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SPORTS, 1B

NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2022 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Asbestos removal will cost \$200K extra at old Seven Mile hospital site

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The removal of more asbestos than originally expected will increase costs for demolishing the former psychiatric hospital on Seven Mile.

The additional asbestos found in several of the remaining buildings on the Northville Township site destined to become Legacy Park prompted the contractor to return to the township and ask for additional funds.

"You don't know what's between the floors until you start tearing the building apart," said Bob Belair, the township's director of public services. "It is a legitimate request."

The proposal, taken up by the township board of trustees during its Dec. 15 meeting, would allocate an additional \$202,140 to the contractor, Asbestos Abatement, Inc., for the removal of more asbestos from the five remaining buildings on the site. Original documents used a standard of three feet of asbestos per window, though work revealed many of the remaining 1,374 windows had significantly more asbestos than that.

The demolition is part of a plan approved earlier this year by the board of trustees to remove buildings on the site. The demolition of the former psychiatric hospital will lead to the creation of a new township park, which plans to have amenities such as hiking trails and bicycle paths. The buildings on the property — which closed as a psychiatric hospital in 2003 — have become an attraction for vandals and arsonists over the years since the closure.

Belair said several buildings have been removed in the past year, with five more buildings left. He said the work is 60% to 70% complete.

Questions over contract language

The matter of asking for more funding did give Treasurer Jason Rhines some pause. He said in reviewing the contract, language indicated the agreement should cover all costs associated with the demolition and the additional funds should not be awarded.

See ASBESTOS, Page 5A

Huron Valley introduces warm, fuzzy approach to school safety



Brynn Dudley, a Milford High School student, pets Rosie, a black Labrador retriever trained by Elite Detection.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

District welcomes bomb-sniffing Labrador retriever Rosie

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Forget metal detectors.

Huron Valley is taking a softer approach to keeping students and staff safe in an era of school shootings and bomb threats.

Rosie, a black Labrador retriever, is

the school district's new tail-wagging, hand-nuzzling, explosives-sniffing safety feature. She sauntered down the hallway of Milford High School on Dec. 13, drawing smiles and pets from the kids she protects.

"She makes me feel safer," Brynn Dudley, an MHS junior, said as she knelt to cuddle the dog. "Just petting her makes me feel comforted."

The 2-year-old dog is creating a similar effect at Lakeland High School, as well as at the International Academy and Harbor High School. She began rotating full days at the schools Dec. 5 after district officials agreed on a contract with Elite Detection K-9 at a cost of up to \$85,000 for the year.

See SAFETY, Page 4A

Novi golf course ownership seeks liquor license for new restaurant



The Maples Golf Club, now under new ownership, seeks to add a liquor license to its new restaurant, though the Novi City Council has delayed a decision until the restaurant is closer to opening.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A restaurant could return to a north Novi golf course sometime in 2023.

Ownership of the Maples Golf Club, located off 14 Mile between Novi Road and Welch, changed hands earlier this year. The new ownership has asked the city to grant it a liquor license for a restaurant planned at the site. City Council took up the proposal Dec. 19.

"There is a need for this, that's why I believe the city approved this to the first original owner. And we want to get it right," said Salam Elia, an attorney representing the new ownership of the property. "And hopefully, third time's a charm."

The property was built in the early 1990s. A restaurant that served alcohol formerly occupied the building, though it closed several years ago. The new ownership wants to bring back the restaurant and keep the nine-hole golf course open.

Several members of the city council, while excited at the idea of bringing new life to the property, wanted to delay awarding of liquor license. Mayor Bob Gatt said he wanted to wait until the restaurant was closer to opening, which isn't expected until the spring.

"In my humble opinion, we're jumping the gun a little bit," he said. "The kitchen equipment is very important. We just need more time. You need to do

See LICENSE, Page 5A

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Plans move forward for Northville Twp. skatepark

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A new place to perfect that kick flip will become a reality in 2023 in Northville Township.

The proposed skatepark planned for Millennium Park is moving forward after funding for the park was secured through both public and private means. The park, an initiative launched after the death of North-

ville Township resident and skateboarder Dominic Duhn in 2020, will now move into an information-gathering phase.

"The process has worked in making sure multiple interests are being met, which will ultimately create a fantastic skatepark for the community," said Todd Mutchler, Northville Township manager.

That next phase will include setting up public meetings and a Facebook page to gather input from the community about what types of elements the skatepark should include. Those meetings and communication channels are expected to launch sometime in late winter/early spring. Mutchler said they hope to break ground on the project in the spring and complete it later in the year.

The park will don the name Unity Park. The township board of trustees approved the placing of a sign at the proposed site on Dec. 15.

The project is expected to cost roughly \$600,000. Most of that funding is coming from private donations; \$150,000 will come from Northville Township, as well as an allocation the township receives from the Wayne County Parks millage. A small amount also is coming from the City of Northville's county parks millage allocation.

California-based Spohn Ranch will work with the township in developing the skatepark. That's the same company that assisted Milford in creating its skatepark, which opened in 2020. That park is built to accommodate skateboards, scooters, BMX bicycles and roller skates.

"They're really a recognized expert in the area," Mutchler said. "They're very familiar with how to achieve the best results possible."

Part of the skatepark will also include a memorial to Duhn, who was struck by a car and killed while skateboarding in 2020 along Sheldon Road between Five Mile and Six Mile. His death inspired the idea for the skatepark, which quickly grew into a big and feasible community project.

"This project started off to honor our son, Dominic, and then quickly expanded into helping our youth with all the positive benefits skateboarding offers," Gabriella Duhn, Dominic's mother and champion of the project, said in a statement. "The outpouring of endorsements and financial support from the community and beyond to make this project a reality is so greatly appreciated and will forever be remembered."

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

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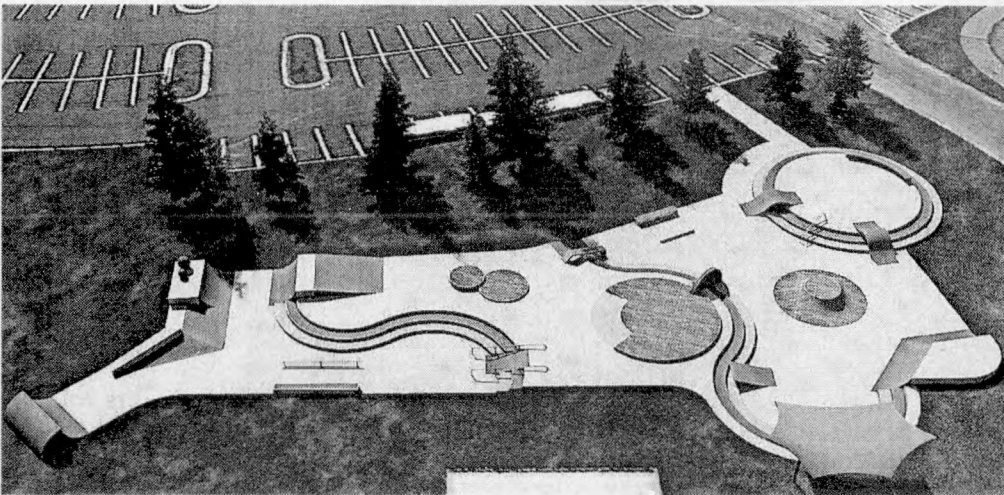
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An early-stage rendering of the proposed Northville Township skatepark from 2021. Actual plans will be hammered out in the coming year after community input is received. A groundbreaking is expected to take place in the spring.

COURTESY OF SPOHN RANCH

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NORTHVILLE

The City of Northville Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing to receive public input on the following variance from the City of Northville Zoning Ordinance. The variance will be considered for premises zoned R-1B, First Density Residential District on property located at 916 Novi St., Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-22-34-428-018. The applicant is seeking a variance to build a roof over their front porch slab in the front yard setback. The variance needed is approximately 9.5 feet from the front yard requirement in Sections 3.04 and 15.01. Also, the existing house is non-conforming per Section 22.01, and the project will require expansion of a non-conformity.

The public hearing will be held on February 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the City of Northville Municipal Building - Council Chambers, 215 W. Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167, 248-449-9902. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the variance requests.

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

Written comments to the BZA pertaining to the proposed variance request must be submitted no later than 4:30pm, January 31, 2023 to the City Clerk at the above address, or using the City Hall drop box, or emailed to dmassa@ci.northville.mi.us.

RYAN MCKINDLES, CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Publish: December 29, 2022

LO-0008190381 347.5

Novi Community School District Meadows PA and Classroom AV Bid Package No. 8 Novi, Michigan

IDS Project No. 19244-1000 BP08

SECTION 00 1113 - ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

DATE: December 19, 2022

PROJECT: Novi Community School District
Meadows PA Classroom AV
Bid Package No. 8
Novi, Michigan

OWNER: Novi Community School District
25345 Taft Road
Novi, Michigan 48374

ENGINEERING/TECHNOLOGY DESIGNER: Integrated Design Solutions, LLC Architecture, Engineering, Interiors & Technology 1441 W. Long Lake, Suite 200 Troy, MI 48098 (248)823-2100 (248)823-2200 fax

BIDS RECEIVED: Until 2:00 PM local time on Friday, January 27, 2023, the Owner will receive sealed Bids for the work as set forth in the Bidding Documents at:

Attention: Jeff Mozdierz
Novi Community School District
25345 Taft Road
Novi, Michigan 48374

At which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. A bid tabulation summary will be available.

The Bidding Documents will be on file on and after December 19, 2022, and may be examined at the following locations during regular business hours, Monday through Friday.

The offices of: Integrated Design Solutions, LLC, 1441 W Long Lake, Suite 200, Troy, MI 48098, (248) 823-2100.

The Technology Designer will furnish electronic documents to the bidders. The documents may be downloaded from <http://cloud.ids-troy.com/bids/bids/novi/MeadowsAV>. Bidders are responsible to check the website from time to time to verify they have all addenda, requests for information and other documents related to the Bid.

All bids must include an Iran Sanctions Affidavit of Compliance.

Each bid must be accompanied by a sworn and notarized Familial Relationship Disclosure Statement. The Board of Education will not accept a Bid that does not include this sworn and notarized disclosure statement.

A pre-bid conference is scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 2:00 PM local time. Bidders shall meet at the Novi Educational Services Building, 25345 Taft Road, Novi, Michigan 48374.

Additional building walk-throughs, if required, shall be coordinated with the Engineer/Technology Designer.

END OF ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Publish: December 29, 2022

LO-0008190377 347.5

RH building plans get makeover in Birmingham

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

Proposed changes to the new RH building under construction on the south end of downtown Birmingham will mark a unique look not seen anywhere else in the world.

Plans submitted to the city's planning board show a revision of what the outside of the building at 300-394 S. Old Woodward Ave. will look like.

Gone is the former look, originally approved by the board last year. Now, the building will sport tan-colored bricks that come from Denmark, a new look in the RH portfolio.

The Birmingham building, architect Victor Saroki said, will be the



The RH construction site on South Old Woodward Avenue in downtown Birmingham. The building plans have recently changed, which caused a pause in the work for the new four-story showroom.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

first RH on the planet with this new look.

"The previous building is and was based on many of the other RHs that were new galleries, not necessarily historic buildings but new galleries," he said. "But now, this is going to be the new direction for RH, not just for Birmingham."

"This is going to be the first one for the country and the world."

The final site plan was reviewed and unanimously approved by the board during its Dec. 14 meeting at Birmingham City Hall. The number of lights on the rooftop, which will support a dining area, was reduced, said city planner Nicholas Dupuis.

The interior of the building will remain the same. The past rezoning for the RH site, which took the property from D-3 to D-4, does not need changing either, Dupuis said. Also not affected are the complementary plans for the nearby four-story building planned at 294 E. Brown, which was reviewed by the planning board earlier this spring.

Other RH locations or outlets are in nearby Troy and Bloomfield Township. However, RH's Birmingham project would bring a new RH stand-

alone gallery to Oakland County, the first of its kind in Michigan. Once completed, it's expected to stand four stories tall and be filled with plenty of home furnishings available to peruse and order for customers.

Part of the redesign will reduce the amount of glass glazing to below the city's 70% threshold requirement, meaning the project would need to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a variance to have the new plan enacted. Saroki said given the building's design, he hopes the city approves such a variance with the design.

"I really believe, and RH believes, that we're meeting the spirit of the ordinance," he said.

Construction continues on the site, though it was halted after the new plans were submitted. With the recommendation of approval, the plans now go to the city commission for its review.

Planning board members spoke in favor of the changes, including board chairman Scott Clein, who did sit in on the discussions after previously recusing himself due to a potential conflict of interest that he said no longer exists.

Notice to Creditors TO ALL CREDITORS:

The Settlor, PENELOPE G. McPHEE, who lived at 41215 Fox Run Road, Novi, Michigan 48377, died October 14, 2022. There is no personal representative of the settlor's estate to whom Letters of Administration have been issued.

Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the McPhee Family Trust dated October 13, 1999, as amended, will be forever barred unless presented to Renee M. Szobonya, Trustee, within four months after the date of publication.

Notice is further given that the Trust will thereafter be assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it.

Date: December 15, 2022

Renee M. Szobonya P57265
Attorney
800 W. Grand River
Brighton, MI 48116
(810)494-7106

Renee M. Szobonya
Trustee
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Publish: December 29, 2022

LO-0008190375 138

Livonia explores ways to control election costs

Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

According to Livonia Clerk Susan Nash, "there's no such thing as a small election anymore."

More people than ever are voting, she said, because of greater access to absentee ballots approved by Michigan voters in 2018 and, in November, voters said yes to Proposal 2's early-voting measure.

Livonia has seen increased voter participation in recent years, mostly due to absentee ballots. Between 2017 and 2021, participation in city council elections rose by about 8,500 voters.

There are challenges that come with more voters and time to vote, and Livonia City Council is already looking at ways to deal with likely consequences that include increased wage costs for election workers and more demanding workloads.

"Elections are very expensive to run, and they're getting more expensive," Council Vice President Laura Toy said. "We need to look at that whole gamut."

Staffing costs are largest concern

According to Nash, Proposal 2's passage will lead to greater staff costs. She notes the nine days of early voting and added drop boxes for absentee ballots that were included in the proposal will result in more working hours for her office.

"The main thing with Prop. 2 is the nine days of early voting," Nash said. "That is nine days of having something open somewhere, and you're paying staff."

She estimates the added cost for the city could be \$50,000, "but it could be considerably higher." Right now, Livonia spends about \$100,000 per election.

An earlier presidential primary in February, which Michigan is being considered for, also would result in higher staffing expenses during a clerk's preparation period.

"The other thing is if the state changes the date of the presidential primary - which it appears it will - and moves to February," Nash said. "That sounds great to everybody, but a clerk



Democrats and Republicans inspect ballots at the Livonia Senior Center during the November 2022 election.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

knows that means you're working right in the middle of Christmas.

"Now, when people are closed for the holidays, clerk's offices are going to be working and getting holiday pay."

Reorganizing election calendar, preparing for bigger elections

Because cities are reimbursed for presidential elections, Toy suggested council explore moving its city elections from odd years to even years.

"It used to be that way in Livonia years back," she said. "I'm not stuck in the mud on it. I'm just suggesting we take a look at it."

Nash noted putting city issues on even-year ballots has the potential to

overwhelm voters with too many races or local offices that are considered non-partisan. But, she said, even-year ballots would also keep the city from paying to run an election for a small ballot.

"In my years of being clerk, there's been many times people have asked me during city elections why there's only one thing on the ballot," Nash said. "I've been asked through the years how much it costs to have that one election. There's a give and take."

Nash said other items for consideration are the addition of a full-time elections director who would report to the clerk and ending term limits for the city clerk and treasurer positions. Livonia is the only large Michigan city that puts term limits on its clerk, which usually

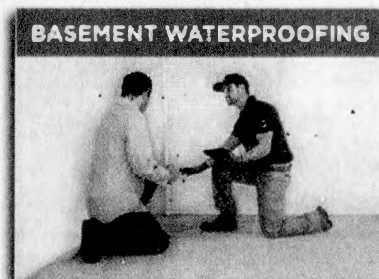
leaves a newly-elected person to run a presidential primary after just months on the job. The clerk can serve for two consecutive four-year terms.

"Clerk and treasurer are administrators, not policy makers," Nash said.

Toy and Nash think election changes are a conversation that needs to be had.

"I'm not saying you need to put a price on democracy," Nash said. "But there are a lot of things that need to be looked at. Council needs to look at this because I've already submitted a budget for 2023 that's not going to come close to covering this."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.



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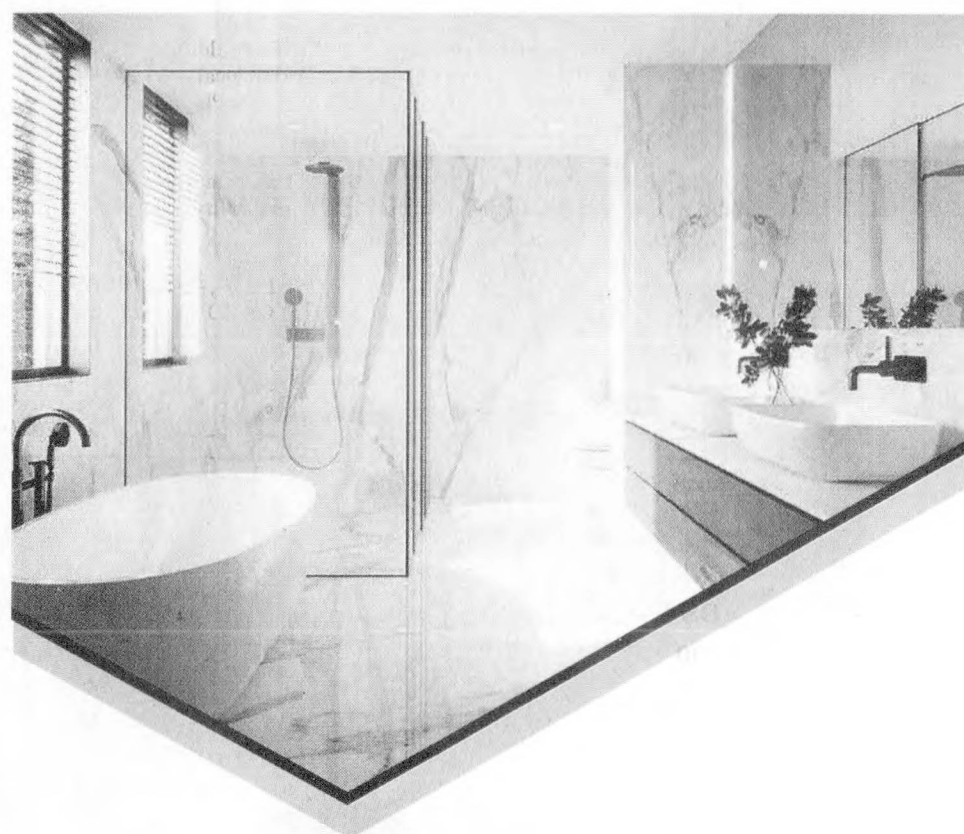
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Safety

Continued from Page 1A

The district is using a state grant earmarked for school safety to fund the pilot program with Elite, the third district in the state to do so. Huron Valley joins Oak Park and Avondale schools in taking the furry approach to security.

Barb Roethler, district communications director, said districts throughout the state and country have been looking at different ways to keep kids safe, including metal detectors and limiting buildings to one entrance and exit.

But for Huron Valley, the dog offered a friendlier, "less sterile," tail-wagging approach.

"We feel we are a safe community and we've had less threats than some other communities, but after Oxford happened, we can't rest on our laurels," Roethler said. "We can't think it won't happen here."

Lucie Prieur, a French exchange student at Milford High School this year, is glad to have the dog. At home in France, school shootings are not an issue, but she was frightened when she learned of the Oxford High School shooting in which four students died just over a year ago.

"It's great to have animals to help people," she said. "It's more easy to trust animals than people."

The feedback so far on Rosie has been overwhelmingly positive, Roethler said. She fielded questions from at least two parents concerned about whether the dog might alert to gunpowder on their sons following hunting trips. That could potentially happen, but would result in a conversation, not a suspension, Roethler said.

Rosie was trained for about a year in detecting explosives, including firearms, ammunition, black powder, dynamite, C-4 (a plastic explosive substance) and safety fuse.

In October, she met her new Elite Detection K9 handler, Jon Tassis, recently retired after a 20-year career as a police officer.

He is excited about his new furry partner and laughed as he explained this one doesn't complain about where to eat.

"I wanted to find a way to give back to the community and be around kids," Tassis said. "I've always loved dogs."



Jon Tassis walks Rosie, a 2-year-old black Labrador retriever trained to sniff out bombs and other explosive materials, through the halls of Milford High School. PHOTOS BY SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

The workday for Tassis and Rosie starts when school does. They alternate days between the high schools in the district, greeting kids when the doors open. While the kids are in class, Tassis and Rosie patrol the halls, with the Lab sniffing lockers, and also strolling through the gym and cafeteria and various locations in the buildings.

If the dog smells something amiss, she has been trained to snap her head back and make eye contact, Tassis said. A threat assessment can then be made by him and other authorities.

So far, it has been business as usual at school with Rosie. The dog's vest that says "do not pet," goes unheeded.

Petting is fine and encouraged, Tassis said, as long as the school day is going like school days are intended to go — with no threats or interruptions.

"She's here to be a weapons dog, with her main objective to keep students, staff and everyone safe," Tassis said. "But how can you not give her attention? She's a cuddle buddy, giving and getting love."

As Rosie finished her day, tail wagging and ready to go home with Tassis, Milford High School Principal Kevin McKenna smiled fondly at the dog.

"She's a great addition," he said. "She's the most popular kid in school."

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

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Rosie is under contract with the Huron Valley School District in a pilot program designed to increase safety in schools.

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WESTLAND

Senior care campus renovation, expansion starts in 2023

Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Crews will break ground on new construction and renovations at The Village of Westland early next year to transform the campus' senior living facilities over the next two to three years.

The Village's parent company, Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, plans to spend roughly \$53 million, including a \$1.5 million gift in American Rescue Plan funds from the City of Westland and other philanthropic support, for the reconstruction.

The buildout on the 23-acre property includes renovations to existing units, construction of 35 ranch homes and creation of a PACE center that will aim to bring affordable medical care to low-income seniors.

"As far as development in not just Westland but western Wayne County, it's one of the larger investments going on right now," said Roger Myers, CEO of Presbyterian Villages of Michigan. "It's serving more people and especially

those who need affordable housing."

The nonprofit feels the development will improve and expand senior care options in the area.

"This is to ensure that we're serving our older adults in this community," said Devon Meier, director of planned giving for the PVM Foundation. "These are people who have lived in this community for years and who grew up here. They babysat you, taught you, worked at the pharmacy or the grocery store."

New, updated living spaces

The 35 new ranch homes will offer independent living options and include attached garages. The units will be constructed south of The Village's campus, 32001 Cherry Hill Road.

"They'll be very independent living," Michele White, The Village's executive director, said. "People will have their own bedrooms and everything inside. But, they can also come to the main campus if they want to join our meal program, have a nice dinner or do any of the activities. We have a full wellness

center here, and they'll be able to join that as well."

Residents need to be at least 55 years old, but will not have to meet a physical requirement.

Renovations to the existing campus will include functional updates to the 270 units, which includes 40 beds for adult foster care patients. Most residents will be able to remain in their units during construction, and Presbyterian Villages of Michigan does not plan to raise living costs because of the project.

"On the main campus, we're doing a lot of renovations," White said. "The eastern half of the community will be turned into affordable assisted living. So, that's for Medicaid-eligible individuals. We're also doing a lot of physical upgrades inside that will give people the services they need."

Offering PACE services to Westland residents

City officials have expressed excitement about a facility for PACE, a pro-

gram of all-inclusive care for the elderly that will be housed east of the new homes.

PACE will help people with Medicare or Medicaid access things like medical care, drugs, home care and hospital visits. Presbyterian Villages offers the service through a partnership with Henry Ford Health.

"PACE allows people to remain as independent as possible and still get the services they need," said Lynn Alexander, Presbyterian Villages' senior vice president and chief marketing officer.

Crews will retrofit and expand an old TCF Bank for the center and add an entrance off Merriman Road. Myers said the new PACE building will be roughly four times the size of the building currently there.

The nearest PACE offices to Westland are in Dearborn and Southfield.

"That will be a very important addition of healthcare services to the campus," Myers said.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Twitter: @shelby_tankk.

Asbestos

Continued from Page 1A

"I'm like 95 percent sure that these things were implemented at least sufficiently enough for us to make a case that we don't owe this \$200,000 approximately, nor do we owe any of the other supplementals that director Belair says

are potentially coming," he said. "The only way to say for certain there won't be other charges coming is if we stand firm that this was a lump sum bid project, which I can point out in the project in places."

He asked the board to delay the change in the contract in order to give more time to review the original contract to make that determination.

Trustee Cynthia Jankowski said the

township's attorney's memo detailing the release of the funds showed it was within the contractor's rights to request the additional funding given what was found on the property.

"We do have a memo from our attorney that says the contractor is entitled to this changeover," she said. "I get the fact that you think this is not an authorized change order, but when you're talking about buildings of this age, and

not having any type of drawings or structural documents or information that can give us a proper understanding of what's going on on that property, there's going to have to be some flexibility in awarding this contractor the proper financial support to be able to do the job."

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

License

Continued from Page 1A

a little bit more work, in my opinion."

