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— Special Section

**A lifetime of hospitality**

Donn Kluck has worked 65 years in the hotel business, the last 11 as a bellman and concierge at the Hotel Baronette.

— Page 15A

**SPORTS**

**Took the title**

Eric Zhao wasn't sure what to expect when he participated in the triple jump at the Michigan Indoor Track and Field State Championships March 5.

— Page 1B

**INDEX**

Business .....	6A
Calendar .....	5B
Classifieds .....	1D
Community .....	6A
Education .....	17A
Faith .....	12A
Health .....	14A
Lifestyles .....	13A
Opinion .....	18A
Public Safety .....	4A
Regional Marketplace .....	6
Seniors .....	15A
Sports .....	1B

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## Park residents file suit

### Old Dutch Farms residents say unsanitary conditions exist

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

Several residents of Old Dutch Farms mobile home park on the west side of the city have filed a more than \$1 million class action lawsuit against the owners of the

park, claiming unsanitary living conditions.

The residents' attorney, Macuga & Little, P.C., of Detroit, announced March 9 that it filed the complaint in Oakland County Circuit Court against Uniprop.

The lawsuit alleges that Birmingham-based Uniprop has failed to adequately maintain the community and caused damage to homeowners' property.

"The living conditions at Old Dutch Farms are unsatisfactory," said Steven Liddle, lead attorney

for the plaintiffs. "The residents deserve better."

Liddle said Uniprop has 21 days to respond to the complaint.

Charmaine Jones, president, Old Dutch Farms Homeowner's Association, said, "It's 2005, and as a resident of Oakland County, I expect to have access to a functioning sewer system and a clean water system."

Residents say the park's on-site

**"What's really holding this up is the weather. There's no way we can do the connection until the weather warms up."**

Roger Zlotoff  
Uniprop CEO

continued on page 3



Photo by JOHN HEIDER

### Preparation

Novi High School students practice water rescue techniques for potential spinal cord injuries during a Monday morning lifeguard course at the school's pool. From left are Ben Vallerand, Aubree Bixman, and Robbie Ykarinen.

## Klaver retiring; city to gain \$150k

### Novi's COO plans to travel, golf and join private sector

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

Craig Klaver, the city's chief operating officer, will retire June 30 after almost 24 years with the city. And the decision has already been made to not replace him, meaning his salary of about \$150,000 will be back in the

continued on page 3

## School finances: Everything counts

### Student fee for driver's ed program up \$56

By Ramaz Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

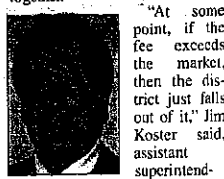
The driver's education course at Novi High School will return this summer at the cost of \$335 per student.

That's the decision the board of education made after 100 students at Novi High said they would take advantage of the service, even if the price jumped from \$279 per student to \$335.

The increase was necessary after the state of Michigan officially cut driver's education fund-

ing to all districts, leaving Novi with only a few options.

The board pondered continuing to offer the program at an increase of \$56 per student, supplementing the program, or cutting it all together.



J. Koster

assistant superintendent of business and finance. "The district has a good program, and I'd hate to see it go.

continued on page 3

### Refinancing of debt could save \$1 million

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

Right now, the window is open. The Novi Community School District is looking to refinance its existing debt in an attempt to save about \$1 million, spread over the next 20 years.

The board of education, at its last meeting, approved a legal council, an underwriter, a financial consultant, and it authorized the district to pursue the market.

"By doing this, our total debt would go down," Jim Koster said,

assistant superintendent of business and finance. "When the opportunity is there to do this, you should do it, which is what we're doing."

Koster explained the district must have those components in place first, otherwise administrators would never know what the market is like. Koster explored the market on Monday and Tuesday to see whether it's feasible for the district to save the money that it thinks it can save.

"We've been through this a couple times before, where we went into the market and the savings wasn't there and so we backed away," Koster said. "We waited for the economy and the interest rates to change and when it came time to do it again, then we went through the process again."

## HAPPY St. Patrick's Day

### Show 'em the green!

### Eateries are crowd-ready

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

St. Patrick's Day is an important day of the year for the Irish (or Irish wannabes), and Novi's restaurants are ready for the big day.

Gus O'Connor's Public House on Grand River Avenue east of Novi Road in the Main Street Novi development had to make space for the huge crowd. "We moved a lot of the tables out of the restaurant, because it'll be standing room only," said Cory Godlewski, manager, Gus O'Connor's.

"Some of the staff at O'Connor's are even from Ireland. And the ones that aren't drink like Irishmen," Godlewski said in jest.

It will be all-hands-on-deck for their busiest day of the year.

"Every single person is required to work that day," Godlewski said. So, no callin' in sick on St. Patrick's Day for his staff.

Doors open at O'Connors at 7 a.m., with a breakfast buffet served from 7-11 a.m. "People want their beer at 7 a.m. on St. Patrick's Day," Godlewski said. A limited menu will be served, which, of course includes corned beef and cabbage.

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., local radio station 89X will broadcast live.

At 3 p.m., the bar will have a bag piper, and from 1-5 p.m. and 7-11 p.m. the Irish band Shamrock Shore from Detroit will perform.

"We ordered a ton of beer — 30 kegs of Guinness," Godlewski said.

continued on page 3

## Wonderland businesses riding it out

### Shops hope customers return after renovations and road work

By Kim Kovellev  
STAFF WRITER

If there's one unsung trooper of a shopping center, it might be Novi's Wonderland Music Plaza at the northwest corner of Novi Road and Grand River Avenue.

Starting last April, tenants endured months of road construction. After that, long-needed facade renovations began in November.

Now, plastic tarps have been lifted, signs are back and one of Novi's oldest shopping plazas is hoping residents return.

"It has obviously hurt everybody in the area," said Michael Vargas, owner, Malsano's Italian Restaurant. "There's no question about it. People find different routes to drive and they find different restaurants."

"It's going to be a building process."

Brought up to Novi's "town center" code, old beige wood paneling has been replaced with brick

columns and a decorative center area topped by a tower.

Weather and mason issues delayed the project several weeks, according to Rochester Hills builder Constructive Concepts.

"We had a bad winter with a lot of snow," owner Darryl Rodgers said. "It's hard to get subgrades to come into work when there's snow on the ground."

The company estimates work will be done within three weeks. Painting, windows and some dry-wall are still underway.

"It definitely looks much better than it did before," said Jim Ankofski, owner of Pastry Palace. "It was a much-needed update."

Like Malsano's, Ankofski said, Pastry Palace is a destination shop.

"When the complete building was in a big bubble, people still did come and pick up their cakes," he said. "I don't know how much walk-in business we got. It's a little bit inconvenient as the process drags on."

He said a window still needs to be cut into the side of his shop.

Other stores, like Nineties Nails and Liquor Depot No. 6, reported losing about half their customers during construction.

Huda Fredrick, manager of the party store, said tarps, scaffolding and missing signs shielded her shop.

"The business has been terri-



Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Malsano's Family Restaurant and other tenants of Novi's Wonderland Plaza have seen their exteriors undergo renovations which include new awnings and an added brick facade.

ble," Fredrick said. "People, they didn't know we were still open. They thought we were closed."

She agreed that the plaza now looks much improved and, since the tarp has been lifted, shoppers have trickled back.

Lover's Lane manager Ronda Hogg is hopeful, too. During Valentine's Day, one of the shop's

peak sale times, said the traffic count was about 700 less than last year.

"Hopefully, the building looks different, people are going to be wondering, 'Oh, what's that over there,'" she said. "It's a little bit more noticeable, especially with

continued on page 3

Be out of the ordinary

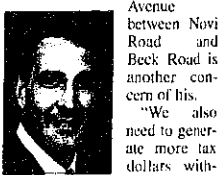
# Green Sheet Classifieds

# Councilman will run

**■ Capello announces rebid for city council seat**

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

el within existing development. "We've been so fortunate that everything is new development that we really aren't focusing on the in-fills, and we need to do that," he said. Completing development in the four quadrants at Grand River Avenue and Novi Road is another important goal Capello sees for Novi.



Kim Capello

Paying attention to Grand River Avenue between Novi Road and Beck Road is another concern of his. "We also need to generate more tax dollars without going to the taxpayers," he added. "And, I think we can do that." Capello is just finishing his first four-year term on city council. He served on planning commission for almost eight years, and was a member of the Town Center Steering Committee, which was responsible for getting the Main Street project approved.

