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South Lyon's new fire chief has almost 30 years of experience

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

South Lyon's new fire chief is Joey Thorington, who has fought fires and led firefighters for nearly 30 years.

He introduced himself last month to South Lyon City Council members.



Thorington

"I'm happy to be here," he said. "I'm real excited to be here. It's a great city. The one thing for sure that I can tell in a short period of time is that the City of South Lyon is very

fortunate to have such a dedicated group of firefighters."

parted late last year to lead Charlotte's fire department.

Like Vogel, he has become South Lyon's fire chief after gaining experience elsewhere.

Thorington retired from the Dearborn Fire Department, where he spent 24 years, eight of them as deputy chief,

He replaces Robert Vogel, who de- before he took control of the South Lyon Fire Department.

He is in charge of about 25 paid, oncall firefighters, and the department is currently seeking applications for more.

Thorington has been evaluating the tasks before him.

See CHIEF, Page 3A

Chaos with school drop-off, pick-up



As school lets out, a line of vehicles to pick up Novi Meadows students spills well onto Taft Road north of the school on Feb. 28, 2022. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Parents frustrated with longer, crazier lines

Susan Bromley

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

Car chaos outside local schools is considerably worse these days at arrival and dismissal times, frustrating parents and other motorists, and presenting safety hazards as well.

The causes are varied and the solutions are complicated.

Middle school dad Bill Mullan describes the time frame between about 7:10-7:35 a.m. as "unbelievably nuts" as traffic backs up on 9 Mile Road and Pontiac Trail by Millennium and Centennial middle schools in South Lyon.

"Making a left turn on to Pontiac Trail, you're taking your life into your own hands," Mullan said. "You're relying on the goodwill of someone to stop and let you in."

Amanda Tima does not even attempt to make a left turn on to Pontiac Trail when she drops her child off at Millennium, even though that would be the most direct route for her to get to work. Instead, she turns right and uses an apartment complex parking lot further down the road to turn around.

In general, she avoids the area when school starts and ends and is thankful for a neighbor who works from home

See LINES, Page 1A

Novi water main work: 'You're making community look like a pigsty'

Susan Bromley

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

Ryan Seeley is tired of the piles of debris along 14 Mile Road near his Welch Road home.

Barrels and tierods remain from water main improvements that began in November 2020 and closed 14 Mile Road down to through traffic from M-5 to Decker and Novi roads for months.

The road has reopened, but the mess remains.

"When is it going to wrap up?" Ryan Seeley asked. "What is the project end date, not just a faux pas one, where you move the goalposts? If it continues, you have to clean it up so it just doesn't look sloppy and no one is held accountable. This has gone on way too long to look like it does. You're making the community look like a pigsty."

Novi City Engineer Ben Croy agreed that the Great Lakes Water Authority project to install a water main "has definitely gone beyond the original schedule for whatever reason," but added that the few tie-ins left to be done is relatively minor work and "should be done in the next couple months."

The installation that began in fall 2020 was "phase one" of a plan intended to alleviate water main break issues by preventing them or offering an alternative water source when one oc-

Great Lakes Water Authority spokeswoman Ashleigh Chatel confirmed the phase one work is being completed still and was delayed, in part, due to prioritization of the repair work resulting from an Oct. 31 break in a 20-foot section of the water main along 14 Mile Road near Drake Road in Farmington Hills. That break resulted in an extended boil water advisory for residents in Novi.

See WATER, Page 3A

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Oakland County's homes rose in price compared to previous year

From Staff Reports Hometownlife.com USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The median sales price for a singlefamily home in Oakland County during November was \$295,000. That's an increase of 9.3% compared with November 2020, according to a USA **TODAY Network localized analysis** generated with data from Realtor.com.

The number of houses sold fell by 60.1% from a year earlier. A total of 590 houses were sold countywide during the month of November. During the same period a year earlier, 1,477 singlefamily homes were sold.

Real estate sales can take weeks or months to be recorded and collected. This is the latest data made available through Realtor.com to the USA TO-DAY Network. Condominiums and townhomes sold in November had a median sales price of \$285,000. That figure represents a 3.6% increase year over year. In Oakland County, 164 were sold, down 59% from a year earlier.

How hot is Oakland County's real estate market in Michigan?

Information on your local housing markets is available through the USA TODAY Network, with more data from Realtor.com.

The top 10% of the properties sold had prices of at least \$599,000, up



A market-rate housing development is under construction at 175 James St., a former brownfield. RICK CINCLAIR/TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

11.1% from a year before.

In November, eight properties sold for \$1 million or more: Seven singlefamily homes and one other property.

The median home sale price — the midway point of all the houses or units sold over a period of time — is used in this report instead of the average home sale price because experts say the median offers a more accurate view of what's happening in a market. In finding the average price, all prices of homes sold are added and then divided by the number of homes sold. This measure can be skewed by one low or high price.

The USA TODAY Network is publishing localized versions of this story on its news sites across the country, generated with data from Realtor.com. Localized versions are generated for communities where the data quality and transaction volume meets Realtor.com and USA TODAY Network standards. The story was written by Sean Lahman

Online dating scams often target seniors, so look for these red flag clues

here's no doubt that the CO-VID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on our society. Not only has there been a financial cost, but it has also taken a toll on people's health. There have also been many industries and businesses that have done very well during the pandemic.

Not surprisingly, scam artists have done particularly well, especially those that perpetuate lonely-heart scams. In fact, according to the Federal Trade Commission, last year lonelyheart scams surged by 80 percent and financial losses to Americans were over one billion dollars. Unfortunately, it appears that this year we will set another record.

Typically, scam artists use dating apps to perpetuate their fraud. Although lonely-heart scams can target anyone, it appears that scam artists disproportionately seek out seniors. They identify widows who are seeking companionship through one of these websites. Not only are scam artists good at identifying their targets, they are also very patient in reeling them in. Because so many of these crooks live abroad, it is often difficult to catch and penalize them.

Typically, the goal of these scams is to convince you to send them money. Money can be in the form of a check, refunding a debit card, a gift card, or even crypto currency. The bottom line is that these scam artists are trying to steal from you.

Although scams are all a little different, there are some consistent signs that should raise a red flag. One of these signs is the picture someone uses on their profile. Scam artists typically use pictures of incredibly attractive people. When meeting someone online, it is recommended to do a Google search of the picture to make sure it is legitimate and not a stock photo. Google Image search will allow you to see if the same picture exists on another website. If it does and has a different name or profile, you know you have a

These crooks often profess that they have fallen in love with their victim, despite never having met them in person. In fact, many times these scam artists will set up an in-person meeting but cancel at the last minute. In addition, many of these crooks will try to alienate you from your family and friends, and convince you not to talk about your relationship with them. These signs should raise a red flag.

Ultimately, the purpose of these scams is to get you to send them money. After they profess their love for you, they'll claim they have some sort of financial or family emergency, and they need you to come to the rescue. Don't fall for it. You should never send money to anyone you meet online, particularly, someone you have not met personally.

Due to the pandemic, there are many people who are very lonely and are seeking companionship. These people are prime targets for scammers. Therefore, if you have a loved one who falls into this category, it is important that you work with them to prevent them from being a victim.

We all are potential victims, and thus, need to be cautious. Be smart with what you post online. Never give your sensitive financial information to anyone, particularly to someone you've only met online, and always be leery of anyone who asks you for mon-

Remember that scam artists are good at what they do, and can be very convincing. If you fall victim to a scam artist, don't be embarrassed; rather, contact the Federal Trade Commission and the police. You never know, there is an outside chance that they will catch the crooks and you may get some of your money back. However, even if you don't get your money back, the information you provide can help law enforcement protect others from these scam artists.

Good luck.

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

Metro Detroit businesses that opened or closed to start 2022

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

With a new year comes a new recap. Starting this year, we're adding a new occasional roundup every few months highlighting the business community's openings and closings across the Hometown Life area.

From restaurants to retail, a wide array of businesses opened and closed their doors throughout Detroit's northwestern suburbs.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of businesses that opened and closed their doors in January and February. Did we miss one? Have a business opening or closing soon? Feel free to inform us by emailing dveselenak@hometownlife.com. We may reach out for this roundup or a separate story

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Farmington Hills

A vacant storefront in a prominent Farmington Hills shopping center has a new big box store.

Big Lots, the department store known for furniture, clothing and other goods opened a new store at 30120 Grand River in the West River Shopping Center. It occupies a longtime vacant spot in the shopping center where Target and the Riviera Cinema is located.

Livonia

Shake Shack, the trendy burger and fries restaurant, brought its flavor to the corner of Seven Mile and Haggerty in Livonia. The restaurant takes over the corner on the border with Northville Township that formerly housed Romano's Macaroni Grill, which closed permanently in 2020.

In addition, Livonia Budget Storage opened its doors down Seven Mile. The self-storage business opened at 29150 W. Seven Mile in the former Toys R Us building east of Middlebelt.

Plymouth

A trio of longtime downtown Plymouth businesses announced their closures this year.

Kemnitz Fine Candies, 896 W. Ann Arbor Trail, closed its doors right before Valentine's Day after being open several decades. Its owners, Cindy and Everett Smith, have retired and seek to sell the business to someone to keep its chocolatey legacy moving forward.

Across the street, Delta Diamond, 895 W. Ann Arbor Trail, also announced it would close its doors by the end of February. A longtime mainstay of downtown Plymouth, the precious gems shop ends its run of nearly 50 years in business in both Dearborn and Plymouth. The Piotrowski family decided five years after the business's founder, Thomas Piotrowski, died, that it was time to close its doors.

"We're holding our heads up high and we're going to try different things," said Aurelia Piotrowski, the shop's owner.



The West River plaza along Grand **River in Farmington Hills. JOHN** HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Joining the trio of longtime business-

es closing is Wiltse's Community Pharmacy, 330 S. Main St. The longtime pharmacy in the heart of downtown will close this spring after 42 years in business as its owners, Dale and Andrea

It's not all closings in Plymouth, however. One shop has transformed a bit, switching up its interior and sporting a new name. The former Eats and Sweets inside the old Plymouth train station is now known simply as the Plymouth Depot. Located at 900 Starkweather in the city's Old Village neighborhood, the shop has tweaked its menu a bit and put more of an emphasis on coffee.

Gone is the gift shop area, replaced with new seating for those looking to stay a while at the historic train station, a place that's drawn visitors as high profile as a president of the United States.

Westland

Grab your smartphone and head out to the newest place to snag that perfect selfie. Joining several other similar concepts across metro Detroit is Selfie Studio, a new self-portrait spot open in the Westland Crossing shopping center in Westland. Located at 34524 Warren, the studio has more than two dozen backdrops for guests to pose in front of, from an old-school phone booth to a '50s diner complete with milkshakes.

If you're looking for some unique cuisine, a new option has opened up that's worth checking out. Egyptian Kitchen, 2717 S. Wayne, opened its doors earlier this year, serving up plenty of northern African dishes such as a koshari bowl, feteer and more

The restaurant is open Il a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. More information, including a full menu, can be found on its website, egyptiankitchenrestaurant.com.

Wayne

Be sure to doublecheck the address if you haven't ordered carryout from the downtown Wayne Pizza Hut recently.

See SHOPS, Page 3A

CITY OF NORTHVILLE 2022 BOARD OF REVIEW WAYNE AND OAKLAND COUNTIES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review of the City of Northville, Wayne and Oakland Counties, will meet for the purpose of reviewing and adjusting the 2022 Assessment Rolls of the City of Northville on the following dates:

TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2022: TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022:

4:00 p.m. Organizational Meeting (No Appeals 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00p.m. to 4:00 p.m. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Act 165 of 1971 and based on the proposed changes to assessed values for 2022, the Wayne and Oakland County Equalization Departments have set the following tentative equalization factors relative to the 2022 Real and Personal Propert Assessments: WAYNE COUNTY - Commercial Real 1.00; Industrial Real 1.00; Residential Real 1.00; All Personal Property 1.00. OAKLAND COUNTY - Commercial Real 1.00; Industrial Real 1.00; Residential Real 1.00; All Personal Property 1.00.

