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— Page 20A



Don't try these recipes!

Novi school children cook up their best recipes for a scrumptious holiday dinner — and you won't believe the results.

— Page 6A

Police probe infant death

By Phil Foley
STAFF WRITER

Novi Police detectives are investigating the death of a nine-month-old Novi boy.

According to Lt. David Molloy, police were called to a residence on the 29000 block of Pierre in Hometown Novi (formerly Chateau Novi) at 6:46 a.m. Friday Dec. 19. Police and rescue crews found an unresponsive nine-month-old, who was transported to Novi's Providence Park where he was declared dead at 7:41 a.m. after attempts at resuscitation failed.

Lt. Molloy said the infant's mother, a 27-year-old Novi woman, told investigators she had taken him and a 2-year-old sister to a girlfriend's home the night before. The woman said she fell asleep with her son.

According to Lt. Molloy, the Oakland County Medical Examiners Office ruled the death was the result of "positional asphyxiation."

At press time, the 2-year-old, a 6-year-old sister and the nine-month-old's twin sister were in the care of their grandmother, said Lt. Molloy. He said the Family Independence Agency is in the process of determining whether the children will stay with the grandmother.

Phil Foley is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700 ext. 108 or by e-mail at pfoley@ht.hometownlife.com.

Helping out for the holidays



Courtesy photo

The students at Novi Woods collected hats, gloves, scarves and food for people in need this holiday season. The outerwear will be donated to a children's services group and the canned goods to a local food bank. Here, fourth graders Lauren Pollard and Jessica Jarvis display a small part of the donations.

Drunk drivers targeted

■ Tolerance for alcohol on the decline

By Phil Foley
STAFF WRITER

Police officers from more than a dozen Metro Detroit communities came to Novi Dec. 18 to join Novi Police Chief Doug Shaeffer and Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard in kicking off the local You Drink, You Drive, You Lose program.

"We're not opposed to holiday celebrations," said Bouchard. "We just don't want you to mix alcohol with gasoline." For those who insist on drinking and driving, he noted, "There's always room in my bed and breakfast."

The sheriff said last year 57,782 motorists were arrested statewide, 2,736 in December alone, for alcohol-related driving infractions. According to state Office of Highway Safety Planning statistics, all but 240 of those people were convicted.

Shaeffer said being convicted of drunk driving is a costly experience. He observed that in addition to the \$500 fine, 360 hours of community service and six points on your license, there is also a new \$1,000 fee added to your drivers license for two years.

attorney's fees, towing fees, alcohol treatment program fees and the emotional cost of public humiliation.

He said a first time drunk driving conviction with cost at least \$5,000 when all the costs are added up.

For Ypsilanti Township resident Jenny Lozano, the cost of drunk driving was even higher. "I'm a loser, a big-time loser," said the Wayne County MADD director, in a quavering voice as she recalled how a drunk driver took the life of her 18-year-old son 15 years ago. "If you think you're the one losing, believe me, you're not," said Lozano.

Frank Cardiman from the Oakland Traffic Improvement Association noted that efforts to get drunk drivers off the nation's highways have slashed the national death toll from 25,000 down to 17,000 annually. Still, that's enough to depopulate Novi in three years; kill every man, woman and child in Walled Lake two and a half times over; or leave Wixom a ghost town.

Swinging a pair of handcuffs, Shaeffer promised jewelry for anyone found drinking and driving in Novi over the holidays. His department and others in the state's 20 most populous counties in the state will be sharing in a \$2 million federal grant to pay for overtime to help get drunks off the road.

"We've got to stop the slaughter on our highways," said Shaeffer.

"There can't be anything worse," said Sheriff Bouchard, "than a phone call of a knock at the door from a deputy with a death message."

Last year police officers in Michigan only had to do that four times over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Local police hope to make that number even smaller this year.

Phil Foley is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700 ext. 108 or by e-mail at pfoley@ht.hometownlife.com.



Chief Shaeffer

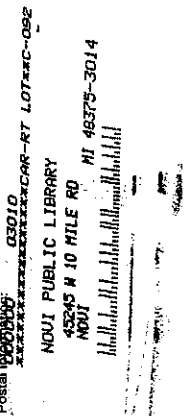
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Local Color brewery, distillery expanding

■ Second locale opening soon in Green Oak Twp.

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

One of the cornerstones of Novi's Main Street development, Local Color, will soon expand its brewery and distillery operations with a new location in Green Oak Township.

Owner Peter Paisley said the establishment will be in a 60,000-square-foot structure on Whitmore Lake Road, about halfway between Lee Road and Grand River Avenue, just east of U.S. 23.

The new brewery and distillery will be built in a structure formerly occupied by the Thermofill plastics plant. A fire at the facility six years ago left it vacant, and the company relocated the plant to Fowlerville.

Unlike his Novi location, Paisley said there will be no restaurant on the new site, only a small tasting room for visitors.

"We plan to stay in full production during the expansion," Paisley said, meaning that the business' beer, liquor and sodas will be available without interruption.

Local Color opened in Novi in January 1998 and has seen steady growth since then.

"Our production's been increasing every year. We have enjoyed double-digit growth each year since we opened, and our liquor sales are taking off. The vodka's literally been going through the roof. We're out of space here," Paisley said.

Voda, a blueberry vodka, was introduced at the beginning of 2003 and is now the business' best-selling product.

"We have orders for the whole



Peter Paisley

West Coast and Hawaii," Paisley said.

Other products include Tom Boy Red Lager, Smooth Talker Pilsner and Rug Rat Root Beer.

Paisley credits Novi residents' loyal patronage as a major reason for his business' success and the need to expand.

"We've been very fortunate in that we've had such strong support from the residents and the City of Novi. Their support has allowed us to grow," he said.

The new single-story, brick-and-metal building is located on 11.5 acres. The property will also allow the business to receive rail deliveries right on site.

"It will include some new jobs in Green Oak Township, although we haven't identified how many staff members we'll need yet," Paisley said.

Work on the new site will begin in

January.

"We hope to be open for business and tours of the new facility by the end of March," Paisley said.

"What's unique is that we're going to take property that's been vacant for six years and make it an asset to the community," Paisley said.

Paisley said the new brewery and distillery will make an interesting place for students to learn about the beverage industry.

"People can come in and see how our beer, vodka and sodas are made and tour the facility. They'll be able to sample the products and talk to the brewers. We would love to have the schools bring kids into the business to see us make the hand-crafted sodas. It's very informative," he said.

Pam Fleming is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 105, or at pfleming@ht.hometownlife.com.

Novi considers change in 52-1 District Court

By Phil Foley
STAFF WRITER

Novi's 52-1 District Court could have a new name and new cash flow this time next year if some city officials and members of the legal community have their way.

The 52-1, which serves 10 communities covering 190 square miles of southwest Oakland County, is currently a second class court, which means the county is the funding agency and the lion's share of the fines generated by the court go to Pontiac.

Judge Dennis Powers told Novi City Council members Dec. 16 that transforming the 52-1 into a third class court would offer local communities more control and

shift the funding stream to the local communities as well.

According to the 52-1's chief judge, Brian MacKenzie, about half of Oakland County's district courts are second class and half are third.

Novi City Manager Rick Helwig told council members that he's been involved in two other municipal courts and that "it can be a tremendous benefit." However, he cautioned, he'd like to go over the court's finances before saying yes.

Following the city council meeting, Hugh Crawford, Novi's Oakland County commissioner, said, "it's probably a win-win for everybody." He said there were some preliminary discussions on the subject several years ago, but

"...it can be a tremendous benefit, [however]...we really need to see the books."

Richard Helwig
Novi City manager

they never went anywhere.

That might be because it's unclear if the court is a money maker or a money loser.

Powers told Novi City Council members that after years of opposing the shift from second to third class status, many Oakland County commissioners, especially those in Southeast Oakland

County, are now supporting it because they think the county is subsidizing the court.

