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MONDAY
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the NOVI NEWS

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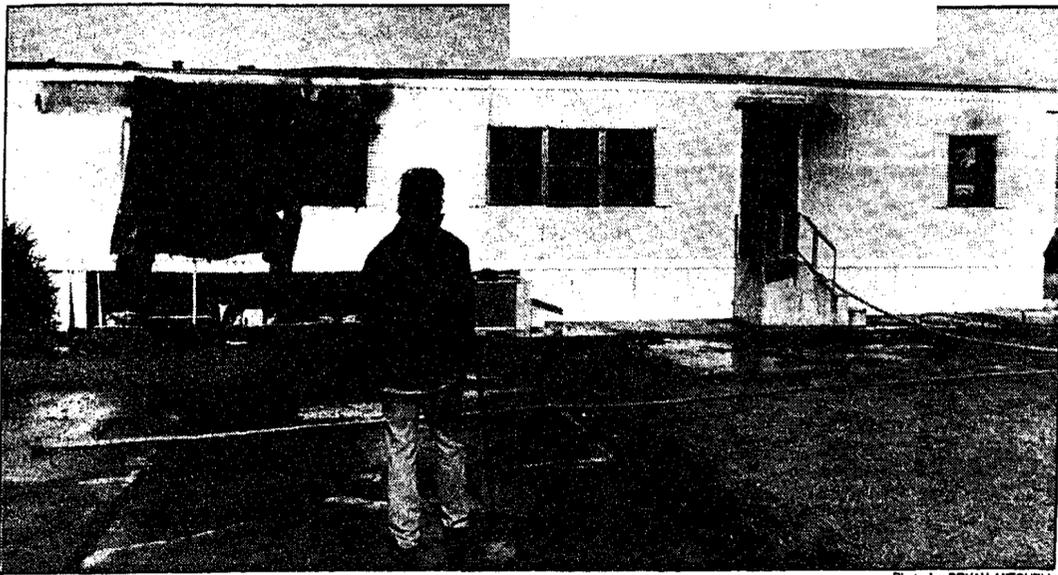


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

The owner a home on Pierre Street in the Chateau Estate Mobile Home park views the aftermath of the fire Friday afternoon. More photos are on page 6.

Family homeless after blaze

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

An accidental fire apparently started by a child playing with matches destroyed the home of a family in the Chateau Estates mobile home park in Novi Friday afternoon. According to Novi Fire Department Assistant Chief William McEwan, none of the five family members was hurt in the blaze. Damage to the mobile home, located off Thirteen Mile near Meadowbrook Road, was estimated at \$18,000, he said. "It's probably going to be totaled," McEwan said. "The fire started in the bedroom and extended throughout the entire structure."

The family was alerted to the fire by a smoke detector. McEwan said the detector allowed them to get out of the mobile home before any injuries occurred. He declined to give the name of the family. "We believe it (the cause) to be a child playing with matches," McEwan said. But he said the fire is still under investigation. The assistant chief said the child was "4 or 5" years old. The family had insurance on the mobile home, McEwan said. He added that the family didn't say where they would stay until the home is repaired or replaced. The fire began at 1:07 p.m. at 29715 Pierre St. Friday and was extinguished in just under two

hours. McEwan said firefighters arrived on the scene in about five minutes. He said flames and smoke were visible when firefighters arrived. McEwan said it took 2,000 gallons of water to put out the fire. Six trucks and 16 firefighters from Novi were called to extinguish the blaze. Firefighters had flames from the mobile home under control in about 20 minutes. McEwan said it wasn't unusual for such a fire to burn for two hours before being totally extinguished. The assistant fire chief warned parents to keep items that can be used to start a fire out of the reach of children. "There is a lesson to be learned here," McEwan said.

Planning starts on I-96/Beck ramp rerouting

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

Discussions between Novi, Wixom and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) are under way to restructure the interchange at I-96 and Beck Road. According to City Manager Edward Kriewall, the interchange needs to be restructured to improve traffic flow and safety. He added that the changes would also allow drivers to get on to eastbound I-96 from Beck Road. "The whole interchange needs to be totally rebuilt," Kriewall said. Plans for the restructuring are being drawn by JCK & Associates, Novi's engineering consultants. Gary Foyt, vice president of the company, said plans were presented to MDOT last month to construct a "multi-level" interchange.

"I think it's a great idea," he said. "There are good reasons to do it that way." By adding a ramp off of northbound Beck and constructing an elevated roadway from southbound Beck to eastbound I-96, access would be gained, Foyt said. He said that the entrance to westbound I-96 from Beck would have a similar design. Entry to Beck Road from the highway would be gained by two separate routes. Westbound drivers would exit the highway onto Twelve Mile Road and head west to Beck. Eastbound drivers would gain access by the construction of ramps to the north and southbound portions of the road. Currently, Beck loops into Twelve Mile Road just past I-96.

Continued on 6

City flood plan raises township ire

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Novi City Manager Edward Kriewall has asked the city council to delay action tonight on a property condemnation lawsuit needed to build a floodwater control system in Novi Township. The delay is expected to give city engineers more time to evaluate the tiny community's alternative proposals. Novi Township Supervisor Ray Schovers plans to provide a quiverful of suggestions — including seven ways to solve city flooding problems on city property. (See related story on page 2.) If the council does hold off, the issue will probably be addressed in a March 25 meeting, Kriewall said. As part of its award-winning 1983 Stormwater Management Plan, the city plans to build a retention basin for stormwater using easements on 13 parcels of property in the township along Chedworth Street, which backs up to Miller Creek and Dunbarton Pines subdivisions. The homeowners in the township don't want to sell the land due to environmental and property value concerns. Forty-nine houses averaging \$150,000 to \$250,000 make up the entire township.

"What you have is a toilet you want to put in a our backyard. You change the direction, but it's still a toilet. . . Let it soak in our ground. Let us drink it. Let it kill our trees. They don't think there's anything wrong with that."

Ray Schovers
Novi Township Supervisor

United as the Miller Creek Citizen Preservation Committee, they have put Michigan State University natural resources professor and attorney Leighton Leighty on their payroll. Leighty is becoming a familiar figure in Novi; as a volunteer, he represented Neighbors Against Poor Planning in their successful fight to stop the city's Grand Plan Industrial Park. Schovers said the township contacted Leighty because of his expertise in environmental issues: "We don't just want a sharp attorney that can whip people in court. We don't want it to

that far." If the matter does go to court, this will not be the first time the two Novis have come to legal blows. Thirteen years ago, the township successfully parried a city annexation attempt, winning its case in the state Supreme Court. New development upstream of Miller Creek, which winds through the back of the Novi Township's sole subdivision, Brookland Farms, has led to yard flooding downstream at about 10 properties along Nine Mile Road, according to city officials. Fields which once absorbed rainwaters have been cemented over by the Novi Civic Center complex, portions of Yorkshire Place and Simmons Orchard subdivisions and the three Dunbarton Pines subdivisions. "That is apparently the only engineering solution for some of the problems occurring in that area," said Kriewall. "Our engineers have investigated it now fairly thoroughly." The township homeowners would retain their land, but the city would have the right to construct and maintain the basin. There is no price tag on the project yet, but the basin would follow the natural, irregular contours of the land, said Bruce Jerome, Novi's superintendent of public works. Continued on 2



Photo by SUZANNE HOLLYER

A clear view

Seventh and eighth graders of Novi Middle School were asked to try their hands at inventing, part of the national Invent American program. And a few truly remarkable devices came out of the exercise. Above, seventh grader Matt Wizinski demonstrates his Squir-O Brush, a squeegee which applies both soap and rinse water to the window. The story and more photos of the inventions students came up with are on page 3.