Mail-in Petitions must be received by March 16, 2022 before 4:00 p.m. ALL TAXPAYERS wishing to petition their property's taxable value or assessment in person with the Board of Review will be seen by APPOINTMENT ONLY. To ensure every appeal is heard it is requested that appointments be scheduled prior to Tuesday. March 15, 2022. Please contact the City of Northville Tax Department at (248) 449-9901 for an appointment or with any questions you may have regarding your 2022 taxable or assessed value.

Publish: February 24, March 3 & 10, 2022

New children's clothing resale shop opens in Milford

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

What began as an online business for Laura Clarke to support her family has blossomed into one of Milford's newest businesses.

Clarke has taken her online children's clothing resale shop, Three Little Peas, to a storefront at 949 E. Summit, located next to the Milford Independent Cinema.

The concept began as a way for the Army veteran and single mother of three children - the namesake of the business — to bring in revenue. That concept grew and grew, with Clarke selling items online all across the globe.

"I did some research and pre-COVID, I noticed a lot of resale stores don't have an online presence. And I think a lot of them have learned since COVID happened," said Clarke, West Bloomfield Township resident. "So I started the online store and literally ran it out of

my house. As that business grew, so did her inventory, and she realized she needed a storefront that could be a place where families could purchase items like clothing, shoes and toys. Being a Milford native, she looked at a map and saw nothing like her idea in the area sur-

rounding the village. After working with a commercial real estate agent, she located the



Milford's Three Little Peas resale clothing shop at 949 E. Summit.

HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE COM

shuttered retail spot and signed a lease to bring her concept to Milford.

"There is nothing in West Bloomfield, Commerce, Milford," she said. "There's this big oval with nothing."

She took over the space, which was formerly Domino's Pizza, at the beginning of February and gave herself a little more than a month to transform the former pizza shop into a retail

"Literally, Feb. 1 I had the contractor come in here and start the wall," she said. "I didn't waste a day."

The shop has clothing ranging from newborns to teenagers and for both boys and girls. It also offers shoes, as well as toys and books. There's even a little play area to keep the little ones busy while mom or dad looking for clothing in the shop.



Three Little Peas owner Laura Clarke will be selling a mixture of new and used kids' clothing and toys at her Milford shop on East Summit. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Clarke will also purchase items brought in as well both outright and on consignment. Her online store which has been down to allow her time to prep for her retail store opening in Milford — will also

continue selling items,

as well. The store is open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday. More information, including the store's online shop, can be found at threelittlepeas.com.

Clarke said she's so appreciative of the sup-

I River bleza sinne Grand

port she's received so far in her online shop and hopes to continue that success as she opens her storefront in Milford.

"I'm so amazed and just feel so blessed with how everything happened," she said. "I don't know too many single moms that have three kids that do this kind of

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

Shops

Continued from Page 2A

The chain restaurant relocated from its iconic hut-roofed building downtown into the former Biggby Coffee building at 35545 W. Michigan Ave., which has been vacant for several years

Canton

A new place to grab dessert popped up on the north end of Canton Township.

Ma Cherie Crepes opened for business earlier this year. Located at 43339 Joy in the Coventry Commons shopping center, the shop specializes in both sweet and savory crepes, as well as waffles, salads and sandwiches. The shop does not appear to have a website as of now, but online ordering through DoorDash is available

Novi

Find some stylish new glasses at one of the newest shops to open at Twelve Oaks Mall.

Warby Parker brought its signature look to the mall at 27702 Novi Road. Customers can get plenty of services at the shop, including eye exams and eyewear offerings, including the company's new Spring 2022 line. The shop is the second in metro Detroit and the fourth to open in Michigan.

Lyon Township

Enjoy some good ol'upper Midwest hospitality at the community's newest place to grab a bite to eat.

Wisconsin-based Culver's has opened its newest restaurant at 22700 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township. Serving up

dishes such as burger, fries, dinners and frozen custard, the restaurant north of Nine Mile brings a new flavor to town. With room for more than 90 people in its dining room and additional patio seating for when the weather warms up, there's plenty of space to enjoy a Butter-Burger.

The restaurant is one of several owned by local franchise owner Charles Paisley, who said he was happy to finally open the doors in late February.

"Honestly, it's exceeded our expectations and the community's been very welcoming," he said.

Get everything you need to do those kickflips at Milford's newest downtown business.

Saturdays, a shop dedicated to all things skateboarding and snowboarding, opened earlier this winter at 525 N. Main St., in the Mill Valley Center. Occupying the space formerly held by Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea, the store has everything needed to enjoy an afternoon at the skate park.

It even has a space dedicated for finger skateboard enthusiasts to try out their skills on a replica of the Milford Skate Park built at the front of the store. It's a shop that hopes to reach the enthusiasts in Milford, which its managers described as being the one community nearby that did not have a similar shop.

"We used to sit there and dream about having our own skate shop and now it's just happening, said Jack Weaver, one of the store's managers.

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

me or profile, you know yo Water

Continued from Page 1A

Following that break, an inspection identified 18 sections of at-risk pipe within a 1.5 mile requiring stretch strengthening.

GLWA extended the timeline for the repair of the original break to include renewal work identified in the inspection, and additionally installed two valves.

At the time, Suzanne Coffey, GLWA interim chief executive, said ensuring resiliency was one of the agency's top priorities and noted that a proactive approach was always the goal, balanced with maintaining service.

"I am thankful for the outstanding collaboration we have had with our member partners, stakeholders and fellow utilities, and appreciate the patience of those residents who have been inconvenienced due to the continuing work," Coffey said.

GLWA officials did not give a timeline on when phase one work would be wrapped up. Meanwhile, phase two work, which Croy called "the monster project" is underway and will ultimately construct a 54inch water main to connect existing 14 Mile Road and 8 Mile Road water mains.

Both phase one and phase two projects are in response to a massive 2017 pipe failure. The new main will provide redundancy and avoid interruptions in water



Mile near Novi Road has left a lot of construction mess along the side of the road that's irked local residents. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

service.

However, phase 2's contractor is being handled by a different contractor than phase 1. The new water main will be constructed by Ric-Man Construction and Clark Construction in a joint venture, at a cost of \$98 million.

In a cost share agreement between GLWA and the City of Novi, four road segments in the path of the new main will also be reconstructed, at an estimated price of \$1.7 million:

• 11 Mile Road from Seeley to Meadowbrook Meadowbrook Road from 11 Mile Road

to the I-96 bridge Meadowbrook Road from 12 Mile Road

to 13 Mile Road • 13 Mile Road from Meadowbrook to M-5

Water main construction in phase 2 was to begin this month along the west side of M-5 between 14 Mile and 13 Mile, followed by boring operations under I-96. A road construction timeline has not yet been released.

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

Chief

Continued from Page 1A

His predecessor said before he left South Lyon that staffing was an issue the department would need to keep tabs on. The total number of calls had increased from about 700 a year to 1,000 a year during his handful of years with the department.

"We want to remain progressive, keep up with the times and provide the highest level of services for the residents," he said.

Thorington lives in Hamburg Township. He and his wife Jean have two children - Al, who plays baseball for Grand



The new South Lyon Fire Chief Joey Thorington at the department's Whipple Street station. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Valley State University, and Cecilia, an athlete at Pinckney School.

South Lyon's new fire chief has bachelor's and master's degrees and has participated in National Fire Academy and

FRAZER

Fire Staff and Command programs.

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



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Lines

Continued from Page 1A

and can drive the kids to school

"It is crazy, very chaotic," Tima said.
"We've always been fine with using the bus, and if everyone could there wouldn't be a problem. But there has been a perfect storm."

That perfect storm centers around the pandemic, which has resulted in a severe bus driver shortage, canceled bus routes, and perhaps fewer students riding buses to possibly avoid prolonged close exposures to COVID-19.

Traffic backups near schools throughout the region are common fodder on social media channels, something that Tima said is frustrating for parents and non-parents alike.

Drop-off and pick-up lines for students is "an age-old struggle for schools," said South Lyon Schools Superintendent Steve Archibald, but he acknowledges that it is likely a bigger problem over the last two years and agrees at least partly attributable to the bus situation and COVID-19.

For similar reasons, lines have also noticeably increased in Novi this year. Superintendent Steve Matthews said the worst of it is at Parkview Elementary, where vehicles can back up on to 11 Mile Road.

Traffic also backs up on to Taft Road for drop-offs and pick-ups as parents enter the complex where the Novi Meadows fifth and sixth grade houses and Novi Woods Elementary are locat-

Schools often suffer from design mistakes with driveways and parking lots with insufficient space to hold many vehicles in a short space of time.

"It can be slow and frustrating," Matthews said. "There are a couple buildings where people wait on main roads as they come into the parking lots. Most don't have long, extended driveways, and there are always cars and waiting. This year, there is more of it. It's a combination of bus service and walk zone changes."

Get on the bus. If you can.

Last fall, Novi cut bus service by one day a week due to a bus driver shortage. Despite recruitment efforts with higher wages and additional incentives, Matthews anticipates a continued driver



shortage this school year.

South Lyon hasn't gone to an alternating schedule, but it has had to cancel or consolidate bus routes for several months due to the driver shortage that has affected districts everywhere.

"If more students who could ride the bus rode the bus, it would help some, but with buses in particular this year, we understand why more people are choosing to drive," Archibald said. "There is no perfect solution."

Tima started carpooling this school year when her middle schooler's bus was repeatedly canceled at the last minute or the ride to get to school took more than an hour.

Brian Toth, assistant superintendent for administrative services in South Lyon, said the district is in a "good spot" with bus drivers now, and the traffic issues at drop-off and pick-up times are "really just the fact so many people are choosing not to ride the bus."

This is compounded by the region's population growth. Toth said the middle schools increased enrollment by roughly 400 students each during the last 15 years.

This also "creates unique problems" when 600 middle schoolers are released on Fridays in warm weather and descend upon businesses in the area, he said.

Walk or bike to school. Or maybe don't.

Warmer weather may encourage more walking and biking to school, which could be good or bad.

Novi implemented new school start

John Brickey directs traffic at **Novi Meadows** on Feb. 28, 2022. Brickey, the school's sixth grade principal, has to alternate between letting buses out of the lot and allowing the long line of parents in vehicles towards the entrance to pick up their kids. JOHN HEIDER/ HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

times this past fall to allow teens to sleep in later. It also started enforcing walking zones. Elementary students who live within a mile of their school and secondary students who live within 1.5 miles of the middle or high school are no longer offered bus transportation. Matthews said the weather may play an impact if some parents are driving students to school based on the winter weather.

In the past, exceptions were made to walk zones to avoid having kids cross main roads, but now most have the ability to use pathways and sidewalks, including some installed with assistance from "Safe Routes to School," a federal grant program.

Toth said a Safe Routes to School grant was done in South Lyon about seven years ago.

But in South Lyon, the idea of more pedestrian traffic is alarming to some unless more dramatic changes are made.

Tima said she was scared to death when she was driving down Dixboro Road and came upon a student "who popped up out of nowhere" riding his skateboard to school in the dark.

Since Griswold was paved between 8 and 9 Mile roads abut five years ago, Mullan said that road is often used to circumvent Pontiac Trail, but now that backs up traffic on 9 Mile and he sees kids riding their bikes to school on the two-lane road. Other students trod a path in the grass in front of residences with no sidewalks along 9 Mile.

Archibald said more students walking or riding their bikes might help the congestion pattern, but it complicates safety, particularly in the parking lots.

"Now you're adding in pedestrians and bikes and vehicles and buses," he said. "You might exchange one problem for another, it becomes a greater potential safety risk."

Pack your patience and do it right

Both Matthews and Archibald are looking forward to better days—whether that comes through warming weather, traffic improvements, more bus drivers, less COVID-19, or all of the above.

In the meantime, parents can follow drop-off and pick-up etiquette to make the line move faster and safer for everyone, instead of getting glares, honks or being told "you're doing it wrong" as Michael Keaton was in the 1980s movie "Mr. Mom."

