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— Page 8B

SPORTS



Fools for April

Call them what you will, but the Novi High School Wildcat athletes are geared up for spring sports — and so is our sports writer, Sam Eggleston.

He takes a look at the season, previewing soccer, baseball, golf, tennis, lacrosse and track. Sam also offers the best of the best in grappling action with his All-Area Wrestling picks.

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Walkers honored for \$1M gift

Agreement signed at reception for Novi family

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

Charles and Myrtle Walker, longtime residents of Novi, signed the paperwork Sunday making their \$1 million gift to the Novi Public Library official.

The couple and their family members were recognized with a special reception in the

Community Meeting Room of the library that afternoon.

The Walkers have also agreed to match community funding up to an additional \$1 million through Dec. 31, 2005.

Those attending the reception included State Sen. Nancy Cassis (R-Novi); Novi Mayor Lou Csordas; City Council Member David Landry; Library Director Brenda Evans; President of the Library Board of Trustees Terry Margolis, and other members of the board; and Treasurer of the Friends of Novi Library Barbara Brunett.

"As we gather here, we can't but realize this is spring — a time of renewal, rejuvenation and

hope. Novi is blooming, too," Cassis said.



C. Walker

"You're not asking for publicity. You're just asking to do something fine for the community which marks the kind of people you are," Cassis said.

"Mr. Walker, personally I want to say to you that you truly epitomize the work of a small businessperson who has endeavored and made his whole life about taking risks and securing prosperity for yourself, your family and your workers," she said.

"We are so grateful to you. You have weathered the ups and downs of many storms. You are also a reminder that our small business people like yourself are truly the backbone of America," she added.

"Our community and our state is richer, and our community is truly blessed. You are leaving us a long-lasting legacy. Now it's up to us to do our part. It is a pleasure for all of us to know you," she said.

"This is a great day in the City of Novi," Csordas said. "With their help, our library will grow along with our city."

Cassis and Csordas both presented the Walkers with framed proclamations honoring their gift. Margolis also gave the Walkers a plaque commemorating their donation.

In 1938, Charles T. Walker borrowed \$500 to start his first company. In the next 66 years, he received two patents and manufactured products such as brass and copper anodes, fuse bodies and universal vertical milling machines. Residents of Novi

continued on page 3

Life in prison

Sentence mandatory in murder of 2-year-old girl

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

Nikole Michelle Frederick, 24, of Novi, was sentenced to life in prison with no parole Tuesday afternoon in Oakland County Circuit Court for the first degree murder of Anne Marie Shawley, her 2-year-old stepdaughter.

Shawley died from massive head injuries at William Beaumont Hospital on Sept. 2, 2003, where she was transferred after Frederick and husband, John Shawley, brought her to Providence Hospital in Novi the morning of Sept. 1.

The girl suffered from massive head injuries, cigarette burns, and second degree burns to her legs and buttocks from a heating vent. She also had tearing around the lips and had two patches of hair ripped from her head when duct tape was wrapped around her head, according to police and medical reports.

Shackled and dressed at her final court appearance in bright orange Department of Corrections clothing, Frederick did not speak following her sentencing on the advice of her attorney, Michael McCarthy.

She was moved to tears, however, at one point during comments made by members of Anne Marie's family.

The little girl's father, John Shawley of Novi, was not present

continued on page 4

For information Child Abuse Prevention, please turn to pages 4 & 5A.



Photo by John Heider

Nikole Frederick reacts as she hears graphic testimony of the death of Ann Marie Shawley during a preliminary hearing in Judge Brian MacKenzie's 52-1 District Court last October. Frederick was sentenced to life in prison Tuesday.

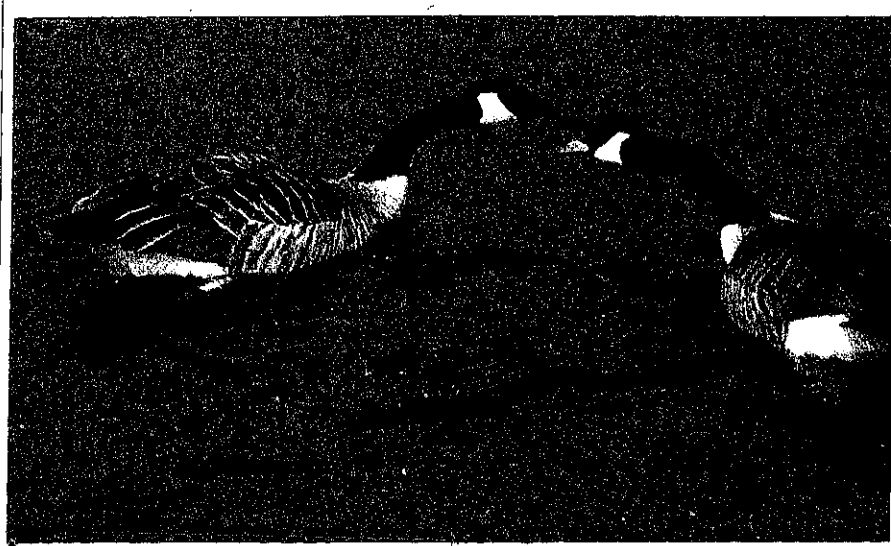


Photo by John Heider

Signs of spring

A pair of Canada geese swim in a pond near the Novi Ice Arena last week. With spring officially here, these geese and others will be busy building nests and creating lots of goslings.

Board makes recommendation for layoff of five administrators

A number of options still available to reduce the \$4.3 million budget

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

The Novi Community School District is facing a \$4.3 million deficit next school year — and the school board proved that it is not wasting time in reducing that amount by considering non-renewal of five administrators' contracts.

Just one week after Jim Koster, assistant superintendent for business and finance for the Novi Community School District, reported to the school board of education on budget matters, the board took its

first action to try to reduce the \$4.3 million deficit.

The district has been cutting the budget for four years in a row now and is running out of areas to cut without getting into educational programs and administrative jobs.

The latest decision by the board was to approve a resolution to make a recommendation to layoff the following:

- Belinda Seal-Sweet - adult education supervisor
- William Malt - assistant director of maintenance
- Jennifer Cheal - executive director of instructional services
- Carol Diglio - Novi High School dean of students for attendance operation
- Jamli Hitehook - Novi High School dean of students for student activities

The layoffs are not definite yet. Under state law, there is a process the board must use in order to termi-

nate administrators. If the administrators aren't given notices within a certain period of time, they automatically get extended for one year. That is why the recommendation for layoffs was made before knowing which way the board will go to deal with the deficit.

The district was required to advise the five administrators of the recommendation to the board, which was done on March 22. The board then passed a resolution

March 26, B. Schram indicating non-renewal is under consideration.

On March 26, Bob Schram, executive director of human resources, gave a written notice of the board's consideration to the five administra-

tors. The administrators now have the right to meet with the board within 30 days to be able to state why they shouldn't be let go.

After the 30-day period, which would be April 29, the board will either pass a resolution of non-renewal or do nothing. If the board does pass a resolution of non-renewal, written notice will be given to the five administrators at least 60-days prior to the date of layoff, which is targeted for June 30.

Schram explained that typically, in cases like this, where it's economic reasons for possible layoffs, people usually don't meet with the board to plead their cases. He said that the next regularly scheduled board meeting after April 1 is April 22, which wouldn't be 30 days yet. That's why the board set April 29 as another special meeting.

