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Officer drops city lawsuit; 4 file complaint

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Novi Police Officer Deanna Hall, who is expecting her second child, agreed to settle her sexual harassment and discrimination lawsuit against the city because she could not take the stress of a trial, her attorney said Friday.

"She's pregnant and off the job and she emotionally could not go through the lawsuit and have the baby at the same time," Hall's attorney Jamil Akhtar explained.

Karen Koester, who was the first female police officer to sue the city over pregnancy-related issues, resigned from the force last week due to what has been described as repercussions from her lawsuit.

The department is currently investigating a new complaint brought by four female officers.

Hall signed an agreement that she would not disclose the amount of the settlement, which was formalized July 14. But the \$25,000 sum was announced at the July 12 Novi City Council meeting.

"I'm flabbergasted. They had Deanna sign a confidentiality agreement to keep it quiet," Akhtar said. "I'm not telling you it was done for \$25,000."

Mayor Matthew Quinn said Friday that the council was not aware of such an arrangement.

"We had some talk it would not have to be confidential. That was not part of our requirement. It's not private now," he added.

Hall, now six months pregnant, was ordered by the city to take her second unpaid leave of absence when her doctor placed a 25 pound weight lifting limitation on her.

Koester resigned from her job as the DARE and crime prevention officer on July 14, said Akhtar, who is also her lawyer.

Koester could not be reached for comment.

"She cited difficulties in working relations with employees as result of the litigation and other issues over the last few years," Novi Assis-

tant City Manager Craig Klaver said.

Koester won \$5,000 in damages from the city on her lawsuit charging sexual harassment, but her complaint that she was discriminated against when denied light duty was not upheld in a jury trial. The city does not permit light duty assignments to male officers who are disabled by injury.

Novi officials have said that state law requires them to classify pregnancy as a temporary disability.

Hall did not lose wages when she was forced to take an unpaid leave of absence in February 1991 during her first pregnancy because she was able to use vacation days and also won three weeks of unemployment pay. On road patrol at the time, she asked for and was denied a light duty shift.

Novi lost an appeal with the Michigan Employment Security Commission over Hall's three weeks of pay, Akhtar said.

The \$25,000 settlement therefore is not to compensate for a loss in salary.

"This is purely for personal injury. It won't cover her attorney fees. Her attorney is taking a bath on this," Akhtar said.

"The only ones making money on this are the attorneys for the city."

The lawsuit was handled by lawyers from Novi's insurance company, Municipal Risk Management Authority.

The Novi Police Department is now conducting an internal investigation based on a complaint against a ranking officer signed by four female police officers, Akhtar said.

"I would imagine that most of the women in the department will be leaving very soon. The department apparently has a policy to force out the women one by one. The council just sits back and lets it happen," he said.

Klaver confirmed that an investigation has been under way since the complaint was turned in two months ago.



Photo by HAL GOULD

Car fire

Thursday, flames destroyed a 1985 Ford Tempo abandoned on the Beck Road overpass at Interstate-96. The car was "just sitting there all locked up," Fire Chief Arthur Lenaghan said. The cause of the fire has not been determined, but the vehicle was

completely destroyed. The fire department arrived on the scene at 3:31 p.m. and remained there about one hour. Above, Bill Fritz of the Novi Fire Department douses the blaze.

Fest caught in 'radio war' crossfire

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Pick up a copy of the official brochure for next week's Michigan '50s Festival and you'll see WHND-AM, "Honey Radio," listed as an official sponsor.

That was true when the flyer was printed, but not any more. Call it the fortune of radio wars.

The Royal Oak-based, all-oddes AM station was recently edged out by WOMC-FM, a long-time festival sponsor that did not want a competing radio station moving in on its turf.

Art Cervi, a Novi resident and classic car enthusiast, with his own show on WHND, "Let's

Talk Cars," is hopping mad. In January, Cervi says, the board said he could do a live broadcast from the festival's Grand River Cruise on July 25.

"We were trying to get a foot into the door," he explained.

Two weeks ago, the board voted unanimously to pull the plug on WHND.

"WOMC did, if you will, a power play on the (festival) board. The board had to make that decision and it was driven by the ultimatum that if we did not drop Honey Radio they would pull out their representation," Gary Wyatt, vice president of the festival's board of directors, explained.

"Based on the information we had, we felt we had no choice but to give in to WOMC. It may not

be right, but it's for the good of the festival. . . In my opinion, we had a general agreement with WHND."