Principal John Brickey is out every morning and afternoon directing traffic at Novi Meadows. While the lines have been longer, he said parents have been mostly pleasant and trying to do what is asked. The small number who don't, disrupt the flow.

"You see their frustration — they are going to be late, they jump the line, pull into a parking space and kids walk through traffic as the parent pulls out and leaves with somewhere to go," he said. "It's incredibly scary. We're trying to keep kids safe and have a system that will keep them safe, but they are trying to circumvent that. Those are the things that become scary."

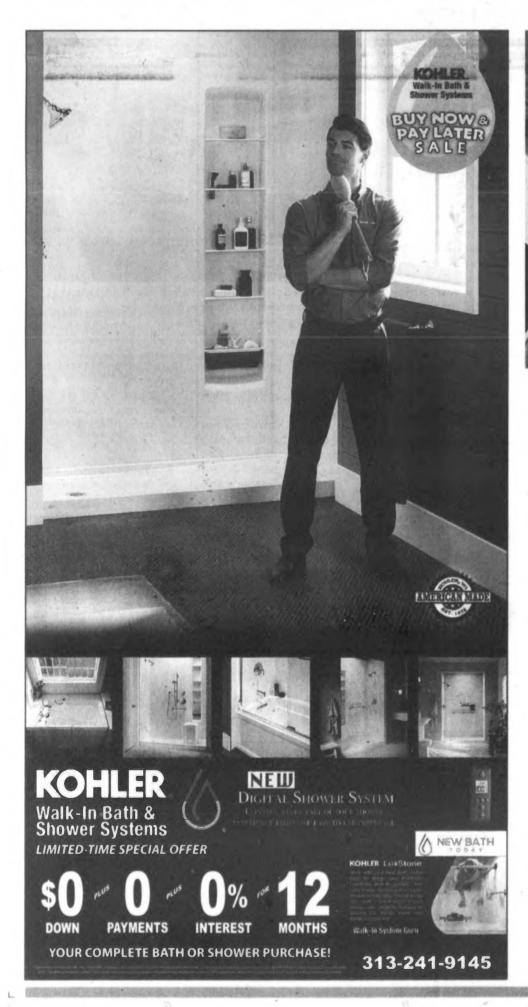
The morning line does feel more frantic as parents try to ensure the kids are in class at 7:30 a.m. when the bell rings, while also getting to work on time.

Both districts offer a video on their websites on proper drop-off and pick-up processes. Following cones and directions from school employees or volunteers helps, as do pulling forward as far as able in the line before allowing a student to enter or exit the vehicle and always having kids exit on the passenger side.

Brickey has a few more tips, too.

"Please be patient, please be kind," he said. "And please do your best to follow the rules in place. They are designed to make it more efficient for everyone. We are all doing our very best to make sure the kids get to school safely."

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





Where to get seafood this Lenten season

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For some, it's a time to get pious. For others, it's a time to enjoy great seafood. And for many more, it's a great time for both.

Lent begins a time when restaurants begin catering to those eating seafood for the next few weeks. Many Catholics will abstain from eating meat on Fridays now through Easter, instead dining on seafood dishes such as shrimp and salmon.

Where's the best place to get that seafood fix this time of year? Here's a look at just a few of the offerings metro Detroit has for that fix the next few weeks.

Sit down

Hazel's in downtown Birmingham is now built for seafood lovers this time of year.

The restaurant at 1 Peabody recently shortened its name to the moniker everyone knew by and decided to go all in on seafood. Previously, oceanic fare was a seasonal lineup limited to several months a year.

With a season known for seafood, coowner and executive chef Emmele Herrold said she and her crew expect to see one dish fly off the menu: traditional fish and chips.

"We sell a lot of them anyway, but we see a big uptick in Lent sure," she said. "Fish and chips seems to be the star."

Hazel's is just one of many places known for having a majority of seafood on their menu. Another is located just down the road in downtown Birmingham, Streetside Seafood, as well as Joe Muer Seafood in Bloomfield Hills.

Head farther west and find other options, including ones selling a range of dishes such as the Krazy Crab in downtown Farmington, Crab Kitchen in Westland and Hook and Reel, which has opened restaurants in both Livonia and Canton Township.

Take it home

In the fast food sphere, much is made of the McDonald's Filet-O-Fish and other sandwiches. Those are accessible all



Hazel, Ravines & Downtown cook Stephen Lorge puts out some oysters and crab claws for patrons in July. The restaurant at 1 Peabody recently shortened its name to Hazel's and decided to go all in on seafood. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

ferings. One such dish is walleye, which

makes its way onto the menu at Culver's

next to permanent offerings such as

shrimp and cod each spring as a limited

to Easter," said Brian Toggweiler, a fran-

chise business consultant for Culver's.

seller of walleye in the world, which only

comes each spring. The wild-caught

fish comes from Canada and makes its

way to its restaurants across the United

States, including one of it's newest

ones, the one on Pontiac Trail in Lyon

Nearly all fast food joints have offer-

'Typically, you run out before you get

He said Culver's tends to be the no. 1

time menu.

Township.

"It's a lot of fish, too."

the time and are the stand by when it comes to a quick fish fix.

Other offerings see more limited of
John Silver's and many more.

If some more made to order is what you're feeling, you've got some local flavor worth checking out this spring as well. Many places known for their broasted chicken also serve up plenty of seafood options such as cod and shrimp. Those include places like Mr. Chicken in Redford Township, Broasted Brothers in Plymouth Township and Chicken Shack in Livonia, Westland and Bloomfield Township.

Spend time at church

There's a strong culture of fish dinners at Catholic churches across metro Detroit. In addition to attending a service, be sure to check out one of the

A snow crab and lobster tail order ready to be picked up at Wayne's Crab Kitchen. JOHN HEIDER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



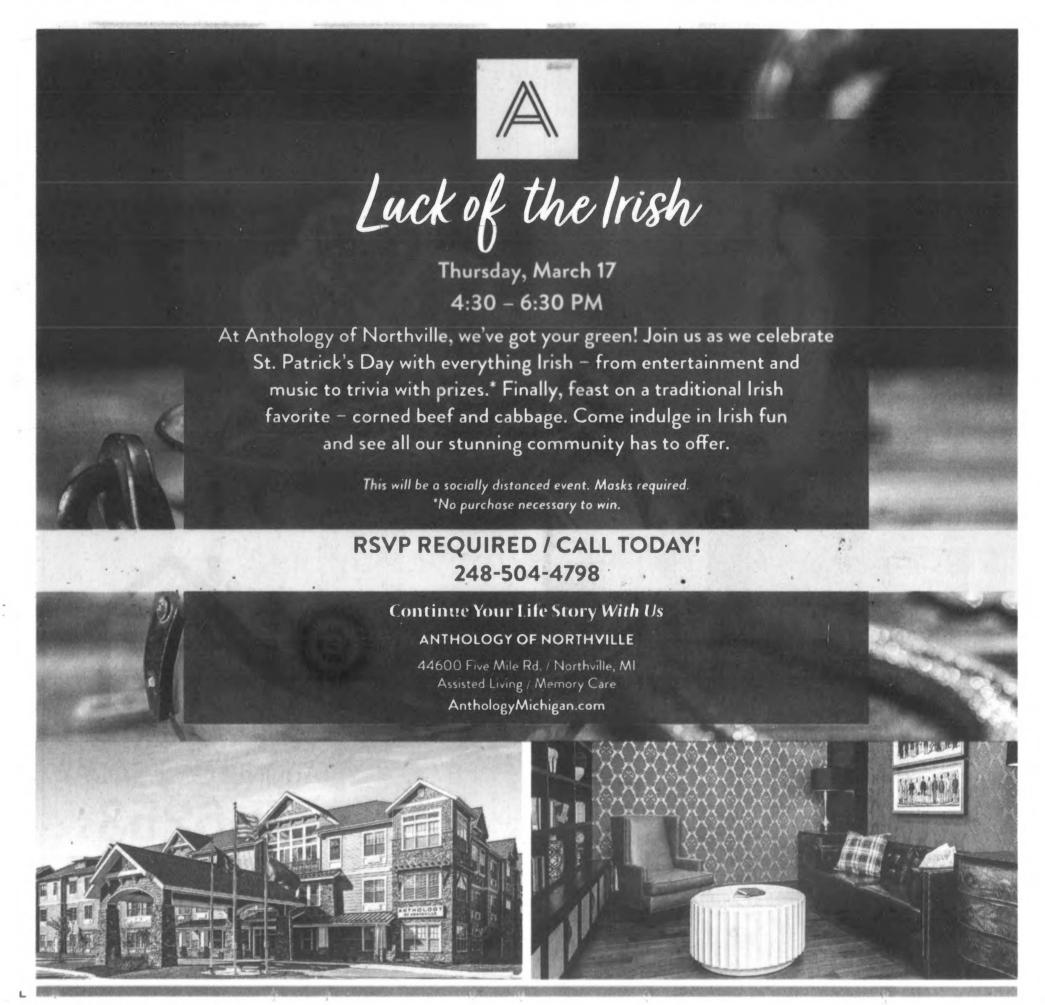
Stone crab claws at Streetside Seafood in Birmingham. JOHN HEIDER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

many churches serving up dishes this

Like previous recent years, many churches, including St. Michael the Archangel in Livonia and St. Mary in Wayne will do the dinners to-go only. Others, such as Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth Township and St. Aidan in Livonia will offer guests the chance to gather and eat together.

Looking for a fish fry? The Archdiocese of Detroit has created a website to do just that. Fishfryfinder.org does not have every church's Lenten dinner listed, but lists many of them across southeast Michigan, complete with options and pricing.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728



New public safety director aims to lead department to 'do what's right'

Susan Vela

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Novi's top public safety official Erick Zinser was running Mackinac Island's daily police operations when someone from Novi's headquarters called about an opening.

The call surprised Zinser, a young happily married man gaining professional satisfaction from developing younger officers.

He had seen the ad seeking applications, but he didn't apply since Novi's finest already had ignored the two applications he submitted for previous openings.

"Novi literally came calling," he said. "They said, 'The police department would like you to come down for an interview.' I literally said, 'Yeah, you know what? I didn't even apply. I'll have to pass."

The police department was firm. They wanted to interview Zinser, who agreed to the opportunity and was hired for the job nearly a quarter century ago.

He completed an uncommon feat by also ascending Novi's police ranks, getting sworn in last month as the city's new police chief and public safety director. He replaces David Molloy, a man Zinser credits with influencing his entire Novi career.

He hopes to continue Molloy's focus on accreditation and community support. He'd also like to improve recruiting efforts, since retention has not been a problem.

"I don't know that my career will necessarily end in Novi, but I have no intention of leaving any time soon," Zinser, 54, said. "I love working here. I tell people that all the time. I look forward to coming to work every day.

"We all have our bad days, but I'm telling you, I love coming to work. I love who I work with. I love the whole thing."

Zinser grew up wanting to become a law enforcer in DeWitt, north of Lansing. He graduated from Ferris State University with certification to become a police officer.

Jobs were few and, a few months shy of having to be recertified, his father told him Mackinac Island had openings for seasonal police officers and they would



Erick Zinser, Novi's new police chief and public safety director, was sworn in on Feb. 22, 2022. COURTESY OF CITY OF NOV I

said. "Here, I am."

Zinser started working on the island in 1991 and met and married his wife while there. He and his young family arrived in Novi several years later.

Zinser has served as a Novi police officer, detective, sergeant and lieutenant. He has served as assistant police chief since 2015. He also has a master's degree in liberal studies, with a concentration in interdisciplinary technology, from Eastern Michigan University.

Throughout his career, he has especially enjoyed watching his younger colleagues grow into their specializations and professional pursuits. He has some advice for young law enforcers.

They have to understand that there is still a lot of overwhelmingly positive support for the police," Zinser said. "We still see some of the negative stuff. Of

what's right. Treat every contact as a chance to build positive relationships. Just because we're arresting somebody, that doesn't mean we don't treat them with respect and dignity. We have to understand, too, when people come see us, they don't generally come on their good days."

