

MONDAY

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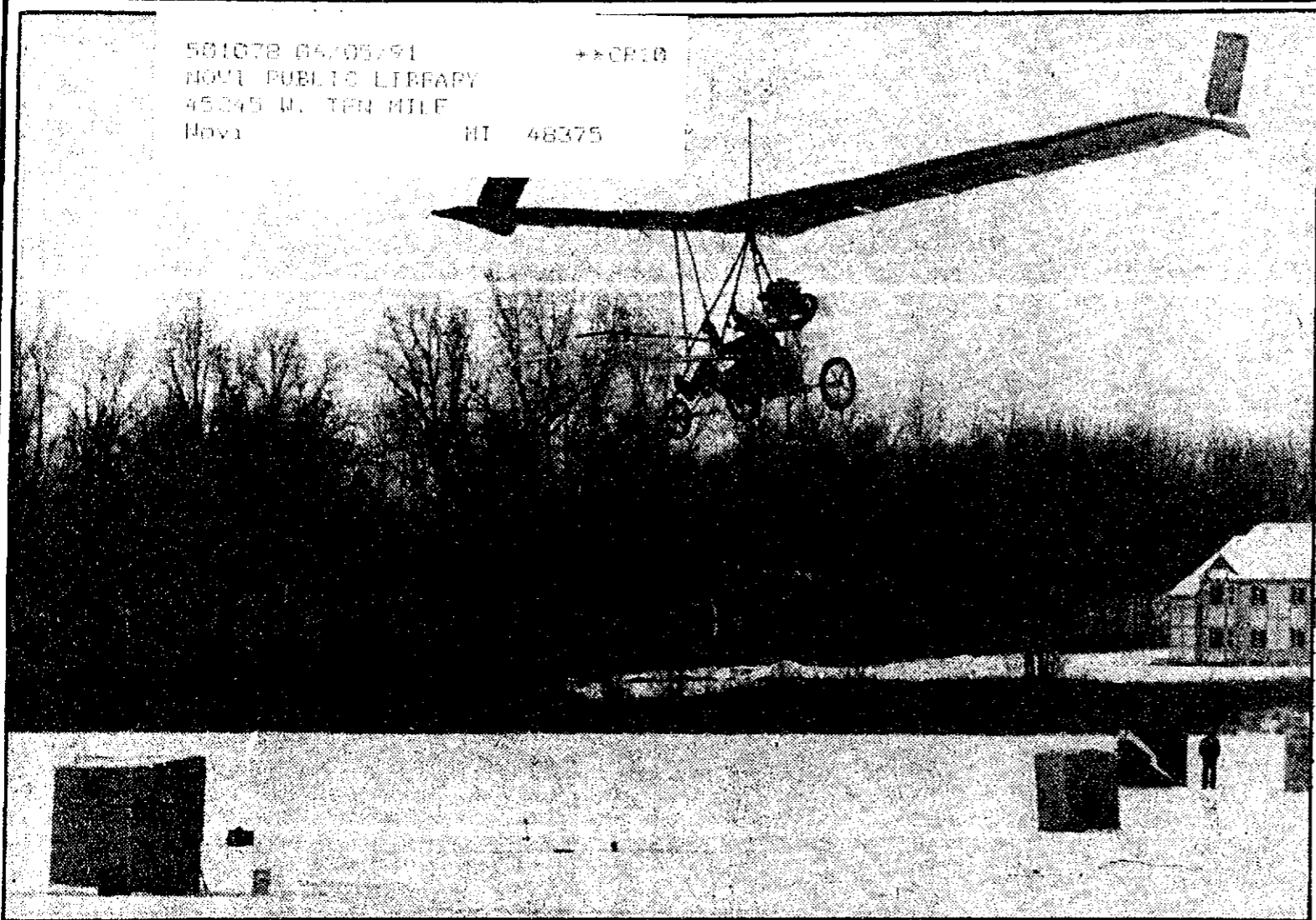
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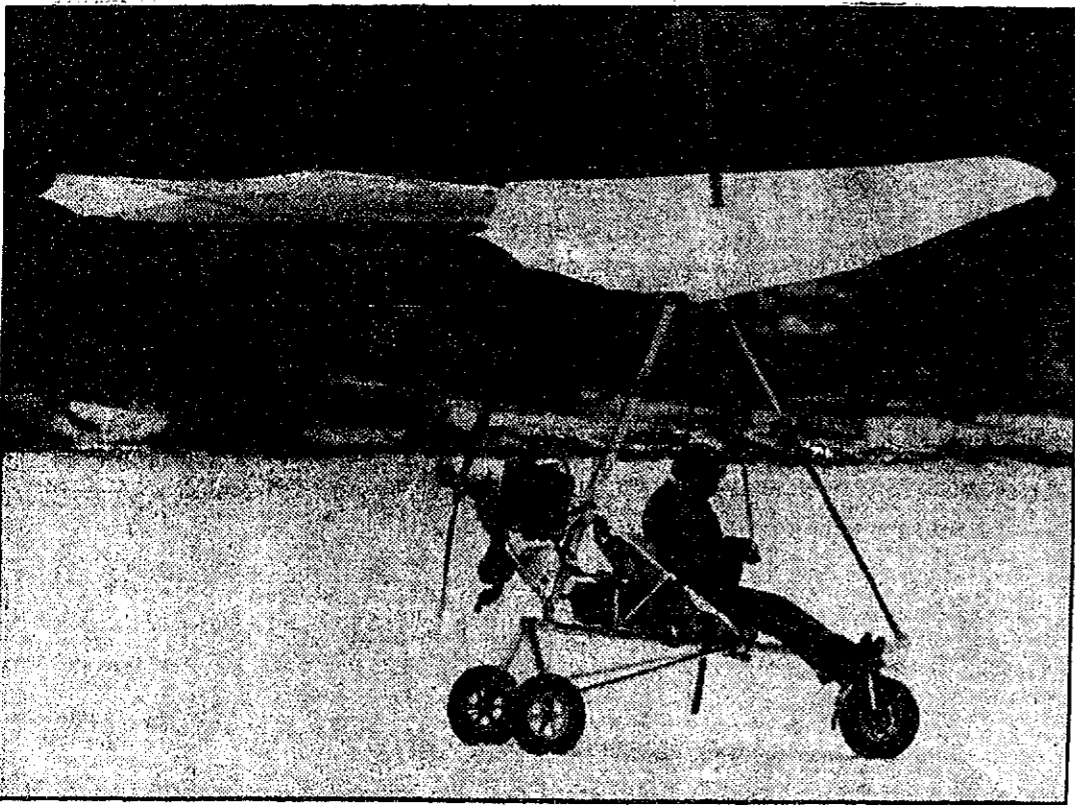
VOL. 35 NO. 74

January 14, 1991

50 CENTS



Photos by BRYAN MITCHELL



Ultralights

Winter sports usually include things like skiing, skating and sledding, but these pilots over Walled Lake added flying to the list. These planes — called ultralights, for obvious reasons — were zooming around the sky last week.

State probes the cause of fire injuries

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

The Michigan Department of Labor is investigating how and why six Consumers Power workers were injured when a high-pressure gas main along Grand River Avenue exploded into flames Jan. 2.

Jerry Sommers, supervisor of construction safety at the state Department of Labor's Bureau of Safety and Regulation in Detroit, said that a gas fire of this severity is rare.

"We do have fire in an excavation where they do repairs on the line and it causes a fire. Usually it is done with a piece of equipment and nobody's down there with it. It burns up the equipment and the guy jumps out and they turn off the gas," Sommers said.

"Maybe the suits they have were good but they didn't protect them completely."

Consumers Power Public Information Director Garth Behrendt said the workers were wearing fireproof gloves, suits and face masks.

While working in the construction pit, the men suffered first- and second-degree burns — primarily to the face, hands and neck — and were treated and released by area hospitals that night. They are back on the job.

The utility company employees were mending a puncture caused by sewer line construction when the fuel sparked for an as yet undetermined reason and burned in a 40-foot blow torch for about an hour and a half.

If safety violations are found, Consumers Power, as the employer, would be liable under Public Act 154, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act, Sommers said.

State safety officers are determining if the proper procedure was followed in the repair and if the equipment worn by the men was adequate. If a violation citation is issued, fines could range from \$60 to \$10,000. A labor department report on the incident is expected to be prepared in at least two weeks.

The Novi Fire Department and Oakland County Road Commission have wrapped up their investigations of the fire. Consumers

Power will continue to probe the situation — including how the accident happened — this week, Behrendt said.

"As far as we know, all the safety procedures were followed," he added.

The company has not yet determined how many dollars' worth of gas escaped. Calculations will be based on gas pressure and the length of time the rip was unsealed.

Financial losses in the explosion have already mounted up to \$72,000.

Novi Fire Chief Arthur Lenaghan said his department will report vehicle and equipment damage to the Michigan State Police Fire Marshall Division, but the city is not required to calculate the fuel loss.

Lenaghan listed \$3,000 in damages to two Michigan Bell telephone poles and cables, which left 300 homes without phone service for about 27 hours.

Consumers Power had a loss of \$40,000 in vehicles and equipment, while Statewide's bill is \$29,000.

