



## Mustangs continue building on playoff run

SPORTS, 1B

# NORTHVILLE RECORD

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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## Northville installs retractable bollards

Structures allow it to reopen downtown streets

Laura Colvin

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**NORTHVILLE** — The downtown area is fully open to traffic for the first time in more than three years, but newly installed retractable bollards will allow the city to close the streets quickly when events are scheduled.

The plan, Mayor Brian Turnbull said, is to keep Main and Center streets open to traffic from Nov. 1 through May 1 each year, with temporary winter closures from time to time.

The bollards, which are currently retracted as traffic flows through downtown, are installed in the intersections of Main and Hutton streets, and Center and Dunlap streets.

Two additional sets of bollards, for a total of 41, are partially installed across the Main and Center intersection. Once installation is complete later this month, city workers will be able to close streets one or both streets with a key for each bollard.

"This gives us flexibility," Turnbull said, noting each bollard is capable of stopping 7,500 pounds, and each can be raised and lowered individually. "We're a parade town, a festival town. Now we can easily open and close on a weekend for these events."

"Maybe sometime in our lives we'll do long weekends in the social district, we'll see in years to come," he added.

According to a statement from the city, the cost of approximately \$200,500 for the bollards was split evenly between the city and the Downtown Development Authority, and includes the project's planning and engineering, as well as purchases and installation.

The 36-inch bollards are black with reflective bands near the top for nighttime visibility. All first responders in the city have been provided with keys to lower the bollards and allow access by emergency vehicles, Turnbull said.

When streets are open to traffic, the bollards are lowered into the ground with a metal plate over the openings.

See BOLLARDS, Page 4A



The dining room of Mojave Cantina, 22870 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township, is expected to be open by the end of November. SUSAN BROMLEY

## Mojave Cantina to debut in Lyon Twp. with Tex-Mex menu

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**LYON TWP.** — Nearly four years after a New Year's Eve fire destroyed Lyon Cantina, a new restaurant has risen from the ashes.

Mojave Cantina, at 22870 Pontiac Trail, is expected to welcome diners inside by the end of November.

"We are waiting for our liquor li-

cense, but we are ready," owner Phil Tsapatoris said. "We hope to be open by Thanksgiving."

He recently gave a tour of his new 4,400-square-foot restaurant, which will seat 120 patrons inside and 50 on an outside patio where a fire pit is planned.

Mojave Cantina is the first restaurant Tsapatoris, who has been in the restaurant business for 20 years and holds a construction management degree from Michigan State University, has built

from scratch, but he operates two other Mojave Cantina restaurants, the first of which opened in Clawson in 2012 and the second in White Lake in 2019.

The new restaurant features arches and custom wooden doors that lead to a private banquet room, as well as Mexican-themed mustard yellow and terra cotta red colors that will match his other eateries.

See CANTINA, Page 5A

## Novi native knocked out of 'The Voice'

Susan Bromley

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**NOVI** — Alison Albrecht suffered a knockout punch on NBC's "The Voice" Nov. 6, ending a wild run on the reality singing show, but discovering life-changing possibilities.

Her only regret is a decision to not play an instrument.

"I regret not playing an instrument and that was my choice," Albrecht said Nov. 8 as the Novi native recapped her time on the popular competition show. "I don't have any (other) regrets, but I would have loved for people to see me play an instrument."

While she would have preferred to play guitar in her blind audition performance of "Ironie," which landed her a spot on the show, she also appreciated the challenge of owning a stage with only her voice.

Albrecht stretched beyond her comfort zone in several areas on the show, including doing covers rather than performing her own music. Besides her initial Alanis Morissette song, she performed a duet of "You Say," by Lauren Daigle, in the battle round and then, in her most recent knockout performance, "It's Too Late," by Carole King.

King is one of Albrecht's biggest

See 'THE VOICE', Page 7A



Alison Albrecht, a native of Novi, sings Carole King's classic, "It's Too Late," during the knockout round on NBC's show, "The Voice." TYLER GOLDEN/NBC

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# Milford House, Banditos close after less than 15 months

Susan Bromley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

MILFORD — Milford House has closed again, a little more than a year after it reopened under new operators following a closure during the pandemic.

Banditos, a small plates Mexican bar that opened in February, is also permanently closed, as well as The Scoop, which offered ice cream. Both were in Milford House's 10,000-square-foot building at the corner of Main and Commerce streets in downtown.

The closures were caused by a multitude of problems, said Rob Horvath, who was brought in less than a month ago to manage Banditos in a late-stage effort to salvage the business.

"A confluence of issues, including the lack of continued approval for operation of the arcade, coupled with a general decline in business necessitated a shut-down," Horvath said. "Those are some of the overarching issues. We had problems finding labor, food costs were

high... Competition from the new restaurant was problematic and caught us out of left field over there."

Horvath was referring to Sayulita Cocina Mexicana, which opened in October across the street.

That may have been the final blow to the business for which few things seem to have gone according to plan, including a shark tank that never came to fruition.

On Thursday, Horvath grimaced as he stood in Banditos' secluded lounge area, and then strolled to an adjacent dining area with a bar behind which several televisions were mounted. Both areas had seen tens of thousands of dollars in renovations. He then descended a few steps into a former patio area of Milford House that has prompted some of the issues leading to the closure.

The new partners had converted the space at the front of the restaurant and brought in dozens of arcade games. Now, the games have been mostly removed, with the space barren as Horvath and a few helpers clear out the

business.

"The arcade was very successful when the Milford House was going and it could have been even more successful," Horvath said. "The intent was to augment and help drive some of the business. We envisioned this as a destination for kids' birthday parties and events for younger people... We brought in the arcade, a new amenity, which was successful, but faced other challenges."

Horvath said that part of Milford House was profitable, but it closed in August, with signs declaring that it was being "remodeled." A permit allowing a temporary wall in the patio "where the arcade lived" expired Nov. 1, however, and with it died a plan to reopen Milford House as a pizza buffet and with a limited bar menu named "Games by the Slice."

On one of the doors, a sign bearing logos for a restaurant of that name, as well as for Banditos, advertises "Now Hiring," with positions including line cooks, dishwashers, busers and bartenders.

But those open positions, which will now never be filled, are also part of a tale that has become all too familiar — the struggle by restaurants to get staff, particularly cooks.

Milford House and Banditos were no exception, Horvath said, noting that in his past 27 days as general manager, he had talked to 20 line cook candidates on the phone, got 10 of them to come in for interviews, and had only one show up to work.

Horvath noted people who work in kitchens are his kind of people and a rare breed — working in a hot, messy, fast-paced, uncomfortable environment.

Line cooking is more demanding than fast food restaurants, where, he noted, employees can make \$15 to \$18 per hour. Milford House and Banditos offered more than that in pay, but couldn't offer enough to attract workers and still maintain a profit in a business with ever-slimmer profit margins, particularly with inflation driving food prices higher.

## Game Pawn opens new store in Novi with giveaways galore

Susan Bromley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

NOVI — Get ready to get your game on.

Game Pawn in the Novi Town Center opens Nov. 3, full of delights for video game and collectibles enthusiasts, both young and "vintage."

"It's been a long process, and we didn't get our spot here until July," Garrett Pyatt said of the store's location at 43189 Crescent Blvd., a few doors down from Walmart. "We're excited to be open for the holidays and getting it going is a lot of fun."

This is the third Game Pawn that Pyatt and Cam Sohrabi, both 28 and former classmates at Waterford Mott, have opened in the past three years: Their

**"We're excited to be open for the holidays and getting it going is a lot of fun."**

Garrett Pyatt

first was in Waterford in 2020 and their second in Ypsilanti, last fall.

The duo buys, sells and trades used and new video games, electronics and collectibles, similar to GameStop, but with a wider selection, Pyatt said.

Game Pawn specializes in "retro" video games, including systems such as NES, Nintendo 64 and early PlayStations, tapping into a market filled with nostalgic customers who want to play what they grew up on.

Sohrabi said he enjoys offering rare,

hard-to-find items.

"The pandemic created a market to go back and look for it," Sohrabi said, "and it has skyrocketed. Bring us anything video game related. We base everything off market data and how things will sell in the store."

Most items in the store range from \$5 to \$20, with inventory changing on a daily basis. Sohrabi said customers who bring games to the store may be happily shocked at how much Game Pawn will offer.

Game Pawn tries not to turn anything away, including non-working consoles, which they buy for parts. They have simplified selling older games and systems, so customers can bypass the hassle of Facebook Marketplace or eBay and get cash or store credit for new games.

The store is filled with thousands of games and collectibles, too, including stuffed video game characters like Kirby, and hundreds of Funko Pop! vinyl, pop culture figures.

During the grand opening, the first 50 customers will each receive a \$20 gift card, while the next 50 each get to choose a Funko Pop! from Game Pawn's collection.

Customers should also stay tuned for upcoming Black Friday sales, including a raffle drawing for a PlayStation 5.

"Come check us out, almost everyone can find something they are interested in," Sohrabi said.

Game Pawn is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays. For more information, visit [www.gamepawnausa.com](http://www.gamepawnausa.com).

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## Firefighters will gift Thanksgiving dinners to seniors

Shelby Tankersley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

FARMINGTON HILLS — The holiday season can be difficult for some. But multiple local organizations try to make Thanksgiving a joyful time for everyone.

One such group, the Farmington Hills Firefighters Local Charity Fund, gives away full Thanksgiving meals to low-income seniors.

The nonprofit is anticipating gifting roughly 80 turkey dinners this year on Saturday, Nov. 18.

"We get a bunch of turkeys and all the fixings," said Kevin Steen, a senior firefighter and the founder of the charity fund. "We bring these right to people's doorsteps. A lot of the time, we bring it in a firetruck and will hang out with them for a little bit if they're comfortable with that. A lot of these people are seniors who don't have family in the area."

While other local efforts focus on the homeless, veterans or families,



Farmington Hills firefighters and their families during the 2022 Thanksgiving meal giveaway for local seniors in need. COURTESY OF KEVIN STEEN

Farmington Hills firefighters focus on locals over the age of 50. The charity feeds seniors all year through a partnership with the Costick Center, donating over \$10,000 in food in recent years. But their Thanksgiving event has a special place in their hearts.

"There's people in tears," Steen said. "For some of us, it's just a turkey. But it really means a lot to people."

Steen said the charity fund relies on donations from residents and local grocery stores like Kroger, Meijer and Trader Joe's for its food program. People can offer monetary support by calling the fire department at 248-871-2800 or by emailing [fhffcharityfund@gmail.com](mailto:fhffcharityfund@gmail.com).

According to Steen, the Farmington Hills Firefighters Local Charity Fund is

entirely volunteer-led and keeps most of its efforts in Farmington and Farmington Hills. Other services the group offers are breast cancer support, temporary housing after house fires, indoor heaters during power outages and financial help during medical emergencies.

During the season of gifting, the firefighters hope their actions inspire others to give back to their community.

"Many of us bring our families," Steen said. "We hope it starts generational giving. If your children see you doing good in the community, I think they tend to carry that on."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at [stankersle@hometownlife.com](mailto:stankersle@hometownlife.com) or 734-311-0659.



### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF NORTHVILLE

The City of Northville Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing to receive public input on a request in regard to the City of Northville Zoning Ordinance to consider the following variance: On premises zoned R-1B, First Density Residential District on property located at 343 Fairbrook Court, Northville, Michigan, 48167, parcel number 48-003-03-0275-315. The applicant is seeking a variance to place a generator in the side yard setback. The variance needed is 4 feet from the required side yard setback of 7 feet for emergency electrical generators in Section 18.24.

