

NORTHVILLE RECORD

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Sixteen challenged books to stay in Salem-South Lyon Library after vote

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

More than 150 people turned out to the Salem-South Lyon District Library on Nov. 29 for a meeting over the fate of 16 challenged books in the library's collection.

Spoiler alert: All 16 books survived the challenge.

Plot twist: Despite a deep divide in ideology, the meeting was perceived as being overall "respectful" by participants from both sides.

"It was a class audience — they were passionate about their positions, but respectful," Library Board Vice President

Linda Hamilton said. "I was very pleased... the mood of the room conveyed that these are all people who care about the library and the community, and they have a difference of opinion on what that looks like."

Tim Ryan, a father who was among those who initially requested removal of the "sexually explicit" books from the li-

brary, agreed that it was a mostly respectful meeting. However, he expressed disappointment in the board's nearly unanimous decision to retain all the books. He also felt those objecting to the books were misunderstood.

"There was a big turnout from the

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Northville selects interim city manager

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Mark Wollenweber has a pretty good idea of how eastern Wayne County works. Now, he'll get a taste of running a community on the county's west side.

Wollenweber, the former city manager for the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, was selected as Northville's interim city manager by the city council during a special meeting Nov. 17. He'll serve in the interim basis until a permanent manager can be found. The current manager, Patrick Sullivan, is retiring from his post Jan. 6 after serving 16 years in the city.

The appointment comes as several crucial projects make their way through Northville, including the massive Downs project that will completely transform the site of the Northville Downs racetrack. Mayor Brian Turnbull said the person named to the position needs to be ready.

"I think this transitional manager is extremely important in our decision here tonight because we have so many things going on right now. It's not somebody we can just settle for," he said. "It is intense in the next 2, 3, 4 months and that is as important, almost as much as that next manager."

After interviewing three candidates for the position, the city council did a ranked vote, with all five members selecting Wollenweber as their top choice.

"It's just a way for me to give back. I've enjoyed a long career in local government," he said. "I appreciate so much the work that elected officials do."

Wollenweber also served as city administrator in Grosse Pointe Woods, city manager in St. Clair Shores, and city manager in Huntington Woods, where he just wrapped up serving in an interim role. In addition, he's worked in communities such as

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Lisa Shaw looks at a SpongeBob Squarepants arcade game at the new Milford House. The former outdoor patio has been enclosed and filled with arcade games. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Milford House reopens under new management

David Veselenak

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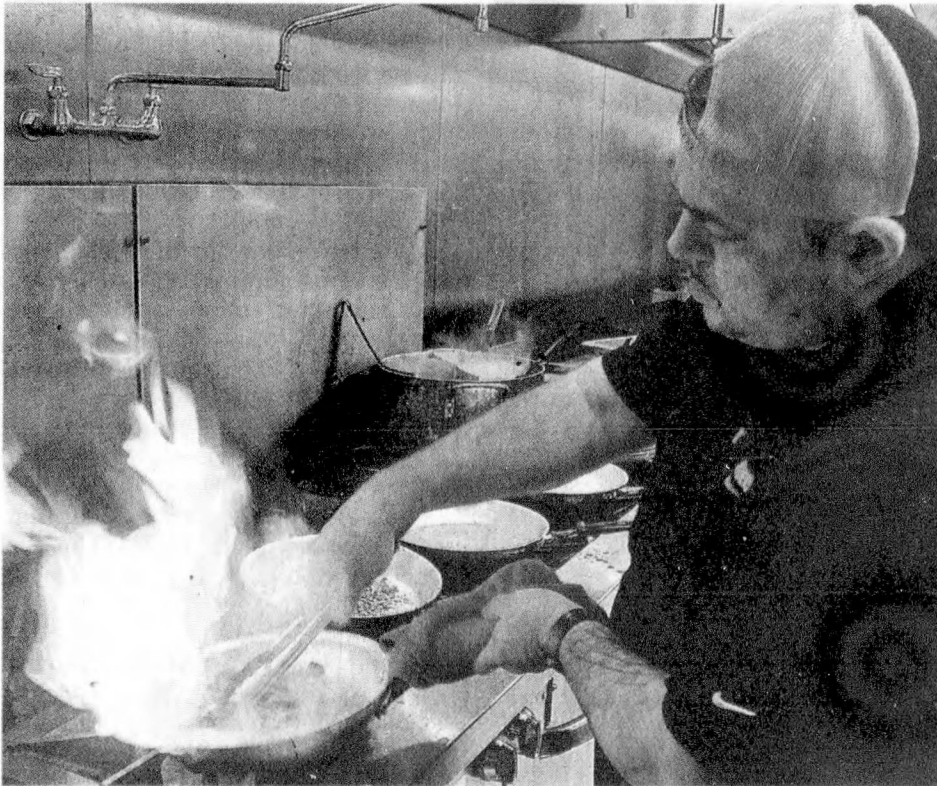
The name may be the same, and that's the biggest thing that hasn't changed at the Milford House.

Located in the heart of downtown Milford at Main and Commerce streets, the restaurant was closed in 2021 by its longtime owners. After months of work and revamping of the business, a new attraction has arrived, complete with ways to dine and play.

Today, customers can grab a meal, a drink or play some games, all under the same roof. It's become a gathering place for those who stop by, including people both young and old.

"These games are all latest and state-of-the-art," said Dave Phillips, one of the partners who runs Milford House. "One of the misconceptions is that it's all for kiddies. We intend on marketing to teens. The teen market for this kind of stuff is really big."

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Chef Daniel Mora cooks a dish in the kitchen at Milford House.

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Some cool hot spots

TikTok's Wandering Michigander recommends 5 winter destinations

Rachel Greco
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Two-and-a-half years into building her brand as a travel influencer, Taylor Dustin still finds it difficult to believe how little people living outside of Michigan know about all the state has to offer.

"Michigan is not a drive-through state," said Dustin, 25. "You have to actually be going to Michigan to explore, unlike a lot of other states that you drive through to get to another one. It's surrounded by water and nobody from other states understands how big the Great Lakes are. When they think 'lake' they think, 'Oh, you can see across it.'"

On social media, Dustin, a Grand Rapids resident and self-described "explorer," makes videos that seek to dispel those misconceptions. She created her TikTok account, "The Wandering Michigander," in the spring of 2020 and started traveling the state. Her video posts showcasing Michigan's hot spots and hidden gems have drawn more than 181,000 followers so far, and the endeavor recently became her full-time job.

Dustin's been all over the mitten state, from Silver Lake's sand dunes along Lake Michigan to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore near Munising, and places in between. The season doesn't matter, she said, and although Michigan is glorious in the summer, there's just as much worth seeing in the winter.

Here's a closer look at five places Dustin recommends visiting this winter season.

Frankenmuth

This one is an obvious choice, Dustin admits, but no one should miss out on experiencing everything Frankenmuth has to offer during the holiday season, she said.

"That's one place that's really special just to winter," Dustin said.

"Michigan's Little Bavaria," is home to Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, a massive year-round Christmas store, and dozens of other unique shops and restaurants located in its downtown.

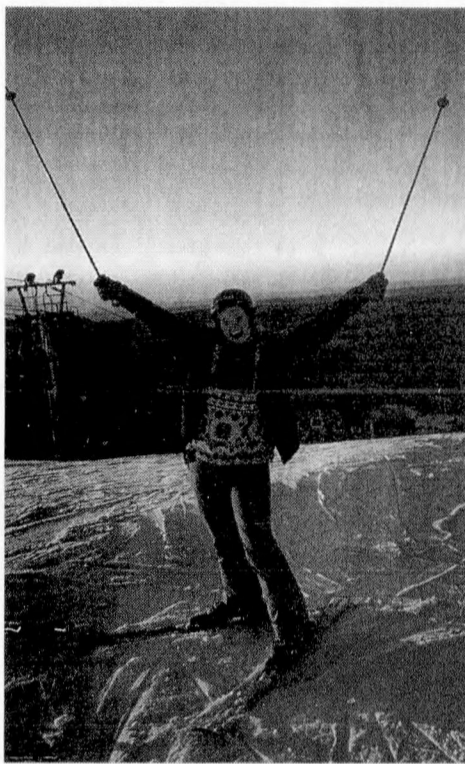
Zehnder's, known for its family-style chicken dinners, hosts its Snowfest, which showcases ice sculptures, in January and the city runs a "Christmas Shuttle" to various attractions throughout December. Learn more at www.frankenmuth.org.

"It's great to go there all year round,



The Bavarian Inn Restaurant along Main Street in Frankenmuth is decked out for the holidays.

PROVIDED BY BAVARIAN INN RESTAURANT



Taylor Dustin, of Grand Rapids, pictured at Boyne Mountain, shares Michigan's travel hot spots and lesser-known gems through her TikTok account "The Wandering Michigander."

but going during the holiday season is something else," Dustin said. "It's a fun place to go for the weekend and relax."

Tahquamenon Falls

Dustin doesn't shy away from outdoor destinations when it's cold. Instead, she bundles up and embraces the weather, and while plenty of people visit Tahquamenon Falls in the summer she urges people to consider a trip there in the winter.

Tahquamenon Falls State Park is nearly 50,000 acres.

The waterfalls, both lower and upper, along the Tahquamenon River west of Paradise, are a sight to behold in the cold, Dustin said.

"I went for the first time in the winter last year because I wanted to see it in all the seasons and I was honestly blown away," she said.

The Upper Falls are so large they hadn't completely frozen over, Dustin said: "It was so pretty. You can also snowshoe the trails there or just hike the trails. It's a totally different experience."

Downtown Detroit

The east side of the state doesn't get enough love, Dustin said, and that includes downtown Detroit.

"Detroit is a really cool place to go in the winter because they have a lot of fun stuff downtown," she said.

That includes ice skating at an outdoor rink in Campus Martius Park, a winter carnival at the Monroe Street Midway featuring games and activities that runs through Jan. 29, and holiday lights at the Detroit Zoo.

"I'm actually really excited to go explore Detroit this winter," Dustin said.

Marquette

If you can wait to visit Marquette un-



Tahquamenon Falls State Park covers nearly 50,000 acres. The waterfalls, both lower and upper, are a sight to behold in the cold, Dustin said.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TAYLOR DUSTIN



Lake of the Clouds at Porcupine Mountains State Park offers a beautiful vista in the Western Upper Peninsula.

til later in the season, Feb. 16-20, you'll be able to catch a series of three popular sled dog races hosted in the city every year.

They include the UP 200, a 220-mile race between teams of 12 dogs each, the Midnight Run, an 82-mile run between teams of eight dogs each, and the Jack Pine 30, a 26-mile race between teams of six dogs each. Racers start from downtown Marquette.

Marquette's downtown is filled with shops and restaurants, Dustin said, and there are lots of unique outdoor spots you can visit in the vicinity, including the campus of Michigan Technological University.

"I love the vibe of Marquette," she said. "They have a cute downtown and they have lots of coffee shops and restaurants and cozy places like that, which is kind of hard to find in the U.P." Learn more at www.travel-marquette.com.

Western Upper Peninsula

Where can you find great terrain for skiing, tons of trails for your snowmobile and so much snow?