Novi News price rises

The cost of an annual subscription to the Novi News will rise from \$18 to \$22 effective April 1. The \$4 annual increase is the first since 1987. Philip Jerome, executive editor of the News and HomeTown Newspapers, said the price increase is tied directly to operating costs, including an 11 percent hike in the cost of newsprint and a 19 percent increase in postal rates. The newsstand price will remain at 50 cents. Jerome emphasized that the current rate of \$18 per year will remain in effect until April 1. Anyone wishing to take out a new subscription to the News or renew a subscription can take advantage of the opportunity to beat the increase by placing their orders prior to April 1. More information about new subscriptions and subscription renewals is available by calling the circulation office at 349-3627.

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

'Springs' project to begin

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

Construction of additions to one of Novi's largest apartment complexes, The Springs, will likely be getting under way by this summer. A total of nine buildings, housing 204 new apartments, will be added to the complex located on the south side of Pontiac Trail between West and Beck roads. The Springs currently has 1,500 units. "We want to start building by this summer," said Michael Fellows, of Southfield-based Edward Rose Realty, owners and developers of the property. "We don't want to let the good building season go by." The planning commission voted Dec. 5 to grant a six-month extension of preliminary site plan approval to developers. Original approval had been granted by the

planners in February of last year. The extension was needed so that new federal guidelines from the department of housing and urban development could be taken into consideration before final site plans were drawn, Fellows said. The new guidelines, he said, address site amenities and building requirements for new developments. Fellows said final site plans would be brought before the city's administration for approval within the next two weeks. He added that the company doesn't expect difficulty in getting the approval. Developers will also have to receive Zoning Board of Appeals variances on the proposed buildings' height of three storeys. City Planning Consultant Brandon Rogers has recommended that the variances be granted by the ZBA.

The nine new apartment buildings will cover 26 acres in the city. The parcel is currently zoned for multiple family residential use. Besides the addition of the apartments, developers may construct a cable television equipment building. The planning commission gave unanimous approval for the building, a 35-foot antenna tower and three satellite dishes at its March 6 meeting. The development would be constructed in the existing portion of the complex. Final site plans for the cable building will be brought back to the city "soon," Fellows said. He said the company would like to start construction in about a month. Fellows declined to describe the building's exact usage. He said it wouldn't be affiliated with any local cable company, however.

Community Calendar

Today, March 18

City Council: Novi City Council meets in the Novi Civic Center at 8 p.m.

Historical society: The Whom Historical Society will host Dr. Erich Von Fange, who will make a slide presentation on the topic of "The People of the Americas — 12,000 B.C. to the Present." All meetings of the historical society are held on the third Monday of each month. The meetings are free of charge and are held in Whom City Hall, at 49045 Pontiac Trail.

Band Boosters: The Novi High School Band Boosters meet in the media center of the Novi High School at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 20

Planning Commission: The Novi planning commission meets in the Novi Civic Center at 7:30 p.m.

Career development: Career Transitions Group, in cooperation with Novi Community Education, will present a career development seminar entitled "Take Charge of Your Life." The seminar will run from 6 to 10 p.m. at Novi High School. Designed for men and women of all ages, the class will show people how to get a job and have job security. The seminar uses self-survey and motivational techniques to help people uncover their hidden abilities and survive and thrive in the job market. Dennis De Leo, career transition consultant and a top executive recruiter, will lead the program. The cost is \$50. Those interested should call Clara Porter, Director of Community Education, at 548-1200 during school office hours.

Choir Concert: A district choir concert is scheduled for 7 p.m. in Fuester Auditorium in the Novi High School.

Thursday, March 21

Newcomers: The Novi Newcomers Club meets in the Community Center of the Novi Civic Center for a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Historical Society: The Novi Historical Society meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Novi Civic Center.

Craft Auction: The Novi Coop Nursery School will hold its Annual Spring Craft Auction at the Novi Methodist Church at 8 p.m. There is no charge for admission. Easter and Mother's Day crafts will be featured. The church is located at 41671 Ten Mile Road. For more information, call Merry Kvoli at 349-5842.

Parent/teacher conferences: Parents of kindergarten students may meet with teachers in the Novi school district on a pre-scheduled basis between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m.

Board of education: The Novi school board will hold its meeting in the Novi Wood Elementary school beginning at 7:30 p.m.

PTO meeting: The Parent/Teachers Organization of the Novi Middle School is set to meet at 7:30 p.m. in the media center of the school.

Friday, March 22

Short school day: Students of kindergarten through fourth grades in Novi schools will have a half day of school. The elementary students are to be released at 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, March 23

Creative Center: The Creative Center for Young Children will sponsor a free children's concert from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Children's entertainer Maureen Schifman will perform music and puppetry. The theme of the show will be "going on safari." Children under 2 years of age welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Snacks will be served. The Center is located at 47300 West Twelve Mile. For more information, call 348-3820.

Friends of the homeless: The monthly meeting of Active Friends of the Homeless will be held from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Holy Family Church in Novi on Meadowbrook Road, north of Ten Mile. The group is a non-profit organization which started three years ago which provides interim financial and other support to individuals and families threatened with homelessness. New members are welcome. Please call 427-9063 or 474-6386 for more information.

Professor offers a list of options

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Novi Township residents say the City of Novi should drop its plans to build a stormwater retention basin on their territory and control its flooding within its own boundaries.

Township Supervisor Ray Schovers said he's suggested a series of alternatives to Novi's consulting engineers in the past. Last week, he submitted to the city a four-page outline drafted by Leighton Leighty, a lawyer and professor at Michigan State University's Department of Natural Resources.

Now, the engineers are poring over the options again, according to Novi City Manager Edward Kriewald. "They told us they've looked at these proposals before, but this has more details in it."

These are the seven alternatives to the Miller Creek detention basin suggested by Leighty:

- Construct an additional dam at the headwaters of Miller Creek above the existing dam located on the Novi Civic Center property, where there are open fields and few people. This would reduce flows in Miller Creek, Leighty said, and could also create a recreational lake near city hall.
- In addition to the above, improve and repair the Miller Creek dam, which Leighty says is on record as overflowing on a regular basis. This could create a second lake, which with proper pumping would stop water retention problems in Dunbarton Pines.
- Or the city might purchase three or four lots in the Bradford of Novi subdivision, where Thornton Creek meets Tall Road. By raising the Tall Road dam, this area could be inundated for water control.
- In tandem with the above proposal, run-off waters from Royal and Dunbarton Estates might be collected in a basin there and piped to the Tall Road dam. According to Leighty, this new subdivision has caused major damage to Novi Township's Miller Creek watershed.
- Finally, working with several of the above plans, Dunbarton Pines could increase the capacity of all its retention areas, reducing the stress on all watercourses.

Students make life easier with their inventions

By SUZANNE HOLLIVER
Staff Writer

Students at Novi Middle School did not set out to change the world. They only wanted to remove the daily annoyances from their lives.

If it's standing in line to vote that gets your goat, then a Novi Middle School student might have just the thing you need.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students in the gifted and talented program devised inventions that would make their daily life easier. Then they held a convention to share their ideas, an invention convention to be exact.

Now, students Sara Blumer and Rob Mutch will throw their ideas in the ring with students from around the state and possibly the country.

The inventions of Novi Middle School seventh and eighth graders were displayed Thursday during lunch for students and again that evening for parents.

Blumer, a seventh grader, invented a computer program to vote by telephone. Her dad hates to wait in line to vote, and he suggested the idea.

The program, called Vote Tech, would use the driver's license numbers of voters to verify their identity.

Mutch, the eighth-grade winner, designed a lane divider to help people see the side of the road. The orange dividers are shaped like large bricks.

When a driver begins to veer off the road, either because of drunkenness or weather conditions, he or she hits the divider.

"If you don't know where the middle of the road is, and you hit the divider, then you know where to go," Mutch said.

Mutch and Blumer are not old enough to vote or drive. When they come of age, they will be ready with solutions to the problems that come with their adult responsibilities.

But eighth-grader Joel Mitchell does not have to wait for adulthood to put his invention to work.

Mitchell was bothered by his sunglasses. He had sunglasses that clipped to regular glasses, flipping up and down for easy use.

The only problem was the sunglasses never worked. When he flipped them up so he could see indoors through his regular glasses, they would fall back down.

