



## For Brother Rice, being one of the best isn't always fun

SPORTS, 1B

# NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2023 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Projects receive about \$1.5M in brownfield funding

David Veselenak  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The cities of Westland and Northville are receiving about \$1.5 million to transform some of their most blighted, well-known brownfields for modern purposes.

Westland is receiving \$695,000 to help redevelop the former Eloise psychiatric hospital, which has stayed vacant on Michigan Avenue, after closing decades ago. Northville will receive \$800,000 to remediate the former Foundry Flask property, 456 E. Cady St., of environmental contamination for future development.

The grant money is coming from the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, and those who see promise in the abandoned properties are thankful.

Westland's former psychiatric hospital, 30712 Michigan Ave., was purchased several years ago and its new owner, John Hambrick, is transforming the former mental institution into a destination, complete with a haunted attraction, hotel and more.

"We are very grateful to EGLE, the city of Westland and the State of Michigan for this grant. It will assist us in the redevelopment of this challenging project," Hambrick said in a news release.

See FUNDING, Page 6A



The old Foundry Flask building in Northville. The city recently received funding to help do brownfield remediation at the site, which is expected to eventually become a mixed-use development.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

S 6 B

## How U-M student overcame failing grades, depression to soon graduate with honors



Ericka Mendez Velazquez, a 2018 South Lyon East graduate, has climbed out of the depths of depression to find success at the University of Michigan.

SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Susan Bromley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

College can be a strain on the brain. It's even harder when you're fighting a mental health battle, as aerospace engineering major Ericka Mendez Velazquez knows all too well.

Her liftoff at the University of Michigan was shaky; she nearly crashed and burned, failing classes and finding herself on academic probation.

That was four years ago. In just a few short months, Ericka will graduate with honors.

"I want others to know you're not alone and your life doesn't end with a mental health diagnosis; it's just a new part of your life," Ericka, 23, said. "When I was going through that, I felt like a failure. I really thought I wouldn't make it through. I didn't care about graduation, I just had to make it through the next day. A lot has changed in four years."

The 2018 South Lyon East High School graduate's troubles began her senior year of high school. The straight-A and National Honor Society student who already had her acceptance to U-M suddenly felt disinterested in everything. She stopped playing sports and her grades dropped to B's and C's.

Her bedroom, which she'd routinely kept clean, became a disaster. She would either sleep for very short periods or for whole days. She was acting out in class and became very emotional, even mean to those around her.

Ericka recalled feeling sad, but attributed it to senioritis and "regular teenage emotions."

See STUDENT, Page 6A

## Tattoo artist accused of sexual misconduct opens business in Livonia

Shelby Tankersley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Alexander Boyko, a tattoo artist accused of criminal sexual conduct, has opened a new business in Livonia.

According to the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Boyko, 29, registered Lee Knows How as a limited liability company in September 2022. The business recently opened at 28913 West Seven Mile

Road in Livonia.

Boyko, a Livonia resident, was arrested and charged in December 2019 with three counts of criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree. Wayne County prosecutors alleged he fondled a female client's breasts in the spring of 2015. If he's convicted of the high misdemeanors, each charge has a maximum sentence of two years in prison.

At a court hearing in late 2019, the woman claimed Boyko touched her inappropriately during an after-hours

consultation appointment at Red Anchor in Plymouth, where he worked at the time. The woman said she'd previously been tattooed by Boyko.

The tattoo artist has pleaded not guilty to all charges. Boyko is set to appear in court again for a motion hearing Feb. 16. A jury trial is set to begin Aug. 21.

Boyko is currently out on bond. The door and windows of his business are boarded up, and it appears

See BUSINESS, Page 4A

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S#8 B#3



# Carvana gives up Novi dealership

## Customers can still buy vehicles online

**Jamie L. LaReau**  
Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Used-car megastore Carvana said Wednesday it is back to "business as usual" in Michigan, but state officials say not quite because the company's Novi location is no longer a licensed dealership. But Michigan car buyers can make a purchase with Carvana online and get a car.

Carvana and the state reached a settlement as part of an ongoing dispute over the state's assertion that Carvana committed violations of the Michigan Vehicle Code, which Carvana admitted to doing.

In early October, state officials suspended the license of the Carvana dealership in Novi for "imminent harm to the public," a claim Carvana has called baseless. The state said that Carvana LLC, owned by Paul Breaux and located off of Novi Road near I-96, committed several violations centering on untimely delivery of titles after vehicle sales. The alleged violations were discovered during an investigation by the state regulatory staff of multiple complaints from consumers about title problems with their vehicles.

On Wednesday, Carvana's senior associate general counsel, Chris Olson, told the Free Press exclusively that Carvana agreed to voluntarily hand in its in-state Michigan dealer license for a period of three years, after which it can apply for it again. The Michigan Department of State confirmed the settlement with Carvana and provided the signed agreement to the Free Press.

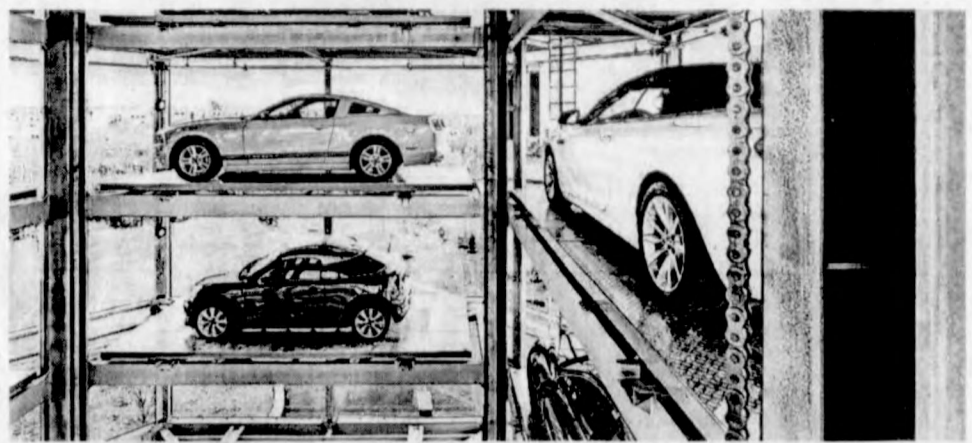
"To save taxpayer dollars that would go to court fees it is standard practice for our department to offer plea deals to dealerships that violate the law and are likely to have their licenses revoked," said Jake Rollow, chief external affairs officer for Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. "In a plea deal signed with our department, the Carvana dealership in Novi agreed it had violated the law and to have its dealer license revoked and be barred from reapplying for a new license for three years."

Carvana said settling the matter allows both sides to move forward and for the company to continue to serve Michigan's car buyers, this time with new practices in place to assure compliance with Michigan law.

"I view this as a positive. I recognize that we were late, we weren't perfect and the state was frustrated at us. ... We see this as a pretty small bucket of people, but it's important to them. And we have to get it right. ... Our performance today is really, really good so I hope this is closing that chapter."

### Doing business out of Arizona

Carvana's sales in Michigan make up about 2% to 3% of the company's total U.S. sales. Carvana has not released its total sales for last year, but in 2021 it sold



Carvana used cars sit inside one of the company's vending machines in Nashville. PROVIDED BY CARVANA

about 425,000 cars across the nation, Olson said.

Olson said the settlement doesn't change much for Michigan car buyers who could still buy a car from Carvana online and have it delivered even during the state's suspension due to Michigan law allowing e-commerce activity.

As part of the settlement, Michigan consumers can still buy a used vehicle from Carvana online and either take delivery of it at Carvana's vending machine in Novi or Carvana will deliver it to their home. Carvana, based in Tempe, Arizona, told the state regulators it would use an Arizona selling license and process to conduct business in Michigan. That means Michigan customers will get temporary plates and paperwork from Arizona after their purchase. They can then switch over to Michigan with the Secretary of State.

It is a preferred method of operating, Olson said, because it saves time and money with efficient systems that already exist in Arizona.

"We offer Arizona-based program in 18 states so we know how to do that paperwork well, so we're happy to do this model," Olson said. "It's our baseline."

Rollow confirmed that Michiganders can continue to do business with Carvana online but will need to retitle the vehicles they buy to Michigan.

"We continue to protect Michiganders by enforcing the law with car dealerships across the state and revoking the licenses of any dealer that fails to comply with the law," Rollow said.

As part of the settlement, Carvana has also agreed to pay a \$10,000 fine to cover the cost of the state's investigation, the settlement document said and Olson confirmed.

### Avoiding a 'war with regulators'

The settlement will put an end to Carvana's lawsuit against the state, Olson said.

On Oct. 13, Carvana filed injunction motions with the Michigan Court of Claims asking for an immediate stop to

the state's suspension. But on Oct. 20, a Michigan Court of Claims judge denied Carvana's request for a temporary restraining order against the state.

The settlement not only provides both parties with "certainty and clarity," but it avoids future legal hearings.

"This was something both parties could live with and move forward on how to operate in the state," Olson said.

To assure customers that Carvana will expeditiously process the paperwork on vehicle sales, Olson said the company is putting many safeguards in place such as new training for newly hired employees, assigning people to specifically be responsible for processing all sales paperwork, and it is doing a "root cause diagnosis as to why the deals were delayed and to be more stringent of what we require of customers in terms of documents. All of that combined makes the performance better and assures that no deals fall through the cracks and have these delays."

### 'Business as usual' in Michigan

Olson said most of Carvana's customers in Michigan who had any problems getting their titles or other paperwork have had their situations resolved. He noted Michigan customers who bought from Carvana last week, for example, all got their permanent tags and title transferred correctly and completed on time. The week before it was 99.2% and for the last quarter of 2022, 98% of Carvana sales were completed in a timely manner, Olson said.

Olson said if a customer still has an issue they can call Carvana at 1-800-333-4554.

"It's business as usual for us in the state of Michigan," Olson said. "Customers can continue to buy from us and we're looking forward to serving the state."

Contact Jamie L. LaReau: [jlareau@freepress.com](mailto:jlareau@freepress.com). Follow her on Twitter @jlareauan. Read more on General Motors and sign up for our autos newsletter.

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### City of Novi Public Hearing Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on **February 7th, 2023, at 7:00PM** in the Council Chambers of the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to consider:

**PZ22-0068 (ZLM services LLC) 47494 Alpine Drive, south of Ten Mile Road, west of Beck Road, Parcel 50-22-29-227-004.** The applicant is requesting a variance from the City of Novi Zoning Ordinance from Section 3.1.5 for a rear yard setback of 24 feet (35 feet required, variance of 11 feet); for a proposed rear addition. This property is zoned One-Family Residential (R-3)

Publish: January 19, 2023

LD-000790438 3x2

### CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.** in the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to **RECEIVE COMMENTS AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MAP AND TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF NOVI MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE.** The proposed map and text amendment involves reclassifying land from Public Park to Educational Facility and vice versa in connection with a proposed land exchange between the City and Novi Community Schools. There are three locations where the land exchange is contemplated: Ella Mae Power Park, Wildlife Woods Park, and Bosco Fields. This notice includes information and a map of the properties situated with Ella Mae Power Park. The properties are approximately 154.22 acres located south of Ten Mile Road and east of Taft Road (Section 27). 45.91 acres would be conveyed to the school district, and 1.74 acres would be conveyed to the City.