Go north, cross the Mackinac Bridge into the state's Upper Peninsula and then west toward Ironwood and the Porcupine Mountains, Dustin said.

The Porcupine Mountains Ski area, located in Porcupine Mountains State Park, gets an average of 200 inches of snowfall each year and is well worth the



The Delft Theater is an iconic building in Marquette's "cozy" downtown.

PROVIDED BY ELIZABETH COUCH

trip to the western U.P., Dustin said.

"I went skiing there for the first time last year and it's the only place I've skied in Michigan that has had legit powder snow like you see out in Colorado," she said. "The runs are pretty long because it's just more mountainous up there."

Learn more about the area online at www.michigan.org/regions/up-western.

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City of Novi Notice of Public Hearing Community Development Block Grant Funds

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Novi will hold a Public Hearing on the use of Community Development Block Grant Funds. The Hearing will be held Monday, December 19, 2022 at 7:00 p.m., EST, at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375, for the purpose of hearing public comments on the Community Development Block Grant Program Year 2023 application in the approximate amount of \$125,932 to fund eligible projects.

All interested citizens are requested to attend this Hearing. Comments will also be received in writing or in person at the City Clerk's Office, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375, until 5:00 p.m., December 19, 2022. Arrangements to reasonably accommodate special needs, including handicap accessibility or interpreter will be made upon receiving 72-hour advance notice. Contact City Clerk, Cortney Hanson at 248-347-0456 for special services.

CORTNEY HANSON,

CITY CLERK

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Plymouth commission considers paid parking plan

Laura Colvin
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Visitors may soon need to pay for parking when they come to dine, shop, visit the library or partake of the many other offerings in downtown Plymouth.

At a Nov. 21 meeting, the Plymouth City Commission voted 5-2 to pursue a plan to implement paid parking, but also to research other potential sources of revenue as the city faces mounting costs to maintain, improve and expand the parking system in the downtown area.

Although nothing has been finalized - the commission will vote to approve specifics of a paid parking plan before it can be implemented - city officials say the parking system will cost millions to maintain in the years ahead. Current funding, they say, is not sufficient.

"Right now, we have funds coming from businesses paying property taxes (and) we have funds coming from residents paying property taxes," said Plymouth Mayor Nick Muroz. "We do not have funds coming from people who are using parking, so I think paid parking makes sense."

"We don't have the funding for maintaining (parking areas) we currently have," he added. "And we've all set this vision... for growing our downtown. In order to do that, we need to increase revenue somehow. I think it is very reasonable to have paid parking pay for maintaining the parking system."

Plymouth stakeholders disagree on parking solution

Currently, drivers do not pay to park in the city, but risk a ticket if they overstay the two-hour limit in some areas.

The Nov. 21 meeting was the latest in a recent series between the city commission and the Downtown Development Authority aimed at discussing the issue. At each meeting, commissioners, business owners, residents and others were strongly divided on the issue.

Many who spoke during the meetings said they were opposed to charging people for parking, saying it could ruin the ambiance and welcoming spirit of the city and possibly drive visitors to



Many of Plymouth's parking lots, as well as the central parking deck, are in need of maintenance and repair. LAURA COLVIN/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

nearby Northville, Canton or other places they can eat and shop without paying to park.

Others said paid parking would essentially add a "tax" to those coming into the city to eat, shop or patronize other businesses.

Many business owners were also against the idea of imposing paid parking on employees.

Dan Johnson, owner Ironwood Grill and Park Place Gastro Pub, said his employees heard the issue was being discussed and came to him with concerns.

"They were just like, 'Don't make us pay for parking, please,'" Johnson said. "Every single one of them could very well go get a job somewhere else. I need those employees. They are in short supply. Everyone is fighting right now for employees."

City Commissioners Alanna Maguire and Linda Filipczak both said they were strongly opposed to paid parking and cast the two dissenting votes against moving ahead with a plan.

"I think we need to consider how to continue to provide the upkeep and do it within budgetary constraints," Filipczak said, noting she felt an outline for potential revenue to be collected from paid parking in the deck was based on assumptions. "I think we will find individuals not parking in the deck and moving out into the neighborhoods (to park)."

To implement paid parking across the city's downtown area - 868 parking spaces - a preliminary outline suggests the city would need 45 kiosks, putting equipment costs at \$585,000.

At \$1 per hour, the city estimates a 10-year revenue at about \$8.7 million, after equipment payoff and operating expenses.

But Commissioner Marques Thomey pointed to a report estimating costs to maintain the central parking deck over the next 20 years at \$3.1 million.

"That's just the deck," he said. "Knowing this is an unfunded liability at this point, a 20-year maintenance or repair of these assets needs to be done. It's not a question of if we're going to do it, it's when. We either maintain them, or they fail."

"If we want our visitors, our residents, everyone who comes to the city or lives in the city to have assets were proud of... we need to find a way to fund it," he added, noting, based on all the data presented to this and prior commissions, "the best option is paid parking."

Decades of discussions on Plymouth parking

During a September meeting, City Manager Paul Sincock laid out a long history of issues related to parking, including the installation of parking me-

ters, followed by the removal of parking meters.

Parking, he said, has always been an issue. Since the 1970s, the city has assembled 11 parking committees, conducted 12 parking surveys, made 10 parking policy updates and implemented 19 parking changes.

In January 2022, the city commission adopted a new strategic plan with a one-year task to decide on a direction for paid parking. Multiple meetings and discussions between the city commission and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) have been held, with reams of historical information provided.

Recently updated documents, including the city's master plan and five-year strategic plans for both the city and the DDA, indicate a desire for further investment in the downtown and the entire city to "promote a higher quality of life, economic vitality and take steps to improve the attractiveness of the city."

"Nobody wants to pay for parking, I think that much is very clear," said Scott Foess, a resident representative on the DDA board. "(But) if I look at the DDA's finance budget, we're supposed to pay \$400,000 to \$500,000 in the next two to three years for the deck. Right now, we don't have that, and we won't get it from our TIF financing, either. And that's just for the deck. It's not for the city lots to be resurfaced and maintained."

"I'm not saying paid parking is the only way to do it," he added. "I'm just saying there are limited options to come up with that funding."

During discussions, commission members vacillated between whether a plan for paid parking should include surface lots, the central parking deck or the entire DDA area and whether exempting certain lots or areas would create a situation where those lots were always full and paid parking areas would be empty. They also discussed starting small with a pilot program with small areas and whether it was feasible to provide the first 15 minutes free and whether whether businesses could validate parking.

Contact reporter Laura Colvin at colvin@hometownlife.com or 248-221-8143.

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Interim

Continued from Page 1A

Plymouth, Ferndale and Westland in administrative roles.

Two other candidates interviewed for the position during the special meeting: Ted Andrzejewski, the former city manager of Menominee and former mayor of Eastlake, Ohio; and Jae Guetschow, the former village manager of Brooklyn in Jackson County.

Firm selected to find permanent manager

In addition to selecting an interim city manager, the city council also decided on which company to work with in finding a permanent manager.

The council voted to work with Okemos-based Walsh Municipal Services in finding a long-term replacement for Sullivan.

While Sullivan said all the candidates he looked at would serve the city well, he said Walsh Municipal Services was

"It's just a way for me to give back. I've enjoyed a long career in local government. I appreciate so much the work that elected officials do."

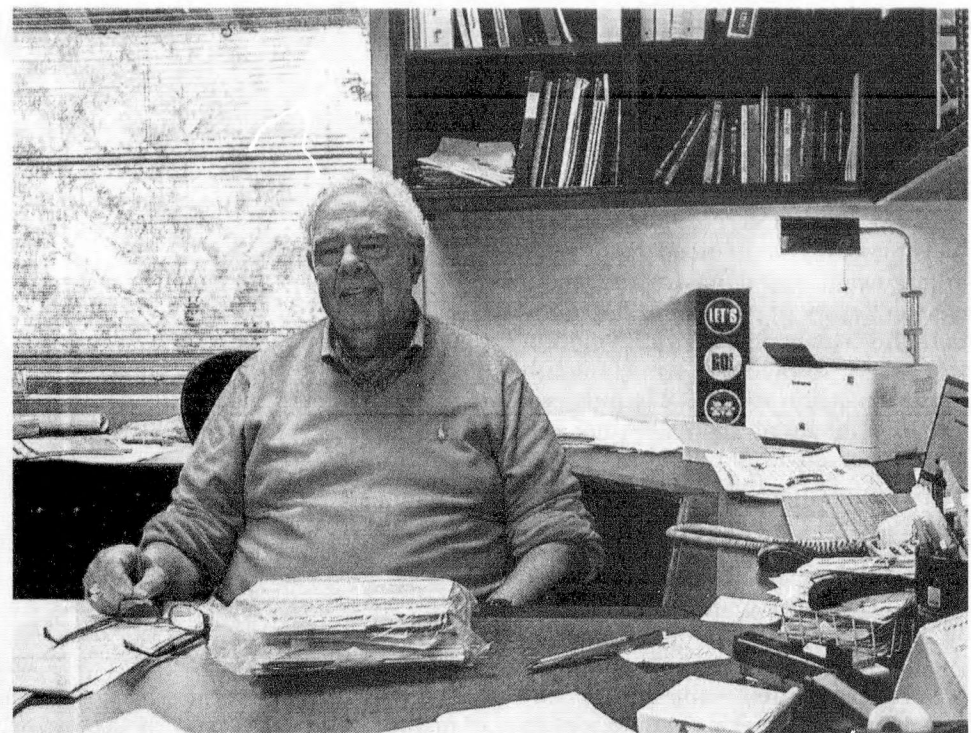
Mark Wollenweber
On being selected as Northville's interim city manager

the best option due to all the activity it's currently seen. The firm has conducted searches in several Michigan communities in recent months.

"That really could be an advantage to us to have a search firm that's got that many people that he's currently in contact with," Sullivan said.

The contract, unanimously approved by the council, will not exceed \$13,900.

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



Former Grosse Pointe Shores City Manager Mark Wollenweber talks in 2019 about his years of service while in his Grosse Pointe Shores office. Northville City Council recently selected Wollenweber to be interim city manager. DETROIT FREE PRESS FILE

Books

Continued from Page 1A

LGBTQ community and many of them had the notion we were against books with LGBTQ content, where our real issue is with sexually explicit books in the teen collection in the library," Ryan said. "It's not explicitly an LGBTQ issue. Any teen book with any type of characters with sexually explicit content is not appropriate for teenagers."

Fifteen of the 16 books reviewed have LGBTQ themes or characters, and the first book challenge in the library's history stemmed from Pride Month displays in the teen section this past June.

About two dozen families and individuals signed on to a letter to the library board objecting to the displays with "inappropriate content" and asking for them to be removed. Furthermore, the letter stated that members of the objecting group had checked out many of the books and planned to keep them checked out "to protect our kids and the community."

The following month, the group formally submitted a citizen's request for reconsideration of library materials form with 16 titles listed. After receiving news in October that their request was denied by the library director and a materials review committee, the group appealed to the library board.

During the Nov. 29 community meeting, after roughly 90 minutes of public comment with the majority speaking against censorship, Hamilton said she and her fellow library board members voted on each challenged book. They agreed to keep them all available to teens.

