



Captain's sacrifice could help Detroit CC at states

SPORTS, 1B

NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Teen golf caddies hit a hole-in-one with free rides to college

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Lauren Haring and Nate Curtis took a swing at going to college by becoming golf caddies.

They ended up hitting the ultimate hole-in-one: a full four-year tuition and housing scholarship to their choice of the University of Michigan or Michigan State University, worth at least \$120,000.

It's a game-changer for the teens and their families.

"I just think this is going to set me up for pursuing my dreams," Haring, a Highland Township resident and Lakeland High School senior, said. "I don't have to worry about the financial burden of college. I'll be surrounded by successful people with the same ambitions and now with this scholarship, I'll go to one of the best schools in Michigan and get the best education possible."

Curtis, a Livonia Stevenson High School senior, agreed.

"If I had not gotten this scholarship, I probably wouldn't have gone to (a four-year) college," he said. "I would have either gone to community college or trade school, because it's too much to take on the loans. I would have had to pay it all myself and I didn't want to do that."

Now, he will attend Michigan State University in the fall and go green without having to spend green, all because he took a chance on working the greens at Western Golf & Country Club in Redford Township on the suggestion of a school guidance counselor three years ago.

The counselor was familiar with the nearly century-old Chick Evans Scholarship, named after an amateur golfer, and through which nearly 12,000 caddies have graduated college.

Currently, a record 1,100 caddies are enrolled at 22 universities across the nation as Evans Scholars, according to the Western Golf Association. Haring and Curtis are among 25 high school seniors in Michigan that were recently selected to be among the next class of Evan Scholars, based on their strong caddy record, excellent academics, financial need and outstanding character.

See CADDIES, Page 2A



Dan Mora, owner of the newly opened Banditos Restaurant & Saloon, and Lisa Shaw, manager, inside Milford House.

SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Milford gets a taste of Latin food with Banditos Restaurant & Saloon

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Dan Mora felt Milford was missing authentic Latin food, so he is quickly fixing that with the opening of Banditos Restaurant & Saloon.

The intimate bar and lounge, located inside the quickly evolving Milford House at the corner of Main and Commerce streets, recently had a soft

opening and received such a great response that Mora is already planning its expansion in both seating and menu offerings.

"It's been crazy - we will have two full-blown restaurants," he said and then laughs, "We asked people what does Milford need? And we found the answer was Latin food and Maurice salad."

Mora will keep the Maurice salad on the Milford House side and in Banditos

will concentrate on offering Latin-flavored dishes, along with high-end tequilas, bourbons, and more.

On the current menu are small plates such as diablo shrimp, filet fajita tips, queso, guacamole and salsa appetizers, as well as a fiesta Mexican pizza, plus some surprises such as chicken tinga egg rolls and pineapple cheesecake egg rolls.

See BANDITOS, Page 6A

Northville Downs project clears first hurdle

Laura Colvin

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

After nearly an hour of public comment and a few tense moments, a proposal for the Northville Downs in Plymouth Township got a green light in the first step of the approval process.

The project, proposed on part of a 128-acre parcel near the southwest corner of Five Mile and Ridge roads,

would include a half-mile oval harness racetrack, grandstand, racing building, horse barn and more.

At the Feb. 15 meeting, the Plymouth Township Planning Commission was tasked with holding a public hearing and deciding whether plans for the project meet predetermined criteria to move forward as a planned unit development (PUD).

Those who made comments during the hearing spoke both in favor of and in

opposition to the project. For some, traffic and road conditions were a sore spot.

Plymouth Township resident Howard Hamerink said he was not opposed to the project, but he lives in the area and has concerns about already-existing road congestion caused by school traffic, industrial traffic and the many trucks going to and from the nearby landfill every day.

See DOWNS, Page 2A

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Microbrewery, tasting room planned in Livonia

Shelby Tankersley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

LIVONIA — A new microbrewery and tasting room is likely on its way to Livonia.

Joe Walters is planning to open the 1 For All microbrewery later this year at 38083 Ann Arbor Road.

He plans to run the business by himself, saying he values the creative freedom and reliability that come with

working alone.

"Keeping it small and manageable to where I can do it myself has been a concept I've had for many years now," Walters said. "The whole concept is just pulling it back into just doing the tasting room and doing it all myself."

The business is awaiting lease confirmation, and is expected to receive the remaining city approvals later this month. 1 For All will only serve beer and hard seltzer.

Walters formerly owned the popular

Liberty Street Brewing Company — now the Bearded Lamb Brewing Company — in Plymouth for over a decade and has been working in the beverage industry for about 25 years.

He's also consulted for other breweries and has taught brewing classes at Schoolcraft College.

The tasting room will be small, with a bar of about 25 seats and a to-go option for people wanting to purchase growlers.

Walters plans to have 10 beers on tap

at any time, including IPA, porter, stout, amber ale, blonde lager and gluten free beer. He said his fan-favorite nonalcoholic root beer and his "Pooh Beer" honey porter will be on the menu, as well.

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

Caddies

Continued from Page 1A

Teeling up for college, not the PGA Tour

An initial knowledge of golf was not required, Haring noted.

She is the granddaughter of a golfer, but she knew nothing about the sport herself when her grandpa suggested she caddy at Pine Lake Country Club in West Bloomfield Township.

She was only 13, the youngest age at which caddies are accepted, but she was sold on the idea of making good money, meeting new people and getting exercise outdoors. Most of all, she was excited about the end game — free college.

Curtis, who was a sophomore when he learned about the opportunity to caddy for a scholarship, had golfed before but had never helped anyone on the course.

Both Haring and Curtis had very short training, just a day or two, and then it was out on the course to accompany seasoned golfers and to continually learn.

"It's lots of patience, lots of taking in information as you go," Curtis said. "You have to have a good knowledge of golf, you have to keep up with the golfer and be active and talk to them."

Curtis worked about four hours a day five days a week during summers and a



Lauren Haring, a Lakeland High School senior, caddies at Pine Lake Country Club in West Bloomfield Township.
COURTESY OF LAUREN HARING

little less in the fall.

Haring, who began working league nights in the spring of seventh grade, said she would caddy for 18 holes or sometimes 36 holes on summer days, which usually equated to being on the course for five or six hours. She also received some early driving lessons on the golf cart. When she started caddying, she recalls she was the same size as some of the golf bags, which was intimidating, as was getting out of her comfort zone and advising strangers on their golf game.

Over the years, however, caddying



Nate Curtis, a Livonia Stevenson High School senior, is a 2023 awardee of the Chick Evans Scholarship.
COURTESY OF NATE CURTIS

has helped her grow as a person and has become "the most rewarding experience of my life."

She wrote about her experience in a two-page essay that she had to submit with her application for the Evans Scholarship. She noted in her essay that, if selected, the education at the University of Michigan or Michigan State University would help her achieve her dream of being a successful engineer.

Last month, after an interview process in which she and other caddies spoke in front of an audience at the Or-

chard Lake Country Club in West Bloomfield Township about their ambitions, she learned she will soon be on her way to achieving her goal.

Her mother found a letter on the porch from the Western Golf Association and began dancing around her daughter.

Haring opened the envelope to see a little white flag, a signal that she was a new scholar.

"I started tearing up and getting so excited," she said. "I texted my friends and called other family members. There were so many people who specifically helped me that I thanked, including golfers at the club who helped me with the application and helped me be a good caddy."

Curtis, too, remembers the "nice little flag," as he opened his free ticket to college, and of course, the excited reaction of his family.

"This is such a blessing," Curtis said. "Two years ago, I had no idea what I would be doing. It means almost everything to me. I know now I can go to college, get a degree, help my family. Now my parents know they don't have to worry about me."

Caddying, he adds, was the best decision he has ever made.

To learn more about the Evans Scholarship, visit wgaesf.org.

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

Downs

Continued from Page 1A

"It's gridlocked," Hamerink said. "It's gridlocked in the morning; it's grid-

locked at lunch time; it's gridlocked in the evening."

Opposition to the project

A steady stream of speakers lined up to voice concerns about issues such as animal ethics and gambling. Some argued the plan is not in alignment with the goals of the township's master plan.

Plymouth Township resident Anthony Costa said he is opposed to the proposal and cited concerns about horse deaths in the racing industry.

"As a state, we've outlawed dog racing because of the cruelty and the perception of that sport," he said. I ask you, how is this any different?"

Costa and several others also pointed to the closure of several other horseracing facilities in Michigan. Currently, Northville Downs is the only such business operating in the state.

Others expressed concerns about the woodlands and wetlands on the property, including Johnson Creek, a tributary said to be the only coldwater stream in the Rouge River watershed capable of supporting certain species of fish.

"The Friends of the Rouge are extremely concerned about this project," said Sally Petrella, the organization's monitoring manager. "Johnson Creek is ... just this jewel; the healthiest, cleanest most beautiful part of the river. We have serious concerns about the decline of this asset in Plymouth Township."

The planning department also reported receipt of 556 email comments on the project, including 515 autogenerated PETA form letters.



A large group of residents turned out at a Plymouth Township Planning Commission meeting Feb. 15 to share comments during a public hearing on the proposed Northville Downs at Plymouth Township project.
LAURA COLVIN/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Proponents of the plan:

Others spoke in favor of the plan, including Marilyn Bertera, a Northville resident who told the planning commission she and her husband are lifelong harness racers. Bertera serves in roles with the U.S. Trotting Association and the American Horse Council.

"I think it's safe to say that anyone who races horses in Michigan, and probably most horse owners, are supportive of this proposal to keep our last racetrack open and keep racing alive in Michigan," Bertera said. "Standardbred horses are bred to race. That's what they like to do, that's what they enjoy doing. We don't force them to race. Most racehorses are very well cared for."

Bob McCurdy, vice president of the Plymouth Soccer Club, said he was hopeful a community benefit agreement with the proposed facility would include a provision for his group.

"Some of those open spaces ... would be incredibly helpful in a community that is devoid of athletic field space," he said.

'I can make every one of you cry'

During the hearing, several people commented on a perception that the township might be too focused on the financial benefits of the project.

Gary Heitman, Plymouth Township's economic development coordinator and former township trustee, seemed to take issue with the comments and drew the ire of the crowd when he took a turn at the podium.

"My goal is to fill every single open spot there is in this township with a business that brings taxes to the township," Heitman said, noting the proposed project site has been empty for

six years. "I've had at least 50 businesses that were going to move in. I've gotten no (financial) support from Wayne County, no support from the State of Michigan."

"Guess what? I can put something worse in there, and I can make every one of you cry with some of the buildings and stuff I can put in," he said, generating an audible reaction from the crowd.

Plymouth Township resident Cattie Miglietti drew applause from the audience when she responded.

"I think it's sad that kind of behavior is tolerated here," she said.

Plan gets first of four required approvals

In addition to holding the public hearing, the planning commission was tasked with deciding whether to approve the PUD option as recommended by the township's planning department, based on the plan meeting eight predetermined criteria to qualify as a PUD.

The criteria are related to issues such as community benefit, preservation of natural assets, avoiding negative impacts to surrounding properties, ensuring the project's compatible with the adjacent land uses and the redevelopment of a functionally obsolete site.

Township Planner Laura Haw said the department felt the plan complied with all the applicable criteria, noting the proposal will leave 41 percent of the 124-acre parcel untouched to preserve wetlands and woodlands for recreation and conservation. The plan also requires the applicant to install a non-motorized paved path along the perimeter of the wetlands and Johnson Creek along with a pathway along Ridge Road and up to Five Mile.

The planning commission approved the PUD option with conditions, sending it to the township board of trustees for the same consideration. If approved by the board, the proposal will return to the planning commission, then again to the township board, for site plan review.

