



**CANINE PROGRAM
HELPS CHILDREN
THROUGH COURT, A3**



**Dancing with the cars
at auto show charity gala, A15**

THURSDAY
January 20, 2011

HOMETOWN WEEKLIES
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NOVI NEWS

hometownlife.com

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NOVI NOW State of the City

The City of Novi in partnership with the Novi Chamber of Commerce invites you to join Mayor David Landry and Novi City Council members for the State of the City address and luncheon from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 20 at Baronette Renaissance hotel (27790 Novi Road).

The cost is \$27 per person. Reservations be made by sending a check made payable to: City of Novi, attention Robin Working, 45175 West Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375

Fitness classes offered

As 2010 comes to a close, the tradition of setting a New Year's Resolution is upon us. The Novi Parks Department achieves its mission of Enriching Lives and Strengthening Community, in part, by offering a wide variety of programs which promote healthy and active lifestyles. Classes begin Jan. 22 and registration is going on now at cityofnovi.org and the Novi Parks office (45175 West Ten Mile Road). Online registrations receive a \$5 discount. For a full listing of classes, visit cityofnovi.org.

MSU Extension offers program

Are you looking for a great opportunity to learn about conservation and natural science and assume leadership roles through volunteering your time, knowledge, and skills in conservation management in your community? Individuals who take part in the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program (CSP) can learn how to effectively take part in informed, scientifically based conservation and resource management and work to sustain healthy ecosystems across Michigan.

This 10-week program consists of nine Monday evening classes (6-9 p.m.) and three Saturday field sessions (9 a.m.-4 p.m.) from Feb. 26 through April 25. Monday evening sessions are held at the Oakland County Executive Office Building Conference Center. Saturday sessions will be held at the MSU Tollgate Education Center, Indian Springs Metropark, and Independence Oaks County Park. Registration fee is \$275. Obtain an application packet online at <http://www.oakgov.com/msu/> or call (248) 858-0887 to request an application by mail. The deadline to submit applications is Feb. 4. Please call (248) 858-0887 for more information.

Novi man kills family, himself

Wife stabbed, sons suffocated

BY CAL STONE
STAFF WRITER

Shortly after noon Jan. 14, Novi police officers entered a residence on Applebrooke Drive, near Nine Mile and Napier roads, and discovered three murdered victims — Jennifer Schons, 38, and her two sons, Tynan, 6, and Camden, 4. In an apparent suicide, the body of her husband, Mark Schons, 39, was discovered around 2:24 p.m. in his vehicle in the Walmart parking lot at I-96 and Milford Road in Lyon Township.

Novi police received autopsy results Saturday morning from the Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office. Jennifer Schons died from multiple stab wounds. Tynan was smothered and died from asphyxiation. Camden also died from asphyxiation, but was not smothered, said David Molloy, Novi's chief of police.

Mark Schons died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

"We're backtracking to see where he purchased a small grill and charcoal which he lit inside the SUV, producing enough carbon monoxide to suck all the oxygen out," Molloy said.

The chief also said that he believes a knife recovered inside the SUV was the one used to kill Jennifer Schons. A friend of the family called Novi



JOHN VELEZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The three roses, a candle, a note and a ceramic angel were left in the snow outside the Schons' home in Novi on Monday morning.

police indicating the children did not show up for school and that their mother had missed a scheduled appointment with her friends. Officers responded to the residence and discovered the crime scene.

Molloy said police received information from the family that the couple had been experiencing marital troubles and considering divorce, but that they were still living in the home.

"We don't believe there has been any filing (for divorce) at this time," Molloy said. Molloy said that rumors of gunshots are factually inaccurate. All three bodies were still in the home.

Please see **FAMILY, A2**

Police catch Novi home invasion suspects

Four teens charged in five incidents

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Four teenagers are facing multiple felony home invasion charges following their Jan. 10 arrest by a Farmington Hills police officer after he found evidence from the thefts in their van during a traffic stop. Southfield residents Terrence Levaugh Minois and Roderick Delouis Woolfolk, both 18, were arraigned Tuesday morning in 22-1 District Court for their alleged role in the four home invasions in Novi on Dec. 4 and 5

and another in Farmington Hills. Two other teenagers, both 16, also are being charged for their alleged involvement.

Novi Police Department Detective Sgt. Matt Conquest said a joint investigation between the Novi and Farmington Hills police departments led to them getting confessions from some of the suspects who implicated themselves and the others.

