill levels can hop in the ring, duke it out and have fun. A pop in the nose elicits good-spirited laughs from the boxers and their onlookers.

The advanced athletes help out the rookies, and the adult coaches in the room keep things constructive. Kronk looks less like somewhere people work out and more like a place where friends can gather to do something they love.

"It is a family," Styres said. "It's very much a family environment. A lot of the kids come from really horrible backgrounds and many of them have very tough circumstances at home."



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Novi City Council is considering purchasing the land and creating a park at 329 Elm Court, which sits on a small island that juts into Shawood Lake. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Island

Continued from Page 1A

"That has changed with Pavilion Shore Park and the addition to Lake Shore Park. Shawood Lake is the last piece of the puzzle."

Access to the island is in walking distance from both Novi-owned parks, but the private property may be a secret to most city residents.

Elm Court is a short, single-lane road with a few closely spaced homes. At the end of the public road sits the privately-owned parcel of wooded land that hides a short pedestrian bridge that leads to the half-acre island taken up mostly by a 1,500-square-foot four-bedroom home, carport and shed.

Maggie Shaffer, who has lived on Elm Court for two years, was initially excited when she learned the city may be interested in buying the island and its potential park amenities.

"If they build anything, I want a kayak and canoe launch," Shaffer said, but added that considering how much foot traffic would be coming by her home if access remained via Elm Court gives her pause.

"That might drive me crazy," she said. She speculated that visitors would park their vehicles at Lake Shore or Pavilion Shore parking lots and walk over, but parking was one of many concerns broached when discussing a possible purchase during the Jan. 24 meeting.

"This is roughly 5 acres of water and a small island," Mayor Pro-Tem Dave Staudt said. "It's the kind of purchase our city long-term can be proud of. ... The fear is it would cost millions to fully remediate the lake. If there is money better spent, I don't know what it is."

Council members Dave Smith, Ericka Thomas and Laura Marie Casey voiced support for the purchase. Council member Justin Fischer and Mayor Bob Gatt dissented, questioning the value for the majority of Novi's residents.

Five votes are needed to acquire the property.

Fischer said he was concerned with unknown costs related to purchasing and developing the property, including ADA compliance, environmental studies and overall safety.

"We are lacking a viable plan and understanding of what we are buying ourselves," Fischer said. "I have a major concern with potential costs. ... I understand the concern of a dilapidated



The abandoned home would be demolished as part of the project. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

building, but we can't buy every dilapidated building in the city. If that is the only reason or the major reason (for purchasing the property), it's not fair to our other residents to use our money to do this."

Other potential costs could include dredging the lake, estimated to cost \$1.4 million in the first year, which would be necessary for restoration. Additional dredging on a regular basis would be necessary as well, City Manager Pete Auger acknowledged.

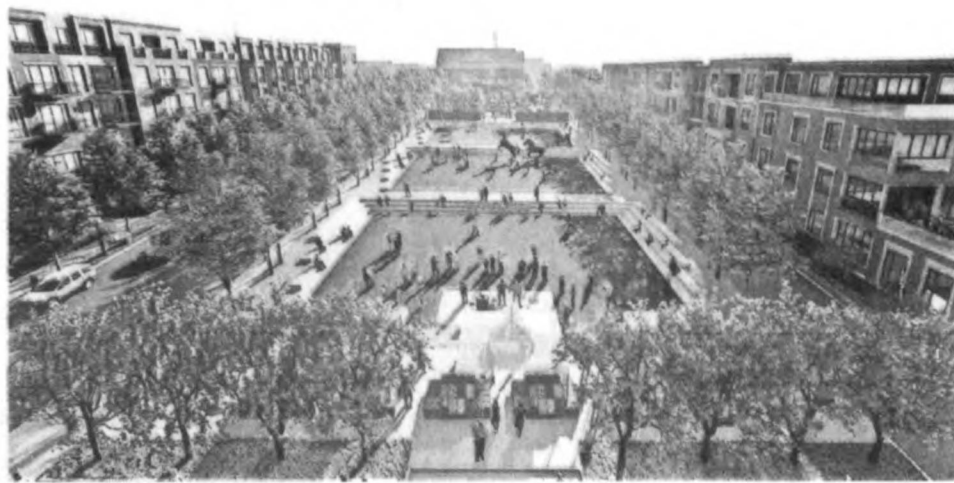
Auger said the body of water is governed by the state and if Novi was going to do something with the lake, they would have to go through a permitting process with EGLE.

"If we don't buy, are we making a mistake?" Gatt said. "I don't know. I can't be in favor for those reasons. It's not a benefit to those who live elsewhere in the city."

Staudt maintained that it would be a benefit, and noted the city spent \$6 million on the ITC Trail that most of Novi's 67,000 residents don't use.

"This is the first step to get the balance of the 20 percent of the lake that we don't own," he said. "The arguments (against the purchase) circumvent the real issue: Are we willing to spend money and invest in a resource that doesn't provide an immediate return to anyone who sits in this room or perhaps any resident in the city of Novi? What we are looking at is investment in the long-term future of the city."

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



A rendering of the heart of the Downs development project. IMAGES COURTESY OF HUNTER PASTEUR HOMES

## Downs

Continued from Page 1A

"To have no vote at all is absolutely unacceptable. I can't tell you how disappointed I am."

Tinberg countered by saying a vote would not be possible because there was not enough time for further discussion among commissioners.

"Then we'll stay longer," Wertheimer said. "The staff told us before the meeting they'd be willing to stay longer."

Tinberg then asked for a motion to table the discussion until the commission's next meeting Feb. 15.

Commissioner Thomas Barry made the motion, which was supported by Commissioner Carol Maise.

In a roll call vote on the motion to table, six commissioners (Tinberg, Vice Chair Steven Kirk, Barry, Paul DeBono, Maise and AnnaMaryLee Vollick) voted yes while commissioners Jeff Gaines, David Hay and William Salliotte, Jr. voted no.

The same 6-3 result followed a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting included a 23-minute presentation by city planner Sally Elmiger, an approximately 70-minute site plan presentation by Hunter Pasteur, a 32-minute period when commissioners asked clarifying questions to the developers and roughly 48 minutes of public comment regarding the site plan.

The development process will not



A rendering of carriage homes Downs developers added to their site plan.

move on to the next step — an official public hearing — until the planning commission votes that the developer's preliminary site plan is "generally complete."

The meeting was held with a hybrid format online via Zoom or in person.

Tinberg explained at the outset of the meeting that commissioners were required to attend the meeting in person, a requirement she said she'd like to see changed given the current spike in COVID-19 cases.

The Downs project was deemed PUD eligible Nov. 2, 2021.

At a meeting Monday, the Northville City Council was expected to consider establishing a Downs Project Advisory Committee intended to plan for and oversee benefits of the Downs redevelopment project.

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

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Cindy Hartwick tends to the roadside memorial in the days following the 2016 death of her son Dequoya Carroll. FILE

## Memorials

Continued from Page 1A

Takesian of nearby Star Jewelry. "It's so devastating, knowing someone died there.

"At the same time, it's heartwarming to know the person meant so much to family and friends that they'll continue to maintain a memorial months after the death."

### Tragedy grants new perspective

Prior to Sept. 3, 2020, emotions tugged at Gabriella Duhn's heart whenever she drove by a roadside memorial.

"I'd pass one and think, 'Oh, how sad,' and then I'd keep on driving," Duhn recalled. "When you don't know the story of the person who died at the site, it's not nearly as impactful as if you knew them."

On that fateful night 16 months ago, Duhn's 20-year-old son, Dominic, was fatally injured on the shoulder of Sheldon Road when he was struck by a hit-and-run driver. Dominic Duhn was a much-loved student at Michigan State University at the time of his death, a graduate of Northville High School and an Eagle Scout.

During a post-funeral luncheon at the Duhns' Northville home, Gabriella Duhn was approached by Tony Agius, the grandfather of Dominic's longtime girlfriend.

"Tony said, 'Would you mind if I put up a cross where Dominic died?' " Duhn recounted. "Honestly, that wasn't even on my radar at the time because I was still in shock. I told him absolutely, I would love it."

The next day Agius and two of his grandsons — all of whom loved Dominic like he was a member of their family, Gabriella said — erected a three-foot-high white cross with "Dominic 2000-2020" etched on its horizontal section.

"I love how he did it. Very simple, nothing crazy," Gabriella said. "People tell us they say a prayer whenever they drive by Dominic's cross."

"I still get emotional when I drive by that spot."

The Duhns' family and friends — as well as complete strangers — periodically place mementos near the memorial: an orange, carved silhouette of a stampeding mustang (Northville High School's mascot), Scouting-related items, a small cross and flowers currently decorate the site.

"One of my husband's friends planted mini sunflowers at the memorial," Gabriella said. "It brings us comfort to know so many people still care."

### 'Every parent's worst nightmare'

Northville resident Paula Kiefer is reminded of the worst day of her life every time she visits her daughter at MSU. Large signs near the Williamston exit of Interstate 96 read: Mitchel A. Kiefer Distracted Driver Awareness Memorial Highway.