Statewide-Excavating Company of Wixom was extending a sewer line along Grand River Avenue when a drill tore into the staked gas main. In a night with weather in the low teens, 650 homes in Novi and Wixom lost gas service for up to 18 hours.

The high-pressure gas line serves west Novi and Wixom, including the Ford Motor Company plant.

The line was reportedly flagged by the utility company. Statewide Excavating had contacted MISS DIG — a Michigan organization owned and operated by the utility companies — at least a week before the fire, said Executive Director Kathy Fournier. "They had supplied the proper notice before they did their work."

State law requires a three-day advance notification. MISS DIG then contacts all utilities.

The Oakland County Road Commission, which has jurisdiction over Grand River Avenue, tested the road for damages. Soil borings to examine the subsurface of the road found the only problem was aesthetic — the scorching of the road.

Auxiliary buildings get new rules

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

City residents hoping to add a storage shed or dog kennel to their homes this year may have a more

difficult time.

The Novi Planning Commission voted unanimously at its Jan. 9 meeting to recommend that the city amend its zoning ordinance to tighten regulations on "accessory

buildings." The issue will go to city council on Jan. 21 for a vote.

The zoning ordinance amendments address the issue of where accessory buildings can be located on residential and commer-

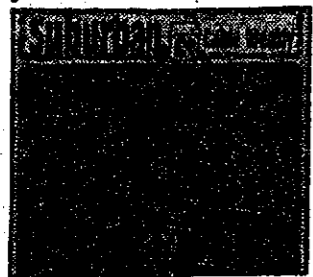
cial property.

The city ordinance presently allows detached accessory buildings in the rear and "interior" side

Continued on 4

Inside

Feature stories, columns, and complete program listings — all that and more in "Suburban Cable Weekly," your guide to television inside today's paper. The TV listings are keyed to the actual channel numbers on the local MetroVision cable system.



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Novi Briefs

Advisory council seeks members: The Novi Community Education Advisory Council is accepting applications for positions on the 10-member council. Council terms are three years. The council meets the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Novi Educational Services Building on Taft Road.

For more information or to apply for a position call community education director Clara Porter at 348-1200.

The purposes of the council are:

- To assess and identify interests, resources and problems within the community.
- To set objectives and priorities and establish programs to meet the needs and desires that have been identified.
- To provide coordinated planning and action, avoiding unneeded duplication of programs and services and full communication with community agencies, groups and community members.
- To utilize facilities and equipment that can be shared and to help in discovering funds that are available from numerous sources that can be utilized to expand or offer new services.
- To conduct continuous evaluation of established objectives, priorities and programs.

Transit overload? Novi Special Recreation Coordinator Kathy Crawford told City Council this week that the parks department's senior citizens van is so much in demand that some seniors are unable to schedule rides, even when they call three or four weeks in advance.

Crawford said the department originally asked users to call 48 hours in advance, but demand is so high that often is not enough. Crawford said the van, a 10-passenger vehicle with a wheelchair lift donated less than a year ago by Michigan National Bank's Independence for Life program, is usually in operation eight hours a day and has an average daily load of 15 passengers.

The van is the only one the city has to serve a population of some 5,000 senior citizens, she said. While the solution might be to obtain a larger bus or a second vehicle, Crawford said the program is likely two years away from receiving grant money from the Southeast Michigan Area Regional Transit (SMART) authority.

Plant closing: United Technologies announced this week it will be closing its Walled Lake facility, employing 95 workers, at the end of April. Company officials said the operations of the plant would be moved to other United Technology facilities in Michigan. The plant, which is part of United Technology's automotive division, known as Engineered Systems Division,

is being closed due to the downturn in the automarket and because of excess capacity in the company's factories.

Open to the public: Wixom's Gilbert Willis Park will once again be rented to the public this year. Residents have the first opportunity to reserve the park Jan. 1 through March 31. During this time, Wixom residents may reserve the park for any date. After March 31, non-residents will have an opportunity to reserve the park for any date. For more information, contact the Wixom Community Services office at 624-2850.

Minister meeting: Fr. William T. Cunningham, Executive Director of Detroit's Focus: Hope program and pastor of the Church of the Madonna, will be the featured speaker at the first Novi Prayer Breakfast in observance of the week of prayer for Christian Unity. The breakfast is to be held at Victor's Novi Inn, Grand River near Novi Road, and is slated for 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23. The event will be sponsored by the Novi Minister's Association. For ticket information, call 349-8847 or 349-5666.

Chef exchange: On Sunday, Jan. 20, the chefs of the Sheraton Oaks-Novati will step aside to let six of Japan's finest master chefs move in. These culinary artisans will transform the Sheraton kitchen into a Japanese art gallery as they prepare an 11-course meal in honor of their hosts the Michigan Winter Ice Festival. The event is being held for 10 days at the Michigan State Fair Grounds Jan. 25 through Feb. 3. The visiting chefs are from the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. Tickets for this event will run \$35 per person. For information, contact Jaimie Kleinstiver at 868-8800.

Share your skills: Novi Community Education is always looking for instructors for its adult and child enrichment classes.

If you have a skill, craft or hobby you'd like to share with others, call Novi Community Education at 348-1200.

Support group: Don't suffer in silence. The HAVEN is offering an ongoing rape support group on Thursday evenings in Southfield. For more information and to sign up to attend, call 334-1274. The HAVEN is an organization based in Pontiac designed to provide women will shelter from domestic violence and other violent encounters.

Historical notepaper: The Novi Historical Society has notepaper for sale at the Novi Public Library and the Novi City Manager's Office. Each package contains 12 note cards, three each of four subjects. Price is \$3, including envelopes.

Sports Briefs

Wildcat update: If the Novi volleyball team can learn how to win a close match, the sky could be the limit. Saddled with a history of losing, the current Wildcats are very competitive, but lack whatever it takes to win the close ones. In action last week, Novi had a chance to win two matches in the last game, and came up short both times. Novi let a golden opportunity slip away on Jan. 7 in a crucial KVC showdown with Brighton. The 'Cats jumped ahead 15-6 after one game but then dropped a pair of 11-15 games that included many match-winning opportunities wasted. . . . The Novi swimmers got back on the winning track on Jan. 8 against Chelsea, but it took a while. . . . The Wildcats dunked the Bulldogs 109-77, but performed poorly in the early going and actually trailed by eight points after six events.

Mustang update: The Northville spikers opened their conference season with an impressive 15-7, 15-0, 9-15, 15-11 dual-meet victory on Jan. 9 to visiting Farmington. . . . In boys swimming, the host Mustangs dominated the Rocks 60-33, winning 10 of 12 events and setting numerous state meet cuts and career best efforts.

MONDAY EDUCATION

Recapture suit may go to Supreme Court

By SUZANNE HOLLYER Staff Writer

Novi and Northville schools may take a lawsuit against the state to the Michigan Supreme Court in an attempt to have \$72 million lost to funding cuts returned.

A steering committee made up of representatives of the 56 school districts involved in the lawsuit has authorized their attorney, Dennis Pollard, to proceed with an application to the Supreme Court to grant superintending control over the case.

The lawsuit was filed after the state recaptured \$72 million from out-of-formula school districts last summer when, for the first time, social security payments were declared "categorical" aid and subject to recapture.

Categorical aid is state money given to school districts to fund special programs like transportation or special education. Social security payments for school employees had formerly been paid by the state. By declaring the money categorical, the state was able to take money allocated for the payments from property-wealthy school districts

and use it to help fund poorer schools. Northville schools lost over \$1.3 million to the recapture. Novi lost \$890,000. The districts joined forces with 54 other school districts in a lawsuit attempting to have the money returned and prevent future recapture.

The state Court of Appeals dismissed the case on Nov. 9. Pollard said the dismissal was based on a court error. The court, Pollard said, in dismissing the suit quoted Section 30 of the Headlee Amendment, the law upon

which the grievance is based. But the school districts have filed the suit based on Section 29 of the amendment, he said. He filed a petition for rehearing with the Court of Appeals soon after the case was dismissed. Because the court has not responded, Pollard may ask the Michigan Supreme Court to assume jurisdiction.

Northville Superintendent George Bell has not decided if Northville schools should continue participation in the lawsuit. He hopes to learn more and make a final decision at a Michigan Out-of-Formula District Association meeting later this week.

It's going to depend on the price tag," Bell said. Bell is unsure whether the \$72 million would be returned even if the lawsuit were successful. "If we did win the case, where would the state get the money?" Bell said.

He said if a lawsuit were successful the governor could issue an executive order returning the money once again to the state. But setting a legal precedent that could prevent future recapture may make the legal costs worthwhile, he said.

If the Supreme Court rejects Pollard's request to have the court assume superintending control of the case, then the 56 school districts will have to wait until the Court of Appeals rules on Pollard's motion to rehear the case. If the appellate court rejects the motion, the schools will have the direct right to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Impending cuts to schools due to a state budget crisis is the justification the schools will use in asking the Supreme Court to take immediate control of the case.

Make way for ye olde banquet

By SUZANNE HOLLYER Staff Writer

Jugglers, court jesters, beggars and strolling musicians will take about 300 local people back to a time when men wore tords and women wore ladies.

Northville High School will be transformed into a Renaissance-era banquet hall on Jan. 25 and 26 in what has been billed as the "First Annual Madrigal Dinner" to be held at the high school "Castle on the Hill."