Police were on the lookout for the suspects after they broke into a Farmington Hills



Woolfolk



Minois

house only to find the owner home at the time. The suspects did not take anything and fled in a blue van. A couple weeks later, a Farmington Hills officer stopped the van and found the subjects were smoking marijuana. During a search of the van, the officer found evidence from the home inva-

sions, including one of the victim's credit cards. Some of the stolen items included jewelry, televisions, computers, credit cards and other electronics.

The four homes broken into in Novi occurred on back-to-back days on Valley Star and Enchanted Drives.

"All the homes were locked and unoccupied," Conquest said. "And all four were broken into by kicking or forcing open the front door."

The four teenagers are charged with four counts of second-degree home invasion in Novi and one count of first degree home invasion from the Farmington Hills inci-

dent. All charges are felonies, with first-degree home invasion being the most severe since someone was home at the time. First-degree carries up to 20 years in prison and/or \$5,000 fine, while second-degree is punishable up to 15 years in prison and/or \$3,000 fine.

Conquest said police were able to retrieve some of the items, and encourages people to be on the lookout for each other.

"If you see something suspicious or out of the ordinary, always call the police," he said. nmuel@qnet.net (248) 437-2011 ext. 255

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Superintendent candidates narrowed to five

Final interviews expected to start next week

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

The five candidates interviewing for the chance to become the next superintendent of the Novi Community Schools district were announced to the public last week.

Interviews were slated for Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday, and the Novi Board

of Education will announce the finalists early next week. The pool of five consists of Osceola Area Schools Supt. Christine Beardsley, St. Joseph Academy President and CEO Robert Brescia, Birmingham Public Schools Deputy Supt. for Educational Services Paul DeAngelis, Manchester

"I have every confidence we are going to find an outstanding leader to move this district even further along toward greatness."

BRUCE BACANT, Novi Board of Education President

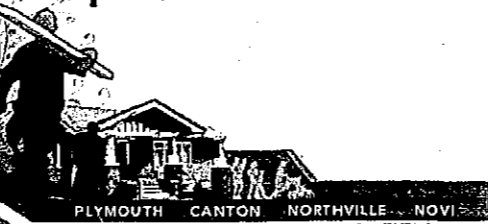
Please see **CANDIDATES, A2**



INDEX

APARTMENTS	B7	CROSSWORD PUZZLE	REAL ESTATE	B7
AUTOMOTIVE	B10	ENTERTAINMENT	SPORTS	B1
CAREER BUILDER	B8	OPINION	BUSINESS	B5

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CANDIDATES FROM PAGE A1

Community Schools Supt. Shavyn Lewis-Lakin and Grand Ledge Public Schools Supt. Steve Matthews.

Finalist interviews are expected to take place next week, and if a person is selected, contract negotiations will begin in early February.

The expected start date for the new hire is in early March.

"We truly are very excited about this slate of candidates," said Board President Bruce Bagdady. "I have every confidence we are going to find an outstanding leader to move this district even further along toward greatness."

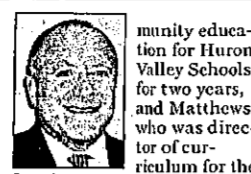


Current Supt. Pete Dion is retiring at the end of the school year, and the district started to look for his replacement in September with the hiring of the consulting firm School Exec Connect.

The firm had 40 candidates complete the entire interview process, with the majority coming from Michigan and Illinois. Candidates from seven other states also interviewed.

Of the five finalists, only Brescia is from out of state, with St. Joseph Academy located in Brownsville, Texas.

Secretary George Kortlandt said the consulting firm told the board "this is one of the best pools they have seen in a while."



ies were found in separate bedrooms. The bodies were transported to the Oakland County Medical Examiner's office for autopsies.

The chief could not comment on the condition of the house, if there were signs of struggles, or how long the family lived there. To his knowledge, there was no suicide note either.

FAMILY FROM PAGE A1

Although the family's home is located in Novi, the two children attended Northville schools. They had only missed school Friday, Molloy said.

Dr. Leonard Rezmierski, superintendent of Northville schools, attended the press conference, held at the Novi PD's Training Center. He and his staff have been more than accommodating and have their critical response plan in action, Molloy said.

"It's an almost unspeakable tragedy to put our arms around," Rezmierski said, adding that the district is using the ListServ e-mails to notify the community. Brief counselors will be working with students as well.

The following message was sent through the community via a ListServ e-mail around 7:30 p.m. Friday: "It is with tremendous shock and sadness that we report the tragic homicide deaths of two Thornton Creek students: a first-grader, a 3-year-old student in our Early Childhood Education program, and their mother. These deaths were accompanied by the suicide death of their father."