Additional information is available for review at the Community Development Department in the Novi Civic Center.

**Subject Parcel IDs:** 50-22-27-100-005, 50-22-27-100-006, and 50-22-27-100-007

All interested persons are invited to attend. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M., **Wednesday, February 8, 2023.**

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Novi Planning Commission  
Michael Lynch, Secretary

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LD-000790440 3x7.5

### CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, February 8, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.** in the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to **RECEIVE COMMENTS AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MAP AND TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF NOVI MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE.** The proposed map and text amendment involves reclassifying land from Public Park to Educational Facility and vice versa in connection with a proposed land exchange between the City and Novi Community Schools. There are three locations where the land exchange is contemplated: Ella Mae Power Park, Wildlife Woods Park, and Bosco Fields. This notice includes information and a map of the properties known as Bosco Fields. The properties are located south of Eleven Mile Road and west of Taft Road (Section 20). Here 73.87 acres would be conveyed to the City for public park purposes.



Additional information is available for review at the Community Development Department in the Novi Civic Center.

**Subject Parcel IDs:** 50-22-20-200-011 and 50-22-20-200-022

All interested persons are invited to attend. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M., **Wednesday, February 8, 2023.**

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# More Eight Mile roadwork coming later this year

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

For drivers who routinely traverse Eight Mile on the eastern side of Novi and Northville Township, planned road work cannot come soon enough.

Resurfacing took place along the road between Taft to just east of Novi Road last year by Wayne County roads crews, who oversee that stretch of the road that straddles Wayne and Oakland counties. But a worse stretch still awaits work near the busier section closer to Haggerty.

Tiffani Jackson, spokeswoman for Wayne County, said via email the county will resurface more of Eight Mile this year, starting west of Orchard Hill Place on the Novi/Northville Township border to east of Interstate 275, where Livonia and Farmington Hills border. That work will take place later during the county's summer construction season and is expected to cost about \$330,000.

Talk of work along that portion of the road began last year, when resurfacing was underway along a few miles of Eight Mile. But a patchwork of repairs remains between Haggerty and almost to Novi Road.

Even after upcoming work, there will remain a stretch of road with plenty of damage heading west from the Haggerty corridor. That's a project, Wayne County Commissioner Terry Marecki said, that's in the county's plans for the future.

"It's on their radar. They will be looking at it again next roads season. They're definitely keeping an eye on it," said Marecki, R-Livonia, who represents Northville and Northville Township in Wayne County. "That's where it stands now."

The county hopes to do a reconstruction project on the road between Haggerty and Meadowbrook in the future, Jackson said. The county obtained approval from the Federal Aid Committee in December, a step toward securing funding and eventually reconstruct-



Vehicle drive along Eight Mile near Meadowbrook on the Novi/Northville Township border. The road, which has plenty of patches, hopes to see construction in the future. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

ing of the road. That project is expected to cost roughly \$6 million, Jackson said.

"It will be a new concrete pavement replacement," she said in an email statement. "This project is currently in the design phase and anticipated to start con-

struction late this year or early next year."

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

# Changes coming to Northville summer concerts

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

More changes are on deck for the ambience of downtown Northville this summer.

The city is adding a few more concerts this year after seeing changes the past several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's also changing performance days.

The larger band performances that took place once a month last summer will instead take place twice a month. And instead of Friday performances, these shows will take place on the second and fourth Saturdays from June through September. They will take place in the Town Square downtown.

"Now that the pandemic is over — well, waning, hopefully over — the DDA is changing the concert series to reintroduce what we call 'stage band concerts,' in Town Square," said Lori Ward, the director of the Downtown Development Authority. "The stage bands perform just as they sound like: on our old stage, which has not been hosting concerts the last couple of years."

"This would formalize the use of that stage again." The acoustic music performed as visitors stroll the

downtown will return as it has since 2020 when it first began. Those performances, meant to create an atmosphere as people eat, shop and spend time downtown, will take place Friday nights and Saturday nights when larger performances are not happening. Larger, big band shows were canceled in Northville during 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic, replaced with the acoustic sounds on both Main and Center streets.

The city council recently approved a new contract with Wixom-based JAG Entertainment for \$32,800, an increase from the previous year's contract. Ward said the increase helps cover increased payments for larger bands.

"We have raised the amount that we are paying for the stage bands up from \$1,500 to \$2,000, which is more competitive in the area," Ward said.

Acoustic acts will still be paid \$600 a night. All shows will run from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

That acoustic music has been a benefit to downtown, especially farther away from Town Square, said Mayor Pro-Tem Barbara Moroski-Browne.

"It really activates Center Street, having it both ways as well," she said. "Actually, the sound almost carries better over on Center."

Contact our office to schedule an appointment with Dirk Beamer or one of our other experienced attorneys.



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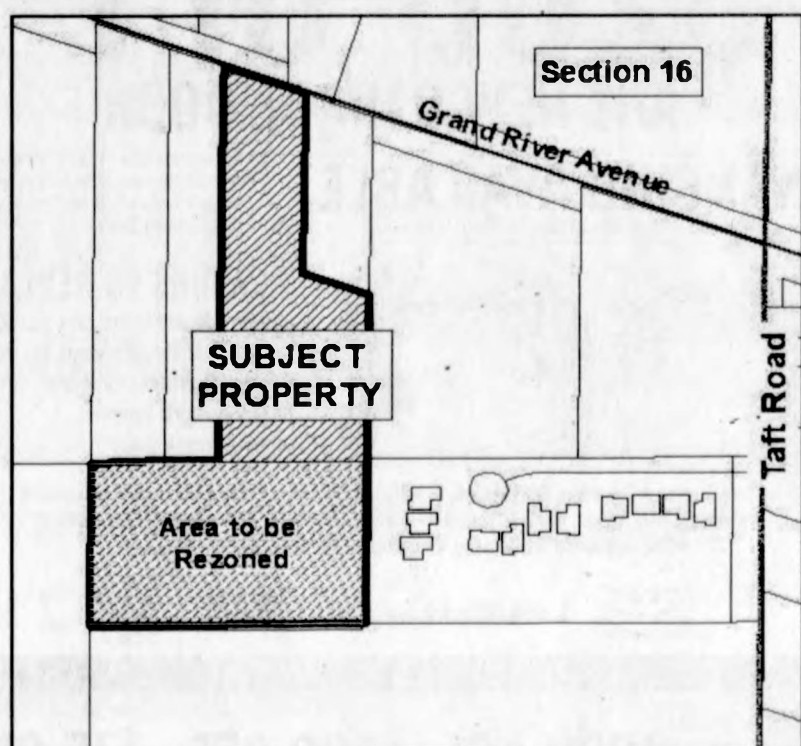
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## CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, February 8, 2023**, at 7:00 P.M. in the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to **PARADISE PARK JZ22-31 FOR PLANNING COMMISSION'S CONSIDERATION OF ZONING MAP AMENDMENT 18.739, TO REZONE FROM OST (OFFICE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY) TO I-1 (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)**. The subject area to be rezoned is approximately 4.14 acres on the south end of the parcel located at 45799 Grand River Avenue (Parcel 22-16-451-046). The subject property is west of Taft Road and south of Grand River Avenue (Section 16). The site is currently used as a family entertainment venue. No changes to the site layout are proposed at this time.

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



Subject Parcel IDs: 50-22-16-451-046

All interested persons are invited to attend this in-person meeting. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M. **Wednesday, February 8, 2023.**

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Michael Lynch, Secretary

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LO-00079045 3X7.5

## CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

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Additional information is available for review at the Community Development Department in the Novi Civic Center.

Subject Parcel IDs: 50-22-17-300-016, 50-22-17-300-017

All interested persons are invited to attend. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M. **Wednesday, February 8, 2023.**

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# Farmington Hills 'hockey doc' pleads not guilty to CSC charges

**Shelby Tankersley**  
HometownLife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Farmington Hills doctor accused of molesting youth hockey players claims he's not guilty.

Dr. Zvi Levran, 66, is charged with sexual misconduct accusations first brought forward in October 2022. He's been charged in the last two months with second-degree sexual misconduct, multiple counts of third-degree sexual misconduct and multiple counts of fourth-degree sexual misconduct in connection with multiple accusers.

Levran is named as the defendant in 10 cases at the 47th District Court in Farmington Hills and two cases at the 48th District Court in Bloomfield Hills. He was arraigned Wednesday morning on multiple charges in Farmington Hills.

"He disputes the charges," Joe Lavigne, Levran's attorney, said. "He's not guilty in each of those cases, and we're

looking forward to the next hearing."

The doctor is being held at the Oakland County Jail, and his bond is over \$2.5 million. Lavigne suggested the \$500,000 added to the bond amount Wednesday was "excessive," but the judge disagreed.

"There's a certain tipping point with the number of cases and the number of charges," Judge James Brady said. "I think the bonds are appropriately set."

Levran is scheduled to appear at the 47th District Court again at 9 a.m. Feb. 28 for a preliminary exam. His next court date in Bloomfield Hills is Feb. 9,



**Dr. Zvi Levran of Farmington Hills with attorney Joe Lavigne in January 2023.**

SHELBY TANKERSLEY/  
HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

which will be a probable cause conference.

He has a urology practice in West Bloomfield and has provided medical services to youth and school hockey organizations in Minnesota and in Farmington, Novi and other Michigan communities for about 20 years. The first alleged survivor to come forward was a 19-year-old man.

The doctor is accused of abusing patients at his home office. All of his accusers are connected to youth hockey programs.

People are encouraged to call the Farmington Hills Police phone number set up for tips about Levran, 248-871-2610. According to the department, calls have poured in since the hotline was established last month.

Get the latest headlines for metro Detroit every morning in your mailbox by signing up for our daily briefings newsletter.

stankersle@hometownlife.com



**Greek Islands Eatery at 306 S. Main Street in Downtown Plymouth will close for good Monday, Jan. 16.**

LAURA COLVIN/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Owners will replace Plymouth's Greek Islands with 'something better'

**Laura Colvin**  
HometownLife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

After 10 years serving up breakfast, burgers, salads, sandwiches and more, Greek Islands Eatery in downtown Plymouth was slated to close Jan. 16.

Jimmy Merdani, one of the eatery's owners, said a new restaurant will open in the same space later this year.

"We're still deciding what the new concept will be," Merdani said. "We'll be giving the city something better. We appreciate the support we've had from (our loyal customers) ever since we opened and we're even more excited to see them again in the future."

Once the restaurant closes, all furnishings and other equipment will be auctioned, he said. The new restaurant will feature a full remodel of the space.

The restaurant enjoys a prime location at 306 S. Main St. in downtown Plymouth.

Plymouth Downtown Development Authority Director Sam Plymale said Greek Islands is known in the area as a family favorite.

"I know a lot of people will be sad to see it go," he said. "But I think it's important for downtowns like ours to evolve and change, especially when it comes to restaurants. Anytime we have a new restaurant down here, it's rather exciting."

## Business

Continued from Page 1A

clients can only schedule an appointment by contacting @leeknowshow on Instagram.

