

PLYMOUTH OBSERVER

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SAMPLE TEA AT READING EVENT
FOOD, B10

Teachers ratify pact without salary increases

Joanne Maliszewski
Staff Writer

Teachers, members of the Plymouth-Canton Education Association, ratified a two-year contract supported by a majority of less senior educators, but rejected by more experienced members who are still without a pay increase.

"It's another two years without a raise," said Bob Williams, president of the PCEA. "I am so afraid this is divisive."

The membership March 19 and 21 ratified the pact in a

60-40 percent split. Teachers who are at the top of the pay scale will again be without any salary movement other than a \$75 increase in longevity pay, which is provided once a year.

Teachers who are still on the 14-step seniority march will receive a step increase in 2016-17, the second year of the contract. In the contract's current first year, there are no step or salary increases.

This agreement comes after after teachers rejected a tentative agreement in December 2015.

"Our people are not happy. This is a concessionary contract," Williams said. "This year is still officially a freeze."

In 2010, state legislators passed a law that no longer requires school boards to honor and pay traditional salary steps based on years of service for teachers. Plus, the state also now requires school boards to adopt balanced budgets.

Adding more salt to the wound, about five years ago Plymouth-Canton abandoned the teachers' 11-step salary system for 14 steps, stretching

out the potential for salary increases for years of service.

"I thank the board for putting a Band-Aid on our number one leak (step increases)," Williams said. "Our people climbing the ladder need to get there (to the top)."

The seniority schedule was changed effective for the years 2012-15 to \$39,954 for the first step with a bachelor's degree and \$43,954 with a master's degree. The next half-step would pay \$41,111 for a bachelor's degree and \$45,320 for a master's degree.

PCEA teachers last had a 2-percent salary increase in 2006-07. In 2008-09, teachers at the top of the schedule received a 2-percent raise. Since 2009-10, PCEA members have had no increases.

According to the National Education Association, in 2012-13, the average starting salary for Michigan teachers was \$35,901, while the national average was \$36,141. During that same time period for nearby states, the average starting

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Two more join race for area's state House seat

Matt Jachman
Staff Writer

Two more men have joined the Republican primary race to succeed the Plymouth area's term-limited state representative.

Joe Smith of Plymouth Township and Steven Valentini of Northville Township have filed paperwork to run for the 20th District Michigan House of Representatives spot held by Rep. Kurt Heise, R-Plymouth Township.



Smith

Heise, who is in his third two-year term, cannot seek another House term and is running for the job of Plymouth Township supervisor.



Valentini

Smith and Valentini join Jeff Noble, a Plymouth Township resident and local pastor, and Chris Roosen, a former Northville

Township trustee, in what is now a four-man primary race. There are no Democrats in the primary so far.

The 20th District includes Plymouth, Plymouth Township, Northville Township, part of the city of Northville and part of eastern Canton Township. The primary election is Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Smith and Valentini, both 46, each said they'd bring a local focus to the job of state representative, engaging people at a grassroots level to help take their concerns to Lansing.

Smith said that, if elected, he would connect with small businesses and community groups.

"That's what drives the communities," he said. "That's who I want to represent in Lansing."

Similarly, Valentini said he'd also work with people in the district and try to solve problems by winning more local control over certain issues, such as road maintenance, for example.

"It all starts with people on

See HOUSE, Page A3

WOMEN BEHIND BARS

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Lakeshia Valdez appears in 17th District Court in Redford in 2012 during her murder trial.

Valdez on committing murder: 'I never expected it ...'

David Veselenak
Staff Writer

Throughout the halls of the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, Lakeshia Valdez is known as inmate No. 855914.

That's the number she's been assigned while serving time for the murder of Redford resident Matthew Olivarez, whom Valdez stabbed and killed in 2011 during an argument at a house off Garfield Street, south of Six Mile, in Redford.

"We got into it. I grabbed the knife and I stabbed him," she said in an interview at the prison, located off U.S. 23 in Washtenaw County's Pittsfield Township. "He was talking to me. I stabbed him again. And I stabbed him again."

The house, along with Olivarez's remains, were later set on fire and several of his items were taken before Valdez left to go back home downstate. Some jewelry and other items were later recovered from a pawn shop in

See VALDEZ, Page A8

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

In our first installment of Women Behind Bars, ex-school teacher Nancy Seaman reflected upon a marriage that ended in murder. Now we hear from Lakeshia Valdez, a young mother of two who was just 19 years old the day she repeatedly stabbed her former boyfriend, then set his body on fire with the intent of evading justice. Reporter David Veselenak, who covered the original crime, found a more hardened Valdez this time around.

INSIDE

- » Nancy Seaman case fits domestic abuse pattern
- » Battered woman defense gaining attention

Prison: A story of conflicting lives

Welcome to the DOC." These words greeted me as I completed paperwork earlier this winter to gain visitor access to the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility in Pittsfield Township. A guard at the desk uttered them to me as I completed the initial visitor paperwork, adding to the intimidation factor of being in a place containing the state's convicted female felons.

Nothing to make me feel better about my first trip visiting a prison. I thought a lot about what a trip to



David Veselenak

STAFF WRITER

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CLARIFICATION

Lu Havalá says she was misquoted in a March 20 Plymouth Observer story about changes at the Friendship Station, a senior citizens center.

Havalá said she may have said, "Here's your stuff. Get it

out of here" in describing how members of Plymouth Township Seniors, a club that meets at the Friendship Station for card and mah-jong games, were told to remove personal items from the building.

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P-CEP student chefs tops in state

Joanne Maliszewski
Staff Writer

The Plymouth-Canton Educational Park competitive culinary team sliced, chopped and cooked its way to the No. 1 rank in Michigan this past weekend, providing scholarships to each of the winning students.

"They are just ecstatic," said Diana Woodward, instructor/coach of the P-CEP Hospitality and Culinary Arts program. "It was the coolest thing. There was no one even close."

The culinary team took first place in the Michigan ProStart® Competition, hosted by the Michigan Restaurant Association. At the same time, the management team – which developed a restaurant concept full of real-life details – and nutrition team took second place in the competition.

Students on the winning culinary team each receive \$49,000 in scholarships, while members of the management team receive \$24,000 each in scholarships, Woodward said.

Plus, the culinary team will also receive paid trips to the national competition, April 28 through May 1 in Dallas.

"There are still a couple more (honors) coming in," Woodward said.

The culinary team includes Taarika Singhal, Emma Stephens, Zachary Wolfis, Patrick McKillen



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The culinary team, Patrick McKillen, Emma Stephens, Zachary Wolfis and Taarika Singhal, practicing for the competition in which they took first place.

and alternate Cody Bates. The team spent the last couple of weeks before the competition practicing over and over again. "They did everything I asked. I have really high expectations. It paid off," Woodward said.

Each item prepared by the students includes between seven and 11 components or recipes. For example, Singhal created nine components for the dessert, which included white chocolate, strawberries and passion fruit. The other chefs created a meal of scallops and braised beef.

The management team includes Jacob Lorenz, Brynna Samuels, Samantha Rhodes, Kyle Branham and alternate Dylan Grandke. Offering similar stress as experienced by the culinary team, the management team developed a concept for a restaurant, Greenstone, which would seat 70 people and offer a casual, lodge atmosphere.

The group's plans literally included a sort of blueprint of the facility, menu, staffing, marketing, costs, recipes, you name it – anything and everything that goes

into opening a new restaurant.

Because competition is costly for the teams, the culinary program continues to raise funds. Anyone who wishes to donate to the cause or just send well wishes to the teams is encouraged to do so by contacting Woodward at 734-507-0661 or by email at diana.woodward@pccsk12.com.

"All the support radiates with the kids," Woodward said.

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TEACHERS

Continued from Page A1

salary in Illinois was \$37,166, in Indiana it was \$34,696 and in Ohio it was \$33,096.

In the new contract, a concession from the teachers union is a decrease in the annual classroom allocation –

used to buy supplies – from \$100 to \$50, Williams said.

"I believe we are headed in the right direction," interim Superintendent Monica Merritt said Tuesday night as the P-CCS Board of Education gave the contract a stamp of approval. "Would we want to do more? Absolutely." Trustee Michael Maloney abstained from

voting as his wife is a PCEA teacher.

Merritt said district officials are working to increase student enrollment, which in turn provides revenue to the district, based on per-pupil funding from the state. She said the goal is to increase funding to provide more competitive wages.

"Our teachers work

hard. They are dedicated to our students," Merritt said.

Board President Kim Crouch thanked both sides of the bargaining table, lauding teachers for not allowing negotiations to affect their work in the classrooms.

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Egg hunt Saturday in Plymouth Township



FILE PHOTO

Plymouth Township's Easter egg hunt is 10 a.m. Saturday at the baseball fields at Plymouth Township Park, on Ann Arbor Trail west of McClumpha. The event, sponsored by the Plymouth Lions Club, is free and open to the public. Children should bring baskets for collecting eggs; the hunt begins precisely at 10 a.m. Then Lions will offer their KidSight program, free of charge, immediately after the hunt. KidSight involves a high-tech camera that takes pictures of children's eyes to aid in the early detection of eye disease.

HOUSE

Continued from Page A1

the local level," Valentini said. "If we can break down what's going on in the state and give more control to the municipalities and the civic groups, I think that's a great start."

Both men say they are fiscal conservatives.

Work experience

Valentini, a longtime real estate agent in the area, is a sales consultant for Berkshire Hathaway Home Services in its downtown Northville office. Smith, who has worked for small businesses for a majority of his career, is officer manager at an Oakland County landscaping firm. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Cleary University.

Smith said he has had an interest in politics and was motivated to run because he wants to bring his experience in service-oriented businesses to public service. He said he would stress his accessibility to the public if elected.

"There are a lot of people who don't even know who their state representative is," he said. "I'm going to bring that back and be very accessible in the district, meet with business owners, community groups, to let them know they have a voice."

Valentini said he's developed a "get-it-done" attitude because of his work in real estate that he would take to Lansing and that he would work to develop relationships in the district and look to local talent and resources for help in tackling state issues.

"There are a lot of smart people who live in our area, our community, who could contribute," he said.

Both have run for the state House once previously, in 2008. Valentini also ran in the GOP primary in 2010, when he was a Novi resident, for a Michigan Senate seat.

Smith, who is married with three children, coaches youth baseball and has served on the board for the Plymouth-Canton Steelers, a youth football program in which two of his children were involved.

Valentini, who is single, said he had gastric bypass surgery in 2003 and has since enjoyed counseling people on health and wellness. "It's about

being happy with who you are," he said.

Valentini has a website, www.votevalentini.com, while Smith said he plans to soon launch one.

The filing deadline for state House candidates is Tuesday, April 19.

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Coyote attacks, kills small dog in Canton

Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

A coyote has attacked and killed a small dog in Canton, prompting a warning by police to use caution when letting small pets outdoors.

A Canton man let his two bichon frise outside in his backyard just after 5 a.m. Friday in a neighborhood southeast of Saltz and Beck roads, Special Services Lt. Craig Wilsher said.

One of the dogs was attacked and later died from injuries suffered before the coyote ran off, Wilsher said. The yard was not fenced in.

Coyote sightings are common across metro Detroit, but Wilsher said he wasn't aware of any other fatal attacks on dogs in Canton.

"We do get quite a few coyote sightings in Canton," he said. "They're looking for any kind of non-threatening food source they can find. They're definitely wandering around. They've been spotted in just about every area of the township."

Authorities said similar attacks have recently been reported in Shelby Township and Grosse Ile.

Shelby Township Police Lt. Bill Wylie said the incident there involved a small dog that was killed when



FILE PHOTO

Authorities say coyote sightings have become common in metro Detroit.

its owner let it outside and was watching it when two coyotes came out of a wooded area and fatally attacked it. It happened March 3.

"It's very sad," he said. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, coyotes have migrated to urban and suburban areas throughout Michigan. They are most likely to be spotted during their breeding period, from mid-January into March.

Authorities say coyotes are active day and night, but especially during sunrise and sunset. They can be difficult to distinguish from a medium-sized German shepherd from a distance.

MDNR officials say the size of coyotes is often overestimated because they have long fur that masks a bone structure slightly smaller than most domestic dogs. When running, they carry their tails below the level of their backs.

Coyotes are drawn to garbage, garden vegetables and pet foods. They can prey on unattended small dogs and cats, but

officials say they rarely attack humans.

To minimize a run-in with a coyote:

» Never approach or touch one.

» Never intentionally feed a coyote.

» Eliminate all outside food sources, especially pet food.

» Put garbage out the morning of pickup rather than the night before.

» Clear out wood and brush piles, which are a habitat for mice and may attract coyotes.

» Do not allow pets to roam free when coyotes are present. Rather, consider keeping them indoors or accompanying them outside, especially from dusk until dawn.

Authorities say a coyote sighting shouldn't automatically be a cause for concern.

Residents with nuisance wildlife issues are advised to contact Varmint Police, a private animal control service, at 734-729-0858 or at www.varmintpolice.com.

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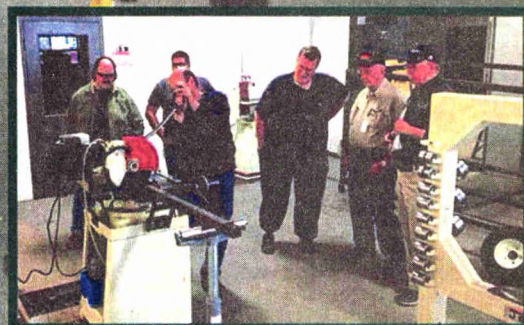
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Man, 81, is third-time victim of scam artists

Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

An 81-year-old Canton man has been swindled out of money a third time after he apparently ignored a warning by police to avoid scams initiated by strangers.

The latest incident happened this month, after a scam artist contacted the victim and said he could obtain a \$5,000 loan if he would first send money to secure it.

"We have people of all ages that get taken advantage of, but it just so happens this time it looks like they were taking advantage of his age," Canton Special Services Lt.

Craig Wilsher said.

The victim was contacted on two consecutive days and asked to send two separate payments by MoneyGram totaling \$2,900. He did.

According to a police report, the victim believed the loan offer was legitimate and began exchanging texts with a scam artist, who convinced him to send MoneyGram payments.

The victim was subsequently told to call a woman named Jennifer to claim his loan, but he got a busy signal every time he called the number. He reported the problem by text to the scam artist and received a reply that he had

been scammed and to contact his insurance company.

Police say it marked the third time the man has lost money in similar schemes. The report said he had previously been warned not to wire payments to strangers.

Wilsher said the victim's ordeal should serve as a warning to anyone who is notified by a stranger and advised to send money to get money.

"It's a huge red flag," he said.

Wilsher said the scams take many forms. A caller may advise the potential victim to prepay taxes to qualify for a large sum of money.

"At no time should you have to send money to prepay taxes to get a loan," he said.

Some scam artists pose as FBI agents or police officials and warn of legal action — even arrest — unless cash is wired for alleged payment of back taxes.

One scam last year used metro Detroit's 734 area code, with the caller threatening arrest unless supposed court fines were paid with a Green Dot debit card. The caller even referenced a local judge.

That scam prompted Patty Esselink, Canton police community relations officer, to issue a warning.

"Most individuals receiving a call like this would probably recognize it as a scam, but some of our more vulnerable community members might not," she said at the time.

Some scam artists have convinced area residents to send money supposedly to bail out a relative from a jail in places such as Mexico.

Wilsher and other law enforcement officials have long given common-sense advice: If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

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CANTON CRIME WATCH

Dispute over gay networking app leads to citation

An apparent dispute between two men over use of a social networking site geared toward gay and bisexual men brought Canton police to a residence on Heathmore Court, near Haggerty and Ford.

The incident unfolded shortly before 2 a.m. Monday and ended with a 37-year-old man being ticketed for malicious destruction of property, amid allegations he broke an 18-year-old man's smart phone. A neighbor reported the incident.

The teen had gone to the neighbor's residence after he claimed he was assaulted by the older man. The two men were described in a police report as friends.

A police report indicated the teen became upset when he saw Grindr, a geosocial networking app, open on the older man's phone. The

older man said the teen became angry and pushed him onto a bed before he broke free and went to the living room.

The older man said the teen followed him and continued to hit him, knocking him to the ground and causing him to hit his head on a coffee table, the report said. He said the teen then ran outside yelling for help.

The report said the older man had a small cut on his face and his eyeglasses were broken. The teen told another story, though.

He said he had the app open on his phone and the older man became angry, throwing him onto a couch and hitting him. He said he tried to get away and the older man pushed him against a wall, took his phone and broke it.

Police concluded the incident by issuing a citation to the older man for malicious destruction of property because of the damage to the smart phone.

Imagined break-in?

A 37-year-old Canton woman could have been suffering from paranoia when she notified police of suspicious activity in her home — activity police couldn't substantiate, a police report said.

The woman notified police last Thursday morning that there may have been a break-in at her residence on Lilley Pointe, near Lilley and Cherry Hill, but police found nothing out of the ordinary.

She later phoned police to say she was at work and believed someone was in her home. She asked police to take pictures of her residence but, again, police found no evidence of a burglary.

The woman told police she believes people enter her home frequently without her permission. The report indicated police had made an offer to contact the woman's family or friends to seek interven-

tion.

Ding Dong Ditch

A neighborhood prank ended with three teens saying they were threatened with a gun by a 21-year-old man after they rang his doorbell and ran away as he answered.

However, the resident told a different story, saying the teens rang his doorbell and threatened to return with an AK-47 to do a drive-by shooting, a police report said.

The incident unfolded shortly before 7 p.m. Saturday on Saxony, near Warren and Lilley. It involved a prank dubbed Ding Dong Ditch in the police report.

Police also spoke with the 21-year-old resident's father who said his son didn't threaten the teens with a gun. The father said he didn't want to big deal over the incident, but wanted to file a police report in case the teens returned.

— By Darrell Clem

PLYMOUTH CRIME WATCH

Pickup truck weaves, driver gets arrested

A 40-year-old man was arrested on a charge of driving under the influence early Sunday after a police officer spotted the pickup he was driving weaving between two lanes on eastbound Ann Arbor Road.

The officer pulled over the driver, who was in a Toyota Tacoma, just after 3:30 a.m. near Eckles Road, according to a Plymouth Township Police Department report. The suspect was unsure where he was, police said, and admitted to having had two beers.

The man refused a preliminary breath test at the scene and performed poorly on field sobriety tests, police said. He was later given a breath-analysis test at the police station, the results of which weren't available to the public.

The Tacoma was impounded by police. Police discovered that the

truck's license plate belonged on a Ford Escape.

License suspended

» A 29-year-old woman was arrested on a charge of driving with a suspended license after she was pulled over on westbound M-14 about 4 p.m. Saturday afternoon because the license-plate tab on the vehicle she was driving was suspended.

The woman, driving a 1999 GMC Jimmy, had no license in her possession and police learned it had been suspended, a police report said.

» A 24-year-old woman pulled over because of a defective taillight on the car she was driving around noon March 13 was arrested for driving with a suspended license.

The woman, stopped near Ann Arbor Road and Eckles, told police she had some tickets in Livonia that she hadn't settled, police said.

— By Matt Jachman



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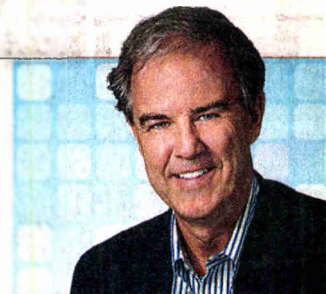
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David C. Kelsall, M.D.,
Cochlear Medical Advisor

Dr. David C. Kelsall, a cochlear implant surgeon and medical advisor to Cochlear, the world leader in cochlear implants, answers questions about cochlear implants and how they are different from hearing aids.

Q: How are cochlear implants different than hearing aids?

A: Hearing aids help many people by making the sounds they hear louder. Unfortunately, as hearing loss progresses, sounds need to not only be made louder, they need to be made clearer. Cochlear implants can help give you that clarity, especially in noisy environments. If you suffer from high frequency hearing loss but maintain your hearing in the low frequencies, there is a solution called Hybrid™ Hearing that may be able to help as well. Be sure to discuss your options with a Hearing Implant Specialist in your area.

Q: Are cochlear implants covered by Medicare?

A: Yes, by Medicare and most private insurance plans.

Q: How do I know a cochlear implant will work for me?

A: The technology is very reliable. In fact, it has been around for over 30 years and has helped change the lives of over 400,000 people worldwide.

Q: Is it major surgery?

A: No, not at all. In fact, the procedure is often done on an outpatient basis and typically takes just a couple hours.

Q: Am I too old to get a cochlear implant?

A: No, it's never too late to regain access to the sounds you're missing.