The public hearing will be held on December 6, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the City of Northville Municipal Building - Council Chambers, 215 W. Main Street, Northville, Michigan, 48167, 248-449-9902. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the variance request.

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

Written comments to the BZA pertaining to the proposed variance request must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. November 30, 2023, to the City Clerk at the above address, or using the City Hall drop box, or emailed to [msmith@ci.northville.mi.us](mailto:msmith@ci.northville.mi.us).

RYAN MCKINDLES, CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

### CITY OF NOVI VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SERVE ON CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Notice is given that the Novi City Council will be interviewing applicants for appointment to the following Boards & Commissions:

- Board of Review
- Corridor Improvement Authority
- Election Commission
- Historical Commission
- Library Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals

If you are a registered voter and interested in volunteering to serve on a City Board or Commission, information about the various Boards and Commissions is available at [cityofnovi.org](http://cityofnovi.org) or by contacting the City Clerk's Office at (248)347-0456

The deadline for filing an application is Monday, November 27, 2023. Applicants will be contacted by the City Clerk's Office regarding the date and time of interviews.

Cortney Hanson, City Clerk



# Share laughs in South Lyon, ease burdens for cancer-stressed families

Susan Bromley  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**SOUTH LYON** — Andrea Miller's life was upended by cancer last year.

Miller was one of an estimated 1.9 million Americans diagnosed with cancer in 2022, according to the American Cancer Society.

And like so many of those new patients, she found herself not only in an emergency health crisis, but under incredible financial strain. The wife and mother of two young sons had to quit her job as an occupational therapist to embark on a months-long battle for her life.

Miller, who did not meet income guidelines for government assistance, was relieved to be directed to the New Day Foundation, which works specifically to help ease financial stress for families suffering a cancer crisis.

"To accept something as valuable as money and time is hard to do," Miller said. "But I am thankful there are organizations and people that donate to them to help families like mine."

Kelly Rodriguez, whose own family has suffered multiple bouts with cancer, has organized a comedy night fundraiser for the New Day Foundation Nov. 17 at the Riverbank Golf Club, 24095 Currie Road. An evening of laughs provided by three comedians and dinner is available for a \$50 ticket, with proceeds benefiting New Day.

"I need my son to know that no matter your situation, you have to help oth-



Kelly Rodriguez with her husband, Frank, and son, Grayson. The family has repeatedly dealt with cancer and Kelly was inspired to organize an upcoming comedy fundraiser to assist other families battling the disease.

COURTESY OF KELLY RODRIGUEZ

ers," Rodriguez, 46, said.

Her son, Grayson, 12, a student at Millennium Middle School in South Lyon, was just 3 when his father and Rodriguez's first husband, Steve Gornick, died.

Gornick had intimal sarcoma, a cancer originating in the lining of his heart, which went undiagnosed until just four days before his death in 2014.

Six years later, Kelly was faced with cancer again as longtime friend Frank

Rodriguez was diagnosed with Stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma just a few months after his wife Yvette, Kelly's best friend, died of a brain aneurysm in 2019.

Frank Rodriguez, who had also lost a 7-year-old daughter to cancer many years before, lacked the strength to work or to cook his own meals, and was unable to pay the electric bill or even make minor home repairs.

Although they didn't know about New Day at the time, and Frank Rodriguez has since recovered with the help of chemo and the love of Kelly, whom he married just over a year ago, the non-profit was meant for people like them and the Miller family.

Andrea Miller, who has been married to James for 12 years, is the mother of Nathan, 10, and Charlie, 4. She was shocked with a breast cancer diagnosis in June of last year.

She'd had no symptoms, except a pain under her arm that she thought was a pulled muscle and which she mentioned to her doctor in passing at an unrelated appointment.

Within 3½ weeks of her mammogram and biopsy, she started five months of chemotherapy and immunotherapy, then underwent a double mastectomy in January of this year, followed by 25 rounds of radiation and finally an all-clear — meaning that all cancer cells were declared dead.

But during her treatment, she had to quit her job to focus on fighting her cancer and being a strong wife and mother. New Day stepped in to make a mortgage and car payment for the family and re-

lieved them of that financial stress.

Miller, now in remission, cried as she remembered how much those acts of kindness meant to her during one of the most difficult times in her life.

"I don't think I could ever say thank you enough to people who don't even know me and donated their money that they work hard for and took time away from their families to make that money," she said. "They found it in their hearts to donate to families like mine, so I can pay attention to my kids and participate in their activities and be an attentive wife and continue to live through treatment and not worry about how I am going to be able to pay the next bill that came through."

Rodriguez hopes to ease that pain for many other families by organizing a fundraiser for the New Day Foundation to continue their mission.

"Come out and support a great cause and have a nice night out making memories," she said. "It's getting close to the holidays. You can make someone else's holiday cheerier."

The Night Out Comedy & Dinner benefiting the New Day Foundation is planned from 6 to 9 p.m. Nov. 17 at the Riverbank Golf Club. Featured comedians are Tom Massey, Ron Rigby and Brandi Alexander. Tables of six or eight can be reserved. Patrons must be 18 or older. To purchase tickets in advance, visit Eventbrite.com or motownmark.com.

Contact Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com. Follow her on X @SusanBromley10.

## New mayors, councilmembers, more

### From Staff Reports

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Voters went to the polls in multiple Hometown Life cities on Nov. 7 to cast the final ballots in the November 2023 general election.

Unofficial results are below.

#### South Lyon

South Lyon voters have chosen Steve Kennedy for their new mayor, electing him with 1,569 votes. He overwhelmingly defeated Jacob McLeod, who received 501 votes. Kennedy has served on the city council since 2018.

Elected to three available seats on the city council were incumbent Lisa Dilg with 1,639 votes, newcomer Thad Bogert with 1,364 votes, and incumbent Maggie Kurtzweil with 1,176 votes. Missing the cut was Jean Dendel with 971 votes.

#### Northville

In Northville, Mayor Brian Turnbull ran unopposed and claimed a two-year term with 1,616 votes.

Four candidates ran for two seats on the Northville City Council, with the top two vote-getters winning four-year terms.

Council newcomer Laura Genitti, a lifetime resident of Northville and owner of Genitti's Hole-in-the-Wall, came away with a landslide, claiming 1,226 votes. Incumbent Barbara Moroski-

Browne held her seat with 916 votes.

Incumbent Marilyn Price was ousted after coming in third with 907 votes, followed by Robert Sochacki who trailed with 821 votes.

#### Novi

Justin Fischer was elected Novi's first new mayor in 12 years and will serve a 2-year term with 7,225 votes. He defeated Aaron Martinez, who received 5,376 votes. Fischer has served as a councilman since 2019 in his current term but was previously a councilmember from 2009-2014.

Six candidates sought three available four-year seats on the Novi City Council. The top three vote getters winning the seats were incumbent Laura Casey with 6,151 votes, newcomer Matt Heintz with 6,102 votes, and incumbent Dave Staudt with 5,904 votes.

Missing the cut were Sujata Raman with 5,614 votes, Jay Dooley with 5,236 votes, and Joe Peddiboyina with 3,696 votes.

#### Farmington Hills

Former councilwoman Theresa Rich has claimed the title of Farmington Hills mayor, winning with 8,829 votes over former mayor Ken Massey's 8,323 votes. Rich will serve a two-year term.

Winning three seats on the Farmington Hills City Council are Bill Dwyer with 8,937 votes, incumbent Jackie Boleware, 7,920 votes, and Jon Aldred with

6,958 votes. They will each serve a four-year term.

Falling short were Valentina Lucaj with 6,850 votes, Mayor Pro Tem Mary Newlin with 6,644 votes, Alex Meyers with 6,190 votes and Asim Khan with 2,628 votes.

#### Birmingham

Birmingham voters approved a senior millage proposition with 3,492 votes in favor and 1,566 against.

The approval adds a new .33-mill, three-year levy that will collect about \$1 million of revenue per year for the city to make interim improvements and establish a sinking fund for a senior center that will provide an array of services. The levy ends on July 1, 2027.

A measure to approve sales of marijuana in Birmingham failed with 3,726 no votes and 1,340 yes votes. Voters were overwhelmingly against an amended ordinance that would have allowed one medical marihuana facility and one marihuana recreational establishment to operate in Birmingham.

#### Bloomfield Hills

Voters in the Bloomfield Hills School District approved a building and site sinking fund millage renewal, 5,925-2,798.

The district will continue to levy .6976 mills for a term of three years with expected revenue to be used for the construction or repair of school buildings,

school security improvements, the acquisition or upgrading of technology, the acquisition of student transportation vehicles, trucks and vans as well as parts, supplies, and equipment used for the maintenance of these vehicles.

#### Westland

State Rep. Kevin Coleman soundly won Westland's mayoral race. Coleman will be Westland's first new mayor in over 15 years, beating out opponent interim Mayor Mike Londeau with 8,144 votes. Londeau, a former councilman appointed mayor in January, received 5,630 votes.

Coleman will serve a two-year term ending in 2025, completing former Mayor Bill Wild's last elected four-year term. Generally, Westland's mayor serves a four-year term.

Michael McDermott, Melissa Sampey and Andrea Rutkowski were elected to four-year terms on council. McDermott received 8,944 votes, Sampey received 7,629 votes and Rutkowski received 7,470 votes.

Emily Bauman took the remaining position with 7,211 votes and will serve a two-year term.

Council will elect a president and president pro tem from among themselves at the beginning of next year.

In the clerk's office, Clerk Richard LeBlanc was reelected with 10,863 votes. LeBlanc has been clerk since 2015 and ran unopposed.

## Livonia voters reelect mayor, put four on city council

### Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**LIVONIA** — Voters in Livonia have decided to retain their first female mayor.

According to unofficial election results, Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan was elected Tuesday to a second four-year term. Livonia voters also elected four people to city council, a new clerk and a new treasurer.

All results are unofficial until certified by the Wayne County Board of Canvassers.

#### Voters reelect Brosnan to second term

Brosnan, a former city council member and executive, was reelected with 13,805 votes. The mayor has said a redevelopment of the city's senior center, kicking off the city's Livonia Vision 21

Master Plan, will be the central focus of her second term.

"I cannot tell you how much this victory means," Brosnan said to supporters Tuesday night. "We've put out a big dream, a big vision. I don't know about you guys, but I think people want us to continue doing what we're doing."

Councilwoman Kathleen McIntyre, who challenged Brosnan, received 10,838 votes.

Livonia's mayor serves as the city's chief executive.

"I am so excited we get to do this for four more years," Brosnan said. "I happen to think we're pretty good at it."

#### Veterans, new faces elected to city council

Councilman Brandon McCullough, Martha Ptashnik, Carrie Budzinski and Councilman Scott Morgan were elected to serve on Livonia City Council.

McCullough earned the most votes

with 16,409 and will serve a four-year term, with two years as council president, beginning next year. Ptashnik, who came in second with 14,512 votes, will also serve a four-year term, two of which will be spent as council vice president.

Budzinski earned 13,373 votes and will serve a four-year term. Morgan received 13,311 votes and will serve a two-year term.

Jim Baringhaus and Robb Drzewicki fell short with 10,702 and 12,334 votes, respectively.

#### Lori Miller wins race for clerk's office

Lori Miller is Livonia's next clerk. Miller's victory marked a major upset.

Miller, the city's current deputy clerk, received 12,584 votes, topping opponent Treasurer Lynda Scheel's 10,804 votes.

In Livonia, the clerk serves a four-

year term.

#### Susan Nash will move from clerk to treasurer

Susan Nash, Livonia's current clerk, will spend four years as Livonia's treasurer.

