

THURSDAY
December 24,
2009
 Hometown Weeklies
 Volume 54
 Number 31
 75 CENTS

NOVI NEWS

online at hometownlife.com



New coach ready to develop program

Sports, B1

NOVI NUTSHELL

Vander Ark in Wixom

As lead-singer, songwriter, and guitarist for "The Verve Pipe", Brian Vander Ark has sold over 3 million albums. Their 1997 hit "The Freshmen" not only reached #1 on the Alternative Rock charts it helped to define the 90's sound. In 2005 he started his Lawn Chairs and Living Rooms tour as a way to connect with his fans in a more intimate setting. He has now performed close to 400 of these house concerts.

On Saturday Jan. 16, Comfy Couch Concerts will host Brian Vander Ark on his first Lawn Chair & Living Rooms concert of 2010. The show will be held at Newport Furnishings, 52504 Grand River Avenue, Wixom. Tickets are \$15 for adults; \$10 for students ages 8 to 18. Contact (248) 910-4941 or stevenjohnson@michiganfolklive.com for tickets, and visit <http://www.comfyouchconcerts.com> for more information.

Flag Line

The Novi Flag Line, a group of fourth-seventh grade students who will learn how to spin flags and dance at an entry-level of the colorguard activity, will be holding an informational meeting at 6 p.m. Jan. 7 in the high school band room. Practices will be on Thursdays, and there will be three performances.

E-mail Betsy Pilon (betsy_richards@hotmail.com) for more information or questions.

Budget award

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) announced the City of Novi has received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget.

"The award represents a significant achievement for the City of Novi and our Finance Department," said Finance Director Kathy Smith-Roy. "The Distinguished Budget Presentation Award reflects the commitment of the City of Novi to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting." To receive the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation must be met including, policy documentation, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device.

Be safe, not sorry this holiday season

Take extra precautions to prevent problems from happening

BY NATHAN MUELLER
 STAFF WRITER

Tom Lindberg, deputy police chief for the city of Novi, said the city doesn't see an increase in crimes during the holiday season.

Lloyd Collins, police chief in South Lyon, also said not much changes this time of year.

But just because they aren't seeing it, doesn't mean it's not prone to happen. And both encourage people to take extra precautions to ensure their safety.

"It's a time for the possibility of opportunistic crimes and that is what you have to be careful of," Collins said. "By that, I mean people are going to be predisposed to have larceny in their heart -- and if the opportunity presents itself, they will take advantage of it. It's a good time of year to be careful and keep valuables out of sight."

In Novi, where people come from

SAFETY TIPS

- Always lock your car and secure your valuables in the trunk, store them out of sight or take them with you.
 - Don't carry large amounts of cash or carry it in one place.
 - Park in a well-lit area.
 - Be as alert as possible.
 - Shut and lock garage doors.
 - Let a neighbor or the police know when you go out of town.
 - Have working smoke detectors.
 - Make sure tree is watered, lights work properly.
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all over the metro Detroit area to do their shopping, Lindberg said people

need to be cautious. He also suggests that women carry their cell phones in a pocket in case someone snatches their purse.

"People need to be more alert and more concerned about making sure doors are locked and valuables are not in plain sight," he said.

Collins said he feels economic struggles are not an excuse, and those who steal do so because they have it inside them. Still, he encourages people to not tempt fate.

The two also said they make sure their officers are more visible this time of year and they pay more attention to neighborhoods, looking for such things as open garage doors and other concerning sights.

Fire prevention also is key during the holidays, and people should make sure their tree is watered, they turn lights off when not in the room and check their smoke detectors.

"It seems every year you hear of a fire tragedy," Collins said. "These are

times to be careful, not just from the crime perspective but fire safety as well."

Also the holidays can be a time where people have too much to drink and decide to get behind the wheel, a practice that is sure to ruin the season.

Northville Township Firefighter Jason Raschke provided some advice, telling people to stay off the roads late at night, call 911 if they see a person driving that appears to be under the influence and take steps to have a sober driver when deciding to go out and drink.

There are several services that will give people rides home, even ones that make sure their car gets home safely too, so there is no excuse for driving drunk.

"Unfortunately every year we have to take people to be our guests for the night," Collins said.

nmueller@gannett.com (248) 437-2011, ext. 255



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Novi Parks and Recreation employee Lauren Sorentino checks out the Facebook page she's created for "Novi Parks and Recreation and Cultural Services." The informational page already has more than 150 fans and will help to promote the departments services and upcoming events.

Novi on the Web

Social media sites become newest marketing tools

BY NATHAN MUELLER
 STAFF WRITER

The social media craze that feeds an audience yearning for up-to-date information all the time has reached the city of Novi.

A few weeks ago, the city launched fan pages for the city of Novi and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department on the popular social networking site Facebook, and the police department has begun using Nixle, a Web site alerting people on public safety issues in the city.

Pam Anttil, assistant city manager, said the city noticed a growing trend in the usage of these sites and wanted to take advantage of their reach.

"One of the goals of the city has been finding new ways to communicate with residents and get feedback," she said. "And Facebook is a perfect way for us to push information to the public and get feedback from them (immediately)."

Please see **WEB, A3**

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JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Making a list

Santa talks to Melonie Brennan, 12, on Dec. 14 at Novi's Twelve Oaks Mall. Santa said that he was very busy this past weekend hearing the Christmas wishes of little boys and girls.