According to his bond, Boyko cannot work on female clients without supervision. The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office told Hometown Life the county is exploring whether the Livonia business is a violation of Boyko's bond.

Hometown Life was unable to contact Boyko. His attorney, Vassal Johnson, did not return a request for comment.

Get the latest headlines for metro Detroit every morning in your mailbox by signing up for our daily briefings newsletter.

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



**Defendant Alexander Boyko, left, sits with defense attorney Vassal Johnson in the 35th District courtroom of Judge Michael Gerou during his preliminary exam. He is accused of criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree for a 2015 assault.** JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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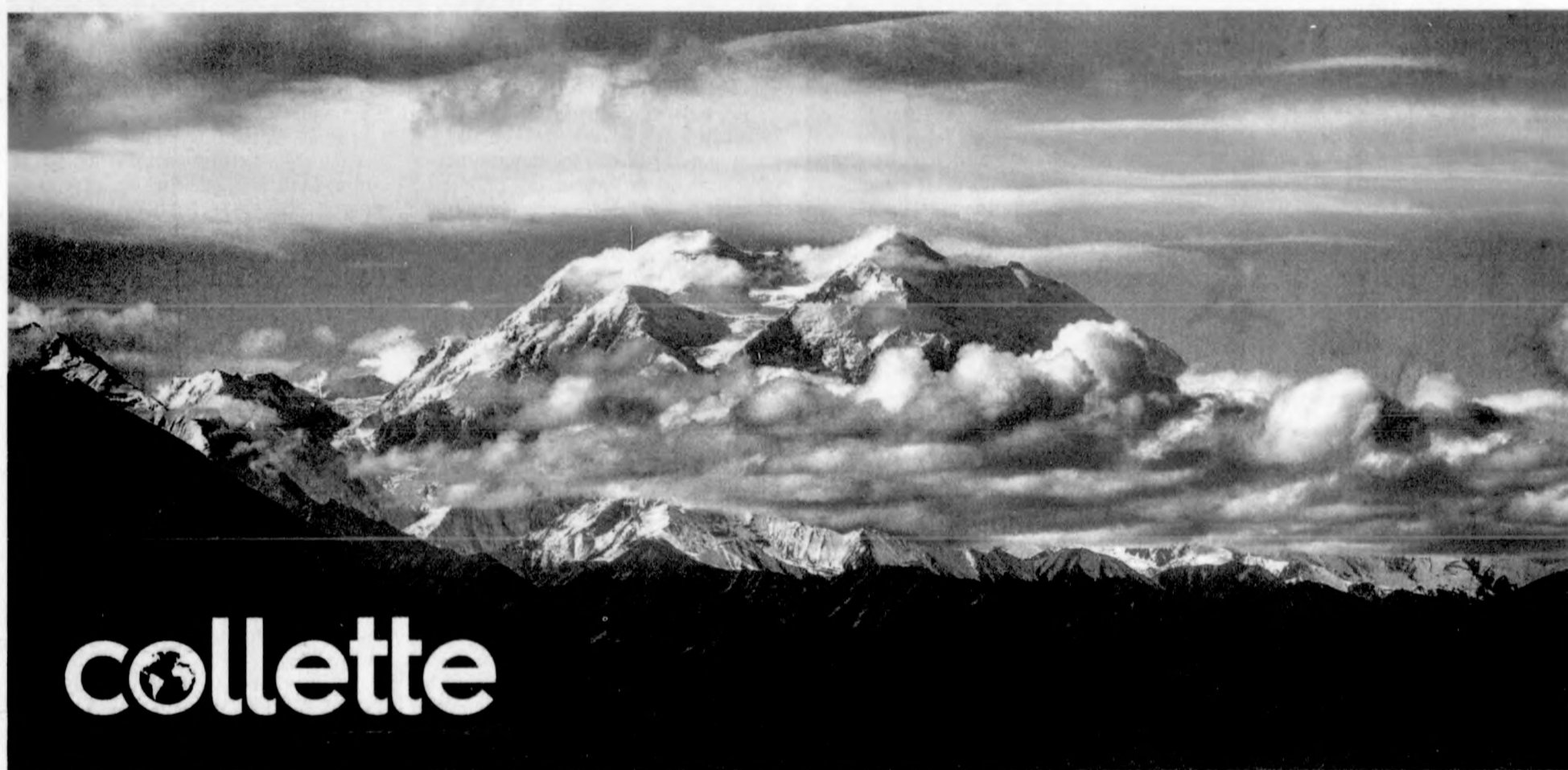
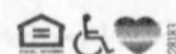
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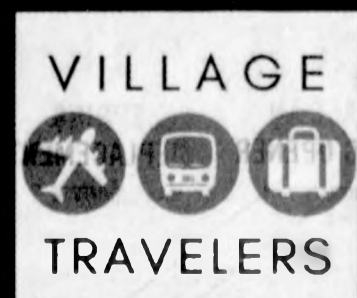
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**FIND THE WORDS**

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

- |           |         |               |
|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Allora    | Delby   | Nanango       |
| Boonah    | Ewes    | Nobby         |
| Buaya     | Food    | Notice        |
| Mountains | Forest  | Oahay         |
| Calves    | Fruit   | Rich          |
| Cattle    | Heifer  | Ripe          |
| Cereals   | Herd    | Sheep         |
| Coal      | Holiday | Sown          |
| Cooby Dam | Lamb    | Sunny         |
| Cotton    | Leyburn | Thunderstorms |
| Crops     | Miles   | Tobacco       |
| Dairies   | Museum  | Wheat         |

**TODAY'S ANSWER**

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**Darling Downs food bowl**

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

**NEWSDAY CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

- Scan widely
- Hedgehog's abundance
- FDR's bridge builder
- Confines
- Member of West Point's "class the stars fell on" (1915)
- Stored, with "up" or "by"
- KQED or WNYC
- Bit of crowdfunding?
- Vastness
- Thick-skinned one
- Jigsaw cutter
- Winning number?
- His last book was *Suspect* (2022)
- Cover nickname on 13 *People* issues (1975-1991)
- Light entertainment
- City in Cather's *O Pioneers!*
- Tree in the etymology of "fig"
- Enterprise metaphor
- Buck passer's dismissal
- Obstacle to a degree
- One's besties
- Golf Channel cofounder's nickname
- Informal meeting, these days
- OED chiefs
- Jockey's burden
- Seasons for a barbecue
- First-born member of the NJ Music Hall of Fame
- Monkey's cousin
- Gluten-free flour
- High regard

**DOWN**

- They help you get a grip around greens
- Strike that moves the needle
- Echoes
- Fall off
- Gather somehow
- Porcine plunderer's pop
- Golda Meir received the first one (1952)
- Add-on for VCRs
- Salivating specialist
- Portion of a pot
- What jeeps were first made for
- Job from the Latin for "walker"
- It's held by Tuscan banks
- Recently past
- Powers of influence
- Power portmanteau
- Couleur du spectre*
- "The Mozart of Electricity"
- Position in baseball, golf, or tennis
- It's built into some Ray-Bans
- Music icons stamp honoree (2022)
- Long-running contests
- City in Germany
- Thrown out for cheating, for short
- Invention honored with a 2003 Nobel Prize
- Patronize profusely
- Robitussin recommender of commercials
- Elevated fortress
- Bears up
- General in 2015's top-grossing film worldwide
- Voltage/time readouts
- Latter-day twerp
- New stock issue
- Olivia, Emma, Charlotte, Amelia, ... (for 2021)
- Very dark

**TODAY'S ANSWER**

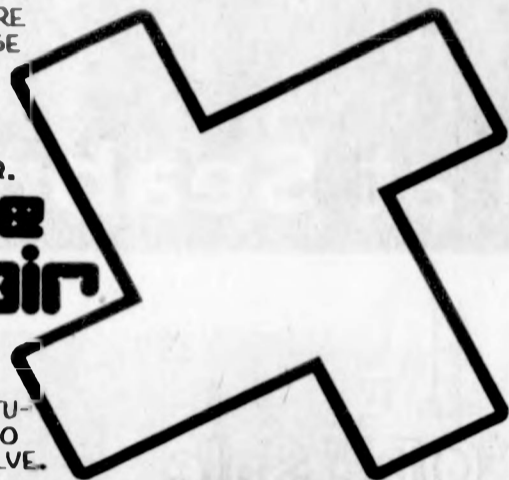
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**PUZZLES & POSTERS**

CONVERT THIS FIGURE INTO A SHAPE WHOSE PERIMETER IS A SQUARE AND AT THE SAME TIME REVEAL A SQUARE WITHIN ITS INTERIOR.

**square despair**

THE OPEN AREA OF THE INNER SQUARE WILL BE LARGER THAN THE ACTUAL FIGURE. MAKE TWO STRAIGHT CUTS TO SOLVE.



**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**

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

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

**Student**

Continued from Page 1A

**A mother's love and a college support system**

Her parents, Lorena Velazquez and Victor Mendez, knew differently, especially her mother, who forced Ericka to see a therapist in May 2018.

Ericka gives credits to her parents, who come from a Mexican culture in which, Ericka said, "mental health doesn't really exist."

"If you say you're depressed, the idea is, 'No you're not, you just need to go for a walk and cheer up,'" Ericka explained.

From her now first-hand perspective, Ericka said "depression isn't just feeling sad. It's swimming underwater and you can't get out."

But Ericka kept swimming. She started at U-M in the fall of 2018, keeping her head above water and earning average grades.

In her second semester, she began to sink again.

When she was failing multiple classes, she dropped out using a retroactive withdrawal. It was at this time that she again reached out for help—to her academic advisor and college support services.

Ken Powell, an undergraduate advisor for aerospace engineering at U-M, said there are processes in place to help struggling students, but they need to reach out sooner rather than later.

"A fairly large percentage of students have a semester where something happens," he said. "Very few people go through a careful delineated path from

high school through graduation from college. Somewhere along the way, life will interfere somehow, a parent will get sick, even if you don't have your own health issues ... We can help, but if the hole gets too deep, it's hard to dig out."

U-M's Consultation Assistance and Resources in Engineering (C.A.R.E.) Center provided crucial assistance to Ericka as well. Director Angie Farrehi said her office is just one of many resources on campus; U-M also has counseling and psychological services to provide support.

"We have seen an increase in students struggling with mental health concerns," Farrehi said, adding that the effects of many mental health conditions more often emerge in adolescence and young adulthood, which may make the transition to college even more difficult.

**Reducing stigma, opening communication**

Mental health has become less stigmatized, but more individuals are experiencing stress and anxiety for a variety of reasons, including external pressures such as social media or intensified expectations to excel academically or in a career, Farrehi said. Adding to the increase in those with mental health struggles in recent years is the pandemic, "a global traumatic event that we all experienced and are still experiencing."

"One of the things I've seen over the years, when a student is struggling, they may hide it or be afraid to reach out," she said. "College is a big transition, and, with transitions, there are struggles and there is help available."

The open communication was criti-

cal to Ericka laying the foundation for success and a comeback.

She took a break from U-M and enrolled in a few classes at Schoolcraft, earning good grades in the summer of 2019 and taking advantage of a good transfer policy between the schools.

