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Thursday, December 22, 2005

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Novi, Michigan

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INSIDE

## FIRE SAFETY 101

Winter's not fireproof

Novi Fire Chief Art Lenaghan wants residents to have a visit from Santa this year, not the fire department.

— Page 4A

Celebrating a century

Mary Miller will need a team to help blow out her birthday candles this year as she celebrates her 100th birthday tomorrow.



— 18A

SPORTS

Hot on ice

The Wildcats boys hockey team squared off against Northville at Compuware Arena and came away with a 6-3 victory.

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Stanford-built

The Catholic Central Shamrocks football team plays their games in the house that Stanfords built.

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## Xbox game stirs frenzy

■ Waiting in the cold for latest gaming system

By Tracy Mishler  
STAFF WRITER

David Champine and Justin Ovlak will do anything to get the new Xbox 360 before Christmas, including camping outside Novi's Best Buy in 15-degree weather.

Along with more than 25 people, Champine, 17, and Ovlak, 17, of Livonia, started lining up outside Best Buy around midnight Saturday after Best Buy officials caved in to allow customers to start a line for the new gaming system.

"We've been here since 3:15 this afternoon," Champine said. "They weren't going to let us line up until 5 a.m., but we weren't going anywhere."

Champine said he heard other Best Buy's in the area were allowing customers to bring tents and chairs.

"We were told by both managers and Novi police that were not allowed to stand on their sidewalk because it was private property," he said. "They were going to make us stand in the parking lot all night."

Once more people began showing up, Champine said they were allowed to line up along the outside store wall as long as there wasn't any trouble.

Novi Police Chief David Malloy said police were dispatched to the Haggerty Road store around 11:30 p.m. from an anonymous source who was concerned about her safety during the camp out.

"Best Buy was simply concerned about fires being started and vandalism during the night," Malloy said. "Officers met with store management and monitored the situation before they helped the customers form a line."

Jim Hackney said Best Buy has nothing to worry about.

"We do this kind of stuff all the time," said Hackney, 31, of Superior Township. "I created the official Xbox list. So far there are 24 names, but I'm sure more people will show up before the night is over."

Hackney said camping out for the latest gaming equipment is common.

"Camping-out is very common, especially for Black Friday," Hackney said. "I'm not sure why Best Buy would have a problem with it. People do it all the time."

Hackney said many people hear

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Photo by TRACY MISHLER

David Champine (left) and Justin Ovlak camped out Novi's Best Buy Saturday night awaiting the arrival of the Xbox 360.



Photo by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

Need-ers

Novi Needlers' Jean Forhan, left, Marilyn Taylor and others take a look at some of the quilts they've finished over the last fall. They'll donate all of these quilts to charity organizations, some went to hurricane Katrina's victims, others to Plymouth's "First Step" for victims of domestic violence. The group meets twice a month at the Novi Senior Center to patch together the quilts.

## Battling energy costs

■ Call energy firms if paying bill's a problem

By Pam Fleming  
STAFF WRITER

Al Wood knows the score when it comes to saving money on home heating bills.

Owner of Dan Wood Plumbing Heating Cooling, with headquarters in Novi, said consumers do have some control over their energy costs this winter.

"For every degree you lower your thermostat, you can save 3 percent on your gas bill," he said. Wood is part of a family tradition.

His grandfather, Edwin Wood, established a heating, cooling and plumbing business in 1908. His dad, Dan Wood, started the same type of business in 1957.

"We have financing programs to assist people who need a new furnace and can't afford it," Wood said.

The company also offers the Wood Home Comfort Program in which the firm offers a regular maintenance program for heating and cooling equipment.

Other ways to keep costs down this winter include changing the furnace filter and humidifying one's home.

"You feel warmer at a lower

Who to call for help

Low-income residents having trouble paying their heating bill can contact The Heat and Warmth Fund at (800) 866-THAW or visit www.thawfund.org.

Or call the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency at (800) 482-9250 after Jan. 4.

Those who need assistance with energy bills can also call DTE Energy at (800) 477-4747 or Consumers Energy at (800) 477-5050.

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## Lecutre shocks, enlightens

■ Sheriff warns about Internet predators at CC

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

From now on, when David Rabahy's nieces and nephews ask him if they can use his computer, he'll think twice about allowing them that access.

Rabahy was one of over 250 fathers who attended Catholic Central's Dad's Club meeting Dec. 12. He witnessed an hour-long speech by Oakland County

Sheriff Michael Bouchard on internet security and the dangers of online predators and the risk they pose for children.

"What surprised me was how many different ways the bad guys can come at you, and how they collaborate together to find victims and to discuss techniques," Rabahy said. "That was the scariest thing for me."

Rabahy's daughter is in col-



M. Bouchard

lege and his son is a senior at Catholic Central. He doesn't have to worry about them being manipulated by predators searching for children. But he did say he will start to monitor his nieces and nephew's Internet usage when they come visiting.

"I think we're doing pretty good right now," he said. "The one thing (Bouchard) talked about was this monitoring software where you can see what sites your kids visited after the fact. That looked interesting. I don't know if I'm going to do it, but I might investigate that at least."

continued on page 3

## Balliet braves the cold to help his fellow man

■ Salvation Army bell ringer credits his faith in God for his endurance

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

It may be minus-2 degrees outside, but that won't stop Stewart Balliet from ringing his bell.

Dressed in layer after layer of clothing, Balliet braves the cold air and winter elements. He stands outside establishments such as Sam's Club, Kroger and Lord and

Taylor at Twelve Oaks Mall, collecting money for the Salvation Army.

And does he mind? Not at all. "This job is a blessing to God himself," Balliet said. "By doing this I'm helping people who really can't help themselves."

Balliet said 89 cents of every dollar he collects goes to people who have no shelters or soup kitchens to go to, and to battered women who have no place to turn.

"It really has a lot of good uses, and it's beneficial to them," he said. "If I weren't out here doing this, they would have no hope from anywhere else."

While taking mini-breaks from bell ringing, Balliet often hears people talk about how cold it is as they scamper across the parking lot and into the stores.

But he just keeps smiling, knowing that in the long run, he's there for a good cause.

"It's tough when you're doing this

five or six days in a row at eight hours a day," he said. "But if it weren't for the thought of helping people, I probably wouldn't keep going."

There is another thing that keeps him going as well. Balliet

continued on page 2



Photo by Ramez Khuri

Salvation Army Bell Ringer Stewart Balliet stands by his post at Lord & Taylor in Novi last Wednesday afternoon.

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# COMMUNITY

Pam Fleming, staff writer (248) 349-1700, ext. 105 pfleming@gannett.com

## LANSING CONNECTION

I've enjoyed connecting you with your state Legislature this year. In reflection, let me wish you and your family a wonderful holiday and best wishes in the New Year.

The Senate ended the fall session with some important legislative work.

### State Board of Education Proposes Mandatory Curriculum

The state Board of Education unanimously approved a new statewide school curriculum standard and referred it to the Legislature for action.

It is important for us to emphasize the quality of our education. The new curriculum is a labor of love and will help to ensure that all Michigan students have access to a high-quality education.

As vice chair of the Senate Education Committee and a former educator, I believe that a modern, comprehensive curriculum should include college preparation, vocational and technical job training.

Manufacturing Tax Cut Goes to Governor  
The Legislature approved legislation that provides approximately \$600 million in tax relief to major job providers in Michigan and sent it to the governor for her approval.

Senate Bill 634, which I sponsored, changes how the Single Business Tax is applied from 90 percent on sales to 95 percent over four years. The bill gives a tax advantage to Michigan-based

businesses who export goods as opposed to those who are based outside of Michigan but conduct business here. This will provide tax cuts totaling approximately \$75 million during those four years.

