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12 Pages plus Supplements

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Drug operation goes sour, ends in gunfire

By MIKE TYREE
Staff Writer

Undercover police officers shot and killed a Westland man Thursday evening after an attempted drug buy that began in Novi went sour.

Ronald John Melnyk, 33, of Wilberness Park Apartments in Westland, was pronounced dead on arrival at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills at approximately 8:30 p.m. Thursday.

Police shot Melnyk once through the chest after he reportedly struck a police officer with his 1989 Chrysler and attempted to flee the Meijer lot at 20401 Haggerty.

Two undercover officers were treated for minor injuries, police said.

Melnyk was the target of a narcotics sting conducted by federal, state, Wayne and Oakland County law enforcement teams, state police at the Northville Post said Friday.

Police were attempting to buy approximately seven ounces of cocaine from Melnyk when the suspect suddenly nixed the deal, said state police Det. Richard Duthler.

"The undercover officer and the suspect had discussions (but) the deal was never finalized," Duthler



INSPECTOR JOE KOENIG

said. "The undercover car pulled away and (other) officers attempted to arrest Melnyk on previous transactions and he tried to get away."

Two police officers fired "a minimum of 6-7 shots" from 9 mm handguns at Melnyk, Duthler said.

Melnyk, who police said was unarmed, was shot near a landscaped island in the northeast portion of the Meijer lot.

Melnyk then attempted to escape

through the lot's northwest exit, police said. His vehicle crashed with a 1991 Chrysler piloted by undercover officers, said witnesses, who also said Melnyk "appeared to be unconscious" prior to impact with the police vehicle.

Duthler said he did not know why officers shot at Melnyk. Police were investigating the incident at press time Friday and Duthler said additional information could be available today.

"This will be an ongoing saga," he said.

State Police Inspector Joseph Koenig said officers had purchased illegal narcotics from Melnyk on other occasions.

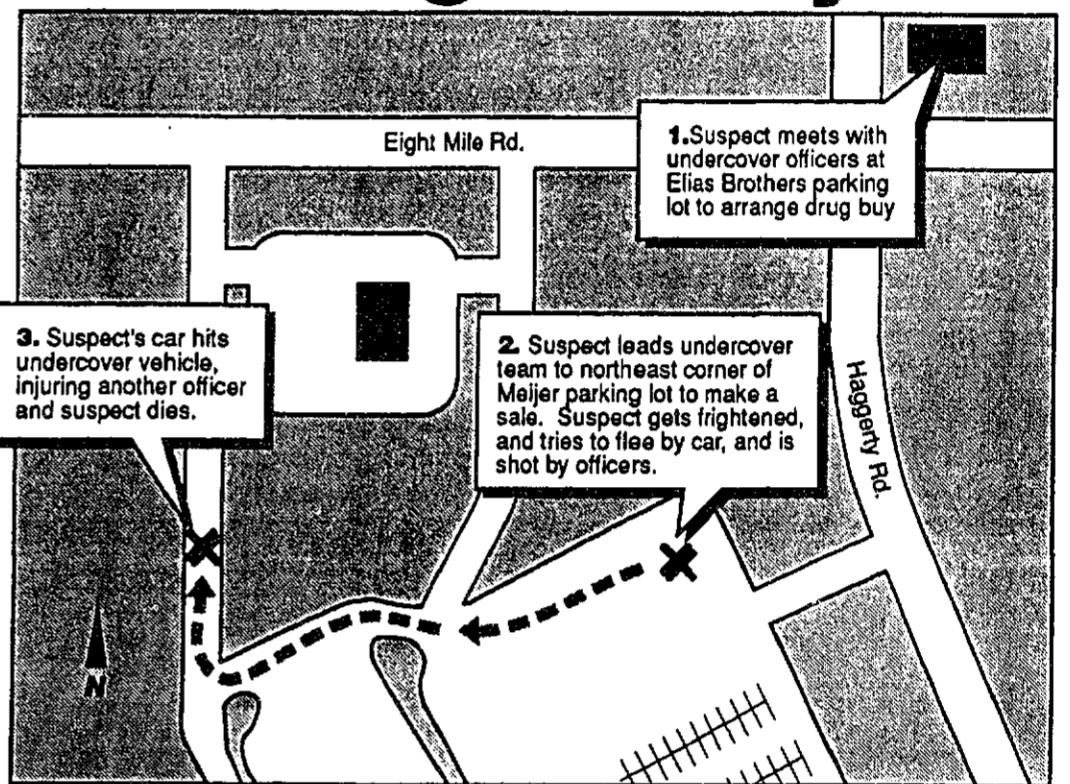
Thursday's meeting was intended to be a "buy-bust," Koenig said, meaning police planned to arrest Melnyk after a narcotics purchase.