Bringing a restaurant back to the golf course would be a vastly different proposal than the one pitched earlier this year. A day care facility had been pro-

posed; the city's planning commission voted to recommend denial of the plan after an outcry from neighboring residents who spoke out against the day care idea.

City councilman Justin Fischer agreed with Gatt, saying he was pleased to see such a business move into the clubhouse but wanted to wait until the restaurant was closer to opening.

"I think this is the right use of the property," he said. "I think if we were further along in the process, and the kitchen was done and inspected and we were ready to go, I would be very in favor of granting this license."

Elia said the new ownership is passionate about the project and wants to contribute to the city, especially at the course that's seen plenty of changes

over the years.

"You want people who are invested in this city, who are going to give back to the city while working to help the city," she said. "And that's what you have here."

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

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Detroit soccer club building 5,000-seat stadium at Madonna University

Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A sports stadium being built at Madonna University next year will bring new event experiences to Livonia.

Madonna is allowing Gold Star Detroit FC, a newly-formed professional soccer club, to build the stadium on part of the former Ladywood High School property at 14680 Newburgh Road. The site is currently the football and track and field practice field. Madonna plans to find a new space for its track and field programs to practice.

Madonna will not pay any construction costs and will be able to use the 5,000-seat facility for football games, graduations, camps and sports practices.

"Gold Star FC needed a location to build a stadium," said Noel Emenhiser, Madonna's director of athletics and men's basketball coach. "This is a location that's going to be accessible to a lot of people in metro Detroit. We offer the location and space that will fit their need. In return, we need a permanent home for our football team."

Gold Star is owned by Daniel Milstein. He's the CEO of Gold Star Family of Companies and has worked as an agent for professional athletes. Company officials did not respond to a request for comment.

Madonna started its football program in 2020, and Emenhiser said it's already fostered more school spirit among students. He hopes a permanent home for the team will create more opportunities for the campus community to gather.

"We'll hold tailgates on campus and then kind of parade down to our home field," he said. "Having that all in one location where our community can gather prior to a football game and then walk down 100 yards to participate in it is going to mean a lot."

Madonna football and Gold Star players will share a locker room, but each will have their own areas. Gold Star, part



The football and track practice field at Madonna University will be the home of a new 5,000-seat stadium. SHELBY TANKERSLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

of the National Independent Soccer Association, will play home games at the stadium and be able to rent it to other groups or events. The club is still working with an architect, so details like final cost and construction timeline haven't been finalized.

But, Madonna and the club expect to open the facility in the spring of 2023.

The turf fields at the complex are something Madonna football is particularly excited about. The program currently plays home games at Livonia Churchill High School.

"The turf is going to be eight inches thick," head football coach Herb Haygood said. "It will be the only one in the country like that. There's two similar turf fields currently in Europe. It's like being on grass."

Other student athletes at Madonna will also use the stadium for practice during cold weather. Emenhiser said most programs have to practice off-campus in the winter.

The college expects visitors to the stadium will be happy with what they see.

"They want it to be a special kind of event whenever people come visit a soccer game or a football game," Emenhiser said.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.

Family prays for a miracle for Westland teen struck by vehicle

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Aalyiah Rasheed-Wiley was just an independent teenager taking charge of her priorities - getting to school on time - when her life and the lives of those who love her changed in one terrible instant.

Aalyiah, a 15-year-old sophomore at John Glenn High School in Westland, was crossing Newburgh Road on Dec. 8 when she was struck by a vehicle that police said ran a red light. The driver, who fled the scene, was later located by police.

Aalyiah was rushed first to St. Mary's Hospital in Livonia and then later transferred to Children's Hospital in Detroit with traumatic brain injuries. She only recently regained consciousness.

"She is improving quite a bit and it's exciting and miraculous," Tamara Rasheed, Aalyiah's aunt, said Monday. "I am trying to balance the feeling of knowing she has a long way to go and being glad to see her come back to herself with not knowing what that will look like."

Tamara Rasheed has begun a go-fundme fundraiser on behalf of her sister and Aalyiah's mother, Ayah Rasheed, to allow the single mother some space to breathe financially. Ayah has taken time off from a new job to be at her daughter's side and is also struggling to care for Aalyiah's younger brother Caleb, 6, during the family emergency.

Ayah is staying at the Ronald McDonald House in order to be near Aalyiah at Children's Hospital, where she was moved for specialized neurological care. Tests showed swelling of her brain, as well as multiple bleeds, Tamara said. In addition to "excessive brain damage," Aalyiah suffered three large breaks in her pelvis, which have been repaired with surgery, and also sustained a lower spine injury, her aunt said.

In recent days, she has begun to respond to commands, including holding a hand, or pushing with her foot.



Aalyiah Rasheed-Wiley, 15, was hit by a car while walking to John Glenn High School in Westland on Dec. 8. COURTESY OF TAMARA RASHEED

On Dec. 18, she was moved from the intensive care unit to a regular room, Tamara Rasheed said. She is unable to eat on her own or speak, but is beginning to communicate with gestures.

Before the crash, Tamara said her niece, whose nickname is "Lee Lee," was "silly, intelligent and opinionated." She describes her as a talented artist who loves to support young artists and was also involved at robotics at school, a go-getter who had a "go get it" attitude about everything in life.

"My sister prays every day that she can see Aalyiah's bright spirit again and she will do everything in her power to see her daughter return to her original self," Tamara Rasheed said. "This past week has been a roller coaster of emotion."

Police have not released the name of the driver and said they referred the incident to Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy's office.

Doctors have told the family because Aalyiah is young, her potential to recover is higher. Tamara just wants her niece back. In a season of miracles, she is praying for one.

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

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 7 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

Aloe	City	Hats	Roots
Arts	Conversation	Herbs	Sage
Axes	Cos	Junk	Sandals
Banana	Dill	Kettle	Shoes
Basil	Doors	Lime	Skis
Beans	Earrings	Mint	Soap
Beet	Eggs	Okra	Special
Blke	Fennel	Peas	Tacky
Boysenberry	Ferns	Pick	Tasty
Cakes	Figs	Plants	Turnip
Cash	Gates	Plum	Yams
Chai	Glass	Quilt	
Chutney	Guava	Radish	

TODAY'S ANSWER

Fresh is always best

Weekend market

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

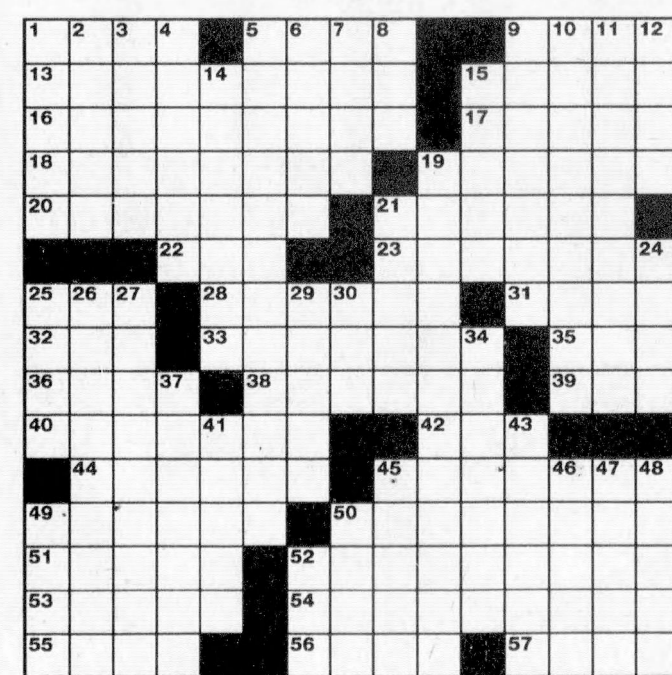
NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Exercise for young ones
- 5 Bear at a baby shower
- 9 Work for Nero
- 13 Free-fall ride
- 15 Firm resolution
- 16 Quick recharging
- 17 Get suspended
- 18 Questioning answer
- 19 Spread out
- 20 Server with wheels
- 21 Good word across the sea
- 22 Hybrid auto mode
- 23 Singers, to labels
- 25 Modern "my dear"
- 28 Provide coverage for
- 31 It flattens over time
- 32 Something shedding in September
- 33 Barbarous
- 35 Stocking stuffer
- 36 Commiserative comment
- 38 Chronicle
- 39 It's put down out of respect
- 40 Quite far from
- 42 Flatten over time
- 44 Certain tusker
- 45 Is sparing
- 49 Take partnership to the next level
- 50 Pasta topping

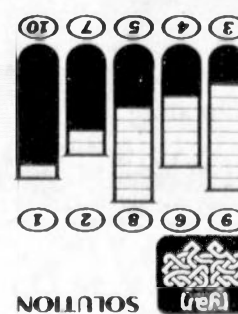
DOWN

- 1 Let pass
- 2 Union member
- 3 Brown hue
- 4 Trim; a tree
- 5 Placebo recipients
- 6 Look for
- 7 Didn't stop
- 8 Units of treatment
- 9 Anyone can play this
- 10 One will play this
- 11 Debatable
- 12 Peanut, for instance
- 14 Taboo for Mormons and Sikhs
- 15 Very limited
- 19 Woods works
- 21 State on the South Atlantic
- 24 Worth listening to
- 25 Peanut, for instance
- 26 Margin for error
- 27 Coming out
- 29 "Wonderfilled" food
- 30 Letters before a number
- 34 Cheer up
- 37 Clicks on
- 41 Gets in line
- 43 His fable book (1923) was one of Elvis' favorites
- 45 Brown hue
- 46 Not at all reflective
- 47 French dips
- 48 Vehicles without wheels
- 49 "With saints ___ bait thy hook!": Shak.
- 50 ___ run
- 52 Strike forcefully

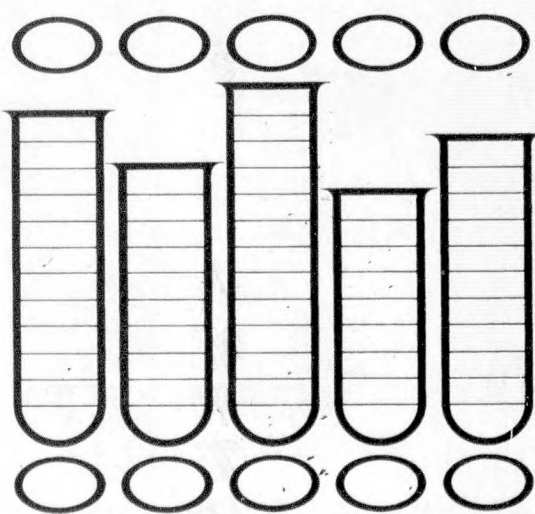


CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 12/24/22

TODAY'S ANSWER



PUZZLES & POSERS



GRADUATE SCHOOL
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
FILL THE TEST TUBES WITH A TOTAL OF 29 OZS. OF WATER. 1. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT EACH TUBE MUST CONTAIN MORE WATER. 2. CHART THE WATER LEVELS IN THE OVALS BELOW. 3. CHART THE UNFILLED TUBE PORTIONS ABOVE. 4. THE OVALS ABOVE AND BELOW MUST REVEAL THE #'S 1 THRU 10.

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

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

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

Audit cites lapses in how MDOT checks out road gravel

Paul Egan
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

LANSING — An audit released Wednesday identifies significant quality control problems related to the gravel the Michigan Department of Transportation uses to build and repair roads.

The state road agency often did not document that it completed required testing to ensure the gravel met specifications and also failed to perform required inspections on laboratories used to carry out the testing, according to the report from Michigan Auditor General Doug Ringer.

The failures have a "potential negative impact on the quality of construction projects," the report says, in a state where crumbling roads have long been a major issue for voters and where Gov. Gretchen Whitmer campaigned on a pledge to "fix the damn roads" in both 2018 and 2022.

MDOT largely agreed with the auditor's findings and recommendations. In comments incorporated into the report, it blamed short staffing for some of the lapses and said new processes have either addressed most of the identified problems, or soon will.

The Free Press has reported previously on a cozy relationship between MDOT and the state's gravel industry, which has been pushing for changes to state law that will further limit the authority of local governments to prevent gravel mines from being dug or expanded. In 2019, the Free Press, based on emails obtained under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, reported that the Michigan Aggregates Association secretly orchestrated an MDOT report identifying a gravel shortage in Michigan, recommending the consultant MDOT hired, setting out the scope of work, and even spelling out the expected findings.

The audit released Wednesday is "about processes, many of which were already being improved," said MDOT spokesman Jeff Cranson. "It is in no way related to the industry/legislative efforts concerning more mining." Cranson said the auditor found shortfalls in the agency's process and controls but "did not make any determination that actual testing was missed on specific projects."



Gravel quality is an essential component of Michigan road construction and repairs. An audit released Wednesday says the Michigan Department of Transportation's processes fall short in ensuring quality control.

WILLIAM ARCHIE/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Visual inspections are also important and were always performed, and "MDOT is confident that the aggregate used in construction meets MDOT's specifications," he said.