The package also creates property tax credits to reduce business liabilities, offers tax incentives for business to move jobs into Michigan and preserves the Delphi and Visteon's current tax status, protecting them from massive tax hikes at the end of the year.

This is an unquestionably sound one, a vital first step to promote tax relief for the struggling manufacturing sector. Early next year the intention is to focus on small business tax relief and begin a comprehensive tax restructuring to promote Michigan's overall competitiveness and well-being.

### Banning Alcohol Inhalation Devices

The Senate recently voted unanimously to outlaw devices designed to vaporize alcohol so it can be inhaled directly into the lungs and quickly enter the bloodstream. This results in a very rapid and potentially life-threatening rate of intoxication.

HB 5067 bans the use, possession or sale of these machines in Michigan. The bill is awaiting the governor's approval.

As always, your comments are welcome and appreciated. You may reach me by e-mail at: sen-nancy@senate.michigan.gov, or toll free at 1-888-8-NANCY.

### State Senator Nancy Cassis, a Novia Republican, represents the 15th Senate District, which includes the townships of Commerce, Highland, Holly, Lynn, Milford, Novi, Rose, West Bloomfield and White Lake, as well as the Villages of Holly, Milford and Waterline Lakes, and the cities of Novi, Northville (the portion in Oakland County), Orchard Lake, South Lyon, Walled Lake and Wixom.

## Cubs celebrate 75 years of scouting

### Scout Pack 240 donates toiletry kits to the needy

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

Charities continue to report lower than anticipated donations in 2005, and Cub Scout Pack 240 wants that to change.

To do their part in helping the needy, the scouts donated their time by assembling toiletry kits for those less fortunate.

The kits, donated to the Detroit Rescue Mission, included items such as tube socks, shampoo, toothpaste, hand cream and candy canes. Due to the overwhelming response of area dentist offices, the scouts had enough supplies to put together over 100 kits.

"We sent out letters to quite a few dentists in the area, and they responded by sending every kind of dental hygiene products they could think of," said Theresa McClure, pack 240 coordinator. "We were shooting for 50 kits, and now we're able to do over 100 because of their generosity."

When it was all said and done the scouts put together over 125 toiletry kits and were able to give eight boxes of miscellaneous items, along with 12 boxes of videotapes, DVDs, books and CDs. Three boxes of the same items were also sent to the Providence Park Emergency Room. In addition, 150 laundry kits were packaged for the mission.

McClure said the scouts do a community service project every year. In past years they've sent kits to soldiers in Iraq and scarves

and hats to other local charities. "We just want the boys to realize other people need us," McClure said. "Originally we were going to send the toiletries down to Louisiana to a neighboring pack, but we found out many people locally need them more."

In addition to celebrating their kind deed, the 55 boys in pack 240 broke out the sparkling grape juice and toasted 75 years of Cub Scouting. Pack 240 itself has been around for 32 years.

"We've been celebrating our 75th anniversary all year," McClure said. "We try to let the kids know that it's not only them receiving stuff, but they should always try to help others as well."



The boys of Cub Scout Pack 240 met last Monday to assemble toiletry kits for the needy and to celebrate 75 years of scouting existence.



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## Getting a new furry friend for Christmas?

### Make sure you and your family are pet-prepared

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

For years, seasoned pet-owners have been raising their furry friends as members of their own families.

But for those who are contemplating bringing a pet into their homes this holiday season, there are some important rules and con-

siderations they must keep in mind.

According to www.avma.org, your pet-owning experience will be most enjoyable if you take the time to consider which animal best suits your family.

John Stottele, owner of Family of Pets in Novi, said that there are three main things to consider when shopping for a dog: supplies, veterinarian care and behavior training.

"One of the biggest problems that most people have is they buy a dog and they don't buy a kennel," Stottele said. "A kennel is used for a multitude of reasons."

Stottele said that years ago, kennel training was taboo and not

too many people liked using one. But in the last 15 years it's become more accepted.

"It's just the way we believe we can train a dog," he said. "A kennel is a dog's bed. If you can confine a dog to a kennel, he won't go to the bathroom there if he's comfortable."

Kennel training teaches dogs very quickly not to wet where they lay. It teaches them to hold their bladders until their owners give them time to go out.

"It's a scheduling thing," Stottele said. "You feed them and take them out on a schedule."

### Before getting a pet, you must consider and do the following:

- Do you have room for a pet?
- What activities do you enjoy?
- How do you spend your day?
- Do you have a no-pets clause where you live?
- How much will your pet cost?
- What if a pet doesn't fit your lifestyle?
- Consider veterinarians and other community resources.
- Make check-up plans for your new companion.
- Prepare your home for your pet's arrival.

to contain a lot of corn and very little meat.

"It's not good because dogs are carnivorous," Stottele said. "With a quality dog food you'll protect your dog with better health. We recommend purchasing ProPac food."

Vaccinations are usually \$25 each, plus office calls.

"It will cost about \$50 per visit and when you go every three weeks, it adds up," Stottele said. "But it's absolutely necessary, whether you get a dog for free or pay \$1,000 for one."

Behavior training is the next major component, and Stottele said it ranks up there as one of the most important. He said for years pet owners were advised to go to

classes, but now they're being told to train in their homes.

"The biggest reason dogs die is not from viruses, or from getting hit by cars," Stottele said. "It's because we euthanize them because of behavior issues. That's not the dog's fault, it's the owners. It's how you teach the dog, or any pet that will determine how it behaves."

In order to teach a pet well, an owner needs to be committed to the time it takes. Dogs will not be great companions unless the owner is willing to work at it.

"Don't buy a puppy on a whim," Stottele said. "If you're in an apartment, make sure you have a pet clause and that you're allowed to have pets."

For more information, visit www.familyofpets.net.



Fountain Walk's Family of Pets employee Jay Frechette holds a Yorkie-chon, a Yorkshire terrier/bichon frise cross puppy. Family of Pets is ready to counsel any household considering buying a dog or cat for a Christmas present.

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# EDUCATION

Ramez Khuri, school reporter (248) 349-1700, ext. 110 rkhuri@gannett.com



Photo by KRISTYN ZINNER

Novi Community School District bus drivers pose with Corporal Michael Liacono of the United States Marine Corps and the donations they made to Toys for Tots. Pictured from left to right are: Ray Banalis, Rebecca Yarbrough, Larry Poltier, Michele Gordy, Mary Kotrych and Liacono.

## Department donates toys

■ Three kids to get new bikes for the holidays, courtesy of Novi bus drivers

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

When Rebecca Yarbrough received a special request from a young Novi resident, she went right to work.

In addition to being a substitute bus driver for the Novi Community School District's transportation department, Yarbrough is also a Toys for Tots coordinator.

The request was for a special bicycle, and Yarbrough decided to combine her two jobs to make his wish come true.

"Yarbrough came to me and asked if there was any way that

we could help him out," said Mary Kotrych, Novi bus driver. "We talked about it, and we said yes."

In past years, the transportation department has donated its bulk return fund to needy families from St. John Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills. But last year the parishioners already took care of all the needy families that they had, so the bus drivers didn't do anything in particular with the funds.

"This year, when the church didn't need the transportation department again, the bus drivers came up with a new idea to help out Toys for Tots."

"We took the bottle money and some donations from other people and bought the bike that the boy wanted," Kotrych said. "We also bought bicycles for another boy and a girl."

Kotrych explained that the transportation always tries to donate its bottle return money to local families or charities. This list for fall term 2005 at year she personally delivered the

bicycles to the Novi Toys for Tots warehouse on Dec. 8, where Corporal Michael Liacono of the United States Marines accepted them.