A trumpet fanfare will announce each course of the meal, and diners will be entertained throughout by the Royal Court Singers, known in modern times as the Northville Singers. The theme will be Renaissance England, and everyone from the waiters serving food to the beggars hoping for a few scraps will be dressed reminiscent of the 15th to 17th century.

"We're really trying to take people back," high school Choir Director Mary Kay Pryce said.

But don't worry if your best Renaissance-era clothing is at the cleaners. Visitors are not expected to sport the garb of days past. The menu will consist of wassail bolle (apple cider), Baron's roast beef, royal English potatoes, St. George's beans and carrots, browned rounde coofe (coffee), and fresh fruite (fruit). Ye olde crisper appys, known today as apple crisps, will be served for dessert.

The modern-day equivalent of each Middle English menu item will be prepared under the direction of Northville High School's master chef Yvonne Stephens.

"People will eat and be entertained almost nonstop," Pryce said.



Showing off their Renaissance attire are Northville students (l-r front) Amanda Farkas, Beth Gattig, Nancy Campbell, Valerie Bassin, (l-r back) Andrea Kovalak, Drew Fisher and Jay Sharkey

Sister city plan to teach global view

By SUZANNE HOLLYER Staff Writer

Novi's visitors from Japan just left, but plans to develop an exchange program with the Owami Town School District are just beginning.

The process of developing a sister-school program with the Owami, Japan school district will soon be underway. Superintendent Robert Pwko told the Board of Education Thursday.

The announcement came following a visit by 18 students, two English teachers and three administrators from Owami, Japan. The visitors, who stayed with Novi families, arrived Jan. 5 for a five-day stay.

Novi students will be involved in developing an exchange program, Pwko said. "We will be in contact with the students and ask for some help as it relates to setting up a cultural exchange," Pwko said.

The program would help integrate a global perspective into Novi's curriculum, he said. "As we begin looking at all of this it is something we want to look at," he said.

Besides reaping the educational benefits, some hosting students made some new friends, too. Pwko said he saw a few tears when the bus came to take the Japanese delegation to the airport.

"I can't say enough as to what it meant to all of us," Pwko said. Student board representative Jennifer Forward reported to the board about school activities and then discussed her experience hosting a Japanese student at her home.

Forward said the Japanese student who lived with her learned a few new English words during the visit. And by the end of the stay, Forward was learning a little Japanese.

"It was such a good friendship in three days it was hard to say goodbye," she said. Forward showed the board the gifts given to her by her new Japanese friend. She received cloth-covered pencils and a silk bag.

Board President Robert Schram hosted a Japanese student. He received an aerial photograph of Owami which he showed the board.

"It was a worthwhile endeavor on everyone's time," Schram said.

Parkview playground gets dirty end of stick

By SUZANNE HOLLYER Staff Writer

A little rain may have never hurt anyone, but the playground at Parkview Elementary School has a few problems handling excessive showers. In the opinion of Novi resident George Forsyth.

Forsyth has two grandchildren attending Parkview. The Parkview students reported to Forsyth that they could not use a new playground at the school because it was too muddy on a few occasions when the weather would have otherwise permitted outdoor activity.

"They've got a mud problem, they may have some kind of drainage problem as well," Forsyth said.

Forsyth said he is afraid the playground equipment already are covered in mud. "My thought is if they don't do something quickly, the weather will get too bad and they won't be able to do anything," Forsyth said.

But the mud problem is one that may be indigentous to new playgrounds everywhere. "Most anytime it rains we're going

to have mud someplace on the playground," Novi associate superintendent William Barr said. The problem at Parkview may be a little worse because the playground was recently seeded with grass, Barr said.

"It's going to be muddy for a while till we get a few growing seasons," Barr said.

"Anytime you have 300 to 400 kids beating a path to the playground equipment you're going to get some mud."

But Forsyth can rest assured that the district is aware of the problem and is working to correct it. The areas immediately surrounding the playground equipment already are covered in woodchips, Barr said, which helps alleviate the problem somewhat.

The Parkview playground area is part of a drainage system, Barr said. The problem is expected to be further diminished when gravel or soil is laid in a nearby area in the spring.

"There's not a thing we can do about it until the spring," he said.

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Candlelight vigil for our forces overseas

By CRISTINA FERRIER Staff Writer

A non-denominational candlelight prayer vigil for armed forces in Saudi Arabia has been scheduled for tonight at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Walled Lake, in conjunction with Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Novi.

"This is not a political statement or an activist statement," stressed Rev. Leslie Harding of the Novi church. "We will simply be praying for peace and the safe return of our troops. That's what it's all about."

Harding stressed that the vigil is for everybody, regardless of religious or political beliefs. "We will be asking the almighty God in his grace for strength and guidance in this time that affects so many people—including the Iraqis," he said.

He said the vigil, which will begin at 8 p.m. tonight and continue until 8 a.m. tomorrow morning, will consist of "silent prayer and meditation" with a short prayer service each hour on the hour.

"People can stay for as short a period or long a period as they want, and they don't have to dress up for it," he said.

Wild chase starts in Novi

By CRISTINA FERRIER Staff Writer

A stolen car in Novi Tuesday led to a police chase involving four cities and damaging three police cars.

Rodney Darrin Hoskins of South Lyon is charged with stealing a 1990 Pontiac Grand Am that was parked at the Speedway gas station at Pontiac Trail and Beck Roads. The owner had left the engine of the car running when she went into the station shortly before 1 p.m.

Hoskins had appeared in 52nd District Court that same morning on charges stemming from a previous stolen car incident.

Novi Police, responding to the stolen car report, broadcast a description of the car. Shortly after, a Keego Harbor police officer spotted the vehicle and attempted to pull Hoskins over.

However, Hoskins refused to pull over and instead led Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake and Waterford Police on a chase that ended in White Lake Township.

Oakland County Sheriff Deputy Ron Roy said Hoskins at one point rammed into the side of a Sylvan

Lake police car. A Keego Harbor police car was also damaged.

Before the chase ended in White Lake, he apparently stopped along Orchard Lake Road to pick up a hitchhiker. Roy said the hitchhiker was released.

"We firmly believe the hitchhiker's story," Roy said. "The guy was astounded by the chase. In addition, Roy said, the men would not have had time to collaborate on the story.

Roy said Hoskins, a recovering crack addict, also had a stolen VCR with him in the Grand Am Tuesday.

When Hoskins reached White Lake, he evaded a roadblock only to spin-out at M-59 and Elizabeth Lake Road, where he was apprehended. White Lake police said. One White Lake police car suffered front-end damage in the chase.

Hoskins is currently being held in Oakland County Jail on a \$60,000 cash bond. He is charged with unlawfully taking away a vehicle, two counts of felonious assault, one count of larceny in connection with the VCR, malicious destruction of property and fleeing and eluding a police officer.

MONDAY UPDATE

Utility seeks source of stench

By STEVE KELLMAN Staff Writer

Consumers Power officials are offering a \$1,000 reward for information useful in determining the source of an odor that drifted through parts of Oakland and Macomb counties Friday afternoon, Jan. 4.

The natural gas utility company announced the reward after an extensive investigation failed to locate the source of the mysterious odor. "We have not been able to identify it," company spokesperson Garth Behrendt said last Tuesday.

Behrendt said the company followed up on numerous reports related to the odor throughout the day and night Friday and into Saturday morning. "We got about 1,500 of those calls," he said. "We had reports that ranged anywhere from the west side of Oakland County way over to Macomb County."

The odorant is stored separately from gas and routinely transported in trucks, Behrendt added, saying an open valve or damage to any of the storage locations or trucks could be possible sources of the leak. But "nothing has turned up yet," he said.

"We're not finished with it yet. We're continuing to try to get to the bottom of it. We'll rest a whole lot

"We'll rest a whole lot easier when we find a cause."

Garth Behrendt

Consumers Power spokesman

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"We're not finished with it yet. We're continuing to try to get to the bottom of it. We'll rest a whole lot

easier when we find a cause." According to Consumers Power, the odor did not emanate from a gas leak or the spillage of a gas odorant anywhere in its system. Thomas L. Rugh, community services manager for the utility company's Metro region, said, "Our investigation has not discovered the source of the odor and, to our knowledge, no other company that deals with natural gas or gas odorant has acknowledged responsibility."

Rugh said Consumers Power personnel worked with state police, local police agencies, sheriff's departments and others in their attempt to determine the odor's source. "The volume and pattern of calls indicated to us that there was a substance in the air that smelled like gas odorant and that it was moving in a southwest to northeast pattern," Rugh said. He explained that natural gas in its pure state is colorless, odorless and tasteless. The gas used to heat homes and cook food has an odorant added to it — which is described as

smelling sulphurous or like rotten eggs — to aid in detecting leaks. The odorant is reportedly harmless to inhale, and had the odor actually been natural gas, company officials said there would not have been a threat to people because of the large area into which it was leaked.

The odor, believed to have originated in the Walled Lake-West Bloomfield area, prompted the evacuation of five schools in the Walled Lake district, and one in the West Bloomfield district. The smell permeated the air in at least a 12-mile wide swath, drifting eastward and causing hundreds of residents to call their local police and the departments. Behrendt said the gas company is confident the odor was not actual gas because workers checking out hundreds of odor complaints — particularly at the schools — found no gas leaks whatsoever.