Township Treasurer Bob Doroshe-witz, who serves as board of trustees liaison to the planning commission, said development of the land was inevitable.

"The previous plans ... called for eight sizable buildings," he said. "It's private property. Something's going to get built eventually, so pick your poison."

The site was previously approved for the Ridge 5 project, which would have included up to eight industrial users. That applicant withdrew the project several years ago.

CITY OF NORTHVILLE 2023 BOARD OF REVIEW WAYNE AND OAKLAND COUNTIES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review of the City of Northville, Wayne, and Oakland Counties, will meet for the purpose of reviewing and adjusting the 2023 Assessment Rolls of the City of Northville on the following dates:

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023:	4:00 p.m. Organizational Meeting (No Appeals)
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023:	1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023:	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Act 165 of 1971 and based on the proposed changes to assessed values for 2023, the Wayne and Oakland County Equalization Departments have set the following tentative equalization factors relative to the 2023 Real and Personal Property Assessments: **WAYNE COUNTY** - Commercial Real 1.00; Industrial Real 1.00; Residential Real 1.00; All Personal Property 1.00. **OAKLAND COUNTY** - Commercial Real 1.00; Industrial Real 1.00; Residential Real 1.00; All Personal Property 1.00.

Mail-in Petitions must be received by March 16, 2023, before 4:00 p.m. ALL TAXPAYERS wishing to petition their property's taxable value or assessment in person with the Board of Review will be seen by **APPOINTMENT ONLY. To ensure every appeal is heard it is requested that appointments be scheduled prior to Tuesday, March 14, 2023.** Please contact the City of Northville Tax Department at (248) 449-9901 for an appointment or with any questions you may have regarding your 2023 taxable or assessed value.

BOARD OF REVIEW

Publish: February 23rd, March 2nd, and March 9th, 2023.

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Jin Zhu, 59, of Farmington Hills, poses just before she ran a marathon in Antarctica in early February. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY WORLD MARATHON CHALLENGE

Sore knee the price of astounding 7-7-7 feat

Runner finishes 7 marathons in 7 days on 7 continents

Bill Laytner
Detroit Free Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

In Antarctica she was bundled head to foot including goggles and a face mask while running on snow-covered ice, yet still she managed to run 26.2 miles. Yes, a marathon.

Within the same week in early February, she did the same thing, again and again – in South Africa, Australia, Dubai, Spain, Brazil and finally Miami, Florida. She fell several times on a rock-strewn hill near a village an hour outside Madrid. That hurt her knees, and one still ached after she returned to all-night shifts last week as a nurse anesthetist at Detroit's DMC Sinai-Grace Hospital.

Yet, far outweighing that pain, said Jin Zhu, 59, of Farmington Hills, has been the thrill of notching a coveted "7-7-7." That means running seven marathons in seven days on, no kidding, all seven world continents. Not many have done it. The World Marathon Challenge is a show of athletic prowess that's improbably difficult and costly. Zhu's husband and their two sons gave her the globe-trotting vacation week as an early 60th birthday gift, for about \$45,000, she said.

"I feel like my body is fine. My knee is kind of swollen and there's still a little pain now. But I have no muscles sore," Zhu said. She chuckled as she reminisced about her break-neck week of marathons, shared with a dozen women and two dozen men, along with medical and race staff, who flew chartered planes from continent to continent.

Reached at her hospital job last week, and with her knee sending twinges of pain, she wasn't ready to sign up for this October's Detroit Free Press International Marathon, although she has fond memories of it from a decade ago, as the first of many marathons she has finished since. Still, Zhu didn't rule it out, and Free Press race officials said they'd make a fuss over her if she returns to downtown Detroit to run the race the newspaper founded in 1978. Her knee needs rest and an orthopedist's exam, which she has scheduled, Zhu said.

"People came from 13 countries. Antarctica didn't have a shower. The other places – they all had those facilities in, like, sports centers. In Madrid, it was a high school.

"But in Brazil, we didn't have time to have a shower" because flight delays put the group behind in the rush to squeeze seven races within seven days, she said. Running behind schedule, literally, Zhu and the others started their last marathon in Miami after midnight, just 17 hours after starting their previous race in Brazil. She finished, as she did for each race, in well under five hours.

The group did not stay in hotels because there so little time between races, so the only time to sleep was aboard the jet flights. Zhu should've been exhausted after that last race, where was joined for her last mile by members of a Miami-based club of Chinese American runners, then was greeted at the finish line by her husband and sons. She should've demanded a quiet hotel room for a 12-hour rest. Not this runner.



Detroit nurse anesthetist Jin Zhu gives a thumbs up as she quaffs an energy drink while nearing a marathon finish in Brazil on Feb. 6. By midnight, she was about to run another marathon in Miami, her last of seven on seven continents in a week.

"I couldn't sleep," she said. "I was very excited to finish, very excited to see my family and so happy to meet the local Chinese runners," said Zhu, who was born in China.

"Back to Michigan, I'm back to normal sleep. I work the night shift at the hospital, you know," she said.

In fact, Zhu is notorious among co-workers for working night shifts in warm weather, then driving immediately to Kensington Metropark in Milford to train for 15 to 20 miles, often meeting friends who join her on long runs.

Zhu pulled off this month's global challenge off with stunning aplomb, grabbing several second places, a third and a fourth among the group of women who competed, many of them far younger and presumably in their physical prime. (Her fastest time was 3:48:29 in Dubai; and slowest was 4:36:44 in the Antarctic, which is still less than 11 minutes per mile on ice fields near the South

Pole.)

The quirky World Marathon Challenge, and Zhu's success, illustrates two unexpected trends in marathon running, said Ed Kozloff, the founding race director of the Free Press International Marathon and a national authority on the 26.2-mile distance. Kozloff's basement in Huntington Woods contains such an impressive archive of running literature, medals and mementos that it once rated a two-page spread in "Runner's World" magazine. He said one surprising trend is that for many runners the thrill has switched to accumulating race finishes, not beating the clock, Kozloff said.

"More and more, people aren't always worried about their time. It's become just how many races you can do," he said. Another surprising trend, according to Kozloff, is that many of the nation's aging runners aren't quitting. Their unexpected persistence, call it running addiction if you will, applies to Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), the group that includes Zhu; and to Gen Xers (born 1965-1980), Kozloff said.

"The age factor has extended. People who might've thought they were too old at 60 or 65 are still running," he said. The ultimate geezer jock in this year's World Marathon Challenge was 80-year-old Dan Little of Madill, Oklahoma. His pace was about half that of Zhu's, yet Little managed to finish all but one marathon, the one in Brazil, when race organizers called a halt to his exertions and hustled everyone to the airport, trying to stay within their seven-day schedule.

So, what did Little do? He finished his marathon at the airport, Zhu said, laughing as she recalled the scene.

"He was going in a big circle in the airport," she said, adding: "He's a very nice guy. He said he wants to do it again next year."

CITY OF NOVI NOTICE OF MEETING OF MARCH 2023 BOARD OF REVIEW

Notice is hereby given that the March Board of Review shall convene for the Organizational Meeting at 9:00 a.m. EST, Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in the Mayor's Conference Room/Civic Center at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road. The Board of Review will not hear appeals at the Organizational meeting.

Notice is further given that the second session of the Board of Review will meet for the purpose of hearing and considering assessment appeals in the Mayor's Conference Room/Civic Center at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road on March 13, 14, and 15, 2023.

If you or your representative want to appeal in person, you are strongly encouraged to come into the assessing department on or before 5:00 p.m. EST, Friday, March 10, 2023, in order to schedule an appointment to ensure your time before the Board of Review. Appearances before the Board of Review are limited to five (5) minutes or less. Petitions are available at the Assessor's Department or at www.cityofnovi.org > Services > Board of Review Notice. Please bring four (4) copies of the documents to support your contention of True Cash Value to your board appointment.

NO APPOINTMENTS WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL A PETITION IS RECEIVED BY THE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT.

Written Appeals: Taxpayers may file a protest and petition in writing, instead of appearing in person. Letters of protest will be accepted on or before 3:00 p.m. EST, Tuesday, March 14, 2023. Postmarks will not be considered. When submitting a letter of protest for the Board of Review consideration, you must attach a completed petition along with any supporting information.

All agents protesting values on property other than their own **MUST HAVE** written authorization from each property owner they are representing.

Persons on a limited income may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes due to poverty. Applications are available at the Assessing Department, or at www.cityofnovi.org. Any questions should be directed to the Assessing Department at (248) 347-0485.

BOARD OF REVIEW SCHEDULE

Monday, March 13, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 - 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Mayor's Conference Room

Located in the Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375.

Courtney Hanson
CITY CLERK

Publish: February 23, March 2 & 9, 2023

LD-00076044 3x5



Novi Community School District
25345 Taft Road · Novi, Michigan 48374
(248) 449-1209 · Fax (248) 449-1219

INVITATION TO BID HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND UNIFORMS

Novi Public Schools is now accepting sealed bids for the purchase of high school marching band uniforms in accordance with the outlined specifications. Bidder must also complete and include Novi's bidding document. Bidder must furnish, prior to or at the time of the official bid opening, a complete "BID SAMPLE". It is the bidder's responsibility to see that this uniform arrives prior to the bid opening. Since the bid sample is a requirement of your bid, the Purchaser reserves the right to return unopened any bid not accompanied by the required bid sample.

Bidding documentation and specifications may be found on the district website: www.novik12.mi.us, under District, Business and Finance/Bid or you may email sandra.brasil@novik12.org for bidding documents.

Sealed bids will be received by mail at the office of:
Novi Community School District
25345 Taft Rd.
Novi, MI 48374
Attn: Devin Kling, Asst. Superintendent of Business & Finance

The outside of the submitted bid envelope must clearly state "SEALED BID-BAND UNIFORMS"

Bids must be received no later than 3:00 pm, March, 10 2023. Fax bids and email bids will not be accepted. Questions from bidders shall be submitted in writing to Matthew.diroff@novik12.org no later than March 6, 2023.

Bids will be opened publicly at 3:05 pm, March 10, 2023 at the Novi Educational Services Building, 25345 Taft Rd, Novi, MI 48374.

Bids must remain valid for a period of forty-five (45) days after the bid opening.

Novi Community School District reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids, either in whole or in part, to waive any informalities or irregularities therein, or to award the contract to other than the Bidder's submitting the best financial bid, it its sole and absolute discretion

Bid evaluation may be based upon cost, delivery, compliance with conditions and specifications, vendor reliability and other criteria deemed appropriate by Novi Community School District.

Publish: February 23, 2023

LD-00076053 3x5

Former Schoolcraft College president dead at 79

Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

LIVONIA – Conway Jeffress played a major role in shaping Schoolcraft College into what it is today.

