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NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

INTERSTATE 96 FLEX ROUTE PROJECT

One lane open westbound, bridge to close

Susan Bromley [Hometownlife.com](#)
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Michigan Department of Transportation is closing all but one lane of Interstate 96 from Interstate 275 to Kent Lake Road as crews begin bridge and drain work, pavement repair, and pav-

ing of shoulders. Short-term intermittent ramp closures are also planned. The work is part of the three-year I-96 Flex Route project. Through late May, single-lane closures will continue during the week 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. on westbound I-96 from I-275 to Kent Lake Road and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on eastbound

I-96 from Kent Lake Road to I-275. Additionally, motorists in Lyon Township will be forced to avoid the South Hill Road bridge over I-96 as it will be entirely closed for repairs 7 a.m. April 11 through May 9, weather permitting. Detours for northbound South Hill

Road will be Grand River Avenue to Milford Road, then Pontiac Trail to South Hill Road. For southbound South Hill Road traffic, the detours are Pontiac Trail to Milford Road, then Grand River Avenue to South Hill Road.

See FLEX ROUTE, Page 3A

Northville Township childcare center eyes 2nd location

David Veselenak [Hometownlife.com](#)
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Successful growth at the Premier Academy along Seven Mile in Northville Township prompted the childcare company to seek to add another school in northwest Wayne County.

But not everyone is happy about it. The company seeks to construct a new childcare facility on the mostly vacant parcel at the northwest corner of Beck and Six Mile roads, which would be its fifth such facility in southeast Michigan. The daycare, which would serve children as young as infants, would be constructed with brick and limestone to help fit into that part of Northville Township. Much of the surrounding area is residential. "We're here to make sure we're blending in with our surrounding communities," said Angela Innaimo, a director with Premier Academy.

The township's planning commission discussed the proposal March 22.

Several neighbors spoke out against the project.

Dennis Pepino, who lives in the Hickory Creek neighborhood behind the property, said there were multiple concerns, including issues with the school being at a higher elevation and looking down on private homes, as well as the potential for their private road to be used as a cut-through for people leaving the school.

See CHILDCARE, Page 3A



Kensington Farm Center supervisor Patrick Bigelow introduces Finlee Donner, 7 months, to a weeks-old lamb March 28. Finley is held by his mother Stacey. The center is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and features many baby animals at this time. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Spring is here and so are Kensington Farm babies

Susan Bromley [Hometownlife.com](#)
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's springtime, and babies are back on the farm.

Kensington is welcoming cute new arrivals at the metropark's Farm Center in along the Milford/Brighton border, with six kids (baby goats) and six lambs recently born.

Baby season continues to the end of May and is the most popular time of the year for visitors, who are able to interact

See BABIES, Page 8A

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Nurses turn to short-term travel contracts

Rachel Greco Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For Hailey Mays, travel nursing is an opportunity to see different places.

For Katrina Brook, the job is helping to pay off debt and provide financial stability to her family.

And for Sydne Everts, it's covering out-of-pocket costs for continued education to become a nurse practitioner.

All three local nurses said they had intended to turn to travel nursing eventually. Then COVID-19 arrived in Michigan, and the stress placed on health care workers pushed them to make the move sooner.

They weren't alone, said Rose Fulton, senior vice president of recruitment for Travel Nurse Across America, an Arkansas-based agency representing 4,500 traveling nurses across the country.

Travel nursing — an industry that supplies health care workers to short-staffed hospitals across the country — has been in practice for over 40 years. But the pandemic "exploded the industry," growing it by at least 50%, Fulton said.

"I think the biggest reason was that we just had such excruciating needs," Fulton said. "Hospitals needed not five nurses, they needed hundreds, so when you're talking about that kind of volume and that kind of need, there was an intensity around it."

Last June at Sparrow Health System, during the height of pandemic-driven



Katrina Brook, center, with her children, from left, Sawyer, E.J., and Sierra, and her husband Jeff at their home in Holt. Brook went into travel nursing after two decades as a full-time nurse at Sparrow Hospital. PROVIDED BY KATRINA BROOK

staffing shortages, there were "about 280 travelers," said John Foren, Sparrow media relations director. "Not just nurses, in every area of the health system."

For many local nurses, leaving full-time jobs in exchange for stints at far-away hospitals was a solution to the burnout they grappled with during the pandemic.

Travel nursing pays significantly better and comes with more freedom, some nurses said. That often makes up for the impermanence that comes with each assignment, the continual adjustment to new work environments, and the occasional bout of homesickness.

"I'm in control," said Brook, 43, who lives in Holt and worked for 20 years at Sparrow Hospital. "I can choose where I go, I can choose when I work, where I work, and that felt amazing."

From pandemic burnout to a travel career

Before the pandemic, Brook and her husband, Jeff, agreed that travel nursing would be the perfect career for her after their four children graduated high school.

Quentin, 18, her oldest son, is attending Grand Valley State University. But E.J., 16, Sawyer, 14, and Sierra, 10, are at home.

Still, in July of last year, Brook, a labor and delivery nurse who had planned to retire at Sparrow, decided to continue there only on a per-diem basis and pivot to travel nursing full time.

"I was overwhelmed with COVID and everything," Brook said. "...I think that

we were all anxious about the unknowns. The policies were changing so frequently, our patient population was getting sicker and we were always short-staffed."

Brook took on more overtime, but got burned out and exhausted, she said.

At the same time, some of her colleagues took time off, either because they had COVID-19 or their family lacked child care, Brook said.

Mays, a 25-year-old from Dansville, described similar struggles at McLaren Greater Lansing, where she worked until last fall. Workloads were heavy and nurses had to take mandatory overtime, she said.

"Staff turnover rates were high because nurses were getting burned out quickly over the pandemic," Mays said. "I started to realize that my work-life balance was poor, so I transitioned into travel nursing seeking equilibrium..."

Meanwhile, the pandemic introduced 24-year-old Everts, also from Dansville, to travel nursing. An emergency room nurse at Ascension Providence Hospital in Southfield until February, she worked with several travel nurses there who urged her to consider it.

"Put yourself out there and just be confident in yourself, because you're a good enough nurse to do it," they told her.

Travel nursing offers a kind of freedom Everts can't get working full-time at one hospital, she said.

"Just not being tied down anywhere and having the ability to change your atmosphere every couple of months if you wanted to, that was the most attractive to me," she said.

Better pay and freedom major incentives for travel nurses

The number of full-time nurses who switched to travel jobs jumped during the pandemic. But at times, demand still outpaced supply, Fulton said.

At Travel Nurse Across America, the number of available jobs was sometimes six or seven times the average.

"It was unbelievable how many jobs there were and you just couldn't get there," Fulton said. "There was no finding enough nurses."

That demand drove up pay for travel nurses.

"We've had the same financial advisor for 20 years," Brook said. "The last time I left it with him five years ago, he was like, 'Get out of debt and then come see me. Anything we invest isn't going to equal the interest on your debt.' This past year I went and told him 'Oh, hey, by the way, I've tripled my salary. Can we talk about this? That was quite a moment.'"

Without any bonus money or overtime, Brook made \$40 an hour as a full-

time nurse at Sparrow. Her base rate as a travel nurse is \$107 an hour. There's additional money provided to pay for food and lodging during travel stints, she said.

The money has helped Brook and her family pay off debt and enroll her husband in Lansing Community College's fire academy program.

"It has changed our trajectory for sure," Brook said.

Everts is currently working as a travel nurse at McLaren Greater Lansing and staying with family in Dansville. In her first travel contract, the pay is "almost three times better" than it was working full-time at a hospital, she said.

The pay bump is nice, but more important to Everts is the freedom to switch hospitals, which helps her focus on patients and not get bogged down in workplace policies.

"I don't want to be tied down in politics of a job," Everts said. "I just want to go up, do my job, focus on my patients and go home."

Adjusting to isolation, new hospitals

Travel nursing has offered Mays the kind of lifestyle she always wanted.

"I've come from a very small town," she said. "People always told me, 'You're never gonna leave here,' and I proved them wrong."

Mays is still working through her first 13-week contract as a travel nurse at MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, Washington. She's already extended her stay there for eight additional weeks. When she isn't working, she spends time exploring the area.

Since last July, Brook has worked at two hospitals, first in Oregon and now in Maine at a 54-bed facility.

Adjusting to a new work environment with each stint is a challenge, Brook said. Travel nurses sometimes get just one shift of orientation.

"Sparrow has their stuff together," Brook said. "They have good policies. They have good procedures, they keep up to date, and some of these hospitals that we travel to do not always have best practices initially."

Then there's the isolation.

"I will admit, I'm like nine months in and I'm homesick," Brook said. "I want to come home, I want to work at Sparrow. I want to be with my friends and family, but I still have these financial goals."

Brook talks with her husband and children every day, but says she's missing out on day-to-day moments with them. She's still required to work once a month at Sparrow and tries to visit home twice a month.

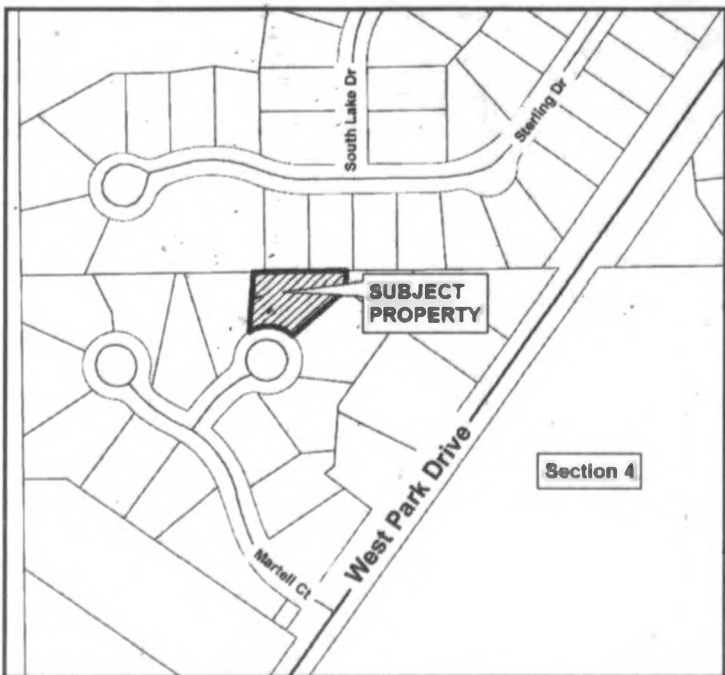
"When I'm on assignment, I work and

See **CONTRACTS**, Page 3A

CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, **April 13, 2022, at 7:00 P.M.** in the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to consider **29930 BRUSH PARK CT. PBR21-0676 FOR A WOODLAND USE PERMIT.** The subject property totals approximately 0.43 acres and is located at 29930 Brush Park Court (Lot 10 West Park Place), north of West Road, west of West Park Drive (Section 4). The subject property is zoned R-2 (One-Family Residential). The applicant is requesting to remove 24 regulated woodland trees in order to construct a single-family residential structure on the lot.

Plans are available for review by contacting the Community Development Department at the following email address: bmcbeth@cityofnovi.org



Subject Parcel ID: 50-22-04-451-026

All interested persons are invited to attend this in-person meeting. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, **April 13, 2022.**

Published on **April 7, 2022**
Novi Planning Commission
Michael Lynch, Secretary

Publish: April 7, 2021

LD-0000361981 3x3

Legal Notice

Attention: Food Service Management Companies

The Novi Community School District is requesting proposals for school food service management services. The Food Service Management Company will provide management services according to United States Department of Agriculture regulations and guidelines, as well as State of Michigan Department of Education policies and guidelines.

A copy of the RFP will be available by email at gregory.mcintyre@novik12.org by April 15, 2022. No pre-bid meeting will be held. All proposals must be submitted electronically no later than 2:00 pm est. on May 6, 2022. Hard copy proposals should also be submitted to:

Novi Community Schools
c/o Gregory McIntyre
25345 Taft Rd.
Novi, MI 48374

The Novi Community School District's Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals or to accept the proposal that it finds, in its sole discretion, to be in the best interest of the school district.

Publish: April 7, 2022

LD-0000361708 3x3



Dansville resident Hailey Mays, 25, stands outside MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, Wash., where she's a travel nurse. Mays worked as a nurse at McLaren Greater Lansing before becoming travel nurse. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HAILEY MAYS



"I didn't expect to be financially stable at 24 years old," travel nurse Sydne Everts, a Dansville native, said outside McLaren Hospital, where she works in the emergency room. "Last week, I was able to pay \$1,000 toward my student loans." MATTHEW DAE SMITH/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

Contracts

Continued from Page 2A

I sleep and I work and I sleep," she said.