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Smile - you're on camera

Sometimes technology helps us and sometimes it hurts us. This is nowhere more apparent than in the proliferation of video clip sharing sites like YouTube. These sites show glimpses of us at our best and at our worst. It seems that everyone has a video camera or a video phone that gets pulled out whenever something unusual happens. We are filmed at every major shopping mall and some entertainment venues.



Jeff Livermore

Recently a clip was put up on YouTube about some fans behaving badly at a local sporting event. The fans appeared to be intoxicated and argumentative. Someone sitting near them at the event pulled out their camera and began filming once a disturbance broke out. Every bad word and gesture was caught on film and have now been viewed by thousands of people. The availability of cheap video cameras and ubiquitous cell phone cameras combined with the ubiquitous presence of security cameras means that we are being filmed much more than we think. Consider

how fast television news shows are able to show video shot at malls, arenas, and even wilderness areas. We need to be much more conscious of being filmed.

Perhaps the greatest increase in surveillance cameras has been the installation of traffic cameras at intersections. I work just over two miles from home but pass through four intersections that are under video surveillance. Each of these intersections has at least four cameras mounted overhead. If I take the back way out of my subdivision I still get filmed at least times. I have been trying to find a route to get more three miles from home without being photographed and I cannot do it. The number of cameras is just incredible.

The level of video surveillance in malls, banks, restaurants, and entertainment venues is also increasing. In many cases, the businesses

put a monitor in view of their customers to make them aware that they are being observed. Surveillance videos have been used to document crimes and perceived injustice. How many people watched the Rodney King video that framed a national debate.

How many of us were moved by the video of a Chinese dissident standing down a tank in Tiananmen Square? Video footage is changing our world whether we are ready or not. Videos are changing how we teach college students. I use videos in some of my classes at Walsh. It is very simple to include a link to a clip in my PowerPoint slides and there is a quick transition from lecture to viewing. A succinct and humorous video clip can bring a lesson to life in ways that I cannot as a lecturer.

Videos clips have many positive uses in our society. Many artists use YouTube to promote their work. I have browsed clips to determine if a song or CD is worth the money before I purchase it. When I was younger you had to be in front of your television at the specified time

catch your favorite show. Now you can watch almost any show at any time over the Internet. The same rule applies to watching videos that people submit to sites like YouTube. YouTube video clips can help keep families together. My niece posted a clip of my grand-nephew singing the "Wheels on the Bus" to round and round" which helped our geographically dispersed family to connect. It was a great clip and a moment captured forever by a cell phone camera and shared. Constantly being on camera is changing our political landscape and our sense of privacy. Cameras used to raise a sense of outrage but now very few of us even notice the addition of new cameras into our world. We are being watched more and more and might as well smile for the camera.

Jeffrey A. Livermore, PhD is an associate professor at Walsh College. He teaches in the M.A. Information Assurance, and Doctorate of Management in Executive Leadership programs and is currently researching the ethics of teaching information security. He can be reached at jlivermore@walshcollege.edu.

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Holiday spirit
The center courtyard of Novi's Twelve Oaks Mall is decorated with the theme of the "Polar Express" this year.

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Ribs - 1/2 Slab \$8.95
Ribs - Full Slab \$13.50
Soup of the Day, Clam Chowder

Grand Opening at Novi 248-448-6999

WEB FROM PAGE A1
Antil has noticed over the years that more people are apt to participate when they don't have to do so live, and the social media sites provide a good venue for two-way communication in a different manner.
The city started actively looking into the social media sites in July, forming a Web 2.0 team and seeing how they could best use the new media. Nancy Cowan, superintendent of recreation and Web 2.0 team leader, said she thinks this form of communication is "crucial."
"In terms of the parks," we have so many events and different programs, and I think it is a great way to engage the current audience in a different way and attract a new audience," she said. "Without the people who utilize the parks and recreation, we don't have a purpose. They create a reason for us to exist, and we want to develop things they enjoy and want to be a part of, so we need to include them."
The parks fan page on Facebook can be found by searching "Novi Parks" and includes

FOLLOW THE CITY ONLINE
The fan pages for the city of Novi and the Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services can be found on Facebook by searching "City of Novi" and "Novi Parks," respectively.
The Novi public safety page can be found at www.novi.com after entering "Novi" into the search bar.
information on upcoming events, photos from previous events and more. The city's fan page can be found by searching "City of Novi" and features information about happenings throughout the city. As of Monday, the two pages had 417 fans.
"The city is always trying to stay up with the times and this is another tool in the tool box for us to communicate and reach people," Cowan said.
As far as any concerns about people being critical of the city on the sites, Antil says that is fine with her.
"Whether the individual is posting it on Facebook or just saying it to their neighbor, it is their opinion and I'd rather have them share it with us," she said. "I think this gives us more of an opportunity to hear what is being said."
From the police side of things, use of the Internet is always key, said Deputy Police Chief Tom Lindberg.
But Nixle is a program the department has signed off on because "it's a tremendous benefit to the community."
Nixle is a free service offering public safety alerts to people via text, e-mail or Twitter, and people can sign up for the type of alerts they wish to receive, ranging from news, weather, traffic and public safety.
Signing up is free by visiting www.nixle.com, and can be canceled at any time. Communities such as Northville Township, South Lyon and Farmington currently use the site.
"It is yet to be seen how it will be received by the community, but I think for those who are interested - and for us to be transparent and get the messages out there quickly - it will be a great tool and a benefit for us," Lindberg said.
Antil said the city is continuing to look at how to best use the new technology and plans on adding polls, YouTube videos and more to the pages as they continue to grow in popularity. "It's a very exciting time because there are so many possibilities," she said.