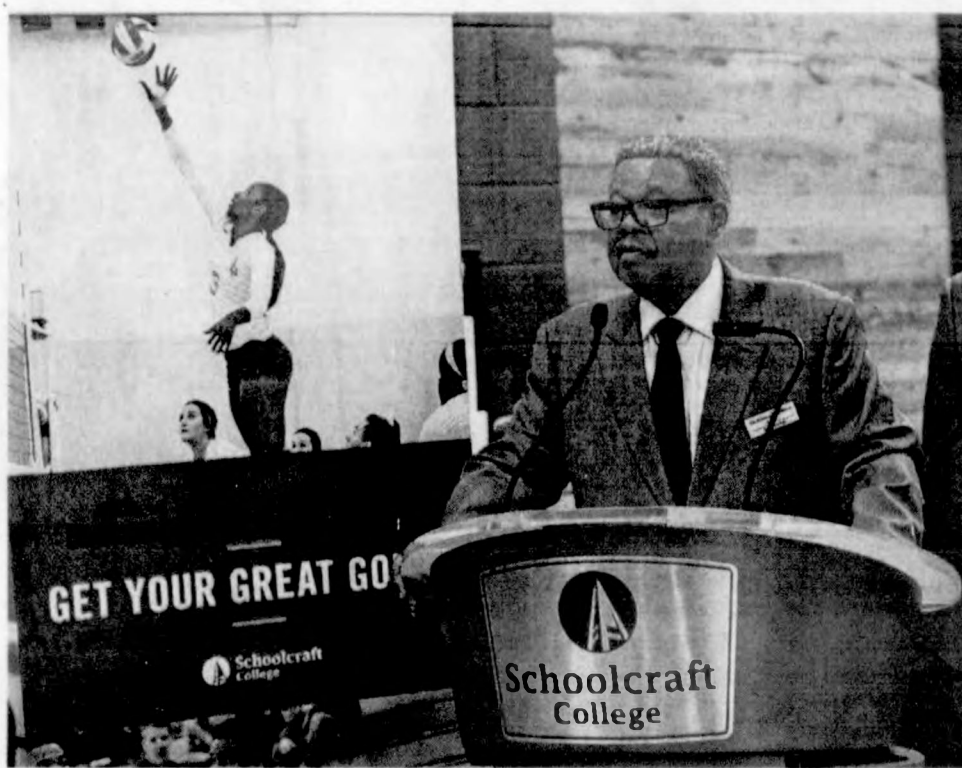
In his nearly 19 years at the helm of the community college, he was known for spurring campus growth and development. The campus' Bradner Library, Biomedical Technology building, indoor soccer fields, and VisTaTech Center were built on Jeffress' watch. The school also broke ground on its health sciences facility while he was in office.

Schoolcraft even named a building, the Jeffress Center, after him while he was still president.

Jeffress died Feb. 13 at the age of 79. "It was a joy to learn from him," Schoolcraft President Glenn Cerny, who knew Jeffress for over a decade, said. "I think a lot of people who have met Conway can say the same thing. He shared his wisdom and knowledge, and he was always open. I appreciated that."

Jeffress started working at Schoolcraft in 1982 before accepting the top job in 2001. He retired in 2020, saying then he felt the timing was right for a leadership transition.

Livonia Mayor Maureen Miller Bros-



Former Schoolcraft College President Conway Jeffress. REBECCA COOK

nan said she'll remember Jeffress' love for Schoolcraft.

"What I will remember most about Dr. Jeffress is that he liked sharing

ideas, he enjoyed championing great visions for what was possible and he appreciated other people's experiences and understandings," she said. "He

loved and believed in Schoolcraft College and he was smart, driven and successful in leading this valued part of our community."

According to Cerny, Jeffress' work to develop the campus and create partnerships helps the college generate revenue that ultimately goes back to students.

"A comment he made to me the first time I met him in 2010 was, 'Always protect the college,'" Cerny recalled. "The college is in perpetuity. Schoolcraft College will be here long after I'm gone. Always protect its reputation, mission and vision because it's so important to the community. It's so important to students who are trying to achieve the greater good." That was drilled into me from my first meeting."

Jeffress' funeral arrangements are being handled by the O'Brian-Sullivan Funeral Home in Novi, but details are not available yet. Cerny said Schoolcraft plans to host an event in Jeffress' honor sometime in March.

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

Aunts, grandma vow to keep siblings together after mom of 12 dies

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Nikita Washington gave birth to a son, Nathaniel, at 10:56 p.m. Dec. 22 at Hutzel Hospital in Detroit.

The following morning, when Daveia Knox went to the hospital to meet her new nephew, she had no idea her sister was experiencing complications.

"Out of the blue, they came and told me her oxygen had dropped below normal," Daveia recalled. "They had to tube her, put her on a ventilator, and the next thing I know, the doctor said they had to do emergency surgery because she was bleeding from the inside... I said, 'Do

whatever you can to save her, she has 12 kids to live for. Please save my sister."

The effort was futile. Nikita, 35, died at 11:55 a.m. A dozen children were left motherless.

But Nikita's kids are not alone. They immediately were enveloped by Daveia, her sisters Jackie and Sharhonda, and their mother, Patricia.

There was never any doubt the extended family would take Nikita's children in.

"Me and my mom and my sisters, we're gonna make sure it happens," Daveia said. "When Kita was alive, we always helped her. The kids know they are gonna be good. We have no choice. No way they would be separated."

Kinship care often best for children

The father of Nikita's older children is deceased. The father of the younger children is in jail.

If not for willing relatives, the children would have gone into Michigan's foster care system.

Instead Nikita's children will join about 54,000 children in Michigan being raised by relatives after being separated from their biological parents for a variety of reasons.

Beth Lindley, director of the Kinship Care Resource Center at Michigan State

See MOM OF 12, Page 5A



From left, Daveia Knox, Patricia Pouncey, and Jackie Pouncey with their newborn nephew and grandson, Nathaniel. Jackie holds the obituary for Nikita Washington, Nathaniel's mother, who died hours after giving birth to him. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Mom of 12

Continued from Page 4A

University, said there is general recognition that children who can't be with their parents have better outcomes when placed with family members or close friends rather than in foster care homes.

Still, the system "is complicated," Lindley said.

Changes to the law in 2018 mean family members who take in children don't have to go through foster care licensing requirements. But they also struggle to get equitable financial support from the state. Foster families receive \$20 to \$25 a day per child. Family members providing a similar home environment for children can get a maximum of \$158 a month for the first eligible child and less for successive children through the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF).

Lindley explained there is no specific kinship benefit. If a family is eligible for a Social Security benefit, it would be subtracted from the available cash assistance from the state.

"There isn't a great pot of money that says if you are a kinship survivor, you're entitled to 'x,'" she said. "We don't want more kids in foster care, but there aren't great supports outside of that system. ... This is what lots of families are up against when they swoop in to take care of their family's children."

Keeping kids together is family's top priority

Daveia said she's determined to keep her nieces and nephews together despite their family's limited resources. She and her husband, Joseph, and their six children live in one flat of a two-family flat in Detroit. Her sister Jackie and her 12-year-old live in the other flat. The children's grandmother, Patricia, who uses a walker and suffers from blood clots, lives in a tiny duplex about 10 miles and a 20-minute drive away from Daveia.

Daveia put out a plea for help the day her sister died. A gofundme titled simply, "Help for burial and her kids" raised just under \$2,000 before the Jan. 9 funeral.

The family was able to pay for Nikita's funeral with help from donors, as



Cerenity, 17, holds her newborn brother Nathaniel and is surrounded by nine more of her siblings, Cassidy, 16; Antonio, 15; Jessie, 14; Terrence, 11; Jayla, 9; Yanhya, 7; Dayanna, 5; David, 3; and Noah, 1. The children's mother, Nikita Washington, died Dec. 23 at Hutzel Hospital in Detroit, hours after giving birth. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

well as a significant discount from QA Cantrell Funeral Services, where Daveia's husband, Joseph, works.

Daveia remembers Nikita as the fun big sister who hosted parties and would "let you do anything except bad stuff." Nikita taught Daveia how to drive, how to do hair and was loving. Nikita attended Denby High School, but dropped out in 11th grade after becoming pregnant with her oldest son, Kishon, 19.

Daveia wants to carry on her sister's legacy of being fun and loving. Her niece Cerenity, 17, will attend prom this year. Daveia wants the event to be a bright spot in a markedly dark year. Daveia said she'll use some of the donated funds to buy her niece a dress and shoes.

A family picks up the pieces

Looking ahead, Daveia's worries are much larger than getting her niece to prom.

She wants the children to have their own space, but she and Joseph were forced to move to a smaller home when their five-bedroom home was damaged by fire last year.

It takes two car trips to get the children to school if all of them are staying in Daveia's home. For now, two of the youngest children - David, 3, and newborn Nathaniel - stay with Daveia. The older children - Cerenity, Cassidy, 16; Antonio, 15; Jessie, 13; Terrence, 11; Jayla, 9; Yanhya, 7; and Dayanna, 5 - stay with their grandmother because they can walk to school from her house. Noah, 1, is also staying with Grandma because he is particularly attached to Cerenity.

Daveia said her husband Joseph works three jobs, driving the hearse for Cantrell, providing security at Travis Sports Bar and Grill at night, and working as a hi-lo driver at Universal, a logistics and transportation company on Georgia Street.

Daveia works there, too, and said she also plans to go back to working at a nursing home after she renews her license as a certified nursing assistant.

She said she's always had help with the children from her mother or Joseph's grandmother, a 69-year-old who has the energy of a 20-something.

Finding the courage to dream of a better future

Lindley is touched by the determination of families to soldier on through overwhelming challenges.

"These families are amazing and resilient and thinking always about the well-being of these children," she said. "They make that decision to raise these children without thinking about how they are going to do it. They just want to make sure their relatives are ok."

The Kinship Care Resource Center will help however it can, in applying for cash assistance, food assistance, health care or legal support. The conversations Lindley has with these families are often complicated and sad when well-intentioned relatives realize how limited a safety net can be. More than half of the caretakers the Kinship Care Resource Center has assisted in the past two years earn less than \$35,000 a year.

"There are an estimated 45,000 families in Michigan that came together on their own to provide safety for their relatives and there is not a safety net for them," Lindley said. "The 2018 law helped, but what isn't clear to me, is what the answer is to equitable support... That is the north star - getting equitable support for both foster care families and kinship caregivers."

"It is inconceivable that these women are coming together to take care of 18 children total, that there wouldn't be more out there to help them," Lindley said of Nikita's sisters and mother. "They are saving the system a huge amount of effort by providing a much more stable environment for the children, even in the face of poverty."

Daveia has applied for guardianship and may soon be seeking guidance from the Kinship Care Resource Center. The gofundme remains open.

Daveia said she is taking one day at a time, hoping she can give the kids bigger dreams in the future. She prays a lot.

"I pray to give my kids and nieces and nephews the life I didn't have growing up," she said. "When I was younger, I wanted to go places and show them places other than just Detroit. I want all my kids - and they are all mine now - to be successful, to see them go to college and to enjoy their life."

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com or 577-281-2412. Follow her on Twitter @SusanBromley10.



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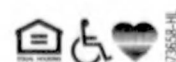
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FIND THE WORDS

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 22 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme or the puzzle.

Ande	Dorrego	Elama	Siling
Bega	Dubbo	Roscluzko	Sydney
Bondi	Eden	Largs	Tamworth
Boro	Forbes	Lawson	laroe
Bullit	Glebe	Leura	Timbarumba
Byron Bay	Gold	Opals	Tweed
Coal	Grafton	Orange	Heads
Coia	Gundagai	Ryde	Wynong
Cook	Guyra	Scane	Yass
Cowra	Junee	Snowy	
Dee Why	Kempsey	Mountains	

TODAY'S ANSWER

More than just the harbour

The first state

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

PUZZLES & POSERS

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THE INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE CONSISTS OF DOTS, DASHES, & SPACES. HOWEVER, IN THIS PUZZLE AN INTERESTING PROBLEM HAS BEEN CREATED BY THE ELIMINATION OF ALL SPACES. ~TO SOLVE, EACH OF THE FIVE ROWS BELOW MUST BE PROPERLY SPACED TO FORM A WORD FROM THE ABOVE TOPIC. THE DOTS AND DASHES ARE IN THE CORRECT ORDER.

1. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 2. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 3. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 4. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 5. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- A B C D E F G H I
J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z

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: SILVER**

TODAY'S ANSWER

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

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

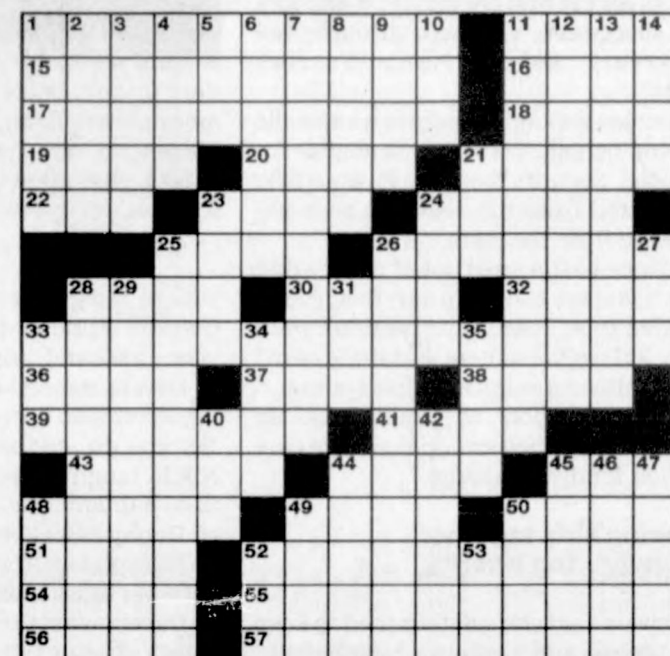
NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 "Echoic"
- Japanese hotpot dish
- Unfair play
- Words of support for a good match
- Done quickly?
- Going over everything
- Mythical spear carrier
- Bug out
- Where Einstein created the "E" equation
- Turns red, perhaps
- Pull out of a spot
- Maserati sister brand
- Snide challenge
- Equivalent of Johannes
- Former in-flight cataloguer
- Lozenge on jewelry
- Slimmed-down food department
- Scrapping or rowing
- Star Trek intro claim to fame
- Sphere opposite a head
- Damage
- Sign over
- Party central of a sort
- Having holes in a plot
- Talking lion of literature
- Give a thrill to
- Mother's
- With 24 Down, certain sorbet surroundings
- Ground cover

DOWN

- 1 It's feathered for flight
- "That's a surprise!"
- Stacks
- Lessen
- Elvis played it between four stops
- A Danube country
- At present
- With lost integrity
- Hair happening
- Breakfast buffet staple
- Going nowhere
- Identical twin in genetics
- Question before the cameras
- Upset
- thing
- Related to
- See 48 Across
- Most likely to become canon
- Comparatively slick
- Wireless broadband standard
- Macbeth or Falstaff
- What you like
- Forty percent of fifty
- Number on moisturizers
- Ideal example
- Wrapped up
- One who sings
- How some military housing is provided
- Brand once called Dekafa
- Was a sub
- Easily influenced, from zoology
- Hardly sporting
- Utterly
- Cooperative
- It might be a stretch
- Some PJs
- Broadside, say



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2023 STANLEY NEWMAN STANKWORDS@AOL.COM 2/18/23

TODAY'S ANSWER

1. ARK
2. STEAMER
3. WHALE
4. TRAWLER
5. LINER

NOLITOS



Northville Township clerk resigns, will remain a trustee on board

David Veselenak

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

NORTHVILLE TWP. — Some nameplates will change locations in the Northville Township Hall chambers next month.

Clerk Roger Lundberg announced he would resign his post effective March 16. The announcement, made at the Feb. 16 board of trustees meeting at Northville Township Hall, came as Lundberg said he wanted to spend more time with family.

That resignation led to a flurry of changes done by the board at the meeting, which included naming current trustee Cynthia Jankowski as Lundberg's replacement. In exchange, Lundberg will remain on the board of trustees, taking over Jankowski's remaining term.

This exchange keeps the makeup of the board the same, though two will have different positions.

"It goes without saying what a fabulous clerk he's been and we've in the past had this discussion about what his intentions are and what he wants to do," said Supervisor Mark Abbo. "Roger has been a valuable asset to this community, to this board. He's been a great team member here. Roger brings a balanced approach to the way he does business."

The clerk's position is a full-time position, in charge of such matters as running elections, keeping all township records and serving as the township's Freedom of Information Act coordinator. Trustee positions have fewer responsibilities and consist of making decisions along with the full, seven-member board.

Since Lundberg's resignation letter was received at a public meeting by the township board within a 30-day window of it taking place, the board was allowed to name his replacement. If the board had not acted on the resignation within that window, the appointment would have gone to a special election.

Because the resignation is taking



Jankowski



Lundberg

place with less than half of the four-year term left, Jankowski will serve the remainder of the term. Both were elected to the board in 2020.

"It was an honor and pleasure to be elected to the Office of Township Clerk," Lundberg said in a statement. "I have thoroughly enjoyed the past two years working for you and look forward to serving as trustee. As trustee, I do plan to stay actively involved in Legacy Park's development, our Pathways Committee and other township activities."

Jankowski will have plenty to do when she takes the reins of the clerk's office next month: most of the township is voting in a special election taking place May 2 considering a \$134 million bond request from Northville Public Schools.

"I'm excited to continue in an expanded role and to serve our residents," she said. "I want to thank Roger for the amazing work you've done as clerk and I will continue the legacy you set forth and continue with the goals you have set for '23 and '24."

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

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The bar at Banditos Restaurant & Saloon, 510 N. Main St. in Milford.

SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Banditos

Continued from Page 1A

As he relaxes in the comfortable lounge of Banditos, which is currently open only on Friday and Saturday evenings, Mora points through a doorway of the cozy room lined with stone and brick walls and talks about removing some lesser-played simulator arcade games in an area of Milford House. The games will be replaced with more dining tables for Banditos.

Along with those tables will come hours that are more in line with Milford House (open 7 days a week) and more menu offerings as well, perhaps some more of the favorites that his Mexican grandmother, Sofia, has taught him to make. He specifically references guisado, which he calls a "peasant comfort food," a hearty meal with minimalistic ingredients.

"She taught me to cook, and that it doesn't have to be over the top," Mora said. "But if we make it, it will be the best damn chimichangas and the best Mexican pizza you'll have in your life."

Banditos Restaurant & Saloon is located at 510 N. Main St., inside Milford



A pineapple fajita bowl is one of the Latin-flavored dishes served at Banditos Restaurant & Saloon.

COURTESY OF DAN MORA

House. Hours are 4-9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. For information, visit milfordhousebarandgrill.com.

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

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Historic first at Marian High as a sister steps down, layperson steps in

Susan Bromley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When Sister Lenore Pochelski steps down as the leader of Marian High School, it will mark the passing of an era.

Pochelski is the last nun on the staff at Marian, and she is handing over the presidency to Heather Greig Sofran, a Marian alumna and married mother of two children. Sofran will be the first layperson to lead the Bloomfield Hills all-girls Catholic school in its 64-year history.

"The decision was made several years ago that 2023 would be my last year," Pochelski said. "The succession planning group was looking for the most qualified candidate, who would be the best fit to lead. No one decided we would not have a sister. We were just looking for the best candidate, male, female, sister or not, alumna or not."

No nuns applied for the job. Pochelski said very few sisters are younger than her age, 75, and there are no nuns in the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation who are interested in being full-time educators.

The school will continue to have sisters on the school's governing board.

The changes are a sign of the times.

A dwindling sisterhood

The Immaculate Heart of Mary sisters were founded in 1845 in Monroe with a mission to provide girls in the area with a religious education. At the time, there were no schools for girls, Pochelski said. Among the IHM sisters' educational institution accomplishments over the years were Marygrove College and Immaculata High School in Detroit.

Marian High School was founded in 1959. Everyone on the staff was a nun, with the exception of the janitor and possibly the physical education teacher, Pochelski said.

But over the years, the number of



Sister Lenore Pochelski, IHM, and Heather Sofran chat in the lobby of Marian High School in Bloomfield Hills on Feb. 6. Pochelski is stepping down as president of the school and Sofran will become the first laywoman to lead the private Catholic all-girls school in its 64-year history. SUSAN BROMLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

nuns in the school has dwindled, while the number of lay educators has increased. Marian is the only Catholic girls high school the IHM sisters sponsor. The overall number of Catholic schools in the area run by any congregation, as well as educators who are sisters, has decreased.

Holly Fournier, associate director of communications for the Archdiocese of Detroit, expressed her gratitude for the generations of religious sisters, as well as brothers, who have served with dedication in Catholic schools.

Within the Archdiocese of Detroit, 12 schools still have religious sisters or brothers on staff. Marian is one of 16 independent schools operated by religious orders in the archdiocese, said Holly Fournier, associate director of communications for the archdiocese.

Lay educators step up, stand in

"In recent years, with fewer religious sisters and brothers available to serve in Catholic schools nationwide, we've had

the opportunity to work with talented and devoted lay educators who are experts in their areas of specialization," Fournier said. "They have a vocation specifically to teach or to lead in Catholic academic environments, which is another blessing for our school communities."

Sofran, a 1996 Marian High School graduate who went on to study elementary education on a full volleyball scholarship at Bowling Green State University, felt drawn to return to Catholic education where she could share her faith. After earning her degree, she taught third grade at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs in Beverly Hills for five years, earned her master's degree in education from Marygrove College and then took a few years off after the births of her son and daughter. She was a substitute at St. Regis before taking a full-time teacher position and then moving into administration at the Bloomfield Hills pre-K-8th grade school.

She is excited to return Marian as the new president, and the feeling appeared

to be mutual as she was welcomed by many open arms as she recently strolled the hallways of Marian.

"There is a tremendous amount of support and it's awesome to have the encouragement," Sofran, 44, said. "I'm excited to work with alums and carry on the mission of the school."

There are 15 Marian alumni among the almost 70 staff members. There are about 400 students at Marian, down from its peak in the 1980s of nearly twice that number.

As a college preparatory institution, the private school is selective of the students it serves. Tuition is \$18,625, although a \$2,800 grant to each student reduces the cost.

In the past year, Marian saw a 30 percent increase in freshman applications.

In Pochelski's 31 years with the school, Marian has upgraded technology and made improvements including a new gymnasium, auditorium, library media center, foyer, commons, student dining area, lounge, and courtyard through capital fundraising efforts.

A third campaign has just gotten underway to raise funds for STEM programming and updates to science classrooms and equipment as well as new windows and air conditioning.

Sofran will play a vital role in these efforts. As president, she will oversee all business aspects of the institution, including visioning, oversight of the new five-year strategic plan, admission, finance, fundraising, human resources, and marketing.

"We always need to look at the world around us and see what our girls need to be successful and make sure our facility and programming has everything it needs," Sofran said.

Pecholski said she has full faith in Sofran and expects the transfer of leadership to be seamless.

"Heather is an alum, she understands what Marian is about," Pecholski said. "It's not the title, it's what is in our heart and in our head. She will keep the school whole and healthy and build it for the future."

