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Center plan draws crowd in opposition

By JEREMY McBAIN
Staff Writer

After a large crowd voicing their opposition to a proposed rezoning at Beck and Eight Mile Roads packed the Planning Commission's meeting Wednesday night, the owner of a trucking company on the property says he may expand in the future.

Over 200 people crammed into the Novi Civic Center, bringing with them a petition with over 1,600 signatures against a proposed rezoning at the intersection of Beck and Eight Mile roads.

A developer has offered an undisclosed amount to the owners of the property, the Zayti family, and wants the property rezoned from its original Master Planned residential zoning, to a commercial zoning. This would pave the way for a proposed shopping center.

However, because signs adver-

"If they don't give us our zoning, I'll bring so many trucks in here I'll really tie up traffic. But, I don't want to make this seem like a threat."

James Zayti

tising a public hearing before the Novi Planning Commission were not put up in time, commissioners could not legally make a decision about the rezoning and put off action until their next meeting Sept. 2.

But, the large turnout caused James Zayti, owner of J.J. Zayti

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Photo by JOHN HEIDER

In his Southfield church, Pastor Calvin Ratz rolls up the blueprints of his church's planned development in Novi.

Brightmoor members pray for success in Novi

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Sunday, anywhere from 300 to 500 people will congregate for a religious meeting on 103 vacant acres at the northwest corner of M-5 and Thirteen Mile Road.

Members of Brightmoor Tabernacle, they'll be praying for the success of their church's latest venture — the transfer of the

2,000-member congregation and nine pastors from Southfield to Novi within the next two years.

On a site earlier targeted by developers for an apartment complex and shopping center, Brightmoor aims to build a church; a 400-student, grade K-12 school; a gymnasium; athletic fields and

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Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Alec Denuccio, 3, enjoys a steadying hand from his dad, Mark, as he skates around the just-opened rink of the Novi Ice Arena Monday afternoon.

Holiday on ice

First skaters glide onto Novi rink

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Six-year-old Matthew Muldoon was the first one to cut the ice at the Novi Ice Arena's first public skating session.

Matthew, who popped into the bleachers briefly to slug down some Sprite, didn't have time Monday to answer questions about how he liked the rink. Instead, he raced back to that glistening white surface.

"Our business is just down the street and we've been eagerly anticipating this. I just had to come and see it," said Matthew's mother, Desiree Muldoon.

"I wish I had brought my skates."

She and her husband, Steve, own Car & Truck Boutique. Also keeping an eye on Matthew's antics was his designated hockey driver, grandmother Marilyn Little. He'll be playing on a Novi Ice Arena team.

City officials and community volunteers who made the \$8.5 million, two-sheet Novi Ice Arena a reality were on hand for the official opening, but while they were lingering over a lunch catered by Country Epicure, the public beat them there when the arena opened for business at noon.

Eleven months ago, the official ground breaking ceremony for the arena was held, but by then, work had already begun. While a July opening date was pushed back, while emergency repair work was done to the facility's leaning front wall, everything's looking good now, City Manager Ed Kriewall said.

Six years ago, the city decided to build the project as a public endeavor led by a non-profit group set up for the arena. The Novi Building Authority issued bonds for the building and oversees the construction. The non-profit Community Clubs of Novi is in charge of operations, but the arena is run on a day-to-day basis by the man-

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Owner cited; dogs remain at large

By WENDSY WHITE
Staff Writer

Northville Township has taken action to prosecute the owner of vicious dogs, but the dogs themselves may still be at large.

Northville Township police charged Novi resident James Zayti with a misdemeanor for harboring a vicious animal after a citizen witness identified a dog on his property as the same one that killed at least three sheep last month.

"It's all going to end up in a court case," said Det. John Sumner.

A beagle and a shepherd type dog have been blamed by Northville Township and Novi residents for killing livestock in the

area of Beck and Eight Mile roads.

According to an unofficial estimate, 20 animals have been killed in the last two years, including lambs, pregnant ewes, geese, ducks, a goat and deer.

In many cases, the animals' throats were ripped out.

Livestock owners and Maybury park officials said they've spotted the beagle and shepherd on or near their property around the time of attacks.

Although Zayti denied ownership of the dogs, Beemer saw the beagle on Zayti's property eight times after the July 31 killings, which he documented for Northville Township police.

The day after receiving Beemer's report, Northville Township police

submitted the warrant for Zayti.

"In this case, in my mind, we have proven it. Mr. Beemer did an excellent job," Sumner said.

However, township police said that they have not picked up any dogs from Zayti's property.

"Who knows how many dogs he has," Sumner said. "If the animals aren't there then what is there to follow up on?"

Since Zayti lives in Oakland County and the killings have occurred there and in Northville Township, animal control for two jurisdictions have been working on the case.