Each book, she said, had to meet a two-pronged test according to federal and state law. If it is determined to have obscene content that violates "contemporary community standards," the work as a whole must also fail to have "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

Ryan expressed frustration that libraries and librarians are exempt from laws forbidding the dissemination or distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors and said the law they ap-



The Salem-South Lyon District Library, 9800 Pontiac Trail. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

plied to evaluating the appropriateness of the books sets a low bar for determining appropriate content for teens.

Ryan said a rating system should be in place for books, much like what is used for movies that are rated PG, R, or X, and said it is not reasonable to expect parents to pre-read their children's books or to follow them around the library to see what they are viewing.

He suggested other solutions, such as putting stickers with warning labels

on sexually explicit books, taking books out of the teen section and placing in the adult section, or requiring such books to have parental authorization before a minor can check them out.

"I am evaluating future plans," Ryan said. "I think it was a missed opportunity to work something out with the board. Sadly, I think a lot of parents don't know this content exists in these books. It's a real problem across the country."

Hamilton said she is not concerned that there will be many more book challenges coming. However, the library board will be reviewing its processes for reconsideration of materials requests.

"We made a decision in compliance with the First Amendment, U.S. code and Michigan law," Hamilton said. "We didn't make a personal decision on whether we will read (these books) or let our kids read them....There may be book challenges, but the board, staff, and community can see we have a good process to deal with it."

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Milford House

Continued from Page 1A

Lisa Shaw, who oversees the games, said she's received great feedback from both grandparents and teens looking for something fun to do in town.

"They're like, 'We don't have anything for our grandkids to do. So we bring them here,'" Shaw said. "I threw a birthday party for a 16-year-old and she left me a note that said Milford House will always have a special place in her heart because they did the best 16th birthday.

"And that to me, is more reward. That's who I am."

For adults, some additional redemption games will be up in what was formerly the wine bar on the north end of the building. They will accompany a new bar, aimed at serving spirits such as bourbon.

Ice cream is also back, although in a seasonal manner. The Scoop of Milford will be open during the warmer months, serving up ice cream from inside the building, rather than the walk-up stand that operated there previously.

More changes could come as they figure out the needs of the community. The back dining room, which can currently be used as banquet space, may turn more into a party room, with some games from the front of the restaurant possibly moving to the back to accommodate such events. And the potential to add a giant shark tank with live sharks — something that made headlines earlier this year when the restaurant's concept was discussed by the village's planning commission — is still up in the air.

Brittani Stanford recently came to the Milford House with some of her family, including her children. They enjoyed some pizza and playing games, an experience they expect to replicate often.

"I'm excited," she said. "We'll probably frequent this place quite a bit often."

While the name of the restaurant may be the same, the chef in the kitchen is not.

Daniel Mora, a chef who's worked at restaurants in eastern Oakland County, brings his flare to the menu as the head chef of Milford House. The menu has plenty of Italian favorites still, albeit different recipes from the previous ownership. Pastas, salads and some steaks



Dave Phillips stands in the back dining area of the Milford House. The back space currently has room for banquet activities, but could transform into more of a party space. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

adorn the menu currently. It also has burgers and other bar food as well.

Mora also hopes to push some Latin-American cuisine as well. They began advertising it when they first opened for carryout earlier this year, and hope to make a bigger push going into 2023.

"Now that we are starting to pick up, I think we're going to revisit it again," Mora said.

While the restaurant isn't the same Milford House the community has known for decades, Phillips, Mora and the rest of the team hope to make adjustments and improvements in order to earn customers' loyalty. They hope keeping the name so many people know it by will help bring them back.

"I wanted people to feel comfortable," Mora said. "They knew this place, it was an institution for 25+ years. And I wanted people to be able to have a familiarity with it."

Milford House is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday. More information, including a full menu, can be found at milfordhousebarandgrill.com.



Leo, 4 and Rocco Stanford play a game in the Milford House arcade.

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Susan Bromley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Christopher Allen Simons will be in prison until he's 90-years-old, or until he dies, whichever comes first, for ambushing and severely beating a man with a baseball bat in the woods of Lyon Township.

Simons, 32 and a former Fowlerville resident, was sentenced Nov. 29 to 62-and-a-half years in prison by Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Victoria Valentine.

A jury found Simons guilty last

month of assault with intent to murder in the horrific 2019 attack in which he grievously wounded Aleksander Malec, a then-30-year-old Northville resident.

Malec testified that he was led to a wooded area in Lyon Township on May 5, 2019, by Jessica Kropiewnicki, whom he was interested in romantically.

The 24-year-old Lyon Township woman knew Simons was waiting in the woods to attack Malec, but allegedly wasn't aware of the extent to which the beating would be taken.

After the beating, Malec found his way to a nearby Martindale Road residence to seek help, but no one was at

home. He forced the front door open and made his way to the bathroom. The homeowners returned to find blood on the exterior of their house, and all over the interior before discovering Malec, breathing and conscious.

Malec was hospitalized with "significant" injuries but was able to provide some information on those responsible. Two days later, Kropiewnicki was arrested on an unrelated matter and volunteered details about the Lyon Township assault.

She pleaded no contest to an assault charge in February 2020 and was released on bond with a tether, but after

she cut the tether and disappeared for three weeks before being caught, she was sentenced to 15-30 years in prison.

Malec was still suffering seizures more than a year after the attack, as well as general trauma from the ordeal.

Simons' defense attorney, Steven Lynch, said on Thursday that he and his client were both "disappointed" in the sentence, which was at the top of the guidelines, rather than the 15-18 year sentence they had sought.

"He maintains it was not his intent to kill the victim and he will be seeking any remedies through the appellate process," Lynch said.

Plymouth's Old Village has new coffee shop

David Veselenak
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Kilian Pauls and his father Reggie Wessel want to help transform Plymouth's Old Village neighborhood. They hope their new coffee shop will be one step forward in that direction.

The duo opened Meridian Coffee Co., at 636 Starkweather in November, bringing a full-fledged coffee shop to the business district on the north end of Plymouth. It's something, Wessel said, that's badly needed in that part of town.

"We really needed this in Old Village," he said. "Old Village is a really, really tight-knit community."

Opening in the space that was formerly the Detroit Vape Shop — the family operated that business before they decided to change industries — the shop gives off a post-industrial feel, a cozy look for a shop nestled in some old buildings.

It's something Wessel said he's wanted to do for a long time.

"We've both been coffee people for years. And I just kept approaching my son like, 'Hey dude, let's open a coffee



Kilian Pauls makes a latte at Meridian Coffee Co. in Plymouth's Old Village. The shop, opened by Pauls and his father, Reggie Wessel, opened in November. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

shop," he said. "Every month, I'd be like, 'Let's do it.'"

They serve all the drinks one would expect in a traditional, independent coffee shop, including lattes, cappuccinos, tea and regular brewed coffee. Seasonal specials are also on the menu, including holiday drinks right now. Meridian Coffee Co. gets its beans locally before roasting them themselves offsite, though they hope to eventually move that operation to the building in the future.

Some light food is offered, including baked goods from Detroit-based Cannelle Pastry.

It's become a destination for those who live nearby or pass through the

neighborhood. Wessel said he's seen plenty of customers stop by multiple times a week to grab a cup of coffee to go or to sit and relax in the café.

The family has poured plenty of love into the space, using top-notch materials to create that comfortable atmosphere. It's enough, Wessel said, that some people have spent lots of time enjoying it while doing their jobs.

"Here, we have people who sit in here for four hours and work. And it's wonderful," Wessel said. "It's aesthetically pleasing. We cut no corners."

The shop is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

dveselenak@hometownlife.com

Theater group presents 'Double Booked for the Holidays'

Courtesy of Huron Valley Community Theater

Huron Valley Community Theater's "Double Booked For The Holidays" opens Friday to kick off the holiday season. This original musical is filled with fun, joy and the holiday spirit, including an audience singalong.

During this laugh-filled story, two directors rehearse their shows only to find themselves in a double-booked battle to present on the same night. With intervention from Faith and Hope, a solution is found that will usher in the spirit of the season.

"The show is the perfect way to spend time with family and friends," said director Linda Foran. "You will not only hear your favorite seasonal songs, but laugh out loud along the way. We would also love to have you donate to our canned food drive to support Community Sharing Outreach Center."

"Double Booked For The Holidays" at Milford High School's Little Theater runs 7 p.m. Dec. 9; 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 10; and 2 p.m. Dec. 11.

Ticket can be purchased at hvcommunitytheater.org or at the door.

FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated at right. Find the listed words in the grid. They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once. Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 18 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Acacia | Cherry | Kauri | Plum |
| Alder | Chop | Koda | Pollen |
| Antarctic | Coachwood | Lilly pilly | Poplar |
| beech | Cone | Lime | Python |
| Apple | Eims | Nature | Root |
| Banksia | Fell | Murrogun | Seed |
| Bark | Flame | Myrtle | Soil |
| Birds | Fruit | Nests | Teak |
| Blackbutt | Geebung | Nuts | Trunk |
| tree | Guioa | Orange | |
| Buds | Hovea | Palm | |
| Cedar | Karri | Pear | |

TODAY'S ANSWER

Keeping our air clean

Tree hugging

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

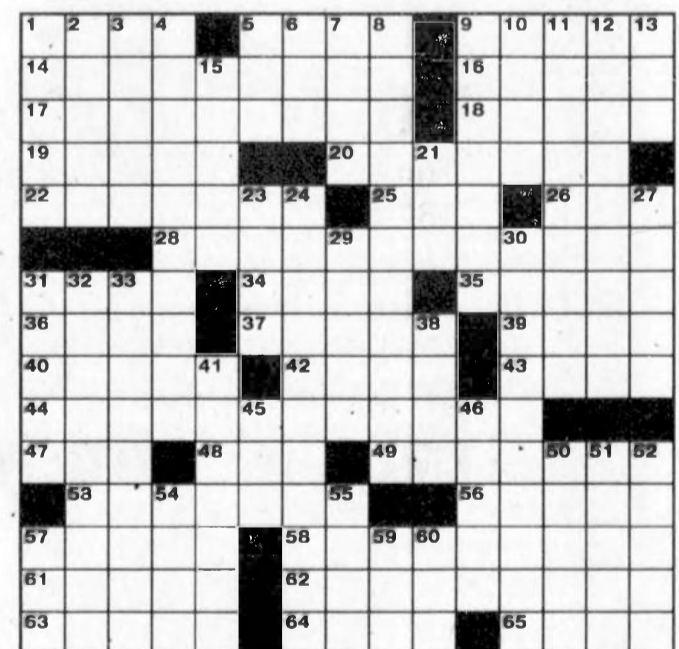
NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Problems for young pupils
- Surprise inspiration
- Nobody you know, these days
- What follows a collaboration conclusion
- Harder to navigate, perhaps
- Many a worker on water
- Conventions, for instance
- Admitted
- Most 35 Across
- Civic alternative
- Fishy symbol of good fortune
- Asian Favorites chef since 2018
- Unfond farewell
- Lasting effect
- "Edible" synonym of "noodle"
- Privileged
- Common casserole contents
- More than minimally reasoned
- Included electronically
- Another '70s nickname for "Schwartz"
- Overgrown
- Film star name in the Inventors Hall of Fame
- Early artistic leaf
- Qualified
- Annual ABC awards show
- Do something fatherly
- Where the current goes out
- Successor of GM in the DJIA (2009)

DOWN

- Hulking, these days
- Divine colleague of Gabriel
- Land due north of Libya
- Seasonal refresher
- Crack that might break you up
- It's just below ANT in the IOC country code list
- Allow to stand
- Firestarter skill
- Where the current goes out
- Palm product
- Overly ingratiating
- Took away (from)
- Interns' assignment
- It's spotted in corals and kitchens
- Protective housing
- Takes away (from)
- Reply to a would-be reneger
- High-maintenance
- Amassed
- St. Michael's, after renovation
- Crook or crew
- All the courses everywhere
- With a markup
- Parent of Poseidon
- Artists in a Works on Paper department
- Qualification for a comment
- Life
- What kiwifruit is, ultimately
- Work for a movie
- What it's not good to be out of
- Not mock
- Big show, briefly
- Racetrack announcer's adjective
- Expert in attestation and internal controls
- Fantasy game archer, often



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 12/3/22

PUZZLES & POSERS

Wiggle Word

...A CHALLENGING ANAGRAM WORD GAME IN WHICH KEY LETTERS ARE MISSING. BY ADDING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER TO EACH CIRCLE, WORDS FROM THE TOPIC CAN BE FORMED. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO SOLVE: 1. EACH WORMLIKE WIENIE WILL FORM A WORD IF THE CORRECT LETTER OR LETTERS ARE POSITIONED. 2. ALSO, EACH ROW OF CIRCLES WILL SPELL A FINAL KEY WORD IF THE CORRECT WIGGLE WORDS ARE UNSCRAMBLED.