However, the audit does show a failure by MDOT to document that it subjects gravel suppliers to the level of scrutiny required by department policy or state law. That's a significant finding, because some critics say a major problem with Michigan roads is poor quality construction, while MDOT officials are more likely to cite other factors, such as the state's freeze-thaw cycle, or a lack of adequate road funding.

MDOT allows gravel suppliers to "pre-qualify" their product by meeting certain standards and thereby reducing the amount of required testing going forward. But being pre-qualified requires the gravel supplier to provide MDOT with weekly shipping summaries, the report said. MDOT uses the volumes set out in those summaries to determine what further testing is required.

But the auditor found MDOT could not provide required documentation showing it had received weekly summaries from 18, or 45%, of the pre-qualified gravel suppliers the auditor surveyed. MDOT said six of those 18 suppliers were inactive and should have been removed from the pre-qualified list, but for the others, the auditor could not determine whether the lack of weekly summaries resulted in a lack of required testing. "We consider this finding to be a material condition because of the ... potential negative impact on construction projects," the report said.

In its response, MDOT said the weekly summaries are not the major factor in determining what testing is required and the issue is expected to be resolved when a new database system, expected to be completed in May of next year, goes into full use next November.

The audit also identified MDOT lapses in ensuring gravel suppliers met the requirements to become pre-qualified.

The auditor sampled 14 suppliers who achieved pre-qualified status between 2018 and 2021 and found that in 71% of the cases, MDOT did not perform required initial inspections of the testing labs the gravel suppliers used, and for half of the pre-qualified suppliers, their quality control plans did not include one or more of the required elements.

The audit found that MDOT also failed to ensure that required testing was performed on gravel received from suppliers who were not pre-qualified.

The auditor reviewed 50 MDOT construction projects awarded between 2018 and 2021 that used at least one gravel supplier who was not pre-qualified and found that for nine of those projects, MDOT could not show that testing was performed at the required frequency. For the other 41 projects, which were identified for physical testing of the gravel, MDOT did not conduct required abrasion tests on the gravel for 12, or 29%, of the projects.

MDOT said gravel suppliers "did not request compliance testing as required in the manual, and as a result of staffing limitations, testing was not always performed," according to the report. The audit also identified shortfalls related to required quality control inspections of laboratories used to test the gravel.

State law requires MDOT to establish and maintain a system of efficient and effective internal control techniques. MDOT procedures require the labs to be inspected every other year to ensure compliance with state and federal standards.

But in a random sample of 40 pre-qualified gravel suppliers, the auditor found that in 36, or 90% of the cases, the labs the suppliers used were not inspected at the required frequency.

Three out of four of the suppliers did not have any lab inspections between Oct. 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021, the auditor found.

The lack of inspections was also a problem for labs used by gravel suppliers who were not pre-qualified, the audit found. For 17 surveyed projects involving suppliers who were not pre-qualified, in which MDOT used a third-party lab for testing, 59% of the labs had not been inspected in the prior two years, the auditor found.

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SAVE MICHIGAN RESTAURANTS

The Crisis

On July 19, the Michigan Court of Claims surprisingly rendered a 2018 action taken by the Michigan legislature (commonly referred to as "Adopt-and-Amend") unconstitutional. If not overturned in court, the ruling will go into effect February 19, 2023 with disastrous effects on Michigan's restaurant industry.

The Fallout

If not overturned in court, on February 19 Michigan's minimum wage will jump to approximately \$13 per hour and the tipped minimum wage will increase more than 200% overnight to approximately \$11.75. The tip credit, or difference between the full minimum wage and tipped minimum wage, would be eliminated, making Michigan one of just a handful of states to operate without one. **The impact of swift and severe wage increases to an industry still recovering from the pandemic will be catastrophic to Michigan's second largest private employer.**

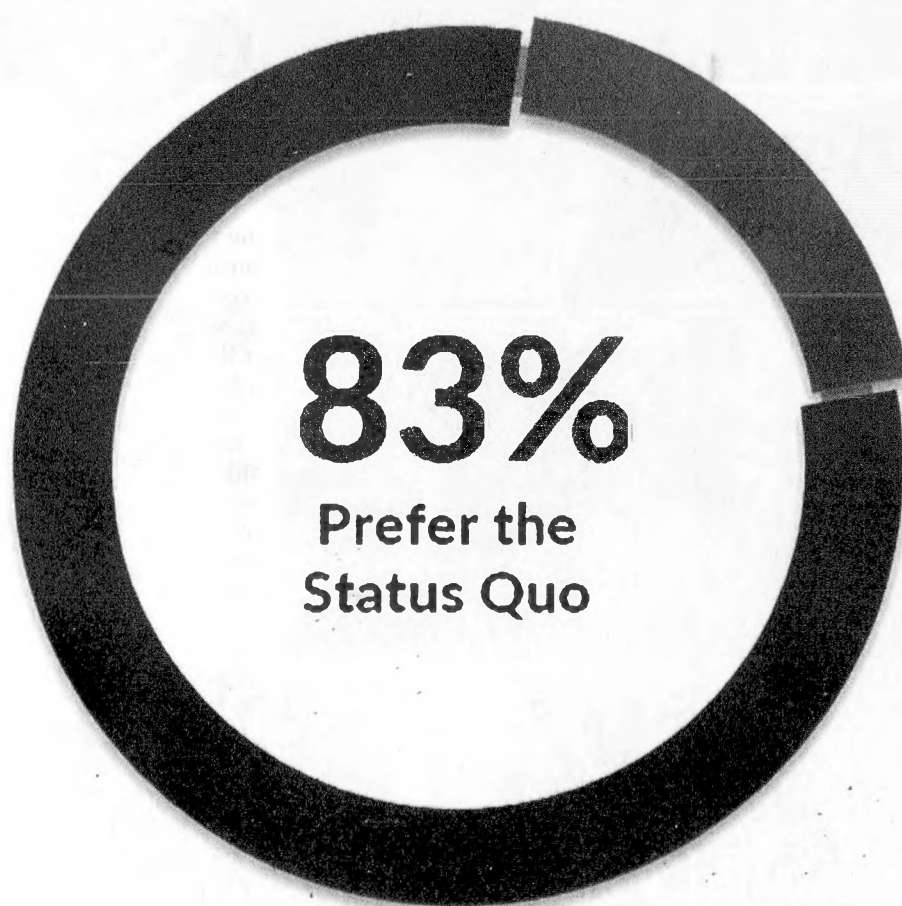
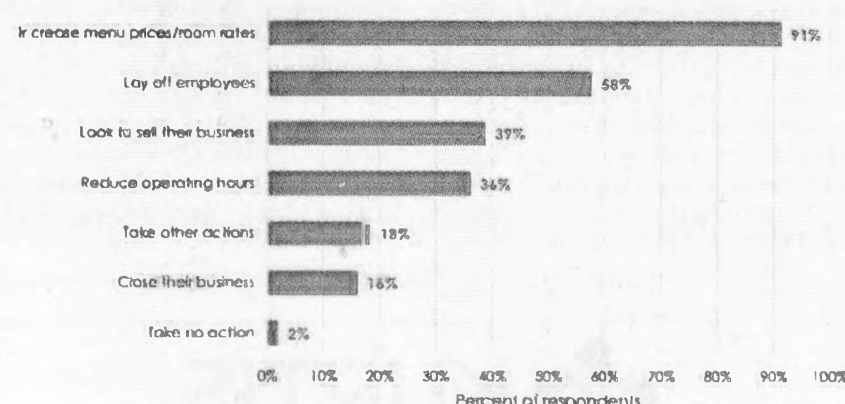
According to statewide surveys commissioned by the Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association:

- **One in six full-service restaurants would close their doors forever** if the Court of Claims ruling stands.
- **40,000-60,000 restaurant jobs – mostly servers – would be lost**
- 83% of restaurant servers prefer the status quo system over one with higher base pay and a less certain tipping culture, which makes sense with servers claiming to make over \$25 per hour on average with tips.
- 79% of servers fear for their own job if the tip credit is eliminated.

The Solution

While relief may come through Michigan's court system, the most reliable and sustainable victory for restaurant operators would be

To offset increased costs if the Court's ruling is upheld, restaurant operators said they will be forced to do the following:



a legislative solution. The opportunity is brief, however, and would require action during the 2022 lame duck session in December.

How You Can Help

1. Engage your servers in the fight. Servers can upload 30 second videos as to why the tip credit works for them at <https://savemirestaurants.com>
2. Send a letter to your State Senator and Representative. Go to <https://bit.ly/savemirest> or text **SAVEMI to 52886** to send a prewritten letter to your elected officials, urging them to support a legislative solution fix the Adopt and Amend issue for restaurants before it is too late.
3. Help us Help You. Donate to the Hospitality Industry Protection Fund, a 501c4 account, to help us Save

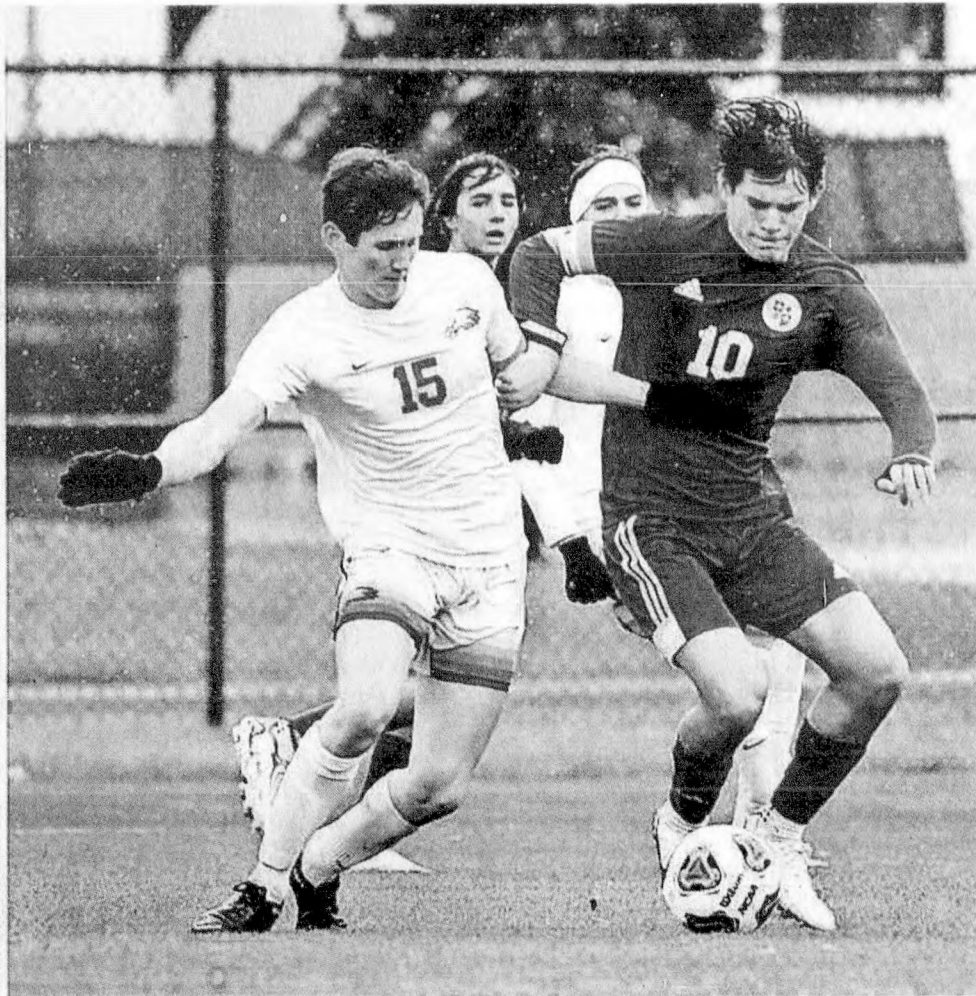
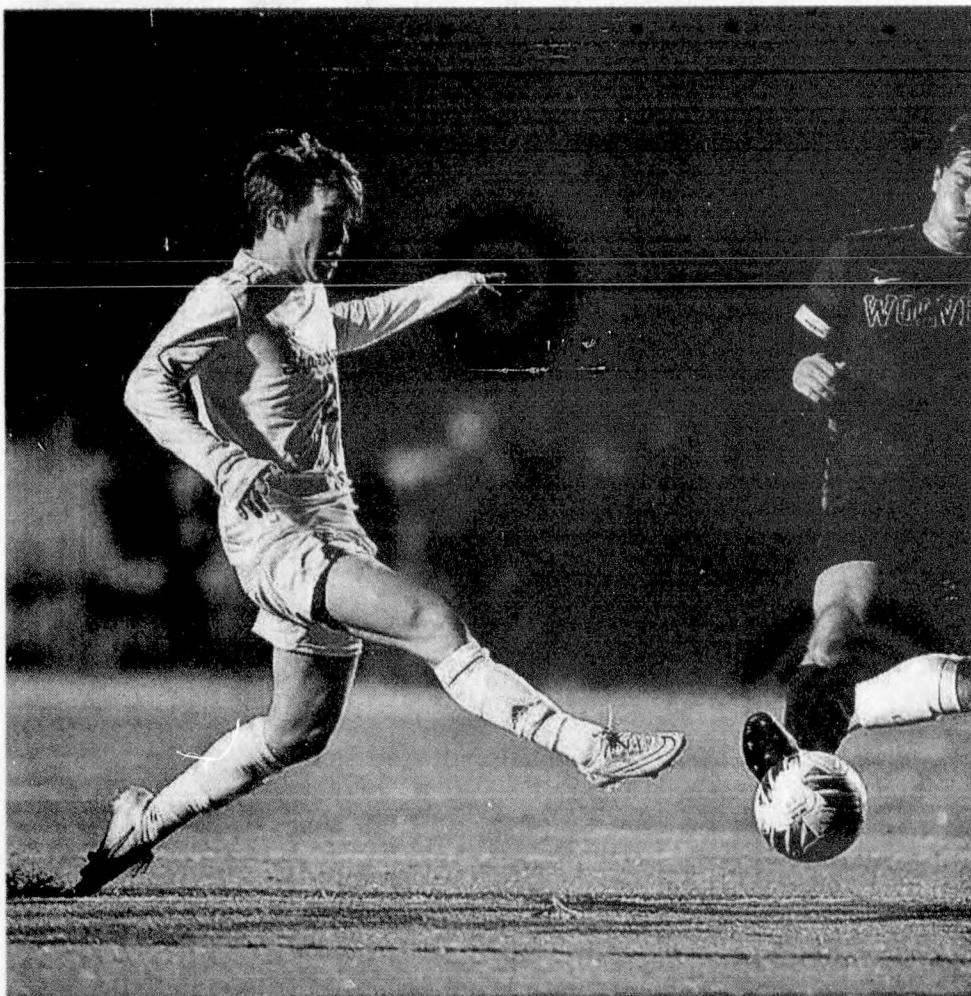
Michigan Restaurants.