Consumers Power fielded hundreds of calls beginning at 3 p.m. Jan. 4 through the Northville/Novi area. The odor was detected as far south as Northville. City Hall, where officials called Consumers Power fearing a gas leak in the building.

By 3:30 p.m. the odor was detected in Troy, and one half hour later it was found in Rochester. By 4:30 p.m., Oakland County calls had subsided and the company began getting calls from Macomb County.

West Bloomfield Police received some calls on the smell, but did not believe there was cause for concern, said Sgt. Mike Madigan, who earlier guessed the problem was likely caused by odorant only. Bloomfield Township Fire Department Capt. Jim Moor said firefighters responded to at least 200 calls and received about one dozen, finding no gas leaks anywhere.

Troy Police Sgt. Mike Kerr said the police department alone received about 150 calls from people "who thought they had gas leaks in their homes." "You can smell it all the way from Square Lake, to Big Beaver to Adams to John R," Kerr said. He called it a "gas cloud."

Police in Rochester and Rochester Hills also fielded numerous calls Friday, but told callers there was no cause for concern.

Civic Calendar Jan. 14-21

MONDAY/14

NORTHVILLE COMMONS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION meets at 7:30 p.m. in the clerk's office at the township hall.

NOVI LIBRARY BOARD meets at 7:30 p.m. in the council chamber at Civic Center.

NOVI CITY COUNCIL meets at 8 p.m. in the council chamber at Civic Center.

TUESDAY/15

NORTHVILLE TOWNSHIP INSURANCE COMMITTEE meets at 7:30 p.m. in the clerk's office at the township hall.

NORTHVILLE ARTS COMMISSION meets at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room at city hall.

NORTHVILLE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION will hold a public hearing on the Master Plan at 8 p.m. in the council chamber at city hall.

WEDNESDAY/16

NORTHVILLE TOWNSHIP WATER & SEWER COMMISSION meets at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the township hall.

NOVI CITY COUNCIL will hold a special meeting at 8 p.m. in the council chamber at Civic Center.

THURSDAY/17

NORTHVILLE TOWNSHIP POLICE RESERVES meet at

FRIDAY/18

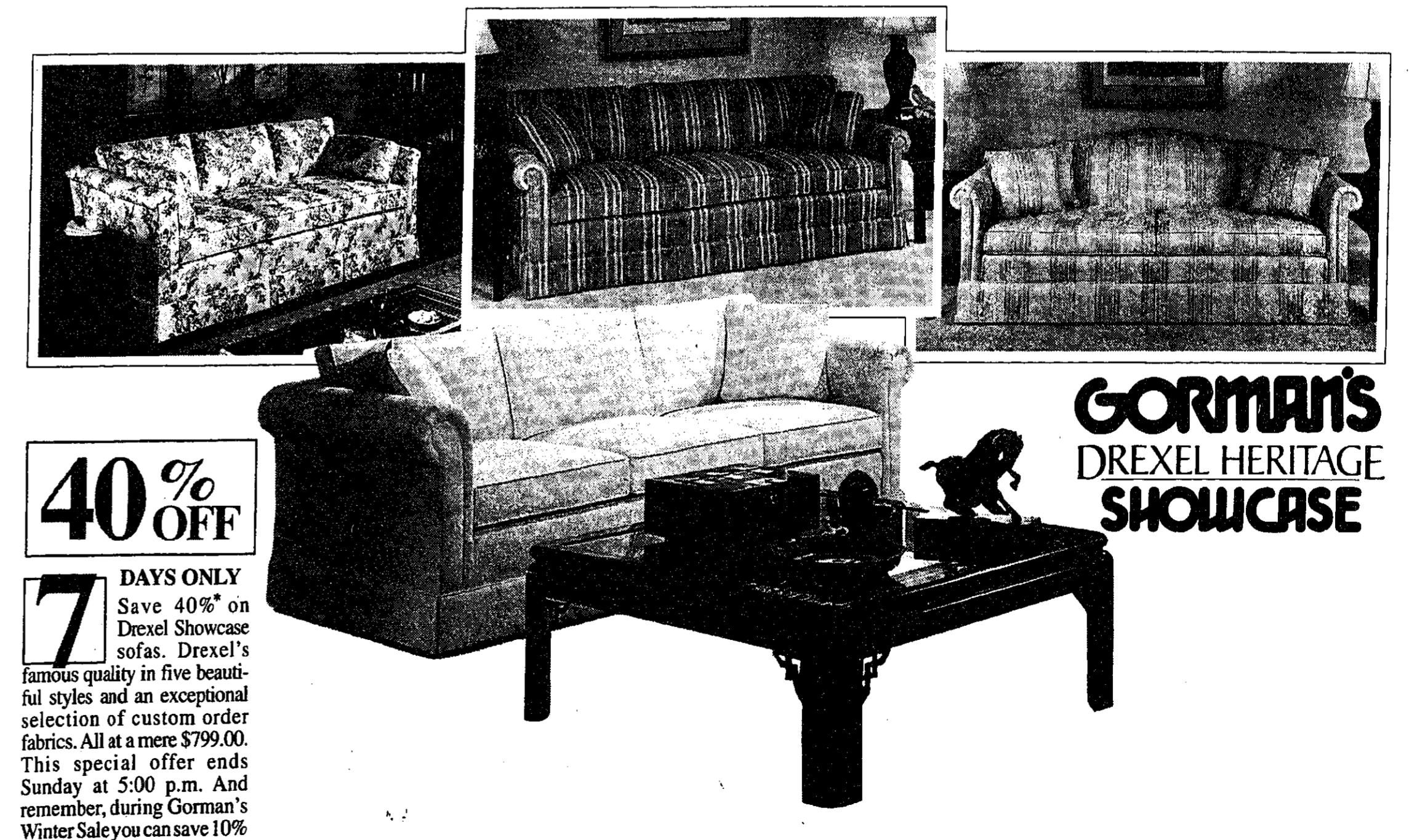
NORTHVILLE SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL meets at 1 p.m. at the Scout Building.

MONDAY/21

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Car fire forces driver off I-96

A 37-year-old Detroit man was forced off of I-96 at Haggerty Road Jan. 8 when his engine burst into flames.

According to Michigan State Police reports, the driver was heading westbound on I-96 when he observed smoke pouring out from under the hood of the vehicle. Reports said that the man pulled off to the shoulder of the highway believing the engine was overheating.

After stopping the vehicle, the driver opened the hood and discovered flames. The Novi Fire Department was called to the scene to extinguish the flames.

No injuries were reported. Cause of the fire is unknown, reports said.

BREAKING AND ENTERING: Novi Police said someone broke into a residence on Nine Mile Jan. 4 and stole a color television set.

The door to the residence inside the garage had been kicked in, causing damage to the door and door frame. The owner of the house told police he had left the residence at 1 p.m. and returned to find the damage at 1:30 p.m.

STOLEN VEHICLE: A Linden man reported Jan. 5 that his 1991 GMC Jimmy was missing from its parking place at the Novi Hilton.

He said he had parked it in the northwest lot of the hotel at 11 a.m. Jan. 4. When he returned to the vehicle at 2 p.m. Jan. 5 he found it missing.

A computer check by Novi Police discovered that the vehicle had been impounded by the Detroit Police Department, which had recovered the vehicle at 8:12 a.m. Jan. 5. The vehicle was missing all four tires and

Police News

wheels, the radio, and the back window. The driver's side door lock had been punched and the steering column was broken.

CONVERTIBLE TOP SLASHED: A radio detector was reported stolen Dec. 9 by the owner of a 1990 Geo Metro Convertible parked at Twelve Oaks Mall.

According to police reports, the convertible top had been cut to gain entry to the inside of the car.

YOUTHS ARRESTED: Four Northville boys were arrested for unauthorized entry into a Horton Avenue home Dec. 11.

One of the boys, age 15, had worked at the home previously and was suspected of several previous thefts of more than \$100 in cash and other items. The arrests followed several days of surveillance by city police.

POLICE INVESTIGATE STORE THEFT: City police are investigating the Dec. 15 theft of more than \$600 in cigarettes from a downtown store.

Someone apparently broke into Arbor Drugs, 133 E. Dunlap St., around 1:18 a.m. by prying open a delivery door on the west side of the building. Forty-two cartons of cigarettes were taken, though three cartons of Marlboros were recovered outside the store. Police also found a green gooseneck wrenching bar and other evidence at the scene.

CITIZENS WITH INFORMATION: About the above incidents are urged to call Northville City Police at 349-1234, Northville Township Police at 349-9400, or the Novi Police Tip Line at 349-6887.