Nash earned 16,159 votes. Her opponent, newcomer Andrew Lendrum, fell short with 6,929 votes.

Because Nash appeared on ballots in an election she was also tasked with administering, she called in fellow clerks from Redford, Canton and Plymouth townships to ensure things ran smoothly and fairly.

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

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 734-311-0659.



## Bollards

Continued from Page 1A

For the last several years, the city has used a combination of orange barrels, water-filled barriers and out-of-service police cars to block the streets.

Northville City Manager George Lahanas said he was glad to see the temporary devices cleared away.

"If you're doing something temporarily, the plastic barriers are fine," Lahanas said. "If you want to do something on a more permanent basis, and you want more efficiency, the bollards provide a greater degree of safety. It's a great solution for the future."

Both Lahanas and Turnbull said they were unaware of other nearby cities using retractable bollards, but Turnbull said city officials from other Michigan communities were "very interested" when he presented the project at a recent SEMCOG event.

Among Northville business owners, reaction to the reopening of the streets was mixed.

Julie Cole, owner of Great Harvest Bread Co., said business slowed when the street closures began; she's happy the downtown is now "back to normal."

"Older customers, especially, have let us know that this is the first time they've come in a while because it was too much work for them," Cole said, noting she wasn't looking forward to having the streets closed again next summer.

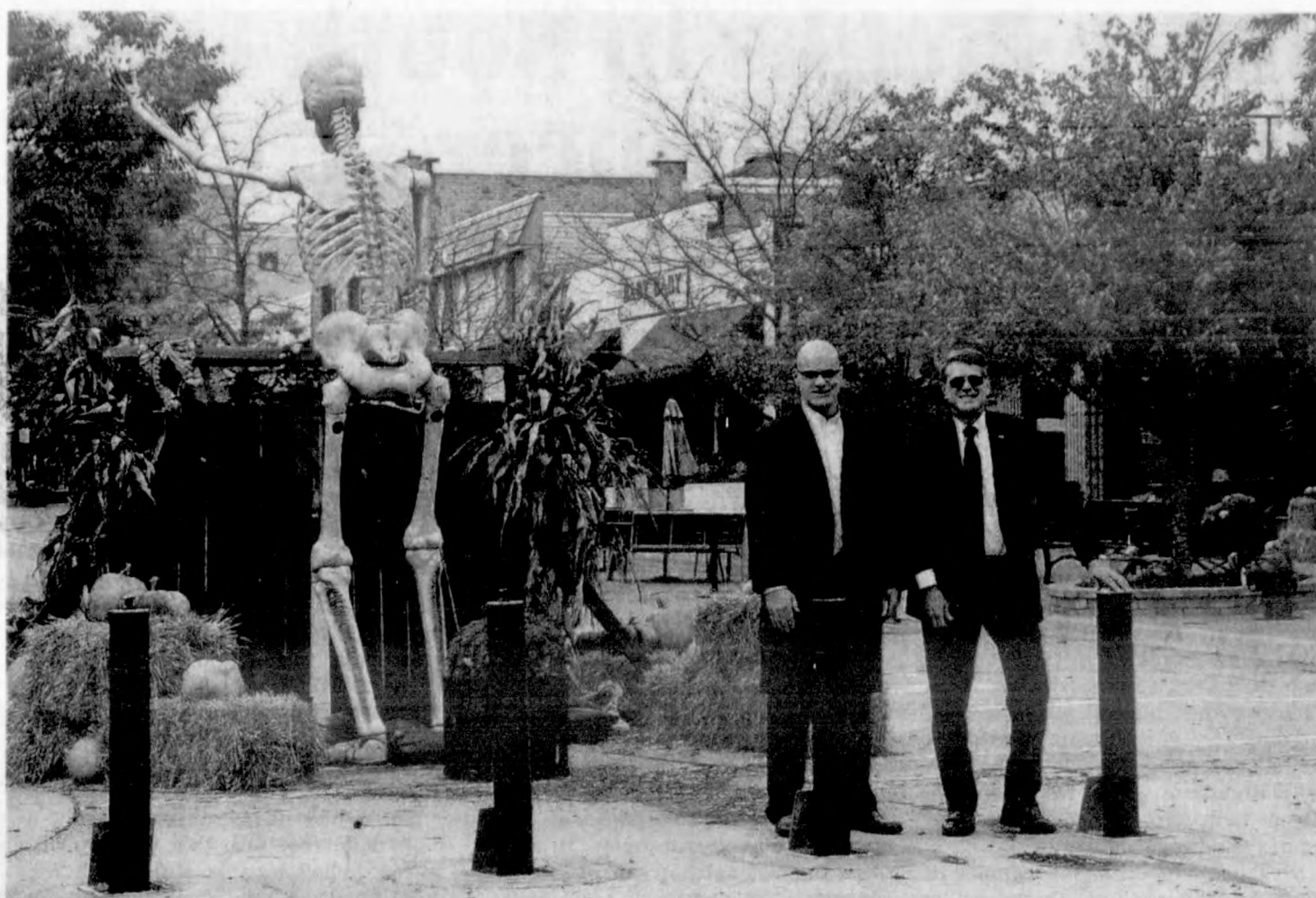
"I would love it if they would just close it for festivals," she said.

On the other hand, Derek Blair, owner of the Northville Gallery, said business has been booming over the past three years.

"We really enjoyed the streets being closed," Blair said, adding that heavy foot traffic prompted him to extend his closing time — previously 6 p.m. — to 9 p.m. "It's always so busy down here. It's just been a festive atmosphere in the last three years."

"This was becoming a real destination place for all of metro Detroit," he added. "People knew this was a pedestrian zone all the time, safe and easy for kids and dogs and families. We had customers from Birmingham and all over that we never had before. Profits are definitely up."

Doc Anway, owner of Town & Country Bike & Boards, said business was up



Northville City Manager George Lahanas, left, and Northville Mayor Brian Turnbull show off the new bollards in downtown Northville. COURTESY CITY OF NORTHVILLE

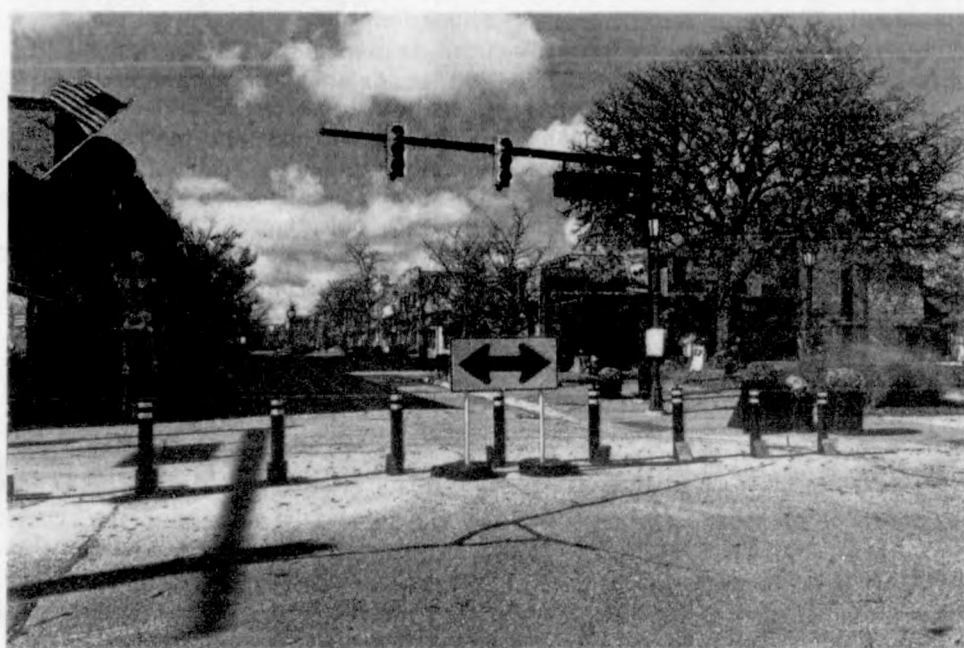
**"This was becoming a real destination place for all of metro Detroit. People knew this was a pedestrian zone all the time, safe and easy for kids and dogs and families. We had customers from Birmingham and all over that we never had before. Profits are definitely up."**

Derek Blair Owner, Northville Gallery

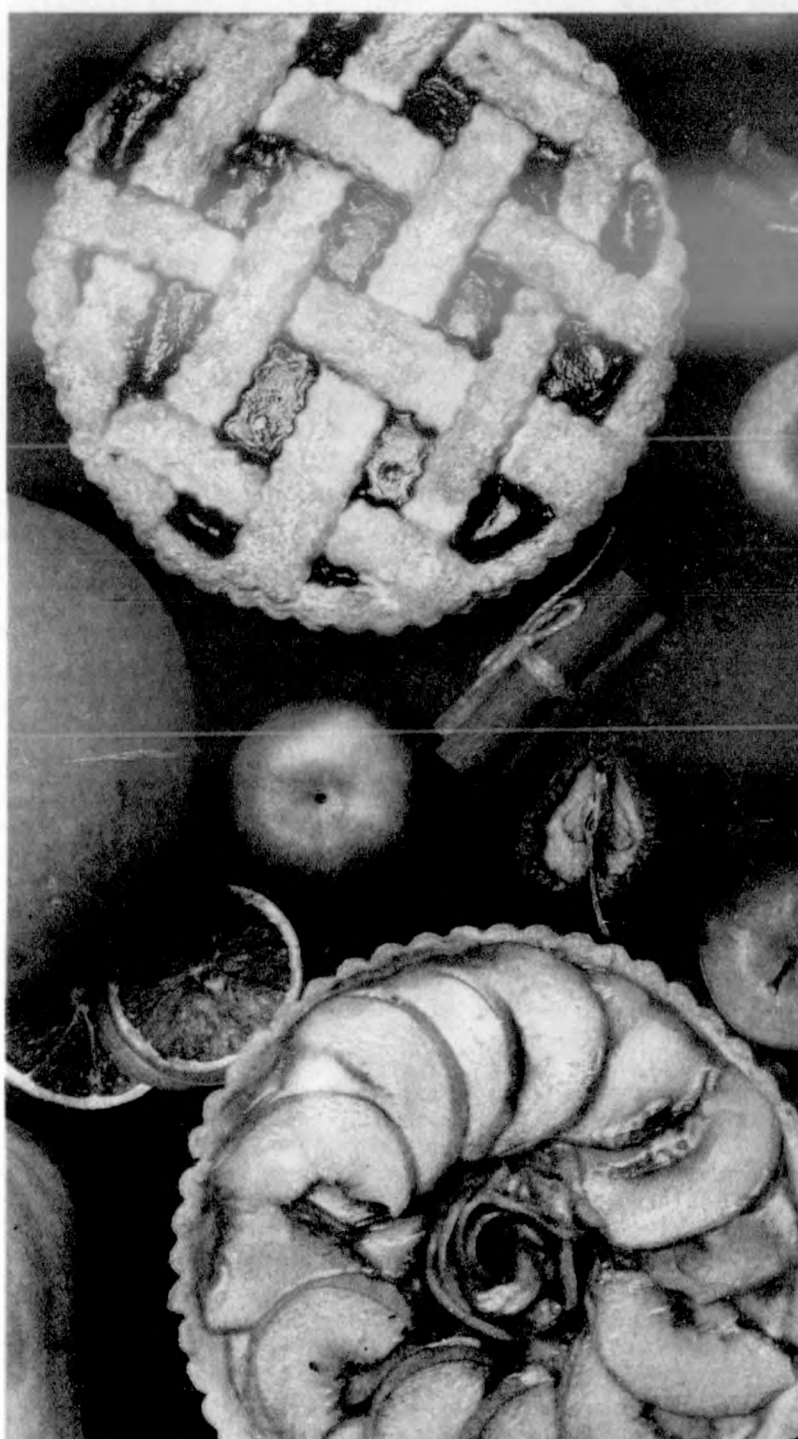
"big time" over the past three years.