TOPIC: PARTS OF A SHIP

SUDOKU | CREATORS

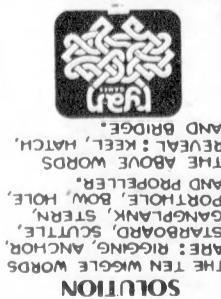
Insert numbers 1-9 in each box with every row, column and 3x3 box containing the digits just once. Difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest) RATING: GOLD

TODAY'S ANSWER

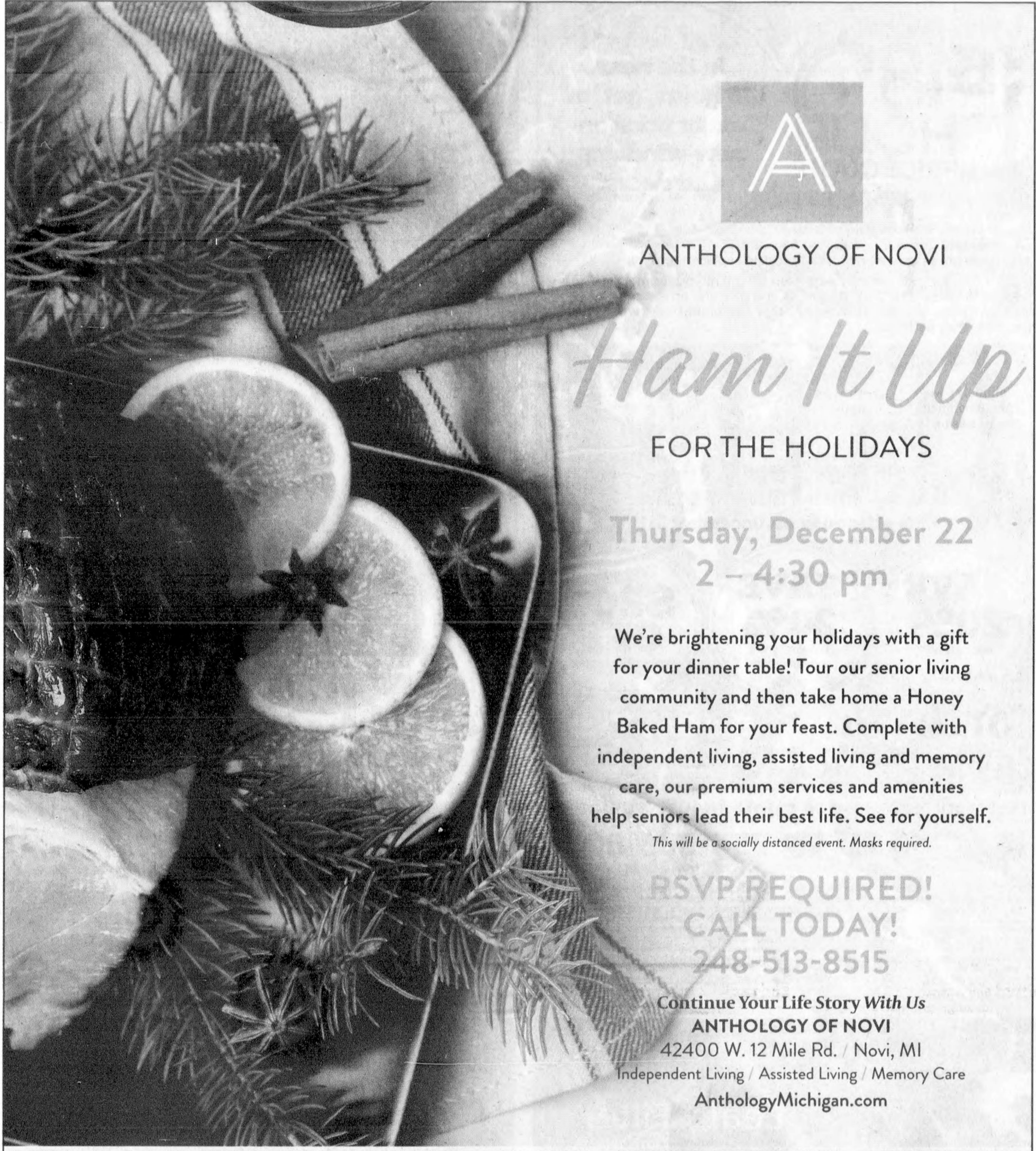
3	8	1	5	6	9	4	7	2
8	2	5	3	7	1	4	9	6
9	6	1	2	8	4	7	5	3
7	1	6	5	2	9	3	4	8
2	4	3	1	6	8	5	7	9
5	8	9	7	4	3	2	6	1
1	5	7	9	3	6	8	2	4
6	3	8	4	5	2	9	1	7
4	9	2	8	1	7	6	3	5

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

TODAY'S ANSWER



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



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SPORTS

Bloomfield Hills Marian volleyball team wins 3rd-straight state title

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It definitely wasn't the rowdiest crowd the Bloomfield Hills Marian volleyball team has had to combat over the years.

At the start of the Division 1 state championship Nov. 19, Northville's student section had 20 present. Make that 22 if you count recent Michigan Miss Volleyball winner Harper Murray and Farmington Hills Mercy outside hitter Ella Shields, who were in the front row, rooting on their Legacy Volleyball Club teammates who star for Northville.

But then a bus full of Kalamazoo

Christian students unloaded and joined the Northville faithful in the bleachers, which were set up behind the team's service line. Suddenly, that modest group turned into about 100 strong.

And, coincidentally, chief among them was recent TikTok sensation Rocco D'Angelo, a 14-year-old K-Christian student, who had gone viral after showcasing his "King Rizz" talents to 800,000 viewers on the app just two days earlier.

Marian had come back from deficits all year long.

But now it was tied one game apiece, and it was trailing, 16-8, with Northville's crowd getting louder and louder.

See VOLLEYBALL, Page 3B



The Bloomfield Hills Marian volleyball team celebrates winning the Division 1 state final Nov. 19 at Kellogg Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Northville eyes KLAA West title

Bill Khan
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

NORTHVILLE — Is this the year a girls basketball team outside of Livingston County wins the Kensington Lakes Activities Association West Division?

The league's coaches think so.

And there's validity to their preseason prediction.

Northville has all the ingredients to justify being the favorite in a division that's been dominated by Brighton, Hartland and Howell.

The Mustangs graduated only two players from a team that finished third behind co-champions Hartland and Howell in the West Division and won a district title before losing in the regional semifinals to state-ranked Wayne Memorial.

Meanwhile, there are question marks surrounding all three Livingston County teams. Hartland graduated all five starters from a state runner-up team, the Eagles and Brighton both have new head coaches, and Howell will play the first part of the season without fourth-year player Molly Deurloo.

Northville brings back nine players, including three starters. Eve Tanaskoska and Susy Heller were All-KLAA players last season, while Lauren Talcott received honorable mention.

"I guess it's nice to be recognized by the other coaches that they certainly respect our program and respect our players and know we had a successful season last year," Northville coach Todd Gudith said Monday night at the first KLAA basketball media day.

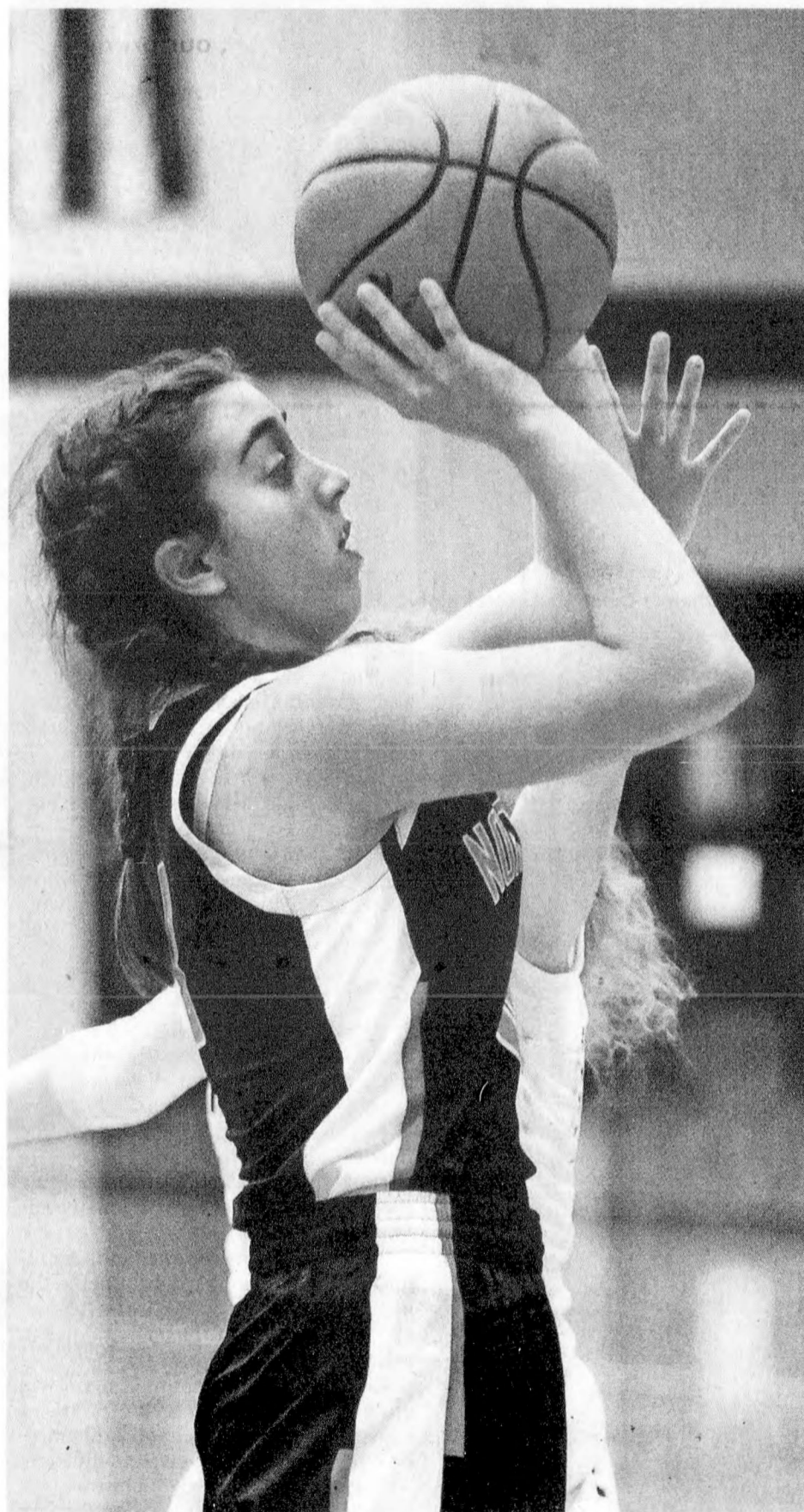
"A lot of that just has to do with the number of returners we have back. That's given us that bump in the vote, but it's one thing to be voted preseason possible division leader, it's another thing to go out there and prove it."