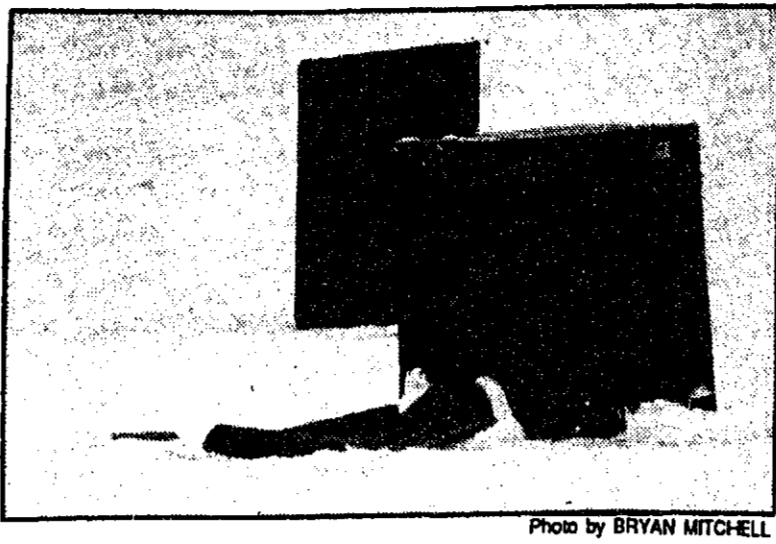


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

It's shanty season once again

Daily removal of shanties begins

By JAN JEFFRES Staff Writer

Local ice fishers may be braving the cold more this winter than in the past.

This is the first season the city's new daily removal ordinance for shanties has been given a try-out.

Only two of the structures have been registered at the city clerk's office to date — while 25 were last year.

"It makes a difference if you've got to bring it in every day, especially if you've got no where to put it," said City Clerk Gerry Stupp.

Novi's Superintendent of Public Works Bruce Jerome said only one delinquent shanty so far has been dragged off the ice of Walled Lake. That happened the night of Jan. 7.

"We pulled it off to the edge and put a note on it. We didn't impound it," Jerome said Thursday.

"I was there today. There were several shanties on the Walled Lake side but there was only one shanty on the Novi side. It appears most of them are fishing without a shanty."

LAST DAY OF REGISTRATION SCHOOL ELECTION

NOTICE OF LAST DAY OF REGISTRATION OF THE ELECTORS OF NOVI COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT: Please Take Notice that the Board of Education of Novi Community School District, Oakland County, Michigan, has called a special election to be held in the school district on Tuesday, February 26, 1991.

TAKE NOTICE that the following proposition(s) will be submitted at the special election:

MILLAGE RENEWAL PROPOSITION
Shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property in Novi Community School District, Oakland County, Michigan, be increased by 10.5 mills (\$10.50 on each \$1,000.00) on state equalized valuation for a period of 3 years, 1991, 1992 and 1993 to provide additional funds for operating purposes (this being a renewal of 10.5 mills for operating purposes which expired with the 1990 tax levy)?

THE LAST DAY ON WHICH PERSONS MAY REGISTER WITH THE APPROPRIATE CITY OR TOWNSHIP CLERKS, IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AT THE SPECIAL ELECTION CALLED TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1991, IS MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 1991. PERSONS REGISTERING AFTER 5 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING ON MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 1991, ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AT THE SPECIAL SCHOOL ELECTION.

Persons planning to register with the respective city or township clerks must ascertain the days and hours on which the clerks' offices are open for registration.

This Notice is given by order of the Board of Education of Novi Community School District, Oakland County, Michigan.

SANDRA E. THORNTON, SECRETARY BOARD OF EDUCATION (1-14 & 1-21-91 NN)

Restaurant planned for 14 Mile

By SCOTT DANIEL Staff Writer

A new 250-seat restaurant is in the works for Novi.

Plans for the restaurant, which would be located on the south side of Fourteen Mile Road, east of East Lake Drive, went before the Novi Planning Commission at its Jan. 9 meeting.

The restaurant is being developed by Ted Andris and Claude Romain, who own several parcels of land adjacent to the restaurant site.

Commissioners voted unanimously to grant preliminary site plan approval to the project.

"It will be a visually, extremely attractive restaurant," said commissioner Kathy McAllen. "You will be almost assured of success."

Plans for preliminary site approval were first presented to the commission in November of last year, Meads said. She said Andris and Romain have been trying for several years to develop the land. A shopping center and restaurant development was first proposed for the site in 1986.

But, Meads said, homeowners from East Lake Drive stalled the plans by raising concerns over increased traffic in the area from such a development.

Planner John Balagna said the commission received a letter from one city resident, David Clark, who opposes the construction of the restaurant. He said Clark cited increased traffic as the reason not to allow the development. He said Clark asked him to vote against the restaurant.

Despite the resident's opposition, commissioners agreed that the restaurant would be a good addition

to the city.

"I'm very pleased with general design," said planner Ernest Aruffo. "It will be a massive, positive improvement for the land."

Balagna agreed with Aruffo. He said it was a "good use for the property."

Several questions were raised by the commissioners, however.

McAllen said potential problems could arise from the restaurant. She said the development would be surrounded by residential areas on three sides and would have insufficient off-site parking. The commissioner worried that restaurant goers would end up parking in the residential areas.

Developers will likely be before the commission again in February for final site plan approval.

DARE to care at annual dinner

It costs money to support Novi's successful Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program and one way the funds are raised is through the annual D.A.R.E. Dinner.

Or if you prefer a home delivery service, Novi Council on Substance Abuse member Judy Maxwell will drop off tickets anywhere in the city. Contact Maxwell at 348-8585.

Checks should be made out to the Novi Council on Substance Abuse. Novi Police Department Officer Robert Galt initiated the local program in Sept. 1989. D.A.R.E. helps the students develop the skills needed to resist peer pressure to experiment with drugs.

Auxiliary buildings get new restrictions

Continued from Page 1

yards of city residences and businesses. The ordinance defines an exterior side yard as one that abuts another lot.

The amendments would eliminate the building of accessory buildings in any side yard, but would still allow for construction in rear yards. Front yard buildings would still be prohibited.

Rear-yard buildings, the amended ordinance states, must be located no closer than 10 feet to a residence. It also states that an accessory building may not be built closer than six feet to the rear lot line.

The ordinance wouldn't apply to any buildings already constructed in Novi.

The planning commission held a public hearing on the matter at its

meeting. The hearing was held to get public input, but no city residents spoke out about the proposed amendment.

Planner Kathy McAllen asked Assistant City Attorney Dennis Watson if the construction of swimming pools or play structures would be affected by the changes.

Watson said that the building of larger pools may be affected, but that play structures wouldn't. He said the city's building department wouldn't regulate the construction of play structures, such as tree houses.

If passed, the amendments would also affect commercial and industrial building owners, according to Novi Planning Consultant Brandon Rogers.

"I think (the amendments) will improve the street appearance of our residential areas," Rogers said.

Second Annual Northville Record and Novi News RESTAURANT POLL

Which restaurants in the Northville/Novi area are the most popular? Help find out by filling out this ballot.

The Rules:

1. Only restaurants in Northville/Novi area are eligible to be mentioned on your ballot.
2. To help us avoid ballot-box stuffing, each ballot must include your name, address, and phone number. Ballots without this information will be thrown out.
3. Only ballots clipped from the newspaper will be accepted. Photocopied ballots will be thrown out.
4. Mail your completed ballot by Feb. 1 to: The Northville Record/Novi News, 104 Main St., Northville, MI 48167. Or drop it off at our offices.
5. Poll results will be published Feb. 21.
6. One ballot will be selected at random, and the winner will receive dinner for four at the Novi/Northville restaurant. (Home town employees and their families are not eligible for the free dinner)

The Categories

- Best Overall Restaurant
- Best Inexpensive Restaurant
- Best Service
- Best Breakfast Restaurant
- Best Sandwiches
- Best Desserts
- Best Atmosphere
- Best Pizza
- Best Burgers
- Best Seafood
- Best Ethnic Food
- Best Fast Food
- Best Soups
- Best Steak

Comments: _____
Please note: The following name and address blank must be filled out. Ballots without this information will be thrown away.
Your Name _____
Street _____
City _____
Phone _____

BOYS TOWN NATIONAL HOTLINE (800) 448-3000

Is someone hurting you physically or sexually? Are you thinking about running away? Are you hooked on drugs or alcohol?
Call the Boys Town National Hotline to talk to caring people who will listen to your problems and find you help quickly and close to home.
Call toll-free, anytime.

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MetroVision
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MONDAY AT HOME

Robert Meisner/Condo Queries

Parking policy unfairly enforced

Our co-op has a so-called traffic and safety policy that isn't being enforced on all members. Some members are being asked to pay a \$25 fine for a second offense of parking more than two cars and the third offense will call for eviction proceedings. Is this possible when a policy is not enforced on everyone, and board members change the policy when they themselves are noted for violations?

Simply put, no. The restriction, rule or policy must be enforced uniformly against all members. It cannot change depending on who is being prosecuted. Accordingly, it would appear that if the restriction was ever contested, your co-op's policy of unequal treatment would not stand the test. I would write the board and tell them about the problems you perceive in regard to the fine policies.

Can you tell me if the recent amendments to the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act apply to condominiums?

An employer under the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act is defined as a person who has one or more employees. An employee does not include an individual employed in domestic service of any person. Therefore, the Handicappers' Civil Rights Act would apply to a condominium association if it has one or more employees. The act is designed to provide the opportunity to obtain employment, housing and other real estate and full and equal utilization of public accommodations, public services and educational facilities without discrimination because of a handicap.