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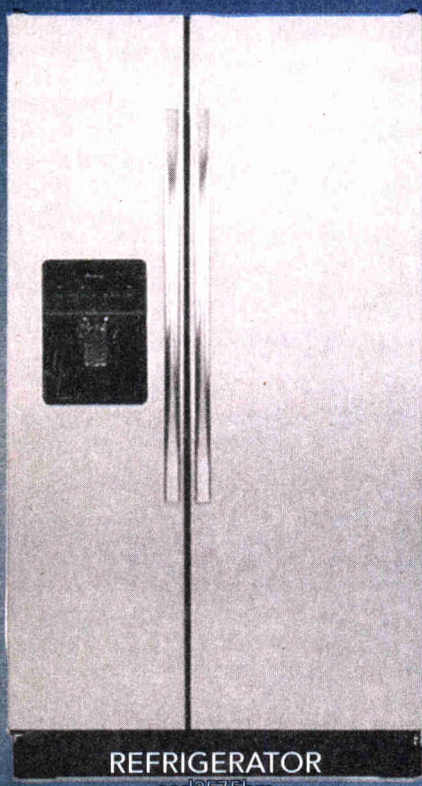
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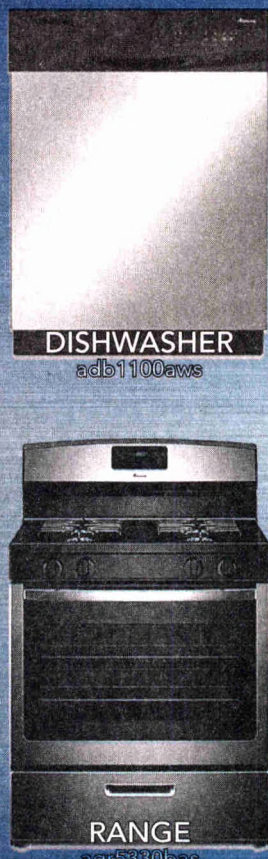
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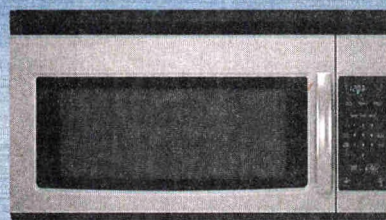


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School restoration plan gets brownfield boost

Matt Jachman
Staff Writer

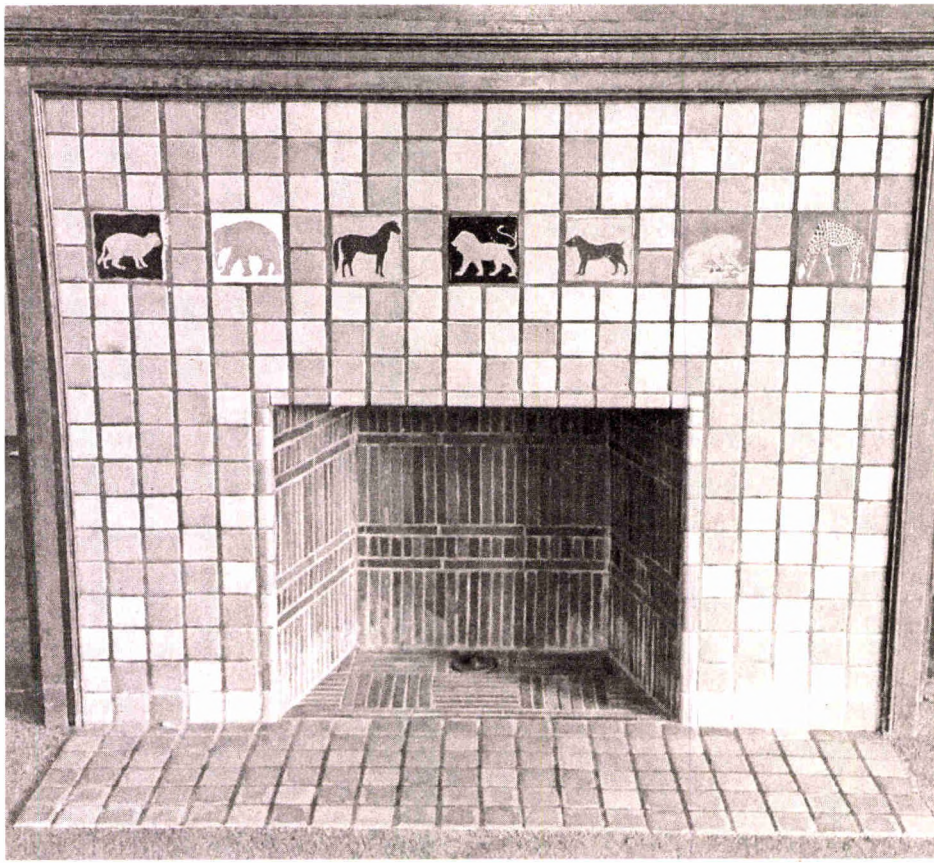
Brownfield financing of more than \$1 million will help developers with the cost of restoring a vacant school in Plymouth's Old Village that's slated to be converted into 22 loft-style apartments.

The Plymouth City Commission approved the brownfield plan for the Starkweather School project with a 4-0 vote Monday. The plan will make the project eligible for tax-increment financing totaling nearly \$1.65 million over 15 years.

Developers have purchased the 5.57-acre property on Holbrook from the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools for \$1.15 million and plan to re-purpose the 1927 school building into apartments while keeping many of its historic features intact, plus build 23 single-family houses on the site. Work should begin this spring, said Mark Menuck, one of the partners on the project.

"We want to build a really nice higher-end community for Old Village," said Menuck, a third-generation builder and a partner in Curtis-Plymouth LLC, the company organized for the project.

The tax-increment financing, or TIF, means much of the property-tax revenue that would have been collected as the site becomes taxable — as a school facility it was not taxable — will be set aside to reimburse developers for costs associated with restoring the building, which has been declared obsolete. Eligible costs could include



A fireplace at the Starkweather School, built in 1927, is decorated with Firestone faience tiles and is one of the features developers plan to keep intact as the building is converted into loft apartments.

hazard remediation, such as removing or safely encapsulating lead paint and asbestos insulation, plus certain demolition work, like tearing out original wood floors and taking out dropped ceilings and walls that weren't original to the building, Menuck said.

Developers will be eligible for up to just over \$1.07 million, including interest and contingencies, in reimbursement during the first 11 years of the plan. The city will be reimbursed up to nearly \$165,000 for administrative costs and

another \$412,492 will be put into the city's site remediation revolving fund, which is earmarked for environmental clean-up, over the last few years of the plan.

City Manager Paul Sincoc said there are no current plans for money going into the revolving fund and that it has been Plymouth's practice in the past to return at least some of the money to the taxing entities that would have collected it had it not been for a TIF plan.

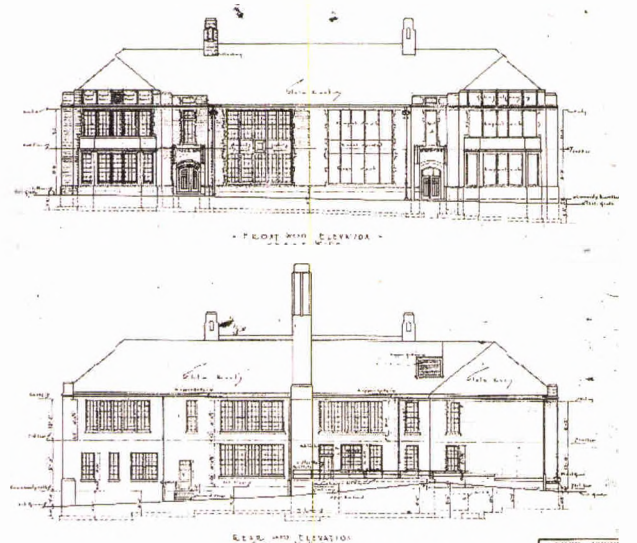
The city's brownfield redevelopment authority, chaired by Commissioner Colleen Pobur, ap-

proved the plan last month.

Some millages protected

Some specific millages — for schools, the Detroit Institute of Art, the Detroit Zoo, plus the city's and the Plymouth District Library's voter-approved debt millages — will not be "recaptured" under the brownfield plan and will be distributed as they normally would.

Menuck said he initially would have preferred to tear down the vacant school for the project, but worked with the city,



A 1927 architectural drawing of the front and rear facades of Starkweather School, designed by the Detroit firm of Malcomson and Higginbotham, which designed many prominent area buildings.

preservationists and Old Village residents to save it.

"It's actually become a fun project that I'm really looking forward to doing," he said.

Developers are applying for National Register of Historic Places status for the building, which, if approved, could mean they'd benefit from tax credits.

The two-story school was designed by the Detroit firm of Malcomson and Higginbotham, including the original Cass Technical High School (razed in 2011), Wayne State University's Old Main and Mary Mayo Hall at Michigan State University.

Menuck estimated the cost of the project, not including the cost of building the single-family houses, at more than \$5 million.

The single-family houses, of no less than 2,000 square feet each, will be built in traditional styles that fit the look of Old Village, Menuck said. Some will overlook Hines Park, which is just east of the site. Prices will start in the \$500,000 range.

A final vote on a planned unit development, or PUD, agreement between the developers and the city was tabled Monday pending final details of the plan.

Voting for the brownfield plan were Pobur, plus Commissioner Oliver Wolcott, who chaired the meeting as mayor pro tem, and Commissioners Joe Valenti and Mike Wright. Mayor Dan Dwyer and Commissioners Dan Dalton and Suzi Deal were absent.

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Ford plans more sampling after borings find some vinyl chloride

David Veselenak
Staff Writer

More testing in a south Livonia neighborhood will take place

after Ford officials found signs of vinyl chloride drifting east in the groundwater near the

plant. Testing took place of several spots in the Alden Village subdivision last month by Ford officials,

who determined vinyl chloride, a carcinogen, was located in the groundwater east of the Ford Transmission Plant, located at 36200 Plymouth, east of Levan.

Two boring sites found levels that exceeded the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality standards for drinking water, which is 2 parts per billion. One site was located north of Boston Post Street and contained 9 ppb 12-15 feet below ground; the second site was north of the west end of Standish Street, which had a measurement of 3 ppb 16-19 feet below ground. The subdivision where testing occurred is located north of Plymouth and west of Stark.

Most of the boring samples came back with no detection and some showed signs of 1-2 ppb of vinyl chloride.

"I think what it shows is most of the borings we drilled have non-detect amounts of vinyl chloride," said John Cangany, a communications manager with Ford. "We're continuing the investigation. The majority of the borings having non-detect is obviously a good sign."

No amount of the substance was detected within 12 feet of the surface.

"The levels of vinyl chloride are further down underground than what we found initially," Cangany said.

He also said soil gases across the area have also been tested and showed no trace of the substance in the soil.

Ford officials have stressed while they are using the drinking water standards to determine where to test, drinking water in that area and other parts of Livonia is not affected by the contamination, as the city's water comes from the Great Lakes Water Authority and doesn't draw from local groundwater.

No set timetable

Ford announced last month it had discovered vinyl chloride in the groundwater while doing some improvements to the property several months ago. Vinyl chloride is a chemical the company says derives from trichloroethylene, a component used as a parts degreaser from the 1950s to the 1980s.

With the increased

levels still being found, Ford says the company will sample 20 more sites in the neighborhood, mostly around Rosati Avenue and the north end of Boston Post, north of Beacon Street.

Cangany said most of the future boring sites appear on private property, meaning the company needs permission from the property owners before drilling for samples. If that permission is obtained, it will take several more weeks once drilling is complete to share the results.

"We have already mailed the notices trying to request an access request," he said. "We reached out to all of them."

Testing was done in residential neighborhoods throughout February after the company discovered the chemical had drifted east in the groundwater past Belden Court. DEQ regulations require the company to notify area residents of the impact, which was done last month.

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AUCTION MARCH 31, 2016 at 10 a.m. MAYFLOWER TOWING

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3B7HF13Z1V6741648	1997	Dodge	Ram Van
4HDL51213WD001208	2000	TRAILER	
1G1ND52F14M686887	2004	Chevrolet	Classic
CH23J63263414	1996	Chrysler	New Yorker
2G4WS52M1W1516961	1998	Buick	Century Custom
3GND433P37S590763	2007	Chevrolet	Hhr Lt
	0	TRAILER	
JM1TA221621718757	2002	Mazda	Millenia
1FMDK03135GA00259	2005	Ford	Freestyle
	0	TRAILER	
1FMYU031X2KB30481	2002	Ford	Escape
1G8ZH52841Z258257	2001	Saturn	
1GCJK33264F218833	2004	Chevrolet	Silverado K3500

Published: March 24, 2016

LO-000278322 3x3



Letters of Intent Notice REQUEST PROPOSALS

The Senior Alliance (TSA) is requesting proposals to provide the following services to adults age 60 and older in the 34 communities of southern and western Wayne County, Michigan. Some adult day care and respite funding will include service to individuals who are age 18 and older.

Adult Day Care	Home Delivered Meal Program Assessments
Caregiver & Community Transportation	Kinship Caregiver Legal Aid
Caregiver Legal Aid	Safe-At-Home (Safety Modifications)
Elder Abuse Prevention Services	Nutrition Programs Administration
Friendly Reassurance	Medication Management
Evidence-Based Disease Prevention/Health & Wellness Programs	Legal Aid
Home Delivered Meals & Congregate Meals Preparation	Senior Center Staffing

****NOT ALL SERVICES LISTED MAY RESULT IN AWARD OF CONTRACT****

Service Period: FY 2017-2019 (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2019)

Bidders must provide services in one (1) or more of the following communities. Additional criteria will be provided concerning serving residents of all listed communities.

Allen Park	Gibraltar	Plymouth	Taylor
Belleville	Grosse Ile Township	Plymouth Township	Trenton
Brownstown Township	Huron Township	Redford Township	Van Buren Township
Canton Township	Inkster	Riverview	Wayne
Dearborn	Lincoln Park	River Rouge	Westland
Dearborn Heights	Livonia	Rockwood	Woodhaven
Ecorse	Melvindale	Romulus	Wyandotte
Flat Rock	Northville	Southgate	
Garden City	Northville Township	Sumpter Township	

All prospective applicants for FY 2017-2019 funding for the above listed programs **MUST** submit a Letter of Intent **PRIOR** to submitting a formal application. Final funding levels for FY 2017 have not yet been determined. **Complete Letter of Intent requirements can be found at:** <http://www.aaa1c.org/doing-business-with-us/request-for-proposal>

Letters of Intent may be mailed, delivered, or e-mailed to:

The Senior Alliance
ATTN: Nicole Jeffrey
3850 Second Street, Suite 100
Wayne, MI 48184
njeffrey@tsalink.org

Letters of Intent must briefly describe the basic elements of the program, major benefits of the applicant agency, major partners, and innovation/sustainability. Letters of Intent must not exceed one (1) page in length.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) documents will be available only to those who submit a Letter of Intent in writing NO LATER than 4:00 p.m. on April 13, 2016. TSA will hold an Application Workshop on May 2, 2016 and all bidders are strongly encouraged to attend.

For more information, please call: (734) 858-2238

Published: March 24, 2016

LO-000278200 3x7

Family foundation supports Children's Hospital research

Every year, 40,000 American children are born with a congenital heart defect, affecting approximately one among 120 babies. Jacob Dougherty, son of Mike and Erin Dougherty of Novi, was born with a congenital heart defect and underwent successful surgery at Children's Hospital of Michigan.

The Doughertys wanted to help other families whose children face life-threatening cardiac defects. They established The Heart of a Child, a nonprofit foundation, to raise funds for congenital heart defect research and treatment. The 2016 Heart of a Child Dinner

and Silent Auction, held in January 2016, raised \$36,000 for Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation. Since its inception, The Heart of a Child (theheartofachild.net) has donated more than \$300,000 for research to improve cardiovascular surgery outcomes for children.

"We are very grateful for this support to expand what we know about congenital heart defects and to improve pediatric cardiac care. The Heart of a Child provides a great service for future patients and their families," said Tony Werner, president and CEO of Children's Hospital of

Michigan Foundation.

Established in 2003, the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation is dedicated to advancing the health and healthcare of the children of Michigan. This is accomplished through philanthropic support for pediatric medical education, research, and community benefit programs. The foundation granted \$5.7 million in 2014 for vital pediatric health initiatives. The foundation is an independent public charity governed by a community board of 27 directors, and is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Learn more at www.chmfoundation.org.

Local boy hopeful in national adaptive bike giveaway

Brad Kadrich
Staff Writer

PUT WILLIAM ON WHEELS

Her pregnancy was moving along, like most pregnancies, with the morning sickness and the baby kicking and the preparation.

But for Allison McRae, her husband Duncan and their newborn son William, the end of normal came three weeks early. William was born prematurely, in respiratory distress, not breathing.

He weighed just 3 pounds, 13 ounces, and spent 28 days in the Neonatal-Intensive Care Unit. Within a year, William had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. At 18 months, he had a feeding tube. He's also afflicted with what his mom calls "pretty severe epilepsy."

So life hasn't been normal, at least not by most people's definition. Now, though, comes a chance to provide a sliver of normalcy to William's life, through a bicycle giveaway from Friendship Circle, the West Bloomfield-based charity that has been providing assistance and support for more than 3,000 families of children with special needs since 1994.

Friendship Circle has launched its fifth annual Great Bike Giveaway, a national effort to provide as many as 600 adaptive bikes to children with special needs.

William, now 6 years old, is one of the children hoping to win the kind of bike that would cost the family upward of \$3,000 otherwise. The thought of winning the bike — and giving her son a chance "to be like other kids" — brings Allison McRae to tears.

"Our life is pretty limited with what we're able to do," she said. "To have something to do that's light and fun and to be able to watch my son play around like any other kid ... would be just about the best thing in the world to me."

The Friendship Circle giveaway is a national effort to provide adaptive bicycles to boys and girls with special needs. The giveaway honors Michaela Noam Kaplan, who also suffered from cerebral palsy and whose spastic quadriplegia did not allow her muscles to

What: Friendship Circle annual Great Bike Giveaway
When: Voting ends March 30; winners tentatively scheduled to be chosen March 31
Why: Friendship Circle hopes to give away up to 600 adaptive bicycles to special-needs children

Helping William: Donate, vote or become an ambassador at friendshipcircle.org/bikes/2016/02/william-m/
More information: www.friendshipcircle.org/bikes/about/

move fluidly on their own. Friendship Circle has partnered with nine adaptive bicycle companies around the country. Adaptive bicycles are extremely costly and, while more than 74 million kids across the U.S. ride bikes as an everyday part of childhood, it's not the case for children with special needs.

"We all know the feeling when our children turn 5 or 6 and learn to ride a bicycle," said Basie Shemtov, director of Friendship Circle. "It's the freedom our children feel that's incredible. It's a very special feeling. (But) most special-needs children can't ride a bike. They don't ever get that feeling."

That's what the McRae family wants for William. Michaela Kaplan is the daughter of a family friend, Gabrielle Burman, and Allison McRae — who also has step-daughters Sydney and Lindsey — also heard about the giveaway on Facebook.

She signed up immediately (only the first 600 entrants were going to be part of it) and started seeking "ambassadors" (folks to help spread the word). Anyone wishing to help can donate money, become an ambassador or — most importantly — vote for William at his Friendship Circle page (www.friendshipcircle.org/bikes/2016/02/william-m/).

The bike for which they're entered is a Rif-tin Tricycle, an adaptive tricycle that would not only help him with his motor skills, it would give William the freedom other kids have.

"Socially is where we'd get the most out of



Allison McRae speaks about the contest that provides special bikes for kids like her son William.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Allison McRae of Livonia hopes to win a bicycle for her son William.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Caring for a child with multiple challenges like William isn't easy, but to Allison McRae, "He's my whole world."

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

it," his mom said. "He'll be able to play outside with other kids."

William gets some of that at school. He attends Cooke School in Northville, where staff members work with special-needs students ages 3-26. At school, William has access to an adaptive tricycle.

Jeanine Lithgow, a physical therapist at the school who works with districts in Northville and Livonia, said the bike William and the other kids ride at Cooke provides big benefits in terms of muscle devel-

opment, head and trunk control and respiration.

She said it's a way for special-needs kids to exercise that's "socially acceptable" and is of great social value.

"It's a way for kids to look at a child with special needs and say, 'They're like me, they ride a bike like me,'" Lithgow said. "We find that most of the kids, when they get to ride the bike, they have a smile on their face."

The McRaes want to get William a bike for home, but as a one-income family — Duncan

owns Grain Line Artistry, but Allison stays home with William — they really can't afford it.