Officers originally met with Melnyk at the Big Boy restaurant on the northeast corner of Eight Mile and Haggerty in Novi, Koenig said. Melnyk decided to further discussions at the nearby Meijer parking lot, Koenig said.

The cocaine buy disintegrated after "something made the suspect start to flee," Koenig said.

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Shooting at Meijer



Graphic by ANGELA PREDHOMME

Suspect described as a 'sizable dealer for Novi'

By SCOTT DANIEL AND
CRISTINA FERRIER
Staff Writers

A Michigan State Police-coordinated drug bust that began in Novi Thursday ended in the fatal shooting of a Westland man and the arrest of a Dearborn Heights party store owner.

Ronald J. Melnyk, 33, of Westland was killed during a "buy-bust" operation by narcotics officers, according to Investigator Joe Koenig of the Michigan State Police Criminal Investigation Division (CID).

Lieutenant Dorothy McAleer of the Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team (NET) said Melnyk was "a sizable dealer for Novi."

A second man, who Koenig would only identify as a Dearborn Heights party store owner, was also

■ The Meijer store in Northville is a busy place most evenings. Thursday night, the peaceful comings and goings of shoppers was disrupted by the crack of gunfire. The story is on page 4.

■ The investigation into the fatal shooting will likely be completed early this week. State police said further interviewing of witnesses and processing of evidence is needed. The story is on page 4.

taken into custody by narcotics officers Thursday. He said the party store owner was an "associate" of Melnyk.

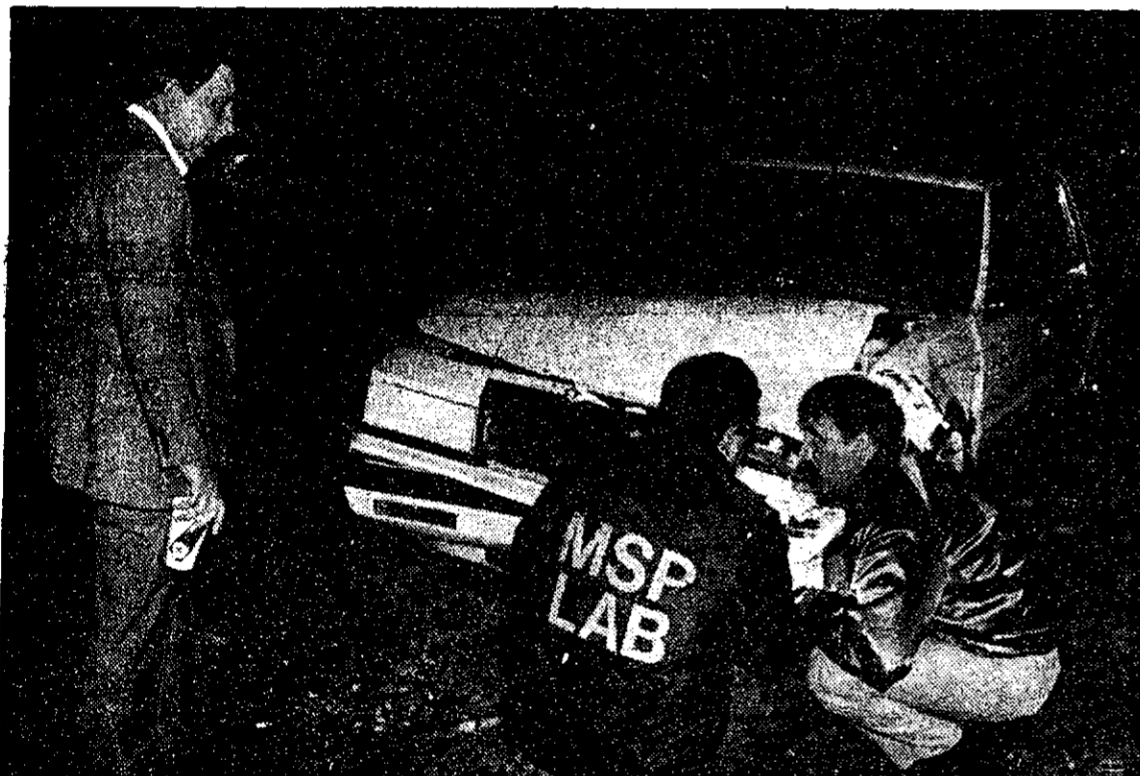
McAleer said they had been conducting an investigation into Melnyk for nearly two months for cocaine dealings in Novi, and had made several buys from him already.

Koenig said they delayed arresting Melnyk so that the source of his cocaine supply could be traced. He said it's currently unclear if the CID has traced that source.

The state police investigator said it's likely that Melnyk was part of larger narcotics distribution system.

McAleer said the investigation would continue.