WOMC provides the Michigan '50s Festival with between \$70,000 to \$80,000 of services, but the festival also pays the station \$4,500 for radio ads, Wyatt. The festival board is now asking WOMC to waive that fee.

The Ferndale-WOMC has an oldies format and reaches an audience of about 500,000. It's been the festival's official sponsoring radio station for three years and had a more limited involvement with the event earlier.

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AG says Lt. Moulik embezzled petty cash

By RICK BYRNE
Copy Editor

The former commander of Northville's Michigan State Police post was arraigned Thursday on felony charges of embezzling more than \$138,000 from petty cash funds at the post.

State Attorney General Frank Kelley charged Lt. Jack Moulik with five counts of embezzlement at 35th District Court in Plymouth.

Moulik waived rights to a preliminary exam. Judge John McDonald released Moulik on a \$50,000 personal recognizance bond. The case has been bound over to Detroit Recorder's Court, where he faces a hearing on July 29.

According to Kelley's charges, Moulik diverted money intended for the state's imprest cash fund. The fund exists for troopers who receive interim bond money from arrested motorists to ensure their appearance in court.

Shortages were discovered in deposits made by the Northville Post to the imprest cash account for calendar years 1989 through 1992.

An investigation by the State Police Internal Affairs Unit revealed evidence that Moulik had failed to deposit bond money into the proper account. Kelley also al-

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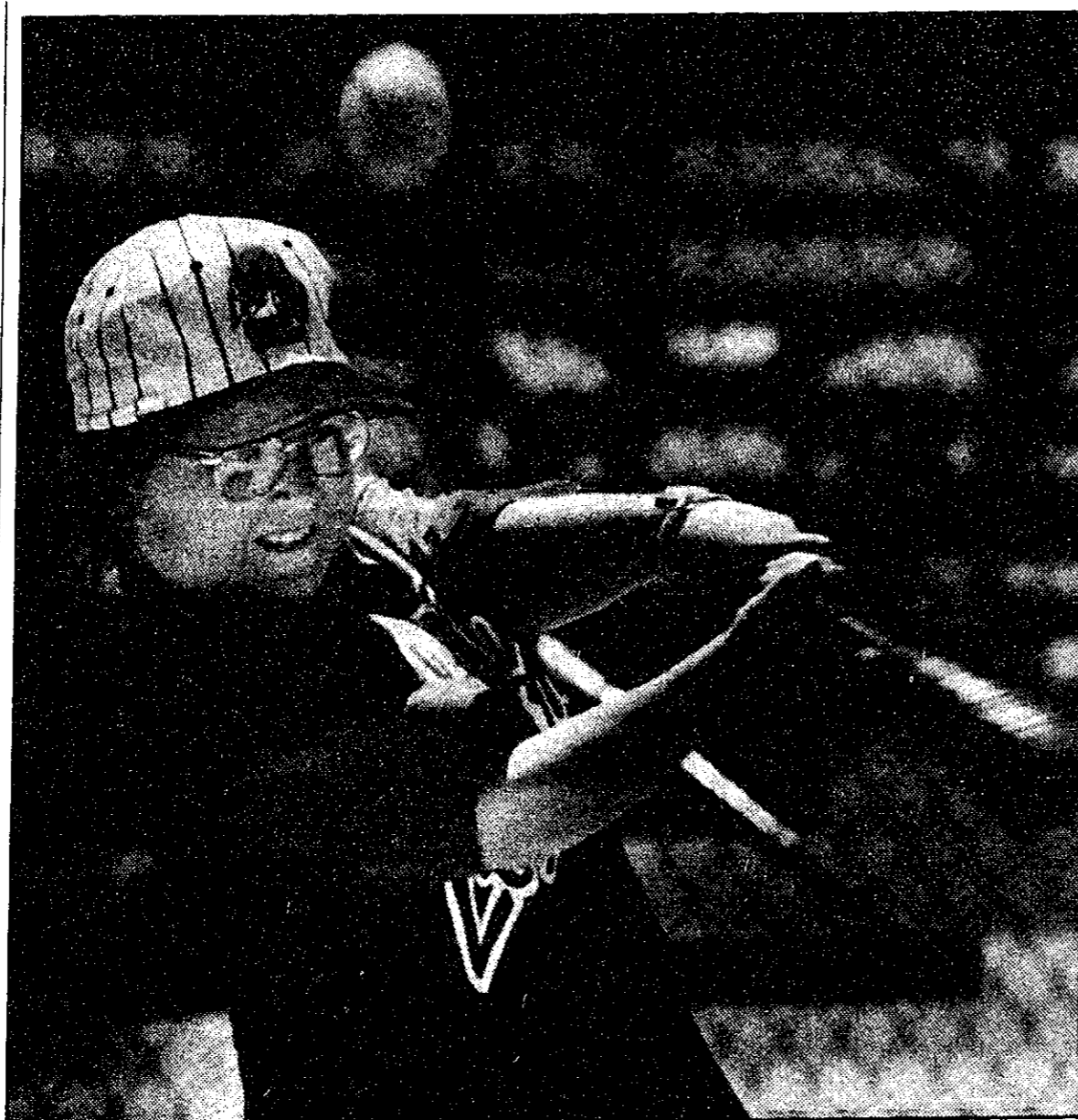