A native of Royal Oak, Capello and his family have lived in Novi for 13 years. He graduated from Bishop Foley High School in Madison Heights.

ey and wrestling, and I still play hockey a couple of times a week," he said. He graduated from the Oakland University in Rochester with a degree in political science and philosophy and attended Thomas Cooley Law School in Lansing, graduating in 1976. Capello practiced law in East Lansing and Birmingham before moving to Novi. He specializes in the areas of real estate, development, construction, small business representation and divorce. Capello believes his knowledge can benefit the citizens of Novi. "We've got a changeover in administration coming. With my history on the planning commission and being involved in local government on that level for so long, I know stuff that the administration doesn't know," he said. "I've got the advantage of seeing where we've been and seen the mistakes we've made in the past."

Capello says he is excited about running again and is ready to start his campaign. "I've talked to [mayoral candidate] David Landry, and I'm ready to go," 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.

"I told my family I needed to know one way or the other because people out there were talking."

Kim Capello  
Novi City Council candidate

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# Shops hope customers return after renovations and road work

continued from front page

the peak part that's going in." One final, less drastic change may be center's name.

Currently, the Wonderland Music Plaza sign stands, though its freestanding anchor store closed last year due to lagging sales.

Existing businesses expect gradual recovery. "It's not going to happen overnight, it's not going to happen in a month," Vargas said. "It's like starting from Ground Zero again, basically."

Kim Kovelie is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 107 or via e-mail at ikovelie@ht.homecomm.net.

# MORE WONDERFUL

- **What:** Wonderland Music Plaza, including five stores and one on-the-way anchor
- **Where:** northwest corner of Grand River Avenue and Novi Road
- **What:** facade renovations are nearly complete, and major intersection construction wrapped up last November. Businesses have lost patrons during the work, but hope customers find their way back.

# Visit your local 'Wonder'

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- **Matsuno's Italian Restaurant** (248) 348-1647
- **Nineiles Nails** (248) 682-2600
- **Pastry Palace** (248) 380-2810
- **Alstair Billiards & Game Room Furniture** 26040 Ingersoll Drive (248) 465-0155

# Novi's COO plans to travel, golf and join private sector

continued from front page

city's budget. "We have the ability to purchase prior time from another employer, and I worked for the city of Royal Oak for 14 years," he said. He bought 13 months so he could take advantage of the "25 years and out" retirement policy.

He began his career with Royal Oak when he was a student at Oakland University, working summers for the engineering department. Although he was studying to become a schoolteacher. But, after he graduated in 1970, the market was grim for education majors.

# Residents say unsanitary conditions exist at trailer park

continued from front page

sewer system leaks raw sewage under houses, creates a stench in the park and has contaminated groundwater.

The MDEQ issued several notices of noncompliance in the past to the park for failure to address problems with the sewer system. Last year, the city of Novi sued Unipro, demanding that they look Old Dutch Farms to the city's sanitary sewer system. A settlement was reached requiring Unipro to raise its treatment plant and connect to the city's sewer system.

# Student fee for driver's ed program up \$56

continued from front page

It's a direct instructional component to the kids. As long as the market is such where we can

# Delays

"What's really holding this up is the weather," said Roger Zlotoff, Unipro CEO. "There's no way we can do the connection until the weather warms up. The equipment can't travel to the site. We also need one more easement we have to obtain. But there's no specific date as to when we have to have the work completed. The city of Novi understands that this is a process," he said.

"I'm very confident that we have worked expeditiously and that the city of Novi is comfortable with the pace of the project. We have received no communication from the city of Novi indicating that it's unhappy."

The poor water condition in the park also prompted MDEQ action. In January, the MDEQ issued a notice of noncompliance when Old Dutch Farms failed to meet standards set by the Michigan Safe Drinking Water

Act, according to Ben McGeachy, MDEQ supervisor. "We monitor water supply, waste water, insect and rodent control, garbage — basically public health issues," McGeachy said.

Zlotoff said Unipro is addressing the drinking water issue. "We've addressed it with DEQ and received their conditional certificate of compliance in February. We're meeting with them and we're in compliance. DEQ is not taking any regulatory action against Old Dutch Farms," he said.

Residents are also concerned about poor road conditions, inadequate lighting and improper foundations on the homes.

"We thought it was necessary to file this lawsuit because we deserve to have a safe and clean place to raise our children in an

upscale community like Oakland County. We want to be compensated for damages," Jones said. Zlotoff said Unipro staff was upset by the residents' lawsuit. "We are sad and disappointed that our customers decided to pursue litigation without prior contact with us. We had no notification that they were considering this. We're very confident, however, that we can produce evidence from independent, third parties that the allegations are really without merit," he said. "We're doing everything we can do to expedite the project. We're not delaying it for any reason."

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Runez, 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

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**House approves road funding**

The U.S. House of Representatives last Thursday passed House Resolution 3, known as the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU).

The bill provides 42 percent more than the current spending levels, with highway funding 38 percent more and transit programs 51 percent more. It earmarks \$11.1 billion for projects requested by individual Congressional members. The measure permits states to allow low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles, such as hybrids, and to use high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Congressman Thad McCotter (R-Livonia) secured close to \$14 million in funds for the following projects:

- Novi - \$1,000,000 to reconstruct Grand River Ave. between Novi and Haggerty roads.
- Northville - \$500,000 for improvements to Taft Road, from 8 mile Road north to city limits.
- Wyom - \$1,000,000 for design, ROW, and construction of the Wyom Road Interchange.
- Walled Lake - \$125,000 to widen Maple Road, west of Decker to Welch.
- South Lyon - \$125,000 for improvements on Second Street between Warren and Haggerty.
- Commerce - \$1,500,000 for improvements to Haggerty Road from 14 Mile to Richardson roads.
- Van Buren - \$1,100,000 to widen Belleville Road between Tyler and Boerle roads.
- Highland - \$125,000 for improvements to Clyde Road, from Hickory Ridge to Strathcona.
- Wayne - \$125,000 to reconstruct one quarter mile stretch of Laurenswood.
- Livonia - \$1,000,000 to reconstruct Stark Road, between Plymouth Road and I-96.
- Plymouth - \$500,000 for improvements to Haggerty Road, from Plymouth to Schoolcraft roads.
- Westland - \$3,500,000 for improvements to Ann Arbor Trail, between Farmington and Merriman roads.
- White Lake - \$500,000 to pave Cooley Lake Road, between Hix and Newburgh roads.
- Garden City - \$1,225,000 to reconstruct Maplewood Road, between Inkster and Merriman roads.
- Canton - \$2,000,000 to pave Cherry Hill Road, between Canton Center and Haggerty Road.

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**Explorers train for that big blaze**

By Tom Filipezak  
SPECIAL WRITER

Richard Hamilton set some cars on fire last Memorial Day. Hamilton, 19, thinks that it was a good learning experience. It's all part of Explorer training.

Explorer posts are affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America and offer career-based training programs in fire, rescue, and law enforcement fields, among others.

Lisa Westfall, a 14-year-old cheer girl and Explorer, wants to be either a firefighter or a veterinarian.

"We'll see," said her mother, Karen Westfall, of the latter. Lisa has fire running through her blood. Her parents and her brother are firefighters. Her brother was also an Explorer.

"As a parent you're always concerned," said Karen. "We never pushed her toward it, though. She can do whatever she likes."



Representing some of Northville Explorer 1717 Post are (front to back) Lisa Westfall, 14, Richard Hamilton, 19, Jarrod Dauk, 14 and Dave Person, 18, represent some of Northville Explorer 1717 post.

The Northville Explorer 1717 post, started in 1994, is the local post for communities like Novi, Northville and other close suburbs. Explorers train the first and third Thursdays of every month and complete with other posts.

"The Northville Fire Department is very, very good about its training and making sure that everyone is taken care of," said Karen.

**Tested training**  
On Memorial Day weekend, local Explorers attend the Monroe Event and test their skills.

"They burned cars that day," said Sheri Allen, advisor to the Northville Explorer post, of the Monroe Event.

Explorers don't typically deal with "live burns." But competitions and large-scale training exercises, like the Monroe Event are exceptions.

"We stacked two cars on each other and the Explorers had to rescue the people inside," said Hamilton, a Northville firefighter-Explorer. "At the end of the day, we burned the cars."

Local Explorers have their sights on the National Exploring Council's biannual national competition held in June. Only two groups of four from each post are allowed to participate in the Texas event. Post 1717 will go if they can raise the necessary funds.

The event costs about \$1,000 per person. In past years the city has offered odd jobs to Explorers to help raise money. So far this year "nothing has

come up," said Northville Fire Chief Jim Allen.