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More: For a complete listing of local and regional events, see the Novi Calendar online at www.hometownlife.com.

LOCAL EVENTS

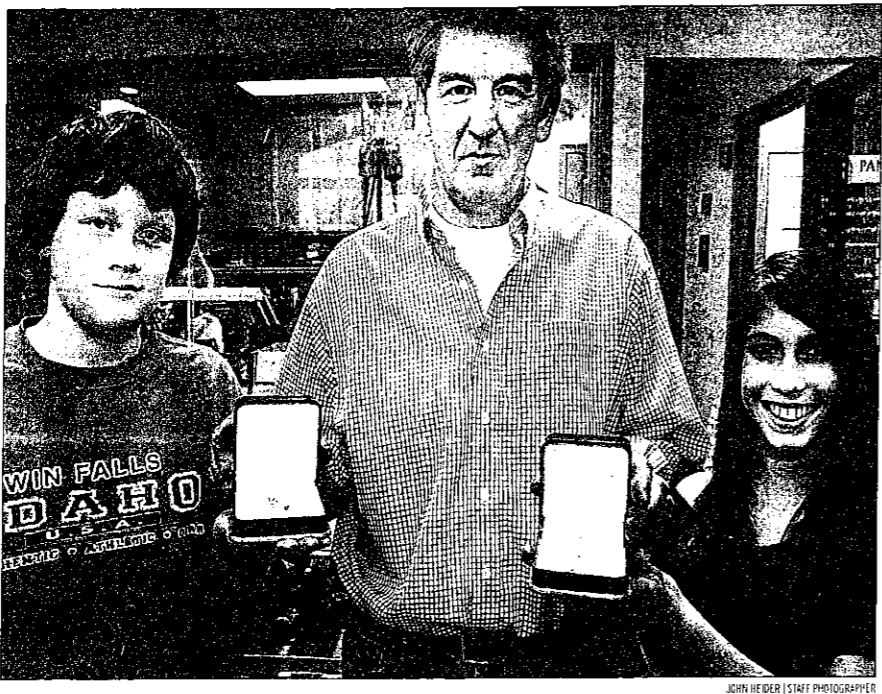
Rock Financial Showplace Location: 46100 Grand River Avenue, Novi Contact: (248) 348-5600

29th Annual Cycle World International Motorcycle Show Time/Date: noon-9 p.m. Jan. 1, 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Jan. 2, and 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Jan. 3

Ultimate Fishing Show Time/Date: 2-9:30 p.m. Jan. 7; noon-9:30 a.m. Jan. 8; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Jan. 9, and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Jan. 10

Gardeners Of Northville & Novi Club Meeting Time/Date: 6:30-8 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11

Location: Northville Art House, 215 W. Cady Street Details: Social time and garden lecture on "In Full Bloom: Flowers & Plants in Art"



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Winning pieces

Brian Larson of Novi's Larson's Jewelry Design created two winning entries from Novi Middle School students Brandon Gamble, 12, and Lexie Capello, 13.

Location: Historic Green Oak Township Hall, 10789 Silver Lake Road (about two miles east of U.S. 23)

Details: The Phoenix Players Phire Philes' presentation is fun for the whole family, a great way to entertain kids while they're in school

BUSINESS

Metro Novi BNI Time/Date: 7-8:30 a.m. every Wednesday

Location: On the Border Restaurant, 23091 Hagerly Road (north of 8 Mile) Novi Details: BNI is a structured net-

working environment for professionals. The Metro Novi BNI team members are committed to providing bona fide referrals to each other.

Monthly Networking Luncheon Time/Date: 11:30 a.m. Jan. 6 Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel Details: Donald Kilson and Paul J. Hindelang will discuss Health & Wealth Secrets for 2010.

Novi Toastmasters Club Time/Date: 7-9 p.m. every first and third Tuesday Location: Novi Civic Center, Activities Room, 45175 West 10 Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375

Bar Louie Location: Twelve Mile Crossing at Fountain Walk, 44375 12 Mile Road, Novi Contact: (248) 662-1100

The Grapevine of Novi Location: 43155 Market Street, Novi Contact: (248) 344-4044

The Post Bar Location: 42875 Grand River Avenue, Novi Contact: (248) 465-9600

Mixx Lounge Location: 43155 Main Street, Novi Contact: (248) 347-6499

Novi Public Library Location: 45245 W. Ten Mile Road Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1 a.m.-5 p.m.

Novi Rotary Club Time/Date: Noon every Thursday Location: Novi Methodist Church, 41671 W. 10 Mile Road

Novi Chamber of Commerce The Novi Chamber of Commerce is an active, progressive chamber offering a variety of events, educational programs, an enhanced Web site, and involvement with local

charities. Location: 41975 11 Mile Road #201, Novi Contact: For more information, call (248) 349-3743 or www.novichamber.com

Novi Toastmasters International, or Toastmasters International.

How to make home a safer place for seniors

Dear Savvy Senior My parents have lived in the same house for more than 40 years and plan on living there the rest of their lives. The problem is, their house is two-stories and isn't very practical for seniors.

accidents, and millions are seriously injured. Falls are the leading cause of injuries, but the elderly are also at risk for being burned by the stove or scalded by hot water.