"We deeply grieve the loss of this family from our Thornton Creek community and recognize the urgent need for crisis support for our students, staff and community over the coming days and weeks. Sharon Irvine, principal of Thornton Creek, will send a ListServ message to the Thornton Creek community, notifying them of the comprehensive school plan for support that will begin on our students' return Monday morning."

"It's very difficult," the superintendent said. "They feel vulnerable and exposed."

Grief counselors were available, too, for the police officers working the case, Molloy said.

"As investigators and officers, our hearts go out to the victims," he said. "Many of these investigators have children at home. It's very sad news."

Molloy added that this is an isolated incident of domestic violence and, although very tragic and severe, "Novi is a very safe community," he said.

Novi police then assisted the Michigan State Police in processing the crime scene after a warrant was issued by the 52-1 District Court.

"Our job now is to move backward and try to figure this out and identify what has taken place in the last 19 to 20 hours," Molloy said. "We may never know what triggered this event, but we will know everything about these victims and what has led to this."

Laptop computers, digital phones and social media will be analyzed over the next several weeks, Molloy said.

Molloy said that Mark Schons has no documented criminal history, and that Novi police have had no previous contact with any of the victims or the home. He did say that Schons owned a business in Howell, Party Central, that had recently gone out of business, and that he was working as a computer programmer in Lansing.

Jennifer Schons was a paint engineer with General Motors, according to Molloy.

Asked if the couple had filed bankruptcy, Molloy said there was "preliminary information of financial difficulty," and that checking to see if the couple had filed for bankruptcy would be part of their victimology procedure.

"We know that the female victim has some family in western Wayne and Oakland County and that her parents

are currently out of town," Molloy said, adding that Mark Schons has family in northern Oakland County.

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Canine Advocacy Program helps children get through court

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASCHI CORRESPONDENT

Sometimes the comfort of a dog nearby can make all the difference for a child who has to testify about sexual abuse.

Amos, a chocolate lab, goes to court to help young victims tell what happened to them and somehow his presence lowers their anxiety level.

When he's not in court, the 2.5-year-old canine, is working with sexually abused young adults and teens at Children's Village in Oakland County.

"He really helps out a lot and makes it more comfortable to talk about what happened to us and the problems that are going on in life," said an unidentified teen at the village, in a recorded online video.

The program began shortly after Dan Cojano retired from the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office as supervisor of Victim Services.

"I looked at some programs and visited the courthouse dogs program in Seattle, Wash.," said Cojano, explaining that for two years he worked to bring a similar program to Michigan.

In October 2010, Canine Advocacy Group began work with children in Michigan and became the first program of its kind in the state, Cojano said.

Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester donated Amos, and Cojano credits 52nd District Court Judge Brian W. MacKenzie with being instrumental in getting Canine Advocacy Group started and "notified by other judges."

"Amos brings down the anxiety level while children are waiting to go into court," Cojano said. "They play with him and scratch his belly and it gives them a new focus."

While they're waiting, it's one of the most traumatic times because they don't know what to expect and people will be asking personal questions about what happened to



Dan Cojano, executive director of the Canine Advocacy Program, with Amos.

them." When Amos is allowed in the courtroom he lays down at the victims' feet while they are testifying.

"They know they have someone who is there protecting them and it allows them to talk," Cojano said. "It's been successful in every case we've gone in. That presence of having Amos in there works wonders."

After the children testify they are usually very upset, Cojano added. So, Amos is called in again.

"There are a lot of hugs and kisses and more treats for Amos," Cojano said.

Currently, the program is

funded by Cojano and Amos' owner, who is an employee Cojano worked with in the prosecutor's office.

"We pay for liability insurance, food and vet bills," he said, adding that the Waterford Valley Optimist Club and the Oakland County Clerk's office have made donations.

Cojano and Amos train weekly at various court locations in Oakland County.

"Many judges welcome Amos in the courtroom to train and they often have had other ideas to assist children in a variety of cases," Cojano said.

The Canine Advocacy



Amos, a chocolate lab, goes to court to help young victims tell what happened to them and somehow his presence lowers their anxiety level.

Program became a non-profit organization in November.

Amos is available at no cost. "We're looking for donations," explained Novi City Councilman David Staudt, who wrote and paid for the application for the organization's non-profit status.

"One hundred percent will go back to the dog and the program," Staudt said. "There is no staff or infrastructure. It's created for the sole purpose of benefiting the children and those victims of crimes that need the assistance of someone other than a human individual. We provide them the ability to open up in a non-confrontational setting."

Amos recently visited students at Novi High School and has made other public relations stops to spread the word about what he does.