"It just happened that Rebecca, who works with us, is a coordinator, and we thought that there was no sense in letting that money sit there another year," Kotrych said. "I enjoy doing this, it feels good to help people."

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@gannett.com.

## ON CAMPUS

Novi residents Florence Jirasek, Jennifer Knockart and Lance Tuttle were named to the dean's list for fall term 2005 at Northwood University.

## Students make blankets for needy

■ Novi High pitches in for the holidays

By Ramez Khuri  
STAFF WRITER

Freshman Tessa Antony wants everyone to be warm this winter.

"That's why she happily accepted double-duty work last Thursday at Novi High School."

Antony was asked by special education teacher Jodie Sikaris to help her students make blankets for the needy as part of a project called "Bring Together the Community."

"She also volunteered to make a blanket herself."

"There are many people who are in need. And if we, as kids, can do something to make a difference in society, I think that's a great thing," Antony said. "We are future citizens and we can make a difference. I really believe that."

The project was initiated by the social studies department under the leadership of teacher Nicole Carter. Senior Jennifer Phillips, as part of the school's Interact club, explained it was members of the club who donated money and bought the fleece so students could make the blankets.

The Interact Club does community service projects regularly around Novi and is the high school branch of Novi Rotary.

"This is an awesome opportunity for students to be active citizens," said Corey Nuckolls, social



Photos by Ramez Khuri

Novi High School freshmen Nathan Haynes and Ben Fraser are hard at work making a blanket for the needy.

studies teacher. "I believe the goal of any social studies classroom is to develop active productive members of our society. Learning does not simply take place within the four walls of the classroom."

Nuckolls was impressed with the number of students who packed the school's atrium and volunteered their time to make blankets. They came in groups and ranged from ninth through 12th grade.

All the blankets were then donated to the Open Door Outreach Center in White Lake.

Nuckolls explained the a main reason for the project is to stress to the kids that the holidays are all about giving and not receiving gifts.

"We want our students to learn the significance of that," he said.

"The students, out of the kindness of their hearts, have chosen to use this time to make a positive impact. It's an awesome turnout and we're hoping to make at least 20 blankets today."

One of those students was freshman Tim Oh, who felt good about helping those in need.

"When I heard about the project, I said 'Why not?'" said Oh. "I feel like I'm accomplishing something big because there are so many needy people and doing this project can make a huge difference in their lives."

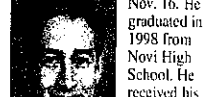
Ramez Khuri is a staff writer for the Novi News. He can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 110 or by e-mail at rkhuri@gannett.com.

# PEOPLE

Cal Stone, editor (248) 349-1700, ext. 113 cstone@gannett.com

## NAMES IN THE NEWS

Novi resident John M. Mione was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan, Nov. 16. He graduated in 1998 from Novi High School. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan in 2002 and attended Wayne State University Law School. He received his Juris Doctor degree on May 16, 2005.



J. Mione

John is currently employed as an attorney with Thomas M. Keranen & Associates, P.C., Bloomfield Hills.

Novi-based Macprofessionals, an IT support company, announced the appointment of Jan Rutherford to director of video and training. In his role, Rutherford oversees and trains staff and clients in digital image manipulation, graphic design, multi-media presentations, non-linear video editing, 3D anima-

tion, advanced motion effects, compositing and DVD authoring. He also consults with major companies to improve the efficiency of their digital workflow. Rutherford formerly worked as a production manager for General Motors Creative Services. He resides in Royal Oak.

The company also announced the promotion of Tina Sulkowski to director of sales and marketing. In her role, Sulkowski is responsible for developing new markets, building national partnerships, and managing the sales team at Macprofessionals. She previously served as an account representative for the Mac Group in Farmington Hills. She resides in Dearborn.

Prior to joining Macprofessionals, Sulkowski was an account representative for the Mac Group in Farmington Hills. She resides in Dearborn.

Novi resident Tom Campbell, veteran WIR news reporter, has been honored by Lawrence Technological University President Charles Chambers and other University leaders, for his work in preparing the

Technology Update series of radio spots which have won the 2005 Silver Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). CASE is the premier national association for collegiate advancement and marketing professionals. The ad series competed with others from colleges and universities across the country.

Chambers presented Campbell with a framed CASE award certificate and thanked him for his hard work, creativity, and dedication. To prepare the spots Campbell conducted more than 48 news interviews of Lawrence Tech faculty, students, and staff. He distilled each interview or group interview into at least three and sometimes as many as six different 60-sec. segments.

"Tom's keen reporting skills, sharp news sense, and passion for excellence have been essential to the success of this unique series," Chambers said. "We're delighted with his leadership in creating these lively, informative segments that detail the work and innovations of Lawrence Tech students, faculty, and staff."

## IN THE SERVICE

Novy Seaman Lisa M. Solan, daughter of Joanne and Michael J. Solan of Walled Lake recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.

During the eight-week program, Solan completed a variety of training which included classroom study and practical instruction on naval customs, first aid, firefighting, water safety and survival, and shipboard and aircraft safety. An emphasis was also placed on physical fitness.

Solan is a 2005 graduate of Walled Lake Community High School of Walled Lake.

## ENGAGEMENT



Velthoven-Wilson

Janice Stevens-Velthoven of Pinckney announces the engagement of her daughter, Danielle

Nicole Velthoven to Dennis Patrick Wilson, son of Kristin Wilson, Royal Oak and Brian Wilson. The bride-elect is also the daughter of the late Daniel Velthoven.

The bride-elect is a 1998 graduate of Novi High School and a 2002 graduate of Madonna University with a bachelor of science degree in nursing. She is currently employed as a Registered Nurse at the University of Michigan Cardiology Department.

The groom-elect is a 1998 graduate of Royal Oak Kimball High School and is currently attending Wayne State University. He is employed as a Sales Manager. A September 2006 wedding is planned.

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# SENIORS

Cal Stone, editor (248) 349-1700, ext. 113 cstone@gannett.com



Photo by JOHN HEIDER/Novi News

Novi resident Mary Miller smiles as she recounts her life growing up in Michigan. Miller will turn 100 later this month.

## Celebrating a century of life

### Novi resident turns 100

By Tracy Mishler  
STAFF WRITER

Mary Miller will need a team to help blow out her birthday candles this year.

Born in 1905, Miller, of Novi, will celebrate her 100th birthday tomorrow and more than 50 family members will be with her to celebrate.

"I don't feel like I'm 100," Miller said. "I act like it, but I don't feel like it."

As the oldest of nine siblings, Miller moved to Detroit in 1926 from Baraga in the Upper Peninsula to look for work.

After spending several years working in a variety of fields, Miller worked as a clerk for the U.S. Army in Detroit for 16 years.

She married her husband, Leo, in 1934 and had two children,

Maryann and Robert.

"There are so many differences in the world today than when I was a kid," Miller said. "The kids today wouldn't know what to do if they lived back when I was growing up."

Miller said life in the early 1900s was very different.

"We didn't have a refrigerator or an electric stove," she said. "I didn't even have my first drink of Coke until I lived here in Detroit."

"Those were horse and buggy days. I hated having to drive a car when I got to Detroit. It was so much easier to just jump onto a horse."

#### Decades pass

Today, Miller is the only one in her family from Baraga still alive.

"I outlived all my brothers and sisters," Miller said. "I am happy though spending my days with my daughter and her family."

As the first of four generations of women in her family all living in

Novi, Miller lives with her daughter, Maryann Mitchell, 69, and said it's nice to have family nearby.

"It's nice to know they are all so close," she said. "I don't know what I would do without them."

Mitchell said her mother's goal was to outlive her father, Robert, who lived to be 89 years old.

