

# NOVI NEWS DAY

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50 CENTS

## Planners give thumbs up to Sandstone

By SCOTT DANIEL  
Staff Writer

Unanimous support was given to plans for Sandstone — a 296-acre residential and commercial development in Novi — by the city Planning Commission at its Wednesday, Dec. 19 meeting.

The commission voted to recommend approval for a revised area plan for the project to city council. According to David Lanciault, an attorney representing Hughes Properties, developer of Sandstone, the project will be presented to city council in January for area plan approval.

"I'm delighted with the plan," said commissioner Ernest Aruffo. "It's a concept that is going to benefit the City of Novi."

In September of 1987, the city council approved the 334-acre Real

Estate Interest Inc. Sandstone development, which would have covered one square mile with six distinct "villages" in between Twelve and Thirteen Mile roads and Novi and Meadowbrook roads, adding about 3,100 people to the city's population. The design called for the extension of Decker Road as a four-lane paved connector from Twelve Mile to Thirteen Mile roads, as well as the paving of Twelve and a Half Mile Road, thereby easing congestion on Novi Road.

Lanciault said Real Estate Inc. had financial difficulties bringing the project to fruition. In September of 1989, the city council gave Hughes Properties, who took over for Real Estate Inc., a 12-month site plan approval extension for the planned urban development (PUD).

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Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

Santa shouldn't have any trouble finding the Knockeart family, despite the fact they are living at a new address this year, courtesy of Novi's September tornado

## Holidays in the aftermath

Knockeart family prepares for Christmas in wake of twister

By JAN JEFFRES  
Staff Writer

The tree is up and decorated. Silver garlands festoon the hallways. Four red stockings are hung by the kitchen counter with care.

Beyond a doubt, Santa Claus will find Jennifer and Jimmy Knockeart, even though the family's chimney — and entire home — was reduced to rubble by a Sept. 14 tornado.

"He knows where we are. It's in the big, magical book, remember?" said their mother, Linda Knockeart.

The Knockearts are a lucky family. They have lost their house in Yorkshire Place subdivision, as well as most of their furniture.

But Linda Knockeart and Jimmy, 2, who were at home when the twister hit that afternoon, are just fine. Jennifer, 5, weathered out the storm with the rest of her kindergarten class in Parkview Elementary school and her father, Randy, was at work.

By mid-February, the four expect to move back into the ranch they had built three years ago. It'll be a new house from the ground up.

"He (Santa) knows where we are. It's in the big, magical book, remember?"

Linda Knockeart explaining to her children

The disaster left some emotional repercussions in its wake. Knockeart feels a bit jumpy during storms.

"It does make me a little nervous, especially when the wind kicks up. I'll probably be a little nervous moving back into the house," she said.

"The kids talk about it, you know, but there hasn't been any problem. Jennifer misses her friends. It's just nice it's during the winter months."

After spending the first week after the tornado in a motel, the Knockearts have been living in a spacious, furnished apartment. Much of what

they could pull out of the rain-sodden debris is in storage.

One of the toughest jobs for the family was making a complete inventory of their possessions for insurance purposes.

"It's a pain in the butt trying to remember everything that's in your house. All the personal stuff seemed to be all right. You can always replace everything else," Knockeart said.

"You don't have stuff that you're used to having, that you take for granted. They have dishes here but it's not like your supply at home. It's always the little things."

While working in the kitchen, Knockeart, a homemaker, will find herself reaching for a utensil that isn't there. Jennifer is still pouting a little over the loss of a toy pony.

Santa Claus is expected to drop off a few replacement toys for the two children.

"The stuffed animals were pretty much drenched and full of debris. We took a few of her dollies. That's all she was worried about, her dollies," Knockeart said.

Continued on 4

## Residents respond to youngster's need

By STEVE KELLMAN  
Staff Writer

Calling Dr. Roger. Please report to your adoring public.

Novi and Northville citizens proved they have a lot of heart this holiday season by coming to the aid of a 3-year-old Novi boy scheduled to undergo open heart reconstructive surgery Jan. 23.

Roger Umble's parents, who nicknamed their son "Dr. Roger" because of his fondness for stethoscopes, have received dozens of calls from residents offering to give the gift of life by donating blood to the boy's operation or to area blood banks in general. The family was seeking at least 10 donors for the operation, but his mother Kathy said last week, "I have over 21 volunteers already."

Roger's picture and story graced the front page of the *Novi News* Dec. 13, and the young boy was thrilled to see his picture in a newspaper box as the family drove by that day. As Kathy recalled, "He just kept saying, 'That's me!'"

Kathy said the response to the article, which also ran in *The Northville Record* and the *South Lyon Herald*, "was much more

than I ever expected."

Employees of a Novi bank decided to come to Roger's aid with a little financial assistance. Linda Mammel and Ann Jacobs at National Bank of Detroit took up a collection for Roger at their office in lieu of the traditional exchange of gifts. The office raised at least \$200, which will help defray the Umble's \$350 bill for storing blood for Roger's operation.

Many of those who called to donate blood agreed to make a general donation to the local American Red Cross blood bank instead, Kathy said. Blood banks typically run low during the holidays, when holiday-related accidents increase the need for blood.