When she returned to U-M in the fall, she hit another low — with her overall GPA falling to 1.7. She was placed on academic probation.

The coronavirus pandemic turned out to be a blessing for Ericka. After spring break, all classes were moved online. She moved home and passed all her classes at both U-M and Washtenaw Community College, where she was dual-enrolled. It was her first time passing all her classes since she had withdrawn in her second semester.

Toward the end of 2020, Ericka and her doctors had finally found the correct mix of medications to treat her mental health condition. While finding the correct dosage wasn't easy or something she thought was necessary, Ericka now realizes it was critical to her treatment. Her GPA for just the fall 2020 semester was over 3.4.

**Soaring to new heights**

However, because her overall GPA had fallen so low, she now faced new challenge — securing the internships that are crucial for an aerospace engineering major.

Ericka applied for roughly 250 internships in the fall of 2020, but she felt her resume was likely being thrown away.

So she removed her GPA, 2.4 overall, from her resume and applied to Tesla. The week before Thanksgiving in

2020, she received a congratulatory email on her acceptance for an internship with the automotive company.

Ericka worked on Tesla's San Francisco field test and compliance team, doing destructive testing on solar roofs among other tasks, from January to August 2021. It was her first time being away from home and remembers calling her mom crying, doubting her ability to continue the internship.

She ended up loving the experience. More internships far from home followed — with Rolls-Royce (aerospace) in Indiana in the summer of 2022 and then Gulfstream Aerospace in Georgia this past fall.

Next up is Blue Origin, an aerospace company based in Kent, Washington, this summer.

But first, she is looking forward to graduating with honors this spring. An overall grade-point average of 3.233 also makes her eligible for the master's degree program at U-M, which she'll start this fall.

At one point in the depths of her depression, Ericka thought only of making it through the next day. She never imagined being where she is now.

"I think having support around me was one of the biggest things," Ericka said. "I want others to know, you're not alone ... If you're struggling, ask for help. It's not easy or a walk in the park ... It's a lot of work to find out who you truly are."

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

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**Funding**

Continued from Page 1A

The haunted attraction opened in 2021 inside the Kay Beard building, the main structure still standing on the property. It's also home to Alice Cooper Court, a thoroughfare renamed for the rocker during an event where Cooper appeared in 2021.

The former Foundry Flask property in Northville is set to become a mixed-

use development on property that's also been vacant for years. Environmental remediation will include excavation and disposal of impacted soils, as well as installation of barrier systems to prevent exposure to any residual contamination.

The grant isn't the only benefit the project is receiving from the state. The project is also receiving \$730,000 in brownfield tax increment financing for environmental costs not covered under the grant. According to the assessment data, soil and groundwater were likely

contaminated by the site's historic industrial operations. Developer 456 Cady LLC is the owner of the property.

The project has been in the works for years, beginning with approval from the city's Historic District Commission back in 2021.

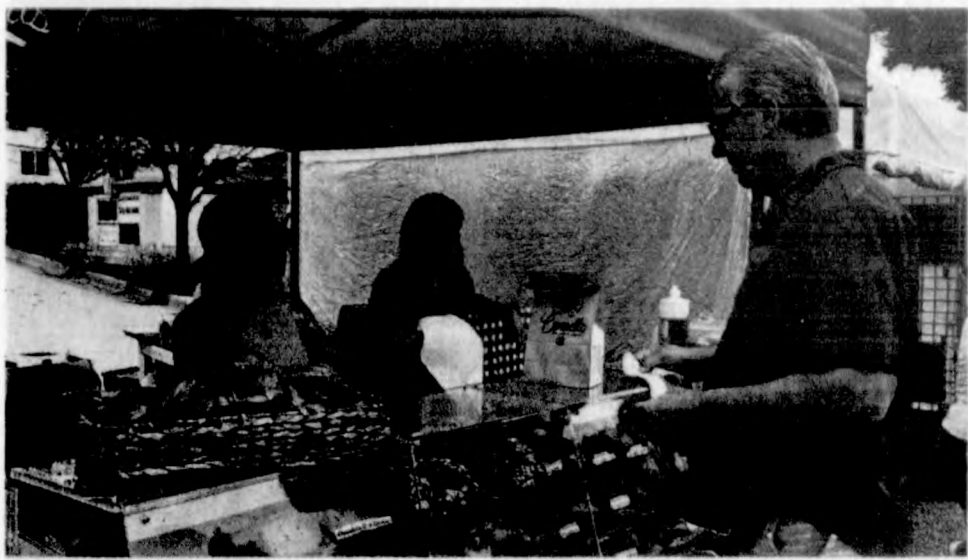
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Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Twitter: @davidveselenak.



The city of Westland was awarded nearly \$700,000 to help redevelop the former Eloise psychiatric hospital. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM





Cannelle has been a staple of the Farmington Farmers Market for years. Now, the bakery plans to open a permanent home along the downtown strip.

SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Cannelle patisserie to open new location in downtown Farmington

Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Matt Knio has been selling baked goods at the Farmington Farmers Market for years. Now, he's preparing to create a more permanent presence downtown for his patisserie, Cannelle.

Knio recently purchased the former KickstART building at 33304 Grand Rive Ave. and plans to start renovating the space this month. Knio said he'll likely open in April or May.

"I love Farmington," he said. "I love the people and I love the farmers market. The community over there is beautiful, and I'll love to be part of it."

Cannelle has locations in Birmingham, Ann Arbor and Detroit along with a commercial kitchen in Warren. Knio said he thinks Farmington is an up-and-coming community, and he wants to be part of it flourishing.

"I've been going to the farmers market for years now," he said. "In the last couple years, I've gotten really interested in the city. I can see the city is getting

going and getting better. I want to be part of it."

While the menus at each Cannelle are the same, every shop has a unique atmosphere. Farmington's shop will include, according to Knio, a "beautiful" outdoor patio. He also plans to keep his spot at the farmers market, which runs spring through fall at Riley Park.

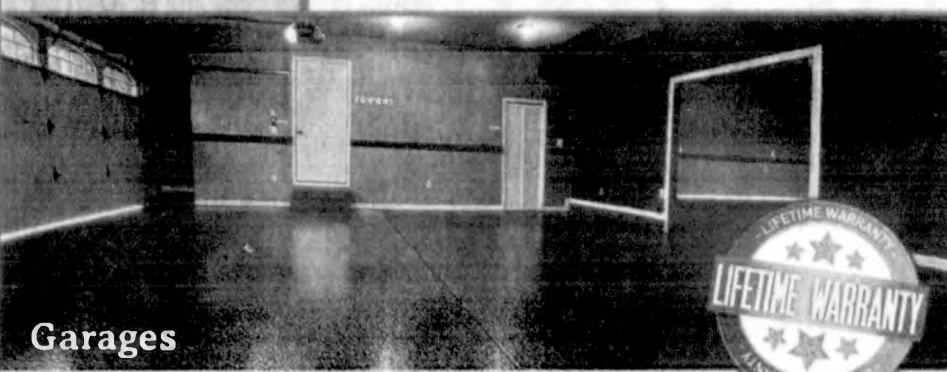
Even for fans of his market stand, Knio said the brick and mortar store will offer something new. One of his personal favorite menu items is the pistachio croissant.

"Usually at the farmers market, we just sell baked goods," he said. "But Cannelle isn't just about baked goods. We have pastries, breakfast sandwiches and chocolates."

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Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby\_tankk.

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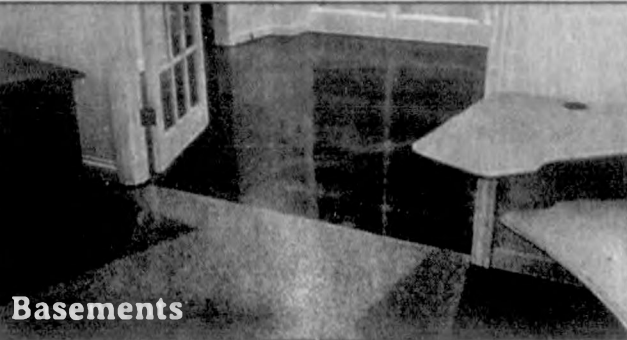
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—Steven C.

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# SPORTS

## HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL



Brother Rice's Warren Marshall dribbles during a Catholic League-Central boys basketball game Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, at Detroit Catholic Central. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## For Brother Rice, being one of the best isn't always fun

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

Even if Rick Palmer wanted to lie, his body language gives away the true answer anyway.

Following the Brother Rice boys basketball team's 67-52 victory Thursday night at rival Detroit Catholic Central, the fifth-year coach was asked if he was enjoying this.

What's this?

That's the pre-season hype the Warriors had entering this winter as the favorites to win the Division I state championship, despite shooting guard Henry Garrity (ACL) suffering a season-ending injury playing football.

That's the team celebrating national signing day with three starters joining Division I college teams. Curtis Wil-

liams, the top-ranked recruit in Michigan, picked Louisville, John Blackwell chose Wisconsin and Xavier Thomas is headed to Toledo. No other team has that many future D-I players.

That's Blackwell, a three-star combo guard who scored his 1,000th career point during a non-conference game on Jan. 3 at Rochester Hills Stony Creek.

That's the Warriors spending most of this season as the No. 1-ranked team in all of the important polls, from The D Zone Top 100 to the Detroit Free Press and the Associated Press.

Game after game has provided Brother Rice with memories that its players will recall for a lifetime. This is a special team embarking on a special season. It's why you sign up and play the sport, right?

So are you having fun and enjoying the ride, Coach Palmer?

"Umm, ha ha, yes," he said seconds after clenching his teeth, letting out a quiet groan and staring at his shoes.

It makes sense why he's reluctant to champion how great it's been so far.

Brother Rice (9-1, 1-1) has a target on its back. The expectations are there. Palmer did himself no favors in scheduling one of the toughest non-conference slates around. But that's needed if you want to be battle-tested when the playoffs start.

Plus, let's not overlook how the Warriors play in the best league in Michigan. That's not debatable. A year ago, all five teams — Brother Rice, CC, Warren De La Salle, Detroit U-D Jesuit and Orchard Lake St. Mary's — took turns knocking each other out of the No. 1 spot in the rankings.

See BROTHER RICE, Page 2B

## Plymouth hockey team bounces back from month-long losing streak

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

One by one, players from the Plymouth hockey team exited the ice and made their way to the dressing room.

Captain Gavin Timberlake pretended to cover his face with his gloves, let out a goofy shriek and gave one of those Peter Griffin-like giddy smiles.

Chris Borg started sprinting on his skates, lifted his front toes and skidded about 12 feet across the rubber floor as if he was wearing a pair of Heelys until he finally crashed into two teammates, who were also eager to celebrate.

"It feels good to finally win one, boys," one Wildcat shouted.

"Yeah," another responded. "It's been a month!"

It's true.

Plymouth's 7-1 victory over Farmington United on Jan. 11 finally brought an end to a brutal four-game losing streak that started just before the holiday break.

After beating a solid Cranbrook squad in the MIHL/KLAA Showcase on Dec. 10 at Eddie Edgar, the Wildcats (5-7) endured a month-long gauntlet during which they lost to three of the best teams in Michigan. That includes league losses to third-ranked Livonia Stevenson and No. 9 Salem, another loss to Alpena, which is No. 2 in Division 2, and a tough defeat to Sault Ste. Marie during a trip to the Upper Peninsula.