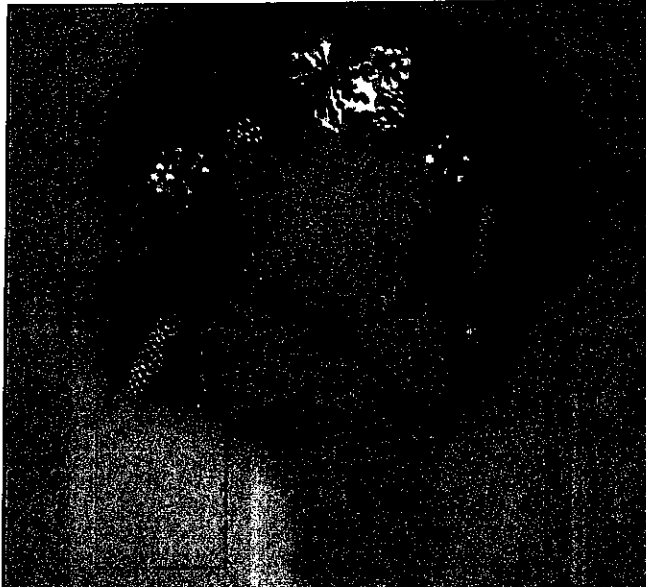
"I love having my mother around," Mitchell said. "It's really exciting having her turn 100."

"I don't believe I know anyone who has lived that long and I am thankful and lucky that my own girls were able to know their grandmother."

Miller said her greatest accomplishment in life was raising a family.

"I had other dreams that didn't come true," she said. "But I definitely lived a long life and am very thankful."

Tracy Mishler is a staff writer for the Novi News. She can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 107, or at tmishler@gannett.com



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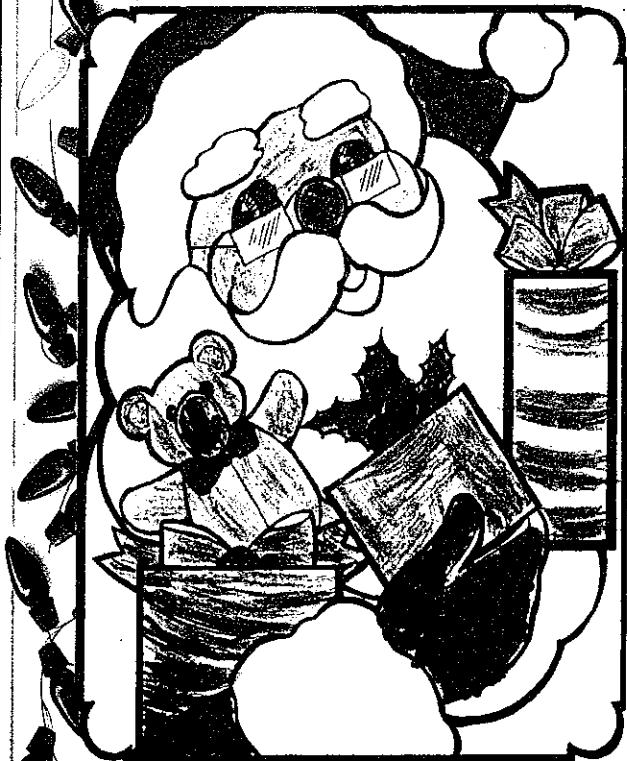
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Andrew Stefan  
Winner for 7-10 year olds

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**Tommy Boy**  
Tom Civerilla isn't just some little kid anymore. He's the top scorer on his team from last year and so far one of the top players around again this year.  
— Page 4B

**Wildcat Hockey!**  
There's just way too much action from the Northville and Novi hockey game to not put more of it in this section! Check out the photopage this week.  
— Page 4B



# SPORTS

# CHECK!

## Wildcats slap Northville with rivalry loss

By Sam Eggleston  
SPORTS WRITER

Novi's special teams were pretty special Saturday. The Wildcats boys hockey team squared off against Northville at Compuware Arena and came away with a 6-3 victory.

"They were a lot faster than us out there tonight," said Northville coach Brad O'Neill. "They got to the puck faster than we did and they responded faster than we did."

"I was also very disappointed in our physical presence out there. They just outplayed us."

Novi, which lost the first game between the two teams, 4-3, in overtime, capitalized on almost every chance they were given. They scored three times while short-handed and added a powerplay goal to their performance.

The Wildcats tallied a short-handed goal at 12:03 in the third period to take a 4-2 lead when Northville

goalie Scott Ozog came out of the crease to retrieve the puck. He bobbled it, lost it and watched as it was recovered by Novi's Tom Ciaverilla, who skated around the net and scored despite a quick Mustang defenseman who took position between the posts.

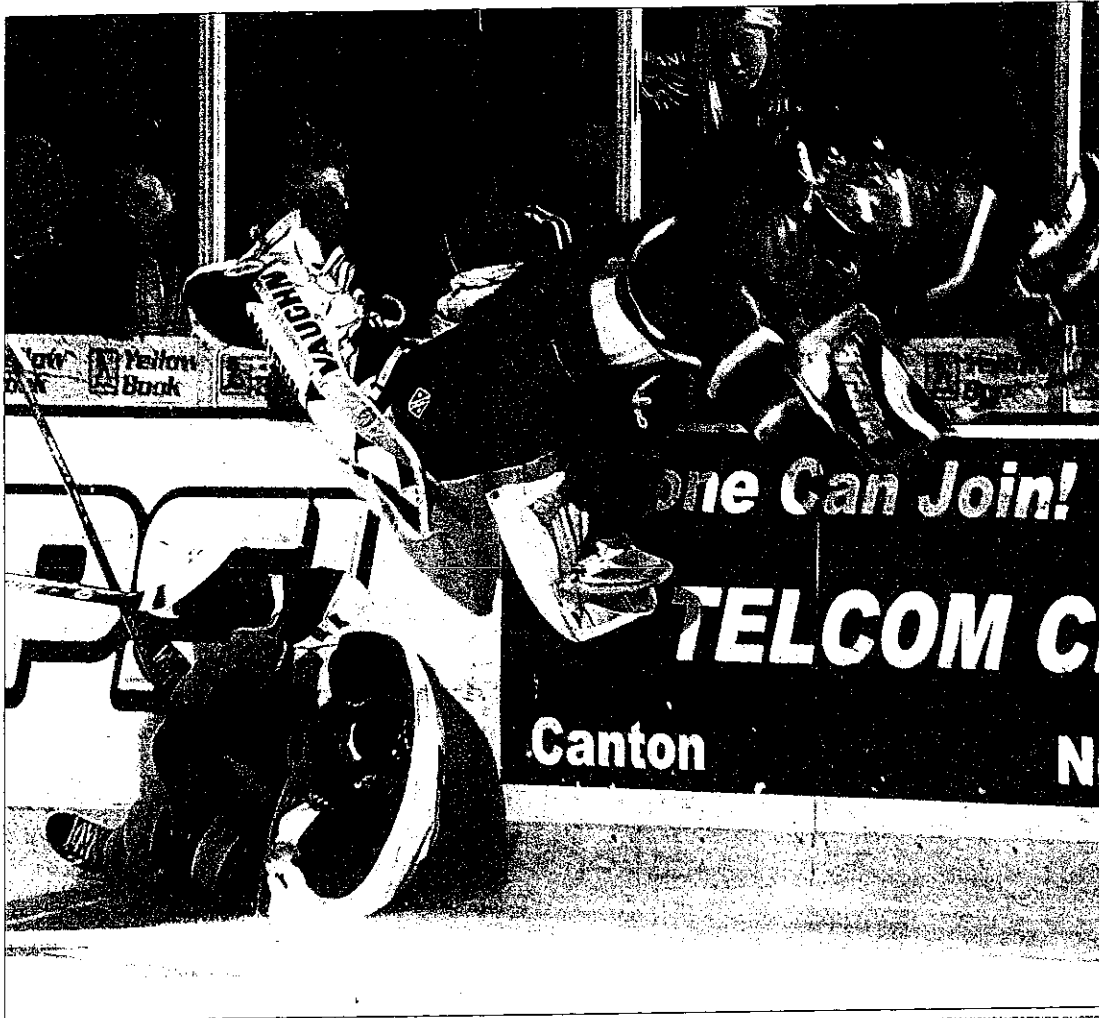
Just 25 seconds later, the Wildcats put the game away for good when sophomore Ryan Timar notched a short-handed goal by skating between two defenders and fired home an off-balance wrist shot.