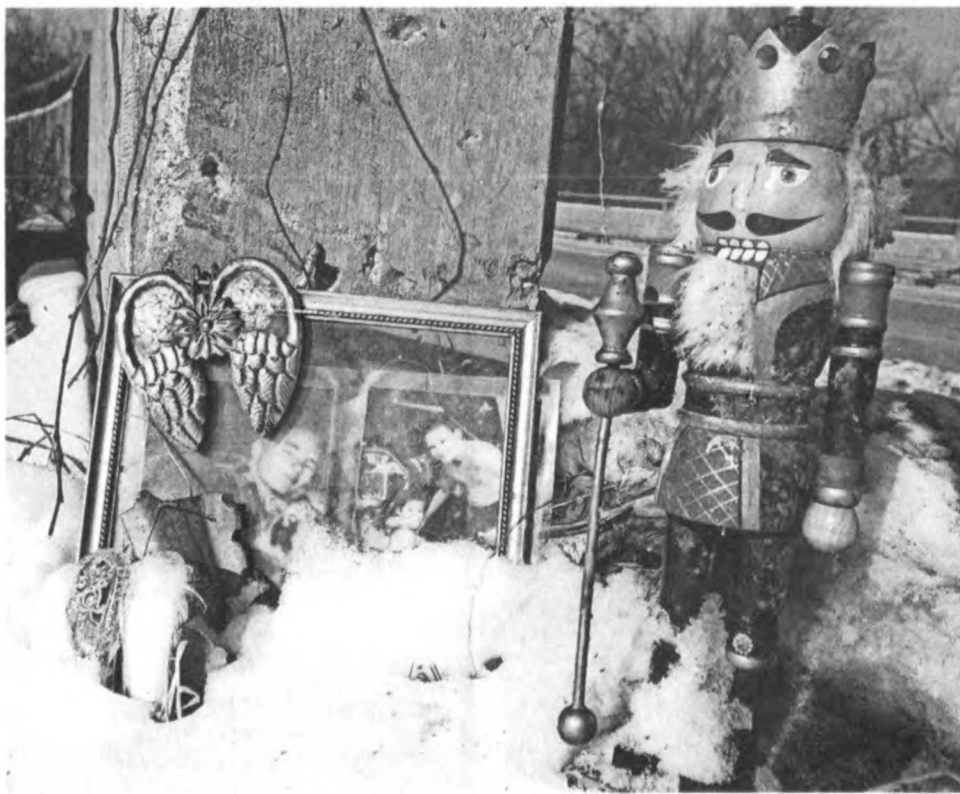
On Sept. 19, 2016, while returning to East Lansing following a brief trip home, Kiefer, a freshman at MSU, was rear-ended by a 21-year-old driver who was posting a message on Instagram while traveling 82 miles per hour, a law enforcement investigation discovered.

The collision pushed Kiefer's vehicle into eastbound traffic and he was killed in a head-on collision.



A memorial was set up at the place along Sheldon Road where Dominic Duhn was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



A nutcracker figure and photos of a car crash victim rest at a five-year-old roadside memorial near the site of Plymouth Township's former Courthouse Grille restaurant.

Kiefer's death fueled his family and friends to mount a campaign to end distracted driving, and a foundation has been created in Kiefer's name.

"Mitchel's death was like every parent's worst nightmare," Paula Kiefer said. "We never even thought about putting together a roadside memorial where he died. We were focused on his gravesite."

During the harrowing days following their son's death, Steven and Paula Kiefer searched for a fitting gravesite for their 18-year-old son. The journey took them to the southernmost acreage of Northville's Rural Hill Cemetery.

Kiefer's gravesite is a testament to the love his family and friends felt for

him. Decorated with memorabilia from his life — a pair of goalie pads he wore in hockey games during the family's time in Luxembourg rest against a nearby tree — the site is a regular visiting place for those who knew him well.

"It's still a sad place," Paula Kiefer said, "but seeing all the memorabilia his friends leave, it warms my heart because it shows that everybody else who knew him thought he was as wonderful as I did. ... Every time I go to Mitchel's gravesite, I can tell somebody else has been there."

### Uncertain future

A few days after Kiefer's death, De-



Two stuffed animals mark the spot for a memorial to a car crash victim on the northwest corner of Ford and Canton Center roads.

quoya Carroll and Mark Wittrock, both 14 and freshmen at Churchill High School in Livonia, were killed when a stolen 1985 Ford Mustang SVO driven by Carroll collided with another vehicle on Plymouth Road near the Courthouse Grille and burst into flames.

In the five-plus years since the teenagers' death, an often-updated memorial has drawn the attention of motorists.

Detroit sports memorabilia, stuffed animals and most recently a nutcracker figure bring color to the space.

The memorial's long-term future is murky. District Capital Detroit, a commercial real estate financing company, is on the verge of turning the property into a luxury apartment development.

When contacted by Hometown Life on Jan. 31, a District Capital Detroit spokesperson politely declined comment on the fate of the memorial.

Regardless of its remaining lifespan, the tribute — like the others in western Wayne County — has no doubt brought at least a small level of comfort to people experiencing the most horrific moments life has to offer.

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





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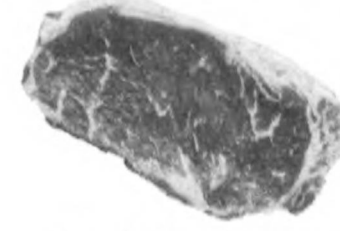
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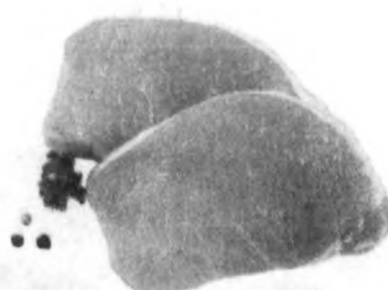
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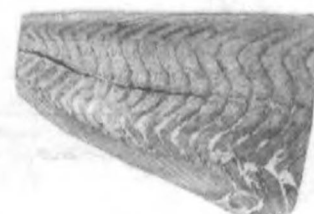
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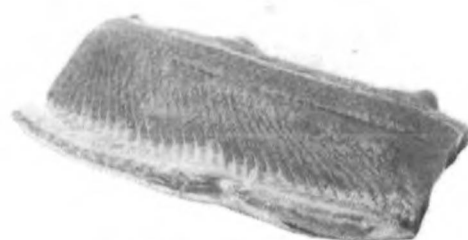
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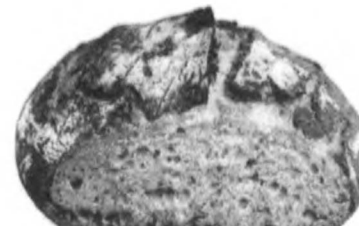
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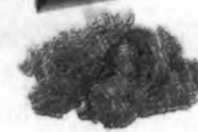


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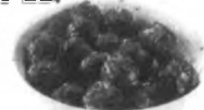
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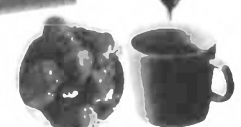


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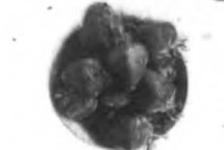
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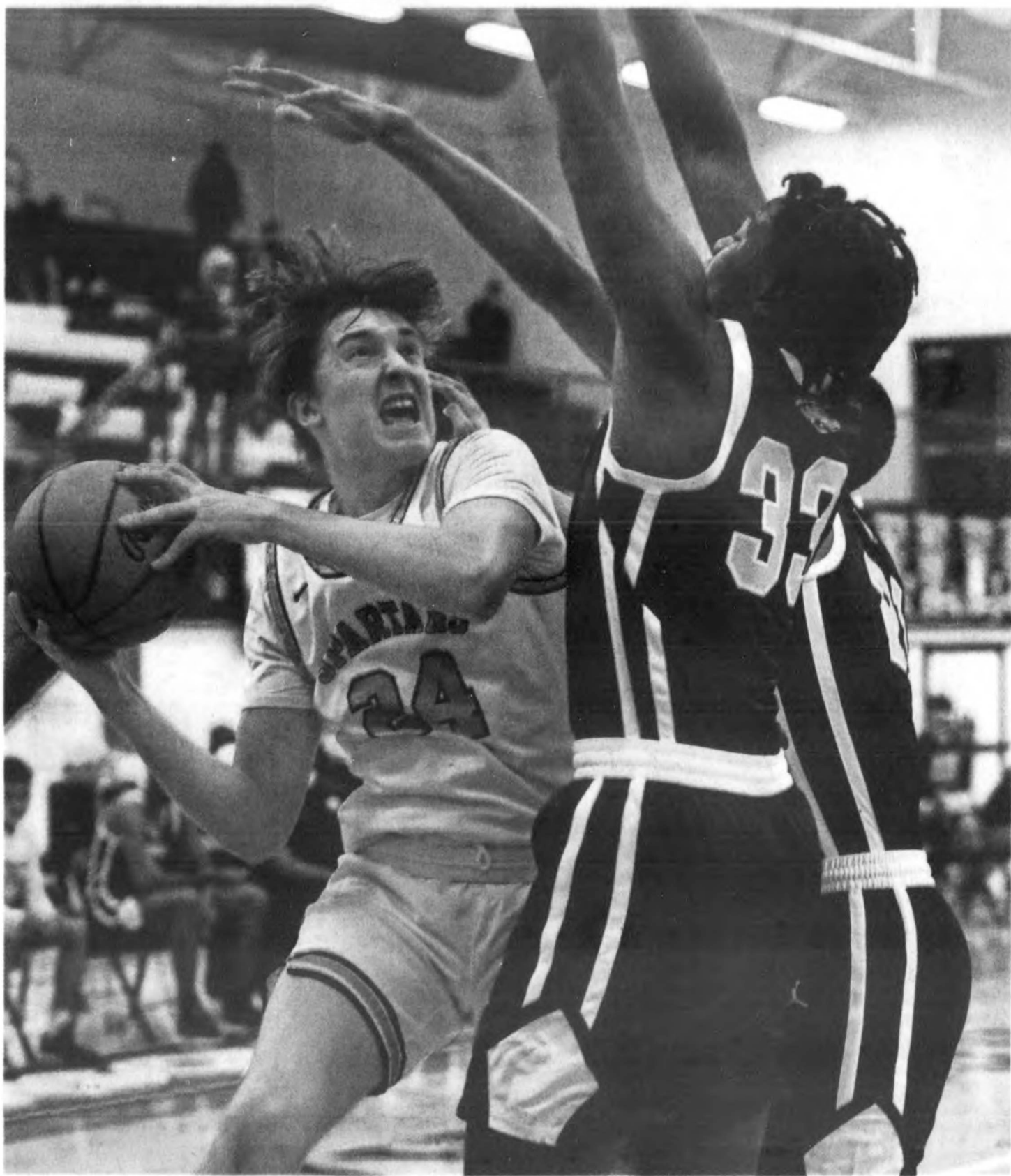


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## SPORTS



Stevenson's Lucas Young looks for an opening against Wayne on "Oxford Strong" night. "It felt like a Friday night," said Stevenson coach Eoghann Stephens, whose Spartans beat Wayne, 62-37. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## 'Oxford Strong' night brings Stevenson community together

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

You would've thought Wayne Memorial was playing a home game with how many spectators sported navy blue and gold shirts, sweatshirts and hats.