Turning this potentially blinding situation around, Mitchell invented the sunglasses hat. A shaded visor

hangs in front of its wearer's eyes when outside. The visor also snaps forward, clearing the way for indoor vision.

Matt Wizinsky also deplores blurry vision.

Seventh-grader Wizinsky invented the Squirt-O-Brush after his mother's windshield-washer nozzles broke.

After a few rides in a car with dirty windows, Wizinsky devised a solution.

The Squirt-O-Matic is a regular household squeeze rigged up to squirt soapy water and clean water alternatively on an offending window.

But the ultimate adolescent invention had to be the door alarm by seventh-grader Peter Wickman.

Wickman got fed up with his brother sneaking into his room. With a few wires, a 6-volt battery and a bell purchased at a local hardware store, Wickman invented a door alarm.

Soon to be the bane of brothers everywhere, Wickman's alarm was the noisiest invention at Thursday's event.

The invention convention was an opportunity to teach creativity and problem solving to some of the school's gifted and talented students, teacher Denise Karakashian said.

Novi Middle School students who have been identified as gifted or talented can take an elective class with other students with similar abilities.

This year, students in the class were assigned the task of inventing something they could use in their daily life, Karakashian said.

Amy Saari's life needed a shampoo bottle that did not force her to waste time in the shower trying to get the last bit of shampoo out of the bottle.

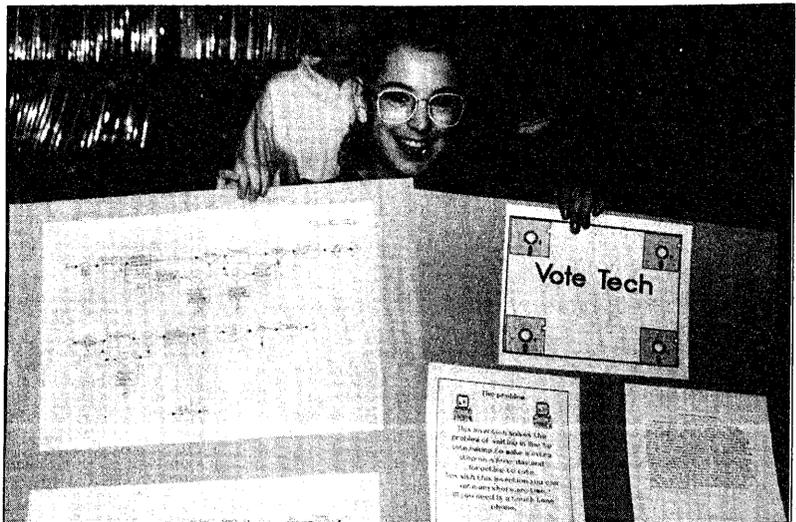
Saari invented a double-ended shampoo bottle. If the bottle is nearly empty, its user can open the bottle from the bottom, easily getting the remaining shampoo.

Students involved in the gifted program were inspired by a local inventor who came to their class and discussed inventor-related issues like patenting.

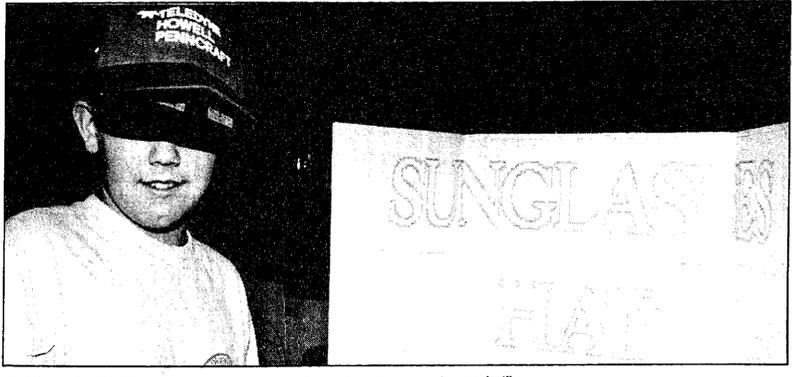
The school now will send the ideas of Blumer and Mutch to a state-level Invent America competition.

State winners will move to a regional competition and eventually to a national competition. Prizes are awarded at every level.

But the biggest prize will be a trip to Washington, D.C. to compete against other regional winners, Karakashian said.



Seventh grader Sara Blumer won with her invention of a "Vote Tech" vote by telephone program. Photos by SUZANNE HOLLIVER



Eighth grader Joel Mitchell demonstrates his invention, the "sunglasses hat".

City says flood plan may be only solution

Continued from Page 1

"They will still be legal owners of the property," he said. "It can be dry 360 days of the year but during a major storm there would be water on the property. That water would stay anywhere from a few hours to a few days."

What worries township residents, Schovers said, is the muck, silt and toxics such as lawn chemicals which would enter the stream and possibly their well water. The subdivision is heavily wooded and residents fear that their tall trees, including white pines, will die if their roots sit submerged in water.

His land is impacted the least of the 13 parcels targeted by the city, he added. Six years ago when the development of Dunbarton Pines began, Schovers said he noticed that no retention basins were included in the subdivision's plans and was told by city engineers that the basins weren't needed.

"What upsets me is that I now find out the reason they didn't have retention ponds is they planned to use our backyards," he said.

"What you have is a toilet you want to put in a backyard. You change the direction, but it's still a toilet. . . . Let it soak in our ground. Let us drink it. Let it kill our trees. They don't think there's anything wrong with that."

Within Brookland Farms, Miller Creek is controlled by a series of dams. Rainwater is metered and controlled by this system, he said. It also has seven artesian spring-fed ponds. And it is all part of a fish hatchery operated on the site many years ago.

But the dam at the Novi Civic Center has caused flooding downstream in the township, Schovers contends, overflowing at least four times and endangering the area's habitat.

Among the township's alternatives for flood control is an enlargement of this dam.

"I can't say that it hasn't (overflowed)," Jerome said. "I personally haven't seen it. The water does rise substantially in that basin. . . . It's possible that in 1989 we had some overtopping."

The Van Buren family, which resides on Nine Mile Road in the city, has proposed since 1978 when plans for Dunbarton Pines One called for a water culvert to drain across their 28-acre estate, as well as the discharge of water from that subdivision into Miller Creek.

The Van Buren family threatened to sue the city over property damage to use the city over property damage by flooding, but have not done so yet, Kriewald said.

City engineers have modified plans for the Miller Creek project several times, Jerome explained: "We met with the residents a couple of times. We've looked at modifications and tried to design it so it would have the least impact on properties in the township."

But township residents have found none of these changes palatable.

People we've tried to acquire property from are not the people who would get the benefit from it. The people downstream will get the greatest benefit.

"Even the area where we want to put the pond has seen some minor flooding."

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Detroit Pistons ring found in Novi

Novi Police reported a gold-colored ring was found March 14 on Antler Street.

The ring, which was attached to a key ring that reads "Detroit Pistons—World Champions," was found by a jogger at about 5 p.m. Thursday. The jogger told police it was found about 100 yards south of Nine Mile Road. The ring is being held by police.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE: A 21-year-old Ypsilanti man was arrested by state police for possession of a controlled substance after being stopped on I-96 in Novi March 9.

Troopers stopped the man on westbound I-96 near Meadowbrook Road because of a cracked windshield. After making contact with the man, officers cited the man for failing to show proof of insurance. Upon bringing the citation back to the 21-year-old, troopers noticed what appeared to be the smell of marijuana coming from the vehicle, reports said.

After a search of the vehicle, a bag believed to be filled with marijuana was discovered. The driver then produced a second bag and gave it to troopers.

The Ypsilanti man was cited for failing to show proof of insurance. He was released pending lab analysis of the alleged marijuana and warrant authorization by the Oakland County prosecutor's office.

Police News

ACCIDENT: A 13-year-old youth was knocked down by a vehicle at Nov Middle School March 13. The boy was uninjured.

The 13-year-old was crossing the crosswalk of the school when the vehicle struck him at approximately 2:30 p.m. Reports noted that the driver's vision was blocked by school buses. No ticket was issued to the driver.