Oakland County Animal Control officers picked up a beagle in the area on Aug. 19 which no one has since claimed.

Pending a behavior review, the beagle will either be put to sleep or adopted.

Oakland County officials picked up a shepherd registered to the Garden City residence of Zayti's girlfriend, at Zayti's Novi home.

Beemer confirmed that the shepherd was not the one he had seen the night of the killings, and later told police he was sure only that he had seen the beagle in Zayti's yard.

"They didn't bring out the beagle, they brought out the shepherd and it wasn't the same shepherd," Beemer said. "I don't want to destroy any animals and I don't want our animals destroyed. I just don't want them loose and some-

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Future of Fuerst farm debated

By JAN JEFFRES
Staff Writer

Historians believe that the first town meeting in Novi may have been held in the 1830s at a house near the southeast corner of Taft and Ten Mile roads.

Monday, possibly for the first time since those pioneering days, local government leaders met at the same location, as the Novi City Council convened in the unair-conditioned parlor of the Fuerst Farmhouse to sweat out the property's future.

"The question's got to be, are you going to save it? And if you're not going to save it, get the bulldozers," Council Member Bob Schmid said.

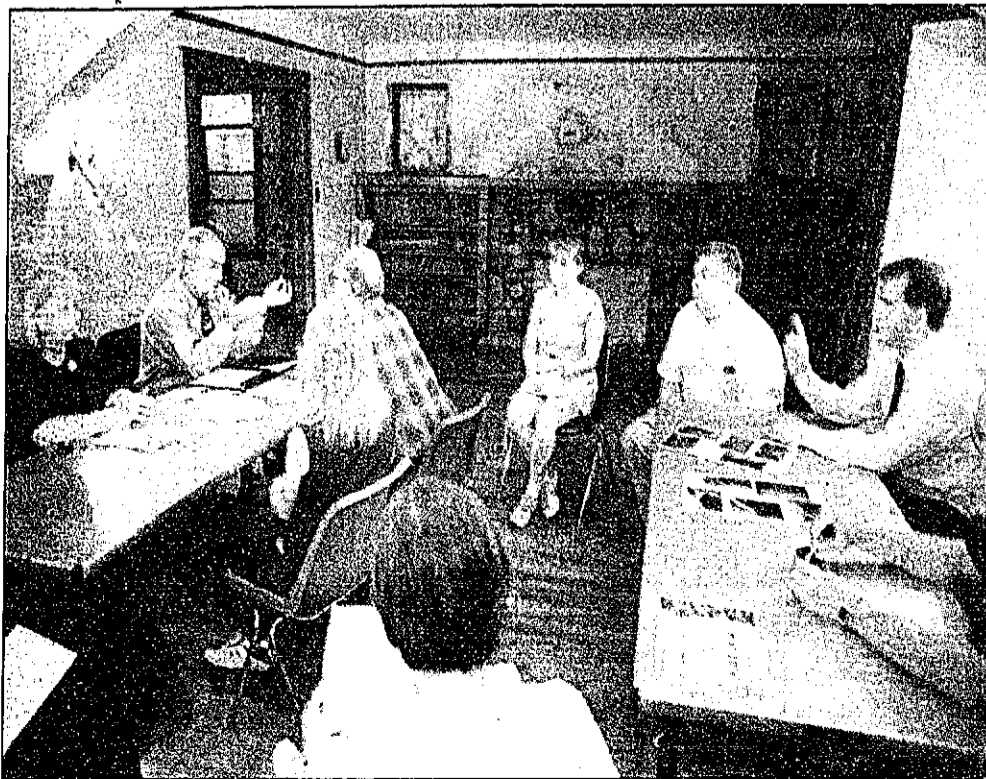


Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Continued on 13 Novi City Council meets inside the Fuerst home to consider it renovation and repair.

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Eight Mile/Beck rezoning draws opposition

Residents vocal in concerns for shopping center at intersection

Continued from 1

truck company, to plan his future options, which include expanding his trucking facility currently located on the property. "If they don't give us our zoning, I'll bring so many trucks in here I'll really be up traffic," he said. "But, I don't want to make this seem like a threat. It is not a threat, it is a promise."

Zayt added he also has the ability to turn the business into a 24-hour operation.

Zayt, a lifetime resident of the area, said the opposition to the rezoning has left him baffled.

"What I feel is, we're being informed upon. I can respect what people say, but we were here first," he said.

Zayt's reaction came after the planning meeting, as the developer and residents gave their side of the controversial issue.

The developer, Stuart Frankel of Troy, said he wants to use the property to build a "rural country village" that would house a Kroger's grocery store, a drug store and a hardware store.