"People sit over at the restaurant, look over here and see the bikes out in front...and they come over to buy one," he said. "I definitely want [the city] to keep the streets closed in the summertime."

Contact reporter Laura Colvin at [lcolvin@hometownlife.com](mailto:lcolvin@hometownlife.com) or 248-221-8143.



The new bollards in downtown Northville will allow easy street closures for parades, festivals and events. LAURA COLVIN





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Mojave Cantina, 22870 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township, will open in November.  
PHOTOS BY SUSAN BROMLEY

## Cantina

Continued from Page 1A

The Lyon Township Mojave Cantina also will feature the same authentic dishes with a Tex-Mex flavor served at his other locations, with everything made in-house, including fire-roasted tomatoes for salsa and homemade chips. The majority of the menu is gluten-free through using corn tortillas, instead of flour, and the facility is nut-free.

"We are known for our sizzling fajitas with fresh-cut vegetables; and our enchiladas are very popular," Tsapatoris said.

Mojave Cantina has its own recipe for margaritas and sangria, and will offer a brunch menu for Saturdays and Sundays with "tres leches" French toast, fajita skillet, breakfast nachos and more.

Tsapatoris began the work of bringing the new Mojave Cantina to the community just over a year after the Lyon Cantina building burned down Dec. 31, 2019, but faced delays caused by pan-

dem labor and supply shortages. He also suffered the loss of his original architect, South Lyon resident Stephan Hoffman, who died earlier this year of cancer.

Tsapatoris plans to invite Hoffman's family when he launches a soft opening this month, at which he hopes they and other diners will enjoy all the delicious dishes and drinks the new restaurant has to offer.

"We're excited to be a part of the community. We've been looking forward to it for several years," Tsapatoris said, adding that the restaurant will have about 50 employees. "We can't wait to start up the kitchen and make many memories with the community. Hopefully we can be here for decades."

Mojave Cantina will be open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Fridays; 10 a.m. to midnight Saturdays; and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sundays.

For more information and a full menu, visit [www.mojavemi.com](http://www.mojavemi.com).

Contact Susan Bromley at [sbromley@hometownlife.com](mailto:sbromley@hometownlife.com). Follow her on X @SusanBromley10.



Mojave Cantina, 22870 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township, is finally ready to open nearly four years after a restaurant formerly at the location, Lyon Cantina, burned down.



Phil Tsapatoris, owner of Mojave Cantina, is ready to open his new Mexican restaurant at 22870 Pontiac Trail in Lyon Township.

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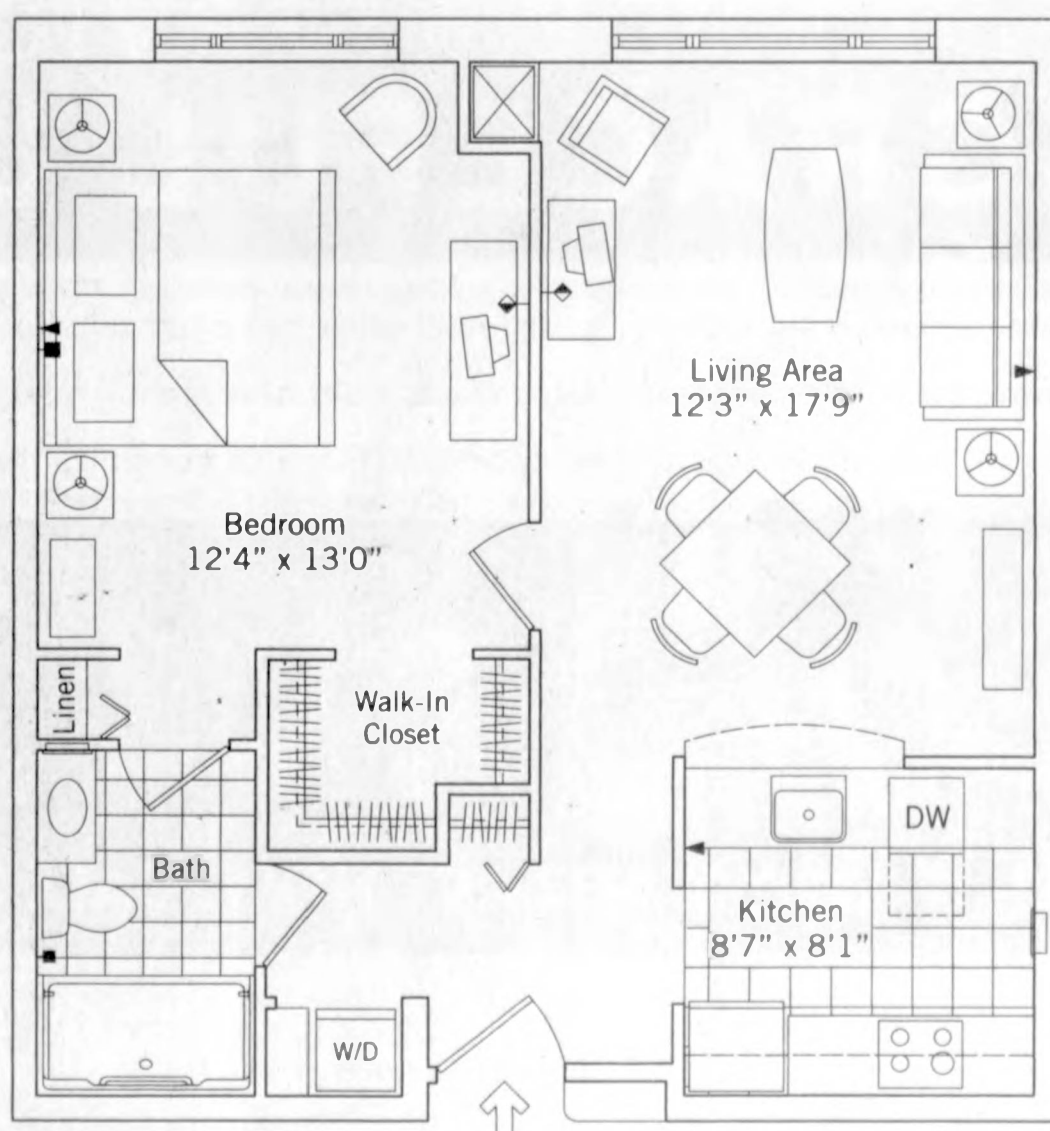
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FIND THE WORDS

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

Apex	Fast	Luck	Rules
Autos	Flags	Mechanics	Runs
Brakes	Formula	Mess	Skaffe
Cars	racing	Nitro	Smash
Circuit	Fuel	Pass	Spain
Crew	Gearbox	Pitstop	Speed
Dips	Heats	Podium	Streets
Dirt	Idols	Power	Torque
Disqualify	Jaguar	Record	Toyota
Driver	Jones	Reflex	Wheel
Europe	Laps	Results	

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Speedway adventures

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

NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Receptionist's pronoun  
5 Where Thor held his hammer  
9 Defense concern of the FDA  
12 Under the Tuscan Sun setting  
13 What Dewhurst got for Taming of the Shrew  
14 Certain service center  
15 What Russian America was subsequently called  
18 Authorial profession  
19 Mideast word for "lighthouse"  
20 Big name in the Giants of Science book series  
22 Cause of some blowups  
23 Where Pulitzer's Big Apple office was  
28 "Corking!"  
29 Goggle  
30 Joey of fiction  
33 Reservations  
34 Have a good time  
35 Force down  
36 Close to the tail  
37 Fluid change  
38 Drop  
39 Tonic cocktails  
42 Be together  
44 City near Dunkirk  
45 Word on US commonwealths list  
48 Take away  
52 Precarious position  
54 Fausse (misconception)  
55 Port closest to Spain  
56 Didst strike

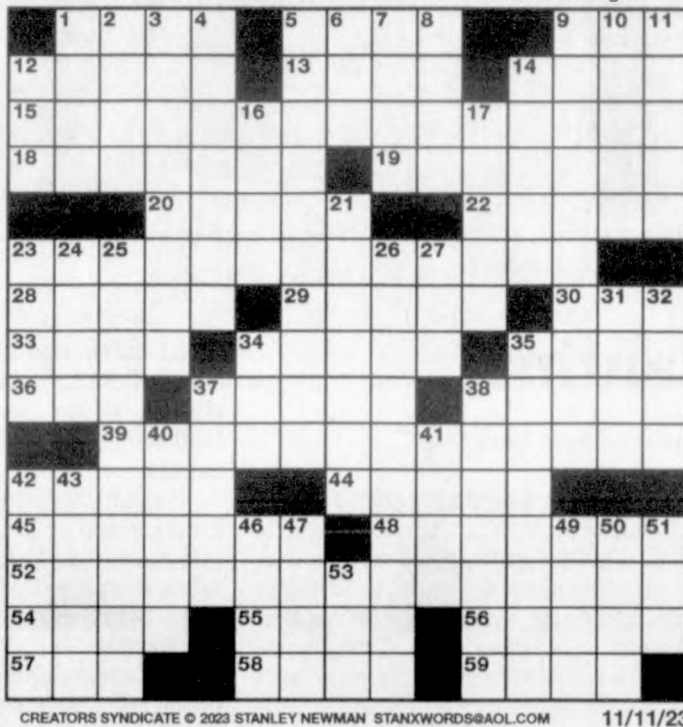
- 57 Petroleum product  
58 Moviedom's "Eighth Wonder"  
59 Pounds with Austen's portrait

- 11 Reach as quickly as possible  
12 Agitador de (cantina container)  
14 Slide stuff  
16 Aladdin, for instance  
17 Pit of the stomach  
21 With added zest  
23 Chelsea Gray was its 2022 MVP  
24 Poulet product  
25 Pet kept for pest control  
26 Indy 500 setting  
27 Run follower/precursor  
31 Publisher of Firestarter excerpts (1980)  
32 Takes a course

- 34 Unbundled  
35 "You can stop here"  
37 Come out with  
38 Desserted?  
40 Part of the 2024 Olympics opening ceremony parade route  
41 Holders of sulfides, carbonates, etc.  
42 Circumference  
43 Water near Verona  
46 Recess  
47 Big shock  
49 Where le Carré taught French  
50 Animal Planet regulars  
51 It sounds like an inspiration  
53 Athletics degree

DOWN

- 1 Tricky  
2 Maximum intensity  
3 In high gear?  
4 Manages  
5 Possible peppers partner  
6 Icon of small change  
7 Not moving  
8 Resa alternative  
9 What sushi rice is always at its source: Pascal  
10 "The stream is always at its source": Pascal  
11 Reach as quickly as possible  
12 Agitador de (cantina container)  
14 Slide stuff  
16 Aladdin, for instance  
17 Pit of the stomach  
21 With added zest  
23 Chelsea Gray was its 2022 MVP  
24 Poulet product  
25 Pet kept for pest control  
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32 Takes a course

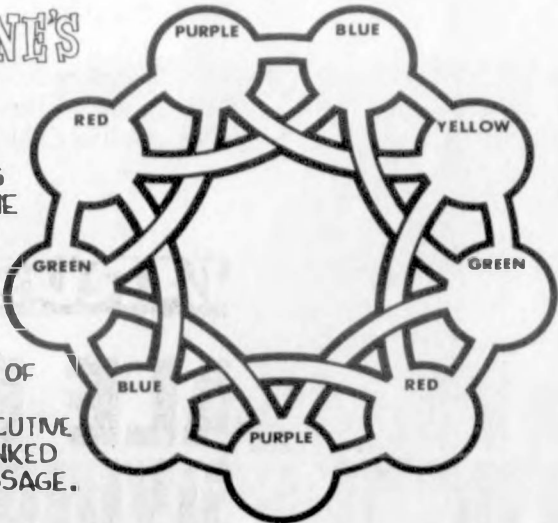


CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2023 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDSAOL.COM 11/11/23

PUZZLES & POSERS

TRUE TO ONE'S COLORS

PLACE THE NUMBERS 1 THRU 9 IN THE NINE COLORED CIRCLES OF THIS PUZZLE IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:  
1. ANY SET OF THREE NUMBERS WHICH TOTAL FIFTEEN MAY NOT BE OF THE SAME COLOR.  
2. NUMBERS OF CONSECUTIVE VALUE MAY NOT BE LINKED DIRECTLY BY ANY PASSAGE.



