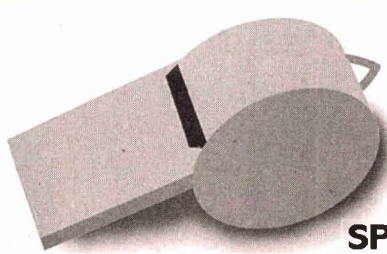


PLYMOUTH OBSERVER

BLOWING THE WHISTLE

Officiating ranks take a hit



SPECIAL REPORT, B1

THURSDAY 03.31.16 || HOMETOWNLIFE.COM || PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

P-CCS superintendent outlines budget goals

Joanne Maliszewski
Staff Writer

As planning for a new district budget winds up, Plymouth-Canton Community Schools interim Superintendent Monica Merritt is looking at how the positions in central office shape up to meet school board goals.

"I think we have a window

to get things right," said Merritt, who in February was appointed superintendent, effective June 30, when former Superintendent Michael Meissen's contract expires.

Merritt's appointment was



Merritt

one of a number of goals and objectives set by the board at a February governance meeting. Providing time for Merritt to review the existing cadre of positions in the district's central office, as well as appointing an interim human resources manager - Merritt was assistant superintendent of human resources and labor relations - are among board

goals.

Other goals include a budget balanced and spending management and improving the climate and culture of the district, including employee engagement and customer service.

"I'm not looking to create new FTEs (full-time equivalent employees)," Merritt told the Observer recently.

During Meissen's tenure as superintendent, he created a regional-type of governance at the board office with three regional directors over designated areas in the district. During last year's budget process, two of the regional positions were eliminated. Kay Elaster, who was the third

See GOALS, Page A2

EGGS-TRADORDINARY



Gavin Novak, 5, of Plymouth has more than one use for his Easter basket.

KELLY DOBSON

More than 400 kids hunt for eggs at annual Lions event

Danielle Alexander
Staff Writer

More than 400 kids had an eggs-traordinary time Saturday collecting eggs at the annual Plymouth Lions Club Easter egg hunt for children 10 and under at Plymouth Township Park.

Event chair Jo Ellen Hincker said

MORE INSIDE

Turn to page A3 for more photos.

the event went "very well" and had more than 400 children in attendance. The children, who were encouraged to bring baskets for their findings, were divided into age groups of 3 and under, 4-6, 7-8 and 9-10.

In addition to the egg hunt, the KidSight program set up a special high-tech camera to take pictures of children's eyes to detect early eye dis-

eases for free immediately after the event. To attract more parents and children, this was located near the prize tables this year and 18 children took advantage.

"KidSight is a wonderful, wonderful program," Hincker said. "They've done it at the library and gone into schools, too. It's really something."

The hunt was free, but donations were welcome. Collection boxes were also available, since the Lions Club collects used or unwanted eye glasses, cellphones and hearing aids.

Plymouth Township teen gets prison in murder plot

Robert Allen
Michigan.com

At an age when most kids are thinking about graduating from high school and heading to college, Rokhsana Sikorski only has prison to look forward to for the next 10-20 years of her life.

While her former classmates in the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools district are enjoying spring break this week, the waifish 17-year-old sat Monday trembling in a chair in the middle of a Wayne County courtroom, handcuffed and attired in an orange jail jumpsuit, waiting to hear the judge pronounce his sentence.

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The boy screamed, alerting the rest of the family. Sikorski dropped the knife and fled outside, where her then 23-year-old boyfriend - who police say had been texting her instructions on how to carry out the killings - was waiting. They were soon arrested.

Despite being the target of the plot, Laurene and Jeff Sikorski have stood firmly behind their daughter from the start, even hiring an attorney to represent her. They said the teen - who stands 4-foot-8 and weighs 95 pounds - suffered from depression and was manipulated by her older boyfriend.

Sikorski's parents adopted her and two siblings from Poland more than a decade ago after the children endured an abusive early childhood. They say her co-defendant, Michael Rivera, now 24, coerced her into the conspiracy, and they blame law enforcement for not arresting him sooner after he had illegal sex with her.

"She's in desperate need of continued psychological help," Laurene Sikorski told the court Monday before sentencing. "She is still fragile and an adult prison would shatter her del-

See PRISON, Page A2

Woman turns childhood tragedy into motivation

Darrell Clem
Staff Writer

Sharina Jones still remembers how small rocks and hot pavement felt to her bare feet on the last day she could walk.

Only 5 years old, she had accompanied her older sister Kimberly, 14, to babysit two neighbor children when one of them, a 7-year-old boy, walked into the room holding his parents' .22-caliber handgun.

He pointed it at her and told her to run.

"I got up to run and he pulled the trigger," Jones said, recalling that day.

It was a tragic moment that left her unable to walk. She

persevered with strong family support and learned to dress herself, play wheelchair basketball and swim.

Now, at age 36, Jones is an author, power-lifter, businesswoman and former Ms. Wheelchair Michigan who, with husband Grover Jones III, is raising an 8-month-old son, Grover Jones IV.

"He's the light of my life and our life," she said.

Jones, who lives in Mundy Township, brought her story of courage and achievement to the Canton Public Library, where two of her best friends, Tisha Pate and Kathy Dresser,

See JONES, Page A2



Sharina Jones talks about her life after a gunshot at age 5 left her unable to walk.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



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Volume 129 • Number 68

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PRISON

Continued from Page A1

icate world. How will sentencing her as an adult help her? Is this justice?"

Roksana Sikorski took a plea deal Feb. 22 to one count of assault with intent to murder in exchange for six other felony counts getting dropped. Rivera is serving a life sentence after being convicted by jury on all seven counts.

Sikorski tearfully apologized to her family Monday "for not being the daughter they wished I would be. And I promise that I will get better, no matter what happens."

Circuit Judge James Callahan said this is a case of a young person "swayed by an older person," who previously had victimized her with "inappropriate sexual behavior." He said that given the investigation's findings, she may have had second thoughts, as the injury sustained by her brother appears to have been "more of his being aroused ... from her initial action" than from her cutting into him.

"This is truly an unfortunate situation," Callahan said, as he sentenced her to 10-20 years in prison.



REGINA H. BOONE | MICHIGAN.COM

Roksana Sikorski of Plymouth Township cries as she apologizes to her family in court, standing with Matthew Evans, her court-appointed attorney. She was sentenced to 10-20 years in prison for cutting her brother's neck with a knife in a plot to slay her family in October 2014.

In a separate case, which occurred more than two months before the knife incident, Rivera was sentenced to 2½-15 years in prison for having sex with Sikorski when she was 15.

Sikorski's parents have questioned why it took 11 weeks between the sex incident and police receiving the warrant for Rivera's arrest.

"Where were the police, where was (Wayne County Prosecutor) Kym Worthy's office when Rivera was running around my neighborhood for three months?" Jeff Sikorski said after sentencing. "This wouldn't

have happened if they had picked him up earlier. It was their incompetence that caused all this."

The parents also said they oppose the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office's decision to charge the girl as an adult. Her confession was kept out of trial after Callahan found that she was too immature to waive her Miranda rights.

Worthy's office opposed that decision, but the appeals court ruled with Callahan.

"The prosecutor had the discretion to look at the facts and the back-

ground of the defendant and the very serious nature of the offense to determine that she should be charged as an adult in this matter," prosecutor's spokeswoman Maria Miller said after sentencing Monday.

Matthew Evans, Roksana Sikorski's attorney, said he hopes this case leads to the laws being reconsidered.

"The problem that we had here is that the juvenile laws in the state of Michigan give the prosecutor tremendous latitude in who they charge," he said, adding that in this situation, it would be more appropriate for the judge to decide whether to charge his client as an adult.

The parents said they opposed the plea, and they questioned why Evans waited until the day trial was supposed to start Feb. 22 to accept the plea agreement with prosecutors. Evans said Monday that the decision to take the plea agreement came after a late ruling that interfered with the defense strategy, which was intended to show Sikorski was under duress at the time of the attack.

Sikorski and Rivera were both charged with four counts of conspiracy to commit murder and one count of assault with

intent to murder, using a computer to commit a crime and assault with a dangerous weapon, all felonies. Rivera was convicted last year on all counts. His attorney, Wright Blake, has said that his client maintains his innocence in the conspiracy-to-murder case and will appeal his life sentence.

Evans said he'd recommend Sikorski appeal that she had ineffective assistance of counsel. He was appointed after Callahan removed attorney Leslie Posner from the case. The parents had hired Posner, but Callahan found that there was a conflict of interest, as they were identified as victims in the case, and removed her.

Evans said Posner didn't ask any questions during the preliminary examination. Posner, who attended the sentencing, previously said she didn't think Evans had Sikorski's best interests in mind. She said she would have let the case go to trial. Now she wants to represent Sikorski once again and file an appeal to have the guilty plea rescinded.

JONES

Continued from Page A1

sat in the audience.

Pate fought back tears as she spoke of Jones.

"She was there for me when my children were born," Pate said.

Dresser, who is hearing-impaired, said Jones has been an inspiration to her since they met in high school.

"We've been friends ever since," she said.

After she became paraplegic, Jones recalls her father encouraging her to be strong and see herself as a queen. She chose the title goddess and eventually used it for her first inspirational book, "Life of a Push Goddess." She has penned a second book, but it hasn't yet been released.



Jones

Jones became Ms. Wheelchair Michigan in 2011 and was first runner-up among 46 women in the Ms. Wheelchair America 2012 competition. She used her crown as a platform to help others and started a nonprofit, www.ThinkBeyondTheChair.org. It focuses on providing social activities, events, support, education and advocacy for people with disabilities.

One of the nonprofit efforts involved a trip to mentor students with disabilities in the Republic of Panama. She and her husband visited a school where parents carried their children to class because they had no wheelchairs.

"I knew at that moment that was where we were supposed to be," Jones said.

She had 273 wheelchairs delivered to the school in late 2014 after she enlisted help from service clubs, medical equipment providers and friends who raised money from garage sales.

Jones developed her business acumen, too, after getting an education that includes a master's degree in business administration from Wayne State University in 2008. She started www.PushGoddess.com, where visitors can find wheelchair apparel, Push Goddess clothing, nail polish and her book, among other products intended to encourage people with disabilities.

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GOALS

Continued from Page A1

regional director, was put into the role of assistant superintendent for teaching and learning after Erin McGregor left the position at the end of the school year in 2015.

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Published Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Media

Community Office:
29725 Hudson Drive • Novi, MI 48377 • 866-887-2737
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
hometownlife.com

Editor: Joanne Maliszewski
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Subscription Rates:
Newsstand price: \$1.00 Thursday and \$1.50 Sunday
\$8.25 EZ pay per month
\$52.00 six months
\$104.00 per year
\$91.00 six months mail delivery
\$182.00 per year mail delivery

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CORRECTION

A Sunday, March 27, story about the Plymouth-Canton Community Literacy Council's adult spelling bee should have said that competition winner Nehal Sanghvi speaks three Indian languages, including Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi.

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Plymouth Township teen gets prison in murder plot

Robert Allen
Michigan.com

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REGINA H. BOONE | MICHIGAN.COM

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The parents, meanwhile, continue to raise the two younger siblings in hopes of giving them a bright future.

"I would never trust the legal system, frankly, to protect my family again," Jeff Sikorski said.

BLUEPRINT

Continued from Page A1

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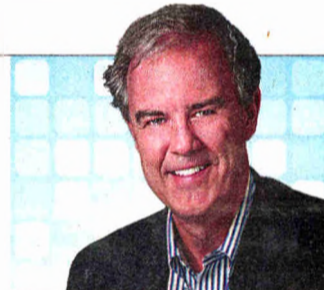
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Ask the Expert

THE TRUTH ABOUT COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

Straining to hear each day, even when using powerful hearing aids?



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

Feeling frustrated and sometimes even exhausted from listening? Whether it happens suddenly or gradually over time, hearing loss can affect you physically and emotionally. Being unable to hear impacts your ability to communicate with your loved ones, hear in noisy environments, talk on the phone, and may force you to become more reliant on your family members to interpret for you.

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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: 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.

Q: Are cochlear implants covered by Medicare?

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

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CANTON CRIME WATCH

Custody dispute leads to alleged gun, death threats

A man involved in a child custody dispute with his child's mother allegedly told her that he had bought a gun and would be visiting her in coming days, a police report said.

Police went to the Sherwood Village mobile home park, near Michigan Avenue and Haggerty, the afternoon of March 17 after the child's mother reported the alleged threat.

She told police she and the child's father had been fighting over custody of their 4-year-old son and that the father, a Jackson resident, wanted to pick up the boy in Canton. She told him to wait until they appear in court April 4 for a custody hearing.

That's when she said he advised her that he had bought a gun and would be paying a visit to her. She said he also has made previous threats about putting her "six feet under" — which she said left her scared.

Police contacted the suspect and he denied making any threats. Police advised him to

stay away until the court hearing and advised the woman how to get a personal protection order.

Factory site break-in

Canton police have been asked to patrol the old Henry Ford Village Factory site near Cherry Hill and Ridge roads, amid reports of intruders forcing open a wooden door and entering one of the buildings.

Work has begun on the site to transform it into the Village Arts Factory with artist studios, programs for war veterans and walking and biking trails, among other amenities. The project is being led by the Partnership for the Arts and Humanities.

A partnership official notified police that a series of break-ins have occurred on the site. She speculated it could be teenagers using the property to drink alcohol at night.

The door frame was damaged during the latest break-in, which occurred between 5 p.m. March 18 and 7 a.m. March 20. Nothing is stored in the building, so nothing was missing. The official asked police to

patrol the property at night until a surveillance camera can possibly be installed.

Teen domestic violence

Police were investigating reports that a 16-year-old Canton girl's ex-boyfriend had assaulted her, despite a court order that he stay away from her because of earlier, similar incidents, a police report said.

The report indicated the girl had been the victim of domestic violence involving her 17-year-old boyfriend on three occasions this month and last, although he had been ordered in January to stay away from her. The girl's father contacted authorities.

Police also were investigating allegations the ex-boyfriend had made some 50 phone calls to the victim. Police were planning to speak with the suspect after he returns from a trip out of town with his father to discuss accusations he violated the court order.

'Huffing' reported

Police went to the Academy/West Point mobile home park

after receiving reports of a man inhaling — or "huffing" — air duster, a can of compressed air used to clean computers.

Police went to the residence, near Michigan Avenue and Haggerty, shortly before 11 a.m. Friday after a relative reported the 34-year-old man had become violent after he inhaled the can's contents. The man was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Disorderly students

Two high school girls apparently fighting over a boy have been cited by Canton police for disorderly conduct after they got into a fight after a class had been dismissed at Plymouth High School, a police report said.

The incident unfolded shortly before 2:30 p.m. March 22 when two girls, both 17, exchanged punches and pulled each other's hair, leaving one girl's face scratched and her lip bloodied, the report said.

One of the girls screamed at another girl who allegedly had been paying attention to her boyfriend, the report said. The incident escalated and school

employees summoned police amid accusations the girls were assaulting each other.

One educator was unintentionally hit in the face when he tried to separate the two girls. School personnel finally managed to separate the girls.

Police also reviewed school surveillance video that captured part of the fracas. Police issued citations to both girls for disorderly conduct, the report said.

Online scam

A 55-year-old Canton man told police he ordered a camera lens through eBay and received a small envelope that merely had a postcard and a note in it, a police report said.

The man said he ordered the lens from a purported seller in Hong Kong. He paid for it, but it wasn't in the envelope he received by mail.

The man told police eBay was planning to refund his money. He filed a police report to document the incident.

— By Darrell Clem

Lead by example when dealing with inexperienced drivers

We often think of teens being inexperienced behind the wheel.

With today's technology, we can see where they are and how fast they are going. The thing we can't see is if they are driving while distracted.

Are they playing with the radio, texting, talking on the cellphone or eating something on the way to their destination? Parents always tell their kids: two hands on the wheel, eyes on the road, don't use your phone until you get to where you are going and no eating in the vehicle.

Inexperience behind the wheel makes them more susceptible to distractions. According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, 10 percent of all



Sgt. Michael Sura

ASK A TROOPER

drivers ages 15-19 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. The percentage of driver's text messaging or visibly manipulating hand-held devices increased from 1.7 percent in 2013 to 2.2 percent in 2014.

Since 2007, young drivers have been observed manipulating electronic devices at higher rates than older drivers. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the accident. On any given

daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cellphones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010. One in three teens who text report they have done it while driving. Dialing a phone while driving increases your teen's risk of crashing by six times and texting while driving increases the risk by 23 times. Talking or texting on the phone takes your teen's focus off the road and the task of driving.

Hold on, I had to catch my breath after typing all that. Wow, huh? With all that, someone should talk to teen drivers.

What about you though? Are you taking the same advice? You have more experience, right? You're a better driver,

right? What do you show your teens and pre-teens when you are driving? Do you talk on the phone? Do you eat in the vehicle? What are your kids learning from you as far as acceptable behavior? One more thing: When you are driving, do you do these things with someone else's child or teenager in the vehicle? Do you want someone texting or talking on the cellphone with your child in the vehicle?

The month of April starts Distracted Driver Awareness Month. It's time to start a conversation. Parents talk to your teen drivers; teens talk to your parents. Familiarize yourself with the Michigan graduated driver's license program. Create your own rules if necessary, like you would for your

teenagers. Talk about the consequences of distracted driving, and ensure you and your teen are aware of the Michigan Laws and penalties for talking or texting on the phone.

Parents, remember to set the example by keeping your own eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel while driving. Be consistent between the message you tell your teen and your own driving behaviors. Kids learn from watching their parents.

If you have questions or comments, email them to askatrooper12@gmail.com or mail to Ask A Trooper, Michigan State Police Brighton Post, 4337 Buno Road, Brighton, MI 48116.



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TOM BEAUDOIN

The robotics team 6190 from Canton Preparatory High School is prepared for the robotics competition that was held last weekend in Livonia.

Robotics challenge 'like a giant community' for high school teams

Julie Brown
Staff Writer

The Plymouth-Canton Lightning 862 robotics team was on hand to set up, tear down and inspect robots, as well as to serve as technical advisers and to keep score while other teams competed in the FIRST in Michigan District competition Saturday in Livonia.

But in the Lightning 862 team will be in the spotlight this coming weekend when it competes in Troy, said Jay Obsniuk, adviser and Canton High School teacher.

Meanwhile, Novi Detroit Catholic Central High School students Mark Didonato and Keaton Mulcahy were glad to be at the FIRST in Michigan District Event, competing among 40 high school robotics teams.

"We're doing very well," said Didonato, 17, a CC senior who lives in Ann Arbor. The event ran March 24-26 at Livonia Churchill High School; early Saturday, Catholic Central was eighth of the 40 teams.

"We have a certain amount of ranking points. We still have a couple competitions left," said Didonato, who plans to study electrical engineering at Kettering University and pursue a General Motors internship.

The CC team has about 22 students and its members worked to get the FIRST program in school with sponsors and support. "At first, there was a lot of math involved," Didonato said. "You got a lot of experience in the field." He noted it helps with engineering study and college scholarships. Added freshman Mulcahy, a Canton resident, "I like the experience and I like how everyone works together. It's like a giant community."

Mulcahy is mulling Michigan State University for engineering and of robotics noted, "I love the hands-on." The CC team is the Shambots.

FIRST stands for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. For more information, go to www.firstinmichigan.org

"I would say it's a lot more friendly than I thought it would be," Didonato said of the Churchill-based competi-



TOM BEAUDOIN

Robots took over Churchill High School last weekend.

tion. "Even on the opposing team, they would help us out."

Nearby were the Hackbots of the Farmington Public Schools, from Harrison, North Farmington and Farmington high schools. Mark Skodack, a Wixom resident and their teacher and coach, and is on the staff at Farmington High. The Hackbots have about 70 students, Skodack said, and are in their fourth year as a unified team. "This is our fourth robot," he said.

The FPS team has been to Worlds competition in St. Louis, Mo., four years ago and is striving to return. "It was a good experience," Skodack said. "It's a lot of connecting the dots with their core classes. They're in there, they're problem-solving. They're owning it. Our kids this year are taking an outstanding initiative."

The FPS team now has some college students in engineering, FPS grads who assist. Skodack noted multiple teams from pneumatics to safety. "It's almost like a small business," he said. "A business has to market, a business has to be safe. Six weeks to build a robot is tight for these kids. It gets their focus

razor sharp." Avery Cosier, 17, is a junior at Farmington High and a Hackbot. This is her second year on the team.

"There are so many different subgroups," Cosier said. "You get to be really creative and apply things you've learned." Her plans are biochemistry study in college for a dentistry career.

Cosier is the team brand manager, including marketing, imagery, graphics and the business plan.

In competition, remote-controlled robots, piloted by students and cheered on by fans, go head-to-head in short games on the floor of a sports arena, battling it out to earn points during a round.

Isolina Carlini is the team leader and coach for Livonia Public Schools, whose Warrior team includes Stevenson, Churchill and Franklin high schools. The Warriors have 52 kids and 31 mentors, said Carlini, a Livonia resident.

This is the sixth tournament hosted at Churchill. "It has a perfect layout for the competition," she said, noting some 2,000-2,500 people attend, including students, volunteers and



TOM BEAUDOIN

Catholic Central/St. Catherine of Siena students won first place, along with Clarkston and Bedford High School, at this year's robotics competition.



TOM BEAUDOIN

Thurston students Raj Patel, Chad Fletcher, Tyree Gregory and Jay Pettis and coach Heather Staley pose in the "pit" as they are ready for the robotics competition at Churchill High School.

spectators. "Everyone here is trying" to get to Worlds in St. Louis, Carlini said. "We are bantering for the position."