Shemtov, Friendship Circle's director, understands the problem. Many parents of children with special needs, she said, simply cannot afford an adaptive bicycle and Friendship Circle of Michigan wants to make this dream a reality for their children.

She'd like to get bikes for all 600 entrants, and said they'll give away however many they're able to get. To do it, Shemtov knows Friendship Circle will need generous support.

"Our children are our greatest and most precious and valuable commodity," Shemtov said. "We are kindly asking you to show your generosity by supporting the

children and putting smiles on the faces of boys and girls throughout the United States."

Voting closes March 30 and winners in each category are scheduled to be drawn the following day.

Entrants come from near — Jayce Wargowsky of Northville is one — and far. And obviously, Allison McRae is hoping William is one of the chosen children. But she understands how he might not be, given all of the children on the list. She has spent time reading all of the profiles and wipes away tears every time.

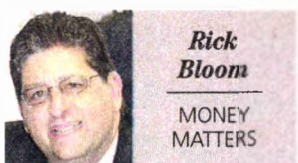
"My heart aches," she said. "It's so hard not to vote for every child on there."

bkadrich@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @bkadrich

Income tax refund fraud is a \$21 billion problem

It's tax time, which means that the fraudsters and lowlifes are out in force.

One type of tax fraud that has soared over the last few years is tax refund fraud. This is where someone using your Social Security number and birthday files a bogus tax return seeking a refund. Two years ago, the Internal Revenue Service estimated this type of fraud cost taxpayers about \$6.5 billion. This tax season, the IRS is estimating it will cost taxpayers more than \$21 billion. You may ask how this could happen. There are a couple reasons, including the IRS's out-of-date fraud detection system and the fact that it takes so little personal information to file a tax return. Basically, all you need is name, date of birth and Social Security number. This is why protecting sensitive information is so important. Unfortunately, the IRS doesn't have the means to stop tax fraud



and most of us won't find out we are subject to one until we hear from the IRS that our tax return has been rejected.

If you find you've been subject to tax refund fraud either because the IRS would not accept your tax return or you received a notice from the IRS about a suspicious tax filing, there are some things that you should do. The first is to notify the IRS. The IRS has an identity protection unit that you should immediately notify. Its toll-free number is 800-908-4490. After you have notified the IRS, you should obtain Form 14039, Identity Theft Affidavit, from www.irs.gov and complete the form. This form should then be mailed in to the IRS, along with your tax return. You

should know that even if your tax return was fraudulently paid to another individual, the IRS will still honor your return and you will get your refund, although it may take a while.

If someone has filed a fraudulent tax return on your behalf, you need to do more than just contact the IRS. I also recommend that you file a police report with your local police department and a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission. Its website is www.ftc.gov.

It is also important that you contact the three main credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. You should notify them that you have been a victim of identity theft and they should put a fraud alert on your account. In addition, it's not a bad idea to pull your credit report from the three agencies. One thing that you sometimes see is these thieves will apply for credit in your name. By pulling

out a credit report and putting a fraud alert, you can do your best to minimize any harm to you.

For those who have been subject to some sort of identity theft, it is important that you regularly change your passwords. I know it's a hassle and I hate to do it myself, but we all have to recognize that technology has changed the world and we have to change along with it.

I guess I will analogize to when I was a kid. I grew up in Oak Park and

our door, particularly during the day, was unlocked. In fact, I think most of the houses on the block weren't locked. Today, I think the first thing most of us do when we come home is make sure the doors are locked. Times have changed and we have to change with it. My recommendation for all of us is to make sure that we regularly change our passwords and to never let our guard down.

Identity thieves are out in force and they can

do us tremendous harm. We may not be able to 100 percent protect ourselves, but by being diligent and taking some precautions, we can greatly reduce the chances that we will be victims.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. His website is www.bloomassetmanagement.com. If you would like him to respond to questions, email rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.

MEDICARE NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that on April 9, 2016 the agreement between Compassionate Care Hospice of Michigan, 5730 North Lilley Road, Suite A & B Canton, Michigan 48187 and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as a hospice in the Medicare program will be terminated.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has determined that Compassionate Care Hospice of Michigan is not in compliance with the following Medicare Condition of Participation: 42 CFR §418.56 Interdisciplinary Group, Care Planning, and Coordination of Services

The Medicare program will not make payment for hospice services furnished to patients whose plan of treatment was established on or after April 9, 2016. For patients whose plan of treatment was established prior to April 9, 2016, payment will be made for up to 30 days of covered services furnished after April 9, 2016.

Pam L. Thomas
Branch Manager
Non-Long Term Care Certification & Enforcement Branch

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Battered woman defense gaining more attention

David Veselenak
Staff Writer

When it comes to battered woman syndrome, Cindene Pezzell said it's important to know it doesn't just affect women.

In fact, the legal coordinator for the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women said it can happen in any type of intimate relationship and affect anyone in an abusive relationship.

It's an area of legal study that seems to be gaining more attention in legal circles across the country, though Pezzell said there's still a lot of work to be done.

"We're seeing less push-back around it being an illegitimate field. There's so much science and research," said Pezzell, a Philadelphia resident and Michigan native. "At least some of this stuff is getting in, when it wasn't before all the time."

The issue of battering is brought up in courthouses across the country during cases where a defendant may have been the victim themselves against a domestic partner. In Michigan, typically expert witnesses can testify about signs that could point to a victim as being battered or threatened by retaliation by a partner, though oftentimes cannot make direct connections between a defendant and that person showing signs of being battered, said Carol Jacobsen, a University of Michigan professor and director of the Michigan Women's Justice and Clemency Project.

This is the defense former Farmington Hills resident Nancy Seaman has claimed caused her to kill her husband more than 10 years ago. She's claimed in appeals her attorney did not do enough to show she was abused in the relationship that led to the confrontation. She was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison, though she has ap-

"Even today, it's not presented effectively by defense attorneys for the most part. It's really awful."

CAROL JACOBSEN
U-M professor and director of the Michigan Women's Justice and Clemency Project

pealed her case through state courts and eventually in federal courts. A U.S. Court of Appeals panel of judges ruled in 2012 that using a defense claiming she was battered was not "a defense under Michigan law."

Jacobsen said there's been an increase recently in the amount of testimony brought in by defense attorneys to show some defendants were acting in self-defense because of the fear of retaliation, compared to older cases dating back decades in Michigan.

"Especially those earlier people, they did not present much evidence," she said. "Even today, it's not presented effectively by defense attorneys for the most part. It's really awful."

Each state different

Jacobsen hopes more state courts begin accepting fewer restrictions when it comes to testimony from experts, hoping for changes that would benefit women that show signs of being battered by partners.

"We felt, too, that Michigan's law is too restrictive on expert witnesses," Jacobsen said. "They do not get understood as acting in self-defense."

Pezzell said each state is different in how it approaches the topic, either

See BATTERED, Page A9

VISIT

Continued from Page A1

the prison would be like for several weeks prior to actually going. What would the atmosphere be like? What would talking to someone convicted of murder really be like? How would I be treated?

Plenty of stereotypes exist surrounding prisons. Popular culture is riddled with references, be it movies such as "Escape from Alcatraz," "The Shawshank Redemption" or, more recently, the Netflix series "Orange is the New Black." Most people's exposure to penitentiaries is strictly through their television sets.

So was mine until January. But with all those depictions fresh in my mind, I left the facility after my interview with a slightly different outlook.

From the outside

Prisons are isolated by nature. Some inmates never see the other side of the double chain-link fence once they get there. But I couldn't help feeling the two worlds weren't completely disconnected. After all, inmates walking the yard can see the staff's vehicles parked just feet from the fence. I could envision some inmates looking at those cars and being in awe of their design, since some have been locked up for decades.

The visiting area at Huron Valley isn't difficult to access, once clearing security. Two sliding doors controlled by a guard and another set of locked doors are all that separate inmates from the outside room.

There was a sense of normalcy that must have slipped through those doors into the prison. Save for my initial meeting with Lakeshia Valdez, the inmate I interviewed for this series, I never felt horribly uncomfortable in the room filled with convicted felons. It was a feeling I didn't expect to have throughout this experience. I saw smiles, heard laughter, even saw a mother reading a book to her



The Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility is where Lakeshia Valdez has serving her sentence as a convicted murderer.

young daughter who had come to visit her. Is that how it always is? I doubt it. But it certainly wasn't what I expected.

The only difference this had from a hospital visiting area was the DOC guard watching the area from one side of the room. Despite any feelings of normalcy, there was always a lingering reminder that you were in prison with those who had lost their freedom. There was no escaping it.

Everyone has a story

Inmates are assigned a number upon arrival. Behind those numbers, I've learned, are stories.

Valdez, who took a plea deal on a murder charge where she stabbed and killed a Redford man in 2011, talked of her hope of being released early on a commutation of her sentence, a rarity. Only a few hundred inmates have received one the last 45 years.

Despite this normal interview, it was important to keep the facts straight: This is a story about a prisoner, a person who committed a crime so heinous that she'll most likely never see freedom again. She spoke of missing her children, who are growing up without their biological mother.

It can be conflicting: How can one be so emotional about another person, when the reason they're locked up is because they took away someone else's child? There's a reason people say two families suffer when someone is sent to prison for murder; not only is the family whose loved one died affected, but the inmate's family is affected, albeit in a different way.

At the end of our conversations, we said goodbye, knowing our paths probably wouldn't cross again. I told her I hoped her time in prison was productive and reflective on the horrible thing that she had done. As I left the room, I thought about this prison experience and other interviews I've done in my career.

I've interviewed political leaders, business owners, and everyday people. I added "convicted felon" to that list earlier this year. It's certainly not the most high-profile interview subject, but it is the only one I've done that required me to take off my shoes and socks.

David Veselenak is a reporter for the Livonia Observer. He can be reached at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter: @DavidVeselenak.

VALDEZ

Continued from Page A1

Toledo.

Valdez, 24, of Adrian, is serving 40-80 years for second-degree murder after taking a plea deal in November 2012. At minimum, she'll be locked up until 2051, when she will be 60 years old. If she serves the entire sentence, Valdez will be 100 by the time freedom beckons from beyond the prison walls.

She was originally charged in 2011 with first-degree murder, arson, larceny in a building and tampering with evidence after being picked up by police less than 24 hours after killing Olivarez. She remembers being at her Adrian apartment and being told police were arriving outside.

"The moment I looked out my window and they surrounded my house, I knew what it was," she said.

A plea bargain

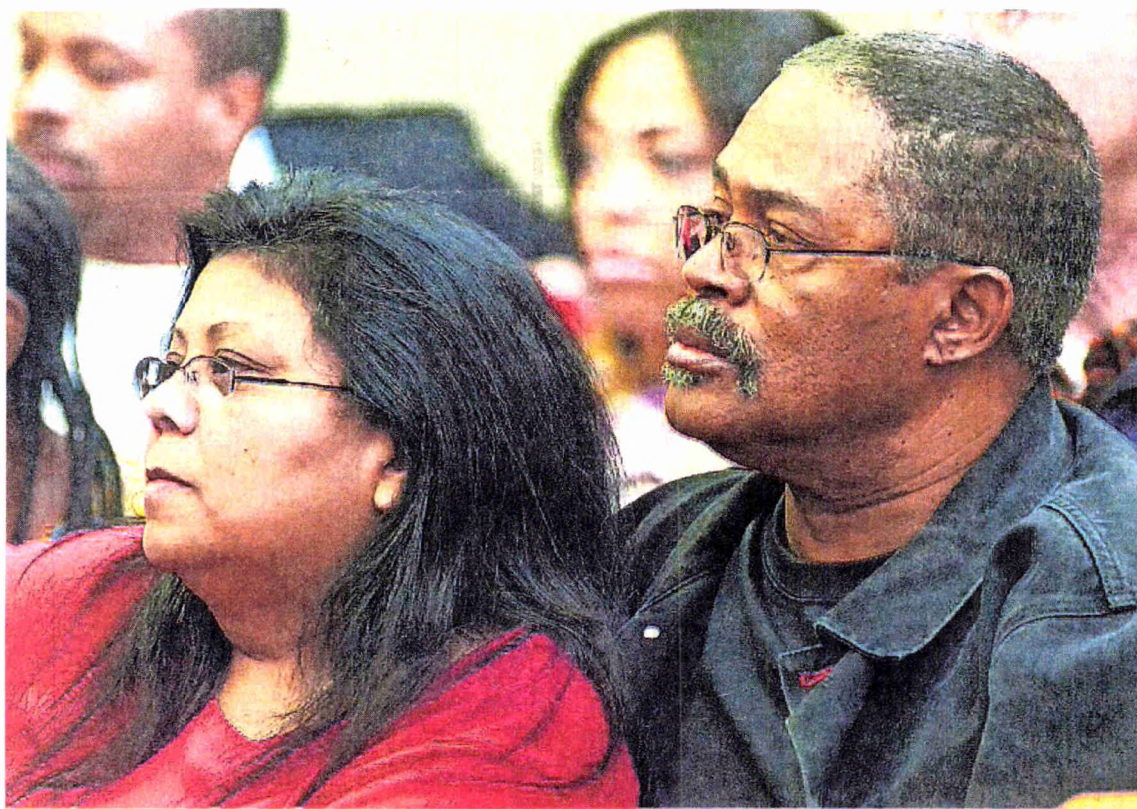
The legal system churned slowly — at one point Valdez's roommate testified that Olivarez was killed so his belongings could be sold to help pay rent. Valdez and the roommate also both had children and Christmas was approaching, the roommate said.

The evidence against her was strong, advised her attorney, and the brutality of the crime would play a factor in court. Valdez turned down an initial plea offer of 45 years, believing it was too long. Facing mandatory life without possibility of parole, Valdez decided against risking a first-degree murder conviction and took a plea bargain before the trial began.

Olivarez, who was also from Adrian, was remembered by friends and family as a loving man.

"I just feel she should do life in prison for what she did," Olivarez's uncle, Frank Olivarez, said during the sentencing hearing in 2012. "He had two good boys. He was a good father."

Valdez recently said the claim that she killed Olivarez for his items wasn't accurate. She said they had been involved romantically, but she decided to break it off. They continued to sell drugs together after the relationship ended and she would sometimes spend the night with Olivarez in Redford. She said the murder weapon was in his room and they got into an argument,



Brenda Shead and her husband Louis Shead listen to testimony during the 2012 preliminary hearing of Lakeshia Valdez, who was later convicted of murder.

FILE PHOTO

prompting her to grab the knife.

"That just never crossed my mind. I never expected it would go as far as it did," she said. "I did kill him, that's what it boiled down to."

History of issues

Valdez, who lived in Adrian most her life, said she wasn't always the best-behaved. She first got into trouble at age 11, when she was caught stealing from a local JC Penney. She also faced other criminal charges in Lenawee County, including receiving and concealing stolen property, disorderly conduct and retail fraud, according to the Adrian Daily Telegram.

She admitted to being wild during her teenage years.

"I messed with guys, who gave me whatever I wanted," she said. "I just had a good thing going."

She got pregnant at 15, an experience she said calmed her lifestyle somewhat, though she still got into trouble.

She fled to San Antonio when she was in her mid-teens with her child, taking a bus south and planning on staying there. It was her mother, a woman whom had never been in trouble a day in her life, who convinced her to come back to Michigan for Mother's Day. Valdez decided to remain in Adrian and didn't go back to

Texas.

She gave birth to another child several years later and wanted to make sure they were cared for. The arrangement with Olivarez followed.

"I never wanted to be without. I just lived my life," she said.

Prison life

Today, Valdez is one of about 2,200 women serving out their sentences at the facility in Washtenaw County. Classified as a Level II inmate, she shares a cell with a woman she originally met while in the Wayne County Jail during the year before her sentencing.

Serving time in jail, she said, was much worse than prison. Jail fights were more common in downtown Detroit, she said.

"I felt out of place in the Wayne County Jail," she said. "Wayne County Jail is much worse than here."

She has worked maintenance in prison, taking out the trash and removing snow, though that status was on hold in January due to a misconduct ticket issued by a guard. The job pays \$1 an hour.

Valdez also attends school, with the intent of earning her GED this spring. She tries to stay active, only spending time in her cell during count or at night.

Keeping busy, she said,

passes the time quickly.

"It's nothing like the movies," she said of prison life.

She doesn't spend a lot of time dwelling on killing Olivarez. She sorted that out years ago in a series of dreams about Olivarez.

"It made me at peace with what I did," she said, of those nights in Wayne County Jail.

At the sentencing, Olivarez's mother, Brenda Shead, addressed Valdez, telling her she hoped her actions would resonate with her for the rest of her life.

"Just know that every time you close your eyes, it will be him you'll see," Shead said in 2012. "She deserves everything she gets — and then some."

Shead said in a message to the Observer & Eccentric that the pain of running into people involved got to be too much in Adrian, a small town of about 21,000 just north of the Michigan/Ohio border. She moved out of state several years ago.

"We are forever changed; it affects a person deep inside," she said. "And unless you have experienced it, you could never really understand."

"As for me, my heart will forever be broken, but I continue to smile through the tears for the love of my son Matthew and the ones that he loved and left behind."

Not likely to be released early

Valdez arrived at the prison in 2012 and was at first taken aback by the barbed wire, guard towers and correctional officers.

"I'm just like, 'Damn, 40 years of this (expletive),' she said. "For real?"

In all likelihood, she'll be here at least another 36 years.

In 2013, the Michigan Court of Appeals rejected the merits of her appeal. Valdez has not appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court.

Because of truth-in-sentencing laws, approved in 1998, inmates who committed crimes after 2000 are required to serve at least their minimum sentence, eliminating good behavior and disciplinary credits. Valdez hopes to apply for a commutation of her sentence, something the governor can approve and allow for the minimum sentence to be changed to time served, allowing her to go before the parole board for a hearing for possible release.

That's a route, Valdez said, she may take in several years after living straight in prison, including finishing her GED and other programs.

"I'll get a certificate for everything I did," she said. "I want to be a better person."

Getting her sentence commuted is something that's statistically not likely to happen. Since 1969, only 320 commutations have been granted by Michigan governors, according to the Department of Corrections. Since Gov. Rick Snyder took office, only five commutations have been granted, all for medical reasons.

A total of 2,581 inmates have applied to have their sentence commuted since Snyder began his first term in 2011; the rate of approval is 0.19 percent.

Valdez believes even convicted murderers deserve a shot at redemption if they're willing to work for it. One inmate she knew served 28 years and found two jobs after being released from prison, she said.

But that will have to wait. She's got decades to serve behind the barbed wire fencing that separates prisoners from the rest of society.

And deep down, she knows she has to serve her time.

"At the end of the day, you did kill this man," Valdez said.

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Expert says Seaman case fits domestic abuse pattern

Aileen Wingblad
Staff Writer

Some batterers take the physical route: pushing and shoving, pinching, hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, choking.

Some take the psychological route: intimidation, threats and other manipulative tactics.

Some use both — yet the goal is the same.

"The batterer will do whatever works," said Cara Lynch, LMSW.

Lynch calls it "intimate partner violence," a form of abuse inflicted by one's current or former spouse or partner. And as a therapist at HAVEN — Help Against Violent Encounters Now, which helps victims of domestic violence and sexual assaults — Lynch deals with it every day.

"This is controlling and/or assaultive behavior that one partner uses against another partner to have all the power and control in a relationship," she said.

The "low level" abuse, as Lynch calls it, is more common. Of course, it doesn't always stay at that level. And the longer one remains in an abusive relationship, the more likely the abuse will escalate, she noted.

"That's a very common pattern that we see," she said.



FILE PHOTO
Nancy Seaman in Oakland County Circuit Court for her 2004 trial.

batterer having too much to drink or say "it really wasn't that bad" or offer another excuse.

Sometimes, it's because the victim is embarrassed. But often, Lynch explained, minimization of the abuse is part of the acceptance pattern adopted as part of a survival mechanism.

"It's their thinking, 'If I accepted the reality of the situation, it really is this bad.' That could mean they would then feel they would have to leave and they might be afraid to do so," Lynch said. "But if they lessen (the problem) in their own mind, that keeps them going."

And a survivor often loves the batterer, despite the suffering they've endured. "They just want them to stop abusing," Lynch said.

Minimizing the abuse

Lynch calls the victims "survivors." Whether they hide their suffering or seek help, they often share a similar response to the abuse: downplaying what has occurred.

When a battered woman, for example, reaches out to HAVEN, at her initial meeting with a crisis counselor she'll often try to diminish what's she's gone through, Lynch said. She'll attribute it to the

'Common pattern'

That apparently was the story for Nancy Seaman, sentenced to life in prison for murdering her husband Bob in their Farmington Hills home in 2004. Lynch said she never met Seaman nor was she familiar with her case. But when told of Seaman's claims during and since her murder trial, Lynch said those certainly are among the hallmarks of intimate partner abuse.