Photo by BRYAN MITCHELL

Learning from the best

Former Tiger Chet Lemon put on his "Chet Lemon School of Baseball" program for Novi kids in Power Park recently and the youngster who participated played "live" games of ball

last Thursday and Friday to put their newly-acquired skills to the test. Above, Sean Delaney, 10, shows what the students learned by taking a forceful cut at the ball.

Child in good condition after rescue from pool

A toddler who was discovered Thursday at the bottom of a backyard swimming pool on East Lake Drive was in good condition Friday at a Pontiac hospital.

Rescue workers from the Novi Fire Department and Community Emergency Medical Services discovered a slight pulse on 18-month-old Joselyn Amaker and performed CPR and ventilation on the child before rushing her to Huron Valley Hospital, Fire Chief Arthur Lenaghan said.

The little girl is from El Paso, Texas, and was with her parents

visiting the Wright family on East Lake Drive. No one is sure how she got into the pool or how long she was under water, Lenaghan said.

The rescue crew was on the scene in two minutes, arriving at 1:37 p.m. They got there in good shape. They did a good job and got her stabilized," Lenaghan said.

From Huron Valley Hospital, she was transported to St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac.

"It sounds like hopefully everything will be okay. Everybody was kind of pleased," the fire chief added.

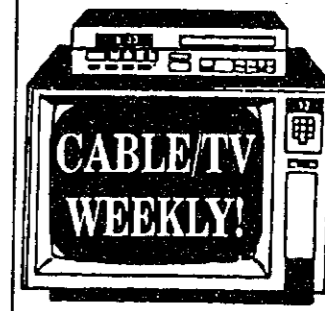
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WHAT'S
INSIDE?



As We See It

Governments can buy plaintiff's silence

So you think you live in America, huh . . . the land of free speech and equal justice under the law . . . the land where the rich and powerful can be held to account by the not-so-rich, not-so-powerful because of the right to speak out and criticize and the right to file lawsuits.



Government

Well, think again. Such rights do not always go hand in hand.

Here's the scenario. The government goes up, real bad. You speak out to the city council, the school board, the county board, the state legislature or whatever level of government is appropriate, but you get no satisfaction. A petition drive among the local residents doesn't resolve the issue. Press coverage and letters to the editor in the local paper aren't able to set things to right.

Finally, you sue in court. This way, you figure you'll have your day in court, you'll get a chance to expose the government wrongdoing in a court of law for all to see.

Chances are, government officials will never be held to account because of a legal gimmick used in such lawsuits called a "confidentiality agreement." It is a standard tactic for governments which are taken to court. They offer the plaintiff a monetary settlement, but in return they ask the plaintiff to sign a "confidentiality agreement." Once signed, it means the plaintiff can't talk about the results of the case publicly.

In essence, it equates to the government buying the silence of those plaintiffs.

And it clearly is to the detriment of the rest of the public. The general public clearly has an obvious interest in knowing the outcome of a court case. Others may be suffering similar difficulties with that governmental agency. Knowing the outcome of the case would give them an idea of whether the government felt it had a defensible case against that lawsuit and whether the plaintiff's rights really were abridged.

Still other members of the public also have a right to know how much taxpayer money is being spent settling these kinds of disputes, because after all, it is their money. And they should be able to assess how well their government does, both in avoiding violating people's rights and in how much it has to pay out to set things straight later.