My ex-husband and I are divorced but paid off a house on a land contract but still owe taxes. Now that we are divorced, would like to know if we did not have the title recorded, do we own the house or do we have to wait until the taxes are paid? I want to sell my half of the house. How do I go about doing this?

You will probably not be able to record the deed until the back taxes are paid. If the taxes are paid, presumably by getting half of the contribution from your ex-husband, get a deed from the land contract seller, ask them to make the deed to "Jane Smith and John Smith, tenants in common." If you got a deed, record it, and then do another deed from yourself to yourself as above and record that. I am assuming, of course, that the divorce judgment did not discuss the house.

Once you own the property as tenants in common, you are legally free to sell your half. Bear in mind, though that as a practical matter, it can be difficult to sell a one-half interest in real estate. Perhaps your ex-husband will join in the sale and you can split the proceeds. You should seek the advice of an attorney to protect your interests once you are clear as to your intent concerning the disposition of the property.

Mortgage rates still declining

Buyers of houses and condominiums in metro Detroit continue to find fixed-rate mortgages attractive, as rates for 15 and 30-year instruments held in the range of 9 1/2 percent to the week of Jan. 1.

Mortgage rates are lower now than a year ago, and in some instances, are at their lowest levels in several years.

"I won't say rates have never been better, but they're as low as they have been in the last 10 years," said Michael Lubig, vice president and general manager of the mortgage department for Standard Federal Bank.

Gregory Quick, vice president of secondary marketing for Coreicia Mortgage, had a similar observation. "In general, we haven't seen rates at this level since the first part of 1987."

Lower mortgage rates means more house for the money for buyers at the upper end of the spectrum and more people able to enter the market as first-time buyers at the lower end. Refinancing activity also has increased.

Several factors have resulted in lower mortgage rates.

One was the decision of the Federal Reserve to lower its discount rate in mid-December from 7 to 6 1/2 percent to stave off a recession, said Al Marshall, chief president of business development for First Federal of Michigan.

"Hopefully, they (financial institutions) can pass that savings on to their customers," he said. "The key was the discount rate being reduced and supply and demand, the market being down."

Rates can now fluctuate daily, Quick said. "Most residential mortgages are packaged into securities purchased by investors."

"What's going on in capital markets basically is the belief we're in a recession and will continue to be in a recession for a time period in 1991 and that typically ushers in a reduction in demand for money. Consum-

ers zip up their pockets and rates come down," Quick said.

Many banking executives, including Daniel B. Smith, vice president and branch manager for Republic Bancorp Mortgage, believe that rates will fall even more.

"With the economy slowing down, people aren't buying big-ticket items. They (Federal Reserve governors) are trying to keep the economy going," Smith said.

"There's an ample supply of mortgage money now," Lubig said. "It's a buyer's market. A lot of mortgage bankers are competing for a smaller piece of the pie."

Adjustable rate mortgages that were available at 7 1/2 percent. Lubig projected that upwards of 80 percent of all first mortgages originated at Standard Federal are of the fixed variety.

"It's essentially consumers wanting to lock in relatively low rates for a long time," Quick said. "That's a case of a lot of people wanting to reduce

financial uncertainty."

Loans fixed for a period of years then ballooning to a final payment or refinancing also have niches.

Republic Bancorp's most popular product now is a seven-year balloon plan at 8 1/2 percent on a 30-year amortization schedule, Smith said. After seven years, mortgages pay off the loan or refinance.

"I'm getting a lot of people absolutely sure they're not going to be in the house for seven years so they won't have to refinance," he said.

Comerica Mortgage offers a 5/25 plan at 8 1/2 percent annually for the time of closing.

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MONDAY BUSINESS

Computer program puts mind over manager

Information changes behavior. That is the guiding premise on which a new computer diagnostic tool -- developed by Plymouth Township-based Human Synergistics -- is based.

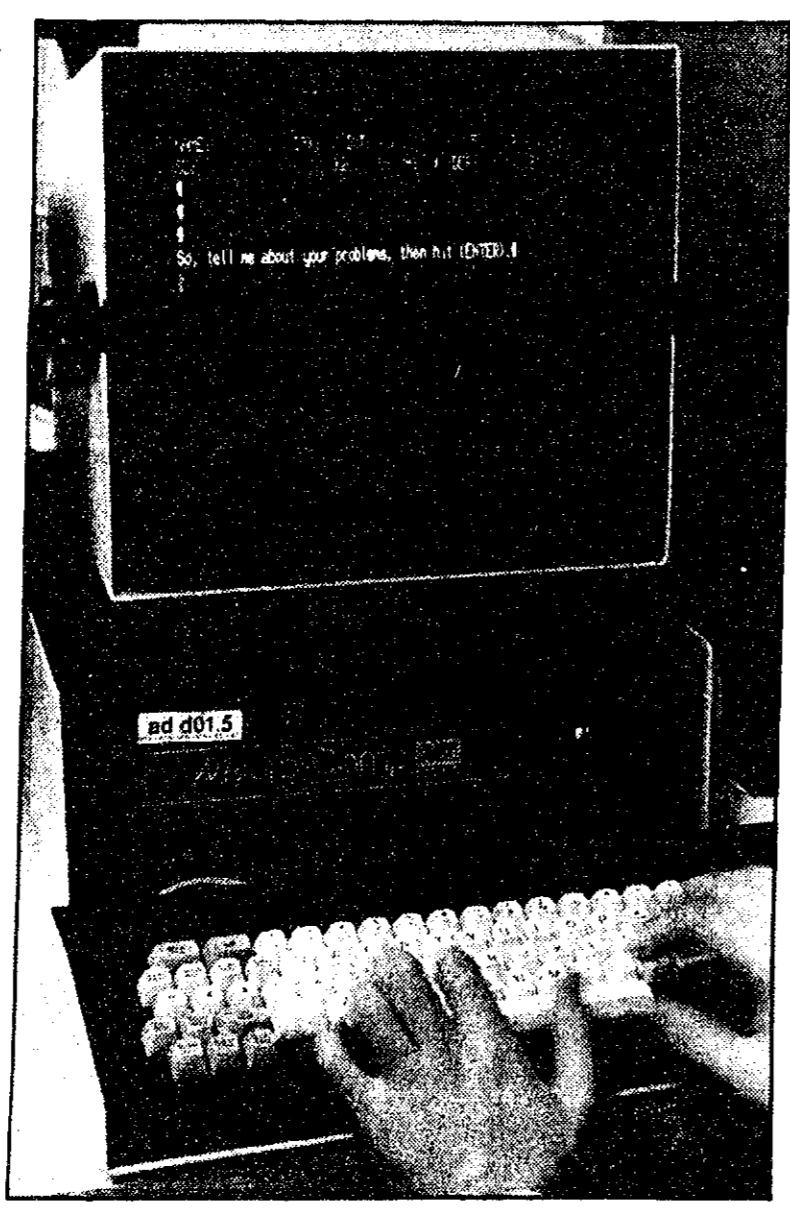
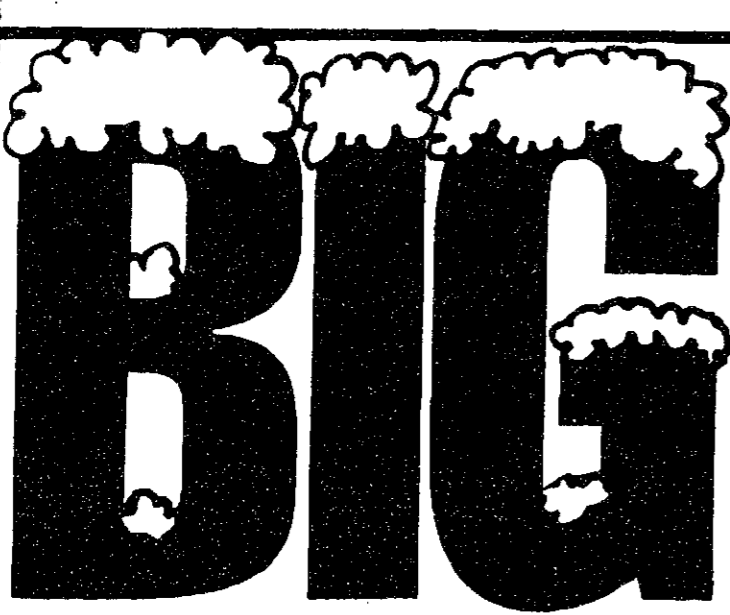


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

What we found was that the manager had an unhealthy notion of power," Neale said. Rather than being a person whose power is delegated, he viewed power as something to hold over people.



SKI SAVINGS Skis - Boots - Bindings - Poles Skiwear - Outerwear - Accessories Downhill & Cross Country For Men, Women, and Children YOU'LL GET YOUR BEST DEAL THIS WEEK AT...

Bavarian Village FULL LINE - FULL SERVICE SKI SHOPS. 12 store locations listed with addresses and phone numbers.

No gain. No pain. Keeping your weight at a moderate level may slow down your risk of heart attack. So maintain a healthy diet and lighten up on your heart. American Heart Association.

Leewards Sunny Sale. Here are just a few of the ways that you can save all over the store this week! Includes deals on sweatshirts, yarn, and stitching kits.