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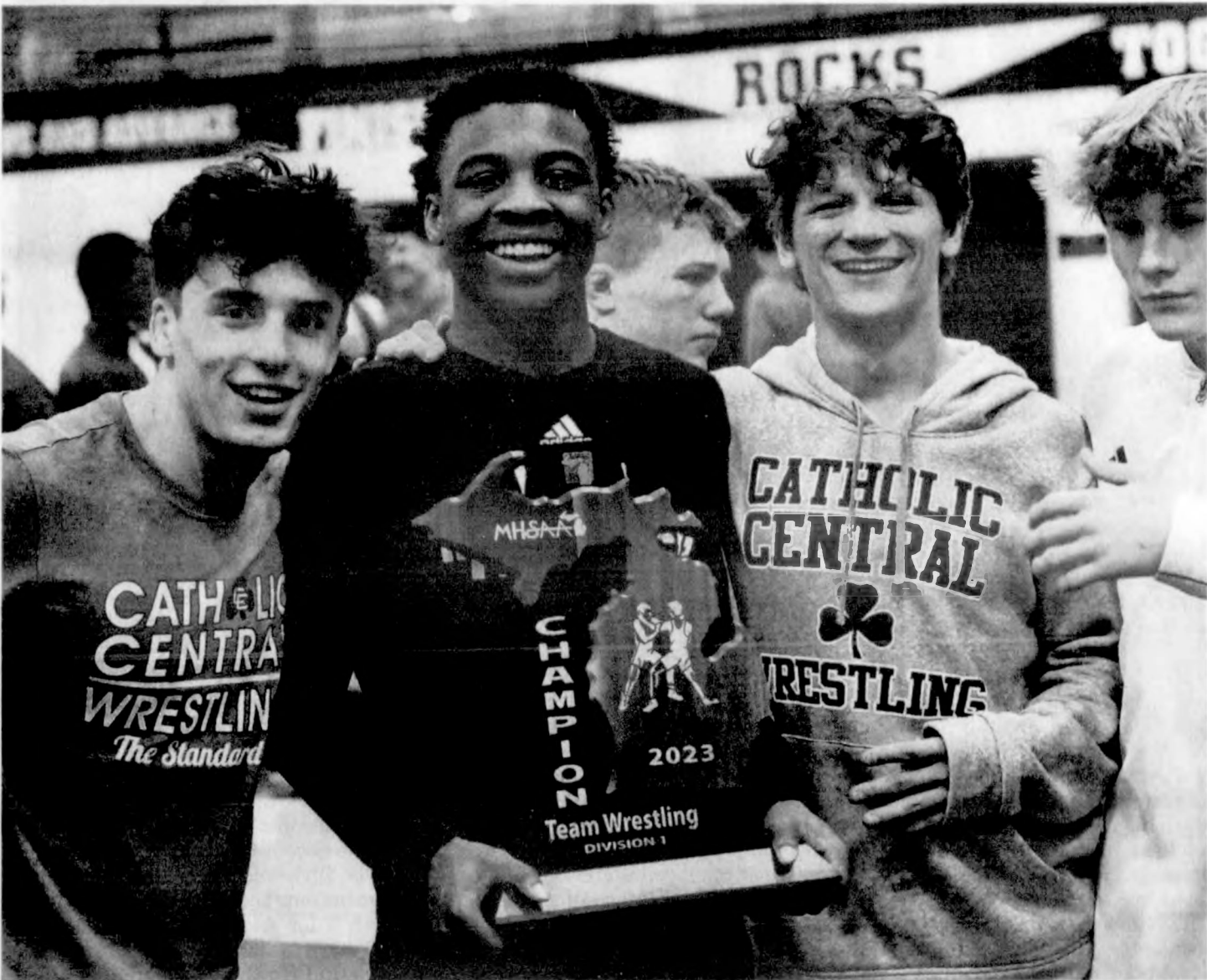
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SPORTS

BOYS WRESTLING



Detroit Catholic Central's Christian Werner, Clayton Jones and Dylan Gilcher celebrate winning the Division 1 team wrestling regional final Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023, at Salem. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Captain's sacrifice could help Detroit Catholic Central at states

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Detroit Catholic Central wrestling coach Mitch Hancock has spent 16 years leading the Shamrocks. He's taken them 11 times to the Division 1 state finals, helped them win seven state championships and sent countless wrestlers to college to compete at the best NCAA programs. Needless to say, there's not much the former All-American at Central Michigan University hasn't seen on the mat. But Hancock has never seen someone do what captain Christian Werner recently volunteered to do.

Before the postseason, the senior withdrew his name from the Shamrocks' roster of wrestlers who were slated to compete in the individual state tournament. Werner has never been to the state finals at Ford Field, and this year, more than any other year, he had a great shot at not only qualifying but placing on the podium. Werner's reasoning? He's not one of the handful of Shamrocks who plan on competing in college. And there are plenty of other guys on the team who are still looking for scholarship offers to wrestle at the next level.

See SACRIFICE, Page 5B

"Everybody works extremely hard, and I want to focus on the team and the team state championship and let these other guys who want to wrestle as individuals get that chance to do so."

Christian Werner

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Zebras win 7th-straight KLAA-East championship

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Wayne Memorial girls basketball coach Jarvis Mitchell exited the locker room following his team's 62-39 victory at Dearborn on Feb. 14 and was shocked to hear the news. "OHHH!?! Wow, I didn't realize that," the ninth-year coach said. "Honestly, I never look at it. And that's not me being oblivious. I just hate jinxing myself. I just hate looking ahead." And what was that news? With the win over the Pioneers, the Zebras (16-4, 13-0) clinched their seventh straight Kensington Lakes Activities Association-East championship. In fact, their win over Livonia Stevenson on Feb. 17 sealed their seventh straight season being undefeated in the division. They've actually won their last 81 division games, as their last loss was to Canton by three points on Feb. 3, 2017, just over six years ago. Dominating the league has become the standard for Mitchell's squad. So, of course, he'd be caught off guard by hearing the news. Wayne is trying to get back to the Breslin Center for the third straight year. In four trips to East Lansing, a state title is the only thing Mitchell's players haven't won. Capturing a KLAA-East championship is just part of the journey for the Zebras.

"That's been the problem," Mitchell added. "We've got to figure out a way to beat the dragon at the end of the Super Mario Bros. game. We've got to figure out a way." Likely leading Wayne on another long postseason run will be Mayla Ham and Paris Bass, who, together, are enjoying the type of senior seasons most players can only dream about having. At the beginning of the winter, both became McDonald's All-American nominees. Shortly afterward, on national signing day, Ham joined Georgetown University while Bass picked North Dakota, making it seven straight years Mitchell has sent off a Zebra to play Division I college basketball.

See ZEBRAS, Page 2B

BOYS BASKETBALL

Canton overwhelms Brighton in clash for first in KLAA

Bill Khan
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

CANTON - For about seven minutes, Brighton showed why it is having one of its best boys basketball seasons in years. The Bulldogs were knocking down big shots, winning battles on the offensive boards and limiting their opponent to precious few points. They even had an Eddie Millington dunk which seemed to provide a spark. But only seven minutes of stellar basketball won't cut it against a team like Canton, which started and finished strong in a 67-45 rout of Brighton on Feb. 17 in a battle for first place in the KLAA West. More importantly, seven minutes

won't cut it in a few weeks when losses become permanent in the state tournament. That was the warning that was delivered to the Bulldogs following their first lopsided loss of the season. "It's one of the first things I said when we went in there - it's not the end of the season," Brighton coach Mike Griest said. "But we have to play with the fact at some point it could be if we aren't playing our best and doing all the things we need to do to win." Brighton fell to 16-4 overall, its other three losses coming by single digits. Canton moved into sole possession of first place in the West Division at 11-2 with one game remaining, while Brighton dropped to 10-3.

See CANTON, Page 2B



Canton's Dante Favor takes a shot while defended by Brighton's Eddie Millington during the Chiefs' 67-45 victory Feb. 17. TIMOTHY ARRICK/ FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

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Wayne Memorial's Paris Bass dribbles during a KLAAs-East girls basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Dearborn. PHOTOS BY TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Wayne Memorial's Mayla Ham goes up for a shot.

Zebras

Continued from Page 1B

The duo helped Wayne wrap up another division championship and have the Zebras entering the KLAAs tournament as the favorites to win.

Their high school careers are about to conclude, but they've both been cherishing their final season with Mitchell.

"I think about it every day so I just try to play my hardest every game because it's almost over," said Bass, who, too, was shocked to learn her team had won the division. "I really didn't expect any of this (when I got to high school). I'm just excited and just happy to be here. I feel good, really good. I'm confident in my team moving forward. I'm just trying

to win a championship, and that's it."

The win over Dearborn marked Ham's first night back from an ankle injury after she sat out three games.

Despite missing time, she should still be a Michigan Ms. Basketball candidate when the nominees are announced in a few weeks. She was Hometown Life's Preseason Player of the Year.

The 5-foot-11 small forward was a first-team all-area player after averaging 14.2 points and 9.7 rebounds a year ago. And she's about to be selected to the All-KLAAs team for a fourth season.

"It's been kind of emotional but more exciting, too," said Ham, who scored a team-high 16 points vs. Dearborn. "It's been a really good season, but it's been kind of rough, too. I just came off injury. It's my first game back since my injury. I'm sad we're leaving, but I'm happy I'm

able to experience this last year with my team and hopefully get back to the Breslin. All of this, it's just been exciting."

The seventh-ranked Zebras have a clear path to the state semifinal and should be favored to win big in each matchup leading up to that March 17 game at Michigan State. Once on campus, then it'll get interesting. They could face anyone from defending state champion West Bloomfield to Detroit Renaissance, Rockford, Bryon Center or Flint Carman-Ainsworth.

But Mitchell knows his two seniors won't be judged by what happens in the final four. Just getting them to the next level has been enough to make the longtime coach proud. Their legacies have already been cemented at Wayne.

"You know what? Looking at them two, I'm extremely proud, knowing how

they were when they came in as freshmen," Mitchell said. "Just seeing their growth. The biggest part of this is seeing my kids get a chance to play at the next level. No one understands the relevance of that. People have gotten used to it at Wayne because since 2017, we've had a kid go Division I every year. So people have become accustomed to it and have taken it for granted. That's a big feat. You have a kid that's about to get \$200,000 worth of education because of their hard work. So *this* is the end goal for me. I absolutely want a state championship. Please don't get that misquoted, but seeing my kids get to the next level is the best feeling."

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

Canton

Continued from Page 1B

Canton will represent the West in the KLAAs championship game against Dearborn or Livonia Franklin, even if the teams finish tied at the top, because of the league's tie-breaker system of how teams fared against common opponents, starting from the top of the division and moving down. The teams split their season series, but Canton has a better record than Brighton against Howell and Northville, who are tied for third.

Neither game between Brighton and Canton was close. The Bulldogs beat the Chiefs 69-52 in Brighton on Jan. 24.

"The biggest thing for us is we needed to play harder," Canton coach Jimmy Reddy said. "Brighton totally outworked us in that first game. They had 19 offensive rebounds. Playing harder was an emphasis. Defending and rebounding was an emphasis."

Canton led 13-4 after one quarter and 32-18 at halftime. The Chiefs' lead reached 41-20 with 5:50 left in the third quarter before the Bulldogs made a run.

Brighton outscored Canton 16-5 the rest of the quarter, scoring the final seven points, to cut the deficit to 46-36 heading into the fourth. A 3-pointer from the corner in the opening seconds of the fourth quarter that would've made it a seven-point game missed the mark.

"At the quarter break, we were up 10," Reddy said. "Hey, if we win the quarter, we win the game. We just talked about getting back to playing harder and playing with more energy on the defensive end and stringing some stops together. We were able to do that. We did a nice job killing some clock in the fourth quarter, having some longer possessions before they started fouling."

With the score 49-39, back-to-back 3-pointers by Omar Suleiman and Caleb Williams extended Canton's lead to 55-39 with six minutes left. Trevor Viau hit a 3-pointer for Brighton, but the Chiefs outscored the Bulldogs 12-3 the rest of the way.

"We made it pretty difficult on them to score," Reddy said. "They had a really good third quarter, but quarters one, two and four defensively and effort wise, we were pretty solid tonight."

Dante Favor got Canton started by



Brighton's Eddie Millington (23) tries to split Canton defenders Omar Suleiman (left) and Dante Favor during the Bulldogs' 67-45 loss on Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

scoring eight points in the first quarter. Suleiman took over from there, scoring 16 second-quarter points and finishing with 27. He hit seven 3-pointers.