See PLYMOUTH, Page 4B

## Fran DeNardo proving to be one of undefeated Marlins' hardest workers

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

Gary Morris is an old-school girls basketball coach.

Not just because he's been doing this since 1992 (which includes him leading Farmington Hills Mercy since 2005).

But because of his approach to giving players a chance to prove themselves.

Take guard Fran DeNardo, for example.

There was no doubt she was going to be one of his captains this winter. Throughout her career, she's been a consummate leader. And that's been true through the first eight games of her senior year.

But is she one of his best players? That's debatable. The Marlins are not short on talent, from the freshmen and JV teams up to the varsity, and there could be younger players who are more worthy of being a starter over her.

But that's where Morris' old-school

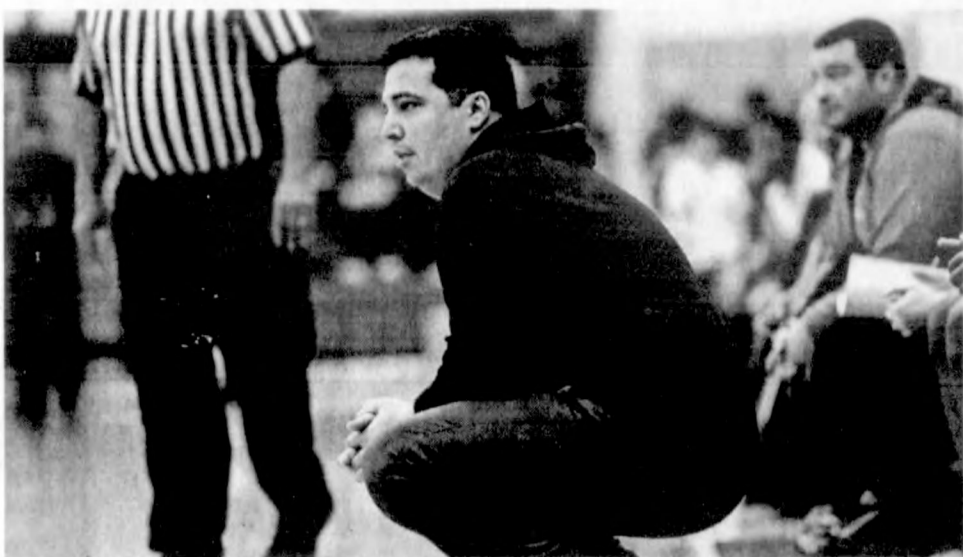
See MARLINS, Page 2B



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Brother Rice coach Rick Palmer watches his team during a Catholic League-Central boys basketball game Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, at Detroit Catholic Central. PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Brother Rice

Continued from Page 1B

CC was arguably the "worst" team in the Catholic League-Central — and make sure you notice the emphasis on the word "worst" — and it beat Brother Rice twice.

U-D Jesuit, which Brother Rice beat, won the league but was upset by Hamtramck in the regional opener.

St. Mary's, who had arguably the best player in the league in Western Michigan signee JaVaughn Hannah, beat DLS twice in the regular season but lost to the Pilots in the state quarterfinals.

DLS won only three league games, lost to CC in the CHSL tournament semifinals and went on to win the state championship.

You can't make this stuff up.

So it's easy to see why Palmer looks exhausted just 10 games into the season.

No lead is safe. No win is guaranteed.

"It's a grind, it's a grind," he said. "It's exhausting. I was here Tuesday night (for CC's game against U-D Jesuit). The bye game is my favorite day in the league because I get to sit back and watch two teams lose and have no stress. It's stressful, but our guys are coming together. We're trying to enjoy the process."

That process includes lots of film,

scouting and hours in the gym. Palmer said earlier this season that some practices have been tougher than their actual games. Which makes sense. The boys are loaded, even without Garrity. Their fourth-best player is guard Warren Marshall, whose only flaw is the fact he's just a junior in a lineup with talented seniors. But, barring injuries, there's no doubt he'll be Palmer's next D-I player.

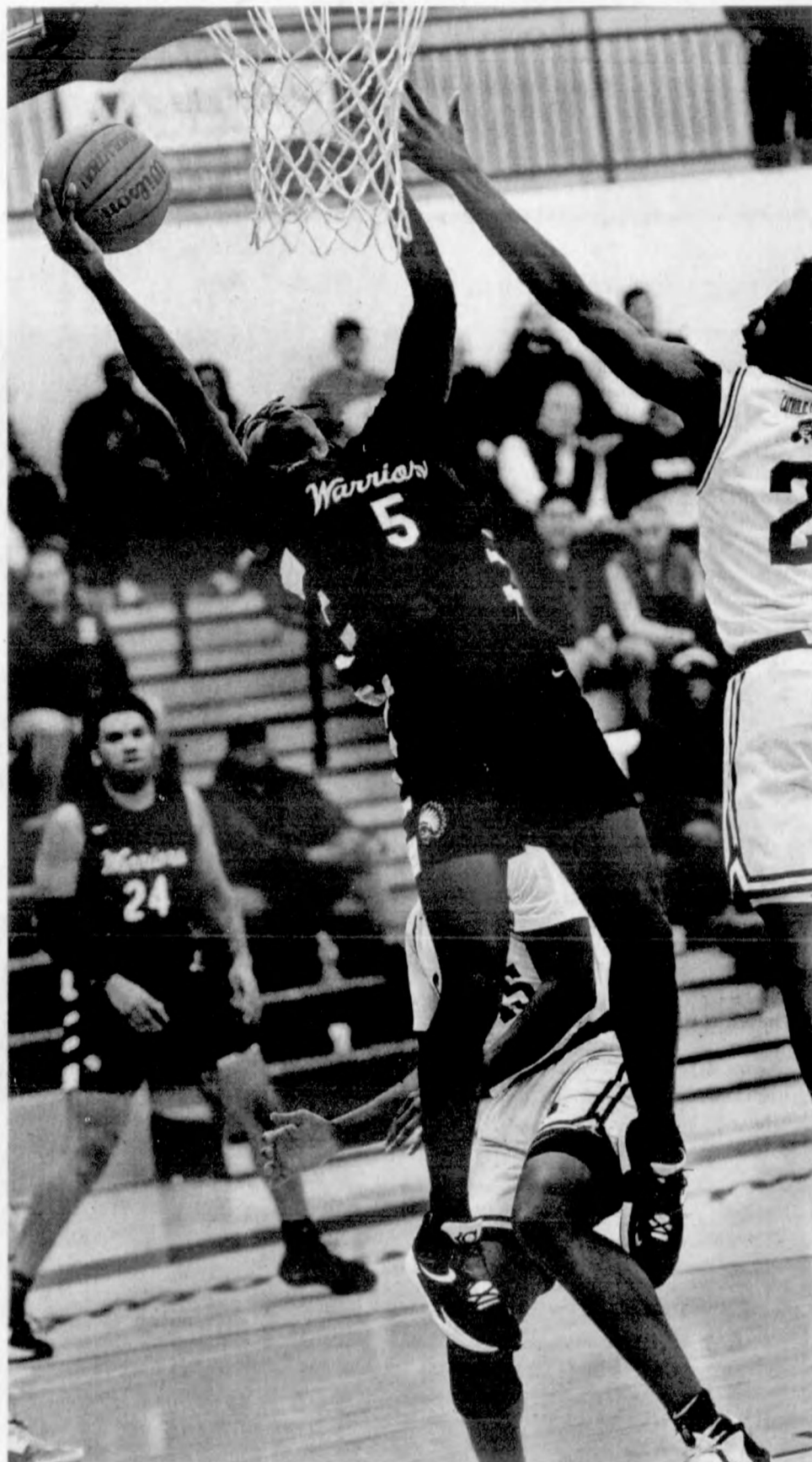
But how are the players feeling during this campaign?

"At the end of the day, it can be stressful, and that comes with basketball," said Blackwell, who scored 14 points vs. the Shamrocks. "But I always tell Curt, X and (Ryan) Frohock, like I told them yesterday, 'This is our senior year. You've got to enjoy it because you three, when we go onto the next level, it's a business at that point, so it's not going to be all fun and games sometimes.' I just told them to enjoy your senior year because you're going to miss it when you go to college."

Realistically, with DLS upsetting Brother Rice to kickoff CHSL play last week, the Warriors can afford just one more league loss, or else its dreams of winning the Central are likely over.

But that's the cost of being atop the mountain. Palmer's boys are going to get everyone's best each night. It's never going to be easy, but, after the final buzzer, it should at least be fun, right?

"Are we having fun? Yeah," Palmer said. "We're making progress."



Brother Rice's John Blackwell scores down low during a Catholic League-Central boys basketball game Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, at Detroit Catholic Central.

## Marlins

Continued from Page 1B

ways come in.

He saw how much DeNardo has worked to improve her game. Dating back to last year's Division 1 district championship run, she's done as much as possible to work her way into the starting lineup.

She received private instruction from Get Skillz Basketball in Livonia and she played for Legacy's AAU program.

So when the season started, Morris made her an ultimatum: Show me your hard work has paid off or come off the bench as one of the rotational players.

DeNardo hasn't given him a reason to doubt her yet.