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SaveMIRestaurants.com

SPORTS



Twin brothers Kyle and Drew Pierson from Detroit Catholic Central are Hometown Life's Co-Players of the Year. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS

Meet the 2022 Hometown Life All-Area boys soccer team

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com | USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Sports reporter Brandon Folsom is here with his 2022 Hometown Life All-Area boys soccer team. • With Cranbrook making the state finals and many other local teams going on deep playoff runs, there were plenty of players to choose from. • From Detroit Catholic Central to Salem and Plymouth Christian Academy and everyone else in between, let's take a look at how the team shook out:

Drew and Kyle Pierson, Detroit Catholic Central

Co-Players of the Year What a family.

As a senior, Ryan Pierson led the Shamrocks to a Division 1 state championship and wound up as a Mr. Soccer fi-

nalist as well as the 2017-18 Michigan Gatorade Player of the Year.

Four years later, his younger twins brothers wound up leaving a similar legacy on the pitch at Detroit Catholic Central.

Kyle won Mr. Soccer, following in Ryan's footsteps. And the Michigan sig-

nee is arguably the top goal-scorer in the state. And if he's not, he's among good company, if that honor ends up going to Clarkston's Richie Ludwig or Rochester Adam's Jackson Craft.

Drew was a three-year varsity player, a two-year captain and, arguably, one of the best high school defenders in Michi-

gan. He holds an offer from Detroit Mercy, where Ryan plays, as well as interest from other Division I and II programs.

How can you choose between two Pierson boys?

The answer: You can't.

See ALL-AREA, Page 2B

DeFillippo retires after 32 seasons of football

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Bill DeFillippo remembers calling former Livonia Churchill coach John Filiatraut and begging for a job on his football staff after the 2007 season.

His run as Milford's offensive coordinator was ending. Mavericks coach Pat Fox was stepping down. And DeFillippo's drives from his teaching job at Johnson Upper Elementary in Livonia to Milford's practices were killing him.

It was time for a change.

"I called John that spring and said it's time for me to start coaching here," DeFillippo told Hometown Life last month. "I knew we had a lot of good athletes in fifth and sixth grade. If there was ever a time for me to maybe become a head coach down the road, I knew what we had was looking promising."

Filiatraut resuscitated an underperforming program during his time there.

And adding DeFillippo as offensive coordinator took the Chargers to the next level.



Livonia Churchill coach Bill DeFillippo is retiring. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

DeFillippo worked under-Filiatraut for four seasons. And Filiatraut's final year in 2012 was arguably the greatest regular season in program history. DeFillippo's offense averaged 41.1 points

See DEFILLIPPO, Page 4B

Detroit Catholic Central now chasing a state title

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

You could call it cockiness or arrogance.

Except the Detroit Catholic Central boys basketball team knows the pitfalls that await. And it has plans to navigate past each one. And though hard times are expected, each moment will be used as a learning experience to prepare for the postseason.

Losses are likely coming the Shamrocks' way, yet the belief remains the same.

"I think we can win states this year — no doubt," said junior TJ Nadeau, the Shamrocks' only returning starter, following CC's 64-15 victory over Detroit Country Day in the Calihan Challenge at Detroit Mercy on Dec. 10.

Wait, what?

This is the same Shamrocks squad that just graduated two of its best leaders in Cooper Craggs (Oakland University) and Kam Mayes (Albion College).

It's the same team that lost the second-best junior in Michigan, according to PrepHoops.com, in San Diego commit Chas Lewless, who transferred to Detroit King over the summer.

Aside from Nadeau, there's only one player on the roster who even played considerable minutes. And, perhaps, the word considerable should be thrown in air quotes because Josh Ross was just a role player off the bench.

CC is basically a brand new team one season removed from losing to Grand Blanc in the state quarterfinal.

How the heck are the Shamrocks getting to the Breslin Center?

"Addition by subtraction, to a certain degree," fifth-year coach Brandon Sinawi said.

That's right.

Uchenna Amene transferred in from Division 4 powerhouse Southfield Christian early in the off-season. The junior guard might not be as talked about as Lewless, but Sinawi thinks he's found something special in Amene, who

See SHAMROCKS, Page 7B



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All-Area

Continued from Page 1

2022 Hometown Life All-Area Boys Soccer Team

FIRST TEAM

F - Kyle Pierson, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 F - Foster Garrett, senior, Salem
 F - Sam Chaney, senior, Birmingham Seaholm
 F - Ben Farah, senior, Detroit Country Day
 M - Luke Nicholson, senior, South Lyon East
 M - Mori Miller, senior, Birmingham Groves
 M - Evan Evans, senior, Cranbrook
 M - Nathan Hooker, senior, Cranbrook
 D - Drew Pierson, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 D - Enzo Bordogna, senior, Brother Rice
 GK - Jack Rogers, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 GK - Drew Swancutt, senior, Northville
 Coach - Chad O'Kulich, Cranbrook

SECOND TEAM

F - Cameron Hannah, junior, Cranbrook
 F - Aiden Song, senior, Bloomfield Hills Roper
 F - Ezra Knezek, senior, Livonia Stevenson
 F - Logan Hartman, senior, Livonia Franklin
 F - Jaiden Lunga, senior, Novi
 M - Ali Jaffer, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 M - Griffin Ellis, senior, Salem
 M - Adam Mason, senior, South Lyon
 M - Josh Copeland, senior, Brother Rice
 M - Joey Iaquaniello, senior, Walled Lake Northern
 GK - Tommy Verash, junior, Salem
 GK - Bora Akgun, senior, Cranbrook
 Coach - Gene Pulice, Detroit Catholic Central

THIRD TEAM

F - Zach Rodger, junior, Detroit Country Day
 F - Jordan Petrovski, senior, Walled Lake Northern
 M - Wesley Hart, senior, Canton
 M - Matt Shehab, senior, Northville
 M - Kellen Larson, senior, Detroit Catholic Central
 M - Evan Thornton, senior, Brother Rice
 M - Caedmon Whipple, sophomore, Plymouth Christian Academy
 D - Joey Weertz, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
 D - John Dickmeyer, senior, Walled Lake Northern
 D - Matt Meilinger, senior, Birmingham Groves
 D - Ryan Kientz, senior, White Lake Lakeland
 GK - Finn Hounsell, sophomore, Detroit Country Day

HONORABLE MENTION

F - Marco Palushaj, senior, Northville
 M - Alex Greene, senior, Plymouth
 M - Tripp Gaffney, senior, Birmingham Seaholm
 M - Chase Henderson, sophomore, Birmingham Seaholm
 M - Wesley Hart, senior, Canton
 M - Stephen Brentano, junior, Detroit Country Day
 M - Andrew Brentano, junior, Detroit Country Day
 D - Evan Miller, senior, South Lyon East
 D - Nick Settle, junior, Northville
 D - John Lee, senior, Cranbrook
 GK - Joe Farah, junior, Birmingham Seaholm
 GK - Aaron Walenciak, senior, South Lyon East
 Coach - Kyle Karns, Salem

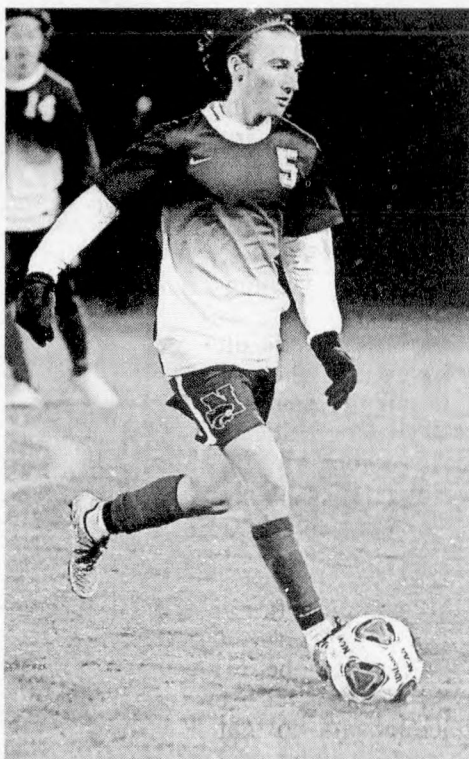
SPECIAL MENTION

F - Will Oglesby, senior, Bloomfield Hills
 F - Mark Musai, senior, Salem
 F - Jordan Scott, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
 F - Dominic Hannawa, sophomore, Walled Lake Northern
 F - Benne Lemke, sophomore, Westland Huron Valley Lutheran
 F - Jesse Stewart, senior, Livonia Clarenceville
 F - Atanas Popov, senior, Salem
 F - Ian Mendoza-Garceia, senior, Wayne Memorial
 F - Andrew Adragna, senior, South Lyon
 F - Jacob Hemker, junior, South Lyon
 M - Aiden Miller, junior, Lutheran Westland
 M - Matt Johnson, senior, Plymouth Christian Academy
 M - Owen Hickey, junior, Walled Lake Northern
 M - Mateo King, senior, Birmingham Groves



Canton's Wesley Hart passes during Round 1 of the Gary Balconi boys soccer tournament in August.

PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Novi's Jaiden Lunga dribbles ahead during the Division 1 district tournament in October.

TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Salem's Foster Garrett attacks during a non-conference match Sept. 10 at Rochester Adams.



Plymouth Christian Academy's Jordan Scott heads a ball against Ann Arbor Greenhills during the Division 4 state semifinal Nov. 2 at Troy High School.



Cranbrook's Evan Evans celebrates scoring a goal during the Division 2 regional championship Oct. 27 at Waterford Kettering.



Birmingham Seaholm's Chase Henderson celebrates a goal with Drew Stice during the Division 1 district final in October.

M - Mario Blum-Alexander, senior, Birmingham Groves
 M - Brett Russell, junior, Birmingham Groves
 M - Orfan Adil, senior, Livonia Churchill
 M - William Aljets, freshman, Livonia Churchill
 M - John Napieralski, senior, Livonia Franklin
 M - Carter Mroz, senior, Livonia Stevenson
 M - Nathan Riehl, senior, Novi
 M - Alex Green, senior, Plymouth
 M - Jack Kroll, senior, Salem
 M - Jesus Valasquez-Cervantes, senior, Wayne Memorial
 D - Yuya Nakijima, senior, Northville
 D - Moreno Scaccia, senior, North-

ville
 D - Kenan Hadzic, senior, Livonia Clarenceville
 D - Christian Presley, senior, Canton
 D - Alex Eby, sophomore, Detroit Country Day
 D - Gabe Hunter, senior, Detroit Country Day
 D - Tyler Watson, senior, Walled Lake Northern
 D - Reese Austin, senior, Canton
 D - Elliot Cialone, senior, Canton
 D - Stewart Johns, junior, Livonia Churchill
 D - Connor Dzngel, senior, Livonia Churchill
 D - Colin Whitney, senior, Livonia Stevenson
 D - Ben Wilson, junior, Livonia Ste-

venson
 D - Masaharu Kimura, junior, novi
 D - Antoine Kondracki, senior, Novi
 D - Rohan Parikh, senior, Plymouth
 D - Dylan Clayton, senior, Salem
 D - Bill Broucek, senior, Salem
 D - Jovani Martinez-Perez, senior, Wayne Memorial
 D - Carter Wisley, sophomore, Westland John Glenn
 GK - Owen Boukalik, senior, Northville
 Coach - Collan Baker, Plymouth Christian Academy

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

Colleagues react to DeFillippo retiring

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Livonia Churchill football coach Bill DeFillippo has retired after 32 years of coaching high school football. He spent the past 15 years with the Chargers, which includes 10 seasons leading the program as the head coach.