WAYS TO PAY If your parents need or want to make substantial changes to their home, but don't have the cash to pay for them, they should consider taking out a home equity loan.

Agency on Aging (call 800-677-1116 or visit www.eldercare.gov to find your local office) near your parents, and inquire about home modification loans and services available to seniors.

Your Invitation to Worship

A large grid of church listings for various locations including Brighton, Milford, Farmington Hills, Highland, New Hudson, Northville, Livonia, White Lake, and Plymouth. Each listing includes church name, address, phone number, and service times.

Passages Obituaries, Memorials & Remembrances 1-800-579-7355 • fax 313-496-4968 email: oebits@hometownlife.com

ROBERT K. CARROLL Age 79, of Ann Arbor, passed away Dec. 14, 2009. Dear father of Cindy (John) Carroll-Shier and Celeste Carroll-Schmidtke.

SUSAN JEAN JOHNSON Age 48 of Milford, December 18th, 2009. Services were held at lunch & Soos Funeral Home, Milford.

FRANK SCULLY Age 90, December 16, 2009. Funeral was held Saturday, Dec. 19, at O'Brien/Sullivan Funeral Home, Novi.

ALLEN W. LUNDY Age 82 of Highland, passed away peacefully at his home surrounded by his loving family, Friday December 18, 2009.

WILLIAM J. DUFFY Age 79, December 16, 2009. Funeral was held Monday, Dec. 21 at St. Patrick Church, Brighton. Memorials may be made to St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center.

PATRICIA A. HAUSER Age 73 of Northville, passed away on December 16, 2009. She was born on December 27, 1935 to Jay and Iva (McCoey) Graybeck.

CARMELINA "CARMIE" STAUP Age 86, and a former resident of Livonia, passed away on Dec. 21, 2009. She is survived by her daughter, Linda (Mike) Mauck of Brighton.

S. JEAN MORRISSEY Age 83, December 1, 2009. Formerly of Birmingham, MI & Kheel, Maui. Funeral 11:00 Monday, December 28 at O'Brien/Sullivan Funeral Home, Novi.

STEPHANIE ANN FLEMING Age 88, December 17, 2009. Funeral held Saturday, Dec. 19 at St. James Church, Novi, followed by a service in Joliet, IL on Monday, Dec. 20.

JOSEPH L. NORTH Age 55, passed away December 16, 2009. A funeral was held December 19, at Phillips Funeral Home, South Lyon. View the online guestbook at www.phillipsfuneral.com

DAVID STEVENS Age 60, of Milford and White Lake. Passed away 12/23/09 in Las Vegas, where he lived since 1993. Beloved son of Roy and Margaret Stevens.

CAROL JEAN PERSICINI Age 58, passed away December 17, 2009. She was born on October 30, 1951, in Highland Park, to the late Harry and Jean (Sorenson) Craycraft.

OBITUARY POLICY Email your obit to HTW@hometownlife.com or fax to: 313-496-4968

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May You Find Comfort in Family & Friends

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THURSDAY
December 24,
2009

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Cal Stone, editor
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cstone@gannett.com

LOCAL OPINION

online at hometownlife.com



Our fundamental purposes are to enhance the lives of our readers, nurture the hometowns we serve and contribute to the business success of our customers.

OUR VIEWS

Make holiday season one of peace and love

The presents are purchased (though perhaps not yet paid for), holiday cookies are in the oven and Christmas is almost here.

And our hope for the season is that everyone makes it special, according to what it means to them.

Many people scaled back their spending for this Christmas. Some were forced to because they were laid off or had their job eliminated; others chose to because of uncertainty about the future economy.

While economists might disagree, spending less on Christmas isn't such a bad thing.

Consider the first Christmas. Jesus — God's only son — was born to poor parents, peasants, in a stable among animals, the Bible says. There was no Christmas tree, no presents, no special foods.

Maybe these religious aspects aren't your cup of tea, or perhaps you celebrate another holiday tradition, such as Kwanza, Hanukkah or the winter solstice. Then again, to you, the holidays may be more about family, about spending time with your loved ones. Certainly that's a wonderful aspect of the season, regardless of whether you follow a religious or secular observance.

The wise men, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, did not visit Jesus while he was in the stable, but in a house when he was a toddler, according to biblical scholars.

The reason we celebrate Christmas is because of Jesus' birth, unpretentious as it was.

Jesus was God's gift to humankind, the Bible says. He took the punishment for everyone's sins so that, through faith in him, people can live eternally in heaven.

That sometimes gets lost in our modern-day celebration of Christmas, with its frenzy and excess.

Perhaps a simpler, less commercialized observance will help us remember the reason for the season.

Maybe these religious aspects aren't your cup of tea, or perhaps you celebrate another holiday tradition, such as Kwanza, Hanukkah or the winter solstice. Then again, to you, the holidays may be more about family, about spending time with your loved ones. Certainly that's a wonderful aspect of the season, regardless of whether you follow a religious or secular observance.

People celebrate the holidays for a variety of reasons they need only understand themselves. But the great thing about the holidays is that it offers an opportunity to think of someone, or some thing, other than one's self.

Some ring bells for the Salvation Army, while others feed the homeless at shelters around the area, and still others donate toys to the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots campaign and the local organization Northville Civic Concern.

For those folks in civic organizations and church groups, the meaning behind the holiday season is found in helping others. We are all richer, we are all blessed by the work they do.

While there are those who simply want to go it alone, too many of them are forced into that position due to infirmities, both physically and mentally caused. They deserve a brighter holiday, too.