But these weren't Zebras fans. This was Livonia Stevenson bringing its community together for one special evening.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association has designated all of February as "Oxford Strong" month to support the survivors, victims and families who

### Performance online

Find Ava Smith's national anthem performance at [HometownLife.com](https://www.hometownlife.com).

were impacted by the Oxford High School school shooting in November.

The Spartans wasted no time in organizing their own "Oxford Strong" night.

On Feb. 1 they welcomed Wayne for much more than your typical Kensington Lakes Activities Association-East matchup.

Present was the pompon team with

Oxford gold bows in their hair. The pep band stationed itself in the entire southwest section of the bleachers inside Jay W. Formsma Memorial Gymnasium. More school spirit was shown by the hockey, football and softball teams all making appearances.

The boys basketball team warmed up in navy blue "Oxford Strong" shirts while the coaches wore similar crew-neck sweatshirts.

The national anthem was even sung by Oxford senior Ava Swiss, whose

See OXFORD STRONG, Page 2B

## Redford Westfield Prep defense puts them among best

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The fourth-ranked Redford Westfield Prep girls basketball team might have the quickest defense in the state.

And the evidence why doesn't come from a stopwatch.

Just know the Warriors are faster than the speed of sound.

Before the public-address announcer of the matchup at Cass Tech was finished declaring the start of the second half, Westfield Prep's Isis Johnson-Musah had intercepted an inbound pass and took off on a fast-break.

Her layup attempt had already left her fingertips by the time the announcer could finally say the last two syllables of the sentence, "Cass Tech's basketball to start the second half."

Now THAT is fast.

And that was just one example of many throughout the Warriors' 82-58 victory.

Their defense has come to play this winter, and Westfield Prep (15-1) hasn't exactly played an easy schedule.

Each night is another battle against a Division I powerhouse for the Class B school with an enrollment of just 505 students, according to the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

The Warriors have already beaten Rochester Hills Stoney Creek, East Kentwood, Ann Arbor Pioneer, Grand Blanc, Southfield A&T, Dexter and Kalamazoo Central, among other big schools, including some from outside of the state.

Their lone loss is against Ypsilanti Arbor Prep, a three-point close-call on Jan. 13, and the D-3 Gators are arguably the best team in the state when four-star Texas A&M signee Mya Petticord is on the floor.

The Warriors should turn heads once the D-2 playoffs start. They're battle-tested, and the Technicians were the latest victims of their hard-nosed defense.

"Our main thing is defense, defense," coach Doc Cornell said. "On any night you can have a good offensive night, but there should never be an off defensive night. That's just all heart and effort, so that's what I preach. Our defense is the main thing first and foremost."

Good luck getting the ball inbounded from the baseline.

The Warriors, led by guards Shamyia Ried, Johnson-Musah, Layla Marshall and Asia Cochran, are just too scrappy.

The second a guard catches a pass, they've already swarmed her with a

See DEFENSE, Page 2B

## Brother Rice ends losing streak at Detroit U-D Jesuit

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Three men wearing neon yellow vests that had "Detroit U-D Jesuit Dads' Club" printed on the back made a makeshift barricade for the Brother Rice boys basketball team following the Jan. 29 game.

The men were keeping what fans re-

mained from the Cubs' student section away from the Warriors, who were walking back into the locker room to gather their belongings and head home.

But, once the Warriors finally got in there, it took no time at all for them to start spraying fourth-year coach Rick Palmer with water.

They were celebrating their 67-42 thumping of the Cubs.

Wait, who celebrates their regular-season wins like that?

Rice (8-3) hadn't beaten U-D Jesuit since Feb. 10, 2015. The win snapped a 15-game losing streak, which counts Catholic League-Central games, CHSL tournament matchups and one district playoff tilt.

That's right. The Warriors hadn't beaten the Cubs in almost seven years.

"We're going to enjoy wins. Winning is really hard," said Palmer, whose gray track jacket had blotches of water spots all over. "They had a good time in that locker room, especially after coming off two (CHSL) losses. We needed that. Tonight, we were the hungrier team, and we needed to be, coming off of two

See BROTHER RICE, Page 7B



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## Defense

Continued from Page 1B

double team. If the guard can manage to get a dribble off before turning it over, consider that a win for the offense. It doesn't happen too often.

"Our defense just looks great because most of these teams are not like on a higher level like most teams," said Johnson-Musah, who scored a team-high 21 points. "Once we play the better teams in the playoffs, we're going to have to tighten up our defense more. But, yeah, it's definitely fun. It's fun when refs don't call fouls a lot. It's definitely fun playing (hard-nosed) like that."

Conditioning has been key for the Warriors, who make wholesale hockey line-like changes to keep their players fresh. There's not a player on their bench who wouldn't start for another smaller school in the state.

Cornell subs in a girl, she plays all-out until she's gassed and then he brings in a fresh replacement.

It's relentless basketball for 32 minutes.

With the regular season coming to a close, he admits it's tough keeping his players committed to running in practice. But he reminds them it'll pay off in March.

"The thing is we want to be in condition because this is the part of the season where you can get lackadaisical," the third-year coach said. "This is the part of the season where you can get bored because of the time in between games. We've just got to keep conditioning and running as much as possible and doing competitive things on the days we're off to keep them in game mode."

"With those big layoffs, you've got to have something to keep them going and keep them in conditioning. That's the main thing is staying in conditioning and staying in shape. That's why we're always mimicking game play in practice to keep their minds (ready)."

Marshall added 20 points for the Warriors, which included making four 3-pointers, while Reid contributed 15 points and Cochran had nine.

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsom-brandonj.



Redford Westfield Prep's Shamyra Reid goes up for a basket against Cass Tech.  
PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Redford Westfield Prep's Layla Marshall scraps for the ball.



Redford Westfield Prep's Isis Johnson Musah shoots Feb. 4 at Cass Tech.



Stevenson's Dylan McGlinch takes a shot off the drive against a Wayne defender.  
PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Spartan Kenoly Jones tries to sneak a basket past two Wayne Memorial players.

## Oxford Strong

Continued from Page 1B

family is from Livonia (find the video of Ava's performance online at hometown-life.com).

There were raffles, merchandise purchases and donations made. The money raised from the event will be donated to the Oxford Memorial and Victims Fund.

Sometimes it takes a tragedy to bring a community closer together. There definitely was a sense of family and brotherhood throughout the night.

"It felt like a Friday night," said Stevenson coach Eoghann Stephens, whose Spartans beat Wayne, 62-37. "We just told them before the game, 'What better place to be? You're here with our team. We've got the Stevenson community here. This is what you dream about when you play basketball. We have a packed house in the stands, and you get

to play in front of them.' So I just told them to not waste the opportunity and show everyone who we are."

It was another second-half surge for the Spartans, who improved to 8-4 overall and 6-2 in the East. Many nights have seen them stumble through the opening half only to storm back with a giant third quarter. Tuesday was no different.

Senior Kenly Jones picked up his third foul just nine minutes into the game, so Stevenson was without its best shooter for almost the entire second quarter.

When the 5-foot-11 guard checked back in after halftime, he helped the offense find its rhythm with a 24-point third quarter.

The Spartans extended a one-point halftime lead with a 20-4 run that saw them bury five 3-pointers, including three from Jones, who scored eight points during the scoring spree. Mark Stein nailed the other two from downtown during the stretch, which included

him making a buzzer-beater that gave his team a 45-31 lead entering the fourth.

"Over the course of different games, I've realized not to let it (foul trouble and slow starts) get to my head," said Jones, who scored 15 of his team-high 16 points in the second half. "I just stayed locked in and helped my teammates by cheering them on. I knew I was going to get back in soon because the coaches kept on telling me that and stuff, so I knew I was good."

Added Stephens: "It's tough (having Jones sit on the bench) because he gets a lot of shots, and he creates a lot of opportunities for other people because of how offensively strong he is. He opens up a lot of other people."

Jones, who also scored the first four points of the fourth, said a conversation with a teammate inspired him to keep his head up while sitting out.

"One of my teammates, Joey Harper, No. 3, just told me, 'Just turn up,' and I

was like, 'Alright,' and I just let it come to a flow," Jones said. "I just started shooting, and they just started going in."

In the waning moments, Nate Curtis scored six-straight to give Stevenson a 27-point lead, its largest of the night.

Stein finished with 11 points for the Spartans, who also got 10 from Radu Iacoban, seven from Dylan McGlinch and six apiece from Curtis and Lucas Young.

Keith Weight, a 6-7 center, led Wayne (2-8, 1-7) with 16 points, most of which came in the paint and under the basket. Travon Stevenson added six points, followed by Zavion Ayler with five.

"The first half was a little iffy, but in the second half, we did show them who we are," Stephens said. "We work them hard in practice, and we talk about how we've got to be able to play every quarter. I think we showed we're not tired. We can battle with anybody."

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Twitter: @folsombrandonj.



# Our top 5 girls basketball teams: Week 4

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Only three weeks of the regular season are left until the district tournament begins.

Conference races are coming to a close and league tournaments are about to be seeded. It's about to get really fun around the state over the next two months.

Let's take a look at who the best teams are in western metro Detroit as the final days of the season fall off the calendar.

Note: These records are based on results from before Feb. 6.