"I got open, I made my shots," Suleiman said. "I felt pretty good once I started hitting some shots. I started rolling and felt hot."

"Our defense was a lot better (than in Brighton). We were playing a lot harder. We were playing for something. This game was pretty big to us. This was our senior night. We were just playing a lot harder than them, playing better defense, which led into our offense."

As a team, Canton hit 11 3-pointers. Brighton had only 13 rebounds.

Ashton Tomassi had 16 points and four steals, while Trevor Viau had 13 points for Brighton.

Favor finished with 12 points and Williams 11 for Canton.



Brighton's Trevor Viau puts up an off-balance shot while defended by Canton's Caleb Williams.

Mercy falls in CHSL Bishop tournament championship

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor Father Gabriel Richard's 12-0 run in the third quarter cost the No. 5 Farmington Hills Mercy girls basketball team the Catholic League Bishop tournament championship Feb. 18 at Detroit Mercy's Calihan Hall.

But the 41-27 loss doesn't take away from the Marlins (17-3) actually advancing to the championship.

"I'm sure you're nervous. We're all nervous," coach Gary Morris said he told his players before tipoff. "I said, 'There are years where we've all been up in the stands watching this game. Even though we're nervous, or whatever, we'd rather be out there on the floor and see what happens.'"

That message comes a year after Mercy was upset by rival Bloomfield Hills Marian in overtime during the tournament semifinal.

The Marlins, who had beaten Marian twice in the regular season, could only watch from the stands at Wayne State University as the Mustangs went on to beat Dearborn Divine Child to win the CHSL tournament.

What's more, since Morris wasn't actually coaching in the game, the coach was a color analyst for the game's live stream. It was a much better experience for the Marlins having Morris off the headset and on the bench Saturday.

They just couldn't get many shots to fall in the second half.

Fran DeNardo sank a baseline runner to open the second half, but then FGR (17-3) held Mercy scoreless for the rest of the quarter and early in the fourth.

Aizlyn Albanese, who scored a team-best 11 points, broke that scoreless streak with a pair of free throws. But FGR grabbed a nine-point lead down the stretch, and the Marlins never recovered from it.

"As we made fewer and fewer shots, that rim became tighter and tighter and

"We've always had pretty close games with them, even going back a couple of years, especially at their place. They're certainly making their mark in the Central division."

Gary Morris
Farmington Hills Mercy coach

tighter, unfortunately," Morris said. "I thought we were tentative when we were shooting the ball. I base that on a lot of shots being very short. We weren't necessarily shooting with confidence."

Maya White scored five of her 10 points in the second quarter, including a big 3-pointer, that ensured Mercy an 18-13 lead at halftime.

"The offense just went away from us," Morris added. "I thought, defensively, in that third quarter, I thought we still played pretty good D. Sometimes we gave up some offensive rebounds, which was something we had addressed because that was a concern, really, both times we had played them."

Mercy and FGR split the home-and-home CHSL-Central series. The Marlins won the first meeting, 46-33, on Jan. 7, while FGR won on the road, 33-26, on Jan. 27. With both teams finishing 7-1 in the division, few fans were shocked to see the two meet again in the tournament championship.

"We've always had pretty close games with them, even going back a couple of years, especially at their place," Morris said. "They're certainly making their mark in the Central division."

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



Farmington Hills Mercy's Aizlyn Albanese attacks the hoop during the Catholic League championship Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, at Detroit Mercy.

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Brothers win regional titles for Hartland

Bill Khan
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HARTLAND — Bodie Abbey of Hartland hasn't performed like a freshman in his first state tournament as a high school wrestler.

That's because, while winning a regional championship Feb. 18 was a great accomplishment, it was just another high-caliber event in a wrestling career that began at the age of 3.

"I've been on this stage before," Abbey said. "I've been to a lot of national tournaments, state tournaments. I had some experience."

He also had some inside knowledge of what to expect when he joined Hartland, one of the premier wrestling programs in Michigan.

His brother, Vinnie, a junior in his third season with the Eagles, also won a championship in the Division 1 individual regional at Hartland.

"I just got to watch him and how he acts, his demeanor out there, what he accomplishes," Bodie said. "I just look up to him and try to be as good as he is."

After watching his younger brother win championships at the youth level, Vinnie tried to warn him that the step up to high school would be more challenging. The biggest challenge, it turns out, has been for any wrestler who has taken the mat against Bodie.

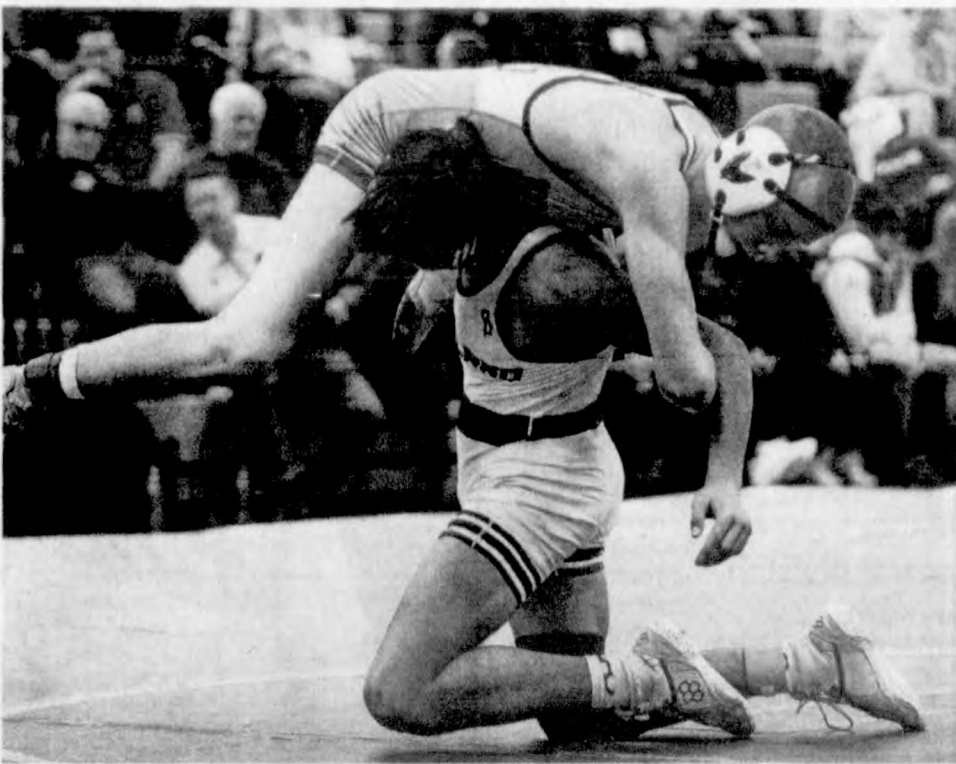
"I always told him it's going to be a lot harder when he's wrestling a lot older kids, but he's doing great," Vinnie said. "He's doing super good for a freshman."

As far as Hartland coach Kyle Summerfield is concerned, the younger Abbey couldn't have a better role model than the one under his own roof.

Summerfield speaks glowingly of Vinnie Abbey's work ethic and leadership any time his name has been mentioned.

"Both brothers are very special," Summerfield said. "If you ever ask Bodie if his brother was his role model, he'd probably laugh. They beat each other up quite a bit."

"The whole family, their dad was a couple-time state champ. They're a wrestling family, top to bottom. He's got little brothers who are killers, too. They just do everything right. They work



Hartland's Bodie Abbey lifts Clarkston's Preston Lefevre during the 113-pound championship match at the Division 1 individual regional tournament Saturday at Hartland. PHOTOS BY BILL KHAN/LIVINGSTON DAILY



Hartland's Vinnie Abbey takes the shoe of West Bloomfield's Jason Onwenu to the face during the 157-pound championship match at the Division 1 individual wrestling regional tournament Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023 at Hartland.

hard. They want the best for themselves and the team. They're good leaders and good wrestlers."

Summerfield had no doubt Bodie Abbey and fellow freshman state qualifier Dallas Korponic would make an impact this season.

"He's wrestled the best of the best, in Kansas nationals, which is one of the biggest youth tournaments, him and Dallas Koropnic," Summerfield said. "We're lucky we have a lot of really good kids who want to get better and want to work hard and they want to be at Hartland. That's all we can ask for. We're home grown. Our home-grown kids are doing great things."

The Abbey brothers delivered two of Hartland's three championships. Nick Rochowiak won the other at 165 pounds.

Bodie won by a 7-3 decision over Clarkston sophomore Preston Lefevre, improving his record to 37-3.

"It feels great," Bodie said. "Just all the hard work we've done through the season and all the hard work I put in with my partners paid off."

Vinnie, a three-time state qualifier, won his second straight regional championship by pinning West Bloomfield's Jason Onwenu in 3 minutes, 50 seconds in the 157-pound title match. Abbey, ranked second in Division 1 by MichiganGrappler.com, has pinned the sixth-ranked Onwenu three times in the individual and team postseason.

"It's go time now," Vinnie said.

"I'm just trying to stay locked in. It's postseason; you've got to be on your 'A' game."

Rochowiak, ranked third at 165, won his first regional championship and qualified for his third state tournament. He won his first two matches with pins in 15 seconds and 1:15 before winning by forfeit over fifth-ranked Max Callahan of Davison.

"I was really looking forward to that match and training hard for it," Rochowiak said. "I'll probably see him at state. Much respect for the opponent. I know he's been battling an injury. It is what it is."

Hartland qualified 10 of its 13 wres-

tlers for the state tournament from a regional that got considerably tougher with the addition of third-ranked Davison and fifth-ranked Clarkston.

Seniors Gabe Cappellano and Brayden Bobo reached championship matches and lost to unbeaten wrestlers, Cappellano by a 4-3 decision to Midland's Cole Schelb at 150 and Bobo by a 20-5 technical fall to Davison's Josh Barr at 175.

Finishing third for the Eagles were Korponic at 120, junior James Butzier at 165, junior Jacob Pretzel at 215 and senior Vincent Cox at 285.

Sophomore Easton Culver was fourth at 132.

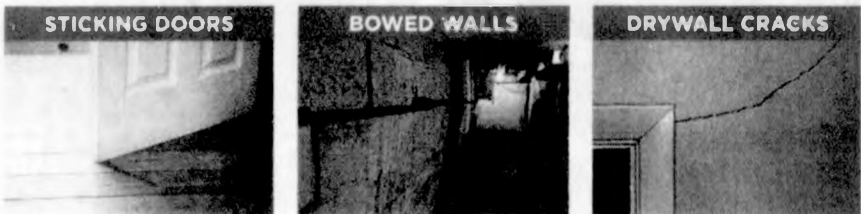
"We're proud of the guys today from top to bottom," Summerfield said. "Everyone performed as best as they can today, and that's all we can ask for. In total, we got 10 through, which we're happy about. We had 13 qualifiers here. We were hoping to get a couple more through, but we're very proud of all the guys' efforts and the 10 who are going on."