She teaches English at Holmes Middle School in Livonia and noted the three district middle schools feed into high school-level LPS robotics. "I think it gives them a hands-on experience that simply is not possible in the classroom," Carlini said. "It positions kids for success and scholarships and internships. Kids that like this kind of stuff, it really appeals to them."

Among enthused students is Joshua Johnson, 16, a Wayne Memorial High School junior on the Bionic Zebras team. "I actually think it's really good," Johnson said, adding of the FIRST event compared to other competitions, "I would say so far it's the best. I like the theme of it, the

medieval theme."

This year's theme included use of a catapult arm to throw a ball through a target. The Bionic Zebras are mainly Wayne Memorial students in the Wayne-Westland district, plus a John Glenn High student. Johnson is at the William D. Ford Career Technical Center for welding.

He was working at Churchill with Trevor Davis of Garden City, a mentor who works at the Suburban of Garden City car dealership as a lube technician. Davis graduated from Wayne Memorial in 2007.

"Getting to teach the students about electrical and networking," Davis said of what he likes. "To teach students about networking and programming, it's fun." This is his seventh year as a mentor, with the Bionic Zebras having 21 students.

"We tend to help out a

lot of the new teams," said Johnson, who has found new friends through robotics. He's his team's safety captain.

The volunteer mentors, often engineers, are key to team success. Andy Monique of Farmington is an engineer at FANUC with a son, Jay, 16, a sophomore at Farmington High, on the Hackbots team. "He just likes the whole program," Monique said. "I think it's very good for the kids and their future."

Monique is an electrical/software engineer. "There's a lot of opportunity out there in the engineering field," said Monique, in his first year as a mentor.

"There's a big presence from Bosch," he said. "A lot of people contribute."

AISIN Group was the title sponsor for the FIRST in Michigan District Event at Churchill.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Owner honored

Jason Miller, broker and owner of RE/MAX Home Sale Services in Plymouth, was recently honored at the annual RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan Awards Gala. The event was held at the San Marino Club in Troy and celebrated the accomplishments of RE/MAX's highest performers in southeast Michigan.

Miller received the prestigious Showcase Award during the event. Showcase Awards are based on agent growth, average yearly commission per agent and percentage of productive agents. RE/MAX Home Sale Services was recognized for achieving the highest average agent commissions for an office category of 11-25 agents.

"Jason Miller has built a team of dedicated professionals with a great passion for serving their clients," said Magnus Sublett, chief executive officer, RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan. "It is a pleasure to recognize RE/MAX Home Sale Services for their hard work and excellent results."

RE/MAX Home Sale Services is at 1200 S. Sheldon Road, Suite 200, in Plymouth.

Free buyers workshop

In preparation for the busy home buying season ahead, Catholic Vantage Financial will host a free home buyers workshop 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, April 13. The workshop will be at



Pictured (from left) are Magnus Sublett, chief executive officer, RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan; Joe Sabatini, vice president, RE/MAX of Southeastern Michigan; and Jason Miller, broker and owner, RE/MAX Home Sale Services in Plymouth.

the credit union's Plymouth branch, 8817 Sheldon Road, at the northwest corner of Sheldon and Joy roads.

Cherylene Jackson of the Mortgage Center will talk about navigating the mortgage process, different home financing options, what costs are real and what fees you need to watch out for, along with differences between a home appraisal and inspection.

"This is an excellent workshop for first-time

home buyers and it's also very helpful for people who want to learn about recent changes in credit and financing requirements," said Emma Teller, vice president of marketing and business development for Catholic Vantage Financial.

To ensure adequate seating for the workshop, advance reservations are requested by calling 734-432-0212, ext. 301, or by email to eteller@mycfcv.org.



Canton Leisure Services recreation and facility supervisor Jon LaFever (left) and operations manager Greg Hohenberger.

Two Canton recreation employees certified

Greg Hohenberger, operations manager, and Jon LaFever, recreation and facilities supervisor, of Canton Leisure Services were recently certified as Certified Park and Recreation Professionals by the National Certification Board and the National Recreation and Park Association.

The CPRP certification is granted to individuals employed in the recreation, park resources and leisure services professions who meet the eligibility requirements — including a combination of higher education and/or work experience — and who successfully complete the national CPRP examination.

The examination tests knowledge in all aspects of general administration, programming and operations management for parks and recreation. CPRP certifications are valid for a period of two years, and professionals who wish to re-apply are required to complete professional continuing education unit requirements or equivalent academic course work.

"We're very proud that these employees took the initiative to achieve this certification," said Debbie Bilbrey-Honsowetz, Canton Leisure Services director. "It is hard work and dedication like this that contributes to the on-

going success of our Department and ultimately enables us to better meet the changing needs of our community."

Individuals certified as CPRPs meet high standards of education, expertise and experience established in the field for park and recreation professionals and many agencies recommend or require CPRP certification when hiring for professional positions.

Hohenberger has worked in Parks and Recreation for more than 15 years and has been in his current role as operations manager with Canton Township for the past six years. Through his work with Canton Leisure Services, he currently oversees operations at several leisure services facilities, including the Summit on the Park community center, The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, The B.L.O.C.K. Youth & Teen Center and Recreation services.

Hohenberger also assists with oversight of golf operations. In addition, he has led development of initial business plans for the department and the cost recovery program, as well as training and development of Leisure Services staff. Hohenberger is currently a member of mParks (formerly known as Michigan Recreation

and Park Association), presenting at numerous conferences and trade shows, and has previously served as its treasurer.

Since 2001, LaFever has worked in a variety of parks and recreation capacities with Canton Leisure Services and currently coordinates operations at several facilities. In addition, LaFever and his staff are responsible for the planning and execution of leisure services large-scale special events. An mParks member since 2001, he has been a frequent presenter at the annual mParks Conference & Trade Show, a member of the Youth & Teens and Programming Committees, served as the mParks Michigan Youth Symposium Chair and was recognized as the organization's New Professional of the Year in 2006. He is currently an mParks director at large.

The CPRP program is offered by the National Certification Board in coordination with NRPA and the CPRP Certification Committee. Hohenberger's and LaFever's recent certifications demonstrate the continued professional commitment shared by other Leisure Services staff members, including Bilbrey-Honsowetz and Jeanette Aiello.

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Dangers may lurk when co-signing a loan

The other day, a client contacted me with an issue. Unfortunately, I had to give the client some bad news. The client's situation is that about five years ago, after her daughter got married, she co-signed a loan so that her daughter and her new son-in-law could start a business. The loan was for 10 years and, for the first few years, payments were made on time. Unfortunately, about a year or so ago, the daughter and son-in-law got divorced and closed their business. According to the divorce settlement, the husband assumed responsibility for the loan.

Not unexpectedly, about six months after the divorce, they each filed for bankruptcy; as a result, their liability on the business loan was discharged. Unfortunately, no one in the divorce proceedings took into consideration that my client had co-signed the loan. As a result, the bank contacted her and informed her that unless she paid the loan, they would begin legal proceedings.

My unfortunate job was to inform my client that she is responsible for the loan. Although her now ex-son-in-law and daughter were legally discharged from the loan, that had no effect on my client. As a result, as I informed her she



Rick Bloom
MONEY MATTERS

was responsible for the loan.

At least a few times a year, I am faced with the issue of having to inform a co-signer that they are responsible for a loan. Many people are under the misconception that if the primary signer of the loan goes into bankruptcy and receives a discharge, that somehow that discharge applies to the co-signer; it does not. In fact, if you take a step back, that is the reason why banks and other financial institutions many times will require a co-signer in order to approve the loan. I always tell people before you co-sign a loan, you have to accept the very real possibility that you can legally be on the hook to repay that loan. That is why I always say you better thoroughly think it through.

I recognize that family and friends want to help each other and, obviously, that is a good thing. However, when it comes to co-signing a loan, you definitely have to think through the consequences. If you are forced to repay the loan, how will it affect you financially? If it would

cause financial distress, then you probably should pass on the co-signing. If it would have minimal impact, then that is another thing.

There is a reason why banks and financial institutions ask for co-signers — they're not sure that the individual requesting the loan has the wherewithal and the financial resources to repay the loan. You always have to think twice before you co-sign. If the bank doesn't think that they have the wherewithal to repay the loan, it should cause you to seriously think about your decision.

When it comes to dealing with banks or financial institutions, you can negotiate some of the terms. For example, I recently dealt with a client who was co-signing a loan for one of her children. We were able to work with the bank to limit my client's obligation to the first two years of the loan. If the loan was paid on time for the first two years, she would be removed as a co-signer. We were able to limit her liability and that's something that you may want to consider.

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.



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Benefiting Capuchin Soup Kitchen The Holy Year of Mercy 2016 Donate what you can and enjoy a free lunch buffet from 11am - 3pm, or order off the regular priced menu 11am - 10pm. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. (Antonio's locations only)



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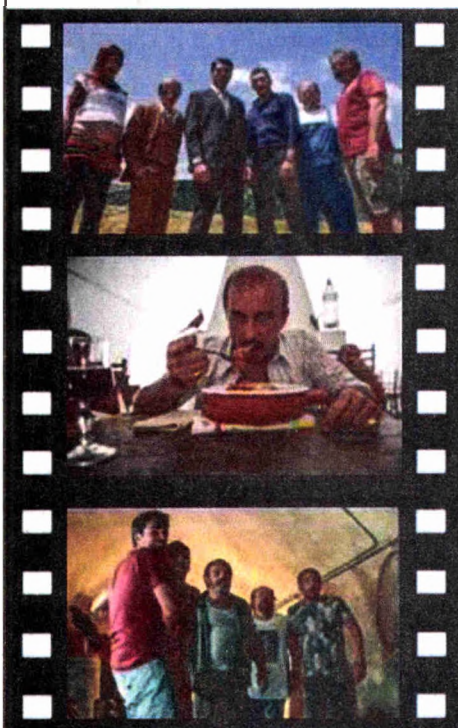
Sunday, December 11th [DEARBORN HGTS.]

This very popular event includes a delicious buffet lunch with healthy food choices plus Antonio's specialties, fun crafts for all ages, picture with Santa and live Reindeer! Reservations will be taken after November 1st by calling (734) 981-9800 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. (Seating is limited) Tickets: \$21 per person, children 3 and under \$5 +20% tip will be added Benefiting Wayne County Good Fellows

All locations - unless specified. For details on each event visit www.antoniosrestaurants.com

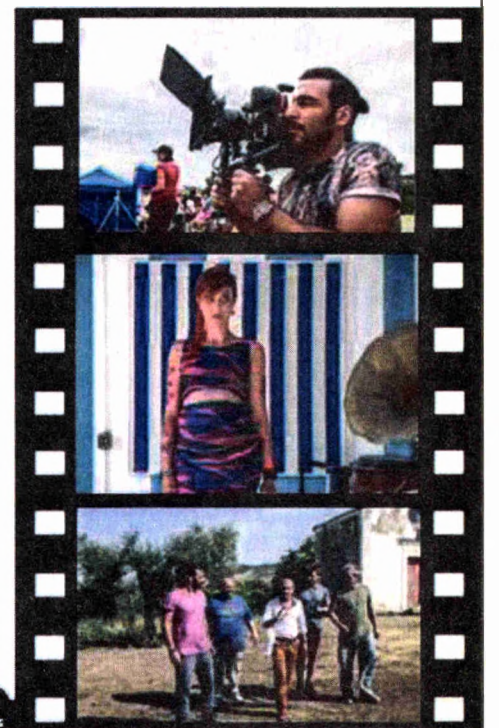


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March 30th - April 24th

Reader reaches out to Nancy Seaman: 'Never give up hope'

Dear Nancy Seaman, My heart goes out to you. I read Aileen Wingblad's story about you in the Birmingham Eccentric and I can only imagine what courage it took for you to meet with her. It's a good thing you did, because her story could possibly lead to some positive things in your life, such as people like myself thinking about your plight, hoping there will be someone who can help you get a new trial or a hearing which will ultimately lead to your freedom.

As the daughter of a woman who was physically and psychologically abused by her second husband, I am aware of the damage done to one's psyche over years of volatility. She never knew what little thing it would take to trigger his temper.

One moment he could be loving and the next gnawing his finger like a



Pat Hardy
GUEST COLUMNIST

bone before going into a rage. She put up with it for years, sadly dying a natural death before he did. I always hoped he would go first, so she could have some years of peace. It didn't happen.

I vowed never to marry a man like my stepfather. I know now that he suffered some kind of mental illness and so did she. She lost her confidence in the ability to take care of herself and chose financial security over a peaceful life. It was her choice, for which she paid a heavy price.

I think the saddest part of your story is that you wake up every day of your life crying and that you have denied any visits from your loved ones. I wonder how many times you have relived

every moment of the day you "lost it." Wasn't that one day enough? Why would you continue to relive that moment over and over when it's over. It's done. The "you" that was then is no longer. You are a totally new person and, even though you are physically incarcerated, you don't have to be mentally or spiritually incarcerated.

Your studies in the library are probably the only times you are not living in the past. Then, your mind is fully engrossed in the subject and that is a clue as to how you might derive some happiness in life.

While in that library, search for some books by noted spiritual writers such as: Buddha, Eckhart Tolle, Wayne Dyer and Deepak Chopra. They all know the power of our thoughts. You can change your reality, because you are not just your body — you are body, mind and spirit. You may not have

given much thought to these ideas and they could be very helpful and uplifting for you.

I'm currently listening to an online 21-day free meditation given by Deepak Chopra and Oprah Winfrey. You could subscribe, if you have access to a computer. I could purchase it for you, if you are interested and then you could listen as often as you wish.

In yesterday's session, two statements reminded me of you. Deepak said, "You are not the person you used to be." (The Nancy of today is not the Nancy of 11 years ago.) He also said, "I am endlessly renewed in the present moment." Have you ever thought about being in the present moment — this very moment, so different from every other moment you have lived? It's a new and productive way of living life, Nancy.

I am a former junior high school English

teacher, married to one of the kindest people to walk this Earth for 55 years this coming April 1. Had I been married to someone like Bob, I probably would be where you are today.

There would come a day when I would lose my mind and retaliate for years of pain ... not really wanting to kill anyone, but wanting to get even for all the pain, the hurt, the trauma, the theft of my life. Whatever you did had to be done when you were totally out of your mind. Those who have never been abused or witnessed abuse do not know what it is like. They don't realize there is a horrific breaking point.

The new you, the woman who exists today, should waste no more time not seeing your loved ones. It's time for them to know you, because you are transformed, much stronger now than ever before. I

also think you should contact Wingblad and begin writing the whole story together.

One of the dearest and wisest people to enter my life was the Rev. Jay Samonie. He said, "There are no accidents in life and everything happens for a reason." He also said, "You are where you are supposed to be." Give these two statements some serious attention. See what you think.

I would be happy to send you books, tapes, whatever you wish, all because Wingblad wrote that story. I remembered reading about you at the time our friend, retired Judge Jack McDonald, heard your case. I remembered, also, that he tried to help you afterward. I am joining you now in never giving up hope that you will be able to really begin living life again.

Pat Hardy is a Bloomfield Hills resident.

LETTERS

A third candidate

A letter in the opinion page of this paper, March 24, 2016, shows how low Republican politicians are willing to sink to win office in this election year. Term-limited Kurt Heise rakes appointed

Plymouth Township Supervisor Shannon Price over the coals. Heise signs his letter as state representative, 20th District. He fails to mention that he is a candidate for Price's position.

This isn't a state official exposing local mis-

deeds, it's just one right-winger using his title to get a jump on another right-winger.

Now, I am not a fan of either of these men. Price, as I understand it, is continuing the dysfunction of his predecessor during board meetings. Heise can mark a new milestone attained during his three terms in Lansing.

It was reported this week that more children than ever live in poverty in our state. But the rich got richer. So thank you, Rep. Heise.

Maybe a third name will appear on the ballot for the August primary.

WRITE US

We welcome your Letter to the Editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We may edit for clarity, space and content. Submit letters by the following formats:

Web: www.hometownlife.com

Mail: Letters to the Editor, Canton and Plymouth Observers, 29725 Hudson Drive, Novi, MI 48377

Fax: 248-668-4547

Email: jmaliszews@hometownlife.com

If not, even though it would be considered heresy by the hard liners, Plymouth Township voters might take a cue from their Canton neighbors and vote for Democrats in November.

James Huddleston
Canton

President chooses nominee

The U.S. Constitution prescribes the president choose a nominee when a vacancy on the Supreme Court occurs. Congress must interview the person and vote yes or no.

President Barack Obama nominated Judge M. Garland to replace the late A. Scalia. Extreme Republicans in Congress refuse to fulfill the duty as written in the Constitution. Is democracy alive? This is inexcusable.

Nina Tottenberg, well known female journalist on National Public Radio, interviewed President Obama recently. I recommend reading it or listening to it.

Hannah Provenge
Donigan
Commerce Township

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Mysterious Movado wrestler to visit Canton library

The Mysterious Movado is showing off some new moves along with other local wrestlers when they visit the Canton Public Library.

Wrestlers are stepping into the ring to demonstrate some literary linguistics with area fans during a program set for 7-8 p.m. Monday, April 4, at the library, 1200 S. Canton Center.

During the library's Wrestlers Read program, fans can listen as wrestlers read stories, talk about what it's like to face off in the ring and hang out for photo opportunities.

"Our Wrestlers Read program was inspired by the WWE Wrestlemania Reading Challenge, an annual initiative that encourages kids to read," said Jack Visnaw, children's librarian. "With Wrestlers Read, we want to show kids that everybody reads, including athletes, and that reading can be fun, whether you know how to perform a



The Mysterious Movado is coming to the Canton Public Library.

vertical suplex or not." The program is free and all ages are welcome.

For more information, go to www.cantonpl.org or call 734-397-0999.

Group announces voter registration drives

The Northwest Wayne County League of Women Voters has announced three sites in Canton where it will host voter registration drives.

Voters from any community may register here:

» 12:45-2 p.m. Friday, April 1, at the Muslim Community of Western

Suburbs, or Canton Mosque, 40440 Palmer Road.

» Noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 10, at the Gurdwara Sahib Singh Sabha of Michigan, 3310 S. Canton Center.

» 10 a.m. to noon Sunday, April 10, at the Hindu Temple of Canton, 44955 Cherry Hill Road.

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OR HEARING

In the matter of name change petition for Brandon David Brewer TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including: whose address is/are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following. TAKE NOTICE: A hearing will be held on 5/3/16 at 9:30 a.m. at Michigan 3rd Circuit Court before Judge Charles S. Hegarty for the following purpose: To change the name of Brandon David Brewer to Cecilia Anne Brewer.

Published: March 31, 2016
LO-0000276753 1x4



The Canton Historical Society is looking for volunteers for tours at the Bartlett-Travis House in June to coincide with the adjacent Canton Farmers Market.

Canton Historical Society seeks volunteers for house tours

The Canton Historical Society is seeking volunteers to work as tour guides at the historic Bartlett-Travis House, in Preservation Park on Canton's west side.

Tour guides are needed from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Sunday starting June 5. The historic house is located on

Ridge, north of Cherry Hill.

The tours will coincide with hours for the adjacent Canton Farmers Market. Volunteers don't have to work for four hours or every Sunday, a move that provides some flexibility.

Bill Tesen, a longtime

Canton Historical Society member, said training will be given about the Bartlett-Travis House's history and its contents.

Anyone who is interested in Canton's history and who wishes to help the society should send an email to cantonhist@comcast.net.

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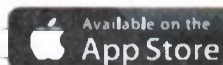


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INSIDE: CLASSIFIED, B6-7 • ENTERTAINMENT, B10 • FOOD, B11

SECTION B (CP)
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2016
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SPORTS

TIM SMITH, EDITOR
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MICHAEL VASILNEK
Canton's Noah Spencer, shown taking a swing during a 2015 game, is one of the Chiefs' top returnees.



Pitching key to Chiefs' hopes

Up-the-middle strength could spark Canton

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Veteran Canton High School baseball coach Mark Blomshield subscribes to the tried and true adage that win-

ning teams are strong up the middle.

Blomshield sees that scenario playing out for the 2016 Chiefs, looking to improve from a 19-15 season last spring.

"During this off-season, we understood we have a few holes to fill due to graduation and our staff is confident that we have made the necessary adjustments to be a solid all-around ball club," Blomshield said. "We are strong up the

See CHIEFS, Page B4

BLOWING THE WHISTLE

KICK IN THE GUT

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Go to any scholastic, club-level or rec league athletic event in any city or town across Michigan and you will find one constant: one (or more) referee who is there to ensure fair play and following of the rules. A team might be short of players or lack an assistant coach, but without a man or woman in the proverbial striped shirt, there is no game or match or meet.

In recent years, officials in all sports have come under fire, whether from overheated parents, increased social media or disrespectful players and coaches. Many leagues and governing bodies are having a difficult time finding enough adults to act as officials for youth sports events.

Observer & Eccentric reporters conducted a variety of interviews in the last several weeks, with referees, officials, executives and others who are involved in the recruitment and training of sports officials. We found that, while many still enjoy the unique thrill of being part of the game, others are being driven from the playing field, some haunted by the killing two years ago of local soccer referee John Bienowicz.

Today begins a two-part package of stories, "Blowing the Whistle." Come back April 7 for the second installment.

INSIDE

- » Young official says education key to improving attitudes, B2
- » Former player, coach sees his sport from a new angle, B3

COMING APRIL 7

- » "You don't have a horse in the race," referee says
- » Former prep player moves straight into officiating
- » Teenaged umpire talks about leaving game for good
- » MHSAA makes recruiting, retaining officials top priority



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As much as Mario D'Agostino (left) and Kevin Winningham love calling soccer games at High Velocity Sports in Canton and at other area venues, their patience is being tested by parents and others who jump at any chance to criticize dedicated refs.