"That would be more than 30

continued on page 2

Independent contractor agreement OK'd

Administrators can work for district and collect money from retirement

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

The Novi Community School District Board of Education on March 18 approved an agreement between the district and Professional Contract Management,

Inc. to help retired administrators continue to work and collect retirement money at the same time.

The agreement will also help the school district to retain experienced administrative staff who may want to retire but also remain actively involved in educational leadership within the district and to have access to a quality pool of experienced administrators should an emergency situation occur in the future.

According to Bob Schram, executive director of administrative services and human resources, is if a school administrator wants to retire and has worked for the district for many years, he or she can retire under the state of Michigan Public

Retirement System. Then they can go work for a private company outside of education, in this case Professional Contract Management, Inc., that provides employees to school districts on an independent contractor basis. That person can then continue working with the same responsibilities they had before — not as an employee of the school district, but as an independent contractor supplied by PCMI.

The school district doesn't have to pay the retirement system or provide benefits for that employee.

"It saves a significant amount of money and we can retain very effective, highly experienced administrators who still have a lot to offer to

children and the staff," Schram said. "The advantage to the employees are, they can continue to work, doing something they are very effective at, and they can also collect their retirement."

The Novi district had an experience like this a few years ago when it needed an emergency employee at one of the buildings to cover for an administrator.

"We're familiar with this concept," Schram said. "The reason we're taking another look at it now is, there was a Michigan Court of Appeals lawsuit last year by the name of Robert Mantei vs. the State

continued on page 2

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School board recommends administrative layoffs

continued from front page

days from March 25," Schram said. "That's when they would actually issue a layoff notice and make a resolution to implement the layoffs."

Koster once again stated last Thursday that a financial crisis looms in Michigan's educational system in the near future. He presented his best estimate of what revenue expenses are going to be next year and he even projected out a couple years beyond that. He tried to paint a revenue picture and an expense picture based on the worst-case scenario of the state.

In order to address the situation, the board has come up with several options other than layoffs:

- To implement a millage for "public recreation and playgrounds." Since the district offers an extensive community recreation program, according to Koster, it is logical that a millage could be levied for these programs, thereby lessening the amount of necessary reductions in education programs.
- To implement a pay-to-play policy for athletics and other extra-curricular activities.
- To change more money for community education.

• To implement a school of choice policy, where Novi Schools would allow students from other districts to attend their schools.

"These four areas could increase revenue," Schram said. "We have not been inclined to do schools of choice in the past and we always try to avoid pay-to-play type situations, but that's what we may have to get into now."

The board can look at other things as well, said Schram.

"We don't know if they will want to use any of the fund equity or if they want to do a millage or not," he added. "I'm not ready to decide yet whether they want to make a loan or equity they want to use. I will talk with the district from his pay each employee, benefits, a retirement and salary."

The school board is expected to discuss the options during a public meeting tonight at the Educational Services Building located on Tall Road between 10 and 11 Mile Roads. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

Ranee Khuri is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 110 or by e-mail at rkhuri@ht.homecomm.net.



Gettin' loose

The cast of Novi High School's "Footloose" goes through their opening number during last Thursday night's premiere of the Broadway Musical, which was presented March 25-27.

Photo by John Heider

Agreement approved

continued from front page

of Michigan Retirement System Board, where the circuit court ruled in favor of Mr. Mantel, saying that it's perfectly legal for him to come back and work in a school district as an independent contractor and still get retirement from the state of Michigan.

At a time when the district has to look for creative ways to save money, the independent contractor agreement was a no-brainer. It's a win-win situation for the district and employees.

"The board did not appoint individual people," said Schram, "and no individual person has come forward saying they want to retire, but we will have a vehicle in place where if an administrative employee wants to retire and then become an employee of PCMI, they could lease that employee back to us."

By law, the superintendent can not participate. However, the agreement can be used by any other administrator in the district, such as principals, assistant principals, assistant superintendents and directors and supervisors.

Ranee 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@ht.homecomm.net.

Walkers honored for gift of \$1M

continued from front page

since 1975, the Walkers want to see the library grow with the community.

"I've always liked libraries," Walker said. "This is truly special to see this day. I'm a grateful man. I have been blessed to be successful in business over 65 years. This is an opportunity for us to give back."

He noted that he and Myrtle, his wife of 47 years who he calls his "partner in crime," recently returned from a trip to China.

"He truly is a self-made man who took it upon himself to be involved in lifelong learning," Margolis said.

She noted that the library will be renamed the Charles and Myrtle Walker Library in the future, and that the community is encouraged to make donations to the library. A special box is available in the library for citizens to drop off donations.

Friends of the Library donated \$2,500 to the capital improvement fund at the reception and made the Walkers honorary members of the group.

"We're looking forward to working with everyone on this project," Margolis said. "We look forward to a greater and larger library in the future."

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.

A lifetime in libraries

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

Libraries have been a very important part of Charles Walker's life for many years. So much so that the 88-year-old and his wife, Myrtle, recently donated \$1 million to the Novi Public Library.

Born and raised in Detroit, his father, David, owned a shop that took nonferrous metal and reclaimed the metal for a local foundry. Charles Walker graduated from Northern High School in Detroit.

"I wished I had gone to Case Tech," he said.

His education has been more hands-on.

"My beginnings in the industry after high school was in the brewing industry. I went to brewer's school in Chicago to learn the technology of making beer," he said.

He worked for Zynda Brewing Company as an assistant brewmaster in Detroit. "After knowing the practice of it, I learned the technology of it," he said.

Later, he became interested in the electroplating industry. I've been with the electroplating industry ever since — since 1938. That was the year I established Universal Corp., which supplied electroplating materials to the electroplaters," he said.

Five years ago, the family moved the company from Detroit



Photo by Marcia Dominick

Charles and Myrtle Walker of Novi were honored by State Sen. Nancy Cassis, left, and Novi Mayor Lou Csorda, right, as well as members of the community for their \$1 million gift to the Novi Public Library Sunday. The Walkers have also agreed to match all contributions up to \$1 million through Dec. 31, 2005.

to Angola, Ind., to combine the manufacturing of copper, brass and other anodes with a chemical plant, which was also moved

"You have the choice, and I have the choice to give to many organizations. I chose my community."

Charles Walker
\$1 million Novi Public Library donor

from another location in Detroit. Although Walker's son, Chuck, runs the business now, he is still engaged in a lot of the major decisions.

"It's fantastic," he said. "Hopefully, I'll be able to go to the library on the days I'm not undergoing dialysis," he said.

"Today I challenge those of you who have the ability to support this growing community and the need to have the resources the new library will provide," Charles Walker said at the Sunday reception.