The chief belongs to several professional organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police and Michigan Association of Chiefs

He is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and EMU's School of Police Staff and Command

There have been awards, merit citation and recognition along the way. Zinser, though, takes pride in having close friends and connections outside of the law enforcement arena.

He's a reader who keeps some favor-"This is not a difficult formula. Do ites on his office bookshelves. Those in-

clude H.W. Brand's "Reagan: The Life," Ron Chernow's "Grant," and Doris Kearns Goodwin's "Team of Rivals".

He and his wife Julie, a teacher with Plymouth-Canton schools, live in Brighton. They have two daughters including the one who was the only child born on Mackinac Island one year.

"One thing that stood out to me is how well-respected Chief Zinser is by his peers and community members," City Manager Pete Auger said in a statement. "He possesses the right combination of leadership skills and knowledge to lead the Novi police and fire departments into the future."

In his new capacity, Zinser is managing more than 200 sworn police personnel, firefighters and support staff, along with an annual budget of more than \$20 million

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



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Novi Principal Nicole Carter state's high school principal of the year

Staff Reports

Novi High School Principal Nicole Carter has been named Michigan's 2022 Principal of the Year.

The honor was bestowed by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Michigan Association of Student Councils and Honor Societies.

Carter will represent Michigan as the state's nominee for the National Association of Secondary School Principals Principal of the Year competition, which will be awarded in September at the NASSP Principals Institute in Washington, D.C.

Carter's nominator, a Novi High student and Executive Board President Ruheen Qadeer, described how Carter has unwavering dedication for the improvement of the school community and puts her heart and soul into her work. Qadeer provides multiple examples of how Carter is a champion for students: growth, leadership, academics and mental and emotional health.

"Without her help, we wouldn't have been able to embody the leaders we are," Qadeer said. "She encourages us to make a positive difference in our school culture and provides us with the tools we need to do so."

Carter has 23 years in education and 15 years as an administrator, all at Novi High School. She is described throughout her nomination as passionate, innovative, respected and empathetic.

"Carter genuinely cares about the experiences of our students and staff and strives to make them feel safe and validated," NHS Senior Class Student Council Adviser Danielle Crossley said. "She knows that our students are our future and that's why she's so determined to help them become our independent and brave leaders of tomorrow,"

There are many initiatives that Carter started at NHS to check in and keep open communication with and between staff and students to build a positive culture and community.

"Nicole is a proven leader in her school community, in the county and statewide," Wendy Zdeb, MASSP executive director, said. "Her willingness to serve and her dedication to her students and staff set her apart."

Qadeer said Carter exemplifies exactly what a principal should be.

To qualify for this award, nominees must have served in a principal role for at least three years in grades 6-12. Additionally, nominees must demonstrate a sense of collaborative leadership, involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment, as well as a personal positive involvement with district staff, students and families. The selection committee includes students and principals from the Michigan Student Leadership Board of Delegates and the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals Board of Directors.



Novi High School Principal Nicole Carter holds the award she has received as the Michigan Principal of the Year. With her from left are, Ruheen Qadeer, senior at Novi High School; Wendy Zdeb, MASSP Executive Director; and Danielle Crossley, Novi High School ELA Teacher. LYDIA CADENA



Novi High School principal Nicole Carter talk about the preparation the school district made into getting its students back to in-class sessions on the first day of the 2020-2021 school year. Novi was among the few local school districts to start that school year in person. JOHN HEIDER |





Ascension Michigan: Data breach may have exposed patient info

Christina Hall Detroit Free Press USA TODAY NETWORK

A data breach at Ascension Michigan may have exposed some patients' Social Security numbers and other health information.

The health system said an unauthorized individual inappropriately accessed patient information in its electronic health record between Oct. 15, 2015, and Sept. 8, 2021.

It became aware of suspicious activity in the electronic health record and immediately began an investigation.

On Nov. 30, after an extensive review, the health system said, it determined how long the person accessed patient information. The user's access was immediately ended.

"The information that may have been accessed for the affected individuals (note, not all individuals may have had all information affected): full name, date of birth, address(es), email address (es), phone number(s), health insurance information, health insurance identification number and carrier, dates of service, diagnosis, treatment related information, and, in some cases, Social Security numbers," according to a news release dated Feb. 23 that was provided to the Free Press on Friday.

Some patients received letters in the mail about the breach this week. One of the letters indicated that in some cases, the information was further disclosed to third parties.

Ascension Michigan spokesperson Airielle Taylor provided the Free Press a news release for southeast Michigan patients of Ascension Michigan. It did not specify how many patients were affected or how many had more sensitive personal information, such as Social Security numbers and health information, exposed.

Taylor said in an email that the health system was only sharing what was included in the release

The health system is offering free credit and identity theft protectionmonitoring services to the affected patients as well as guidance on how they can protect their information from potential misuse.

It also is recommending that people remain vigilant in responding to anyone who may know their medical information related to care received at an As-



Some Ascension Michigan patients received letters in the mail about the health system's data breach this week. AP FILE

to the health system anyone trying to contact them regarding medical services or indicating they are partnering with Ascension to offer services.

Ascension Michigan said it has taken steps to further protect its patient information, including a "review of internal controls and further improvement to the processes intended to safeguard patient information."

The health system reported the breach to law enforcement and said it will cooperate with any investigation.

It also set up a call center from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 855-568-2066 for anyone who has questions.

This is the second health system in the metro Detroit area this week to release information about a data breach.

Michigan Medicine said Thursday

that it was notifying about 2,920 pa-

cension Michigan facility and to report tients that some of their health information may have been exposed when an employee's email account was compromised Dec. 23. This resulted in a cyberattacker gaining access to and using the account to send phishing emails, the health system said.

Notices were mailed to the affected patients or their personal representatives starting Thursday. Additional technical safeguards were put in place on the health system's email system and infrastructure.

Last month, Michigan Medicine notified 269 patients about a separate data breach found Jan. 27 in which a newly hired employee accessed patient medical records without a business need between Dec. 1 and Jan. 25.

Contact Christina Hall: chall@freepress.com. Follow her on Twitter: @challreporter.



Ascension Michigan is part of St. Louis-based Ascension Health, a nonprofit Catholic health system. **ASCENSION HEALTH**

Campground reservations at Michigan State Parks: What to watch, avoid

It's only March, but if you're a Michigan camper, you're probably already feeling pressure to get site reservations

set for the summer. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a surge in new campers and remote work made it easier for anyone to set up shop at Michigan campgrounds. Camping at Michigan State Parks broke state records in 2021.

It has created a bit of a mad dash to secure prime sites before they're gone.

So, save yourself some time. Here's what you need to know about state park campground reservations and closures this season.

We've got tips on parks to keep an eye on and others you may want to avoid.

And don't be surprised when your camping trip costs a little more this sea-

Campsite costs increase

In November, the Department of Natural Resources adjusted campsite and lodging fees to help fund state park operations. State park campsites costs have generally increased between \$2 and \$8 per night, rustic campsites increased by no more than \$5 per night and overnight lodging increased by \$10 per night. according to the DNR. The increase was the first in four years.

Keep an eye on Aloha State Park

The temporary closure of Aloha State Park, which sits on Mullett Lake in Cheboygan, is an opportunity for campers still looking to score a peak summer reservation.

The campground will be closed through at least June 23 for construction. All sites within the South campground will be upgraded to full hookup. The South campground's bathroom will also be eliminated and sewer and water lines will be replaced at the park.

The DNR has not allowed any reservations for the South campground for the 2022 season until a definitive opening date is set. This means when the South campground reservations become available, all the dates for booking should be wide-open.

You'll probably want to act quick. The updated sites will be quite the draw



Sterling State Park campground in Monroe on Oct. 6, 2021. TANYA WILDT, DETROIT FREE

since only eight other Michigan State Park campgrounds offer full hookup. Campers should check the DNR web-

site on or after March 12 for an update on the South campground.

U.P. campground reservations could be tough starting in August

A waterline replacement project will force Fort Wilkins Historic State Park in Copper Harbor to close sites 1-81 in the East campground and the East campground laundry facility in August. The closure is tentatively scheduled to start Aug. 1 and run through the end of the season. Sites 121-124 may also intermittently close Sept. 15 through the remainder of the season.

The closure will leave only half the park's sites available for reservation.

More campground closures

Brimley State Park

Brimley State Park's modern campground will be closed to replace three restroom and shower buildings. It's slated to reopen June 30, but it could be longer. Campers who already have reservations will want to watch in case the closure extends beyond June 30.

Interlochen State Park

Interlochen State Park's modern campground in Brimley also won't be available until June 30. Construction of a wastewater treatment plant means the campground and sanitation station will be closed. The park's rustic campground opens April 25.

Ludington State Park

Construction delays to replace two bathroom buildings and part of the electric system at Ludington's Beechwood campground in Ludington will force it to remain closed until at least July 1.

McLain State Park Beginning Sept. 6, the bathrooms at McLain State Park's campground in Hancock will be closed to replace water, sewer and electrical systems. Portable water will be available through the parks spigots and at the sanitation station. However, dumping at the sanitation will be unavailable. Other dumping options are available in the village of Lake Linden and the city of Hancock campgrounds for a \$5 fee. Campers can also use Baraga State Park's sanitation station on the day of their departure

from McLain, but a camp permit must be provided.

Otsego Lake State Park

Otsego Lake State Park's North campground in Gaylord will close June 2-15. The park will undergo roof, parking lot and road enhancements. The South campground will remain open.

Straits State Park

Reservations will not be taken at Straits State Park's Upper campground in St. Ignace after Sept. 6 due to a project to replace the restroom and shower building.

Van Buren State Park

The modern campground at Van Buren State Park in South Haven closed Sept. 12 for the construction of new bathrooms and is scheduled to reopen July 1.

Wilderness State Park

Wilderness State Park's East Lakeshore Campground in Carp Lake will remain closed into the 2022 season due to significant delays with the campground redevelopment project.

Water levels impacting sites

Harrisville State Park on Lake Huron in Harrisville will continue the closure of lakefront sites (94, 96, 97, 99, 101, 102 and 103) into this season due to high water levels.

Sanitation station closed at Holly **Recreation Area**

You'll need a new plan if you usually use the sanitation station at Holly Recreation Area in Holly. The station is closed while the DNR works to replace the drain field. Campers can use walkup mini dump stations, third-party sanitation services (Sundays only) or empty tanks at other state parks. The closest locations are Metamora-Hadley in Metamora and Proud Lake in Commerce Township. Campers must present a camping permit that expired within the last 24 hours to use those dump stations at no additional cost or pay a \$10 sanitation fee. Using the station at Seven Lakes in Holly is not an option because it's closed to non-Seven Lakes campers.

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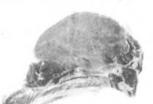
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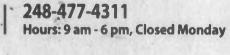




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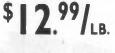
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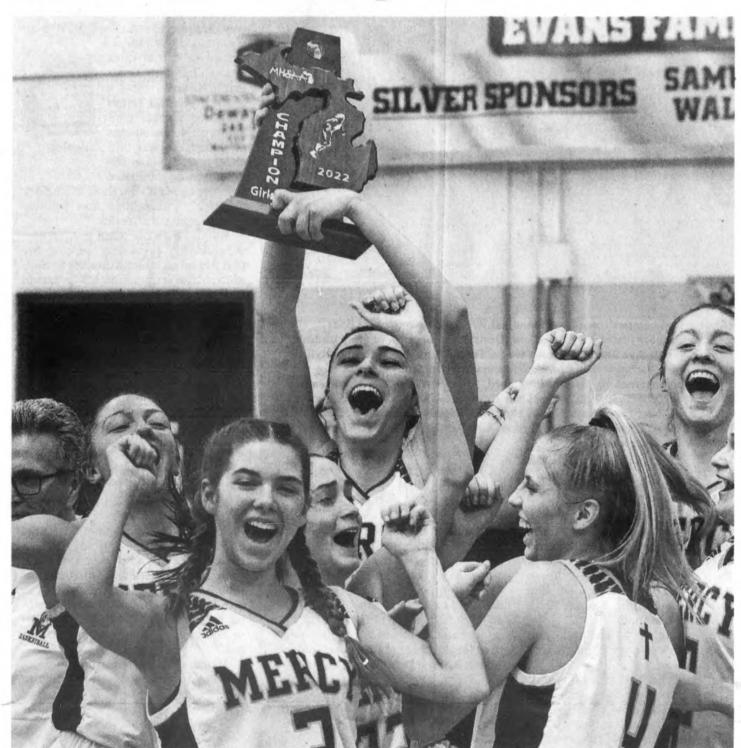


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SPORTS

Winning a district title was the best revenge for Marlins



Farmington Hills Mercy celebrates after the Marlins beat Livonia Stevenson in the Division 1 girls basketball district final on Friday, March 4, 2022, BRANDON FOI SOM/HOMETOWNLIFE COM

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Farmington Hills Mercy girls basketball team wore smiles on the outside since it was a special event.