So as long as the state legislature refuses to ban such confidentiality agreements in court cases involving government agencies, governments will continue to use such agreements to avoid accountability for their actions.

An interesting twist in the debate over confidentiality agreements arose

last week when word was announced of a settlement in the lawsuit between police officer Deanna Hall and the Novi Police Department. According to Hall's attorney, Jarni Akhtar, she signed a confidentiality agreement as a part of the settlement of her sexual harassment and discrimination lawsuit against the Novi Police Department. Hall had sued because she was denied a light duty assignment when pregnant with her first child. She settled the suit, Akhtar said, because she is pregnant again and didn't want to go through the stress of a trial while carrying her second child.

The government — in this case the Novi City Council — talked openly about the case in its public meeting Monday, July 12. Council members approved the settlement that was scheduled to be finalized two days later and specifically mentioned the amount of the settlement, \$25,000.

Still, after the amount came out, Akhtar wouldn't confirm or deny the amount of the settlement because of Hall's confidentiality agreement. He expressed outrage that the council would go ahead and talk about it publicly.

Novi Mayor Matt Quinn said council knew nothing about a confidentiality agreement and the council felt there was no need for confidentiality.

It is not clear what that confidentiality agreement may have stated, nor is it clear that the City of Novi would be bound to silence by such an agreement signed by Hall.

What is clear is the ultimate effect. The government can talk about the case while the person — who was apparently wronged enough to warrant payment of a \$25,000 settlement — can't. How convenient.

It is also clear to us that these confidentiality agreements, at least in lawsuits involving the government, should be banned outright. It seems to us that they simply encourage the government to offer more and more taxpayer money to end a lawsuit so it can evade public accountability for its actions. And it seems to us that the worse the government has messed up, the more eager it will be to give away more taxpayer dollars.

It conspires against both protecting individual rights and holding down costs for taxpayers.

'50s Festival had rocky start



Phil Jerome

Talk about a tale of two cities — Northville has a Victorian Festival; Novi has a '50s Festival.

The Victorian Festival comes up later in the year, but the '50s Festival is at hand. Festivities begin this Wednesday and run through Sunday night, culminating with the Cruise Grand River event.

Some random thoughts about the '50s Fest.

■ The sixth annual '50s Fest? It seems like there have been a lot more than that. The fact that this is only the sixth one makes me think that festival organizers have done an awfully good job of getting the event firmly established.

■ Novi City Manager Edward Kriewall deserves a portion of the credit for helping make the event so successful. The City of Novi every year throws a party for employees and the volunteers who serve on various boards and commissions. These parties usually have a theme.

Six or seven years ago, the theme was the '50s. And everyone had such a good time that the '50s was selected as the theme for a summer festival.

■ How many people remember the very first '50s Festival back in 1987?

That was the summer of the big drought. The heat was oppressive, and it seemed like there was no rain whatsoever for more than a month.

A lot of people worked very hard to make sure the first '50s Fest would be a success. They knew the expenses would be high, but were counting on two concerts by Sha Na Na at the high school football field to raise enough mo-

ney to cover costs.

The Saturday of the concerts was typical of the days before it — unbelievably hot . . . so hot that hardly anyone showed up for the afternoon concert, which was okay because a full house was expected for the evening concert.

About 15 minutes before the concert was scheduled to begin, the drought ended. Big time. There was a fierce electrical storm — frightening bolts of lightning and a torrential downpour. Everyone rushed for the high school to get out of the storm.

And the concert never happened. No way was Sha Na Na going to take the stage with all its electrical equipment in the middle of an electrical storm.

The problem was that Sha Na Na insisted on being paid. They were there and ready to perform, they argued. They had met their end of the contract; festival organizers should have been smart enough to have lined up alternate facilities — like the high school auditorium, for example.

Making matters worse, people who had tickets for the evening concert wanted their money back. They had bought tickets for a concert and there was no concert, they reasoned with good justification.

Festival organizers asked concert-goers to consider making a donation by foregoing their refunds. And while some people complied, the festival still ended up something like \$20,000 in the hole after '50s Festival I. And '50s Festival II looked doubtful.