However, Powers insisted the court, which handles more than 60,000 cases annually, is in the black. Powers said shifting control of the court from the county

continued on page 4

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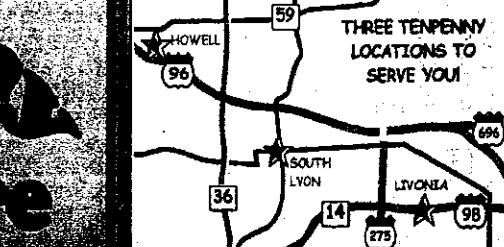
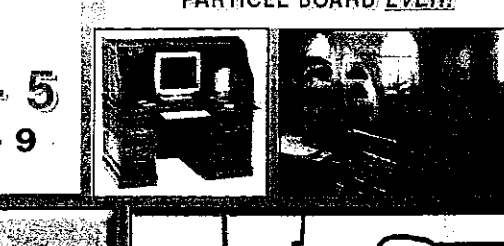
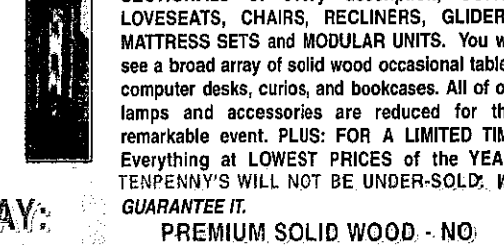
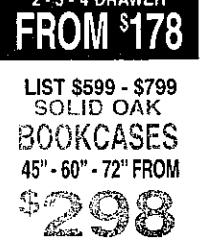
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POLICE REPORT

Three-car wreck

A 39-year-old Farmington Hills man was taken to Royal Oak's William Beaumont Hospital with incapacitating injuries at 7:34 a.m. Dec. 18 after his 1991 Chevrolet glanced off the back of a 1996 Jeep stopped on southbound Haggerty Road near 10 Mile and slammed into a northbound 1992 Chevrolet. The Jeep driver, a 26-year-old Taylor man, and the driver of the northbound Chevrolet, a 61-year-old Novi man, were uninjured. Officer Larry Lerner cited the Farmington Hills with hazardous driving.

Red means stop

A 22-year-old Novi man told officers Eric Lindblade and Adrienne Hinckle that he'd only had two beers at TGIFridays before they stopped his 2001 Saturn L300 for running a blinking red light on southbound Meadowbrook at Eight Mile Road at 1:16 a.m. Dec. 18. However, he failed field sobriety tests and registered a blood alcohol content of .12. He was taken into custody, but later released pending a warrant.

Prize goes to number two

Officer Brian Woloski was head north on Meadowbrook Road at 1:48 a.m. Dec. 18 when he clocked a car traveling 47 mph in a 30 mph zone. However, when he turned, he spotted a 2002 Saab driving erratically. The driver of the Saab, a 32-year-old Royal Oak woman, told

him she'd had two drinks before dinner at O'Toole's, a glass of wine with dinner and two drinks after. It was enough for her to register a blood alcohol content of .145 and for Officer Woloski to charge her with operating under the influence of liquor. She was later released after posting a \$100 bond.

Too much alcohol

After Officer Jonathan Zabick stopped a 1996 Infiniti I-30 for driving 59 mph in a 40 mph zone on Novi Road near 10 Mile Road at 1:52 a.m. Dec. 18, the driver, a 29-year-old Walled Lake man, said the brown glass on the floor contained "alcohol." Apparently he did too, since he failed field sobriety tests and registered a blood alcohol content of .19. Officer Zabick charged him with operating under the influence of liquor and he was later released after posting a \$100 bond.

Pickup stolen

A 22-year-old Washington man told Officer Craig Chismar that someone stole his 2002 Dodge Dakota pickup sometime before 7:07 a.m. Dec. 18 while he was visiting his girlfriend at her Cordoba Street residence.

Thief gets VCR

A 69-year-old Novi woman told Officer Steve Palterst that someone entered her Fireside Street residence sometime before 7:55 p.m. Dec. 18, drank a can of Pepsi and made off with an \$800 VCR. There is a suspect.

Warrant arrest

Officer Steve Patterson took cus-

tody of a 53-year-old Highland Park man from Livonia Police at 9:36 p.m. Dec. 18. The man was being sought on a probation violation warrant from the 52-1 District Court.

Denied drinking

A 32-year-old Waterford woman denied drinking after Officer Andrew Hudechek stopped her 2002 Corvette on Novi Road near 10 Mile Road at 1:04 a.m. Dec. 17. However, the woman registered a blood alcohol content of .13, so he charged her with operating under the influence of liquor.

Lead foot

Officer Leonard Lowen charged a 59-year-old Novi man with operating under the influence of liquor after stopping the man's 1999 Ford Mustang traveling 50 mph in a 35 mph zone on Beek Road near 10 Mile Road. The man said he had consumed three drinks in Plymouth earlier and he registered a blood alcohol content of .155. He was later released after posting \$65.

Car stolen

A 28-year-old Novi man told Officer Paul VanPelt that he started his 2002 Oldsmobile Alero at 5:55 a.m. Dec. 15 to warm it and when he came back out of his Shorecrest Street apartment at 6:12 a.m., the unlocked car was gone.

Cash, car gone

A 38-year-old Highland man told Officer James Brandon that someone took \$2,006 in cash from his office at Suburban Infiniti and

drove off in a 2002 Mazda Millennia.

Identity theft

A 25-year-old Southfield man told Officer Timothy Farrell Dec. 15 that someone had apparently opened accounts with Verizon and Fingstaur in 1998 while he was living in Novi. An undetermined amount of merchandise was shipped to Marien, Ill., before the accounts were closed and turned over to collections.

Identity theft II

A 39-year-old Novi woman told Officer Scott Woodley Dec. 15 that after she lost a credit card in Detroit Dec. 8, someone tried to use it three times in one day to have items shipped to a Detroit address.

MIP arrest

After he stopped a 1992 Oldsmobile for making an improper turn from Novi Road to Grand River Avenue at 1:45 a.m. Dec. 16, Officer Andrew Hudechek charged the driver, a 20-year-old Farmington man, with minor in possession. The man registered a blood alcohol content of .096. He was later released after posting a \$100 bond.

Two injured

Two White Lake Township women were taken to Huron Valley Sinai Hospital Dec. 11 following a three-car wreck on Beek Road just south of Pontiac Trail at 2:35 p.m. According to a report filed by Officer Diane MacGregor, a 2000 Chevrolet S-10 driven by a 17-year-old White Lake woman,

crossed the centerline and sideswiped a 1999 Ford F-150 before hitting a 1999 Chevrolet Metro head-on. The driver of the Ford, a 42-year-old Highland woman, treated her own non-incapacitating injuries. The 40-year-old White Lake woman in the Metro and the driver of the S-10 were taken to the hospital with incapacitating injuries.

Home burglary

A 53-year-old Novi woman told Officer Brian Tillman that her Dunbar Drive home was burglarized sometime before 4:48 p.m. Dec. 16. She said a "Lord of the Rings" DVD and a Nikon Coolpix 775 camera were taken. The burglar apparently entered through a kitchen window, leaving muddy footprints.

Home burglary II

A 46-year-old Novi woman told Officer Scott Bowers that her Whitehall Street home was burglarized sometime before 8:11 p.m. Dec. 16. She said a PlayStation2 was taken from her basement and \$20 from her son's room.

Rear-end

A Commerce Township couple escaped apparent injury Dec. 13 when a 1997 Ford Ranger slammed into the back of a trailer the were towing with their 2003 Dodge pickup at 10:26 p.m. on northbound Beek Road at Pontiac Trail. The driver of the Ford, however, was taken to Novi Providence Park with incapacitating injuries. The Dodge was stopped at a red light at the time of the accident.



Court appearance
Marian Bryant, 56, of West Bloomfield stood mute before Judge Dennis Powers during her arraignment on malicious destruction of personal property charges in the 52-1 District Court Dec. 10. Bryant, who is accused of doing more than \$100,000 damage to more than 175 vehicles over Thanksgiving, is also facing charges in Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield. If convicted in the Novi case, she could face up to five years in prison. Bryant is also facing unrelated assault charges in West Bloomfield and Westland.

Photo by Phil Foley

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Wreck snarls mall area traffic Novi considers change in court

By Phil Foley STAFF WRITER

Holiday shoppers found traffic snarled for more than an hour last Thursday in the wake of a four-car wreck on Novi Road at I-96, but no one was seriously injured.

According to Novi Police Sgt. Matthew Conquest, a 2003 Dodge driven by a 26-year-old Livonia woman was stopped for a traffic light at 4:35 p.m. when she was rear-ended by a 1999 Dodge driven by a 42-year-old Milford man. The impact drove the Livonia woman into the back of 2001 Dodge driven by a 48-year-old man from California.

While the three cars were sitting in the intersection a fourth car, a 2001 Dodge driven by a 29-year-old Wixom man, slammed into them.