"I'm really proud of the way we played tonight," said Dan Phelps. "We sat down and watched some tape (of the 9-0 loss to South Lyon) and we talked about what kind of team we are going to be. This is the team we selected in November. They didn't surprise me tonight, because I knew this is what they could do."

Northville scored a final goal in the third period with a powerplay of their own. Senior Pat Uetz wound up and slapped home a shot from just inside the blue line with 8:39 left on the clock for the final score of the game. Brandon Wales earned the assist.

Northville tallied the first goal of the night at 13:16 in the first period on a shot by Wales, unassisted, before Novi's Shamus Finnerty tied it up four minutes later with an assist from Andrew Haggerty. Northville added another from Derek Mohacsi at 2:20 with an assist from Tim Fick before Novi answered a minute later on a goal by captain Steve Rousseau with an assist from Ciaverilla to end the first period, 2-2.

Novi notched the lone goal of the second period on a short-handed play with 1:33 left. Timar skated in alone off a pass from Matt Ericson and fired it



Novi goalie Brad Clos goes airborne after a collision with a Northville skater.

Photos by MARK HICKS/WESTSIDE PHOTO

### Bad Boys

There were a few tense moments for both teams when it came to powerplays. Novi and Northville combined for a total of 26 penalty minutes in their game Saturday.

TEAM	PLAYER	TIME/PERIOD	PENALTY	MINUTES
*Northville	Matt Long	7:20/First	Unsportsman	2
*Novi	Ryan Fox	7:20/First	Hooking	2
*Northville	Kyle Storey	3:39/First	Unsportsman	2
*Novi	Scott Eberline	3:39/First	Unsportsman	2
Novi	Scott Eberline	15:55/Second	Hooking	2
Novi	Scott Eberline	11:07/Second	Hooking	2
Northville	Brandon Wales	5:50/Second	High Stick	2
Novi	Ryan Fox	3:43/Second	Unsportsman	2
Novi	Ryan Fox	3:43/Second	2nd Unsportsman	2
Novi	Greg Morissette	13:58/Third	High Stick	2
Northville	Matt Long	10:30/Third	Slashing	2
Novi	Brett Walczak	9:51/Third	Holding	2
Northville	Anthony Deneau	3:59/Third	Holding	2

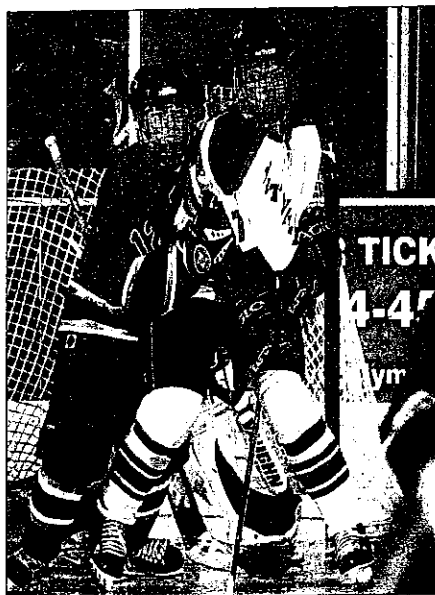
\* indicates off-setting penalties

past Ozog for the score.

"We couldn't have asked for a better performance from our team," said Phelps. "We made the best out of every situation and had some great plays."

Ozog took the loss for Northville, which is now 6-3, while Novi's Brad Clos earned the win with some impressive play to help Novi to a 3-6 mark.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@gannett.com.



ABOVE: Northville's Corey Campbell tries to take up position in front of Novi goalie Brad Clos. Defender Greg Morissette is preparing to clear him. LEFT: Novi's Ryan Timar tries to get a shot in for a goal while Scott Ozog defends.

<b>By the numbers</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6-3</b>	<b>3-6</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>8-3</b>	<b>3</b>
	Total minutes the Novi and Northville hockey teams had for penalties.	Goals, combined, scored by the two teams during Saturday's game.	Northville's new hockey record following the loss to the Wildcats.	Novi's new hockey record thanks to their huge win over the Mustangs.	Number of fans at Saturday's game, a record for a Northville home game.	Score between Novi and Northville's junior varsity hockey teams. Northville won.	Days until Santa Claus finally comes with all those gifts!

SPORTS SHORTS

Free skating event

On Jan. 2 from noon-1:50 p.m., Novi Ice Arena will host the "It's Great to Skate Celebration" in conjunction with the United States Figure Skating Association's National Skating Month...

the Skating Club of Novi will hold its Holiday Skating Exhibition on Saturday, Dec. 10 from noon-2 p.m. and the Skate with Santa will take place Dec. 18 from 1:45-5 p.m.

National Skating Month allows for USFSA member clubs and basic skills programs to reach out to new members in the community.

Novi Arena to hold Learn to Skate Camp over Break

Novi Ice Arena will run a Holiday Learn to Skate Camp Dec. 27-29. Classes will be held from 11-11:45 a.m.

Enrollment underway for Christmas Clinics

Suburban Hockey Schools will hold various two-day Christmas Clinics for ages 6-14 at Novi Ice Arena (Dec. 22-23 and 29-30), the Onyx-Rochester Ice Arena (Dec. 22-23 and 27-30), Suburban Ice facilities in East Lansing (Dec. 22-23 and 27-30) and Macomb (Dec. 22-23 and 27-28).

shooting technique. Squirt/Pee Wee Power Skating (ages 9-12) will focus on powerful stride, explosive starts, edge control, as well as backward skating and pivoting.

The Defense Clinic will run at the Onyx as well as Suburban Ice in Farmington Hills and East Lansing. Players will learn backward skating and acceleration, proper positioning, footwork, pivoting and lateral movement, as well as passing and shooting from the point and body contact and stick checking.

Just added to the schedule is a Goalkeeping Clinic featuring former Team Canada and professional goaltender Blaine Rheame. Goalies ages 8-14 are welcome to sign-up for this clinic that will run at Suburban Ice-Farmington Hills on Dec. 22-23 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

3-on-3 hockey shootout

Suburban Ice-Farmington Hills will be the site of the Mission Hockey Holiday 3-on-3 Shootout for 'B' level mini mite, mite, squirt and pee wee teams, 2-7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 26.

In addition, Suburban Ice will hold two sessions of Sticks and Pucks, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 21-Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26, Saturday, Dec. 31 and Monday, Jan. 2.

Pitch and Hit Leagues

The Total Baseball's Indoor Pitch and Hit Baseball Leagues will be a great way to stay in shape for the spring. Leagues will consist of live pitchers throwing to live hitters in a 55 minute game, with 5 players per team.

Baseball and softball camp will be separate. Players divided into appropriate age groups. Total Baseball's Baseball/Softball Camp will feature professional instruction from Barbours Garbey, Detroit Tigers former hitting coach, Lee Berjics-Michigan High.

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Quick Hits

New pre-game music, please

Did anyone hear some of the pre-game music being played while Northville and Novi's hockey teams warmed up Saturday?