The local American Red Cross office is located in Livonia at 29691 W. Six Mile Road, in Suite 100 C of the Bell Creek Office Plaza. Office hours are 2-7:45 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Tuesday and Friday, and 9 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Saturday.

Appointments can be made by calling the Livonia Red Cross office at 494-2856, or by calling 1-800-552-5468.

### Inside

It's almost time for Rose Bowl 1991. That's just one of the features in "Suburban Cable Weekly," your guide to television. The TV listings are keyed to the actual channel numbers on the local MetroVision cable system.



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For results on your want ads call *The Green Sheet* at 348-3022

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### Novi Briefs

**Holiday deadlines:** Due to the upcoming holidays, *The Novi News* will be delivered on Friday instead of Thursday the next two weeks. Papers will be delivered on Friday, Dec. 28 and Friday, Jan. 4.

Deadlines for the Monday and Thursday Green Sheet during the holiday season are Friday at 3:30 p.m. Deadlines for letters to the editor or news releases move to 5 p.m. Friday.

The Monday edition of the *News* will continue to be delivered on Monday. Deadlines for news releases in those papers will be 5 p.m. Thursday.

**Friends or relatives in Saudi Arabia?** The *Novi News* would love to hear about anyone with local ties who has been deployed as a part of "Operation Desert Shield," the U.S. military force in Saudi Arabia.

We hope to collect basic biographical information and pictures of our local service people, and run them on a special page in the near future. The page will include information on how to send mail to the service people.

If you know of anyone serving in Saudi Arabia, please call the office at 349-1700. Ask for Cristina Ferrer or Mike Malott.

**Correction:** Information contained in a outline in the *Novi News* Dec. 20 on page 7 was incorrect. Shown in the picture were Suel Kuang Lee and Hi Sook Lee, owners of Leong On Restaurant on Pontiac Trail. They are seeking a liquor license from the city. The couple is planning to change the name to Singapore and offer Malaysian cuisine. It was the Sakura-Cherry Blossom restaurant which was recently approved for a liquor license and is proposing a restaurant in West Oaks II.

**A friend, indeed:** Novi residents' nitty-gritty, up to the knees in river-mud work in "Rough Rescue 90" won the city a commendation Dec. 17 from Friends of the Rouge, the organization which runs the annual event.

Larry Coogan, executive director of the non-profit environmental group, reminded the city council that Novi was one of the original 12 communities to unite for the clean-up. In its fifth year now, 22 local governments now pitch in.

"We're committed to clean up our portion of the Rouge River, which is really the headwaters. We're up to the task and we'll make sure we have more recruits than we had the year before," Mayor Matthew Quinn said.

**Recycling package:** Christmas season leaves large amounts of packaging materials laying about the house. Mail Boxes Etc., of Novi, is attempting to increase recycling of such materials this year. The store, at 43422 West Oaks Drive, will be serving as a drop off point for styrofoam "popcorn" or "peanuts." The store will also be accepting preformed styrofoam used to package electronics and appliances. Participants will receive coupons. For

information, call 347-2850.

**Giving thanks:** The Salvation Army is looking for food donations to make up Thanksgiving baskets for needy families and individuals in Novi, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield and Livonia.

If you are interested in donating food, please call Cheryl Carter at 477-1153. Businesses which would like to run a canned food drive may also call Carter to arrange for a collection pick-up.

The Salvation Army is located at 27500 Shilawasee, Farmington Hills.

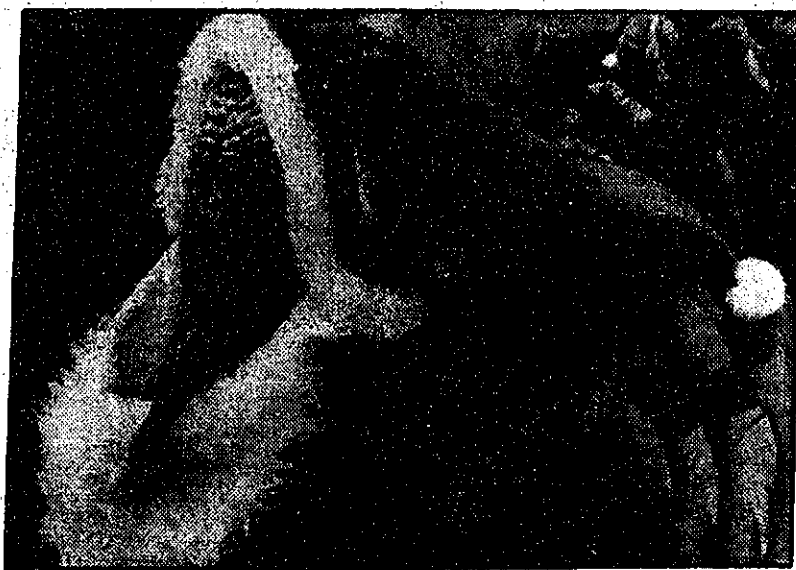


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

### The Christmas Turkey

Margaret Schmidt, of Novi, often takes her animals to pre-schools and libraries in the southeast Michigan area to put on programs. One of them, Tom Turkey (shown above), visits with the children. Christmas stories are told and songs sung. The children are often invited to join the band.