Their children have adjusted to a new normal, Jeff Brook said.

"They talk to her every day when they can so it doesn't seem too bad," he said. "Every once in a while the youngest one misses her."

Travel nurses still part of 'staffing model'

"Before the pandemic, we had very few travel nurses compared to our current needs," said Jeanne Bishop, Sparrow Hospital's director of nursing, in an email.

But today, there are "about 80 agency nurses helping support all inpatient units across the hospital," Bishop said.

Dave Jones, marketing manager for McLaren

Health Care, declined to provide the number of travel nurses at McLaren Greater Lansing because "usage fluctuates based on need," he said in an email.

"While we, like the vast majority of other health care facilities, have seen our usage of travel nurses increase since the start of the pandemic, we have the utmost confidence in our staff and their prioritization of patient care and treatment, regardless of employment classification," said McLaren Chief Nursing Officer Deborah Leblanc in an email.

Mays said the number of travel nurses is still high where she's working in Washington.

"I think the whole unit that I worked on last night was all travel nurses," she said earlier this month.

Fulton said that may not change.

"It's difficult because the nurse-to-patient ratios are high," Fulton said. "Even though COVID has receded, hospitals are still busy."

Today, travel nursing is a part of the staffing model for hospitals, she said.

"Hopefully people will embrace travel as a way that this is part of a nurse's career, not just some fringe option."



Dansville resident Hailey Mays hikes in Washington, where she's working as a traveling nurse.



A rendering of the Premier Academy proposed at the corner of Six Mile and Beck roads in Northville Township. The proposal would require special land use approval, as the property is zoned residential. COURTESY OF NORTHVILLE TOWNSHIP

Childcare

Continued from Page 1A

"The majority of the patrons of the academy will probably want to turn left. There's going to be a line up to turn left," he said. "They're going to turn right on Arbor Trail."

Commissioners also expressed concern over traffic, especially along Beck Road.

"It's a tough one for me because accidents happen there all the time," Commissioner Mindy Herrmann said. "To add a little bit more to it and to have little kids in the car is a struggle for me."

Premier Academy has locations in Oakland Township, Rochester Hills and Northville Township. Another center is expected to open in Macomb Township.

The proposal would require special land use approval, as the property is zoned residential. The planning commission heard discussion from the public and the petitioner before it was proposed by the school's representatives to delay the vote since only five of the seven planning commissioners were at the meeting.

Jeff Schmitz, president of JS Capitol Group, which would build the facility, said the new facility would actually help slow down traffic. He said a majority of families who take their kids to the school typically live

nearby and the parents would drive Beck and Six Mile roads regardless to get to work.

"It'll reduce the amount of accidents you will have because people will be getting in and getting out," he said. "We're talking about traffic that we have no control of. Wayne County has control and there's nothing we can do about it."

The public hearing was reminiscent of a similar proposal heard several weeks ago before the Novi planning commission. A childcare center was proposed in a former golf clubhouse on 14 Mile, against which many residents spoke. That daycare plan was ultimately recommended for denial by the city's planning commission and turned down by city council.

The Northville Township planning commission voted, 4-1, to delay the request to a future meeting yet to be determined. Schmitz said he would take the project and see what type of improvements could be made to better fit.

If such improvements are vastly different from the original plan, the application would need resubmitted, said Jennifer Frey, township planner. That would mean a new public notice, as well as a new public hearing at a future planning commission meeting.

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



The South Hill bridge over Interstate 96 will be closed beginning April 11 for maintenance. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Flex route

Continued from Page 1A

The \$269 million I-96 Flex Route project includes rebuilding the freeway, rebuilding the median shoulders for use during peak periods, sign upgrades, and active traffic management installation, including intelligent transportation systems (ITS) equipment, overhead gantry installation and ramp signals for metering traffic onto the freeway.

Electronic message boards will alert drivers with speed advisories and travel information.

For more information, visit DrivingOakland.com.

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



Roundup

Continued from Page 4A

A big box pharmacy has closed as well. The Rite Aid at 27401 Six Mile on the corner of Inkster has closed, with the last day open in March.

A request for more information on the closure was sent to Rite Aid but was not returned.

Plymouth/ Plymouth Township

Grab a taste of fall all year round in downtown Plymouth.

Bakehouse 46 has taken over the former Cupcake Station at 318 S. Main St.

A collaboration between Blake's and Cupcake Station, Bakehouse 46 brings cider, doughnuts, cakes and other treats to a new café. It joins several others in southeast Michigan.

A popular fast-casual restaurant has also moved to the area: Chipotle opened at Ann Arbor Road and Haggerty in Plymouth Township. The popular burrito joint is one of the first locations to open at the plaza where Kmart formerly stood. A Henry Ford Health facility plans to open on the site later this year.

There was one prominent closing in the Plymouth area this past month. Shimmy Shack, the well-known vegan restaurant on Sheldon Road, closed after rent was increased at the space. While the restaurant is closed, the Shimmy Shack food truck plans to continue serving up its delicious fare.



Biggby Coffee employee Emma Mood mixes up a tea-latte. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Paris Baguette Assistant General Manager Megan Lou places pastries in a case at the new Birmingham location. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Farmington

Get ready to get fit as a new gym has opened its doors in Farmington.

F45, known for its high-intensity workouts, held its grand opening in March at 33019 Grand River.

The gym is known for its group fitness classes utilizing circuit and high-intensity interval training. Other F45 gyms operate nearby in Livonia and Birmingham.

Milford

No longer do Milford parents looking for used clothing for their children need to drive to Novi or Brighton.

Three Little Peas has opened in the plaza at Summit and Commerce next to the Milford Independent Cinema.

Specializing in clothing for infants to young children, it's the first dedicated children's clothing resale shop to open in the

area. They also purchase clothing.

A new attraction for a special night out also opened its doors in downtown Milford.

North-End Market Candle Bar opened in late March at 435 N. Main St., giving guests a chance to create their own scented candle, hand soap and other products with customizable smells. It brings together the North Main Gift Co., which operated in a small room behind the Beyond Juicery + Eatery, and the new candle bar.

Nearby in Highland, there's now a place to grab a classic metro Detroit classic: the coney dog.

Leo's Coney Island has a new location at 2218 S. Milford Road in front of Milford High School. Leo's is known across the region for its traditional coney island staples such as the hot dog smothered in chili, onion and mustard, along with other

comfort foods.

South Lyon

There's a new reason to go to the bowling alley in South Lyon.

Pinz Bowling Center at 700 N. Lafayette has added a new arcade in addition to the bowling lanes, which includes a variety of games.

Shoot some hoops or play one of several games and try to win a prize at the bowling alley. Do well enough and win a prize.

More information can be found at pinzsouthlyon.com.

Birmingham

Grab a taste of the world at Birmingham's newest café.

The first Paris Baguette in Michigan opened in March at 183 N. Old Woodward.

Known for its self-serve format for pastries and other baked goods, the café offers space for

diners to enjoy their baked goods and coffee inside or to-go.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com.

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Woman dies in I-96 construction zone collision

Susan Vela hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Rochester Hills woman died Saturday morning in a rear-end collision along a westbound Interstate 96 construction zone near the Novi-Wixom border.

State troopers said on Twitter they responded to reports of a crash involving injuries near the Wixom Road interchange at about 9:25 a.m. April 2.

A Subaru was stopped in the west-bound center lane due to a lane closure. A Kia sat behind the Subaru. According to a preliminary investiga-

tion, a driver in a different car moved to the center lane because of the lane closure.

After the lane change, his car rear-ended the red Kia, which then rear-ended the Subaru. First responders pronounced the Kia's rear passenger - a 28-year-old woman from Rochester Hills -

dead at the scene.

The Kia's driver and front-seat passenger were transported to a local hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

Other individuals involved in the crash were not hurt.

An investigation continues.
svela@hometownlife.com

Milford police called to Central Park for man with knife

Susan Vela hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A 25-year-old man was arraigned on a felonious assault charge after Milford police said he apparently slashed his wrists and ran after Central Park patrons with a knife.

The accused is scheduled to appear in Novi's 52nd District Court April 6 for a probable cause conference.

According to the police report, a basketball player called 911 the evening of March 27 because a man observing him and his friends play from a nearby

bench stood up and had a knife.

The basketball players started walking toward their car. The man followed, jogging when they started to jog.

"He could see that the male's wrists were bloody and the knife was still in his hand," the police report documented. "They all got into the car and the male continued to stand at the driver door until they drove away."

The basketball players called 911 upon leaving the park. Police responded to a report of a bleeding man with a knife possibly chasing people.

An officer found the suspect walking

across the basketball court, and the officer approached with his weapon in "low ready position." The officer ordered the wounded man with a large kitchen knife to lay down. The wounded man apparently had blood on both wrists.

He complied and told police that he wanted to die. He did not say why he hurt himself. He was taken to a hospital for medical treatment. While in transport, he told first responders he had voluntarily departed from a sober living home.

That day, police termed the incident on Facebook as "a mental health call in-

volving a knife."

Police later interviewed a person who had observed the wounded man with the basketball players. To that person, the man with the knife "was in an aggressive stance."

"The male was walking at a brisk pace after the teenagers, and (that person) was afraid he was going to stab them," police said in their report. "As the teenagers began to scatter back to their vehicle, the male sped up after them."

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

Children's clothing resale boutique opens in South Lyon

David Veselenak hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Kristen Evans didn't typically shop resale for her daughter's clothing.

Now, after realizing how fast children can grow out of pants and shirts with little wear and tear, she has opened Little Threads Children's Resale Shoppe, 22205 Pontiac Trail in South Lyon. The shop serves as a hub for used children's clothing from preemie to 16.

Evans, who opened the shop with her mother, said she's managed an Etsy shop selling clothing in the past, but decided she wanted to open a physical storefront after discovering how important resale could be.

"It's always just been a big passion of mine," said the South Lyon resident. "When my daughter was little, I was

buying her all these cute clothes and people were commenting on it and I just was like, 'What do I do with it?'"

The shop in the Brookdale Square shopping center - which opened late last year - occupies the storefront that formerly held KV Sports.

Evans said she began looking for a space for the shop before the COVID-19 pandemic began. She signed the lease last summer and began renovations, which included adding clothing racks.

Evans also sells shoes, toys and other accessories for children such as high chairs. The shop purchases clothing from shoppers every day.

Evans said she wanted more of a boutique feel to her shop, focusing on quality items.

"There are so many great benefits to resale," she said. "We're very particular

about what we buy and what we carry."

Little Threads becomes the lone children's resale-centric shop to open in the South Lyon/Lyon Township area. Other resale shops operate in Novi, Northville and Milford, where Three Little Peas children's resale shop opened in March.

Evans said business started well, but really ramped up as March rolled in, which could be a result of the need for new clothes as the weather begins to change.

"We've had a lot of excitement about it," she said. "Hopefully we'll keep this momentum up."

Evans also said she hopes to host events and hold fundraisers.

The store is currently open Tuesday through Saturday. Evans said a website is also coming soon and will be live at littletreadresale.com.



A dress available at Little Threads.
JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Learning Tree wants to open center for 200 children in Lyon Township

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A new Learning Tree Childcare Center is proposed for a 20-acre residentially zoned property at 60750 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township.

If approved by the planning commission and township board, the 14,774-square-foot facility could house as many as 200 children near Silver Lake Road and around the corner from Kent Lake Elementary as the area's second Learning Tree location.

"South Lyon is like home to us," Andrea Majewski, regional director for Learning Tree, said. "We've been looking for property in Lyon, to grow, for possibly five years. ...

"This location is great, just off the freeway, great for parents commuting and there are lots of homes in the area that we would be convenient to."