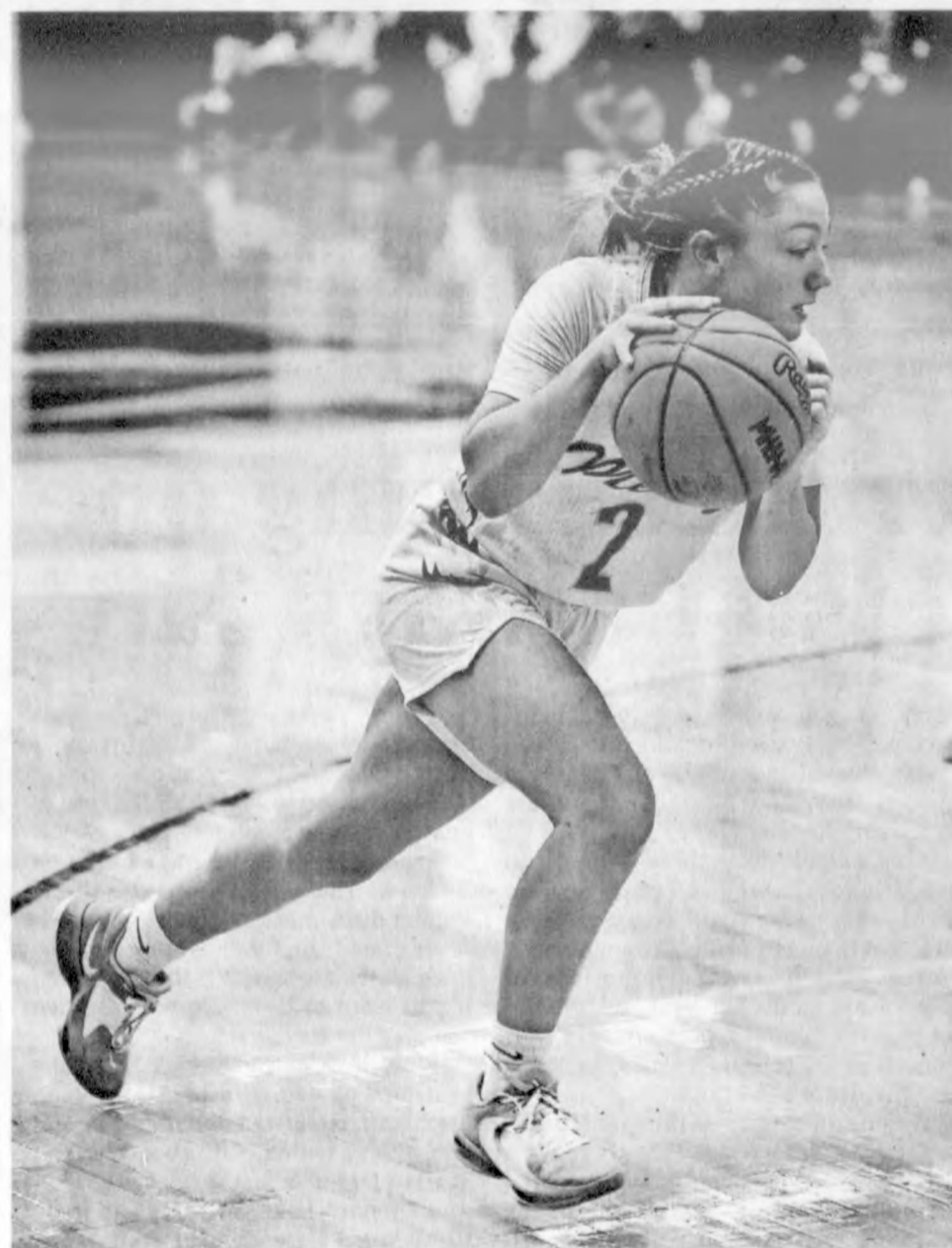
"I told her at the beginning of the season, 'You're going to start. I'm going to give you a shot, but just know that other people are going to be coming after you and want to get your minutes,'" Morris said. "And she has certainly responded. She's just a different player now that she's a senior. And she's worked so hard."

DeNardo, who's just 5-foot-3, has proven to be invaluable for the Marlins, who moved to 8-0 overall and 2-0 in the Catholic League-Central following their 66-24 victory on Jan. 10 over rival Bloomfield Hills Marian.

She's the team's shooting guard, but if point guard Lauren Smiley gets into foul trouble or needs a break, she slides over and fills that role for Smiley. She's a strong ballhandler with plenty of confidence to pass and dribble around the perimeter, so the Marlins' go-to scorers, small forward Aizlyn Albanese and power forward Maya White, don't miss a beat with DeNardo at the point.

But, more importantly, she's a stand-out defender. Morris said he puts DeNardo on each opponent's best perimeter player because he knows she can get the job done. And that was certainly the case against the Mustangs. Molly McLeod is one of the better point guards in the CHSL, and DeNardo did not take it easy on McLeod, who had to work to get passes into Marian's scorers. McLeod finished with nine points but had just five by the time DeNardo was subbed out for backups and watched the final 13 minutes, 51 seconds from the bench.

"Fran, the entire season, has been our lockdown defender," Morris said. "We've put her on the other team's best



Farmington Hills Mercy's Fran DeNardo dribbles to the hoop during a Catholic League-Central girls basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023.

TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

perimeter player, whether that be a 1, 2 or 3, and she's done a great job. She makes it really tough for them to move and get open. She did it again tonight against Molly."

Coincidentally, DeNardo's effort against McLeod came just one game after she had what she described as the best game of her career. She scored just seven points during a 46-33 win over Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard, arguably one of the top teams in Michigan, regardless of division. But all seven of those points were needed as White sat out most of the first half in foul trouble.

But, more importantly, Morris said it was her defensive effort that ensured the Marlins the comeback victory on the road. And that's what got her nominated for Hometown Life's Athlete of the Week this past week.

"It was really exciting, especially since they're such a really good team, so I just had to make sure I had a good mental outlook the whole day," DeNardo said. "My teammates really helped me relax, and we had a really fun bus ride. We make sure everyone is cool, we shake off the nerves and we make sure we all work together. My teammates

really help me a lot, for sure."

Which is important because DeNardo admitted she started the season worried about losing her starting role to a younger player. But her teammates have been there every step of the way to make sure she stays focused on performing her role.

As far as those fun bus rides? DeNardo said the Marlins like to sing the whole trip. Their favorite tune to sing along to right now is "Pump It Up" by Endor.

"Recently, I've just had a different outlook (since Morris gave me the ultimatum)," DeNardo added. "(It lurked in my head) a little bit at the beginning of the season, for sure. But then I just had to put that aside, continue to work hard, put my head down and keep going. Our FGR game, it gave me a lot of confidence. I've just been building off of that. I've been putting in a lot of hard work in practice. My teammates have really helped me build my confidence, so it's been going well."

"I just know that I've put in a lot of hard work since the summer. Just like throughout these last couple of games, I've just been telling myself to not think about everyone else. He (Morris) told me he wants me to start, but if someone beats me out, they're going to get that spot. I've just had to relax, play my game and not worry about everyone else."

The gauntlet will continue for the Marlins, who have still yet to play division opponents Warren Regina and Dearborn Divine Child. It might be tough for them to finish the CHSL-Central undefeated, but they should be looked at as the favorite to repeat as divisional champions and enter the conference tournament as the top seed.

DeNardo likely won't be leading the stat sheet in any of these upcoming games, but she's proved she deserves to be in the lineup alongside Albanese, White, Smiley and Emily Walker. Her lockdown defense and heady play as a passer have proven Morris' old-school approach of giving his senior captain a shot at starting was all worth it.

"I'm big on giving seniors a chance, and I think she has worked hard," Morris said. "From the end of our season last year until now, she's worked very hard. I just said to her that you've got to earn a shot to be our starting two (guard), and she took that to heart."

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



# Howell claws back from 12 down, beats Brighton in OT

**Bill Khan**  
Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

BRIGHTON — With Ashton Tomassi on the free throw line, about to give Brighton a three-point lead with 13.6 seconds left in the fourth quarter on Jan. 11, Howell guard Jaylen Hicks tried getting the attention of teammate Logan Leppek.

Leppek was perched close to the basket along the key, while Hicks was in the backcourt. Hicks didn't want to blurt out the plan for the upcoming possession to tip off the Bulldogs, so Leppek had to do his best to read lips.

"I was at the free-throw line getting ready to box out," Leppek said. "Then Jaylen came up to me and started mouthing what I thought was 'pick and pop.' So, I was 50-50 on it that that's what I was supposed to do. We just ran with it and got a good look and just shot it."

The play worked to perfection, regardless of whether it was the intended plan. Leppek took a pass from Hicks and drained a 3-pointer with four seconds remaining to force overtime.

In the extra period, John Klask hit the only basket to give Howell its first lead of the game in a 55-52 victory over Brighton.

"Leppek just set that down pick for me," Klask said. "I just came off it and was open and hit a shot."

The shot with 2:49 left in overtime capped a career-high 14-point performance for Klask, who came in averaging 4.6 points this season after playing sparingly as a junior.

"I couldn't be happier for that guy," Howell coach Nick Simon said. "That guy needs that as much as anybody on this team. He has had a bunch of ups and downs in his year-and-a-half on varsity. He's put in a ton of work. We see that stuff in practice all the time. I'm just so happy for him to be able to show it in a game like this."

Klask scored 10 points in the fourth quarter and overtime to spark Howell's rally from a 12-point deficit midway through the third. His previous career high was seven points.

"I think I got my confidence up in the first half," Klask said. "I just was feeling it in the second half, so I kept shooting it



Brighton's Eddie Millington elevates on a 3-point attempt during a 55-52 overtime loss to Howell on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023.

TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

and it kept going in."

Klask hit two 3-pointers in the fourth quarter to cut Brighton's lead to four points, but the Bulldogs were able to counter with points of their own after

each basket.

Hicks helped the Highlanders chip into the lead further, scoring six points in the final 3:52 of the fourth quarter. He drove to the basket and scored with 14.5

seconds left to cut the Bulldogs' lead to 50-49.

Tomassi was quickly fouled and hit both free throws. Howell moved the ball down the floor and got the game-tying 3-pointer.

The only points in overtime came on Klask's go-ahead jumper and a free throw by Hicks with 11 seconds remaining. Tomassi missed a 3-pointer from the top of the key and Klask grabbed the rebound to seal the victory.

"Throughout the past couple weeks, throughout the whole season, the whole thing we've been talking about is just sticking with the game plan," said Leppek, who finished with a team-high 15 points. "In life, in practice, in games, there's gonna be adversity coming our way. So, the whole thing we're talking about is sticking with that game plan, sticking on that path and eventually we'll come through."

Brighton entered the game with a six-game winning streak and a 7-1 record. All seven of the Bulldogs' victories were by double figures.

It looked like the Bulldogs were on their way to another lopsided victory when they jumped out to a 16-4 lead, but the Highlanders didn't allow the game to slip beyond their grasp.

"It's the first moment we've been in with a lot of pressure against Howell, No. 1, and No. 2 just that kind of game," Brighton coach Mike Griest said. "We'll learn from it and we'll get better from it, staff to players. I'm confident we'll get better."

"Coaches sometimes will say it's good to have a loss. I don't believe in that. I think wins are wins, and you want those. This will definitely be a learning experience. It's hard to simulate things in practice. This was not practice and Howell executed better than we did."

Hicks finished with 14 points for Howell (4-3), which has won both of its overtime games this season.

Tomassi had 17 points, four assists and four steals for Brighton. Ben Anderson scored 12 of his 13 points in the first half and finished with 12 rebounds for the Bulldogs.

Contact Bill Khan at [wkhan@gannett.com](mailto:wkhan@gannett.com). Follow him on Twitter @BillKhan.



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# Plymouth

Continued from Page 1B

In fact, that loss to the Sault was an eye-opener. Plymouth gave up four goals in the opening period and was essentially handed the loss just 17 minutes into the game.

Knowing the playoffs are right around the corner, first-year coach Brian Dallas sent a message to his players: We need to clean it up and finish this game with some pride. We need to build some momentum with under a dozen games remaining before the regionals are here.

And that's just what happened in the final two periods last weekend at Big Bear Arena.

"Our schedule was a real grind, and I think we kind of ran out of gas up north, riding the bus and playing very physical and skilled teams," Dallas said. "We just didn't play very well, quite frankly. It's good to get back home and get back on our game a little bit. My message to them up north was: We're better, and everybody needs to give more."

"We played the last two periods 2-1 against them. We gave up four in the first. The game was over essentially after the first because they have a good, solid goaltender (Michael Bontrager) and play a good, solid system. The idea at that point was let's try to win the second period. Let's try to win the third period. Let's build some momentum for tonight, and I think we did that coming into tonight."

It hasn't been a total rebuild for Dallas, who took over the Wildcats after Dearborn Unified disbanded last-off-season. The team had a solid foundation to build on when he got on the bench at Plymouth Cultural Center and Ice Arena, and fans got a glimpse of that against Farmington, another squad that is enduring a rebuild.