The same goes for Seaman's portrayal of

Bob, especially the positive traits that many knew of — and led them to doubt he was ever the violent, controlling bully that she said he could be behind closed doors.

"Charisma is a very common characteristic (among abusers)," Lynch said. "Often they are considered awesome on the job and among their friends and can appear to be good parents and good partners. That can really play into the power-control dynamic. And they tell (their victims), 'Nobody will believe, nobody will care.'"

Seaman's personality type also appears to be akin to some who endured abuse, possibly — and unwittingly — drawing abusers into their lives, Lynch said.

"In her case, it sounds like an abusive partner could exploit her," Lynch said. "We all probably have something someone could exploit, but a batterer really takes advantage of someone with a big heart, who doesn't believe in divorce, who ascribes to traditional gender roles, those kinds of things."

Lynch also noted she wasn't surprised to hear Seaman was reportedly planning to leave the marriage when the couple's final fight occurred. "It's a very, very common pattern," she said. "Sometimes, it's the actu-

al leaving or, sometimes, the batterer just senses that he's losing control, that (the partner) is pulling away. That certainly can escalate the violence, as the abuser exercises his power to do something to make it stop."

A fateful choice

To this day, Seaman said she regrets the plan she had chosen to move from the home she shared with Bob and to start a new life on her own. She waited until she felt financially independent and until her sons were grown. Then — rather than leaving right away — she stayed in a pseudo husband-wife relationship, while secretly packing away her belongings and storing them elsewhere until her new condominium was ready.

Lynch said crisis counselors at HAVEN never tell someone when or if they should move out of their home, but offer a listening ear, support and other resources to help with whatever course of action they decide to take.

"I'm not here to tell someone what to do — I haven't lived their life. But you can bounce ideas here, to figure out what makes sense to you," Lynch said. "If you decide leaving is what you'll do, we can help you find the safest ways to go

about this. And I will say, even though we want that perfect time to do something, there tends to never be a perfect time for anything in life."

Seaman, however, doesn't hesitate when asked what she would say to someone suffering abuse at home: "You can't stay. The first time he lays a hand on you in anger, you have to leave. You can't let people talk you into staying, you can't be shamed into staying. You have to leave."

Over the years, Seaman said, she has regularly received mail from across the globe — letters from people who stand by her and say they hope that somehow, someday, she's successful in her appeal and is released from prison, plus letters from people who recount their own experiences as victims of domestic violence.

She answers them all, she said. And to those who are suffering the way she said she did during her 31-year marriage, her message is clear: "Don't do what I did, waiting and packing and staying," she said. "Looking back now, it was, 'What was I thinking?' Just go. You just have to go."

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BATTERED

Continued from Page A8

through court rulings or legislation. While there have been defenses mounted showing those on trial have been battered in courtrooms in all 50 states, Pezzell noted, she believes many places, including Michigan, don't need specific laws put into place to

define battering.

Interpretation of current laws should be enough, she said, to protect those who have been battered and are on trial. Adding specific regulations could make it more difficult to defend someone who has been battered.

"What we don't want to see is efforts to exclude people, rather than include," Pezzell said.

'More education required'

Those who argue against those cases where battering is introduced tend to want to show that the defendant wasn't, in fact, battered, Pezzell said.

"The prosecutor can possibly argue that there's zero evidence that the person is battered," she said. "Sometimes the evidence is just

too strong to do that."

If that doesn't work, she said prosecutors will work to show juries that the battering was not relevant or there was no imminent danger to the defendant at the time of the incident.

Jacobsen said teaching more individuals about the effects of battering is an important step to take, so the issues can be more thoroughly discussed not only by the common public, but by

those in the legal system.

"I think there's a lot more education required of judges and prosecutors and defense attorneys," she said. "It's an epidemic in this country."

Even with education, it can be difficult to relate to issues facing these individuals, Pezzell explained. It's easy for someone to say they know what they would do in a similar situation, but actually experiencing

and going through it can be difficult to understand.

"There's so many things about it that the average person on the street doesn't know," Pezzell said. "People think they know. People think they know what they would do in any given situation."

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GUEST COLUMN

Sunshine legislation is important now more than ever

As we face one of the worst government-created problems in Michigan's history, the Flint water crisis, and hear stories of legislators using state dollars to cover up their sordid behavior, the need for more openness in government is stronger than ever.

The Freedom of Information Act in Michigan begins with the following: "It is the public policy of this state that all persons, except those persons incarcerated in



Joe Warner
GUEST COLUMNIST

state or local correctional facilities, are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees, consistent with this act. The people shall be in-

formed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process."

The last sentence of this statement is vitally important. We've made some progress over the last several years. The last session of our Legislature passed a law to improve the process of FOIA by lowering costs and demanding time lines be adhered to or there would be consequences. But as events have unfolded in the last year, it's become evident we have a long way to go.

Michigan is one of only two states that completely exempt the governor's office from FOIA. We are one of a handful that exempt the Legislature. It's time to make a change. The citizens of Michigan should have access to information about every level of government.

In a study by the Center for Public Integrity and Global Integrity toward the end of last year, Michigan ranked last nationally in ethics and transparency laws

and safeguards, in part because of our weak public records law and an absence of laws requiring personal financial disclosures by lawmakers and top state officials.

The Michigan Press Association is hoping to change that ranking. We feel amendments to current law would remove the veil of secrecy in our Legislature and the governor's office and would be a big improvement. We expect to see a proposal soon and hope

Michigan's citizens will urge support from our lawmakers and governor.

Sunshine Week, March 13-19, celebrates the public's right to know. We can do much better. We ask you to join us and encourage our government to see the advantages of transparency and the importance of checks and balances.

Joe Warner is president of the Michigan Press Association.

LETTERS

'Thuggish behavior'

Supervisor Shannon Price's misconduct at the March 15 Plymouth Township board meeting should result in censure by the board as soon as possible. In my 25 years in local, county and state government, I have never seen the CEO of a municipality engage in such obscene and thuggish behavior toward another elected official.

Price clearly lacks the temperament and maturity for this important job and has brought more shame and embarrassment to the Plymouth community.

Kurt L. Heise
state representative
20th District

Oppose anti-historic district bills

There was a time when answering "Northville" to the question, "Where do you live?" was like sheepishly admitting to ramshackle digs. The once-proud town, well past its heyday, was little more than an assemblage of sad-looking, slowly rotting Victorians - a dilapidated outpost on the fringe of Detroit's urban sphere that few cared about and fewer still considered viable as a place to call home.

Then I-275, completed in 1977, opened up the "western frontier," making remote Northville more accessible. But an even bigger boon to

Northville was the genesis of its historic district three years earlier, in 1974. In fact, the establishment of the historic district is arguably the main reason forgotten and decaying Northville was veritably resurrected to morph, 42 years hence, into one of the most sought-after communities in the entire state.

Considered in this context, it matters not whether one makes his Northville home within or without the historic district. The benefit to the desirability and valuation of his house is the same. This institutionalized respect for Northville's past is Northville's greatest asset. Without it, we are just another nondescript suburb with nothing special, nothing unique, to offer. Remove the historic district and the commission that oversees it and one has set into motion the death knell of our quaint and lovingly maintained town.

My wife and I labored

for decades to turn our once-veritable dump of a circa 1895 Queen Anne, in Northville's Historic District, into something that we could be proud of and the original owners whom, we like to think, are admiring in spirit over our shoulders. Were our house sited anywhere else, it would in all likelihood have been bulldozed. But this is Northville, where because of the preservation ethic that undergirds the community, no amount of effort at preservation goes unrewarded.

Legislation currently under consideration in Lansing (HB 5232 and its identical Senate counterpart, SB 720), seems designed by its sponsors to do away with all of Michigan's historic districts, including Northville's. Why? Big money. Northville's real estate boom (look at how the real estate bust afflicting the rest of the country was largely unfelt here), owes the entirety of its success to our historic district and the preserva-

tion-minded who inhabit it.

Were it up to me, every Northville property owner would get on the horn with his state representative to voice his concerted objection to these two ill-conceived amendments. The very substance and future of our proud town is at stake.

Ken Kilpatrick
Northville

H2, oh

There has been a lot of coverage in the news regarding the Flint water crisis and a lot of finger-pointing has gone on as to who might deserve the blame.

I'm certainly no fan of Snyder and I won't make excuses for him, but there are others who deserve some blame also, including at the federal level, namely, the EPA.

There's another culprit though who's 'flying under the radar' and that's the city of Detroit and the Detroit water system. The fact of the matter is, it was because

of the obscene, exorbitant rates that Detroit fleeces the suburbs for water that Flint, in an act of desperation to get out from under Detroit's thumb, attempted to set up its own water source. The idea had merit but it wasn't executed properly.

It may be fashionable to bash Republicans for all the problems in the world, but let's consider how much trouble Detroit has caused Michigan. Let's start with how they abuse their monopoly over the water service.

The changes made in the water authority, including adding advisers, hasn't prevented Detroit from arbitrarily raising its rates. Local officials do little more than raise their arms up in exasperation. Why not have the city attorney challenge this highway robbery in court?

Leo Weber
Livonia

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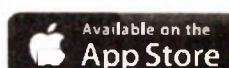


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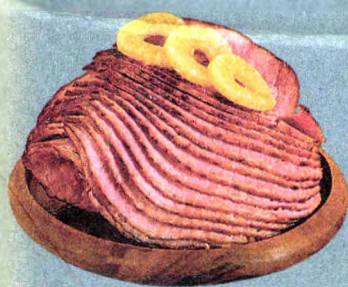
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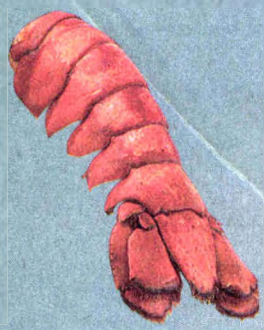
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SPORTS

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CONCACAF U-17 WOMEN'S SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

Jordan, here we come!

U.S. sweeps field in Grenada, qualifies for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Taking on the world — literally — are Izzy Rodriguez and the U.S. Under-17 Women's National Soccer Team.

Rodriguez, a junior at Salem when she isn't helping win medals for her country, contributed to Team USA's 2-1 victory March 13 over Mexico in Grenada to win the 2016 CONCACAF U-17 championship.

With the victory, the team qualified for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, slated to run from Sept. 30 through Oct. 21 in Jordan.

"It was very exciting to know we have a spot in the World Cup," said Rodriguez, who played defense in three contests, including the semi-final (a 5-0 win over Canada) and final. "It was a great experience being in Grenada and

See **SOCCER**, Page B2



The U.S. Soccer Under-17 Women's National Team celebrates after winning the 2016 CONCACAF championship in Granada with a 2-1 win over Mexico. In the front row (far right) is Salem High School junior Izzy Rodriguez.

U.S. SOCCER

USA HOCKEY



Clayton Keller (front), skates against the Youngstown Phantoms at USA Hockey Arena. Keller scored the lone U.S. goal Sunday.

RENA LAVERTY | USA HOCKEY

USA HOCKEY

NTDP coaches praise camp

Orientation gives nation's best chance to join Team USA

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth Township was brimming with activity Friday through Tuesday as young prospects from all over the country attended the annual National Team Development Program orientation camp.

There were 48 players born in 2000 who took part in scrimmages, attended meetings and even watched this year's two NTDP squads each play a United States Hockey League contest.

Whether or not any of those 16-year-olds are among the 22 selected to comprise the 2016-17 NTDP Under-17 team remains to be seen.

But coaches Danton Cole and Don Granato concurred that the orientation is an important, essential and even invigorating event that caps a two-year scouting process by the evaluation team led by Ryan Hardy, director of player personnel for USA Hockey/NTDP.

"It's been really good," Cole said Sunday following the U18s' 2-1 loss to Youngstown. "It's been really good."

See **CAMP**, Page B2



Cole

PAYING THE PRICE

Phantoms' short-handed goal difference in 2-1 victory over NTDP U18s

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Sunday afternoon's USHL game featured an untimely momentum shift for the U.S. National Team Development Program Under-18 squad.

Just 19 seconds after Youngstown's James Winkler received a major penalty and game misconduct for slamming U.S. defenseman Luke Martin into the boards from

behind, the Phantoms snapped a 1-1 tie on a short-handed goal.

The perfect shot taken by Noah Lalonde flew over the blocker of U18 goaltender Joseph Woll at 12:33 of the final period, putting Youngstown up 2-1. That's how the contest ended, to the dismay of about 1,100 fans at USA Hockey Arena.

"It was a bad turnover and we didn't support the puck very well," U.S. head coach Danton Cole said. "You know what, we got a little lackadaisical and we paid for it."

"Then we just couldn't get

See **HOCKEY**, Page B2



Joey Anderson (left) of the U.S. NTDP U18s, shown from earlier this season, picked up an assist Sunday.

RENA LAVERTY | USA HOCKEY

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Glacier state champs



MARIA FARRIS

Suburban Glacier of Farmington Hills, a 12-and-under Tier III girls hockey team, posted a 3-0-1 record to capture the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association championship March 11-13 at Northern Lights Arena in Alpena. Glacier, coached by Don Farris, defeated the Detroit Skating Club Wildflowers, 4-2, in the final after a 2-2 tie in the third round against the Grosse Pointe Icehawks. Other wins came against the Wildflowers (5-2) and Kensington Valley (11-1). Team members include: Madison Farris, Reese Heaton, Julie Lorelli, Daria Rorick (goalie), Caroline Thrush, Ashley Manning, Claire Martin, Maya Hastings and Sofia Pappas, all of Northville; Avery Nester, South Lyon; Gabrielle Warra and Martha Blank, Livonia; Julianna Pascaris, Canton; Shaye Eggenberger, Farmington Hills; and Hayley Underwood, Bloomfield Hills. Assistant coaches include Marc Lorelli, Chris Trush and Jerry Warra. Team manager is Maria Farris.

HOCKEY

Continued from Page B1

the next goal. Sometimes, you get what you deserve.” Team USA did have the remaining 4:41 of Winkler’s penalty to do something on the power play, but the home team could not muster much of an attack.

In the meantime, the Phantoms nearly cashed in a second short-handed goal when Alex Esposito crossed the U.S. blue line and had a clear cut path to Woll.

But out of nowhere, forward Clayton Keller dove to knock the puck off of Esposito’s stick.

On the doorstep

In the final minute, Keller — who scored the lone U.S. goal of the day — nearly had the equalizer.

He took a sharp-angle shot from the left side of the Youngstown net that goalie Ryan Bednard got a piece of. The puck got behind Bednard and slid close to the goal line before the play was whistled down.

“Their goalie just had it smothered up; we thought it was loose,” Keller said. “But I guess it’s just how it goes. They just played harder than us.”

Bednard stopped all 14 shots he faced in the final period, including a glove stop on U.S. forward Kieffer Bellows that looked headed for the back of the Youngstown net.

Earlier in the third, defenseman Adam Fox wheeled in from the half-wall and clanked a shot off the crossbar.

“He’s a very good goaltender; he’s won a lot of games in this league, he made a lot of big saves,” Cole said about Bednard, who stopped 31 shots. “We had some point-blank ones early in the third and didn’t get anything. They got their chance and they were able to bury it.”

“That’s the way it goes sometimes. We need to be better and we’ve got to keep elevating our play.”

On the board

Keller and his linemates Bellows and Joey Anderson did display plenty of tic-tac-toe passing during the contest.

A prime example of that resulted in the U.S. goal, at 8:52 of the middle period to tie the score at 1-1.

Bellows backhanded a centering pass from the right corner that Keller chipped in for his 12th USHL goal of the season. Also assisting was Anderson.

“Our ‘D’ made a good (play) at the red line,” Keller said. “And then Joey had a nice chip to Kieffer and he threw it to the net and I got lucky. It hit off the side of my shin pad.”

Youngstown opened the scoring at 4:18 of the second period, just six seconds into a power play.

Off the face-off, forward Yushiro Hirono snapped a shot from the right point that linemate Chase Pearson tipped past Woll (26 saves).

The game was the U18s first in nearly two months at USA Hockey Arena and the team has one more home game (March 31 against Muskegon) before going to Grand Forks, N.D., for the 2016 IIHF World U18 Championships.

“We haven’t lost many games here. Usually, we play real well,” Cole said. “I thought we were OK, we weren’t great and then you leave the game up to chance.”

They’ll be ready

Despite Sunday’s loss, Keller said he and his teammates are gearing up for the U18 tournament, which will end the group’s two-year stint together.

In the NTDP, players are brought in for the U17s and remain together the following year before moving on to college teams and other programs.

“I think we’re getting better every day,” Keller said. “We struggled a little bit over in Finland and we’re just starting to get out of that.”

“We’re playing better and more simple and we’ll be ready. It’s a big tournament and something that we work for here in our two years. Everyone will be fired up for that.”

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CAMP

Continued from Page B1

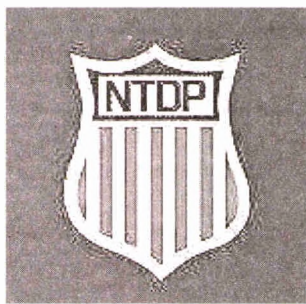
Ryan Hardy and his staff do a real good job and identify talent; there’s a lot of really good kids here. It’s always exciting, it’s a lot of fun.

“There’ll be 22 of those guys that will be the ones that are here next year and working away for the U.S.A.”

Area hopefuls

Among those prospective players are Canton’s Jacob Semik, Plymouth’s Max Ellis, Novi’s Chrystian Krygier and Rochester’s Jonathan Gruden.

Semik and Krygier are defensemen, from the Detroit



Honeybaked and Detroit Little Caesars teams. Ellis and Gruden are Honeybaked forwards.

Granato, who this year coaches the NTDP U17s, also praised the USA Hockey scouting staff in even boiling down the number of elite players to 48 in time for the

orientation.

“They identify 50 or so of the top guys,” Granato said. “There’s hard choices after that. There’s not a lot of fall-off when you’re looking at the top 50 in the country.”

“This is testament to all the youth hockey coaches out there that developed these kids in all different markets. It’s amazing, it’s way different from when I was a kid. There’s quality coaching at all these markets, something that wasn’t there 25-30 years ago.”

Both Cole and Granato will be involved in the process moving forward, whittling the list of hopefuls down to the 22 players that will skate at USA Hockey Arena next season.

But Cole will be their coach for two years; Granato moves up with his current team when this year’s U17s become next year’s U18s.

That is how the NTDP operates; each coach rotates from team to team and stays with the same group of players during a two-year span.

“It’s fun. These guys come in and really lay it on the line for two years,” Cole said. “They get better and they progress and then they test themselves at the World Championships and then a new group comes in. It’s a really neat process.”

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SOCCER

Continued from Page B1

the team did really well.

“We really bonded and worked well together. Everyone on the team contributed to us winning all five games.”

She added that, for as thrilling it was to run the CONCACAF table, the work is only beginning for the team — especially with stakes ratcheted higher than ever for the FIFA World Cup.

“We still have a lot of preparing to do,” said Rodriguez, a Canton resident who plays for the Michigan Hawks ECNL team. “We are looking to the World Cup in Jordan.”



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Izzy Rodriguez, a Canton resident and Salem junior, contributed to the U.S. Under-17 Women’s National Soccer Team winning the 2016 CONCACAF championship.

The win over Mexico gave Team USA its third CONCACAF title, with previous championships won in 2008 and 2012.

“It’s been an emotional two weeks and it’s been a

hard-fought two weeks,” U.S. head coach B.J. Snow said, on U.S. Soccer’s website. “The girls are ecstatic and I’m proud of them for pushing through some adversity.”

“Five games in nine days in this heat against this type of competition is tough and every game we had was very difficult.”

“The girls learned from it and pushed themselves through some things they’ve never had to deal with before. It was a total team effort.”

In the victory over Mexico, forward Civana Kuhlmann scored in the 86th minute for the winning goal.

Opening the scoring in the 43rd minute was U.S. forward Ashley Sanchez, who scored five goals during the

tournament.

Sanchez was rewarded for her outstanding play over the two weeks by being awarded the Golden Ball for top player.

Goalkeeper Laurel Ivory, who played all five games, won the Golden Glove for top goalie in the competition.

The CONCACAF championship was icing on the cake for Team USA, which already had locked up a spot in the World Cup thanks to the shutout March 11 against Canada.

Other teams to qualify were Mexico and Canada.