Continued on 4



Investigators inspect the car Melnyk used to attempt to flee the scene, hitting an officer in the process

Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

SOMOCO manages to stay off DNR 'blacklist'

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

The Southern Michigan Oil Company (SOMOCO) was not added to a Michigan Department of Natural Resources "blacklist" this year because the state was close to wrapping up a consent agreement with the corporation's affiliate, the West Bay Exploration Company.

West Bay was until recently barred from receiving new drilling permits due to contamination problems at six northern Michigan well sites. Early this month, the

company signed a consent agreement with the DNR and is now eligible for the permits.

As West Bay's sister corporation, SOMOCO's drilling permits could have also been withheld by the state. However, DNR officials were unaware until December of the relationship between the two Traverse City firms.

SOMOCO's one-year permit to drill a well a quarter-mile east of Echo Valley Estates subdivision was renewed March 26 by the DNR.

The consent order was executed April 1, said John Kennedy, Chief of the DNR's Special Litigation Branch.

The binding agreement includes evaluation and clean-up at the six Grand Traverse and Manistee county well sites.

SOMOCO continues to seek a Novi oil and gas well permit through the courts, having been denied one by the city council. (See related story.)

Lynne Boyd, supervisor of the DNR's Geological Survey Division compliance unit said Thursday state research confirmed reports in the *Novi News* that the two companies shared the same president and major stockholder, Robert Michael Tucker Jr.

But progress in negotiations with West Bay meant the DNR did not initiate the paperwork to add SOMOCO to the non-compliance list. Boyd said SOMOCO was not at the point of drilling any wells at that time.

"We just held off until we got the paper signed. They (SOMOCO) were not put on the list. They would have been. We were real close but there was no activity with SOMOCO," Boyd said.

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Boosters propose Novi High bonfire

By SUZANNE HOLLYER
Staff Writer

The problem: A lack of post-football game activities for students that do not include alcohol.

The solution: A bonfire to be held following one football game every year.

Band and athletic boosters Thursday told the Novi Board of Education of their intentions to begin planning a fall bonfire to provide an alternative activity for students following one football game.

The boosters' philosophy said: "It is our belief that the majority of our students do not want to party or hang out as such, and that they would greatly appreciate a social function such as a post-football-game bonfire."

The school board Thursday agreed to the bonfire in theory. Trustee Ray Byers said he expects school administrators to evaluate the success of the fire and come back with a report to the board next year.

Specific details will be planned by the school, band and athletic boosters.

This is a fine proposal to share with the board, but the idea is not to get into the nitty gritty but to leave that to the movers and shak-

"It is our belief that the majority of our students do not want to party or hang out as such, and that they would greatly appreciate a social function such as a post-football-game bonfire."

The Novi Band Boosters

ers," said Superintendent Robert Piwko. The fire will be held immediately following one home game. The bonfire will not be held following the homecoming game. The game against Northville High School also has been ruled out because of a fear that students from the opposing team would stay for the fire.

But the bonfire will be held following one of the more important games of the year. Games against Hartland and Brington have been considered.

An objective of the bonfire is to begin a tradi-

tion. A permanent fire pit is expected to be built with a permanent sign to mark the spot reading "Novi Wildcats Burn 'em up."

Pizza, pop, hot chocolate and donuts would be sold at cost and one or two student guitar players would be asked to perform.

Coaches and captains would be able to give speeches over a to-be-installed sound system. Cheerleaders and the marching band also would participate.

And the issue that immediately comes to mind when kids and fire are mentioned in the same breath was also addressed. Assuaging safety fears is the Novi Fire Department which will be on hand for the entire event.

The department will start and extinguish the fire. A permit for a three-hour fire has been issued by the department, but principal Robert Youngberg expects the fire to last only an hour and a half.

A security committee of parents also would patrol the area with walkie-talkies in case any problems arise.

Four locations were proposed for the fire pit with an area south of the tennis courts on the east side of the building being favored, Youngberg said.

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Feature stories, listings, 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.



Just one good ride

Lou Mallard wanted said he just wanted to get "one good ride" out of his windsurfing board when he broke it out for the season recently on the waters of Walled Lake. Despite the fact the weather has warmed up considerably these past few weeks, the

water is still cold. But that did not seem to daunt Mallard's determination, and once he managed to get the sail upright, he got that ride.

DNR won't block oil wells

Continued from Page 1

"They (West Bay) entered into an order committing to do everything we want for remediation of all the sites," Boyd said.

This includes purging groundwater and purifying soil contaminated by toxic chemicals including the carcinogen benzene, an ingredient of oil and gas. These chemicals were in water leaking from a dehydrator at the well sites. After the cleanup, the well sites will be monitored for anywhere from one to five years by the DNR.

Each oil well is entered as a separate consent order with the state's supervisor of wells. Some have continued pumping oil, while others are not operational.

If West Bay does not meet the terms of the consent agreement, the oil company could be added to the non-compliance list again, Boyd said, but this time SOMOCO would join them there.