MDOP: A 25-year-old city resident reported that his left rear window was smashed on March 14. The incident occurred in the parking lot of the Michigan National Bank at Twelve Mile and Novi roads between 2:20 and 2:30 p.m. Tuesday. Among the jewelry items stolen were a gold necklace, bracelet and watch. There are no suspects in the case.

STOLEN PLATE: A 32-year-old resident reported the stealing of a license plate from his vehicle on Foxmoor March 14. The resident said the plate was stolen between Tuesday and Thursday from the parked vehicle. There are no suspects in the case.

LARCENY: An Oakville, Ontario man reported March 8 that his briefcase may have been stolen from the Novi Hilton.

The man was staying at the Hilton with a group of other people on a business trip. He said that when they left, he placed his briefcase with his other luggage, expecting it to be loaded onto the bus.

However, when he arrived home, the briefcase was not on the bus. He said the briefcase was full of personal and business information as well as tax information.

STOLEN TOOL: A Canton man reported March 4 that someone had apparently walked into Suburban Rental and taken a concrete cutter from a display along the wall.

The man told Novi Police the cutter was most likely taken during business hours.

STOLEN LICENSE PLATE: A resident on Pondview in the Crosswinds Condominiums complex reported March 5 that someone had stolen the license plate from her 1990 Pontiac Grand Prix, which was parked in front of her residence.

There are currently no suspects or witnesses. Citizens with information about the above incidents are urged to call the Novi Police Tip Line at 349-6887. You do not have to give your name.

Novi Briefs

Choir teacher honored: The Northville High School choir is directed by one of the three best choir teachers in the state, according to her colleagues. Northville Choir Teacher Mary Kay Fryce was recently chosen by a vote of her peers to direct a regional Michigan School Vocal Association choir concert on Dec. 7.

"This is quite a big honor," said Roger Dehn, executive secretary of the 630-member association. "It's one of the highest awards that you can get to have your peers think enough of you to choose you for this honor."

Michigan has three regions. Each region will have a Dec. 7 rehearsal and concert with 200 student singers performing.

Chefs ski race: Nine chefs from the local area took part in the Grand Mariner Chefs Ski Race at the Boyne Highlands Ski Resort in Boyne Highlands, Michigan. The event is known as one of the nation's most eccentric amateur races, in which the competitors ski the alps wearing the traditional chef's coat, apron and toque blanche, or tall white hat of their profession.

In addition, the event is a fund-raiser for anti-hunger campaigns. The proceeds benefited the Michigan Chef Against Hunger, which contributes to the Capuchin Community Center Soup Kitchen. Since 1988, the event has raised \$250,000 for hunger programs in five major cities. The Country Epic restaurant in Novi sent a large contingent to the event, including owner Karen Angoleante, chefs Janet Thurber and Suzanne Jarnaz, and cooks Marje Olson, Todd Reilly, Kathleen Narducci, Dan Stanton and Lori Lafontaine. Thomas MacKinnon of MacKinnon's Restaurant in Northville also participated.

Held over: An appeal of a city council denial for permits and variances needed to drill an oil well west of Echo Valley Estates subdivision was tabled March 5 by the zoning board of appeals.

The applicant, the Southern Michigan Oil Company (SOMOCO) has a lawsuit against Novi currently pending in the Oakland County Circuit Court.

An appeal meeting on March 26 at 7 p.m. has been set aside for the local appeal.

Zoning board chair Gerald Bauer said the meeting will last at least four hours. "That's what SOMOCO indicated and I think there's going to be a great deal of audience participation," board member Lisa Foote added.

'Fear is gone,' care home's residents say

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

Since Farmington Hills-based Charter Care Corp. took ownership of the troubled Novi Care Center late last year, residents say they no longer live in fear of the facility's nursing aide staff.

"Residents were afraid," said Florence Adair, a resident at the facility for two years. "They were afraid to complain for fear of being battered. They knew they would be battered for anything they said."

Things have changed considerably, Adair, who is president of the Charter House community council, continued. "This management is trying to get a handle on everything. That fear is pretty much gone now."

Charter House of Novi began operations Dec. 14 last year. Since then, new owner and administrator Sandy Spiro said the facility has been trying to get rid of the "Care Center blues."

According to wife Nora Spiro, the entire family has gotten involved in running the facility. She said they are working to win the trust of the residents and the community.

"The residents were apprehensive at first," Nora Spiro said. "They have never had a family-operated enterprise."

"I think the residents are happier," she said. "We aren't the Care Centers. We never have been."

owned by Care Centers of Michigan, was involved in three incidents last year in which nurse's aides were charged with neglect or patient abuse.

In September, a nurse's aide at the center was charged with harmful neglect in connection with the choking death of a patient. Later that month, another aide pled guilty to a charge of patient abuse after kneeling a patient in the buttocks. In November, a third aide was charged with physical abuse for allegedly striking a patient on the arm.

Another resident, who identified herself as Eleanor, 74, said abuse came from the aide staff and not the management of the Novi Care Center. She said she has been a resident of the facility for nearly two years.

Adair agreed with Eleanor. She described hearing another patient beaten because she had given the aide staff a "hard time." Adair added that the aides conspired to beat the patient, who she said came away from the incident severely bruised, to teach her a lesson.

"It was so bad," she said. "The help was totally undisciplined and did whatever they wanted."

The Novi Care Center did employ several good aides, Adair said. She added that since Charter Care took over the facility many more "good" aides have been hired.

"Our girls work hard," Adair said. "It's not an easy job."



Sandy Spiro of Charter House shows off the improvements in the kitchen. Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL.

Owner refurbishes care center

By SCOTT DANIEL
Staff Writer

A two-phased plan is being used by Charter House of Novi owner Sandy Spiro to provide residents with improved living conditions at the city's only convalescent facility.

Spiro, who bought the facility from Care Centers of Michigan, began making changes immediately after beginning operations Dec. 14 last year. Early changes focused on the facility's staffing, such as adding new nursing aides, a new housekeeper, beautician and head nurse.

In addition to making further staffing changes, Spiro is currently focusing on physical improvements to the facility. The convalescent center first opened in 1968, he said, and has had little work done on it since.

"This building hasn't been loved," said wife Nora Spiro, who helps operate the facility. Spiro hired the Minnesota-based Arthur Shuster company, which specializes in interior design of nursing home facilities, to come up with remodeling plans.

According to Judy Dahlseid, of the firm, it took a

short time to develop the two-phased plan. She said the goal was to change the feel of the facility. "We want residents to feel like it's their home not an institution," Dahlseid said.

Phase one, currently under way, is focusing on the main corridor of the facility, the activities room and resident dining rooms. Dahlseid said each of the rooms will have a traditional theme and will be designed to be "bright and cheerful."

Many of the rooms, including the dining areas, have had plaster and painting work done to them to "soften the atmosphere," Spiro said. The owner added that cinder blocks were visible in many of the rooms previously.

The first phase of the work will be completed in about six weeks, Dahlseid said. The last phase, which will be completed in about a year, will focus mainly on patient rooms and the lobby of Charter House.

Carpeting will be added to every room as will new furnishings. Dahlseid said the facility's lobby will be redesigned to allow for additional office space.

"It's a top to bottom makeover," she said.

Besides changes to the inside, Spiro said the facility will undergo one other big change. A new roof, which has been estimated at \$150,000, will be added later this spring.

"We aren't going to sleep something down," Spiro said. "We want something that will last. This is our lifetime commitment."

Evidence of that commitment is seen in the facility's kitchen, he said. New equipment, such as a restaurant-style toaster, have been added to improve resident meals. Spiro said the new toaster allows bread to be freshly made, whereas in the past it was prepared long before it was served.

"That is the kind of focus we are providing," he said. "It's a small thing, but it means a lot for the quality of life."

Spiro said Charter House's menu is also being expanded. Residents have been impressed with the improvement in the facility's food service.

"The food has improved 100 percent," said Florence Adair, a resident for two years. "You use to go to the table wondering if you could stomach it. The food was very dull and shabby."