Amos is all over the Internet, too, with his own

Facebook page; on Twitter, at twitter.com/Amos_CAP; and featured in various news media clips.

"He's getting busier," said Cojano who runs the program, provides the training and takes him to court. "I see Amos being more and more busy in the coming year and I'm excited about that."

"I guess I'm really proud of being one of the people bringing canines into service assisting children. Everyone benefits from this program -- the children, the professionals involved in the case, the judge and the whole criminal justice system."

When you "see what it does for children, how can you not support it?" Staudt said.

Donations may be made to Canine Advocacy Group, P.O. Box 463, Novi, 48375.

Advertisement for Jazzercise Monday, January 24 1 DAY SALE. Includes image of a woman exercising and text: "Call. Click. Come in. \$29 per month for your first 3 months." Also includes contact information for Jazzercise.com.

Advertisement for IBC Computer & Printer Repair. Includes text: "Thank You for your business!", "We REPAIR most PRINTERS including CANON-HP-BROTHER", "We REPAIR COMPUTERS FIX VIRUS and SPYWARE PROBLEMS RESTORE DATA, PICTURES and MUSIC", "IBEC Computer & Printer Repair 38435 Grand River Ave. Farmington Hills, MI 48335". Also includes contact info for Bruce Faber and Wild Birds Unlimited 30th Anniversary Celebration.

Large advertisement for University of Michigan Health System. Text: "THE MICHIGAN DIFFERENCE IN CANTON AND LIVONIA." Includes logo for M Health System and text: "Primary care and specialty physicians, therapy, diagnostic testing and outpatient surgery for the treatment of men, women and children — you'll find it all in Livonia and Canton. But no matter what you come here for, count on getting the same great care and extraordinary medicine that's practiced in Ann Arbor. Check out everything we have to offer at UofMHealth.org."

Advertisement for LENOXX furnaces. Text: "THINKING ABOUT... A NEW FURNACE? LENOXX FREE ESTIMATES (734) 525-1930 Our 26th Year! UNITED TEMPERATURE 8919 MIDDLEBURY • LIVONIA www.unitedtemperatureservices.com"

Advertisement for Demmer Automotive Group. Text: "Looking for Ford or Lincoln-Mercury Sales / Parts / Service / Body Shop? You Are Only 15 Minutes From Your BEST Deal! 'HOME OF THE CHEAP LEASE!'". Includes contact info for Jack Demmer Lincoln Dearborn and Jack Demmer Ford Wayne.

Advertisement for The Novi News. Text: "THE NOVI NEWS Published Each Thursday By The Novi News 101 Lafayette South Lyon, Michigan 48178 Periodical At South Lyon, Michigan". Includes subscription rates and contact info.

Advertisement for Abbey Park Senior Living. Text: "New Year, New Home. For a Happier, Healthier, Independent Lifestyle. LUXURY Senior Living at AFFORDABLE Prices". Includes a list of services and amenities.

Advertisement for Tenpenny Furniture. Text: "Tenpenny Furniture OAK AND CHERRY FURNITURE SUPER JANUARY CLEARANCE ON ALL FLOOR SAMPLES LIQUIDATING \$100 OFF Any Purchase of \$599.00 or more". Includes contact info for Tenpenny Furniture.

ON CAMPUS

Mississippi College

Novi's Veronica E. Salenus was named to the Dean's List. To be eligible, a student must maintain a 3.5 or better grade point average based on a 4.0 system. The student must take a full course load of at least 12 semester hours of undergraduate credit with all academic courses impacting their grade point average.

Donations needed for Senior All Night Party

Organizers for the Novi High School Senior All Night Party are hard at work planning for the 2011 event and are requesting donations from parents, businesses and community members to make this year's event the best one yet. The annual Senior All Night Party, scheduled for June 4 at Novi High School, offers food, activities and prizes, allowing graduating seniors to celebrate in a safe, supervised environment. The SANP Donations Committee is seeking raffle prizes and monetary donations to cover the cost of decorations, entertainment and additional raffle prizes. Organizers encourage those planning to make financial contributions

to do so as soon as possible so the committee can plan a budget. Checks may be made payable to NHS Senior All Night Party and should be sent to: NHS Senior All Night Party, C/O Dana Nussio, 22041 Shadybrook Drive, Novi, MI 48375. Information may be obtained by contacting Dana Nussio at nussio@earthlink.net or Anne Lewis at alewis13@mmr.com.

SCHOOL BRIEFS

We're looking for Super Bowl party recipes

Super Bowl Sunday is nearly a month away, but it's not too soon to begin planning party menus.