Veteran soccer refs blame social media, culture of disrespect and 'win-at-all-costs' mentality for dwindling pool of officials

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Mario D'Agostino's hands trembled as he held them up, presenting the ultimate irony. One of his wrists was adorned with a yellow and orange wrist band with a simple but direct message: "Respect the Game." The veteran youth and high school soccer official — the referee coordinator at High Velocity Sports in Canton — had just witnessed a troubling incident in which a young female soccer ref was verbally abused following a game by off-the-rail parents and coaches.

"I got parents up there that are just berating the referee and it's a young girl," D'Agosti-

no said during a recent interview at the Michigan Avenue soccer facility. "They're just going crazy. There's a coach who just is ripping into me, telling me 'Have you ever played soccer? Have you ever been in a stadium?' That has absolutely nothing to do with youth soccer.

"My hands are shaking right now because I just got done with the confrontation. This is U-7 boys up here right now ... this is the problems we're having. The parents are up there all screaming and yelling at the referee."

According to D'Agostino and fellow soccer official Kevin Winningham, also a

See REFEREES, Page B2

Longtime official keeps things in Czech

Brad Emons
Staff Writer

With more than 30 years of experience, Bob Czech has virtually seen it all as a registered high school official.

The 60-year-old from Berkley, a retired Detroit police officer who also worked for Farmer's Insurance for 10 years in auto theft claims, remains as an active Michigan High School Athletic Association official while working behind the scenes as an assignor for the Metro Detroit Athletic Officials group.

The officiating landscape has changed dramatically over the past 30 years for Czech, who is now an assignor for the 24-school Kensington Lakes Activities Association in both basketball and football. He is also a baseball and softball assignor for the

23-school Oakland Activities Association.

"When I first started out, all the officials had to call the A.D.s and get their games," Czech said. "Then, a few years later, I got a call from George Lovich (former Livonia Franklin A.D.) and he wanted me to become an assignor.

"George Lovich, Ron Holland (former North Farmington A.D.) and Paul Cummings (Salem A.D.) — those guys mentored me and got me into it."

Changes in the wind

Czech said the procedure for booking games took a different course during "the late 1980s and early 1990s."

"It's changed a lot ... how you get your games, how you get trained, coaches, behavior of parents, etc, etc," Czech said.

See CZECH, Page B2

BOB JEANNOTTE



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BLOWING THE WHISTLE

REFEREES

Continued from Page B1

familiar face at High Velocity as assistant head referee for the Canton Soccer Club, such attacks are on the rise almost every day.

Walking away

As unchecked attacks in social media now carry over to real life conflict, as venom escalates, the number of registered soccer officials across the board is plummeting.

Winningham said annual attrition is at about 25 percent. Just as troubling, fewer are signing up with the United States Soccer Federation.

"These kinds of problems we have with parents," D'Agostino said. "Just verbally abusing these children to the point where they're not interested in being out there."

Who could blame them? No one would want to be faced with maximum abuse for a few bucks more than the minimum wage.

"If a parent, if a player, would step in to become a referee," Winningham said, "they would have a greater understanding of a game, as well as greater respect for those who are working games — whether it's an 11-year-old girl upstairs or a 50-year-old guy out on the field."

Nodding emphatically in agreement was D'Agostino.

"I think one of the greatest things that I wish could happen is that every parent or coach could officiate a game," D'Agostino said. "Put them behind the whistle. And I guarantee you their perspective of the game would totally change, in all sports. To see what it's like to make that split-second decision."

Remembering John

Both Canton men always wear the "Respect the Game" wristband when they officiate contests. And they do plenty, at the youth and club levels and for the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

"I always make it a point to roll it up (almost to his fingers) during my captain's meeting," Winningham said. "Just to make a point: 'We're here to respect the game, gentlemen.'"

Yet there are times when both men can't help but wonder what's happening, why violence, trash talk and overall unruly behavior directed at refs of all ages is threatening the lifeblood of their sport.

That unwanted element already is costing much more than that. D'Agostino and Winningham also wear their wristbands as a constant reminder of dear friend John Bienowicz, a Westland man and longtime official who was fatally punched in the head in summer 2014 by an angry player during an adult amateur league contest in Livonia.

Bienowicz lost his life because the player, Bassel Saad, 36, of Dearborn, went berserk when Bienowicz issued a red card against him (thus ejecting him from the match).

Saad eventually pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and is serving 8-15 years in prison.

Earlier this year, a player who had been kicked out of a men's game in Argentina reportedly was so upset that he



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Whenever and wherever Mario D'Agostino and Kevin Winningham go to officiate soccer games, they wear these wristbands to honor the memory of friend and fellow referee John Bienowicz.

retrieved a gun from his personal belongings, marched back on to the pitch and shot the referee to death.

"Why should we be fearful for our lives now when we officiate games?" D'Agostino said. "We have our families telling us (to give up refereeing) ... my wife's saying that. But she knows and (Winningham's) wife knows, it's imbedded in us. It really means a lot for us to do these games."

"But yet we've got family members now who are telling us to slow down a little bit? When you need to be escorted to your car after a game by an athletic director, after a high school game, that's really, really bad. That's what it's getting to right now."

What now?

Another thing it's getting to is a crossroads for soccer lifers such as D'Agostino and Winningham, who routinely pack each Saturday with an endless string of games to call simply because not enough refs are in the mix.

"They want to limit us to three or four (games), but there's nobody there," Winningham said. "We keep saying yes. (This is) our weekend; we both work (regular jobs), we have wives at home ... I do it because I love this game. This is a beautiful game."

"There's nothing better than having a kid when he was 10-11 years old and then you get to see him play at 14 or 15 and then you get to watch him play in high school."

Chiming in was D'Agostino, agreeing that "there's not enough referees to officiate all these games. Guys like us, who it's meaning a lot, are doing way too many games than what we should be. We hate saying no; we love doing what we do. But by the sixth or seventh

game on a Saturday afternoon, we're exhausted."

But both men acknowledge they need some help on the pitch. Is it ever going to happen?

Winningham would like to see more parents consider give officiating a try, perhaps even the players as they mature. Doing just that was his own son Tyler, a member of Canton High School's 2011 state championship team.

"I would love other parents, other people, who have worked the game, to come back," Winningham said. "They're just not anymore and the reason is, 'Why do I want to go stand out there and get yelled at for an hour-and-a-half and get belittled by people, when I could be doing something better?'"

"We need re-education and re-commitment to what this game is all about, which is teaching kids life skills."

Basic values

That means people returning to tried and true values such as showing some respect for authority. Also putting cellphones into pockets instead of videotaping every move an official makes — good or bad.

And don't forget good old-fashioned communication rather than confrontation.

Still, despite honest efforts to reverse the trend, nastiness continues.

"The clubs are doing a much better job compared to a decade ago, communicating what is expected," Winningham said. "But there's no accountability to what is expected."

See REFEREES, Page B3

College player says education the key to curbing anger

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

It isn't just middle-aged guys such as Mario D'Agostino and Kevin Winningham that have some issues with the way soccer referees are treated in the anything goes world of 2016.

Yes, even 20-somethings don't like the current landscape where every perceived misstep by an official is videotaped for the social media masses to peruse. Or where every so-called soccer "expert" can anonymously rip a ref and start the snowball of anger rolling down the hill.

One of them is Tyler Winningham, a longtime soccer player even though he is in his early 20s. He was part of the Canton varsity boys soccer state championship team in 2011 and also competed with the Canton Soccer Club.

After high school, he's played at Schoolcraft College and Lawrence Technological University and also refs and coaches the sport at the club soccer level.

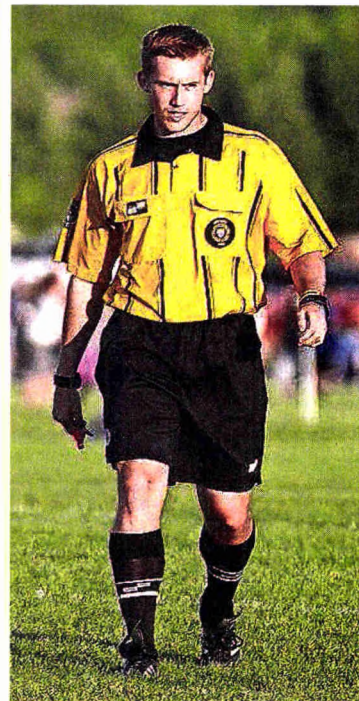
Although Tyler Winningham was unable to attend a recent roundtable discussion at High Velocity Sports, he responded via email to several questions that also were delved into by D'Agostino and Kevin Winningham.

Q: As a player, referee and coach, do you have a unique perspective in how you deal with game officials?

TW: I think being a player, referee and coach does give me a unique perspective towards how I deal with game officials. I think when you coach vs. play vs. ref at the different levels available, it makes things frustrating but enjoyable. At each level you have a different expectations of the referees. I coach U-9 and U-10 boys, so I will rarely yell at referees at that level because they are typically either new young referees who are nervous and do not know exactly what they are doing or they are older referees who only walk all game because they are far out of their prime. The expectation when I play in college or semi-pro, you are expecting to have top officials and you respect those game officials much more because for the most part, they are very competent but you do have to understand that referees will make mistakes at all levels.

Q: Have you considered stepping away from being a referee due to the increasing safety concerns, with highly publicized stories about soccer refs being killed or injured by fans and players?

TW: I have never considered stepping away from refereeing due to increasing safety concerns. I understand the safety and understand that players and fans can be stupid, but I have also come to realize that when players and coaches and fans are yelling, there is usually a reason. Yes, some yell for stupid reasons because



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Tyler Winningham works a soccer game during the 2015 Canton Cup. He also plays and coaches the sport, giving him a unique perspective on the way officials are treated.

they do not understand the game. But for the most part, certain coaches and players only yell because maybe you did mess up. One thing that I try to focus on when I am refereeing is game management.

When events happen and safety becomes an issue, it usually is because the build up of events. It isn't just a one time sporadic moment. When issues arise during the game, players/parents/coaches yelling at the officials or each other, parents being disrespectful and ruining the atmosphere, those things need to be taken care of right away. When they are not properly taken care of or handled, they escalate to a point that is no longer controllable and the referee crew is then in danger. Game management starting from the moment you arrive at a game to the moment you leave a game is a key to staying safe and maintaining a smooth game.

Q: How much do you con-fab with your dad about these issues? Are you seeing these issues the same way or differently? Please explain why, either way.

TW: I think my dad and I partially agree with the issues. There are multiple aspects to the issues going on and the dwindling of referees. The two main things I see are the culture we live in and the thinness of skin my people now a days. I have thick skin. Kevin has thick skin. Referees today have very thin skin. One small complaint from a coach or parent throws (other refs) off their game and they feel shaken up. After they feel shaken up, everything goes downhill from there and they keep making bad decision after bad decision and that escalates the situation and parents/coaches get heated

See EDUCATION, Page B3

CZECH

Continued from Page B1

The MDAO boasts more than 400 members, "but a lot of guys belong to two or three different associations," whether it's Downriver or the East Side, according to Czech.

Another challenge Czech and MDOA faced came in 2008, when the MSHAA lost its gender equity lawsuit, forcing coinciding girls and boys seasons. Volleyball moved from the winter to the fall, while girls basketball went from fall to winter, among other changes.

"They're working more than they have before," Czech said. "And obviously, if they're older, it's a little rougher on the body. Whereas before you'd work the girls (games) in the fall and the boys in the winter, so you only worked a couple of times a week. Some of these guys are working three and four times a week, maybe five."

Many officials have had to transition during the week back and forth between boys and girls basketball games, which can also be a challenge and an adjustment.

"The boys game is much faster, but the rules are the same," Czech said. "You have to interpret the rules the same. The boys game is obviously faster than the girls, so you have to adjust a little bit, but like I said, the rules are the same. We generally have to be neutral. Boys are stronger, so they're going to be able to take a little more hitting and bumping a little bit, whereas females aren't quite as strong, so you have to adjust a little bit."

Knowing the rulebook

Officials also have to adapt year-to-year to rules changes and points of emphasis handed down from both the MHSAA and the National Federation of High School Associations.

"From the people in Lansing (MHSAA), Mark Uyl and Nate Hampton, they're the ones that kind of give us guidance," Czech said. "They're kind of like our bosses. They give us feedback and they just tell us what we need to do. Kind of like a teacher when a principal tells them to do something. Well, the principal is the boss, right?"

In the KLAA, varsity football and basketball officials are paid normally \$60 to \$65



BRAD EMONS

Bob Czech (center) has been officiating for more than 30 years and heads the Metro Detroit Athletic Officials group. Working on his crew at a recent basketball game are Plymouth's Paul Woodard (left) and Southfield's Darcy Gitchuway.

per game, while it's \$45 to \$50 for freshman and JV.

"We're a little behind other states because we just haven't caught up, but hopefully we'll catch up eventually," Czech said.

Czech said his biggest challenge now is recruiting younger officials.

"The problem is the average

anywhere?" We say, 'Hey, want to become an official?' If you played high school sports, we want to train and mentor you. It's the local associations that have to go out and hustle the guys."

Ongoing shortage

The shortage of officials remains an ongoing concern for Czech, particularly from an assignor's standpoint.

"Basketball, we're kind of OK, but we need more and football we need some more," he said. "The problem is baseball. We don't nearly have enough baseball umpires. It's at 4 o'clock and it's in the spring when it's cold. It doesn't warm up around here until the middle of May, so the first two or three weeks it's ice cold. And it's 4 o'clock in the afternoon and most people are working unless you're retired or work midnights."

The MDOA assignor said there are a couple of necessary components to in becoming a registered MHSAA official.

"You got to have thick skin and common sense," Czech said. "And be like in your job ... flexible. It's an avocation, not a vocation."

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BLOWING THE WHISTLE



JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Zaim Cunmulaj referees a match during the Farmington Public Schools tournament.

"It's a lot harder than what I thought it would be. Being an official now, I look at the game a lot differently."

ZAIM CUNMULAJ
high school wrestling official

This official has a new appreciation for the job

Former player, coach sees wrestling competition from a whole new angle

Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

When a friend pushed the idea of being a wrestling official, Zaim Cunmulaj decided to give it a try. He was not enamored with the job after his initial experience.

"By the time I was done, I said, 'This not for me; it's too hard,'" Cunmulaj said. "He said: 'Don't worry; it's hard for everybody at first.'"

"I went home and was exhausted, mentally and physically. He pushed me into hanging in there. I came back. I'm very glad I did come back."

Cunmulaj, 45, recently completed his third season of officiating matches at the middle and high school levels.

An all-state wrestler at North Farmington High School and former college football player, Cunmulaj is still fit and looks as if he could compete today.

After a period of adjustment, Cunmulaj adapted to the rigors of being back on the mats.

"Everyone thinks officiating is easy," he said. "It's difficult to do, to be in the right spot at the right time. In wrestling, you have to anticipate what the next move is going to be."

"It's a lot harder than what I thought it would be. Being an official now, I look at the game a lot differently. I'll go, 'Wow, that has to be hard on the referee, taking all that heat.'"

"We're human. Sure, I've made mistakes. But I totally look at the officiating differently than I did."

Playing experience helps

It helps in the case of Cunmulaj, who was a heavyweight wrestler and a defensive lineman at East Carolina University, to know the sport and have competed in it.

He also is an assistant football coach and was the wrestling head coach at North Farmington in the 1990s, but there's still more to being a good official.

"It's a challenge to know all the rules," he said. "You have to know them in a split second. You can't open the book. You have to be ready to go or coaches are all over you."

"They'll take advantage of you if they see you don't know the rules. They'll let you know and that will travel (throughout the coaching ranks)."

"There was a lot of stuff I had to learn. A lot of stuff had changed since I had wrestled. There are changes every year to the rule book."

Cunmulaj recalled one incident when an understanding coach took the time to share his knowledge with him.

"This what kept me in officiating," Cunmulaj said. "I had made a mistake. He said, 'Let me open the book and explain it to you.' He was wonderful. He didn't scream at me; I didn't have to put my guard up."

"He said: 'Please, stay with it. We're glad to have you in the sport.' He was encouraging and it helped."

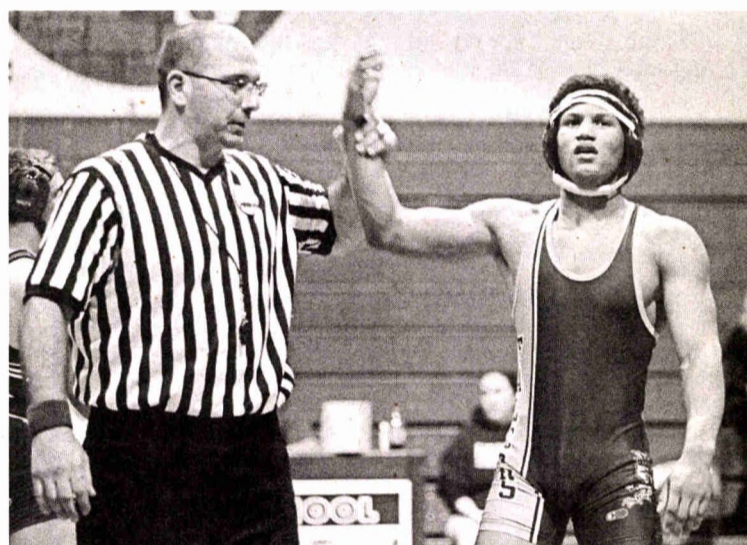
The right balance

Cunmulaj tries to find the right balance between being an authority figure and a calm, understanding figure, too.

Other officials and coaches



Cunmulaj



Zaim Cunmulaj declares Farmington's Gyasi Davis the winner during a match this past season.

JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

have told him it helps to have the deep voice he does, he noted.

"I try to be as invisible as possible," Cunmulaj said. "If I make a mistake, I'll walk over and apologize and say, 'I'm sorry; I didn't see that.' I try to combine the two things and get the best of two worlds for the coaches and the referees."

"There was one incident this year at a tournament. A guy was hanging on the railing. He leaned over and screamed something at me. I said, 'Sir, if you want to stay in the gym, you might want to sit down.' He sat down."

"He came to me later and said: 'I'm sorry about what I said.' I said: 'I understand; everybody gets upset sometimes.'"

Sometimes, Cunmulaj's reputation precedes him with coaches who've seen the tape of him wrestling a black bear 20 years ago at a promotional event.

"I look back and say, 'What was I thinking?'" Cunmulaj

said. "A couple guys wrestled him before me. As soon I got up there, (the owner) told the bear to stand up. My eyes opened like half-dollars."

"We kind of wrestled around. He was just kind of playing. It was something to remember."

"As a young referee, you get a lot of good feedback from coaches. Some have said, jokingly, if I did make a mistake, they weren't going to tell me."

It's no good to yell

The worst thing an athlete or spectator can do is yell at an official, according to Cunmulaj, a resident of Walled Lake.

"I've never had a problem with that," he said. "Most coaches seem to do a good job of keeping spectators in line. It's something that happens in every sport."

"You walk into any gym and hear that. You just have to let it roll off your back. You just kind of block it out."

"I've seen kids sitting there

yelling at referees. I'll walk over to him and say, 'Coach, this guy or that guy needs to watch what he's doing or keep it to himself.' I've had very little problems with anybody."

As a former coach, a major motivation for Cunmulaj being an official is to encourage and help young people.

"When a match is over and a guy walks by with his head down, I'll ask, 'What year are you?' I'll say, 'I didn't do very well as a freshman, either. Keep your head up and stick with it. You're a very good wrestler,'" Cunmulaj said. "Most of the time, he'll pick his head up and smile."

Like most sports, the Michigan High School Athletic Association is in need of more officials in wrestling, he added.

"Some guys are getting ready to retire," Cunmulaj said. "We need to get more younger guys involved, guys younger than me or just out of high school."

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EDUCATION

Continued from Page B2

when the referees are bad. At the same time the culture we live in now is ignorant. People feel the need to speak out about anything and everything. Most of the parents yelling have no idea what they are yelling about. Parents are competitive and get way into the game. Instead of enjoying the game and watching their son or daughter run around

and play soccer, they just want to win and yell as loud as they can for no real reason.

Q: In your opinion, what needs to happen for this current situation to be alleviated?

TW: Players, coaches and parents need to be educated. There is a current system in place, but it is a very loose and relaxed system. FIFA and U.S. Soccer has had movements like 'Say No to Racism' or 'Respect the Game.' The English Football Association re-

leased a commercial last year about parents yelling at youth games magnifying how embarrassing it is and how you ruin the entire game for everyone. But not enough is being done for referees. It either has to start from the top at U.S. Soccer or it needs to start from the clubs. Everyone knows that the treatment of referees is terrible. Referees are verbally abused, (and) physically abused in certain situations. But it has become a problem that no one wants to resolve. When an issue does come up

about a referee being assaulted, abused, killed, as a referee community we are aware. MSYSA is aware. But U.S. Soccer, the top dog, is not doing enough to protect soccer referees or educating parents and players. I do not include coaches in that because coaches nowadays have to take a referee portion test/module when they get new licenses so coaches are very knowledgeable on the laws of the game."

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"I understand the safety and understand that players and fans can be stupid, but ... when players and coaches and fans are yelling, there is usually a reason."

TYLER WINNINGHAM



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

On any given Saturday, Mario D'Agostino (left) and Kevin Winningham expect to work several games, at the very least. Every year, fewer are returning to officiate contests in youth, high school and adult rec leagues.