### Sports Briefs

**Wildcat & Mustang updates:** Novi had all the advantages — playing at home in its fourth outing of the season — but it was the Northville volleyballers who claimed a 15-6, 15-5 victory over the 'Cats in what was the Mustangs' season opener on Dec. 17.

"The girls were pleased and so was I," Northville Coach Paul Osborn said. "Novi always starts earlier than we do, so that puts us in a hole. We had some movement problems but we haven't even scrimmaged yet, so overall, we did real well for an opener."

The Mustangs won both games convincingly, but struggled a bit more in the nightcap.

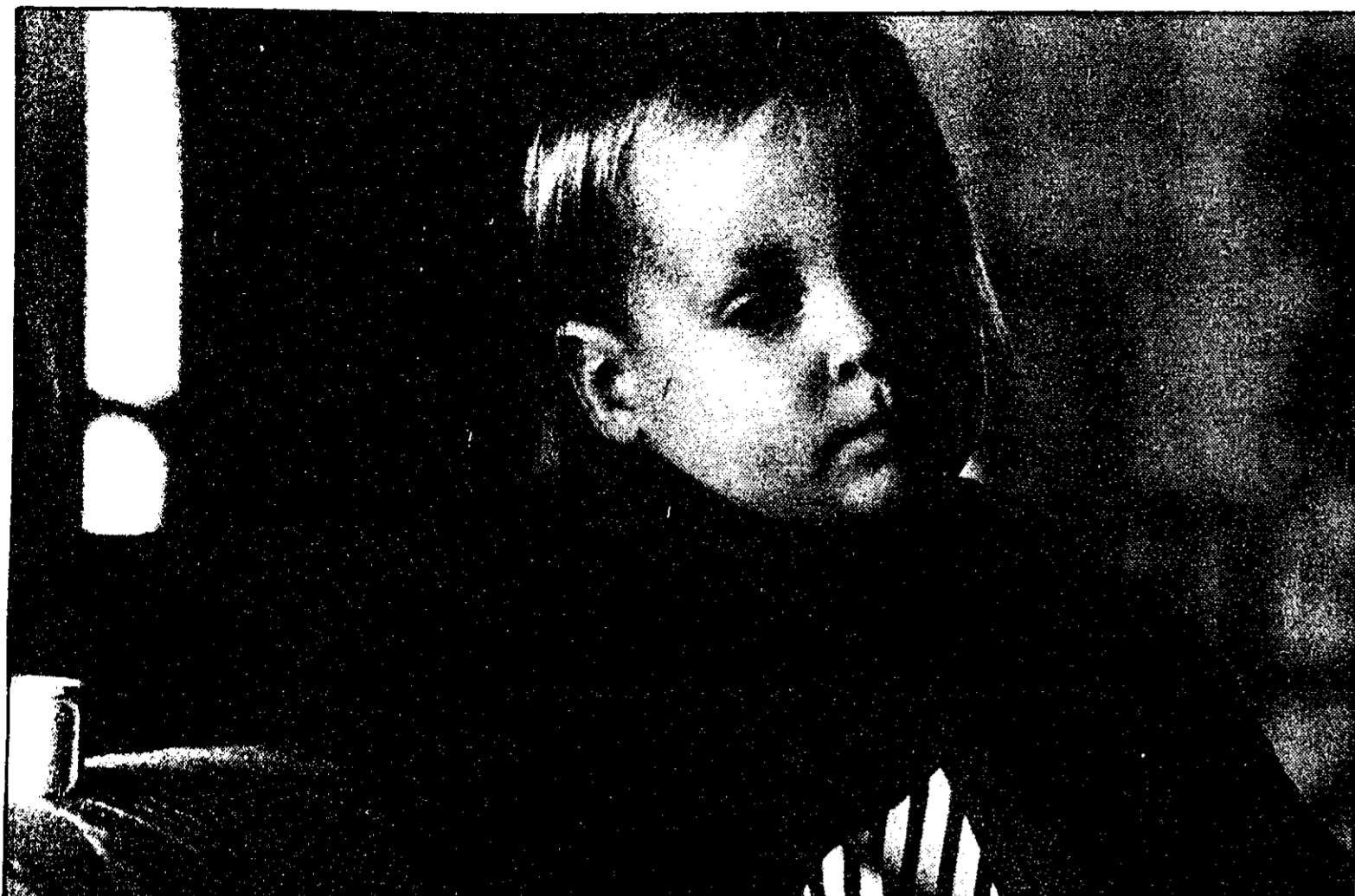
"Some of our problems, particularly the transition from offense to defense, were more evident in the second game," Osborn said.

In the opening game, the Wildcats actually led 1-0, but Northville reeled off five straight points. By the end of the first rotation, the lead had swelled to 12-1.

Novi narrowed the gap to 12-6 but the Mustangs ended it with another flurry — the final two points coming off Stacy Nyland's serve.

In game two, Northville's Beth Ursel served her way to four quick points, but the Wildcats cut it to 4-2 after one rotation and tied it soon after that. The Mustangs regained control when Marcie Dart reeled off six points, and then ended it by scoring five of the game's final six points.