Jeff Kujawa, a City of Northville paid-on-call firefighter, went through the Explorer program and is now an advisor to new members. He said the national competition is very important to prospective firefighters.

Kujawa, 22, said the Explorer program provides "personal improvement" and those who complete it don't have to spend as much time on the hoses when going through official fire training.

Hamilton credits his Explorer experience and training provided by Northville firefighters as reasons for his success as a firefighter.

"I was 15 the first time I put out a fire," said Hamilton. "It's a great learning tool."

Tom Filipezak is a University of Michigan-Dearborn intern. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 109 or at tfilipezak@tt.homecomm.net.

**Tragedy puts court security under scrutiny**

**Local judge says restraints not used in trials**

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

After the tragedy last weekend in Atlanta, when Brian Nichols, a 33-year-old suspect being retried for rape because a murder suspect — allegedly overpowering a sheriff's deputy, killing a state judge, court reporter, sheriff's deputy and later a federal agent — courtroom security has been under a magnifying glass.

Nichols was apprehended March 12 when 26-year-old Ashley Smith, a woman he held hostage, betrayed him and convinced him to allow her to leave to see her 5-year-old daughter. She called 911, with Nichols surrendering to authorities at 11:24 a.m.

Cities across the nation are now asking, "How do courts handle security, and do additional steps need to be taken?"

Judge Robert Bondy of Novi's

52-1 District Court, said the court has two deputies in the front of the building who run a metal detector. Everyone who comes into the building is screened.

"They can't bring in any sharp objects such as pocket knives. They go through everyone's briefcases, their purses and they have to empty their pockets. The general public, the lawyers, everybody goes through this unless you have a security clearance to come in through an employee door," Bondy said.

Security for all of Oakland County's courts is provided by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Bondy said he would like to think of the shootings in Atlanta as an isolated event.

The 52-1 District Court tries misdemeanors and handles felonies for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause. Cases are then sent to Oakland County Circuit Court in Pontiac.

"On the other hand, it does make you cognizant that there's always the potential for danger — for somebody to commit an irrational act," Bondy said.

**"If you leave a person in leg chains or handcuffs during a jury trial, this could prejudice a jury."**

Judge Robert Bondy  
52-1 District Court

He noted that prisoners may appear in court handcuffed or shackled for a hearing, but the theory is that in a jury trial, such restraints give the appearance of guilt.

"If you leave a person in leg chains or handcuffs during a jury trial, this could prejudice a jury. This is why in a jury trial, defendants don't wear their prison jumpsuits. That may affect the jurors' thinking," he said. Instead, deputies are usually

positioned behind the defendant during the trial.

Bondy said deputies who escort prisoners from the court's holding jail to the courtroom are armed, but the prisoners are usually handcuffed. This was not the situation in the Atlanta case, since Nichols was on trial.

Novi City Council member Toni Nagy, a court reporter by trade, has experienced security with prisoners up close and personal.

"I've actually gone to the prison in Jackson to take a deposition for a prisoner suing for unfit conditions. They had quite a lot of security," he said.

"I do think they need more security in courtrooms, however. I think that when you have a person who's committed a violent crime they should be subdued," she said.

Bondy said that after the Atlanta incident and the recent case in which a Chicago judge's pincus were allegedly killed in their home, "I'm sure you're going to see a revisiting of security issues in the courtroom. I think you're going to see a lot of courts reassess what they're

doing and a lot stricter adherence to the rules and procedures," Bondy said.

He personally doesn't worry about repercussions from people he has sentenced.

"Most judges are elected, so we ask to do this job," he said. "You can't shrink from the responsibility."

He has a "panic button" he can use to summon deputies in the courtroom and in his office. "Sometimes I hit it accidentally,

though, and the deputies come rushing down the hall," he said.

Bondy did discuss with his wife over the weekend the possibility of removing their address with his listed home phone number.

"I may look into that," 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@tt.homecomm.net.

THE NOVI NEWS  
Published Each Thursday  
By The Novi News  
104 W. Main Street  
Northville, Michigan 48167  
At Northville, Michigan

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Publication Number USPS 395290

**Thaw will make gravel roads worse**

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) warns motorists who use gravel roads that these roadways could again deteriorate significantly in the coming weeks, depending upon how quickly the spring thaw occurs.

"In the worst-case scenario, we could end up closing the worst gravel roads if they become impassible, and others could be very difficult to drive," explained RCOC Highway Maintenance Director Tom Meszler. He added the worst-case scenario would be triggered by a very quick warm up, which would cause the snow to melt before the ground thaws.

"If the temperatures rise very quickly, the snow will melt and water will have no place to go, because it takes the ground longer to thaw. The water will not be able

to soak into the ground," the director said. "That means the surfaces of many gravel roads are likely to turn to mud. If there is three or more inches of mud on top of frozen ground, grading the road will do absolutely no good."

If that happens, the only option left to RCOC will be to spread additional gravel or recycled asphalt product (RAP) on the muddy road surfaces. However, because doing so is very labor intensive, time consuming and costly, it can only be done in the worst situations.

This grim potential comes on the heels of the worst season for gravel roads in decades in Oakland County, in which RCOC has faced the most difficult challenges it has seen in years as it has attempted to maintain its 800 miles of gravel roads. The unpaved roads were battered by record January snow falls followed immediately by an unseasonable thaw and heavy rains, followed by more heavy snow and sub-freezing weather, leading into more freeze-thaw and heavy rains in February.

The best-case scenario for the coming weeks would be if the temperatures slowly rose, allowing the ground to gradually thaw and absorb the water as the snow gradually melts.

"Whatever happens, we are prepared to do everything we can to try to make the gravel roads as passable as we can," Meszler said. "Unfortunately, though, with a quick thaw, there are very few things we can do until the water is able to drain. Once that happens, we will grade the roads as quickly as we are able to."

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# Wyndham undergoes \$2.2 million renovation

Novi hotel sees first major update since 1988

By Pam Fleming STAFF WRITER

The Wyndham Garden Hotel at Novi Town Center has spruced things up a bit lately. The facility, located at 42100 Crescent Blvd., recently completed a \$2.2 million renovation, with more improvements on the way.

Every corridor, every stairwell and every room has received attention. The bedrooms have been completely redone from top to bottom, including wall coverings, carpet, draperies, beds, bedding, furniture and artwork. The bathrooms received more minor refurbishing, such as the marble being buffed.

"There was nothing left unturned. They even replaced the heating and cooling units in each of the rooms," said John Rolands, general manager for four years, who's been with the chain since 1994.

The two-story hotel had been slightly neglected, Rolands said, since its opening in 1988. But the renovation has now transformed the facility into a more modern hotel offering more amenities to guests.

The meeting and banquet space, including a separate board room, has been redone, and more improvements to landscaping and the courtyard are planned for this spring and summer.

Weddings have already taken place in the courtyard, and a portion of the wood-chipped area will be completed this spring so oval tables could be set up for receptions.

The hotel also features Herman Miller ergonomic desk chairs in every hotel room and the board room.

The Garden Cafe has a new menu, too, with such offerings as honey mustard chicken salad and

### AT A GLANCE

- Wyndham Garden Novi
- 148 rooms
- 2,450 square feet of meeting space
- 2,100 square-foot meeting room for banquets up to 150 and theater seating up to 270
- Courtyard suitable for weddings
- Pool, whirlpool bath, sauna
- Access to Bally's Fitness Center next door
- Garden Cafe/lobby lounge

homemade meal -- served as either a full meal or a sandwich on a freshly-baked roll.

"The menu's a homemade recipe. Our chef at the Wyndham Garden Hotel Woodlake, a suburb of Chicago, helped design this menu. It's his mother's recipe. They put it into bulk production, and now our hotels have it," Rolands said.

Mike Haddad, food and beverage director for Novi's Wyndham Garden Hotel, tidies up one of its newly-renovated rooms. The hotel, near the Novi Town Center, spent approximately \$2.2 million to change its interior decorations, amenities and to paint its exterior.

receiving rave reviews. "Guests have really taken a liking to it. We've gotten really good feedback about it. The servers are really pumped up about the new menu, too. It's a great new start for everybody here at the hotel," he said.

Guests can also swim or work out at Bally's Fitness Center right next door to the hotel at no charge.

For more information about Wyndham Garden Hotel services in Novi, call (248) 344-8800 or visit [www.wyndham.com](http://www.wyndham.com).

Pam Fleming is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1702, ext. 105, or by e-mail at [pfleming@hometownnews.net](mailto:pfleming@hometownnews.net).

