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INSIDE



15 Minutes With ...

Find out what makes long-time supporter of Novi and Novi High School athletics Tim Marcus tick.

— Page 3A

Oh Baby

This new section features babies born in 2004 (they are sooo cute), a recap of important events and prices of 2004, and parenting tips on naming your baby, choosing daycare, education, eating and more.

Special Section

Direct Buy

If you're a homeowner looking to save a buck or two,



DirectBuy in may be just for you. Tony Musu, former vice president of Hometown Community Credit Union, is the store's new general manager.

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CONTACT US

Novi News
104 W. Main
Northville, MI 48167

■ Classifieds: 888-999-1288

■ Newsroom: 248-349-1700

■ Fax: 248-349-9832

■ Home Delivery: 888-840-4809



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Random drug testing?

■ Next forum to be held on February 24

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

Parents had mixed reactions to the possibility of random drug testing among student athletes during a public forum at Novi High School last week.

Curt Ellis, the school's athletic director, held the first of two meetings about the proposed athletic code of conduct in the high school's auditorium on Thursday.

"If the parents say random drug testing is not effective, or it's not the route that they think can be most effective, we may indeed take it out (of the new code of conduct)," he said.

That may be the case, as many of the parents voiced their disapproval of the random drug testing. One of those was Kathleen Bartlett, mother of junior football player Alex Bartlett, a receiver on the varsity team.

"I understand the issue of random drug testing is still under discussion, but nonetheless, these are

children and they need to be taught how to say no," she said.



Curt Ellis

(drugs) with my child and I don't think the school needs to address it again."

One parent in favor of the

changes is Carol Sprys, whose son Dan is the captain of the varsity wrestling team, a thrower in discus and shot-put in track and an offensive guard/defensive tackle in football.

"Athletics is a privilege, it's not a requirement," she said. "If that's what needs to be done, then do it."

Ellis said the two things that drove him and the committee to review the code of conduct were that they knew it was lacking language on hazing and also lacking consistent language on consequences in a lot of different areas.

continued on page 2A

Over 50 gather to discuss concerns with city

■ Annual city hall breakfast keeps growing

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

Being president of a homeowners association is kind of a thankless job.

There's no pay, a lot of responsibility and a big time commitment.

But once a year, representatives from Novi's neighborhoods do receive a small benefit from the city by being invited to the Homeowner Association Leadership Breakfast. This year's event took place last Saturday at the Novi Civic Center.

Cindy Uglow, Neighborhood Services coordinator, said the Jan. 29 breakfast was a tremendous success, with representatives from more than 50 homeowner associations present.

After talking with many of the associations' leaders, Uglow said major concerns of Novi homeowners are:

- The city's updated master plan
- Neighborhood and child watch programs
- An update on the Emerald Ash Borer's effect on city trees
- Roads and street replacement

Mary Beth Mascari, president of Wintergreen Park subdivision on the south side of Ten Mile Road between Taft and Beck roads, was one of the neighborhood leaders attending the breakfast.

"I feel every year it's a very well-organized celebration of our city and what's going on around us. It's a chance to get

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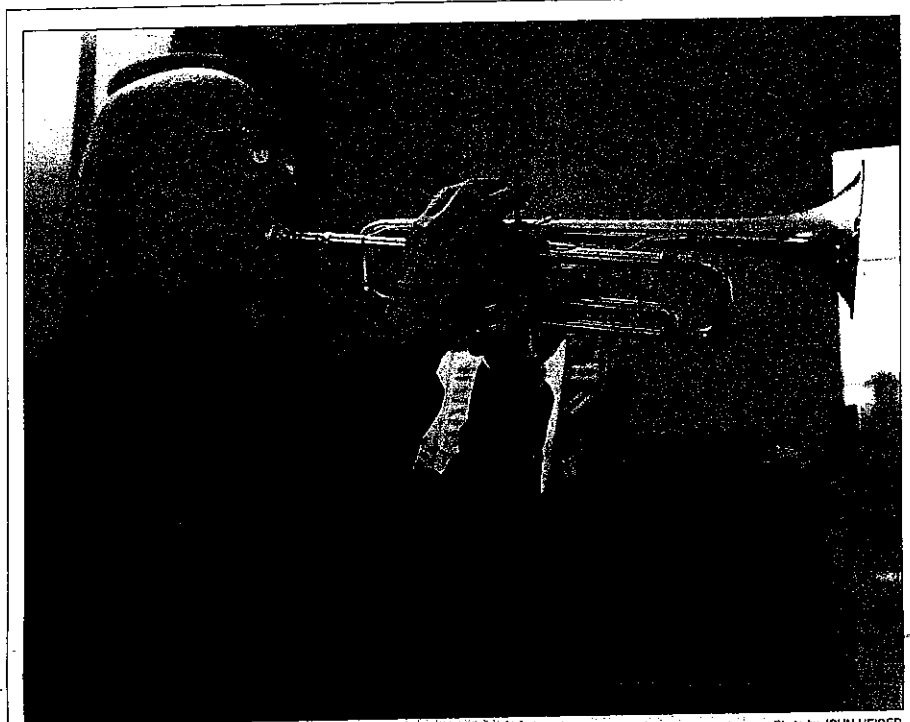


Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Still swingin'

Waltonwood resident Milt Aptekar has been playing his trumpet for decades. For the full story on a group of Novi seniors who are still making music, please turn to page 13A.