REFEREES

Continued from Page B2

"So they tell (the parents), don't approach your coach, have a 24-hour rule before you approach a coach about a problem with your son or daughter. Don't yell at the coach, don't yell at the players on the field. Let the coach coach the kids."

"So all of those are great things. But many times, during tryouts when they communicate that at the beginning of the season, once the season begins, all of that accountability goes out the window, it's just a free-fall for parents to say whatever they want to."

As the young official found out first-hand on this particular day at High Velocity, that lowly standard applies to those whose kids are playing for a rec league participation trophy — those who probably never

will compete for a World Cup someday.

"We give little \$2 trophies to these little kids that are absolutely meaningless in a weird sense," D'Agostino said. "But it seems like it's so much for these parents."

Inexpensive trophies aside, today's "win at any cost" mentality is something that troubles both veteran refs.

"That's something I just can't understand," D'Agostino said. "I just think it also comes with maturity and age. The younger (parents) tend to be a little bit worse because of the fact they are new to the sport and a lot think their (children) are superstars, that they're going to be playing in the big leagues someday."

"When it all comes down to it, it's just a game."

Win off the field

What's the big deal about 10-year-old kids winning when

there are so many other positives to be gleaned from an hour or two on a soccer field?

"That shouldn't be the ultimate goal," Winningham said with a nod. "The ultimate goal should be fun, development of our kids, friendships, developing skills of communication, commitment, hard work and discipline. And it's all about the trophy."

Perhaps what should be doled out instead are those wristbands to respect the game — and each other.

They hope it isn't too late for that already.

"Unless some changes are going to be made, I don't see it getting better," D'Agostino said. "I really don't ... Society changes. It really starts in the home."

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BASEBALL PREVIEW — PART 1

Heating up for the new season

Wildcats in Florida preparing to jump out of the gate

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

This week, Plymouth's varsity baseball players are soaking up the sun with spring workouts down in Florida.

And when they return to Michigan for Monday's season opener at Ann Arbor Skyline (4:30 p.m.), third-year head coach Jason Crain is as confident as ever that the Wildcats will bring the heat.

"We look forward to coming together as a team and building upon the strong base (that) previous classes have built," Crain said.

It doesn't hurt to have an outstanding nucleus of returning players who were key to the 2015 team going 27-13-1 and winning the KLAA South Division and first-ever Division 1 district title — not to mention establishing a new program record for victories.

Captains Pete Carravallah and Evan Claggett "look to lead



Two key members of the Plymouth varsity baseball team are seniors Josh Sulak (left) and Kyle Wolter.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

a strong group of returning starters, including Josh Sulak, Kyle Wolter and Ryan Elliott."

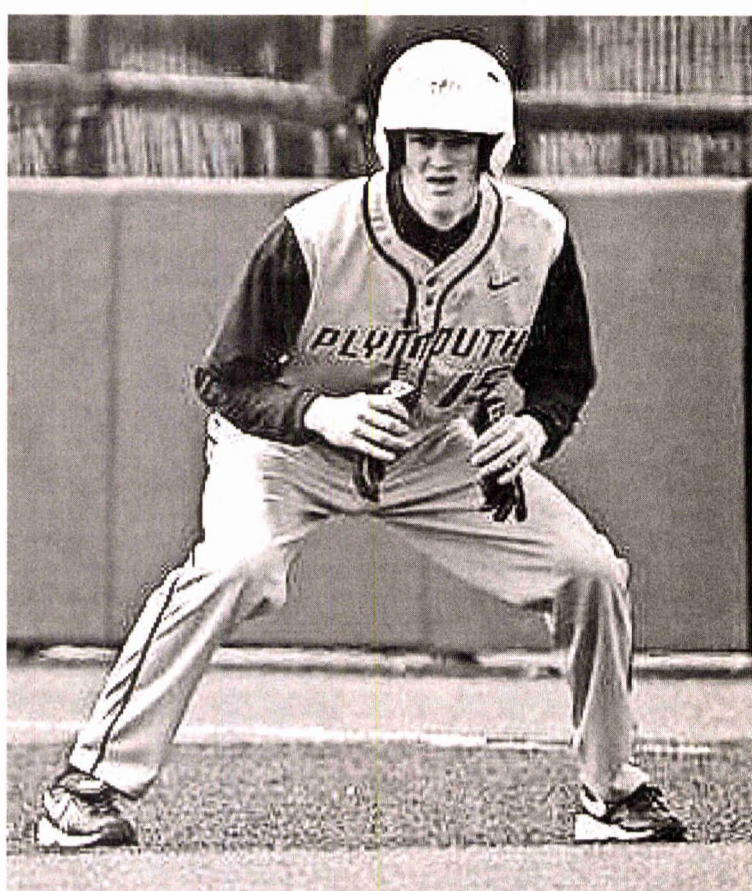
That standout quintet will be augmented by several other players who contributed to the 2015 success. Those include Owen Spryszak, Justin Raylean, Mike Farrere, Regan Fleisher, Taylor Burke and Josh Janovsky.

Add to the mix a group of newcomers in whom Crain sees big things to come, in Mike Matovina, Brenden Lac-

orato, Austin Scheffer, Chase Timko, Mike Wischer, Nik Patel, Jacob MacBrien, Max Marco, Evan Good and Chase Every.

After facing Skyline, the Wildcats will host Novi Detroit Catholic Central at 4 p.m. Friday, April 8, at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park.

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One of the catalysts for Plymouth's 2016 attack will be senior spark plug Pete Carravallah.

MICHAEL VASILNEK



Forward Clayton Keller, shown from a recent game, is one of several top NHL prospects on the U.S. NTDP Under-18 team. Keller and his teammates will play their final home game at 7 p.m. Thursday.

RENA LAVERTY | USA HOCKEY

USA HOCKEY NTDP UNDER-18 TEAM

Last chance to check future NHLers

Top-level NHL prospects Keller, Bellows, Krys to play final home game Thursday

USA Hockey's National Team Development Program Under-18 team hosts the Muskegon Lumberjacks at 7 p.m. Thursday at USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth Township.

The United States Hockey League tilt will be the final home game of the season for the U18s, who will play April 14-24 in the upcoming U18 World Hockey Championships at Grand Forks, N.D.

Students with proper ID will be admitted to the game for \$5. Other specials will

include \$1 hot dogs and \$2 burgers. Call the USA Hockey Arena box office at 734-453-8400 for more information.

Thursday is the last chance to see top-rated NHL prospects Clayton Keller (U18 leading scorer with 29 goals, 56 assists, 85 points in 52 games), Kieffer Bellows (40-28-68) and Chad Krys (3-21-24, in 43 games) at USA Hockey Arena.

The U18s come into Thursday's game with a record of 12-3-1 at USA Hockey Arena

against USHL and college teams.

In addition, Muskegon (25-23-3-4) features the USHL's leading scorer, Rem Pitlick (43-38-81 in 51 games), and Dallas Stars-draftee Matej Paulovic (19-29-48 in 44 games).

Meanwhile, the U.S. NTDP Under-17 team does have another home appearance around the corner.

That contest is slated for 7 p.m. Friday, April 8, against Youngstown.

BOYS GOLF PREVIEW — PART 2

Post-Trosper era beginning for Chiefs

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Donnie Trosper, an all-state Super Team member in 2015, is golfing at the University of Central Florida.

Other ultra-talented golfers such as Noah Lindbauer, Chris Dooley, Hunter Schlammpp and Josh Johnson also graduated not long after Canton's varsity boys golf team finished last season with a third-place showing at the Division 1 state finals.

The Chiefs went 6-2 in the Kensington Conference and 4-1 in the KLAA South Division.

Still, veteran Chiefs coach Tom Alles is looking forward

to this season to see how quickly a handful of returnees mesh with promising newcomers.

"I think it will be difficult to repeat the success that the 2015 team had, considering we graduated so many talented golfers from that squad," Alles said. "I anticipate that we will rely heavily on our three seniors, Brian Oldani, Phillip Conrad and Brenden Chan, for leadership."

One of the team's top performers could be junior Suhars Potluri, who already has extensive varsity experience.

Another junior to keep an eye on is Dominic Dimaya, who Alles said has performed well during tryouts. Other juniors include Curt Yun and Ryan Witczak.

Canton has plenty of young talent on the roster that could help the team fill the void of the graduations.

"Paul Maurer has the lowest average so far out of a promising sophomore class that also includes D.J. Jablonski and Patrick McDougall," Alles said.

And another sophomore, Ben Samoy, along with freshman Steven Hess, posted the lowest average of first-year players coming out for tryouts.

"A lack of overall varsity experience could be an issue for the 2016 team," Alles said. "We lack the depth that the 2015 team utilized so well."

"If our veteran players can perform consistently and we can get some help quickly from a few of our less experienced players, I am hopeful that we can be competitive in our division and in the KLAA Kensington as a whole."

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Potluri

GIRLS SOCCER PREVIEW — PART 1

Rocks hope to hit the pitch running

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

It never helps any team to lose an all-state performer like Kaitlyn Pelech, who was stellar in the back for the 2015 Salem varsity girls soccer team.

But second-year head coach George Tomasso is enthusiastic that the Rocks (10-6-2 last year in the Kensington Conference) can fill the void caused by Pelech's graduation — and then some.

"I'm very excited for the upcoming season," Tomasso said. "Our program has a lot of returning varsity players, as well as some underclassmen that could make a tremendous impact."

The Rocks do boast a trio of outstanding senior returnees and co-captains in Caroline Simko (midfield), Marisa Martin (forward) and Hailey Katulski (defense).

Simko, Martin and Katulski highlight a deep senior class.

Others include Pamela Beas (defense), Kamrey Dingelday (defense), Annalyse Drouillard (defense/midfield), Sara Hawks (defense/midfield), Miranda VanDerRoest (midfield) and goalies Casey Kotrba, Abbey Ozenaric and Jillian Yuhas.

Juniors on the roster include Olivia Harkins (midfield), Jayna Lenders (mid-



Hailey Katulski (left) is one of three Salem senior co-captains who will be called upon for ability on the field and team leadership.

JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

field), Nikki Pilon (forward), Bailee Soper (forward), Gabby Teodorescu (defense/midfield) and goalkeeper Skyler Grant.

Salem's lineup also will be dotted by some younger performers eager to gain playing time.

Those players include sophomore forwards Katie Coleman, Anna Faybrick and Ari Finn and sophomore defenders Gabriella Mazzuca, Rhona Nicol and Brittney Simpson.

"I'm looking forward in seeing how our team jells together," Tomasso said.

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CHIEFS

Continued from Page B1

middle and our entire pitching staff returns from last season."

Seniors Greg Goodbred, Mitch Zelenak and Tyler Byers will head the pitching staff, with senior Noah Spencer (the starting shortstop) another key hurler when needed.

"Each threw significant innings last season," Blomshield said. "And we are expecting them to be solid contributors."

They will be augmented by senior pitcher Nick Sprosek (starting third baseman) and sophomore Lou Baechler, who will chip in as an infielder and pitcher.

Bar set high

Canton will have to make up for the graduation of standouts such as catcher Nick Romanowski, now playing for Schoolcraft College's debut baseball team. The Chiefs' pitching staff will now throw to senior catcher Mike Flaishans, one of three players new to the starting lineup.

"We return six of our nine starting position players," Blomshield said. "This ball club has very solid depth and we expect to be a highly competitive team this season. We have set the bar extremely high and it will be interesting to see how this group of seniors responds to the challenges of our confer-

"During this off-season, we understood we have a few holes to fill due to graduation and our staff is confident that we have made the necessary adjustments to be a solid all-around ball club."

MARK BLOMSHIELD
Canton coach

ence and non-conference schedule."

Spencer is viewed as an essential component both on offense and defense, providing a strong bat as well as range and athleticism at shortstop.

His keystone partner will be either junior Justin Dolney or sophomore Andrew Krafft.

On the corners will be Zidzik at first base and Sprosek at third, both also expected to provide some thump for the Chiefs.

Blomshield will have some roster flexibility, too, with Baechler along with juniors Jake Dattilio and Justin Mattson, who "will also be expected to contribute" wherever they are needed on the field or in the lineup.

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SOFTBALL PREVIEW — PART 1

Chiefs will look to set the pace this season

Canton ready to push the envelope in 2016

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

The “fast and the furious” could very well apply to Canton’s varsity softball team, with a roster of players ready and able to spring to the top of the KLAA South Division standings.

That’s the plan, as far as Chiefs head coach Al White is concerned. He is optimistic that his team will step it up even more from last season’s 24-14 overall record.

“Good, but not up to Canton’s standards,” White, the longtime Madonna University softball coach, wrote in an email to the Observer. “We fought the injury bug last year. You got to be good and a little lucky and stay away from injuries.”

The Chiefs feature a future Detroit Titans player in

senior outfielder and co-captain Elizabeth Yager; she batted .513 and registered 30 stolen bases despite missing a month of action last year.

Another senior standout is co-captain Mackenna Payne, “who will be in the circle for us.”

Payne and other Canton pitchers will throw to senior catchers Victoria Porter and Maddie Stowe (who also plays outfield) or sophomore catcher Hannah Hajdel as the Chiefs have a solid depth chart at the position.

White said four juniors are just starting to enter their own, with each player “playing a major part in our team success.”

That group includes co-captain and shortstop Olivia Grant (the No. 2 hitter in the lineup), second baseman Sydney Dawson, third baseman/pitcher Peyton Philbeck and outfielder/infielder Allayha Griggs.

Heart of order

With a lineup of contact hitters and speed merchants that can put pressure on the opposing defense, another difference-maker is sophomore co-captain Izzy Dawson, who swatted 29 doubles last year.

“Izzy will be in the third slot of the lineup,” White said. “She was our shortstop last year, but we will move her to first base this year.”

Zajdel is set to bat cleanup and will be penciled in either at catcher, third base or designated hitter.

“She missed a lot of time last year with a shoulder injury, but she looks healthy this year and ready to go,” White said.

Rounding out the team will be three sophomores up from junior varsity and intriguing freshman Nicole Dawson (cousin of Sydney and Izzy Dawson).

The sophomores are Samantha Mattern (outfield),



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Canton senior outfielder Elizabeth Yager, shown in this undated file photo, brings a standout all-around game to the squad.

Morgan Stephens (outfield-first base) and Aja Penick (outfield), of whom White said “all have outstanding speed” and are ready to move up to the varsity level.

Perhaps the X-factor will be Nicole Dawson, a “very good athlete” who will pitch and play infield.

White said the Chiefs will need to handle a strong

schedule, including state-ranked teams Plymouth, Northville, Clarkston, Waterford Kettering and Bay City Central.

According to the district website, the season opens Friday, April 11, at home against South Lyon.

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BOYS BASKETBALL STATE FINALS

Raiders fall short in first appearance in Class A final

Top-ranked Jesuit wins state championship with 69-49 win over North

Dan O'Meara
Staff Writer

It was a disappointing finish for the North Farmington varsity boys basketball team and its fans Saturday after a great run through the Class A state tournament.

The Raiders, though they were considerable underdogs to top-ranked University of Detroit-Jesuit, had their hopes and sights set on winning it all. But so did the undefeated Cubs, who claimed the school's first state championship with a 69-49 victory at the Breslin Center in East Lansing.

With 11 seniors on this year's team, North made history by getting past the regional final to the last day of the season, finishing with a 24-3 record and a school mark for single-season wins.

“I can't say enough about this group of kids, what they've meant to our program, what they've meant to our school and the North Farmington community,” coach Todd Negoshian said.

“They left an impression, not just from a basketball standpoint, but a life standpoint on how to behave, how to carry yourself. It goes way beyond the basketball court and there aren't enough words to say how proud I am of them.”

Scoring wizard

U-D senior guard Cassius Winston showed the crowd of nearly 10,000 and a television viewing audience why he is the 2016 Mr. Basketball Award winner.

The Michigan State recruit scored a game-high 31 points on 14-of-16 shooting with two 3-point baskets and a free throw to go with nine assists and four rebounds.

“We felt, if we could try to keep Cassius out of the paint, we'd give ourselves a chance to win,” Negoshian said.

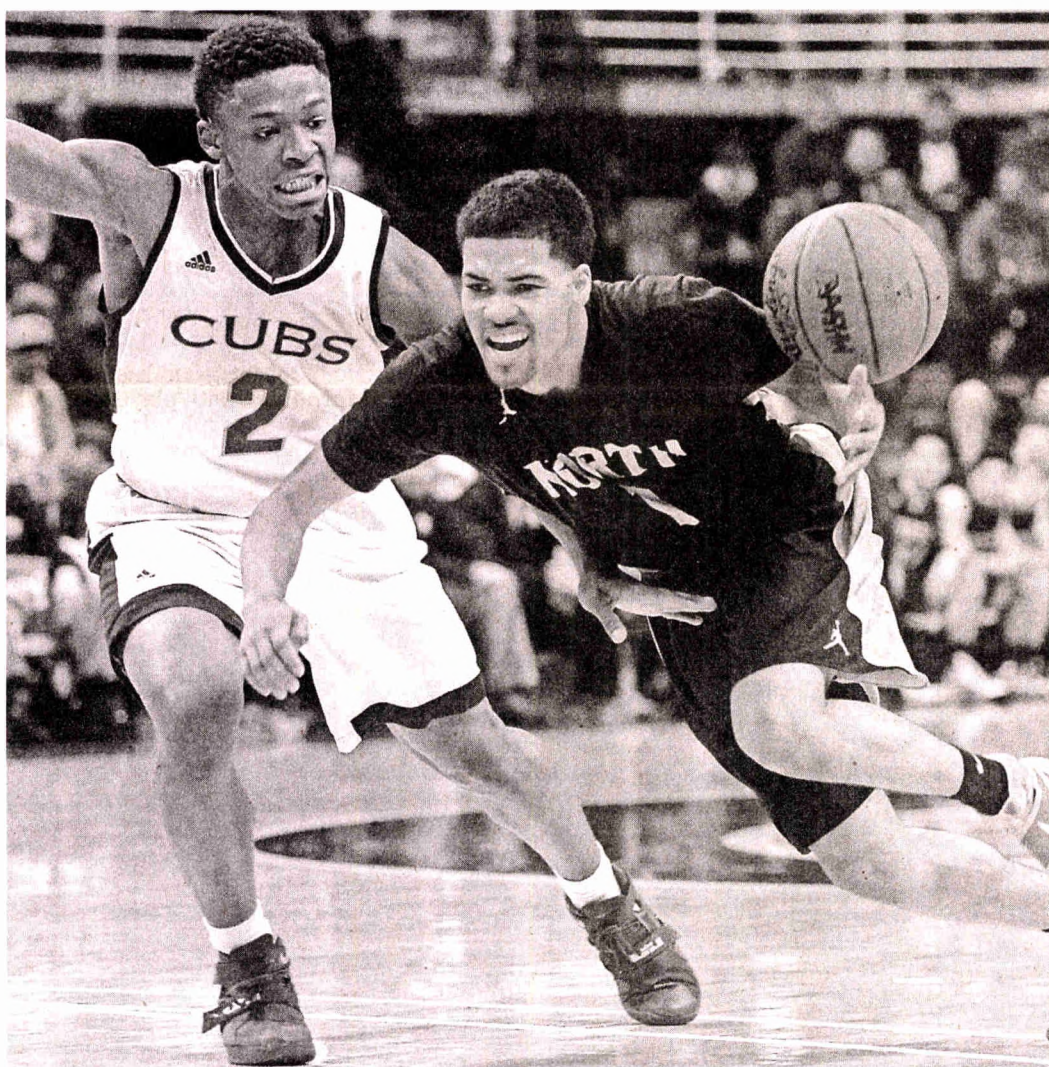
“That's the best I've seen him play in four years.”

“I don't know if it was the big stage, the final game, but that's the Cassius that's going to Michigan State and he was really damn good tonight.”

Winston was able to penetrate the lane with his ball-handling skills and scored the majority of his points on drives to the basket.

“This one of those days I knew I would need my best performance,” the 6-foot-1 Winston said. “It was going to be my last high school game, the last chance at winning a state championship.”

“I had to go out and play



JOHN STORMZAND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

North Farmington senior Billy Thomas drives past U-D's Elijah Collins in the state final.

my best game. I was zoned in, focused and ready to go. I was scoring the basketball, so my teammates kept going to me.”

'A great season'

Junior guard Scott Nelson helped dash the Raiders' hopes, coming off the bench to hit a pair of threes and score 13 points on outside shooting.

Ikechukwu Eke, one of two 6-foot-9 starters for the Cubs, had 10 points and 13 rebounds. The other big man, Greg Eboigbodin, added eight points and eight boards.

Senior Billy Thomas scored 23 points for the Raiders, who were 5-of-24 from 3-point distance. Jacob Joubert scored eight points, Amauri Hardy six and Alex Darden five.

Cubs take charge

The Raiders got down early, but made a game of it in the first quarter, staying within one, 16-15, with a Thomas layup.

U-D (28-0) scored the last five points of the opening quarter and stretched its lead to a dozen at halftime, 39-27. That was as close as the Raiders got as the Cubs expanded the margin in the second half.

The Cubs finished the game shooting an amazing 63

percent (29-of-46). It would have been very difficult for the Raiders or any team to match that. North shot 34 percent (20-of-59).

“I can't be more proud of these guys and what they did today,” Cubs coach Pat Donnelly said. “We hung our hat on what we do best and that's defend. It gave us a lot of great opportunities.”

“Being named the state champion in Michigan is something we've dreamed of at U-D. In over 100 years of playing basketball, this is the first one.”

“There's a lot of emotion and a lot of pride right now, sitting up here (in the post-game interview room) and being able to say we're state champions.”

Raiders perspective

Darden, who also had five rebounds, three steals and one block, appreciated the support the Raiders had throughout the tournament.