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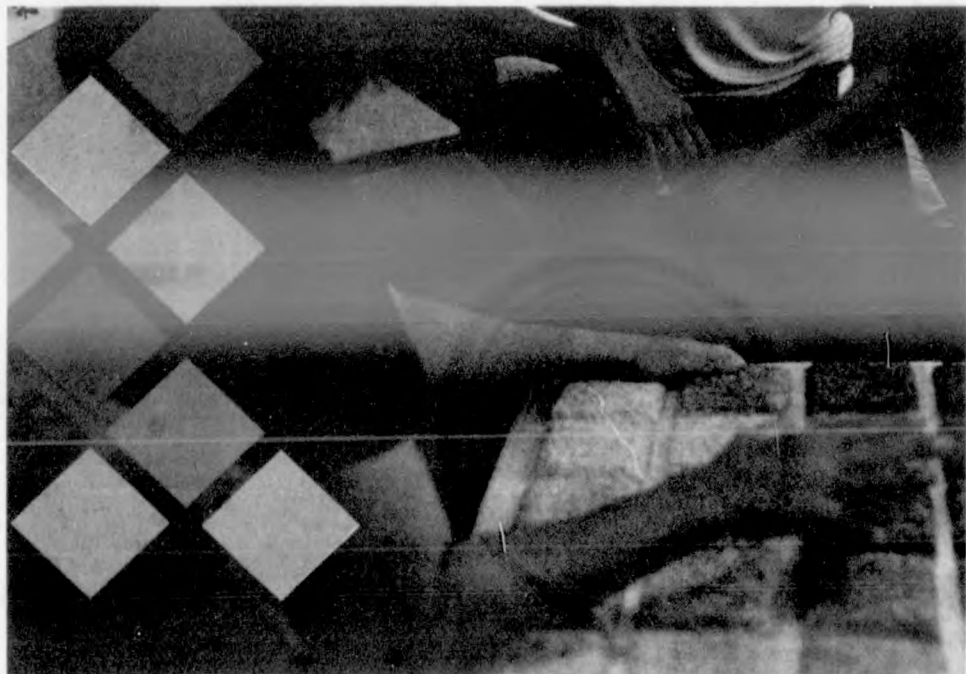
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Sacrifice

Continued from Page 1B

The individual state finals is one of the most coveted tournaments around. If Werner dropped out, that meant one of his teammates might get noticed by a college.

Moreover, his selfless act might help the Shamrocks secure another individual state title or two.

"You don't see that out of a lot of kids these days," Hancock said. "He wanted to give some younger guys the opportunity."

"He came into my office and said, 'Hey coach, my goals are stuck with the team. I have no real desire to wrestle in the individual tournament. Give some of the other guys the opportunity.' It blew me away. It blew our staff away."

That doesn't mean Werner's career is over, however.

Bowing out of the individual tournament has allowed him to focus entirely on winning dual matches throughout the team tournament.

In fact, he recorded a pin at 157 pounds during DCC's win over host Salem in the D-1 regional semifinal on Feb. 15. About an hour later, CC went on to beat Livonia Stevenson 82-0 in the regional championship, a victory that qualified the Shamrocks for a return trip to the team state finals on Feb. 24-25 at Wings Event Center.

Werner could have as many as three matches left in his career, depending on the scenario the Shamrocks find themselves in once they arrive in Kalamazoo. He's already told Hancock he could wrestle at 150 pounds if needed. Or, it's possible his number might not get called at all, which speaks to the sacrifice he just made.

"I've just always been one for the team," Werner said. "I've been working hard, but I'm not the greatest wrestler. A lot of these other guys need the opportunity more than me. They deserve the opportunity, and I wanted to give that opportunity to these guys. Everybody works extremely hard, and I want to focus on the team and the team state championship and let these other guys who want to wrestle as individuals get that chance to do so."

Hancock said Werner has displayed several characteristics throughout the

years that warranted him naming the senior one of his captains before the season started. Whether that's leading teammates in the wrestling room, weight room or during running sessions. Werner's also a stellar student (he plans to study finance at Michigan State).

"His character is extremely high, and you get that from talking to him," Hancock added. "He's very mature. He leads the guys in every single way. That's what has stuck out to me. He's not your returning state champ. He's not your All-American. But he's special. You don't get to coach guys like him every year. ..."

"We were a little shell-shocked (he dropped out) because there's no doubt in my mind I think he'd be a state qualifier and probably a place winner. That was our goal for him, and we think he could've placed high. He just has bigger goals. He's focused on the team's success. It's wild to think about that. He doesn't have the ambition to wrestle in college, but I just know he's going to have a bright future for whatever he goes into."

Two Shamrocks actually got to enter the individual tournament with Werner backing out.

Junior Michael Cannon defeated Stevenson's Sam Ward by decision to win the 120-pound district championship, while sophomore Lee Krueger placed fourth at 190 pounds.

Both have advanced to Saturday's regional tournament with a trip to Ford Field on the line.

Of course, after qualifying for regionals, both Cannon and Krueger went out of their way to thank Werner for his selflessness.

"It sounds crazy, but I'm not going to college for wrestling or anything," Werner said. "I just wanted to give a younger guy who's maybe looking for some college offers a chance to get out there and show everybody what they're made of and maybe give them a chance to place because that's what it's all about."

"I've never gone to individual states. This year I could've gone. But it's not something I wanted to do. But I'm OK with not going because it lets a guy have that opportunity."

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

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02/20/23

Brighton ski teams sweep D1 regionals

Bill Khan
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

BRIGHTON - It's hard to qualify for the state high school ski meet without one critical element. Snow.

Early spring-like conditions in lower Michigan have played havoc with the sport the past two weeks, forcing schedules to be juggled and meets to be postponed to maneuver around the weather.

The Division 1 regional at Mt. Brighton was moved up two days to Feb. 14 to find a more suitable weather window, but it was still 40 degrees at the start and 50 at the finish.

The only snow remaining in Livingston County managed to hold up well enough for teams and individuals to punch their tickets to the state meet Feb. 27 at Schuss Mountain.

Even with abnormally warm conditions, it was a typical regional for Brighton. The Bulldogs swept the boys and girls team championships for the second straight year, with the boys extending their streak of regional titles to four and state appearances to 11.

Brighton's boys scored 81 points to beat Birmingham by 34.5, while the girls scored 71 to beat Milford by 28.

It was a relief for everyone who qualified to get a regional meet completed during a crazy stretch of weather that can be unkind to their sport.

"It's been a big challenge," Brighton coach Jeff Street said.

"Honestly, I was expecting it to be more slushy than it was. It was definitely firmer. The slalom race had some ruts, but once you got through that softer stuff, it was hard underneath. This stayed pretty firm the whole time. I saw people getting bounced out, because the snow was hard and they were thinking it was soft."

The slalom runs in the morning took place on firmer snow, but the surface became a little slushier for the giant slalom races in the afternoon.

"Slalom, actually, the snow wasn't bad because overnight it was pretty cold, but this GS stuff was pretty soft to ski on," Brighton senior Isabella Militello said. "Different conditions, different styles of skiing. Hard snow this morning with slalom, you could really be on the front of your boots and just crank out those turns. GS, you had to be more careful where you put pressure."

The conditions didn't deter Militello, who won slalom by more than a second in 37.38 seconds and placed second in giant slalom in 33.37. She was 0.25 seconds behind first-place Natalie Melody of Milford in giant slalom.

"My first slalom run was amazing," Militello said.

"The second one, I got rocked around a little bit, but it's OK. The first one was good enough to hold me to first place. My first run (of GS) I almost fell like three times. I was on one ski a lot, but my second run was pretty good, so I'm pretty happy about that."

Brighton's girls scored 35 points in slalom, giving them a 29-point cushion over Milford, which was third after the morning races. Milford edged Brighton in giant slalom, 35-36.

Also scoring in both races for the Bulldogs were Abby Storch (fourth slalom, sixth GS), Ava Popov (eighth slalom and GS) and Lia Leffel (22nd slalom, 20th GS).

"The girls' team is really solid," Street said. "We're deep. We can score any of the top six skiers, for the most part, and they skied really well today. Izzy Militello is having a fantastic senior year, skiing super, super well."

Hartland's Reagan Aylor grabbed the 10th and final individual qualifying spot in giant slalom. As a team,



Brighton's Isabella Militello won slalom and was second in giant slalom in the Division 1 regional ski meet Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023 at Mt. Brighton.

PHOTOS BY BILL KHAN/LIVINGSTON DAILY



Brighton's Hunter Post skis slalom.



Brighton's John Popov skis slalom.

the Eagles placed fifth with 156 points, two places shy of a state berth. Howell's girls were 11th out of 12 full teams.

Brighton's boys won on the strength of an outstanding top three. John Popov was third in slalom and second in giant slalom, Cru Smith was fifth in slalom and fourth in giant slalom, and Hunter Post was fourth in slalom and seventh in giant slalom. Erik DeKeyser completed the team scoring, placing 25th in slalom and 35th in giant slalom.

"Cru Smith has been out with an injury," Street said. "We haven't been able to get him back until last week. He was able to start skiing with us and get back on the hill, so that really helped us today. Our other skiers were solid, right where we needed them to be to score well as a team."

Howell's Alex Cotton qualified for state by placing eighth in giant slalom.

Hartland's boys finished ninth and Howell's were 11th.

Obituaries

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Elizabeth Lucille Bullard

MILFORD - Elizabeth Lucille Bullard, of Milford, passed away on February 13, 2023, at her home surrounded by her loving family. Elizabeth or better known to her family and friends as Betty Lu was born on May 23, 1928, to Raymond and Iva Sherwood. She was the sixth generation Sherwood to grow up and live her entire life in the Village of Milford.



Loving wife of the late Glenn Raymond Bullard. Elizabeth is survived by her children: Robert Sherwood (Sue) Bullard, Ina Bullard (wife of late James Lee Bullard), Timothy Mason Bullard, Thomas Kevin Bullard and Sue Ann Bullard. Also survived by eleven grandchildren, sixteen great grandchildren, and four great, great grandchildren and her younger Brother, John Raymond Sherwood.

She is preceded in death by her husband Glenn Raymond Bullard, her son James Lee Bullard and her twin brother Stewart Stetler Sherwood.

Visitation and services were held by Lynch & Son's Funeral Home in Milford.

Memorial contributions to be made to the American Cancer Society or the Milford Historical Society.

For further information, please visit www.LynchandSonsMilford.com, or call (248) 684-6645.

Cranbrook's Jordan Richie wins Student-Athlete Award from MHSAA

Brandon Folsom
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

An essay Cranbrook senior Jordan Richie wrote about handling defeat has earned her recognition from the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

She was one of eight athletes who participate in Class B sports who the MHSAA selected to receive its Scholar-Athlete Award on Feb. 14. The governing body of high school sports in Michigan has been giving out the award for the past 34 years.

Part of the honor includes receiving a \$2,000 college scholarship, one she'll use when she studies chemical engineering at the University of Texas next school year.

To be eligible for the award, athletes needed to carry at least a 3.5 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale), lettered in one varsity sport and write an essay about the importance of sportsmanship.

"We have all lost. Every athlete has experienced the frustration of a devastating loss, the pain of seeing a medal in another's hands and not one's own," a portion of Richie's essay said. "I have never played a perfect game or run a perfect race. I have watched helplessly as a volleyball flew off my hand and into the net on a game point. I have stood idle as a player blew by me to score a buzzer-beater."

"But, when the final score favors my competitor, I know that taking accountability for my mistakes and appreciating the heart and hustle of the winner will teach me greater lessons than a simple scoreboard."

Richie played volleyball at Cranbrook for four seasons. She's currently enjoying her third season with the girls basketball team and is expected to wrap up her four-year career competing in track and field in the spring.

She carries a 4.2 GPA and has recorded the high-



Cranbrook's Jordan Richie drives to the hoop during a girls basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, at Plymouth Christian Academy.

TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

est possible score on three separate advanced placement exams.

Lutheran Westland senior Noah Etnyre recently was awarded the MHSAA's Student-Athlete Award in Class C.

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

Redford Union wins 3rd WWAC title in 5 seasons

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Mike Myles sat out his sophomore season after suffering ACL, MCL and quad injuries.

So the Redford Union boys basketball star is well-versed in both handling and overcoming adversity.