Weekdays, the cafe is open from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., with the lobby lounge open from 4 p.m. to midnight.

"We're not opposed to extending those hours in the lobby lounge. The staff is very flexible," Haddad said.



Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Mike Haddad, food and beverage director for Novi's Wyndham Garden Hotel, tidies up one of its newly-renovated rooms. The hotel, near the Novi Town Center, spent approximately \$2.2 million to change its interior decorations, amenities and to paint its exterior.

### Floors To Your Door

By: Mike Riley

#### Choosing a Flooring Store That's Right for You!

Deciding where to purchase new flooring for your home or office can be a trying experience. While competitive pricing is important, your retailer's reputation, knowledge and experience need to be considered, too.

Stores specializing in floor covering and only floor covering usually give you the most value for your money, not just the cheapest price.

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Begin by asking your retailer questions. Does your salesperson understand floor covering construction and performance standards? Does your salesperson ask about and understand your lifestyle and flooring needs before recommending a product for your home or office? What do you learn about installation policies?

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# An 'untapped market'

Lady Jane's Barber Shop for men only

By Pam Fleming STAFF WRITER

Ever heard of a hair salon where the motto is... No Girls Allowed?

Well, now you have, Lady Jane's Barber Shop opened at the beginning of this month on Ten Mile Road just east of Meadowbrook Road, and it is definitely for men only.

Charlie Wolfe, who developed the concept about six years ago, said the idea sprung basically out of necessity. He says when he was transferred to the Detroit area from Minnesota in 1989, "I looked all over for a good place for a men's haircut, and I couldn't find one," he said.

So he decided to turn a personal inconvenience into a business opportunity. His idea was to create an environment just for guys.

"They can go to Lady Jane's and get away from it all," Wolfe said. "We tried to look at every angle."

That meant, for the Novi location, the fourth Lady Jane's, that they converted the former Salon Luna "to our men's style -- putting in new chairs, 20-inch flat-screen TVs, and men's products," said John Cipriano, the proud new owner.

Cipriano said the goal was to make his salon elegant, yet manly. The interior features brushed stainless steel accents and comfortable swivel rockers in the waiting area. Services include shampoo, haircuts, color, highlights, manicures and waxing.

"I think the shop's a great idea," echoed stylist Ginger Slavaker. "Women have their day at the spa. Why can't men have their day, too?"

Lady Jane's is for men only, age 18 and older. Hours are 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. 105, or by e-mail at [sfleming@hometownnews.net](mailto:sfleming@hometownnews.net).

"We did 40 haircuts our first day. Our biggest day was March 4 -- we did 54 cuts," Cipriano said. Haircuts cost \$18; a shampoo and cut is \$20.

There are some women allowed in Lady Jane's -- those who work on their customers' hair. "Men enjoy the environment and the pretty girls. We have six beautiful and professional stylists," Cipriano said.

Cipriano and Wolfe, the original developer, teamed up when Cipriano's business partner worked with Wolfe at the Lakeside Barber Shop.

"We filmed a TV commercial on site, and John was one of the extras," Wolfe recalled. The first Lady Jane's opened about six years ago. Today, there are other shops in St. Clair Shores, Shelby Township and Troy. But there are no others in Novi.

"We plan to open additional stores about five to six miles apart. We've found that spacing works well. We had a lot of guys from the Plymouth, Novi and Northville area driving to St. Clair Shores to see us. So, we know Novi would be a very good location," Wolfe said.

Monica Coppola said she likes working in the new men-only salon. "Guys seem to like it here. They're asking more questions about styling. I think they're more comfortable here," she said. She said one of the most popular cuts is the Caesar -- short on the sides and spiked on top.

"I think the shop's a great idea," echoed stylist Ginger Slavaker. "Women have their day at the spa. Why can't men have their day, too?"

Lady Jane's is for men only, age 18 and older. Hours are 10:30



Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Novi's Lady Jane's salon for men began welcoming customers last week. From left are Karina Jeffries, John Cipriano, Monica Coppola, and Kelly Risinger

a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. 105, or by e-mail at [sfleming@hometownnews.net](mailto:sfleming@hometownnews.net). (248) 478-2200.

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@hometownnews.net](mailto:pfleming@hometownnews.net).

# HomeTown sale to Gannett proceeds

Officials at HomeTown Communications Network, Inc. -- parent company of The Novi News -- expect a smooth transition with the end of a federal review of the Livonia-based firm's sale to publishing giant Gannett newspapers.

"The U.S. Department of Justice has concluded that the sale may now proceed," wrote Richard Agninan, president and CEO of HomeTown, in a memo e-mailed last week to the company's more than 780 employees in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky.

"With that behind us, we've now begun our discussions with Gannett about setting a closing date. We'll also begin to assist them with whatever plans they are developing for the transfer of operations to their ownership," wrote Agninan.

No closing date has been announced for the sale. HomeTown and Gannett announced the sale last November, but then had to wait for a federally-required review of the transaction. Terms of the sale were not announced.

HomeTown Communications Network publishes one daily, 62 weekly and twice-weekly newspapers as well as specialty publi-

cations and phone books. It also runs a Web site operation and runs four commercial printing plants.

The Novi News is in a division called HomeTown Newspapers, which also includes the South Lyon Herald, the Northville Record, the Millford Times and the Livingston County Daily Press & Argus.

The corporation's largest division consists of the Observer & Eccentric newspapers, which are suburban Detroit from Rochester to Canton. The corporation also includes suburban weeklies based in Royal Oak as well as divisions that ring Lansing and Cincinnati.

Gannett, which owns the Detroit News, also owns daily newspapers in Lansing and Cincinnati.

The nation's largest newspaper group in terms of circulation, Gannett publishes 101 daily newspapers with a combined circulation of 7.6 million. This includes USA Today, the nation's largest-selling daily newspaper with a circulation of about 2.5 million.

Gannett recorded \$7.4 billion in operating revenue in 2004. When the sale was announced last year, HomeTown was projecting 2004 revenues of \$86 million.

"With that behind us, we've now begun our discussions with Gannett about setting a closing date."

Richard Agninan  
HomeTown president and CEO

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A LONG STORY  
There has been a return to long necklaces for women who want to impart a bit of sophisticated glamour to their wardrobes. Opera-length necklaces hang as far down as the navel to give a distinctly sexy look. These very long necklaces originally became popular during the nineteenth century when they were seen dangling from the necks of the most fashionable opera buffs. Today's versions need not necessarily be solely comprised of pearls. There are fine gold chains that are punctuated with semi-precious stones. These look equally beautiful when worn over a button-front shirt and blazer, a contrasting shirt or a black evening dress. Any way you wear it, an opera-length necklace speaks of style.  
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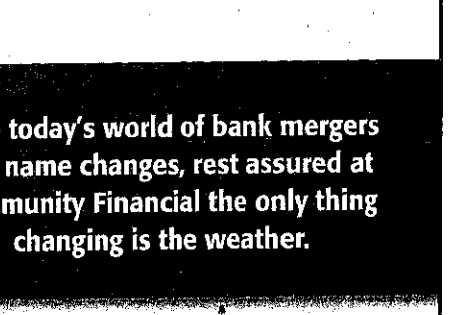
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# HEALTH

Cal Stone, editor (248) 349-1700, ext. 113 cstone@ht.homecomm.net

## Novi's newest grocer offers organic option

### Better Health Market fills void in downtown

By Kim Kovellev  
STAFF WRITER

From seafood to salad dressing to espresso, Novi's new Better Health Market is geared at nutrition.

"I think what sets us apart is our focus more on organics," owner Todd Handelman said. "We like to buy from local growers if possible."

Officially opened yesterday, Better Health fills the Luma Building's gap at Grand River Avenue and Market Street, once home to Vic's Market.

Handelman's 14th store in the state, it's the largest at 23,000 square feet. Warm, earth-toned colors lead to a comfortable setting, he said.

Storewide products bear round, green-and-white "USDA Organic" approval stickers.

"The organic standards are regulated by the government. It has to be grown a certain way," Handelman said. "It's done mostly by small farmers."

There are soy-based vegetarian products. Bulk food is available in eco-friendly baggies. Behind 60 refrigerated doors are frozen foods like milk, yogurt and cheese.

A reverse osmosis system spritzes tapwater-free water on produce, Handelman said.

There are about 100 employees, many with culinary backgrounds. Even titles are more holistic: market managers are called team leaders.

Russell North leads the meat, harvested from free-range, grass-fed, lean livestock.

"What we offer here is meat that's hormone-free, steroid-free, antibiotic-free," North said. "The staff taste real. It tastes the way it should taste."