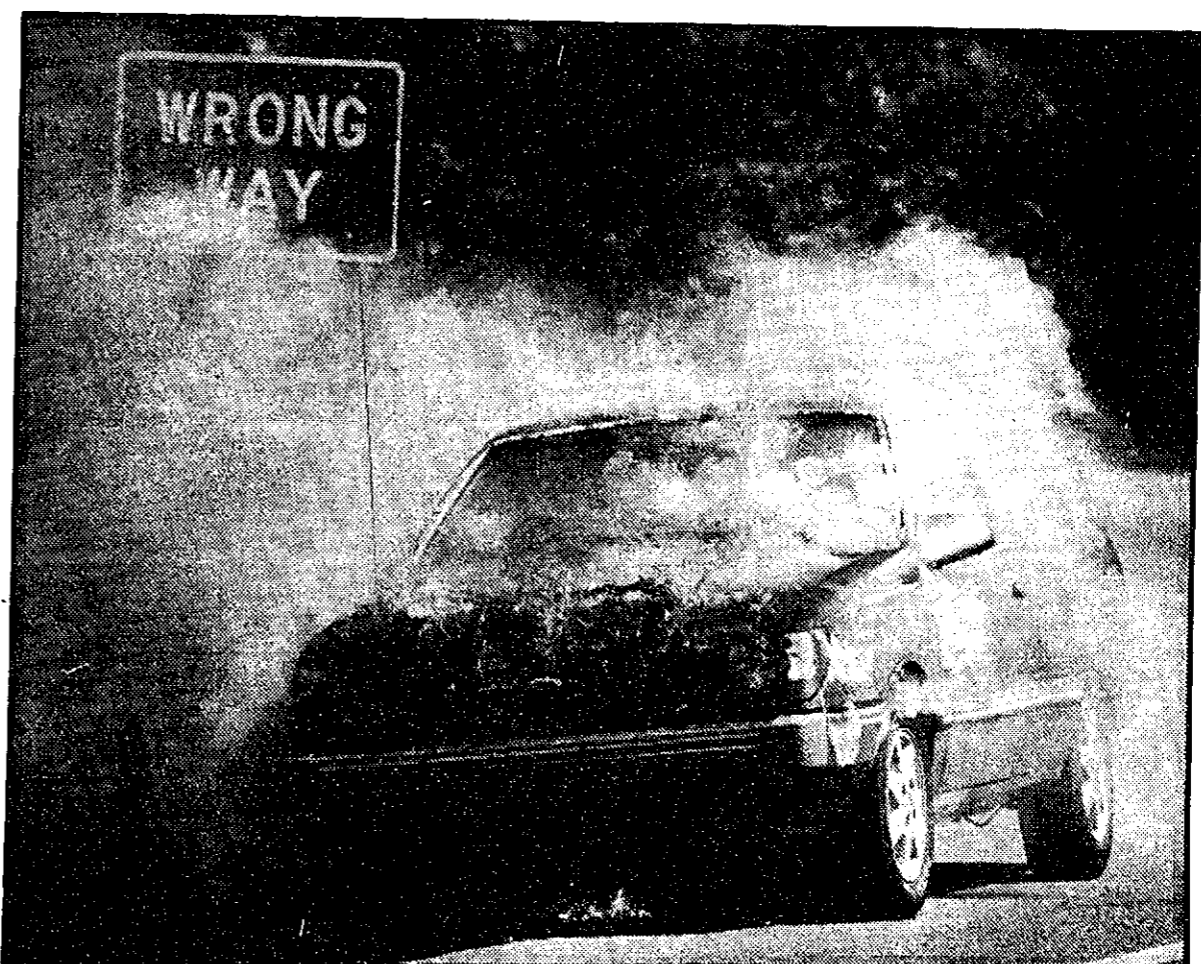
A prominent local retail establishment, insisting on anonymity, quietly bailed the festival out of trouble and '50s Festival VI begins Wednesday.

It's a great party. Plan to attend.

Phil Jerome is executive editor of The Novi News and HomeTown Newspapers.

In passing

By Hal Gould



'Wrong way'

A car fire on the exit ramp of I-96 at Beck Road Thursday

Check out the cars, movies



Rick Byrne

Everyone's heard about the Sock Hop Express as part of this week's Michigan '50s Festival in Novi. A bunch of rowdy people bounce from dance to dance at major area hotels, with buses to get them around.

Now get ready for the Motorsports Express. To make sure the masses of people who will be in town for the weekend don't miss the great cars and displays at the Motorsports Museum and Hall of Fame, there'll be a shuttle running between the '50s Festival and the Expo Center, with a stop at the front entrance of the Museum.