Not too late

Big race fan? Well, make sure you go and hit the Motor Sports Hall of Fame before they move.

Here's to you, Rachele

Geer, Niagara University is a little behind, aren't they? They just announced the signing of Rachele Folino to the Purple Eagles basketball squad.

Low turnout

The Novi Wildcat hockey team deserves praise for the way they played and controlled their cross-town rivals, the Northville Mustangs.

Working hard

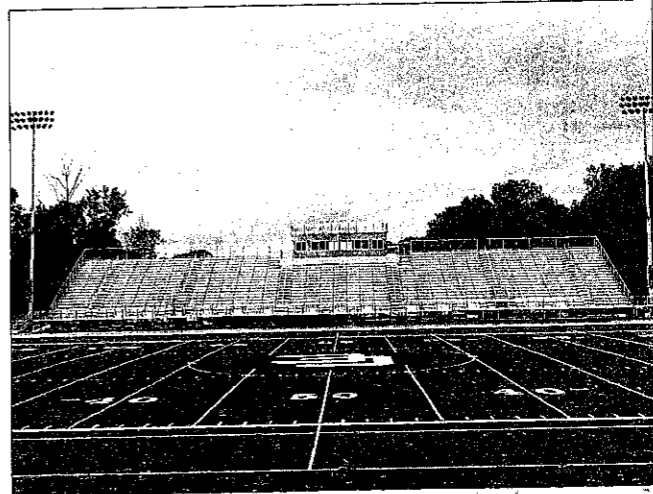
We hope Curt Ellis didn't get a sunburn while in Orlando. Nah, we're just kidding. He really was hard at work at an athletic director's conference.

During a fire you need to scoot, so plan and practice your escape route!

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The house that Stanfords built

By Sam Eggleston



Catholic Central's field is one of the premier locations in the area to play.

The New York Yankees play baseball in the house that Kath built. The Catholic Central Shamrocks football team plays their games in the house Varsity built.

Stanford, who owns and operates Varsity Lincoln-Mercery on the corner of Wixom Road and Grand River Avenue, wouldn't know what it's like to be a Shamrock. He

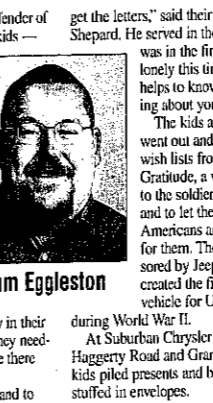
Maxwell is a freshman who donned football pads this year. But his sons weren't the reason Stanford did what he did.

Maxwell is a freshman who donned football pads this year. But his sons weren't the reason Stanford did what he did.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@gannett.com.

Ice Cats supporting America's soldiers, Christmas

Dan Hiller leaned onto the front fender of the Chrysler van and smiled at the kids — numbering at a cool baker's dozen — who sat in front of the Christmas tree.



Sam Eggleston

"You've all done such a wonderful job," said Hiller. "Because you did such a great thing, we're going to give \$1,000 to the USO (United Service Organizations)."

From the Ice Cats to the troops serving this country overseas, Merry Christmas to all and the most pleasant New Year from all of us at the Novi News.

Sam Eggleston can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104 or at seggleston@gannett.com.

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Novi's Tom Ciaverilla brings the puck up the ice against Northville Saturday. Photos by MARK HICKS/WESTSIDE PHOTO

# Oh captain, my captain

## Novi's Tom Ciaverilla more than just team leader

By Courtney Ratkowiak  
SPORTS INTERN

Thomas Ciaverilla isn't a "midget" anymore. As a 5-foot-4-inch, 115-pound sophomore center, Ciaverilla earned his nickname by being the smallest athlete on the Novi varsity hockey team. Two years later, the 5-11 senior co-captain has grown into his leadership role while teammates look up to him as an example of intensity and dedication.

Ciaverilla's hockey career began at the age of seven. Before playing for the Wildcats varsity team, he won three state and two national championships in three years as a member of the Farmington Hills Fire travel team. After joining the Novi team in the tenth grade, he led the team in points during his junior year. This season, through eight games, he has eight goals and six assists.

In his first year as a co-captain, Ciaverilla feels that the precedents and traditions of past captains have most influenced his leadership abilities. "Usually, the captains

(Ciaverilla, Ryan Fox, and Steve Koussaul) will get together and talk about what we're going to do, a team speech, before the game," he said. "We just try to get the team pumped up and ready. During practice, we just try and keep them focused."

"I just try to set a good example, a prime example, coming to the rink and working hard every day and trying to lead the team."

Although he considers hockey his main sport, Ciaverilla is a member of the Novi varsity golf and baseball teams and enjoys playing roller hockey in the off-season. He hopes to study business at Central Michigan or Oakland University but is unsure if he will pursue a collegiate hockey career.

As the team begins the second half of the season, Ciaverilla hopes to eventually finish strong in the KVC, win regionals, and advance to the state tournament—a goal that he has never achieved as a member of the varsity team.

"We're really progressing this year," he said. "Our (3-5) record doesn't reflect how our team is

doing. We've been playing good hockey, we just haven't been capitalizing on our opportunities. We're inconsistent, and we're trying to work that out, trying to come to the rink with 100 percent effort every day instead of every other game."

To have a satisfying senior season, Ciaverilla knows that his team will have to achieve a consistent, maximum team effort.

"It was a heartbreaker, seeing the seniors all upset after losing (last season) in the regional game, seeing how they wouldn't be able to play Novi hockey anymore and how much it meant to them," he said.

"It reflects on me and shows how much this year's going to mean to me, how much it has to mean to me. I just have to work as hard as I can so that I have no regrets at the end of the season."

Courtney Ratkowiak is a sports intern for the Novi News. Comments can be directed to the sports department at (248) 349-1700, ext. 104.

# Novi 6 YES! Northville 3



Novi senior Kyle Mouch slams a Northville player into the glass. Novi, the underdog in the contest, won, 6-3.



LEFT: Novi Wildcat defenseman Mike Arnold fires a hard slapshot during the game against Northville. RIGHT: Dan Phelps talks with one of his assistant coaches during the third period against Northville last Saturday.



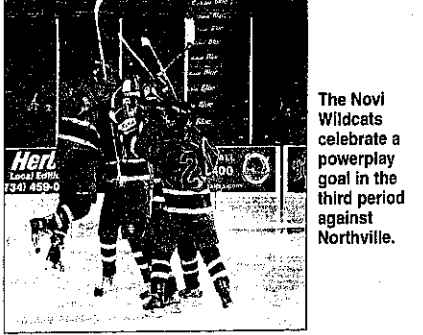
## High School Sports Schedules

### Novi Wildcats

Basketball			
Varsity	12-22	Away	Farmington
	12-29	Home	Lake Orion
Junior Varsity			
	12-22	Away	Farmington
Freshman			
	12-22	Away	Farmington
Wrestling			
Varsity	12-29	Away	Salem Individual Tourney
Junior Varsity	12-28	Away	Salem Team Invite

### Catholic Central Shamrocks

Wrestling			
Varsity	12-22	Home	Dearborn/Wayne Memorial
	12-29	Away	St. Johns Tournament
Junior Varsity			
	12-22	Home	Dearborn/Wayne Memorial
	12-28	Away	Milan JV Tournament
Freshman			
	12-29	Away	Brother Rice



The Novi Wildcats celebrate a powerplay goal in the third period against Northville.