Jimmy Knockart: The children still talk about the tornado which destroyed their Novi home

Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

## Displaced family still celebrates

Continued from Page 1

"We may replace a couple afterwards, when we move back. We are going to have to go through everything and make sure it is the same way it was before."

The storm blew the family into the public's eye, an experience Knockart is not quite comfortable with. Seconds before the tornado hit, she was watching "The Days of Our Lives" on television. Not long afterwards, the TV news cameras would be focused on her family and neighborhood.

Her friend and neighbor, Cyndi Vockler, rushed to the Knockart house when she saw the funnel cloud approach. Vockler had her 20-month-old daughter, Lauren, in tow. Knockart, who had just heard the alarm, rushed Jimmy out of his crib and the four crouched under the basement steps just before the winds hit the house.

Afterwards, when she walked upstairs, Knockart said she was shocked to see sky through the place her roof had once been.

She and Jimmy took shelter at the Novi Police Department. When her husband came to pick them up, the family was tackled by television reporters.

"It's different. I'm not used to it. I wasn't into going onto TV. Three or four TV stations were there with cameras. They just swarmed over us," she said.

"Somebody from television asked us, 'Did anyone get a video of this?' Yeah, that's the first thing you think of when you see someone's house blow up."



Jennifer Knockart: She misses her friends from the neighborhood

## Planners reject rezoning request

By SCOTT DANIEL Staff Writer

The Novi Planning Commission voted Dec. 19 against rezoning of nearly six acres in the city at the intersection of Taft Road and Grand River Avenue.

The commission voted 6-1 against recommending the rezoning to city council. Planning Chairperson Edward Kramer cast the only vote in favor of the motion, which was made by commissioner Ernest Aruffo.

"We would like to work with you," commissioner Kathy McLallen told petitioners. "But, we aren't here to maximize profits with every parcel."

The rezoning proposal was made by owners of the parcel, Mary Jo McGrail and Felix Valbuena. They asked that commissioners recommend a change of zoning for the parcel from residential agricultural to one-family residential district.

Valbuena told commissioners that he and McGrail would like to develop one-family homes for the site. He said the homes would be in the price range of about \$200,000.

"To develop this small parcel we would need at least 18 units," Valbuena said.

Attempts to change the zoning have been made by himself and McGrail over the last six years, he said.

Valbuena said responses from Brandon Rogers, the city's planning consultant, have been vague on the issue.

"We want to develop the property," he said. "But the present zoning creates an economic hardship for us."

In a letter to commissioners, Rogers told planners that the issue before the city was one of land use and zoning. He said to change zoning of one parcel in an otherwise uniformly zoned area would be unwise.

"I don't see coming in with such a radical change for one parcel," Rogers said.

Commissioners agreed. "It seems to me that this once more

would be called 'spot zoning,' Aruffo said.

McLallen said she agreed with Rogers that making the change would be "reaching." She said she could possibly support a less radical change in zoning for the parcel.

"Your R-4 request is excessive," Kramer said. "R-1 may be possible."

According to the Novi City Clerk's office, the rezoning request should be before city council in January. If the council turns the request down it could be taken to the Zoning Board of Appeals at a later date.

## Crowd of 500 sees Novi band concert

About 500 people packed Novi High School's Fuerst Auditorium Wednesday for a free holiday concert. The concert was intended as a gift to the community from the high school bands.

The concert band, under the direction of Paula Joyner-Clinard and student teacher James Engelbert, began the program with the classical favorites and concluded with a band-clapping rendition of "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

The award-winning symphony band, under the direction of Craig Strain and Engelbert, then took

the stage playing Richard Wagner's "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral," Walter Piston's "Tunbridge Fair," and Alfred Reed's "Russian Christmas Music."

The Novi High School percussion ensemble made its first performance of the year with a rendition of "Ten Lords A Leaping," Kettle, metal and snare drums, a giant bass drum, marimba, gongs, tom-toms, bells and rattles joined in the performance.

The evening concluded with the traditional playing of Jerry Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" and an all-audience sing-a-long including "Deck the Halls," "Silent Night" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

"I'm really pleased to see this tremendous community support for our fine young musicians in the bands," said band director Craig Strain. "I'm also thrilled to see so many band alumni return each year for this very special event."

## Churches set services for Christmas

The following is a list of holiday services planned by local churches:

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTHVILLE:** Special evening service will be held Monday, Dec. 24 as follows: 5 p.m., Children's Christmas Pageant; 7 p.m., youth service; 9 p.m., service of lessons and carols; 11 p.m., communion service. The 7, 9 and 11 p.m. services will be candlelight services.

First Presbyterian Church of Northville is located at 200 E. Main St., Northville.

**OUR LADY OF VICTORY:** Christmas Eve services will be held at 4 p.m., 7 p.m. and midnight. The 4 p.m. service is for children. Christmas day services will be held at 9 and 11 a.m. New Year's Eve services will take place at 5 p.m. and

New Year's Day services will be at 10 a.m. Our Lady of Victory is located at 770 Thayer in Northville.