## 1. Redford Westfield Prep (15-1) (Last week: No. 1)

It wouldn't be a surprise if the Warriors win a state title. With Shanya Reid, Isis Johnson-Musah, Laylah Marshall and Asia Cochran, they're pretty great.

But when you factor the talented on the rest of their roster, Westfield Prep looks unstoppable. They've bullied Class A school after Class A school week in and week out.

They're ranked No. 4 by the Associated Press, which is a travesty. But that's likely because they've only been around at an elite level for the past three seasons. They should turn heads in the playoffs in March.

## 2. Farmington Hills Mercy (12-2, 8-1 CHSL-Central) (Last week: No. 2)

Thanks to a snow day, the Marlins played just one league game last week. That means Dearborn Divine Child caught up with them in the Catholic League-Central standings.

So both squads are tied for first place. And both squads have just Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard left on their schedule. And both squads barely got past the Irish in earlier matchups this winter.

Mercy beat Gabriel Richard 34-33 on Jan. 18, while Divine Child beat the Irish 48-43 one week later. The division race is going to be a nail-biter down the stretch.

## 3. Wayne Memorial (13-1, 10-0 KLAA-East) (Last week: No. 3)

The Zebras must win only one of their next four Kensington Lakes Activities Association-East games in the upcoming two weeks to win its sixth-straight division title.

It'll win all four of the games, though, because they were No. 10 in Division I in last week's AP poll.

They're battle-tested. They got past their final hurdle on Friday, beating Livonia Franklin on the road, the only true team that stood a chance at beating them.

They just need to keep winning and then wait to see who they draw from the West for the league championship game.

## 4. South Lyon East (11-2, 9-0 LVC) (Last week: No. 4)

Right now, the Cougars can afford to lose two of their next six games and still repeat as the Lakes Valley Conference champions.

That's a good place to be in as we head down the stretch. Why? Injuries or a COVID-19 layoff could arise at any moment.

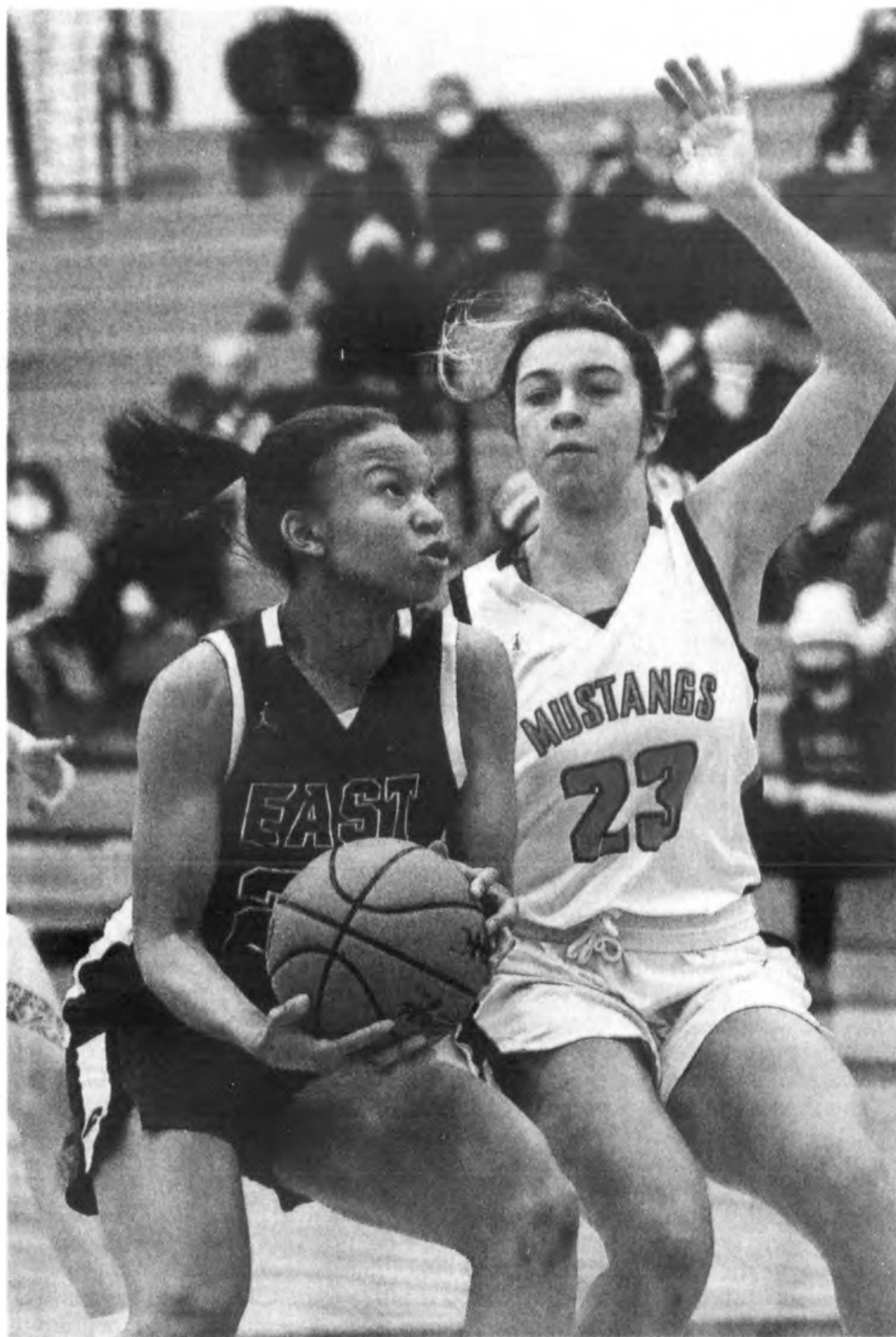
Just ask Ypsilanti Arbor Prep, which just dropped its first game of the season because of these very reasons. East now has breathing room should a setback try to halt their run for another league title.

## 5. Plymouth Christian Academy (12-3, 5-0 MIAC) (Last Week: Unranked)

With Livonia Franklin losing its third KLAA-East game, this No. 5 spot was a coin flip between the Eagles and Birmingham Seaholm, which is 11-3 overall and 9-0 in the Oakland Activities Association-Blue.

But PCA got the nod because its strength of schedule was better, and it's blitzing through its conference as well right now. Plus, there might not be a better senior leader out there than Anna Fernandez, the Eagles' 1,000-career point scorer.

In the hunt (in no particular order): Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills Marian, Birmingham Groves Bir-



South Lyon East's Taylor Anderson attacks the basket during Northville's girls basketball holiday tournament Dec. 28. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

mingham Seaholm, Birmingham Detroit Country Day, Livonia Clarenceville, Milford, Northville, Plymouth Christian Academy, Wixom St. Catherine, White Lake Lakeland.

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsom-brandonj.

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# Northville hockey finds mojo entering postseason

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Northville hockey team couldn't have picked a better time to return to full strength.

The Mustangs have taken their lumps all winter.

They've had players out because of COVID-19 protocols. Others have missed because of the flu. And, of course, injuries have kept some skaters off the ice as well.

Being shorthanded has kept them under a .500 winning percentage.

Saturday was the first time all season (yes, seriously) Northville had its entire roster available for game day.

And the Mustangs needed it.

They traveled to Mt. Clemens Ice Arena to take on L'Anse Creuse Unified, a squad just one day removed from repeating as the Macomb Area Conference-Red champions.

For those unaware, the MAC-Red is the toughest division in all of Macomb County. Yes, Northville benefited from LCU being a little sluggish from celebrating a conference title the night before. Plus, it was senior night at its arena. But LCU didn't back down from the fight. In fact, LCU scored the first two goals, putting the Mustangs in a major hole as the second period was waning.

But, despite the deficit, coach Gordie Brown thought Northville was playing some of its best hockey yet. So the Mustangs kept chipping away until Connor Vissotski pushed in a pair of goals in the third to give them the lead.

And then Zach Holstad sauced in an empty-netter from 100 feet away to ensure them the 5-3 comeback win.

"They're (LCU) probably coming off of being tired, I imagine, and let's be honest: We've got to take advantage of it," Brown said. "They probably played late last night. Senior night. They win everything. They were probably super high (emotionally) last night and didn't sleep well. And now they're back, and we used it against them a little bit."

"But I told our guys that we were playing well. That was probably the most scoring opportunities that we've had in the first period all year. I said we've just got to keep chipping, we've got to keep going and we'll get our op-



Northville goalie Dylan Eliason stops a shot against L'Anse Creuse Unified on Feb. 5 at Mt. Clemens Ice Arena.  
BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

portunities. Don't put your head down and don't take a penalty. They put their head down, and they kept going. That energy, I think you could see, kept us in it during the third."

Tommy Loebach and Matthew Heitzler bookended the end of the second and beginning of the third with goals to knot the score at 2 apiece.

LCU's Cade Ringstad scored his second goal seven minutes into the third to put his team back ahead, 3-2.

And then the Mustangs controlled the play the rest of the evening.

Vissotski somehow pushed in a goal in an absolute scrum off a rebound to tie it at 3 with 8:39 left.

Three minutes later, Vissotski did it again, pushing in another rebound for a score, only this time the scrum was

much larger, despite LCU being a man down because of a penalty.

The scrum was so messy, in fact, that the forward lost his stick in the net after his shot, so he wound up celebrating in the west end of the arena without it.

"We're taught by Coach Gordie to crash the net. It pays off," the sophomore said. "When you crash the net, you've got three guys at the net, and it's hard for the goalie to save it. My line, I just tell them every time, 'Crash the net!' You never know what's going to happen."

Added Brown: "The guys have bought into rebounds at the net. Obviously, they had a really good goalie (Frank Boskovich), and he didn't let anything clean in all night. ... I think we out-heavied them a little more at the net."

It's a little too late for Northville (9-11-1, 1-2-1 KLA-A-Gold) to claw back into the division race with only four games left, including just one game against a Gold opponent.

But the Mustangs have won three straight. Plus, they're finally healthy. With the playoffs only three weeks away, they're putting it all together at the right time.