The shuttle will run directly from the '50s Festival site at the Novi Town Center, picking up passengers at a special Museum display near the Entertainment Tent. Bob Hoeksema, a museum volunteer, graciously arranged for the loan of a van from his employer, Ford Motor Co.

When you get to the museum, you'll want to check out more than just the cars and Hall of Fame. We'll have our video display going all weekend long, rerunning teen car movies of the 1950s like *Hot Rod Heaven*.

You have to approach these old movies with the right frame of mind. The best way to describe them is that they're good because they're bad. Really horrible. Lousy acting, inconceivable scripting, unlikely plots. They make

Smokey and the Bandit look like a think piece. But that's what makes them so much fun. Besides, the old cars are really neat.

The Museum is also taking an active role in the '50s Festival Car Show, too. On display along with the other lead sleds and street rods will be the Novi Special, owned jointly by the City of Novi and the Novi Economic Development Corp.

The Novi, for those unfamiliar, was one of the most powerful and most popular cars in the history of the Indianapolis 500. It led many races and was the fastest qualifier at Indy several times throughout the '50s, but ironically never won the race.

It took the city's name because its builder owned a company here in town that supplied parts to Detroit automakers. In another piece of irony, the car never did visit Novi until it was restored in 1988.

Also appearing at the car show along with the Novi Special will be a 1955 Cadillac stock car owned by Jess Austin of Wayne. The car is a replica of one that raced in the Mexican Road Race of the 1950s and competed on the NASCAR Grand National circuit, what we know today as Winston Cup. It's amazing how unsophisticated the race cars of that era were. The darned thing even has white walls.

The shuttle will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, at 15-minute intervals. For more information, call 349-RACE.

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

FIGHTING MAD?

WRITE BACK!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This newspaper welcomes letters to the editor. We ask, however, that they be issue-oriented, confined to 400 words and that they contain the signature, address, and telephone number of the writer. The writer's name may be withheld from publication if the writer fears bodily harm, severe persecution, or the loss of his or her job. The writer requesting anonymity must explain his or her circumstances. Submit letters for consideration by 4 pm Monday for that Thursday's paper. We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity, clarity, libel, and taste.

The week prior to an election, this newspaper will not accept letters to the editor that open up new issues. Only responses to already published issues will be accepted, with this newspaper being the final arbiter. This policy is an attempt to be fair to all concerned.

Submit letters to: Editor, The Novi News, 104 W. Main, Northville, MI 48167.

Florine Mark/Weight Watchers

*July has been
berry, berry
good to you*

July belongs to blueberries! This is the peak month for berries, and to celebrate, Weight Watchers has come up with a trio of delectable blueberry recipes.

Start off your "berry" good day with mouth watering Blueberry Hotcakes, or the perennial favorite muffin, in this case Blueberry-Orange Muffins. Or, try something different — a tangy Blueberry Salad, ideal as a side dish or as a light dessert.

Whether you cook them or eat them by the handful, enjoying more fresh, seasonal fruits like blueberries can help your weight loss effort.

When you enjoy the fruits and vegetables at their peak of freshness, you add variety and a sense of fun to your diet.

Sounds "berry" good! All recipes are from Weight Watchers Favorite Homestyle Recipes Cookbook.

BLUEBERRY HOTCAKES

- ¼ teaspoon cornstarch
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- granulated sugar substitute to equal 4 teaspoons sugar
- 1½ ounces quick cooking oats
- ½ cup buttermilk powder
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon double-acting baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup egg substitute

To prepare blueberry sauce, in small saucepan, combine cornstarch and ¼ cup cold water until smooth. Add blueberries; cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir in sugar substitute; set aside.

Heat non-stick electric griddle or 2 medium non-stick skillet until hot.

In large bowl, combine remaining ingredients until just blended.

Drop batter by ¼ cup measures onto hot griddle, making 6 hotcakes. Cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Carefully turn and cook until other side is golden, about 3 minutes. Serve immediately with blueberry sauce. Makes 2 servings.

Each serving provides: ½ milk; ½ protein; 1 fruit; 1½ bread; 10 optional calories on the Weight Watchers Food Plan.

Per serving: 286 calories; 15 g protein; 3 g fat; 52 g carbohydrate; 318 mg calcium; 761 mg sodium; 14 mg cholesterol; 5 g dietary fiber.