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH:** You are invited to celebrate in song and the Bible narratives at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Northville. Christmas Eve services will be held at 6, 8 and 10 p.m. The 10 p.m. service is a special candlelight service. Christmas day services will be at 10 a.m. and New Year's Eve service will be at 6 p.m. St. Paul's Lutheran Church is located at 201 Elm St. in Northville.

## Police News

Property was reported stolen from a locker at Vic Tanny in Novi Dec. 13, but it was found by a Vic Tanny employee in another locker several days later.

The man who reported the property missing told police that he and a room attendant had checked the entire locker room for his missing property, which included stock certificates, clothing and assorted personal business equipment.

The property was found in a locker at the club Dec. 16 and was returned to the owner.

**MDOP TO VEHICLE** — The owner of a black 1988 Toyota reported Dec. 4 that someone had kicked in and damaged his windshield while he was watching a movie at Town Center General Cinema in Novi.

Police reported he had returned to his vehicle shortly before midnight to discover the damage. The hood of the vehicle had visible fingerprints leading up to the windshield, which was completely damaged. There are currently no suspects or witnesses.

**AUTO KEYED** — The owner of a 1990 Ford Tempo reported Dec. 18 that the entire right side of her vehicle had been "keyed" sometime in the last 30 days. She said she feels it was done at Twelve Oaks Mall.

**STOLEN PURSE** — An employee at Red Lobster in Novi reported Dec. 18 that her purse had been stolen from the restaurant restroom. It was found later at TJ Maxx in Novi Town Center, minus cash and credit cards.

She told Novi police she had placed the purse — which contained cash, credit cards, various identification, keys and makeup — in the restroom at 4 p.m. when she began work. However, when she returned to the restroom after work, she said, her purse was gone.

The purse was found at approximately 10 p.m. in the TJ Maxx parking lot with the cash and credit cards missing and returned to Novi Police.

**NAME GAME** — A Detroit man and a Mississippi man were charged with providing false information to State Police Dec. 13.

The men were stopped by State Police on I-96, east of Novi Road in Novi. The driver of the car was arrested after police discovered an outstanding warrant for his arrest in Madison Heights.

After transporting the 37-year-old driver, of Detroit, back to the North-

ville State Police Post, Madison Heights Police picked him up. Fingerprints records indicated that the man had falsely identified himself and Madison Heights Police then released him, according to State Police reports.

Both the driver and the 45-year-old Mississippi passenger were then charged with providing false information to police, reports said.

**CONCEALED WEAPON** — State Police arrested two Lansing men after a traffic stop on M-102 in Farmington Hills, and cited them for carrying a concealed weapon and transporting open intoxicants, reports said.

Troopers first observed the men traveling on M-102 in Novi at 70 miles per hour where the posted speed limit was 65. Troopers reported that they observed the men apparently putting items underneath their seats.

After stopping the men in Farmington Hills, the troopers reportedly discovered an open bottle of beer and .38 caliber semi-automatic pistol. Both the beer and the gun were seized and the men arrested.

**ASSAULT ON OFFICER** — A 38-year-old Southfield man was charged with disorderly conduct and assaulting a police officer at Northville Downs Dec. 20. The man reportedly made loud derogatory remarks about a female race-track employee in front of a Northville City police officer that night. When a crowd started to gather, the officer asked the man to step into the police office at the track. The man refused, walking quickly away from the office. When another officer told the man to stop and put his hand on the man's shoulder, the man reportedly swore at him and threw his arm back, hitting the officer in the chest. The man was arrested, charged, and released on a \$100 bond.

**DRUNKEN DRIVING ARREST** — A 31-year-old Northville woman was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol Dec. 20. City police stopped the woman on Edward Hines Drive at Seven Mile Road after seeing her nearly hit another car. She "was unable to stand without support," according to the police report. Her blood alcohol level was measured at .24 percent, more than twice the legal limit. She was arrested and released on a \$100 bond.

Citizens with information about the above incidents are urged to call Northville City Police at 348-1234, Northville Township Police at 348-9400, or the Novi Police Tip Line at 348-6887.

## Planners give nod to PUD complex

Continued from Page 1

In May of this year, Hughes presented a scaled-down plan for Sandstone to the planning commission. Original plans called for 1,493 total units made up of condominiums and stacked flats. The revised plan reduced the total units to 1,362 and reduced commercial space from 245,000 to 80,000 square feet.

Plans presented to the commission on Dec. 19 reduced the development further.

A total of 1,193 units are now planned. Extension of Decker Road, by Hughes Properties, will be extended southwest to the Novi Road, Twelve and a Half Mile Road intersection. The Decker Road extension is slated to be the first phase of development of Sandstone.

Commercial space will remain at 80,000 square feet. Planned development is also complete. A total of 26.7 percent of the site would be developed. Remaining natural portions will be connected through a series of linear trails to the city's Natural Resource Design Plan.

Construction of the first phase of the plan is set to begin in April of 1992. Before construction can start, Hughes Properties will need a series of approvals from the city.

That process will start in January when city council reviews plans for general area plan approval. The company will work with the city throughout 1991 on site plan approvals for phase one, Lanciault said.

"We realize we have a long way to go just to get phase one going," he told commissioners. "But, if we lose

this window of opportunity it will be very hard to rework financing for the project.