“It's been great with everybody in our community and our school wishing us luck, hearing from people you haven't talked to in a while,” he said. “Everyone just wants to see you succeed.”

“The most special thing was that everyone was behind us and supported us to

the end. Even when we were about to lose the game, they still cheered us on. I can't thank them enough for that.”

He added the defeat was a tough pill to swallow, to get to the final game and not have the outcome the Raiders wanted.

“This is what I've been working for so hard for four years,” Darden said. “We've put so much time, blood sweat and tears into it. To be so close and not take it, it's heartbreaking.”

“As a senior, there are no more chances now; I'm out. It's disappointing, but then again we can't just throw out what we did all season. It's been a special season.”

A key component

Thomas, who was at U-D and transferred to North, was a great addition to the program this season, averaging more than 20 points a game as the team's leading scorer.

“He grew up in our district,” Negoshian said. “He's been friends with our kids, so he'd be at all of our open gyms.”

“You can throw out basketball. I was just so happy to have another great kid in our program who does things correctly on and off the floor.”

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Schoolcraft splits pair with Macomb

Plymouth graduate Gerou's complete game lifts Lady Ocelots to 8-2 win

Tim Smith
Staff Writer

Displaced from Ford Field due to last week's heavy rain, the Schoolcraft College softball team played Saturday's doubleheader at Macomb Community College instead.

And thanks to a complete game by sophomore pitcher and captain Elaine Gerou (Plymouth), the Lady Ocelots notched their first Michigan Community College Athletic Association victory, an 8-2 triumph over the Monarchs.

The win followed the day's opening contest, a 3-0 loss to the defending conference champions.

“Overall, I was pleased that we were able to go to Macomb and get the split,” Schoolcraft head coach Rey Linares said. “We didn't do a good job of executing and moving our base-runners in the first game; we cannot strand all those base-runners and expect to win many games in this tough conference.”

“But we made the necessary offensive adjustments in the second game with a good mix of strategic hits and small ball, accompanied by solid team defense.”



Gerou

Gerou's work in the circle was outstanding in Game 2. She allowed eight hits and two earned runs without walking a batter and fanning two.

Schoolcraft overcame an early 2-1 deficit, tying the contest in the fourth on a squeeze bunt by freshman outfielder Alaina DeFrain (Livonia Franklin).

That hit scored sophomore shortstop and captain Katlyn McIntosh (Garden City), who had singled to open the inning.

A four-run fifth blew the game open for Schoolcraft, which loaded the bases on hits by Mackenzie Quinn, Shelby Shelton and freshman third baseman and Garden City product Kelsie Powell.

A sacrifice fly by freshman Mariah Coleman gave the Lady Ocelots the go-ahead run and Livonia Stevenson alum Kassidy Lipinski, a freshman second baseman, drilled a line drive home run to left-center, opening up a 6-2 edge.

Capping off the big game was a two-run sixth and Schoolcraft (4-9 overall, 1-1 in the MCCA) had more than enough offense to prevail.

In Game 1, freshman pitcher Kerry Prowse threw a complete game and gave up just three runs and two walks while striking out three.

But the Lady Ocelots weren't able to provide her with much offense in the loss. Powell led Schoolcraft with two hits, with single hits by Quinn and Caitlin Fitzpatrick.

Schoolcraft will visit Oakland Community College for a conference doubleheader set for 3 p.m. Friday.

tsmith@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @TimSmith_Sports

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NOTICE TO BRIGHT HOUSE NETWORKS CABLE CUSTOMERS

This notice is to inform our Bright House Networks customers of upcoming changes to their cable programming lineup.

From time to time our agreements with cable channels and television stations come up for renewal. While we do not anticipate any loss or disruption of service, negotiations require us to notify you of the possibility of losing programming. Therefore, please be advised that our agreements for 5StarMAX East, ActionMAX East/West, Cinemax East/West, Cinemax On Demand, DW America, HBO Comedy East, HBO East/West, HBO Family East/West, HBO Go, HBO On Demand, HBO Signature East/West, HBO Zone East, HBO2 East/West, MAX Go, MoreMAX East/West, Music Choice channels 902-951, ThrillerMAX East, TV One, and YouToo America remain in effect on a month-to-month basis, and we may have to cease carriage in all formats if our authority to continue is withheld. We are working diligently at this time to come to acceptable and fair terms with all these channels.

Our agreements with WDIV NBC/This TV and Outdoor Channel expire on March 31, 2016 and we may have to cease carriage in all formats if our authority to continue is withheld. We are working diligently at this time to come to acceptable and fair terms with all these channels.

On or after April 1, 2016, ENCORE ENCORE Action, ENCORE Black, ENCORE Classic, ENCORE Espanol, ENCORE Family, ENCORE On Demand, ENCORE Suspense, and ENCORE Westerns will be replaced by STARZ ENCORE, STARZ ENCORE Action, STARZ ENCORE Black, STARZ ENCORE Classic, STARZ ENCORE Espanol, STARZ ENCORE Family, STARZ ENCORE On Demand, STARZ ENCORE Suspense, and STARZ ENCORE Westerns.

On or after April 12, 2016, Al Jazeera America will cease its operations and be dropped from channels 143 and 343.

Bright House Networks utilizes a digital video delivery technology known as Switched Digital Video (SDV). SDV is a robust bandwidth management system that makes it possible to offer more digital video programming services than before including new HD channels. To be able to offer more new video services, Bright House Networks will be moving some existing programming services to the new SDV system as well as adding new services on the SDV system.

On or after May 1, 2016, the following services may be moved to the SDV system:

Network	Tier	Location	Network	Tier	Location
OWN East	Standard	27	CBET CBC	Basic	9
ESPN	Standard	29	WADL	Basic	19
Fox News	Standard	24	WDIV NBC	Basic	4
Freeform	Standard	59	WJRX FOX	Basic	2
FSN Detroit	Standard	32	WXBD CW	Basic	5
HGTV East	Standard	48	WMYD MyTV	Basic	6
TBS East	Standard	36	WPXD ON	Basic	21
TCM	Standard	37	WTVS PBS	Basic	11
TLC East	Standard	43	WWJ CBS	Basic	14
TNT East	Standard	35	WXYZ ABC	Basic	7

These services will not be available on unidirectional retail devices as of the date(s) noted above. If you want to subscribe to these services, you will need a digital set-top box or tuning adaptor from Bright House Networks. Customers may continue to use their unidirectional retail device and CableCARD to receive video programming other than the programming delivered on the SDV system. Customers who also utilize a digital set-top box or tuning adaptor will be able to receive video programming delivered on the SDV system. Customers will be notified in advance of any other programming changes.

On or after May 1, 2016, Bright House Networks will change the frequency it uses to deliver the following digital channels:

Network	Tier	Location	Network	Tier	Location
WJRX (FOX) HD	Basic	2.1	WXYZ (ABC) HD	Basic	7.1
WDIV (NBC) HD	Basic	4.1	WXYZ (ABC) - Bounce	Basic	7.2
WDIV (NBC) - This TV	Basic	4.2	WXYZ (ABC) - Laft	Basic	7.3
WWJ (CBS) HD	Basic	62.1	WMYD (MyTV) HD	Basic	20.1
WTVS (PBS) HD	Basic	56.1	WADL (Ind) HD	Basic	38.1
WTVS (PBS) - Create	Basic	56.3	CBET (CBC) HD	Basic	9.1
WTVS (PBS) - Plus	Basic	56.2	WPXD (ION) HD	Basic	31.1
WKBD (CW) HD	Basic	50.1			

These changes only affect customers who receive programming through a digital-ready television (with a QAM tuner) and do not have a digital device. Those customers will need to rescan their television set to continue to view these channels.

On or after May 20, 2016, Tennis Channel will be available on the Premier Channels tier on channels 553 and 653.

For more information, please call 1-877-885-8318 or visit our website at bighthouse.com

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AFI Financial	2431	(877) 234-0600	3.49	0	2.75	0
Ameriplus Mortgage Corp.	127931	(248) 740-2323	3.625	0	2.75	0
Dearborn Federal Savings Bank	399721	(313) 565-3100	3.875	0	3.125	0
Fifth Third Bank	403245	(800) 792-8830	3.75	0.25	3.125	0.125
Ross Mortgage	107716	(248) 282-1602	3.875	0	3.25	0
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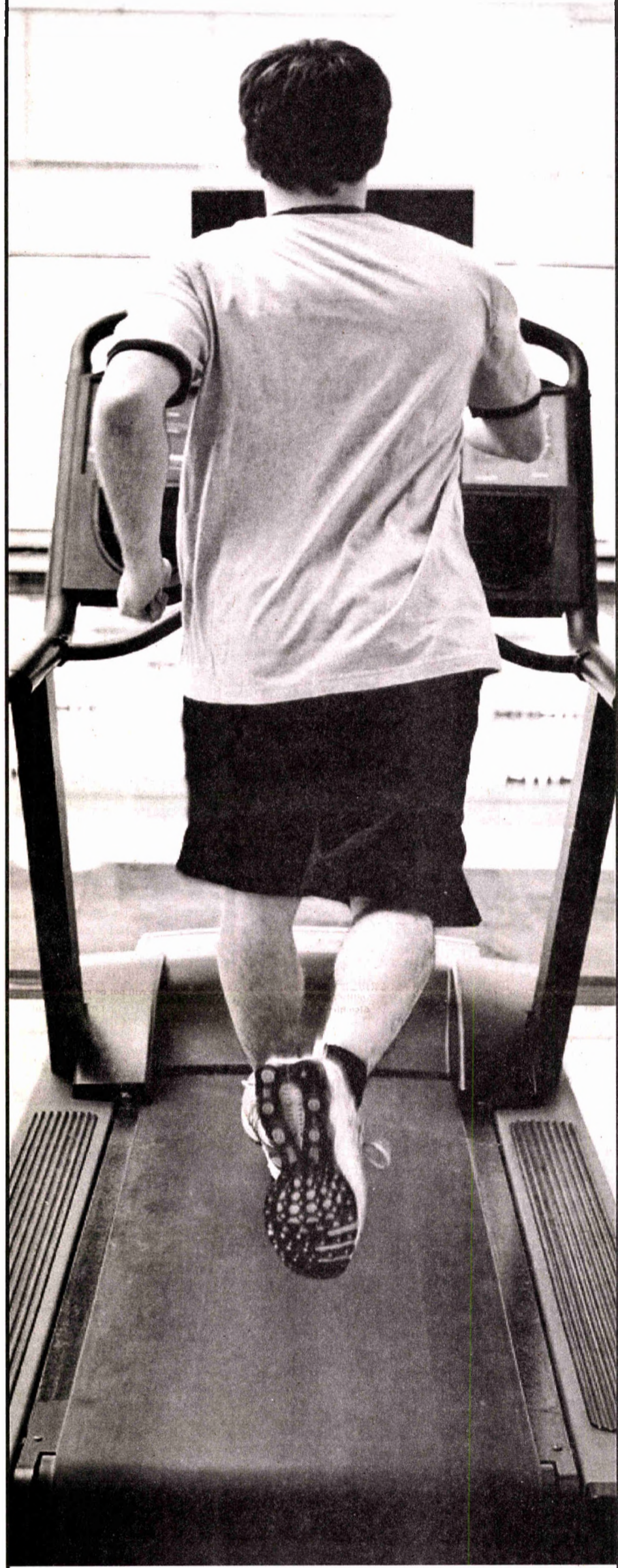
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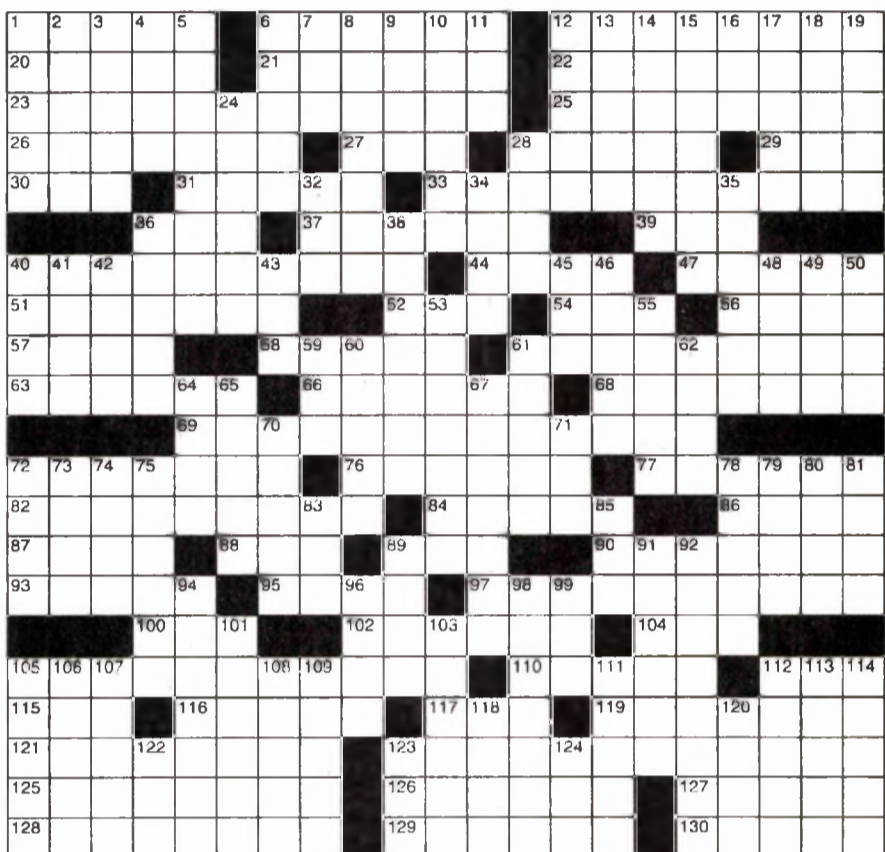
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THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pre-Easter seasons
 - 6 Confront boldly
 - 12 Entrée
 - 21 "— & Greg" (old sitcom)
 - 22 Baseballer Roberto
 - 23 Style for Halle Berry
 - 25 Turned away from sin
 - 26 Remove with a dustpan, say
 - 27 Mate of Mom
 - 28 Dead duck
 - 29 Jestful sort
 - 30 Kin of -ette
 - 31 Prelude
 - 33 Kitschy lawn decoration
 - 36 Blasting inits.
 - 37 Matador
 - 39 Low mark
 - 40 Diet Coke alternative
 - 44 Banjos' cousins, in brief
 - 47 Boxer Roberto
 - 51 Duncan of dance
 - 52 L.A. winter hrs.
 - 54 Bit of web video gear
 - 56 Burrito kin
 - 57 "American Pie" actress
 - 58 Aesop's language
 - 61 Robert Louis Stevenson short story, with "The"
 - 63 POW's place
 - 66 Difficult trial
 - 68 Prize taker
 - 69 Credits for currying favor
 - 72 World Series month
 - 76 Goal
 - 77 Yard dividers
 - 82 Grimm story
 - 84 Born earlier
 - 86 Roof edge
 - 87 Took a plane
 - 88 — Z (the works)
 - 89 Part of 55-Down: Abbr.
 - 90 One issuing a revision
 - 93 Deer daddies
 - 95 Filmdom's Kazan
 - 97 Cookie baker in a tree
 - 100 Part of UNLV
 - 102 Least confined
 - 104 Horace's "— Poetica"
 - 105 Swimmer with a long, flattened snout
 - 110 Singer — Marie
 - 112 Destroy the inside of
 - 115 Lacto— diet
 - 116 Like some perfect games
 - 117 Wide shoe spec
 - 119 With regard to pitch
 - 121 New film's initial
 - 123 Spago restaurateur
 - 125 Licorice-tasting liqueur
 - 126 One way to serve café
 - 127 — Lauder
 - 128 Alcoves
 - 129 Surgical inserts
 - 130 Performers
- DOWN**
- 1 Little slip-up
 - 2 Sweeping stories
 - 3 Greek island
 - 4 Duet + one
 - 5 Enter by foot
 - 6 Change to fit
 - 7 Greek letter
 - 8 One of four on a sedan
 - 9 Kind of whale
 - 10 Smear mark
 - 11 Design on skin, in brief
 - 12 Atlantic fish
 - 13 Actress Graf
 - 14 Rely
 - 15 Appeared
 - 16 Woody lair
 - 17 Bisected
 - 18 Iron output
 - 19 Bush row
 - 24 Stalking sort
 - 28 Totally get
 - 32 Artery: Abbr.
 - 34 In — (mired)
 - 35 Fix, as a dog
 - 36 — wave
 - 38 Lured
 - 40 Is in session
 - 41 Jr.'s exam
 - 42 — avis (oddy)
 - 43 Sharp turn
 - 45 Green start?
 - 46 The Devil
 - 48 Police action
 - 49 Crest
 - 50 "Negative"
 - 53 BBO pest
 - 55 Weekday letters
 - 59 Propel a boat
 - 60 Golfer Els
 - 61 Tow-headed
 - 62 Emit coherent light
 - 64 Big name in advice
 - 65 Garbo of film
 - 67 Hulking and dumb, maybe
 - 70 Elocute
 - 71 Mineral
 - 72 Does in
 - 73 City in Colombia
 - 74 Arena area
 - 75 "1984" writer
 - 78 Gets closer to Henri
 - 79 Blanchett of "Elizabeth"
 - 80 Stunt puller
 - 81 Toiler of yore
 - 83 Online "Hal"
 - 85 Wipe
 - 89 Jamie of TV
 - 91 Intend to do
 - 92 Crazy
 - 94 Holy French ladies
 - 96 "— all possible ..."
 - 98 Singer
 - 99 Summer, in Savoy
 - 101 Hog noises
 - 103 Just manage
 - 105 Really succeed
 - 106 Like lambs
 - 107 Of the fifth element
 - 108 Novelist
 - 109 Tap-dancer
 - 111 Les — -Unis
 - 112 Thigh-rotating muscle, informally
 - 113 Peptic disorder
 - 114 Moppets
 - 118 Her,
 - 120 Lhasa — (small dog)
 - 122 Wind dir.
 - 123 Used to be
 - 124 "Shool"



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

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

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!

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

CREDIT CARD WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

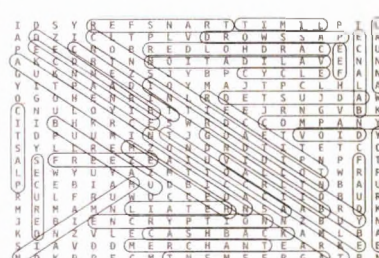
FRAUD
FREEZE
INTRODUCTORY
LIMIT
MEMBER
MERCHANT
MINIMUM
PASSWORD
PLASTIC
RECEIPT
RETAIL
SECURED
TRANSACTION
TRANSFER
VALIDATION
VARIABLE
VOID

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS HERE

Crossword Answers

1 PRE-EASTER SEASONS
6 CONFRONT BOLDLY
12 ENTREE
21 "— & GREG"
22 ROBERTO
23 HALLE BERRY
25 SIN
26 DUSTPAN
27 MOM
28 DUCK
29 JESTFUL
30 KIN
31 PRELUDE
33 KITSCHY
36 BLASTING
37 MATADOR
39 LOW
40 DIET COKE
44 BANJOS
47 BOXER
51 DUNCAN
52 WINTER
54 VIDEO
56 BURRITO
57 AMERICAN PIE
58 AESOP
61 STEVENSON
63 POW
66 TRIAL
68 PRIZE
69 CREDITS
72 SERIES
76 GOAL
77 DIVIDERS
82 GRIMM
84 BORN
86 ROOF
87 PLANE
88 Z
89 PART
90 REVISION
93 DEER
95 KAZAN
97 COOKIE
100 UNLV
102 LEAST
104 HORACE
105 SWIMMER
110 SINGER
112 DESTROY
115 LACTO
116 LIKE
117 SHOE
119 REGARD
121 INITIAL
123 SPAGO
125 LICORICE
126 ONE
127 LAUDER
128 ALCOVES
129 SURGICAL
130 PERFORMERS

Word Search Answers





Building of new homes is increasing.

GETTY IMAGES/BANANASTOCK RF

SE Michigan new housing report shows upswing in building

Julie Brown
Staff Writer

With some late reporting by municipalities in the four-county area, the final total for new single-family home permits issued in 2015 (4,316) across Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair and Wayne counties nearly matched the total in 2014 (4,321). When multi-family activity is added to the totals, 2015 (5,658) saw its best year for permit activity dating back to 2006 (6,962).

"It is very encouraging," said Michael Stoskopf, CEO of the Home Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan. "To have such a strong start to the calendar year. What a difference a decade makes. Now that we're on the upswing, that's very exciting for our builders and I'm sure the citizens of Michigan."

Based on single-family new home permit data compiled by the Home Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan and reported in the HBA Southeastern Michigan Residential Building Activity Report, a total of 603 single-family permits were issued in Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair and Wayne counties in the two-month, January-February 2016 time frame. That's the highest two-month total to start a calendar year since

January-February 2006 (1,025).

Activity was 70 percent higher compared to January-February 2015's total of 354 permits, reflecting in-part the much milder weather this year compared to last. Oakland County leads this year's fast start with 254 new home permits and 162 multi-family permits issued in January-February.

Said Stoskopf of the encouraging news, "No. 1, it's people being employed." Roofers, carpenters, those who lay carpet and others go to work when home building picks up.

"There's people that need to work to do those jobs," he said. Also, the new homeowners begin to think about major retail purchases such as a couch or a refrigerator.

"It's showing up in retail outlets," said Stoskopf, adding, "Typically, new homes have a higher value for the unit because of newer materials" than do existing homes.

That translates to higher property taxes which in turn benefit school systems, he said.