But, deep down, as the Marlins sat in the stands and watched, they couldn't have been any more upset.

They had an incredible regular season. They won the Catholic League-Central after sweeping rival Bloomfield Hills Marian, squeaking by pesky Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard and

splitting with Dearborn Divine Child, one of the top teams in the state, which included a three-point victory in the rubber match in late January.

They wanted to add to the trophy case by winning the CHSL tourna-

Except Marian returned a few injured players, found some team chemistry and upset Mercy in the semifinal. The Marlins looked out of sorts in the first half and couldn't keep pace offensively with their rivals.

That put the Mustangs in the championship against Divine Child at Wayne State's brand new arena.

And the worst part about it? The CHSL hands out its season awards during halftime. That meant the Marlins were on hand to watch Marian take down the Falcons and win the tournament title.

They were right there, only a few rows up, sitting behind Divine Child's bench, taking in the scene as Marian guard Anna Herberholz helped retiring coach Mary Cicerone claim her 20thcareer tournament championship.

See MARLINS, Page 4B

Controversial finish helps **Canton hockey** win 1st regional title ever

Brandon Folsom

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

The east end of Novi Ice Arena was absolutely littered with abandoned sticks, gloves and helmets following an impromptu celebration of a life-

And wading through that mess was Canton hockey coach Justin Maedel, who found himself at the very end of the Chiefs' side of the post-game handshake line. As his guys marched forward to congratulate Livonia Stevenson's players on a game well played, the third-year coach paused to gather his thoughts.

First, he squatted down with his palms on his knees. And then he let out a giant sigh of relief. He briefly shook his head, stood back up and then quickly raced forward to join his players in shaking hands.

"I need to go to bed and get a couple of hours of sleep," Maedel later said of

A night like the Division 2 regional championship March 2 will do that to a

Maedel didn't rest much leading up to the matchup with the Spartans. The week prior, the Chiefs beat Walled Lake Northern in the semifinal. It had been 10 years since they had last won an opening-round playoff game.

They ratcheted up their effort in practices. Players were zeroed in. Scouting reports were finalized. Not a stone was left unturned in preparing for the unlikeliest of opportunities: A chance to win the first regional title in program history.

Of course, Canton entered as the underdogs. It had lost by three goals to Stevenson in the regular season, plus the Spartans were the No. 3-ranked team in D-2 according to Michigan

High School Hockey Hub. Sprinkle in a controversial finish in regulation as well as a game-winner scored by the least likely of goal-scorers in overtime, and there you have the blueprint to building an exhausted head coach.

But Maedel will take the heart race over the heartache.

Just 23 seconds into overtime, Lucas Amos buried a wide-open shot to give Canton the 3-2 upset victory.

"We just brought it today," Maedel said. "We didn't quit, and that was the whole thing. We competed from the

See HOCKEY, Page 3B

Plymouth Christian's Chibi Anwunah signs with Michigan football

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Scott Wiemer called college coaches. He emailed recruiting coordinators. He forwarded film and highlights.

The second-year Lutheran Westland football coach had no trouble sending players to the next level at past stops. They went to Wayne State, Northwood and Concordia-Ann Arbor, among other in-state programs. Some played for Division III schools in Wisconsin. He even had connections with a few assistants at some of the local D-I schools.

Certainly, someone would want See ANWUNAH, Page 6B

Wiemer's latest prospect, a 6-foot-7, 220-pound defensive end with a motor like JJ Watt's, a physicality like John Randle's and both the leadership and strength of Christian faith like Reggie White's.

But no one - not a SINGLE team returned Wiemer's calls, emails or texts last fall.

No one wanted Chibikem Anwunah, the Plymouth Christian Academy senior who participated in his school's co-op agreement with Lutheran Westland so that both small schools could even have enough players to field an 11-player



Plymouth Christian Academy senior Chibi Anwunah recently signed as a preferred walk-on with the Michigan football team. **PLYMOUTH** CHRISTIAN **ACADEMY** ATHLETICS/ **COURTESY PHOTO**



Lions' cheer celebrating one of the best seasons in program history

The Lions kept breaking school records

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

The South Lyon competitive cheer team saw its season end with a ninth-place finish in the Feb. 26 Division 1 regional meet at Hartland.

But that doesn't mean the Lions haven't had plenty of reasons to celebrate this winter.

In just their second season competing as a D-1 program, they qualified for regionals after breaking three school records during its district meet two weeks ago.

What's more, the trip to Hartland was just their first regional appearance in four seasons.

This is a team on the come-up.

"These athletes are top tier and do not get enough credit for the sport they love," coach Sarah Fierk said in a statement. "And yes, it is a very difficult sport. They show up day in and day out ready to work and break that next barrier down. We have stellar athletes who are all determined and very emotionally and physically engulfed in the sport.

"Our sport is unique. We cannot just throw in another player onto the football field or basketball court. Our three rounds are so calculated and having any changes within them affects each athlete on the mat. Our girls are resilient and have faced every challenge thrown at them this year to look clean, crisp and (like) a force to be reckoned with

"South Lyon has elite skills, and we manage to perform them in unison with textbook execution."

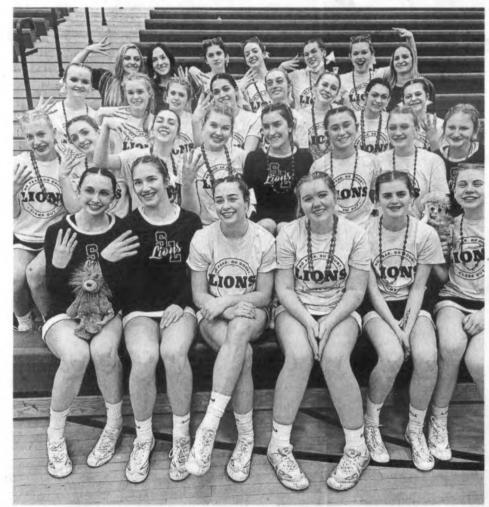
South Lyon's total district score of 765.76 broke a school record as did its individual scores in Round 1 (233.6) and Round 2 (226.94).

The only record it failed to break was the individual Round 3 score, which is still held by the team from 2018 that posted a 318. This year's squad scored a high of 311.5.

The regional saw the Lions post scores of 221.60 in Round 1, 218.64 in Round 2 and 305.30 in Round 3, good enough for a total score of 745.54.

"It seems that each competition we are breaking more school records on a round by round basis," Fierk said.

This year's squad included freshmen Maggie Badrak, Katelyn Benn, Avery Bourlier, Sabrina Cornellier, Kylie Modreski, Leah Plagens, Allison



The South Lyon competitive cheer team just wrapped up one of its best seasons in program history. Pictured are (front) Lauren Keith, Maggie Badrak, Lauren McMahon, Ava Sentz, Allison Savage, Emma Tupa, (second row) Kylie Modreski, Emily Yarbrough, Jenna Neer, Jenna Chaffin, Emily Nagy, Avery Boulier, Sabrina Cornellier, Reese Retherford, (third row) Leah Radde, Delainey Smith, Sophie Boback, Rianna Gjoka, Lizzy Creech, Leah Plagens, Lilyana Yost, Katelyn Benn, (back) assistant Sydney Stenman, assistant Megan Johnson, Callie Overstreet, Elizabeth Stanley, Brooklynne Adams, Audrey Ford and coach Sarah Fierk. COURTESY PHOTO

Savage, Delainey Smith, Emma Tupa, Emily Yarbrough and Lilyana Yost; sophomores Brooklynne Adams, Sophie Boback, Audrey Ford, Rianna Gjoka, Jenna Neer, Leah Radde and Ava Sentz; juniors Elizabeth Creech, Emily Nagy, Callie Overstreet, Reese Retherford and Elizabeth Stanley; and seniors Jenna Chaffin, Lauren Keith and Lauren McMahon.

Also helping Fierk lead the team were assistants Sydney Stenman and Megan Johnson.

"We have the best coaching staff imaginable, and our three (although crazy at times) different cheer experiences all bring the perfect recipe to our athletes," Fierk added. "This team is special, and I hope they will remember this year for the rest of their lives. We have a very young team, and I can only imagine where they will go year over

year, keeping with them the legacy of our amazing seniors that showed them

"(At districts), we knew we were walking in with a good chance of qualifying, but needed the girls to perform the way we have prepared them to. They stepped it up and put some amazing routines on the floor. We are so incredibly proud of them."

Just one area team, Plymouth, qualified for the cheer state final slated for March 4 at the DelaPlex in Grand Rapide.

The Wildcats took fourth place at the D-1 regional at Troy Athens with rounds of 237.40, 231.16 and 318.60 for a final score of 787.16.

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

Patriots pompon wins Mid American Pompon championship

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Livonia Franklin has the best pompon team in the state. Quite literally.

Not only did its varsity squad win the Mid American Pompon state championship on Feb. 13 at Eastern Michigan University but its JV won a state title as well.

This news comes after both squads won the High Kick Championship last November in Saginaw and qualified for the state championship during the ensuing regional meet this past January.

The varsity claimed the Class A/Division I state title after scoring 498 out of 550 points, which was a better score than several college teams present, while the JV earned a D-1 title, too.

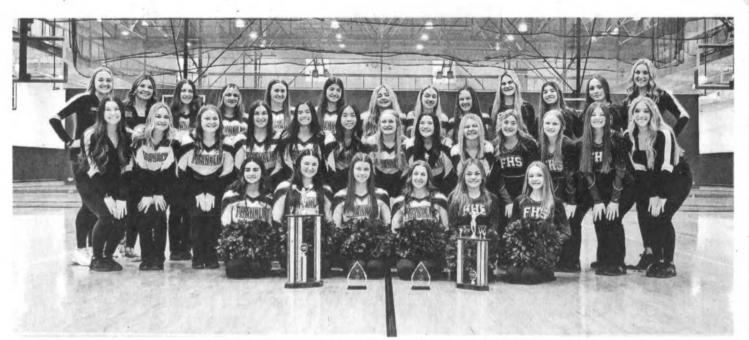
It's just the third time Franklin has won a state championship.

Coaching the varsity were Maddie Ruffing, Brooke Argue and Hailey Petrovich, while the JV coaches included Anna Fillar, Jenna Milewski and Hannah Sexton.

This year's varsity squad included senior captains Kayla Petrovich, Haylee Shingler, Sophie Nomides, Kailyn Benson; juniors Grace Makowski and Megan Swystun; sophomores Lauren Kotrych, Lily Poisson, Alyssa Greis, Savannah Hodges, Lily Sczcembara, Isabelle Anderson, Madeline Shiner, Brein Horgan, Davinee Scott and Ava Phan; and freshmen Kaitlyn Fugedi, Emily Young and Maliya Watt.

The JV roster included sophomore Kierra Kelly and freshmen Katarina Benson, Jillian Hardacre, Sophia Marietta, Lilly McKinley, Brooklyn Branham, Brianna Bartz and Madison Brussow.