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YOUTH WRESTLING

Matcats boast nine MYWA regional champions

Total of 27 advance to state finals in Battle Creek

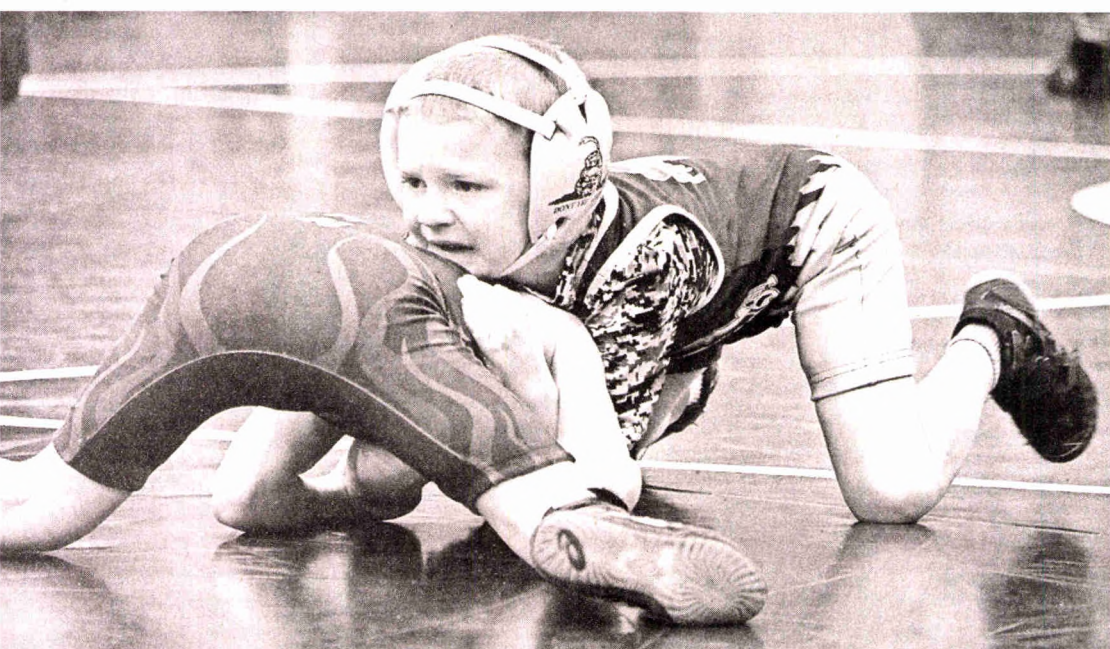
Brad Emons
Staff Writer

The South Lyon Matcats clawed their way to nine individual regional titles during Sunday’s Michigan Youth Wrestling Association Metro Regional tournament held in at Macomb Dakota High School.

The tournament featured more than 700 competitors battling for four spots per age and weight class for a chance to represent their club April 1-3 at the MYWA State Championship at Battle Creek’s Kellogg Arena.

The Matcats, who took a total of 27 places, once again earned the most wins, pins, technical falls and total points among the participating club teams.

“We’ve never achieved this amount of success with MYWAY before,” Matcats coach Steve Richardson said. “These kids have all worked so hard during this very long season. We’ve thrown everything we can at them to prepare them for each of these state finals meets. I’m so proud of them all.”



STEPHANIE HARDESTY
The South Lyon Matcats’ Bronson Shinkonis (top) was a regional champion Sunday at the MYWA Metro Regional at Macomb Dakota.

Among the regional champs for the Matcats were Beck Yurkunas, Bronson Shinkonis, Dominic Nauss, Nathan Walkowiak, Devon McKinney, Simeon Mardossian, Sabrina Nauss, Jonah Koiloplali and Billy Morris.

Runner-up honors went to

the Matcats’ Jackson Kimling, Isabella Cepak, Aiden Garcia, Travis Richardson, Liam Seaver, Robert Cann and Scott Cann.

Placing third were Carter Lucier, Cort Gehringer, Drake Pollins, Mason Melcher, Ryan Henderson and Antonio Nauss, while Jace Kimling, Hunter

Oliver, Aiden Meyers, Andrew Slevin and Spencer Filarski each finished fourth.

The Matcats will also be sending 15 alternates to the state finals at Kellogg.

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MEN'S BASKETBALL

A SEASON TO REMEMBER



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Schoolcraft guard Dre Black, a Westland John Glenn alum, slices through Delta College defenders during a game this season.



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Sophomore forward and Canton alum Davon Taylor (right) was a key player for the Ocelots the past two years.

Schoolcraft College sophomores finish memorable careers as team reaches NCAA D-II quarterfinals

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

A national championship wasn't in the cards for the Schoolcraft men's basketball team, nor will a NJCAA Division II banner be hoisted anytime soon.

No worries, as far as Ocelots head coach Abe Mashhour is concerned.

The winning legacy of sophomores Dre Black, Davon Taylor, Tyler Johnson, Anthony Wartley-Fritz and Ja'Christian Biles is something that won't be forgotten around the Livonia campus for some time to come.

"Our five returning sophomores accomplished some great feats in two years," Mashhour said, running down the checklist. "We won 60 games, two state championships, two conference championships, two district championships, two national tournament berths."

Mashhour proudly noted that all five of those players are mulling scholarship offers to move on to a four-year college (D-I or D-II) to continue their basketball careers.

"All five and (6-10, 240-pound freshman center) R.J. Coil have received scholarship offers to either D-II or D-I schools," Mashhour said. "Only

Biles has signed."

Biles, a sweet-shooting 6-3 guard from Oak Park, already is headed to the University of Detroit Mercy.

The others, including 6-7, 215-pound forward and Canton alum Taylor and 6-2 sparkplug guard Black (Westland John Glenn), have been courted by Concordia, Gannon, Florida Tech, LeMoyne College and Western Illinois, Mashhour noted.

Don't forget about Johnson, a Howell product and shooting guard who can go on torrid hot streaks from behind the 3-point arc.

Rounding out the impressive group is Wartley-Fritz, a 6-8, 250-pounder from Taylor who was hobbled by injuries at times over his Schoolcraft career. But when healthy, he and Taylor owned the glass.

Team persevered

This year's journey was a bit more bumpy for the Ocelots, to no fault of their own.

A paperwork snafu involving a player who transferred to Schoolcraft from out of state resulted in a ruling by the National Junior College Athletic Association that resulted in the forfeiture of six non-conference games played in November and December.

Mashhour and his players didn't stew over that situation, instead coming out of the blocks when MCCA play began in January.

Schoolcraft marched on from there to win the conference and District 10 championships.

After knocking off Cecil College, 96-82, March 16 in the NJCAA D-II tournament to advance to the quarterfinals, the Ocelots' quest to win it all ended two days later with a 79-76 loss against South Sub-

urban.

That ended Schoolcraft's second consecutive outstanding season under the guidance of Mashhour, with a 23-11 record that included the forfeits.

And now, Mashhour and his coaching staff — featuring assistant coaches with ties to Observerland high school teams in Michael Allie (Livonia Stevenson) and Corey McKendry (Clarenceville) — go to work trying to replenish the roster.

It will help if Coil does come

back for a second season and not leave just yet.

Meanwhile, several freshmen will perhaps be able to step right in.

In addition to Coil, other players who have another season of eligibility at Schoolcraft include guards Juwan Clark, Bryan Collins, Dwayne Chastian Jr. and Esa Abduljami and forwards Rodney Scales, Daniel Dwyer and Carlos Taylor.

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CLASS A BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT

North Farmington rolls into final four

North advances with win over S.H. Stevenson

Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

North Farmington senior Alex Darden is looking forward to his 18th birthday Friday and it's certain to be a memorable occasion for him and his teammates.

The Raiders (23-2) will make the school's first appearance in the semifinals of the Class A boys basketball state tournament that afternoon at the Breslin Center in East Lansing.

"It'll be a great birthday present for me," Darden said. "This is what we set our sights on. To actually be here and see all of our hard work pay off, it's incredible. Words can't describe it right now."

The 6-foot-6 Darden played a major role Tuesday in North's 70-57 win over Sterling Heights Stevenson at the University of Detroit Mercy.

He went to the defensive glass with authority and made key baskets early as the Raiders jumped to a 10-0 lead and never trailed in the quarterfinal victory.

Jacob Joubert and Billy Thomas made 3-pointers to help fuel the good start. The Raiders made four of their five treys in the first quarter and had a 22-11 lead at the end.

Crashing the glass

But it was the play of Darden, who scored a team-high nine points in the first half and held the Titans (20-4) to one shot on many early possessions, that set the tone.

Darden, who had 15 rebounds, disagreed with Stevenson coach Mark LaCombe's statement the Raiders don't go



JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Seniors Mher Tcholakian (left) and Josh Hogans embrace after North Farmington's quarterfinal win.

to the glass to get rebounds.

"That's what I pride myself on every game, crashing the boards," he said. "I might get the big numbers, but a lot of credit goes to my teammates for boxing out and letting me sweep up the boards."

"We might be a little undersized, but we fight for every rebound. I think we proved that tonight."

Darden and his teammates also kept the ball alive on the offensive glass and, just when it appeared a Stevenson player had it, knocked it away, got the free ball and scored.

"You can't defend a good team twice and we made ourselves do that," LaCombe said. "We defended them; we got a stop and couldn't finish."

North appeared to be on the verge of a blowout, leading 35-17 late in the second quarter, but Stevenson trimmed the margin to 11 at halftime, 36-25.

The Raiders were never in jeopardy of losing their lead, but the Titans stayed just close

enough in the second half to make it interesting.

"They have kids who shoot it so well," North coach Todd Negoshian said. "You can't take possessions off. You have to guard five guys all the time."

"At times, I thought we weren't mentally there. But we live to see another day and that's all that matters."

Closing it out

Stevenson got within seven points — 50-43 at the end of three quarters and four other times in the fourth. Hardy made four layups in the last quarter. Joubert and Thomas were a combined 8-of-9 at the foul line to help secure the victory.

"I'd like to say we did a great job as a coaching staff," Negoshian said. "But our guys know what's on the line. With a chance to get to the final four, we really played well; we played hard. I thought we ran out of gas near the end, but we live to see another day."

Hardy scored 14 second-half points and led a quartet of North players in double figures with 18. Thomas finished with 15, Joubert 13, Darden 12 and Josh Hogans eight. Darryl Dunlap added four.

"The 10-0 run gave us a lot of confidence," Darden said. "They made a little bit of a push, but we definitely wanted to hold them to one shot. We wanted to crash the boards, because we knew they were a little undersized."

"They were a very good shooting team. We knew, if we gave them second-chance opportunities, we wouldn't have the outcome we did tonight."

"He does a lot of little things for us that people don't realize," Negoshian said of Darden. "He's a guy who en-

joys his role. To be a good team, you got to have guys who don't want the spotlight. He does all the dirty work. He enjoys it; he relishes it."

Vince Ramaci scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half for the Titans. Bryce Miller had 12, Stacy Howard and Luke Lamoreaux 11 apiece.

North shot 47 percent (27-of-57) and Stevenson 42 percent (23-of-55). Each team made five threes. The Raiders were 11-of-15 at the line, the Titans 6-of-9.

"It's disappointing, because this senior class that took us this far is a lot better (than it showed)," LaCombe said. "Sometimes, the ball doesn't bounce the right way."

"When you get down, when you don't have the rhythm and the flow, it's tough. It never got to be our style, except for very small spurts when we looked good."

Darden's birthday will be all the more special and memorable should the Raiders win their game with Lansing Everett (16-10) and get to the championship game Saturday.

Tipoff is set for 2:50 p.m. Friday.

On the other side of the bracket, Detroit Jesuit will play Macomb Dakota at 1 p.m. Friday at the Breslin Center. Both teams are 26-0.

A North-Jesuit game would be a rematch of last year's regional final, which the Cubs won. Thomas would be playing against his former school, too.

Friday will be an historic event for the North boys program, playing in its first semifinal game. The girls did that during a 2008 run.

"From a coaching standpoint, it doesn't hit you until the season is over," Negoshian said. "We'll be watching film tonight and getting ready."

SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE

Ball teams look for turnaround

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

After a tough start to their inaugural seasons, the Schoolcraft College baseball and softball teams look to turn things around this weekend.

The baseball team fell to 3-10 on the season when it dropped a doubleheader March 18 to host Owens (Ohio) Community College, falling 6-4 and 10-0.

Schoolcraft won three of nine games during a Florida trip, but has yet to post a victory since breaking camp in early March. But coach Rob Fay and his team has a chance Thursday against host Rochester College.

Fay's team won't grace the diamond at Ford Field in Livonia until hosting Cleary University in another doubleheader, slated to begin 2 p.m. Thursday, March 31.

Women's softball

So far, the first portion of the Schoolcraft softball team's schedule hasn't been any kinder for the Lady Ocelots as the team is 3-8 — including a doubleheader loss (14-6, 2-1) Saturday at Jackson.

But head coach Rey Linares and company look forward to the first-ever home games in team history.

Schoolcraft will welcome Macomb for a twinbill set to start 1 p.m. Saturday at Ford Field.

Men's club hockey

Meanwhile, the first season of Schoolcraft men's hockey is coming to a successful close.

Coach Rob Lindsay's squad defeated Lake Superior State, 5-1, Friday night. The team has played as an independent club team this season, but Lindsay said the Ocelots will compete in 2016-17 in the American Collegiate Hockey Association.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

Wayne runners sprint to Big Apple

Zebra senior Hood among finest in 400

Ed Wright
Staff Writer

"Intensity" is more than just the name of the track and field club Wayne Memorial head coach Jamal Johnson orchestrates.

It's also the one of the commodities that helped the swift members of the team to the national indoor championships last week in New York City.

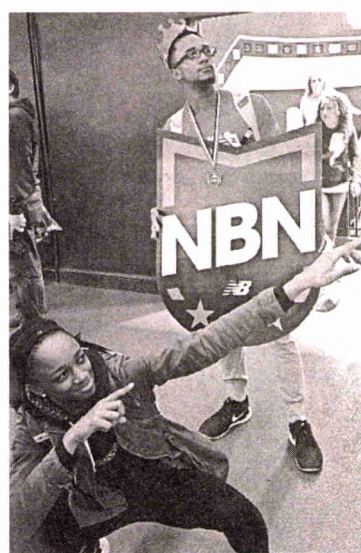
Made up mostly of high school athletes from Wayne, South Lyon and Monroe, the Intensity Track Club excelled at the indoor state meet earlier this month and at last weekend's national meet in the Big Apple.

"You have to have a great work ethic and a positive attitude to be on this team," said Johnson, a former track standout at Detroit Martin Luther King High School. "You have to be up for the challenge, because we train hard."

Johnson said this season's indoor team was unified more than others he's coached.

"This team is very close; they really came together and performed great in the state meet (at Aquinas College)," he said.

Intensity practiced four or five times a week at Eastern Michigan University.



Wayne's Anavia Battle and Montel Hood strike a pose during the national indoor track championships in New York City.



Intensity Track Club members include (back row, from left) Steven Linton (St. Johns), Kevin Schopa (South Lyon), Montel Hood (Wayne Memorial) and Jerod Allen (South Lyon) and (front row, from left) Anavia Battle (Wayne), Reanna Brown-Deacon (Wayne), Jsalissa Bridges (Monroe) and Erica Robinson (Wayne).

The intense practices paid off, as every club member who competed at the state meet earned a medal.

The speedy crew was led by Wayne Memorial senior Montel Hood, who has emerged as one of the best 400-meter sprinters in the country. During the 400 finals in New York, Hood posted a time of 47.99 seconds, which earned him a fourth-place national finish (and All-America honors).

Equally impressive is that the time is just a fraction of a second off the state record held

by former U.S. Olympic medalist Darnell Hall.

"Montel is just a hard worker; that's how he's gotten to where he is now," Johnson said. "He brings it at every practice and every meet."

One of Intensity's top female runners is Hood's younger sister, Anavia Battle, a junior at Wayne.

Primarily a 200-meter sprinter, Battle placed third in the state meet with a time of 24.5 seconds. She ran a 24.6 200 in New York, Johnson added.

Indoor times are generally slower than outdoor times in the sprint events, Johnson noted, as most meets use a 200-meter tracking, meaning there are twice as many left turns

and not nearly as much straightaway running.

In addition to Hood, who won the state championship in the 400, other state meet medal-winners were Battle (third in the 200) and South Lyon's Jerod Allen, who placed fifth in the 800.

ewright@hometownlife.com

Ocelots add a Rocket



Westland John Glenn senior softball standout Mackenzie Huren recently committed to play at the next level for Schoolcraft College. Also pictured are Schoolcraft coach Ray Linares, John Glenn athletic director John Young and Huren's parents, Dan and Bridget.

COUNTDOWN DANCE COMPETITION

They're movers and shakers at Planetdance

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Planetdance Dance Studio literally put the moves on the competition earlier this month.

The Canton-based dance company prevailed March 4-6 at the Countdown Dance Competition held at Waterford Kettering.

"I'm extremely proud of each and every one of my dancers," Planetdance owner and director Jen Tompkins said. "They have worked harder this year than I have ever seen."

First-place finishers included Savannah Kneeshaw (Intermediate Solo), Brianna Distefano (Intermediate Teen Solo), Lindsey Koshowsky (Miss Teen Dance), Cadance Toby (Overall Mini Solo; Miss Petite Dance/2 Days in OC Scholarship), Vazhane Sawyers (Senior Solos); the Mini Duet of Kneeshaw and Toby; and the Teen Duet of Toby and Brooke Arcuragi.

Other honors included: Top Mini Group, Top Junior Group, Top Junior Line, Top Teen Solo, Top Teen Duet, Top Senior Solo, Senior Group, Mini Miss Countdown and Teen Miss Countdown.



Members of Planetdance Dance Studio in Canton celebrate finishing first at the recent Countdown Dance Competition in Waterford.

In addition, Leila Sta Maria was second overall in Mini Solos and Solo Scholarship Winner.

Other dancers include Milie DiPaola, Morgan Besant, Kassia Liakos, Mackenzie Wrobbel, Raeonna Williams, Ella Ogden, Marisa Stafford,

Molly Johnson, Maya Kneeshaw, Maddie Haack, Kaylee Mrak, Bella King, Jillian Babcock, Alyanna Caldito, Kendall Stasser, Kayla Hill, Sophia Sroka, Abbi Espinoza, Lacey Mrak, Rhea Sridhara and Selia Rendon.

The Planetdance staff in-

cludes Tompkins and instructors Courtney Stone, Alexis Pyrros, Kendall Stasser and Marisa Stafford.

According to www.planetdancestudio.com, classes are offered for both recreational and competitive students.

YMCA SPORTS

Plenty of rec options offered for spring

Believe it or not, spring is here and that means all kinds of recreation options for youngsters through the Plymouth Family YMCA.

On tap beginning in late April will be offerings for everything from volleyball to co-ed preschool flag football to co-ed T-ball.

But space is running out fast.

For more information on registration and various leagues and clinics, contact the YMCA at 734-453-2904 or go to ymcadetroit.org/plymouth.

Following is a rundown of the various offerings:

» **Girls Volleyball:** For ages 5-14, participants will learn the basics of volleyball and develop new skills.

Practices will be held one night during the week, with games each Friday.

The season begins April 27 for seven weeks, with games played in Plymouth.

The Y rate is \$96; non-members can sign up for \$120.

» **Co-Ed Soccer:** League is forming for ages 3-12. Children will learn soccer fundamentals in a fun environment.

The season begins April 27 for six weeks at Hulsing Elementary.

Preschool soccer cost is \$50 for members and \$75 for non-members.

» **Co-ed Preschool Flag Football:** A clinic is offered for ages 3-5 to learn the basics of football through non-contact.

Players get a free football, jersey and medal.

The four-week clinic at Hulsing Elementary kicks off May 2.

Fees are \$25 (Y rate) and \$35 (non-members).

» **YMCA Co-ed T-ball Clinic:** Available for youngsters ages 3-5, the focus is on hitting, throwing, base-running and catching.

It begins June 7 at Far-rand Elementary and runs for a four-week span.

Fees are \$25 (Y rate) and \$35 (non-members).

For more information about the Plymouth Family YMCA and spring programs, call sports and community director Chelsea VanAssche at 734-453-2904 or go to ymcadetroit.org/plymouth.

The Plymouth Family YMCA is located at 248 Union Street.