"(We have) a lot of mojo right now," Vissotski said. "We're 5-1 in the last six, so we're turning it around and playing good against good teams. I think we're going to go pretty far if we keep playing like we did today."

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsom-brandonj.

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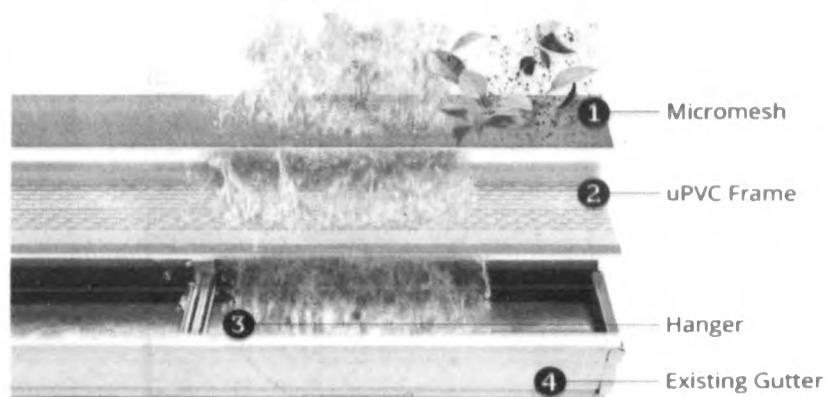
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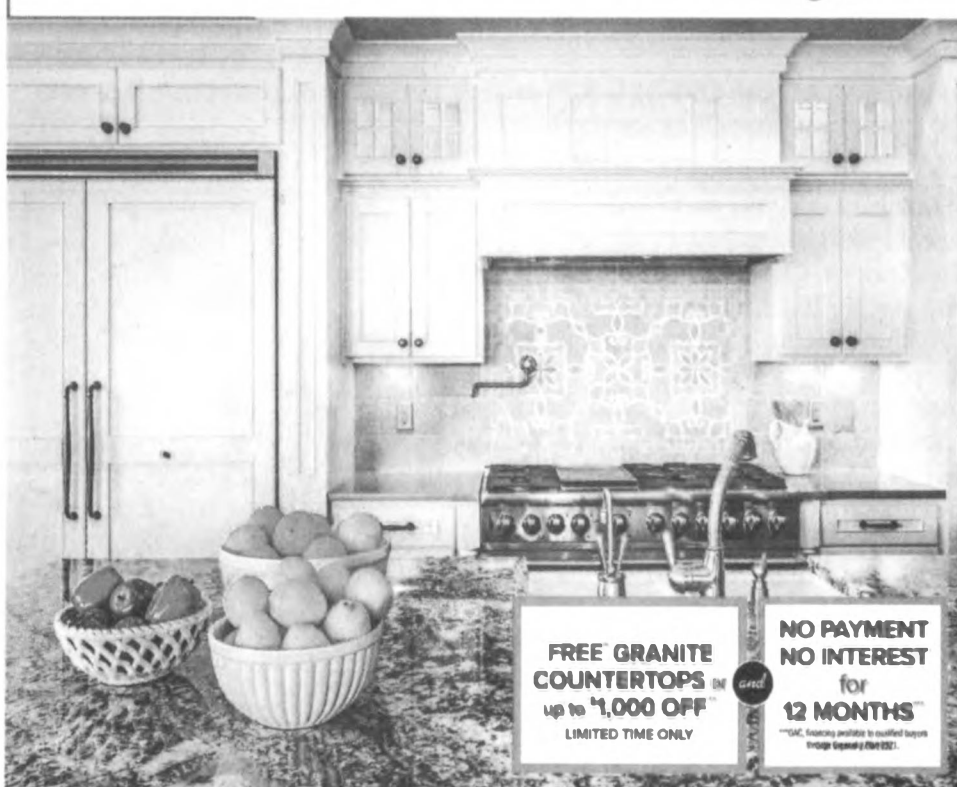
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# CMU-bound lineman helps Hartland stay in KLAA West basketball race

Bill Khan Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

CANTON — Payton Pyle won't play basketball in college, but his time playing hoops for Hartland should benefit him in his chosen sport.

Pyle will be an offensive lineman on the Central Michigan University football team as a preferred walk-on.

While there aren't many comparable situations in basketball to what Pyle encounters battling with other big guys in the trenches, some of the skills needed on the court transfer well to the football field.

"It really helps with footwork, I noticed," Pyle said. "The more I play basketball, the faster I am with my feet. As a lineman, you need fast feet to get back and block the guy in front of you. It makes me more agile. It's definitely a boost for football."

Before Pyle hangs up his basketball shoes for good, he's providing an imposing presence in the paint for the Eagles at 6-foot-6, 315 pounds as well as a nice shooting touch for a big man.

Pyle came off the bench to guard Salem's top player and scored seven points in Hartland's 47-39 victory over the Rocks Friday night.

Ashton Wheeler, a 6-4 senior, scored eight of Salem's 10 points in the first quarter. With Pyle assigned to impede his path to the basket, Wheeler had only five points over the next 23 minutes before getting two baskets in the final minute after Hartland built a nine-point lead.

"We just needed a big guy on him, because he was a big guy," said Pyle, a three-year starter on Hartland's offensive line. "With my stature, it was good to defend him. It was probably the better matchup there."

"I'm very familiar with the position. I also did it with Danny Honkala at Howell. He's another big guy I guard most of the time."

Hartland coach Kevin Blouin said Pyle brings more to the court than just a large frame.

"He's extremely smart," Blouin said. "He has a high, high aptitude for the game of basketball. He just has a calm presence out there. When he plays within himself, like he did tonight, he can really do a lot of good things."

There aren't many offensive linemen on varsity basketball rosters, but two of the best to come out of Michigan were outstanding basketball players in high school.

Before becoming an All-Pro in the NFL, Jon Runyan was an all-state basketball player at Flint Carman-



Hartland's Payton Pyle drives past Salem's Ashton Wheeler for two of his seven points during the Eagles' 47-39 victory Feb. 4. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

Ainsworth in 1991-92. Jake Long, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2008 draft, was an all-league basketball player at Lapeer East.

Pyle had a key basket in the fourth quarter, putting in a rebound to tie the game 29-29.

"This season I haven't been playing as much as I wanted to," he said. "It was good to get in and get some more shots up. They were falling. My confidence was boosted the more I hit them."

The victory kept Hartland one game behind Canton in the race for the KLAA West championship. The Eagles improved to 11-2 overall, 8-1 in the division. Canton is 9-0 in the division.

Hartland led 14-10 after one quarter and 18-15 at halftime.

Salem took its first lead since midway through the first quarter at 25-23 with 1:09 left in the third quarter.

The Rocks were leading 31-30 when Carson Conrad hit a 3-pointer from the right corner to give Hartland the lead for good at 33-31 with 3:18 remaining in the game.

"I haven't been shooting well from the three this year," said Conrad, who finished with 13 points. "During the moment, Ryan (Bohlen) kind of drove and I was sitting corner. I realized my guy helped; he's kind of a shot blocker. So, I threw it up and it went well. It felt big, for sure."

From there, Bohlen and Gannon Grundman helped seal the victory. Grundman scored five of his 10 points in the final 2:41 and Bohlen was 6-for-6 from the line in the fourth quarter, finishing with 13 points.

"We just stayed poised," Blouin said. "It was a very up-and-down physical game. I really like how the guys responded tonight, just played through a lot of adversity."

"Salem did a great job of never giving an inch. We were able to hit some timely shots that helped us out in the third and fourth, mainly the fourth quarter."

The Eagles will travel to third-place Howell (7-2) at 7 p.m. Tuesday to begin a three-game stretch of road games against its two biggest rivals and Canton.

Wheeler had 17 points for Salem.

## Obituaries

To place an ad, call 586-826-7171 or visit [mideathnotices.com/place.php](http://mideathnotices.com/place.php)

### Hazel Ruth Dust

Hazel Ruth Dust was born in the home of her parents Robert and Ruth Stone in Bloomingdale, Michigan on October 4, 1939. She passed away on January 27, 2022, age 82.

We have been honored and privileged to have shared our lives with such a wonderful person as Hazel.

Beloved and cherished wife to Dennis Dust for over 44 years; proud mother to Scott (Sharon) Moser and David (Janice) Moser; adoring grandmother to Lauren (Nolan) Earl, Lyndsay (Brady) Mahar, Maddison Moser and William Gables; great grandmother to Wendell Earl.

Survived also by her sisters, Delores (Richard) Miniati, and Sharon (David) Adams; brother, Karl (Joyce) Stone. Also many, many nieces and nephews.

Hazel's greatest enjoyment was being able to retire when her first granddaughter, Lauren, was born and be actively involved as all 3 granddaughters grew up, graduated from college, two got married and one is finishing law school. To quote her daughter-in-law, Sharon, "We lost a wonderful woman. She would do anything for her family and friends. She loved to bake for all of us especially. She was the best supporter at her three granddaughter's events....She came to every volleyball game, ski race, dance, softball game, skating, chorus, band. She was the best grandma and babysitter with ice cream at Ozzie's, after school treats, lots of chocolate." There were many cookies and cinnamon rolls for "the team".

Hazel also felt so lucky to have been able to travel extensively, sometimes for granddaughter's tournaments, ski vacations out west, east, or visiting friends in far-away locations like Alaska, Hawaii, Switzerland and Amsterdam were successful bucket list visits.

Hazel was admired and loved by her family and friends and will be terribly missed. We were so honored to have you in our lives and will love you forever!

Per Hazel's wishes, there will be no memorial service, only a private family life celebration in the Spring.