The Livonia woman and her 11-month-old daughter were sent to Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills for observation. According to reports, the woman's 26-month-old daughter appeared uninjured.

A passenger in the Wixom man's car, a 23-year-old Wixom woman, was taken to Royal Oak's William Beaumont Hospital for observation.

The Wixom and Milford men, said Conquest, were cited with failure to stop in a clear assured distance.

Conquest noted the first Novi Police unit arrival on the scene within five minutes of the accident. He added that by the time fire trucks, ambulances and wreckers mixed with the holiday traffic, "it was quite a mess out there."

Phil Foley is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700 ext. 108 or at pfoley@ht.homecomm.net.

continued from front page

to the local community would make that more apparent.

MacKenzie said that the 48th District Court, a third class court that serves a portion of Oakland County roughly the same population as the 52-1, spends \$50,000 a year on information technology. Oakland County charges the 52-1 \$450,000. He added desktop computers from the county cost his court \$3,800 a unit.

"Just see what you can get at CompUSA these days for \$3,800," MacKenzie said.

The county also owns the court's building on Grand River Avenue and leases it to the court. "They're gouging us on rent," offered city council member David Landry.

MacKenzie noted that as a second class court, after the state takes its portion of fines, 60 percent of the balance goes to the court for "costs" and the remainder is split between the county and the local community, with the local community getting 1/3.

He said that all of the communities in the district that agree to become part of the new court's funding authority would share in the two-thirds that now goes to Pontiac.

While acknowledging that communities in the funding authority could be held responsible for funding the court, if there was a shortfall, MacKenzie said the court has shown a steady increase in income in recent years.

MacKenzie said the shift to a third class court is the "next logical step" following a series of townhall meetings in 1998. Those meetings, he said, have led the court to take a series of steps to make it more community-oriented.

City council voted unanimously to have Novi City Attorney Gerald Fisher prepare a report for his Jan. 26 meeting, detailing what steps would be needed to transform the court

Flint man dies in rollover accident

By Phil Foley STAFF WRITER

A Flint man on his way to work at General Motors Corp. died at 5:30 a.m. Dec. 14 when his truck rolled on I-96 just east of Wixom Road.

According to Michigan State Police Trooper Timothy Lane, Steven Dunman, 46, was crushed when his 1995 Isuzu truck rolled, partially ejecting him from the truck.

Lane said Dunman was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident. Lane said Dunman's widow told him he had a doctor's note allowing him not to wear a seatbelt while driving.

Lane said witnesses told him Dunman's truck was in the center lane of eastbound I-96 when he lost control. He said it appears Dunman was driving too fast for conditions on the snow-covered expressway.

According to Lane, at the time of the accident, road crews had only cleared snow from the expressway's center lane. He said it was difficult to estimate Dunman's speed at the time of the accident, but the truck ended up 50 to 75 feet off the road between Wixom Road and the 12 Mile Road entrance to I-96.

He said that while toxicology reports have not been completed, it does not appear alcohol was involved.

Phil Foley is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700 ext. 108 or by e-mail at pfoley@ht.homecomm.net.

BUSINESS

Pam Fleming, business reporter (248) 349-1700, ext. 105 pfleming@ht.homecomm.net

Citizens Bank to build two new branches in Novi

Other offices planned for South Lyon and Wixom

By Pam Fleming STAFF WRITER

Citizens Banking Corporation recently announced a major expansion in Oakland County, with two branches planned in Novi and one in Wixom.

The second-largest Michigan-based bank holding company, Citizens will invest a capital investment of \$35 million to \$40 million and will open 14 new branches and two hub offices over the next 24 months.

The Novi branches will be located at Ten Mile and Beck roads and at Twelve Mile Road and M-5 highway, according to Tom Shafer, regional president.

The Wixom branch will be constructed at Grand River Avenue and Wixom Road, Shafer said. The bank also plans to build one of its two hub offices at the Twelve Mile and M-5 location in Novi.

Other new locations in the area will be at Lyon's Crossing in South Lyon at I-96 and Milford Road and at Haggerty Road and Pontiac Trail in Commerce Township.

Shafer said the company decided to build two branches in Novi after reviewing the demographics.

"The housing starts, the current population base, the business growth, and the number of new residents moving to the community are all significant in Novi. The locations we have chosen are both visible and convenient. All of the new facilities will be a newly designed branch that we believe will make it easier for our clients to do business with us," Shafer said.

The new design of the interior of the bank is contemporary, featuring stylish furniture and coffee counters.

"We've tested the design with a lot of different consumer groups. We think the new branches will be inviting and friendly places for our clients to do business," Shafer said.

Shafer said about 50 jobs will be created between the three new facilities in Novi and Wixom.

"We expect to break ground in

Oakland County, and the firm plans to open the additional 14 branches in the county in the next year.

In addition to the retail branches, we'll be opening an office that will include commercial banking, wealth management, business banking, mortgage and retail administration at M-5 and Twelve Mile Road in Novi," Shafer said. "The building will be an addition to the branch there. The two building will be contiguous," he said.

The other hub office will be located at 900 Tower Drive in Troy and open in early 2004.

Shafer said it was important that Citizens Bank be able to offer all of its services at the Twelve Mile and M-5 site because of the business growth in the area and the configuration of the highway system.

He noted that population trends have shown that people in the Metro Detroit area are moving near highways. "We're just mirroring what the people are doing in the metropolitan area," Shafer said.

Shafer said about 50 jobs will be created between the three new facilities in Novi and Wixom.

"We expect to break ground in



Citizens Bank will build two new branches in Novi and one in Wixom next year using this new design by Southfield-based K4 Architecture. The company recently announced a major expansion in Oakland County in which it will open 14 new branches and two hub offices in the next two years.

the early spring and be in the office building next to the Twelve Mile branch by March or April of 2004," he said.

Shafer said the company is looking forward to doing business in Novi. "We're very excited about coming to Novi. Your community is vibrant," he said.

Citizens Bank purchased its first bank in Oakland County in 1993.

"We've grown outside the area during that time frame, but realizing that a year ago the importance of expanding in this area and started making plans then," Shafer said.

Pam Fleming is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 105, or by e-mail at pfleming@ht.homecomm.net

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Employers win tax break on health care

Tax on health care Legislation sponsored by Sen. Nancy Cassis (R-Novi) to reduce Michigan's tax penalty on employer-funded health care benefits was over-whelmingly approved by the Michigan Legislature late last week.

"Today we have achieved a great bipartisan, bicameral victory for workers, businesses and health care with the passage of the Cassis and Competitive Wages Package," Cassis said.

The package included Senate Bills 672 and 673.

"These bills will reduce the Single Business Tax placed on employer-funded health care benefits by 5 percent in 2004, 20 percent in 2005, 40 percent in 2006 and 50 percent in 2007.

"This achievement is a result of a year-long process that included Senate hearings in Lansing, Novi, Bay City and Grand Rapids, and the support of more than 50 businesses, associations, organizations and individuals. Across the state, residents and business owners have told me how much they need this relief," Cassis said.

"This accomplishment represents a new era of economic development in the State of Michigan," Cassis said.

"The result will make Michigan more competitive, more able to retain and create jobs, and more effective in protecting private health care for Michigan employees and their families," she added.

Rep. Craig DeRoche (R-Novi) introduced a substitute bill that helped to facilitate a phase-in of the 50 percent cut in the Single Business Tax on health care benefits offered to employees.

The bill was part of the budget compromise reached between the House, Senate and Gov. Jennifer Granholm to balance the state's budget.

"Part of being responsible for the fiscal integrity of the state means you have to give and take in order to be effective and get the job done," DeRoche said.

"We in the House held out...for the governor to give a little more to employers that provide health care to their employees. This deal gave us a large portion of what we asked for and makes health care more affordable for manufacturing workers and other families involved with a small business. I consider this a huge victory for all Michigan employees who need health care options," he said.

The bills will now be presented to Gov. Jennifer Granholm for her signature.

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CLASS NOTES

Ramez Khuri, school reporter (248) 349-1700, ext. 110 rkhuri@ht.homecomm.net

House of Representatives approves Granholm's executive order

Schools face a reduction of approximately \$96 from per pupil grant

By Ramez Khuri
Staff Writer

The book associated with the Novi Community School District faces that state cuts were inevitable, but they can all be made a part of what is known as the "Novi deal," he said. "We're caught between rapids right now and everything is smooth, but the 2004-05 school year will bring with it some new challenges to face."

received \$8,110 per student for its per pupil foundation grant. Now the state reduction total for Novi is \$600,000, down from the \$1.2 million figure when talks of \$196 per pupil was to be cut.