BLUEBERRY-ORANGE MUFFINS

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup reduced-calorie tub margarine
- ¾ cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 1 small orange, peeled, seeded and finely chopped with juice
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Spray twelve 2½-inch non-stick muffin cups with non-stick cooking spray, or line with paper liners; set aside.

In large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; cut in margarine until mixture resembles fine crumbs.

In small bowl, combine yogurt, orange and orange peel until thoroughly blended. Stir in eggs.

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An important component at every Italian meal throughout the day is perfectly done bread.

Loaves, Italian style
Bread appears on the table at every meal

By **ORLANDO RAMIREZ**
Copley News Service

Bread is simple: flour, water, yeast — maybe a little salt — and you have the staff of life. Yet, each culture has its own variation and it is how those variations are made, and the ingredients added, that summarizes the history of that culture's cuisine.

Italy is as good an example as any. Sitting at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the Italian peninsula has been invaded or occupied by the Greeks, Etruscans, Arabs, French and Germans in its 3,000-year history. Each has left its stamp on Italian food.

Flat breads, such as focaccia, draw from the Arab style of bread baking brought by the Moors, who also introduced the eggplant from across the Mediterranean.

The European influence can be seen in the breads from the northern reaches, in particular the Pane Giallo, which uses polenta to make a corn bread. Although who introduced rice to the Lombardy region is in dispute, the French are widely credited as having a deep influence on the development of risotto.

Even the Americans, through the tomato, have had their effect on Italian cooking.

Of equal influence is Italy's geography. Surrounded on three sides by water, with a mixed terrain of mountains and fertile fields, Italy's 20 regions have a wealth of indigenous ingredients with which cooks whip up local specialties.

It is said that it took national hero Giuseppe Garibaldi to unify the cuisine when he marched from one end of Italy to the other and introduced the northern,

rice-eating soldiers in his campaign to the pleasures of pasta and tomatoes from the south.

The essential aspect of each of these breads is the flavoring imparted by local herbs and flavorings.

Panne Rustico, flavored with Italian ham and mozzarella cheese, can be a meal in itself. In Rome, Panne Rustico, a green salad and a bottle of Chianti are considered lunch.

From Sicily, there is Pane di Mattina Alla Siciliana, a breakfast bread that uses locally made Marsala dessert wine to impart a sweet flavor.

In fact, Marsala wine is used quite frequently in Sicilian dessert-making, said to be the best in Italy. Many of the recipes were influenced by the Moorish invaders.

Most of the "rustic" breads described here demand nothing more than a simple dressing of a good olive oil, salt and maybe a tomato — the vine-ripened kind, not the gaseous variety that passes for a tomato in most American supermarkets — to make an excellent appetizer.

And although most Italians purchase their loaves at the neighborhood bakery, there are few things better or more impressive than home-baked bread.

To be honest, baking bread is a time-consuming process that requires some physical labor if you're not using a food processor fitted with a dough hook. One thing to remember is that the loaves you don't use right away can be frozen.

It is best to freeze right after the bread has cooled to preserve freshness. Make sure the freezer wrap or bag is airtight. You don't want any moisture or vapors to be absorbed. It is best to use frozen breads within four to six months.

There are several important steps to

preparing yeast doughs. (The Pane Giallo uses no yeast.) The first is, of course, the yeast, which must be proofed in warm water at least 105 F.

If bubbles fail to rise within 10 minutes of mixing the yeast with the warm water, then the yeast is inactive and you must start with a fresh package. However, most commercial yeast will begin proofing within five minutes.

Then the kneading begins. Many chefs opt to use a food processor with a plastic dough hook instead of kneading by hand. When using a food processor, start with the dry ingredients in the bowl and add the liquid slowly. When mixed thoroughly, the dough will form a ball, and the sides and bottom of the bowl should be clean.

A further note: Use the plastic dough hook with amounts less than 3 cups of dry ingredients. Above that amount, the metal blade works best.

Even if you're using a food processor, take the dough out of the bowl and knead it by hand for a few turns. Something about the dough being stretched by hand seems to give an extra elasticity and texture.

Set the dough on a lightly floured bowl and using the heel of your hand, push the dough away from you. Then, pull the end back over and give the dough a turn — no more than an inch or two.

Build up a rhythm, pushing, pulling and turning in a continuous motion until the dough develops an elastic, smooth finish with small bubbles appearing just under the surface.

At first the dough may stick to the board. Sprinkle the board with flour until it becomes clean. Scrape away any wet pieces that stick to the board.