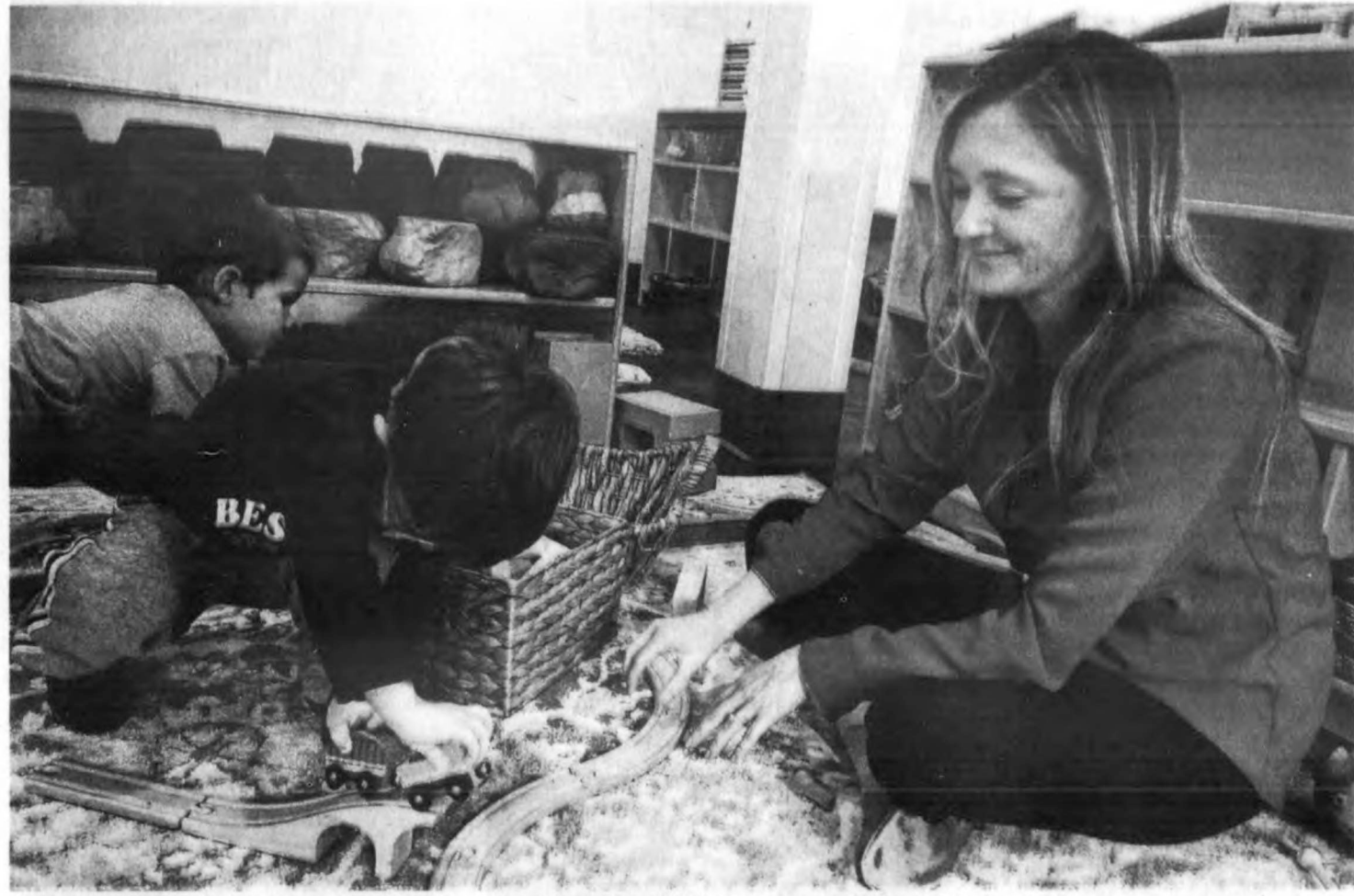
Due to the property's residential-agricultural zoning a special land use must be granted.

The planning commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the matter during its April 11 meeting, followed by a possible recommendation for approval or denial to the township board. A preliminary site plan will also be considered.

Learning Tree opened its first location in Livonia in 1982 and now has three child care centers in that city, as well as one in Howell.

In 2002, Learning Tree opened the smallest of its facilities in a former church on Valerie Street in South Lyon. Damage from a kitchen fire at the location two years ago required moving the 100 children who receive care there into modular classrooms, but renovations were recently completed and the facility has reopened.

Still, demand is great for childcare and Majewski hopes that with planning commission and township board approvals, children ages 6 weeks to 13 years can be moved off a waiting list and into a new Lyon Township facility with land that will allow for hiking trails,



Andrea Majewski hangs out with a couple of Learning Tree Child Care guests March 30 in South Lyon.
PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

large playgrounds and gardens, and the opportunity for outdoor classrooms.

"Staffing is the biggest concern with child care centers right now, but we have such a unique program - we offer higher pay and full benefits," Majewski said. "We have so much regional support to make sure employees and our families have a positive experience."

"We'll continue to enroll families looking for care, we just need a place to put them."

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



The Learning Tree Child Care center's current location.

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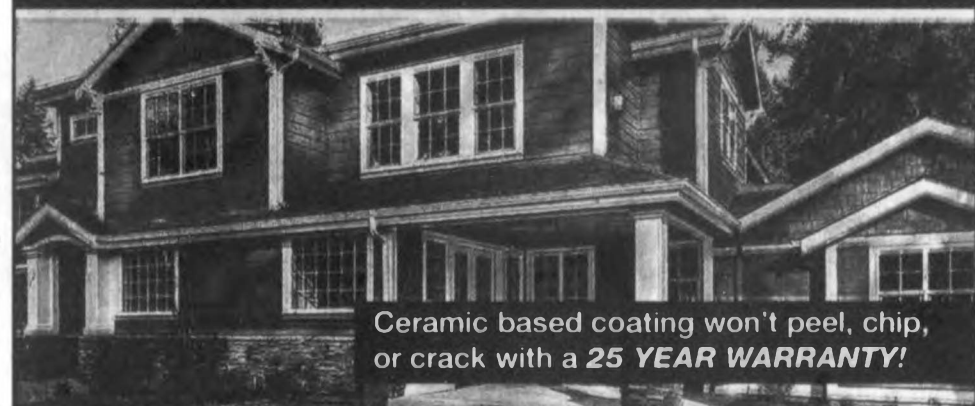
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Babies

Continued from Page 1A

with the babies as well as their parents.

"You can pet farm animals and it's a great time to bring the kids out and give them that experience of what a farm looks like and how it works," said Danielle Mauter, chief of marketing and communications for Huron-Clinton Metroparks.

The Kensington Farm Center is home to goats, sheep, chickens, horses, pigs, cows, donkeys and rabbits.

Mauter said rounds of babies are born about every two weeks as farm animals have staggered breeding times.

While delivery times are unpredictable, farm visitors can observe the miracle of birth if they are fortunate enough to be on site at the magic moment.

The babies remain with their mothers as long as needed for good health. Some will remain permanent residents at Kensington, while others will be sold at auction.

The Kensington Metropark Farm Center, 4570 Huron River Parkway, is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. through October.

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com or 517-281-2412. Follow her on Twitter @Susan-Bromley10.



Visitors check out some of the baby farm animals at the Kensington Farm Center on March 28.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



A pair of pigs catch a nap.



Tara Fry says hello to a curious kid.



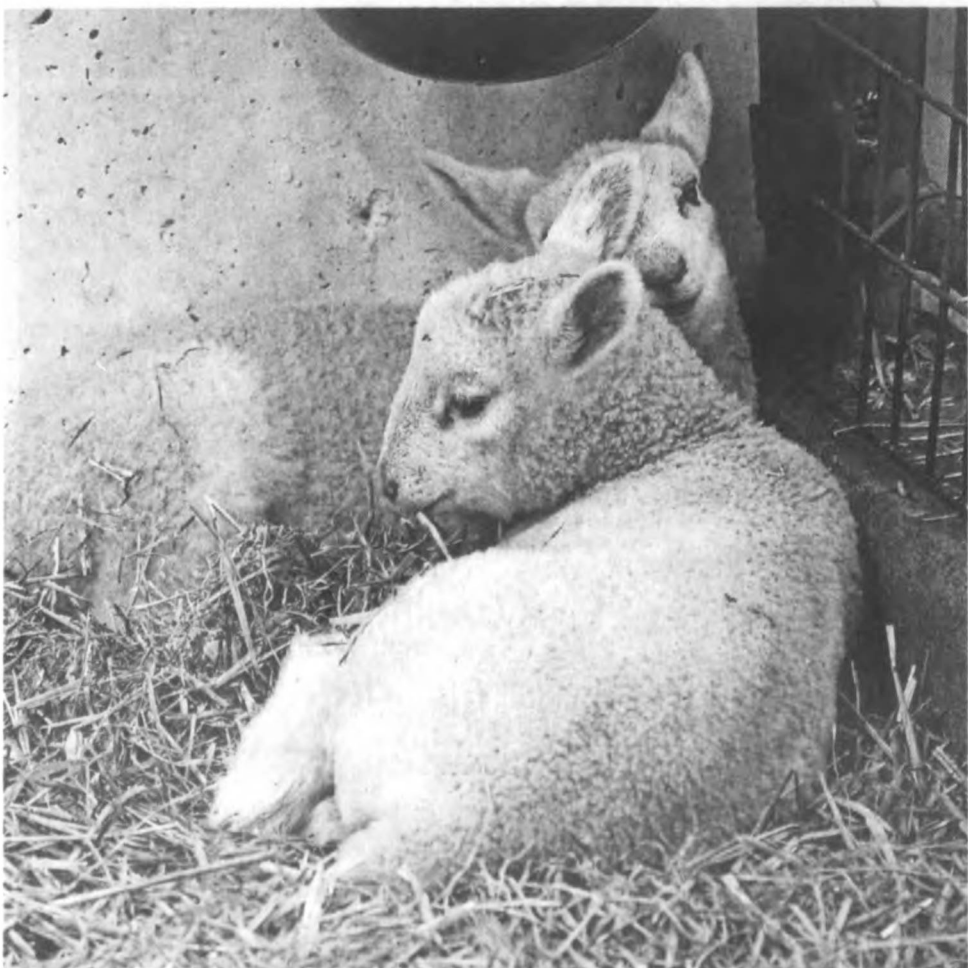
Fry, of Lansing, gets a goat kiss.



The center sits at 4570 Huron Parkway in Milford Township.



A goat gets a drink of water March 28.



Two one-week-old lambs huddle underneath a heat lamp.



Patrick Bigelow holds a three-week-old goat.



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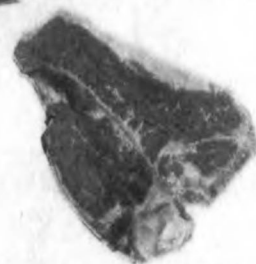
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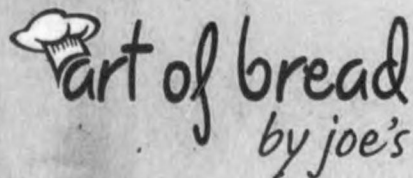
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SPORTS

ALL-AREA GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM



Wayne Memorial's Colleena Bryant rebounds during a Kensington Lakes Activities Association-East girls basketball game Feb. 4 at Livonia Franklin.
BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Our favorite players from across the Hometown Life area

Brandon Folsom HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

I can tell you this: I'm exhausted. I've been told by several coaches that Hometown Life hasn't put together an All-Area team in seven years. Well, it's time to fix that. Much like my favorite GIF from the movie "Jumanji" where Robin Williams' bearded character asks, "What year is it?" I have finally returned from my writing garret after spending the past two weeks putting together this team.

I got no sleep during this time. Is this team perfect? No, not at all. But let's talk about why it has blemishes. First, I am the only sports reporter at Hometown Life. I cover 43 high schools across two counties. Our digital footprint includes 10 print newspapers ranging from Westland to Milford and Birmingham, and pretty much every other place in between. Second, I could not see every team in person. It was physically impossible. Trust me. I tried to see everyone.

Third, when I contacted each school seeking nominations for the All-Area team, it was an absolute struggle to get the coaches to play ball. Half of them never responded. Several of them emailed me after the deadline. And about two-thirds of them didn't send in all the necessary information (e.g. stats, post-season awards, individual accolades, etc). If your favorite player is missing from this team, or if you think a particular player should've been higher on the list, blame your team's coach, not me.

Longtime Yooper sportswriter Burt Angeli, who died in 2020, once tweeted, "When a coach can't take a few minutes to report game results to the media, I wonder where else they're shortchanging their athletes." So think about that before throwing haymakers at me in my inbox or via social media. Here's the team. I'm really proud of how it turned out. Enjoy deep-diving into it while I finally get to take a nap.

See ALL-AREA, Page 2B

USFL alumni relive Panthers pro football memories

Ed Wright HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

On a recent snowy afternoon in Northville, nearly four decades since they defied a United States Football League rule that discouraged players and cheerleaders from, um, mingling, Novo and Lynda Bojovic shared memories of their Michigan Panthers days, the

wedding bands secured on their ring fingers signifying 38 years of marriage. A freshly-graduated defensive back at Eastern Michigan University and rising corporate star at IBM, Dave Smilo followed his dream of playing professional football in fall 1982 to a USFL tryout camp at Chicago's Soldier Field. The tryout attracted more than 800 fellow dreamers and a handful of league

executives, coaches and scouts who were looking for a needle (i.e. pro football-caliber talent) in a haystack. Smilo, it turned out, was the needle. And Livonia resident Tama Smith beat the odds by making the Michigan Panthers' inaugural cheerleading squad in 1983, setting the stage for some unforgettable — and at least one laugh-out-loud — experiences.