The cuts have already begun, however. Because the House of Representatives didn't reach a decision before checks were supposed to be mailed out to school districts in Michigan, \$200,000 was already taken out of Novi's check, which makes the rest of the state reduction for Novi is \$400,000, to be spread out over time payments with a reduction of approximately \$96 per pupil. The balance to make up the reductions, roughly \$370,000, will come from the district's fund equity, which is equivalent to a savings account. The district currently has \$8 million in cash in its fund equity.

Jan Naveck, assistant superintendent of business and finance for Novi Schools, explained that the new deal is better for Novi Schools than the old one for now, but the future is still uncertain.

"This gets us through the 2003-04 school year and we'll hold our breath for the 2004-05 year," Kusier said. He likened the situation to white water rafting. "Now we're on a nice little current, but we can hear the waterfall ahead!" he said. "We're caught between rapids right now and everything is smooth, but the 2004-05 school year will bring with it some new challenges to face."

Regardless of the reduction in cuts, the Novi Board of Education has implemented a reduction of \$229,700 from its budget through eight cuts of its own, which are still in effect. They are:

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Author, illustrator visit Village Oaks, Orchard Hills

Students read "Maybury Had a Little Lamb"

By Ramez Khuri
Staff Writer

Students at Village Oaks and Orchard Hills Elementary Schools were recently graced by the presence of Cathy Black and Sarah Marino, as they showed off the book they created together - "Maybury Had A Little Lamb."

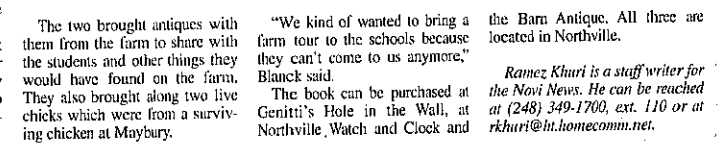
Illustrations captured images of what Maybury used to be, and her experience and passion for the farm came through. "We know what went on there and we know what the farm looked like," Black said. "It was a wonderful place, but also a very sad place because so many animals had to go, but that's reality."

Maybury was one of the few living, working farms left. Everything was done by hand there and that, according to Black, is where true artwork in farming comes in. After it caught on fire and most of the animals perished, one main thought that Black had was that it was going to cost a lot of money to re-build it, if in fact that was the plan. "That's when she came up with the idea to write a book."

"Driving back up north I was thinking, this is a piece of my childhood that I really cared about," Black said. "I thought, what can we do to get some money back for the re-building? Three days later I wrote this book, sent it to Sarah and she started illustrating it and we worked all through the spring."

It was a long process for them both, especially because the two resided so far apart. They called each other back and forth on the phone, they used fax machines and e-mails, and when it was all finished, they had a final product that they were proud of.

"I knew we both cared deeply for the farm," Black said. "Sarah was there the night it was burning and I was there the morning after when it was still smoldering. I trusted her judgment, she trusted mine and that's why this project worked out well."



Illustrator Sarah Marino, left, and author Cathy Black brought their book "Maybury Had A Little Lamb" to Village Oaks Elementary Monday morning and shared it with students including second graders Urara Cho and Blair Myers, center.

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Novi High students collect 666 items for Toys for Tots

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

Who would have thought that seven years after Jennifer Davies' idea of giving to Toys for Tots would still be going strong at Novi High School?

Davies, who graduated from Novi High in 2001, came up with the idea all by herself when she was in the eighth grade at Novi Middle School. Her class decided to do community service projects for the month of December, and she suggested giving to Toys for Tots.

"Needless to say, her teachers and classmates were thrilled at the idea. When all the other classes at the school found out about it, they all wanted to participate as well.

The tradition lives on to this day. When Davies moved on to Novi High, however, giving to Toys for Tots was something she wanted to continue to do. So, she joined forces with her mother, Diane Davies, who is Novi High's media center para-professional.

"When Jennifer suggested Toys for Tots, the teachers at the middle school were thrilled because this is children giving to children," Diane said. "They thought it would really touch the kids' hearts and get them involved with it."

The dynamic duo received permission to start up a Toys for Tots donation at the high school in 1997, and in the first year they collected 103

toys. That number has risen every year since then, going to 515 to 520 to 635 and hitting an all-time high of 666 in 2003. This year the donation collected 666 toys.

"We collected so many in 2001 because that was my 911," Diane said. "I think people felt more generous. Plus there was some competition between the classes, and a lot of toys got donated that way."

Over the years many people have helped out with the donation. The student council took it over in 2000. One year it was even featured in the school's yearbook. The students who had an idea in the eighth grade, that wasn't very realistic," Diane said.

"In the beginning I thought just about everybody would be motivated to bring something in, so the first couple years I envisioned like 1,000 toys. But that wasn't very realistic," Diane said.

The amount of toys donated in all seven years has reached 3,680 — a mighty accomplishment for a student who had an idea in the eighth grade.

Ramez Khuri is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 110 or by e-mail at rkhuri@novihome.com.net.



Courtesy photo

Senior citizen fun day

The Novi Meadows fifth grade Junior Girl Scout Troop #2385 visited the residents at the Village at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ypsilanti. The scouts entertained the residents with some skits that they wrote and performed a dance that they choreographed. They then sang several Christmas carols with the help of the residents.

Scouts pictured from left to right are Chloe Trestler, Kayla Cummins, Samantha Macy, Ashley Krynak, Paige Trestler, Laura Subject, Julie Lupo and Allison Jones.



Courtesy photos

Candlelight Choral fest

Deerfield Kindergartners participated in the seventh annual Candlelight Choral fest hosted by the Novi Town Center on Dec. 8. The event took place in the Goodrich Quality Theater and Deerfield was among five schools that performed holiday music.

Novi Woods Holiday Shop

The Novi Woods PTO held its annual holiday shop from Dec. 2-3. Students were invited to shop for holiday gifts which ranged in price from a quarter to \$10. Pictured, third graders Lauren Brown and Lauren Zampas search for the perfect gift for their loved ones.



Courtesy photo

Shopping at Orchard Hills

Orchard Hills second grader Adam Hershburn and his sister Gina (kindergarten) shop with their mom and brother at the Orchard Hills Happy Holiday Shoppe. Here they are getting their presents wrapped and all set for the holidays. This annual event allows students and their siblings to buy gifts for their families at reasonable prices.

SCHOOL BRIEFS

Novi Meadows sponsoring soldiers

Novi Meadows students are sponsoring a company of soldiers from the Michigan Army National Guard. These soldiers, who will serve in the Afghanistan Force and 436th AHC, are the next generation of soldiers from the Novi area. The company is being sponsored by the Novi Meadows PTO. The soldiers will receive care packages and letters of encouragement from the students and staff. The company will be deployed in January and will serve for six months.

WL meeting rescheduled

The January 8, 2004 Regular Meeting of the Walled Lake Consolidated School District Board of Education has been rescheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board of Education Room, Educational Services Center, 850 Ladd Road, ELL, D.

Compiled by Ramez Khuri

ON CAMPUS

Novi resident Ann Marie Nelson was a member of the Northwestern University Team Ford Commercial that received the Ford Creative Award. This award is part of the annual International Advertising Show produced by Northwestern students from all curriculums and is held during the fall. Ann Marie is the daughter of Arthur and Marianne Nelson of Novi.

Novi resident Jeff Dodds has won a Medallion Scholarship at Western Michigan University. Recipients are selected in an annual competition held on campus in February that includes essay writing and group problem solving for the students. He is the son of Robert and Yvonne Dodds of Novi.

Novi resident James Clark has been named to the Dean's List at Northwestern University for the fall 2003 semester. He is the son of Robert and Yvonne Dodds of Novi.

Novi resident Ronald Redfern has been included in the 2003 edition of "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges."

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ENGAGEMENT



Ronald and Joanne Opat of Novi announce the engagement of their daughter, Becky Anne Opat, to Jeffrey Michael Zellen, son of Lawrence and Shirley Zellen of Romeo.