The Mustangs got the attention of the KLAA last season by sweeping two games against a Brighton team that reached the regional finals. The first victory against Brighton ended an 80-game winning streak in division play by the three Livingston County teams against the rest of the division.

Hartland still has a 47-game winning streak against division opponents outside the county, while Howell has won 34 in a row in such matchups.

A Livingston County team has won

See BASKETBALL, Page 7B



Eve Tanaskoska is one of nine returning players for a Northville team that is favored to win the KLAA West girls basketball championship.

GILLIS BENEDICT/LIVINGSTON DAILY

Starting football player helps Shamrocks hockey beat Brother Rice

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Detroit Catholic Central hockey team is ranked No. 1 in the Super 10 poll for a reason.

The Shamrocks are chock full of stars who will play at the next level. They're the defending Division 1 state champions. And they've won five of the past seven state titles in their division.

But all of that gets thrown out when it's time to face rival Brother Rice.

To the surprise of no one, Nov. 23 saw a packed house inside Mitchel Kiefer Memorial Rink.

Like, literally.

It seemed the fire marshal would've had a heyday handing out citations to USA Hockey Arena had it known how many folks were parking their butts on the stairs adjacent to the bleachers. Heck, some even stood on top of random piles of unused hockey boards and glass laying rinkside just so they could get a better vantage point of the action.

Both student sections made up most of the crowd. They were loud — and impressive. And even the girls from sister schools such as Wixom St. Catherine, Farmington Hills Mercy and Bloomfield Hills Marian got in on the raucousness.

CC entered as the runaway favorites, but Brother Rice was going to make it a game.

And the sixth-ranked Warriors did.

In fact, captain Andrew Marone tapped in a rebound mere seconds after a power play had ended to make it a 3-2 score just 3 minutes into the third period.

At that point, with Brother Rice making a comeback, no CC lead looked safe.

"You've got to go get the next one so you don't lose all of the momentum," CC coach Brandon Kaleniecki said he

See HOCKEY, Page 2B

Get More Sports

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC
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New high-scoring line has Stevenson hockey coach happy

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Every Michigan high school hockey fan knew what to expect out of Livonia Stevenson's top line.

Through four games, Owen Penny, Charlie Ward and Ty Heath, the Spartans' three returning all-staters, have already totaled 16 points. And that includes Penny notching two goals and a pair of assists in a 7-1 victory Nov. 30 over Northville at Eddie Edgar Ice Arena.

Penny (21-30--51) was the Spartans' top point-getter a year ago. Ward (9-26--35) was third on the team, while Heath (13-13--26) finished fifth.

Seeing those three seniors play well early on for Stevenson (3-1) isn't necessarily surprising.

But what has been a pleasant surprise is the team's second line.

Midway through Stevenson's 3-0 win over defending state champion Hartland a week earlier, coach David Mitchell said enough was enough and finally let team chemistry prevail.

He threw onto the ice sophomores Owen Hall and Andrew Clark and junior Derek Buchanan, which could be looked at as a gamble since they're three young guys with limited varsity experience.

Except the trio hasn't stopped producing points since.

Hall, for example, has had back-to-back three-point nights. He had two goals and an assist during Stevenson's 8-0 victory over Mattawan in a neutral-site matchup at Western Michigan University's Lawson Ice Arena.

And then he followed it up with a pair of first-period goals and another helper against the Mustangs. In fact, his first two goals were critical because the Spartans somehow let Northville's Nick Novak score on a breakaway just over 6 minutes into the game. Hall's line ignited the comeback for the Spartans.

The threesome shares the same birth year, so Mitchell is calling them his "06s" line.

But considering Buchanan and Clark also pitched in three points, you could call them the 06s for the number of points they're adding to the lineup each night.

"That whole line tonight was a key for us and a spark for us," Mitchell said. "They're all 06s and we put them together in the middle of the Hartland game, and they played really well together."

"When we have the Owen Penny-Ty Heath, the top line there, they (the 06s) gave us a nice 1-A. They've been sound defensively, and they've chipped in offensively, and they made some hockey plays tonight. I'm very proud of them."

You're probably wondering what gave Mitchell a hunch that the 06s would play well together, right?

That's a credit to associate coach



Livonia Stevenson's Owen Penny celebrates a goal Nov. 30 at Eddie Edgar Ice Arena. PHOTOS BY TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Livonia Stevenson's Owen Hall scores a goal.

Keith Robertson, who worked with the youngsters this past off-season. He quickly noticed the three of them had great chemistry together.

"They had some synergy in the spring and fall," Mitchell added. "They've been a really good line."

The wild part is Hall doesn't play like a sophomore.

He makes aggressive, heads-up plays, ones you'd expect from a senior

such as Penny and Heath. He throws his body around. He wins battles in the corners. And he's not afraid to throw puck after puck at the net.

While his first two goals vs. Northville were huge, his assist was even bigger.

Stevenson was set to go on the power-play. Coincidentally, Robertson, who's in charge of putting together the power-play, mixed up the lines and had Hall

take the faceoff with Penny, a forward, standing near the blue line.

Hall won the ensuing faceoff and sent a pass behind him to Penny, who lased in a 20-foot shot. That's right, Stevenson scored just 2 seconds into the power-play.

Now doing that's just unheard of, especially for a 10th-grader.

"Obviously, it feels great," Hall said. "I've been working hard at it. I've wanted this forever. To come out and do that, it feels amazing."

Of course, Hall, who had just 11 points a year ago, isn't your typical underclassman.

He grew up watching his older brother, Brendan Hall, play for Mitchell. And, in fact, Brendan has since joined the staff as an assistant. Brendan's been with the program as both a player and coach for eight seasons.

Owen probably has the skill set to play for a premier triple-A program.

But he bleeds Blue and White. There was no doubt about who he was going to play for in high school.

And Mitchell couldn't help but smile when asked about him.

"He's just a relentless guy that's, right now, playing with a lot of confidence," Mitchell said. "He had a really good year as a freshman, so he's carried that over into his sophomore year. He's growing up right before our eyes. He works very hard at his craft, so I'm just happy for him and I'm proud of him."

Follow Brandon Folsom on Twitter @folsombrandonj.

Hockey

Continued from Page 1B

told his players after Marone netted his second goal of the night.

And the least likely of players ensured the Shamrocks kept that momentum.

That was Cael Rogowski, who has been easing back into the lineup.

Rogowski was a starting offensive lineman on CC's football team. He helped the Shamrocks win a district championship against Northville and play for a regional title. Alas, they saw their run end against defending state champion Belleville in a statewide televised game on Bally Sports.

Just 62 seconds after Marone cut the Warriors' deficit to one goal, Rogowski found himself in the middle of a scrum in front of Brother Rice's net. And somehow, some way the junior poked in the momentum-saving score.

Minutes later, Nolan Galda and Landon West each pushed in goals to give CC more breathing room.

"Honestly, I was just going in off the bench and trying to get into the scrum," said Rogowski, a forward. "The puck just popped out right to me, and I tried to throw it at the net. I just got a lucky bounce there."

Rogowski had practiced with the hockey team for only the past 2 weeks. He had seen limited ice time in the Shamrocks' previous three wins during



Detroit Catholic Central's Cael Rogowski skates during a hockey game Nov. 23 at Mitchel Kiefer Memorial Rink. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

their opening week.

Playing against Brother Rice was going to be his first chance to get real playing time.

Until football season ended, he hadn't even laced up his skates since July.

"He played great today," Kaleniecki said. "You can see he's getting his legs under him. He's getting his hands back. He really provides more depth for our team, and it was a really good perfor-

mance out of him, especially with it being 2 weeks out of football season."

Now here's the crazy part.

Rogowski probably shouldn't even be playing hockey in the first place. He should be in the wrestling room helping the Shamrocks' other nationally-admired powerhouse.

If the name Rogowski sounds familiar to you, yes, you're right: Cael is the son of 1999 CC graduate Casey Rogowski, who was one of the best athletes in school history.

Casey helped the football team win state titles in 1997 and 1998.

He was a back-to-back state champion wrestler in the heavyweight division.

And he was named Michigan's Mr. Baseball before being picked in the 13th round of the 1999 MLB draft. Interestingly, he was drafted by the Chicago White Sox just three picks before the St. Louis Cardinals selected Albert Pujols.

Casey probably could've gone on to play whatever sport he wanted in life. He even had a football offer from Miami. He could've been on the 2002 Hurricanes team that won the BCS National Championship.

When Cael was born, Casey was eager to get his son into sports.

And the funniest part is the only sport the two have in common is football. But this isn't a story about a son following in his father's footsteps.

Casey wanted Cael to wrestle, and Cael even considered grappling when he was younger.

But he attended a friend's birthday

party when he was 4 or 5 years old at Eddie Edgar Ice Arena in Livonia. That was the first time he tried ice skating. And he fell in love with it instantly.

"I just really loved the sport after that," Cael said. "Hockey was something nobody has done in my family. After that party, I had my parents sign me up for a team, and it just went off from there. I fell in love with it. I did (want to try wrestling) when I was little, but it interfered with hockey so much, so I just wanted to stick with hockey."

Cael is one of several Shamrocks to join the varsity after a stint of playing triple-A hockey locally.

He said what made him fall in love with the sport when he was younger was how he could legally hit someone and not get into trouble. And he said he enjoyed showing others up when given the opportunity.

He was quick with a rebuttal when he was reminded that you can do both of those things as a wrestler.

"It's just different with hockey," he said. "I just fell in love with the sport so quickly, and I've just loved it ever since."

Cael's uncle, Ryan, another former professional MLB player with the Los Angeles Dodgers organization, is CC's varsity baseball coach. And Casey is an assistant with the program.

So, of course, Cael spends his springs playing lacrosse instead.