"It's time we make a decision to build the PUD," Lanciault continued, "or find out what else we can do with the land."

The attorney said Hughes Properties has spent about \$4 million so far to develop plans for Sandstone. Lanciault said the company couldn't justify spending additional funds on the project unless the development plan concept was acceptable to the city.

"We have to have approval to go forward and commit funds," he said. "We have done everything we can do on the concept of the plan."

Commissioners were pleased with the new plans and voiced their support.

"It has come a gigantic step," said Commissioner Tim Gilberg. "You've done a great job."

Planner Kathy McLallen said she was pleased that improvements in the plans that call for lesser impact on wetlands area on the site. She was concerned, however, with the number of students that would be added to Novi and Walled Lake schools.

Commissioner Judy Johnson said that Hughes Properties had made a "good faith" effort in revising plans based on city concerns. She added that Sandstone would likely benefit Novi.

"On the whole, I think it's a positive project for the city," Johnson said.

Planning Commission Chairperson Edward Kramer agreed. "I see in front of us a sensitive plan," he said.

From all of us  
to all of you

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

Joanne Kroske, Carol Kunec, Carolyn LaFrance, Hope Lash, Josephine Leshnick, Juanita Little, Elizabeth Lyberg, Joy Macklin, Kay Magnusson, Sharon Mahoney, Mike Malott, Sharon Maroudis, Gina Matthews, Sylvia McBride, Gerald McChristy, Janice McKenzie, Douglas McLaughlan, Deborah McNamara, Linda Meock, James Merkle, JoAnn Michels, Cynthia Miller, Richard Miller, Marilyn Millner, Bryan Mitchell, Sandy Mitchell, Buddy Moorehouse, Doris Moriset, Marilyn Moyer, Rita Myers, Bob Needham, Dawn Needham, Brian Osan, Felecia Panicacci, Laurel Paulson, Bob Peri, Steven Perkins, Geraldine Perkowski, Rich Perlberg, George Perry, Grace Perry, Danielle Pesce, Sandra Peters, Scott Piper, Jeffrey Plumley, Tina Podsiadlik, Angie Predhomme, Mike Preville, Diane Quint, Linda Rasegan, Mary Jane Reilly, Joe Richards, Lisa Rohkohl, Denise Russell, Deborah Scharp, Tracy Senia, Denise Sepulveda, Dawn Seyfried, Kelly Shaw, Shirley Sheldon, Judith Sickles, Laura Sinke, Carol Smith, Ray Smith, Cliff Stamper, Pamela Stankiewicz, David Stevens, Maria Stuart, Bob Sunday, Melissa Suffin, Meghan Swain, Robin Swantack, Mary Jane Swartzell, Kathleen Tadajewski, Cynthia Tarchinski, Del Taube, James Taylor, Donald Tennant, Nancy Thomas, Jerod Thompson, Rita Tomasek, Ida Tomaszewski, Dennis Topolinski, Terry Towles, Mike Tyree, Charles Ukra, John Utter, Matt Valley, Thomas Varcie, Jennifer Wagoner, Rick Wagoner, Janice Walters, Jo Anne Westlake, Jeanette White, Robert White, Dawn Whitmarsh, Shari Wice, Annabelle Wiseman, Margaret Wiseman, Ruth Wojdyla, James Wood

Grace Aardal, Sharon Alvey, Bruce Amonette, Jon Anderson, Harriet Baker, Barrie Barber, Howard Baske, Helene Blake, Karen Blatt, Jeffrey Bowhall, Linda Bowhall, Mark Bowhall, Chris Boyd, Julie Brown, Rick Byrne, Juli Carless, Tracey Catlin, Kimberly Chapman, Ned Chubb, Donna Claypoole, Denise Clements, Carrie Cley, Barbara Cloutier, Randall Coble, Debra Cook, Charlie Cortez, Deborah Coykendall, Lewis Crawford, Mark Cruson, Yvonne Cybart, Sheila D'Amico, Scott Daniel, Collene DeCoste, Raymond Delaurantuy, Marty Deschaine, Janice DeWitt, Sue Donovan, Linda Dowsett, Kelly Doyle, Sherri Doyle, Lisa Dranginis, Judi Durocher, Vivian Dunstan, Wendy Eisele, Gloria Estes, Sandra Everly, Dahlia Feit, Cristina Ferrier, Alicia Garrison, Neil Geoghegan, Laura Gerdel, Louis Glubzinski, Don Golem, Sueanne Golphin, Hal Gould, Stephanie Jo Groth, Matthew Hanna, Julia Hanselman, Georganna Herrington, Jay Harrison, Marcia Heilner, Todd Henkel, Bob Henshaw, Marilyn Herald-Smith, Jacqueline Hill, James Hogan, Suzanne Hollyer, Sue Jarvis, Jan Jeffres, Phil Jerome, Mike Jetchick, Coreena Johnson, Jack Kaake, Dennis Keenon, Gary Keiber, Steve Kellman, Teresa Kettler, Laurean Kinnick,



## the NOVI NEWS

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## MONDAY BUSINESS

### Give it a whirl Whirly Ball is a hit with players

If you like basketball, hockey, polo and jai-alai, but your idea of a strenuous workout is driving an electric bumper car, your sport has arrived. It's whirly ball. It's in West Bloomfield. It's drawing crowds from as far away as Troy, Southfield, Birmingham, Detroit and Mount Clemens.