SUDOKU | CREATORS

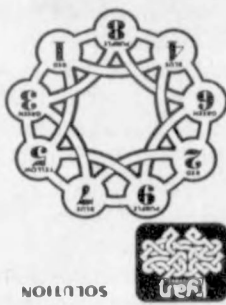
Insert numbers 1-9 in each box with every row, column and 3x3 box containing the digits just once. Difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest) RATING: SILVER

TODAY'S ANSWER

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


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

TODAY'S ANSWER




11/11/23





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## 'The Voice'

Continued from Page 1A

songwriting inspirations. Given more autonomy with that song choice than preceding selections on the show, she chose King's classic from among available options.

"I wanted to showcase my storytelling ability for knockouts," Albrecht said.

In rehearsals for the song, Albrecht's coach, Reba McEntire, was joined by "mega mentor" and fellow country music star, Wynonna Judd.

Albrecht told them she had been writing songs since she was 13 and admired King as an incredible storyteller.

"I'm 23, so I'm in the baby stages of my career and really looking not just for a moment, but for longevity," Albrecht said.

Judd agreed storytellers are needed and the classic song was important for the next generation to hear.

During the rehearsal, McEntire noted Albrecht had shown tremendous growth on the show, particularly in con-



Tom Nitti, Jacquie Roar and Alison Albrecht all were coached by country music star Reba McEntire on the NBC show, "The Voice." TYLER GOLDEN/NBC

fidence. However, she coached the Roeper School grad to not overthink her performance, or every action or facial expression.

"Relax, be still," she said. "You don't have to conduct. All you have to do is tell the story."

Judd counseled Albrecht to pretend she was not on "The Voice," but instead pretend she was hanging out with Judd and singing to her in the car.

When Albrecht asked the star what

the secret was to have a career for a lifetime, Judd responded that she should surround herself with good people, and added a second bit of advice.

"Save your money, sister, because I've blown it twice and wrote a book about how to lose everything," said Judd, adding that she was the heart and her mother, Naomi Judd, was the head. "I was so naive and still am so gullible."

When Albrecht finally got her turn on a knockout round stage, where two fellow Team Reba members also were vying for their chance to remain on the show, she impressed judge Niall Horan, formerly of the band One Direction.

"Alison, your growth is just amazing," Horan said, adding that the Carole King song she chose is in his top 10 of all time.

Fellow judge and musician John Legend told Albrecht she was his favorite of the three singers on the stage.

"Alison, I truly am in love with your voice," he said. "Your tone is so lovely."

He lamented, however, that he didn't get to see "another gear" from her in vocal range. McEntire, who told Albrecht she was proud of her and felt she had watched "the blossoming of a beautiful

rose," ultimately chose to keep the other two singers on the show.

Albrecht had nothing but gratitude for the opportunity.

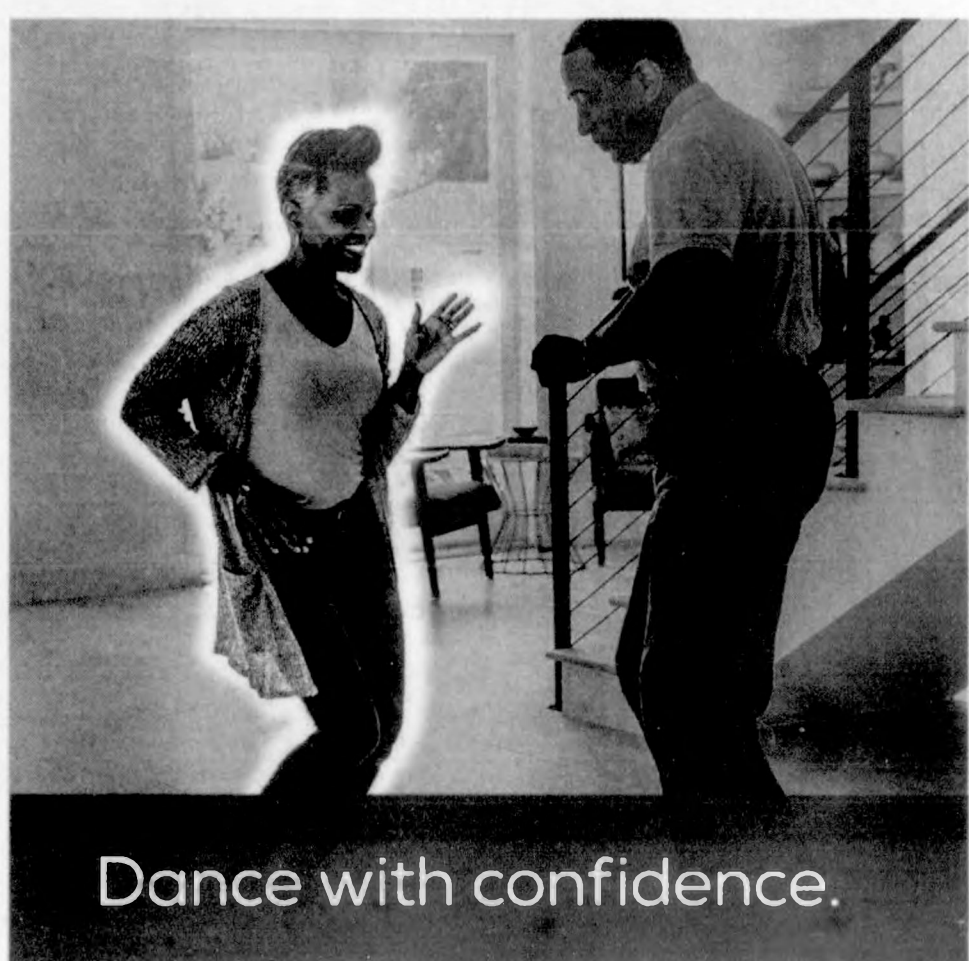
"Reba, you believed in me from the beginning and being able to work with you is one of the greatest joys of my whole life," she said.

Speaking by phone from Los Angeles, where she moved to pursue her dream, Albrecht noted she also will continue to follow McEntire's advice and keep the music coming.

"I moved to L.A. to work as an artist and 'The Voice' elevated that," she said.

"Thank you so much to everyone for the kind messages and support, I've had so many followers since I was a teen performing in Michigan. I can't wait to show them what is next and continue my music career."

Within the next month, Albrecht's recorded covers of both "Ironie" and "It's Too Late" will be released on Spotify. She also has new original music coming out. Check out her website at [www.alisonalbrecht.com](http://www.alisonalbrecht.com) or follow her on Instagram @alisonalbrecht and on Tik Tok @alison\_albrecht.



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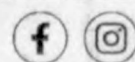
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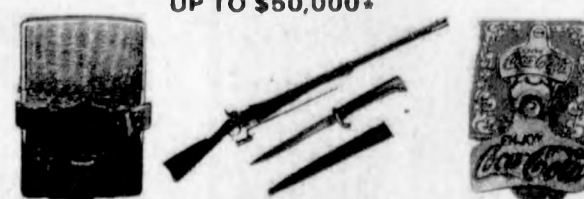
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# SPORTS



Northville celebrates winning the Division 1 volleyball regional final against Saline on Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, at Ypsilanti Lincoln. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWN LIFE

## Mustangs continue building on playoff run

Brandon Folsom  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If you know Northville volleyball coach Sarah Lindstrom, you know she loves coming up with kooky and creative ways to motivate her players before, during and after big matches. Whether that's having a box of Frosted Flakes on the bench when the Mustangs are a game away from making it to Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek or using a magic wand to pick her player of the game.

And the Division 1 regional championship against Saline on Nov. 9 was no different. En route to Ypsilanti Lincoln's gym, the third-year coach presented her team with a poster board full of bricks. You know, the ones you'd use to build a house or fireplace. And on it was the saying, "A STRONG FOUNDATION IS THE KEY TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS." Lindstrom called upon each of her players to come up with a person, or two, who has been integral in helping the Mustangs build the foundation of their current dynasty-in-progress and

write their names on a brick. These are the names of people who have put in the sweat equity to prop up Northville to be the state power that it is. They came up with a couple dozen names, from former coach Rick VanDerVeer to Abby Reck and Taryn Rice, two starters on Northville's first-ever state finals team, to Juliana Imbuzerio, who helped the Mustangs win their first district title in four years during Lindstrom's first season coaching on 6 Mile. See MUSTANGS, Page 3B

## What upsetting CC means for Northville's football program

Brandon Folsom  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Atop the bleachers in Northville's gymnasium, with both hands above his head, captain Drew Rankin hoisted a piece of paper freshly ripped out of a notebook as if it was a championship wrestling belt. After enthusiastically showing it off to everyone there, the junior passed it to his coaches. Star lineman Graham Gilmartin then began tapping with his fingers under the "DISTRICT CHAMPS" portion of the NHS football placard hanging on the wall, signaling where he wanted the coaches to tape it up. And on that white lined paper, it read, "2023." Just four digits representing the current year we're in. But it was enough for the remaining members of the team that made the trip down to the high school from Tom Holzer Ford Field on 8 Mile to holler and cheer. And here are some other numbers for you: 23, 0, 4 and 3. Entering Friday night, it had been 23 years since the Mustangs (10-1) had won a district championship. It had previously beaten state power Detroit Catholic Central zero times in football. It had seen playoff runs cut short by the Shamrocks four times since 2010. Exiting Friday night, all three of those streaks were snapped. It took a little bit of luck and a whole heck of a lot of talent, but Northville somehow, some way found a way to steal the Division 1 district championship trophy from CC with a last-minute, heart-racing 24-17 victory Nov. 3. "This is historic, this is one that's never going to be forgotten in Northville history, and I'm proud to be a part of it," said first-year coach Brent Luplow, who left Brighton to take over the Mustangs following the 2022 season. "When you have really good kids and really good families, it kind of takes care of itself." You could have brought in the directors of "Rocky," "Rudy," and "Miracle," and the three of them together couldn't have scripted a better ending than the one the Mustangs acted out in crunch time in front of a packed home crowd. It took Northville's defense forcing a turnover on downs just outside of the red zone when CC was driving to make it a two-score lead with 4:13 left. See FOOTBALL, Page 2B

## Detroit Country Day soccer falls short in state title match

Nathaniel Bott  
Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

GRAND LEDGE - Following a state semifinal exit last season, the Detroit Country Day boys soccer team found itself back in the familiar spot of a Division 3 title game Saturday, looking to add to a record 15 state championships in program history. The No. 2-ranked Yellowjackets had their toughest challenge yet, facing off with No. 1-ranked Hudsonville Unity Christian. After the two sides battled to a 1-1 score at halftime, Country Day took the lead just over 15 minutes into the second half. But the Crusaders refused to quit

and scored two goals in response - the second coming with just 9:23 left in the match - to propel Unity Christian to the Division 3 crown. "It's very disappointing right now, but I'm very proud of the team getting to this point. It was a great season and a good run through the playoffs," Country Day coach Steve Bossert said. "We came up one short, but they are a great team, one vs. two, back and forth, and we had several chances to tie it back up. But I thought it was a terrific championship game." Unity Christian's Isaac Eppinga opened the scoring just under seven minutes in, but Country Day's Alex Eby



The Detroit Country Day soccer team gathers to receive finalist medals following its 3-2 loss to Hudsonville Unity Christian in the Division 3 state championship game at Grand Ledge High School on November 4, 2023. NATHANIEL BOTT

Get More Sports

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC  
hometownlife.com



# Northville volleyball rallies in fifth set to regional semi win

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

YPSILANTI — With Northville's volleyball season teetering on the brink, coach Sarah Lindstrom took her players on a trip down memory lane.