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THEATRE	TIME	THEATRE	TIME
AMERICAN FAMILY THEATRES	7:30PM	AMERICAN FAMILY THEATRES	7:30PM
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# FOOD



## Filet Mignon With Cabernet Potato Butter Sauce

- 6 (7-ounce) Omaha Steaks  
Filet Mignons, grilled
- Sauce:
- 2 teaspoons plus 1 pound unsalted butter, divided
  - 1/4 cup finely minced shallots
  - 3 cups Cabernet Sauvignon (about one 750ml bottle)
  - 1/2 cup dry Idahoan Buttery Homestyle Mashed Potatoes
  - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- In small stainless steel saucepan, place 2 teaspoons butter and shallots. Sauté briefly, until shallots are translucent.
  - Add wine.
  - Over high heat, reduce liquid by half (cooking about 10 minutes).
  - Reduce heat to low and stir in dry mashed potatoes. Cook and stir 1 minute.
  - Cut 1 pound butter into 1/2-ounce cubes.
  - Over low heat, add butter cubes to sauce 1 at a time while continually whisking. If sauce gets too hot and starts to get thin or separate, add more butter cubes to cool it down. If sauce starts to cool down and get thick, let it heat up before adding another cube. Keep between 100°-120°F.
  - Season with salt.
  - Serve immediately over grilled steaks or hold at 100°-120°F in double boiler. Complete the meal with Green Beans With Butter and Lemon (recipe below) plus prepared Idahoan mashed potatoes using remainder of the pouch for the sauce, with one additional pouch.
- Yield: 6 servings

## Green Beans With Butter and Lemon

- Pinch of baking soda
  - 1 1/2 pounds fresh green beans, ends snipped
  - 1/4 pound butter
  - 1/2 cup diced (3/8 inch) red pepper
  - Jules and zest of 2 lemons
  - 1 teaspoon sea salt
- In boiling water with pinch of baking soda, cook green beans to desired doneness.
  - Drain beans, then toss with butter, red pepper, Jules and zest, lemon zest and sea salt. Serve immediately.
- Yield: 6 servings

# Secretly Simple HOLIDAY DINING

## Potato Chocolate Cake

- 1 cup margarine or shortening
  - 2 cups sugar
  - 4 eggs
  - 3 squares chocolate, melted
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 1 cup cold, prepared Idahoan Original Mashed Potatoes
  - 2 cups flour, sifted
  - 1 teaspoon baking soda
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - 3/4 cup buttermilk
  - 1 tub chocolate frosting
- Preheat oven to 375°F.
  - Cream together margarine or shortening and sugar. Beat in eggs one at a time.
  - Stir in melted chocolate and vanilla. Add mashed potatoes and mix well.
  - Combine flour, baking soda and salt. Add this sifted, dry mix alternately to batter with buttermilk. Blend well with each addition.
  - Grease and flour baking pans. Distribute batter evenly between three 9-inch layer pans. Bake 20 minutes.
  - Frost with favorite chocolate frosting. Garnish as desired.
- Variation: For Chocolate Spice Cake, add 1 teaspoon each cinnamon and allspice to sifted dry mix. One cup raisins or nuts also may be added.
- Yield: 12 servings

With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it can feel like days, even weeks, go by without sitting down to dinner with your family. Entice them back to the table this holiday season, with a meal that is elegant enough to serve to company, but simple enough to prepare for the family on a busy weeknight.

These delicious recipes look and taste like you've been in the kitchen for hours, but don't worry, we won't tell your secret. They're created by using versatile pantry staples — including pouches of 100% Idaho mashed potatoes (so you don't have to spend time peeling), and a frozen asset you'll always want keep on hand — grain-fed, well-marbled, tender Midwestern beef. With these items, you can make almost any night "secretly simple!"

Everyone loves appetizers that feel like party food — these savory mushroom caps are perfect to pass around as the meal is cooking. Or, for those really chilly nights, serve creamy roasted garlic potato soup. Your family will surely ooh and ahh as you present them with the main course of sizzling hot filet mignons, drizzled with wine sauce and served with festive green beans and the classic companion to a steak — buttery mashed potatoes. After dinner, wow the kids with a moist chocolate cake. With all of these quick and tasty recipes, you might actually need to remind everyone to save room for dessert!

## Four Cheese Potato-Stuffed Mushrooms

- 1 (4-ounce) pouch Idahoan Four Cheese Mashed Potatoes
  - 12 large or 18 medium mushrooms
  - 3 tablespoons butter, margarine or olive oil
  - 3 tablespoons chopped chives, divided
  - 3/4 teaspoon salt
- Preheat oven to 450°F.
  - Prepare mashed potatoes as package directs.
  - Remove stems from mushrooms; chop stems and set aside.
  - Carefully scoop out center of each mushroom cap with spoon, leaving 1/2-inch shell.
  - Melt butter in 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add chopped mushroom stems and cook 3 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat and stir in mashed potatoes, 2 tablespoons chives and salt.
  - Fill each mushroom cap with potato mixture, mounding slightly. Bake 10 minutes or until potatoes are lightly golden. Sprinkle mushrooms with remaining 1 tablespoon chives.
- Yield: 12 appetizer servings

## Roasted Garlic Potato Soup

- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
  - 2 large leeks, sliced
  - 2 (13 3/4-ounce) cans vegetable or chicken broth
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 1 (4-ounce) pouch Idahoan Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes, dry
- Melt butter in 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add sliced leeks and cook 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.
  - Add broth and pepper. Heat to boiling. Stir in dry-mashed potatoes until mixture has thickened.
- Yield: 6 servings



For more recipes and usage suggestions visit [www.omahafoods.com](http://www.omahafoods.com) and [www.idahoan.com](http://www.idahoan.com).

# REGIONAL MARKETPLACE

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Novi News

Thursday, December 22, 2005

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## Allstate Offers Christmas Tree Safety Tips For A Brighter Holiday

Wixom, Mich., December 22, 2005 - For many people, decorating the Christmas tree is a favorite part of the holiday and adds to the spirit of Christmas. However, with the addition of a Christmas tree to your home, the risk of fire and other household accidents increases. Each year, home fires and other accidents during the holiday season injure 2,000 individuals and cause over \$500 million in damage.

"There are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday," says Allstate Agent Louis Kirby. "By following these steps, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday casualty."

Allstate Insurance Co. and the National Safety Council offer the following safety tips to ensure a fire or other accident doesn't spoil your holiday season:

### Christmas trees

1 A real tree can fill your home with beauty and the scent of pine. But a real tree can also pose a fire hazard. Select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. With fir trees, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.

2 Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly.

3 Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.

4 If you use an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

### Tree lights

Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

### Tree ornaments

1 Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places.

2 Read labels before you use materials that come in jars, cans and spray cans.

3 Never place lighted candles on a tree or near any flammable materials.

4 Avoid placing breakable tree ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower branches where small children or pets can reach them.

5 Do not hang popcorn chains and candy canes on the tree when small children are present. They may think that other tree ornaments are also edible.

For more information on this and other safety topics, contact Allstate Agent Louis Kirby, located at 49357 Pontiac Trail, Suite 103 in Wixom. Louis can be reached at 248-669-0755.



Looking for a way to pay for you holiday gifts this year?

Contact the Louis Kirby Insurance Agency for a free, no obligation quote.

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49357 Pontiac Trail, Suite 103  
Wixom, MI 48393

Mention this ad when you request your quote and you will be entered into our Dinner for Two drawing.\*

\*No purchase necessary. A complete quote must be completed to be eligible. Three winners will be selected on January 2, 2005. Employees of the Louis Kirby Insurance Agency, and their family members are not eligible. 1st prize is a \$50 dinner certificate. 2nd and 3rd prizes are \$25 each. Winner will be notified by telephone. Prize must be claimed by winner in person at the Louis Kirby Insurance Agency office. Must be 18 or older to be eligible.