Frankel said the mall will service residents who live within a two-mile radius of the site. This site would be a service to the community, he said, because studies have shown people do not like to drive long distances on highways to buy groceries and currently the residents who live in that area have to.

Frankel added, because the facility will enable people who live in the area to drive a shorter distance for groceries, traffic on Novi roads will be reduced.

However, with each of his claims, Frankel's voice was drowned out by laughter by members of the audience, who presented their own views of what the center will bring to the area and brought a petition with over 1,000 signatures of residents who were against it.

Phil Goodman, a former member of the commission, started the residents' onslaught against the development, saying that the city made a commitment to the people of the area when it designed the city Master Plan.

"The city, at that time, made a commitment to the people to not put major commercial developments at every major intersection in Novi," he said. "When you look back at this, what I voted for in the Master Plan, should be honored today."

Peter King agreed and said he is building a house in the area that will be done in a few weeks. King said he was building the house because the Master Plan had assured him commercial develop-

ment would not be coming into the area.

While some pointed to the area's current residential zoning, others said the development would make the area unsafe and hurt the environment.

Patricia Lauerato, a resident in the area, said the council should consider the safety of children in the area.

She said with the high amount of traffic currently traversing the area, she is already concerned about her children's safety. She feels a new commercial development in the area will bring more traffic.

"I appeal to the commission as parents and homeowners, do not let this development go through. We do not want to shop next to a highway, we also do not want to live next to one," she said.

Karen Zycanski said she has environmental concerns of the development and its impact on Maybury State Park, which is located across the street to the proposed location of the development.

"Maybury State Park is a safe haven. There is a variety of wildlife around the park," she said.

In addition to these arguments, others addressed Frankel's opinion that residents of the area need this development.

Paul Jerome, a Northville resident and Executive Editor of HomeTown Newspapers, pointed to the packed audience and said, "If you look at this little group of citizens, you will see most of us have nice haircuts, most of us have clean clothes and not one of us suffers from malnutrition."

Ray Shaffner, a resident of the area, summed up the opposition to the plan by turning to the audience and asking, "Do we need a new shopping center?" The crowd then responded to his question with a resounding no.

Included in the fray against the development were the city consultants assigned to investigate the proposal.

Rodney Arroyo, city planning and traffic consultant, said he does not recommend the rezoning for a variety of reasons.

He said the proposal is not consistent with the city's Master Plan, it could negatively impact the existing and planned residential uses surrounding the site, and he said Frankel has not provided any information indicating there is a market for commercial land uses in that area.

Mike said his family is not out to hurt anyone, they just want "their fair share."

He said his family has lived in the area for 50-plus years and they have not opposed any of the new subdivisions that have moved in around them over this time.

In fact, he said, his family has gone out of their way to accommodate the new residents by keeping the noise and dust from his brother, James', trucking business.

For example, he said his family runs the trucks from the business slowly down the road, to reduce noise and they built berms around the property to further reduce noise pollution.

"We've done everything," he said. He added a key issue residents who are opposed to this should look into are taxes.

"A lot more taxes for the city of Novi are going to be generated if this is commercial rather than residential," Mike said. He said residents' taxes could stay the same or even go down with a shopping center in the area.

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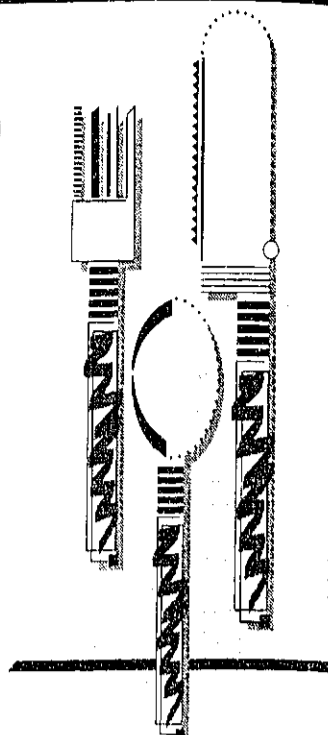
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Look out! Novi track star Kevin Avenius is prepared to do what it takes to make his senior year a winning one

Story by Jason Schmitt • Photo by John Heider

Setting goals and achieving them hasn't taken priority in Novi cross country and track star Kevin Avenius' life, but because of an unparalleled work ethic and determination beyond that of several average teen athletes, those goals seemed to come and go like day and night for the young man.

"I guess to win would be an obvious goal," Avenius said. "But more importantly to be smarter when the race comes along this year. Who knows what would have happened last year if I would have had longer spikes. I just need to be aware of what's going on."

"I've always had really high expectations for him and he's really come through. But I still don't think he knows just how good he is."

John Fundukian, Jr.
former coaching assistant
and Novi track star

energy for the finish," he said.