Leewards January Events. 17. Laurel Park Place lifestyle series... 24. Laurel Park Place lifestyle series... 25. Fashions Du Jour... 27. Meet world champion Detroit Piston Dennis Rodman.

Leewards STORE HOURS Sunday 11-6, Monday-Saturday 9-5:30. For Your Listening Pleasure, Laurel Park Place Presents PIANO IN THE PARK.

MONDAY FOOD

Eleanor and Ray Heald/Wine

Sometimes you've got to break the rules. Kitchen responsibilities have diminished since the holidays, but quick and simple meals must still remain attractive and flavorful, even if classified as "carry-out."

With this goal in mind, we recently tasted Famie's Chicken (2707 N. Woodward Ave., Royal Oak) with a dozen red and white wines especially selected by local wine distributors to complement the herb-roasted chicken.

The favorite white wine with the chicken (no sauce) was the 1989 Duena Vista Lake County Sauvignon Blanc (\$8). By itself, the wine is fresh and attractive.

Other compatible wines that added flavor interest to the chicken were the 1988 Foster-Blochgarten Riesling (\$11), Burkin-Wolf (\$8 per liter) and the 1989 Liberty School California Sauvignon Blanc (\$8).

We all agreed that the tomato-smoke flavors of the Southern barbecue dipping sauce killed the flavor of the white wines. While the 1982 Moore "Quaff" Gewurztraminer (\$8) was too sweet for the herb chicken, it was a clear winner with the honey mustard sauce.

Three of the reds were particularly good with the herb chicken. Those that paired best showed rich fruit, good body and a fair amount of structure.

Food and wine combinations are fun when you do not take them too seriously. Remember, you can learn as much from a poor combination as a good one.

Another surprise was that the sweetest wine, "Quaff," complemented the chicken with honey mustard sauce, while a dry wine assaulted the palate.

One of the real pleasures in life is a simple meal with friends, especially one that you didn't have to prepare, accompanied by a delicious, yet affordable wine.

Wine is fine for at-home fundraiser

Wine is not just an indulgence or a luxury. For one Northville couple, wine is the vehicle to help those who may need your kind indulgence.

On Saturday, Mike and Jan Michls hosted their third annual private wine tasting and auction. Hardly a major event on the community calendar, it's more of a party among close friends with the proceeds benefiting a charity.

"I'm definitely not tooing my own horn with this auction," said Mike. "I do it to raise money for charity. In my case it's the wine that we auction, but you can do with anything that's collectible."

The cost of donation that year was a can of food, which was donated to charity, and at the auction, some \$500 was raised for the American Cancer Society.

"My friends were going crazy trying to outbid each other," Mike said. "I had a \$10 bottle of wine fetch \$100. Last year, there was a \$100 bottle of champagne that went for \$300."

In the second year, guests were asked to bring a winter coat to donate. That night \$1,500 was raised for the Salvation Army. Tom McKinnon, owner of McKinnon's restaurant on Main Street in Northville, served as guest auctioneer for about 30 friends.

"I've told people that my goal for this year is just to raise one penny over \$1,500," said Mike. "But my personal goal is \$43,000."

Through the rare and exquisite labels might draw some intense bidding on their own, Mike and Jan aren't content to let the wines alone be the stars of this occasion.

"It's a nice, summery kind of wine," said Mike. "So on June 14, I'm going to get out my shorts, slip on the backpack and walk that wine to the door of the successful bidder. Jan will meet me there with a cooler full of ice, so it will be properly chilled when the winner gets home from work."

"Now, Mike may only have to walk next door, or he may have to walk 38 miles. That's how far one of his guests had to go to get their wine."

"And that's just the highway mileage," Jan pointed out. "He may have to walk twice that going by the back roads."

Another lot includes a dinner for two at the Michl's home on July 19. Sometime in the future, they may auction a trip in the California wine country.

"If five people can read this and pick up on the idea to auction something -- whether it be art or whatever -- for charity, that will be worthwhile to me."



Photo by RICK BYRNE

Mike Michls makes a selection from his cellar throughout the evening can best be described as fun and games for grown-ups.

Along with some catered edibles, there is a wine quiz, asking multiple choice and true-false questions about wine (with both the highest and lowest scorer receiving a bottle of wine as a prize); a blind taste test; a contest to see who can blend the best wine; a tasting of five different vintages of some Sterling Vineyards Reserve; and horse-and-buggy rides around Northville.

That's just the type of people the Michls are when it comes to wine.

"I think of those bottles as my children," he said. "I'll give them away as gifts, share them with friends. I'll use them to raise money for charity. I'll consume them and I'll pass them on to my children when I die; but I won't sell them on eBay."

"I always feel like I haven't done enough for charity, and I get to feeling a bit guilty. Now I can give to the charities through something I love."

"Jan and I met as volunteers with the Special Olympics," said Mike. "I always feel like I haven't done enough for charity, and I get to feeling a bit guilty. Now I can give to the charities through something I love."

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Auction planning step-by-step

Here are Mike and Jan Michl's steps to a successful charity wine auction. Remember, you can adapt this list to auction anything collectible, donating the proceeds to charity.

Select a charity. You may want to poll your friends, or accept recommendations prior to the party. Contact the charity and let them of your plans. They may need information for you to distribute, or even send a representative.

Set a date that doesn't conflict with birthdays, holidays, major sporting events or peak vacation time. Make a budget taking into account the charity's needs. Determine your goal. Keep in mind that the more of your home or chosen venue is used, the more the charity will benefit.

Prepare a list of items to auction. This list should include a variety of items to keep guests' interest. Make sure you have enough wine glasses. Plan one or two prizes, with a few extras to be given to the winners.

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Chef Mary Brady

Break out those fondue pots for fun memories

While rummaging for Christmas decorations I discovered two electric fondue pots and dozens of forks neatly packed away. I contemplated the many times the pots and forks were used and the fun I had developing menus.

Fondue was my first experience with "gourmet" cooking. Why has fondue cooking lost its popularity over the last several years? The reasons are varied with the most likely being the high calorie, high cholesterol cooking mediums used.

Fondue is traditionally thought of as "hearty cuisine." It comes from humble beginnings. As with other provincial dishes it originated out of necessity and practicality. Because cheese has a tendency to become hard when stored for long periods it was discovered that the hard cheese would melt and that dipping pieces of bread into it made a simple and satisfying meal.

The word fondue is either French, meaning to melt, or from Swiss meaning to dip. Which is correct is immaterial because the traditional fondue is melting and dipping. Although the Swiss cheese fondue is the most popular, meat and desert fondues are pleasurable alternatives.

FONDUE SUISSE. 1 pound Swiss cheese finely diced, 3 tbsp. flour, 1 clove garlic, 2 cups dry red wine, 1/2 cup kirsch, 1/2 cup salt, 1/4 tsp. white pepper, 1/4 tsp. mulling or paprika.

CURRY SADDLE. 1/2 medium onion chopped, 1 clove garlic minced, 1-inch piece ginger peeled and sliced thin, 1/2 tsp. butter, 1/2 tsp. curry powder, 1/4 tsp. brown sugar, 1/4 tsp. salt, 1 cup chicken stock.

Mushroom Fondue. Add 1/4 pound chopped, sautéed mushrooms and 1/4 pound minced, sautéed onion to completed fondue.

Potato Fondue. Peel and seed two tomatoes and add when the fondue is ready to eat.

FONDUE ORIENTAL. 1/2 pound meat or poultry per person plus beef or chicken fondue pot to cook in, 1 cup beef or chicken stock, 1 cup fat, 1/2 cup oil, 1/2 cup soy sauce, 1/4 cup ketchup, 1/4 cup hoisin sauce, 1/4 cup rice vinegar, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1/4 cup chili sauce, 1/4 cup cornstarch, 1/4 cup water.

Moloca Chocolate Fudge. 1 cup butter, 2 squares unsweetened chocolate, 1 1/2 ounce jar marshmallow creme, 1/2 cup coffee liqueur. Melt butter, chocolate and marshmallow creme together in fondue pot. When melted, whisk and add coffee liqueur and stir well. Serves 4-6.

MONDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Bogeyfest '91

Festival revives his love affair with the camera

Humphrey Bogart was one of those rare actors whose love affair with the camera made even his worst films watchable. So it's no big deal that the monthlong tribute to Bogart at the Livonia Mall runs the gamut from great to godawful.

"The Treasure of Sierra Madre" (1948) kicked off the series on Tuesday. In perhaps his finest performance, Bogart is Fred C. Dobbs, one in a trio of prospectors who grows paranoid and crazy with greed after striking gold.

The adventure was directed by John Huston, whose natural gifts as a storyteller plus his use of deep focus and natural locales made his film unlike any others at the time.

The film also featured the director's father, Walter Huston, in an Academy Award-winning role as the old prospector. John Huston even shows up as a white-suited tourist early in the film.

In one of the film's many amazing sequences, Bogart and partner Tim Holt encounter a shady contractor who refused to pay for their work. The high contrast lighting and simply staged violence make the ensuing barroom brawl one of the best conceived fist fights in the movies.

There are similarly great moments in Huston's "Key Largo" (1948), which paired Bogart with Lauren Bacall for the fourth time. It screens Jan. 30. Bogart plays one of a handful held hostage by psychotic gangster Edward G. Robinson in a Florida hotel.