A Charter House resident looks out the window to the courtyard which is to be improved so that residents can enjoy the outdoors.



Above, Sandy Spiro and maintenance man Jeff Anderson inspect the roof that will be replaced. At right, Jack Farley of Clark Painting prepares for a painting project at the center.



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5A
MONDAY
March 18,
1991

As We See It

Assessment season points out problems

The whole process of property assessments and property taxes is kind of an unpleasant business. It gets more unpleasant when a homeowner believes a piece of property has been over-assessed. But if that homeowner wins the appeal to the board of review, that should be the good part, right?



Right — until the next year. That's when the homeowner lands right back at the starting point — with an over-assessed home.

The recent mailing of assessment notices in Novi and around the area brought the bad news to those people who won board of review appeals last year: Their homes this year seem to be just as overassessed as before. Those people aren't imagining things.

See, the assessment/appeal system works with a built-in flaw. When an assessor sticks a value on a house, that number stays in the assessing records — even if a board of review adjusts it down, agreeing with the property owner that the figure is too high.

Under state law, the assessor next year must use as a starting point the original, old value — the one which an official body decided was wrong. Any increase will be applied to the old incorrect figure. In other words, if a person starts out with a bad assessed value, that person must appeal every year in order to correct the situation.

Now, the point of this rule in state law is to stop hardship cases or temporary reductions in value — say, the result of a fire — from forever affecting the value of a house. And we can certainly agree that those who plead hardship should indeed have to show that that hardship exists each and every year.

As You See It

Being taxed out of Novi

To the Editor:

My husband and I appeared before the Novi Board of Review to contest the 53 percent SEV increase on our East Lake Drive home and the 40 percent increase on the accompanying lake lot. A Spinal Column article (Feb. 13-19, 1991) stated that "Novi residential property was assessed 4 percent higher." We presented the same (1990) organized articles and photos of (1) unchecked flooding (documented by the Novi DPW and building dept.), (2) a similar neighborhood structure being assessed for less, (3) close proximity of two depressed structures, and (4) the incorrect classification of East Lake Drive as a "residential" road as it bleeds our front yard carry 12,181 cars per day (1990 Sandstone study).

We were told that if there was a flooding problem (as it was not noted on our field card) to call the assessor's office for an inspection. This property has been owned by my family since 1956. We are now raising the fourth generation, but, of course, a personal appeal would be lost on deaf ears. In other words, we are being penalized for rebuilding my grandfather's home or "shack" as some have referred to it. We are being taxed out because we invested everything we had in Novi.

The Board of Review clearly had no say in the matter. We were told point blank that unless there was a hardship they had no choice. It was a "34 percent across the board increase." Who made that decision? Who does have a choice? This property has been owned by my family since 1956. We are now raising the fourth generation, but, of course, a personal appeal would be lost on deaf ears. In other words, we are being penalized for rebuilding my grandfather's home or "shack" as some have referred to it. We are being taxed out because we invested everything we had in Novi.

Sue Soborotek

No more man-eating tigers



Phil Jerome

Remember the joke about the guy waving his arms in a big, crazy circle and snapping his fingers? His buddy walks in, asks what he's doing and is informed that waving your arms and snapping your fingers is a foolproof way to scare away man-eating tigers.

"Don't be ridiculous," says his friend. "There aren't any man-eating tigers around here."

"See," says the first guy, brightly. "It works."

Okay, so it's not a great joke. But I was thinking about it the other day because of a present I received from my wife last Christmas.

You must remember that my wife is something of an animal lover. Actually, she's an animal-lover of the highest order. She donates regularly to the Nature Conservancy and the Michigan Humane Society, but more than that she has converted our palatial Westview Drive estate into a shelter for homeless animals.

Sort of a southwest Novi chapter of the Michigan Humane Society.

Cats rule highest at the Jerome pound. They're allowed in the house; we have seven of them now. But they're not the only animals which get special treatment. All other animals are welcomed to climb through a former milk chute into the garage where they'll find cozy "beds" made of old rags, incubator lights to keep them warm during the winter and, of course, plenty of food and water.

At various times, the garage has been home to opossums, raccoons, rabbits and an occasional skunk.

But back to man-eating tigers and Christmas presents. There are many nights when I get home from work fairly late. And one of the little moments I used to treasure after a long day at work was seeing an occasional wild animal while driving south toward Northville on Beck Road between Eleven and Eight Mile.

I saw a red fox jogging along the west side of Beck, just north of Ten Mile, one night.

And several times I have seen deer bounding gracefully across Beck Road. The fox was a real thrill because you don't see them very often around here. And the deer, though somewhat more common, are truly beautiful.

But that's where the problem comes in. I can't tell you that I used to see red fox and deer everywhere I drove down Beck Road late at night, but I used to see them often enough that I always looked forward to it.

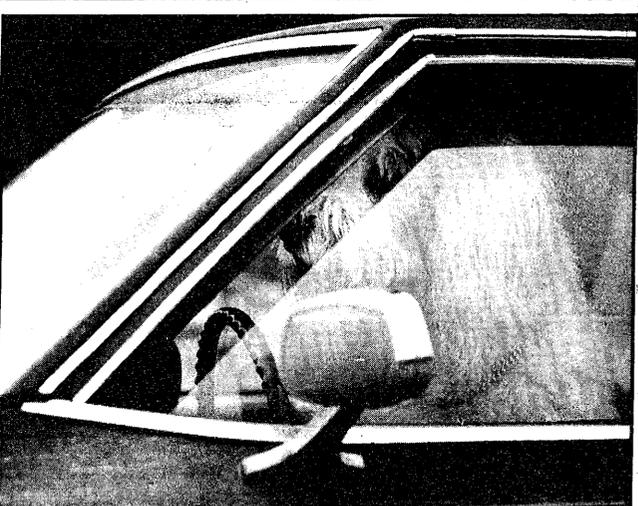
The key words in this previous paragraph are "used to." I "used to" see all kinds of wildlife with some degree of regularity.

But not any more. Nope, the sad truth is that I haven't seen any animals at all along Beck Road — or any other road for that matter — for a good long time. . . not since the day after Christmas when I installed those animal-warning sirens on the front of my car.

Of course, I haven't seen any man-eating tigers either.

In passing

By Hal Gould



'Going to the dogs'

Walking to work, pro and con



Rick Byrne

There wasn't much fanfare when I moved into Northville last week. More likely, people were probably muttering "What took you so long?"

It's going to be an adjustment for me. I've commuted from Ann Arbor (22 miles) for nearly a year, but that never really bothered me. For three years before that, I had commuted to Howell six days a week (31 miles). Coming to Northville was a piece of cake by comparison.

But now, living on Eight Mile (actually in Novi) if you want to get technical, I'm little more than a mile from the office. Not since the days when I walked to and from high school have I used my feet for commuting (not counting college, of course, where everyone walks).

I must say this idea of walking (and on some days biking) to work appeals to me. It saves wear and tear on my venerable Dodge, not to mention the reduction in expenses. From an environmental standpoint, it gives me a good feeling to be doing my part to conserve fossil fuels and reduce emissions.

There's just one thing standing in my way. Perhaps more accurately there are a lot of things standing in my way — and none of them are traversed by a sidewalk.

Perhaps I've been spoiled, but whenever I wanted to walk somewhere in Ann Arbor, I could. There was always a paved footpath to lead me where I wanted to go.

As a youth growing up in New York City, I knew of only three ways to get around. The bus, the subway and walking.

Even if I don't have anywhere to go, I still like to walk. Once around the neighborhood is enough to refresh my spirit when I need it.

But from my new home in the Woodland Glen apartments, I don't see foot to a sidewalk until I'm halfway to Main Street. Pavement on Griswold doesn't even start until Pennell Avenue, west of the railroad bridge. And that's only on the southwest side of Griswold. The sidewalk on the other side of the street starts at Main Street, and goes about 100 feet before stopping in the middle of nowhere. It doesn't even reach Mill Race.