A natural athlete, Avenius has a great mind set and knows he has one more year to prove he is the best in the state. But he has prepared himself physically and mentally to top Hartman and the rest of the field this year.

"The situation is very similar to me and Nick Gow of Lakeland. I was in awe of the Lakeland runners when I first started running," Avenius said. "My sophomore year I found myself pushing him to his personal-best time in track. But last year I was able to overcome this mind game with him, and now we have a mutual respect for each other."

"Now I have to overcome that Jason Hartman obstacle."

Hartman not only won the cross country state title, but the 1,600 and 3,200 runs at the track and field state

championships this past spring. Avenius posted the third fastest time by a Michigan runner in the 1,600 (4 minutes, 13.5 seconds), but finished just behind Hartman (4:12.8). Both are back for their senior campaigns.

But unlike Gow, who has graduated, and Hartman, Avenius' potential has no boundaries. He started running cross country his sophomore year, and even that was sparingly. He practiced just twice while making soccer his number one sport.

"I had always played soccer and all through middle school I never thought about running cross country," Avenius said. "But some of my friends went out for track in high school and I decided to compete. Coach (Bob) Smith, who is also the cross country coach, came to me and talked me into giving it a try."

He would finish 100th overall and 40th among the individual qualifiers in that sophomore campaign.

"He's sacrificed a lot for this," Smith said about his star runner. "He'll do what it takes to make sure all of the bases are covered. He's also very easy to coach. The best way to approach Kevin is to throw more work at him because he's so willing and eager to attack every challenge."

It was in his sophomore season that he met John Fundukian, Jr., a volunteer assistant for Smith. Fundukian, a former Novi star and runner for Eastern Michigan University at the time, would take Kevin under his wing and train with him and the other distance runners at practice.

"I always liked that he was able to run with us in practices," Avenius said. "In my mind it always made more sense that I could learn more from a coach who is out there running with me. Since then we have become good friends."

Fundukian, who has taken a teaching job in the Walled Lake school district and will coach track and cross country there, said skies the limit for Avenius' potential.

"His poise is his best potential. He's always able to stay relaxed and stay focused," he said. "People just don't see how determined he is because he doesn't always show it. He has ice in his veins."

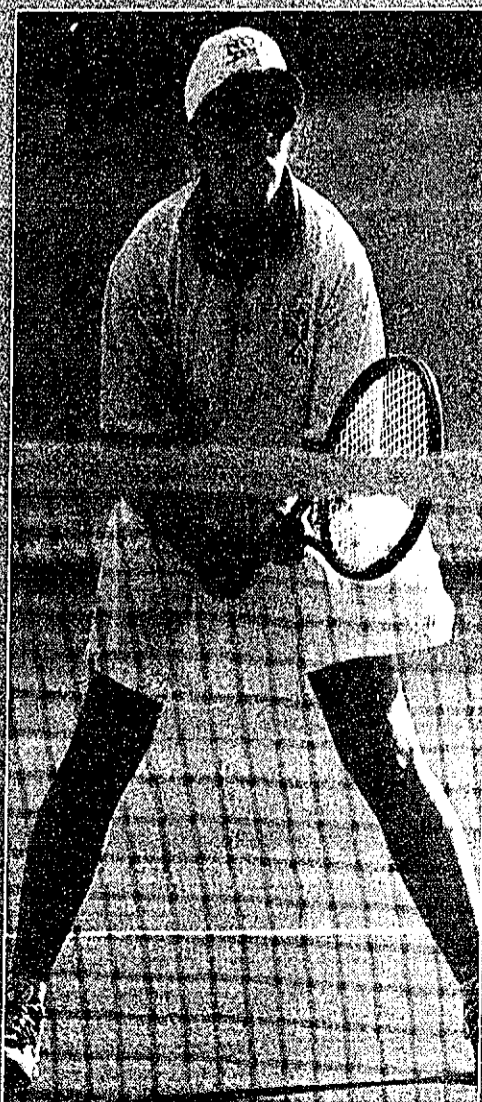


continued on 5 Avenius' coaches past and present have nothing but praise for this determined natural athlete.