Donations in her name may be made to Alzheimer's Association, 25200 Telegraph Rd., Suite 100, Southfield, Mi. 48033



### Earl A. Todd

NOVI - Earl A. Todd, passed unexpectedly on Saturday, January 29, 2022 in Novi at the age of 88. Mr. Todd leaves behind his beloved wife Celia of 67 years, his loving children; Gregory (JoAnn) Todd, Andrea (Daniel) Wildes, Felicia (Kevin) Kucera, and the late Joseph Todd; his dear grandchildren; Audrey Kendrick, Geoffrey Todd, Joel Todd, Andrew Todd (Erin), Gabrielle Kucera, and Jason Kucera.

Earl was a retired brick mason. He proudly served in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He was an accomplished private pilot.

Earl was most proud of his grandchildren. He had a special place in his heart for all of them.

He was a friend to all animals. He never met a cat he didn't like.

There will be no services at this time. Online condolences to [www.obriensullivanfuneralhome.com](http://www.obriensullivanfuneralhome.com)



Hartland's Jack Paweski drives to the net for one of his four goals in a 7-1 victory over Livonia Churchill on Monday. Paweski now has 15 goals and 21 assists in 21 games this season. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

## Paweski's 4 goals help Hartland earn hockey title

Bill Khan Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HARTLAND — After three years of trying to persuade Jack Paweski to play hockey for Hartland High School, it looked like a lost cause for coach Rick Gadwa.

Paweski, who just completed his junior year at Hartland, left in June to play hockey in Connecticut.

The change of scenery wasn't going well, so Paweski returned home after two months and sent Gadwa a text inquiring about playing for the Eagles.

"He's been tooling around in Triple-A his whole life," Gadwa said. "He thought it was a good opportunity for him to come in and play a good role for us. He's obviously done that."

Paweski has been everything Gadwa hoped he could be, even before he scored four goals and one assist in a 7-1 victory over Livonia Churchill Monday at Hartland Sports Center.

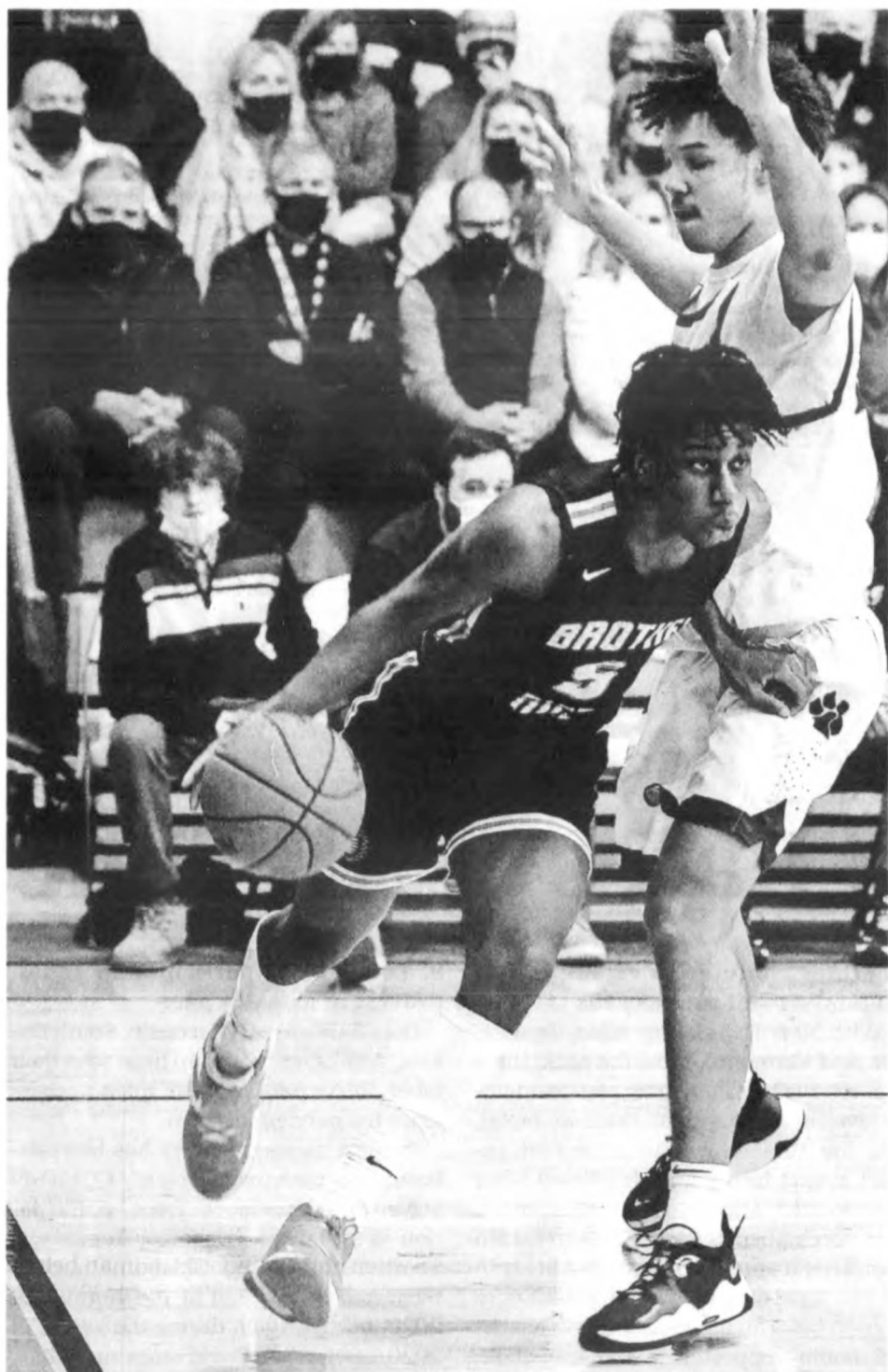
With his fifth multi-goal game and first hat trick of the season, Paweski boosted his totals to 15 goals and 21 assists in 21 games. He's second on the team in goals and tied for first in scoring with Ashton Trombley.

"The great thing about Jack is he's a 200-foot player," Gadwa said. "He plays well in the defensive zone. He does his job all the way up and down the ice, and he's rewarded with goals. He's got junior

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Brother Rice's Johnathan Blackwell dribbles against Detroit U-D Jesuit.  
PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Brother Rice

Continued from Page 1B

losses. We might play them one or two more times, so whether you win by two or 30, you've just got to keep moving on."

And that just speaks to how tough the Central is right now.

When league play started, all five schools — Rice, U-D Jesuit, Orchard Lake St. Mary's, Detroit Catholic Central and Warre DeLaSalle — were ranked in the top 10 of The D Zone 100 as well as all the other polls around the state.

For the last three weeks, it's just been a conga line of each team taking turns in first place of the standings. Rice is one of the best teams in the state, regardless of division, and it's just 2-3 in its conference. Yet both of its wins, a buzzer-beater against St. Mary's and Friday's losing streak-snapper, were against the No. 1 team in the league.

"I think we were No. 1 when we got beat," Palmer said. "This league is really good. All five teams, at any one night, can win. Our two games against U-D were lopsided (the Cubs won 61-42 on Jan. 11), but they might've been the only two non-one-possession games. ...

"Every night in our league, two teams a night have to lose. You lose one or two, everybody's still good. We took it to them, but they did the same thing to us 17 days ago. And they're going to do it to somebody next week, and we've got to turn the page because we've got St. Mary's next week."

To finally wipe the slate clean with U-D Jesuit, it took a total team effort from Rice, with a great effort from both its starters and its key bench guys.

First, it was three-star recruit Johnathan Blackwell igniting the offense. The guard scored 11 of Rice's 22 points in the first quarter, making five field goals, which included him scoring six-straight points off an alley-oop from Xavier Thomas, cashing in on a back cut to the hoop and scoring at the rim off a dribble drive.

All 13 of his points came in the first half, as U-D Jesuit looked to take away his scoring in the second half.

"I just knew I had to set the tempo for my team because I'm a leader, captain and the point guard," Blackwell said of giving Rice a 22-9 lead to open the game. "Just set the tempo, coming out and scoring. Not being passive, being aggressive the whole time. I knew coming out of the second half that they were going to key in on me, so I just made the right passes and controlled the tempo."

Also helping in the first half was Keithan Gilmore, who pulled down rebound after rebound, scored on put-back attempts in the paint and put together one of his best performances of the season. The center posted eight points on four baskets in the first half and finished with 12 in all.



Brother Rice's Xavier Thomas shoots.

The Warriors stayed one step ahead of the Cubs for the entire second half, playing calmly while holding onto their big lead.

Four-star forward Curtis Williams scored 15 of his team-best 19 in the third quarter, which included him burying a 3-pointer from the corner at the buzzer.

Thomas, who scored eight points, brought the ball up the floor against U-D Jesuit's full-court press break. He had no issues with turnovers, nor did he ever panic.

Warren Marshall came off the bench and scored eight of his 11 points. His final bucket gave Rice a 27-point lead, allowing Palmer to sub out his entire lineup for backups with 2:20 remaining.

"Everyone played really well tonight. We're coming. We're improving," Palmer said. "I said to our team before the game, watching the film of our game the last time we played them, I knew coming into this game we had improved a great deal. Really proud. Really good program win. None of the guys in that locker room had beaten them before. Getting over this hump for us is big psychologically and, hopefully, this can take us on a run."

With U-D Jesuit out of the way, Rice still has rematches with St. Mary's, Catholic Central, and De La Salle ahead.

Hopefully, for the Warriors' sake, that means Palmer will be getting doused with water a few more times.

"That felt good," Blackwell said. "We haven't done that in a couple of games, so it felt good to get coach. ... It feels good, just getting a win and shutting the crowd down. Coming off of three (CHSL) losses, we're just bouncing back. Coming in here, turning the page and having the short-term memory loss."

"We're just going to keep going on a roll."

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsombrandonj.



Hartland's Braden Pietila brings the puck up the ice while pursued by Churchill's Chase Adams during the Eagles' 7-1 victory Jan. 31.  
PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

## Title

Continued from Page 6B

hockey written all over him. We're going to help get him there, too."