Even his 10-year-old triplet daughters benefit, he said. "They've been on a natural diet since they were born. I wish I had these things when I was a kid."



Ann Medonis arranges bottles of fruit juice on the shelves in preparation for the March 9 opening of the Better Health Market. It's located in the Novi Main Street Development in the home of the former Vic's World Market.

Jason Darnell-Mason heads the seafood selection. Fish, he said, are pulled from Caribbean to Mediterranean waters. High-grade tuna, salmon, shrimp, mussels, oysters and sushi are available.

There are ethnic foods like Asian and Hispanic and gluten- and wheat-free choices for allergies.

"We're giving a huge variety of natural foods to the consumer," said team leader Tom Ball. "It's like a Mercedes vs. a Chevrolet."

Handelman said farmers with the Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance are often tapped.

A Novi resident and himself an organic foods consumer,

Handelman said business interest began with a family dental supply company.

"I've always had a passion for natural foods and for health," he said. "As you learn more and you educate yourself, it's an evolution."

In a prepared foods section, patients can learn how to make meals with basics. For instance, "I can tell them how," executive chef Kimdon said. "Bring a notepad. It's going to invite you to eat healthy."

A computer kiosk area will allow visitors to research foods or vitamins that can help them.

About 300 health-related books will be for sale, too, as will vitamins,

baby food and beauty products. Fine organic wines and beers are on the way.

But whether it's fresh Zingerman's breads and cream cheese or Fair Trade Certified teas, Handelman said, prices are reasonable.

"The popularity of it is becoming so that the prices are coming down," he said. But for Handelman and his daughter and wife, the health benefits are the key.

"I'm pretty driven and I need all the energy and all the extra help I need to stay healthy," Handelman said. "If you don't have your health, what have you got?"

### BETTER HEALTH MARKET

• What: Better Health Market, Novi's newest grocery store, opened yesterday. It offers a wide variety of organic-based food, beverages, vitamins, healthcare products and more.

• Where: 42875 Grand River Ave., just east of Market Street in the Novi Main Street District

• Hours: 9 a.m.-9 p.m., seven days a week

• Contact: (248) 735-8100

### HEALTH BRIEFS

#### Trinity Health CFO becomes chief development officer

Novi-based Trinity Health announced March 9 that James Peppiatt-Combes has been appointed as the system's first chief development officer, leading business development activities throughout Trinity Health.

Combes, who was serving as the chief financial officer until he was moved into this position, will assume both the financial and development duties until the appointment of a new CFO, possibly as soon as this summer.

In his new position, Combes will help refine business development strategies and oversee their implementation. He will provide guidance to joint venture and similar transactions throughout the system.

Combes has been CFO of Trinity Health since 1983, where he was actively involved with business planning and implementations, mergers and other strategic initiatives. Before that, his career spanned a variety of engineering, operations, financial and CEO responsibilities.

Combes earned his bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and his MBA from Harvard Business School.

#### New appointments at Trinity

Novi's Trinity Health recently named a chief information officer and Catholic Health Ministries director.

In a newly-created position, Paul Browne will manage information systems at Trinity's network of hospitals, outpatient facilities and other operations. Previously project manager for Trinity's information services, Browne will work to implement core computer systems to eliminate costs.

Sister Suzanne Brennan, CSC, was appointed ministries director of Catholic Health Ministries on Trinity's health board. Brennan has served poor and marginalized people during a 25-year career, currently serving as executive director of an outreach program in Utah.

Trinity Health's corporate offices are located in Novi at 27870 Cabot Drive

## For hotel concierge, it's a matter of service

### Hotel Baronette's Donn Kluck turns 80

By Kim Kovellev  
STAFF WRITER

At Novi's Hotel Baronette, Donn Kluck still greets guests as "sir" and "ma'am," and never has encountered lost luggage he couldn't track.

The concierge, with the hotel for more than 11 years, turned 80 years old March 14.

Last Friday, employees, family and a senator gathered to mark the event with German cuisine.

But for Kluck, always donned in suit and tie, the fanfare wasn't necessary.

"It's all a matter of, I enjoy being a service person," the Redford resident said. "People are the most fascinating subject there is."

The hospitality industry marks Kluck's early and late career.

As a 13-year-old high schooler in Chambersburg, Penn., Kluck began working as a bellboy at the Montgomery 1938.

"That was a little 54-room hotel

in town," Kluck said. "It was just a matter of waiting to do something."

"We were busy." Before elevators, he transported baggage to four floors by stairs: "It was interesting."

Supervising and purchasing duties at three hotels in the Grenoble Hotels Corporation chain followed.

All along, he met travelers from far and wide.

"There's never been two people the same," Kluck said.

After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps, he wed wife Marjorie, a USO hostess, in Michigan. Making Detroit home, the Fort Shelby Hotel and Dearborn Inn were his employers for two years.

Then, for 45 years — Kluck sold furniture.

"Again, it was a matter of working with people," he explained. "A later attempt to retire proved futile. Soon, a want ad for Hotel Baronette, which Kluck's company helped furnish, caught his eye."

That was in 1993. Since then, he's worked at the hotel 40 hours a week — calling it "part time."

General manager Leonard Williams said his popular concierge leads by example.

"He wants to take care of the guest and give them the best possible guest service," Williams

said. "He is all business. He is always here — doesn't matter if we have three feet of snow."

Attending to guests and services, Kluck also purchases supplies, proofreads letters, minds the front desk and even curts luggage as needed.

"We always say, if there's any lost luggage, Donn can find it before the airlines can," catering manager Gina Cairns said.

"That's just his real forte, is going out of his way to help."

Again, Kluck credits people.

"Over the years, I've developed relationships with certain people that can help me," Kluck said of his key to luggage locating. "I don't abuse their confidence."

Also a worker at a tax-writing company, Kluck's spare hours are filled with travel, museums, symphonies and crossword puzzles.

"But retiring again isn't on his list."

"I just keep working 'til I drop," are Kluck's plans. "As long as there are people around, this business is going to be around."

"It's just a matter of making them feel at home."

Kim Kovellev is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 107 or via e-mail at kkovelle@ht.homecomm.net.



Michigan State Senator Nancy Cassis, left, is joined by Hotel Baronette General Manager Leonard Williams, right, in recognizing the many decades of service that Donn Kluck has given the hotel business. In 85 years of his working career, Kluck has been with the Baronette for the last 11 years as a bellman, clerk and concierge.

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**Build a Team!**  
If you would like to rally together a team of your own, contact your American Cancer Society. Teams usually consist of family members, friends, co-workers, civic groups, religious organizations or students. Youth groups are also encouraged to get involved!

**Sponsor the Relay!**  
The American Cancer Society is always looking for companies and organizations to help sponsor the event. If you or someone you know is available to make a contribution, give an in-kind donation or help at the event, call your American Cancer Society today!

**Come join us at one of the following Relay For Life events!!**

Novi - Northville Relay For Life Ford Field Saturday, May 14 - Sunday, May 15, 2005 10 a.m. - 10 a.m.	Walled Lake - Commerce Township Relay For Life Walled Lake Middle School Saturday, June 4 - Sunday, June 5, 2005 10 a.m. - 10 a.m.
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Call 248.557.5353 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) to learn more

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	Northville Record	248-349-1700
	Novi News	248-349-1700
WEST	Livingston County Daily Press & Argus	517-548-7060









## Brownies feeding the troops

Brownie Troop 2287 from Deerfield Elementary School recently sent 84 packages of Girl Scout cookies to United States soldiers in Company B, Second Platoon in Iraq. The girls made many colorful, happy cards thanking the soldiers for their hard work.

The Girl Scouts were inspired to take on this project after meeting with Rick and Janet Guttershuf, whose son, Rob, is a corporal in the 82nd Airborne and is serving his second tour of duty. His platoon is an Airborne Infantry Regiment serving in Mosul and Baghdad.

The Guttershufs showed the girls many photos of their son in Iraq and a few items that he brought home, including an Iraqi flag. They also read Rob's most treasured memento - a letter he received from an Iraqi girl. In her best English, the girl told Rob how thankful she was that he and the other soldiers were there to keep them safe and help them.

The girls decided to adopt Rob and his platoon as their special soldiers and send them a surprise.



Photo by Elaine Maylin

Girls from Brownie Troop 2287 from Deerfield Elementary School display one of the eight packages they sent to U.S. Soldiers in Iraq. The packages were filled with Girl Scout cookies and handmade cards. Pictured from left to right are: Bailey Borycki, Rose Maylin, Allison McDowell, Hope Goodearl, Lindsay Webster and Emily Frankowski.