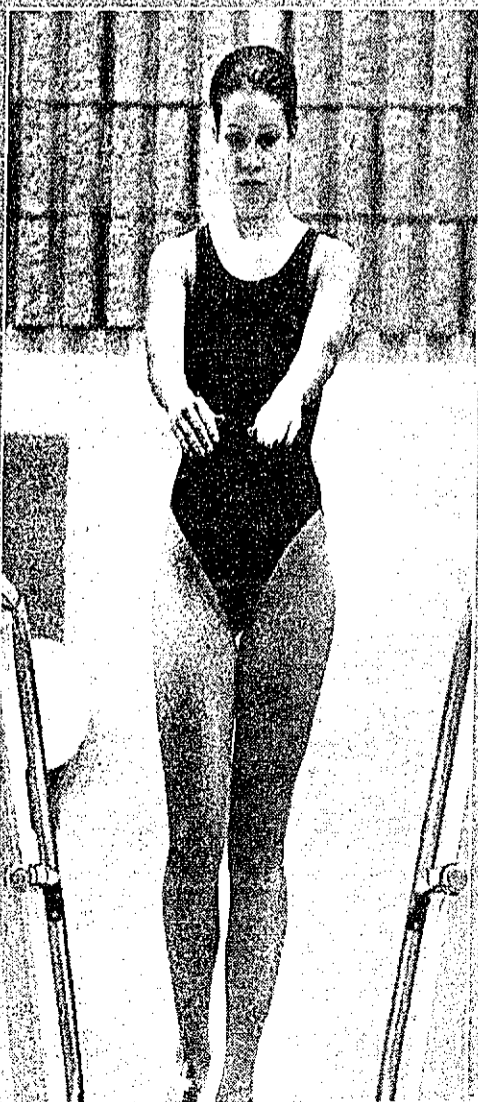
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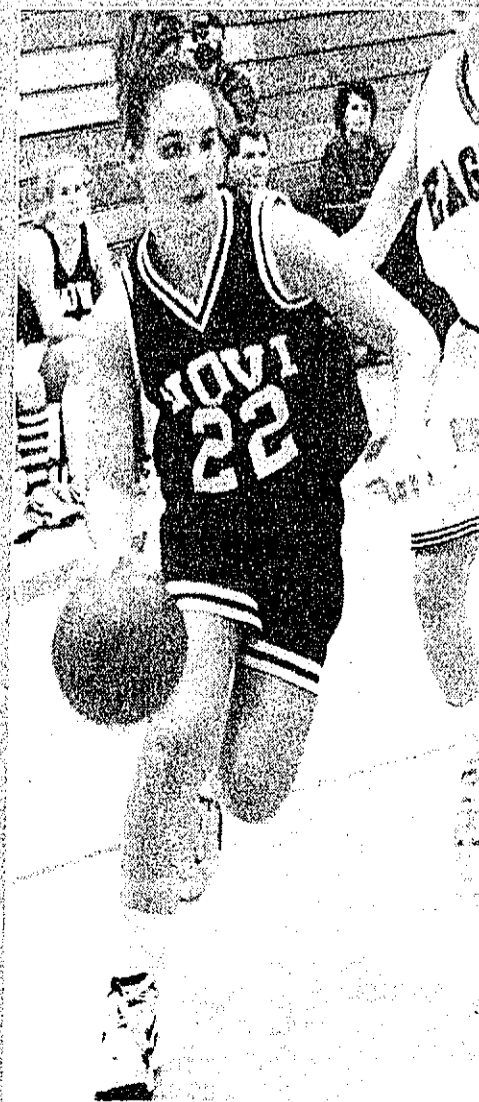