The original USFL — a reboot of which is returning in April following a 37-year hiatus — lasted just three seasons (1983-85), but manufactured good football, fond memories and a commodity Northville resident Jeff Wiska didn't find in his stints with two other professional football leagues (the National

See MEMORIES, Page 7B



VOTE FOR BEST POWER FORWARD!

For the first time ever, readers can vote for who they thought were the area's best players at each individual position: Center, power forward, small forward, shooting guard and point guard. Polls opened Saturday online at hometownlife.com and will remain open for one week. At the conclusion of the event, the top vote-getters will make Hometown Life's Fan Voted All-Area team.

Disclaimer: Individually, you can vote as many times as you wish, but only one of your votes every three hours will actually count in the final tally. So be sure to share this link with your family and friends to ensure that your favorite player wins the poll.

Meet the power forward candidates.

Maggie Liebler, Birmingham Seaholm
Vitals: PF, senior, 6-foot-1.
Stats: Averaged 10 points, 12.5 rebounds and three blocks. Broke the single-game school record for most rebounds with 24 vs. Harper Woods.

Accolades: Two-time All-OAA Blue first-teamer, named team MVP and a two-year starter. Carried a 3.9 GPA.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Chris Manchester: "Maggie could change the game with her length and athletic ability. She could rebound and block shots with the best of them. She was the glue for our team."

Erin Young, Livonia Franklin
Vitals: PF, senior, 5-foot-10.
Stats: Averaged 13.6 points, 5.7 rebounds and 2.5 blocks. Shot 43% from the floor, 37% from 3 and 85% from the free-throw line. Finished career with 850 points, 500 rebounds and 150 blocks.
Accolades: Three-time All-KLAA selection, fourth-year starter and third-year captain. Carried a 3.8 GPA.

College Interest: Signed with Albion College.
Coach John Sant: "Erin led us to our best record (13-8) in over 10 years. She is an excellent student, leader, scorer (inside and outside) and outstanding help-side defender."

Maya White, Farmington Hills Mercy
Vitals: PF, junior, 6-foot.
Stats: Averaged 7.3 points and 5.6 rebounds. Shot 43% from the floor and led the Marlins in rebounding.
Accolades: All-Catholic League selection.
College Interest: Holds an offer from Grand Valley State.
Coach Gary Morris: "Maya was a very effective player in the post, both on offense and defense."

Juliana Imbuzeiro, Northville
Vitals: PF, senior, 5-foot-9.
Stats: Averaged 7.2 points and 4.3 rebounds. Led the Mustangs in blocks and was second in scoring.
Accolades: All-KLAA selection, fourth-year varsity player and co-captain.
College Interest: Signed with Nova Southeastern (Florida) for volleyball.
Coach Todd Smith: "She has the strength to play inside but can step out and knock down the 3. Juliana's big-time leaping ability made her a force on defense as she applied her volleyball skills to the basketball court."

Morgan McCarthy, Plymouth
Vitals: PF, junior, 5-foot-11.
Stats: Despite playing on both a partially torn ACL and meniscus, averaged 6.9 points, 6.1 rebounds and 1.6 assists. Second on team in scoring with 124 points and first in rebounds with 109.
Accolades: All-KLAA honorable mention and given Team Leadership Award.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Ryan Ballard: "The fact that she was

able to hobble around and make the plays she did was what made her season special. I don't know if I have coached a player with a better game IQ. Her ability to read defenses and attack them in a variety of ways makes her really good. Meghan had surgery last week to repair her knee, and we expect to have her back next year for the majority of the season."

Hailey Maulbetsch, Plymouth Christian Academy

Vitals: PF, junior, 5-foot-8.
Stats: Totaled 328 points, 130 rebounds, 61 steals and 13 blocks. Made 36 3s and shot 54% from the floor and 26% from 3. Scored in double-digits in 17 games.

Accolades: All-MIAC first team. On pace to finish with more than 1,000 career points.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Rod Windle: "Hailey is an outstanding help defender who shrinks the court against our opponents' top scorers. Hailey is a difference maker at both ends of the court."

Summer Ambler, White Lake Lakeland
Vitals: PF, senior, 5-foot-10.
Stats: Averaged 7.6 points, 6.2 rebounds, 1.9 assists and 1.6 steals. Shot 60% from the floor.

Accolades: Three-time All-LVC selection and four-year starter.
College Interest: Signed with Spring Arbor for softball.

Coach Michael Leitheim: "She has improved her scoring every year, including this year. But she has been the heartbeat of our defense the last couple of years. Always guarding opponents' top scorers, very versatile and is a very underrated player in the area."

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



Livonia Franklin's Erin Young looks to shoot during a Kensington Lakes Activities Association-East girls basketball game against Wayne Memorial on Feb. 4. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

All-area

Continued from Page 1B

FIRST TEAM

Player of the Year:
Anna Fernandez, Plymouth Christian Academy

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-7.

Stats: Totaled 458 points, 164 rebounds, 90 assists, 91 steals and 11 blocks. Shot 49% from the floor and 19% from 3.

Accolades: All-MIAC first team, All-MIAC Dream Team, MIAC MVP and ended career with 1,418 points as a four-year starter.

College Interest: Uncommitted.

Coach Rod Windle: "She is our floor leader who runs the offense at the point guard position. She steps up in the biggest games to score the basketball. She has a thankful attitude toward her coaches at each and every practice."

Folsom's take: It didn't matter how big the opponent was (Detroit Country Day, Ypsilanti Arbor Prep, Fowler, etc.), she showed up and outperformed the defender in front of her. She won't ever play Division I basketball, but she has the heart of a WNBA Hall of Famer.

Sarah Cunningham, Farmington Hills Mercy

Vitals: SF, senior, 6-foot.

Stats: Averaged 11.3 points and 5.2 rebounds. Shot 48.5% from the floor. Led the Marlins in scoring and was second in rebounding.

Accolades: All-Catholic League selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Gary Morris: "Sarah is a fearless competitor who gave no ground to any opponent."

Folsom's take: You could tell Sarah was everybody's favorite teammate. Only the best leaders can say that about themselves.

Taylor Anderson, South Lyon East

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-9.

Stats: Averaged 12 points, seven rebounds, 5.4 steals and 4.5 assists. Owns school record for most steals in a career (286) and single-season (113).

Accolades: All-LVC selection and nominated for Michigan's Miss Basketball.
College Interest: Signed with Central Michigan.

Coach Rob Leadley: "Taylor is an incredible athlete who can change the game on defense and on the boards. She sees the court well and is extremely difficult for other teams to handle on either end of the court."

Folsom's take: Her motor never quits, especially while playing full-court defense. She just never tires, and she makes it look easy.

Daval Matthews, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: C, senior, 6-foot-2.

Stats: Averaged 18.1 points and 12.3 rebounds.

Accolades: Two-time All-KLAA selection, McDonald's All-American nominee, the winningest player in Zebras' history (79-14 record) and made three trips to the state final four.

College Interest: Signed with Long Beach State (California).

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: "Great leadership. She persevered through two ACL surgeries."

Folsom's take: As the oldest girl on the floor, she really was the big sister to her teammates. The only thing that



Plymouth Christian's Anna Fernandez attacks the basket against Ypsilanti Arbor Prep in December. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

matched her strong ability to battle in the paint was her leadership skills.

Mayla Ham, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: SF, junior, 5-foot-11.

Stats: Averaged 14.2 points and 9.7 rebounds.

Accolades: Three-time All-KLAA selection and led Zebras to two final-four trips.

College Interest: Currently holds six Division I offers and is a top-10 ranked junior in Michigan.

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: "Mayla has improved every year at Wayne. She's a complete workhorse and is a very tough-minded kid. She should be in the running for Miss Basketball next year."

Folsom's take: It's going to take either a catastrophic injury or an unforeseen event for Mayla not to be my Player of the Year in 2022-23. She's the best player on the west side of metro Detroit. Without a doubt.

Coach: Rod Windle, Plymouth Christian Academy

Folsom's take: He's coached everything at the school, and he's been around forever. When you take PCA to its first-ever state final, you deserve this honor. Windle is an invaluable asset to PCA athletics.

SECOND TEAM

Anna Herberholz, Bloomfield Hills Marian

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-4.

Stats: Despite missing time with injury, averaged 8.4 points, 3.2 assists, 3.1 rebounds and two steals.

Accolades: All-Catholic League and four-year varsity player.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Mary Cicerone: "MVP of the Catholic League playoffs, in my opinion. Without her, we don't win any games."

Folsom's take: She absolutely took over games, and you really notice just how important she is when she comes off the floor. She can't be replaced.

Maya White, Farmington Hills Mercy

Vitals: PF, junior, 6-foot.

Stats: Averaged 7.3 points and 5.6 rebounds. Shot 43% from the floor and led the Marlins in rebounding.

Accolades: All-Catholic League selection.

College Interest: Holds an offer from Grand Valley State.

Coach Gary Morris: "Maya was a very effective player in the post, both on offense and defense."

Folsom's take: Without a doubt, she was the strongest, most-physical re-

bouncer. She'll be one of my favorite post players entering next season.

Morganne Houk, Plymouth Christian Academy

Vitals: SG, junior, 5-foot-7.

Stats: Totaled 375 points, 171, rebounds, 127 assists, 84 steals and eight blocks. Shot 51% from the floor and 27% from 3. Led team in assists, rebounds and 3-pointers.

Accolades: All-MIAC first team and All-MIAC Dream Team. On pace to finish career with over 1,000 points.

College Interest: Receiving Division III and NAIA interest.

Coach Rod Windle: "Morganne is one of the top juniors in the state. Her ability to drive the ball the length of the court for baskets and her overall athleticism are reasons she was named to the five-member Dream Team in our league."

Folsom's take: What a gamer. Anytime PCA needed a basket to kickstart a run, it was Morganne knocking down the 3. One of the best in clutch moments.

Paris Bass, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: SG, junior, 5-foot-10.

Stats: Averaged 8.7 points and 6.4 rebounds.

Accolades: All-KLAA selection.

College Interest: Holds multiple Division I offers.

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: N/A.

Folsom's take: She was the third-best player on her team, which was funny because she'd be the best player in most other leagues. She's that good.

Colleena Bryant, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: PG, freshman, 5-foot-6.

Stats: Averaged 7.3 points and 8.1 assists.

Accolades: All-KLAA selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: N/A.

Folsom's take: Lee Lee will be the best point guard — and probably the best player, regardless of position — in Hometown Life's coverage area by the time she's a senior.

Coach: Jerica Williams, Detroit Country Day

Folsom's take: She moved to an area she's unfamiliar with and took the Yellowjackets to back-to-back final fours. That's unheard of, even for Frank Orlando's old job.