School board filing deadline Tuesday

■ Two open seats on Novi School Board

By Ramez Khuri
STAFF WRITER

The deadline is looming for those planning on running in this year's Novi Community School

Board of Education election.

Two seats will open this year, as board president John Streit and board member John Balagna both publicly announced that they will not be running again. Both of their terms expire June 30. Each board member term is for four years.

Individuals interested in running must file their nominating petitions and affidavits of identities with Oakland County by 4 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 8. Materials needed

are available at City of Novi offices.

The election will be held Tuesday, May 3, a month earlier than in previous years. Instead of the district administering the election as in the past, Novi City Clerk Maryanne Cornelius now will run it. Cornelius will also be running the Northville and Walled Lake school elections in the Novi boundaries.

In the Northville Public School District, 4,500 voters live in Novi

and 118 are in Novi Township.

Recently-passed legislation calls for election consolidations and allows for four election dates in a year for school districts — February, May, August or November. Novi chose May.

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@h.homecomm.net.

HOMEOWNERS' ISSUES

Residents' top concerns at the Jan. 29 Homeowner Association Leadership Breakfast at city hall were:

- The city's updated master plan
- Neighborhood and child watch programs
- An update on the Emerald Ash Borer's effect on city trees
- Roads and street replacement

Chinese New Year celebrated in style

■ Residents party at Novi Middle School

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

For Americans, New Year's celebrations consist of getting together with friends or family to welcome the coming year.

This month, the Chinese celebrate their New Year with their own special traditions.

The holiday is based on the Chinese Lunar Calendar, which follows the cycles of the moon.



Photo by JEFF ZHENG

The White family, from left: Michael, Martha, Erica, 19 months, Nicole, 4, and Malla, 6, at Sunday's Chinese New Year party at Novi Middle School. Martha enjoys taking Chinese classes at the Michigan New Century Chinese School with Malla and Nicole every Sunday. The couple plans to adopt their fourth child this summer.

The date for New Year's Day is different every year, with the holiday falling on Feb. 9 this year.

Since this is just around the

corner, members of the Michigan New Century Chinese School

continued on page 2A

Plans for Walled Lake's downtown taking shape

■ Consultants see dining, entertainment and recreation

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

Downtowns are as much a part of America as hot dogs and apple pie.

Cities and towns that have them cherish them. And those that don't have one usually want one.

Last week, experts assessed area municipalities that are part of the National Main Street Center program, including Walled Lake.

■ Architect: Novi missed boat on downtown planning

By Pam Fleming
STAFF WRITER

About a decade ago, Novi's leaders had a vision — to create a downtown along the north and south sides of Grand River Avenue just east and west of Novi Road.

The result was Main

continued on page 4A

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SENIOR CENTER CALENDAR

Friday 2/4	Wednesday 2/9
8:45 a.m. Panera Bread	9 a.m. Stretch & Strength
9 a.m. Stretch and Strength	9 a.m.-1 p.m. Massage
10 a.m. Body Recall	10 a.m. Body Recall
noon Lunch	10 a.m. Computer - designing your own calendars class
12:30 p.m. Clogging - CANCELLED	10:30 a.m. Quilting
Tribute to the Starts Trip Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Trip	11 a.m. Blood Pressure and TOPS Class
Monday 2/7	noon Lunch
9 a.m. Stretch & Strength	12:30 p.m. Clogging*
10 a.m. Body Recall - new sessions	1:30-2:30 p.m. Sing-a-long with George and Caroline
11:30 a.m. Goodie Lady	Thursday 2/10
noon Lunch	9 a.m. Line Dance*
12:30 p.m. Pinochle*	10 a.m.-2 p.m. Income taxes by appointment only
1-3 p.m. Healing Touch	10 a.m. Computer-beginner Class
1-3 p.m. Clogging*	noon Lunch
Tuesday 2/8	12:15 Line Dance
9 a.m. Panera Bread	1-2 p.m. Computer-intermediate Class
9 a.m. Line Dance	1-3 p.m. Book Discussion at Center - CANCELLED
10 a.m. Asian Pacific	
11 a.m. Computer - Beginning Class	
11 a.m. "Memory" - Sharon T.	
noon Lunch	
12:30 p.m. Bingo	
12:30-2:30 p.m. Focus Hope Distribution	
1-3 p.m. Computer-Intermediate Class	

Activities designated with an "*" will be held at the Novi Civic Center. The Senior Center is located at 25075 Meadowbrook. Call (248) 347-0414.

SENIOR BRIEFS

Seniors give blood
Senior citizens at the Erickson Fox Run retirement community in Novi recently donated blood to the American Red Cross. Last month, 26 people gave, including residents, staff and servers. In all, 36 attended.