From what I've been told, I'd be barking up the wrong tree if I wanted the City of Northville to extend the sidewalks on Griswold to the city limits. Asking a city politician to address sidewalks is like asking the Pentagon about battle plans. You'll get a lot of walking, but no walkways.

A large portion of my walk to work is in township territory, too. I guess if I really wanted to get nowhere fast, I could ask the township about putting in sidewalks on Eight Mile and Griswold (or anywhere else for that matter).

Yeah, this living in Northville business is going to take some getting used to. If you happen to drive past some guy slogging through the mud alongside Griswold around rush hour, give me a hunk and a wave.

And if they ever hold a vote to improve sidewalks in the city or the township, vote with my feet instead of your own.

Rick Byrne is copy editor for the Northville Record and the Novi News.

Cities, state plan interchange work

Continued from Page 1

Plans call for extending Beck Road farther past the highway, straightening the road, and connecting it to Twelve Mile at a conventional intersection.

The city is hoping to get a response on the plans from MDOT sometime this summer, Foyt said. The agency, he said, may not approve the plans because of designs of their own.

"I'm not sure they will replace their (own) scheme," Foyt said.

MDOT's plans call for a cloverleaf-style interchange, he said. Instead of having long ramps to and from the highway, loops would be used to make the connections.

Foyt said the city prefers a multi-level configuration because it uses

less land than the cloverleaf design. In any case, he said, the city wants a plan for the interchange in place as soon as possible so that development for the valuable land around it can take place.

"The area of Novi is being developed and we need to plan for the future," Foyt said.

Kriewall said the JCK plan would cost between \$4 million to \$5 million to implement. He said the project likely wouldn't begin for three to four years because MDOT will have to work it into its budget.

Thus far, the City of Wixom has been fully cooperative with Novi on the project, Kriewall said. He added that Wixom has also covered 50 percent of fees for the JCK design.

McMahon to stay, but Petrie's out

By SUZANNE HOLLYER
Staff Writer

Northville School Board Secretary Robert McMahon may vie with two mystery candidates for one of two places on the Board of Education in June.

But board President James Petrie's name won't be appearing on the ballot this year.

McMahon, a four-year board veteran, announced at Monday's board meeting that he will seek re-election to the school board on June 10. Two positions will be up for grabs, with Petrie's term also expiring in June. After eight years on the board, however, Petrie is calling it quits.

Petrie is running for the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency Board of Trustees, a position he could hold concurrently with the Northville school board.

But Petrie said he will leave the Northville school board in order to dedicate his time in future months to the county election. Petrie also cited work and family commitments as reasons for leaving the school board.

McMahon and two other potential

candidates requested petitions to have their names placed on the election ballot from the district's central office at 501 W. Main St.

McMahon said in his one term on the board "much has been accomplished."

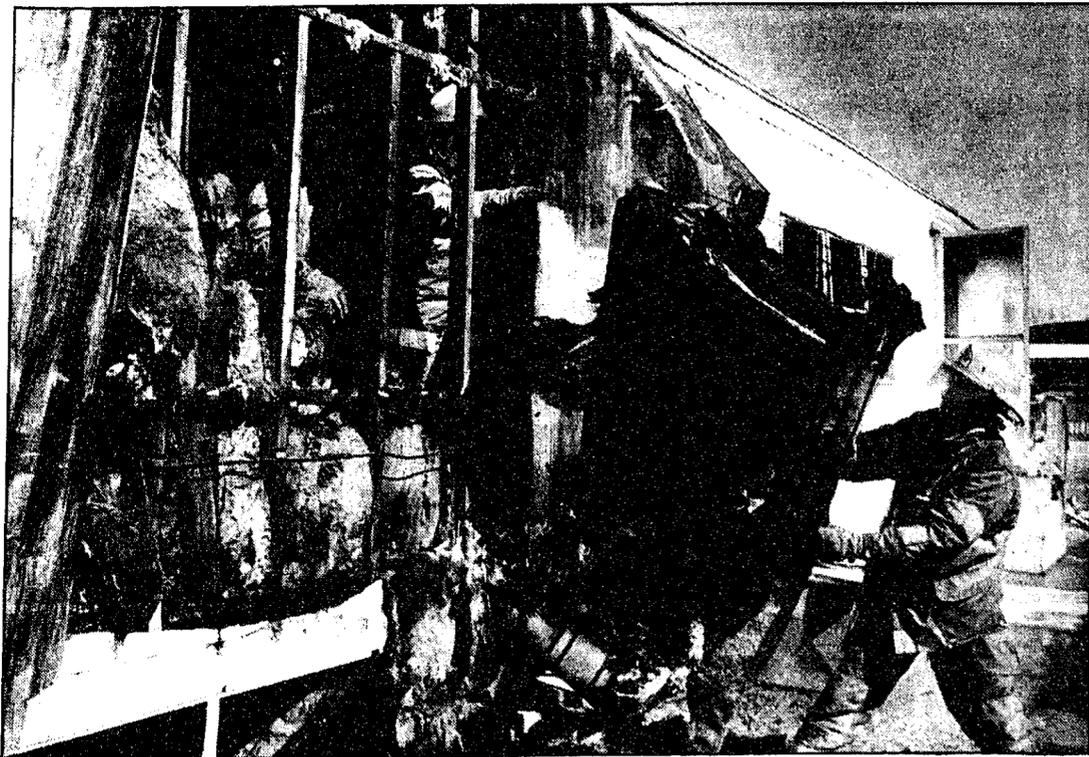
He attributed the district's success to staff, parental and community involvement.

"In this district we involve the citizens at the start," McMahon said. "By the time it gets to the board there's not much of a controversy."

In addition to McMahon, the two others who have pulled petitions asked to remain anonymous, said Northville's director of business and finance, John Street.

But a clue as to the identity of the two other possible candidates might be found in looking at one controversy that has made it to the board level in recent months. A critic of the district's board-adopted health model said one or more advocates of her position may seek a post on the school board.

Candidates must return petitions of 20 signatures to the district's central office by April 8 at 4 p.m.



Photos by BRYAN MITCHELL



Playing with matches?

Fire officials are still investigating the cause of a fire that destroyed a residence on Pierre Street in the Chateau Mobile Home park Friday afternoon, but preliminary findings indicate the blaze was likely the result of a child playing with matches, according to the assistant fire chief. At top, Novi firefighters pull a smoldering bed from the room in which the fire seems to have started. At bottom, firefighters work to put the blaze out. It took only 20 minutes to bring the fire under control but it was two hours before the fire could be completely extinguished. Fire officials believe the home will have to be replaced. They estimate the damage at \$18,000.

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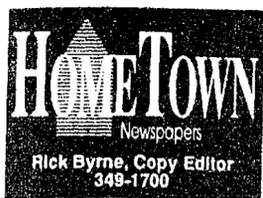
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One of the major differences between American and European wines is the label. Most American wine labels are dominated by a grape name, such as cabernet sauvignon or chardonnay. European wine labels emphasize the place where the wine was made, such as Bordeaux or Burgundy.

As you become more interested in wine and its origins, place names become important to identifying a wine's quality. With the long history of wine-making in Europe, a classification of wine quality evolved principally on a wine's geographic origin.

Without being predisposed to geography, an interest in wine tends to generate a curiosity about place. It is now possible to learn everything you've ever wanted to know about Italian wines in Burton Anderson's "The Wine Atlas of Italy: And Traveller's Guide to the Vineyards" (Simon & Schuster, \$40).

The book is well written by one of the best authorities on Italian wines.

"Oz Clarke's New Encyclopedia of French Wines" (Simon & Schuster, \$24.95) is an accurate, refreshingly humorous text covering all the wine regions of France. The book's features offer a comfortable introduction to French wines.

Clarke, a British wine authority and broadcaster, has traveled the length of France. He understands the wines and gives superb descriptions of aromas and flavors. Clarke is opinionated and doesn't mind letting you know.