"You have the choice, and I have the choice, to give to many organizations. I chose my community. I think I may have triggered something for other communities to think about," he 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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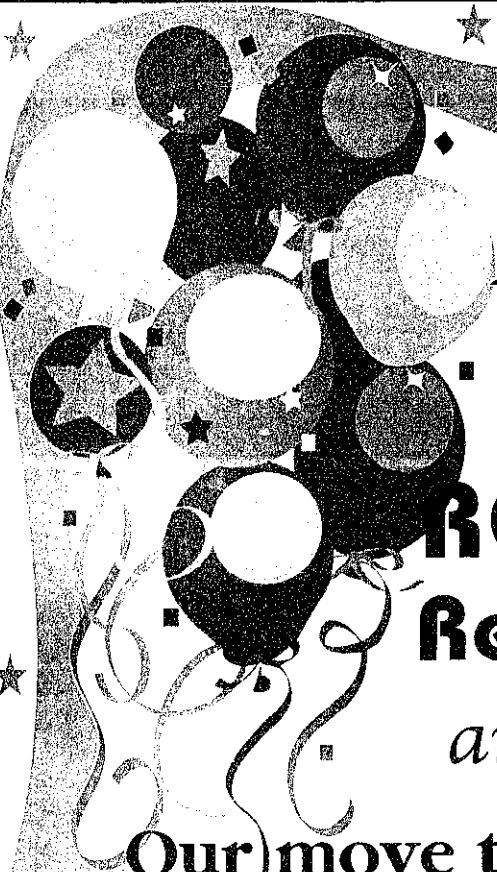
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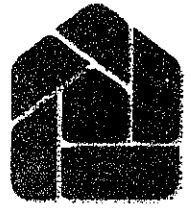
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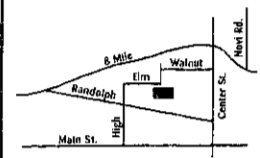
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St. Paul's Lutheran Church Easter Week Services

| Palm Sunday | Maundy Thursday | Good Friday | Easter Sunday |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| April 4 8:30 am 11 am 11:30 am | April 8 7 pm | April 9 1 pm 7 pm | April 11 8:30 am 11 am 11:30 am |



St. Paul Lutheran Church
201 Elm Street • Northville
(Behind Hillers)
248-349-3140

Easter Week Services

| Palm Sunday Worship Services | Maundy Thursday Service | Easter Sunday Worship Services |
|---|--|--|
| April 4 8:00, 10:15, 11:30 am Contemporary Workshop 9:05 am | April 8 7:30 pm Good Friday Service April 9 Noon-3:00 pm | April 11 Traditional Workshop 7:00, 8:00, 10:15 & 11:30 am Contemporary Workshop 9:05 am Sunday School for All Ages 9:05, 10:15, 11:30 am |



WARD Evangelical Presbyterian Church
40000 Six Mile Road (Just West of Haggerty)
248-374-7400

First United Methodist Church 777 W. Eight Mile Rd., Northville 248.349.1144

Holy Week Schedule

| | |
|--|---|
| Palm Sunday, April 4, 2004 8:00 a.m. - Communion Service 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. - "Only Jesus" Youth Musical (Gr. 7-12) | Easter Brunch, April 6, 2004 9:30 a.m. - Inspirational program Communion and a delicious brunch - Tickets - \$7.00 |
| Maundy Thursday, April 8, 2004 7:00 p.m. - "Trust Clause" Communion, Rev. John Hice | Good Friday - April 9, 2004 7:30 p.m. - Community "Tea & Service with combined Presbyterian & Methodist Clergy & choirs at First United Methodist Church |
| Easter Sunday, April 11, 2004 7:00 a.m. - Sunrise Service 8:00 a.m., 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. "Irresistible Force" - Rev. Hice 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. - Festive Services with 9 choirs participating Sunday School (Crib - 6th gr.) | Easter Breakfast Served 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. *Handicap Accessible and Childcare (crib thru 4 yr. olds) |

First Presbyterian Church of Northville

Palm Sunday Worship, April 4
9:30 and 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday, April 8
7:30 pm Worship with Holy Communion

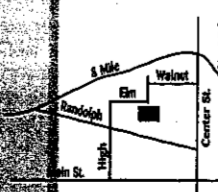
Good Friday Worship, April 9
Ecumenical Service at
First United Methodist Church

Easter Festival Worship, April 11
8:00, 9:30, 11:00 am

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St. Paul's Lutheran Church Easter Week Services

| Palm Sunday | Maundy Thursday | Good Friday | Easter Sunday |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| April 4 8:30 am 11 am 11:30 am | April 8 7 pm | April 9 1 pm 7 pm | April 11 8:30 am 11 am 11:30 am |



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CLASS NOTES

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

Online teacher pays a visit

Classes popular among Novi High School students

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

Thirteen Novi High School students got a real treat when J.D. Birchmeier, an online teacher for the Michigan Virtual High School as well as all 13 of them are currently enrolled in his classes.

Birchmeier, who teaches Human Space Exploration and Astronomy online, lives in Canton and usually never sees his online students in person because there are so many of them scattered all over the state of Michigan. He communicates with them through e-mail and students work at their own pace to pass his courses.

Since there are so many at Novi High, he was invited to come in to do a face-to-face session. "I wrote both classes," Birchmeier said. "Human Space Exploration is a little bit of history and how you manage to live in space. I started with an outline by Lynn Borduanti, who works for NASA. He gave me the outline and we discussed that and by the time I was done I had 31 pages of material. That won an award last year from the International Society for Technology and Education for online education."

Junior Brian Harrison and senior Sam Muraliphar are enrolled in Human Space Exploration. Both are enjoying the course very much.

"I got into it just as an alternative because I ran out of other classes to take," Harrison said. "It was good because instead of having to pick one class, there it gave me a lot of options. It's a good class because it gives you a lot of freedom. If you're not motivated to work every day, with this class you can take a day off and still get your work done. It's very self-paced."

A mentor at Novi High oversees that students are working on their separate curriculums each day. There is only one high school in Michigan that teaches Human Space Exploration traditionally, which is why the online version is

so popular. "I looked at the preview of the classes online to see which ones were good to take," Muraliphar said. "This one looked interesting. There is a lot of things to click on and look at. It has gone really well. Our teacher communicates with us very quickly. I think this class is better online, it would be hard to teach it traditionally."

James Wheaton is one of Novi High's mentors. He explained that the program was originally developed for smaller school districts. Novi, however, is not traditional in that sense. It has such a large student population, that it can offer many different classes, as well as the supplemental online courses.

"The students are very definitely succeeding," Wheaton said. "It's a good supplemental program from what I can see so far. It's not for everybody though, it has to be a self-motivated student who can come in and get themselves to work."

Senior Hannah Irwin is taking Birchmeier's other course, Astronomy. "I took this class because it's my senior year and I wanted to take something new," she said. "I'm really into space photography, so I thought this would be for me. It's really great, everything is online and we all have the chance to go further in the subject if we want to because there is so much information on the web that's available. You can go at your own pace, which is really nice."

Irwin described the class as a nice break from the monotony of regular classes. "You get to go and do your own thing instead of getting behind," she said. "I wouldn't be able to sit at a computer all day though, I do like the regular classes too. These classes are good for more specific subject areas and Astronomy and Human Space Exploration are pretty specific."

Harrison and Muraliphar agreed. "Online courses are good,

but you need a social interaction too," Harrison said. "If I had two online classes during the day, I would end up getting bored, but I think it's good just to experience it and work with computers. I don't think I would like to have many of these classes take over a school."

Muraliphar would also miss the social aspect of traditional courses if she took all online classes. "A classroom is one thing where you can talk to your peers, and it helps because there are a lot of kids in this online class, but if you're in an online class and nobody else is in it, I think it would be a lot more difficult because you wouldn't have anyone to compare with," she said.

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@ht.homecomm.net.



J.D. Birchmeier, Online teacher for Michigan Virtual High School (wearing the hat), poses with Novi High School students who are enrolled in his class. Pictured with him are, front row left to right: Robert Carter — 11th grade, Hannah Irwin — 12th grade, Lindsay Wegryn — 12th grade and Novi High Mentor Teacher James Wheaton. Pictured in the back row left to right: Sean Costello — 11th grade and Brian Harrison — 11th grade.