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

Volleyball

Continued from Page 1B

"Let's go Northville! Let's go Northville!" the K-Christian-inspired Northville crowd chanted.

Louder and louder and LOUDER. All because K-Christian's fans showed up about an hour early to its D-3 state final matchup against Pewamo-Westphalia.

But guess what happened? Marian, the two-time defending state champion, ratcheted up its intensity.

It used that crowd noise as motivation.

"We've been here, now, our third year in a row," fifth-year Marian coach Maysa Cook said. "This is our home court, and I knew we had the advantage. We had the experience of playing on this stage, in this gym. We know the way it smells, the way it feels and all of that stuff. In one of those last huddles, before we made the total turnaround, I was thinking, 'They're (Northville) going to fold under pressure. We love pressure. We thrive for it. We crave for it. We want it.' With something like that, I feel like it was a spark.

"I saw the fire in their eyes, and I knew that they were going to get it done."

Lauren Heming's serving got Marian going.

And then Wofford College signee Ella Schomer smashed back-to-back kills to knot that third set at 20 apiece.

Northville tied it with an Avry Nelson kill, but then Izzy Busignani rocketed home a kill. And then Molly Banta sailed in two well-placed aces.

"In the net! In the net!" the K-Christian-Northville cooperative shouted as Banta toed the service line again.

Nelson got one more kill on Marian, but then Busignani slammed another for herself.

And then Banta, somehow, someway, got one arm under a tough dig to set up Busignani with the set-winner.

Marian had come back from an eight-point deficit to take that third set, 25-22. And it just kept going.

It continued to feed off the crowd energy, especially once Pewamo-Westphalia's fans started shuffling into Kellogg Arena and filled in behind Marian's student section.

And, what's more, Marian looked un-



The Bloomfield Hills Marian volleyball team won the Division 1 volleyball state final Nov. 19. "I saw the fire in their eyes, and I knew that they were going to get it done," coach Maysa Cook said. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

stoppable. It jumped out to a 17-6 lead in the fourth set, and then Busignani threw up the winning kill to secure the three-peat for Marian.

Marian's Mustangs defeated the Mustangs from Northville, 3-1.

But, hey, most importantly, Marian defended its home arena.

"I thought that Marian students did a really good job of being loud, but adding that student section on both sides upped the amount of momentum that I think each team had," said setter Ava Sarafa, who's signed with Kentucky. "It didn't increase the pressure, but it also just lightens the vibe, lightens the mood and makes you really pumped up, and I think that also really fueled us a lot, having that extra support on our side."

Not that Marian needed any more fueling.

Surprisingly, the winners of the past two state champions — er, make that three now — entered as an underdog.

Northville is chalked full of Division I college players. From Miss Volleyball nominee Abby Reck (Northeastern) to

libero Taryn Rice (Northern Iowa) as well as a bunch of sophomores and juniors who will be garnering college scholarships over the next two travel seasons.

Marian had just graduated Miss Volleyball winner Ava Brizard (NC State), Sarah Sylvester (TCU) and Sophia Tredner (Brown University). And middle blocker Jannah Jones could've played in college but chose not to sign with a team.

How on earth was it going to three-peat with two or three new starters?

"This year we had a new team, we were missing a few people and we really had to battle," said Heming, the team's returning libero. "We really had to work for it. Nothing was handed to us. We have been practicing every single day, training, watching film and scouting like we wanted this. And we had to prove it to everyone else and ourselves, too. We knew that it was going to be harder, and we knew we could do it if we tried our best."

Marian still had some heavy hitters

returning, including a couple of up-and-comers Cook has been keeping a secret.

Obviously, Sarafa and Schomer, the Mustangs' two Miss Volleyball nominees this year, were atop opposing teams' scouting reports. But they got Banta back after she sat out because of the transfer rule. Eevey Oegema has been a top-notch serving specialist for a while. Heming is about as tough as you can get defensively. And Regan Sass was good enough to sign with Denison University.

Sprinkle in Busignani, one of the top sophomores in the state, outside hitter Dani Mertz and middle blocker Mckenzie Swanson, a top basketball recruit, and the Mustangs were ready to prove the haters wrong in 2022.

"With the past few years of having such power hitters, there have been a lot of doubt on us this year, and I think that fueled every single senior on this team that we know we can win this again," Schomer said. "So that was a big part of our fire in this game."

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Plymouth QB wants to make states as a wrestler

Brandon Folsom
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

You hear it all the time. To the point that it almost sounds cliché: Offensive linemen make great wrestlers.

Heck, you don't even have to look far to see that it's true.

Tackle Owen Hawley just led the Livonia Franklin football team to a Division 2 regional championship appearance. Which garnered him first-team all-state honors from the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association.

And now he's back as the captain of the Patriots' wrestling team. He's hoping to improve on his fifth-place finish as a heavyweight during last year's state championship tournament at Ford Field.

And there's a good chance he will because, well, he's Owen Hawley, one of the best athletes in the state.

But what you don't hear often is football players other than linemen or linebackers giving wrestling a shot.

How many punters or cornerbacks have you seen make the state finals mat in downtown Detroit?

That's what makes Sam Plencner's story a special one.

Yes, that Sam Plencner, the starting quarterback at Plymouth.

He used to love playing basketball. In fact, he was a pretty decent point guard until he fell out of love with the sport in middle school at Plymouth Scholars Charter Academy.

"It just wasn't my thing," the junior said during Kensington Lakes Activities Association wrestling media day Nov. 30 at Livonia Stevenson. "I was just looking for something else to do. The people I played basketball with weren't the most enjoyable. I knew wrestling was an individual sport, and I knew you controlled your own destiny with it so I was willing to try it out. ...

"I just about had it with basketball, so I asked my dad about wrestling. He said, 'As long as you know what you're getting yourself into, go right ahead.' I jumped into the wrestling room in the eighth grade, and I loved it, so I kept working at it, and that's how I started."

Plencner joined the Plymouth Can-



Plymouth coach Patrick Durocher, right, speaks during Kensington Lakes Activities Association wrestling media day Nov. 30 at Livonia Stevenson. At left is starting quarterback Sam Plencner, who is also on the wrestling team.

TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

ton Wrestling Club, known as the Wolfpack, in the eighth grade.

And the rest has been history. After one year of club, he entered high school. And he never hesitated about joining the varsity at Plymouth.

He had a rough go as a freshman, finishing 12-12 in a season that was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But in his sophomore season, things just started clicking for him.

He put together a winning record, going 26-15, and he even beat Novi freshman Carson Jones in the D-1 district tournament at 145 pounds. He pinned Carson in 1 minute, 45 seconds, to advance to Round 2 of districts where he lost to Dearborn Fordson sophomore Ajami Hussein.

But the most important part is he won a playoff match. He was just three wins away from a district title.

"His freshman year, he was pretty green, but he's a natural athlete," Plymouth coach Patrick Durocher said. "He worked like an upperclassman as a freshman. There aren't many kids who come in with that serious of an attitude as a 13-, 14-year-old kid. He was able to come in and immediately started picking out seniors to wrestle with. He's just

got a work ethic that you can't teach."

And that, right there, is the hook of this story.

The reason offensive linemen are great wrestlers is because the footwork required for pass protecting or run blocking easily translates to the mat. Sure, you need brute strength to get takedowns or reversals and to pancake the three-technique, but you also need to be light on your feet to put yourself in a position to score points.

What does running away from a 250-pound defensive end or tossing 35-yard passes help you with in wrestling? Not much.

But, usually, the QBs are the best leaders.

And Plencner's leadership has been key in Plymouth's wrestling room.

"You have to be able to lead other people and lead yourself," said Plencner, who's jumping up to 152 pounds this winter. "In wrestling, you've got to lead yourself into those dark spots. You've got to lead yourself to get better. You've got to keep a positive mindset when you're a quarterback, and you've got to keep a positive mindset when you're a wrestler, and I guess you can say in a way that correlates."

Durocher said Plencner picked out seniors to practice with from Day 1. He never shied away from bigger, stronger and more-skilled opponents.

A year ago, Plencner worked with senior Brayden Stephens, who was a regional qualifier at 135 pounds. Iron sharpened iron in that case. Plencner got Stephens ready for the postseason. Stephens helped Plencner perfect his craft as a newer wrestler.

"The two of them worked their butts off all year long last year," Durocher said. "That mentality to bust his butt in practice and be the best is certainly there. We'll see what he can do this year."

That's why Durocher has named Plencner a captain alongside Nolan McDowell and Cameron Graham.

"He's just a natural leader," Durocher said of having a quarterback in the wrestling room. "He comes in the room, and he works hard. He pushes the people around him to work harder. He's always searching out for that next challenge. It's pretty cool to see, and it's good to see leadership in that room, knowing that he'll be around next year, too. Having him here, he's pushing everybody from the top to the bottom of the lineup. And we need kids like that."

It's unlikely Plencner will win an individual state championship this year, especially with national powerhouse Detroit Catholic Central always being in the Wildcats' regional.

But that's OK. His goal is to make it to states for the first time and give it his best shot.

To be fair, just down Joy Road is Plymouth Christian Academy senior Noah Etnyre, who quarterbacked the Lutheran Westland co-op football team to a Michigan Independent Athletic Conference championship in 2021 and then went on to become a D-4 state runner-up at 171 pounds for the Warriors in early 2022.

Plencner isn't the first QB to try wrestling, nor will he be the last, even if it is rare to see a signal caller in a singlet.

But he's hoping to prove the cliché wrong. You don't need to be a lineman to have success on the mat.

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



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Wayne Memorial's next nominee for Miss Basketball should be Mayla Ham

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Wayne Memorial girls basketball coach Jarvis Mitchell is tired of the politics. Especially after last season's slight at the Breslin Center.

The Zebras have gone to two-straight Division 1 state semifinals. In the history of the Kensington Lakes Activities Association, only 10 teams in the league have even made it that far in the playoffs. And four of those teams were Mitchell's.

Yet, there they were last March at Michigan State, with the lights dimmed so the entire crowd could watch the Michigan High School Athletic Association's hype video ahead of Wayne's final-four matchup with Hartland.

As reported by Hometown Life months ago, highlight after highlight was shown on the video board, from eventual state champions West Bloomfield and Ypsilanti Arbor Prep to Detroit Edison.

Even Hartland, another KLAAs team, had two separate clips shown during the brief montage.

But there were no highlights of Wayne, which had a 23-2 record entering that weekend. Up until that point, their only blemishes were losses to Arbor Prep and four-star Mya Petticord in the season opener and Howell during the conference tournament.

Surely that effort was good enough to warrant a highlight of point guard Colleena Bryant whipping a no-look pass at Little Caesars Arena or Long Beach State signee Davai Matthews grabbing rebound after rebound during their regional championship against Brighton.

Instead, the Zebras sat there in disgust as Hartland's fans got to whoo during their team's highlights and the Wayne fans got nothing. If you think that didn't impact Wayne's players mentally to start the game, think again.

It's not the first time the Zebras have been overlooked under Mitchell's leadership. And it likely won't be the last.

That's why the ninth-year coach isn't holding his breath when it comes to Michigan's Miss Basketball award.