THIRD TEAM

Coach - Jarvis Mitchell, Wayne Memorial

PF/C - McKenzie Swanson, sophomore, Bloomfield Hills Marian

PF - Hailey Maulbetsch, junior, Plymouth Christian Academy

PF - Erin Young, senior, Livonia Franklin

PG - Diavian (Dee) Robinson, freshman, Livonia Clarenceville

PG - Sophie Dugas, senior, Farmington Hills Mercy

PG - Sela Lefler, junior, North Farmington

PG - Shamya Reid, junior, Redford Westfield Prep

PG - Molly Libby, senior, White Lake Lakeland

SF - Madison Yeager, junior, Plymouth Christian Academy

SF - Isis Musah-Johnson, freshman, Redford Westfield Prep

SF - Anna Lassan, sophomore, South Lyon East

SG - Kaitlyn Sanders, junior, Birmingham Groves

SG - Jaidyn Elam, sophomore, Detroit Country Day

SG - Rachel Balhorn, freshman, Livonia Churchill

SG - Morgan Miller, senior, Plymouth

SG - Asia Cochran, senior, Redford Westfield Prep

SG - Madison Morson, sophomore, Salem

SG - Ella Kruschka, senior, South Lyon East

HONORABLE MENTION

Coach - Gary Morris, Farmington Hills Mercy

C - Caroline McGuire, senior, Lutheran Westland

C - Mira Kelley, sophomore, Milford

PF - Maggie Liebler, senior, Birmingham Seaholm

PF - Sarah Sylvester, senior, Bloomfield Hills Marian

PF - Justice Tramble, sophomore, Canton

PF - Aubrie Ickes, senior, Livonia Stevenson

PF - Juliana Imbuzeiro, senior, Northville

PF - Alyssa Lemke, senior, Westland Huron Valley Lutheran

PF - Summer Ambler, senior, White Lake Lakeland

PG - Katie Sullivan, senior, Birmingham Seaholm

PG - Emma Arico, sophomore, Detroit Country Day

PG - Aysia Yokely, junior, Detroit Country Day

PG - Siena McNitt, junior, Garden City

PG - Kalin Bates, senior, Livonia Franklin

PG - Jenna Hoppe, senior, Milford

PG - Penelope Creary, junior, North Farmington

PG - Eve Tanaskoska, junior, Northville

PG - Rachel Luomala, junior, Wixom St. Catherine

SF - AriYana Wiggins, freshman, Detroit Country Day

SF - Shahd Bakkar, junior, Salem

SF - Hailey Baumann, junior, Wixom St. Catherine

SG - Aizlyn Albanese, freshman, Farmington Hills Mercy

SG - Sydney Brown, junior, Northville

SG - Samantha Maday, senior, Novi

SG - Paja Williams, senior, Westland John Glenn

SPECIAL MENTION

Coach - Mary Cicerone, Bloomfield Hills Marian

C - Scarlett Webster, junior, Livonia Stevenson

C - Rachel Schornack, senior, Livonia Stevenson

PG - Sofia Salinas, freshman, Bloomfield Hills Roeper

PG - Lauren Smiley, junior, Farmington Hills Mercy

PG - Alyssa Mamo, junior, Livonia Churchill

PG - Anna Lindsey, sophomore, Novi

PG - Ashley Beeskow, junior, Westland Huron Valley Lutheran

SG - Mary Grace Lehmkuhl, senior, Bloomfield Hills Academy of the Sacred Heart

SG - Marisa Cribari, sophomore, Canton

SG - Mia Bazzi, freshman, Wayne Memorial

SG - Alexis Halley, sophomore, Wayne Memorial

SG - Kate Beckerman, senior, Westland Huron Valley Lutheran

SF - Grace Rotter, senior, Bloomfield Hills Marian

SF - Susy Heller, junior, Northville

SF - Dani McCain, senior, Westland John Glenn

PF - Meghan McCarthy, junior, Plymouth

PF - Grace Goodnough, senior, White Lake Lakeland

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

VOTE FOR BEST SHOOTING GUARD!

For the first time ever, readers can vote for who they thought were the area's best players at each individual position. Center, power forward, small forward, shooting guard and point guard. Polls opened Saturday online at hometownlife.com and will remain open for one week. At the conclusion of the event, the top vote-getters will make Hometown Life's Fan-Voted All-Area team.

Disclaimer: Individually, you can vote as many times as you wish, but only one your votes every three hours will actually count in the final tally. So be sure to share this link with your family and friends to ensure that your favorite player wins the poll.

Meet the shooting guard candidates.

Kaitlyn Sanders, Birmingham Groves

Vitals: SG, junior, 6-foot-1.
Stats: Totalled 225 points in 17 games, averaging 13 points and four rebounds. Led the Falcons in steals and blocks, recorded three double-doubles and scored a career-best 29 points in a single game.
Accolades: All-OAA-Red first-teamer, third-year starter and carried a 3.5 GPA.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Allison Hisey: "She's a multi-sport athlete who's endured three varsity head coaches in three years. Amidst all that change and adversity, Kate was able to rise as the leader of our team on the court, despite numerous injuries, and an almost 6-week battle with mono."

Jaidyn Elam, Detroit Country Day

Vitals: SG, sophomore, 5-foot-11.
Stats: Averaged 14.5 points, 7.2 rebounds

and 3.4 steals.
Accolades: Division 2 AP All-State honorable mention.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Jerica Williams: "Jaidyn's ability to shoot the ball from 3 and drive and finish makes her hard to guard. Her length and height also allow her to guard multiple positions. She rebounds extremely well and because of her guard skills, she can go the full length of the court."

Rachel Balhorn, Livonia Churchill

Vitals: SG, freshman.
Stats: Scored over 200 points and led the Chargers in scoring, rebounds and steals. Had a season-best 28 points in one game.
Accolades: All-KLAA selection.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach K'Len Morris: Nomination form not returned before deadline.

Penelope Creary, North Farmington

Vitals: SG, junior.
Stats: Averaged 11.1 points, 3.3 steals and 5.5 deflections.
Accolades: All-OAA-White selection.
College Interest: N/A.
Coach Jeff Simpson: "Penelope is a tenacious defender. She also has one of the best first steps in attacking the basket."

Samantha Maday, Novi

Vitals: SG, senior, 5-foot-9.
Stats: Averaged 11 points, four rebounds and 1.6 assists. Scored in double-digits in 10 games. Made six 3-pointers and scored a season-best 27 points vs. Salem.
Accolades: All-KLAA, fourth-year varsity player and two-year captain.
College Interest: Signed to Michigan State

for rowing.
Coach Bailey Massavant: "Great leader on our team. She came back from injury even stronger and was a force offensively leading the team in scoring."

Morgan Miller, Plymouth

Vitals: SG, senior, 5-foot-10.
Stats: Averaged 12.8 points, 5.1 rebounds and 1.6 steals. Led the Wildcats with 265 points, 38 made 3-pointers, 57 field goals and 34 steals.

Accolades: All-KLAA selection, named team MVP and finished career with three single-game school records: Most points (35), most field goals made (15) and most 3-pointers made (nine).
College Interest: Committed to Michigan-Dearborn.

Coach Ryan Ballard: "Mo had a phenomenal season. She is probably the most improved player in the league. She's an amazing story of grit and determination. Played JV the majority of the year as a junior but worked on her game all spring, summer and fall (to become) our best player. Mo is a terrific shooter and has range-plus to hit shots from deep. Her length makes her a tough guard in the paint, and she's an excellent finisher around the rim."

Morganne Hawk, Plymouth Christian Academy

Vitals: SG, junior, 5-foot-7.
Stats: Totalled 375 points, 171 rebounds, 127 assists, 84 steals and eight blocks. Shot 57% from the floor and 27% from 3. Led team in assists, rebounds and 3-pointers.

Accolades: All-MIAC first team and

All-MIAC Dream Team. On pace to finish career with over 1,000 points.

College Interest: Receiving Division III and NAIA interest.

Coach Bob Windle: "Morganne is one of the top juniors in the state. Her ability to drive the ball the length of the court for baskets and her overall athleticism are reasons she was named to the five-member Dream Team in our league."

Ella Kruschka, South Lyon East

Vitals: SG, senior, 5-foot-6.
Stats: Averaged 14.6 points, three rebounds, 2.4 steals and 1.3 assists. Shot 37% from the 3-point line. Finished as third-leading scorer in school history (831 points).

Accolades: Two-time All-LVC selection and four-year starter.

College Interest: Being recruited by Division III schools.

Coach Bob Windle: "Ella is a clutch 3-point shooter who can also finish with either hand at the rim. She is an excellent on-ball defender and has been a varsity starter for four years."

Paik Bass, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: SG, junior, 5-foot-10.

Stats: Averaged 8.7 points and 6.4 rebounds.

Accolades: All-KLAA selection.

College Interest: Holds multiple Division I offers.

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: N/A.

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

VOTE FOR BEST CENTER!

For the first time ever, readers can vote for who they thought were the area's best players at each individual position. Polls opened Saturday online at hometownlife.com and will remain open for one week. At the conclusion of the event, the top vote-getters will make Hometown Life's Fan-Voted All-Area team.

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Meet the center candidates.

McKenzie Swanson, Bloomfield Hills

Vitals: PF/C, sophomore, 6-foot-3.

Stats: Despite missing time with injury, averaged 13 points, 9.1 rebounds and 2.0 steals. Totalled 169 points and shot 48% from the floor.

Accolades: N/A.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Mary Ciccone: N/A.

Scarlett Webster, Livonia Stevenson

Vitals: C, junior, 5-foot-10.

Stats: N/A.

Accolades: All-KLAA honorable mention.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Karrem Smartt: Nomination form not returned before deadline.

Caroline McGuire, Lutheran Westland

Vitals: C, senior, 5-foot-10.

Stats: Totalled 58 points, 117 rebounds, 43 blocks, 11 steals, seven assists and 14

turnovers, despite missing 11 games with a torn ACL injury.

Accolades: All-MIAC-Red first-team and third in school history in career blocks (90). BCAM Academic All-State with a 4.4 GPA.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Keith Brown: "Caroline's work ethic is intense on and off the court. She persevered through many challenges with poise and passion. She is a role model for all players and is loved by her team."

Mira Kelley, Milford

Vitals: C, sophomore, 6-foot-11.

Stats: Averaged 6.9 points and 5.6 rebounds.

Accolades: All-LVC selection, All-LVC Academic Team and named team's Rookie of the Year.

Coach Mike Jenkins: "Mira had a great sophomore season, leading our team in scoring and rebounding. She's an athletic 5 (center) that dominated at times in the paint. Huge potential in the coming next two years."

Daval Matthews, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: C, senior, 6-foot-2.

Stats: Averaged 18.1 points and 12.3 rebounds.

Accolades: Two-time All-KLAA selection, McDonald's All-American nominee, the winningest player in Zebras' history (79-14 record) and made three trips to the state final four.

College Interest: Signed with Long Beach State (California).

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: "Great leadership. She persevered through two ACL surgeries."

VOTE FOR BEST POINT GUARD!

For the first time ever, readers can vote for who they thought were the area's best players. Polls opened Saturday online at hometownlife.com and will remain open for one week. At the conclusion of the event, the top vote-getters will make Hometown Life's Fan-Voted All-Area team.

Disclaimer: Individually, you can vote as many times as you wish, but only one your votes every three hours will actually count in the final tally. So be sure to share this link with your family and friends to ensure that your favorite player wins the poll.

Meet the point guard candidates.

Katie Sullivan, Birmingham Seaholm

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-10.

Stats: Averaged 11 points, nine rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Accolades: Three-time All-OAA-Blue selection, former team MVP and fourth-year starter who led the Maples to their first conference title in seven seasons. Carried a 3.9 GPA.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Chris Massavant: "Katie was the engine who led our team. She is a two-year captain who could take over the game when she needed to. She is also one of the fastest players I have ever coached."

Anna Herberholz, Bloomfield Hills Marian

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-4.

Stats: Despite missing time with injury, averaged 8.4 points, 3.2 assists, 3.1 rebounds and two steals.

Accolades: All-Catholic League and four-year varsity player.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Mary Ciccone: "MVP of the Catholic League playoffs, in my opinion. Without her, we don't win any games."

Sofia Salinas, Bloomfield Hills Roper

Vitals: PG, freshman, 5-foot-4.

Stats: Averaged 14.5 points, 2.2 assists and two steals.

Accolades: All-MIAC-Red first team.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Andrea Collins: "Sofia is a young but lionhearted guard. Truly a tough kid. Salinas is a true leader on and off the floor. The kid is fast as lightning and can not only create and see the floor well for her team she is also our leading scorer. Accepting such a big role as a freshman is a hard task, and she came in and delivered."

Emma Arico, Detroit Country Day

Vitals: PG, sophomore, 5-foot-6.

Stats: Averaged 8.4 points, 4.3 rebounds, 3.2 assists and 2.4 steals. Shot 37% from the 3-point line.

Accolades: N/A.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jerica Williams: "Emma is a pure floor general who changes the game when the ball is in her hands. Her ability to drive, pass and shoot make her a dynamic offensive threat. Defensively, she never shies away from guarding the other team's best player."

Aysia Yuley, Detroit Country Day

Vitals: PG, junior, 5-foot-6.

Stats: Averaged 8.4 points, 4.8 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 2.2 steals.

Accolades: N/A.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jerica Williams: "Aysia is a deadly shooter from 3, hitting a season-high seven in our quarterfinal game. She is deceptively quick, making her one of our best on-ball defenders along with a phenomenal ability to break a press."

Sophie Dugas, Farmington Hills Mercy

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-9.

Stats: Averaged nine points and 2.4 rebounds. Shot 44% from the floor and was second on the Marlins in scoring.

Accolades: All-Catholic League selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Gary Morris: "On offense, Sophie is a good shooter off the bounce or catch and is a good driver. On defense, Sophie usually guarded our opponent's best perimeter player."