When processing a new permit application, the DNR does not run a check on an oil company to see if it shares corporate officers with companies who are not eligible for permits, Boyd said in December, but was planning to draft new rules to re-

quest this.

These changes will not happen soon, she explained Thursday. Because of funding cutbacks, the State Department of Commerce is now charging the DNR for corporate record checks.

"It's going to be quite an effort to do," Boyd said.

Permits for new wells were withheld from West Bay under the provisions of Public Act 61 of 1939, the Michigan Oil and Gas Regulations. The state also charged that West Bay broke several sections of the Water Resources Commission Act and the Michigan Environmental Protection Act.

Company representatives say the Traverse City-based firm has already spent \$1 million in remediating the polluted sites, including the installation of wells to monitor groundwater.

West Bay was first contacted about the situation by the DNR in 1985. About 80 well sites in Michigan — owned by a number of companies — were found to have the contamination when fluid released by Smith Industries dehydrators, machinery which removes water from gas, entered soil and groundwater.

SOMOCO's attorney John DeVries, at an April 16 Novi Zoning

Board of Appeals meeting, said the dehydrator issue was started by the DNR "in what some believe to be a publicity ploy."

Coming to an agreement with the DNR took six years, DeVries said, due to disagreements over the level of purging necessary to clean up the site.

Benzene levels at the well sites range from 7,100 to 14,000 parts per billion. The Environmental Protection Agency standards are 5 parts per billion. West Bay took exception of the DNR's request for 1 part per billion, DeVries said. But the consent agreement contains this 1-part-per-billion benzene requirement.

"They let a couple of big companies off the hook. The people they could muscle they presented with a consent order to sign which in my opinion was unacceptable," he said.

Boyd disagreed with this. "We had significant contamination on each of the sites. The public impact was minimal because there were no people in the area," she said. No penalties were sought by the DNR.

"I think we felt it might be better to expend the bucks on the cleanup," Kennedy said.

ZBA ruling raises residents' ire

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

When Zoning Board of Appeals member Lisa Foote was late for an April 16 meeting with the Southern Michigan Oil Company (SOMOCO), Echo Valley Estates homeowners' association president Frank Brennan quipped that the evening had started out on the wrong foot.

Afterwards, as far as Brennan was concerned, the statement seemed prophetic.

Following testimony from both SOMOCO representatives and city experts — including consulting geologists — the zoning board agreed to grant the Traverse City oil firm a variance to explore for and pump oil from 75 residentially-zoned acres south of Ten Mile Road. City ordinances restrict oil wells to industrial parcels.

Brennan has led Echo Valley's charge against SOMOCO for six years now and said he won't give up.

"I'm not rolling over. I'll continue to fight this damn thing. I'm very, very disappointed with the ZBA's interpretation of the data," he said. "I feel they have misrepresented the constituents. I will fight this to my last breath."

City Attorney Fried said Friday that the land use variance may no longer be part of the lawsuit filed by SOMOCO against Novi in November.

"There are two parts of the case. This is done with. They now have the use of the land. That part, as far as I'm concerned, is over. The question is whether they will get the license. That is now in court," he explained.

Fried said he didn't know if ZBA members would be called by SOMOCO's lawyer to testify in court as witnesses, but that this option exists.

A trial date has not yet been set for the case, which is assigned to Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Rudy Nichols.

The zoning board was instructed by Fried that they should reach an independent conclusion based on the evidence. The city council in October seconded a planning commission recommendation to deny the special land use variance and also vetoed an oil and gas drilling permit.

It was, said ZBA chair G. Brent Canup, a difficult decision but one made easier by the volumes of testi-

mony the board members had at their fingertips, including transcripts of city council and planning commission meetings.

"It was a good presentation by both sides, both the petitioner (SOMOCO) and the homeowners. The city had hired a consultant to investigate and look for truth in the matter of the petitioner. They could find nothing detrimental or a danger to the people in the area," Canup said.

"There's a fairly good separation there between the residential area and where the well is going to be."

Some Echo Valley residents might disagree. Several said after the meeting they were appalled that the zoning board had overruled the city council and granted SOMOCO the variance which could ease the firm's

quest to drill for oil through the aquifer which provides water to their subdivision's wells.

Homeowners fear their water a quarter-mile to the east could be contaminated by the procedure.

"I'm obviously upset. If they (ZBA) can't take the good advice of the planning commission and the city council, they're obviously much wiser than those august boards," said Dennis Ringvick.

John Kuenzel, whose home on Heartwood Drive sits on the easterly edge of the \$42 to \$50 million oil pool found by SOMOCO, was dismayed by the ZBA decision.

"It's sad. It just shows what money can do. They have the high-price attorney and all we have are citizens who are trying to fight this," he said.