As part of the current Girl Scout cookie sale, the girls asked their customers to buy an extra package or two for the platoon. Rob and his platoon should receive the cookies near the end of March.

## Meeting, but without a pen



Courtesy photo

Gabriella De Oliveira show Danah Dahabi and Suha Syed (back to camera) around her classroom at Orchard Hills.

Early this year, Becky Purcell's fourth grade students at Orchard Hills Elementary School started a friendship with their peers at Huda School in Franklin. In late February, they were finally able to meet their pen pals in person when the Huda students visited Orchard Hills for a cultural exchange.

The Huda students came dressed in traditional clothing, and brought a variety of Middle Eastern and Indian dishes to share. The fourth graders spent the morning talking with each other about the similarities between their schools and their hobbies, sharing stories about Christian and Islamic holidays and culture, and touring Orchard Hills Elementary.

Purcell met Afrin Aalavi, who teaches at Huda, when Aalavi's daughter was a student at Orchard Hills. The two decided that having their classes become pen pals would be a unique experience for the children to expand their horizons and learn about other cultures. Throughout the school year, the students have exchanged four letters.

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## ON CAMPUS

Anisa Lari, a student at Waldo Lake Western High School, has been selected as a State Finalist in the National American Miss Michigan Pageant. She is the daughter of Fatos and Lilihana Lari. Erin Darlington, of Novi, was studying abroad during fall 2004 semester at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. She is a junior at Hope College and the daughter of Tom and Kathy Darlington of Novi.

Novi resident, Andrea Szuminski, earned a Certificate of Merit in Equities and Remedies during her sixth term at The Thomas M. Cooley Law School, Lansing. She is the daughter of Angie and Duane Szuminski.

Maria Schimzki, of Novi, was named to the Dec. 2004 graduates at Adrian College during commencement exercises.

Novi resident, Ryan Stec, was named to the dean's list for fall 2004 semester at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, Fla. He is the son of David and Elizabeth Stec.

Novi residents, Angela Doolin and Jennifer Najjar have been chosen as members of the Albion College's Symphonic Band. Angela is a trombonist and is the daughter of Leon and Geraldine Sims-Doolin. Jennifer is a flutist and is the daughter of Robert and Mary Najjar.

Michael Kujawa and Christina Parrish of Novi were among the Dec. 2004 graduates of Grand Valley State University during commencement exercises.



Courtesy photo

## Showing off with art

Village Oaks third graders celebrated their theme, "People Who Made a Difference," by performing a musical and exhibiting their artwork at Fuest Auditorium in Novi High School on March 3. The musical highlighted the people who were influential in combining old styles with new ideas to create new styles in music. Music selections ranged from African music, spirituals, ragtime, swing, rhythm and blues and rap. Every student had a special part in the musical and each child had five pieces of their own artwork displayed. Their visual arts projects represented artists styles in the 20th Century from Jackson Pollock to Picasso and went further back in time to the Impressionist painters of the 19th Century. People who have made a difference in how we view and appreciate art. Their final projects this year will go further back in time to study the Renaissance, Egypt and Native Americans. Pictured here are: Ali Taha, Sam Potts, and Kelsie Carter.

## SCHOOL BRIEFS

### Kotzen published

Elaine M. Kotzen McIntyre is a first grader at Parkview Elementary School. Her work, "The Scuba Adventure," has been selected for publication in the Michigan Reading Association's 14th annual Kaleidoscope. This publication showcases students' writings from across the state. She will be attending the Young Authors' Luncheon at the MRA's Annual Conference in March. Elaine is the daughter of James D. McIntyre and Rhonda Kotzen.

### Habitat for humanity

Novi High School students will be spending two April Saturdays to help build a Habitat for Humanity home in Pontiac. An organizational meeting was held in January with Habitat for Humanity of Oakland County to evaluate student interest. More than 70 Novi High School students, freshmen to seniors, attended.

Novi High School was granted two days to help with the build due to the overwhelming number of students willing to commit to a four-hour work session on a Saturday, and to collect as many donations from family, friends, and community members as possible.

Novi High School students will work on-site at a home on Prospect Street in Pontiac on April 9 and 16, helping with tasks ranging from light construction work to painting.

### Fuest scholarship

If you are a resident of the Novi Community School district and are attending post high school education in an undergraduate program at an accredited community college, college, university, technical or vocational school, then you may be eligible for a Fuest Scholarship. The Fuest Scholarship is based primarily on financial need and is administered through the Novi Educational Foundation. Up to \$20,000 in scholarship funds are awarded annually to qualified applicants. Application forms are available from the Novi High School Counseling Office, the Educational Services Building on Taft Road, or by calling (248) 449-1200. The deadline for applications is Wednesday, March 23.

### Middle School Career Day

Novi Middle School's 15th annual Career Day will take place on Wednesday, March 23. As in the past, the seventh graders will have the opportunity to listen to speakers representing six different career pathways. The pathway overview helps students learn about emerging career opportunities while connecting them to post-secondary education and the world of work. Eighth graders will have a

chance to go through "The Reality Store." The student will choose a profession, find out his or her estimated salary and then visit "stations" such as housing, insurance, day care, groceries, etc. The student will try to determine what portion of the salary will be used for each of these necessities. The Reality Store is a concept developed by Canton's Business and Professional Women's Association.

If any Novi Middle School parent would like to volunteer to assist with the Career Day, please contact the school office at (248) 449-1600.

### PLANS events

Book Trivia Bonanza: Tuesday, March 22 at 7 p.m. in the Instructional Technology Center Forum. PLANS celebrates March is Reading Month with an evening of literary trivia. Categories include Harry Potter, fairy tales, American Girl and more. For all ages from K - 8. \$3 payable at the door. Please pre-register with Lee Linton at (248) 305-9043.

PLANS Novi Student Talent Show: Monday, April 25 at 7 p.m. in the Instructional Technology Center Forum. The evening will benefit Teens Aiding the Cancer Community (TACC). All acts are welcome and need to be three minutes or less. Audience members are asked to bring a toy or other donations to benefit TACC. For more information, contact Lee Linton (248) 305-9043.

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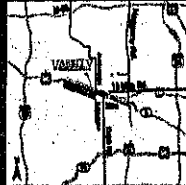
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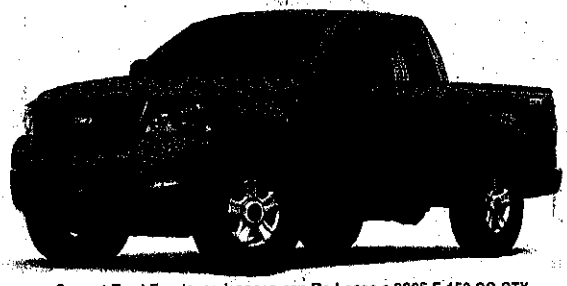
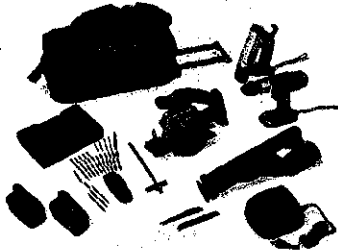
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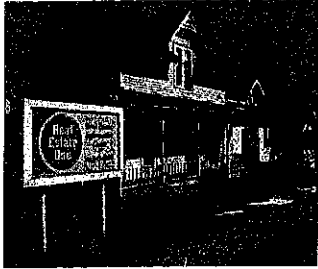




## Taking a tumble

It wasn't the end of the season the Northville-Novi Wild Stangs gymnastics team, including Amanda Perelli, was hoping for, but in the end they showcased their talents and finished behind some extremely talented teams.

— Page 3B



## Regional Marketplace

Real Estate One serves the area with offices in Novi, Milford, South Lyon and Northville (above).

— Page 6B



## Calendar

The Spring Boat Show at the Novi Expo Center is just one of many events taking place locally.

— Page 5B

# SPORTS

B-1 Novi News

hometownlife.com

Thursday, March 17, 2005

## Starting from ground zero

Some might say it wasn't a good year to be Chris Alberty. Others would disagree.

The Novi junior diver said his year wasn't full of his greatest memories, but wasn't as bad as it could have been either.

"I placed 10th at states yesterday," he said. "I'm really happy with that, especially with how the rest of the season went for me."

With how the rest of the season went? Alberty trained for this year. He had big plans. Two diving records stand on the wall for all to see. For 11 dives, Mike Alberty owns the mark with 411 points. For six dives, Steve Alberty is the record holder with 273 points.