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## Restaurant offers authentic Mexican food

### Drop by for a chimichanga and a fun night out

By Kate Phillips  
SPECIAL WRITER

After one bite of the food at La Casa del Rio Grande customers never go back to chain restaurants. The authentic Mexican flavor at La Casa is nothing like other restaurants, which often serve spicy Tex-Mex. The food recipes were actually imported directly from Central and Southern Mexico.

"There's nowhere else in the area to get this type of food," said owner Dawn Salvati. "It's real Mexican food, not Americanized Tex-Mex."

### Try a bite

La Casa del Rio Grande offers something for every member of the family. It serves lunch and dinner seven days a week. There are a variety of Mexican appetizers, lunch and dinner specials, unique desserts and a full-service bar.

Lunch specials offered Monday through Friday include favorites like Mexican Pizza. It's made with two fried flour tortillas with a choice of meats inside and topped with cheese and vegetables.

"The food is not overly spicy or hot but we'll make it hot upon request," said Salvati.

The restaurant is home to several groups of regulars who like the fast lunch-time service. For those looking for a quick lunch, Salvati suggests calling in orders ahead of time. Those who place phone orders can pick up, carry-out or dine in the restaurant.

"Your meals will be on the table waiting for you when you arrive," said Salvati.

Of all the appetizers, a customer favorite is the Mexican flaming cheese — without the fire. The restaurant has also brought back a winter time favorite, the chicken tortilla soup. The hearty chicken soup includes black beans and vegetables.

The selection of entrees features chimichanga platters, fajitas, enchiladas and burritos.

"We have the best fajitas around," said Salvati.

Pedro's stacked sandwich is another recommended dish. It starts with three flour tortillas layered with rice, refried beans and your choice of tender diced pork, shredded beef or chicken. It's topped with melted mozzarella cheese and jalapenos by request.

Another favorite is the seafood salad, a fresh garden salad topped with shrimp, crab meat, avocados, tomatoes, onions, olives and mozzarella cheese.

On Monday there is dine-in-all-you-can-eat taco special for \$7.25. Hungry guests can order up as many tacos as they like, filled with ground beef, shredded beef, chicken or traditional bean and potato. Some try one of each. For only \$8.25 chefs will fry up soft flour tortillas into crispy taco shells for the all-you-can-eat special.

"The flour tacos are absolutely amazing," said Salvati.

Since plenty of people can't choose just one item, sampler platters provide a taste of several. A Don Pedro sampler comes with a ground beef taco, enchilada, ground beef, shredded beef flauta, ground beef tostada, beans and rice. Or the Rio Grande sampler includes a chicken taco, ground beef enchilada, small pork chimichanga, beans and rice.

Early birds that come in for din-



Photos by HAL GOULD

Owner Dawn Salvati (right) and Melissa Littlemyer serve up real Mexican food at La Casa del Rio Grande.

ner between 3 and 5 p.m. can cash in with a "buy one get the second dinner half off," by request.

With huge serving sizes, it's hard to save room for dessert. But the Xango is tempting. It's made of cheesecake inside of flour tortillas, deep fried to a golden brown and served with ice cream, cinnamon and sugar topping and whipped cream.

### Party down

The festive atmosphere at La Casa del Rio Grande sets the tone for fun, casual dining. Colorful blankets, wooden benches and sombreros are part of the cheerful decor. "Don't be afraid to use your fingers," the menu explains. It's about having a good time.

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

With free chips and salsa, the fun starts as soon as the family takes a seat.

The dining room keeps the atmosphere moving with festive Mexican music, while the bar plays classic rock. It was the customers who came up with the musical preferences.

The community is invited to come home from the holidays, to the home on Grand River, which in Spanish is called La Casa del Rio Grande. The restaurant is open on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

But no one needs a refresher course in Spanish, because the menu explains everything in English. The staff is glad to help folks find their way around the menu and make a dinner choice.

### Treating you right

Affordable pricing makes La Casa del Rio Grande a great place to bring the entire family. Adult dinners average about \$7.50 and kids meals are \$3.50, including beverage. Tuesday and Saturday are kids days with meals for just \$2.99, including a beverage and



The bar at La Casa Del Rio Grande.

also ongoing mixed drink specials. Wednesday and Sunday are "margarita days" with all house margaritas at happy hour prices. The Spyder margarita is Salvati's own secret recipe, made with citrus tequila.

There's even Spyder parties to celebrate every month. The next spyder party is coming up Dec. 21 from 6 to 9 p.m. The Spyder margarita is specially priced at \$4.50, plus bar items, like T-shirts, are given away as prizes.

Check out the Web site at [riogrande-restaurant.com](http://riogrande-restaurant.com) for more information on special promotions. Diners can also sign up for an e-mail club to receive a free dinner on their birthday and wedding anniversary plus buy one, get one half off coupons. To join go to [theemailclub.com/riogrande](http://theemailclub.com/riogrande).

The restaurant is happy to accommodate special requests and allergy concerns. No lard or chicken stock is used in the beans and rice to provide a vegetarian friendly experience.

Most items are easily adaptable to a low carbohydrate diet.

"Mexican food is great for low carb diets," said Salvati. "You just have to cut down the beans, rice and tortillas."

The restaurant also offers smoke free nights in the dining room on Friday and Saturday. On those nights patrons are allowed to smoke in the bar or on the patio when weather permits.

### Special nights

Families pack the place on clown night. A side-splitting clown known as Jannie Annie entertains the kids and the adults, too. Jannie Annie is coming Dec. 17, Jan. 14, Feb. 18 and March 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. Children enjoy the \$2.99 kids days meals.

For adults looking for a night out, La Casa del Rio Grande stocks a full-service bar with a large selection of both American and Mexican beer. Happy hour prices run on beer and alcoholic drinks from 3 to 7 p.m. daily.

There are always running beer specials. In December Labatt and Labatt Light beer is on special for \$2.25 a bottle. In January Coors Light is only \$2 a bottle. There are

also ongoing mixed drink specials. Wednesday and Sunday are "margarita days" with all house margaritas at happy hour prices. The Spyder margarita is Salvati's own secret recipe, made with citrus tequila.

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### A family effort

Owner Dawn Salvati actually operates the restaurant in the home where she lived as a child. Her father bought it more than 35 years ago. New Hudson is Salvati's beloved hometown, through and through.

After operating Don Pedro's Restaurant in Detroit with ex-husband Tom Salvati, she saw how much folks loved the food, and decided that New Hudson would be the perfect place to open another restaurant.

Since the home on Grand River was still in the family, Salvati

### AT A GLANCE

- La Casa del Rio Grande is located at 57721 Grand River Ave. in New Hudson. The restaurant is just west of Milford Road, or drivers can follow the Lyon Center Drive loop from Wal-Mart to Grand River Avenue.
- Call (248) 446-7700 or fax (248) 446-7701 or go to the Web: [www.riogrande-restaurant.com](http://www.riogrande-restaurant.com)
- Open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week with a full-service bar.
- Reservations accepted. Carry-out and call-ahead meals can save time. Party and catering menus available. All major credit cards accepted.

### Celebrate the holidays

- Christmas Eve: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Christmas: Closed
- New Year's Eve: Noon to 10 p.m.
- Temporary delivery service available weekdays Dec. 26 through Jan. 31 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for all orders over \$25 within 10 miles.
- New Year's Day delivery service available, from 1 to 8 p.m. for all orders over \$25 within 10 miles.

decided to transform the building into a homestyle restaurant, hence the Spanish name for "the house on Grand River."

The food at Don Pedro's and La Casa del Rio Grande is the same, so many loyal customers drive out to La Casa now that Don Pedro's has closed.

Most of the staff are family members of some sort, including Salvati's mother and two daughters, Samantha and Carmen.

"It's a small-town family atmosphere," said Salvati. "You can feel the love of family here."

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