Siena McNitt, Garden City

Vitals: SG, junior, 5-foot-5.

Stats: Averaged 16.5 points, 4.9 steals and 3.4 rebounds. Totalled 297 points in 18 games, shot 78.7% from the free-throw line and had a high game of 29 points.

Accolades: Three-Time All-WWAC selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Michelle Tyree: "Siena has been our offensive leader since her freshman year. She can shoot the 3 as well as attack the basket. She is also a solid defender."

Diviana (Dee) Robinson, Livonia Clarenceville

Vitals: PG, freshman, 5-foot-3.

Stats: Averaged 14 points, four assists, five steals and three rebounds. First girl to score 300 points in a season.

Accolades: All-MIAC-Red, All-MIAC Dream Team, voted team MVP and Best Offensive Player and led the Trojans to school's first district title.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Kristin Alshauske: "Dee is one of the most unselfish point guards that I have had the pleasure of coaching. She is constantly looking for her teammates on the court, and she does an excellent job of controlling the tempo throughout the game. Dee is also someone I can count on to lock down on defense."

Kalin Bates, Livonia Franklin

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-5.

Stats: Averaged 10.3 points, 3.9 assists and 3.4 rebounds. Shot 79% from the free-throw line.

Accolades: Three-time All-KLAA selection, fourth-year varsity player, third-year starter and second-year captain. Carried a 3.7 GPA.

College Interest: Signed with Madonna University for both basketball and track and field.

Coach John Smith: "Kalin played a major role in our successful season. Unselfishly moved to the point guard position, which may have hurt her overall stats but definitely helped our team."

Sela Lefter, North Farmington

Vitals: PG, junior.

Stats: Averaged 17.9 points, 3.8 rebounds, 1.4 assists and 4.0 steals. Shot 49.7% from the floor and 72.7% from the free-throw line.

Accolades: All-OAA-White selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jeff Simpson: "Tough, hard-nosed point guard. Can create her own shot and is tough defensively."

Eve Tanasakorn, Northville

Vitals: PG, junior, 5-foot-7.

Stats: Averaged 7.3 points, 4.8 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 2.1 steals. Led the Mustangs in scoring and charges taken (14).

Accolades: All-KLAA selection and third-year varsity player.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Todd Gault: "The quarterback of the team. She has become more of a scoring threat this season and has a high basketball IQ. She continues to get better each season and took a major step forward this year. Defensively, she is

always in the right place at the right time."

Anna Fernandez, Plymouth Christian Academy

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-7.

Stats: Totalled 458 points, 164 rebounds, 90 assists, 91 steals and 11 blocks. Shot 49% from the floor and 19% from 3.

Accolades: All-MIAC first team, All-MIAC Dream Team, MIAC MVP and ended career with 1,418 points as a four-year starter.

College Interest: Uncommitted.

Coach Bob Windle: "She is our floor leader who runs the offense at the point guard position. She steps up in the biggest games to score the basketball. She has a thankful attitude toward her coaches at each and every practice."

Shariya Reid, Bedford Westfield Prep

Vitals: PG, junior, 5-foot-5.

Stats: N/A.

Accolades: AP Second Team All-State and already a 1,000-point career scorer.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Doc Cornell: Did not return form before the deadline.

Taylor Anderson, South Lyon East

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-9.

Stats: Averaged 12 points, seven rebounds, 5.4 steals and 4.5 assists. Owns school record for most steals in a career (286) and single-season (113).

Accolades: All-LVC selection and nominated for Michigan's Miss Basketball.

College Interest: Signed with Central Michigan.

Coach Bob Leadley: "Taylor is an incredible athlete who can change the game on defense and on the boards. She sees the court well and is extremely difficult for

other teams to handle on either end of the court."

Molly Libby, White Lake Lakeland

Vitals: PG, senior, 5-foot-8.

Stats: Averaged 12 points, 4.8 rebounds, 2.2 steals and 2.1 assists. Made 48 3-pointers and shot 79.7% from the free-throw line. Led the team in scoring, 3-pointers made, free-throw percentage, steals and assists.

Accolades: Four-time All-LVC selection.

College Interest: Signed with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (New York).

Coach Michael Leithelm: "Molly has been the driving force behind back-to-back districts titles the last two years. While she was selected as one of BCAM's BEST for Division 1 last year, she has had an even better year this year: increasing her scoring, free-throw percentage, 3s made and 3-point percentage."

Rachel Luoma, Wixom St. Catherine

Vitals: PG, junior, 5-foot-8.

Stats: Averaged 11 points, 3.5 assists, three rebounds and two steals. Ranked second all-time in school history with most assists, fifth in steals and seventh in scoring.

Accolades: Two-time All-CHSL selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jon VanGorham: "Rachel is a proven leader who has improved as a player in each of her three seasons on varsity. (Being) picked as a captain by her teammates with five seniors on the team says a lot."

Colleen Bryant, Wayne Memorial

Vitals: PG, freshman, 5-foot-6.

Stats: Averaged 7.3 points and 8.1 assists.

Accolades: All-KLAA selection.

College Interest: N/A.

Coach Jarvis Mitchell: N/A.

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VOTE FOR BEST SMALL FORWARD!



South Lyon East's Anna Lissan dribbles during the championship of Northville's girls basketball holiday tournament Dec. 28. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

For the first time ever, readers can vote for who they thought were the area's best players at each individual position: Center, power forward, small forward, shooting guard and point guard. Polls opened Saturday online at hometownlife.com and will remain open for one week. At the conclusion of the event, the top vote-getters will make Hometown Life's Fan-Voted All-Area team.

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Meet the small forward candidates:

Ari'Yana Wiggins, Detroit Country Day
Vitals: SF, freshman, 5-foot-8
Stats: Averaged 10 points, six rebounds, 21 steals and 2.2 assists.
Accolades: N/A.
College interest: N/A.
Coach Jerica Williams: "A freshman with a high IQ and immense versatility with the ball, she does not play like a freshman. Eerily similar to Ashley Owusu at Maryland, Wiggins can play the 1-5 with ease. Her ability to handle the ball, distribute, rebound and score make her a next-level threat that will be a triple-double player before her senior year."

Sarah Cunningham, Farmington Hills

Mercy
Vitals: SF, senior, 6-foot.
Stats: Averaged 11.3 points and 5.2 rebounds. Shot 48.5% from the floor. Led the Marlins in scoring and was second in rebounding.
Accolades: All-Catholic League selection.
College interest: N/A.
Coach Gary Morris: "Sarah is a fearless competitor who gave no ground to any opponent."

Madison Yeager, Plymouth Christian Academy
Vitals: SF, junior, 5-foot-8.
Stats: Totaled 219 points, 108 rebounds, 49 assists, 69 steals and 11 blocks. Shot 54% from the floor and 17% from 3. Second on the team in made 3-pointers.
Accolades: All-MIAA first team.
College interest: N/A.
Coach Rod Winkler: "Madison is our top on-the-ball defender who always draws the most difficult assignment and best ball handler of the opposing team. Her length and quick hands make it hard to score against."

Shahd Bakkar, Salem
Vitals: SF, junior, 5-foot-5.
Stats: Averaged seven points, six steals, four assists and three blocks. Led the Rocks in assists, rebounds and steals.
Accolades: All-KLAA selection.
College interest: Being recruited by Division III, NAIA and JUCO schools.
Coach Brad Wells: "Shahd made great strides during the season. She controlled

the tempo/flow for our offense. Great rebounder for her size. All about the team."

Anna Lissan, South Lyon East
Vitals: SF, sophomore, 5-foot-10.
Stats: Averaged 12.4 points, 6.2 rebounds, 21 steals and 2.4 assists.
Accolades: All-LVC selection.
College interest: Holds an offer from Wayne State.
Coach Rob Leadley: "Anna is a hard-working, fundamentally sound player who is a threat inside and outside. She is a physical, aggressive player who can score in the low post and step out and hit the 3."

Hailey Bismann, Warren St. Catherine
Vitals: SF, junior, 5-foot-11.
Stats: Averaged 11 points, six rebounds, 4.5 steals and 3.5 assists. Totaled the most assists in a single season in school history.
Accolades: Three-time All-CHSL selection and ranked first in school history with most assists and steals, third in points and fourth in rebounds.
College interest: Committed to Wisconsin for soccer.
Coach Jen VanGoethem: "Hailey is a do-it-all, rarely-comes-off-the-court difference-maker for our program. She is the most versatile and complete player I have witnessed in my 20 years as a coach."



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Hartland defenseman Braden Pietila had 14 goals and 21 assists in 30 games as a junior. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

Hartland junior named to all-state hockey Dream Team

Bill Khan Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Junior defenseman Braden Pietila has an opportunity to go down as one of the all-time greats in the highly successful Hartland hockey program.

Pietila is only the second junior from Hartland to make the all-state Dream Team, a compilation of the top players in all three divisions.

Four forwards (because of a tie), two defensemen and one goaltender were selected to the Dream Team by the Michigan High School Hockey Coaches Association.

Also making the Dream Team were senior Brian Apple of Detroit Catholic Central, senior Jackson Riley of Calumet, junior Peter Rosa of Birmingham Brother Rice and senior Billy VanSumeren of Midland Dow at forward; senior Brayden Grange of Marquette on defense; and senior goalie Colin Lemanski

of Midland Dow.

Twelve Livingston County players were in contention for Dream Team spots after being named first-team all-state in their respective divisions one week earlier.

Hartland's only non-senior to make the Dream Team was junior forward Josh Albring in 2016-17. Hartland's other Dream Team selections were forwards Luke Cowan in 2015-16, Jake Behnke in 2017-18 and Joey Larson in 2018-19.

By making the varsity at Hartland as a freshman, Pietila was already in rare company. Most of the Eagles' top players made the varsity their sophomore or junior years.

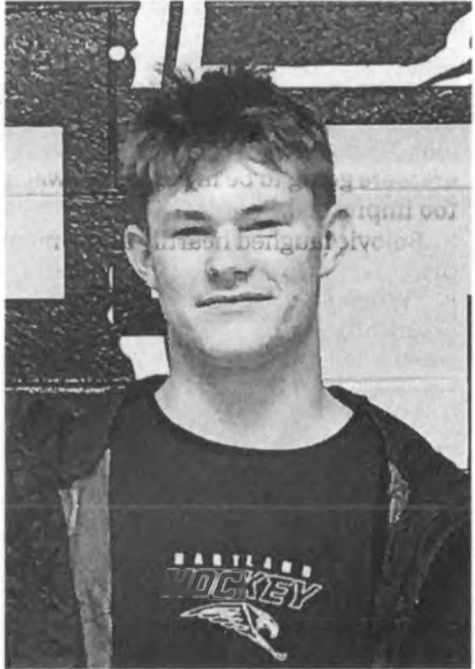
"We obviously noticed something in him as early as his freshman year," Hartland coach Rick Gadwa said. "Having him for three seasons, it's really neat to see the development in front of our eyes and how much he's progressed as a player."

"The sky's the limit for his senior year. We'll find creative ways to make sure Braden is staying hungry and trying to reach his hockey goals. He's definitely off to a great start with first-team all-state and Dream Team honors as a junior."

Pietila was not only a force on the back end, but an integral part of Hartland's attack. He was fourth on the team in scoring with 14 goals and 21 assists in 30 games. Pietila had one of the biggest goals of the season, getting the game-winning goal with 5:37 left in a regional semifinal victory over upstart Clarkston.

"If things weren't going well, Braden Pietila found a way to turn it around for the team," Gadwa said. "You can't coach those kinds of things in players."

"That's a skill that someone has within. It's a coach's dream to have a 6-foot-1 or -2 player that can shoot and defend hard."



Braden Pietila. COURTESY

Obituaries

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Charlotte M. O'Leary

TECUMSEH - Age 80, passed away March 18, 2022 peacefully at home after a brief illness with loving family by her side. She was born June 15, 1941 at Highland Park Osteopathic Hospital, delivered by the family physician Dr. Griswold of South Lyon. She was the seventh child of Joseph and Genevieve Comiskey and grew up with her siblings Joseph, Evelyn, Richard, Eugene, David, Anne, and Michael in South Lyon on Detroit Street. Charlotte attended St. Patrick's Catholic School in Brighton through the 7th grade and then South Lyon Schools for the balance of her education.