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THURSDAY 10:30 11:30 12:30 1:30 2:30 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 7:30 8:30
FRIDAY 10:30 11:30 12:30 1:30 2:30 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 7:30 8:30
SATURDAY 10:30 11:30 12:30 1:30 2:30 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 7:30 8:30
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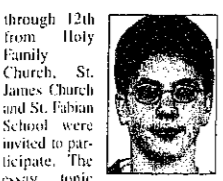
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Two win Knights of Columbus Essay Contest

Winners are Scott Davis and Kristin Thomas

By Ramez Khuri

The Third Annual Knights of Columbus Essay Contest winners are in, and once again the Novi Community School District was represented well, claiming two out of the four winners.



S. Davis



K. Thomas

through 12th from Holly Family Church, St. James Church and St. Fabian School were invited to participate. The essay topic this year was, 'Why I Am Proud To Be An American.' Students were asked to identify, in writing, the reasons why they are proud to be Americans. Essays were judged on writing style, idea development, content, original thought and insight.

State winners will be announced by the end of May. "I was surprised when they told me I won," Davis said. "I'm not expecting to win the state competition, but it would be pretty cool if I did."

Michigan competition with a chance to win a \$200 U.S. Government Savings Bond. The runner-up will win a \$100 U.S. Government Savings Bond. State winners will be announced by the end of May. "I was surprised when they told me I won," Davis said. "I'm not expecting to win the state competition, but it would be pretty cool if I did."

Novi COMMUNITY EDUCATION CORNER

How to Self-Publish Your First Book

DATE: Wednesday, April 7 TIME: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. LOCATION: Novi Middle School Room 102 DETAILS: Learn how to get a bar code/ISBN/Library of Congress Number and get your book on the order rolls of all major book stores. This class provides practical, realistic information to achieve your dream.

Let Me Cook - Sautéing and Pan Sauces

DATE: Tuesday, April 20 TIME: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. LOCATION: Novi Middle School Room 328 DETAILS: Learn how to make fantastic pan sauces for chicken and turkey cutlets, duck breasts, pork chops, fish fillets and more. A sauce can make or break a great dinner.

Let Me Cook - Kitchen Makeover

DATE: Tuesday, April 6 TIME: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. LOCATION: Novi Middle School Room 328 DETAILS: Learn how to stock a pantry so you will be able to whip up anything at a moments notice and impress those unexpected guests.

PHONE: (248) 449-1206 for registration



Older students from the high school got to play teacher during a visit to Parkview Elementary.

Novi High students keep their eyes out for Parkview pupils

By Ramez Khuri

The 'eyes' have it. Well, not really. That should say the 'eyes' got it, as in, they got dissected at Parkview Elementary School last Wednesday.

Soldier pays a visit to Woods

Cousin of Woods student reads to kids

By Ramez Khuri

Theresa Drafta, a Novi Woods fourth grader, had someone very special to share with her classmates last Tuesday. It was kind of like show and tell, but instead of bringing a Barbie doll, or some other toy, Drafta introduced her older cousin, Rick Dee, to the school.

group and in 2003 he went to Iraq. Currently Dee is on leave until Easter Sunday, but it's possible he could return to Iraq next March. Dee talked to the students about the army's intentions in the current war with Iraq. He read a book entitled "A is for America," written by Channel 4 News Anchor Devin Scillian, which he later presented to Novi Woods Principal Pam Quilpini. He also held a question-and-answer session with the kids, passed out pencils and American flag pins and even took the time to pose for photos with all the classes who attended.



"Rick" (pictured) was 19 years old and going to college when 9-11 happened and he decided to join the army. Here's my cousin, Specialist Rick Dee," said Theresa Drafta introducing her guest.

ON CAMPUS

Thomas Philip Price of Novi was named to the dean's list at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Ga., for fall quarter 2003. Price is a painting major and is the son of David Price and Donna Price of Novi.

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Waldenwoods Resort Easter Dinner Buffet. Rocky's of Brighton Easter Buffet.

SCHOOL BRIEFS

Sale to benefit TACC. Brian Langley, a Novi High School science teacher, is designing and selling T-shirts, sweatshirts and sweatpants, with all profits benefiting Teens Aiding the Cancer Community this semester.

HomeTown Heroes

Do You Want to Honor a HomeTown Hero? Your Observer & Eccentric, Mirror and HomeTown Newspapers, in conjunction with the United Way Volunteer Center of Oakland, are calling for nominations for the HomeTown Heroes Awards.

Village Oaks S.P.A.R.K. Day a success despite power outage

Students learned much about science during event

By Bette Born

After more than a year of planning, the first ever S.P.A.R.K. Day took place March 12 at Village Oaks Elementary School. Science Plus Activities Reaching Kids day was an event that principal Mary Goedert had spearheaded at her previous school system, and she wanted the Village Oaks students to enjoy it as well.

The purpose of this event was to introduce children to the many facets of science in a very informal, hands-on approach which would inspire and "spark" their curiosity. The second goal of S.P.A.R.K. Day was to expand the children's career awareness by inviting presenters from throughout the community who use science at work.

With the support of the parent organization V.O.I.C.E., over 22 presenters from every walk of life were assembled for this very special day. The topics ranged from weather, forestry, recycling and animals to germs, food, lasers and hydro-electric power.

Based on the subject area, the topics were classified by age appropriateness of either (kindergarten, first, and second) or (third and fourth). Each presenter was given a room and 45 minutes to introduce and talk about their subject area. During this time, they engaged in vital conversation and various hands-on activities with their room of students. At the end of the 45 minute session, the school would fill with the chatter of children as each made their way to the next session. In total, each child participated in three sessions of their choice.

Mary Ann Dunaj-Ring, from the Detroit Zoo, presented "Animal Wrappers." The children experienced the feel of a zebra, giraffe, moose, and polar bear pelt. They learned how hair or fur can keep an animal warm and that the colder the weather, the more dense the animal's hair. Fur also protects the animals from cuts. The children also examined feathers from various birds including a peacock, owl and duck. They were able to see how the feathers keep the birds dry. The children saw the skeleton of a snake and felt a real snake skin. Reptile skin, known as wrapper, helps to keep moisture in as a form of protection.

Nancy Kelly, a parent and science teacher, engaged a room full of younger students with her amazing light show. She explained the various parts of the eye and how light is captured.

The children quickly discovered the differences between transparent, translucent and opaque. Lots of giggles could be heard as the children's opaque bodies made the light go around their bodies and put shadows up on the walls.

"Ahhhh!" was the reaction at Kelly's as she shined a beam of light in

the dark room and lightly sprinkled fine, white baby powder over the beam. Because white light contains all the colors of the rainbow traveling in different waves, the waves of the white light could be seen. The same demonstration using a red laser showed no waves in the light.

The children enjoyed several hands-on activities with pyramids, kaleidoscopes, and other reflective materials. And, finally, the students learned that Mr. ROY G. BIV is a great way to remember the order and colors of the rainbow—Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet.

Gieta Wicker, from the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, gave every student the opportunity to be a geologist for 45 minutes. Each child was given a set of rocks and minerals, a magnifying glass, and a color flip chart. As they learned about the three different types of rocks—igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic—the children looked through their personal set to find their sample. With their magnifying glasses in hand, each looked closely for minerals that were crystals. It

was a great opportunity for the students to be detectives and geologists.