Hartland's reputation for sending players to the junior and college ranks was a selling point as Paweski finally chose to play for the Eagles.

"Coach Gadwa talked to me a lot and told me what's good about it," Paweski said. "A bunch of other guys who played before said how good it is."

"It's been great, just all the guys, practicing every day, getting better, working on your shot and skating, all that. I've been pretty much Triple-A my whole life, but it's the best decision I made to come out here and play."

Paweski's original reluctance to playing high school hockey as a freshman was due to his size. At 5-foot-2 in ninth grade, "I was the smallest kid in the grade," said Paweski, who is now 5-11. "Everyone's older, so you don't want to play then."

Hartland needed to win or tie Monday's game to earn a berth in the KLAA championship game against Livonia Stevenson Feb. 11 at Eddie Edgar Ice Arena.

Outstanding Churchill goaltender Ryan Price was the biggest roadblock to clinching the KLAA West for the Eagles, but they came out strong with three goals in the first 9 minutes, 55 seconds.

Sean Hastings opened the scoring 57 seconds into the game and Paweski's first two goals made it 3-0 after one period.

Paweski set up Hartland's fourth goal by winning a faceoff and sliding the puck in front of the net to Brendan Pietila for a shorthanded goal at 5:35 of the second. Pietila set up three of Pa-



Hartland goalie Cole Gumiela makes a save against Churchill.

weski's goals.

Churchill's only goal, the team-leading 21st of the season by Dom Krupinski, cut Hartland's lead to 4-1 at 8:56 of the second.

Paweski got his hat trick and Trombley scored a highly skilled goal with a shot between his legs to extend Hartland's lead to 6-1 through two periods. Paweski's fourth goal with 4:43 left in the game was the only tally of the third period.

Hartland outshot Churchill, 45-18.

After back-to-back losses left Hartland 2-2 in the KLAA West, the Eagles won their final six league games to edge Brighton (7-2-1) for first place.

"We like competing for things," Gadwa said. "It's one of our goals to compete for that league championship with hardware on the line. It models just what you would have in a playoff."

Before facing Stevenson, Hartland will take on Riverview Gabriel Richard at 6:40 p.m. Friday and Cleveland St. Ignatius at 7:40 p.m. Saturday in the MIHL Showcase in Trenton.

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# 12 States Hit Their Lowest Unemployment Rates of All Time

By ZipRecruiter.com

Last week's State Employment and Unemployment report provides much-needed detail to supplement the monthly jobs report and underscores what an unusual economic recovery this has been so far.

12 states have now recovered all of the jobs lost at the start of the pandemic. And 22 states are back to their pre-pandemic unemployment rates, with twelve at their lowest rates of all time. And yet labor force participation has been slow to recover in the vast majority of states, with only 4 states back at pre-pandemic participation rates.

**1. Utah leads the economic recovery with a working population that is 4% larger than before the pandemic, while Hawaii's lags behind, 7.3% smaller, due to slow recovery in leisure and hospitality industry**

Employment is up at least 2% compared to pre-pandemic levels in Utah (4.0%), Arizona (2.8%), Idaho (2.4%), Oregon (2.3%), and South Dakota (2.0%), but still down nearly 7% in Hawaii, Connecticut, and Vermont.

South Dakota was the first state to recover the jobs lost early in the pandemic as early as December 2020. The state's employed population has since grown and is now almost 9,000 larger than in February 2020.

**2. States continue to establish new unemployment rate records**

With New Hampshire, Ohio, Tennessee, and Vermont joining the pack, there are now 22 states with pre-pandemic-level unemployment rates or better. The low unemployment rates both reflect robust hiring and depressed labor force participation.

In December, twelve states recorded their lowest unemployment rates in history. The rapid drop in unemployment rates is great news for unemployed people, who are finding opportunity and transitioning to employment at an unusually rapid pace. But it has quickly altered the hiring conditions for employers, many of whom are struggling to find the talent they need to solve their staffing shortages.

**3. Labor force participation is improving at a snail's pace**

Only four states (Wisconsin, South Dakota, Alaska, and Oregon) have seen their labor force participation rates recover since the pandemic began.

In most states, recovery has been delayed by each subsequent COVID-19 wave. In fact, labor force participation in Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Oklahoma initially recovered by the end of the summer of 2020, but fell again during the winter of 2020/2021, when Covid cases surged.

Vermont and Nevada are the farthest from recovery, with participation rates down 4.8 and 4.2 percentage points, respectively. Overall nationwide, participation is only down 1.5 percentage points, on average.



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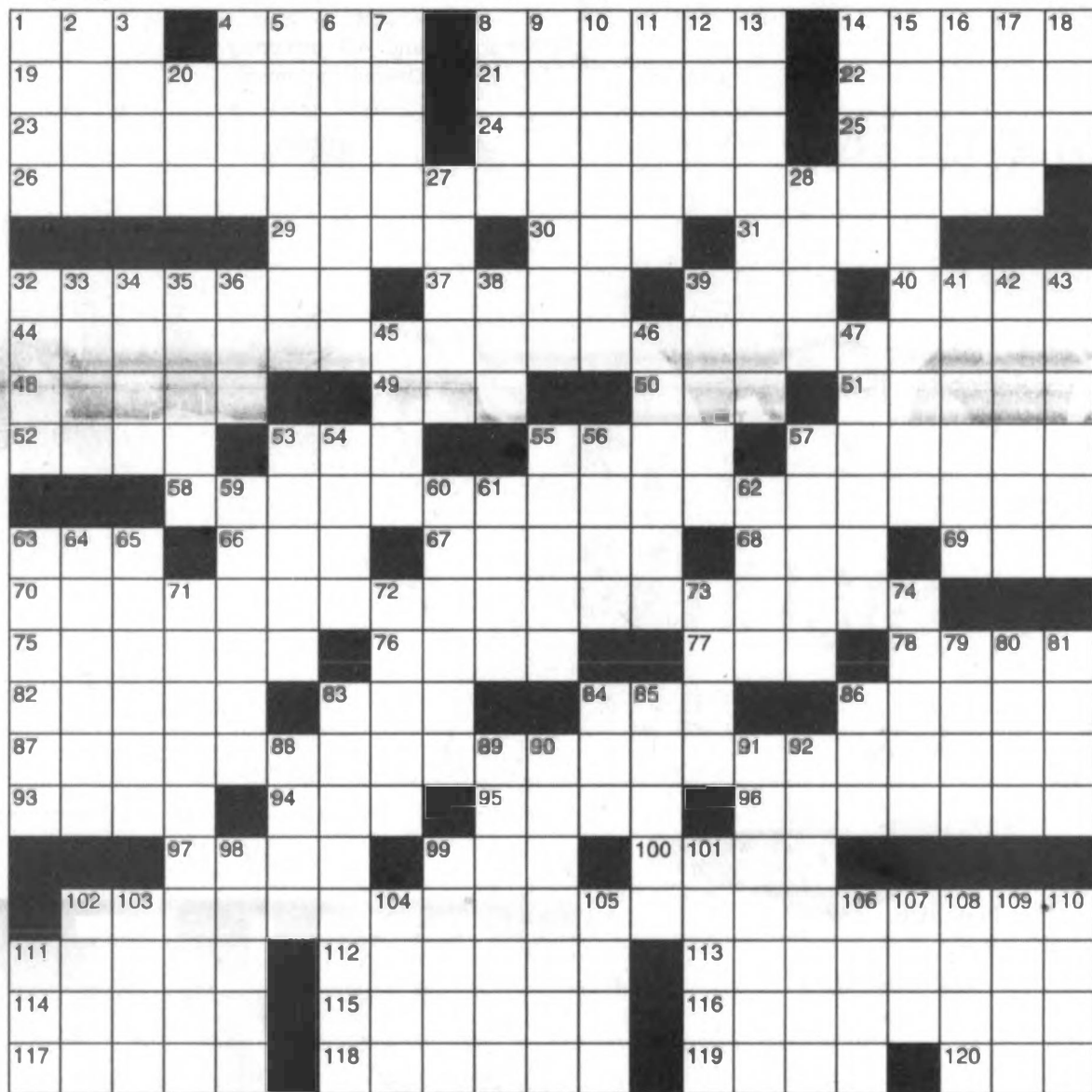
# THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

### PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

### CALCULATING CHARACTERS

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pet doc  
4 "Come again?"  
8 Treats maliciously  
14 Tennis player Borg  
19 Narcissist's problem  
21 Actress Address  
22 Ate, as prey  
23 Football Hall of Famer Bronko  
24 Arrive on wheels  
25 Frankie or Cleo of song  
26 Start of a riddle  
29 Noise in a comic book gunfight  
30 Exotica singer Sumac  
31 "The Human Stain" novelist Philip  
32 Cure-all  
37 Race of people in an H.G. Wells novella  
39 Some sorority letters  
40 Donations to the destitute  
44 Riddle, part 2  
48 Like much greasy food
- 49 See 83-Across  
50 Corp. leader  
51 Skip over, as a vowel  
52 World War II film, when tripled  
53 Charged bit  
55 Place — (be active on eBay, say)  
57 Cheap cigar  
58 Riddle, part 3  
63 Simile middle  
66 Chaney of film  
67 Song-belted Merman  
68 On a pension, maybe: Abbr.  
69 Military draft gp.  
70 Riddle, part 4  
75 ZZ Top album whose name is Spanish for "The Crazy One"
- 76 Hamm and Farrow  
77 Neither's partner  
78 Tingly feeling  
82 Totally tired  
83 With 49-Across, touter of green eggs and ham
- 84 "Yes" vote  
86 Early arcade giant  
87 End of the riddle  
93 — Flush (bathroom brand)  
94 Architect I.M. —  
95 Made angry  
96 Florida fruits  
97 R&B great Marvin  
99 Not at all new  
100 Golf club  
102 Riddle's answer  
111 Stalin-era labor camp  
112 Polecat's kin  
113 Urge against  
114 Muscat native  
115 Do over  
116 Office squawker  
117 Fender dings  
118 Mimics a mad mutt  
119 Helper of Frankenstein  
120 Inventor Whitney
- DOWN**
- 1 "—, vidi, vici"  
2 "The Keep" novelist  
3 Jennifer  
4 Forum wear  
5 Drunk  
6 Writer Gogol  
7 Third-largest city in Israel  
8 Ride a wave  
9 Eighth-brightest star in the sky  
10 Like a hajji's religion  
11 Second-largest city in Oklahoma  
12 Charles Lamb's alias  
13 Bay Area California city  
14 Equivalent of A sharp  
15 Lee Tracy's "Bombshell" co-star  
16 Like praiseful poetry  
17 Gossipy Barrett  
18 Bakersfield-to-Boise dir.  
20 Letters before 39-Across  
27 Swiss watch brand  
28 Clueless  
32 Fizzle sound  
33 Sleek, informally  
34 Hair removal brand  
35 Top squad  
36 Mooer's mouthful  
38 On the — (fleeing)
- 39 "— say more?"  
41 Actresses Vivien and Janet  
42 In — res (mid-plot)  
43 Clay pigeons to be shot, informally  
45 Three x three  
46 Frozen spear  
47 Eats away at  
53 "Were — it all over again ..."  
54 "It can't be!"  
55 One of the Three Musketeers  
56 Nickname for singer Justin, with "the"  
57 Densive smile  
59 One of the three Furies  
60 R&R alone  
61 "— boy!"  
62 Pisa's river  
63 Nuclear trials, for short  
64 Class of antimicrobial drugs, in the British spelling  
65 Actress Sorkin who once hosted "America's Funniest People"
- 71 Like animals that don't roam  
72 So-called "fifth taste"  
73 Apartment near the super's, perhaps  
74 Mesh well  
79 Piquancy  
80 Ontario tribe  
81 Cat's warning  
83 Pittsburgh footballers  
84 "Chances —"  
85 "Catch my drift, bro?"  
86 Pie-mode link  
88 1974 CIA parody film  
89 More lacteal  
90 Not cardinal, as a number  
91 Plundering  
92 Writer Sabato  
96 Patronage  
99 "— Loompa" diameters  
102 Journalist Brit  
103 Zing  
104 Lucy Liu's "Kill Bill" role  
105 Insect traps  
106 Exploiter  
107 Mongrel mutt  
108 Frilly material  
109 Shrine figure  
110 Moore of "G.I. Jane"  
111 Shrine figure



For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at (517) 702-4247 or smcclellan@michigan.com.

## SUDOKU



Difficulty Level ★★★

2/10

### Here's How It Works:

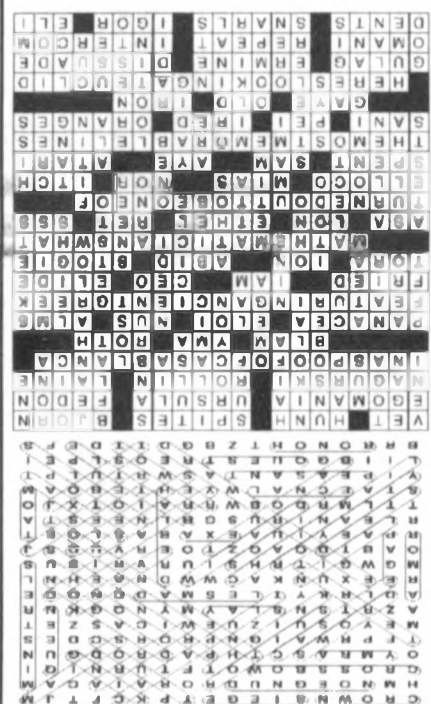
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues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

## MEDIEVAL TIMES

Can you find all the words hidden in the grid? Read backwards or forwards, up or down, even diagonally. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

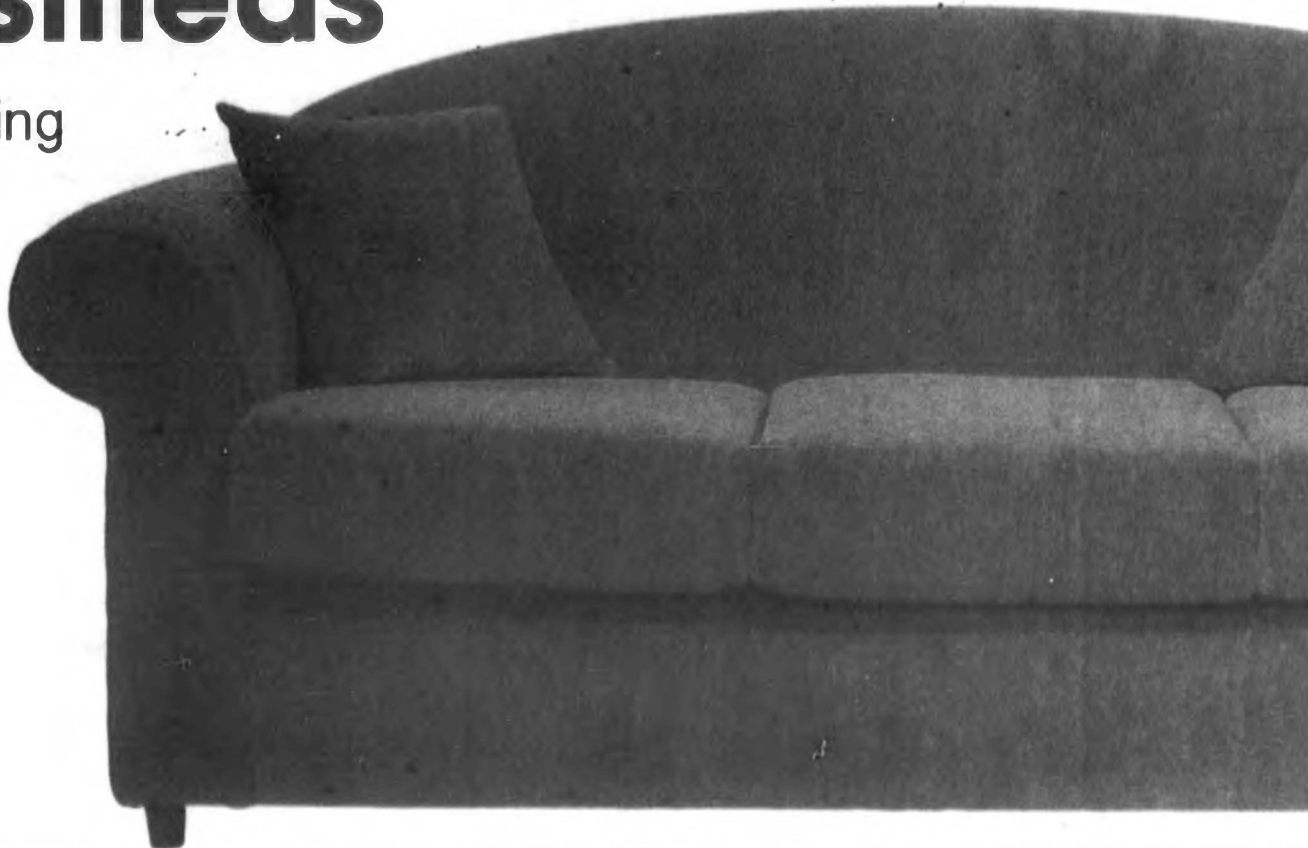
C R O W N S I E G E T P K C F T J M  
H M N O E G N U D R O R A I A C A M  
C R O S S B O W O T F T U R N I Q I  
O Y M R A S C T H P A D R O D G U N  
T F P R W A I G N P R O R S C D E S  
M E Y O S U I Z U E W I C A S Z E T  
A Z R T S N S L A Y M Y N Q G K N R  
A D L R K Y T L E S M A D C N O C E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

ARMOR  
ARMY  
ARROW  
AXE  
BANQUET  
BATTLE  
CASTLE  
CATAPULT  
CHAIN MAIL  
CHIVALRY  
COURT  
CROSSBOW  
CROWN  
DAMSEL  
DRAGON  
DRAWBRIDGE  
DUNGEON  
HALBERD  
HONOR  
JESTER  
JOUST  
KING  
KNAVE  
KNIGHT  
LANCE  
LATIN  
MAIDS  
MINSTRELS  
MOAT  
NOBLES  
PAGE  
PEASANT  
PRINCESS  
QUEEN  
QUEST  
ROYALTY  
SHIELD  
SIEGE  
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WIZARD



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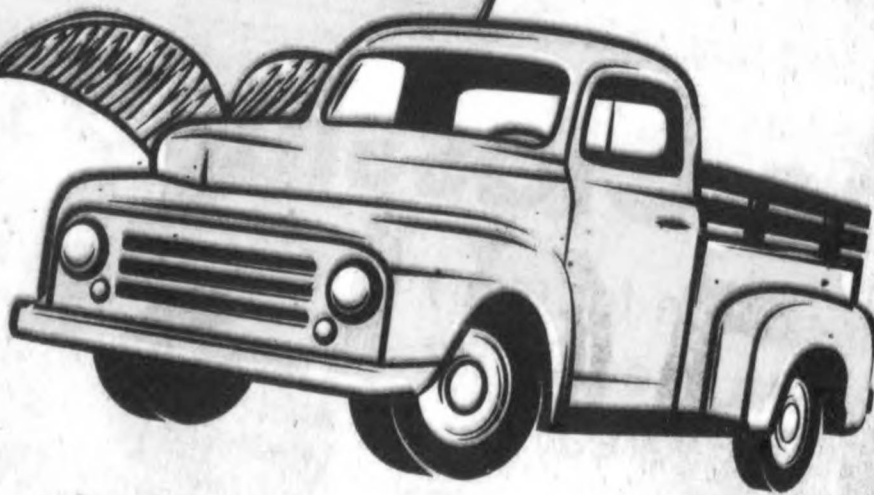


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