The Wildcats set the tone in the first period by outshooting Farmington, 19-3.

They broke with their special teams, scoring on one of their four attempts on the power play (Caden Wingrove) and also added a shorthanded goal (James Darty).

But, more importantly, they showed just how selfless they can be.

Borg, an alternate captain, broke open a 2-1 game by scoring back-to-back insurance goals.



Plymouth's Chris Borg scores during a hockey game against Farmington United on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

The senior had an opportunity to secure the hat trick late in the third. As he was attacking the net, though, instead of firing a shot at Farmington goalie Landon Wiesner, he slid a pass across the crease to Wingrove, who blasted in a wide-open goal on the backside.

Yeah, Borg's had hat tricks before, so it wouldn't have been earth-shattering had he recorded another one. But to pass one up to help a buddy have a better scoring opportunity, that's what you want to see if you're Dallas.

"My teammates have been setting me up for a lot of nice plays, and we've been moving the puck well for me to bury them," said Borg, who leads the team with 12 points (seven goals, five assists).

"I saw Winny wide open backdoor, and I thought, 'Why not give it to him?' He had a wide-open net. It was an easy play there instead of me just trying to stuff it home."

The win should be the shot in the arm the Wildcats have needed as they close out the regular season, especially with a handful of tough matchups coming up. That includes KLAA crossover games against Northville, Novi and defending state champion Hartland as well as a Black matchup with Livonia Churchill.

There was plenty of self-reflecting on the bus trip down I-75 following that loss to the Sault. So it wasn't a surprise to see all the celebrating en route to the dressing room after Plymouth took care

of Farmington.

But who knows? Perhaps that loss in the U.P. was just what the boys needed to inspire them to turn around their season.

"It's been tough," Borg added. "The bus ride home, it was a struggle. We came into tonight and really responded. We played hard. We put up a couple in the third, and we liked how we responded. We've just got to keep it going. Keep the momentum up. Keep the energy high. We did a good job of that today. Hopefully, we can keep that up Friday and continue that for the rest of the season."

Follow Brandon Folsom on Twitter @folsombrandonj.

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# Stevenson named Hartland football coach

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If Thomas Stevenson had only one opportunity to be Hartland's head football coach, it was one he would always savor.

Stevenson, Hartland's defensive coordinator since 2016, was pressed into duty as the head coach when Brian Savage had a case of COVID during the week of the Eagles' regular-season game against Howell in 2021.

The Eagles knocked off a 5-0 Howell team that night, 29-7, a victory that ultimately allowed Hartland to play in the KLAAs championship game against Belleville.

"I always said, 'Hey, I had my shot against Howell, the ultimate rival in my life,'" Stevenson said. "That's always the team I looked at since I was a little kid that this is the team we need to beat. It was a very special day for my family and our program, something I'll never forget."

Stevenson will have more opportunities to make great memories leading the Hartland football program after being named the Eagles' head coach on Jan. 12.

The job became open in mid-November when Savage stepped down after 11 seasons because he planned to retire as a teacher on Dec. 31. Under an act that went into effect in July, anyone who retires from a public school in Michigan can't receive a salary working in a school for nine months.

Over the next two months, Athletic Director JD Wheeler received 20 applications for the job. He screened 10 candidates by phone, had initial interviews with six along with Principal Kate Gregory and followed up with three finalists.

There were a lot of nervous moments over those two months for Stevenson, a 2007 Hartland graduate who has been coaching in some capacity in the football program since his sophomore year at the University of Michigan.

"It's the only job I've ever wanted in my life, growing up here for a long time and playing youth football here and playing high school football here," Stevenson said. "It's the only place I've ever coached."

"For the last couple months, it's been a long process, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to have gone through the process. I always thought this is what was going to happen, but it was very rewarding to have to earn the opportunity. Speaking with JD over the last couple months, he said, 'You definitely earned it. We never had a doubt in you. We just had to carry out the process.' That's very gratifying."

While there is value in the continuity of hiring a coach from within the program, Wheeler wasn't looking to maintain the status quo.



New Hartland head football coach Thomas Stevenson (arms raised) has been the Eagles' defensive coordinator since 2016. COURTESY

"I was hoping to hear his new ideas and his vision for the program," Wheeler said. "If Thomas would have come in and said, 'We're just going to keep the train rolling in exactly the same direction,' I would have been disappointed. I wanted to hear his ideas and unique vision for what Hartland football could be throughout the interview process. That's what impressed me the most."

Stevenson knew early on he wanted to be a football coach.

He was a two-time second-team all-Livingston County defensive lineman for Hartland in 2005 and 2006. During the fall of his freshman year at Michigan, there was a tremendous void in his life.

"The first year I didn't have football in my life was when I went away to college," Stevenson said. "It was a really weird feeling not being on the football field. That year, I knew I had to figure out how to get back on the football field fast."

Just two years removed from high school, Stevenson became the defensive coordinator for Hartland's freshman team. It was a low-demand job that allowed him to still focus on his studies.

After graduating from Michigan, Stevenson worked with the junior varsity team, the first two years as defensive coordinator and the next two as head coach. He joined the varsity as defensive coordinator in 2016.

Defense has been the Eagles' strength the past two seasons. Hartland has allowed only 13.6 points per game during that time. The 2021 team had shutouts in four of its first eight games before games against state champion Belleville and a triple-overtime playoff loss to Howell skewed the defensive averages negatively the final two weeks.

"I've taken pride in helping shape that side of the ball with the players and the coaches," Stevenson said. "We've done something very special together, trying to include all of our players and all of our coaches in the entire program. I've been able to coach that side of the ball with my dad and having some of my best friends on that coaching staff. It's incredible. I love the opportunity to build the defense, which a lot of people would recognize is top-notch and has given our team every chance to win big games."

Stevenson's father, Bob, coaches the

defensive line at Hartland and was recognized this past season as one of the state's assistant coaches of the year by the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association.

Now that he's the head coach, Stevenson said he will have to allocate the primary defensive responsibilities to someone else.

"I don't think I can put the time in I have been on one side of the ball, specifically," he said. "I want to be more involved with the offense and special teams and the game plan and with our lower levels and with our students in their academic pursuits. The defense will be in good hands with everybody we have on our staff."

"The majority of guys on the staff still want to be on the staff. I think roles will change a little bit. I also have a handful of guys who reached out in this process who want to come on board and add their value to our program. It's exciting, because I've had some pretty high-level coaches, guys who have coached around the state of Michigan, who want to come to Hartland now."

Contact Bill Khan at [wkhan@gannett.com](mailto:wkhan@gannett.com). Twitter: @BillKhan.

## Obituaries

### Sandra "Sandy" Kaye Di Ponio

HIGHLAND - Sandra "Sandy" Kaye Di Ponio, of Highland, MI, passed away surrounded by her family on January 7, 2023, at 75 years of age. Sandy was born on February 18, 1947 in Pontiac, MI, the eldest of three girls.

Sandy grew up in Clarkston and graduated from Clarkston High in 1965. After time at Central Michigan, she worked at Pontiac Motor Division in the office for 9+ years, leaving there to start a family with her soulmate Mario. After she raised her two children, David & Gina, she attended Oakland University and studied elementary education, graduating in 1990. From there, she obtained her dream job as a teacher at Muir Middle School for many years until she retired in 2011, once being nominated for teacher of the year. She enjoyed helping her students prepare for life success and looked forward to her students returning and sharing their life updates along the way.

Sandy had a gift for making family holidays magical, most specifically Christmas, of which brought out a child-like wonder and joy that filled the room and the hearts of those around her.

Her greatest joy was her family and friends, and she blessed all of them with her kind and humorous spirit. Nothing gave her greater joy than spending time with her husband and children. She will be greatly missed.

Beloved wife of Marino Di Ponio for 52 years, Sandy is also the loving mother of David (Annette) Di Ponio and Gina (Dale) Lawrence. Dear sister of Cindy (Glen) Riley. She is also survived by her sisters-in-law, Maria (the late Giuseppe) Di Ponio, and Connie (Joseph) Marker, and her brothers-in-law, Rosino (Gladys) Di Ponio, Benedetto (JoAnne) Di Ponio, and Jacob (Diane) Di Ponio. She is also survived by many dear nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, extended family members, and close friends.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Betty Smalley, her sister, Susan (Jack) Howey, and her father and mother-in-law, Gaetano and Giuseppa Di Ponio.

Visitation was at Lynch & Sons Funeral Home. Mass was at Church of the Holy Spirit with interment at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.



## New Fowlerville coach Copeland 'bleeds purple'

Bill Khan  
Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Matt Copeland felt the time was right to take on the added responsibility of being a head football coach, but he wasn't exactly shopping around for gigs.

"(Fowlerville) is really the only place I would do it," said Copeland, who has been named the Gladiators' new football coach. "I was born and raised here. I've been a Gladiator my whole life."

It doesn't get any more purple and gold in Fowlerville than the Copeland name, which has produced five generations of graduates from the high school.

Copeland is a 1994 Fowlerville grad who has worked alongside his father and brother during a 22-year coaching career at his alma mater. He has taught in the school district for 23 years and has a daughter who is a senior this year.

"The job opened up kind of at the perfect time," Copeland said. "My youngest daughter is graduating in June, so I'll have a little bit more time on my hands. I thought I'd give it a shot. I've had the pleasure of working with coach (Jack) Wallace, coach (Bret) Shrader and coach (Jon) Fletcher, so I'm excited to help keep the program moving forward."

Copeland has coached in the football program in various capacities,



Copeland

most recently as a defensive assistant coach. He is an assistant track and field coach and was the softball coach when Fowlerville reached the regional final for the only time in 2014.

"He's been in almost everything at some point in some way," Fowlerville athletic director Brian Osborn said. "I think that's so important for him and for our kids and other coaches on the staff, because now they know who's there and know he's going to support them, whether at a wrestling meet or basketball game in the winter. When he's not at a track meet, he'll pop over to softball and baseball kids. He bleeds purple and loves Fowlerville."

The job opened up when Fletcher resigned in November after six seasons leading the Gladiators. Copeland was one of 15 candidates and four finalists.

"Some people are gonna look at it and think maybe we could have gone outside of the district," Osborn said. "The big thing in interviews looking at people outside the district is it confirmed we have great coaches here. We were able to interview multiple people on our staff."

"I think it's important we're now hitting the ground running. They know him, they have respect for him. It's going to help us in the long run in terms of getting winter workouts together, trying to get kids to stay involved with multiple sports and compete."



# Brighton beats Howell, stays tied atop KLAA West

**Bill Khan**  
Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**HOWELL** — Back on Dec. 17, Brighton's girls basketball team was in unfamiliar territory, trying to pick up the pieces after its first 0-3 start in 12 years.

Granted, those losses were to three teams with a combined record of 21-3, but the Bulldogs aren't accustomed to losing games in bunches.

But more than three weeks later, Brighton is back in a familiar position, contending for a KLAA West championship.

The Bulldogs' most impressive victory during their four-game winning streak was a decisive 57-41 triumph Jan. 10 at Howell.