"In my very last timeout, I just started listing names of players who aren't here anymore that are in college," Lindstrom said. "I said, 'Those are the girls who bought into what we were selling, who explained to you that this is what Northville volleyball looks like. I said, 'That team doesn't have what we have.' It's the players from our past."

And then she honed in on the exact scenario the second-ranked Mustangs were facing Nov. 7 in a Division 1 regional semifinal against ninth-ranked Temperance Bedford at Ypsilanti Lincoln.

Northville trailed 12-9 in the fifth and deciding game, a situation nearly identical to the one the Mustangs faced while trailing Saline 12-10 in the fifth game of the state semifinals last season. Northville rallied to win that game and would do so again against Bedford, coming away with a hard-fought 25-15, 25-27, 21-25, 25-18, 15-12 victory.

"I said, 'We were in Battle Creek last year, we were down to Saline in the semifinals in the fifth set,' " Lindstrom said. "I said, 'We've been here before."



We know what it takes and what it feels like," I said. "The good news is, they think it's already over and there's still a lot of game left."

The Mustangs scored the final six points to earn a trip to the regional championship match on Nov. 9, where

they went on to defeat Saline again in four sets.

Junior outside hitter Molly Reck put the exclamation point on the comeback against Bedford, taking a set from junior Ella Craggs and pounding a shot through a block attempt by Kaylin

Molly Reck (8) buried the final shot to give Northville a 3-2 victory over

Temperance Bedford in a volleyball regional semifinal Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023.

TIMOTHY ARRICK/ FOR HOMETOWN LIFE.COM

Schroeder for the final point.

"I just had full confidence in my teammates," Reck said. "I knew we could do it with our amazing passing throughout the night. I've got to give credit to my setter; she had an amazing set and I just found the open spot."

"She's one of my best friends. We know each other really well. I think that helps on the court with communication and everything."

With a large, vocal crowd watching two incredible teams go blow for blow, the match had the air of a state semifinal, not a regional semifinal.

Or maybe the match was worthy of an even greater stage.

"I think you're looking at the toughest region in the state of Michigan right now," Lindstrom said. "That right there, to me, was probably a state championship match and one of the best I've seen in a long time."

"Bedford played absolutely outstanding and they frustrated us to the Nth degree. We couldn't have been serving and passing better. They only aced us two times tonight in five sets. We were doing everything and it was really frustrating."

"That's an incredible team, an extremely well-coached team. It feels really good to come out on top and I think it's going to give us a lot of confidence heading into Thursday."

## Football

Continued from Page 1B

It took an all-out effort from quarterback Isaac Pace and the Mustangs' offense to drive 67 yards to set up the game-tying score, a 9-yard TD grab by Nick Helner on a fade route expertly thrown by Pace with 2:01 remaining.

And, with overtime likely imminent, it took Gilmartin coming up with arguably the play of the game as the Shamrocks attempted to make the most of the final 90 seconds or so. CC was trying to nab those game-winning points, whether it was going to be a long Jake Matigian field goal or an outright TD run by running back Jaden Pydyn or a long bomb from strong-armed QB Beau Jackson.

The Shamrocks (8-3) went with Jackson, the namesake of the former 1985 Heisman Trophy winner, electing to move the chains through the air. Except Northville's defense had just the right play drawn up.

It mixed up its defensive front by subbing off nose guard Ferris Jordan, bringing in pass rusher Robbie Schuckle and moving Gilmartin, one of the best defensive ends in the state, right in front of the football.

Defensive coordinator Matt Sexton sent a linebacker through the A gap, which left Gilmartin with a one-on-one with CC's center.

"I kind of faked him out," the 6-foot-1, 245-pound lineman said. "I ripped underneath him and got just enough separation to get to the ball and get it out."

That's right. Gilmartin managed to strip-sack Jackson at CC's own 20-yard line, leaving Northville's offense with 46 seconds and two timeouts remaining, just what it needed to set up Sonny Rentz with a 25- or 30-yard field goal attempt at the final whistle.

The Mustangs didn't need it.

On the first play of the series, they called Deak's number. The senior found success at the wildcat QB position all night, having no issue getting first downs and moving Northville into scoring position.

The designed QB sweep to the right was supposed to center the ball for Rentz's eventual field goal. Instead, Deak kept running for daylight. Once he got around the end, he was gone.

The Mustang's linemen sealed the edge, Deak raced 20 yards untouched for the winning TD just six seconds after Gilmartin's forced fumble and Northville was ready to celebrate one of its greatest upsets ever.

"When my name was called, and I got the ball and saw it open up, I ran as fast as I could and it ended up working out," Deak said. "I've got to give credit to all of my linemen for opening that up. Momentum just started going our way in the fourth quarter, and I'm glad we could capitalize on it."

Northville's defense kept CC out of the end zone for the remaining 39 seconds.

Its student section, rightfully so, stormed the field after the final whistle, which forced Northville's athletic administration to scrap the post-game medal ceremony entirely. But all that meant was Luplow got to immediately hand the championship trophy to his captains.



Northville coach Brent Luplow celebrates with the trophy following the Division 1 football district championship against Detroit Catholic Central on Friday, Nov. 3, 2023. PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWN LIFE



Northville's Graham Gilmartin hoists the trophy.

"I'm going to get emotional," said the rookie coach, who, did just that when asked how he felt watching Deak turn what should have been an eventual long field-goal opportunity into an incredible TD run.

"That was a blur," Luplow added. "A hole opened up, and there he (Deak) goes. That's a historic play in Northville history."

Nov. 3 will never be forgotten by the Mustangs.

When you look back in history, there have been plenty of great teams.

Like the 1990 squad, which was the last team to win a regional title and the only one to play in a state semifinal. That team didn't win the Western Lakes Activities Association, but it did blank rival Novi, 17-0. There was plenty to cel-

ebate back then.

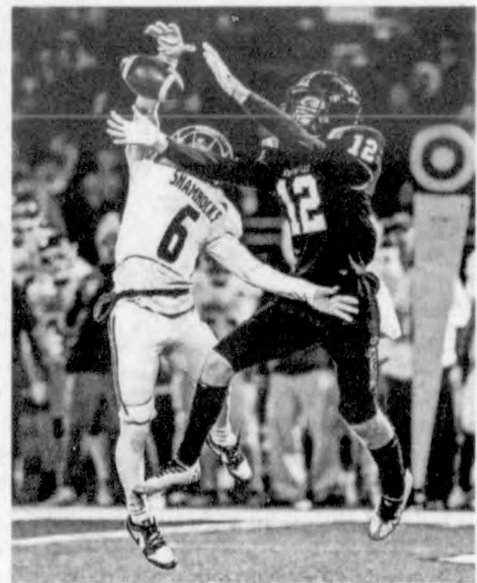
There was the 2015 team that went 9-0 in the regular season and beat Novi in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association finale to ensure a league title. But those Mustangs lost to Canton in the district final.

The 2010 and 2011 teams trounced everyone they faced except Plymouth and Canton before CC trounced them back-to-back times in the playoffs.

The 1993 team was perfect in every game except the two times they faced league rival Farmington Hills Harrison, the eventual state champions.

And so on and so on.

Exactly where this year's squad stacks up to past great teams is yet to be determined. Northville still has a regional championship to play against



Northville's Nick Helner reaches for a pass against Detroit Catholic Central's D'Andre Green.

Belleville next week. But it already has a KLAA-West championship, a win over rival Novi, an upset win over state power Clarkston at the Big House and, now, its first district title in over two decades and its first-ever win over CC, a program that has won 10 state titles and appeared in the state finals 17 times.

The makeshift notebook paper that says "2023" should be preserved in the trophy case along with the wooden mitten. Rankin's WWE celebration was well warranted. And the student section deserved to crash the party.

This win means everything to the Mustangs. That's evident. The only question is: Who's going to direct their movie?

Follow Brandon Folsom on Twitter @folsombrandonj.



# Mustangs

Continued from Page 1B

Heck, even current athletic director Brian Samulski had his name on a brick, which makes sense. All the guy has done is hire winners since he left Salem to take over Northville in 2019. The football team proved that last week.

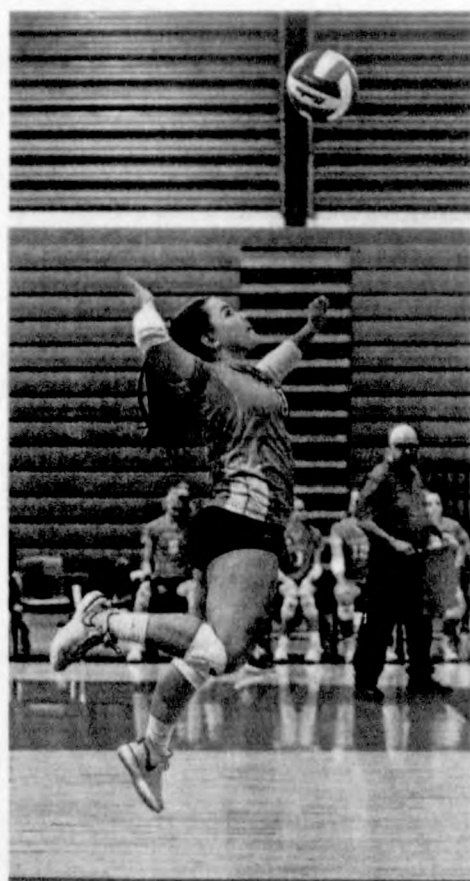
Who knows how much that pre-game exercise led to the way the No. 2 Mustangs played in their come-from-behind 3-1 victory over the Hornets to win their second straight regional championship? But what we do know is there are a couple of players who, indeed, earned themselves their own brick throughout the evening.

And the evening did not start well. At all.

Saline easily swung its way to a 25-18 win in the opening set and overcame an early 11-6 deficit in the second to take a 23-21 lead heading down the stretch. But then the Mustangs started believing.

Northville erased that small deficit, and then Molly Reck came up with a block that gave the Mustangs match point. On the next play, it was Ashlee Gnau (Syracuse signee) and Greta McKee (Wright State) earning their names on a pair of bricks. Somehow, some way, McKee dug a ball that was headed toward the northwest wall — which features a banner of current NBA player Emoni Bates' 2019 state championship boys basketball team at Lincoln — and trust us when we say that that ball was well out of bounds.

And then Gnau, an equally talented defensive specialist, got her paws underneath McKee's prayer and sailed a pass back to McKee, who launched a backward prayer to Saline's side. And the Hornets appeared completely gobbled up by the fact that Northville kept



Northville's Giselle Burlingame serves during a Division 1 volleyball regional final against Saline on Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023, at Ypsilanti Lincoln.

BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWN LIFE

the rally alive because it couldn't keep the ball from hitting the floor, which gave the Mustangs the 26-24 victory and knotted the match, 1-1.

That was the play that got them going. There was no backing down after that.

"We call those 'game-changing plays,' and in volleyball, we have so many game-changing players," Lindstrom said.

In the third set, a pair of bench play-

ers made their names brickworthy.

First, it was serving specialist Giselle Burlingame, who came in for middle blocker Avry Nelson and gave Northville an early 10-5 lead by serving five straight points, which included her recording two aces and coming up with a key dig that kept a rally going for another point. Saline closed the gap and made it a one-point set, but freshman Gabby Lavoie subbed into the game cold and inspired the Mustangs' defense in the back row. And then Mallory Reck thundered home the match point to, finally, put Northville ahead once and for all.

"For a freshman like Gabby, she's been someone who could be on the court all year long," Lindstrom added. "There's a reason we put her on this team. We knew she wouldn't play as much because of the twins (Molly and Mallory Reck). But Gabby works in the gym against these girls. She gets to dig these girls every day. I just turned and looked at her and said, 'It's time.'"

"We talk about how there's not one player on this team that can win us a state championship (on their own), but we are so well-rounded, and I couldn't be more proud of them for stepping up in those moments. Like, Giselle going on serving runs. It's been hard all year looking down the bench and see a kid like Giselle not being on the court. But that's when happens you're in a program that's this strong. But we train all of our athletes, we don't just train our starters, so I know kids like her work their butts off and are ready for these moments."

Northville secured the victory in the fourth set with the usual suspects. Saline took a two-point lead in the waning moments after Nelson sailed a potential kill out of bounds. But the senior redeemed herself by scoring the next three points on her own. She drummed up back-to-back blocks at the net, and then she thanked McKee for keeping a play alive with another incredible dig by

slamming home a big point to give the Mustangs a 24-23 lead.

"It was really close, and I was a little bit nervous, but everybody just stepped up around me," the recent 6-foot-3 Eckerd College (Florida) signee said. "So I just got super energetic on the court. It helps when everybody on the bench is energized, too. It was one of the best feelings ever, I'd say."

After Saline tied the score at both 24 and 25, Ashley Krahe and Ella Craggs teamed up for a block that gave Northville match point. And then Krahe ended the match with a solo block that advanced the Mustangs to the state quarterfinals Nov. 14 against Portage Northern. That match was completed after press time for this edition.

"It feels amazing because I know we were all kind of sweating it out at the end there, but we knew we were going to pull it out," said Krahe, a senior hitter. "I just had to be confident and swing strong. That's the biggest thing. We just had to not play scared, even when it was tight and we knew there was a lot riding on that last point, we just had to keep swinging hard."

After the match, as Lindstrom said farewell to her friends, family and former players who made the trip to Ypsilanti, she threw up three fingers to a couple of them and just said, "Three more!"

That's an obvious nod to how many more wins the Mustangs need to secure their first state championship in program history. But that's also how many more opportunities her players have to earn their names on a brick.

When it's all said and done, who on this team will go down as a foundational player? There's a strong chance the answer will be all of them.

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

# Soccer

Continued from Page 1B

knotted the score with a strike from 20 yards out that found the back of the net.

Country Day's Stephen Brentano gave the Yellowjackets the lead early in

the second half off a corner kick, but first-team all-state midfielder Collin Nieuwenhuis made a great individual effort to bring the Crusaders level.

A cross into the box found the head of Unity Christian's Logan Lutke, and forward Jack Kamminga volleyed his header past the Country Day goalkeeper to provide the game-winning goal.

"Country Day has a lot of great players, so kudos to them," Unity Christian coach Ian Billin said. "It was a great season and I'm just so proud of our guys. To go up and then get scored on twice and go down 2-1, that changes the momentum. Our guys found a way to get that momentum back and we were able to hold on in the end."

Country Day outshot Unity Christian 19-6, but its late chances weren't enough to find the equalizer.

Country Day finishes with a 19-3-2 record and finishes as state runner-up for just the second time in program history.

Contact Nathaniel Bott at nbott@lsj.com. X: @Nathaniel\_Bott.

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# What we learned at KLAA hockey media day

**Bill Khan**

Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

NOVI — The top high school hockey teams in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association will travel far and wide to find the best competition, hoping to be battle-tested when the state tournament rolls around.

Most teams take an annual weekend trip to the Upper Peninsula, some will schedule perennial powerhouses like Detroit Catholic Central and Trenton. Beginning this year, a few will even venture to Minnesota now that it's considered a bordering state by the MHSAA.

But even if those other opportunities weren't available, simply playing a KLAA schedule is enough most years to prepare teams for what's to come in the state playoffs.

Six of the 10 teams in the KLAA have reached the state championship game at least once since the formation of the league in 2008-09.

- Brighton has four state championships and four runner-up finishes

- Hartland has three state championships and two runner-up finishes

- Livonia Stevenson has one state championship and two runner-up finishes

- Howell has two runner-up finishes

- Novi has a state championship, and

- Livonia Churchill has one runner-up finish

The other four teams have made at least one quarterfinal appearance during that time.

"The KLAA and MIHL, and that's not taking away from the U.P., you could make an argument those are the top two conferences," Howell coach Rocky Johnson said. "But let's get even more specific. You've got our division within our conference with Brighton, Hartland, Howell, Northville, Novi. Really? Getting through that alone is almost dead man walking. Yeah, it's hard, it's brutal. At any time, any one of us could be in the state finals every season."

The KLAA held its annual media day Monday night at Novi, giving us our first look at the teams who hope to hoist championship hardware March 8 at USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth. Teams can begin playing next Monday.



Landen Burdt celebrates a goal last fall for Livonia Churchill. He'll now be a part of the new co-op team, the Livonia United Red Stallions.

BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Here are some key takeaways:

## Unity in Livonia

Not every school in the KLAA has a hockey team, but those who do have managed to avoid requiring a co-op to field it.

That changes this year with Churchill and Franklin combining to form the Livonia United Red Stallions. Numbers were particularly low at Franklin, which had just 12 skaters and two goalies last year.

"Sometimes when you put two schools together with a 50-year rivalry you don't know what you're going to get," coach Jason Reynolds said. "We've gotten over the biggest hurdle. They all get along with each other."

Senior defenseman Landen Burdt, who attends Churchill, said players quickly got over the fact they attend rival schools.

"It's honestly a weird feeling to play with guys you used to throw down with, but honestly everybody gets along very well," Burdt said.

## Garden seat

Perhaps the best line assignment in Michigan is to be the other winger with Brighton senior all-stars Cam Duffany and Lane Petit.

Things could change during the season, or even before the first puck drop, but it appears a freshman could get that plum assignment.

Tim Peterson has been impressive enough to get a look with Duffany and Petit. A year ago, senior Dominic Vincent came out for the team for the first time and had 13 goals and 20 assists in 30 games on Brighton's top line.

The Petersons are familiar with terrific line assignments. Ben Peterson had 12 goals and 20 assists in 31 games in

2016-17 skating with Mr. Hockey winner Jake Crespi.

"Typically, the kids who have made it as freshmen have had pretty impressive careers through Brighton and beyond," Brighton coach Kurt Kivisto said. "We're excited to see what he does. He's a good, smart player."

## Three-headed monsters

Hartland and Howell plan to carry three goaltenders, hoping one of them can seize the job and take their teams on long playoff runs.

The Eagles have juniors Brady Hubenschmidt, Nolan Brown and Gaige Dieugenio. Hubenschmidt played in 13 of 25 regular-season games before then-senior Colin Babcock took over for the playoffs. Brown played on the junior varsity and Dieugenio comes from the travel ranks.

"It's going to be another one of those years where it's that little carrot and we'll see who grabs it," Hartland coach Rick Gadwa said.

Howell brings back senior goalies Jack Stawick and Alex Herter and has added senior Andrew Klei from travel.

"Having three guys you can count on any given night is just a great blessing for any coach," Johnson said.

## Youth movement at Stevenson

Livonia Stevenson has been part of the KLAA's big three with Brighton and Hartland. The Spartans don't plan to take a step back, even though coach David Mitchell has one of his youngest rosters ever.

Derek Buchanan is the only senior on a team that graduated 10 players, including six of its top eight scorers. Owen Hall (11 goals, nine assists) and Andrew Clark (seven goals, 11 assists) were key contributors as sophomores last season.

"There's definitely going to be those growing pains or get-to-know-you type period, but they do understand the expectations," Mitchell said. "The guys who are back, the Buchanans, Halls and Clarks, they're imperative for us to teach these guys and to lead them."

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

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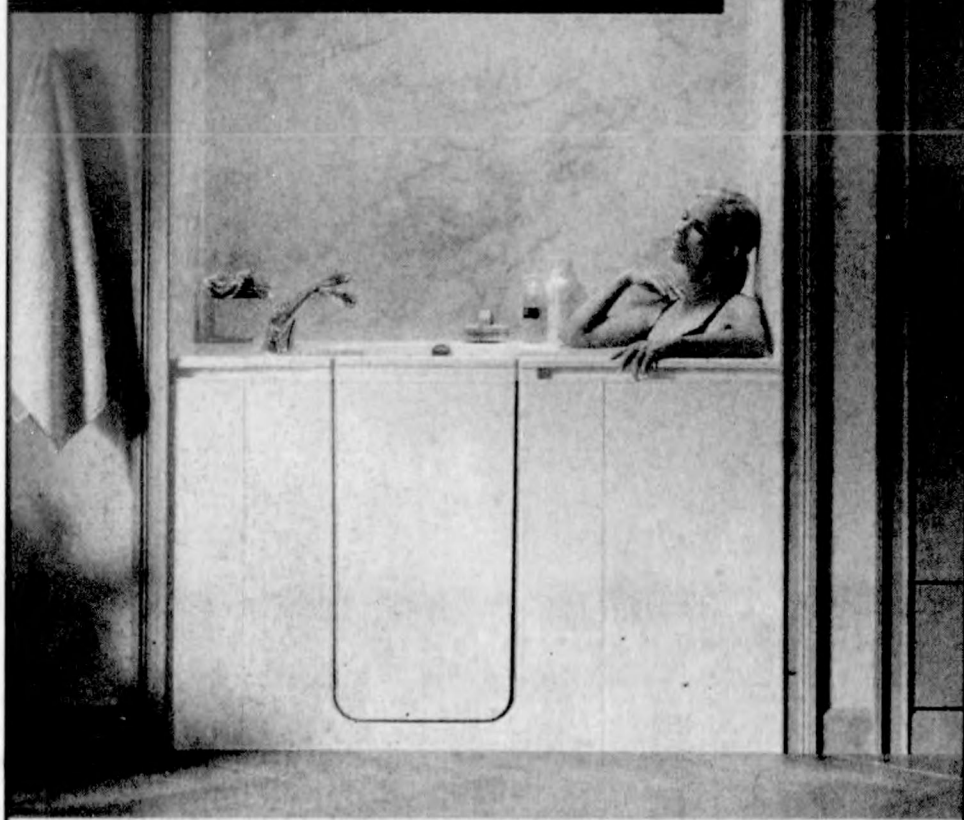
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# Brighton turned away in OT in Div. 1 final

Brian Calloway

Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

GRAND LEDGE — Devlin McGinnis knows the expectations externally weren't for the Brighton boys soccer team to find itself where it was Saturday evening and playing for a Division 1 state title at Grand Ledge High School.

But based on what McGinnis saw in the preseason, he believed the Bulldogs had the potential.