Sports Briefs

Wildcat Update: The Wildcat tennis team went three-for-three in matches last week, topping Walled Lake Western 4-3 and Farmington Harrison 5-2 in non-conference clashes, and then adding a 6-1 win over Milford in the season's first Kensington Valley Conference showdown on April 17. Novi is now 4-1 overall, 1-0 in the KVC.

Boston Marathon Finishers: Nearly a dozen local marathoners completed the grueling 26-mile plus Boston Marathon on April 15. The Novi finishers, with their times included: Ted Papenthien (3:06.58), Hub Copp (3:18.09), Lisa Milczarski (3:25.35), Jim Wahl (3:25.35), Patrick McFadden (3:31.07), Roger Armstrong (3:33.44) and Joseph Bonno (4:16.04).

The Northville finishers: Michael Webster (2:49.26), Keith Bilby (3:17.27), Dale Yagielka (3:18.28) and Victor Barkoski (3:19.4).

Library Notes

Folk singer: Spend "An Evening with Kitty Donohoe," folk singer, at Novi Public Library on Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m. Performing throughout the midwest for a number of years, Kitty has appeared on national radio as well. She has entertained audiences at the Novi Library in the past. The *Detroit Free Press* proclaimed her as "a bright new singer-songwriter from the area whose skills, beauty and talent are superbly matched."

Music lovers of all ages are invited to attend this free program.

Civil War Videos: The War between the States comes to life in a vivid series of videos now available at the Novi Public Library. The well-received nine-part PBS series offers a wealth of information about the issues, people, places and battles of the Civil War. Combining historical facts with dramatic reflections, the videos include many photographs taken from the Matthew Brady Collection. Brady was the primary photographer of the Civil War. For information on how to check out these and other fascinating video documentaries, visit the Novi Library.

Art Video: The Novi Library has recently acquired the new video, "Art Makes the Difference." Written and edited by award-winning journalist Steve Palackharry and produced by Sue Marx Films, the video was designed to encourage a greater awareness and appreciation of the arts to viewers of all ages.

The video features TV newscaster Mort Crim, actor Jeff Daniels, state senator Lana Pollack and other local celebrities.

Woman Pitcher Credits M.D. for Improving Curve...

"Little did I realize that dropping just 25 lbs. did so much for my figure," says Doris Ruetenb. "Now when my family or clients listen to my 'pitch' they see more pep than ever before. Thank you M.D. for improving my 'curves'."



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Eleanor & Ray Heald/Wine

Oregon vintner likes challenge of pinot noir

"Burgundy is a classical wine region with limited land and strong traditions," contends Robert Drouhin, president of the renowned Burgundy house Maison Joseph Drouhin. "In Burgundy, we produce archetypal wines which must remain true to their predetermined type."

However, in Oregon, Drouhin is free to accept the technical difficulties of growing pinot noir, the wine world's most challenging grape.

Drouhin recently introduced the 1988 Domaine Drouhin Oregon Pinot Noir produced by his daughter, winemaker Veronique. About 1,500 cases are available nationally.

"Our goal is to make a wine as elegant as our Burgundies," Drouhin maintains. "But it must also demonstrate the special traits of an Oregon wine just as Clos des Mouches is recognizable as a Premier Cru from the Cote de Beaune."

In 1961, when Drouhin visited Oregon for the first time, he discovered the potential of growing pinot noir under different conditions from its original Burgundy home. The initial appeal was heightened in 1979, when Drouhin tasted the 1975 Eyrie Vineyard Pinot Noir Reserve. Later that year, the prestigious French magazine Gault et Millau conducted a tasting in which the same wine was more highly ranked than one of Drouhin's Burgundies.

Drouhin's 1959 Chambolle-Musigny won a rematch in 1980, but Oregon's Eyrie Vineyard placed a distinguished second.

In 1986, when Veronique, armed with an oenology degree from the University of Dijon, sought a wine apprenticeship, her father suggested Oregon wineries. Veronique worked at Adelsheim, Bethel Heights Winery and Eyrie Vineyards as her family actively searched for a perfect parcel of land for its Northwest United States venture.

In 1987, a hilltop property, 30 miles southwest of Portland in Dundee, Ore., was studied. The site approximates the same 45-degree latitude and 500- to 800-foot elevation as Maison Joseph Drouhin in Beaune. Even the annual rainfall mirrors that of Burgundy.

However, the local, decomposed red volcanic basalt soil is dissimilar to Burgundian soils. Since it was Drouhin's intent to make a pinot noir different from the red Burgundies he produces in France, and since his Oregon pinot noir tasting experiences convinced him of the quality potential of this wine, he exercised his option to buy a 100-acre property, which has since been expanded to 180 acres.

Currently, 27 acres are planted. Additional plots will be put under vines on an annual basis. Consequently, the first three vintages (1988 through 1990) of Domaine Drouhin Oregon wines were made from purchased grapes selected from local growers.