And it works like this.

Two teams of five members each climb into red and yellow bumper cars parked on opposite ends of an 80- by 50-foot indoor court. They look at each other nervously.

In their hands they hold plastic whirly ball scoops that they will use to try to retrieve a plastic ball that referee Tom Benevides is about to toss out from a balcony above.

The agony of waiting.

Suddenly a buzzer sounds. Benevides throws the ball, and 10 bumper cars move at maddening speeds of 6 mph toward center court. A red team member scoops up the ball, avoiding the urge to touch it with his hands.

That would be a penalty.

Red team members toss the plastic ball back and forth as they head down the court toward a red backboard that has a hole and a net in its center. The aim is to hit the net and score 2 points.

Sounds easy.

It's not.

The yellow team gets the rebound, and the bumper cars, crashing into one another, begin the cross-court journey to the yellow backboard.

"The big zero," Benevides yells into a microphone as a yellow team member misses the goal.

And so it went Thursday night as workers from Blue Cross-Blue Shield paid \$120 an hour to rent a whirly ball court at the new Whirly Ball West on Drake Road, south of Walnut Lake, in West Bloomfield.

That seems expensive, but not when you have 20 or so players chipping in.

Teams can score in two ways—by making shots or acquiring penalty points assessed against the opposing team for such infractions as goaltending or causing collisions at excessive speeds.

Teams can cause turnovers for various reasons, such as when a team member fails to pass the ball within 20 seconds or when the team doesn't shoot within 30 seconds.

There are even technicals. Don't harass the referee or you lose 2 points; a second offense shaves 4 points from the score.

"This is just great, great fun," said Hiramatsu Desai of Orchard Lake, who played Thursday for the first time. "You get to enjoy the teamwork, and it also gets rid of your aggressions. But it takes time to get the hang of it."

Cheryl Kavanaugh of Troy had played four times before. "It's a lot of fun," she said. "They should open a lot more of these for entertainment."

Richard Porhola, a 35-year-old businessman from Royal Oak, sought a franchise from the Las Vegas-based Whirly Ball International and leased two tennis courts at the Centaur Racket Club, transforming them into the first whirly ball courts in Oakland County.

Centaur's owners had found that they could fill only six of their eight tennis courts.

Porhola had opened the first whirly ball club in Michigan five years ago in Mount Clemens. He'd heard about the sport from his brother, Stanley, of Alaska, where the 10-year-old game had already caught on.



Whirly Ball gives new meaning to "crashing the boards"

Two years ago, Porhola sold a franchise in Ann Arbor. West Bloomfield seemed like the next logical spot for a club; people from this area were going to the other clubs to play.

"It's an all-around sport that men and women can play competitively," Porhola said. "The bumper cars make them equal."

Most whirly ball games are played in 18 minutes, and the clock never stops. Porhola requires a minimum one-hour reservation, though some groups rent the courts for as many as four hours.

People 10 years or older may play, but most of the participants are adults. Many organize company games in which the competition may pit managers against hourly workers.

"These people get pretty serious about it," said Benevides, a former

Florida resident who also worked at a whirly ball center there. He's seen some Florida leagues play hour-long games in which the scores topped 100 points. As local enthusiasts improve at the game, he hopes that leagues will spring up here.

Porhola, with several business partners, spent between \$300,000 and \$400,000 to start the twin courts at Whirly Ball West, where games may be played from 9 a.m. to 4 a.m., seven days a week, by making reservations.

Thus far, only 18 whirly ball centers have sprung up in the United States, said Porhola, who's proud he's behind the three franchises in Michigan.

"Out of 18 in the nation, I've got three," he said. "What the hell, I'm having fun."



Monte Nagler displays some of his works, now being sold in his gallery at the Novi Town Center

### Photog offers his works

Monte Nagler takes his cues from the great ones.

A well-known photo artist from Farmington, Nagler recently opened his own shop in the Novi Town Center to both sell and display his work. His store, adjacent to the F & M store, is open daily from 3-9 p.m.

Nagler began photographing seriously after studying with the great Ansel Adams.

"It was during that period of intense work that I realized that making photographs is a way to experience beauty instead of just looking at it," Nagler says.

Nagler's photographs, which have won numerous awards, are found in many private and public collections including the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, The Brooklyn Museum, Nikon International, Ford Motor Co. and IBM. His photographs are represented in galleries from coast to coast.

Nagler's photographs are large in size and scope, and technically show meticulous care and attention. All images are printed and mounted to exacting archival standards. Yet Nagler is quick to point out that tech-

nique is clearly second to content.

"Cameras don't make photographs—people do," he says. "Photographers should communicate feelings that are inside them. Through the photographs, a photographer should be saying, 'This is what I say and feel, and I'd like to share that.'"

Nagler's love of photography has extended to teaching and writing. He instructs all photography classes at the Birmingham Community House and the Farmington Community Center, and conducts seminars at Cranbrook P.M. He also writes the photography column for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.