"We changed our mindset after that third loss in a row," first-year Brighton coach Bob Wellman said. "We came together in that practice before that next week and said we're going to reset and forget about that start and get the mindset we're 0-0. We started playing better team basketball and having better practices."

Senior Mary Copple led the charge for Brighton, scoring 26 points and grabbing eight rebounds.

"She started off a little tight," Wellman said. "She missed some buckets, but then sort of got into a groove. It started by her creating some shots for her teammates. That then created some open looks for her, and she hit some

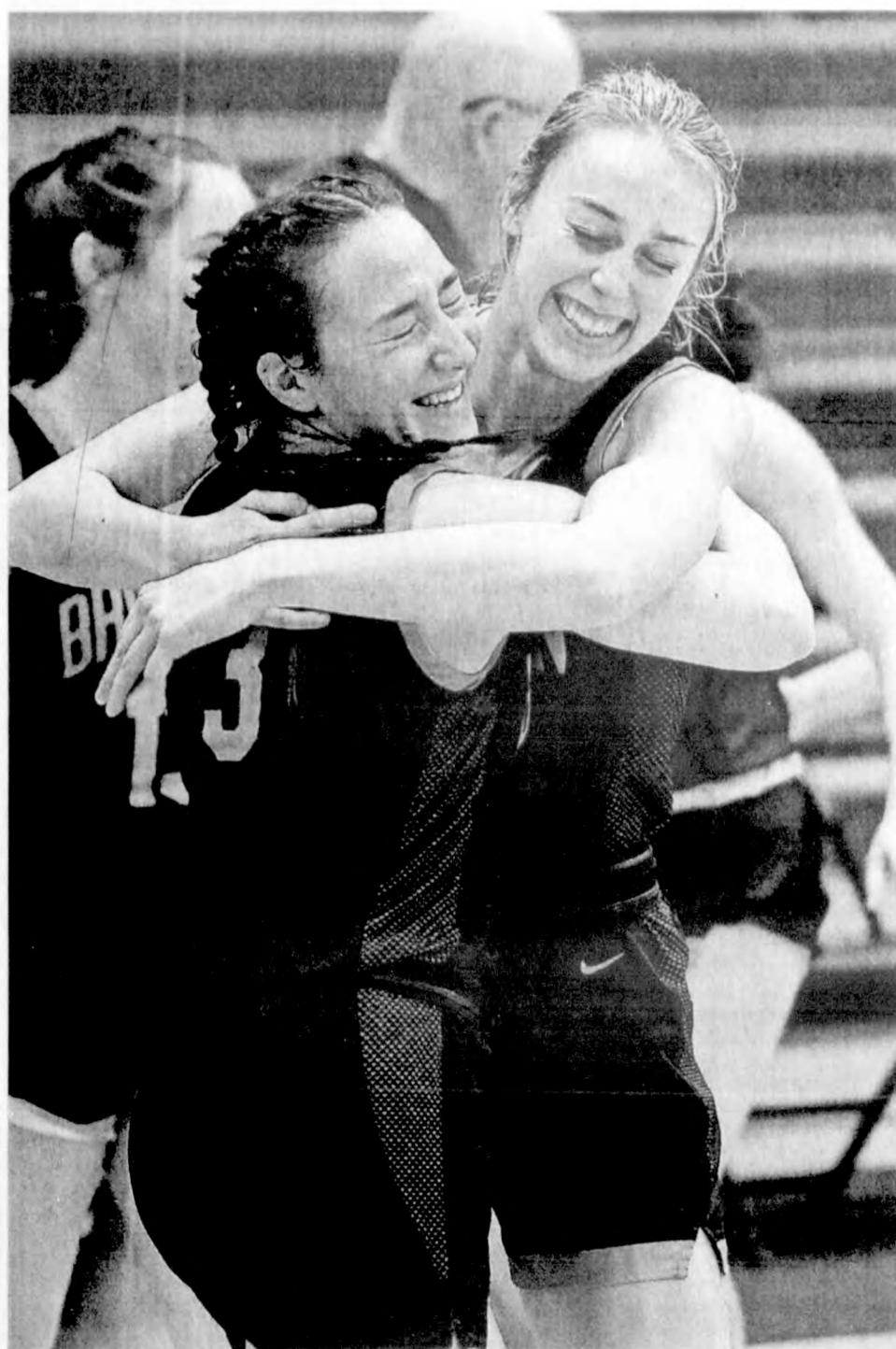
shots. She hit a couple deep 3s. When she hits a couple good 3s, she feels comfortable and gets in that groove."

Howell had won three games in a row after losing its division opener at Hartland on Dec. 22. Now the Highlanders (7-3 overall) are tied for fifth place in the West with a 1-2 division record.

"At this point, I'm not too worried about what's going on with the division race," said Howell coach Tim Olszewski, whose team shared the West title with Hartland last season. "I'm gonna focus on what we've got to do to get better for Friday and realize we need to take this, not just one game at a time, but one practice at a time. We can't afford ourselves the luxury of having a lackluster practice. We've got to keep them engaged, we've got to keep them battling. We've got to focus on the game at hand, and the chips will fall where they will."

Liv Lutz had six points, Julia Viau five points and Makena Smith eight rebounds for Brighton. Molly Deurloo had 21 points and seven rebounds for Howell.

"We came out with a lot of energy," Wellman said. "Our defense did a really nice job on them. They've got some really good players. Even though Molly Deurloo had 21, we were pleased we held (Sophie) Daugard to under 10, and the same with (Gabby) Piepho. Those two girls can really score for them. It really started with our defense, and we moved the ball around. We found girls who were open and finished."



Brighton's Mary Copple (3) and Makena Smith celebrate a 57-41 victory over Howell on Tuesday. DAN ZEPPA/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

# Chelsea boys coach turns heads and wins a bunch

**Mick McCabe**  
Special to Detroit Free Press

It was minutes before Chelsea's boys basketball game at the Roundball Classic in Ferndale when the public address announcer asked whom he assumed was the Chelsea official scorer for the name of the head coach.

The person wrote down: Andrea Cabana.

With a puzzled look on his face asked: "His name is Andrea?"

"No," she responded, "that's my name."

Clearly, this must have been a failure to communicate.

"No," the announcer said, "I need the head coach's name."

Finally Cabana said: "I am the head coach."

By then, the announcer was baffled. "Really?" he asked.

Yes, really.

Cabana, 46, is the first-year head coach of the Chelsea boys basketball team, replacing Josh Tropea, who resigned last spring.

But she is anything but a rookie head coach. For the previous six years she was the highly successful coach of the nearby Grass Lake girls team, which she led to the 2021 Division 3 state championship.

Very few women have coached varsity boys basketball teams in Michigan. Among them are Brenda Gatlin, who was the Hall of Fame girls basketball coach at Detroit Cass Tech and coached the Cass boys team for a season and beat a Detroit Northern team that featured three Division I players, including Derrick Coleman. Deb Norman also coached the boys at Allen Park Cabrini, and the late Keisha Brown coached the Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart boys team while her husband, Damon, still coaches the Sacred Heart girls team.

It is anything but common to see a woman calling the shots for a boys team.

"It's different," Cabana said. "It does catch some people off-guard. I think it's humorous. Once they find out, they're very receptive to it."

No one is more receptive than the Chelsea players.

Many of them already knew her, but not necessarily as Grass Lake's girls coach. They knew her as Joey Cabana's mother. Joey is the junior point guard and is averaging around 24 points a game.

"We weren't sure who was going to take it, and Joey said he thought his mom would be a perfect fit," junior Jake Stephens said. "We all were feeding into it, and I think we helped her get the job. When I heard she got it, I was happy

about it. I've been friends with Joey since fifth grade, when we played AAU together. I'd been around their family for a while and I knew she'd be a good fit for us."

So far, so good. The Bulldogs, ranked No. 5 in Division 2, are 8-0 entering Friday's game at Dexter. It took about five seconds for Cabana, whose nephew, Cole, earned all-state football honors at Dexter and signed with Michigan, to convince the Chelsea players she knew exactly how to coach this team.

She spent the summer installing her offense and leading the team in summer league games.

"I remember against (Ann Arbor) Skyline in particular, the game was getting a little heated up," Stephens said. "We were down big at the beginning, she called a timeout and brought us all together and we ended up winning by double digits. That's when I realized she has what it takes to move over to the men's side of the high school world."

Although urged to by her husband, Chris, and their four children, Cabana didn't immediately jump at the opportunity to throw her hat into the ring for the job.

"My husband kind of said it jokingly a little bit," she said. "I really had zero intentions of leaving Grass Lake — ever, for that matter. But when this opened up, it took two weeks and a few phone calls from a couple of different people and finally, I decided to apply for it."

Athletic director Brad Bush, who soon will be leaving the district to become an assistant director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, had an unusually good pool of candidates for the job.

"There was a thorough process and the longer we got into it, the more it became clear," he said. "She had coaching experience, she was well-respected by her peers. It was obvious our kids, who were involved in the process, very much respected her as a coach. She just rose to the top."

The fact that she would be one of the few women to coach a boys team in the state was never a factor in Cabana getting the job.

"The people that matter the most in this — the kids — it was clear to me from the beginning they didn't care at all if it was a man or a woman," Bush said. "They just wanted the best coach."

A few years ago, Bush hired former NFL tight end Tony Scheffler to coach the Chelsea girls basketball team and he has the Bulldogs rated No. 3 in Division 2.

Now he has a woman running the boys team.

"There really isn't a lot of precedent for it, but in the same sense, I think if

you can coach, you can coach," Bush said. "Tony has done a great job with our girls as a man, and she's done a great job as our boys coach as a woman."

Ironically, Cabana did not grow up wanting to be the next Sheryl Swoopes or Rebecca Lobo. She wanted to be the next Mary Lou Retton.

"I loved gymnastics," she said. "At a very young age, I was drawn to it. I competed at a high level in USA Gymnastics and trained in Lansing and we were in the gym five days a week."

Eventually basketball became her passion, and the fact that Parma Western had a gymnastics program allowed her to compete in both sports in high school.

Cabana began coaching when her eldest child, Gracie, now 23, was in the third grade and kept with it when Abrie, now a sophomore on the Grand Valley State team, began playing.

Because she was never an elite player, Cabana had her father serve as her first assistant coach and moved on from there.

"Any time any of my kids were in a

building with a college coach, I'd go and watch and take a notebook and write everything down — you've got to be a student of the game," she said. "It kind of evolved, found things that worked for me and tweaked them. I never tried to reinvent the wheel."

But she did reinvent the Chelsea offense. The Bulldogs now play at a much faster pace, and the players love it.

"It's just the way she coaches," said her son. "She plays 'free ball.' Our other coach, Josh, is a great coach, but he was more like having a bunch of offenses. I think we play a lot better when we don't run through a system."

Of all that she has brought to the program, Cabana is most proud of the team's new approach to defense.

"I'm a defense-first coach," she said. "What we've changed most is the defensive aspect of it. It's been a gradual kind of development as we go and they're getting it. We're not doing anything special, it's just different. We're changing that muscle memory, kind of, and they are given a lot more freedom on offense."

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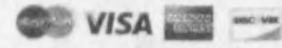
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