RELIGION CALENDAR

MARCH

BIBLE PROPHECY SERIES

Time/Date: 7:15 p.m., beginning March 28

Location: Metropolitan School Gymnasium, 15585 N. Haggerty, Plymouth

Details: An in-depth Bible prophecy series called Unlocking Revelation will examine prophecies of Scripture. Go to www.UnlockRevelation.com to see all locations and pre-register and receive a free Bible Prophecy DVD on the first night. Snacks will be served

Contact: www.UnlockRevelation.com

BUDDHISM CLASS

Time/Date: 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, March 24, April 14 and 28, and May 12 and 26

Location: The Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington, 25301 Halsted, Farmington Hills

Details: Free five-week secular practical Buddhism class will apply Buddhist teachings to daily life through meditation, reflection and discussion. Secular Buddhism emphasizes the teaching of Eastern philosophy practices in a way that allows each individual to become their own teacher. Ideas such as "awakening" and "enlightenment" are goals in which there is no "one true way"

Contact: 248-478-7272; uuFarmington.org

DRAMATIC EASTER MUSICAL

Time/Date: 7 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 25-26

Location: Merriman Road Baptist Church, 2055 Merriman, Garden City

Details: "Bow the Knee"

Contact: Church office at 734-421-0472; RussellWeathers@734-536-3553; pastor@mrcb.us

EASTER FAIR

Time/Date: 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, March 25

Location: Newburg United Methodist Church, 36500 Ann Arbor Trail, Livonia

Details: Egg hunt, crafts, prizes, interactive Bible stories, lunch. Children also will have the opportunity to "search" for items to make a hygiene kit for boys in foster care at the Methodist Children's Home, in Redford

Contact: 734-422-0149; newburgumc.org

EASTER FUN

Time/Date: 3-5 p.m. Saturday, March 26

Location: InsideOut Church, 1075 Venoy, Garden City

Details: The event will include carnival games, photos with the Easter Bunny, Easter candy and chances to win a prize package worth \$100, for families with children, fifth grade and younger

Contact: 734-983-8376

EASTER FUN

Time/Date: 1 p.m. Saturday, March 26

Location: Faith Community Wesleyan Church, 14560 Merriman, Livonia

Details: Family-friendly event with crafts, egg hunt, and presentation of the Easter story. Bring a basket for the egg hunt, which is for ages 12 and under

Contact: Melissa at 734-765-1827

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: Maundy Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 24; Good Friday, 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 25; Easter services 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. Sunday, March 27

Location: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 28000 New Market Road, Farmington Hills

Details: Maundy Thursday service includes communion

Contact: 248-553-3380

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: Maundy Thursday service, 7 p.m. March 24; Good Friday meditation, noon-1 p.m. March 25; Easter service, 10 a.m., March 27

Location: Unity of Livonia, 28660 Five Mile, Livonia

Details: A continental breakfast follows the Easter service

Contact: 734-421-1760; office@unityoflivonia.org

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: Maundy Thursday service, 7 p.m. March 24; Easter worship, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. and egg hunt at 9:15 a.m., Sunday,

March 27

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, 26165 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills

Details: Maundy Thursday worship commemorates the Last Supper and will consist of Holy Communion and a Tenebrae service with song, prayer, scripture and a meditation. Prichure and will be served between the two services on Easter

Contact: 248-474-6170; farmington-pres.org

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: 7 p.m. March 24-25 and 10:30 a.m. March 27

Location: Good Hope Lutheran Church 28680 Cherry Hill, Garden City

Details: Maundy Thursday service on March 24; Good Friday service is March 25 and Easter service on March 27. An Easter breakfast also will be held at 9 a.m., followed by an egg hunt at 9:30 a.m., March 27

Contact: 734-427-3660

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: 6:30 p.m. Friday, March 25 Passover Seder; 10:30 a.m. worship, Sunday, March 27

Location: Warren Road Church, 33445 Warren Road, Westland

Details: The Passover Seder retells the story of God's salvation of his people from Egypt through the elements of the Passover meal. The evening will conclude with a dinner that includes roast chicken and mashed potatoes. Breakfast kicks off Easter morning at 9 a.m., followed by the worship service

Contact: 734-458-7301

EASTER WEEK

Time/Date: 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday service, March 24; 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Good Friday services, March 25; 9:30 a.m. service on March 27

Location: 1475 Park Lutheran Church, 14750 Kinloch, Redford

Details: Free Easter breakfast from 8-9:15 a.m. All visitors will receive a free DVD, "My Son, My Savior."

Contact: 313-532-8655; 734-968-3523

LABYRINTH WALKS

Time/Date: 1-6 p.m. and 7 p.m. worship, March 24; 7 a.m.-7 p.m., with worship at 7 p.m., March 25

Location: Northville United Methodist Church, 777 W. Eight Mile, Northville

Details: Participants use the labyrinth as a "walking prayer"

Contact: 248-349-1144

PILGRIMAGE

Time/Date: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday, March 30

Location: Carpool to the Divine Mercy Center in Clinton Township from St. John Neumann parish office, 44800 Warren Road, Canton

Details: Cost is \$10 and includes tour and lunch. Deadline to register is March 23.

Contact: Janet Gilbo at jjgilbo@wowway.com or Sharlene Borke at sharborke@gmail.com

SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE

Time/Date: 7:15 a.m. Sunday, March 27

Location: Faith Community Wesleyan Church, 14560 Merriman, Livonia

Details: Service will be held outdoors except in extreme weather conditions. Coffee and refreshments will be served after the service. An Easter breakfast will start at 9 a.m.

Contact: Mary at 248-471-1322

VESPERS

Time/Date: 6 p.m. Sunday, through April 17

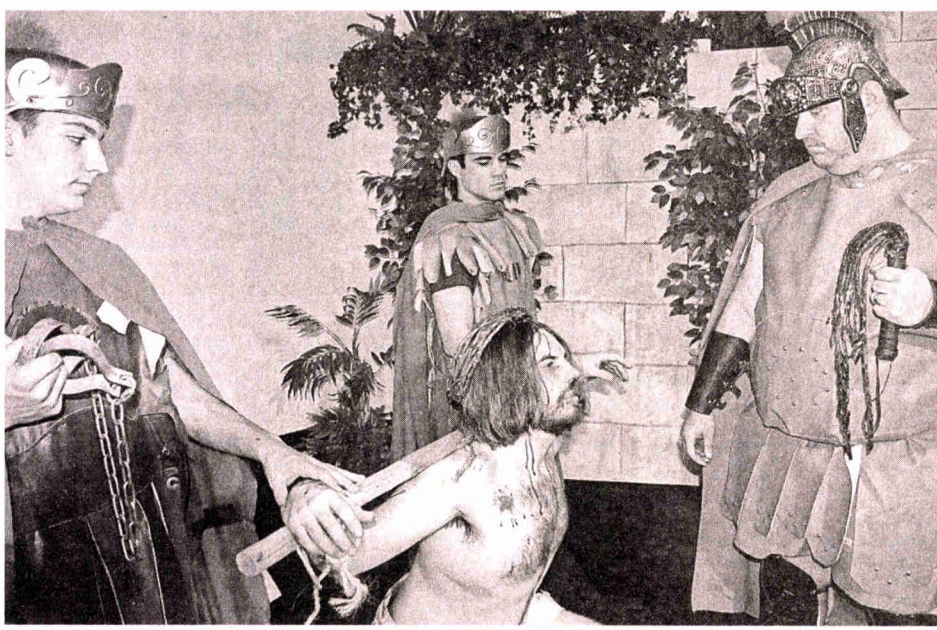
Location: St. Mary the Proctress Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral, 21931 Evergreen Road, Southfield, March 27; Nativity of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church, 39851 W. Five Mile, Plymouth, April 3; St. Michael Russian Orthodox Church, 26375 W. Chicago Road, Redford, April 10; and St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, 2160 Maple, Troy, April 17

Details: Members of the Clergy Brotherhood of St. John Chrysostom of Metropolitan Detroit will conduct the services. An inter-Orthodox chorus will sing the responses

Contact: Olga Liskivsky at 248-252-8184; Olga-liss0910@gmail.com

APRIL

CONCERT



Members of Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City rehearse a scene from their Easter play, "Bow the Knee," which will be staged March 25-26, at the church.

Time/Date: 7 p.m. Sunday, April 3

Location: Trinity Episcopal Church, 28660 LaMuera, Farmington Hills

Details: Benefit concert for Farmington Neighborhood House features Wayne State University's Motor City Cabaret. A free will offering and canned goods will be collected

Contact: 248-474-2860; trinityfarmingtonhills.org

CONCERT

Time/Date: 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 16

Location: St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic Church, Bloomfield Hills, 2215 Opdyke, Bloomfield Hills

Details: Features Aeolian Chorale, Carlos Seise, Quinto Milito, baritone, Timothy L. Huth, ars musica doctoris organ, John Sittard, conductor. Presented by the church and Friends of the Opera of Michigan. Free will offering will be accepted

Contact: 248-644-5460

DEVOTIONS, SWIECONKA

Time/Date: Starting at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, April 3

Location: St. Colette Catholic Church, 17600 Newburgh, just north of Six Mile, Livonia

Details: 12:30 p.m. Mass, 1:20 p.m. exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, 1:45-3 p.m. silent adoration and Sacrament of Reconciliation, 3 p.m. praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and a spiritual talk, 3:30 p.m. benediction; followed by Swieconka Polish Easter meal at 4 p.m.

Menu includes ham, kielbasa, potato salad, blessed hard-boiled eggs, beet horseradish, rye bread, butter lamb, salad, chesapeake, lazy perogi, beets, cabbage and beverages. Cost is \$15 per person. Meals must be paid in advance. Send a check or money order payable to WSDPAHS, to Laurie A. Gomułka, 32040 Grand River Ave., Unit #47, Farmington, MI 48336. Include number of attendees. Must be received by March 26.

Spponsored by the West Side Detroit Polish American Historical Society

Contact: 855-POLONIA; detroit-polonia.org

MOM-TO-MOM SALE

Time/Date: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, April 23

Location: Connection Church, 3855 S. Sheldon, Canton

Details: Shop 100 tables of mom- and child-related items. Strollers welcome after 10:30 a.m. Admission \$2

Contact: 734-397-1777

ONGOING CLASSES/STUDY

Our Lady of Loretto

Time/Date: 6:30-7:30 p.m. Monday

Location: Six Mile and Beech Daly, Redford Township

Details: Scripture study

Contact: 313-534-9000

St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Time/Date: 7-8:30 p.m. second and fourth Thursday, through May

Location: 11441 Hubbard, just south of Plymouth Road, Livonia

Details: Gary Michuta, author and Catholic apologist, leads a study of Isaiah. Bring your own Bible

Contact: 734-261-1455, ext 200 or on line at www.livonia-ist-michael.org

Time/Date: 7 p.m. Sunday, April 3

Location: Trinity Episcopal Church, 28660 LaMuera, Farmington Hills

Details: Benefit concert for Farmington Neighborhood House features Wayne State University's Motor City Cabaret. A free will offering and canned goods will be collected

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Details: Gary Michuta, author and Catholic apologist, leads a study of Isaiah. Bring your own Bible

Contact: 734-261-1455, ext 200 or on line at www.livonia-ist-michael.org

Time/Date: 7-8:30 p.m. Thursday

Location: Parish office, 15089 Newburgh, Livonia

Details: Group meets for singing, praying and short teaching. Fellowship with snacks follows

Contact: Parish office at 734-464-1223

St. Michael Lutheran Church

Time/Date: 6-7 a.m. Monday-Friday

Location: 7000 N. Sheldon, Canton

Details: Praying silently or aloud together; prayer requests welcomed.

Contact: 734-459-3333 for additional information

Recycling

RISEN CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Time/Date: 1-4 p.m. third Saturday of the month

Location: 46250 Ann Arbor Road, between Sheldon and Beck roads, Plymouth

Details: Recycle your cell phones, laser cartridges, inkjet cartridges, laptops, iPods, iPads, tablets, eReaders on the third Saturday of each month. Use the doors on east side of church.

Contact: Lynn Hapman at 734-466-9023

SINGLES

Detroit World Outreach

Time/Date: 4-6 p.m. Sunday

Location: 23800 W. Chicago, Redford, Room 304

Details: Divorce Overcomers group is designed for individuals going through divorce, those who are divorced or separated.

Contact: 313-255-2222, Ext. 244

» Farmington Hills Baptist Church

Time/Date: 7-9 p.m. second Tuesday of the month except January, July and August

Location: 28301 Middlebelt, between 12 Mile and 13 Mile in Farmington Hills

Details: Western Oakland Parkinson Support Group

Contact: 248-433-1011

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Community Announce
 announcements, events...

Special Notices

Public Vehicle Auction
 April 1, 2016 10am
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 Southfield, MI 48033 248-356-6011

2002 Pontiac 1q2wv12k62149785
 2000 Ford 1f0p3436v155050
 1981 Toyota 4t1bf3ek3b663976
 2000 Chrysler 2c3hc3562vh429664
 2010 Nissan 1n4d2ap2ca411784
 2004 Pontiac 2g2wp522941287418
 1999 Mitsubishi 4a3oa463xe084366
 2002 Jeep 1j4w483c2c12139
 2001 Dodge 1b3e146x1n63906
 2004 Jaguar s0iwa74c4d913553
 2004 Oldsmobile 1g3m12244151181
 2001 Dodge 1b7hg2an115271918
 2002 Ford 1f1mvu70e2u9b6434
 1998 Lincoln 11401m1w1v999176
 1998 Jaguar saikn62xw817174
 1993 Lincoln 11im91v8y754884
 2007 Mazda jm3er29670118107
 2000 Ford 4r7g141v999176
 2002 Pontiac 2a2nf25e12m11875
 1997 Ford 1f1f487vma45492
 1993 Chevrolet 1g3m12244151181
 1999 Mercury 4m2zu55pxx129729

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 Court, Fri., March 25, 10-4 pm,
 Sat., March 26, 10-3 pm. Furniture,
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 wonderwomen.biz WONDER
 WOMEN E-STATE SALES
 517-256-0695

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 Mon, thru Fri., 8:30-5pm
 Some restrictions may apply

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 WELLNESS CLINIC
 TSC ~ WHITE LAKE
 10150 Highland Rd. Sun. April 10th,
 4PM-4:30PM. 3-year Rabies, \$16.
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 all kinds of things...

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 w/12 seat & 4 chairs. \$375. *19" tv
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 Requires: Bachelor's degree or
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 Resume to: HRM (code 15-4422),
 Great Lakes Medical Laboratory, Inc.,
 33469 W. 14 Mile Rd., STE 120,
 Farmington Hills, MI 48331

Product Engineer wanted by a glass
 mfg. co. in Farmington Hills, MI. Res-
 ponsible for engg automotive glazing
 products & coord'g tech'l & engg dsen
 activities for assigned projects &
 prjms; support engg prototyping ac-
 tivities & initiate simulation activi-
 ties; ensure customer tech'l engg &
 system reemts are met; release 3D &
 2D data to internal mfg plants & to
 suppliers & complete the data info in
 internal engg documentation; generate,
 compile & maintain pram docs &
 complete Dsgn Review Checklists,
 Approval & Performance Specs re-
 views, C/F gage concepts. Reas
 Bach's deg in Mechanical Engng, In-
 dustrial Engng, Engng or closely relat-
 ed field, & 2 yrs of automotive prod-
 uct dsen exp in job offered or as
 Design/Project Engng. Forward
 resume to: Sarah Kehoe, HR c/o AGC
 Flat Glass North America, Inc. db/a
 Pilkington Automotive, 33997
 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia, MI 48150.

Project Engineer II-Controls for an
 independent company in Plymouth,
 MI engaged in the development of
 powertrain systems with internal
 combustion engines & transmissions
 as well as instrumentation and test
 systems. Requires Bachelor's degree
 in Mechanical Engineering, Electri-
 cal Engineering, Mechatronic Engi-
 neering or related field and 2 years
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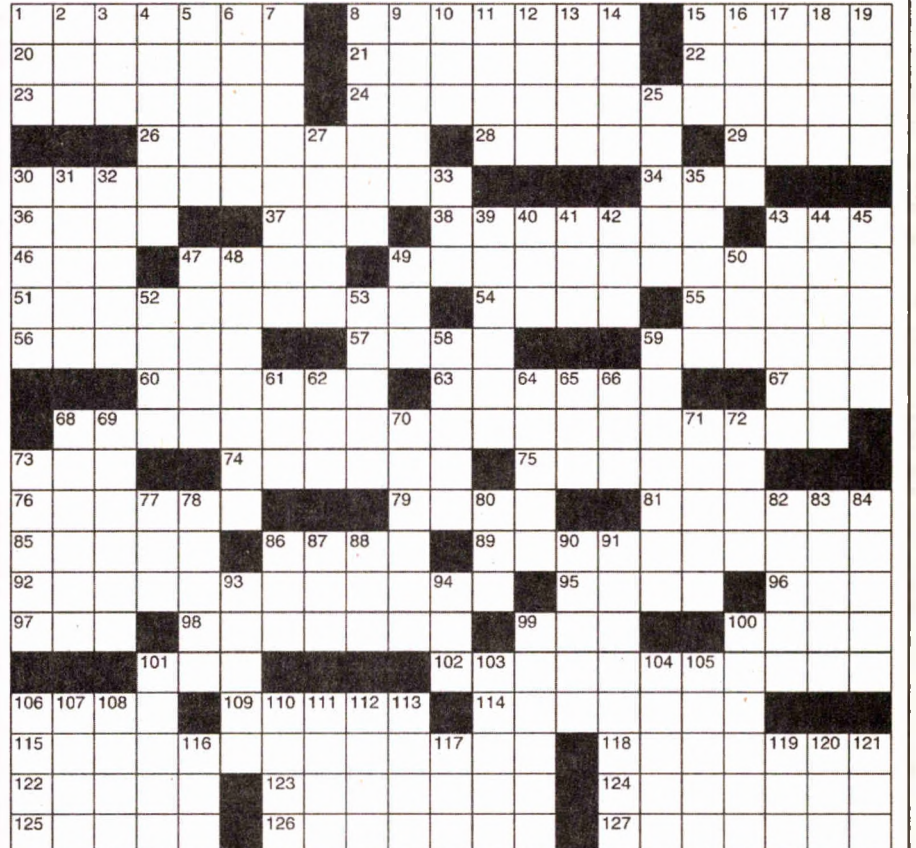
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- ACROSS 1 Watchful 8 Abjectly submissive 15 Floral shop receptacles 20 More candid 21 Fingernail surrounder 22 Novelist 23 Bands of fibrous tissue enclosing muscles 24 Inept warrior in armor? 26 Like escaped convicts 28 See 29 Slaughter of the diamond 30 Member of a certain antelope fraternity? 34 Plasma particle 36 "Hurlyburly" playwright David 37 Med. drips 38 Certain book of liturgy 43 Anti-DUI ad, e.g. 46 Ending for Alp or salt 47 Concept, to Jean-Luc 49 Activity when shopping for sweaters? 51 Person who positions tiny flies? 54 "Life of Pi" novelist 55 Something easy-peasy 56 Apia resident 57 "Nothin' —" ("Easy-peasy!") 59 In the dossier, e.g. 60 First-class 63 Sword stopper 67 Bireme tool 68 Shoelace snarl of note? 73 Young male, urban-style 74 Like many offshore rescues 75 Outdoor enclosure for tabbies 76 In a mischievous way 79 Inside: Prefix 81 Beautiful guy 85 Persian-founded faith 86 "That feels go-o-od!" 89 "One-l lama poet, grnd your teeth!?" 92 Had some friends south of the border? 95 Poker cost 96 Norma — (Field role) 97 Horse's kin 98 Call halfway to a walk 99 "Delishi!" 100 Wound, after a few days 101 Twisty letter 102 Far northern city inhabited by trolls? 106 Sheep's hair 109 Wear down 114 Convenient kind of shopping 115 Confession after hitting your physician with your leg joint? 118 Angel, musically 122 Big rig, e.g. 123 Lava spewer 124 Automaker Maserati 125 Impetuosity 126 Very vivid 127 Totally faded 1 Out of whack 2 Pro-gun org. 3 Auto fluid 4 Set free 5 Spitz variety 6 Province 7 More moony 8 Singer Boz 9 Light unit 10 — glance 11 "La Dolce —" 12 Chilled 13 Pivot 14 Wife of Zeus 15 With 16 Foreign 17 With 28-Across, ink the contract 18 Canyon reply 19 Puts (down) 25 — light (lamp on a film set) 27 Ominous bird 30 Prudish sorts 31 — Barbara 32 Flanged girder 33 News svc. 35 Like Mork, per his planet 39 Reaping tool 40 Alias lead-in 41 Maya of architecture 42 Cable TV's Spike, once 43 Rack-and- steering 44 Camp for Colonel Klink 45 According to 47 "But is —?" 48 Faye of films 49 NBAer, e.g. 50 Rubber check abbr. 52 Food-order option 53 French political units 58 "What a piece of work —" 59 Aromatic substance 61 "Where — start?" 62 Bungle 64 Wearing a disguise, informally 65 Airport info 66 Illuminated 68 Holy books of Islam 69 Cubbyholes 70 Bray sound 71 Slight push 72 A party to 73 Easter cake 77 Hem and — 78 Bird perches 80 Toledo "two" 82 User busters 83 Rockabilly singer Chris 84 "Come Back, Little —" 86 Rocker Rose 87 Be laid up 88 Drama unit 90 See 91 Got tangled 93 Slacked off 94 Eggy quaff 99 Marilyn of "The Misfits" 100 Depleted 101 Opt 103 Lunchtimes, often 104 Early name in arcades 105 "Bonanza" star Greene 106 Among 107 Creole pod 108 Difficult task 110 Shankar of Indian music 111 Take too much, briefly 112 Knucklehead 113 Nero's "Lo" 116 Stretch (out) 117 Almond-hued 119 Prefix for "equal" 120 Erwin of films 121 Young kid