And the de facto Western Wayne Athletic Conference championship on Feb. 17 presented plenty of it.

With 2:19 left and the Panthers clinging to a four-point lead over Romulus, shooting guard Amare Slaughter-Taylor, arguably the best player in the league, fouled out. And that put plenty of pressure on Myles' shoulders.

This was the rubber match. Over the past four seasons, Union and Romulus have both taken turns beating each other for the league title. The Panthers have won two of the past four championships, while the Eagles have taken home the other two.

And with the way Romulus' full-court defense was pressuring the Panthers' backcourt, Union needed Slaughter-Taylor, one of its top ballhandlers, on the floor to lighten the load.

Instead, Myles, a sure-handed point guard himself, had to make do without his buddy.

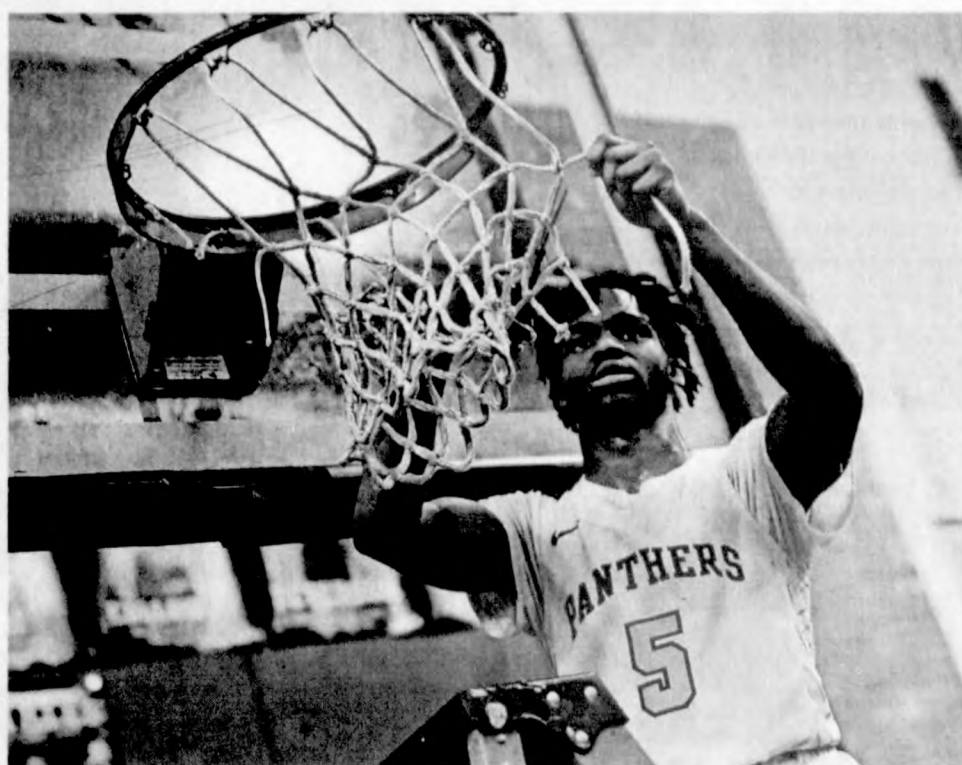
And the junior did.

He helped Union kill some clock, scooted to the basket for a much-needed layup with 57 seconds left and was on the floor as Romulus missed two chances to knot the score before the final buzzer.

Union 57, Romulus 55.

It was the Panthers' (14-5) cutting down the nets on their home court for a third time in the past five seasons.

"It's not easy," said Myles, who totaled 11 points and five assists. "But we go over it in practice. There are a lot of mistakes made by each player in practice, but anytime I've made a mistake, Coach (Randall Taylor) has been on me about, 'Mike, we can't have turnovers.' At least not from me. I just take it possession by possession and try to get the



Redford Union's Mike Myles cuts down the net after the Panthers' boys basketball team won the Western Wayne Athletic Conference on Friday, Feb. 17. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

best shot. When we're on defense, I'm making sure we're executing every assignment. And it starts in warmups. Even when I'm getting the energy hype and I calm down for a second, Coach is like, 'Mike, you can't stop talking.' So it's just communicating with my team and making sure we execute the game plan."

Myles, who was a bench player as a freshman, was a big part of Union's championship two years ago.

And he was slated for an even bigger season as a sophomore, but he suffered his leg injuries on the football field and was forced to watch from the sidelines as Romulus and Dearborn Heights Robichaud finished ahead of Union in the final league standings.

"He's grown so much as a player," Coach Taylor said. "As far as him down the stretch, we had been talking to him, Coach Julian and I, all week about poise and playing with control and under-

standing the moment, understanding the time and the situation. He did a great job tonight in the last 2 minutes in the game of keeping us in it and keeping us in control."

Myles didn't do it alone, obviously.

In fact, it was a pair of his football buddies who helped Union separate from Romulus early on.

Slaughter-Taylor, who posted a team-best 20 points and 11 rebounds, buried a buzzer-beater to give the Panthers their first lead, 12-10, at the end of the first quarter.

But it was Jamire Hall, a recent Wayne State University signee and the center of Union's WWAC championship football team, keeping that lead alive in the second and third quarters.

First, Hall buried a put-back attempt at the halftime buzzer and sank the ensuing and-one attempt.

And then he sank a pair of free

throws and a big bucket down low to kickstart the second half. In fact, he sank four free throws in all to finish with eight points.

And then it was Central Michigan University signee Jeremiah Alston-Jackson who made three crucial buckets in the fourth to keep the Panthers ahead of Romulus. Alston-Jackson finished with 13 points.

"Both of those two guys have been such a blessing to our program," Coach Taylor said of his football stars, Hall and Alston-Jackson. "They didn't play last year, and they came out this year. They give us toughness inside defensively, and they're growing. Neither one of them have played since their freshmen year. With Jamire going to Wayne State for football and Jeremiah going to Central Michigan for football, they came in and bought in from the jump and said, 'Hey, you know what? Let's play.' And they've played from the jump.

"They think about our goals every day, and they're some of our best leaders every day. Jamire is more of a vocal leader. Jeremiah is more of a quiet leader and leads by example. But both of them are huge. Jamire was major to-night with his free throws and rebounding, his defense and just his want, his want to win, and that was major for us. And that's how we got it done."

And helping them get the ball down low?

That was Myles, who was happy to climb the ladder and snip a piece of the net following the victory.

"It feels great," Myles said. "I came in as a freshman and we won the district championship. It was a great feeling then. But I was coming off the bench. I was still a big part of the team, but I was coming off the bench. Right now, to lead this team, and to come through and win a WWAC championship as we're about to go into the playoffs hot and feeling good, it makes me feel ready, it makes me want to keep playing."

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

Bloomfield Hills Marian's Swanson verbally commits to Butler University

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

One of the top junior girls basketball recruits in metro Detroit has found her future home.

On Feb. 9, Bloomfield Hills Marian power forward McKenzie Swanson verbally committed to Butler University.

Despite missing time with an injury a year ago, she earned third-team honors on Hometown Life's All-Area team, averaging 13 points, 9.1 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game. She also shot 48% from the floor.

What's more, she's a three-time state champion in volleyball. This past fall, she was the starting middle hitter on the Mustangs' squad that beat Northville in the Division I state championship.

Right now, the Mustangs are enduring a rebuilding effort on the hardwood. Coach Mary Cicerone retired after 39 years following last season, which included Marian winning the Catholic League tournament. She has since been replaced by former assistant Michelle Lindsey, who has the team 6-13 overall and 1-7 in the CHSL-Central in her first season.

Hometown Life recently reached out to Swanson and asked her to fill in our readers on just why she chose Butler over the other Division I programs recruiting her.

Here's what she had to say in her recruiting diary:

The Butler Way

The Butler Way demands commitment, denies selfishness and accepts reality, yet seeks constant improvement while promoting the good of the team above self.

Why Butler?

I visited Butler in June of 2022, after the spring Nike EYBL live period. Previous to my visit, I knew Butler was in the Big East. I knew it was a high academic school and I knew they had a new coaching staff.

What I didn't know is that over the course of the next 8 months that I would find my home.

Butler started recruiting me in the spring of 2022. While in Coach (Austin) Parkinson's office in June, he leaned across his desk and, with a passionate demeanor, looked me in the eye and told

me that I can come play for him but only if I loved basketball. He proceeded to tell me that I didn't need to make that decision today, but when I go home and I am alone, to really think about that. I knew I loved basketball (I always have), but his question really helped me to realize that I wanted to play for a school, a coach and a team with that passion.

Since that visit in June, Coach P and the Butler staff have been in constant communication with me. They call, text and/or send me mail frequently. Every communication has had a special and unique message for me that has helped me build a special bond.

I took my time with the recruiting process and I studied all my options, including Coach Parkinson. His philosophy resonated with me perfectly.

First, high academics: I care about my academics. When basketball is over, I want to pursue a career in the medical field.

Second, high-character players: I want to surround myself with a network, including a coaching staff and teammates who share the same values as me (The Butler Way). I want to grow into a great leader.

Third, love basketball: It's going to be amazing to play on an elite team who loves basketball.

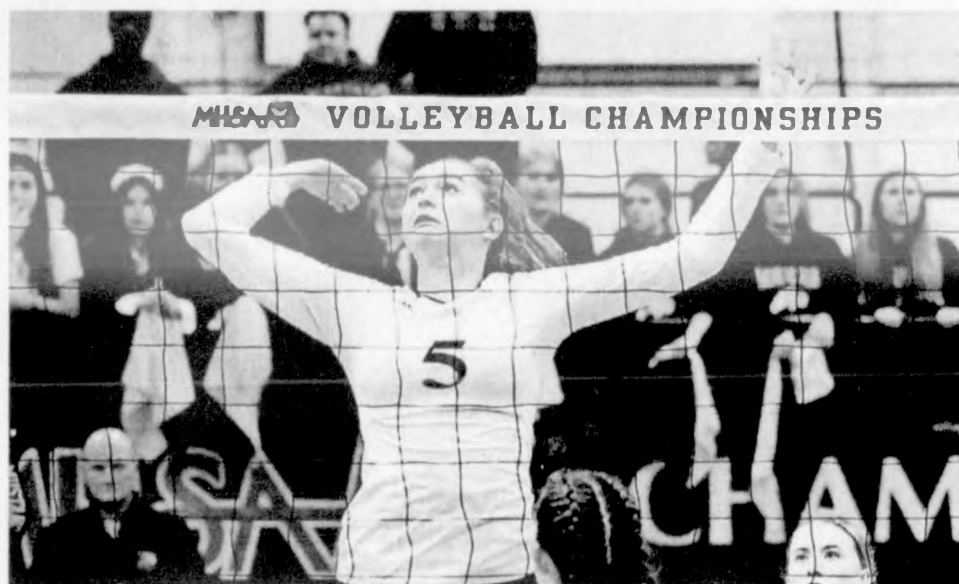
Fourth, an offense built around inside/out. The last three post players who played for coach were 1,000-point scorers.

Furthermore, Coach P has demonstrated that he can build great teams and deliver a winning program with his time at IUPUI. I can already see that great team coming together. I am going to get the opportunity to play with some amazing teammates including 2023 commit Lily Zeinstra (West Michigan Drive). I have played AAU against Lily since fifth grade. She is a great competitor and can really shoot the ball.

Why now?

Simply put, I'm blessed with an incredible opportunity to get the degree that I want from a top school while playing the sport that I love for an amazing coaching staff and with teammates who share my same passion to win. And it is in the Big East. The basketball conference! Let's go, Dawgs!

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



Bloomfield Hills Marian's McKenzie Swanson hits during the Division 1 volleyball state final Nov. 19 at Kellogg Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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