Fox Run anniversaries
Novi's Fox Run is honoring several employees who've been with Erickson retirement community one-four years as of this month. The fourth year celebrant was Heather Krasen, human resources generalist of Lathrup Village, while purchasing coordinator Taryta Barwick of Orchard Lake reached the three-year mark. Two-year anniversaries included event Julie Lanni of Farmington Hills, human resource director Sharon Mens of Belleville and general services director Judith DeMarco of Romulus. Those at the one-year point were dining service wait staff members Mark Butler of Commerce Township and Bryan Dechart and Bryan Crummins, both of Novi. Communications specialist Mary Garwood of Bloomfield Hills and housekeeper Tatyana Vaynova of Wixom also reached one year.

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Monday, February 21, 2005

Copy Deadline:
Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Publication Date:
Thursday, March 17, 2005

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Novi News

STILL SWINGING



Ruth Gootkin sings a tune from "Music Man" in her Fox Run home. Gootkin regularly sings at the Novi senior community on Thirteen Mile Road.

Ruth sings in markets. Milt Dick plays his sax, while George and Caroline get seniors singing. Grounded in an era dominated by jazz, big band and vocal groups, these five are among Novi's senior citizens still bringing their musical talents to the limelight.

"Though they've never performed together, each in the quintet says they've found joy and an outlet in music — whether performing for a crowd or with the radio.



LEFT and BELOW: Novi resident Dick Cywinski plays his tenor saxophone as he rehearses with "Big Band Express" at the Garden City Community Center. RIGHT: Caroline, left, and George Giese host a fun sing-along practice at the Novi Senior Center on a recent Wednesday afternoon.

Wood-winded
The glimmering gold of the horn lured Dick Cywinski and Milt Aptekar in grade school. After a short clarinet stint, Cywinski inherited a 1939 Parisian alto saxophone from his older brother at age 11 while attending Dearborn's Woodworth Elementary School.

Now 80, Cywinski picks up the same horn every Wednesday evening to practice at the Maple Wood Center in Garden City with 17 gents, mostly seniors. They're called the Big Band Express.

"It was a big instrument for me at that age," Cywinski recalled. "I just liked the saxophone sound. I sort of grew up with that era of music — big bands."

For retired teacher Aptekar, trumpet caught his ear 80 years ago at Custer Elementary School in Detroit.

"I like the sound of the horn," said Aptekar, 89. "I think it has a very warm sound. It's like singing."

It wasn't until he met Gene Fenby in 1935 that a group evolved. Playing for auto executives and introducing the likes of Luciano Pavarotti and Bob Hope until Fenby's recent death, the "singing schoolteachers" were known as the Fenby-Carr Orchestra.

"We played all the country clubs in the area. We were mainly an entertaining or listening kind of group," said Aptekar.

Both had four children, but while Aptekar taught high school jazz and played Detroit's London Chophouse, Cywinski took a break from sax to parent and work as a Ford engineer.

Today, Cywinski plays occasional weddings and festivals. Aptekar directs choir and disc jockeys themed music CD nights at his Watsonwood home — where he has a practice room for him and his trumpet.

With Big Band Express, Cywinski keeps swing-style tunes live.

"I just...feel like that's real music," he said. "It's sort of a relaxer. You have to concentrate all of your being on what you're doing. I really think it's a lot of fun."

They hail from three different states, but Ruth Gootkin and

George and Caroline Giese were raised in song.

"According to my mother, in kindergarten, I was always singing," Gootkin said. "I was just a joyful singer. Every week there were two or three new songs. Everybody knew them."

"Whenever you went, people were dancing and singing. It was fabulous."

In Newton, Mass., Gootkin said inspiration ran from Broadway to pop tunes. Violin was her adolescent love, but singing persisted, starting with solos as a 12-year-old concertmistress.

A variety of choral groups followed, most currently at her Fox Run home.

George Giese, 79, who accompanies wife Caroline at Novi's Senior Center for their monthly sing-alongs, began singing at Detroit's St. James Lutheran Detroit as a child. He took piano lessons for about two years.

"I enjoyed it so much I just kept playing piano all the time," George laughed. "I like jazz and all different kinds of styles of music. Singing — it just gives me enjoyment."

Alto-voiced Caroline, 90, said her childhood Taylorville, Ill. home was a musical magnet for neighborhood kids.

"Mom used to play the piano and my dad used to dance," Caroline said. "He used to jig. My friends would come over and they would say, 'Let's get your dad to dance!' There was music all along through my life, same as George."

George, who serenaded family and friends barbershop-quartet style, recently recorded a CD of love songs for Caroline. Both participate in Novi Theatres' senior shows.

For all three, training was picked up. Gootkin found tips on NBC's The Late Show to use her diaphragm to project.

"I was watching Johnny Carson one night and they had a voice teacher," she said. "She talked about the correct way to breathe."

Their singing satisfaction comes in small packages. Caroline sees it in the happy faces of seniors during sing-alongs.