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



Both the Livonia Franklin varsity and JV pompon squads won state championships Feb. 13 at Eastern Michigan University. Pictured are (front, I-r) Sophie Nomides, Kayla Petrovich, Haylee Shingler, Kailyn Benson, Madison Brussow, Kiera Kelly; (second, I-r) coach Madison Ruffing, Davinee Scott, Grace Makowski, Savannah Hodges, Maliya Watt, Ava Phan, Lily Poisson, Lauren Kotrych, Emily Young, Brooklyn Branham, Jillian Hardacre, Katarina Benson, coach Hannah Sexton; (third, I-r) coach Hailey Petrovich, coach Brooke Argue, Lily Szczembara, Isabelle Anderson, Megan Swystun, Alyssa Greis, Brein Horgan, Kaitlyn Fugedi, Madeline Shiner, Sophia Marietta, Brianna Bartz, Lilly McKinley and coach Anna Fillar. Not pictured: coach Jenna Milewski. COURTESY PHOTO

Stevenson's Lori Hyman awarded Women In Sports Leadership MHSAA honor

Courtesy of Geoff Kimmerly mhsaa.com

Over the last 27 years, Livonia Stevenson athletic director Lori Hyman has not only led athletic departments at two of Michigan's larger high schools but also served as a voice of leadership, education and mentorship for her colleagues statewide. To celebrate her contributions to school sports, Hyman

was named the 35th recipient of the MHSAA Women In Sports Leadership Award.

Each year, the representative council considers the achievements of women coaches, officials and athletic administrators affiliated



Hyman

with the MHSAA who show exemplary leadership capabilities and positive contributions to athletics.

Hyman is in her 22nd year at Stevenson after previously serving her first five as an athletic director at Dexter. She also is a graduate of Stevenson High School and continued her education and basketball careers at Michigan State University, then served as a women's college basketball coach for 17 seasons before transitioning into school sports administration in 1995.

Hyman will receive the Women In Sports Leadership Award during the MHSAA Division 1 Girls Basketball Final on March 19 at Michigan State's Breslin Center.

"Every part of my career I've been happy with, and honored, and just thoroughly enjoyed it," Hyman said. "It's been a passion of mine, every as-

"(Playing at Michigan State) was one of the best times, if not the best time, of my life as a youngster. And then being an athletic director has probably been the most rewarding as an adult. And being at Stevenson, coming back home, has been quite an honor and just a very rich experience for me"

Me."
Hyman has hosted a multitude of MHSAA tournament events while at both Dexter and Stevenson and has served on the MHSAA's girls tennis, girls basketball and boys basketball committees. She also has served as the girls and boys tennis commissioner of the Kensington Lakes Activities Association, of which Stevenson is a mem-

She has served as a Leadership Training Institute instructor for the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA) and as a presider and speaker at the MIAAA's annual conference. She also has spoken at the MHSAA's Women In Sports Leadership Conference.

Hyman was named her region's Athletic Director of the Year by the MIAAA in 2014 and received its Jack Johnson Distinguished Service Award in 2015.

"Lori has been a leader and pioneer in the world of athletics, and in particular as an advocate for females and girls sports," MHSAA Executive Director Mark Uyl said. "When she left coaching basketball to work as an AD, it was an incredible victory for kids in our state. She's been dependable, loyal and just a model of consistency in running a first-class program."

Hyman is a 1975 graduate of Livonia Stevenson, where she also played softball and competed in track & field. She was named MSU's Outstanding Athlete of the Year for women's basketball in 1979, after serving as co-captain of the team that season but rarely playing because of an injury. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in physical education and health in 1980 and also has a master's in athletic administration from Wayne State University.

Hyman served as a women's basketball graduate assistant at Ferris State University after graduating from MSU and then as head coach at Northwood Institute (now University) from 1981-82 — when she was only 23 years old through 1985-86.

She then served as an assistant coach at University of Illinois before returning as head coach at Ferris State from 1989-90 through 1994-95.

She received her certified master athletic administrator designation from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) in 2006. In addition to her vast school sports responsibilities and contributions, Hyman has volunteered with Special Olympics, Livonia's Newburg United Methodist Church and Rotary Club.

Hockey

Continued from Page 1B

drop of the puck in the first, to the second, and to the third and in OT. ... It was a very emotional, hard-fought game for both teams. It was fun to watch. It was a fun game to watch with back-and-forth opportunities."

Emotional is an understatement.

Canton's game-tying goal scored in the third period will be something Stevenson's fans will talk about for dec-

Trailing 2-1 with 1 minute to go, the Chiefs pulled goalie Nate Azarovictz (34 saves) for an extra skater as a last-ditch effort to knot the score and force overtime with a man advantage.

Stevenson almost threw in an emptynetter, which was enough to kill plenty of time

The Chiefs finally got the puck back into scoring territory and worked it around the net. About 15 seconds remained.

Finally, Nolan Lenon ripped a shot from the blue line. It went wide-right and banged off the glass. About 10 seconds were left.

Matthew Thibodeau corralled the rebound and sent a backhanded shot toward Stevenson goalie Zach Waldo, but it got deflected before it ever reached Waldo. About 3 seconds were on the clock.

Joel Fonovic crashed the net and somehow banged his stick on the puck. The rebound went in, but there was no time remaining.

Quite literally. The scoreboard showed three Os, but the final horn never sounded.

Stevenson's Andrew Elliott pointed up at the scoreboard and then clutched his helmet in disbelief. And then teammate Adam Heard skated toward a referee and pointed at the scoreboard as well.

Spartans coach David Mitchell looked so distraught by the play that he left the bench and walked toward the west end of the arena to regather him-

The referees met at center ice to make a final decision. They ruled that 0.2 seconds were left. The score would stand.

Canton burst into an immediate cele-

"The boys were buzzing with 0.2 sec-



The Canton Chiefs hoist their Division 2 championship trophy on March 2, 2022. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

onds left on the clock, and we still fought through it," said Fonovic of his unbelievable goal. "I just knew there was more than a second on the clock. I just went behind the net and tucked it

"It's amazing. In my three years on varsity, we've never beaten them. My sophomore year, we lost 10-1 in the playoffs in the first round to them. It feels great to beat them finally.

Overtime was just a thrilling, or gutwrenching, depending on which side of the bleachers you sat on.

Immediately after the opening faceoff, Canton dumped the puck into Stevenson's zone. The Spartans never truly cleared it and a few odd things happened to them.

Owen Penny, who scored both of Stevenson's goals, lost his stick, taking him away from the play and giving Canton an instant man-advantage.

And then Canton's Cam Kitts deked Waldo on a shot that saw the goalie awkwardly slide out of position. But the rebound landed in front of Amos, who initially thought about passing the puck back to Kitts or to Fonovic in the corner. But then the sophomore saw just how wide-open the net was with Waldo scrambling to recover his territory.

So Amos lasered a strike to the right side of the net to win it all.

Amos was apprehensive about taking the shot because he had only scored two goals in his two years on varsity. He never expected to take that shot.



Tyler Husted brings the puck up ice. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Canton Chief **Daniel** Fletcher barrels towards the Livonia net. JOHN HEIDER/ HOMETOWN

"Nah, I was thinking I was going to give it one of them on my line," he said. "It just kind of worked out like that. It's amazing. I don't think we've ever beaten them, so it's pretty amazing.'

Maedel almost looked unprepared when athletic director Vern Crump Sr. handed him the regional trophy.

The coach looked it up and down in amazement, handed it to Tyler Husted and Fonovic, two of his eight seniors, and watched as his team celebrated while hoisting the trophy in front of Canton's student section.

And then he pulled out his phone from his right pants pocket and started organizing the team pictures. He wanted one taken in front of the scoreboard showing the score of the game and another in front of Canton's fans.

It was a lot to organize. Sleep was going to have to wait.

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

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Marlins

Continued from Page 1B

What's more, Mercy coach Gary Morris was a color analyst on the CHSL's broadcast of the game. Talk about adding insult to injury.

So not once but twice the Marlins saw Marian spoil what was almost a perfect regular season. Clearly, they needed to pick up the pieces, refocus and soldier on from the experience.

"Obviously, that feeling really sucked," senior Sarah Cunningham said. "Nobody wants to go and watch a game they should've been playing in, but we kind of just wanted to put that loss behind us. That was the fire lit underneath our butts to win the district championship, and that's exactly what we did. In practice, we've been working our butts off to do exactly what we did tonight."

That's right. Mercy used that night at WSU as motivation to finish the regular season on a high note and walk into the Division 1 district tournament with one goal in mind: Win the whole dang thing.

And the Marlins (18-4) did just that, taking down Southfield A&T in the semifinal on March 2 and then using a 16-point third quarter to run past visiting Livonia Stevenson 54-31 in the March 4 championship game.

They faced West Bloomfield, the No. 1 team in the Associated Press' final poll, in Tuesday's regional semifinal.

They entered the matchup as the underdog, but that's OK. They already had a chip on their shoulder from watching Marian win the CHSL tournament. There's nothing wrong with having even more motivation.

"You don't want to look back and say we played badly in a game," Morris said. "We didn't play well against Marian, especially in the first half, so we don't want to repeat that in the state tourna-

"We told the kids: That knocked us out of the Catholic League tournament, but the next loss ends our season."

Friday's district final saw Mercy overcome some adversity.

It was a two-point game with a minute left in the first half. But Sophie Dugas buried a 3-pointer, and then Maya White scored a bucket down low just before the buzzer to give the Marlins a 23-16 halftime lead.

They never looked back after that.



Farmington Hills Mercy coach Gary Morris accepts the championship trophy after the Marlins beat Livonia Stevenson in the Division 1 girls basketball district final on Friday, March 4, 2022. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

In the second half, Cunningham and White were a force in the paint. Dugas continued knocking down shots. And contributors such as Lauren Smiley, Aizlyn Albanese and Fran DeNardo, among others, helped push the pace, especially with their team's full-court pressure defense executing well.

"I think it's good we got a taste of what a loss could feel like in the playoffs," said Dugas, reflecting on the loss to Marian. "That was not very fun, and we don't want to go through that again. So we're working extra hard in practice so we don't lose."

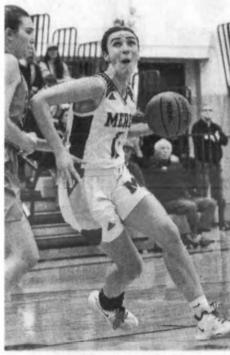
Although senior night was last month, Morris used the end of the evening to pay tribute to Cunningham and Dugas, his only two seniors, aside from third-year manager Bianca Marcon, as the duo officially played in their final home game of their careers.

With 3:15 left, Morris substituted Cunningham out of the game for the last time, and the Marlins' student section gave her a standing ovation as she walked to the bench.

Nineteen seconds later, he did the same for Dugas.

me for Dugas.

The two watched their teammates



Farmington Hills Mercy's Sarah
Cunningham attacks the basket during
the Division 1 girls basketball district
final against Livonia Stevenson on
Friday, March 4, 2022. BRANDON
FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Farmington Hills Mercy's Maya White passes during the Division 1 girls basketball district final against Livonia Stevenson on Friday, March 4, 2022.

BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Farmington Hills Mercy's Sarah Cunningham celebrates after the Marlins beat Livonia Stevenson in the Division 1 girls basketball district final on Friday, March 4, 2022. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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dribble out the final seconds off the scoreboard. When the horn finally buzzed, Cunningham was the first to sprint to half court to celebrate.

The pain from the Marian loss was finally subsiding as Mercy hoisted the district trophy in the air for yet another

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



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Anwunah

Continued from Page 1B

team.

It was heartbreaking, actually. So much so that Anwunah gave up on playing college football completely. He decided he'd just pick a school that had a great dentistry program and put athletics behind him. He could always play intramural sports or even try out for his future school's club basketball team (at 6-7, he's thrown down plenty of dunks and alley-oops in PCA's gymnasium during his four years there).

But playing football, that was just going to be a fond memory he'd always hold deeply in his heart.

This past fall he helped the Warriors win their first league championship in their 37-year history. He guided them to an eight-win season for only the second time ever. He ensured they made the playoffs for just the fifth time, and not even the 1996 squad that also won eight games made it to the postseason.