Charlotte married her high school sweetheart Rand O'Leary (of New Hudson) on October 8th, 1960 and the happy couple immediately packed all their belongings including wedding gifts and headed to Florida. While in Florida, Charlotte and Rand had all three of their children, Rand Jr., of Bangor, Maine, Kelly (Truett) of Ypsilanti and Shawn O'Leary of Tecumseh. While in Florida, Charlotte volunteered for the Jesse P. Miller Elementary as the school nurse (mostly for the uniform we're told) and also worked for Hartford Insurance Company in Orlando. Rand and Charlotte were married for 56 years before his passing in December of 2016.

After moving back to Michigan in 1969, Charlotte and her family settled on Beaumont Ave. in Dixboro, a small community outside Ann Arbor that was reminiscent of her small-town roots. And for many years Rand and Charlotte alternated wonderful holiday gatherings with Dave and Marge Comiskey and their children in South Lyon on Whipple Street. Charlotte worked and raised a family, first for the Institute of Social Research and then later for the University of Michigan Medical School in Information Services.

In retirement, Charlotte was able to focus on her passion for gardening,



and could often be found tending to her numerous flowers and plantings on Catalpa Drive, or "The Drive" as she fondly referred to it. Family was the most important thing in Charlotte's life, and every summer she made time for each of her grandchildren to visit the lake and ensured they had a great individual experience, even if that included homemade milkshakes at midnight. She was also known for helping out those in need, often giving away her own furniture and other possessions to those less fortunate than herself. She was known to canvas second-hand shops looking for items that were on "her list" for family and friends.

Although not a world traveler, she did enjoy a trip to London and Paris in 2013 for a family wedding. As a devote Catholic, she especially enjoyed her visit to the St. Paul's and Notre Dame Cathedrals.

In the winter months, Charlotte and Rand traveled from Michigan in their vintage Airstream camper, visiting several historic areas of the country before finally settling in Donna, Texas at Victoria Palms Resort as their permanent second home. Charlotte loved being a "Winter Texan", and also enjoyed hosting numerous friends and family to their home for food and fun.

Charlotte is survived by her three adult children, Rand Jr. (Sandra) O'Leary of Bangor, Maine, Kelly Truett of Ypsilanti and Shawn O'Leary of Tecumseh along with seven grandchildren, Robert (Sarah) O'Leary of Lymm, UK, Christine (Joseph) Winkel of Lincoln Park, Dylan (Samantha) Hall of Tecumseh, Joben (Kelsey) Truett of Melbourne Florida, Daniel Hall of Southgate, Jonathan (Erika) O'Leary of Concord, North Carolina, Lauren Truett of Ypsilanti, and 6 great grandchildren: Annabel O'Leary, Jessica O'Leary, Klaus Hall, Madeline O'Leary, Zelda O'Leary, and Calvin O'Leary.

In accordance with her final wishes, no formal services will be held, but a celebration of her life at a later date is planned. The family asks that if able, a donation in her memory be made to the American Cancer Society or Hospice of Michigan.

Memories

Continued from Page 1B

Football League and Arena Football League).

"More than any other professional league I played in, the USFL was flat out fun," said Wiska, who sandwiched two stints with the NFL's New York Giants around his two-year career with the Michigan Panthers and one season with the Oakland Invaders. "It was a fun time, a fun league, and we had a great following."

"The USFL was about the sport of football and the game of football, not so much about the business of football like the NFL."

Michigan Panthers kicker, cheerleader meeting was 'destiny'

In spring 1983, Columbiaville resident Genny Stier was watching an episode of "Kelly & Company" when she found out that the soon-to-debut USFL's Michigan franchise was holding open tryouts for cheerleaders at the Pontiac Silverdome. Stier shared the news with her daughter Lynda, a former cheerleader and gymnast who was a student at Macomb Community College.

"I still remember getting out of my car in the Silverdome parking lot thinking, 'Should I even be here?'" Lynda (Stier) Bojovic recounted, smiling. "I found out about the tryouts two days before and I hadn't been working out a lot."

Stier's doubts were quickly vanquished as she survived three rigorous rounds of tryouts that whittled the number of prospects from over 600 to the final 36.

Novo Bojovic, a four-year starting kicker at Central Michigan University (1979-82), was selected by Michigan in the third round of the USFL's territorial draft. He was a key player in the Panthers' ascension to the league's first championship game set for July 17, 1983, in Denver, Colorado (the Panthers defeated the Philadelphia Stars, 24-22), leading the team with 103 points scored.

"A few days before we left for Denver, there was a pep rally at Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit," Bojovic recalled. "I was one of the players — Anthony Carter, Bobby Hebert and David Greenwood were a few of the others, if I recall correctly — who was going to be escorted to the stage by two cheerleaders. When I looked over to see which two cheerleaders were going to be my escorts, I wasn't too impressed."

Bojovic laughed heartily at the memory.

"When I looked back, I saw (Lynda's) beautiful eyes and approached her to see if she would be my escort," he continued. "She said, 'Oh, I'd love to!' Lynda was on my right side and to this day I don't remember who was on my left side."

Ignoring the USFL's player/cheerleader no-mingling mandate, the couple started dating and quickly fell in love — a development that did not go unnoticed by Panthers executives.

"I was working for Cadillac at the (1984) Detroit Autoshow and a member of the Panthers public relations staff approached me and informed me I wouldn't be able to try out again because of my relationship with Novo," Lynda Bojovic said. "Honestly, I wasn't going to try out again anyway."

Due in part to their families' contrasting cultures and backgrounds — Novo was born and raised in Podgorica, Montenegro, Lynda in rural Lapeer County — the couple decided to elope, setting March 5, 1984, as their wedding date.

"A couple weeks before our wedding, Novo was being interviewed by a Detroit Free Press reporter and he told the reporter about our plans," Lynda Bojovic said. "So, my dad's reading the Free Press one day and that's how my parents found out about our upcoming wedding."

Thirty-eight years later, the Bojovics have two grown children, three grandchildren and an everlasting gratitude for the USFL.

"A few months before (Panthers) coach (Jim) Stanley passed away (Jan. 12, 2012), I visited him because I knew he was very ill," Novo Bojovic said. "I thanked him because he was the one who gave me my first opportunity to play professional football and, ultimately, led to me meeting my wife, having a family. I'll be forever thankful for the Michigan Panthers."

"It was destiny," Lynda added, as Novo planted a playful kiss on her cheek.

From IBM engineer to USFL starter

Although a free agent tryout with the Miami Dolphins in summer 1982 didn't lead to a training camp invitation, Smilo retained an agent: Dr. David Ping, who still represents NFL players from his office in Saline.

Just 24 years old, Smilo was en-



Former USFL Michigan Panthers Jeff Wiska, left, USFL Denver Gold player Dave Smilom, Novo Bojovic, and his wife Lynda (who was a Panther cheerleader) meet up on Northville High's football field March 12. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Former Panther place kicker Novo Bojovic recreates a photo from his playing time with his wife, Lynda, whom he met while both were on the USFL team.



Lynda Bojovic holds the ball for future husband Novo Bojovic in the summer of 1983. COURTESY OF NOVO BOJOVIC

trenched as a much-admired systems engineer at IBM's Detroit headquarters, but his desire to play professional football was stronger than ever.

"Dr. Ping told me about a USFL tryout camp in Chicago, so I road-tripped it down there with a couple of former teammates," remembered Smilo, a resident of Plymouth. "There must have been 800 guys there — everyone from homeless guys running 40-yard dashes in their street shoes to a lot of really good athletes."

"I was in the best shape of my life, so I go in there and run a 4.5 40 and had a standing vertical jump of 36 inches. A couple of the coaches who were looking on were like, 'Huh?' I don't think they were expecting those kind of numbers out of me."

The orchestrators of the tryout asked 20 defensive backs (including Smilo), 30 wide receivers and five or six quarterbacks to stay after the initial camp to display their specific football skills, Smilo said.

Smilo excelled during the skills-specific drills, igniting an impromptu meeting with Deke Pollard, a coach for the Denver Gold.

"Deke told me the Chicago Blitz were going to offer me a contract, but they had a stacked defensive backfield with all former NFL guys, so they wouldn't even give me a chance to get to training camp," Smilo said. "He said the Denver Gold would give me a legitimate chance to make the roster, but first I had to get released by the Michigan Panthers who owned my territorial rights."

Following Pollard's advice, Smilo attended the Panthers' tryout and strategically ran a modest 4.9 40, ensuring his release.

Smilo made the Gold's 1983 roster and excelled in eight games, mostly as a special-teams player, before being traded to the Birmingham Stallions, for whom he earned a starting spot late in the season.

"Following the 1983 season, the Stallions didn't protect me, but I was selected by the Houston Gamblers in the 1984 expansion draft," Smilo explained. "Unfortunately, I was one of the last three players cut by the Gamblers. Getting released hurt a great deal because I loved playing football, but the experience I had in the USFL was absolutely priceless."

Reason to cheer for this Michigan Panther

With just one year of cheerleading experience on her resume, Tama Smith outlasted close to 600 other hopefuls during the Michigan Panthers' inaugural season tryouts.

"I was a dancer since I was 3 years old, so that obviously helped," revealed the Livonia resident, whose lone pre-Panthers cheerleading gig was in 1982 with the American Soccer League's Detroit Express.

Smith said the cheerleaders practiced three or four times a week and their weekly game checks were \$30.

"We actually made more — I believe about \$100 — for promotional events we attended with some of the players," said

Smith, who manages Livonia-based live cover band Power Play. "Obviously, we weren't in it for the money. The games were exciting. There were big crowds, and the team was really good."

One of Smith's fondest Panthers memories was the lone regular-season road game the cheerleaders were allowed to attend in Chicago. On the eve of the Blitz-Panthers game, Smith and four of her teammates rented a car and explored the Windy City's nightlife.

"I remember us walking down Rush Street and men were buying us champagne," she said. "Before we knew it, it was getting late. I volunteered to drive us back to the hotel, but we got lost. There wasn't GPS or MapQuest in 1983."

Smith remembers pulling into the hotel parking lot the morning of the game as the rest of the cheerleading squad was loading onto the bus that would take them to Soldier Field.

"We performed that day with zero sleep," Smith said, chuckling, "but the Panthers won, so we did our job."

Before departing an interview on the fringes of the Northville High School football field, the USFL alums were asked if it seemed like 40 years since the league kicked off.

They all shook their heads in unison.

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The Jobs Recovery Accelerated as Omicron Faded

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Quotes may be attributed to Julia Pollak, Chief Economist at ZipRecruiter, a leading on-line employment marketplace

The U.S. economy added 678k jobs in February as Omicron faded, soundly beating expectations. Totals for the prior two months were revised upwards by 92k. Job gains also broadened across the economy.

The number of workers out sick due to Covid dropped from 3.6 million to 1.6 million, 304k workers returned to the labor force, and the prime-age labor force participation rate rose from 82.0% to 82.2%. Paired with an uptick in weekly working hours, these numbers point to a substantial increase in labor market activity in February.



Job Growth Should Remain Strong in the Coming Months

The jobs report suggests we could see further growth in the months ahead. 4.2 million people reported that they were not able to work in February because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic. As Covid cases fall further, we could see more businesses come back online, raising employment and output.

The report also showed that the number of workers employed part-time for economic reasons because they couldn't find full-time work rose by 418k. Many of these workers should be able to find full-time work in the months ahead.

The number of workers not in the labor force who want a job now is 5.3 million, up from 5 million before the pandemic. Hundreds of thousands of these workers could also return soon as business picks up.

Women's Employment Raises Concerns

Worryingly, the prime-age labor force participation rate for women dropped to 75.8% from 76.0%, even as it increased among men to 88.8% from 88.2%. The departure of women could reflect child-

care challenges that have dragged on throughout the pandemic. Employment in child daycare services ticked upwards from 922.8k to 930.7k, but is still down 11.7% from pre-Covid levels. Employment in public and private education also slowly improved, but is still down by 392k.

Overall, there are still 590k fewer people in the labor force than before the pandemic, and all of the missing workers are women. There are 1.2 million fewer women and 600k more men.

Below-Expectation Wage Growth Likely Reflects Composition Effects

Average hourly earnings hardly changed, despite tight labor market conditions and the fact that workers are increasingly requesting that their compensation keep pace with inflation. The average is likely being dragged down by the reentry of low-wage workers into the workforce. Other data sources point to accelerating wage growth.

Certain industries are seeing more rapid wage growth than others. The leisure and hospitality sector is still leading the way, with average wages growing 11.2% over the year. Annual average wage growth also surged in

transportation and warehousing to 7.7%. These are the only two industries where average wage growth outpaces inflation.

Office Reopenings Fueled Recovery in Downtown Service Businesses

As Omicron waned, many workers came back to the office. 13.0% of employees teleworked because of the coronavirus pandemic, down from 15.4 percent in the prior month. As more workers return to office in March, we could see job gains in the businesses that serve office workers accelerate.