S. Eggleston

This year Alberty planned to break them both. He trained all year with the Legacy Diving Club out of Ypsilanti. He worked at it, perfecting his routines and his skills.

But there was one thing Alberty couldn't plan for. Early in the season he was involved in an altercation and injured his back.

The news at the doctor's office wasn't good.

"The doctor said I could have no physical activity," he said. "I was out completely for about six weeks."

The result found Alberty back to where his efforts had started — at zero. A month stood between him and the biggest week of his diving season. He had to compete in the regional and then the states.

There were plenty of expectations too. Last year he finished fourth — just one point out of third. This year he came into the season ranked second in the state of Michigan.

"I had a lot of work to do," he said. "After the first week I was so sore."

To top it off, Alberty rejoined his fellow Wildcats with the flu, which hampered his return.

On the first day of practice in November he had expected to finish in the top three in the state. His return in February from a back injury found him reconsidering.

"I lowered my expectations and I trained harder," said Alberty.

Train harder, indeed. The Novi junior spent nearly six hours a day on the board and working out. He pushed himself to the point of exhaustion at times.

"I worked with my coach, Larry Teahan, who often stayed after practices with me and worked extra hours," Alberty said. "I also worked with the Legacy Divers at Eastern Michigan."

The work paid off. Alberty not only got through the regional early last week, but finished 10th in the state finals with 337.10 points.

But he's not finished yet. The day after the state finals he was

already focusing on the future. "I'm supposed to start training today for next year," he said. "I'm going to learn harder dives and keep training. I hope to have a lot better season next year."

He's got a lot to prove. Ranked second in the state and finishing 10th isn't the plan he had for himself early in the season. Even his rival, Kyle Overway from Zeeland who was ranked first at the beginning of the year after placing third in 2004, didn't do as well as expected. Overway finished sixth in the finals.

But Alberty isn't concerned with his rivals. He isn't concerned with the diver who took first this year or the one who might take first next year.

He's worried about himself and how well he'll do. He's worried about getting himself into the best shape he can be in and keeping it that way.

"I feel I have a lot to prove," he said. "I'm definitely going to be more motivated this year."

And, of course, he's got those two pesky records to keep looking at for the next eight months.

"My brothers don't want anyone else breaking those records but me," Alberty said. "I definitely plan on doing that."

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@ht.homecomm.net.



Wildcat Chris Alberty, who recently finished 10th at the state meet, performs a dive at Novi High.

Photo by JOHN HEIDER

## Quick Hits

### Dumb jocks?

The Novi Wildcats football team may not have played for the past four months, but it's still busy snagging awards.

The team earned the honor of being selected as a Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Academic All-State Football Team for Division I schools.

It's the fourth time in five years the Wildcats' graders have earned the distinction.

Ryan Pritchard, a center and defensive tackle for Novi, was also named to the Academic All-State Individual First Team. He was one of just 20 players to make the academic team.

### Clearing up for spring

There has been a familiar sight everyday running down the sidewalk outside of sports writer Sam Eggleston's house: Amir Huprikac and the gang running.

Why? These guys are troopers. Snow? Meet rain.

They're like the post office because they're always out on their rounds. That goes well with the track team's plans at defending the Kensington Valley Conference this year.

### Springing into action

So what teams are looking for a KVC title and which ones have even bigger plans for spring? Check out the April 7 edition of the Novi News, the issue when the spring sports preview will be come out.

Complete schedules and previews will be available for all of the varsity teams at Novi High School.

### Forecasting the future

Pat Schuler isn't a happy camper following his team's loss to South Lyon in the district tournament, but he's well aware the Lions have had this potential all year long.

The Novi basketball coach named South Lyon as a team to beat in the KVC this year.

Thanks to having three seniors who started back when they were just wee little freshmen, South Lyon did indeed prove the team to be as they went on to not only bounce Novi from the district tournament, but Canton as well.

### Wild card weekend

The Novi Northville Wild Stangs gymnastics team thought they were out of the running last week after taking fourth in their regional. The top three teams make it to the state finals and the rest go home.

Usually, the group found out the next day that their season wasn't over.

After all, one team out of the state is selected as a "wild card" squad and given a berth to the finals.

It has been shown the past season is indeed a time of second chances.

Novi Wild Stangs finished third in a regional last week. Check out the Novi News for more details on the 2005 KVC gymnastics season.

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## Zhao wins indoor triple jump; ready for KVC challenge

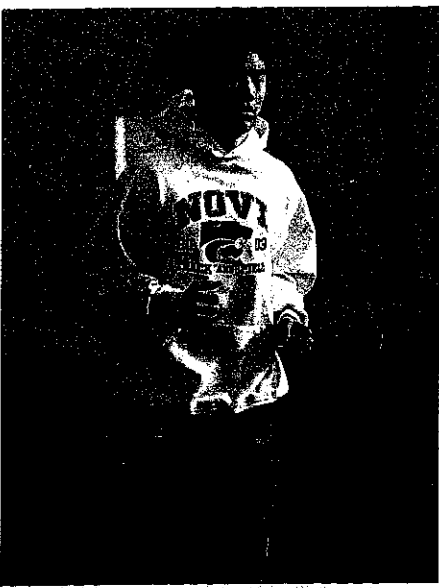


Photo by JOHN HEIDER

Wildcat Eric Zhao will soon be running for real on Novi's oval in distance events and the hurdles.

By Sam Eggleston  
SPORTS WRITER

Eric Zhao wasn't sure what to expect when he participated in the triple jump at the Michigan Indoor Track and Field State Championships March 5.

The Novi junior is sure of one thing now though: He should have jumped a few times prior to the big moment.

"It was the first time I jumped," he said. "I was hoping to finish in the top three. I definitely didn't expect to win."

Zhao leaped 40-feet-5-inches to secure the top spot in the event. Afterward he was well aware of one thing — his body wasn't thrilled with his lack of preparation.

"I was so sore," he said.

Zhao wasn't the only Novi Wildcat to participate in the championships, but he was the only one to secure a state title. The 4-by-200-relay team of Jarrell Woods, Chris Dalton, Brandon Coles and Brandon Carnegie took seventh at the meet and Chris Machisak went 12-foot on the pole vault but didn't place.

The performances of everyone on the squad, to Zhao, meant his team should be pretty competitive in outdoor track and field, starting early next month.

"I think we're going to be very competitive," said the long jumper who went 20-feet-5 inches for a personal best last year. "We've got a really strong sprint crew, great distance runners and strong field events."

Personally, Zhao hopes to reach his career best mark again and has even set himself up with a little wager to keep him motivated.

"I have a bet with a teammate (Brad Sisson) that I can jump it again," he said. "I've also bet him with his 400 (dash) event."

Zhao said his team, the defending Kensington Valley Conference champions, will be looking to edge out Milford again this year as well as Brighton. He also said despite his championship triple jump, he probably won't be the top long jumper on the team this year.

"David Carnegie is an amazing jumper," said Zhao, who first started jumping with the

standing long jump in his grade-school days. "I haven't been able to beat him yet. It's a nice, friendly competition that helps push both of us."

No matter how well he jumps, Zhao said he has plenty support from his friends, teammates and family. Being an only child, Zhao has the undivided attention of his father, Yang, and his mother, Linda.

His father was present when he set the top mark in the state in the triple jump, which took place at the University of Michigan. Zhao said his father is supportive.

"He pushes me without trying to push me," Zhao said.

Beyond winning a title, Zhao said his time at the indoor state championships was used for a more important cause — preparing for the highly-competitive spring track and field season.

"I wanted to see if I had my steps down before the start of the regular season," Zhao said. "I'm very confident now that I've found out I have them down the way I want them."

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# REGIONAL MARKETPLACE

Page 6B

Thursday, March 17, 2005

## Background checks and what can be included

Background checks can range in depth and breadth from a verification of the individual's social security number and credit check,

to a more extensive inquiry into his or her driving records, vehicle registration, criminal history and credit, education, court and drug test records. For sensitive positions, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), it's not uncommon for a company to order an investigative consumer report—a report that includes interviews with an individual's neighbors, friends and associations.

The FCRA prohibits consumer reporting agencies from including the following information in a consumer report: Bankruptcies after 10 years; civil suits, civil judgments and records of arrest, from date of entry, after seven years; paid tax liens after seven years; accounts placed for collection after seven years; and any other negative information (except criminal convictions) after seven years. In addition to these restrictions, many state labor codes and state fair employment guidelines further limit the content that can be included in a background check.