"You know they're enjoying themselves," she said. "We get more out of it, I think, than we give. To make (them) so happy for an hour or two is really, really something."

And Gootkin, who croons a few lines to newly-met faces, added that there's a certain fun to it.

"When you like to sing, everything sounds like a song," Gootkin said. "I sing everywhere. Nobody has the nerve to do it. It's a very 'up' hobby."

Kim Kovelle is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 107 or kkovelle@ln.hometown.com.



ABOVE: A group of people enjoy a sing-along at the Novi Senior Center hosted by George and Caroline Giese.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS,

"I just...feel like that's real music. It's sort of a relaxer. You have to concentrate all of your being on what you're doing."

Dick Cywinski of Big Band Express, on swing music.

Story by Kim Kovelle
Photos by John Heider

SING-ALONG

- **What:** Sing-A-Long with George and Caroline Giese, featuring old classics
- **When:** Second Wednesday of every month, next is Feb. 9
- **Time:** 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Novi Senior Center, 25075 Meadowbrook Road, on the west side of the road between Ten Mile Road and Grand River Avenue
- **Call:** (248) 347-0414

WALLED LAKE SCHOOL BRIEFS

District challenging AYP results

The Walled Lake Consolidated Schools' announced it is appealing the district AYP report released Jan. 13. The state AYP district report indicated Walled Lake did not make AYP based on its middle school English Language Learners (ELL) English Language Arts (ELA) score and its high school Special Education math score.

The district received A's and B's on the state report cards at all levels, and made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at all its schools except Western High School as a result of having a larger special needs population that did not meet the standards on the state math test.

According to Superintendent Dr. James Geisler, "We are researching our large ELL student population as well as the special education stipulations. We disagree with the designation and

will work with state officials to recalculate the data."

Here's how Walled Lake's high schools rate on the No Child Left Behind, AYP and MEAP indication information that composes the grade:

- The high school participation rate on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests is above the required 95 percent.

- The high school graduation rate is 90.64 percent, well above the required 80 percent and the dropout rate is 1.47 percent.

- The general MEAP scores are well above the state AYP target score in math and language arts.

"In Walled Lake we rely on our benchmark assessments, tightly aligned curriculum with the state standards and instructional "best" practices and many research-based interventions including Reading Recovery, Soar to Success, an innovative English Language Learners program and many individualized strategies

used with our special learners," Geisler said.

Walled Lake Northern High School CAD goes 3D

Ken Melcher's CAD class at Walled Lake Northern recently received a grant from Discreet, Inc., for 20 copies of 3D Studio MAX. 3D Studio MAX is state of the art software for creating high end computer animation used in movies, video games, and visualization applications. The software will be used second semester by students in the advanced 3D CAD class at Northern.

The main objective of applying for the grant was to give students the change to experience creating graphics and animation approaching the level of that in many commercials and animations produced by the entertainment industry. Melcher said, "Because of the cost involved, most high school students rarely get the opportunity to experience this kind of soft-

ware. It's perfect for those interested in a career in animation."

The education division of Discreet has provided a series of tutorials the students will use to learn the functionality of the software. They also provided a CD with projects applying the skills students will learn in the tutorials.

District announces new election dates

Due to changes in the state election law that went into effect last January, there are several timing and procedural differences for the annual Walled Lake school board election. Candidate nomination petitions now must be filed with the Oakland County Election Coordinator in Pontiac, rather than with the district's election office. The deadline for filing is Feb. 8. The last day to register to vote is April 4. The election will be held on May 3, rather than in early June as in the past.

Two picked as candidates for Presidential Scholars

Tiffany Lin and Cassie Jeng are inseparable. They have been best friends since they were toddlers and are involved in many of the same activities at Novi High School. So, it was no surprise to either of them when they discovered that both have been chosen as candidates for the 2005 Presidential Scholars Program, an honor that goes to a mere 2,600 of the 2.8 million seniors expected to graduate from United States high schools this spring.

Lin received her notification first. "We got the same score on our ACT, so I knew Cassie would be picked, too," she said. Two days later, Jeng's letter arrived. Inclusion in the program is one of the highest honors high school seniors can achieve, and it is unusual for one high school to have two students chosen as candidates in the same year. Selection is based on superior academic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character, involvement in school and community activities and superior performance on either the College Board SAT or ACT. Further consideration is given to students' self-assessments, descriptions of activities, school recommendations and school transcripts.

In April, a distinguished panel of educators will select 500

finalists and the Commission on Presidential Scholars, a group of 32 eminent citizens appointed by the President of the United States, will then make the final selections. They will choose one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. students living abroad as well as 15 students at large and up to 20 students from the creative and performing arts

as Presidential Scholars. The U.S. Department of Education will announce the Scholars in May.

Lin is the daughter of Chung-Liang Lin and Shu-Fen Lin of Novi. She is an editor of the school newspaper, president of the National Honor Society and Interact Club, and a member of the Science Club and the Quiz Bowl team.

Tiffany is planning to study piano performance or business and is considering several top universities.