Sports reporter Brandon Folsom spoke with several people who worked with him closely. Here's what they said about the impact he had at Churchill as a coach, teacher and mentor to student-athletes:

Marc Hage, former Livonia Churchill athletic director

Marc Hage had a lot to worry about during his 26 years as an athletic director.

But he never had to worry about DeFillippo or the football program.

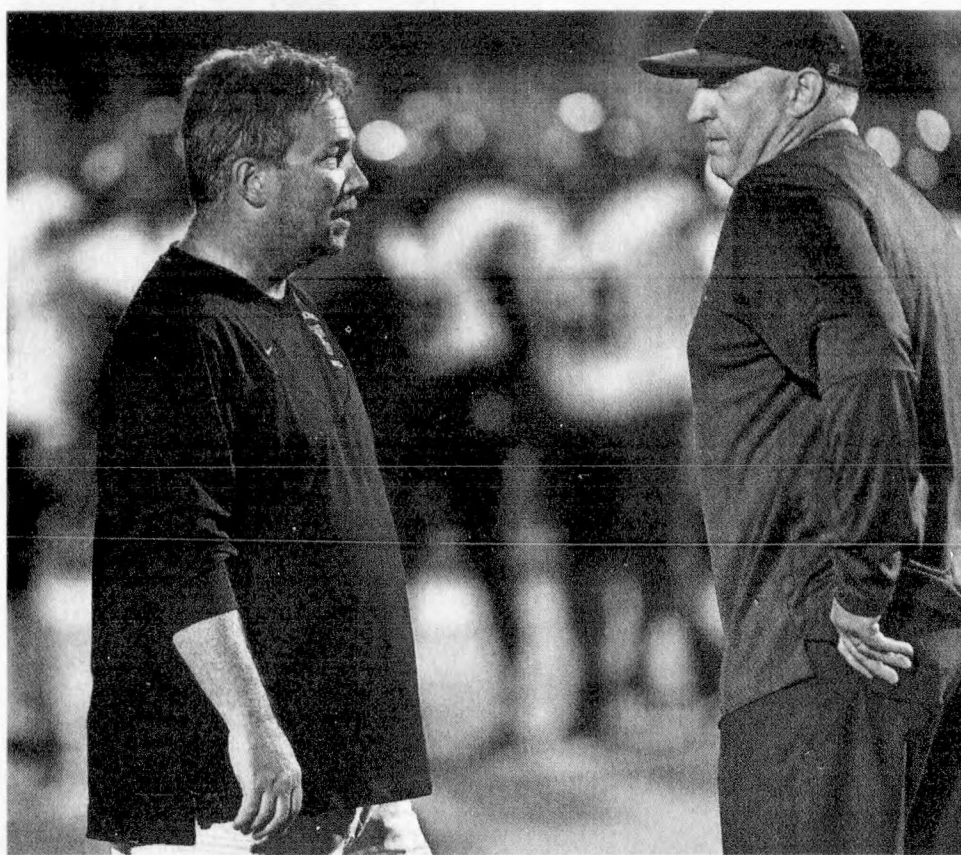
DeFillippo took no days off. Even during spring and summer vacations.

Coaching was a 365-day endeavor for him, and that translated onto the field.

"Bill is a football guy," Hage said. "I don't know if he's ever had a vacation where he hasn't gone to a college and spent days with a college staff. He has a thirst for football. He's more than paid his dues. In recent years, our enrollment has been down, and we're now the smallest school in the league. And he kept us at a high level. He never backed down from anybody. It didn't matter the size of the school or the lineage of a winning program, he'd say bring them on, let's play and we'd be successful. Decades ago, everybody wanted to play us (because we were an easy win). Lately, we were one of the most feared on the block and people didn't want to play us. And that's a credit to Bill."

When former head coach John Filiatraut retired, Hage never hesitated about promoting DeFillippo from offensive coordinator to take over Filiatraut's position just over 10 years ago.

"I was very enamored with his dedication," Hage added. "I knew he'd be extremely dedicated, and he had an enthusiasm for kids. He and I taught together for a time, so I saw the positive impact he had on the kids. I just knew he



Churchill coach Bill DeFillippo, left, and Franklin coach Chris Kelbert meet near midfield during a game in 2021. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

would be a tireless worker, and that's what you need from a varsity football coach. Hiring him was a very easy decision. We interviewed other candidates, but it was a unanimous decision to hire him amongst the committee."

Casey Conway, current Churchill athletic director

Conway was only in charge of the Chargers' athletics for one football season while DeFillippo ran the football program, but the two have known each other since 1995.

They were physical education teachers together back then. And even in the 1990s, Conway knew DeFillippo was going to be something special on the sidelines.

"He'll be sorely missed, and I can honestly say we've stole him as far as his ability as an offensive coordinator and being a head coach goes," Conway said. "I never had a doubt he could make a

significant impact as a coach. For as long as I've known him, he's been drawing up plays and working hard on game plans, and that goes back to 1995 when he was at Ann Arbor Huron and a few other places."

Conway was Hage's assistant before taking over as AD, so he's watched DeFillippo over the years, and he's learned plenty from watching the coach run a program.

"As the athletic director, you learn really quickly about your coaches and who can take care of the day-to-day stuff," Conway added. "People all too often think football is just nine Fridays a year. They don't understand the other 356 days that go into the preparation for those nine Fridays, and Flip made it look effortless. He takes care of the parents, the kids and the fundraising. He's got a great staff that he's built throughout the years. As far as being a manager and a leader of a staff, it's been an absolute joy watching him do that. Flip and those

guys would tell me what a kid's grades are before I could even tell them about the kid's grades. You'd never have to worry about a player being ineligible because his staff would come and tell me about it first."

Allen Feigel, Churchill's assistant head coach

With DeFillippo teaching physical education at Frost Middle School, it meant he was unable to keep tabs on his football players throughout the day at the high school.

That's where assistant Allen Feigel came in handy.

Not only was Feigel his No. 2 on the coaching staff but he was also his "inside guy." He acted as DeFillippo's eyes and ears inside the high school.

"Being the assistant head coach, (being the 'inside guy') is kind of your job," Feigel said. "I didn't necessarily want that job back then, but I took it on for him. All great programs need a good No. 2. You need that second guy to be a second head coach. Being in the building, with several coaches in the building, it's an advantage we have over several (opposing) head coaches. I was his guy inside the building. And I still am."

The two spent 13 years coaching beside each other.

"He's one of my best friends," Feigel added. "Other than my wife, he's probably my closest friend. He's a mentor of mine, and I've been very blessed to know him. Flip did things the right way, and we always had a collaborative approach to leading the program. In the off-season, he let me be the head coach and run the program how I saw fit. I'm the strength and conditioning coach, so it was great to run the off-season. One of Flip's biggest strengths is he allows other people to be themselves as much as possible. He was really good at delegating and letting guys spread their wings professionally and personally. He's going to be missed."

Al Smith, Churchill's defensive coordinator

Al Smith graduated from Churchill in

See COLLEAGUES, Page 4B

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Colleagues

Continued from Page 3B

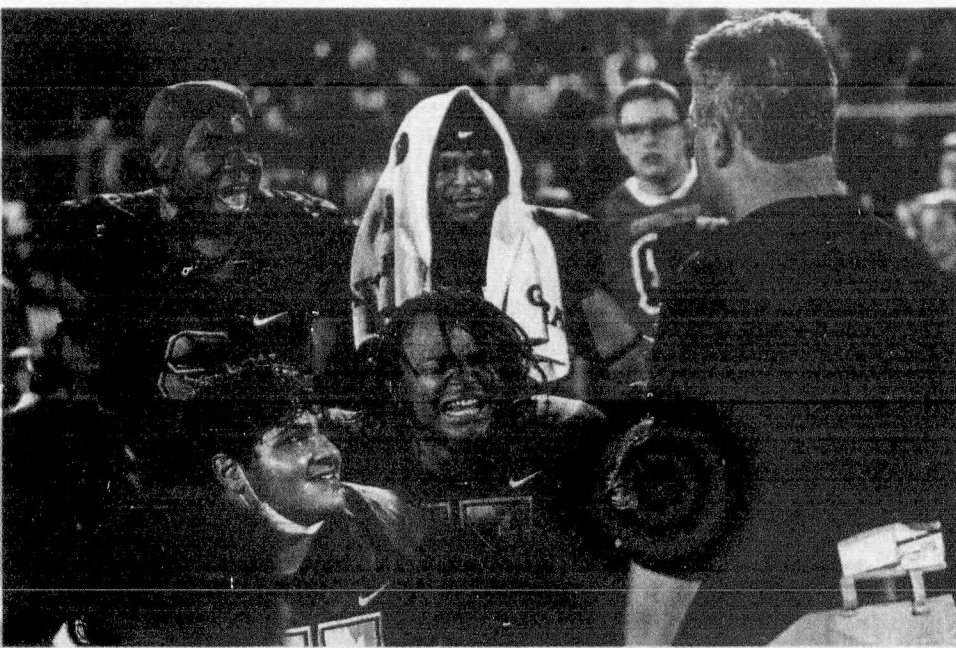
2001 and joined the football staff as an assistant almost immediately.

So he's been around for all 15 years of DeFillippo's tenure at Churchill, including acting as the team's defensive coordinator for the past 11 seasons.

Smith wouldn't trade his relationship with his former boss for anything.

"The nice thing about working for Flip when he took over was that the guys (assistant coaches) on both sides of the ball knew what he was doing," Smith said. "He had a good baseline knowledge of where he wouldn't have to micromanage things. And that kind of relationship is forged in the off-season. He and I, for about 7 years in a row, and later Feigel and Brian Rochon would join us, take a 10-day professional development or four-day week to travel to places like Ball State and meet coaches and learn more about coaching.

"Those are the moments where you develop trust among your staff. When you got eight guys going to the University of Cincinnati coaching clinic, because we want to be the best coaches we can be, that's where we set the standard. He's been going on professional



Head coach Bill DeFillippo talks to players after defeating Belleville 28-21 at Livonia Churchill High School in Livonia in 2021. JUNFU HAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS

development trips for 30 years. He never stops learning when it comes to football and organizational leadership. And that trickled down to his staff."

The culture established by DeFillippo has not only made Smith a better football coach but a better person as well.

"The family culture he's promoted,

endorsed and developed has been huge," Smith added. "All of us coaches know each others' families. It's the type of deal where I live 2 miles from Flip's parents. If his dad needed something, he can call me anytime. It's really a great culture of family that we have. Because we're losing one member of the family, it

doesn't mean anything is going to change. We will still break it down after practice with a 'Family' every day, and that's why we've had the level of success we've had."

Brian Rochon, Churchill assistant

When Brian Rochon stepped away from coaching at Plymouth, he never questioned whose program he wanted to join next.

"It was the logical next step because you want to coach with friends and people who do it the right way, and it was a no-brainer for me," Rochon said. "Most of their staff, including Flip, have been friends of mine for a long time, both competing against each other and being friends off the field."

Rochon has spent the past 3 seasons on DeFillippo's staff.

And that time has been invaluable.

Not only has Rochon grown as an assistant while learning under one of the best to do it, but he's also been proud to be part of Churchill's program. Plus, he loves how innovative DeFillippo's offense has been.

"Flip is one of the most talented offensive coaches I've ever been around," Rochon added. "Churchill's system has

See COLLEAGUES, Page 6B

DeFillippo

Continued from Page 1B

per game and put up a school-record 452 points. Though, they lost in the district championship to Plymouth, despite winning 10 straight games entering the matchup.

When Filiatraut retired soon after, former Churchill athletic director Marc Hage tabbed DeFillippo to take over the program. And the job has been his until Oct. 21.

That's right. After 15 seasons with the Chargers, including the past 10 as the head coach, DeFillippo has retired from coaching at the high school level.

He considered several factors before making the decision.

For one, he only has one year left of teaching before he can retire.

For two, he wants to spend more time

with his parents as they get up there in age. And, lastly, if he's ever going to get a chance to coach college football, now's the time.

"I'm going to take the fall off and maybe be more of a fan next fall," said DeFillippo, who has coached high school ball for 32 years. "I want to watch some of my guys playing in college, which you don't get to do when you're coaching, at least not very often anyway. Maybe I'll take a couple of road trips to college games and do things I haven't been able to do in a while."