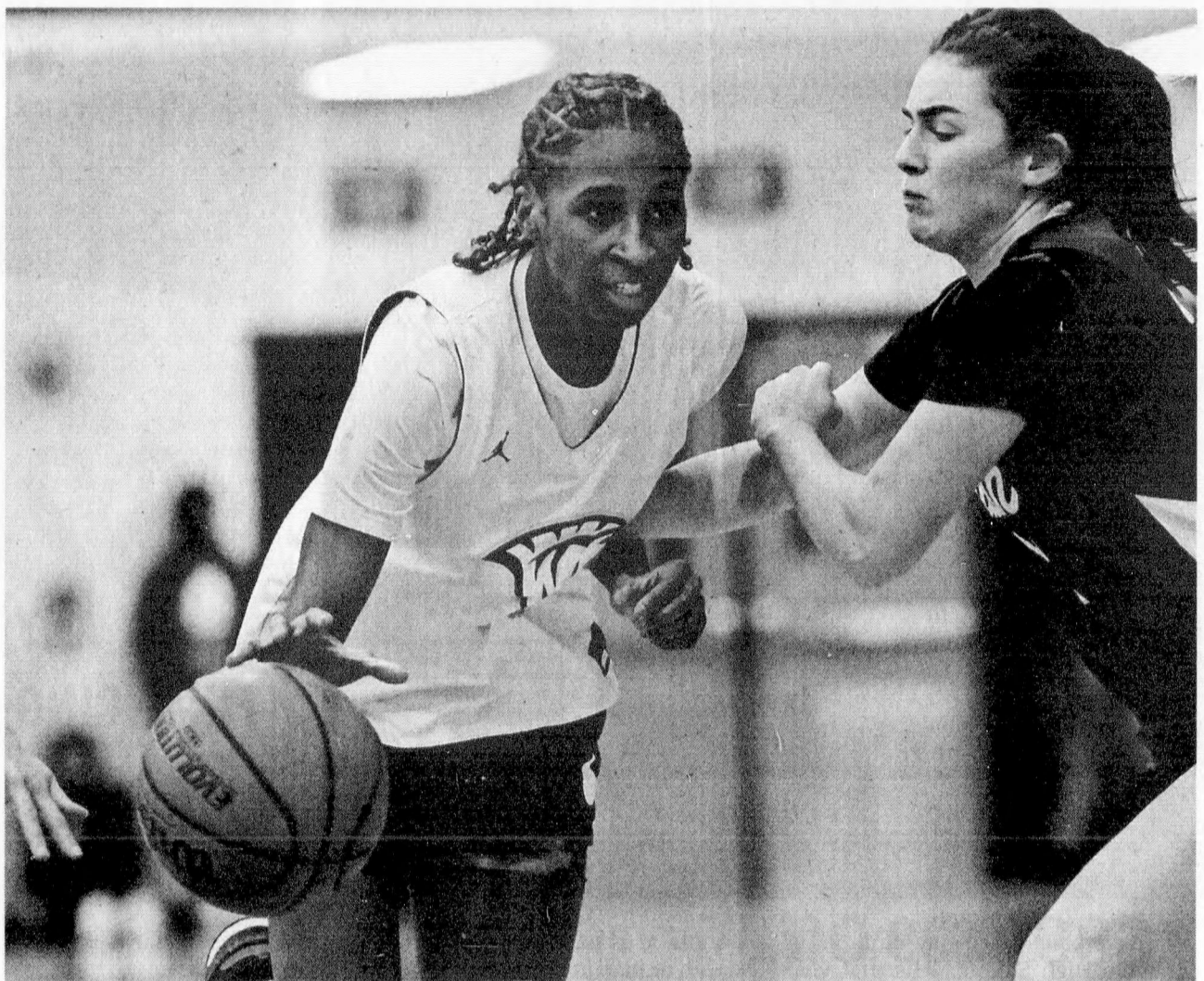
This year, more than any year in recent history, there are no clear-cut, runaway candidates for the honor. It's completely up in the air as the season kicks off.

There's only one girl, East Grand Rapids guard Macy Brown, a four-star headed to Michigan, in ESPN's top 100 rankings. And Prep Girls Hoops' rankings aren't littered with metro Detroit players like in years past. In fact, there are only three locals in its top-10 rankings, and West Bloomfield's Sydney Hendrix is ranked the highest at No. 8.

Wayne has had two Miss Basketball nominees in the past five years (though it should have had a third, and we'll talk about that later), and senior Mayla Ham could be the Zebras' first winner at the end of the season.

That is, of course, the rest of the state actually pays attention to her team this time.

"It's going to be hard to get her on the panel as one of



Wayne Memorial's Mayla Ham dribbles in a scrimmage against Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard on Nov. 23. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

the five finalists, even though Mayla's resume is far better than anybody's else's resume," said Mitchell, who has a 136-48 career record leading the Zebras. "If you took Mayla's resume and took her name off it, she'd be far ahead of the other kids. But it's going to have Wayne Memorial next to the name, so they're going to be like..."

That was a side-eye expression Mitchell made to finish that sentence at KLAAs basketball media day Nov. 28.

But he's not wrong.

Forget about Ham's skillset as a shooting guard, which makes her, according to Prep Girls Hoop, the No. 10-ranked player in the state. Forget that she's signed to play for Georgetown in the Big East. Forget her stats. Forget her leadership ability. Forget almost all of it.

Just look at her wins and losses.

Should Ham make the finalist cut, no player will likely have as many wins as her.

She's 59-11 as she enters her fourth year in Mitchell's lineup. She's expected to add another 20 or so to that tally.

"If you break it down, as far as winning, she'll be the winningest candidate," Mitchell added. "Macy Brown has never been out of regionals. Faith Carson (a Ohio State commit) from Buchanan, she's never been out of districts. Mayla has been to the final four two times. And the one time we lost (in the regional semifinal to Saline in 2020), nobody went to the final four that year because it was the COVID year. And there's a good chance she'll go this year, too."

Another thing to look at is Ham's numbers.

Mitchell doesn't believe in pouring it on. He prides himself on pulling his starters by halftime or early in the third quarter so his opponents don't get running-clock mercies put on them.

And with Ham playing about 16 or so minutes per game, she still averaged 14.2 points and 9.7 rebounds a year ago.

She could get that double-double average if Mitchell wanted her to have it. Heck, she could average a triple-double.

"Meanwhile, you've got teams playing their superstar crazy minutes to get crazy stats, letting their kids play to get 42 or 50 points," Mitchell added. "You ever see these scores? You've got teams beating people, 80-5. If you look at a Wayne Memorial score, you'll never see us scoring 60 points. We're just not going to beat teams like that. I am merciful because I'm only playing Ham, Terry and Clegg for two and a half quarters in the KLAAs, at best. But still, my kids get slighted."

Ain't that the truth?

Purdue senior Jeanae Terry is currently one of the best point guards in the Big Ten. She leads the league in assists and is second in rebounds. In fact, she is three spots ahead of Minnesota forward Alanna Micheaux in rebounding.

Mitchell coached both of those girls at Wayne, and Micheaux was one of Mitchell's two Miss Basketball nominees, with St. Louis guard Camree' Clegg being the other.

Terry likely should've been a nominee when she was in high school, but Mitchell was told she missed the cut because the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan didn't want voters to choose between two different Detroit-area players, as Detroit Edison's Rick-ea Jackson, who won the award in a landslide, was also nominated.

That's why he wants the politics to end with Ham.

If a player can play, judge them on that. Not location, commitment status or any other obscure benchmark.

Ham's not one to tout how great she is. In fact, when asked to describe her greatest moments as a player, she doesn't mention her career-high points or the game-winning shots in the playoffs. She likes to point out how she had 18 rebounds in a game as a freshman.

She's actually not even the highest-ranked player on her team. That would be guard Paris Bass, who's

Folsom's top 25 (or close to it) local girls basketball players

1. Mayla Ham, senior, Wayne Memorial (Georgetown) (Preseason Player of the Year)
2. Isis Musah-Johnson, sophomore, Redford Westfield Prep
3. McKenzie Swanson, junior, Bloomfield Hills Marian
4. Colleena Bryant, sophomore, Wayne Memorial
5. Paris Bass, senior, Wayne Memorial (North Dakota)
6. Madison Morson, junior, Salem
7. Jayla Jackson, freshman, Detroit Country Day
8. Shanya Reid, senior, Redford Westfield Prep
9. Yasmy Palmer, junior, Cranbrook
- 10a. Anna Lissan, junior, South Lyon East
- 10b. Maya White, senior, Farmington Hills Mercy
11. Morganne Houk, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
12. Layla Marshall, junior, Redford Westfield Prep
13. Aizlyn Albanese, sophomore, Farmington Hills Mercy
14. Jaidyn Elam, junior, Detroit Country Day
15. Kaitlyn Sanders, senior, Birmingham Groves
16. Sela Leffler, senior, North Farmington
17. Shahd Bakkar, senior, Salem
18. Lauren Smiley, senior, Farmington Hills Mercy
19. Meghan McCarthy, senior, Plymouth
20. Eve Tanaskoska, senior, Northville
21. Siena McNitt, senior, Garden City
22. Aysia Yokely, senior, Detroit Country Day
23. Madison Yeager, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
24. Hailey Maulbetsch, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
- 25a. Ari'Yana Wiggins, sophomore, Detroit Country Day
- 25b. Diavian (Dee) Robinson, sophomore, Livonia Clarenceville
- 25c. Rachel Balhorn, sophomore, Livonia Churchill
- 25d. Sydney Brown, senior, Northville
- 25e. Naiya Krispin, freshman, Detroit Country Day

(Yes, I can get away with placing 30 players in my top 25.)

signed with North Dakota and is ranked one spot ahead of her on Prep Girls Hoops' rankings.

But is Ham the best in the state?

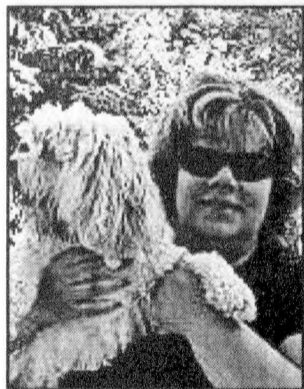
"Absolutely, yes," the senior said. "(Because of) how hard I play all the time. I feel like I rebound well. I'm an efficient scorer. I can shoot well. And leadership, too. Leadership on my team and with my teammates, everything comes together the right way (with my game)."

Assuming Ham stays injury free, she should be a finalist for the Miss Basketball honor, especially with how talented the Zebras are expected to be in 2022-23. Will she win it? Who knows? But there are no politics involved when it comes to winning playoff games. So, at the very least, it's a good bet she'll be on the highlight reel shown at the Breslin Center in March.