Those were going to be Anwunah's biggest memories of playing the sport.

Or so that's what the senior thought until, in December, Wiemer heard from Albert Karschnia, the person responsible for getting Anwunah a preferred walk-on opportunity at Michigan.

From Africa to the opponent's backfield

Anwunah, the son of Nigerian immigrants, spent most of his life in Michigan.

He attended early grade school at Canton Charter Academy before his parents thought it'd be best for him and his siblings to spend a year in Abagana, a Nigerian town not far from both the Niger River and the Gulf of Guinea, where his family is originally from.

"I hadn't spent much time in Nigeria before that," he said. "So my parents thought it was a good idea for me and my sisters to stay there, embrace the culture and get a real feel for what it's like to be Nigerian."

He spent the entire eighth grade in Africa before his parents allowed him to come back to the Canton area.

He was too old to return to Canton Charter Academy, so he enrolled at nearby PCA.

Athletic director Matt Windle will never forget the first time he saw Anwu-

nah walk into the building as a freshman.

"He looked like he was 30 as a 14-year-old," said Windle, who's also Anwunah's basketball coach.

He was already 6-5 and 190 pounds at that age. Windle couldn't wait to get him in the gym and have him battling in the paint for rebounds and blocks.

And, surely, he'd be a good fit on the football team, too, right?

Anwunah actually didn't have any experience playing the sport, plus lots of his friends at PCA ran cross country during the fall. So that's what he decided to do, too.

"I thought that was really funny. He struggled in it," Windle said. "In his first race, I think he was the last-place runner out of everybody who ran the race."

That was actually a 93rd-place finish at the Monroe Jefferson Invitational in 2018. He finished in 24 minutes, 38 seconds, which actually wasn't his worst time or finish of the season. He would be much slower later that fall.

But he also surprised himself with a personal best in the 5 kilometers during a sub-22-minute effort around Thelma Spencer Park in Rochester Hills at PCA's conference meet.

The most successful high school distance runners are about 5-8 and 140 pounds — or the equivalent to just one of Anwunah's tree-trunk-sized legs.

Did no one really think to have the giant freshman give the gridiron a shot? "...uh, no," Anwunah laughed. "I just wanted to try out cross country."

He finally wised up as a sophomore and tried out for football.

He wasn't that successful there either. He lumbered around unathletically and it took a while for former coach Paul Guse and his assistants to figure out what to do with him.

He ended up getting reps at tight end.
"We always thought basketball was his sport," Windle said. "That's what he's always played. He came into the school at 6-5 and with a freakish build. He spent the first two years trying to learn the position.

"He was getting some looks on defense the last couple of years. But he didn't become a freak until this past season, and that's when things were starting to click for him."

When Wiemer took over the program from Guse, he asked offensive coordinator Steve Faith if there were any players he could build the program around.

Wiemer said Faith gushed over An-



Lutheran Westland's Chibi Anwunah pass rushes against Advanced Tech during a Michigan Independent Athletic Conference football game on Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021, at Lawrence Tech. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Plymouth Christian Academy senior Chibi Anwunah sits with his parents after signing as a preferred walk-on with the Michigan football team. COURTESY OF PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ATHLETICS

wunah.

"Steve Faith was there and he said,
'You're going to love this kid, and he's
very raw,' and he did have a lot of raw
talent," Wiemer said. "But that did show
you his athleticism, and he was making
contributions early on. And he was
smart. He started adapting very well."

In just a year, Anwunah went from a novice to being unblockable.

Injuries on the team forced him to play middle linebacker in some games, but he certainly shined at defensive end. There wasn't a quarterback he couldn't sack. He threw around offensive tackles like they were (traditional) cross country runners.

Plus, he became the Warriors' best blocker on offense, Wiemer said. Whenever they ran the ball to his side of the line, the play was going to go for at least a first down.

He finished his senior year with 51 tackles (31 solo, five for loss), five sacks, two fumble recoveries and one forced fumble. That doesn't count his effort on special teams as a punt blocker either.

He went on to earn All-Michigan Independent Athletic Conference firstteam honors. But what he should've been earning was a scholarship to play college football.

'Keeping on doing what you do'

Karschnia was the director of player personnel at Central Michigan when he first saw Anwunah's highlights.

However, Karschnia never reached out to Wiemer or PCA about recruiting

him to be a Chippewa.

That's because Karschnia was actually in the process of moving from Mt.

Pleasant to Ann Arbor, as Michigan hired him to be its new recruiting operations coordinator.

Wiemer said Karschnia was digging through his old notes from CMU when he found Anwunah's file.

Karschnia did his due diligence and called Wiemer to see where Anwunah was in the recruiting process.

"He saw Chibi's video and asked if he'd be interested in coming for a visit," Wiemer said. "He wanted information about Chibi's grades, his family and his work ethic. I told him, 'You won't find a better individual than this kid.' He said that he had seen video of Chibi also playing basketball and said that they think they'll offer him a preferred walk-on once they got him up there for a visit.

"It just came out of nowhere."
Wiemer couldn't believe it. He quickly called Windle about getting a hold of
Anwunah since it was PCA's Christmas
vacation.

And wouldn't you know it: The Anwunah family wasn't around. They had traveled to Nigeria for the holidays.

"I texted him and said, 'Chibi, can you take a phone call right now? It's important,' and I think we ended up doing a FaceTime voice call over wifi so it'd work out," Windle said.

Although it was early in the day in Michigan, the Anwunahs were actually gathered around the dinner table in west Africa.

Anwunah was shoveling rice into his mouth with a fork when he heard Windle's big news.

"You're joking me?" said Anwunah, who dropped his fork in pure shock.

"I'm not joking you," Windle responded. "We'll talk more when you get back, but the University of Michigan is offering you a preferred walk-on opportunity."

The Anwunahs returned to the states and quickly piled into their car and headed to Schembechler Hall. Anwunah made sure Wiemer was with him for the visit.

They toured the facility. Anwunah took pictures in some Michigan gear. The family even got to meet assistant Mike Elston, who coaches the defensive ends

And then the offer came. Anwunah committed the following day.

"I was in shock," he said. "I was in the middle of eating some rice and the next thing you know I have a phone call with the recruiting coordinator at Michigan, and he said I should be scheduling a visit. After the visit, he offered me officially, and I just couldn't pass up the opportunity.

"It's truly a blessing... It's really crazy. I've always had faith in keeping on doing what you do. If you know what you're capable of, just pursue it no matter what and just have faith. That's how I got my offer."

The next Nigerian in the NFL?

Obviously, Anwunah still has work to

An opportunity to play for U-M doesn't mean he will be the next best player in the Big Ten, nor does it make him a future NFL draft pick. He's a preferred walk-on, so he's not even promised playing time.

Windle said Anwunah's foregoing his senior track season to focus on lifting weights and conditioning this spring, choosing to prepare for a career in football over defending his league title in the high jump.

But the skies are the limit for Anwunah. He has the work ethic to turn this opportunity into a Hollywood underdog sports movie.

Thirty Nigerians have played in the NFL, including eight who've played defensive end or outside linebacker, the position he'll play with the Wolverines.

What's more, the Wolverines are currently sending at least two of their defensive ends to the NFL this spring in Dearborn Divine Child's Aiden Hutchinson and David Ojabo.

Ojabo, of course, is Nigerian, too.

"It's crazy, and it's a blessing, too," Anwunah said when asked about Ojabo. "I'm pretty sure he started in football pretty late, too, and Michigan shaped him into the player that he is. And he's about to be drafted."

Anwunah is the first D-I football player to come out of PCA, a school that doesn't even have its own football team. And he might become its first NFL draft pick. Imagine if he hadn't quit running cross country three years ago. None of this would've been possible.

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

Obituaries

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Renee Kolasa

NORTHVILLE - Age 68, of Northville, passed away unexpectedly on February 21, 2022. She was born on December 8, 1953 in Pontiac, Michigan; daughter of Robert and Mary (Falzon) LaCroix. Renee grew up in Dearborn Heights and graduated from Riverside High School, class of 1972. She began a family in Livonia and moved to Northville in 1989.

Livonia and moved to Northville in 1989.

After High School she received a degree in Cosmetology. She spent over 40 years as a hairdresser. In her later years, Renee worked as a caregiver to the elderly at Lovewell, a home care company her daughter Kristin owns in Northville. She was an

incredibly kind caregiver and brought so much joy to the people she helped. Renee also spent some time as a preschool teaching assistant and briefly worked at Genitti's Restaurant.

With a strong faith in God and powerful devotion to Jesus, Renee cherished the time she spent with her daughter, Marin, going to Connection Church in Canton. She was a very proud mother, and her two granddaughters, Lucy and Piper, were the light of her life. Nothing held higher importance than spending time with her family and having daily talks with her mother. Renee was a loving, kind, and dynamic mother, daughter, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend.

Renee was very patriotic and loved this country. Singing "God Bless America" always brightened her (and anyone lucky enough to be within earshot of her performance) day. She enjoyed reading, especially history. Renee was a talented seamstress and created Victorian costumes for the Northville Victorian Festival for over 5 years. With a creative eye she enjoyed her time painting, sewing, and crocheting. Some of her favorite things included going to the casino, playing bingo, going to breakfast, and to the dollar store with her closest friends. She was the life of the party, loved being with people, eating (cheesecake and chocolate ice cream were her favorite food group),

laughing, joking, and beaming her big infectious smile.

Renee is survived by her children, Brian (Meredith) Kolasa, Kristin (fiancée Ben McKinnon) Kolasa, and Marin Kolasa; her mother Mary LaCroix; her granddaughters, Lucy and Piper; her siblings, John (Rita Morse) LaCroix, Joan Webber, Michael (Cathy) LaCroix, and Michelle (Doug) Bishop; her sister-in-law Sue LaCroix; and her future step-grandchildren, Kevin and Karter. She is also survived by 8 loving nieces and nephews and her cherished best friend Toni Genitti. Renee was preceded in death by her father

and her brother Rob LaCroix.

A celebration of life was held at Casterline Funeral Home in Northville.

Memorial contributions would be appreciated to Life Challenge Ministries,
17667 Pierson Street, Detroit, Michigan 48219.



Hartland seniors 'protect the nest' again, beat **Howell for KLAA title**

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HARTLAND — The first time they represented Hartland on their home court, they lost.

There was no shame in losing on the night of Dec. 11, 2018, considering the opponent was a Saginaw Heritage team that went on to win a state cham-

Since then, seniors Leah Lappin, Gracey Metz, Amanda Roach and Lauren Sollom have been unbeatable at

They were in danger of losing their final home game, but unleashed a 20point explosion after trailing by five points early in the fourth quarter to beat Howell, 63-48, in the KLAA championship game.

Celebrating a championship was a fitting way for the Eagles' quartet of four-year varsity players to end the home portion of their incredible careers. Hartland has won three straight KLAA titles.

"We just wanted it so bad," Metz said. "Our last home game on this court, we just needed it. We've got to protect the nest. We've never really lost on our home court."

Hartland has won 39 straight home games since losing 55-35 to Heritage in the home debuts for Lappin, Metz, Roach and Sollom. The Eagles haven't lost many games in any gym over the last four years, going 84-7.

The team photo taken with the KLAA championship trophy is one of many such scenes at the league, district and regional level that will go into these players' scrapbooks.

"These kids have been a part of some great things," Hartland coach Don Palmer said. "But Whitney (Sollom) was there, Madi (Moyer) was there, Nikki (Dompierre) was there. Then you had Syd (Caddell) there and Lillee (Gustafson) there.

"This is theirs, so it's their turn." Hartland's only blemish in a 19-1 regular season is a 37-31 loss at Howell on Jan. 11. The Eagles have won 12 consecutive games since then, beating the Highlanders twice during that stretch.