Whatever your beliefs, whatever your reasons, whatever your manner of celebrating the season, our hope is that you will take the next very few days to share your holiday good will with someone who may find little cheer this year.

And our wish is that you, your friends and families are filled with the peace and love of the season, in all the ways you choose to observe it.

COMMUNITY VOICE

How was the year 2009 for you?



"Mine personally was OK. Not too much trouble. Money's tight, but overall it was OK."

Scott Daubner
Novi



"Eventful. I started the year in Anchorage, Alaska, moved back to Novi, and then after Christmas I'll be moving to Key West."

Erika Bowman
Novi



"It was really good. Very productive."

Allison DeBiasi
Novi



"I had a great year. I had a new baby. Life's great."

Darrel Krause
Novi

LETTERS

Community comes together for Detroit students

On Friday, Dec. 11, students and families from Novi hosted a holiday party for the children at Neinas Elementary School in Detroit as part of the Novi Community Schools' community service partnership with Bridgepointe, a nonprofit organization helping children in southwest Detroit. The party was a community-wide event. Students from Novi High School, Middle School and Meadows attended the party. All Novi schools were involved in collecting gift items, wrapping and preparing for the festivities.

The party included a winter carnival, cookie, pizza lunch with ice cream sundaes for dessert, crafts and a visit with Santa. The hallways and classrooms at Neinas echoed with music, laughter and Santa's jolly "Ho, ho, ho." Thanks to the generosity of local families and businesses, each of the 400 students received gift bags filled with hats, scarves, soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, socks, coloring books and crayons, and a fleece blanket.

This effort would not have been possible without the support of several local business and organizations. We are grateful to the following for their generosity: Bailey Drabicki Insurance Agency; Berean Baptist Church; Bezak Properties; Busch's; Costco; Gordon Food Service; Meijer (Wom); Old Orchard Pediatric Dentistry; Polartec; Project 12 Baskets; Sam's Club; Spillane and Reynolds Orthodontics; Target (Livonia); William J. Reilly Insurance Agency.

The spirit of the holiday season is alive and well in Novi! The kindness and generosity of so many is deeply appreciated.

Novi Schools Bridgepointe Committee

School budget problems cannot be fixed locally

No one within the Novi Community

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We welcome your Letter to the Editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content. Submit letters via the following formats. Web: www.hometownlife.com Mail: Letters to the Editor, Hometown News, 101 N. Lafayette St., South Lyon, MI 48176 Fax: (248) 437-3355 E-mail: cstone@gannett.com Blog: You may also let your opinions be heard with your own blog at hometownlife.com. Deadline: Letters must be received by 9 a.m. Monday to be published in the Thursday edition.

Schools takes the privatization of our custodial staff lightly. We understand that this was not a decision that was made easily by the Board of Education, and one that understandably was made to help resolve the budget catastrophe that has been created by a lack of revenue at the state level.

Our Board of Education has done everything in their power to remain fiscally responsible and live up to the mission of the district. However, this financial situation cannot be fixed locally. We continue to discuss making cuts to programs and services within the district, cuts that will undoubtedly change the perception that other communities around the state have of Novi, as well as the reality of what Novi really is. This is a perception of greatness, leadership, and tremendous student achievement that has been earned over time by all of the hard work of each employee of the Novi Community Schools. I am sure that each of the leaders within our school district would like to maintain this reputation they have, one that is built upon a Commitment to Excellence.

Seth Furio
Novi Education Association

Educational excellence and educational genocide

We were exposed to the worst and the best recently in metro Detroit. What a difference a few miles make. Detroit schools sink to a new low while West Bloomfield's International Academy soars.

Parents, teachers, politicians and educational officials from Detroit to Lansing were rattled to the bone as it was revealed that fourth- and eighth-graders in Detroit Public Schools scored the worst in the nation in math according to national test scores. The Detroit scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress, a rigorous national assessment, were the lowest in the test's 40-year history. Among fourth-graders, 69 percent scored below basic levels, as did 77 percent of eighth-graders. Results show 77 percent of eighth-graders and 69 percent of fourth-graders lack basic math skills.

Yet, a few miles down the road in the upscale suburban Bloomfield Hills school district, the International Academy, which emphasizes a global baccalaureate curriculum, was named the second best public high school in the nation, according to the

annual Best High Schools list by U.S. News & World Report. The magazine looked at more than 21,000 public high schools in 48 states and Washington, D.C. Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va., a suburb of the nation's capital, was named No. 1.

The International Academy's No. 2 designation was based on the College Readiness Index, which included scores on Advanced 9 through 12 from several Oakland County districts. Enrollment in the affluent district includes 60.4 percent white students, 36.4 percent Asian, 1.9 percent black and 1.3 percent Hispanic. The DPS system is predominantly African American and poor. Separate and unequal was supposed to end decades ago.

Clearly, the overwhelming majority of the students at the International Academy have had a better start in life than the majority of the children that attend Detroit schools.

The man in charge of DPS, Robert Bobb, understands that teaching and learning trumps and must drive the financial decisions in any high quality school. He also realizes that the academic deficit for the children in DPS is far greater than the fiscal deficit that he inherited and which soars into the hundreds of millions.

Bobb is unearthing the ugly truth that DPS has been about: power, control, politics, jobs and adults and NOT about teaching, learning, children and quality education.