For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at (517) 702/4247 or smcclellan@michigan.com. Want more puzzles? Check out the "Just Right Crossword Puzzles" books at QuillDriverBooks.com

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers 4, 5, 3, 7, 9, 8, 6, 8, 1, 6, 5, 2, 5, 7, 1, 6, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 2, 3, 6, 4, 5, 2, 4, 6, 9, 3, 4, 5, 2, 9, 3, 4, 5, 2

Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

3x3 grid with numbers 2, 1, 5, 4, 7, 6, 4, 8, 3, 8, 8, 6, 6, 8, 8, 3, 5, 1, 8, 9, 7, 3, 9, 2, 6, 8, 4, 5, 1, 9, 3, 6, 9, 2, 7, 2, 4, 8, 9, 5, 4, 9, 2, 8, 9, 3, 6, 1, 6, 7, 2, 1, 9, 2, 1, 9, 2, 3, 8, 2, 7, 6, 9, 8, 1, 4, 5, 3, 6, 9, 3, 4, 7, 5, 1, 2, 6, 9, 8, 8, 7, 9, 3, 2, 6, 7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 4

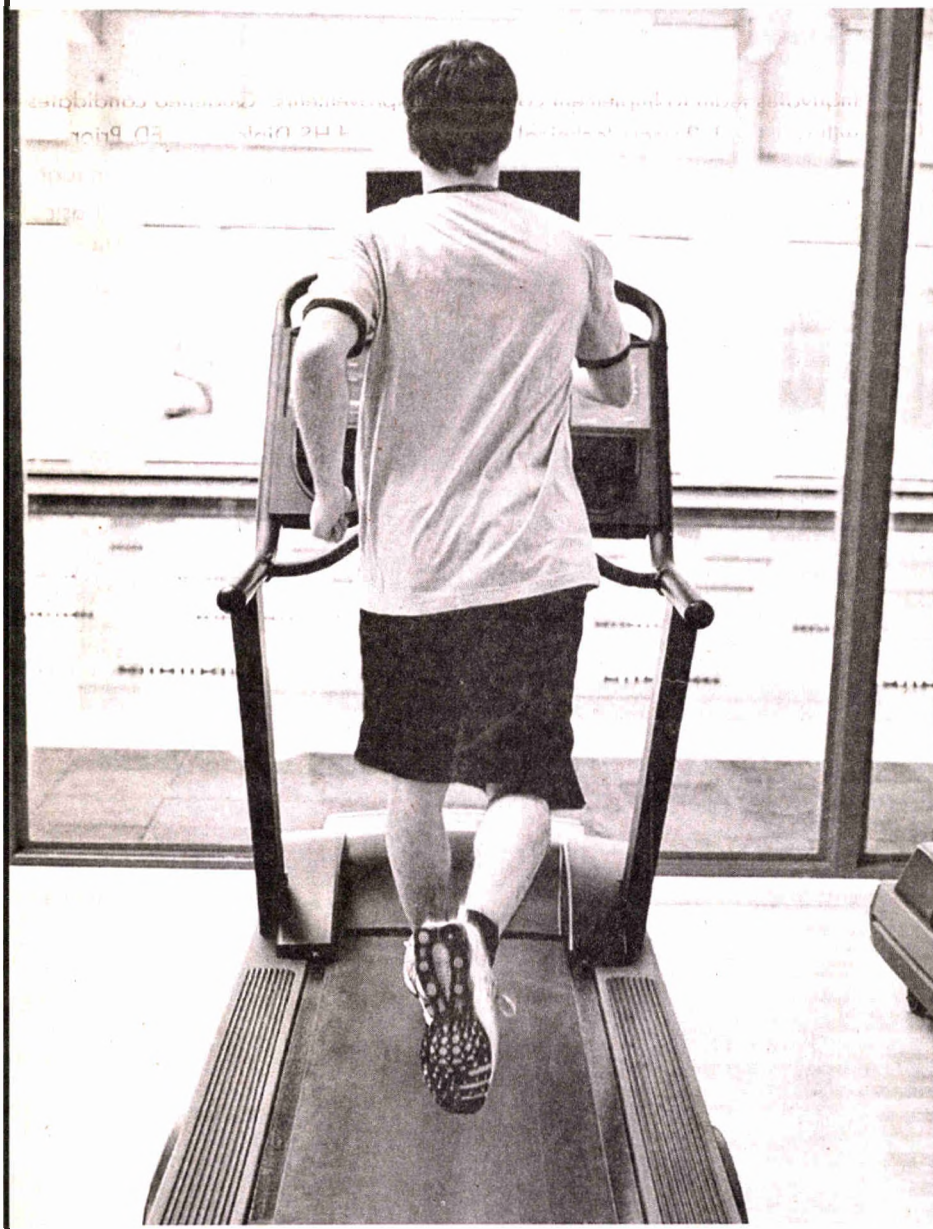
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Murder mystery show aids CAPA scholarships

Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

As national director of The Murder Mystery Company, Justin Issa oversees interactive dinner theater in 30 cities nationwide.

Troupes at each location perform dozens of public shows and even more private parties every year, making the Grand Rapids-based theater company one of the busiest in the country.

"We've done shows in Vegas, on boats, in people's basements. Everywhere," Issa said.

But none of them compare to the performance that Issa and Adam Mack, Murder Mystery Company creative content director, plan each year in Livonia. The show raises funds for the Anna K. Bonde Scholarship, which benefits students from the Creative and Performing Arts Program (CAPA) at Churchill High School. It also involves CAPA students and it's the only public Murder Mystery Company show in Livonia.

Mack, a 1997 Churchill graduate, and Issa, a 1999 graduate, both live in Chicago, Ill., but take a hands-on approach to the benefit performance, which is set for 6:30 p.m. April 7 at Burton Manor, located on Schoolcraft, west of Inkster Road. The seventh annual event will include a three-course dinner, the interactive murder mystery called "Dressed to Kill," and a silent auction. Tickets are \$25.

"We don't usually plan any of these (Murder Mystery Company) events. This is the only one we plan ourselves," Issa said. "We're selling the tickets and making sure everyone in Livonia is buying a ticket."

"Anna was a good friend. She lost her life too early."

Triple threat

Like Issa and Mack, Anna Bonde was a member of CAPA at Churchill, where she appeared in such productions as "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," "South Pacific," "Stage Door," and "Picnic." As a junior she played the role of Peggy Sawyer in "42nd Street," and the following year landed the role of Anne in CAPA's production of "The Diary of Anne Frank."

She graduated in 1999 eighth in a class of 400 and double-majored in theater and dance at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. She died during spring break in 2001 while heading to a New Orleans, La., to volunteer at an elementary school. A drunken driver struck the car she was in, also killing two of her friends.

"She was a good singer, dancer and actor. She's what people call a triple threat," Issa recalled of his classmate. "But she was also very sweet-natured and kind. Theater kids can be crazy, but she was always level-headed and intelligent with that 'old soul' feeling."



Murder Mystery Company cast members include Dan Herdegen, performance coach; Livonia Churchill graduates Adam Mack ('97), creative content director; and Justin Issa '99, national director; and Anna Schmidt, director of public events and sales.

Since 2002 the Anna K. Bonde Scholarship Committee has awarded 39 scholarships totaling more than \$60,000. In 2009 The Murder Mystery Company pitched in to help and raised \$30,000 over six years.

"I am deeply touched that Anna's friends come from around the state and across the country to do this fundraiser in her honor each year," said Debra Bonde, Anna's mother. "This speaks to the lasting impact that Anna made in her 19 years with us. She was an honor student and a talented performer, but what touched people the most was her uplifting, caring spirit and her gift for making everyone around her feel loved and valued."

Working with students

The benefit show started out as a potluck affair with professional actors from The Murder Mystery Company and CAPA students performing at Churchill. The show was moved to Laurel Manor and a catered meal replaced the potluck.

What hasn't changed is the student component of the show.

"The most fun part is coming back for a day to work

with high school kids," Issa said. He and Mack taught The Murder Mystery Company's style of improvisation to the students, held an audition and cast 15 students to perform in the upcoming show. Issa, Mack and other professional actors from The Murder Mystery Company will join them at the event.

Although the show's plot, including the identity of the murderer, is scripted, interactions between guests and actors are improvised.

"It's as much a game as it is a show," Issa said, adding that guests at each dinner table work together to solve the mystery.

"We encourage people to get up and mingle. I think what makes our events great is that people get into it and play the game and are having fun with it."

For more information about The Murder Mystery Company or to buy tickets to the benefit show, visit grimprov.com.

To donate to the Anna K. Bonde Scholarship, send checks, made to "Emmanuel Lutheran Church," and mail to Debra Bonde, 34721 Pembroke Ave., Livonia MI 48152

sdargay@hometownlife.com



Anna Bonde plays the part of Peggy Sawyer in Livonia Churchill High School's production of "42nd Street" in 1998. She was killed by a drunken driver three years later. An annual murder mystery dinner theater show helps generate funds for a scholarship in her memory.

MOVIES OPENING SOON

Check local theater listings for screening times.

Friday, March 25

» **"Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice"** stars Ben Affleck as Batman/Bruce Wayne, and Henry Cavill as Superman/Clark Kent. Zack Snyder directs the characters' first big-screen pairing. With Batman and Superman at war with one another, a new threat quickly arises, putting mankind in greater danger than it's ever known before. Also starring Amy Adams, Jesse Eisenberg, Diane Lane, Laurence Fishburne, Jeremy Irons, Holly Hunter, Gal Gadot, Scoot McNairy, Callan Mulvey, Tao Okamoto. Rated PG-13.

» **"Eye in the Sky"** stars Helen Mirren as Colonel Katherine Powell, a UK-based military officer in command of a top-secret drone operation to capture terrorists in Kenya. Through remote surveillance and on-the-ground intel, Powell discovers the targets are planning a suicide bombing and the mission escalates from "capture" to "kill." But as American pilot Steve Watts, played by "Breaking Bad's" Aaron Paul, is about to engage, a young girl enters the kill zone, triggering an international dispute. Also starring Alan Rickman, Barkhad Abdi, Jeremy Northam, Iain Glen and Phoebe Fox, the film is directed by Gavin Hood and

written by Guy Hibbert. Rated R.

» **"My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2"** is the follow-up to the highest-grossing romantic comedy of all time. Written by Nia Vardalos, who stars alongside the entire returning cast of favorites, the film reveals a Portokalos family secret that will bring the beloved characters back together for an even bigger and greener wedding. Stars Nia Vardalos, John Corbett, Lainie Kazan, Gia Carides, Joey Fatone, Elena Kampouris, Alex Wolff, Louis Mandylor, Bess Meisler, Bruce Gray, Fiona Reid, Ian Gomez, Jayne Eastwood, Mark Margolis, Andrea Martin, Michael Constantine. Directed by Kirk Jones. Rated PG-13.

» **"Remember"** opens exclusively at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor. It tells the story of Zev Guttman, played by Christopher Plummer, a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor struggling with dementia who is living out his final years in a bucolic retirement home. A week following the death of his beloved wife, Ruth, he suddenly gets a mysterious package from his close friend, Max, played by Martin Landau. The package contains a stack of money, a gun, and a letter detailing a shocking plan. Both Zev and Max were prisoners in Auschwitz, and the same sadistic guard was responsible for the death of both their families — a guard

who, immediately after the war, escaped Germany and has been living in the U.S. ever since under an assumed identity. Max is wheelchair-bound but in full command of his mental faculties; with his guidance, Zev will embark on a cross-continental road-trip to bring justice once and for all to the man who destroyed both their lives. Not rated.

Friday, April 1

» **"I Saw the Light,"** is the story of the legendary country western singer Hank Williams, who in his brief life created one of the greatest bodies of work in American music. The film chronicles his meteoric rise to fame and its ultimately tragic effect on his health and personal life. Written and directed by Marc Abraham, the film is based on Colin Escott's award-winning biography and stars Tom Hiddleston, Elizabeth Olsen, Bradley Whitford, David Krumholtz and Cherry Jones. Rated R.

» **"Meet the Blacks"** is about a family out of Chicago in hopes of a better life. After Carl Black, played by Mike Epps, recently came into some unexpected funds, Carl takes his family and leaves the hustling lifestyle behind for something better. Carl, his wife Lorena, played by Zulay Henao, son Carl Jr., daughter Allie, and cousin Draught pack up and move to Beverly Hills. As luck wouldn't have it, Carl

couldn't have picked a worse time to move. They arrive right around the time of the annual purge, when all crime is legal for twelve hours. Starring Mike Tyson, Gary Owen, King Bach, Charlie Murphy, George Lopez. Directed by Deon Taylor. Rated R.

Friday, April 8

» **"The Boss"** stars Melissa McCarthy as a titan of industry who is sent to prison after she's caught for insider trading. When she emerges ready to re-brand herself as America's latest sweetheart, some persons aren't so quick to forgive and forget. Also starring Kristen Bell, Peter Dinklage and Kathy Bates. Directed by Ben Falcone, the comedy is based on an original character created by McCarthy and written by McCarthy and Falcone alongside their Groundlings collaborator, Steve Mallory. Rated R.

» **"Demolition"** is about a successful investment banker, Davis, played by Jake Gyllenhaal, who struggles after losing his wife in a tragic car crash. Despite pressure from his father-in-law Phil, played by Chris Cooper, to pull it together, Davis continues to unravel. What starts as a complaint letter to a vending machine company turns into a series of letters revealing startling personal admissions. Davis' letters catch the attention of customer service rep

named Karen, played by Naomi Watts, and, amidst emotional and financial burdens of her own, the two form an unlikely connection. With the help of Karen and her son Chris, played by Judah Lewis, Davis starts to rebuild, beginning with the demolition of the life he once knew. Rated R.

» **"Krisha"** opens exclusively at the Birmingham 8. Winner of both the Grand Jury and Audience Awards at the 2015 South-by-Southwest Film Festival, and official selection of Critics' Week at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, "Krisha" is the story of a woman's return to the family she abandoned years before, set entirely over the course of one turbulent Thanksgiving. When Krisha shows up at her sister's Texas home on Thanksgiving morning, her close and extended family greet her with a mixture of warmth and wariness. Almost immediately, an unease permeates the air, one which only grows in force as Krisha gets to work cooking the turkey and trying to make up for lost time by catching up with her various relatives, chief among them her nephew, Trey. As Krisha's attempts at reconciliation become increasingly rebuffed, tension and suspicion reach their peak, with long-buried secrets and deep-seated resentments coming to the fore. Rated R.

Courtesy of Allied Integrated Marketing

MOVING OUT A BIT



A growing share of home buyers are millennials, and more of them are purchasing single-family homes outside of urban areas, according to a study.

Millennials often buy single-family home, study finds

A growing share of home buyers are millennials, and more of them are purchasing single-family homes outside of urban areas, according to the 2016 National Association of Realtors Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends study, which evaluates the generational differences of recent home buyers and sellers. The survey additionally found that although student loan debt is more prevalent among millennial buyers, they aren't the generation with the largest student debt balances.

The share of millennials buying in an urban or central city area decreased to 17 percent (21 percent a year ago) in this year's survey, and fewer of them (10 percent) purchased a multifamily home compared to a year ago (15 percent). Overall, the majority of buyers in all generations continue to purchase a single-family home in a suburban area, and the younger the buyer, the older the home they purchased.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says while millennials may choose to live in an urban area as renters, the survey reveals that most aren't staying once they're ready to buy. "The median age of a millennial home buyer is 30 years old, which typically is the time in life where one settles down to marry and raise a family," he said. "Even if an urban setting is where they'd like to buy their first home, the need for more space at an affordable price is for the most part pushing their search further out."

Added Yun, "Furthermore, limited inventory in millennials' price range, minimal entry-level condo construction and affordability pressures make buying in the city extremely difficult for most young households."

For the third straight year, the largest group of recent buyers were millennials, who composed 35 percent of all buyers (32 percent in 2014), more than the combined amount of younger and older boomers (31 percent). Generation X were 26 percent of buyers, and the Silent Generation made up 9 percent.

Financing the purchase

This year's survey underlined the challenges debt had

on some buyers' ability to purchase a home. While debt delayed saving for a down payment for a median of four years for all buyers, the number of years postponed increased from three years for millennials to six years for older boomers.

Among the share of buyers who said saving for a down payment was the most difficult task, millennials were most likely to cite student debt (53 percent) as the debt that delayed saving, while credit card debt was indicated more by Gen X (44 percent) and younger boomers (36 percent).

According to Yun, student debt is likely impacting more than just the millennial generation's ability to buy a home. "Whether it's from financing their own education or borrowed for their children, it's somewhat surprising to see a higher median amount of student debt among Gen X (\$28,000) and younger boomer buyers (\$29,100) compared to millennials (\$25,000)," Yun said. "One of the many reasons housing supply has been subdued in recent years may be because a segment of homeowners have decided to delay trading up or moving down in order to pay down their debt, including from student loans."

This year's study found that 86 percent of all buyers in the past year financed their purchase (88 percent a year ago). Younger buyers who financed their home purchase most often relied on savings for their down payment, whereas older buyers were more likely to use proceeds from the sale of a primary residence.

Overall, the median down payment ranged from 7 percent for millennial buyers to 21 percent for older boomers and the Silent Generation. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of millennials cited a gift from a relative or friend — typically their parents — as a source of their down payment.

Characteristics of buyers

The median income of millennial home buyers in this year's survey was \$77,400 (\$76,900 in 2014), and they typically bought a 1,720-square-foot home costing \$187,400 (\$180,900 a year ago). The typical Gen X buyer was 42 years old, had a median

income of \$104,700 (\$104,600 a year ago) and typically purchased the largest home compared to other generations (2,200 square feet), costing \$263,200 (\$250,000 last year).

Generation X buyers (71 percent) were the most likely to be married, younger boomers had the highest share of single female buyers (20 percent), and 12 percent of millennial buyers were an unmarried couple.

This year's survey found that the millennial generation's desire to own a home of their own as the primary reason for their purchase is increasing, up to 48 percent (39 percent a year ago). The desire for a larger home was the highest among Gen X buyers (16 percent), and older boomers (at 20 percent) were the most likely to buy because of retirement.

Searching for and buying a home

Nearly all buyers predominantly used the Internet and a real estate agent during the home search process. Eighty-seven percent of millennials and Gen X buyers used an agent, and they were also the most likely to use mobile or tablet applications and mobile or tablet search engines during their search. Gen X buyers were the most likely to visit an open house.

NAR President Tom Salomone, broker-owner of Real Estate II Inc. in Coral Springs, Florida, says buyers of all ages continue to seek the advice and guidance of Realtors. "Supply shortages, strong competition and rising home prices in today's market can make buying a home very stressful," he said. "While the Internet is the initial go-to destination to search for available listings, consumers want the expertise and insights of a Realtor® to help them find the right home within their budget."

Gen X buyers represented the largest share of single-family home buyers at 89 percent (85 percent a year ago), and younger boomers were the most likely to purchase a townhouse or row house (9 percent). A combined 3 percent of millennial buyers bought an apartment, condo or duplex in a building with two or more units (7 percent a year ago).

Among the biggest factors influencing neighborhood choice, millennials were most

influenced by the quality of the neighborhood (63 percent) and convenience to jobs (60 percent); convenience to schools was most desired by Gen X buyers, and proximity to friends and family by the Silent Generation.

Characteristics of sellers

Those more likely to be trading up (Gen X homeowners) or trading down (older boomers) represented the largest share of sellers in the past year, at 25 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Millennials — also likely to be move-up buyers — stayed in their home the shortest amount of time before selling (five years).

Even though younger sellers were more likely to need a larger home or move because of job relocation, older boomers were far more likely to move further away. Sellers overall moved a median distance of 20 miles, with older boomers traveling the furthest at 75 miles.