Round 4 is eight days away, with both teams expected to square off for the district championship next Friday

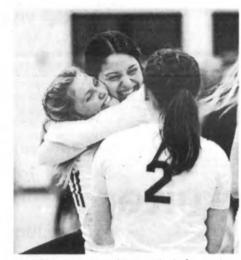
"Every game matters, but we want nother shot." Howell senior Maeve St. John said. "We're glad we get another shot at them. We can't have any more mistakes. This is the last shot you have at a mistake. We definitely had it, so we can't have any more."

Howell's biggest leads of the game were 25-18 after scoring the last six points of the first half and 28-21 early in the third quarter.

Hartland fought back to tie the game 35-35 after three quarters. A long 3-pointer by St. John and a basket by Amelia Storm in the first minute of the fourth quarter gave the Highlanders a 40-35 lead.

Then came a decisive onslaught by the Eagles, who scored 20 straight points over the span of 3 minutes, 24

Roach ignited the surge by hitting a 3-pointer with 5:55 remaining and



Hartland's Amanda Roach, left, and Madeline Turcotte hug after a 63-48 victory over Howell in the KLAA championship game on Thursday. GILLIS BENEDICT/LIVINGSTON DAILY

tland's next nine points with a pull-up jumper, a 3-pointer and a layup to put the game nearly out of reach at 51-40 with 2:40 remaining.

"I wasn't (confident) in the first half," Metz said. "It didn't look very good, but some people have bad shooting nights or bad shooting spurts. I knew I just had to keep shooting, because if I don't shoot, it's not going to

Lappin scored 14 of her career-high 22 points in the second half. She is averaging 14.1 points in her last nine games after averaging 5.7 in her first 11.

It was Lappin who did most of the talking when the Eagles huddled up before the start of the second half.

"The message was, Just come out strong," Lappin said. "They were outrebounding us. That's what wins games. We just needed to focus on that. Rebounding and defense was the

Roach had 14 points and Metz 12 for the Eagles, who will face Linden at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in a district semifinal at Howell.

St. John had 14 points and Storm 11 for Howell (15-5), which will face Fenton or Holly following the Hartland-Linden game.

"They baited us into some quick shots that we shouldn't have taken, which led to transition points," Howell coach Tim Olszewski said. "If you know anything about Hartland, they score 60% of their points on transition. Boy, we just fed right into that. We just threw the bird seed out there and they went and got it.

"You're up five in the fourth quarter against that team. It's time to take care of the basketball, it's time to take great shots, it's time to move and work and pass up a good shot for a great shot. We were satisfied taking average shots, at

Howell junior Sophie Daugard, who sustained a broken nose Monday in a victory at sixth-ranked Wayne Memorial, scored seven points while wearing a protective mask.

"She's a tough kid, a tough, tough kid," Olszewski said. "She's a consummate teammate, believes in the team. She didn't want to let people down. She got cleared by the trainer and parents. She wanted in. You can't keep a competitor like that out. She came in



Hartland's Gracey Metz takes a shot that is defended by Howell's Alison Farr during the KLAA championship game on Thursday. GILLIS BENEDICT/LIVINGSTON DAILY



Olivia Foster (25) of Hartland has been named captain for Navy's soccer team. MAX BUENO/UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY ATHLETICS

Hartland grad goes from walk-on to captain for Navy soccer team

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

On some teams, being named a cap-

To wear the "C" for a team at one of the United States service academies carries greater weight, because the nature of each institution means each team is filled with potential leaders.

Olivia Foster of Hartland has been selected captain of Navy's women's soccer team for next season, a distinction that is even more meaningful considering she's a walk-on who hasn't been a starter during her first three seasons.

"It feels like a pretty big responsibility," Foster said. "At the end of the day, it's just a privilege to be able to step in front of my team and have their trust that they believe in me to lead them throughout the season and everything. At an institution like this where we're all leaders, it feels pretty special. It's still kind of surreal."

Captains at Navy are voted on by players. Each team has only one captain, except for football. Players who are named captains get an extra stripe on their military uniforms because they hold a leadership position.

"It's a leadership institution," said Carin Gabarra, a former national team player who has coached Navy since 1993.

"It's part of the fabric and mission of the Naval Academy. Everybody's a leader here. It's pretty special to be named captain, and by your peers. In all my time here, the voting has been really good. Players aren't just voting for their friends; people are voting for who they think will be the best leaders. It's a very big honor."

Foster has rotated at several positions during her time at Navy, playing wherever the team needs her. She has appeared in 10 games in her career, scoring a goal on a penalty kick against Delaware State last

She made the Patriot League academic honor roll for 2020-21.

"Some of the intangibles Olivia brings to this team are as good as we've ever had in our 28 years as a program," Gabarra said. "She is incredibly intrinsically motivated every day. She plays with this heart and passion that's unmatched and brings others with her. She's incredibly inclusive

and collaborative."

It's remarkable that Foster is playing NCAA Division I soccer, let alone as a captain, because she was ready to give up the sport after graduating from Hartland in

She moved between forward and midfield as a senior at Hartland, tying for second with seven goals on a young team that was building toward a state championship two years later. Foster was a firstteam All-Livingston County selection after making the second team as a junior.

And it looked like that would be it for Foster, who didn't plan to continue her career in college.

Despite her success playing for a large school, the only offer she had was from

Kalamazoo College She already planned to attend the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, with the ultimate goal of becoming an officer in the Marine Corps. Her father, Wade, is a retired Marine who coaches basketball and soccer at Hartland.

"I was completely prepared to give it up," Foster said. "But my senior year after we lost to Novi in districts, I kind of felt like I still had a lot of gas left in the tank; I just needed to do something with it. I didn't feel like I was completely done. I felt like I owed it to myself to give it one more

Foster, who attended soccer camps at the Naval Academy growing up, sent an email to an associate coach expressing her interest in playing for the Midship-

But even Foster had her doubts.

"I kind of put off the whole soccer thing ere," she said, "It's a super good D1 team Who am I to think I have a shot to play

Foster was invited to play during a sports period at boot camp heading into her freshman year, then was given a tryout when the full team began preseason practices. She made the team, which Gabarra said is rare for a walk-on.

"We had already completed the class, so we told her we weren't sure she would fit," Gabarra said. "She's that type of kid who took it on her shoulders to prove herself. Not only did she prove herself, she's going to be a senior captain."

Contact Bill Khan at wkhan@gan-



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The Labor Force Participation Rate for Persons With a Disability Is Up

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Labor force participation dropped sharply at the start of the pandemic, and has still only partially recovered. Most population groups have seen substantial declines in employment and labor force participation. But there are a few notable exceptions. some of which are highlighted in the annual "Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics" report published today by the U.S. **Bureau of Labor Statistics.**

Here are three takeaways from today's release:

1. Labor force participation for people with a disability fully recovered even before the end of 2020

At 22.8%, labor force participation among people with disabilities is now nearly 2 percentage points higher than it was in February 2020, which is remarkable considering that the

labor force participation rate for people with no disability is still 1.8 percentage points below the February 2020 rate.

> 2. Increased remote work opportunities have opened doors for workers with disabilities

People with disabilities faced the same struggles as the rest of the workforce during the pandemic, with one exception: the shift to remote

work made employment opportunities vastly more accessible to them, even as overall employment declined. A massive number of jobs became virtual within days, and a large spike in the share of job postings allowing remote work changed the landscape for homebound job seekers with disabilities and chronic health conditions.

3. Women have been particularly responsive to the expansion in remote work opportunities

The surge in labor force participation among workers with disabilities is being fueled by women. Compared to pre-pandemic 2019 levels, the labor force participation rate for men with a disability is 1.2% lower, whereas it is now 6.2% higher for women. Across gender and disability status, women with a disability are the only segment that has surged ahead of pre-pandemic employment trends, let alone fully recovered.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLER

THE SILVER PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo **SCREEN** ACROSS 46 Beginner, in 34 Piercing 81 Tennis unit 1 Guy in the 85 1982 film gaming lingo compound impertinent 35 Come in 47 Use sandin marijuana: 124 Actor Dick Beatles' first and arcade "I Am the Van -36 Vintage auto paper on, Abbr. game 85 Sequence of 125 Evaluate 38 Someone -86 Steam hole Walrus" informally 7 Brand of 48 Ed. supporter episodes on problem 87 Ninny **DOWN 88** Bump — log bottled water 50 Brain wave the tube 39 Sleep stage 89 Test of speed 43 "I fail - the 90 Road map 13 Holy places tests, in brief 1 Tokens 20 Yacht basin 54 - - Ball 92 1986 Molly 2 Telescope humor" abbr. Ringwald 44 Some sporty 21 Old Missouri (carnival pioneer 91 Write music 3 Newton topic 92 Pod veggie Cinderella natives game) autos 22 Arranged, as 57 Lubbock-to-4 Rats' 45 Orating skill 93 Like Charlie story 96 6x9-inch relatives 46 No, in Selkirk Brown's kite, a page for Laredo dir. 58 1986 Isabella 5 Crooner Paul printing book 48 Least omate inevitably 23 2001 Josh 99 Attach with 6 "Prob'ly not" 94 Seine users, Rossellini 49 Zig or zag cord, e.g. Hartnett war neo-noir film 7 Carpentry rod 51 Major e.g. 95 Result of a 61 WWW page 101 Actor Patrick 8 Invite out for Taiwanese 25 Not macho 64 Musical 102 1992 Wesley 9 Hardly happy carrier very-low-carb 10 Of yore 52 Implies 26 "- little!" inaptitude Snipes sports diet 67 Having 11 Unfamiliar 96 Hooting baby ("Have some 53 Pub mugs 54 Nosy sorts fun!") 107 ABA mem. 12 Fails to be birds arrived 27 Vegas action 97 Latin dance satisfactory tardily 108 Sol-do linkup 55 Sustained The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! 68 Choose (to) 109 Meat spread 13 Skulked 56 Automaker 98 Gives 10% 28 Darkens in 69 1984 Gene 110 "Starpeace" 14 Sci-fi role for 99 Blast the sun Bugatti 30 Hammer, e.g. Wilder singer Yoko Harrison Ford 58 Part of N.B. creator 111 - voce 100 Polar topper 15 Cup edge 59 Lead-in to 31 Yalie romantic 103 Diner patron 32 1971 16 Muckraker Cong or comedy (quietly) Malcolm 72 "- said 113 Smart who took on Minh 104 1995-2011 McDowell before ... Standard Oil 60 Lead-in to Yankee speaker from 73 'The Lion in 17 'That's all crime film Amazon skeleton Posada 37 They're fed Winter actor 115 Photos not wrong!" 62 "- cost you!" 105 Release, as 75 Dawned 18 Funeral from a corral 63 You, quaintly after parking in shades 40 "Energy 65 "Sign me up!" 106 "Excusez-76 Certain of gray ... or speech healing' English what eight 19 Fashion 66 Rapper 111 Holy Miles. technique student answers in trends Lil — X 41 Artist 78 1984 Prince this puzzle 24 Jackson 5 hit 70 Infant's cry 112 Excuses Neiman and musical film are? 29 Meyers of 71 Reimburse 114 "- have to?" 80 Psychic "gift" 120 Precisely, 116 Female Jim Croce's "Dutch" 74 Surgeries 82 Table scraps 32 Comes -77 Like sexist Brown with "on" gametes 117 Allow to 42 1973 83 Graf — 121 Retaliate iokes surprise Charlton (German 122 Czar called 33 Tribe of 79 Road map 118 Ottawa loc. Heston thriller warship) "the Great" Canada abbr. 119 1040 pro 13 20 22 25 23 26 28 30 38 42 43 62 65 66 68 72 70 90 99 100 102 104 105 106 103

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.

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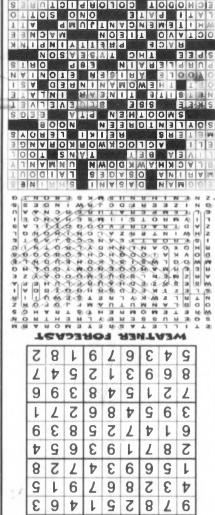
WARM

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ZERO

WINTER

WESTERLY



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109

115 116 117 118

Average time of solution: 67 minutes

For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at

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