In an odd shading of his heroic persona, Bogart is a war veteran and pacifist forced to kill again. In a truly suspenseful climax, he guns down Robinson aboard ship. The foggy setting and more high contrast lighting add realism to the violence.

Raoul Walsh directed the 1941 effort "High Sierra" (playing Jan. 22), but Huston co-wrote the screenplay for this sympathetic study of a convicted killer on the run. "Mad Dog" Earle was a breakthrough for Bogart which added a new dimension to the tough guy characters he was typecast into playing.

And the truly awful title? In what has arguably been hailed as the actor's worst drama, "The Two Mrs. Carrrolls" (1947) wastes both Bogart and Barbara Stanwyck in a melodramatic tale of an artist who marries women, paints their portraits and "The Angel of Death" and then murders them. It plays Jan. 15.

Warner Bros. obviously knew it had a dog on its hands. The film was actually completed in 1945, but held back from release until 1947. Audiences weren't likely to forget Bogart, who completed some 25 features in the 1940s.

For movie buffs, Bogart remains a larger-than-life actor. The opportunity to see any of his films — uncolored and on the big screen — is well worth skipping a morning of work for.



Livonia Mall's theatre features four Humphrey Bogart flicks this month

Dan Greenberg/Video Viewing

'The Civil War' is a stunning chronicle

Beginning the new year with a look at America's past may prove rewarding. Ken Burns' stunning presentation, "The Civil War," which aired on PBS last fall, is now available on nine videocassettes, totaling more than 11 hours of excellent, engaging documentation of America's bloody Civil War.

Burns has emerged in recent years as one of the country's outstanding practitioners of the documentary film form, with diverse productions ranging from "Brooklyn Bridge" to a feature-length presentation about Louisiana's Governor Huey Long.

The nine tapes in "The Civil War" series are chronologically ordered and present a superb, detailed view of the war, its causes and complications and many of the background issues, issues not always apparent but extremely important in understanding how human culture inflicts so much suffering on its members.

The nine are "The Cause — 1861" (99 minutes), "A Very Bloody Affair — 1861" (69 minutes), "Forever Free — 1862" (76 minutes), "Simply Murder — 1863" (62 minutes), "The Universe of Battle — 1863" (95 minutes), "Valley of the Shadow of Death — 1864" (70 minutes), "Most Hallowed Ground — 1864" (72 minutes), "War Is All Hell — 1865" (69 minutes) and "The Better Angels of Our Nature — 1865" (68 minutes).

All were first aired in 1990 and are unrated. Although they're marked "color," a good deal of the photos Burns incorporated so creatively are black and white.

Burns' technique and his superb research are at the heart of the film's impact. Here as in his other films, Burns incorporates all available sources to present a vivid, gripping picture of the subject.

Letters home, the music, newspaper reports, journals and diaries, contemporary historians as well as the many paintings and photographs of the Civil War are rich sources. Burns uses them to great effect in a superb mix.

The thought of stills on motion picture film is not particularly inspiring, but here the effect is sensational.

The third episode, "Forever Free," opens with a montage of portraits of soldiers. Rather than the obvious technique, which has the camera linger on individual stills, Burns cuts rapidly from photo to photo, using gunfire sound effects as his motivating transitional force. In addition, he cuts with a variety of visual transitions creating the dynamic impression of war's violence.

Just as Vietnam was our first war reported live from the front via television, the Civil War marked the first

combat in our national history reported via photography.

In the 1860s, photography emerged as a viable commercial and professional medium, replacing painting and drawing as the preferred visual format. Mathew Brady, in particular, popularized the photograph with his Civil War work and his extensive, by contemporary standards, photography of President Lincoln.

But Burns' technique does not rely on these visuals alone. His impact evolves from careful integration of sound and picture tied together with voice-over narration by David McCollough and the finest professional actors available to read the letters and other reports of the Civil War.

Sam Waterston is President Lincoln, Jason Robards reads General Grant's words, Morgan Freeman is Frederick Douglass, Garrison Keillor is William T. Sherman, Julie Harris and Jody Powell are among the voices.

Ex-slave recordings from the Library of Congress and extensive traditional music combine with sound effects to create an energetic and engaging soundtrack to match the vivid visuals.

Reading the lengthy closing credits indicates the extensive research Burns and his staff accomplished in producing this fine series.

But the greatest significance of "The Civil War" is what we can learn about ourselves and our world.

The current Persian Gulf crisis has revived the use of the term "McClellanism," referring to Union General McClellan, whose reluctance to attack the Confederacy degenerated from prudence to timidity, if not cowardice.

McClellan's reluctance to act was at its worst just when President Lincoln needed a battlefield victory as background for announcing the Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect 127 years ago this past New Year's Day.

Episode Three, "Forever Free," clearly relates the complicated national, international, military, political and socio-economic forces at play as Lincoln moved to free the slaves.

Those forces and issues highlight the terrible savagery humanity inflicts upon itself, and Burns presents them most effectively.

There is a great deal to be learned by viewing these nine tapes in Burns' "The Civil War." We should be grateful for his work. It's a fine experience with which to begin another year of trial, tribulation and, it is hoped, peace and prosperity for all.

Dan Greenberg/Grading the Movies

Year's money-makers no mystery

The totals for 1990's box office receipts won't be in for another week, so all the wise minds will have to wait to second-guess the movie mavens running around telling everyone, "I told you so."

Probably won't hear too much from those who were way off base. No question on the number one and two slots, "Ghost" and "Pretty Woman." Quite probably "Home Alone" will continue its phenomenal success and take third place. Fourth probably goes to the "Ninja Turtles," but after that the rest of the lineup is still open.

In the meantime, no new films open in the Detroit area until Jan. 11 so here's another week to catch up on the holiday releases. Look what's still playing:

STILL PLAYING:

"Almost an Angel" (C-, PG, 95 minutes). A slow, cliched Paul Hogan doesn't make it as a probationary angel.

"Bonfire of the Vanities" (C+, R, 120 minutes). Unbelievable caricatures and jumbled subplots detract from discussion of politics of justice.

"Child's Play 2" (P, R). "Chucky" returns.

"Dances With Wolves" (A, PG-13, 180 minutes). Kevin Costner's magnificent ode to brotherhood and brutality on America's western frontier during and after the Civil War.

"Edward Scissorhands" (C, PG-13, 180 minutes). Unusual young man with scissors instead of hands shakes up the suburbs after moving in with the Avon lady and her family.

"Ghost" (A-, PG-13, 116 minutes). Banker's ghost (Patrick Swayze) hangs around after life to protect loved one (Demi Moore). Spiritualist (Whoopi Goldberg) helps him in this romantic comedy/thriller.

Grading the movie

- A+ Top marks — sure to please
- A Close behind — excellent
- A- Still in running for top honors
- B+ Pretty good stuff, but not perfect
- B Good
- B- Good, but with notable deficiencies
- C+ Just a cut above average
- C Mediocre
- C- Not so hot and slipping fast
- D+ The very best of the poor stuff
- D Poor
- D- It doesn't get much worse
- F Truly awful
- Z Reserved for the colossally bad
- ' No advance screening

"Godfather III" (C+, R, 161 minutes). Disappointing repeat of formula established in Parts I and II, albeit slick production worth watching.

"Havana" (B, R, 135 minutes). Robert Redford is high-stakes poker player in Havana just before Cuba became Castro's.

"Home Alone" (B-, PG, 100 minutes). Engaging comedy about a young boy (Macaulay Culkin) left at home by accident.

"Jacob's Ladder" (A, R, 115 minutes). Sensational, riveting film experience redeems and rewards with its story of Jacob Singer's (Tim Robbins) re-entry to civilian life after Vietnam trauma.

"Kindergarten Cop" (B-, PG-13, 105 minutes). Schwarzenegger is macho and the kids are cute but the plot isn't.

"The King of New York" (R, 103 minutes). Violent return of recently paroled drug lord.

"Look Who's Talking Too" (F, PG-13, 75 minutes). Stupid sequel has nothing to offer.

"Mermaids" (A-, PG-13, 110 minutes). Fine romantic comedy features Cher as an unusual matriarch. Winona Ryder is excellent as her teenage daughter.

"Misery" (C+, PG-13, 100 minutes). Story of writer and obsessed fan waffles back and forth from psychotic thriller to slasher epic.

"Predator 2" (C+, R, 98 minutes). The hunt continues, this time in the urban jungle of 1997 Los Angeles.

"Rescuers Down Under" (P, G). Disney animation has Bernard and Miss Bianca off to Australia to save rare eagle from poacher.

"Rocky V" (C+, PG-13, 100 minutes). Stallone takes another licking but keeps on ticking.

"The Rookie" (D, R, 115 minutes). Travel beyond belief in this super-macho cop film with rookie (Charlie Sheen) working with veteran (Clint Eastwood).

"The Russia House" (B+, R, 120 minutes). Stylish rendition of Le Carré novel stars Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer. Marred by some confusing plot endings.

"Three Men and a Little Lady" (B+, PG, 105 minutes). Delightful sequel to "Three Men and a Baby."

"The White Palace" (A, R, 100 minutes). Two unlikely souls — James Spader and Susan Sarandon — rise above their social, cultural, religious and age differences to find love in an engaging, well-done film.

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