Let's be clear, everyone, regardless of where you live and work, should be very worried about adults failing the children of Detroit. A child without a solid education today will be an adult without a future tomorrow. Our state prisons are jammed with functionally illiterate, educational failures of the past. Uneducated children will reappear as illiterate adults in your neighborhood or place of business unless nothing short of a crusade is undertaken to beat illiteracy and school failure in Detroit.

What is happening in Detroit is nothing short of educational genocide. Hopefully, the atrocity exposed will force bold action that puts our children's needs above adults.

Two spotlights were on Michigan — one that we should aspire to for more of our students and one that should make everyone stand up and say, "No more!"

Tom Watkins is an educational and business consultant in the US and China. He served as state superintendent of schools from 2001-05. Read other works by Watkins at: www.dome.com.



'Tis the season

Parkview Elementary students and their families (left) enjoy snacks after their Dec. 16 holiday concert. Parkview Elementary School kindergarten David Assiti (above) enjoys a cookie break after he and other students performed their holiday concert on Dec. 16 for friends and family.

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FROM PAGE A12

Special Senate tributes presented

This month I have been privileged to present several special tributes honoring the contributions of some outstanding Oakland County residents. I recently gave retiring Huron

Valley School Board members Jennifer Beam and John Branstetter tributes recognizing their service to the community. I also presented Senate tributes during the recent Huron Valley Chamber of Commerce holiday event. The honors were for "Citizen of the Year" to Mel Boman, "Business of the Year" to LaFontaine Automotive Group, "Volunteer of the Year" to AJ Lochner, and "Milford Memories

of the Year" to Bob Hwozdk. It was a distinct privilege to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Novi Rotary Club and to commend the members for their exemplary community service. The Novi Rotary Club was founded in September 1959. Among its community service accomplishments include funding Rotary Park, hosting senior citizens to an annual Christmas lunch

where invited veterans are recognized for their service and remodeling houses for needy families in the community. At the club's annual holiday dinner this month, I presented them with a special State tribute, signed by myself and Representative Hugh Crawford, to thank them on behalf of the multitude of people here and abroad who have benefited from their inval-

able contributions. As we gather together with family and friends, we remember and are thankful for all our blessings. I am fortunate to have a loving family and good friends and the great honor to continue to serve you in the state Senate. We have accomplished much, but much more remains to be done. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New

Year. God Bless you all.

Nancy Cassis is the state senator for Oakland County's 15th District. Commerce Twp, Highland Twp, Holly Twp, Lyon Twp, Milford Twp, Northville city (part), Novi city, Novi Twp, Orchard Lake city, Rose Twp, South Lyon city, Walled Lake city, West Bloomfield Twp, White Lake Twp and Westland city. Visit www.Senate/nancy.cassis.com for the latest information and updates on issues in Lansing, or contact her toll free at 1-888-38-NANCY.



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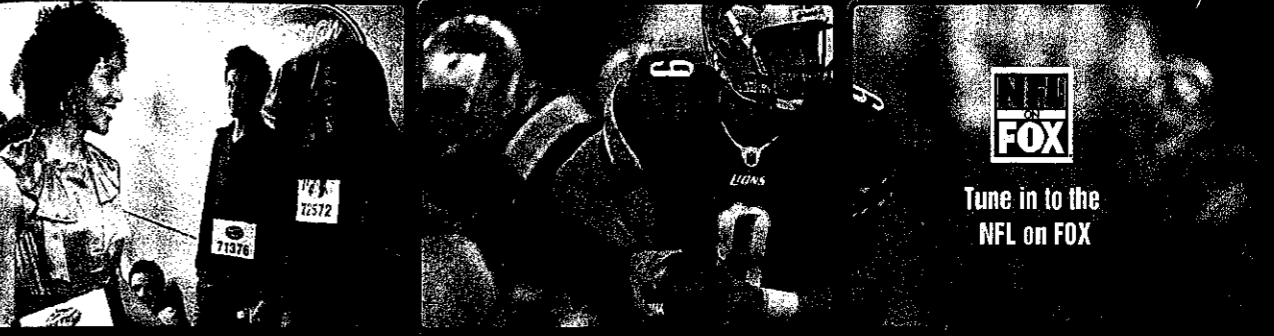


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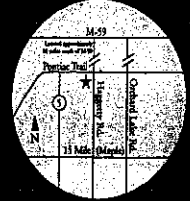
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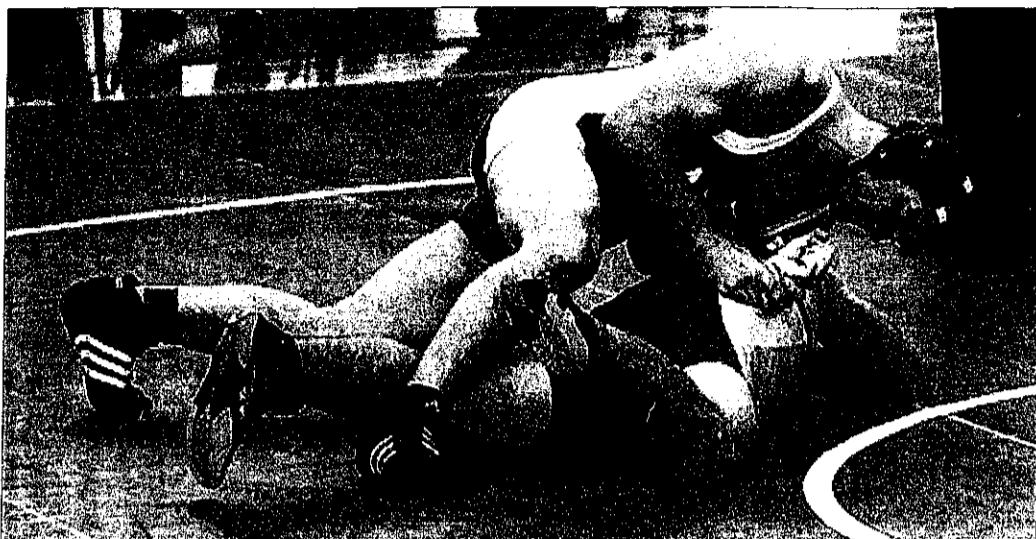
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LOCAL SPORTS