Beginning with the 1991 vintage, wines will be produced from estate vineyards and will be bottled with this designation.

While the winery was under construction, vinification of the 1988 vintage took place at Veritas Winery in Portland, where Drouhin shipped his own equipment, including horizontal and vertical fermenters. He also exported a wide variety of barrels, some new, some one year old, made from a variety of oaks from France's renowned central forests.

WINE SELECTION OF THE WEEK

1988 Domaine Drouhin Oregon Pinot Noir (\$34) is a melange of classic pinot noir aromas and flavors showcasing cherry-like fruit. The wine is handsomely balanced and complex. It tastes delicious now and will age gracefully for several years.

You may think that this wine is pricey. Actually, it's in line with the very best from California and Oregon, and if you compare it with the generously fruited 1988 Joseph Drouhin Chambolle-Musigny at \$48, you will be impressed with this new bottling from Oregon.

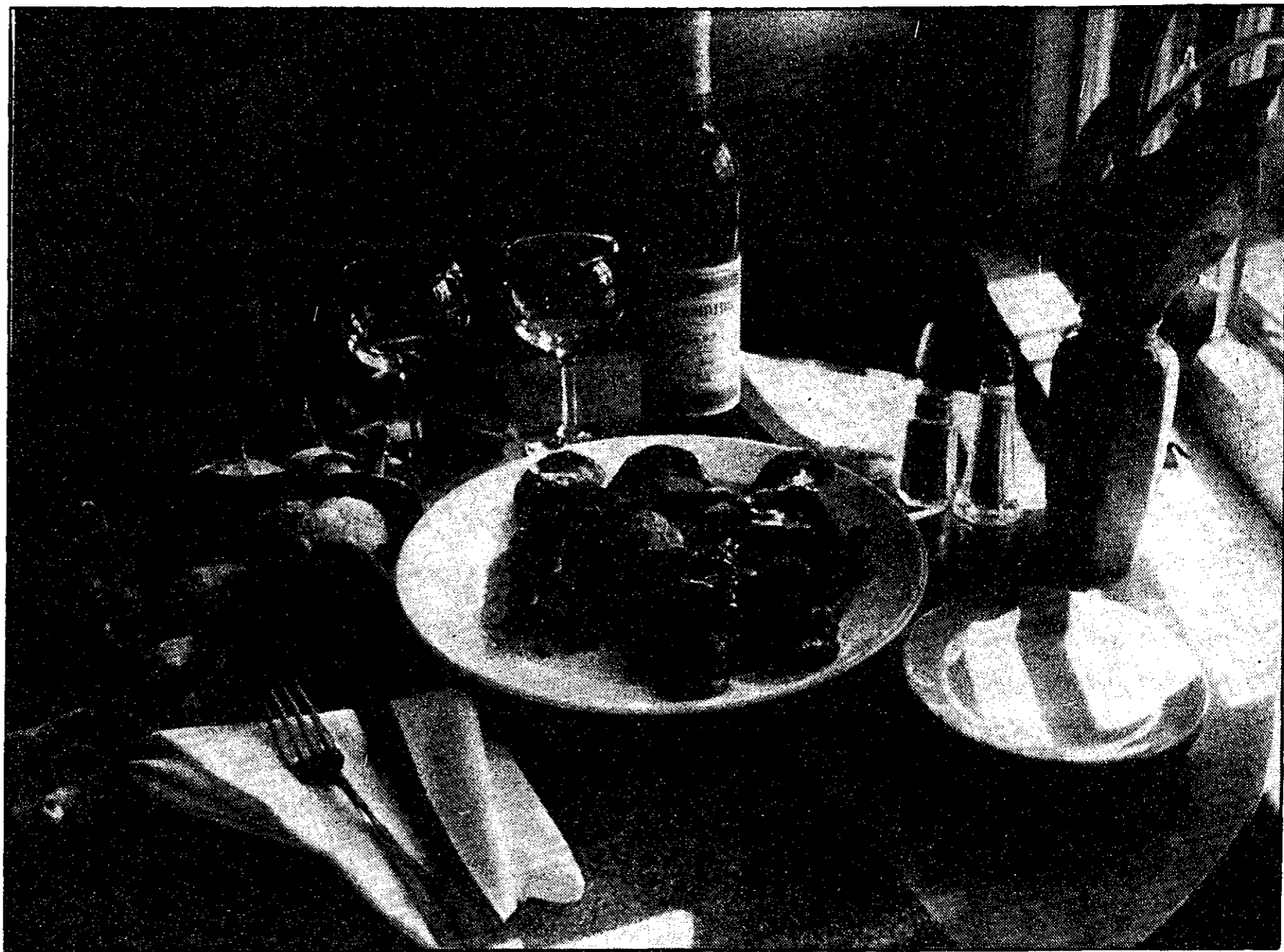


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

Home Sweet Home is the home of shiitake mushrooms grilled with Dijon mustard

Home-grown mushrooms
Restaurateur harvests fungus among us

By RICK BYRNE
Copy Editor

Legend has it that if you find a four-leaf clover in a field, it will bring good luck.