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OBITUARY

LaVerne H. Reinke
LaVerne Reinke died December 17, 2003. He was 60. Mr. Reinke graduated from the Electronics Institute of Technology in 1965, belonged to the National Guard, and was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Dearborn. St. John's Lutheran Church, Farmington Hills and Hope Lutheran Church, Farmington Hills.

SENIOR CALENDAR

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SENIOR CENTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE LUNCH SERVICE TRANSPORTATION CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS

Friday 12/26
9 a.m. Stretch & Strength
Body Recall Cancelled
10 a.m. Crafts with Lorena
11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Sundry Shop Open
lunch service closed
12:30 p.m. Clogging*
12:30 p.m. Dupl. Bridge*

Monday 12/29
9 a.m. Stretch & Strength
10 a.m. Body Recall
11 a.m. Goodye Lady
11:30 am.-2 p.m. Sundry Shop Open
noon Lunch
12:30 p.m. Pinochle*

Rehearsal-Christmas Show
12:30 p.m. Healing Touch
1 p.m.-3 p.m. Clogging*

Tuesday 12/30
9 a.m.-12 p.m. Massage Therapy
9 a.m. Panera bread
9 a.m.-11 a.m. Computer Class-Windows
9:30 a.m. Line Dance*
No Asian Pacific notes
Lunch
12:30 p.m. Bingo

Wednesday 12/31
SENIOR CENTER LUNCH SERVICE TRANSPORTATION CLOSED FOR NEW YEARS EVE MANAGEMENT OFFICE OPEN

*Activities will be held at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road. Phone (248) 347-9414.

RESPECT THE EARTH RECYCLE!

Blue Care of Michigan, Inc., an affiliate of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, announces open enrollment for its HMO group plan product.

PERSONAL PLUS
Open enrollment dates are January 1 - 31, 2004 for a March 1, 2004 effective date.

Please contact Blue Care Network's Customer Service department for additional enrollment information at 1-800-662-6667 and TTY for the hearing impaired: 1-800-257-9980.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on 1/22/04 at 3:30 p.m. the following will be sold by competitive bidding at Estate Self Storage 21650 Novi Rd., Novi, MI. (Space No. 131) Cary Scholl 2 small appliances, TV, 6 household furnishings, 25 misc. boxes/bags, 19 other items. (Space No. 434) Susan McParland 10 household furnishings, 6 misc. boxes/bags, 4 clothing. (Space No. 328) Dytak Services, Inc. 10 other misc. items. (Space No. 417) Dytak Services, Inc. 75 misc. boxes/bags, 1 toy, 75 other misc. items. (Space No. 484) Glynis F. Butler Jr. 3 household furnishings, 30 misc. boxes/bags, 5 clothing.

CONNECT INSTANTLY HERE.

INSTANT NATIONWIDE CONNECT PLAN
500 anytime cellular minutes
Unlimited Push To Talk™ walkie-talkie
Unlimited nights and weekends
\$49.99 Other monthly charges apply. See below.**

DATA APPLICATIONS
Available data services include: Two-Way Messaging, AOL® Instant Messenger™ and Wireless Web Access.

NEXTEL | @Wireless

Stop In and ask how you can keep your same phone number and switch wireless carrier. Coming Soon!

**NexTel also imposes a Federal Program Cost Recovery (FCR) fee of \$1.55 or \$2.83. The FCR is not a tax or government regulated charge. The fee is charged for one or more of the following: 911, number porting and wireless number portability.

Offers expire December 31, 2003. NexTel reserves the right to extend these offers without notice. In-store purchases require two forms of valid identification. Requires new activation and credit approval. \$200 early termination fee applies, after 15-day trial period (wireless service only). Additional charges may apply and may vary by market, including state and federal taxes, a Universal Service Assessment of either 1.20% or 2.5%, a 1RS charge of approx. .07%, and a state-required 911 fee. Other Terms: NexTel reserves the right to modify or terminate these offers at any time. Offers may not be available in all markets. Other conditions may apply. Read service agreement for details. NexTel's Nationwide Connect Plan: Requires one-year service agreement. Direct Connect minutes and Nationwide Direct Connect access are unlimited and do not include Group Connect calls, which are \$0.15/min and are calculated by multiplying the minutes of use, number of participants, and the applicable rate. Group Connect can only work with members of the same network while in their home market. Nationwide service is not available for Group Connect calls. Cellular coverage is \$0.40/min. Cellular calls made to the next full price Two-Way Messaging is \$0.15/minute. NexTel's Nationwide Network services 298 of the top 300 manufacturers. ©2003 NexTel Communications. NEXTEL, NEXTEL, NEXTEL, NEXTEL, ONLINE, CALL, PUSH TO TALK, TTY, DIRECT CONNECT, GROUP CONNECT, NATIONWIDE DIRECT CONNECT and the Drive Safety logo are service marks, trademarks, and/or registered trademarks of NexTel Communications, Inc. MOTOROLA and the Stylized M Logo are registered in the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office. All other product or service names are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

BIRMINGHAM: 2519 W. Maple Rd. (SW corner of Cranbrook & Maple) 248.723.8600
 BLOOMFIELD HILLS: 4036 Telegraph Rd. (Next to Starbucks) 248.503.3695
 BRIGHTON: 315 E. Grand River (East of Main St.) 810.227.7440
 CANTON: 4401 Ford Rd. (S.W. corner of Orchard & Maple) 910.822.7440
 FENTON: 18010 Silver Parkway (in Silver Lake Village) 317.894.7441
 HARTLAND: 1012 Highland Rd. (M-59 & Old US-23) 810.832.9300
 HOWELL: 4207 E. Grand River Ave. (in South Field Plaza) 517.545.7220
 LANSING: 440 E. Edgewood (in front of Sam's Club) 317.954.7441
 MILFORD: 101 E. Commerce (at Main St.) 248.684.7440
 NEW HUDSON: 56754 Grand River (East of Midland Rd.) 248.427.5359
 NOVATI: 27793 - C West Oaks Dr. (in West Oaks II) 248.596.1900
 OKEMOS: 4738 Central Park Dr. (Next to Phoenix Carwash) 517.348.0300
 SOUTH LYON: 226 S. Lafayette (Next to S. Lyon Bakery) 248.437.5300
 TAYLOR: 8237 S. Telegraph Rd. 313.291.2912
 WILLIAMSTON: 725 W. Grand River (Next to Famous Taco) 517.555.9888

SPORTS A-16

NOVI NEWS hometownlife.com Thursday, December 25, 2003

Wildcats dominate Eagles

By Sam Eggleston SPORTS WRITER



Novi Varsity Cheer team members, including Courtney Pitolesi, front-right, compete at a home meet last Thursday night versus Lakeland High.

It's official — cheerleading is definitely a sport. At the second dual meet of the season, all of the classic signs were there. There were fans, officials, cheering, clock management and — gasp! — even scouting.

Round two brought even more separation between the two squads as Novi was rewarded 184.5 points for their shouting and Lakeland notched 126.

Novi was scheduled to be back in action when they visit the Brighton Bulldogs January 8 at 7 p.m. — in another dual meet.



Sam Eggleston

Santa keeps track of all your doings

It has just been one of those years that fly by, hasn't it? On the positive side, that means that we're starting a new year with hopefully some fresh starts across the globe and in our own little communities.

But, as always, there's one guy who does keep track of it all. He lives up north somewhere (I think even further up than the Upper Peninsula) and he has an affliction for the color red.

Collins returns as 'Cats topple 'Stangs

By Sam Eggleston SPORTS WRITER



Mustang co-captain Donny McKinnon circles the ice in a game against the Novi Wildcats. Novi won the game 4-2.

The Novi Wildcats hockey team was well aware that they needed a big win to get their season back on track — and they seem to have finally earned it.

Wildcats are looking like the hockey team of old and winning. They looked like the Novi Wildcats of old. The Novi hockey team made short work of a struggling South Lyon squad, 8-3, December 17.

Two minutes later, Ryan Fox made it a 2-0 game with 6:42 left on the clock. Mark Eberline and Chaz Bulbuk were credited with the assists.

Lenn scored off a rebound, though official statistics show it to have been unassisted, after a hard shot bounced onto the ice in front of the net and Lenn quickly sent it home past Novi's Danny Morrison.

JUNIOR VARSITY CHEERLEADERS

The Novi junior varsity cheerleading team defeated Howell last week after scoring 488 total points in three rounds of action. The Wildcats scored 153.5 points (Round #1); 147 points (Round #2); and 187.5 points (Round #3). This is the first year that the Novi Wildcats have competed in dual meet competitions and thus far they are undefeated on the year.