He calls Muscadet "the perfect easy-going light, soft, fresh dry white." For good value he predicts, "We're going to see more and more Corbieres, Minervois, Fitou and Cotes du Roussillon." He contends that Beaujolais' Gamay grape "can perform brilliantly but frequently doesn't."

Of the famous red Bordeaux wines of Chateau Lafite Rothschild, Clarke said, "I wish I could draw near in humble mood to worship at this shrine of perfection, but I can't, and the reason is simply that the wine is so wretchedly inconsistent." On the other hand he admits, "La Lagune has given me more pleasure than any other single wine."

Despairing about the quality of the white wines of Macon, Clarke suggests that although we should see a steady stream of enjoyable, fruity, fresh, creamy Macon-Villages Chardonnay, the wines of Australia and New Zealand have twice the flavor at half the price.

"The Simon & Schuster Beginner's Guide to Understanding Wine" (Michael Schuster, Fireside Books, \$12.95) is a guide for the novice and experienced alike. Schuster expertly focuses on tasting techniques, grape varieties and winemaking methods, accompanied by illustrative color photographs.

A proponent of language as a part of wine enjoyment, Schuster emphasizes correct vocabulary as he describes tasting techniques. He uses all the senses (sight, smell, taste and touch) to encourage a complete experience.

Grapes, and the wines they make, are discussed from algote to viognier, for whites, and cabernet to zinfandel red wines. Sparkling and fortified wines are explained and a brief discussion of spirits also is included.

Books are the best way to expand your wine education. They will heighten your wine enjoyment.

WINE SELECTION OF THE WEEK

Shenandoah Vineyards Vintage Port. At \$10, this wine is a bargain for those seeking a full, rich, creamy-textured dessert pour with balanced sweetness. Produced from authentic Portuguese grape varieties, this California-style port makes an exceptional complement to warm apple pie.

1990 Martin Brothers Dry Chenin Blanc (\$8) is a delicious alternative to many pricey chardonnays. Floral, melon, pear and pineapple aromas are followed by fresh fruit flavors in a user-friendly style.

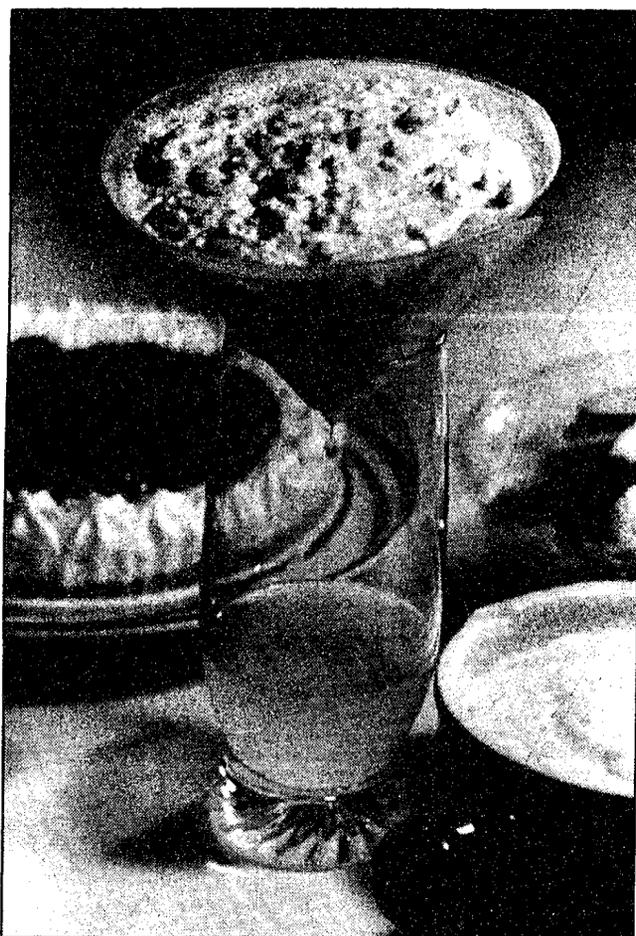
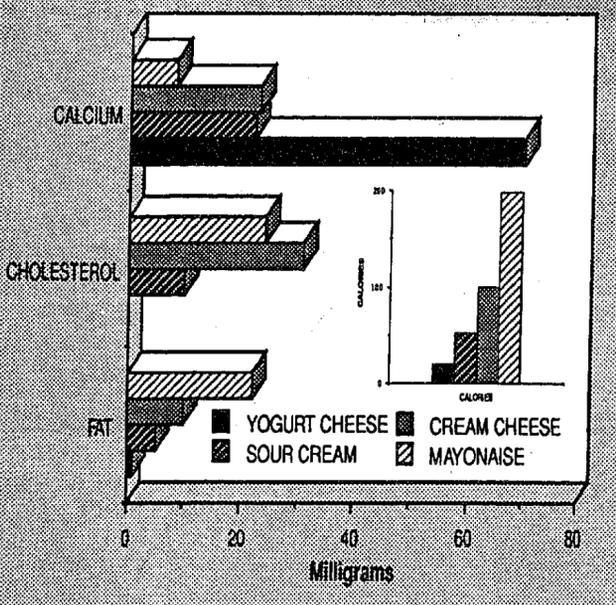


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

Store-bought funnel creates versatile yogurt cheese, by draining the liquid (whey)

YOGURT CHEESE COMPARISON

Nutrient Comparison for One Ounce Serving



YOGURT CHEESE

Forgotten dairy product creamy, without the guilt

By RICK BYRNE
Copy Editor

The Health Police are on the prowl, and they're coming to get you, all you lovers of sour cream, cream cheese and mayonnaise.

They know you've been sneaking around, dipping into cheesecake, chip dips, creamy salad dressings, cheese blintzes and potato salad, knowing full well that all that stuff is high in fat, cholesterol and sodium.

Perhaps you've been asked by your doctor to give up all those creamy goodies. Or perhaps you'd just like to for health's sake, but can't live without a dollop of sour cream on your baked potatoes.

Well, sneak no more because there's a new low-fat, low-calorie, low-cholesterol alternative to sour cream, cream cheese and mayonnaise. It's called yogurt cheese. Yogurt cheese is simply yogurt that has been drained of liquid.

Yogurt cheese is not just some substitute that looks and acts like cheese. From a dairy expert's point of view, it is a true cheese.

Remember the "curds and whey" line from the "Little Miss Muffet" nursery rhyme? When you got too old for nursery rhymes, you still wondered what whey was, right? Whey is, quite simply, the liquid that comes out of any dairy product when it's curdled to make cheese.

Yogurt cheese has a long tradition in Middle Eastern and Indian cookery. The Arabs call it *laban*. In India, it is sweetened, spiced with saffron and cardamom, and mixed with pistachios to make a festive dessert called *shrikhard*. Greek farmers mix it with chopped cucumbers for lunch.

Graham Kerr, the "Gallop and Gourmet," makes frequent use of it in his recently revived television show. It also appears frequently in recipes on Jeff Smith's "The Frugal Gourmet" show, and in his cookbook of the same name.

According to the University of California, Berkeley *Wellness Letter*, "yogurt cheese can be an excellent substitute for high-fat cheeses, sandwich spreads and dips. What makes yogurt cheese so special is that it picks up the flavor of anything it's mixed with."

Further kudos for yogurt cheese come from *Cardiac Alert*, a newsletter dedicated to the prevention of heart disease: "Because yogurt cheese is low in sodium and low in fat, it is a healthy addition to anyone's diet. It is especially useful, however, for people with high blood pressure and heart disease."

The accompanying chart gives

specific nutritional comparisons between cheese made from lowfat yogurt, and the creamy favorites, cream cheese, sour cream and mayonnaise. Yogurt cheese is clearly lower in sodium, calories and fat, and is higher in calcium.

For those who with lactose intolerance, yogurt cheese is also lower in lactose. And it is high in protein as well. If you want no fat at all, use non-fat yogurt to make your yogurt cheese.

The Surgeon General, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society have all told us to get the fat out of our diets. Most importantly, we've been told to be aware of the "calories from fat" in the foods we eat.