"The more people you have

working, the more service jobs you have. That restaurant on the corner has people working," Stoskopf said. "The other benefit of people working is all the service jobs."

Working people often need a place to go for lunch, he noted, boosting the local economy.

As for lessons to be learned from the Great Recession, Stoskopf notes it's his own opinion people got tied up in thinking "everybody was entitled to buy a home."

His daughter and son-in-law, in their 20s, are now working out what a down payment on a home should be as well as their other expenses. Their question is "What can we afford and figure out the right number?"

He noted there were some predatory lending practices. "If we don't learn that from the Great Recession, we're doomed to repeat it." There are people on both sides of the political aisle now, Stoskopf said, who say home ownership should be unrealistically high, such as 70-80 percent.

Some people either don't want or can't afford a home, he said. There was a housing "bubble nationwide," in the Great Recession, he said, although auto sales were a major factor locally.

"People stop making cars,



Stoskopf

they get laid off. It's really auto manufacturing that's the primary driver still in southeast Michigan," Stoskopf said.

Based on the econometrics used in the forecast calculations, the HBA/ASA New Housing Permit Forecast projects a total of 3,087 permits will be issued in the six-month, March-to-August time frame, which represents an increase of 23 percent over the actual permits issued during the same period in 2015 (2,504).

In the midst of that forecast is the projection for May. If the prediction holds, May 2016 would see over 600 new home permits issued in a single month. This would be the first time since July 2006 (718) that permits exceeded that threshold, according to the HBA.

The HBA's monthly new housing permit forecast is sponsored by ASA, asabuildersupply.com, an area business.

Stoskopf also encourages attendance at the April 1-3 Spring Home & Garden Show of the HBA, held at Suburban Collection Showplace on Grand River Avenue in Novi. You can get home ideas and talk to contractors there, he noted.

jcbrown@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @248Julie

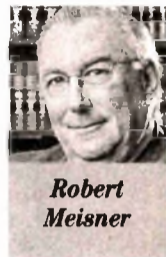
Management company needs to earn its keep

Q: Our board is considering a law firm who has indicated that they represent a magnitude of associations, but it is hard to get them to call us back. Our management company recommended them, and says that a lot of management companies recommend them; what are your thoughts on this?

A: Some management companies recommend the same law firm over and over again notwithstanding how well they perform because they have a "special" relationship with them. Accordingly, the law firm doesn't have to work very hard to get clients or, for that matter, retain them, because they know that they have a constant source of referral from management companies with whom they have a close relationship and, in many instances, the law firm will never pursue any claims that the association might have against the management company. You are best advised to consider another management company as well as another law firm who will give you service that you deserve and who need not be complacent in providing you with what you are entitled to when an issue arises within the management company.

Q: We have a Declaration for our homeowners association but, unfortunately, it does not have any provision for amending the Restrictions Section. What is it going to take to amend our restrictions and can the board use its rule making power to impose any new restrictions?

A: Based upon a recent Michigan Court of Appeals decision, the absence of an amendment provision in the original Declaration of Restrictions for a subdivision lawfully precluded the HOA from later amending its Declaration with less than unanimous consent to impose additional restrictions on the homeowners. The court said that the amendment provisions and restrictive covenants and by-laws will be enforced as written and if there is no provision requiring less than unanimity, it will be required. Again, this is something that you should consult with your community association attorney about before engaging on this issue.



Robert Meisner

Realtor survey: Suburban homes hold their appeal

Over three-quarters of surveyed households would purchase a single-family home if they were to buy in the next six months, and 79 percent of renters would choose to buy outside of an urban area, according to the second installment of the National Association of Realtors new quarterly consumer survey. The survey also found that confidence about now being a good time to buy is waning amongst renters, particularly in the West — where prices have solidly risen.

In NAR's first quarter *Housing Opportunities and Market Experience (HOME)* survey, respondents were asked about their confidence in the U.S. economy and various questions about their housing expectations and preferences, including a question on if they were to purchase a house in the next six months, what type of home and in what area would they choose to buy. The survey data reveals an overwhelming consumer preference for single-family homes in suburban areas. Most current homeowners (85 percent) and 75 percent of renters said they would purchase a single-family home, while only 15 percent of homeowners and 21 percent of renters said that would buy in an urban area.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says the survey findings call attention to the glaring need for more supply of single-family homes. "The American Dream for most consumers is not a cramped, 500-square-foot condo in the middle of the city, but instead a larger home within close proximity to the jobs and en-

tertainment an urban area provides," he said. "While this is not a new discovery, supply and demand imbalances and unhealthy levels of price growth in several metro areas have made buying an affordable home an onerous task for far too many first-time buyers and middle-class families."

According to Yun, it's time for home builders to double their focus on constructing single-family homes. With millennials increasingly buying in the suburbs — as NAR reported earlier this month — tight inventory and affordability concerns will likely worsen without significant headway made in housing starts in relation to job creation.

Renters lose optimism about now being a good time to buy

Heading into the spring buying season, NAR's survey found that compared to the December 2015 survey the same share of homeowners (82 percent) but fewer renters (62 percent) versus 68 percent last quarter) believe that now is a good time to buy.

"A high number of homeowners are expressing that it's a good time to buy and this sentiment is no doubt being fueled by the \$4.4 trillion in housing equity accumulation in the past three years," Yun said. "On the other hand, accelerating home prices and the perceived difficulty in obtaining a mortgage appears to be tugging at the confidence of renters."

Overall, respondents over the age of 65, those living in the Midwest and those with incomes over \$100,000 were

the most optimistic about buying now.

Among current homeowners, fewer (56 percent) believe it is a good time to sell compared to the fourth quarter of 2015 (61 percent). Amidst steep price increases and tight supply, respondents in the West were the most likely to think now is a good time to sell, while also being the least likely to think now is a good time to buy.

Slightly fewer households think the U.S. economy is improving

Among all households in the survey, less than half believe the economy is improving (48 percent), down from 50 percent in last quarter's survey. Renters, those living in urban areas and respondents with lower incomes were the most optimistic.

The HOME survey's monthly Personal Financial Outlook Index of all households has slightly dipped (to 58.1) since December (59.6), but is mostly unchanged from March 2015 — reflecting stable confidence that respondents' financial situation will be better in six months. Currently, renters, younger and lower income households and those living in urban areas are more optimistic about their future financial situation.

Location matters depending on lifestyle

Across all age groups, when asked about their future buying preferences, survey responses were closely tied to each generation's typical lifestyle, with younger buyers

being more likely to consider buying a single-family home. Not surprisingly, renters and younger buyers would for the most part purchase larger homes, whereas older buyers would purchase similar or smaller sized homes.

Highlighting the apparent appetite for some older households to downsize and live in the city, respondents over the age of 65 were the most likely to consider a condo and nearly as likely as respondents under the age of 35 to consider purchasing in an urban area.

Most respondents indicated their preference to stay in a similar area to their current living situation if they were to buy in the next six months. Over two-thirds of those living in rural areas and 75 percent of those living in suburban areas would buy in a similar area. Only those living in an urban area would be more likely to move elsewhere, with a suburban area within 20 miles of the city being the most frequent choice of urban buyers moving to another type of area.

About NAR's HOME survey

In January through early March 2016, a sample of U.S. households was surveyed via random-digit dial, including half via cell phones and the other half via land lines. The survey was conducted by an established survey research firm, TechnoMetrica Market Intelligence. Each month approximately 900 qualified households responded to the survey. The data was compiled for this report and a total of 2,781 household responses are represented.

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 bmeisner@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 from 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.

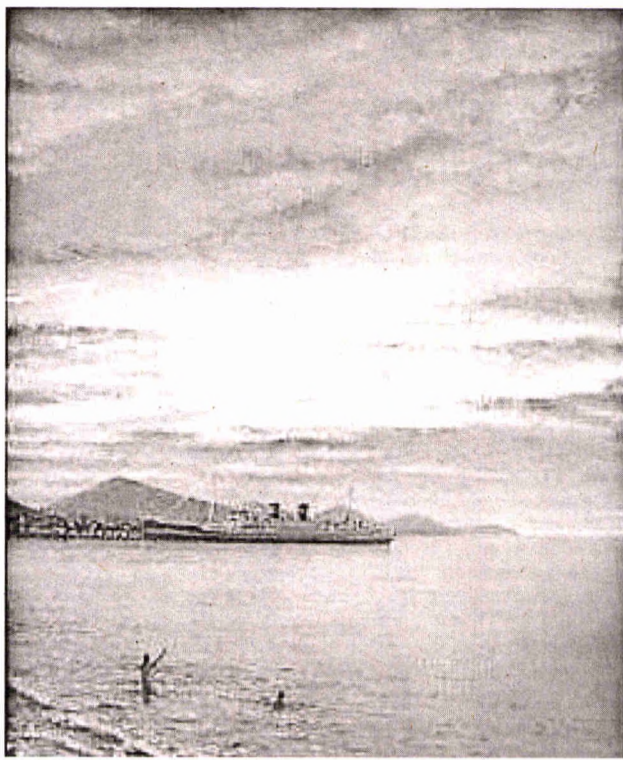
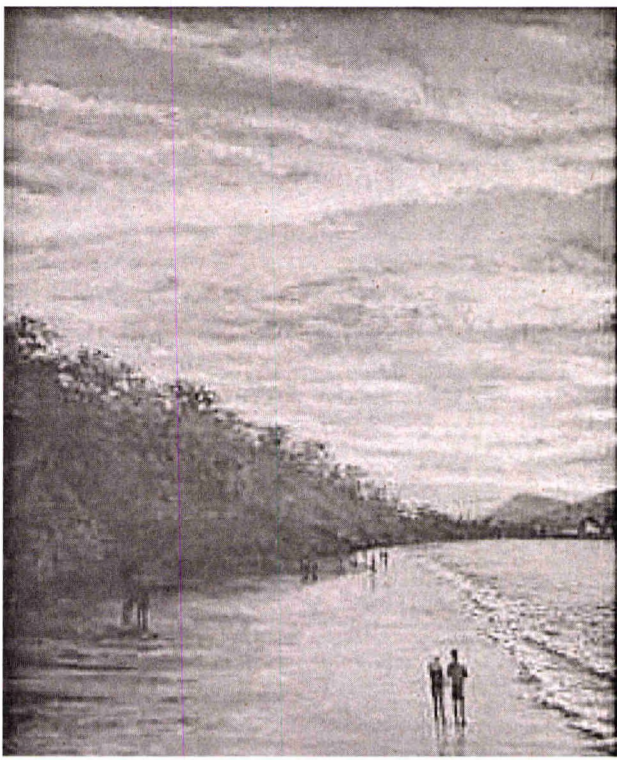
Any questions or concerns, call Bill Beddoes at 734-934-9091 or Wayne Koehler at 313-819-0919.

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 the office at 248-782-7130 or email june.quantum@gmail.com.



The photograph of a sunset, taken during a friend's vacation, inspired this triptych, "Hawaiian Air," by Robert Aikins. It features a Hawaiian Airlines 1935 Sikorsky S-43 flying boat.

Artist combines history, detail in aviation paintings

Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Before Robert Aikins puts brush to canvas, the Farmington Hills artist opens his history books.

"It's research. I'm sitting in my studio and looking at books, a couple of hundred aviation books," said Aikins, whose detailed aircraft paintings resemble photographs.

"Aviation art is a specialty-type thing. People who like aviation art, they want details. Are you telling the right story? Are you showing it (the airplane) in the right part of the world?"

When he was chief designer for Ford Motor Company, Aikins made sure images showed vehicles as sellable and in the best possible light. Now 16 years into retirement, Aikins strives for realism in his aviation paintings.

"When you're doing aviation art, you're trying to represent something that appeared in history," he said, adding that a dirty or weathered-looking airplane may be acceptable in a scene. "People are more interested in authenticity."

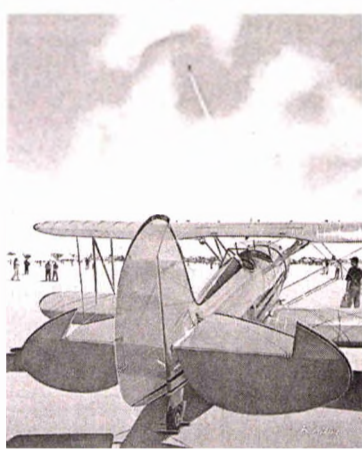
Aikins is flying high these days as an artist with some 200 oil paintings focused on airplanes, both in the sky and on the runway.

His work will be on exhibit during Farmington Hills' Festival of the Arts, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. April 14-15 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 16 at the Costick Center, 28600 11 Mile, Farmington Hills. Aikins is a former artist-in-residence for the community.

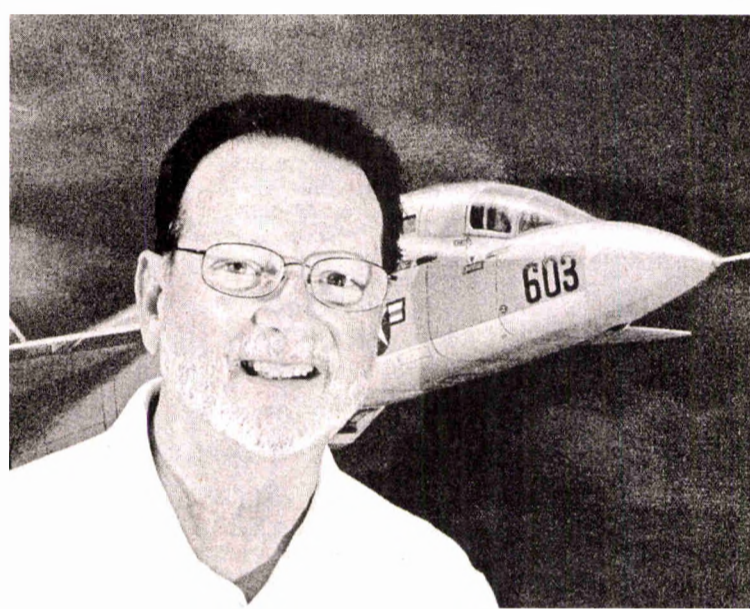
He also has an upcoming exhibit of 24 paintings at Dean Sellers Buick GMC, in Farmington Hills.

"That is a first for me to exhibit in a dealership," said Aikins, who worked in automotive design for 35 years.

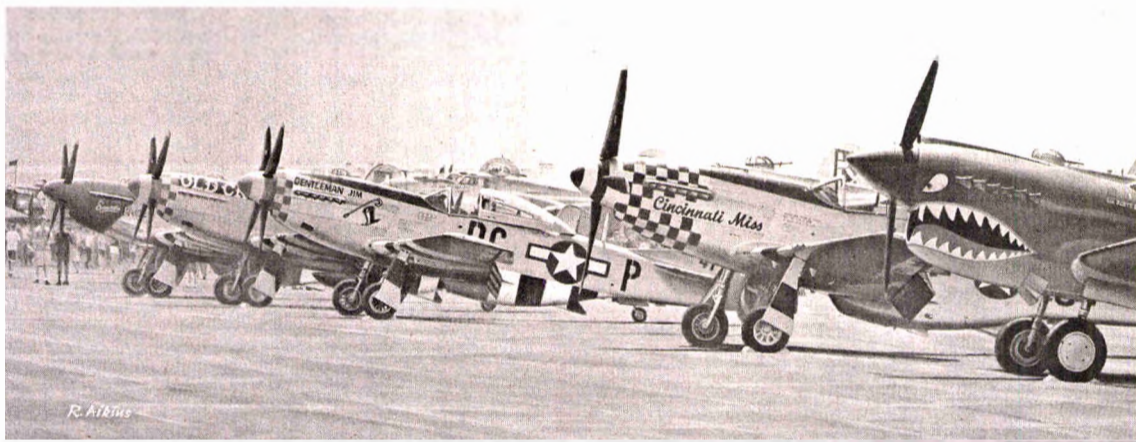
Three of his paintings will be shown June 1-July 25 during an aviation art exhibit at the



"Showtime," a 29-by-35-inch oil painting on canvas by Robert Aikins is a previous American Society of Aviation Arts competition winner. It shows a WACO biplane viewing aerobatics at the 2007 Columbus, Ohio air show.



Robert Aikins, an artist from Farmington Hills, will be the guest speaker Monday, April 4, at Three Cities Art Club in Canton.



"Flightline," showing planes on display at the 2005 Thunder Over Michigan air show at Willow Run Airport, will be on display June 1-July 25, at the James C. Weston Gallery at the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

James C. Weston Gallery at the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

His work also is on display at the National Naval Aviation Museum, the San Diego Air & Space Museum, the Gallery at Baltimore Washington International Airport, the Kalamazoo Air Zoo and the National Museum of the Mighty Eight Air

Force.

He'll be the guest speaker at Three Cities Art Club, 7-9 p.m., Monday, April 4, in the lower level of Canton Township Hall, 1150 S. Canton Center Road, south of Cherry Hill Road, in Canton. The event is free.

"This is the sixth art club I've been invited to," he said. "I let them know there is another

form of art out there. And some of the things we talk about with oil paint technique might help them in their own paintings."

Self-taught in oils

Aikins, who is married and has two adult sons, worked with watercolor, gouache and other media while studying

industrial design at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles, Calif. He didn't use it at school nor on the job.

"Everything in the automotive industry is based on a timeline. Painting for fun is the opposite. I don't care when it's done," he said.

"Oil painting takes a long time to dry and the way I work in oils is almost like watercolor. I put in thin washes and let it dry and then add another color or two. I've had no official training in oils. I read a book."

He tried oil paints because they represented "a challenge" and they offered brilliant colors. Aikins, looking for a creative outlet in retirement, bought a book on oil painting and a book on drawing aircraft "like a pro."

"I still loved airplanes and I wanted to see if I could paint them."

As a youngster, growing up in Washington D.C., Aikins had spent many hours building model airplanes and entering contests. He eventually swapped out airplanes for cars and won several design scholarships. He credits his father, a World War I aviator, for inspiring his interest in aviation.

Today, inspiration comes from attending air shows, from photographs that friends send him, photos he takes, from watching a beautiful sunrise or sunset, or talking with men who flew during World War II. Sometimes he gives the veterans his completed paintings.

"There's nothing greater than seeing the joy of a guy in his 80s or 90s get something like that."

For more about the Three Cities Art Club call Marilyn Meredith at 313-231-3939 or email to marilynmeredit@wow-way.com. Visit Aikins' website at aikinsaviationart.com.

sdargay@hometownlife.com
Download our free apps for iPhone, iPad or Android!

Trinity House Theatre class teaches improvisation

Sharon Dargay
Staff Writer

Gloriann Curley and Laura Gumina will teach a six-week improvisation workshop for students, ages 9-18, beginning April 11 at Trinity House Theatre in Livonia.

Curley of Garden City, is an English teacher at a private school in Canton. She taught drama for three years at a Detroit middle school and has been involved in the

Detroit Creativity Project's program that teaches improv to students in Detroit.

Laura Gumina of Farmington Hills has acted, directed and taught theater for more than 30 years throughout southeastern Michigan. She also has taught improv classes at



Curley



Gumina

Trinity House Theatre.

Curley said all ages will work together as an ensemble. The workshop, which will run 4-6 p.m. Monday and Thursday, will include games and scene work designed to help students think on their feet.

Curley said she watched her students in Detroit be-

come less self-conscious and more confident in their interactions with others after they began learning improvisation skills.

"One of the shyest kids I had got the confidence on stage to go on and attend a special improv camp," Curley said, adding that the student was one of only 20 improvisers selected for the program.

"And improv is a creative outlet. One fun thing about it

is that it's purely imagination, and students don't always get that any more. They'll learn the constructs of the games...and right away we'll have them jumping in to create their own scenes."

Students will perform for family and friends at the end of the six weeks.

Cost is \$120. For more information call Gumina at 313-614-2406 or email to glorianncurley@gmail.com.

GET OUT! CALENDAR

ANIMALS

DETROIT ZOO

Time/Date: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through March 31; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. beginning April 1

Location: I-696 service drive and Woodward, Royal Oak

Details: Admission is \$14 for adults 15-61, \$10 for senior citizens 62 and older, and for children ages 2-14; children under 2 are free. Parking for cars and vans is \$5. Detroit Zoological Society members get free admission and parking

Contact: 248-541-5717

ARTS AND CRAFTS

CITY GALLERY

Time/Date: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, through April 8

Location: Costick Center, 28600 W. 11 Mile, Farmington Hills

Details: "Night and Day" exhibit features new work, including landscape and portraits of other local artists, by Taurus Burns

Contact: 248-473-1859

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL

Time/Date: Through April 22

Location: 31555 11 Mile, Farmington Hills

Details: Works by local artists Pamela Alexander and Susan Warner

Contact: 248-473-1859

NORTHVILLE ART HOUSE

Time/Date: Exhibit hours are noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 1-30

Location: 215 W. Cady, Northville

Details: The exhibit features the personal work of the late Richard Rochon, who was known in the field of architecture for his renderings of buildings. Includes a reception, 6-9 p.m. Friday, April 1

Contact: 248-344-0497 or www.NorthvilleArtHouse.org

U-M MUSEUM OF ART

Time/Date: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. through May 29

Location: 525 S. State Street, Ann Arbor

Details: First U.S. exhibition of Chinese artist Xu Weixin focuses on portraits of Chinese coal miners and of Chinese historical figures during the Cultural Revolution

Contact: 734-764-0395; umma.umich.edu

FILM

PENN THEATRE

Time/Date: 7 p.m. Thursday, March 31, 7 p.m. and 9:20 p.m. Friday, April 1, and 4:25 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, April 2-3

Location: 760 Penniman, Plymouth

Details: "Joy," \$3

Contact: 734-453-0870; www.penntheatre.com

REDFORD THEATRE

Time/Date: 8 p.m. April 1 and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. April 2

Location: 17360 Lahser, just north of Grand River Avenue in Detroit

Details: "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," \$5

Contact: 313-898-1481; redfordtheatre.com

FUNDRAISERS

GIVING HOPE

Time/Date: 6:30-9 p.m. April 13

Location: Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center, 8768 N. Territorial Road, Plymouth

Details: The "Giving Our All for Family, Fun and Fitness" event, presented by Giving Hope Women's Giving Circle, includes food, a cash bar, shopping, a fashion show from local shops and boutiques, a raffle and a silent auction. Admission is \$35 and pre-registration is required. Proceeds from the event will help bring ShapeDown, a family weight management program to the greater Canton and Plymouth area

Contact: cantonfoundation.org

For a complete listing of Get Out! visit www.hometownlife.com

Transform traditional dishes with seafood

Now more than ever, food choices matter. People want healthy, environmentally-friendly foods without sacrificing flavor. Substituting the traditional protein in your favorite dishes with seafood is one delicious way to satisfy these demands.