Novi keeps the win streak alive

By Sam Eggleston SPORTS WRITER

When it comes to coaching philosophies, Novi coach Pat Schuller's is pretty simple — defense, defense, defense. In the perfect world, Schuller would never see the scoreboard register more than 45 points in favor of his team's opponents — but you can't have everything.

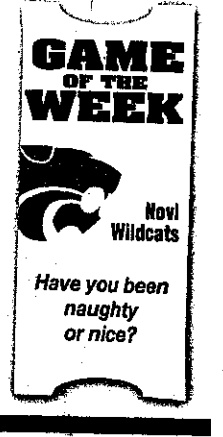
Novi shooters were sent to the line 37 times for free-draw attempts. That's a major difference in the game, especially considering Walled Lake Central shot just 19 from the charity line throughout the contest.

Muston named as 'Cats lacrosse coach

By Sam Eggleston

Novi athletics director Curt Ellis announced recently that Brad Muston will be the new varsity lacrosse coach for the Wildcats. Muston will succeed former head coach, Stan Zajdel, who resigned in August.

Muston was the varsity lacrosse coach for South Lyon prior to accepting the position at Novi.



Have you been naughty or nice?

Rzepka does well at Oakland University

By Sam Eggleston

Ryan Rzepka, 2000 Graduate of Novi High School, recently completed his third year of eligibility for Oakland University's Division I Men's Soccer Program.

During the course of the season, he co-captained a defense that allowed just 19 goals in 22 games and was named the Mid-Con Defensive Player of the Week on October 27, 2003 where he led an Oakland defense that did not allow a single shot on goal in two consecutive matches.

Wildcats top John Glenn Rockets

They're on a roll, and it's going to take one lack of a stand to slow them down.

The Novi Wildcats basketball team, under the coaching guidance of Pat Schuller, has managed to remain undefeated thus far this season thanks to a powerful bench and some impressive shooting from the floor.

UNDERCLASSMAN SCORES

JV BASKETBALL. The Novi Junior Varsity boys' basketball team wrapped up its pre-holiday schedule with a 61-53 victory over Walled Lake Central last Thursday.

Novi currently sits at 4-0 on the year, while John Glenn fell to 0-2 following the loss to the Wildcats.

FRESHMAN VOLLEYBALL

The Novi freshman volleyball team took second-place honors in last weekend's Saline Tournament.

FRESHMAN BASKETBALL

The Novi freshman boys' basketball team lost its second straight non-league game, 29-23, at Canton last Friday.

CITY OF NOVI NOTICE OF ADOPTION ORDINANCE NO. 03-97-01

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Novi Council has adopted Ordinance No. 03-97-01, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF NOVI CODE OF ORDINANCES TO AMEND CHAPTER 4, ARTICLE II BY MODIFYING CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO THE LOCATION, USE AND AWARD OF PRIZES IN CONNECTION WITH AMUSEMENT GAMES AND PINBALL ARCADES.

Advertisement for City of Novi regarding ordinance 03-97-01, including contact information for MARYANNE CORNELIUS.

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SPORTS SHORTS

AAU Wolfpack tryouts

2004 Western Wayne Wolfpack (Northville) AAU Girl's Basketball Tryouts will be held Tuesday, Jan. 6 and Thursday, Jan. 8 for 14's, 15's and 16's from 7:30-9 p.m. at Northville High School.

Learn to Skate programs

Novi Ice Arena will run two Holiday Break Learn to Skate Camps at the end of December. The first session will take place December 29-30. Classes will be held from 11:00-1:40 a.m.

Hockey clinics to be held

Suburban Hockey will hold two-day Power Skating and Puck Handling clinics for mites (ages 6-8), Power Skating & Stick Skills clinics for squirts (ages 9-10) and Checking and Scoring clinics for pee-wees/bantams (ages 11-14) at various locations.

Ski and snowboard club registration

Northville Parks and Rec is currently taking registrations for the popular ski and snowboard club. All students in middle school and high school are encouraged to participate and membership includes luxury motor coach transportation to local ski areas on Friday evenings and some Saturday evenings as well as group lift tickets, rental equipment discounts and lessons at Mt. Brighton Ski Area.

W.A.T. Hitting Classes

James Bonnici, a scout for the Tampa Bay Devilrays, will lead this intense baseball hitting class every Tuesday and Thursday starting January 8 and running through February 12 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Also, adult chaperones are needed for trips and will receive complimentary skiing.

For more information, please contact Northville Parks and Rec at (248) 349-0203.

Want to play some hoops?

Northville Parks and Rec will be hosting a Women's Winter Basketball League starting January 28, 2004. The cost to join is \$395 per team and the season will run through 11 weeks.

Registration has already begun. If interested, please visit Parks and Rec or contact them at (248) 449-9947.

Holiday Baseball/Softball Camp

Total Baseball/Softball will host separate camps with professional instruction from Bruce Fields (Detroit Tigers' Hitting Coach), Lee Bierke (Michigan High School Coaches Hall of Fame member) and Jessie Milosek (Bowling Green University softball standout). Hitting, pitching, fielding, base running and more will be covered in this fundamental camp. Participants will be put on the radar gun for extra speed.

For more information or to register, call (248) 668-0166 or email totalballwixom@aol.com.

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NOTICE CITY OF NOVI REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY USE PERMIT TUP 03-043

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sky Development, LLC is requesting a Temporary Use Permit to allow placement of a temporary construction trailer for property located at 31140 Back Road (lots 5022-04-100, 029 and 5022-04-100-027) from the date of the meeting until January 7, 2004.

A public hearing can be requested by any property owner of a structure located within 300 feet of the boundary of the property being considered for temporary use permit.

Advertisement for Fresh Lighting Picked Deal, featuring Christmas lights and Carlsson Design Products.

Advertisement for 'The Best Picture Of The Year By Far...' featuring the movie Mona Lisa Smile.

Advertisement for 'Something's Gotta Give' featuring Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton.

Advertisement for 'Mona Lisa Smile' featuring Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst, and Maggie Gyllenhaal.

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Are you an organ & tissue donor? Ask your family today, and let them know your decision, too. That way they'll know, and there will be no questions left. For a free brochure, call 1-800-555-SHARE. Share your life. Share your donation. Michigan Coalition on donation. 1-800-555-SHARE

Visit Showtimes.SonyPictures.com

Novi News Coloring Contest Winners

4- and 5-year-olds

6-, 7- and 8-year-olds

9- and 10-year-olds



Brendan McCarthy
Age 5
Deerfield Elementary School
Parent: Vicky McCarthy



Jennifer Hepp
Age 6
Village Oaks Elementary School
Parent: Daniel Hepp



Andrew Check
Age 10
Novi Meadows School
Parents: Michael and Mary Anne Check

SCREEN BEAT

By Brian Renner

Opening in theaters this week

Jude Law, Nicole Kidman and Renee Zellweger star in Civil War romantic drama "Cold Mountain." The film is the story of Inman (Law), a wounded Confederate soldier who is on a perilous journey home to his mountain community, hoping to reunite with his pre-war sweetheart, Ada (Kidman). In his absence, Ada struggles to survive, and revive her father's farm with the help of intrepid young drifter Ruby (Zellweger). "Cold

Mountain" is a Miramax Films release and rated R by the MPAA for violence and sexuality. Steve Martin stars in this comedy remake "Cheaper by the Dozen" as the father of a family of 12 children, who range from preschool-age twins Kyle and Nigel all the way up to 22-year-old Anne (Piper Perabo). When Tom Baker (Martin) gets a job offer to coach football at Northwestern University in Chicago, he and his wife, Mary (Bonnie Hunt), move to the big city. With the recent publication of her long-in-the-works book, Mary feels demands outside the home taking away as

much time as Tom's new job does, so they are forced to try to find new ways of parenting their tribe, but find their parenting styles aren't always compatible. "Cheaper by the Dozen" is a 20th Century Fox release and rated PG by the MPAA for language and some thematic elements. Ben Affleck stars in science fiction thriller "Paycheck" as Michael Jennings, a brilliant computer engineer hired by high-tech corporations for specialized top-secret projects. Once a job is complete, Jennings routinely has his short-term memory erased so as not to divulge any sensitive company

information to future clients. Highly paid for his work, he expects to earn \$4.4 Billion at the end of his latest 3-year project. Upon completion of the job, instead of a big paycheck, Jennings is handed an envelope filled with random objects and told that he has agreed to forfeit all payment. He discovers the objects are clues to the puzzle that once was his past and put the pieces together with the help of Rachel (Uma Thurman), the woman he has worked with and loved for the past three years who rekindles his memory of their life together, before the people he once worked

for have him killed. "Paycheck" is a Paramount Pictures and rated PG-13 by the MPAA for intense action, violence and brief language. The beloved children's classic "Peter Pan" finally receives its long overdue live-action feature film adaptation, with Jason Isaacs starring in the dual roles as Captain Hook and Wendy's father. Peter is the young boy who won't age, who lives in Neverland with other ageless kids, the Lost Boys. Tinkerbell, gives three children: Wendy, John, and Michael Darling the ability to fly, and soon they're off to Neverland, where they're soon in battle with

the evil Captain Hook and his band of pirates. "Peter Pan" is a Universal Pictures and rated PG by the MPAA for some moderate action sequences and peril. **In theaters next week** Teen drama "Chasing Liberty" (PG-13) and comedy "My Baby's Daddy" (R).