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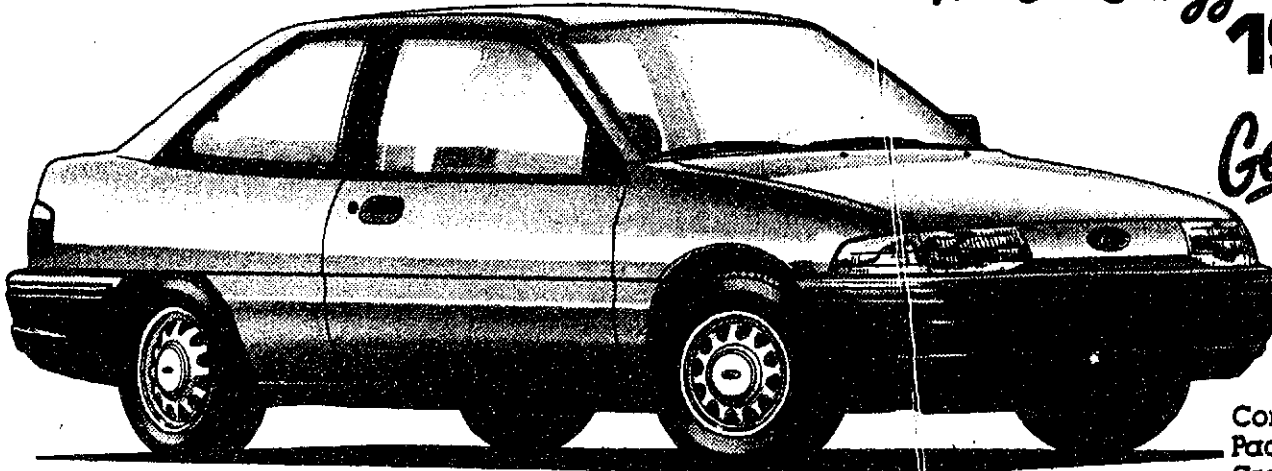
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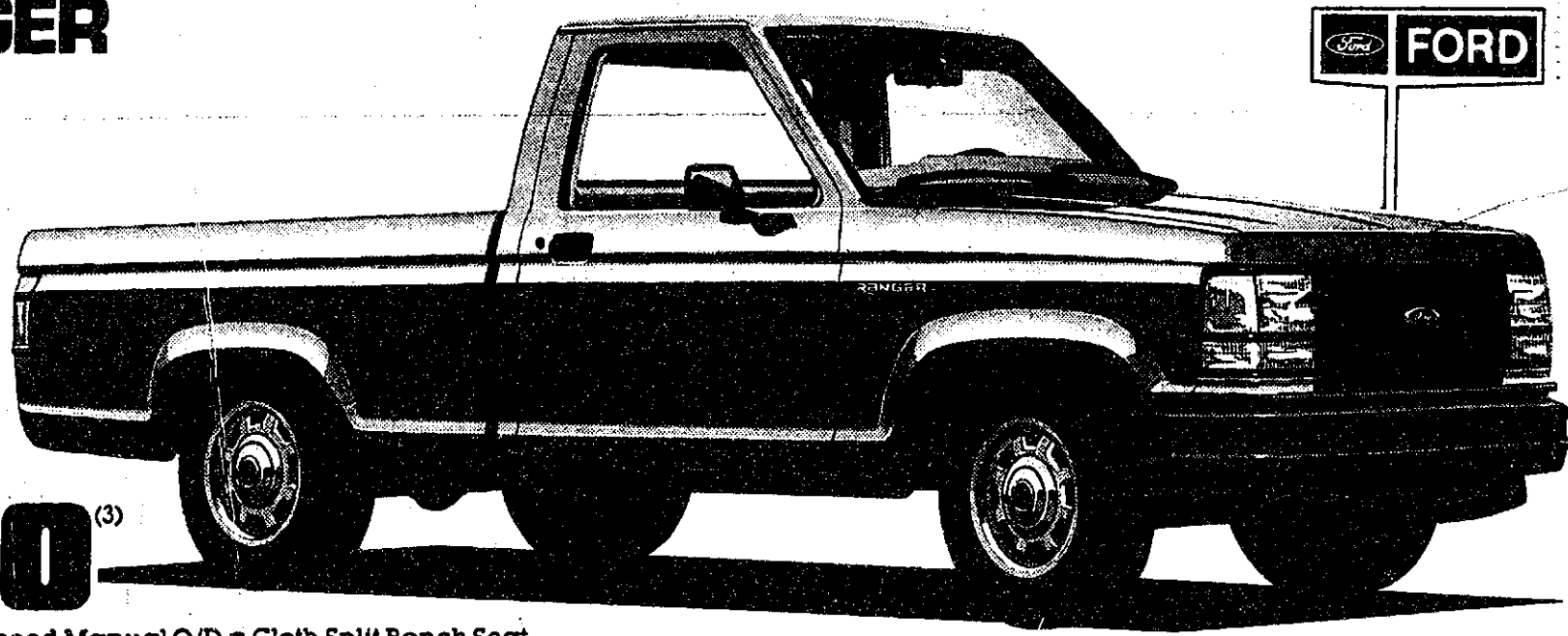
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