When Steve Romanek, owner of the Home Sweet Home restaurant in Novi, was wandering in the fields of his new home in Livingston County, he came across a mushroom. Actually several thousand mushrooms. And as luck would have it, they happened to be one of the hottest food items in the country — shiitake mushrooms.

"I was looking for some real estate to invest in," Romanek says. "On the property, there were all these logs with mushrooms growing on them. I had no idea what kind they were. Lo and behold the logs produced shiitakes."

Scattered in the various hollows and gullies of his property were some 40,000 logs. In Romanek's first year as a shiitake farmer, he harvested some 22,000 pounds of mushrooms.

"And that's nowhere near our capacity," he says.

The process for growing shiitake mushrooms is still done the same way it has been done in Japan for centuries. It's simple, yet very labor intensive. Romanek often needs several people to help do what really is "dirty work."

Biologically speaking, the mushrooms grow from spores. Holes are drilled at several points in the log, and the spores are placed in the holes.

"It must be done in the winter when everything is dormant, and no fungus has been able to take over the tree when it's freshly cut down," says Romanek.

In the spring, the logs need to be thumped to agitate the spores, and start them growing. But when they do, watch out. Like something out of a Japanese monster movie, the mushroom spores will grow throughout the trunk of the log in tendrillike fingers, literally taking it over.

"When they break out, they come right through the wood and the bark, everywhere," Romanek says. "Not just where you've drilled the holes. They come in clusters of 15-20 at a time. It really is amazing to see."

Romanek also points out that Michigan's climate is similar to that of the mushrooms' native Korea.

"You usually have to keep sprinkling them with overhead water," he says. "They like it best when it's in the 70s and overcast."

"People in Florida have been doing it, but in Michigan it is almost ideal, too. The way the weather changes and the way it rains, sometimes we don't see the sun for two or three days."

Once the shiitakes are harvested, it takes 37 days for another generation to arrive. They grow to full maturity in seven days. The logs, usually birch, can be reused for seven years.

Romanek's crop of shiitake mushrooms is probably unlike what you are used to buying in the market. They are, in a word, huge.

Romanek demonstrates his unique strain by taking one from a case in the Home Sweet Home cooler. As in preparing all shiitakes, the woody stem is discarded. The cap that is left is the size of the average hamburger patty. He slices it open to reveal a pristine white cross section nearly a half-inch thick.

"They're really thick and meaty," says Romanek. "Lately the trend is that the people want the big ones. In Europe, they grill one, and serve it as a huge appetizer."

"We cut and skewer them, and cook them in a liquid to flavor them. Then we grill them with some Dijon mustard."

The liquid can also be reserved as the base for a cream soup, and some chopped shiitakes added to make a very popular shiitake mushroom soup.

Though the appetizer is equally popular, the farm yields far more shiitakes than Home Sweet Home could ever use. As a result, Romanek wholesales them to just about any restaurateur that wants them. Among his high-profile customers is the

Golden Mushroom in Southfield. The only grocer currently buying from Romanek is the Shopping Center Market in West Bloomfield, though others are likely to follow.

As much enjoyment as Romanek gets from his shiitake mushroom farm, he can't eat them.

"I'm allergic to the spores, and only the spores of the shiitake," he says. "It took a while to develop, but I was just working around some of the logs and I couldn't even breathe. It was like I was choking."

But for shiitake lovers, there's nothing like the pleasure of the intense flavor of a fresh shiitake. Try some in the recipe included here.

GRILLED SHIITAKES DIJON
from Home Sweet Home

4 large shiitake mushrooms
beef or chicken stock
bamboo skewers
Dijon mustard to taste

Discard woody stems, and poach or boil the whole mushroom cap in stock, just enough to intensify their flavor. Remove from liquid and allow to cool. Skewer the mushrooms crosswise, so the caps lie flat. Spread with as much dijon mustard as you like, and grill. Serve on a bed of shredded red cabbage.

Chef Mary Brady

Shucking oysters a labor of love

What a resplendent gift of nature the oyster is. Even hundreds of miles from the ocean fresh oysters on the half shell are reminiscent of the sea. You can see, smell and taste the saltwater.

Oysters are members of the mollusk family. Mollusks have shells divided into two halves, or two valves. They have a strong muscle that keeps the shell shut protecting them from predators, including man. If you have ever tried to shuck an oyster you're well aware of the strength and concentration required to open the shell.