For more information, please log on to [The Movie Insider](http://TheMovieInsider.com) at www.themovieinsider.com. Please direct any questions, comments, and/or feedback to brian@themovieinsider.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Toy and Hobby Expo

DATE: Dec. 28-29
TIME: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday
LOCATION: Novi Expo Center, 196 at Novi Rd.
DETAILS: Featuring model railroad displays, vendors and collectors selling vintage toys, trains, dolls and hobby items. Admission \$7, kids under 12 admitted free with an adult; parking is \$5.
PHONE: (734) 455-2110.

ON-GOING

Free Blood Pressure Screening

DATES: every Monday
TIME: 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
DETAILS: This Service will be available until January 31.
LOCATION: Charter House of Novi, 24500 Meadowbrook Road, Novi, MI 48375
PHONE: (248) 477-2000

Oakland County Health Division Child Health Clinics

DETAILS: Free welfare check-ups, immunizations, physical exams, guidance/referrals on behavioral, learning, and health problems.
PHONE: Oakland County Health Division, Mary White, Program Coordinator, Child Health Clinics, (248) 858-1380.

Providence Center for the Healing Arts "Tuesday of Ananias"

DATE: every Tuesday night
TIME: 5 p.m.-8 p.m.
LOCATION: Assarian Cancer Center, 47601 Grand River, Novi.
DETAILS: Variety of activities for the adult community to come and enjoy a unique mix of classes brought to you by the Providence Center for the Healing Arts, Aug. 26 - Modern Japanese Calligraphy, Ceramics. Some activities may include a supplies fee (no more than \$10).
PHONE: (248) 465-5483.

Women's Prayer Support

DATE: every Saturday
TIME: 9:10-10:30 a.m.
LOCATION: Harvest Fellowship Church, 49329 Postline Trail, Wixom (Parking is behind the church)

Adoption Playgroup

DATE: first and third Fridays of the month
TIME: 10 a.m.
LOCATION: Holy Family Catholic Church (on Meadowbrook Rd. between 10 Mile Rd. and Grand River Rd.)
DETAILS: We are a not for profit, non-denominational group that brings adoptive families together. Our twice-a-month meetings provide families with the opportunity to share play and conversation. During the summer, we meet at specially designated times and locations.
PHONE: For more information contact Michelle Pergami (248) 887-4955 or Sandra Noonan (248) 960-3257.

Business referrals

DATE: every Wed. ongoing
LOCATION: Novi Civic Center, 45175 10 Mile Rd.
TIME: 7 - 8:30 a.m.
DETAILS: Meeting of local professionals and business looking to increase word-of-mouth referrals business. Various classifications open and eager to bring you qualified business leads.
PHONE: (734) 462-6460

Novi Toastmasters

DATE: first and third Tuesdays of the month
LOCATION: Novi Civic Center, activities room
TIME: 7:8-8:45 p.m.

Bread Cancer Support Group

DATES: second and fourth Tuesdays of the month
LOCATION: Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital, Commerce, Classroom C on the ground floor of the hospital.
TIME: 10-11:30 a.m.
DETAILS: There is no need to call ahead and register.
PHONE: If you have any questions, call (248) 937-5017.

Oakland County Health Division Expectant Parent Classes

DATE: ongoing series
LOCATION: Oakland County Health Division, 1010 East West Maple, Walled Lake
TIME: 7-9 p.m.
DETAILS: Classes will be taught by Public Health Nurses. Topics will include childbirth preparation, labor and delivery, care of the newborn baby, breast-feeding, bottle-feeding, information about keeping children safe, and caring for them when they are ill. Cost is \$25.
PHONE: (248) 858-4003, or (888) 350-0900 ext. 84003

New TOPS chapter in Novi

DATES: Wednesdays
LOCATION: Meadowbrook Commons Activities Room, 25075 Meadowbrook Rd., Novi.
TIME: 11 a.m. weigh in, 11:30 a.m. meeting
DETAILS: \$20/yearly membership registration, includes handbook, \$1/meeting. New members welcome.

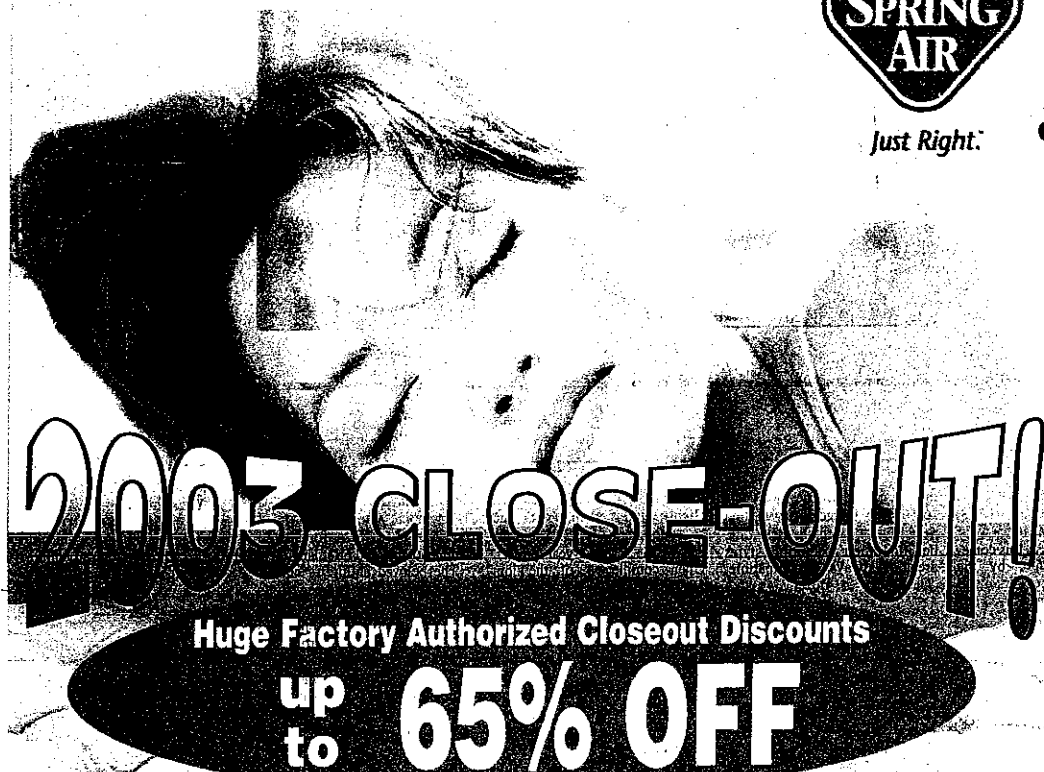


Christmas caroling for the less fortunate
Novi residents Sarah Jylkka and Ashley Lucas, who happen to be Walled Lake Schools fourth graders and best friends, were caroling for fun over the weekend in their neighborhood and a few people gave them money. When Jylkka's mom told them they can't keep that money they thought it would be great to raise money for a needy family at their elementary school. They caroled the next day too and raised over \$70 plus a small bag of food and delivered it to their school counselor on Monday who will forward it to a family in need at their school.

Send calendar items to Cal Stone, Novi News, 104 W. Main, Northville, MI 48168 or e-mail to cstone@ht.hometown.com.