Yogurt cheese gets 30 percent or less of its calories from fat. By comparison, Gouda and Edam get around 65 percent of their calories from fat; cheddar, colby or jack cheeses get a whopping 72 percent.

Making yogurt cheese is quite simple. In the old days, yogurt was spooned into a cheesecloth (now you know where that word comes from, too) sack and suspended over the kitchen sink to drain.

Rather than dangling a drippy sack over your sink, try this method: line a small colander (or large strainer) with a couple layers of cheesecloth, and place in a bowl. Spoon in the yogurt and let it drain.

Technology has also made available a number of yogurt funnels, which can be found in gourmet stores. We tried one called the Really Creamy Yogurt Cheese Funnel, and found it convenient to use, and effective at making delightful creamy cheese.

You can't use fruit yogurts to make yogurt cheese. You're generally limited to plain, coffee, vanilla or lemon. The yogurt you use must be free of gelatin. Check the label if you're not sure. Certain highly-processed yogurts (such as Yoplait) won't work either.

Made with plain yogurt, the cheese is mildly tart, somewhere between sour cream and cream cheese. Sweeter yogurts, like vanilla and lemon, yield sweeter cheeses.

Its texture is like that of whipped cream cheese. It tastes creamy, like it's loaded with fat, but you can eat it guilt-free.

The uses for yogurt cheese are endless. Triad Publishing has even devoted two whole cookbooks to it's use — "Not Just Cheesecake," and "Snack to Your Heart's Content." Included here are some possibilities.

See page 2B for recipes.

Chef Mary Brady

Irish cookery demonstrates more skill than luck

Luck. The Irish believe that luck has a tremendous influence on their lives.

The phrase "luck of the Irish" applied to me early this year when I was awarded a trip to Ireland to do what I love the most — cook and eat.

The jokes started to fly among friends and colleagues. Ireland is not known for its cuisine or culinary expertise. Anyone I ever spoke with that had traveled to the Emerald Isle told me how bland and unimaginative the food was. Well, I was going to find out firsthand.

January is not the time of the year to go to Ireland unless you are happy sitting by a fire to keep warm. Of course, I had no choice in the matter and was just thrilled to be visiting the home of my ancestors.

I could hardly wait to see the brilliant and varied shades of green looming out of the ocean as we flew over. I had expected to have tears well in my eyes at the sight. It was the only disappointment I was to have for 10 days. Snow covered the entire Irish country. There was literally no green. I learned quickly that keeping warm was a priority.

The plane landed early in the morning at Shannon Airport. Since there was short layover before going on to Dublin, we were allowed to get off the plane. My feet had touched the Irish soil. How exciting. It is hard to explain the feeling you have knowing that you are in the land from which your relatives emigrated.

We decided to celebrate with an Irish coffee at the spot that made them famous, the home

of the Irish coffee, the Shannon Airport Bar. The barkeep smiled, knowing we were tourists, and put on his show. A bit of sugar, a dash of Irish whiskey, hot coffee and the richest, lowliest heavy cream I had ever tasted. Skip everything else, give me a bowl of that hand-whipped cream with a spoon.

The Irish coffee at Diamond Jim Brady's (our American Irish pub) has been made the exact same way for years. But that cream. What a difference an Irish cow makes.

Our culinary journey began in a small town about two hours from Dublin in a town called Limerick. We had been on the go for nearly 48 hours without sleep, a shower or a decent meal. To top that off we were driving on the wrong side of the road and sitting on the opposite side of the car. Talk about scary.

The tourist board recommended a B and B nearby. I have never, even in this country, stayed at a B and B and didn't know what to expect. The room was clean and neat, the proprietor charming. But boy was it cold. The Irish are used to no or minimal heat. Obviously, we were not.

Thank heavens for the breakfasts. Fresh orange juice, hot, perfectly brewed tea, that wonderful cream, porridge (oatmeal), brown Irish bread with luscious jam and butter, two eggs, ham and bacon. The bacon is like nothing I've ever had. The closest comparison is the true Canadian peameal. Lean and juicy. Who needs lunch with a start like this?

Each morning began the same. I am not a lover of fried eggs so the next day asked for scrambled. Their texture was light and soft. Totally different than ours. Tiny, tiny curds. Very delicious. I found out later that the eggs are stirred over a hot water bath until curdled, not fried and stirred over direct heat, thus the contrast.

lunch was generally skipped with a pint of Guinness stout used as a substitute. Stout in this country does not compare. Chemicals added for travel make it bitter. Not being a beer drinker, I amazed myself by asking time and time again for a "pint of Guinness, please."

Dinner was not the affair we make of it in the U.S. Little fare; just good, earthy, simple food. The tastes were incredible. Irish salmon is revered in culinary circles. It isn't hard to figure out why. The flesh is firm and a beautiful pink. And the flavor cannot be topped.

Accompaniments are unpretentious — lots of potatoes prepared all of the usual ways but better, and loads of fresh vegetables, broccoli and carrots being the most popular. And that wonderful Irish brown bread and rich butter.

Plaice is another popular fish. A variety of flatfish, it reminded me of an upscale orange roughy/sole combination. Fried and sauteed, its fresh, non-fishy taste is one I'd love to encounter here. Prawns (shrimp) as big as a finger are also abundant. Dublin Bay prawns are renowned around the world for their succulent qualities.

The most popular meat is lamb and mutton. Sheep dot the hillsides wherever you go. Young lamb is superior and the sausages and stews made from mutton are out of this world. Veal and steaks are available and very good. I did not miss any "American" food while gone.

Our travels took us to Lahinch, Dublin, Caven, Virginia and all in between. Each meal was a delightful experience. The Irish people are thrilled to have an American visitor. We are their idols. Service was superb. When was the last time your french fries were served using French service? French service is the hardest and most time-consuming of all styles of service. It is rarely if ever used in the United States anymore. Truly classic but very unpretentious when done by the Irish.

Sandwiches were a mainstay for locals for the evening meal. A chicken sandwich was just that — chicken and bread. Chicken salad consisted of chicken, bread and a piece of lettuce. Nothing glorious except that the chicken was real: no pressed luncheon meat here. Then the rich stock left from boiling the chicken was used in the marvelous soups.

Ireland is one of few countries that produces most of the food that it uses. Very little is imported. The variety of produce does not compare to what we are used to, but wonders are worked with what is available. The fish is extraordinary. Meat very acceptable. Dairy products excellent. Brown bread the best.

And, oh, what I'd give for a pint of stout.

IRISH DARK SODA BREAD

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole-wheat flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 1/4 cups buttermilk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Add all the dry ingredients in a large bowl and mix very well. Pour all the buttermilk into the bowl and stir until a soft dough is formed: Do not try to make it smooth. Pour the dough onto a floured board and knead for one minute. Divide the dough in two and form into round loaves. Put the loaves on an ungreased sheet and slash an "X" into the tops with a sharp knife. Allow to rest for 10 minutes and bake 40-45 minutes in the center of the preheated oven. Cool on racks or serve warm with butter, honey or jam.

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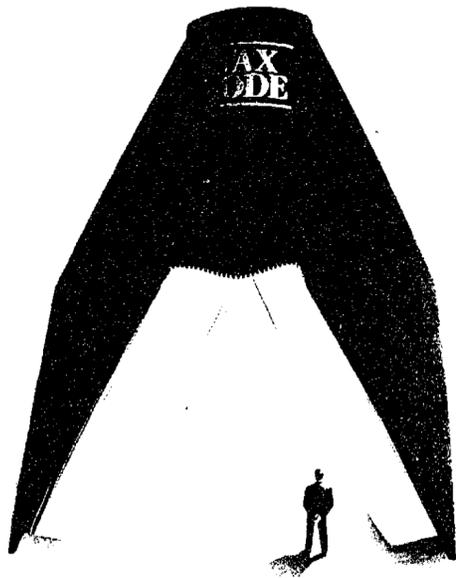
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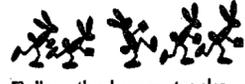
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