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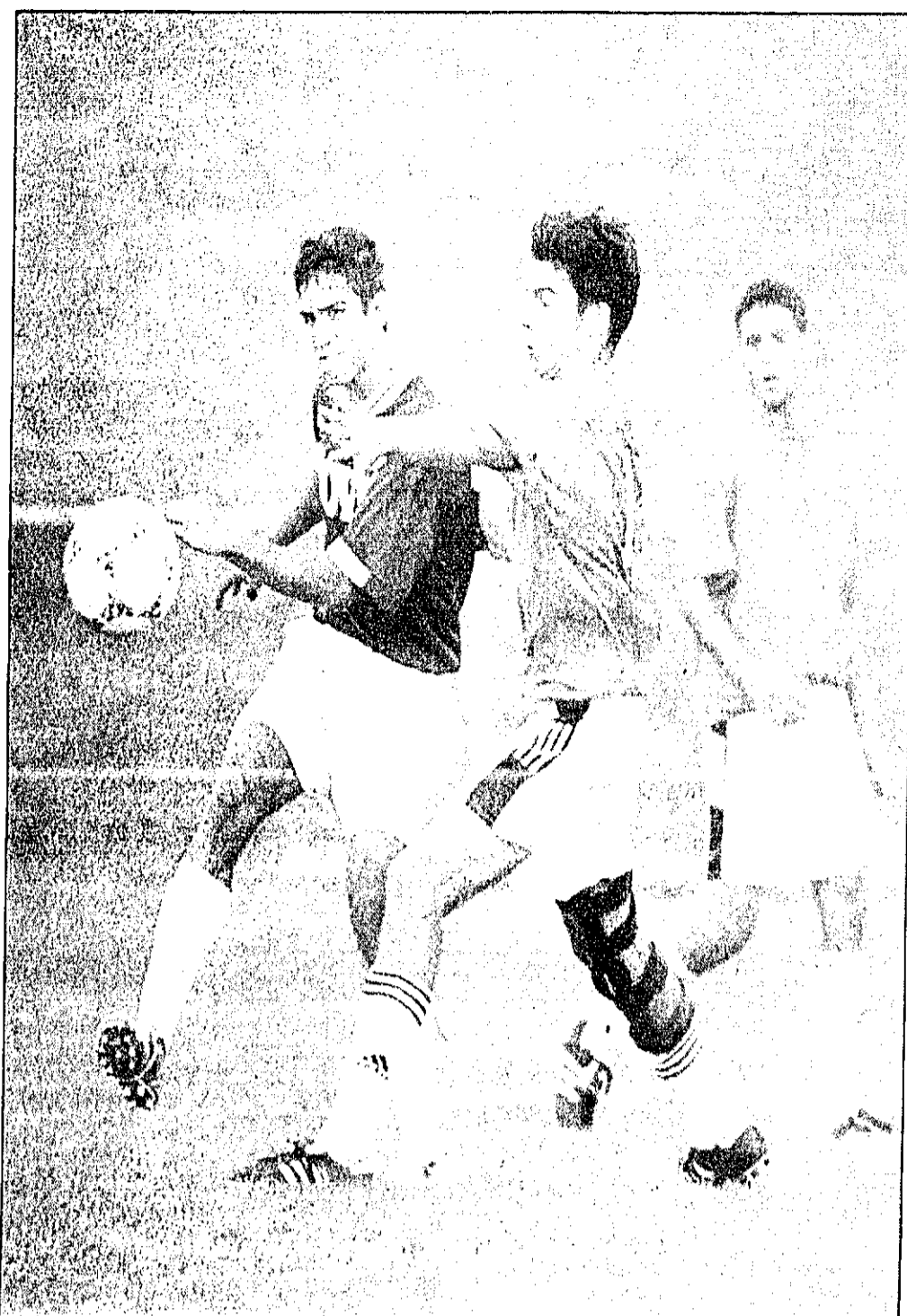
Soccer team could contend in 1998