DeFillippo amassed a 58-48 record as Churchill's head coach. Six of his 15 seasons saw the Chargers score 300 points or more.

His assistants categorize him as a football junkie. If he's not watching film, he's studying the game elsewhere. Whether that's at coaching clinics, trips out of state to learn from college coaches or just talking about the game with

colleagues around Michigan.

"Ideally, once I get done teaching, I want to find a college program and become an analyst or quality control person on their staff," said DeFillippo, who's 53 years old. "If it's a local team, that'd be great, or, hopefully, somewhere close to a beach. I want to pursue that, have a little bit of fun and have some change in my career a little bit. It's just time. It doesn't have anything to do with us. I absolutely love Churchill and the kids we have here. They've been great over the years, even this year when we struggled (going 2-7 overall). The off-season stuff and all the demands for my time that comes with it (has gotten tiresome)."

New Churchill athletic director Casey Conway hopes to have a new coach in place before the spring. He has started a state-wide search but is also open to one of DeFillippo's assistants applying for the job.

A potential replacement could be DeFillippo's top assistant, associate head coach Allen Feigel, who plans to stick around even if he doesn't get the promotion.

"Memory-wise, he's not going anywhere," Feigel said of his former boss. "He's still going to be around and be behind the scenes a little bit. He'll be a guy we can lean on because Flip is a high-character man. He could've just bounced after last year knowing we were going to have the down year we just had, but he stuck around to lay the groundwork for the future. He stuck his neck out there for our program when he could have easily turned it over."

DeFillippo shouldn't have a problem landing with a college program in the future. But given what he accomplished at Churchill (seven playoff berths, seven playoff victories and two district championships), this time he won't have to beg for the job.



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Brighton beats Howell one night after epic comeback

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HOWELL — A letdown would've been understandable, considering how much energy and emotion Brighton invested the previous night to rally past one of the top hockey teams in the state.

But having a rival like Howell on the schedule certainly kept the juices flowing for the Bulldogs.

One night after an epic comeback against Livonia Stevenson, Brighton skated to a 6-1 victory over Howell Saturday night at 140 Ice Den.

Junior forward Lane Petit had quite the weekend to ensure a sweep for the Bulldogs.

On Friday, Petit scored four goals in the final 6 minutes and 57 seconds to erase a 2-0 deficit in a 4-2 victory over Livonia Stevenson, the second-ranked team in Division 1.

Against Howell, Petit had two goals and two assists, boosting his season totals to 15 goals and seven assists in 10 games.

"He's such a good player," Brighton coach Kurt Kivisto said. "When he's skating and going, he's hard to defend. It was a tremendous weekend for him against a top team like Stevenson, then to put up four points against Howell. It's very rare a kid is going to put up eight points in a two-game weekend. He was a huge part of those two wins for us."

A shorthanded goal by Cameron Duffany with 5:24 left in the first period opened the scoring against Howell. Petit made it 2-0 early in the second period before Howell cut the lead in half on a goal by Tanner Sauve with 10:11 left in the second.

The score remained 2-1 until Mason Blow's first varsity goal made it a two-goal game with 23 seconds remaining in the second. Duffany and Petit broke it open with goals in the first 6:45 of the third before Sean McLaren scored into an empty net with 2:12 left for his first varsity goal.

"We had several penalties in the third period," said Howell coach Rocky Johnson, whose team played Northville the previous night. "Obviously, that disrupts flow and we were unable to keep it up. That's a very good hockey team. Their goaltender, Levi, really stood out



Brighton's Lane Petit had two goals and two assists in a 6-1 victory over Howell on Dec. 17 at 140 Ice Den. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

in the third period. We had a number of chances we just couldn't finish."

Brighton goalie Levi Pennala stopped 29 of 30 shots.

Against Stevenson, Brighton was scoreless until Petit scored on the power play with 6:57 left in the game. The goals just kept coming for Petit, who scored with 4:05, 3:27 and 53 seconds on the clock. Duffany set up three of the goals. Pennala made 25 saves.

"We didn't think we were very good

through two periods," Kivisto said of the Stevenson game. "The guys on the bench realized that. They said, 'Hey, we've got this.' They found a way to come back in the last seven minutes and score four and get the win against a really good team."

Brighton will take an 8-3 record and No. 3 Division 1 ranking into Christmas break, returning to action to play Jan. 6 at Houghton and Jan. 7 at Calumet.

"We're growing," Kivisto said. "We

like where our record's at right now. We're competitive with the top teams in the state."

Howell takes a 3-6 record into the break, with its next game being Jan. 7 against Salem at Victory Ice Center in Plymouth.

"We're a young team, but we've also got a team that's come from disparate places," Johnson said. "We've got travel players, we've got players who have come from other places. Bringing them all together in one team is a difficult transition. We're getting closer and closer as we go. Hopefully over the break, they'll come back energized in January and mold into one unit."

Northville 4, Howell 2

Marco Wolf's goal gave Howell a 1-0 lead after one period before Northville scored the next four goals. Tanner Sauve had the Highlanders' other goal.

Howell 5, Livonia Churchill 1

Cade Katlin scored twice, Braden Mitter had a goal and two assists, and Landen Switala had three assists for Howell.

Alex Herter made 24 saves for the Highlanders, which put 45 shots on Churchill goalie Ryan Price.

Houghton 5, Hartland 1

Hartland's seven-game winning streak ended against an unbeaten Houghton team ranked No. 1 in Division 3 and No. 2 overall behind Detroit Catholic Central.

Hartland's Jack L'Esperance tied the game 1-1 at 6:41 of the second period before the Gremlins (9-0) exploded for three goals in a 4:05 span later in the period.

Hartland 4, Calumet 0

Jack L'Esperance scored two third-period goals to break it open for Hartland (7-3), which got a goal from Ben Pouliot in the first and Nick Halonen in the second.

Brady Hubenschmidt made 11 saves for the shutout in the first game of the Eagles' Upper Peninsula trip.

Hartland is off until it hosts Northville at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 4.

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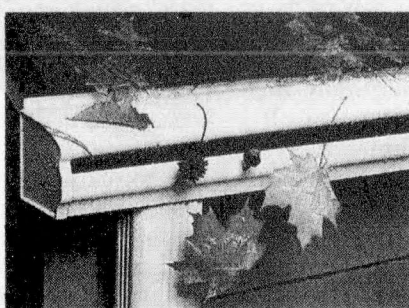
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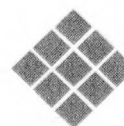


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Hartland seniors beat state-ranked opponents

Bill Khan
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Hartland seniors Vincent Cox and Chase Kern knocked off highly ranked opponents Saturday to win their weight classes in the 44th annual Hartland Invitational.

Cox beat fifth-ranked Colton Turk of Lapeer in the 285-pound championship match, 3-1 in overtime. Turk was 11-0 coming into the match.

Cox also beat the No. 4 heavyweight in Division 2, Adin Young of Plainwell, with a 9-5 decision in the semifinals. Cox (6-1) is ranked No. 12 in Division 1.

Kern beat Lapeer's Matthew Bollman in the 215 final, 7-4. Bollman is ranked No. 3 at 190, while Kern is No. 3 at 215 in Division 1. Kern improved to 8-1.

Hartland junior Vinnie Abbey stayed unbeaten, bumping his record to 9-0, by winning the 157 title.

Also winning championships for Hartland were Bohdan Abbey (113), Dallas Korponic (120) and Gabe Cappellano (150).

Taking second for the Eagles were Jake Gillespie (113), Ty Biggett (126), Easton Culver (132), Liam Wiitanen (144) and Nick Rochowiak (165).

Hartland won its second invitational of the season, scoring 291.5 points. Plainwell was second with 196, Linden third with 132 and Hartland's B team fourth with 122. There were 11 teams.

Season's Beatings

Howell finished third and host Pinckney 10th out of 15 teams.

Howell beat Parma Western (54-21) and Quincy (63-16) in its pool, lost 47-24 to ninth-ranked (Division 2) Lake Fenton in the semifinals, then beat Saline (68-12) in the third-place match.

Drake Blazewski and Brady Butcher went 4-0 for the Highlanders.

Pinckney went 2-3, beating Dearborn (48-23) and Lutheran Westland (42-39), while losing to Saline (57-19), Portage Northern (42-42 on a tie-breaker) and Quincy (53-25).

Cooper Podhola (106) and Noah Marvin (113) were undefeated on the day for the Pirates.

Fowlerville Scramble

Fowlerville won the 13-team event with 177.5 points. Springport was second with 105.

Matt Jeffrey (106), Ben Blyveis (165) and Layne O'Neil (215) won their weight classes for Fowlerville.

Fowlerville 53, Lansing Sexton 15

Fowlerville 43, Williamston 33

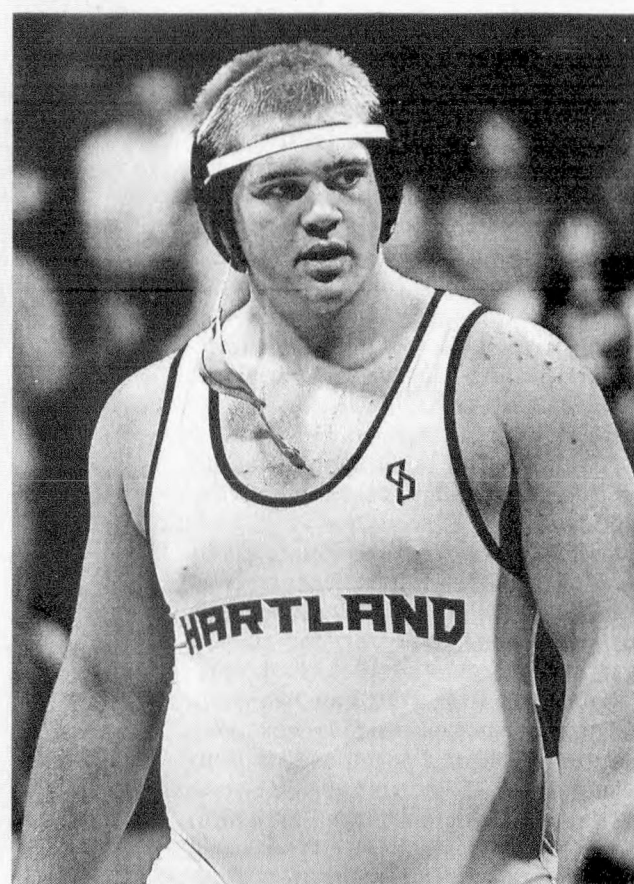
Gavin Stankov, Connor Stankov, Dalton Daniel, Maggie Buurma, Ben Blyveis, Waylon Lamkin and George Daniel won two matches each by pins for Fowlerville.

Grandville quad

Third-ranked Hartland beat Grandville (59-12) and eighth-ranked Rockford (47-20).

Easton Culver, Nick Rochowiak and Brayden Bobo each had two pins for the Eagles.

Brighton lost 51-24 to Grandville and 69-12 to Rockford.



Hartland senior Vincent Cox beat two wrestlers ranked in the top five to capture the 285-pound title in the Hartland Invitational.

DAN ZEPPA/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY



The Livonia Churchill football team takes the field before a game Sept. 16 at Livonia Franklin. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Colleagues

Continued from Page 4B

been in place since he got there in 2008, and he's expanded on it every year. It's so dynamic how he gets the ball to playmakers and does a lot to maximize the talent level of each kid. From a pure football standpoint, he's incredibly talented, and he runs a clean program and does everything the right way. He generally cares about helping kids grow up, which is why we're all in this business. You want to coach with guys you're friends with and guys who do things the right way, and that's been him."

Chris Kelbert, Livonia Franklin's head coach

Chris Kelbert has been roaming the sideline at Franklin for 24 seasons.

So that means he was there for every Franklin-Churchill game that DeFillippo was part of. And that friendly rivalry between their two programs encouraged the Patriots to improve just so they could keep up with the Chargers.

"In Livonia, there's a pride in wanting to be the best of the three programs," Kelbert said. "There was a time there where he was doing all the winning and we were not. That definitely drove us to get better, and it drove us to be get more competitive so we could beat them. They were always in our division, and Stevenson

hasn't always been in our division, but wanting to be good in that inter-city rivalry and division rivalry drove us to want to be a team and program good enough to beat them."

Both coaches were physical education teachers with Livonia Public Schools, so, naturally, Kelbert had a mutual admiration for DeFillippo, on and off the field.

"He did a great job in getting Churchill to where they are right now," Kelbert added. He's been a big part of their resurgence. I just think we've always had a good admiration for each other. I know for me, I always wanted my program and team to be good enough to beat his, and that's something that drove us for a long time. Not having him on the other side now, we'll still have the rivalry, but it might not be as personable as it has been with Flip and I."