Kneading helps develop the gluten in the dough. The yeast forms bubbles of carbon dioxide and stretches the gluten. This expansion determines the volume and texture of the bread.

The purpose of letting the dough rise, then punching it down, is to keep the yeast from stretching to a point where it breaks down the gluten network. The result of the rising and punching down creates an even texture to the dough.

This expansion (or rising) continues until heat in the oven kills the yeast. For breads that demand a heavier texture, such as the focaccia, you don't want to let the bread achieve much volume, so the rising time is 1 ½ hours.

On the other hand, the Pane di Mattina is allowed to rise for almost 8 hours total to develop a light, airy texture to hold the raisins and currants in a sweet dough flavored with Marsala and lemons.

The Merenda Fiorentina is a flat, pizza-style bread scented with rosemary, oil and garlic.

To serve, cut it into thin slices and pack along with a picnic lunch of roast chicken, roasted red peppers and red wine.

The bacon and cheese in the Pane Rustico make it a perfect accompaniment to a bowl of chicken or tomato soup.

The Pane di Mattina alla Siciliana is Sicily's answer to the morning Danish. Make it a day ahead, then serve it with a cup of good, strong coffee for a break from the traditional bacon-and-egg breakfast.

The Pane Giallo is lightened with egg whites to give it a puddinglike consistency.

However, the red peppers and garlic give it a distinctively savory cast.

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Search for fresh fish takes all the senses



Mary Brady

More from Boston . . . Monday evening was the first session of fish school.

Promptly at six and eleven, attendees met for the first time. They were Kusta, Charles, William, Matthew and Gisela Kegas

Haskell, executive chef, Park Country Club of Buffalo, Williamsville, N.Y.; Dan Covington, Purchasing, Union League Club, Chicago, Ill.; and Susan Glazier, purchasing, Congra mail order, Burr Ridge, Ill.

It was a nice diverse group of people that would spend the next 48 hours talking and learning fish. Little did I realize how close we'd become.

Dinner was at Jimmy's Harborside, the oldest restaurant on the wharf. The view, food and company were outstanding. Calamari, oysters, shrimp and swordfish started our stay in Boston. A first class meal.

To start each of us stood and spoke about our background and what we hoped to get out of the seminar. Mike Foley promised us that, by Wednesday, we'd learn all

that we'd asked for and more. A slide presentation finished the session and we were shuttled back to the hotel for a short but sweet beauty rest.

Tuesday started at 6 a.m. with a wake-up call. I can't remember the last time I was up so early. Class began promptly at 7. The morning was spent learning about grading and preserving fish. Some pretty interesting stuff.

There are five tests that fish should pass before making it to our refrigerator, i.e., as it comes through the back door. First, the ideal temperature is 32 degrees. If the temperature is over 40 degrees, the fish should be rejected. A small pocket thermometer is placed between the fillets to check temperature.

Next, the nose test. Good fish does not smell. Any yeasty, fishy or ammonia odors

indicate a poor product.

Then, the eye exam. Look for natural shine. Yellowing or browning of flesh are signs of age.

Also, fish should not be shipped in plastic bags or containers as they are insulators of heat and do not conduct cold. Bet you can guess what Foley's ships in . . . Yep, tin.

The touch test follows. Rub fingers over fish to insure fillets have not been brine soaked. A tacky, sticky and mucousy feel indicates brined fillets. Brine soaking is used to mask fish odor, adds water weight and thus a 10-percent shrinkage loss upon cooking, camouflages poor quality and adds bacteria. Lots of fish processors brine fish because they start with poor quality.

Now, check workmanship. Reject fillets

that have ragged edges or contain blood spots.

And, finally taste the product. Any fishy smells while cooking are a sure sign that the product is not of the quality demanded.

Obviously, it is much easier for us to check these factors upon delivery than it is for you at the grocery store. To me the two tests that are the most important can be conducted at the fish counter.

Ask to smell the fish. If there is any odor don't buy it. Also, look at the product. A nice natural shine is imperative. Any browning or yellowing is a sign of age.

Finally, know who you're buying your fish from. Develop a good working relationship with your neighborhood fish monger.

Next week a trip to the fish auction and wharf.

from the Regas Restaurant in Knoxville; Michael Janosek, sous chef of Cafe Sausalito, Cleveland, Ohio; Thomas Walters, regional director of operations for Morton's of Chicago, San Diego, California; Charles