Oysters prefer brackish, or salty, water and live in bays or coves where the currents provide their food. Each day 100 gallons of water are pumped in and out of an oyster bringing nourishment in the form of plankton and tiny larvae. Oysters must live in moving water to remain healthy.

Oysters have been revered throughout history by ancient Romans, American Indians and early settlers, William Shakespeare and millions nowadays. Unfortunately they are suffering from dis-

ease, pollution and over-harvesting by the same ones that love their unequalled flavor. Man and his environment are the oyster's worst enemy. The plankton that oysters feed on are sometimes tainted, and an oyster weakened by pollution is susceptible to disease. Hepatitis is an example, a frightening one, as it is undetectable by smell or sight.

A good rule of thumb is to purchase oysters from reputable sources. Oysters are generally sold according to their size, small, medium or large. The shells should be tightly closed and when shucked smell of the sea, fresh and salty. A spoiled oyster will be quite apparent to the nose.

Oysters should be stored in a cool place, 45 degrees, covered with a damp kitchen towel or paper towels. Never place in water or in an airtight container as they will die from lack of air. A fresh oyster has shelf life of 7-10 days. If purchasing oysters already shucked be certain the liquor is clear, not milky.

Clean the shells with a brush under clean running water. I like to do this before

storing the oysters so they are ready to shuck on demand.

There are many ways to shuck an oyster but a tried and true method is as follows: Scrub oyster free of grit, wear heavy-duty rubber gloves to protect your hands from the rough shells. Hold the oyster in your hand, large side of the shell down, and find the hinged part of the oyster, the narrow end. Softly work the oyster knife into the hinge with a rocking motion. Then firmly twist the knife back and forth to open the shell. Once open, slide the knife across the top to cut the adductor muscle. Discard the top shell and serve.

If there is a lot of grit present from opening the shell, rinse the oyster in salted water, not fresh, to preserve the flavor. The oyster "juice" or liquor is like honey. To save it, shuck the oysters over a dish or pan and strain the juice through a coffee filter to rid it of grit.

Oysters are easy to serve. They may be presented fresh on the half shell with a garnish of horseradish, tabasco and lemon, in stews, chowders, baked, broiled,

fried, with cheese, bacon, spinach and in a stuffing for poultry. To retain the delicate flavor of oysters never cook too long, just enough to heat them through. There is quite a tendency to overcook oysters. Remove oysters from the heat as soon as the edges begin to curl.

There are many myths that surround oysters.

Do oysters contain pearls? No. Another mollusk that resembles the mussel brings us pearls.

Are oysters to be eaten only in the "R" months? No. Oysters may be eaten year-round because of today's refrigerated transport.

Are oysters an aphrodisiac? Maybe, as they contain phosphorus, iron, copper and iodine, substances believed to enhance lovemaking. Maybe you'll have to eat some to prove or disprove this theory. Have fun.

Northville resident Mary Brady is a certified executive chef.

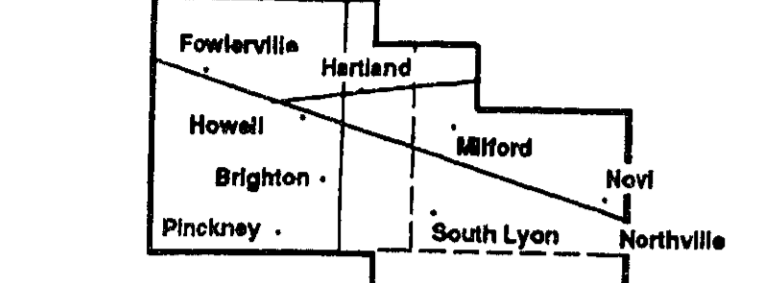
OYSTER CLUB SANDWICH

- 1 pint oysters
- 12 slices bacon
- ½ cup flour
- 12 lettuce leaves
- 12 slices tomato
- 18 slices toasted buttered bread
- mayo to taste
- salt and pepper to taste

Fry bacon and drain. Drain oysters, roll in flour, seasoned with salt and pepper. Fry in bacon fat, or vegetable oil. When brown on one side turn and brown other. This should take no longer than 4-5 minutes. Spread toast with mayo and arrange lettuce, tomato, bacon and oysters among the toast as a club sandwich. Toothpick and serve with slaw.

MONDAY Green Sheet

Phone Numbers:



One local call places your classified ad in over 63,000 homes every Monday throughout Livingston County and the South Lyon, Milford, Northville and Novi areas...

- To place your classified ad: Brighton, Pinckney, or Hartland... (313) 227-4438... To place your circular or display ad: Livingston County... (313) 548-2000...

For delivery service, call: Brighton, Pinckney or Hartland... (313) 227-4442

Place classified ads: Monday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday - Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Deadline: Friday 3:30 p.m. for Monday Green Sheet

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Miracles don't come out of the blue. A healthy baby takes nine months of caring.