Randy Micallef, Livonia Stevenson's head coach

Randy Micallef has led the Spartans for only 10 seasons, but he's been friends with DeFillippo for over two decades.

When DeFillippo was an assistant at Milford, Micallef was at nearby Walled Lake Western. And that's where the friendly rivalry between the two began.

"He's a great guy, and I learned from him when he was a younger coordinator at Milford," Micallef said. "We'd talk at after-season meetings and clinics, and hanging out with him as a person is great. Getting the opportunity to share ideas and different things we've learned over the years has been fun. I enjoyed those times when we'd meet on Fridays in the spring and during the off-season before we both became head coaches. That was back when we both had more time on our hands."

Micallef has beaten DeFillippo six out of the 11 times their teams have faced each other in the past 10 seasons.

"It's been a competitive one, and, personal feelings aside, Flip's kids are always well-coached," Micallef added. "He does so much offensively. Preparing for him has always been a challenge. He knows everybody all over the place, the collegiate level, the high school level. He's always pushing the envelope and adding things every year. And both teams have always been competitive."

"You always had to prepare for the trick play. It'd always be on the first series or in the first part of the game when he'd hit you with it. I'd tell my coaches all the time to be ready for it. He'll throw that reverse pass when you're not ready for it."

Taj Williams, former Churchill quarterback

Taj Williams' 2021 team will be one remembered for its hot start and depressing finish.

A hot start because the Chargers were 6-0 to open the season, which included them being the first team to beat Belleville since the Tigers joined the Kensington Lakes Activities Association in 2018. And they're still the only team in the league to have ever beaten Belleville, which just won its second-straight Division 1 state title in November, to this day.

But it was a depressing finish because Williams broke his leg while putting together a late-game comeback against Dearborn Fordson. After losing Williams for the season, Churchill lost three of its final five games, including getting upset by rival Franklin in the district championship.

That was a state-championship caliber team, one that finished with the third-highest scoring offense in program history (398 points) and likely would've been the best ever had Williams not gotten hurt.

Williams, who is now a QB at Adrian College, said DeFillippo's retirement wasn't shocking but it was upsetting.

"It was kind of heartbreaking a little bit because I know how much he cares about the players, the program and the people who work at the school," Williams said. "He bettered people every day. While he was there, he did have a successful run there at Churchill, and he played a big role in a lot of people's lives. Kids needed mentorship and guidance, and he played a big role in that and motivated and bettered people."

"I'd like to say I'm proud of what he did for me especially. Me and him, we had our ups and downs here and there, and he just talked to me a lot and wanted me to be the best version of me. He was pretty hard on me and the whole team. He just wanted the best out of everybody."

Follow Brandon Folsom covers on Twitter @folsom-brandonj.



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Hartland hopes to build from loss to Wayne

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HARTLAND — Losses like the one Hartland's girls basketball sustained Tuesday night hurt, but could benefit the Eagles down the line.

Perhaps as early as Thursday.

Wayne Memorial broke away from a close game late in the third quarter to beat Hartland, 51-39, in a rematch of a state Division 1 semifinal game the Eagles won last March.

The Eagles will take a 3-2 record into their first rivalry game of the season Thursday at home against Howell. Hartland's losses have been to highly talented Redford Westfield Prep and Wayne teams. The Eagles have beaten quality Grand Blanc and Saginaw Heritage squads.

"It prepares us really well," first-year Hartland coach Reyna Luplow said. "We've been working really hard at handling pressure and taking care of the basketball and playing together as a team since this is brand new to us. I'm super happy with how we're progressing forward and I think it will prepare us for the conference."

When these teams last met, a veteran Hartland team with five senior starters won 52-42 to advance to its first state championship game before losing to West Bloomfield.

The Zebras return four starters who combined for 26 points and 25 rebounds at the Breslin Center, while the Eagles have only two players who saw significant action in that game as backups, combining for zero points and two rebounds.

"These games are definitely going to



Hartland's Ellie Laier drives while defended by Wayne Memorial's Morgan Smith during the Eagles' 51-39 loss on Dec. 20. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

help," said Hartland senior guard Liv Linden, who played nine minutes in the semifinal game. "They're going to get us better. We're going to learn from each other, learn how to play with each other, learn how to handle the pressure situations in the close games. Overall, we win some, we lose some. We've just got to

make sure we learn from both and take it one game at a time."

The Eagles won't face many players like Wayne senior Mayla Ham, a Georgetown recruit who is among the leading candidates for Miss Basketball. The 5-foot-11 Ham scored 25 points, controlling the inside on the Zebras' of-

fensive end.

"She had a great game," Linden said. "She came out aggressive and putting up the points right off the bat. She was pretty much our main focus, because she's a really good player and an all-around great scorer. I think we weren't aware of her right away like we should have been."

Going up against a big girl like Ham can only pay off in the long run for Hartland junior center Sarah Rekowski, who had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

"It helps her mentally and physically, prepares her how to play her well and also the physicality, working in there, doing well, finishing off the layups," Luplow said.

Izzy DePestel had 14 points, while Linden had 10 for the Eagles.

Wayne (2-3), which snapped a three-game losing streak, jumped out to a 13-5 lead in the first six minutes. Hartland cut the deficit to 28-25 and 33-30 on baskets by Rekowski in the third quarter before the Zebras sent on a 15-2 run to create some breathing room.

A key shot was a buzzer-beater from well beyond the 3-point arc by Mariah Cross to end the third quarter when it appeared Wayne might fail to get off a shot after holding the ball. Cross' bomb gave Wayne a 39-30 lead entering the fourth quarter.

"There's nothing you can do about that," Linden said. "It's a good shot. We knew she was a good shooter. I have to give her props for that."

Up next for Hartland is a Howell team that improved to 4-1 by beating Belleville at the buzzer, 54-53.

"We're super excited for it, especially before Christmas," Luplow said. "We just want to go and we want to fight."

Shamrocks

Continued from Page 1B

scored 49 points in his debut against Detroit University Prep on Dec. 6.

And then later in the summer, brothers DJ and Devin Lee from Bloomfield Hills also switched schools. DJ has been one of the centerpieces for the Black Hawks, even helping them win the Oakland Activities Association-White a year ago, while Devin is an athletic sophomore who's about to make a big splash in the Catholic League.

But don't forget about Ross either. The senior power forward has put in considerable time improving his game, both on the court and the gridiron. In fact, as a defensive end, he just helped CC's football team capture a district championship and make a regional final appearance. When he wasn't training for football, he was working on his post moves, rebounding and becoming a better shooter. He even played with the Detroit Spartans travel team. This is not the same Josh Ross. He's now an All-Catholic League caliber of player, who has seven offers to play either football or basketball at the next level.

Sprinkle in some callups from the JV and a couple of young guys who made the roster as underclassmen (sophomore forward Onimisi Sadiq, anyone?), and CC looks poised to win at least a district and regional title.

"We're a brand new team, but these guys came from teams that could compete," Ross said. "DJ and Devin, they were great at Bloomfield Hills, and they played there, and they know how to compete at a high level. Uchenna, as you could see, he scored 49 points a couple of days ago. At Southfield Christian, he was the man. So, yeah, it's just me and TJ coming back, but we've got a lot of guys who can hoop."

You're probably wondering what these pitfalls are then, right?

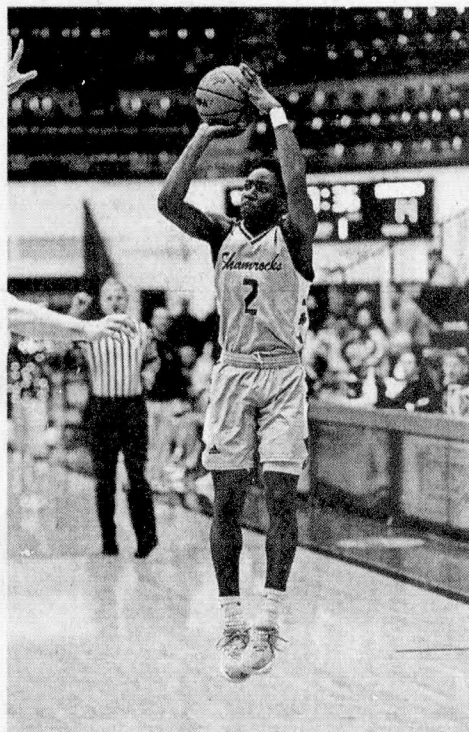
For one, it's a brand new team that hasn't had much time together.

The Lee boys transferred in late, plus they missed all of fall ball while helping the football team.

With the Michigan High School Athletic Association allowing teams to schedule two additional games this winter, that has pushed up the season's start, so it meant fewer practices leading up to this past week's opener.

"It's a brotherhood at CC, so it makes it kind of easy to get everyone on the same page and get them going," said Nadeau, who sat out Saturday's game with a shoulder injury. "Me and Josh have really taken on that leadership role of showing everyone the culture and the environment we want here."

"I think with the talent we have, we have the ability to go farther than we did last year in the postseason, especially with how we're set up in the playoffs. With me and Uchenna in the backcourt, Devin and DJ being a phenomenal pair



Detroit Catholic Central's Uchenna Amene shoots.

of brothers who contribute very well offensively and defensively. And Josh, you know, he's the hustle man. He gets all the boards. He scraps for his points, ya know? That's his style. I think between those types of combos, we're in every game. It's just a matter of if we play hard or not."

The other challenge is just how tough their schedule is.

They lost to Hamtramck on Dec. 9, and they'll likely lose a few more.

League rival Brother Rice is looked at as the favorite to win the D-1 state title. And the Warriors secured the No. 1 spot on The D Zone 100 rankings before the season started.

Plus, they have four-star Trey McKenney and Orchard Lake St. Mary's, defending state champion Warren De La Salle and Mr. Basketball nominee Sonny Wilson and Detroit U-D Jesuit twice on their schedule.

They also have matchups with North Farmington, Detroit Edison, Muskegon Reeths-Puffer and Macomb Dakota ahead. They even have a potential district championship preview with Northville this week.

"I think we're going to be a really good team down the stretch," Sinawi said. "Early on, we got our extremely tough schedule. It's going to take a little bit of time to get accustomed to playing together. We've got the ability to get to the basket and knock down tough shots. We defend extremely, extremely hard. It's just a matter of getting those guys comfortable with playing each other. We're really excited, and it's going to be a fun season. There are going to be some ups and downs with our schedule."

To expect to lose regular-season games and still play for a state championship? That's not arrogance. That's believing in yourself, which is something that's not hard to find at CC.



Detroit Catholic Central's Devin Lee goes up for a basket during the Calihan Challenge showcase against Detroit Country Day on Dec. 10 at Detroit Mercy.

PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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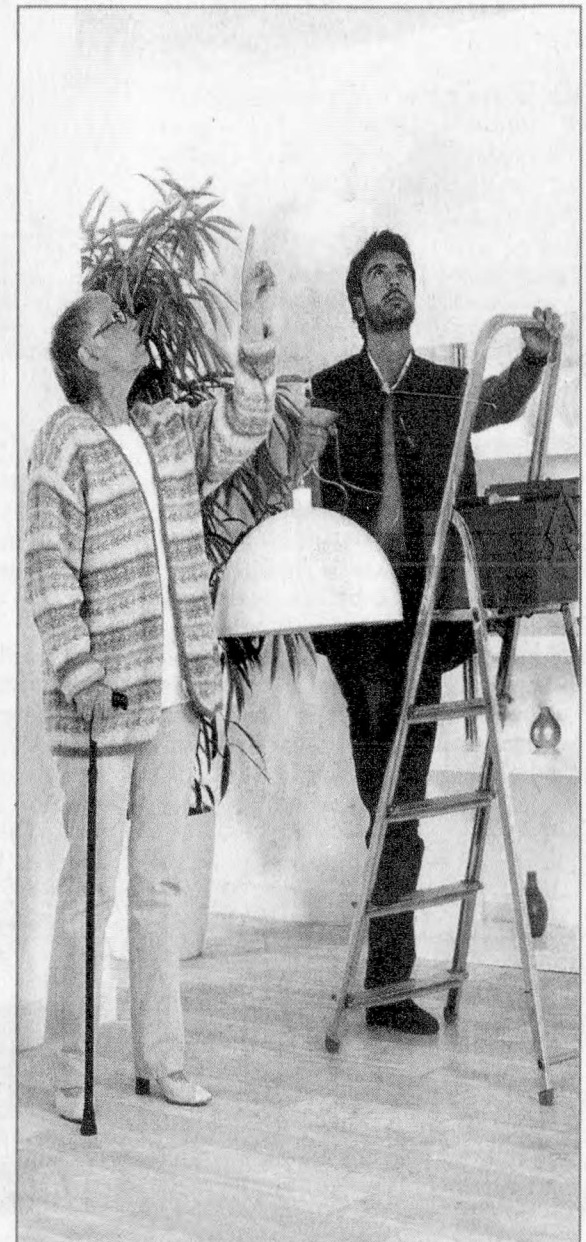
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