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

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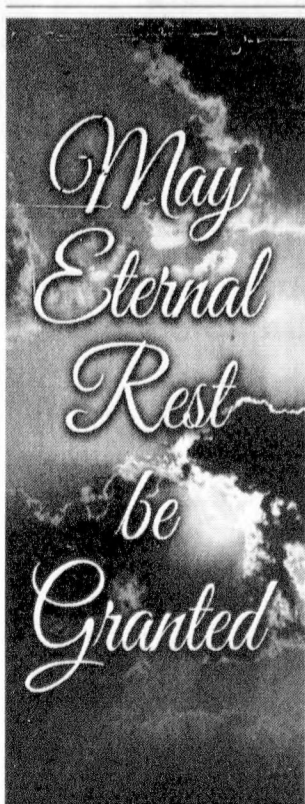


Susan "Kim" Doyle

NORTHVILLE TWP.
- Passed away on Dec. 1, 2022, at the age of 62. Beloved ex-wife of John. Loving mother of Ian (Tim Champagne) Doyle and the late Sarah Olivia "Everett" Doyle. Dear sister of Leslie Tromans and Terri Spence. Services were held at L.J. Griffin Funeral Home, Northrop-Sassaman Chapel, 19091 Northville Rd. (at 7 Mi.) on Mon. Dec. 5. She was laid to rest at Rural Hill Cemetery. Share a "Memorial Tribute" with the family at griffinfuneralhome.com



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One of Reddy's top assistants at Canton takes over rival Plymouth

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Canton boys basketball coach Jimmy Reddy lost one of his top assistants to rival Plymouth.

So, naturally, that means lunchtime inside the physical education office at Centennial Middle School in South Lyon is about to be much more awkward starting this winter.

Wait, what does that even mean? It's true.

Reddy is actually a physical education teacher with South Lyon Schools, despite being a Canton lifer. He played basketball for the Chiefs, he graduated from the high school in 2000 and he's been the varsity coach since 2009. In fact, he's been there so long, he won his 200th game on Canton's bench in 2021-22.

But working in a different district proved to be a boon for him when he needed a new assistant four years ago.

He tabbed Andrew Meeuwsen, another physical education teacher at Centennial, as Canton's freshmen coach. And Meeuwsen, who graduated from Zeeland East, just west of Grand Rapids, made the most of the opportunity.

"He did a lot for us," Reddy said at Kensington Lakes Activities Association basketball media day Nov. 27 at Northville High School. "His first year with us, he was the freshmen coach. The last three, he was the JV head coach. When he became the JV head coach, he started to do a lot of the varsity work in terms of preparation and film work, statting games for opponents and putting together scouting reports with me. "When he started digging in and doing all of that, he started to understand what it takes to run a program. I could see that this was something that he wanted to do. He was putting in a lot of time into it. And he did a lot for us." As tough as it was for Reddy to see

Meeuwsen leave, he had no problem writing recommendation emails and making a few phone calls to ensure one of his closest friends got a head coaching gig.

Meeuwsen actually interviewed for the vacancy at South Lyon, but he finished runner-up to new Lions coach Jeff Schmitz.

But when Mike Soukup stepped down as Plymouth's coach shortly afterward, it was a no-brainer for Meeuwsen to apply for that opening.

Despite Meeuwsen growing up on the west side, he spent enough time learning under Reddy to realize just how big coaching at the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park could be. So he applied for the job, and he got it.

Now a pair of coworkers who share an office at a middle school in South Lyon are opposing coaches in one of the most heated rivalries in Michigan.

"He's going to know what the rivalry is actually going to feel like now because he came from the west side of the state," Reddy said. "I grew up in this. I went to Canton. It was just Canton and Salem when I was a kid. The rivalry is intense, and he's in it now. (Working together) is definitely unique. We play against each other on a Tuesday night for the first time (on Jan. 17), and then we're going to see each other at school that Wednesday."

Canton, 16-6 a year ago, should have the advantage in the matchup.

The Chiefs return three starters from last season in Dante Favor, Omar Suleiman (Lake Superior State signee) and Caleb Williams. They graduated two key contributors from their KLAA-West championship team in Cole Vickers (Ferris State) and Lake McIntosh (Lawrence Tech), but they do bring back their top bench player in Devon Pettus.

Plymouth returns just two starters from their 7-14 campaign under Soukup. That includes center Kelvin Amoako, arguably one of the highest risers on the recruiting trail this past summer, and

sharpshooter Bryce Garbacz.

Regardless of which team is favored going into the rivalry, Meeuwsen is excited to finally put what he's learned from Reddy to the test as a first-time varsity coach.

"I was there for four years, so I learned a lot," he said. "I learned how to do things the right way when it comes to starting a program, running practices, setting summer schedules and fall league schedules and doing things to get kids excited about basketball and believing in themselves. I learned a lot from Reddy. And wherever you go, you've got to learn and pick up things from everyone. Reddy has been doing this a long time, and he's won a lot of games, so I've been writing a lot of things down and taking notes."

Over the years, Reddy and Meeuwsen have spent downtime throughout the workday at Centennial talking about basketball strategies, upcoming opponents and ways to keep Canton's program flourishing.

Obviously, that's going to change with Meeuwsen running his own program now.

"The last four years, it's obviously been a lot of talk about Canton," Meeuwsen added. "In the future, it'll probably be a little less talking about basketball and strategy together because we're going to keep those cards close to our chest, but it'll be interesting because we're both pretty competitive guys. The days we play each other, we probably won't be having lunch together. We normally hang out a lot in the PE office, but we'll likely be more focused on getting our teams ready to play each other."

Meeuwsen will definitely be placing a premium on beating his former mentor.

But, first, he's got other unfinished business to take care of. South Lyon Schools, his employer, didn't pick him to coach at South Lyon High. He can prove them wrong when Plymouth opens the season on Dec. 6 against the Lions.

Folsom's top 25 (or close to it) local boys basketball players

- 1a. Curtis Williams, senior, Brother Rice (Louisville) (Co-Preseason Player of the Year)
 - 1b. John Blackwell, senior, Brother Rice (Wisconsin) (Co-Preseason Player of the Year)
 - 1c. Ryan Hurt, senior, North Farmington (Co-Preseason Player of the Year) (Yes, I can get away with this. It's my list, not yours)
 4. Noah Adamczyk, senior, Bloomfield Hills
 5. TJ Nadeau, junior, Detroit Catholic Central
 6. Xavier Thomas, senior, Brother Rice (Toledo)
 7. Jordan Scott, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
 8. Dante Favor, senior, Canton
 9. Kelvin Amoako, senior, Plymouth
 - 10a. Landon Williams, junior, North Farmington
 - 10b. Tyler Spratt, junior North Farmington
 12. Uchenna Amene, junior, Detroit Catholic Central
 13. Carlos Adamson, junior, Northville
 14. Sam Lewis, senior, Milford
 15. Lee Hardy, senior, North Farmington
 16. Keithan Gilmore, junior, Brother Rice
 17. DJ Lee, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 18. Omar Suleiman, senior, Canton (Lake Superior State)
 19. Warren Marshall, junior, Brother Rice
 20. Prince Jackson, senior, North Farmington
 21. Te'John McGowan, senior, Novi
 22. Caleb Williams, junior, Canton
 23. Bryce Garbacz, senior, Plymouth
 24. Nate Pierson, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
 - 25a. Mark Stein, junior, Livonia Stevenson
 - 25b. Pryor Reynolds, senior, Salem
 - 25c. Jake Fannon, senior, South Lyon East
- (Yes, I can get away with placing 28 players in my top 25.)



Mary Copple leads a Brighton team that is predicted to finish second in the KLAA West girls basketball race behind Northville. GILLIS BENEDICT/LIVINGSTON DAILY

Basketball

Continued from Page 1B

the KLAA West in its various alignments since the league's formation in 2008-09. The only outsider to get a piece of the title was Grand Blanc, which shared the 2010-II championship with Hartland.

"The Livingston County teams have kind of dominated the KLAA West since the get-go," Gudith said. "We've been trying to knock on that door and get our foot in and kind of be in the picture ourselves."

Howell coach Tim Olszewski began to see the rest of the division rise up last season when his Highlanders had hard-fought victories over Salem and Northville.

"Definitely, Salem is better than I think people are giving them credit for," Olszewski said. "Northville has definitely improved a lot. You always have the returning Brighton and Hartland teams

and us. So, the depth is definitely increased a little bit, like it should be. It'll probably be more competitive instead of just the three teams."

Following Northville in the coaches' poll, in order, are Brighton, Hartland, Howell, Salem, Canton, Plymouth and Novi.

Salem returns two All-KLAA players in Shahd Bakkar and Madison Morson, as well as honorable mention selection Ashley Kopacko, from a team that was fifth at 5-9. The Rocks started 4-0 last season before a close loss to Howell triggered a five-game losing streak.

"I'm really looking forward to this team," Salem coach Rodrick Wells said. "I enjoy coaching against the great coaches in our league; it's a challenge. Salem, we're coming; we're coming. Just letting you know."

KLAA teams will begin league play Dec. 22 before taking Christmas break and resuming the schedule in earnest Jan. 6. Howell will play at Hartland in the league opener.

Knights of Columbus to host free throw championship in South Lyon

Courtesy of Knights of Columbus

All boys and girls ages 9 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2023 Knights of Columbus International Free Throw Championship. The local competition will be held 11 a.m. Jan. 14 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in South Lyon.

The local competition will be hosted by the Father Edmund Battersby Council 7586 of Saint Joseph Church.

The International Free Throw Championship is sponsored annually by the K of C with winners progressing through the local, district, and state-level competitions. International champions are announced by the K of C International headquarters based on scores from the state-level competi-

tion. All boys and girls 9 to 14 years old are eligible to participate and will compete in their respective age divisions.

All contestants on the local level are recognized for their participation in this event. Participants will be required to furnish proof of age and written parental consent.

For entry forms contact Craig Lukowski, a representative of the Knights of Columbus, at 734-272-9961.

The Knights of Columbus is an international, Catholic, family, fraternal, service organization with over 2 million members in more than 17,000 local councils. The Knights donate their time to charitable and benevolent causes sponsoring programs to benefit their church, councils, communities, families, and youth.

Community Worship

BRIGHTON	HIGHLAND	NOVI
HOLY SPIRIT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL www.hsccc.net at the corner of Winans Lake & Musch Rd. 810-231-9199 Fr. John Rocus, Pastor Weekend Liturgies Saturday 4:00 p.m. Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Please visit our Shrine of Our Lady and Book & Gift Shop!	Church of the Holy Spirit 3700 Harvey Lake Rd, Highland Saturday Mass 5PM, Sunday Mass 9 & 11AM 248-687-5364 HolySpiritHighland.com The Holy Spirit is Here - Come Home All are Welcome!	Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church 41415 W Nine Mile Rd • Novi, MI 48375 248-349-0565 Divine Service on Sundays at 10am Sunday School & Adult Bible Class 8:45am Rev. Thomas Schroeder wetsnow@aol.com Come 2nd worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!
NORTHVILLE	SOUTH LYON	WHITMORE LAKE
United (248) 349-1144 777 West 8 Mile Road (8 Mile and Taft Road) Northville, Michigan Worship Times: September - May 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. Memorial Day - Labor Day 10:00 a.m. Rev. Marsha M. Worsley, Lead Pastor www.lumccnorthville.org	'the WAY' - a ministry of Hope Lutheran Church Worship @Abbey Park 28413 Abbey Lane New Hudson, MI Sunday @ 10am, 248-553-7170 www.hope-lutheran-church.com Rev. Thomas Scherger	FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH 10774 Nine Mile Road Rev. M. Lee Taylor • 449-2582 Sunday School, 9:45 a.m. Worship, 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Evening, 7:00 p.m.
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