Jeng is the daughter of Shaw-Fung Jeng and Bilan Jeng of Novi. She serves as president of the Science Club and the Quiz Bowl team, and treasurer of the Japanese Club. She is also a member of National Honor Society and is a teacher aide. Cassie has applied to several universities' pre-med honors programs.



Tiffany Lin



Cassie Jeng

Novi district seeking Teacher of the Year nominations

The Novi Community Schools is accepting nominations from parents, students, staff and community members for the Novi 2005 Teacher of the Year Award. From all nominations submitted three teachers will be selected as finalists, one each from the K-6 level, the middle school level and the high school level. The names of the three finalists will be submitted to Oakland Schools to be considered for the Oakland County Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award.

In addition, one of the three finalists will be selected by the

Novi Educational Foundation as the Novi Excellence in Education Teacher of the Year. The person selected will be awarded use of a free vehicle for one year compliments of The Suburban Collection.

The Suburban Collection is Michigan's largest automotive dealership group. Founded in 1948 and based in Troy, The Suburban Collection encompasses 16 dealerships across 19 domestic and import brands throughout Michigan.

"Supporting the 'Teacher of the Year' program is our way of giv-

ing something back to the men and women who have contributed so much to the success of our community. We want to acknowledge their outstanding commitment to the development and accomplishments of our children," said David Fischer, president and CEO of the Suburban Collection.

Nominees must be a full-time, contracted, certified teacher in good standing with Novi Community Schools. They must have at least three full years of classroom teaching experience and have demonstrated the high-

est standard of excellence in their profession.

Nomination forms are available in the office of each school building, at the Educational Services Building, and by calling the Human Resources Office of Novi Schools at (248) 449-1200. The deadline for nominations is 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 21. Nominations should be submitted to: Novi Community Schools Teacher of the Year, 25345 Taft Road, Novi, MI 48374.

Conga line

Novi Woods families spent a cold January evening dancing to the music of the Gratitude Steel Band. Students and their families macarena-ed, limbo-ed and conga-ed the night away and then enjoyed an ice cream treat. Admission to the Family Fun Night event was a donation to the Novi High School run charity, Teens Aiding the Cancer Community.



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<p>California Navel Oranges \$3.99 8 lb. Bag</p>	<p>OSO Sweet Onions 99¢ lb. The World's Premier Sweet Onion!</p>	<p>Argentina Los Cardos \$9.99 750 ml</p>

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Come on in - the water's fine!

Throwing foam and water in his wake, Wildcat Nick Wright powers through Novi's pool during a home meet against Brighton High last Thursday night.

— Page 4B

Success!

Jamie Coley was tired of being overweight, so she went and did something about it. Find out how she dropped her dress sizes and how she's passing the recipe for success on to others.

— Page 3B



Regional Marketplace

Debbie Farneth (office Mgr.), Brenda Smith CPA, Mary Nolf CPA, Amy Haselbuhn CPA.
Let the staff at Brenda W. Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants, PC - Debbie Farneth, Brenda Smith, CPA, Mary Nolf, CPA, Amy Haselbuhn, CPA and Patty Spees (not pictured) - solve all your accounting and tax needs.

— Page 6B

Fighting to stay fit

Eat to Live can help shed weight

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

Dr. Michael Roth didn't start his Eat To Live program to make money. He started it to help people lose weight.

Though a gynecologist by trade, Roth found himself doling out advice to overweight patients who couldn't shed the weight without help.

"About 95 percent of my diet patients are women," he said. "About five percent of them are men, who are usually husbands or boyfriends that my patients bring in."

The key to losing weight, said Roth, is dieting and exercising.

But, unlike some self-help book, Roth is more hands on.

"I basically give them a diet that says go to the grocery store and here's what to buy and here's what not to buy," he said. "I don't make lots of money off of this. If I wanted to do that, I'd make a low-calorie diet salad dressing."

He wants to see his patients lose weight. Obesity, he said, is a disease. That's why after an initial visit he ideally would like to see his patients return to his office every two weeks — much like a diabetic would when being treated.

"It's like diabetes or high blood pressure," said Roth. "Everyone knows someone who is diabetic or hypertensive. They keep going back to their doctor to help them maintain their programs. Obesity requires the same thing."

Many of the clients Roth treats have tried their hand at other programs. He said they're usually frustrated with their results there.

"There's a statistic that's interesting that says 70 percent of people who lose weight on any program gain it back in three years," Roth said. "That's why maintenance is so important."