By JASON SCHMITT
Sports Editor

If all goes as well as planned, the Novi soccer team could be in for one exciting ride this season. The Wildcats caught a break in past-season scheduling and return a strong squad that could play itself into the state playoffs.

Novi has lost to Plymouth Canton in the state playoffs each of the last two years. Both losses have been by one goal. But this season the Wildcats have been placed in a district with Milford, South Lyon and Walled Lake Central and Western.

"We're a better team than last year," coach Brian O'Leary said. "We've got a lot of kids back and I feel we have 11 excellent players that are about the best 11 players in the state."



File Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Alan Lyskawa (left) is a Mr. Soccer candidate and a returning first-team all state selection.

Lady runners look for fifth top 10 finish

By JASON SCHMITT
Sports Editor

Every year it seems like the Novi girls' cross country team loses some big-time performers to graduation only to gain some new young stars and repeat their feats from the year before.

Well, although this may seem like a tall order to fill in 1998, coach Norm Norgren hopes this year's team can become the fifth-straight Wildcat team to finish in the top 10 at the state meet.

"It's too early to tell," Norgren said. "We've got some gigantic holes to fill right now." These holes came because of the departure of Brooke Albright, Kendra Maloney, Christy Drenkert, Rosalee Chang and Lydia Raburn.

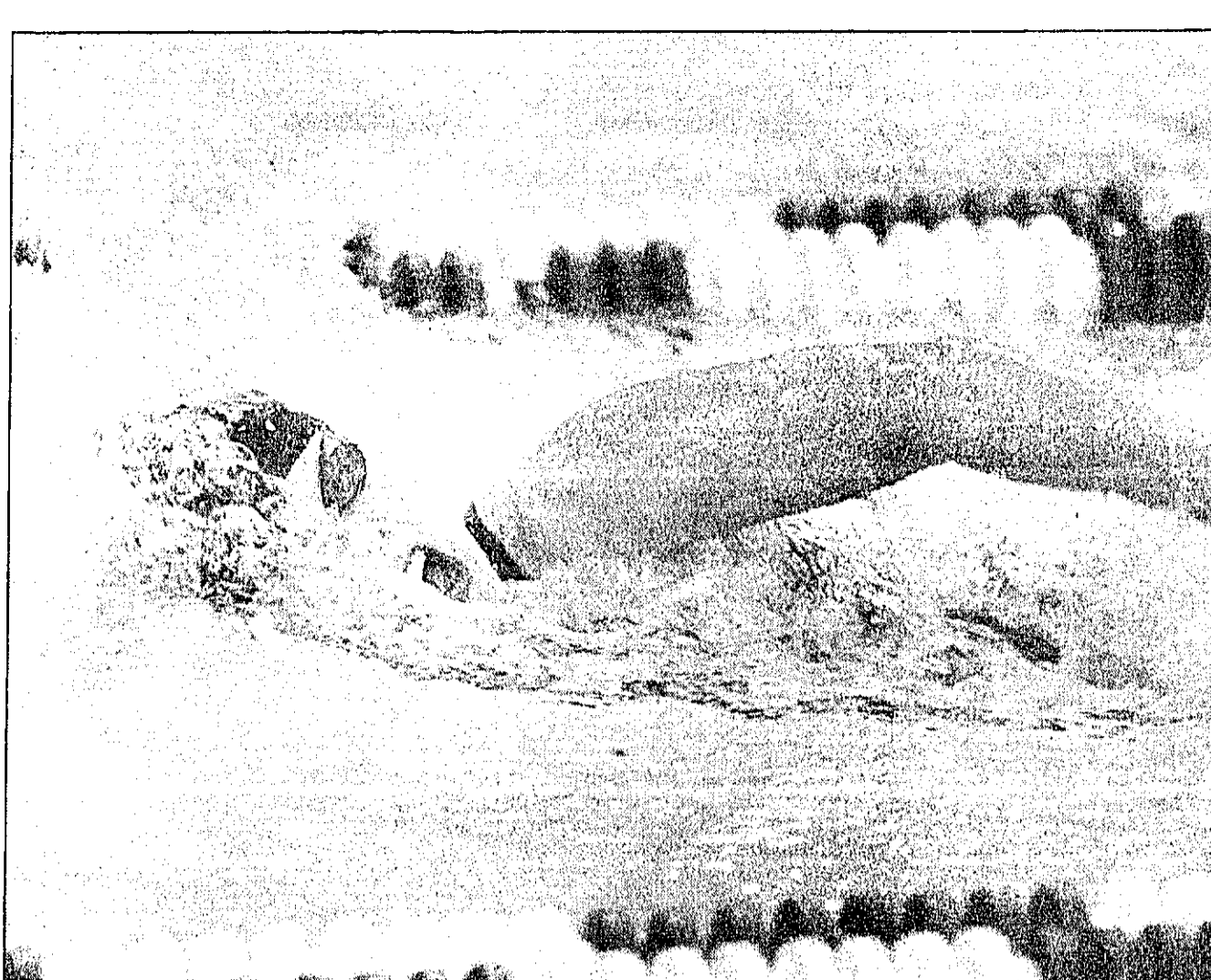
Harriers could be best team since 1991 Novi squad

By JASON SCHMITT
Sports Editor

Everything has potential, but if the 1998 boys' cross country team lives up to the potential bestowed upon it through hard work and dedication in the off season, senior Kevin Avenue will be the only Wildcat to run at the state meet this year.

Last year, Avenue was the lone Novi representative at the Michigan International Speechway in Brooklet, MI. This year coach Bob Smith hopes the rest of the team can join him.

"Hopefully, we have the best team we've ever had," the coach said. "We could possibly be better than the 1991 Novi team that finished ninth in the state. But everything has to fall into place. We can't have any injuries and the kids have to be ready to run."



File Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Swim team hopes to get a second chance

By JASON SCHMITT
Sports Editor

Novi swim coach Teresa Bouton-Tomanek is tired of hearing all the "oh-ohs" talk about how the Wildcats failed to score a point at last year's state swim meet.

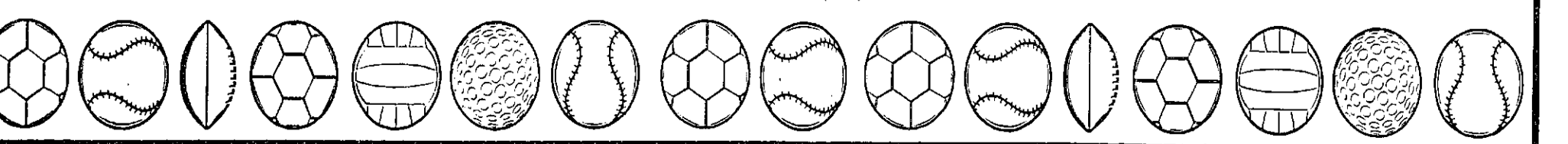
"I'm not giving up first place though. We're capable of beating them all. This year I will not be satisfied with fourth place."

breaking Hartland's school record in the 100 breaststroke while placing 14th in the preliminary round. This year the sophomore will focus on the breaststroke, the IM and be a part of the freestyle relays for the Cats.