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Team notches
100th win for
coach Kelp - B2



Senior captain Alex Engebretson earned third place in the 171-pound weight class at the Herm Wilkinson Classic Dec. 12 in Howell after going 3-1 in competition.

Wildcat grapplers no match for best of county Caldwell and Engebretson medal among 22nd-place team finish

BY CHRIS JACKETT
CORRESPONDENT

Facing some of the toughest competition in the state, Novi's wrestlers competed at the 50th annual Oakland County Championships last weekend.

Hosted by Milford and Oxford high schools Friday and Saturday, the tournament featured 46 teams from throughout the county, so the Wildcats had their work cut out for them as they faced the top Division I grapplers in each weight class.

Novi was led by senior captains Conner Caldwell (125 pounds) and Alex Engebretson (171 pounds), who each placed eighth in their respective weight classes.

"Their senior leadership really came into effect. We're really excited about what they can bring to the team," assistant coach Dan Jilg said,

ON TAP

Following the Oxford meet, Novi and Plymouth Salem will compete in a pair of dual matches against KLAAs South Division's Canton and Plymouth at a Plymouth-hosted quad meet 5:30 p.m. Jan. 6.

noting wrestlers who medal at the county meet generally do well at the state meet as well.

Although several Wildcats were eliminated during the first day of competition, senior captain Martin Bunney (152 pounds), sophomore Shanka Paul (112 pounds) and sophomore Kaveh Sohizad (135 pounds) all qualified for the second day at Oxford, but did not medal in their weight classes.

"It was a really tough tournament," Jilg said. "The younger guys

are (doing well and developing). They haven't peaked yet. Their best wrestling is yet to come."

Senior Adam Trober (160 pounds), junior Matt Aoun (130 pounds) and sophomore Jimi Keller (285 pounds) had impressive performances on the first day, but each Wildcat's individual record on the day wasn't enough to qualify for day two.

Novi's up-and-coming heavy-weight talent, Keller overcame some large odds in winning his first match of the day against a wrestler who was at least 50 pounds heavier.

"I love watching Jimi wrestle because he's fearless. He doesn't care if the guy's 50 pounds more than him. He has a lot of heart," Jilg said.

Aoun used the tournament to make his varsity debut at 130 pounds, finishing with a 2-2 record.

Despite the strong performances of a few, the overall talent from

throughout the county was too much for the Wildcats, who finished 22nd at the tournament with 81.5 points, edging out Royal Oak by half a point and Stoney Creek by one point.

Detroit Catholic Central won the meet with 326 points, individual champions in the 112, 125 and 215 weight classes, and second-place finishes in the 130, 140 and 285 weight classes. Clarkston took second with 236 points.

Novi now has a short break as they prepare for a team dual tournament 9 a.m. Wednesday at Oxford High. Oxford had 14 wrestlers advance to the second day at the Oakland County Championships and finished third overall with 229 points.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.

'Cats swat Hornets

Strong second half
gives Novi 66-49 win

BY CHRIS JACKETT
CORRESPONDENT

ON TAP
The Wildcats are off for the next two weeks before opening up league play by hosting South Lyon 7 p.m. Jan. 8.

Novi's boys basketball team goes into winter break on the heels of two wins in two nights, having defeated Livonia Churchill and Saline last Thursday and Friday.

The Wildcats (4-1) got off to a slow start against the Hornets (1-3) on Friday, as Saline's

Taylor Braham hit his first few shots from distance as the two teams traded baskets.

Novi took a 14-12 lead late in the first quarter and would not fall behind again. The Wildcats snuffed Braham (10 first-half points) in the second half as they turned the game around. A full-court pass from senior Brandon Rydzewski to junior Samer Ozeir for a basket and a huge defensive block by junior Chris Milon helped keep Novi in the game early on.

"I thought we were pretty poor in the first half. We were pretty selfish on defense. I don't know if it was so much them as it was us. We just did not go in the first half. (It may have been) mental fatigue, not physi-

Please see **BOYS HOOPS, B2**

Novi names Pennycuff new football coach

South Lyon East's first-ever
coach ready to develop program
as Novi's third-ever coach

BY CHRIS JACKETT
CORRESPONDENT

It's been nearly two months and the wait is over. Last week, Todd Pennycuff was named Novi football's third head coach in the program's 43-year history.

Pennycuff takes the reins from Tab Kellepourey, who resigned in October following a successful 10-year career at Novi. Kellepourey was preceded by John Osborne, who coached Novi for 33 years and also served as special teams coach this past fall.

"I'm really excited and humbled to be even considered for the head coaching job," said Pennycuff, who turns 41 in two weeks. "It's exciting, its humbling to be the third head coach. I'm aware of all the great things John Osborne has done in the past, as well as Tab."