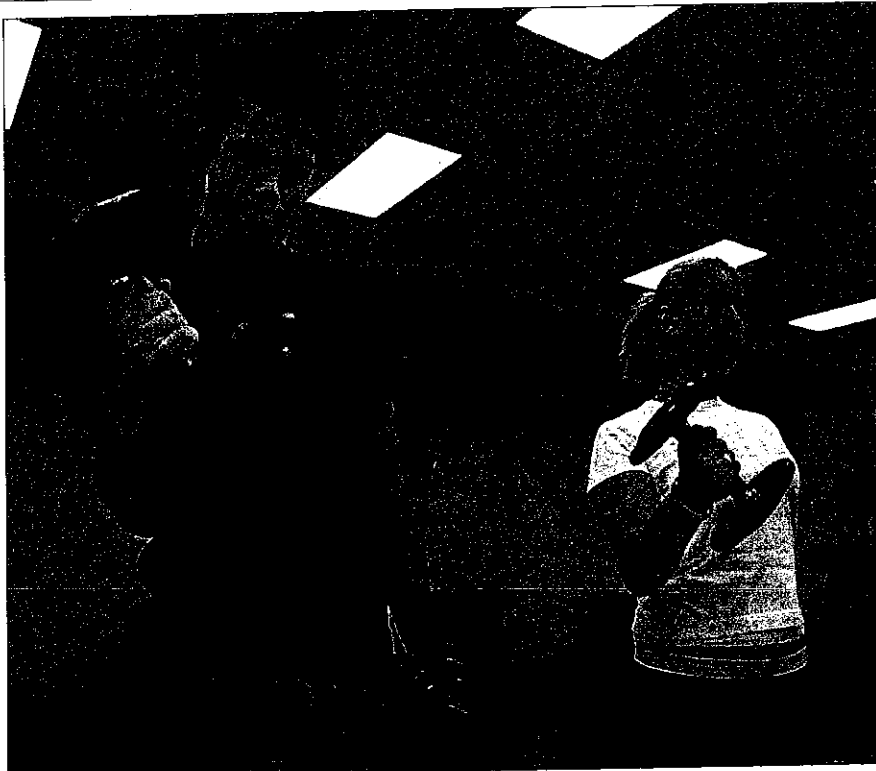
Roth said that he urges his clients who meet their weight loss goals to maintain their loss with continued healthy eating. If they experience a 10-15 percent weight gain he said he expects to see them again.

"They should get their tushes back in here and get back on the diet," he said.

One of the key factors in Roth's diet is to keep his clients off the scale. He said they'll be able to tell they've lost enough weight just by looking in the mirror.

"It's all about perceiving a look," he said. "I tell them they'll know they've reached their goal when they look good in their own eyes."

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Photos by JOHN HEIDER

ABOVE: Northville High School athletes Sean Hughes, left, and Meghan Moticcio are just a couple of many students who are keeping in shape as they look to Spring Break. BELOW: Running is just one of many ways to stay in shape.

Students work on getting, staying fit in time for break

By Matt Simich
SPECIAL WRITER

Spring break sunshine and beaches are only eight weeks away.

And though that means bathing suit weather, don't panic. There's still time to lose weight, tone up and look great.

For starters, doing something as basic as cutting out soda or potato chips and replacing them with fruit or vegetables can make a dramatic difference.

Aaron Pintar, Fitness Director at the Water Wheel Health Club in Northville, says eight weeks is plenty of time for a three to four percent body fat loss. While everyone is different, he said it's a safe and healthy goal.

"Don't compare yourself to other people," said Pintar. "Weight loss occurs by increasing your activity level throughout the day. Working out 4-5 times a week and adding more cardiovascular activity will really help."

For Northville senior Sean Hughes, getting in shape is a big deal. Hughes is headed to California for spring break and wants to be at top form before leaving.

Most of the time Hughes works out during his gym class-



es and uses a variety of weight lifting exercises to get the job done.

"Usually I try and start out

with a dumbbell bench press first," said Hughes, who wrestles at Northville High School. "I work the bigger muscles

before I work the smaller ones."

A typical workout for Hughes consists of the dumbbell bench press with 65-pound dumbbells. Then he moves to pull-ups or push-ups. When finished there, Hughes works on his abdominal muscles by doing sit-ups while hugging a 35-pound weight on his abdomen.

"I always feel better when I workout," said Hughes. "When I'm finished it feels like I have accomplished something."

Getting in shape may be the top priority for some, but for others it not as important, as staying in shape. Traveling down to Cancun for break, Northville junior Megan Moticcio thinks she is where she needs to be.

She gets her workout going to pom pom practice.

"Pom practice is my daily exercise," said Moticcio. "It lasts usually around two hours so I'm pretty tired afterwards."

The team's basic practice consists of stretching and running. Practicing the pom pom routines gives Moticcio a great aerobic workout and keeps her in shape.

Matt Simich is a Northville High School senior and a Novi News intern.

Water Wheel has tools for success

By Sam Eggleston
SPORTS WRITER

It may look bigger and it may have a few more toys, but Northville's Water Wheel Health Club is still the home away from home members have come to enjoy.

"We may look different, but our goal is to continue to be available to our clients just as we have in the past," said Aaron Pintar, the club's director of fitness. "It's something that we've talked about and are committed to doing."

The Water Wheel recently announced the completion of a major renovation to the club. Locker rooms are more modern and the club features more room for members to work out.

Despite a new look, few things have changed.

The Water Wheel is still committed to serving its clients as it has been for the past decade, Pintar said.