Across every generation at 88 percent or above, sellers overwhelmingly used a real estate agent or broker to sell their home. When asked what sellers wanted most from their real estate agent, younger sellers were more likely to want their agent to help price their home competitively or sell within a specific time frame, whereas help finding a buyer was desired more by younger and older boomers.

In July 2015, NAR mailed out a 128-question survey using a random sample weighted to be representative of sales on a geographic basis to 94,971 recent home buyers. The recent home buyers had to have purchased a primary residence home between July 2014 and June 2015. A total of 6,406 responses were received from primary residence buyers. After accounting for undeliverable questionnaires, the survey had an adjusted response rate of 6.7 percent. All information is characteristic of the 12-month period ending in June 2015 with the exception of income data, which are for 2014.

Condo amenity provides for garage storage

Q: I read somewhere about a car garage condominium. What can you tell me about it?

A: The concept is interesting in that it provides for you to store your car in a garage area where it can be taken out and run on a test track with, presumably, other amenities in the condominium. Almost anything can be condominiumized, and the notion here is that people will put their specialized vehicles in a garage facility so they can take them on a test track. Of course, as in any condominium, the rules and restrictions will have to be tailored to this type of condominium development and, as is the case with any type of commercial condominium, there must be cooperation among the owners and the administration on the condominium project to ensure that the goals of the condominium are met.

Q: I have a business on a thoroughfare that has had a temporary loss-of-access and which someone has referred to as "mere circuitry in travel." Do you think I have a basis for compensation?

A: There is much litigation regarding what is commonly referred to as "orange barrel litigation." For example, if a construction project forces cars to travel an additional distance through a detour to visit a particular business, it has imposed what is called a circuitry of travel. However, the courts have said that merely causing patrons to travel the additional distance does not constitute a taking as the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution discusses which means that in the case of a taking, you would be entitled to due compensation. Simply stated, if a business is unaffected by the fact that its patrons have to take a circuitous route to the shop, then the business has generally been deemed to have not suffered an injury, much less a pecuniary or substantial injury. However, if as a result of the fact that the only route to the business is circuitous, and customers stop patronizing a store, then the store has clearly suffered an injury. You are best advised to talk to an attorney who specializes in this form of real estate law.

Robert M. Meisner is a lawyer and the author of "Condo Living 2: An Authoritative Guide to Buying, Selling and Operating a Condominium." He is also the author of "Condominium Operation: Getting Started & Staying on the Right Track," second edition. Visit rbmeisner@meisner-law.com. This column shouldn't be construed as legal advice.

REAL ESTATE BRIEFS

Investors

The Real Estate Investors Association of Wayne will have an open forum. Investors will answer questions and offer a market update. Meetings are at 6-9 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month at the Red Lobster on Eureka in Southgate.

Members are free, guests \$20, which will be applied to their membership. The Red Lobster is next to 7-Eleven, near Trenton Road. Call Bill Beddoes at 734-934-9091 or Wayne Koehler at 313-819-0919.

Short sales

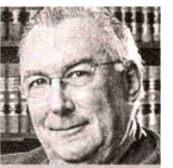
If you owe more than what your house is worth, you may be interested in a free informational seminar on short sale procedures.

Bonnie David, broker/owner of Quantum Real Estate, is the presenter. It will be 6-7 p.m. each Thursday at 129 N. Lafayette, downtown South Lyon. Call 248-782-7130 or email june.quantum@gmail.com.

Free foreclosure tours

Free foreclosure tours are 1 p.m. every other Sunday. Meeting place is Panera Bread on the southeast corner of Middlebelt and I-96.

Email Georgia@addedvaluerealty.com or visit FreeForeclosureTour.com.



Robert Meisner

GETTY IMAGES

SIP, SAMPLE CHINESE TEAS AT 'EVERYONE'S READING' EVENT

Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Tea tasting is a little like wine tasting.

"Think of your white, light teas as being your white wines. And when we get to the heavier, black teas, they are like heavier red wines," Barb Gulley, owner of Barb's Tea Service, told listeners recently at the Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham.

There's even a vintage Chinese tea, sheng pu-erh that improves with age, just like a fine wine.

"It's not considered fully done until it's fermented 30 years. Then we have the shou pu-erh. This is a tea that is processed to mimic a vintage pu-erh. So, the fermentation period is forced and it's rapid. It's not going to get better with age. It's just like wine. Some, if you let them age for 30 years, they are going to be great. And then other wines won't improve. In fact, they may taste worse."

Gulley led her audience through a Chinese tea tasting and presentation as a part of the Everyone's Reading program sponsored by public libraries in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties. This year's focus is on Lisa See's "Shanghai Girls," a novel about two sisters who leave China to marry and settle in Los Angeles' Little Chinatown during the early 1940s.

Gulley will present her "Tea from China" talk and tasting again at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 17 at the Canton Public Library, 1200 S. Canton Center Road. Registration opens March 26. Visit cantonpl.org for more information.

Tea education

Gulley, a Troy resident and former marketing teacher at Oakland University, started Barbs Tea Shop about 10 years ago. The company, renamed Barb's Tea Service this year, offers tea tastings, and information on tea etiquette, rituals and history. She also published a book, "Michigan Tea Rooms," last year.

"Our primary focus is tea education. I'm authorized by the Protocol School of Washington to teach tea etiquette," she said. "We do an Eleanor Roosevelt tea, a Jane Austen tea and a Downton Abbey tea."

She's a fan of Earl Grey tea and her daughter, Rachel Gulley, who assists with programs, likes chai teas, but said Chinese tea "is nice because it's simple."

"It is what it is. You know exactly what you are getting," Rachel Gulley said. "It's very nice."

"Teas, tea ceremonies, it all started in China," Barb Gulley said.

Tea categories

All tea, except herbal teas, comes from the plant *Camellia Sinensis*. The primary difference between the four major tea categories, white, oolong, green and black, is their oxidation period — how long after

"There is a whole intricate process of getting yellow teas. They are very rare because a lot of work goes into them. You don't see a lot of it around the market."

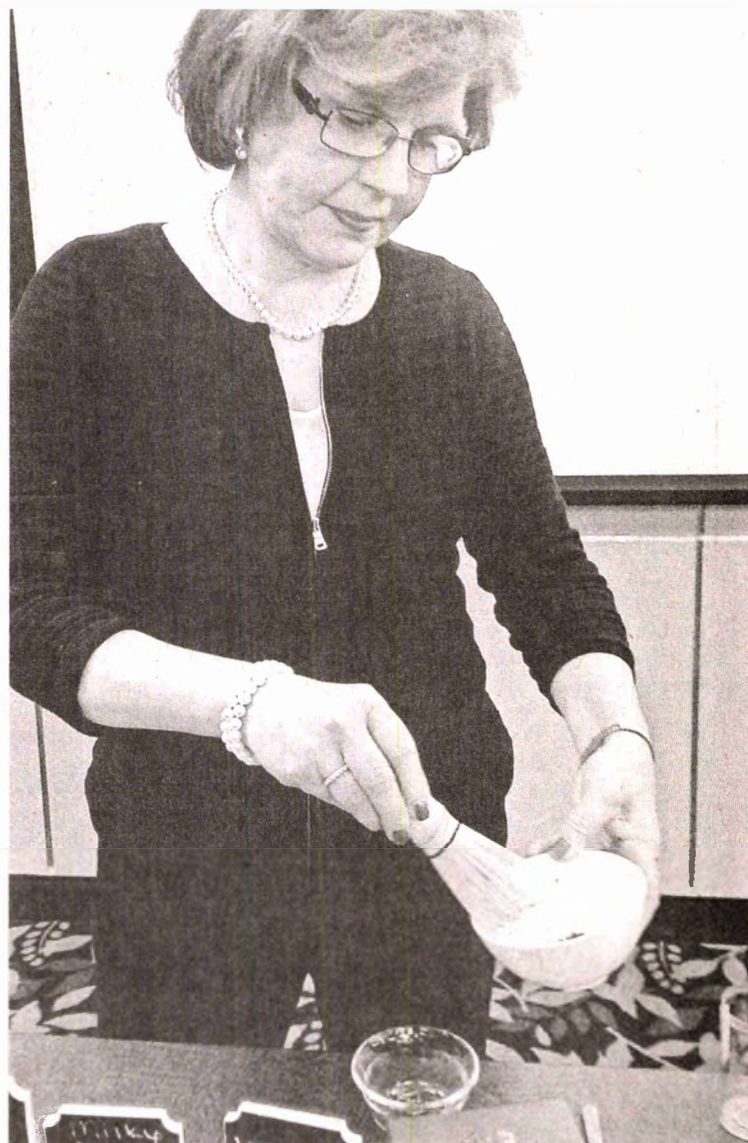
BARB GULLEY, owner of Barb's Tea Service



A clay tea pot from China

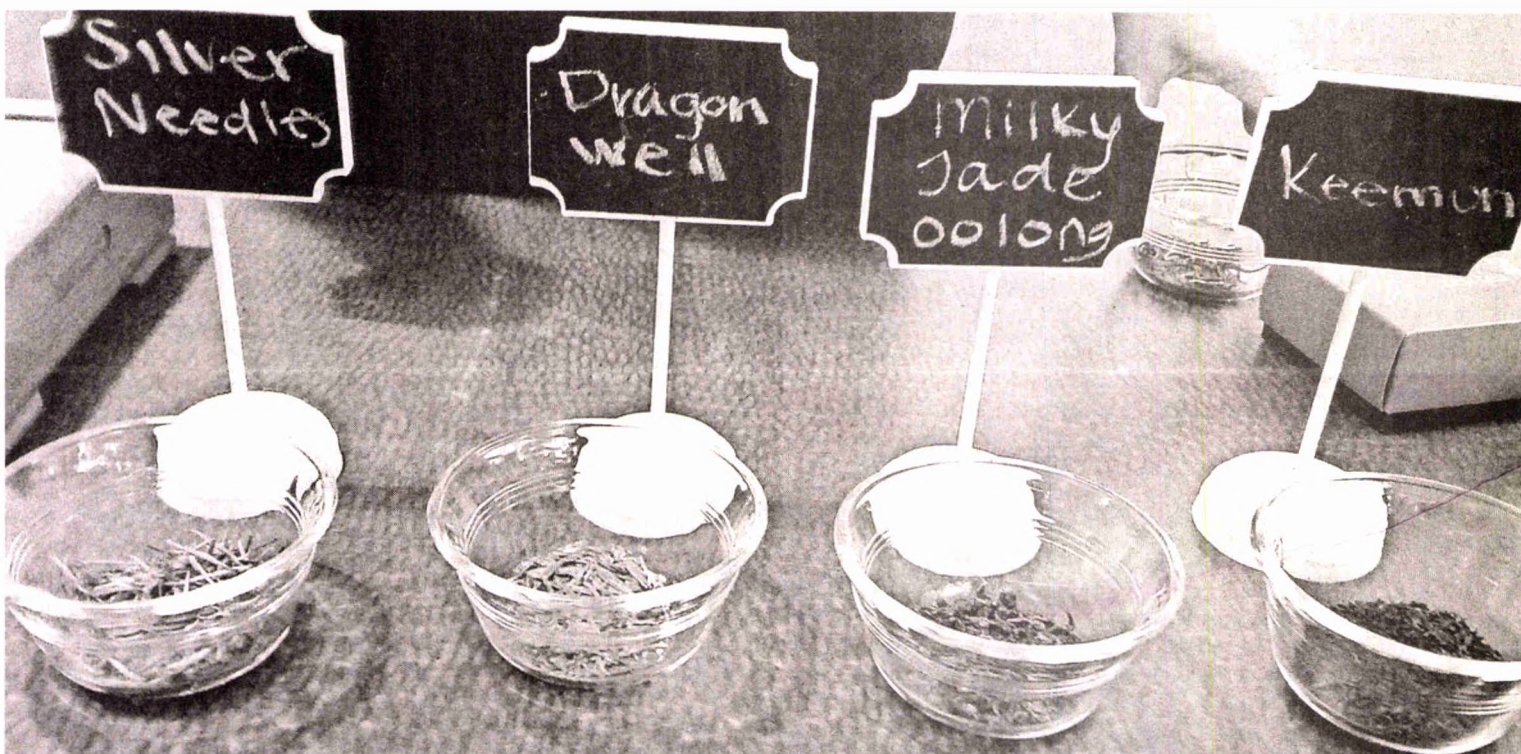


Pu-erh tea cake (left) with powdered tea and the Everybody's Reading selection for 2016, "Shanghai Girls," by Lisa See.



Barb Gulley demonstrates the use of a tea whisk.

SHARON DARGAY



Four teas are ready for tasting at the Everybody's Reading program on Chinese tea.

SHARON DARGAY

the leaves are picked from the plant and exposed to the air.

"There is a lot that goes into what makes a tea a different tea, because other than oxidation, you can steam it, pan fry it. You can have older leaves, younger leaves. There's a lot that goes into it," Gulley said.

Processing sets two other Chinese tea categories, yellow and pu-erh, apart from the rest.

"There is a whole intricate process of getting yellow teas. They are very rare because a lot of work goes into them. You don't see a lot of it around the market."

Pu-erh, with its smoky, earthy taste, is a fermented tea

that is compressed into the form of a small cake, about the size of a truffle.

"China is the only country that produces all six kinds of tea," Gulley said.

Tasting

Gulley prepared white, oolong green and black tea for audience members and offered flavor notes.

White tea has no oxidation. It's minimally processed and has a short harvest period of a few weeks.

"It tends to be expensive. It was once reserved for emperors and the elite," Gully noted. "What you are drinking now, Silver Needles, is the absolute

new growth of the tea plant. It has the downy leaves. Anyone picking up any vanilla notes? Roasted peanuts?"

They sampled Dragon Well, a green tea with its own legend about a dragon in a well that cured a village drought, and they tried Milky Jade, an oolong made from leaves exposed to a steamed milk bath.

"They take in some of that creamy milk taste. You should be getting that," Gulley told her listeners.

A black Keemun, with a slight oaky note, rounded out the tasting.

Steeping times and tea grades also affect tea flavors. "You'll have just the leaf

and some will include parts of the leaf, so you get a mixture. There is a whole grading system, which is how you get the variants in the different tea groups. You'll go from leaf, then to broken leaf and all the way down to fanning."

Fanning, or particles of tea, make up the contents of most tea bags sold at grocery stores. "Basically, it's just the dust," Gulley said. "They call it the dust."

For more about Gulley's programs, visit barbsteatervice.com. For more about the Everyone's Reading event, visit everyonesreading.info/.

sdargay@hometownlife.com

Running for Brews member weighs in on beer, 5K route

Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

For Rick Garcia, a good beer and a 5K run go hand in hand.

Garcia is a member of Running for Brews, a 901-member running club that mixes the fun of running with the pleasure of drinking beer every Monday night in downtown Royal Oak. Runners — and some walkers — gather at 7 p.m. at O'Tooles on Fifth Ave., just east of Washington Street. They pose for a group photo and then follow a 5K route through Royal Oak neighborhoods, sometimes running through nearby Huntington Woods.

Afterward there's plenty of time for socializing and beer.

Garcia, a Madison Heights resident who works in informational technology, has been

running for about 12 years.

"I used to go to the gym a lot and bike a lot and I decided I wanted to try something different. So instead of biking to the gym, I ran," he said.

Eventually he got rid of his bike and concentrated solely on running. For the past two years he has spent most Mondays with Running for Brews, and has tackled the 5K in all kinds of weather.

"Even on those cold days, when you are done running, you're really warm," he said, explaining why a cold brew hits the spot after a run regardless of the season.

The Observer asked Garcia to talk about his most recent run, along with the brew he drank. Next week, another runner will weigh in on both beer and sport.

Q: What did you drink after today's run?

A: Moosedrool from Missoula, Montana.

Q: Describe it.

A: Brown ale, medium-flavored beer not too heavy, not too light. It's one of my favorites because it is very easy to drink, it doesn't have an overpowering taste and it doesn't make you feel full after one.

Q: What kind of food would you pair it with?

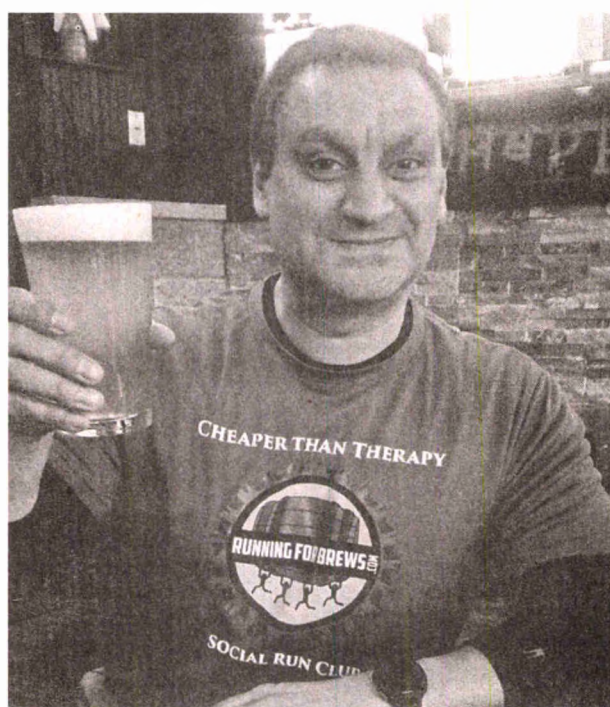
A: Spicy buffalo wings

Q: How was the run today?

A: Great run, temps were in the high 50s, new route that took us through other neighborhoods in the Royal Oak area. We had a very large turnout with daylight saving time kicking in and the sun still out.

Q: Any running tip you can offer?

A: Make sure you have shoes that fit, don't have hot spots that may rub as they could cause blistering.



SHARON DARGAY
Rick Garcia, a member of Running for Brews, enjoys a beer.

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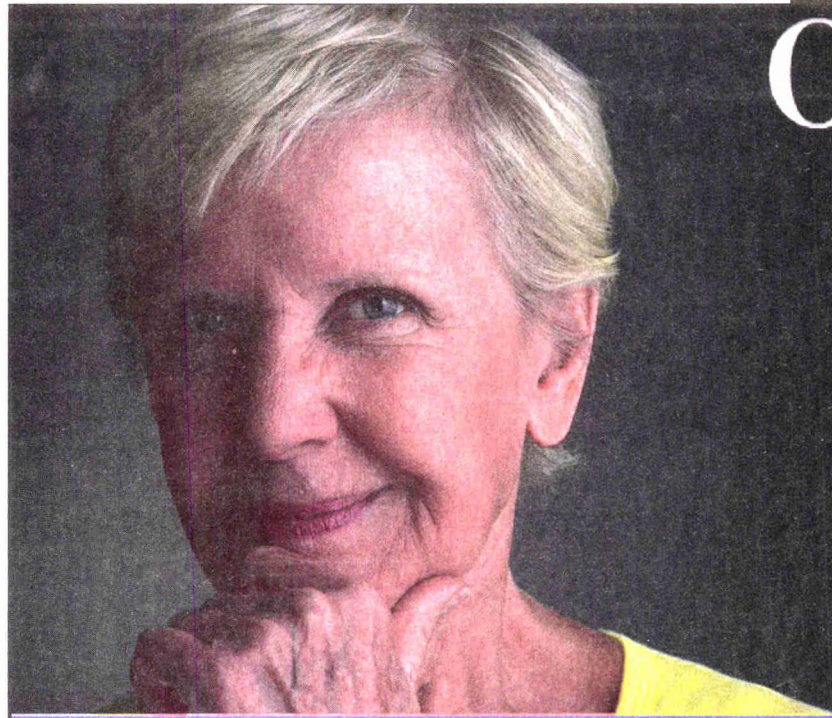
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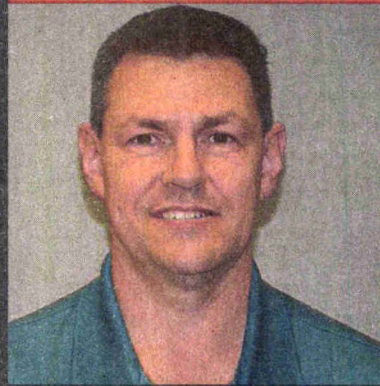
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Maurice Cox, RN, CCE-MT-P/IC and Michelle Moccia DNP, ANP-BC, CCRN
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Healthcare Decisions



10:30 - 11:25
Rick Bloom, J.D., CPA
Bloom Asset Management
Everything you Need to Know about Estate Planning



11:40 - 12:35
Dr. Sol Cogan, D.C. President and CEO
HealthQuest Management, Inc.
New Technology in Pain Relief

Demonstrations and Workshops

9:00 – 9:30
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