On the first-ever S.P.A.R.K. Day, science was given a whole new life at Village Oaks. It became a truly fascinating and interesting subject as the students were able to see, hear and feel in the hands-on activities.

"Science is in every part of life and can be a very fun subject, too! Especially when it is 'S.P.A.R.K. in the dark!'" Goedert said. "We look forward to next year, and hopefully, a day that is fully powered."

S.P.A.R.K. in the dark

No one could have ever imagined after more than hundreds of hours planning this very special event, that the flickering lights at the entrances to school were not a special effect for S.P.A.R.K. Day.

Without invitation, Detroit Edison played a vital role on March 12. Apparently, a fuse (or two) had blown in the transformer. The school had partial power. For the

most part, the school was in total dark, or "glow in the dark" mode. The telephones did not work. The PA system did not work. The heat did not work. Many of the clocks stopped. The bathrooms were in total darkness. But the staff and parents of Village Oaks proudly said, "The show must go on." And, "on" it went.

With maps, schedules, and a case full of flashlights, everyone pitched in and helped. A main volunteer in each hallway, with a walkie talkie, had older siblings so no two families would receive more than one call. The verbal call went out through their chosen presentation by walking with their classmates or with the help of the many volunteers and staff in the hallways. Presenters stayed, even in the midst of black classrooms, to talk to the children. Many times several teachers and parent volunteers shone three or more flashlights on presenters so the children could see their subject matter. No one panicked. Everyone cooperated.

As the morning proceeded, and it was evident that the electric would

not be restored in time for lunch, principal Mary Goedert made the next decision: School would close early at 11:45 a.m.

So how do you contact every parent when all the phone lines are dead?

The secretarial staff, Patricia Korlandt and Pam Neville, with the help of additional staff members prepared packets for each classroom. Rosiers were updated with children who were sick for the day or had older siblings so no two families would receive more than one call.

The verbal call went out through their chosen presentation by walking with their classmates or with the help of the many volunteers and staff in the hallways. Presenters stayed, even in the midst of black classrooms, to talk to the children. Many times several teachers and parent volunteers shone three or more flashlights on presenters so the children could see their subject matter. No one panicked. Everyone cooperated.

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not be restored in time for lunch, principal Mary Goedert made the next decision: School would close early at 11:45 a.m.

Marching through books: A celebration of reading in Novi

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

March may be over, but that doesn't mean the celebration of the joy of reading should end too. Schools across the Novi Community School District took part in that celebration all month, with many author visits, activities and parties.

At Parkview Elementary School, authors such as Johnathan Rand and Rhonda Green shared their knowledge with the kids, while the PTO was busy preparing cupcakes for Dr. Seuss' birthday party. Students watched Dr. Seuss videos and explored the Dr. Seuss web site.

"Our parents come in as reading ambassadors and they begin reading books to students that, hopefully, they will check out and finish themselves," Parkview Literacy Specialist Wendy Gould said. "That's organized by our PTO. We also have a mystery teacher exchange where all the classroom teachers exchange classes and go in and read a story to a different classroom. The kids don't know who that mystery teacher is until that person arrives at their door. The teachers and kids both like that."

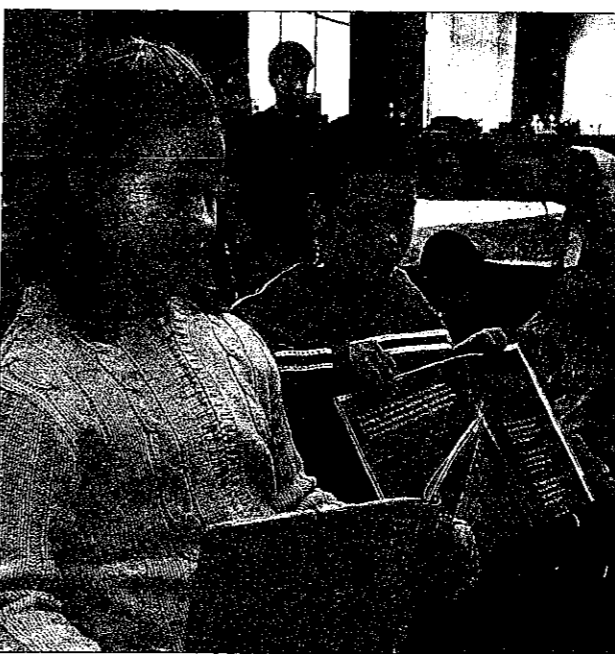
Gould also explained that Parkview also has a year-long reading incentive program called the Bear Club and March is the last month for that. Kids are encouraged to enter the Bear Club, bring their contest and the best one is chosen to be a real banner, which is then put on display in the media center.

"It's a celebration of reading," Gould said. "March is a good time during the year to do it. It's between winter and when all the sports events start. Originally March Reading Month started with the governor many years ago. We have been celebrating March is Reading Month at Parkview since we opened 14 years ago."

Here's a look at what all of the other Novi schools did to celebrate March Reading Month.



Deerfield Elementary teachers Janis Wagner, left, and Janice Wallace talk to a school in Malville, P.A., via a teleconference after their students read their essays "If I were the President".



Orchard Hills students Jessica Smith and Kyle Clemmons read "Legend of Sleeping Bear" by Kathy-Jo Waigin to other classrooms outside of Michigan during a March is Reading Month teleconference last Wednesday morning.



Novi Woods Principal Pam Quittiquit celebrated March is Reading Month by reading "The Cat in the Hat" to students. The Cat himself and Thing 2 also showed up to encourage students to read. Pictured are second graders (back row): Lauren Matson, Jessica Parvang, Peter Tierney, Abby Patenaude, Jenny Chang, Jessica Ledesma (front row) Nicholas Cox, Jessie Beisito, Megan Paul and Ruiting Zuo.



Jackie Puritan, from the WOMC Radio Station, visited the Novi Public Library to read to children for March Reading Month. This event is co-sponsored by Community Financial Credit Union and WOMC Radio Station.



Officer Tom Lindbergh, from the Novi Police Department, reads to first graders in Kathy Sliato's room as one of the readers on Community Reader's Day at Village Oaks.

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Johnathan Rand, the author of the Michigan Chillers book series and most recently the American Chillers book series, visited Parkview Elementary School last month, stressing to students the importance of following their dreams. He also told his story about how he became an author.

SCREEN BEAT

By Brian Renner

Sci-fi action film "Hellboy" begins during the final days of World War II as the Nazis attempt to use black magic to aid their dying cause. The Allies raid the camp where the ceremony is taking place, but not before a demon - Hellboy - has already been conjured. Joining the Allied forces, Hellboy eventually grows to adulthood, serving the cause of good rather than evil. As an adult, he is ultimately sent on a mission that brings him back to the Nazi wizard where it all began. "Hellboy" is a Sony Pictures release and rated PG-13 by the MPAA for sci-fi action violence and frightening images.

Julia Stiles stars as in the romantic tale "The Prince and Me" as a free-spirited American college student, who beginning her post-secondary education at an Indiana university. She meets and falls in love with one of her classmates, but doesn't know is that he's actually a Danish prince, Frederick (Luke Mably), who's spending a year hiding in America disguised as a regular guy. "The Prince and Me" is a Paramount Pictures release and rated PG by the MPAA for some sex-related material and language.