The club offers group classes in everything from cycling to "tower" workouts that have become increasingly popular. Free weights and machine workouts are available, as well as all of the equipment for complete cardiovascular conditioning.

The Water Wheel even has a place to sit down and take a breather while enjoying a "City Blends" smoothie.

"They taste much better," Pintar said of the new smoothies the club offers. "We think people will enjoy them more."

He said the Water Wheel has a commitment to helping its clients have the most successful experience they can. Be it weight loss — which the club employs the Apex system for — or weight gain or even maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the Water Wheel is ready to help.

"We try to provide convenient exercise for the active population," said Pintar.

Pintar noted the Water Wheel has something for everyone. From the gym-rat who loves lifting weights to the elderly who loves lifting laundry.

"I have a client who is 74 years old with double knee replacements," said Pintar.

"Her workout is a lot different than a 23-year-old athlete's would be. She walks up and down the stairs. The other day she told me she lifted the laundry out of her washer. She hadn't done that in years."

Though plenty of exercises and workouts are discussed on a daily basis at the Water Wheel, Pintar said the goal is always the same.

"We want to help our clients progressively work to enhance their lives," he said. "People just

continued on 3B

More fitness tips from the Water Wheel Health Club in Northville

■ Nutrition is important. Exercise will get results but when combined with good nutritional habits, you can really get lasting results. Something as simple as cutting one or two of your favorite junk foods and replacing them with healthy foods can help significantly. Often, low-carbohydrate diets can be good for the short-term but it can be difficult to keep those pounds off and maintain the muscle tone for the long haul.

"Low carb diets do make you lose weight," said Aaron Pintar, fit-

ness director at the Water Wheel Health Club in Northville. "But the weight that you are losing is muscle mass and water weight. When you do eat something, the weight comes right back."

■ Another way to trim extra pounds is to stay active. Walking up the stairs, jumping rope or any kind recreational sport can work. Anything that increases your normal physical activity helps. To see muscle definition, use resistance training. If you want to increase strength, do more repetitions of an exercise. The more you do, the

better results you will get and the healthier you will feel.

■ Make sure to talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program and contact a personal trainer for a personalized fitness program.

■ It's not unusual to notice a big difference immediately. Even if you don't, stick with it. Everyone loses weight differently. Keep at it and by the time you are packing your bags, you will look great and be glad you did.

REGIONAL MARKETPLACE

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Thursday, February 3, 2005

Small business and technology

Nowadays, it seems that anyone can develop a Web site. My 15-year-old daughter, your next door neighbor, and even the completely non-technology literate service man knows how to create a Web site. And then there are online companies that offer Web sites in 10 minutes!

Web site cost also varies from free to several thousand dollars. So how do you know who is really qualified and how much money you really should be spending on Web sites?

Let's start by looking at the e-commerce industry. For the purposes of simplification, the e-commerce industry is being divided here into five distinct categories.

Basement Developers

Web site developers who offer low-cost development services are usually students or technical people who create Web sites as a side business. Rarely do these developers have much knowledge of the operations or challenges facing businesses today. They have very little knowledge regarding e-business and what it takes for companies to be profitable on the Internet.

They may offer their services at an economical price but the technology that they deliver is in most cases quite weak. They mostly create "HTML" Web sites that do not use the latest developments in database technology. They may use a simple HTML editing program such as Microsoft FrontPage. The sites they produce will look like millions of others on the Internet as they are using standard FrontPage graphic templates.

Web sites created by basement operators are some of the lowest traffic sites on the Internet. What that means is that although your company has a Web site, few people will stumble upon your website due to the lack of internet marketing done by your developer.

Basement developers are also unable to produce advanced multi-media applications (audio, video, shock wave, flash, etc.) because they do not have access to the necessary hardware, software or the experience required in these areas.

As the Internet continues to evolve, these developers are limited in their ability to adapt to new technologies, as the learning curves relating to each new technology (e-Commerce, shock wave, database integration etc.) can be quite steep. It is impossible for such a small operation to have expertise in all new technologies.

In addition, most of these types of Web sites are very inflexible and difficult to maintain. Every time you need to make a change to say price or product, you may need to rely on the developer to update the Web site.

These Web sites generally take months to develop and sometimes even then continue to show several pages still under construction. That is because these developers are doing this on the side while working elsewhere or going to school.

Finally, most of the basement developers do not have the knowledge or resources necessary to develop e-business training materials for their clients. They are also unqualified to provide their clients with any form of true e-business consultation services.

Next time we will look at the second category in the e-commerce industry, "Small Boutique."

Nipa Shah is a Novi-based e-commerce solutions provider who specializes in providing affordable solutions for small and medium sized companies. She can be reached via e-mail at nshah@wscicoolwebresults.com or (248) 470-6299.

Send us your business news:

Novi News
104 W. Main
Northville, MI 48167

fax: (248) 349-9832
cstone@ht.homecomm.net

ADVERTORIAL



Photos by HAL GOULD

Let the staff at Brenda W. Smith & Company, Certified Public Accountants, PC – Debbie Farneth (office manager), Brenda Smith, CPA, Mary Nolf, CPA, Amy Haselhuhn, CPA and Patty Spees (not pictured) – solve all your accounting and tax needs.