Already, employment in leisure and hospitality grew 179k in February. The sector still has tremendous room for recovery, with employment still down by 1.5 million, or 9.0%, since the pandemic.



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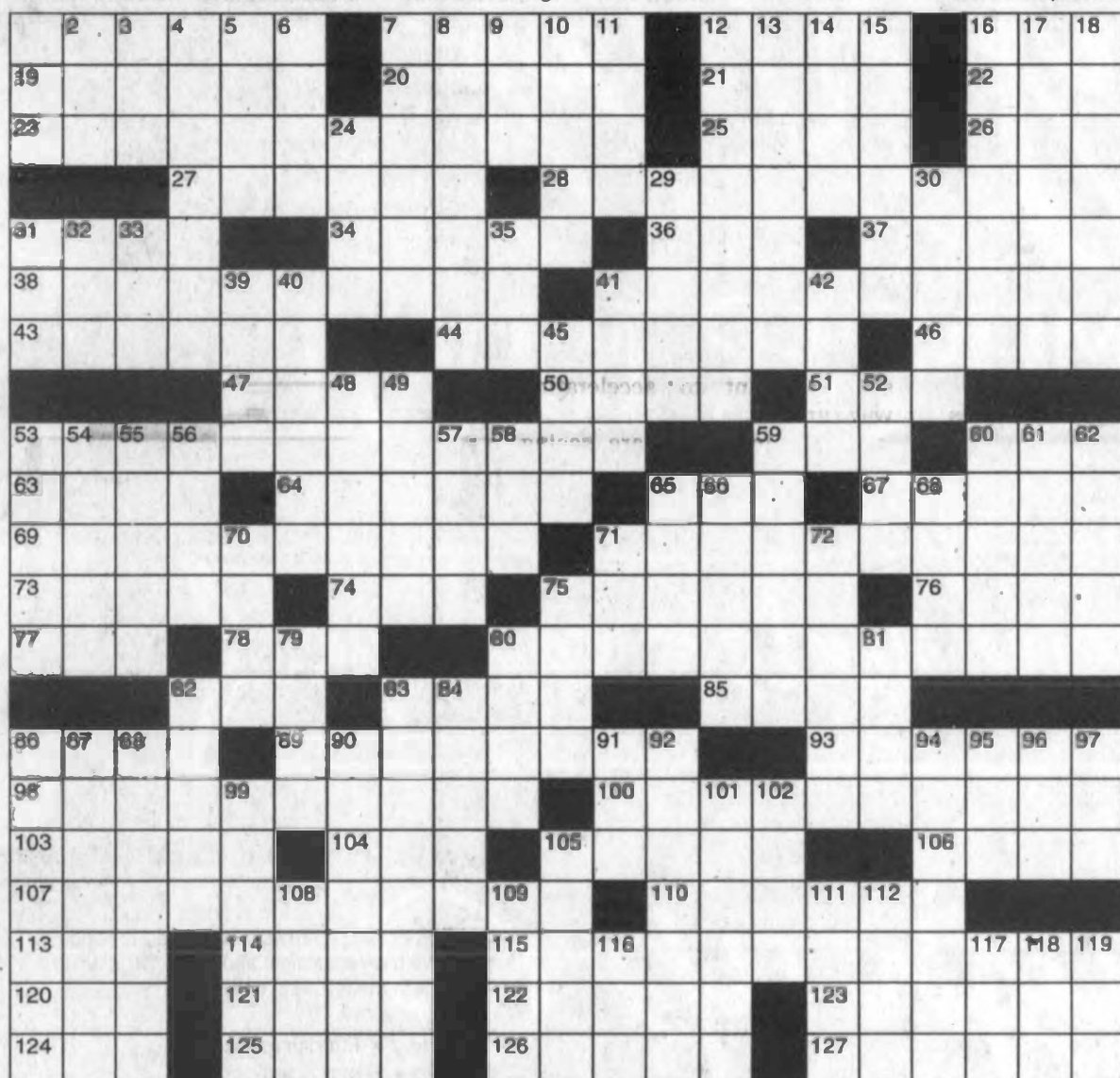
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124 One of the Kennedys
125 Hug's partner
126 Century's 100
127 All 12 of its symbols are featured in this puzzle
- DOWN**
- 1 Dollop
2 Clean air org.
3 Court divider
4 Chants
5 Actor Baldwin
6 Vega's constellation
7 Grill-marked sandwiches
8 French forest region
9 Brand of faucet filters
10 Cry like —
11 Bank bought by Chase, for short
12 Govt. advances for mom-and-pops
13 Opposite of destined
14 "And When —" (1969 hit)
15 Certain high-heel feature
16 Go-Go's singer Carlisle
17 Offspring producer
18 Ones entrapping
24 "Vidi," in English
29 "Slow" primate
30 Bonnie of blues rock
31 Antis' votes
32 Corrida cry
33 Sailor's org.
35 It runs on a 52-Down
39 — do-well
40 Bill of tennis
41 "Hurry it up!"
42 Actress Ward
45 Balm additive
48 Female grad
49 Chatty birds
52 Apple buy
53 Went spelunking
54 Think aloud
55 Prison units
56 2012 Ben Affleck thriller
57 Turkish money unit
58 Bitterly cold
59 Adherents of an Iranian religion
60 Thousand: Prefix
61 — acid (fat product)
62 "There, there"
65 Georgia politician Bob
66 Michael of the band R.E.M.
68 Small nail
70 "— la Douce"
71 Drink-related party abbr.
72 Suffix with micro- or kaleido-
75 Read quickly
79 "I'm c-c-cold!"
80 Start to wake
81 Light snack
82 Small rodents, jocularly
83 Sore feeling
84 Slumber
86 Star of "I'm No Angel"
87 Slower than allegretto
88 Like booties
90 Cream-filled pastries
91 Big head
92 Contributor
94 Covered anew, as a book
95 — Lingus
96 Suffix with Senegal
97 Guided
99 In harm's way
101 Transversely
102 Those people
105 100-buck bill
108 Roman 1,052
109 Auction website
111 "The Wizard —"
112 Celeb's ride
116 Radio host
— God
117 "Bali —"
118 Epoch
119 Small pouch



#2,085

Average time of solution: 67 minutes

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

SUDOKU



Here's How It Works:

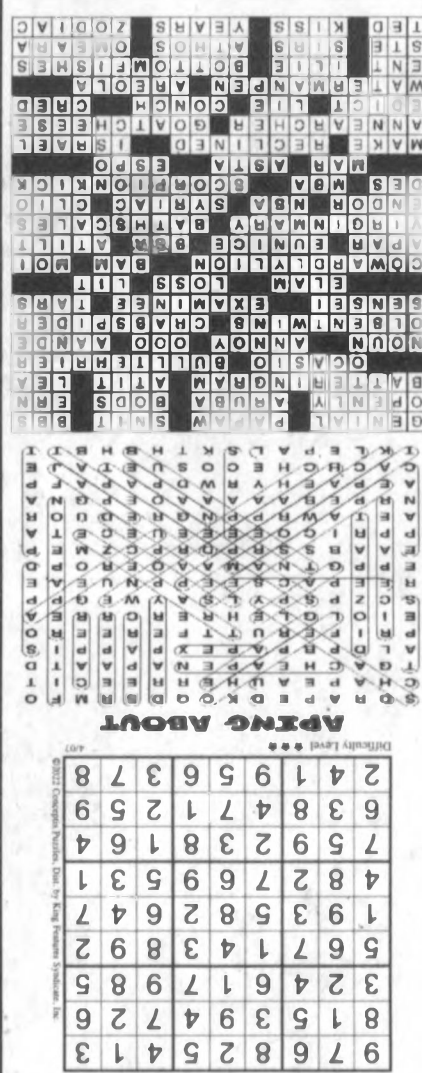
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues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

APING ABOUT

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

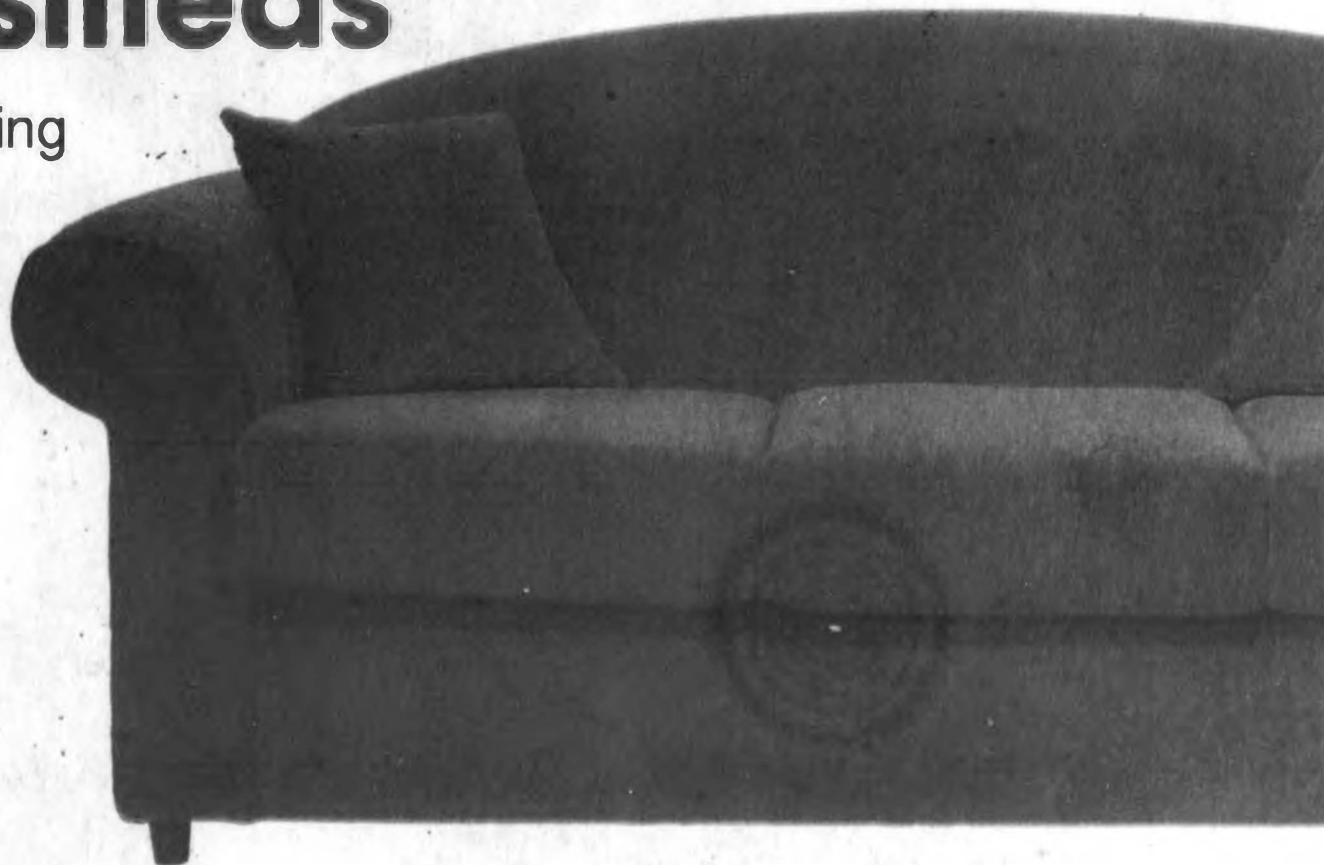
S D R A P E D K C Q D S R M F O
C H A P E A U H E R R E E C I T
T G A C H E A P E N A P A A T D
A L D P B P A P E X P A P P I S
P R I F E R U T T F E R E E R O
E I O L G L E H R E R C R R E A
S C Z P S P Y L S A Y W E G P P
R E E P A C S E E P P N U E A E
E P P G T N A M A A O E R O P D
E A A B S S R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

APERCU
APERITIF
APEX
BUDAPEST
CANAPÉ
CAPER
CHAPEAU
CHAPEL
CHAPERONE
CHEAPEN
CRAPES
DRAPED
DRAPERY
ESCAPEE
GAPE
GRAPE
HEAPED
JAPE
LAPEL
LEAPED
NAPE
NOTEPAPER
PAPERBACK
PARAPET
REAPER
RICE-PAPER
SCAPEGOAT
SCRAPE
SEASCAPE
SHAPELY
SOAPED
TAPERED
TAPES
TAPEWORM
TRAPEZE
TRAPEZOID



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