In this animated musical comedy set in the wild west, "Home on the Range" the story of a herd of cows

who band together to save their farm. The widow owes a \$1000 mortgage on the farm and has no way to pay for it, and the cows get wind of the trouble. Fearing that they'll be sold to the local meat-packing plant, the cows, led by Dame Judi Dench, seek to find a way to earn the money. "Home on the Range" is a Walt Disney Pictures release and rated PG by the MPAA for brief mild rude humor.

Adventure "Walking Tall" stars Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson as Chris Vaughn, a retired soldier who returns to his hometown to make a new life, only to discover an old high school rival, Jay Hamilton (Neal McDonough), has closed the once-profitable lumber mill and turned the town into a hotbed of criminal activity. The place Chris grew up is now overrun with crime, drugs and violence. Chris gets himself elected sheriff and vows to shut down Hamilton's operations. "Walking Tall" is a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer release and rated PG-13 by the MPAA for sequences of intense violence, sexual content, drug material and language.

For more information, please log on to *The Movie Insider* at www.themovieinsider.com. Please direct any questions, comments, and/or feedback to brian@themovieinsider.com.



Photo by John Heider
Sassy
Clare Wiper, of Leamington, Ontario, snuggles up to his sphynx cat "Sassy Pants Be Gone" during last Saturday's Mid-Michigan Cat Fanciers' show at the Novi Expo Center. Sassy Pants, seven months old, is part of the shorthair breed of cats.

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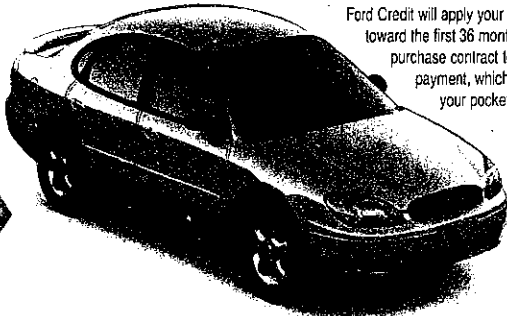
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Eric Hansen earns All-Area honors for wrestling squad

This was an obvious choice this year as Hansen has proved himself to be one of the top wrestlers in the area time and time again. He was the only Novit grappler to earn first-team honors, but a few others were selected with honorable mentions.

Hansen is in good company, ranking up there with the best of the best of his conference as well as from Northville. Something tells us he's right at home with these peers.

— See Page B6 for details

Honorable Mention Wrestlers for All-Area

- A.J. Morris, Senior, Novi
- Jason Sierra, Senior, Novi
- Scott Bergeson, Senior, Novi
- Bill Riegner, Senior, Northville
- Ben Mason, Senior, Northville
- Steve Minier, Senior, Northville
- Andrew Burdick, Freshman, Milford
- Jacob Makowski, Junior, South Lyon

Like autographs?

If you haven't heard of Mitch Maier, you probably live under a rock. But, just in case, here's a refresher course: Mitch is a local graduate of Novi High School who played a slew of sports for the Wildcats. He went on to play baseball at the University of Toledo after turning down an offer from U of M in the ways of that sport they call football. The decision must have been the right one as Mitch was drafted in the first round by the Kansas City Royals last year and is playing Triple-A ball right now.

Well, as luck would have it, we came across 45 cards that Topps made of Mitch and we sent them out to have them signed by our local pro. He did just that and now we're going to give them away. Stay tuned to this sports section to find out the when, where and how to get your hands on one of these highly collectable pieces of Novi sports.

JV scores

Want to see you junior varsity or freshman athlete getting their names in the sports section? It's rather easy to do, actually...just drop Sam Eggleston a line at seggleston@nt.homecomm.net to find out how!

Players of the Week

Check back next week for the spring season's first players of the week. This is quickly becoming one of the favorite features in the Novi News and we don't expect that to change. The athletes just keep getting better and better and that is shown by just how good the Novi sports teams have become.

Don't be upset if your favorite athlete isn't listed a particular week — they have all season to try to get their nod. Just for the record, the decision isn't made by the coaches or parents or players — it's done by Sam Eggleston, the writer for the *Novi News* sports section. No nominations are accepted for the honor as he makes his choice based on week-to-week performances.

Did you know?

Novi has a rugby team? Well, sort of. The Northville-Novit Knights Rugby Football Club is a team that allows players from Novi and Northville to play with each other instead of against on a field of highly competitive and highly entertaining play.

Don't know squat about the sport? Who cares! The players and coaches are ready and willing to teach able-bodied athletes the ins and outs of the game as they look to challenge for the state title this year.

If interested, hunt down your local rugger and let him know. He'll be quick to get you started and on your way in the sport that sprouted from soccer and gave birth to American Football!



NOVI PUBLIC LIBRARY B¹ SPORTS

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NOVI NEWS

hometownlife.com

Thursday, April 1, 2004

FOOLS FOR APRIL

Call them what you will, but these Wildcats are geared up for spring sports

It's that time of year again and everyone is trying to get out and play some sports — outside! Have they taken the time to look out there? It can't decide if it is going to snow, rain, hail, blow like heck or freeze with ice pretty much on everything.

Yet, not a single Wildcat seems to care. Why? Well, the truth is, they're all out athletes and it would take a lot more than just a little weather to stop them from getting on the fields of play right now! A season of being cooped up inside is enough to drive any one of these athletes crazy, and the first chance they get to really come out and play they are going to take it, that's for sure.

The Novi baseball team is looking pretty darn strong this year. With hurlers like Mike Hart and Billy Morrison leading the way, it shouldn't be a surprise at all if they end up running the board in the Kensington Valley Conference. Their goal this year is to win their fifth-straight conference championship and then move on to bigger and better things in the state tournament. See story on page B3.

The Wildcats will be sure to let everyone know that they don't mind being considered as one of the top soccer teams in all the land. In fact, they have one of the best soccer players in all of the land in Maureen Pawlak. Even beyond Mo, they have players like Nikki Hermann, Kristi Timar and Coleen Brockman to make some major noise

this year. This could be the season for coach Brian O'Leary and his gang and they aren't about to let it slip through their fingers. See page B2.

There's no doubt about it — the golf team is ready to play some serious matches this year. With just four seniors, the young squad has leadership and plenty of youthful enthusiasm to carry them this year. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have major dedication and talent to go along with that. The team, which is coached by Deb Harris, will find themselves competing in a very strong field of Kensington Valley Conference teams this year and probably doing quite well if they can keep the strokes to a minimum. Story on page B4.

The lacrosse team at Novi has one thing to say for themselves: They are a whole new team with a whole new attitude. After a lousy season last year cramped their style, the powers that be in Michigan lacrosse banished the Wildcats to a season of playing Division II teams instead of Division I like Novi was used to. First-year Novi coach Brad Muston isn't too happy about that, but he's looking to make sure that his squad makes enough noise to get themselves back on track and back in the ranks of the top teams in the state by the time the MHSAA takes over controlling the sport as of next season. Don't be surprised if the Novi Wildcats bring a lot more than these teams in Division II are used to seeing. Muston was a member

of the state championship squad at Novi High and is looking to get his team back to where they used to be in the rankings. See page B2.