Seafood offers numerous health benefits. It's high in protein, omega-3 fatty acids and essential vitamins and minerals, but low in saturated fat and calories.

When it comes to the environment, seafood offers an advantage as well — it's the most environmentally friendly of all the animal proteins. In a comparison of environmental costs, wild-capture fisheries have a miniscule cost compared to foods such as beef, chicken, pork and dairy.

Changing up traditional meals to incorporate seafood is easier than you may think. Just pick a non-seafood protein dish that you regularly enjoy, and replace the protein with seafood. For example, replace veal in veal Parmesan with cod or the chicken in chicken Marsala with flavorful Alaska salmon.

Find more easy, meatless recipes and inspiration at wildalaska-seafood.com.

COD PARMESAN WITH ZUCCHINI NOODLES

Serves: 4
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes

2 medium zucchini (5-6 ounces each), thinly sliced
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 teaspoon olive oil
salt and pepper, to taste
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 ½ tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon dried basil
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon onion powder
4 Alaska cod fillets (4-6 ounces each)
2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese, divided

In nonstick skillet, saute zucchini slices in butter and oil just until soft. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Keep warm.

Heat oven to broil setting. Mix grated Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise, lemon juice, basil, oregano and onion powder together. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Divide and spread topping onto the top of each fillet.

Place fillets on foil-lined broiler pan. Broil 5-7 inches from broiler element for 3 minutes, or until top is browned and bubbly. Reduce heat to 300 F and cook 3-5 more minutes. Cook until fish is opaque throughout.

To serve, place ¼ of zucchini on each plate. Top with cod fillet and garnish with ½ tablespoon shredded cheese.



Salmon Marsala

SALMON MARSALA

Serves: 4
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes

4 Alaska salmon fillets (4-6 ounces each)
salt and pepper, to taste
2 cups flour
½ cup olive oil
1 cup Marsala wine
2 cups mushrooms, sliced
2 cups chicken stock
2 teaspoons fresh thyme
2 tablespoons cold butter
4 fresh thyme sprigs, for garnish

Season salmon fillets with salt and pepper, to taste. On plate, season flour with salt and pepper, to taste. Dredge both sides of each salmon fillet in seasoned flour, shaking off excess.

Heat large saute pan and add olive oil then place each piece of salmon in pan. Cook for 2-4 minutes, turn fillets over and cook until almost done. Remove fillets from pan; set aside.

Off heat, add wine to pan, scraping bits off the bottom. Return pan to heat and add mushrooms. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, and cook for 1 minute. Add stock and thyme, and let liquid reduce by half.

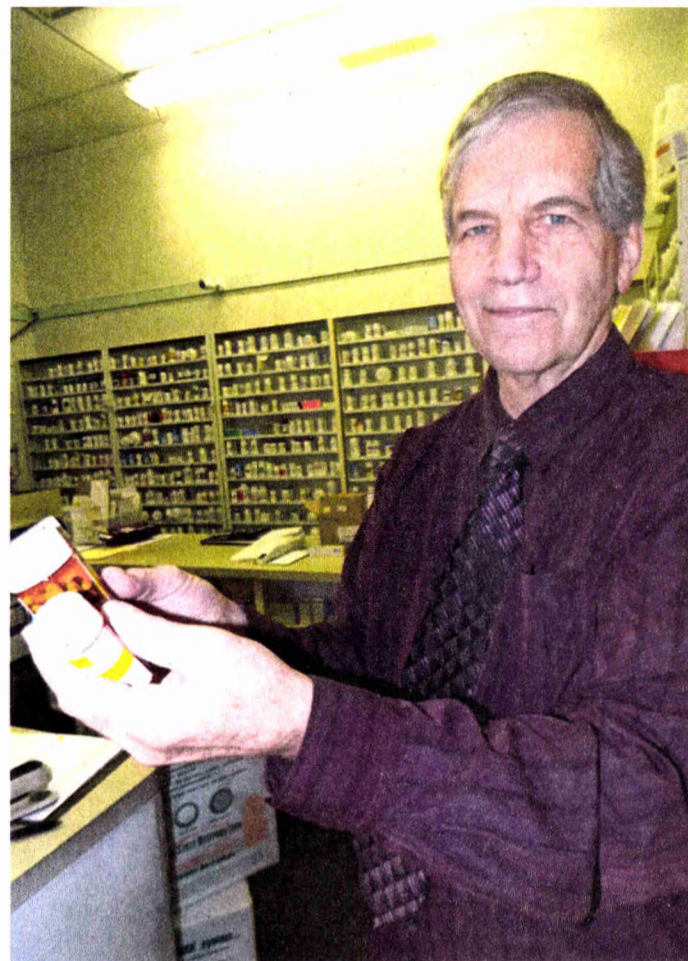
Return salmon fillets to pan. Cook, while basting fish, until fillets are heated through. Remove fillets to 4 serving plates.

Return pan to heat, add cold butter and swirl until incorporated and sauce slightly thickens. Remove from heat and divide sauce evenly over salmon fillets. Garnish each plate with 1 thyme sprig, if desired.



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Registered dietician and nutritionist Aarti Batavia begins to prepare a vegan and gluten-free sprouted mung bean salad in her Novi Providence Park campus office March 18.



SUSAN BROMLEY

Pharmacist Paul Krause, a vegan, said he believes most people could eliminate their need for medications by changing their diet.

NOT JUST LETTUCE

Vegan pharmacist, dietitian share nutrition tips

Susan Bromley
Staff Writer

Pharmacist Paul Krause doles out medications daily to treat patients with high cholesterol, high blood pressure and other ailments, all while advocating a better, cheaper, drug-free way to stay healthy.

Most customers don't want to consider his alternative, however.

"People come in and I tell them, 'All you have to do is live a vegan lifestyle' and they say, 'No way, just give me the Lipitor,'" Krause said. "A lot of the disease states that occur are results from the way we live. If you switch to a vegetarian/vegan diet and exercise, 80 percent of cardiovascular diseases would go away, 95 percent of type 2 diabetes could be eliminated and a lot of specialists say 80 percent of cancers could be eliminated."

He isn't concerned about what such a change might mean for his business. He said he would happily close his store, The Medicine Cabinet in Southfield, if everyone switched to a vegan lifestyle, which avoids the consumption of animal products, including dairy.

Krause is president of VegMichigan, a nonprofit organization whose mission is "promoting awareness of the health, ethical and environmental benefits of a plant-based, vegan lifestyle."

The group will do that locally through a display April 1 at the Novi Public Library, as well as through VegFest Vegan Tastefest and Expo, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. April 24, at Suburban Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River, in Novi. The event features celebrity presenters, including former Detroit Pistons player and vegan John Salley, as well as samples from local restaurants and bakeries, exhibits with eco-friendly products, clothing, cookbooks, food demonstrations, children's activities and more.

More than 5,000 persons, including vegans, vegetarians and even meat-eaters are expected to attend VegFest.

"We have cooking demos there and people can get an idea of how to transition some of their cooking habits," Krause said. "It's funny how we'll go into surgery and do all these dramatic things to our body because of our lifestyle, but consider it drastic to change our eating habits. It's not a difficult transition anymore."

The Troy resident, 69, made the change himself more than two decades ago after he was diagnosed with a cardiovascular blockage. Doctors wanted to perform an angioplasty. Krause declined, and after research, decided to pursue preventive measures to maintain his health.

Raised on pizza, chips, meat and dairy — or the standard American diet (SAD, as he likes to call it) — Krause set to work changing food habits and reversing the cumulative effects of lifetime consumption of animal products.

It worked.

Food as medicine

As a registered dietitian and founder of Nutrition and Wellness Consulting, LLC, in Novi, Aarti Batavia uses food as medicine to develop individualized plans for patients struggling with allergies, diabetes, weight management and cardiovascular, gastric, hormonal and neurological disorders.

"I believe in food as medicine," Batavia said. "We are what we eat, drink, think and touch. Eating whole foods and consuming more plant-based foods provides vitality and exuberance that we need to enjoy life. Food is not just calories. Food is information for your genes. It sends messages to your DNA, regulates hormones, your immune system, bacteria in the gut, neurotransmitters and even influences mood and behavior."

Batavia believes the three biggest steps individuals can take to improve their nutrition are to eat mindfully, consuming whole foods, more vegetables and less processed foods while enjoying food flavors; knowing that food affects inflammation; and being aware that food speaks to genes.

The biggest mistakes people make about food is thinking of it only in terms of calories; assuming that foods promoted as "low-fat" or as "diet" are healthy; eating quickly on the go without savoring food; and assuming that food is not related to mood.

Decrease meat, fish and eggs

Batavia, a vegetarian, suggests turning to beans and whole grains as protein sources. Animal products have vitamins and minerals, but lack antioxidants that are crucial in preventing free radicals from damaging cells through a process called oxidation. Antioxidants are present in fruits and vegetables.

"If you are consuming animal-based proteins, be sure that it is antibiotic and hormone-free," she said. "The antibiotics used in animal farming do have an impact on our gut bacteria and the hormones can play as endocrine disruptors in our bodies."

Krause admits that switching from meat and dairy products to a plant-based diet can be challenging. But he notes the human species "is very adaptable." Buying fruits and vegetables



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Aarti Batavia's sprouted mung bean salad.

SPROUTED MOONG BEAN SALAD

Recipe developed by Aarti Batavia MS, RDN, CLT, CFS, IFMCP.
Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 25 minutes
Servings: 2

1 cup sprouted moong beans
1 small diced carrot
1 small diced cucumber
½ cup diced apple
½ cup halved grapes
½ cup blueberries
1 tablespoon pumpkin seeds
¼ teaspoon black pepper powder
¼ teaspoon cumin powder
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons lime juice
1 tablespoon finely chopped cilantro (optional)

In a bowl add sprouted moong beans, diced carrots, cucumbers, apples and blueberries.

Add pumpkin seeds, black pepper powder, cumin powder, salt and add freshly squeezed lime juice.

Mix all the ingredients and garnish with cilantro.

Serve in a bowl and savor the flavor!

Variations:

- » Add tomatoes and avocado.
- » Instead of fruits, add onions, tomatoes, olives
- » Add a variety of beans either sprouted or cooked or from a can (rinse canned beans)
- » Add ¼ teaspoon chili powder if you enjoy spicy foods

also can be less costly than buying meat.

Helping picky eaters

How can parents convince their children to enjoy eating vegetables? Batavia suggests a shopping trip to the produce section of the market where youngsters can select a few fruits and vegetables. She said not to force them to eat, but to create positive experiences around food and to be a good role model.

"You can't ask your kids to eat fruits and veggies while you're sitting with a bag of chips watching the television," she said.

To learn more, go to vegmichigan.org and aartibatavia.com.

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SPRING SENIOR EXPO

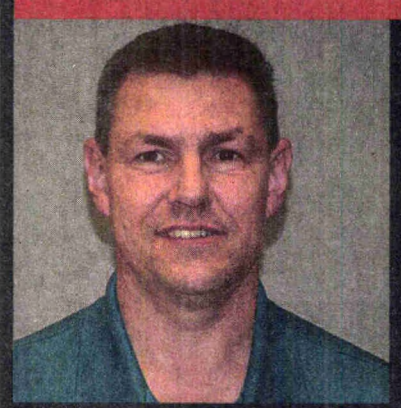
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9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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Featured Guest Speakers



9:20 - 10:15
Maurice Cox, RN, CCE-MT-P/IC and Michelle Moccia DNP, ANP-BC, CCRN
St. Mary Mercy Livonia
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
Schoolcraft College
Facts, Figures and Warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias

The Elder Care Firm
How to protect yourself and loved ones from long-term care costs

Botsford Commons
Why men don't listen and women can't read maps

12:30 - 1:00 p.m.
Schoolcraft College
Exercise for Easing Arthritic Pain

Senior Helpers
Age in Place

Michigan Department of State
Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility



Questions?
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SPRING SENIOR EXPO

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Tuesday, April 5, 2016

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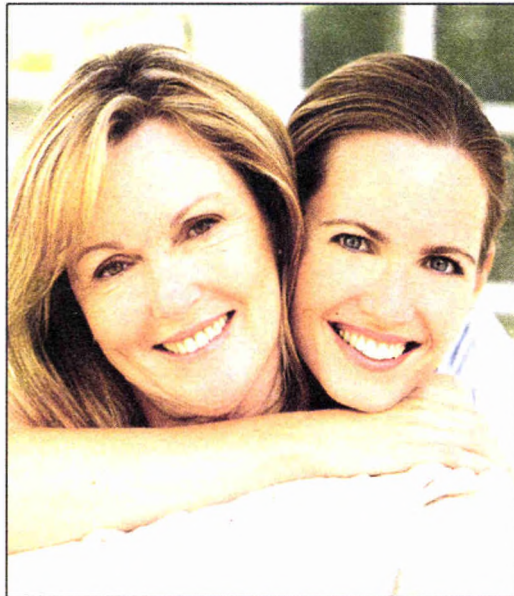
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Time again for the information-packed Spring Senior Expo at Schoolcraft College

Grass is greening and the sun is setting a little later each day. Ah, it's spring time and that means it's time for the 13th annual Observer & Eccentric Spring Senior Expo.

The expo is set for 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, at the Schoolcraft College VisTaTech Center in Livonia. Some of the area's best and brightest businesses will exhibit and provide valuable resources to attendees. The Spring Senior Expo also features nine knowledge-rich speaker sessions from some of the region's most respected organizations. Three sponsored featured speaker workshop topics include, Healthcare Decisions presented by Maurice Cox and Michelle Moccia of St. Mary Mercy Livonia; Everything you Need to Know about Estate Planning by Rick Bloom of Bloom Asset Management; and New Technology in Pain Relief by Dr. Sol Cogan of HealthQuest Management, Inc.

Additional workshops and demonstrations include:

» Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility, presented by Michigan Department of State

» Facts, Figures and Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias, presented by Schoolcraft Col-



Choya Jordan

lege

» How to Protect Yourself and Loved Ones from Long-term Care Costs, presented by The Elder Care Firm

» Exercise for Easing Arthritic Pain, presented by Schoolcraft College

» Age in Place, presented by Senior Helpers

» Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps, presented by Botsford Commons

A complete list of exhibitor locations and speaker session times can be found in the center display of this special Spring Senior Expo publication. We will also have a little fun throughout the day, including a coupon for a free scrumptious four-square pizza from Buddy's Pizza to the first 100 attendees, free random hourly gift drawings and free refreshments sponsored by Twisted Rooster, Leo's Coney Island of Livonia and SMART.

Special thanks is extended to co-sponsor Schoolcraft College; bronze sponsors St. Mary Mercy Livonia and The Elder Care Firm; and gift tote sponsors Crystal Creek Assisted Living and Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services

We hope to see you at the Spring Senior Expo. Remember, admission and parking are free, so bring a friend or two.

Choya Jordan
O&E Media marketing manager

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2016 Senior Spring Expo speakers

Facts, Figures and Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias

Time: 9-9:30 a.m.

Speaker: Debra Mittelbach, sponsored by Schoolcraft College CEPD

Room: W210

Details: Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. It cannot be prevented, cured or slowed.

Join Mittelbach for a presentation on the current facts regarding Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Learn the 10 warning signs and what support and resources are available from the Alzheimer's Association.

Mittelbach has served as a dedicated speaker's bureau representative for the Alzheimer's Association-

Greater Michigan Chapter for more than five years. She holds a master's degree in organizational management blended with more than 25 years in geriatric wellness and development. For the past 10 years, she has been executive director of Arden Courts of Bingham Farms Memory Care Community. Mittelbach presents at numerous professional, academic and community education forums, including radio and television, focusing on best dementia practices and excellence in quality care.

Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps

Time: 9-9:30 a.m.

Speaker: Diane Zide, MS, CTRS, ACC, NHA, executive director of operations, Botsford Commons Senior Community

Room: 460

Details: This discussion will highlight the differences between men and women and how they think, feel and communicate. This session will be based on a book of the same name by Allan and Barbara Pease.

All this time, men thought women just prattled on non-stop and didn't have a real purpose behind the 6,000-plus words that they say each day. Women thought men ignored them on purpose, yet brain studies support the theory that men need to focus on one topic at a time.

This will be an insightful opportunity for all.

How to Protect Yourself and Loved Ones from Long-term Care Costs

Time: 9-9:30 a.m.

Speaker: Christopher J. Berry, Esq., The Elder Care Firm

Room: 425

Details: Certified Elder Law Attorney Christopher J. Berry, Esq., will cover six ways to pay for long-term care, including Medicaid and Veterans Benefits strategies and planning, and how to use legal strategies to protect assets, whether you are

planning for a loved one or yourself. Included in his talk will be a discussion on protecting the family home from estate recovery.

Exercises for Easing Arthritis Pain

Time: 12:30-1 p.m.

Speaker: Kathi Carzon, sponsored by Schoolcraft College CEPD

Room: W210

Details: Many individuals suffering from varying degrees of muscle and joint pain have found relief through yoga and therapeutic water workouts. Join Carzon, one of Schoolcraft's arthritis exercise instructors, to get an overview of two class offerings at Schoolcraft, Water Exercise for Easing Arthritis Pain and Yoga for Easing Arthritis Pain. Participate in several chair exercises and find out more about how gentle movements can benefit you or someone you know who is dealing with arthritis.

Carzon, founder and owner of American Health and Fitness, has been providing fitness instruction for more than 30 years and is certified as a fitness specialist through the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Fitness in Dallas, Texas. Along with a staff of more than a dozen experienced, professional instructors, she offers a wide range of traditional and trendy fitness programs through Schoolcraft College's Adult Community Education program.

She has been instrumental in helping many people achieve an active and healthy lifestyle.

FEATURED SPEAKER SPONSORS

Health Care Decisions: Preparing Now, Inspiring Conversation

Time: 9:20-10:15 a.m.

Speakers: Maurice Cox, RN, CCE-MT-PIC, injury prevention specialist, St. Mary Mercy Livonia, and Michelle Moccia, DNP, ANP-BC, CCRN, program director, Senior ER, St. Mary Mercy Livonia

Room: Kehrl Auditorium



Cox



Moccia

Details: What happens if you are unable to express your own wishes and beliefs? Making your health care preferences known in advance can help ensure your wishes are heard, even if your voice isn't. In this workshop, you'll learn what to consider, how to plan ahead and what to do when minutes matter.

Everything You Need to Know About Estate Planning

Time: 10:30-11:25 a.m.

Speaker: Rick Bloom, J.D., CPA, Bloom Asset Management

Room: Kehrl Auditorium



Bloom

Details: Having an estate plan is the best way to guarantee your assets will be distributed according to your wishes upon death. Unfortunately, too many people

Safe Drivers, Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility

Time: 12:30-1 p.m.

Speaker: Eric Kabdebo, traffic safety programs analyst, Michigan Department of State

Room: 425

Details: Your independence is important and driving is a vital skill to get you where you want to go. Come learn what resources are available for active older drivers and for drivers who may be considering limiting their driving and finding other transportation choices.



Kabdebo

Helping maintain lifelong safe mobility is everyone's responsibility, including aging adults, families and friends and professionals who interact with aging adults. Your goal, and ours, is your safe, lifelong mobility.

don't have an estate plan or may have one that isn't sufficient to protect their assets when they die.

Financial expert Rick Bloom, a financial columnist for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and a partner in Bloom Asset Management in Farmington Hills, will discuss the various aspects of an estate plan, including: wills and trusts, beneficiary designations, estate planning documents (including powers of attorney) and the HIPAA form.

New Technology in Pain Relief

Time: 11:40 a.m. to 12:35 p.m.

Speaker: Dr. Sol Cogan, CEO/president, HealthQuest Management, Inc.

Room: Kehrl Auditorium

Details: Ouch, what a pain! You may not have to live with those pains any longer. Cogan discusses new technology available to relieve old pains that you thought you would have to live with forever. If you or someone you care about suffers from back pain, neck pain, bulging disc, hernia, neuropathy or joint pain, this presentation is for you.

Cogan has been the Detroit Lions team chiropractor from 2002-15. He was also the Professional Football Chiropractic Society president from 2009-13, as well as a past chairman for the Michigan Chiropractic Board.



Cogan

Age in Place

Time: 12:30-1 p.m.

Speaker: Colleen McDonald, director of community relations, Senior Helpers

Room: 460

Details: Many families are not aware of resources available to help their loved ones remain in their home as they age. McDonald shares various supportive care resources available to help enjoy the golden years at home.