"We had a lot of new kids come in and it really just propelled us forward," McGinnis said. "We started winning games and then every started being like oh crap, there's Brighton."

Brighton made its mark this fall, reaching the state championship game for the second time in school history and first since 1998.

And although the Bulldogs came up short with a 2-1 overtime loss to Troy Athens, the ride this season has been one to remember.

"Nobody believed in us besides this circle over here and the fans in the bleachers over there," McGinnis said. "Just to see us come this far and drive this much as a team is just amazing."

Brighton (19-4-2) came close to claiming its first state championship in program history and becoming the first Livingston County boys soccer team to capture a state title.

The Bulldogs broke a scoreless tie when Colin Robertson scored with 9:02 remaining in regulation. That lead vanished with 1:56 left in regulation on a goal Brody Fahnestock that helped force overtime.



Brighton's Devlin McGinnis moves the ball against Alex Marine of Troy Athens on Saturday during the MHSAA Division 1 final at Grand Ledge. Troy Athens won, 2-1, in overtime. MATTHEW DAE SMITH/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

Troy Athens (20-3-2) got a goal from JD Hupman 2:59 into overtime that wound up being the winner.

"It was just a battle and when they got that tying goal it kind of took all of the wind out of our sails there at the end," Brighton coach Mark Howell said. "We knew overtime was going to be an uphill battle to try to climb back into it just momentum wise and it kind of being our first trip here. We knew they

have a lot of experience returning to the big stage. It just didn't fall the way we wanted it to."

Howell called Saturday's experience huge for his program, especially since the Bulldogs return a lot of talent like McGinnis.

He said the core, which gave Brighton its first district title since 2018, learned what it takes to play on the biggest stage and what it takes to make a deep tour-

nament run.

McGinnis also took away plenty from the experience and hopes it can lead to a bright future for Brighton.

"(This run was) just an inspiration to the community and to the team," McGinnis said. "I hope that it lights a spark for more to come."

Contact Brian Calloway at [bcalloway@lsj.com](mailto:bcalloway@lsj.com). Follow him on X @brian\_calloway.

## Brighton's Gray wins 2 titles at KLAA swim meet

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Grace Gray of Brighton had a hand in the only two first-place finishes by Livingston County competitors in the KLAA girls swimming and diving championships Saturday at Brighton.

Gray won the 200-yard freestyle in 1 minute, 55.53 seconds, beating Canton freshman Mina Kennedy by 2.02 seconds.

She was also on the Bulldogs' winning 400 freestyle team with Ava Sventickas, Ola Bodyl and Sage Bissett. That team was second in prelims with a time of 3:40.17 before dropping down to 3:36.01 in the finals.

Gray took third in her other two swims, finishing the 100 butterfly in

59.33 seconds and joining Bissett, Bodyl and Sventickas on the 200 medley relay team (1:49.42).

Bodyl had a second-place finish in the 200 individual medley in 2:09.64 and Millie Hayosh took second in the 500 freestyle in 5:16.62 for Brighton's next-highest finishes.

Placing third for Brighton were Hayosh in the 200 freestyle (2:00.09), Bissett in the 50 freestyle (24.54) and Bodyl in the 100 breaststroke (1:07.08).

Bissett was fourth (1:00.72) and Ava Hasson fifth (1:01.09) in the 100 backstroke.

Hartland's best finishes were a sixth by Sehee Kim in the 200 individual medley (2:19.78) and a seventh by diver Morgan Wehner (309.65 points).

Northville won the eight-team meet with 929 points. Brighton was fifth with

557 and Hartland eighth with 305.

### KLAA B meet

Freshman Anabelle Respondek became Howell's first state qualifier since Madison Zerna in 2017, winning the 50 freestyle in 25.17 seconds and the 100 freestyle in 55.13.

Respondek was also on the winning 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams with Jade Russo, Olivia Fortner and Olivia Glenfield.

Glenfield won the 100 breaststroke in 1:11.46 and took second in the 200 individual medley in 2:19.00.

Russo had second-place finishes in the 100 butterfly (1:06.31) and 200 freestyle (2:16.07).

Penny Nick was third in the 500 freestyle (6:10.31), while Fortner had fourth-

place finishes in the 50 freestyle (27.02) and 100 freestyle (59.00) for the Highlanders.

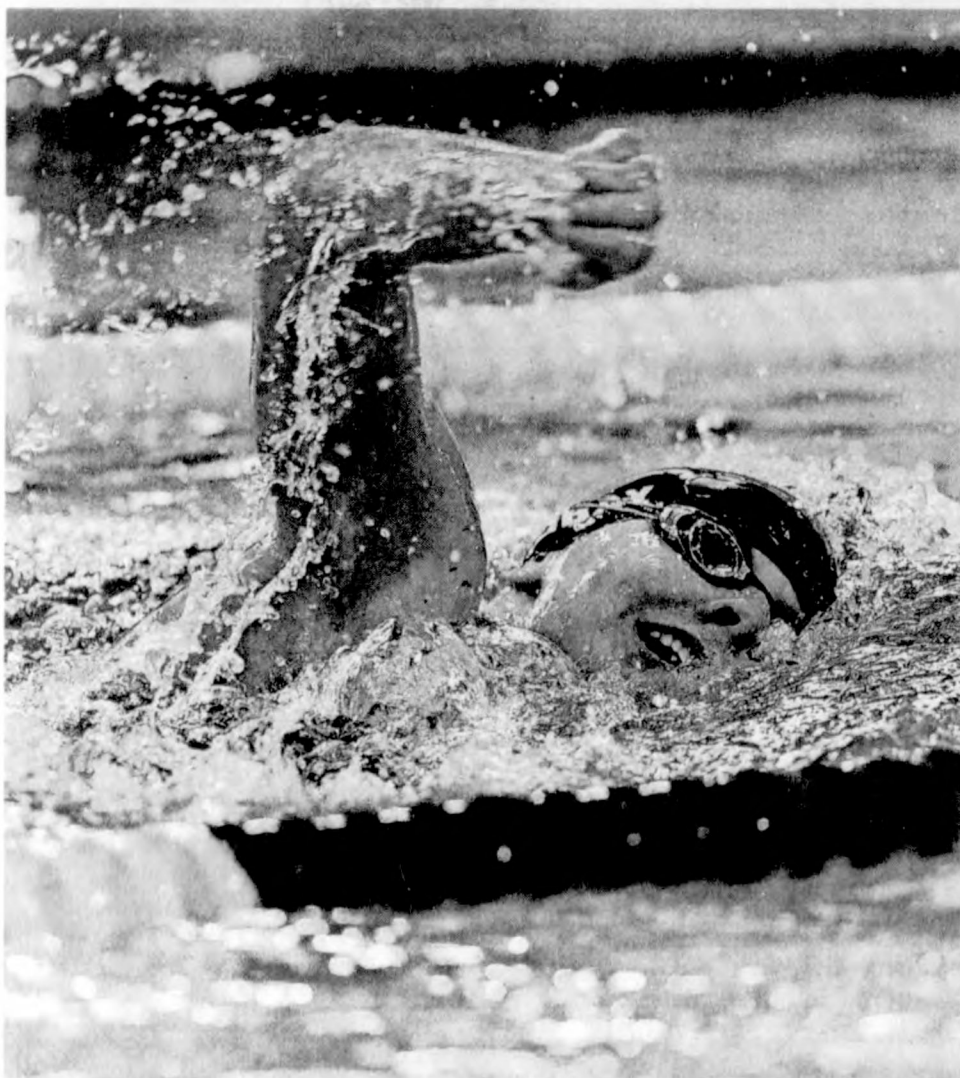
Howell won the eight-team meet with 884 points. The KLAA holds separate meets for the top eight and bottom eight teams from the regular season.

### SEC White meet

Ava Goble had Pinckney's best finish, placing second in the 100 breaststroke in 1:16.80. Goble was also fifth in the 50 freestyle (26.54).

Jenna Vandezande was third in the 100 backstroke (1:07.12) and fourth in the 200 freestyle (2:11.85) for the Pirates, who placed fifth as a team.

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



Brighton's Grace Gray won the 200-yard freestyle at the KLAA championships. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

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## How to approach a business dinner

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Companies have various reasons to host business dinners. Some dinners may be in honor of employees' accomplishments or in recognition of various milestones, while others may be hosted to reinforce relationships with clients.

According to the Gentleman's Gazette, which offers etiquette protocols and other tips, it often is customary for companies to include some sort of lunch or dinner as part of the employee onboarding process. Any business meal, whether it's an informal lunch grabbed on the go or a formal, sit-down dinner, can be a great opportunity to make a good impression.

Business functions outside of the office or working environment require the same behavior one would display during working hours, so it's best to approach the meal as an extension of the workday. The following are some additional guidelines when hosting or attending a business dinner.

### The Host

Hosts should give careful consideration to the restaurant before booking a reservation. It should be able to seat everyone comfortably and not be so loud that conversation is affected. Make a reservation well in advance. In addition, make sure a variety of foods are available to accommodate any dietary restrictions. Inviting a vegan to a



steak restaurant would be uncouth. When hosting international guests, consider culture before selecting a restaurant.

A restaurant should be easy to access as well. Select one near public transportation, if available, and make sure it is relatively close to the office.

### The Guests

This meal is an extension of the business relationship, and it's wise

to make a good impression. While the atmosphere may be a little more relaxed than in the office, remember professionalism is key. Avoid any political or religious conversations and anything that can be construed as controversial. Maintain good eye contact and engage in conversations. Be polite and take the lead from the host.

Avoid alcoholic beverages, unless they are offered. If you choose to imbibe, stick to only one drink, as alco-

hol can lower inhibitions and cause a loose tongue.

Dress professionally for the occasion, choosing formal business attire.

If you have any food allergies or avoid foods for particular reasons, alert the party host well in advance so that your needs can be addressed.

Business lunches and dinners are great opportunities to make strong impressions.

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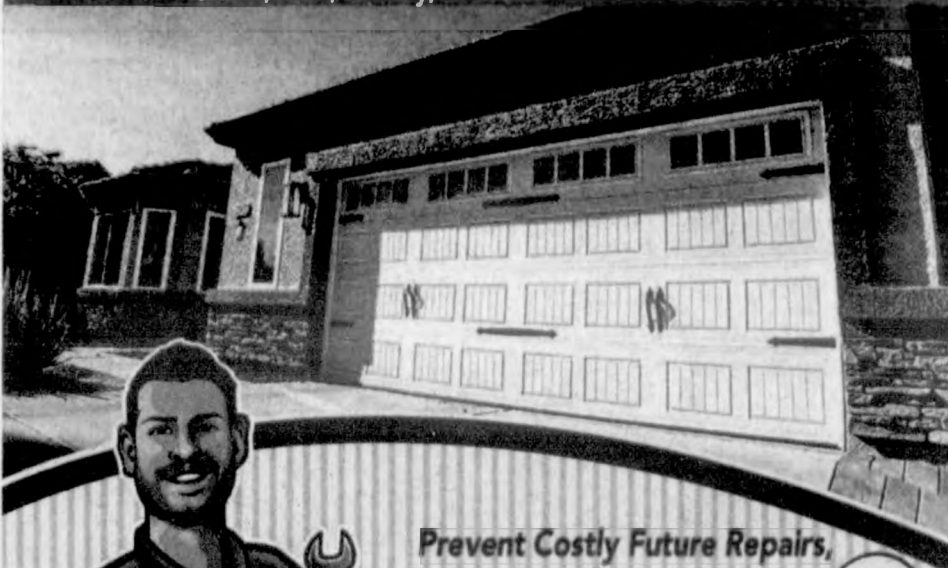
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