Can you imagine what it must be like to be the following act of a team that made the state finals for the first time in school history? That's what the boys' tennis team is going through, but they don't mind. They have seven returning players from last year's team and will be looking to get themselves back in the running and into the state finals yet again. First, they have some things to take care of, like winning the KVC title yet again and figuring out just how to jockey their line up for the best results. One singles player Suraj Ramachandran and two singles star Prasanna Venugopal will be looking to lead their highly talented team to the promised land yet again. Story on page B5.

Over 100 girls! Can you imagine having to keep track of that many athletes at one sporting event? Novi's girls' track team boasts nearly 120 girls' track this year and has implemented a new captain system to bring 12 of them on board to help control the force that they have built! Expect this team not only to be big in numbers, but big on talent as they look to finish in the top three in conference play this year. That won't be an easy task to do, but it is definitely something this group of girls can accomplish if they put their minds to it. Story on B5.

Boys are ready to make noise in track

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

With nearly 100 kids out for the boys' track team, it seems that the word is spreading at Novi High — track is king among spring sports.

The team, which is coached by Bob Smith, will be looking to be just as competitive as ever and hoping to expand their horizons just slightly.

"We're well rounded this year," Smith said. "We don't have any stellar events."

That is a point that probably be argued, considering the squad returns juniors Mark Moore and Amol Huprikar to their distance events — two individuals who earned All-State status in cross country.

"That's just business as usual in the KVC," Smith laughed. "Everyone has a couple of those guys in this conference."

Though that isn't far from the truth, the distance events for the Wildcats will no doubt still be at solid foundation for the rest of their team to be built on.

"We're actually pretty solid all the way around," Smith said. "Our sprints are solid and we're actually very solid in many of our field events."

Including the throws, which will be headlined by junior Ryan Pritchard this year.

"When he's on mentally, he's really a force," Smith said. "He's just starting to realize his potential now. I honestly think he'll be a success this year, which will make him a better athlete all the way around, including on the gridiron."

In the long jump, the Wildcats will have Carl Yui leading the way while Brandon Carnegie, Mark Saurer and Eric Zhao will do their best to challenge Yui in each meet and push each other.

The pole vault finds three sophomores in Chris Alberty, Dan Coleman and Chris Machisak looking to make height this year.

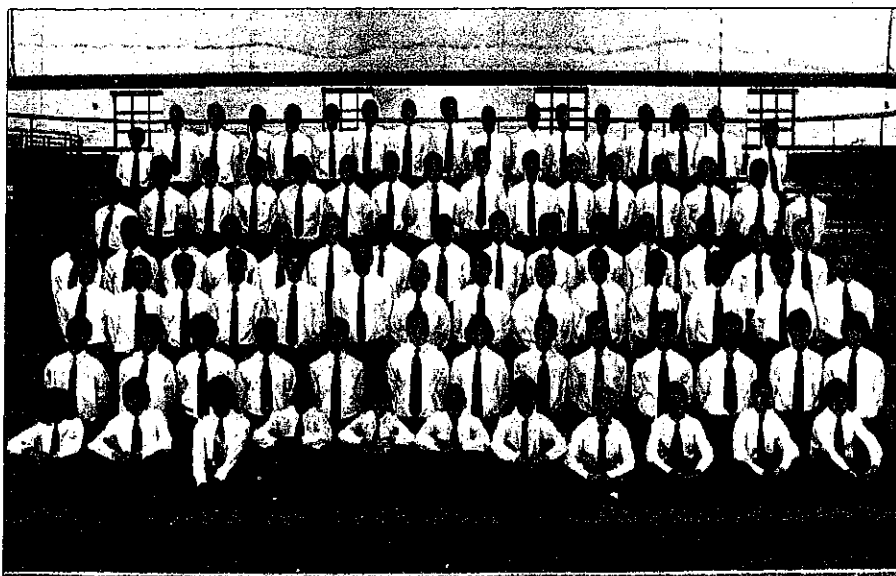
"They worked extremely hard in the winter and did more pole vaulting than any athlete I've seen in the off season," Smith said. "I expect they will be jumping well."

The high jump finds Brad Spisich leading the way, but Saurer won't be too far behind him.

"Spisich is capable of 6-feet in the near future," Smith noted.

In the middle distance events, Smith said he expects Trenton Sisson to lead the pack.

"He really wants to own that event," he said. "He does everything we ask in training and that is really kind of awesome. He's



Courtesy Photo

The Novi Wildcats boys track team isn't kidding around when it comes to numbers or talent this year — they're stacked in both.

extremely dedicated." Steve Fannon and J.W. Woods will also look to challenge in the 400 and 800.

Huprikar and Moore will have plenty of runs in the mile and two mile, and Huprikar is expected to see time in the half mile along with fellow harrier Spencer Ornes.

In the sprints, Justin Davis, Josh Woods, Chris Dalton and David Carnegie will most likely lead the way.

"I expect them to earn a lot of recognition this year," Smith said. "They'll probably end up running beyond high school. They're really that good."

In the hurdles, Yui and Saurer will be looking to lead the rest of the Wildcats in the events.

The captains on the team this year are Scott Bergeson, Eric Tingwall, Bo Xiao and Saurer.

"This is a very deep team and a very talented group of athletes," Smith said. "We should have some good meets and will look to be qualifying a lot of runners for the state meet based on times alone."

The team's goals, like every year, are to challenge for the Kensington Valley Conference title and qualify as many athletes for the state finals as they can.

**BOYS AND GIRLS TRACK
ALL HOME MEETS AT NOVI HIGH SCHOOL**

| Date | Place | Opponent | Start Time |
|-----------|-------|---------------------------|------------|
| 3/30/2004 | Home | Northville | 3:30 p.m. |
| 4/6/2004 | Away | Howell | 4 p.m. |
| 4/10/2004 | Home | Novi Relays | 10 a.m. |
| 4/22/2004 | Home | Lakeland | 4 p.m. |
| 4/23/2004 | Away | Harrison 9-10 | 3:20 p.m. |
| 4/27/2004 | Away | Brighton | 4 p.m. |
| 5/1/2004 | Away | Holly 9-10 | 10:30 a.m. |
| 5/4/2004 | Home | South Lyon | 4 p.m. |
| 5/6/2004 | Away | Hartland | 4 p.m. |
| 5/8/2004 | Away | Sunshine 9-10 @ S. Lyon | 9 a.m. |
| 5/11/2004 | Home | Milford | 4 p.m. |
| 5/14/2004 | Away | Stevenson Invite | 4 p.m. |
| 5/18/2004 | Away | Pinckney | 4 p.m. |
| 5/21/2004 | Away | Regionals | 2 p.m. |
| 5/25/2004 | Away | KVC | 2 p.m. |
| 5/28/2004 | Away | Oakland County @ Milford | 3 p.m. |
| 5/29/2004 | Away | Freshman County @ Milford | 9 a.m. |
| 6/5/2004 | Away | State Finals | TBA |

REGIONAL MARKETPLACE

8B

Novi News

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Gas saving tips reduce pain at fuel pump

The average cost of gasoline in Michigan has risen almost 21 cents per gallon since the first of the year, according to AAA Michigan.

Consumers who fill up once a week with self serve regular unleaded fuel are spending anywhere from \$8 to \$20 more a month on gas.

Paying higher gas prices for a couple of months will likely have only a minimal effect on consumer's pocketbooks, but some experts are predicting that prices won't decrease significantly until after Labor Day.

What steps can you take to conserve gas—and save money—over the next several months? Consider these tips from AAA Michigan.