Brenda W. Smith & Company, PC

By Annette Jaworski
SPECIAL WRITER

Attention: Small Business Owners - IRS Audits Are Up

Knowing how to manage the financial aspects of your business can often ensure success. Messy bookkeeping can lead to mistakes that attract the attention of the Internal Revenue Service, increasing the chance of being audited. However, paying a visit to a certified public accountant is not always first on the list of things to do when starting a business.

One Hour Free Consultation -- Time Well Spent!

"Seeing an accountant is one of the biggest fears of a small business owner," says Brenda Smith, CPA. "Many never see an accountant in the beginning because they're afraid it will cost too much. However, mistakes made in the first year could cost them more than if they had set up an initial consulting arrangement."

Smith, owner of Brenda W. Smith & Company P.C., offers a no-cost, no-obligation, hour-long

consultation with potential business clients. This is one way she put her customers at ease. "It's a good opportunity for the client to interview us to see if there's a good personality fit," she said. "It's very important that they can communicate comfortably with their accounting professionals."

If the client is a new business start-up, Smith and her staff can answer questions about what type of business entity will work best in their individual situation, how to keep records, and what taxes are required. If the business is already in operation, they will look over prior returns or financial statements and answer questions about management, computerized accounting systems and planning for the future.

We Specialize In Small Business

Smith points out, "In fact, we're a small business ourselves, so we appreciate and understand the struggles that business owners go through." Brenda W. Smith & Company offers complete services for accounting and taxes. This includes bookkeeping, quarterly payroll taxes, financial statement preparation, business and personal

tax return preparation, and IRS problem resolution.

The firm's goal is to keep clients in compliance with all government regulations and obligations for tax returns along with tax filings from the different entities – state, local, sales tax, and personal property tax among others.

"There are many different taxes that a small business needs to be aware of, keep up with and pay," Smith said. "That's one area where our experience shows – we excel at keeping people in compliance with taxes."

In Today's Business World You Must Have Quick Access to Decision Making Data

"If someone is still doing their books manually, they're spending time writing and adding, and they are not getting the benefit of instant information," said Smith. "Computer-based accounting software alleviates much of the manual work, and once implemented can save time and increase accuracy tremendously."

Smith recommends that small businesses use some kind of computer software right from the start – while the business is small. "It's easier to learn when working on a smaller scale," she said.

The selection, set-up and training for computerized accounting systems is another area of expertise for Smith & Company. Mary Nolf, CPA, and Amy Haselhuhn, CPA, are both Certified Pro Advisors for QuickBooks.

"We deal primarily with QuickBooks and Peachtree accounting software products, but work with other software as well," Smith said. "We can help our clients convert from manual books to a computerized system or help them improve their existing computer system. This will provide the business owner with the right information and reports needed to better manage their business."

"Small business owners have

the greatest need, and it can often be cost prohibitive for them to work with a large accounting firm."

Smith points out that if every dollar is spent for compliance services just to meet government tax filing requirements, no funds are available for planning or management. A smaller professional firm, like Smith's, can be more cost effective for the small business client.

Smith began in the public accounting field in 1985 for a small firm in Southfield where she developed her fondness for working with small business. She branched out on her own in 1993, and her offices are currently located in New Hudson at 56711 Grand River Avenue. Being located near I-96 and Millford Road is convenient for most of Smith's clients, who are generally located within a 30-mile radius.

In addition to Smith, two full-time CPAs, a bookkeeper and an administrative assistant round out the staff for most of the year. Two additional tax accountants and an additional administrative assistant are brought on board to assist during tax season.

We Help People With All Sorts of Issues

The friendly personable staff can assist clients with numerous questions. There are many times when a client needs to resolve a problem, but doesn't know where to turn. "We can usually put them in touch with the right person, even if it's not us," Smith said. "We're a touchstone for all those other services such as legal, financial services or computer maintenance."

The firm has over 60 years of experience in bookkeeping, accounting and taxation. Brenda W. Smith & Company can handle a variety of accounting situations because of the depth of experienced staff. They provide the knowledge to keep businesses in compliance with all government regulations and obligations. Beyond that, they can help guide

COUPON

Warning: Read this before you file your tax return this year!

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Brenda Smith (left) and bookkeeper Patty Spees review a client's file using the latest accounting software.

emerging businesses towards planning for future growth and the owner's retirement planning.

Although small businesses make up a large portion of their practice, Smith & Company also handles non-profits, estates and trusts, and all types of personal tax issues.

"People tend to match their accounting firm with the size of their business," Smith said. "Our fit is small to medium business. We do as much or as little for a client as they need. One of our goals is to educate business owners to help them better manage their business."

"I believe that our clients – whether they're signing a tax return or giving a financial statement to a bank – need to understand where the numbers came from and what they mean. We can help business owners improve their bottom line through education."

Brenda W. Smith & Company, PC Certified Public Accountants

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