Pennycuff has worked with both Kellepourey (two years at Hartland) and Osborne (during his final season at Novi) in the past. He expects to bring the lessons learned from Novi's first two coaches and the other coaches he has served with all together to create a strong program.

"Our long-term goal is that every young man that comes through our program becomes better businessmen, fathers, family guys. Short term is to get a coaching staff in place and get in the weight room," Pennycuff said. "We want to develop a culture and environment where the kids know its OK to make mistakes, but establish a culture of doing business. Its all how you respond."

Having spent the past three seasons as the first-ever head coach at South Lyon East,



PHOTO BY CHRIS JACKETT

Last week, Todd Pennycuff was named Novi football's third head coach in the program's 43-year history.

Pennycuff will look at a mixture of assistants and coordinators, from Novi, South Lyon East and elsewhere, before putting his coaching staff in place.

"It was real exciting. Not too many head coaches get to start up a program from scratch, from the ground up. I had the opportunity to work with young kids and build the program up," Pennycuff said. "I'm just a low-key guy. It's all about the kids. Everything we do is kid centered. The people I've worked for have been great role models."

Currently a special education instructor at Novi's Village Oaks Elementary, Pennycuff is a South Lyon High graduate who played offensive tackle and tight end for Southwest Baptist University until he blew out his ACL.

After his injury, he went on to coach at SBU from 1989-95 before joining Kellepourey at Hartland for two years.

From there, Pennycuff served as offensive or defensive coordinator at several different high schools, including South Lyon, Novi, Berkley, Livonia Clarenceville and a second stint at South Lyon during a regional-championship season, before landing his first head coaching job at Dearborn Heights Crestwood in 2006.

Please see **PENNYCUFF, B2**

Penalties plague Novi in loss to Division III champs

Wildcats handed first
loss of season

BY CHRIS JACKETT
CORRESPONDENT

The most opportune time to score in any hockey game is during a power play. Both No. 4 Novi and No. 6 Cranbrook made the most of the man advantage Saturday, as all four goals in the Clarkston Christmas Invitational final came on the power play. Unfortunately for the Wildcats, three of the four went to Cranbrook.

Before Novi could face Cranbrook for the invite championship, the Wildcats had to get through Davison on Friday. In the first-ever matchup between the two programs, Novi took a 1-1 game into the first intermission, but came out strong in the second period to take a 5-1 lead.

With the team taking just two penalties throughout the entire game, junior netminder Michael Pesendorfer to improved to 8-0-1 in the 7-2 Novi victory at the Detroit Skating Club in Bloomfield Hills.

Several Wildcats got their names on the stat sheet during the win, as senior Andrew Cmoluch started off the scoring with senior Ryan McCullough earning the assist.

Juniors Nolan Valteau and Matt Sternkoski set up senior Tyler Perpich for Novi's second goal before seniors Tyler Manning and Brandon Juodikis set junior Taylor Howell up for what would be the game-winning goal, that put Novi ahead 3-1 at the time. Davison took just four penalties in the game as Novi outshot the Cardinals.

"I thought we played really well against Davison. They skated hard, played hard, but we outplayed them," Novi coach Todd Krygier said.

From there, Cmoluch, Perpich, sophomore Dylan Shepard and Valteau capped off the scoring as Shepard, Manning, Valteau, junior Joey Ferriss, senior Alec Latin, senior Nolan Anderson and Sternkoski each earned one assist apiece on one of Novi's final four goals.

The Friday victory earned Division II Novi a shot at defending Division III-champion Cranbrook Saturday afternoon.

In a tough game, neither team could score an even-strength goal. Outshooting Novi 27-18,

ON TAP

The Wildcats are off until they visit Livonia Franklin 6 p.m. Dec. 30, followed by 7 p.m. matchups at Calumet Jan. 8 and Hancock Jan. 9 during an annual weekend road trip to the Upper Peninsula. "Franklin isn't a real strong team, but you never know what to expect," Krygier said, noting the trip to Houghton will be a "good team-building trip. You get to see a different part of the state."

Cranbrook managed to pull away behind three power play goals.

"They scored each of their goals on the power play in the last three minutes of each period," Krygier said. "They had five more power play opportunities than us. We would have scored on our power play had we been given the opportunity."

"Our penalty kill was good, but not as good as it needed to be. Their goals were earned goals."

Novi's lone goal came in the second period, when senior captain Evan Dixon and junior Zach Mohr set up Valteau for a wrist shot from the point that rang off the post and into the net to tie the game 1-1.

"I thought it was a timely goal. It was what we needed," Krygier said. "We were ready mentally, but we weren't as ready as we need to be to play Cranbrook. That's the best team we played all year. In general, when you play a team like that, you've got to play with grit and determination. They're the cream of the crop in Division III and the state."

"I think we don't have that quality of competition in our season or early in the season and the first time we see it is late in the state tournament. Personally, as a coach, I want to play the best at all times. As a public school, its kind of different because you don't know what you're going to get year to year and the private schools are consistently good year to year."

With their first loss of the season in the books, Novi's icers go into winter break with an impressive 9-1-1 overall record (4-0-1 in the Kensington Conference), the best start in program history, according to Krygier.

"We're going to relax a little bit and have fun," Krygier said. "I'm excited about the season. A 9-1-1 start, we don't have anything to be ashamed of."

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former Novi News staff writer.

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