• Keep tires properly inflated. You can improve your gas mileage by as much as three percent by keeping your tires properly inflated. Under-inflated tires can not only wear out tire tread and lead to blowouts, they can cut fuel economy by nearly a half percent per pound of pressure below recommended levels.

• Unless your owner's manual specifically says to purchase mid-grade or premium gasoline, fill up with regular low octane fuel. Using self-serve regular fuel compared to premium can save you an average of 17 cents per gallon.

• Check and replace air filters regularly. A clogged air filter can reduce your vehicle's gas mileage by as much as 10 percent.

• Don't start your car in the morning and leave it running. An idling engine consumes one half-gallon to as much as one gallon per hour.

• Accelerate gently, brake gradually and avoid hard stops. You'll not only conserve fuel, you'll reduce wear and tear on your automobile.

• Get rid of the junk in your trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk reduces a typical car's fuel economy by as much as two percent.

• Try to combine as many errands as possible into one trip. If you must make multiple trips, try to avoid driving during peak rush hours. You'll spend less time sitting in traffic and consume less fuel.

• Avoid loading items on your vehicle's roof rack. While a roof rack provides extra cargo space, when loaded it decreases your fuel economy by as much as five percent. You can improve your fuel economy by placing items inside your trunk.

Once you've transported the items, remove them from your trunk immediately.

• If you own more than one vehicle, consider designating one for weekend errands and outings and the other for driving to and from work. Reserve the vehicle that gets the best mileage for activities that require the most driving.

Mary Davis manages public affairs for the Michigan Credit Union League (MCUL), a statewide trade association representing Michigan credit unions. Send your financial questions to "Your Money Matters" c/o the Michigan Credit Union League, P.O. Box 8054, Plymouth, MI 48170-8054, or stop by our Web site (www.mcul.org) to learn more about smart money management. Comments about this column may be e-mailed to mcd@mcul.org.

Mary Davis



At Raney's Rainbow Gardens, 57707 Ten Mile Road just west of Milford Road in South Lyon, patrons will find greenhouses full of impatiens and hundreds of other plants and flowers.

Photos by HAL GOULD

Raney's offers spring's dash of color

By Annette Jaworski
SPECIAL WRITER

It may not look like spring outdoors, but a walk through Raney's Rainbow Gardens in South Lyon should erase any doubt that spring is on the way. Aisles of greenery and blooms are ready and waiting to get customers in the mood for gardening. Mike Raney, of Raney's Rainbow Gardens says it's the perfect time to stop by and check out what's new and exciting for spring.

"We have a pleasant shopping experience. There's a million

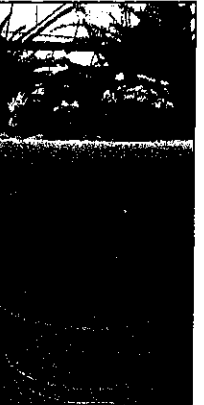


Photo by ANNETTE JAWORSKI

things to look at," said Raney. New and exciting plants and products are available each season. Come in to check out their annuals, with many new additions as well as proven winners from petunias to scaevola. Look for new varieties of ivy, Jackson Perkins roses and coleus.

Ornamental grasses in new shapes and colors are a hot trend in landscape design, said Raney, and a great way to add interest to the landscape during fall and winter. They carry literally hundreds of varieties, including a new variety with a fiber optic look. You'll also see the old-fashioned favorites being rediscovered like snapdragons and verbena.

Don't forget, Raney's specializes in perennial plants that return year to year in your garden. They carry literally thousands of new and old favorites including the "perennial plant of the year," the Japanese Painted Fern. They also carry a selection of new woodland water gardening plants.

Deck and patio containers are another popular trend in gardening. They're colorful, creative and easy to maintain, he added. Whatever your taste, Raney's Rainbow Gardens has a container to suit your outdoor décor. Their versatile collection offers everything from "old scale to upscale," to accommodate their clientele's eclectic tastes. With the combination of pots and colorful plants, the possibilities are endless.

"We can help you to create your own, or we'll have a wide selection ready to go at reasonable prices," said Raney. "If you don't have time, we'll do it for you."

It's part of his philosophy to make gardening fun and convenient. People don't want to fuss, but they want the beauty, he

observed. "When I focus on things, I remember that people are in a hurry. They have lots of other things to do," he said.

Raney's is family owned with a tradition that hails back to Mike's father, Ray, who started the business in 1951. Initially, they offered produce and goods like a farm market. They've never strayed far from their agricultural roots, according to Mike. In fact his father, Ray, remains active in the business along with his brother, Tony. Their foundation in farming is why they're able to offer high-quality plants at affordable prices. Everything there is grown from seeds or cuttings.

"We're able to maintain the high standard of quality because of our years of experience," said Raney. "We're hands on here. One of us is here every day."

They also have unlimited access to technical knowledge within their staff and outside informational resources. Customers are able to take advantage of the employee's problem solving and creative abilities. Mike Raney has a degree in horticulture from Michigan State and several members of the staff are master gardeners. All employees are chosen with a love and enthusiasm for gardening that they share with their customers.

And because they grow everything on site in their 50 greenhouses, everything is readily available in one spot. If it's not on display, just ask. During the planting season the staff works hard to get customers through the checkout line and into their gardens - where they want to be.

"The customer can find exactly what they want, with a variety and quality the big box stores can't match," added Raney.

When it comes to nursery needs, they offer your favorites as well as a lot of rare and unusual woody ornamentals such as new hydrangeas and lilacs that will light up the landscape when they're in bloom. There are also general landscape needs and staples such as plants, evergreens and flowering shrubs. Don't forget the supplies while you're there. Pick up the fertilizer, soil, mulches and pest control while you shop.

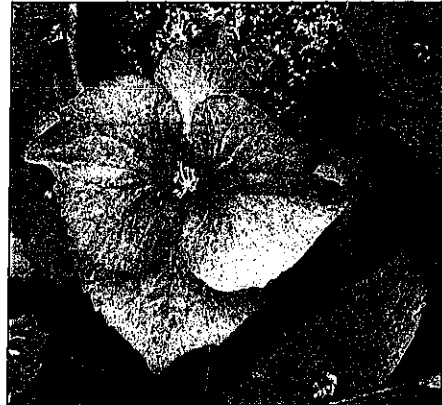
"We have an emphasis on quick and easy ready-to-use products from a time saver standpoint as well as earth friendly and environmentally sound materials," said Raney.

He reminds that it doesn't have to be spring or summer to drop by; they're open year round, closing only briefly in January. There's always new and interesting plants or garden accessories to enjoy. They're also a great

source for gifts for all occasions specializing in holiday and garden-oriented accessories, flowers and plants and a perfect stop for a Mother's Day gift. You'll find a beautiful selection of garden accents including statuary, trellis and wall art. When it comes to floral design and arrangements, they take the time to add special touches and quality you won't get at the big boxes or garden centers, according to Raney.

Raney's Rainbow Gardens is centrally located at 57707 Ten Mile Road just west of Milford Road in South Lyon. They're minutes from other nearby communities of Novi, Northville, Milford, Wixom, Brighton and Livonia with plenty of convenient parking.

For more information call (248) 437-2856. Hours are 9-6 a.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.




A blue Lace Cap Hydrangea provides a beautiful blue hue among deep green foliage.

Do you have a story idea or a business brief?

If you have a news brief or story idea about your company, send it to:

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