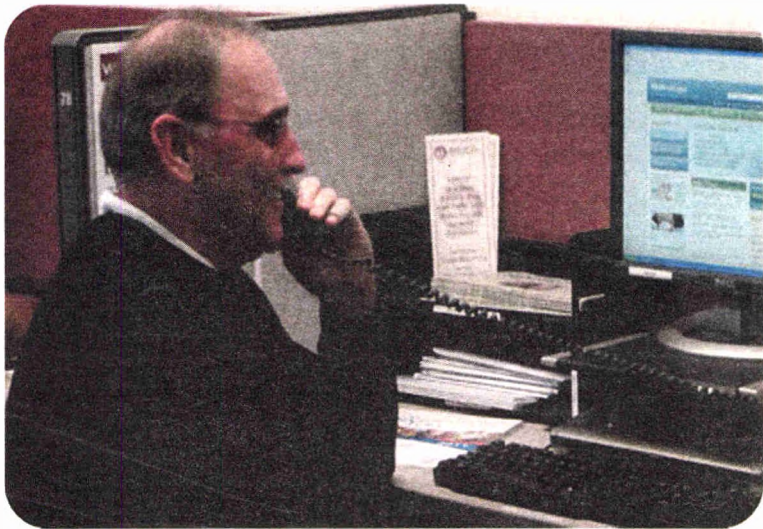
McDonald



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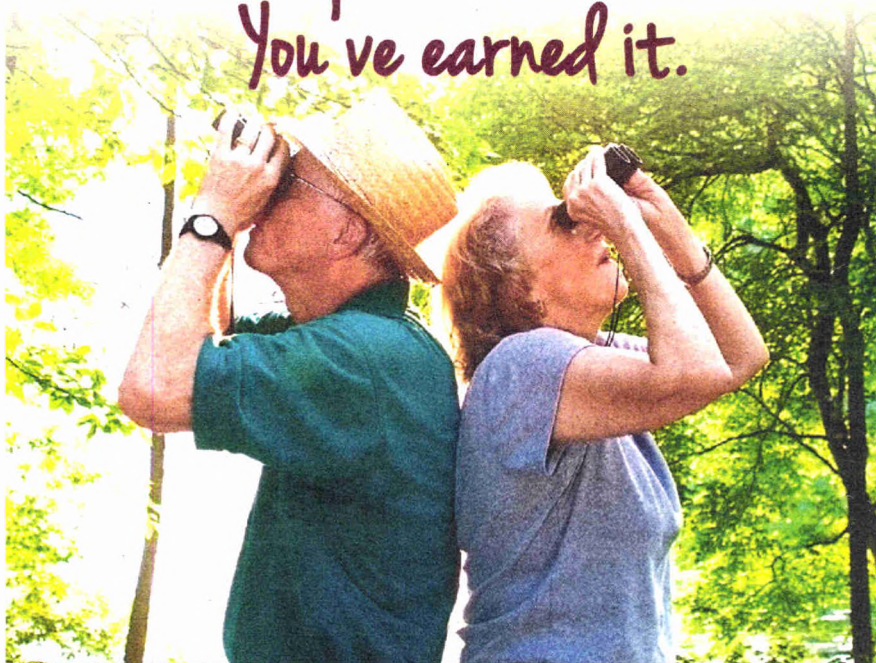
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It's all about relationships at Botsford Commons where we create a Fullness of Life through the joy of relationships, the art of caring, and the spirit of living. You have to see our neighborhood, residents and caregivers in action to truly appreciate its beauty

**Botsford Commons Senior
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- Attend one of our free Summer Concerts in the Garden
- Join one of our free upcoming Alzheimer's Education Events
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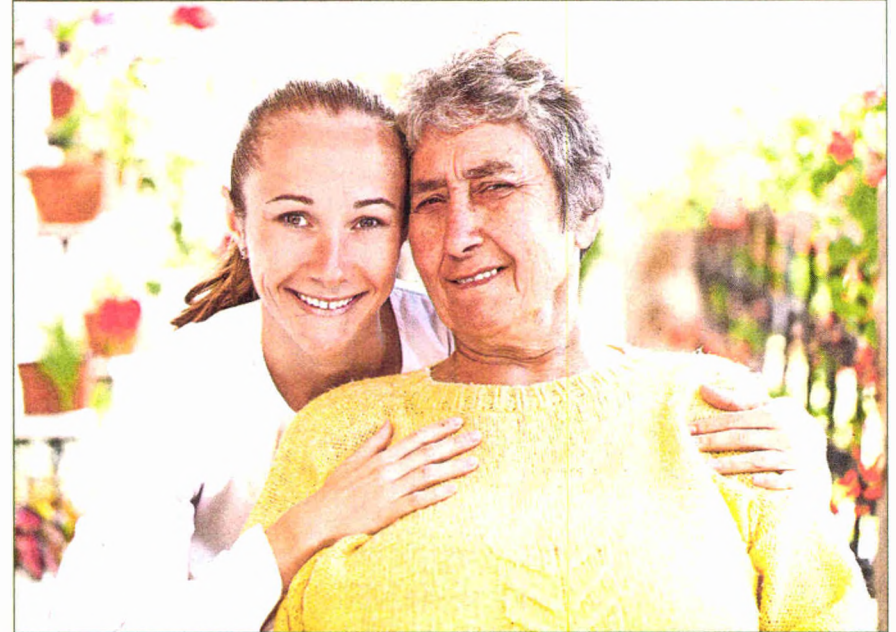
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Certified Elder Law Attorney Christopher J. Berry, sq.

helps families protect what they've earned and preserve what they value through sophisticated Estate and LifeCare Planning techniques. He is one of only 17 Certified Elder Law Attorneys (CELA's) in the State of Michigan, which is the gold standard in estate planning and elder law.

Attorney Brandon S. Thomson

is a VA-accredited attorney, a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), the Elder Law and Disability Rights, and Estate Planning and Probate sections of the State Bar of Michigan.



UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

**Friday,
April 22, 2016**
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

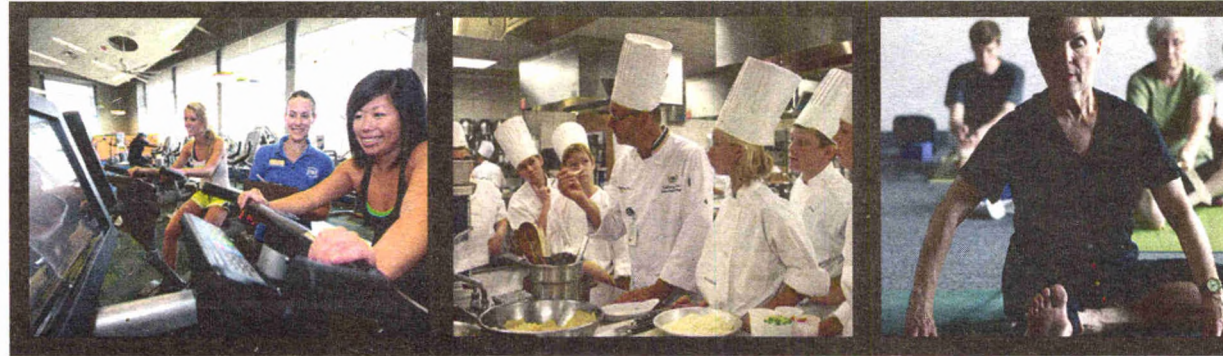
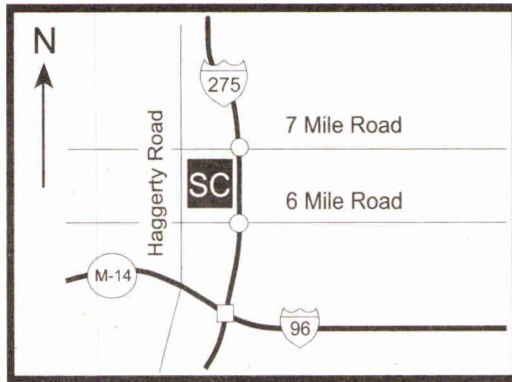
**Wednesday,
April 27, 2016**
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**Tuesday,
May 3, 2016**
9:30 am - 11:30 am

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EXPERIENCE



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Schoolcraft College Continuing Education and Professional Development Staff, VisTaTech Center Staff, and Exhibitors

9:00-9:30

- **Facts, Figures and Warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias (W210)**

by Schoolcraft College

- **How to Protect Yourself and Loved Ones from Long-term Care Costs (VT425)**

by The Elder Care Firm

- **Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps (VT460)**

by Botsford Commons

9:20-10:15

- **Healthcare Decisions (Kehrl Auditorium)**

by St. Mary Mercy Livonia

10:30 - 11:25

- **Everything You Need to Know about Estate Planning (Kehrl Auditorium)**

by Bloom Asset Management

11:40-12:35

- **New Technology in Pain Relief (Kehrl Auditorium)**

by HealthQuest Management, Inc.

12: 30-1:00 p.m.

- **Exercise for Easing Arthritic Pain (W210)**

by Schoolcraft College

- **Age in Place (VT460)**

by Senior Helpers

- **Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility (VT425)**

by Michigan Department of State

All Seasons (18)

Ameriprise Financial - Mike Klassa & Associates (20)

Angela Hospice (17)

Beacon Square Northville (16)

Bloom Asset Management (21)

Botsford Commons Senior Community (2)

CareOne Senior Care (14)

Catholic Funeral Cemetery Services (28)

Cedarbrook Senior Living of Northville (44)

Ciena Healthcare (46)

ClearCaptions (39)

CSI Support & Development (6)

Enhanced Vision (19)

Francesca Nesi-Floff, M.D. (55)

Golden Home Health Care (57)

Harry J. Will Funeral Homes (56)

HealthQuest (4)

Heartland Healthcare (34)

Henry Ford Village (48)

Humana (23)

Jewish Senior Life (60)

Kelly & Kelly, P.C. (33)

Leo's Coney Island of Livonia (12)

Livonia Housing Commission (45)

Miller Vein (5)

National Board of Certified in Hearing Instrument Science (61)

Observer & Eccentric (36-37)

Olympia Group (27)

Oxford Recovery Center (22)

Patient Advocates MI (38)

Priority Health Medicare (58)

RetroFoam (3)

Right at Home (40)

Schoolcraft College (49-51)

Secretary of State (26)

Senior Helpers (29)

SMART (59)

St. Mary Mercy Livonia (7 & 10)

The Elder Law Care Firm (1)

The Senior Alliance (24)

Transitions Remodeling/
Forever Builders (47)

Twisted Rooster (11)

Unique Refinishers (15)

Visiting Angels (62)

Wheelchair Getaways of MI (35)

Woodhaven Retirement
Community (25)

Enjoy a moderately priced breakfast or lunch!
Henry's Cafeteria in the VisTaTech Center



Tuesday, April 5, 2016

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Schoolcraft College
VisTaTech Center**

SPRING SENIOR EXPO



**All activities will be held in the Schoolcraft College VisTaTech Center,
18600 Haggerty Road, Livonia, Michigan • 734-462-4400**

**Expo
Entrance**

Main Street



**Expo
Entrance**

**Floor plan
is subject
to change.**

1 The Elder Law Care Firm	2 Botsford Commons Senior Community	3 RetroFoam	4 HealthQuest	5 Miller Vein	6 CSI Support & Development	7 St. Mary Mercy Livonia	St. Mary Mercy Livonia		
22 Oxford Recovery Center	23 Humana	24 The Senior Alliance	25 Woodhaven Retirement Community	26 Secretary of State	27 Olympia Group	28 Catholic Funeral Cemetery Services		29 Senior Helpers	
33 Kelly & Kelly, P.C.	34 Heartland Healthcare	35 Wheelchair Getaways of MI	36 Observer & Eccentric	37	38 Patient Advocates MI	39 Clear Captions		40 Right at Home	
44 Cedarbrook Senior Living of Northville	45 Livonia Housing Commission	46 Ciena Healthcare	47 Transitions Remodeling /Forever Builders	48 Henry Ford Village	49	50 Schoolcraft College		51	52
55 Francesca Nesi-Floff, M.D.	56 Harry J. Will Funeral Homes	57 Golden Home Health Care	58 Priority Health Medicare	59 SMART	60 Jewish Senior Life	61 National Board of Certified in Hearing Instrument Science	62 Visiting Angels		
21 Bloom Asset Management	20 Ameriprise Financial - Mike Klassa & Associates	19 Enhanced Vision			18 All Seasons	17 Angela Hospice	16 Beacon Square Northville	15 Unique Refinishers	14 CareOne Senior Care

11 Twisted Rooster
12 Leo's Coney Island of Livonia

13





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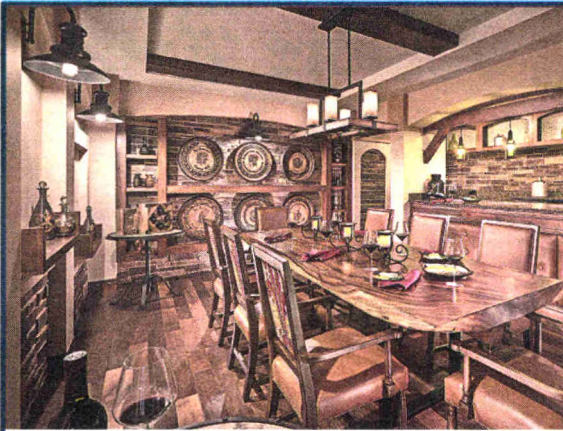
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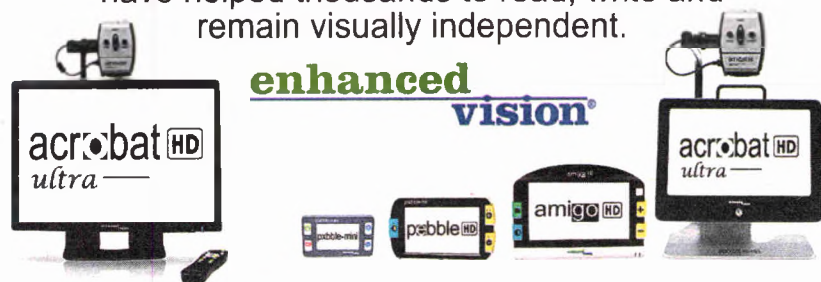
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- The state's first and most experienced Senior ER designed to reduce anxiety, promote comfort and provide high quality care focused on older adults
- Senior care services dedicated to quality care through our participation in the national senior health initiative, Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE)
- Fitness and wellness programs to help seniors get and stay healthy through exercises, wellness education, health screenings and special events
- Disease prevention and management services to better manage chronic illness and prevent complications and injury

- Specially-trained staff on issues related to aging
 - Protocols and initiatives addressing the prevention of delirium, falls, pressure ulcers, maintenance of mobility and function
 - By-your-side volunteers who promote activity and engagement with patients
 - Tools for the hearing or visually impaired
 - Home health services to support patients who need care at home during illness or recovery
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When brothers and partners Ken and Rick Bloom of Bloom Asset Management, Inc. meet with a client, the discussion is a two-way street. They offer their investing expertise, of course, but just as importantly they carefully listen to the client's ideas, hopes and dreams.

"We believe that the way you invest money should be based upon what you're trying to achieve as an investor. Some people think their age is most important when making investment decisions, but we don't look at age as a material factor. We recommend a strategy based upon a person's individual goals and objectives," Rick says.

This approach—combined with a comprehensive knowledge base, high fiduciary standards and long-term investment strategies—helps the firm stand apart from the financial advisors who rely on a one-size-fits-all philosophy.

As a fee-only firm, Bloom Asset Management does not earn commissions on any investment products it recommends, which assures that advisors always

act in clients' best interests. That is especially important with today's market volatility, where too often investors make bad decisions based on fear.

"When we manage a client's money, we not only build the type of portfolio based on their long-term goals, but we make sure we provide a steady hand in guiding their investments to help weather the market's volatility and stay the course," Rick says.

Founded in 1984, Bloom Asset Management manages more than \$1 billion in client assets and has been ranked #1 in Michigan on CNBC's listing of the Top 100 Fee-Only Wealth Management Firms in the U.S. Rick Bloom has also been named one of the Top Financial Advisors in the U.S. for 2015 and 2016 by Barron's magazine.

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Right: Ken and Rick Bloom.
Above: Firm headquarters in Farmington Hills, MI



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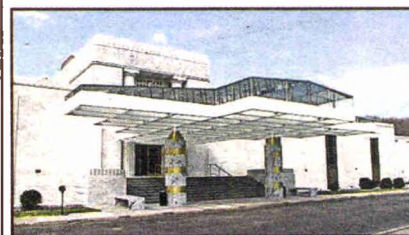
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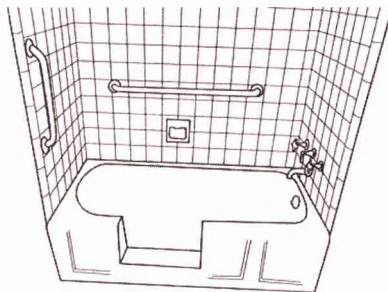
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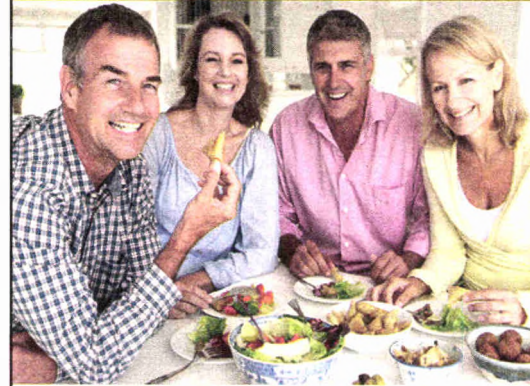
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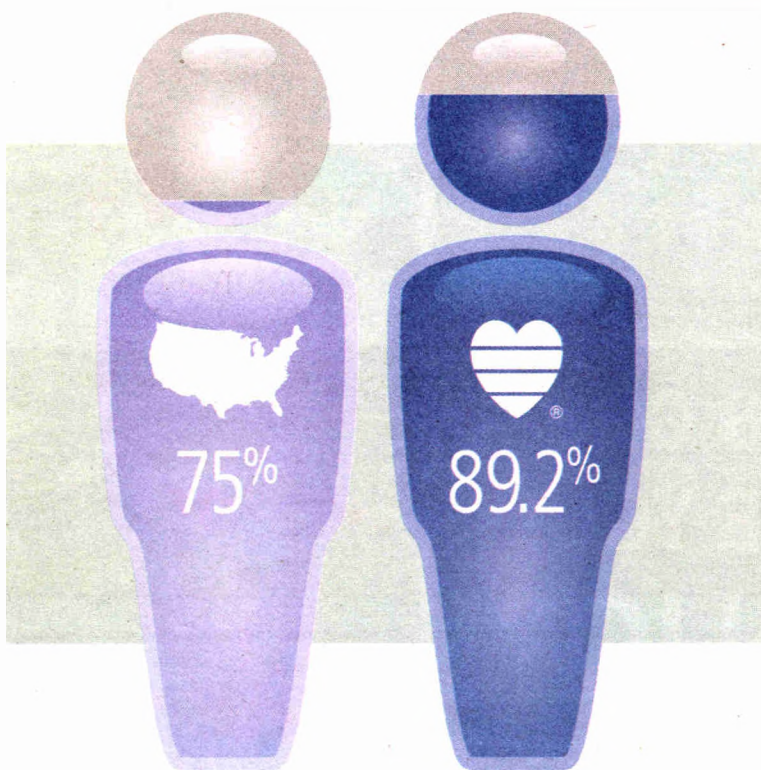
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- Nurses and assistants coordinating and delivering your care
- Therapists providing speech, physical and occupational therapy services
- Pharmacists delivering your prescribed medications
- Social Workers helping plan for your discharge to home and assisting with community resources



heartlandnursing.com

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Heartland 
Health Care Center

Contact us today for more information or to schedule a tour:

Heartland Health Care Center - Canton
7025 Lilley Road
Canton, MI 48187
734.394.3100

Heartland Health Care Center - Livonia
28550 Five Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48154
734.427.8270

Heartland Health Care Center - Livonia NE
29270 Morlock Street
Livonia, MI 48152
248.476.0555

Heartland Health Care Center - Plymouth
105 Haggerty Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
734.455.0510

WELCOME TO SCHOOLCRAFT.

WELCOME TO COLLEGE.

Enjoy a gourmet meal

Schoolcraft College's nationally renowned Culinary Arts Department presents the finest, freshest ingredients in elegant dishes that excite the imagination.

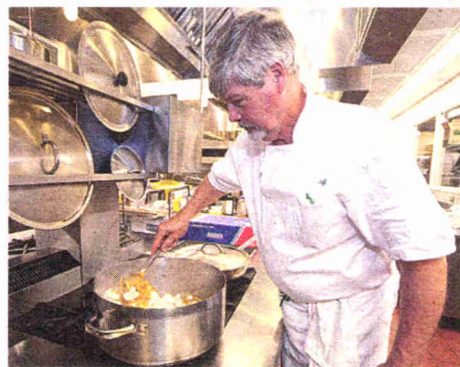
American Harvest lunch, Main Street Café gourmet to go, International Dinners and Breakfast Buffet available September through April. For lunch and dinner reservations: 734-462-4488

Learn something new

There are hundreds of courses to choose from at Schoolcraft College. They include Coffee and Conversation lectures that last a few hours, seminars that run for a few nights, and classes that run for an entire semester. Continuing Education and Professional Development: 734-462-4448



THIS COULD
BE YOU!
ENJOY!



Hear great music

Free noontime recitals by professional musicians are an example of the many public performances offered at Schoolcraft College each year.

Call 734-462-4403 to be notified by mail of upcoming performances.

See a great play

Schoolcraft College's dinner theatre productions routinely sell out and earn fine reviews from patrons and critics alike.

For ticket information call: 734-462-4596



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