### In the event of an adverse action

Before an employer turns down an individual for employment as a result of what's included in a consumer report, they must provide him or her with a "pre-adverse action disclosure," according to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. This includes a copy of the background check report and an explanation of the individual's rights under the FCRA. After taking adverse action, the employer must then give the individual an "adverse action notice." This document must contain the following information:

- The name, address and phone number of the consumer reporting agency that conducted the background check;
- A statement by the consumer reporting agency that it did not make the adverse decision, and cannot give specific reasons for it;
- A notice of the individual's right to dispute the accuracy of the completeness of any information the agency supplied.

### Now available to consumers

FACTA, the same law that entitles consumers to free credit reports, also gives consumers the right to view their records that are maintained by the same agencies that furnish consumer reports to businesses. ChoicePoint is one such company that maintains a series of databases on consumers. For more information, visit the consumer arm of this agency at [www.choicepoint.com](http://www.choicepoint.com). (Note: ChoicePoint recently informed some 2,300 Michiganders by mail that their personal information may have been fraudulently accessed by unauthorized persons. Approximately 145,000 notices were sent to consumers nationwide about the personal information breach. For more information visit [www.choicepoint.com](http://www.choicepoint.com).)

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](http://www.mcul.org)) to learn more about smart money management. Comments about this column may be e-mailed to [mcd@mcul.org](mailto:mcd@mcul.org).

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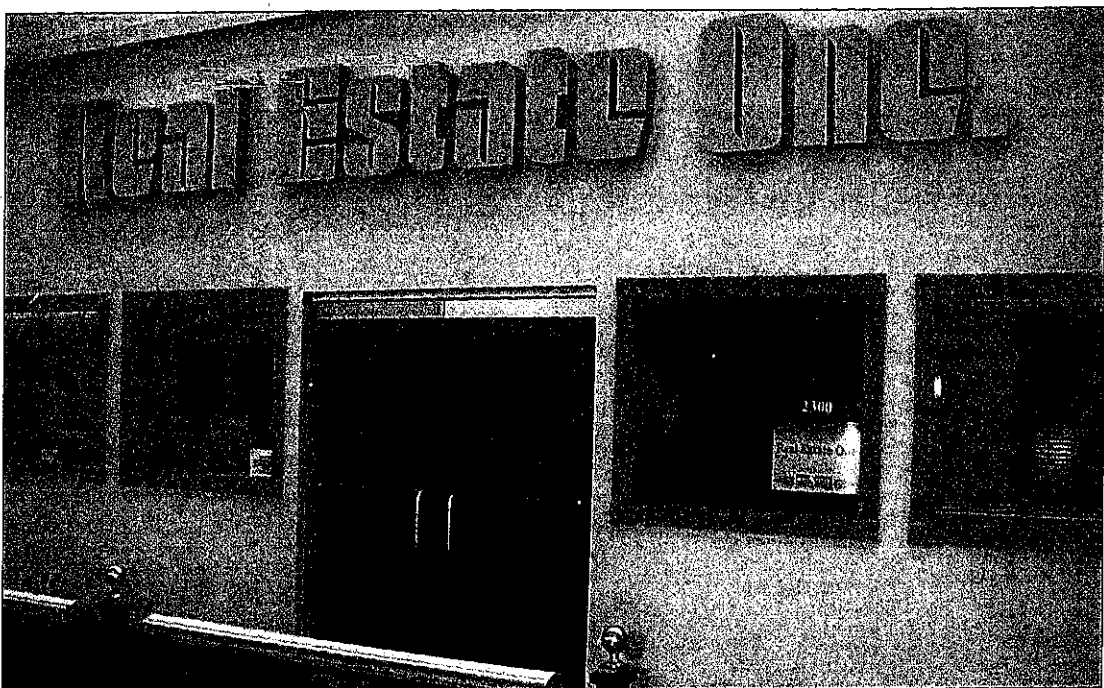
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ADVERTORIAL



Photos by Duane Ramsey

Real Estate One's four offices include (above, l to r) Northville, Milford, South Lyon and (below) Novi.



## Real Estate One

### Leading the way with four local sales offices

By Duane Ramsey  
SPECIAL WRITER

among 51 company-owned Real Estate One offices in Michigan. Celebrating 75 years in business, Real Estate One has more than 1,900 licensed agents who generated \$3.8 billion in sales during 2004 in Michigan.

Real Estate One has a comprehensive training program to support the best trained agents in the business, according to the company. Agents also receive individual training at their local offices.

The four locations are full-service offices that handle transactions from start to finish. Representatives of Capital Title Company and John Adams Mortgage Company are available in the local offices to provide their services to Real Estate One customers.

### DETAILS

**Real Estate One**  
[www.realestateone.com](http://www.realestateone.com)  
4 convenient locations  
**In Novi:**  
43155 Main Street  
Suite 2300  
(248) 348-6430  
**In Northville:**  
103 Rayson Street  
at Centre downtown  
(248) 349-6200  
**In Milford:**  
560 N. Milford Road  
near Main downtown  
(248) 684-1065  
**In South Lyon:**  
346 N. Lafayette  
(Pontiac Trail)  
(248) 437-3800

### In Novi-Northville...

The Novi office and Northville satellite office led the marketplace with \$143 million in combined sales in 2004. The two offices already have generated more sales during the first two months of 2005 than in the same period last year.

There are 60 to 65 agents working out of the Novi office and 10 additional agents in Northville that handle residential, new construction, vacant land and some commercial real estate business.

"We have agents with many years of experience from 10, 15, 25, and up to 35 years in the business," said Kathy O'Neill, manager of the combined Novi-Northville offices, who has 21 years of experience.

The agents in the Northville and Novi offices not only sell homes in those communities but also have listings in Livonia, Farmington, Farmington Hills, and Wixom.

"We've seen all markets and types of transactions over the years. We've followed the market trends and watched the areas grow and home values increase over the years," said O'Neill.

Real Estate One represents some new construction residential developments but also assists individual builders in selling their inventory. In addition, agents take customers to see new and existing houses priced from the high \$100,000 range to well over \$1 million.

### In Milford...

The Milford office of Real Estate One is the number one broker in its market area that includes Milford, Highland, Commerce, Waterford, White Lake and West Bloomfield in Oakland County with parts of Livingston and Genesee counties.

The Milford office generated close to \$70 million in sales in 2004 while doubling the office in size and number of agents. 2005 looks like another growth year as business in January and February has surpassed the same time periods in 2004.

Real Estate One has a 14.5-percent share of the Milford market based on closed listings by list or sales office with the nearest competitor having a 10 percent share.

"Our workplace is one of

camaraderie among peers," said Kathy Solan, manager of the Real Estate One office in Milford.

"There is willingness on the part of all agents to assist their co-workers in putting together a deal and making it happen. That philosophy is unusual in a sales force environment, especially one that is commission based. The team concept is alive and well within the office comprised of competitive sales agents," said Solan.

The office has 44 agents with additional agents in training to cover the growing market. Recently, the Milford office has done substantially more business in Livingston County and increased its business in Genesee County as well.

"We are the last bastion of affordability in developing Oakland County," said Solan. The average home price is about \$226,000 in the Milford area. The agents in the Milford office have listed hundreds of homes and condominiums with prices ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million and more.

### In South Lyon...

The South Lyon office of Real Estate One is the leading real estate company in that community and continues to grow with the residential growth in the surrounding area.

"We are No. 1 in our market. We sell more homes in the South Lyon area than any other real estate company," said Mary Nicole, manager of the South Lyon office. "Our houses are

selling for 98 percent of the listing price."

The agents in the South Lyon office generated \$35 million in sales during 2004 and had a 13-percent share of the local market based on sales from January to September.

The South Lyon office has 25 agents with more than 100 years of combined service in the real estate business, ranging from new agents to veterans with as much as 25 years of experience. The agents market homes in South Lyon, Lyon Township, New Hudson, other areas in Oakland County, as well as in Washtenaw and Livingston counties.

"Our agents make our office unique," Nicole said. "Our office's success is attributed to our exceptional agents who know their market and are committed to their customers by providing them with professional and quality service."

As a company, Real Estate One is involved in supporting the American Cancer Society and Special Olympics programs in Michigan. The four offices and individual agents are active in the local communities supporting the activities of many charities, community organizations, parades and schools.

For example, The South Lyon office has entered a team to participate in the area's first Relay For Life for the American Cancer Society this spring. It also sponsored the holiday breakfast for the South Lyon Chamber of Commerce, adopted a family for Christmas through the Active Faith organization and participates in the annual Pumpkinfest in October.

### HOMETOWN SALES BY YOUR HOMETOWN LEADERS!

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