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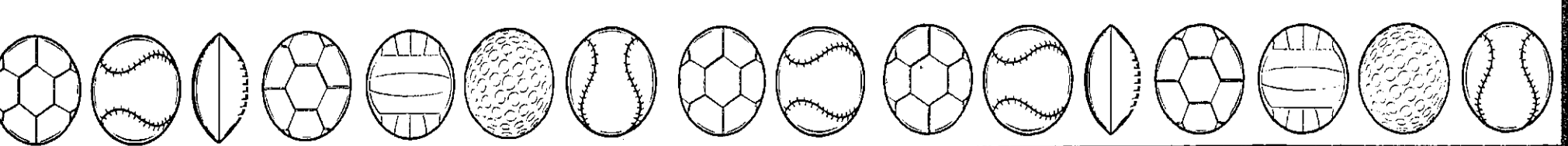
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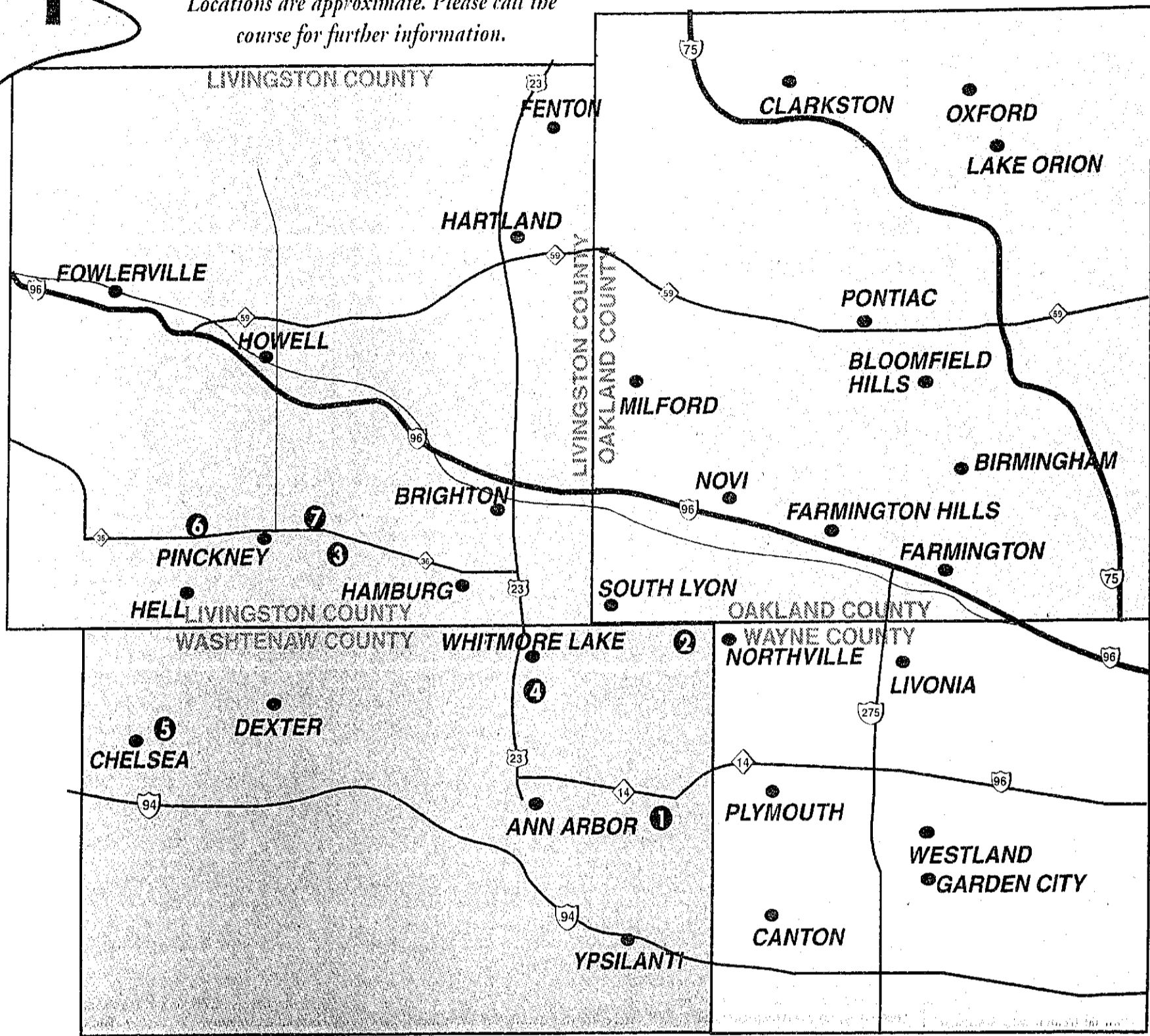
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August 27, 1998