YEAR END

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REGIONAL MARKETPLACE

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Thursday, December 25, 2003

Money Matters

Thanks Congress, but there's just one more thing

By Jack Faris
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
INDEPENDENT BUSINESS

As the calendar winds down on 2003, America's small-business owners can look back with pride on winning some hard-fought, grassroots political victories. But true to their heritage of hard work and determination, these steadfastly optimistic business-citizens will fix their focus on the tasks ahead, for much remains to be done in the political vineyards.

One key challenge not yet met is convincing Congress that a permanent solution must be found for the ailing, and often failing, system that is called health care-for lack of a better term.

On the one hand, those who keep the nation's small businesses running like well-oiled machines are bursting with optimism these days. The economy is gaining traction and their spirits are kicking into high gear. According to the latest NFIB Small Business Optimism Index, they are more upbeat now than at any time in the history of the survey.

Peering six months into 2004, more than half of these Main Street business owners view a better economy. This is the highest tally in 20 years. Sales trends are favorable, credit appears readily available and plans to restock their shelves are at historically strong levels.

But on the other hand, their spirits are dampened. Rising insurance costs, the survey notes, remains No. 1 on the small-business problem list. More than one-fourth of respondents said the cost and availability of insurance was the single, most important challenge they face, even beating out taxes and poor sales.

Although the House of Representatives has passed legislation allowing small businesses to obtain much-needed help through Association Health Plans (AHPs), which would allow small firms to band together to purchase affordable medical insurance, the Senate has yet to consider it. Some cause for relief, however, is the Health Savings Account (HSA) option that was tucked into the Medicare bill signed into law recently by President Bush.

While uncorking the bubbly on New Year's Day, the nation's small-business owners can also celebrate by opening HSAs. The new law takes effect Jan. 1. These tax-preferred accounts are intended for routine medical expenses and allow any taxpayer with high-deductible insurance plans to contribute up to \$2,600 for individuals and \$5,150 for families.

The bright spot for both those who provide jobs and those who have them is that employers will be able to contribute to employee accounts and those funds won't be counted against an employer's taxable income.

This option, which allows monies not spent to remain in the account and earn interest, also gives both entrepreneurs and employees incentives to live more healthy lifestyles so their HSAs can grow.

Health-policy researchers say HSAs could have a transforming effect on the nation's health-care system because those who use them are likely to seek out physicians who prefer cash payments instead of operating within costly and inefficient insurance-based systems.

Appreciative that Congress created HSAs, small businesses will nevertheless continue their fight for true health-care reform in 2004, which means nothing short of passing AHP legislation.

Jack Faris is president of NFIB, the nation's largest small-business advocacy group. NFIB represents the views of 600,000 members in Washington, D.C., and all 50 state capitals. Find more on-line at www.nfib.com.

ADVERTORIAL

Your home for authentic Mexican dining La Casa del Rio Grande

By Annette Jaworski
SPECIAL WRITER

You don't have to travel to sunny Mexico or even to downtown Detroit for the genuine flavor of the Southwest. La Casa Del Rio Grande is located nearby offering authentic Mexican cuisine. You won't find the traditional cookie cutter food served by chains at this New Hudson location.

"There's nowhere else in this area to get this type of food," explains owner, Dawn Salvati, who's proud of their cuisine. "It's downtown Mexican food, not Americanized."

Inside the festive atmosphere sets the tone for fun and casual dining. Colorful sombreros and blankets are part of the cheerful decor. It's a friendly relaxed atmosphere, so go ahead use your fingers, invites the menu.

"It's family dining that's fun and casual. You can dress up if you want, but you can come as you are," said Salvati.

You won't need to brush up on your high school Spanish, either. The menu has the English translations for the entrees. Salvati or her staff will be happy to guide you through the menu. The first basket of tortilla chips and salsa is complimentary, she added.

Why not try a couple of their specials such as Pedro's stacked Mexican sandwich. It comes with three flour tortillas layered with rice, refried beans and your choice of tender diced lean pork, shredded beef or chicken, and then topped with melted muenster cheese, jalapenos on request. Salvati assures the food is not overly spicy or hot. Since some like it hot, they can honor that request, too.

The menu starts with appetizers like Pedro's Mexican pizza, Nachos, Panchitos. Even the soups are unique like Consomme de Pollo - their Mexican style chicken and rice soup, with fresh tomatoes, avocados, onions and cilantro. It's served with a side of rice, tomatoes and three flour tortillas.

Of course it features chimichanga platters, fajitas, enchiladas and burritos. All dinners include beans and rice. For a blend, try the combination plates. Can't decide? Why not try a sampler; the Don Pedro sampler comes with a ground beef taco, enchilada, shredded beef flauta, ground beef tostada, rice and beans. Or, the Rio Grande sampler includes a chicken taco, ground beef enchilada, small pork chimichanga, rice and beans.

Other favorites include a seafood salad. It's a fresh garden salad topped with shrimp, crab meat, avocados, tomatoes, onions, olives and muenster cheese.

A quick delicious lunch

Don't have much time for lunch? No problem. Although the chefs prepare the freshest and most authentic Mexican food in the area, you don't have to wait forever.

"Our service is extremely quick. The staff always does their best," says Salvati.

Better yet, call ahead - your food will be ready and waiting. Carryouts and pre-orders are welcome and even encouraged. They understand sometimes you don't have a lot of time for lunch. If you call ahead, the order will be hot and on the table so you can enjoy the rest of your lunch time relaxing. Numerous local business people and area employees, like Wal-Mart employees, have already taken advantage of this convenience.

For an evening out, they offer a full service bar with a large selection of both American and Mexican beer and of course multiple tequilas.

"There's nowhere else in this area to get this type of food. It's downtown Mexican food, not Americanized."

Dawn Salvati
Owner, La Casa del Rio Grande



Photos by Annette Jaworski

Dawn Salvati, owner of La Casa del Rio Grande, displays one of the dishes from her authentic Mexican menu. Enjoy the great Mexican food during the holidays, too. The restaurant is open on Christmas Eve 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

tion of both American and Mexican beer and of course multiple tequilas.

La Casa del Rio Grande is happy to accommodate special requests and needs. For example, most items are easily adaptable to a low carbohydrate diet.

"Mexican food is great for low carb diets. You just have to watch the beans, rice and tortillas," she added.

Their strategic location is another convenience, just west of Milford Road on Grand River Avenue, away from the hustle and bustle of Lyon Crossing and Lyon Towne Center. Even quicker, take the shortcut west on Lyon Center Drive off Milford Road through Lyon Crossing. La Casa del Rio Grande is right across the street.

Come in and enjoy the specials for even more reasonable prices. Daily lunch specials are offered at only \$3.99 with purchase of beverage. Nightly specials are offered Monday through Thursday. Join the happy hour from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week. Margarita days are Sunday and

Wednesday with happy hour prices for Margaritas all day. Don't forget to check out the early bird specials from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. just ask your server.

Affordable prices make it a great place to bring the family. Adult dinners average about \$7.50, and kids (little gringos) meals are \$3.50 including beverage. Saturday and Tuesday are kids' days, when meals are \$2.99 including beverage and ice cream. They also have a clown once a month for children to enjoy. Just call ahead for dates and times.

The history behind the home

La Casa Del Rio Grande is not just a restaurant to owner, Dawn Salvati, and her two children, Samantha and Carmen. She has a huge personal investment in the business because the land is part of her individual history. The building sits on property once owned by her father over 35 years ago. A little white house once stood there while the area was still

rural. The family lived there for years before moving to Depot Street in South Lyon and later



Everyday is a fiesta at La Casa Del Rio Grande, where helpful employees like Jennifer Putz can recommend tasty dishes in a festive atmosphere.

AT A GLANCE

■ La Casa Del Rio Grande is located at 57721 Grand River Ave. in New Hudson. To get there, follow the new loop (Lyon Center Drive) from Wal-Mart, or continue west on Grand River Avenue just past Milford Road. La Casa Del Rio Grande is located at 57721 Grand River Avenue directly across from Lyon Center Drive. Call (248) 446-7700 or fax (248) 446-7701.

■ Hours are 7 days a week. Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fridays, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday from 3 p.m. until 10 p.m. and Sunday from 3 p.m. until 9 p.m. New Year's Day they will be open regular business hours.

■ Reservations accepted, party and catering available and all major credit cards accepted.

■ Celebrate the holidays at La Casa del Rio Grande. The restaurant is open on Christmas Eve 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Gift Certificates Available!

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