What will you serve for the big game on Sunday, Feb. 6? Do you have favorite recipes for appetizers, snacks or an entree that's perfect for hungry fans? We're compiling Super Bowl recipes for an upcoming issue and we don't want to miss out on yours. Send recipe, your name, city of residence and a telephone number or e-mail to Sharon Dargay at sdargay@hometownlife.com.

Get a photo from last year's Super Bowl party that you organized or attended?

Send it along, too, in jpg format attached to the e-mail. Identify individuals in the image by first and last name, as well as city of residence. If mailing, send to Dargay at the Observer Newspapers, 615 W. Lafayette, Level 2, Detroit, MI 48226. But hurry, deadline for submissions is Jan. 23.

EDUCATION

Thursday, January 20, 2011 hometownlife.com

Novi community focuses on the 'moment'
Holiday event showcases King's message, student's talents

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

They sang. They danced. They played. They spoke. And for one day at least, they lived in the moment.

"Our Moment, Our Time" was the theme of the fifth annual Unity in the Community event at Novi High School to celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. And for those gathered it also was a reminder to not forget the past and look to the future but rather live in the present.

"I challenge you," Novi Mayor David Landry said to the crowd of over 100 on Monday night. "What are you doing in your moment, your time? Because your moment is now."

The event, organized by the high school's Students Promoting Unity and Diversity club, featured spoken word, dancing, musical performances and singing.

The keynote speaker was Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Denise Langford Morris.

Morris was Oakland County's first African American circuit court judge and is the longest serving female judge in Oakland County.

Her speech touched on the recent tragedy in Tucson, Ariz., that left six dead and 13 others injured, the obstacles she had to overcome in her life and featured a slide show with pictures from the Jim Crow days that had the audience's full attention.

"We must help, support and encourage each other to continue Dr. King's dream," she said. "Like Dr. King we all must be dreamers."

The student organizers from SPUD said this was the biggest program in their four years and were especially excited to see the large number of students in attendance.



PHOTOS BY JOHN REIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Novi High students attending Monday night's Unity in the Community program applaud a speaker.



The keynote speaker at Monday night's Unity in the Community program at Novi High - the Honorable Denise Langford Morris - gives her address "Our Moment, Our Time."



Novi High School student Davanta Beal-Greer performs her dance titled "It's a Celebration" during the Monday night "Unity in the Community" program at the high school auditorium.

"As long as we continue to promote his message it will stay alive," said club co-president AJ Sarangi. "It brings us together as a whole and helps us learn about each other."

For senior Callie Wright, the message is about vigilance. "To me it's a constant strive to do better, to do more," she said. "It's all about action," he said. "And we must be relentless."

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HAVE A STORY IDEA?

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Comment online at hometownlife.com

School board to look at MMC, grad requirements

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Melinda Bush wants her child to get a Novi High School diploma when he graduates.

But she does not want her son Nick, who has a disability, to have the piece of paper but lack the appropriate skills.

Bush instead is asking the Novi Board of Education for help by modifying the Michigan Merit Curriculum for a student with an individualized Education Program.

"I want a meaningful education," she said. "To be honest, it wasn't just about my son. I would like to see all kids get an appropriate education, but in particular I am sympathetic to kids with disabilities."

"They shouldn't have to choose between a meaningful education and a diploma."

The Novi woman's issues stem from the Michigan Merit Curriculum that requires four years of math, including geometry and algebra, four years of English and three science classes as well as one online learning experience.

Her son struggles in math, and while he has a 3.99 grade point average, would not do well in courses such as trigonometry and Algebra 2. For him to get a personal curriculum, it still has to meet merit curriculum expectations.

The MMC also forces districts to work with the notion that a student must be proficient in a set of standards, and Donna Tinberg, director of student services for the Novi Community School District, said "we are all wrestling with that and what does proficiency mean?"

Currently, Novi sets that mark at 60 percent to determine proficiency for fear of cutting a lot of kids out of credit if they raised it, but the district is challenged because they want to maintain the integrity of the diploma and standards.

School districts can offer a certificate of high school completion instead of a diploma, but Bush wants her son to have the opportunity to earn a diploma despite his disability.

She said one of the main reasons is because when Nick is looking for jobs, employers are more likely to look favorably upon a diploma. The board of education will have a chance to look at new policy language recommended by administration regarding graduation requirements, the Michigan Merit Curriculum and Personal Curriculum plan at its meeting tonight.

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What do you want to be when you grow up?

GUEST COLUMN

Even before they start school, children are often asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Their answers are probably limited to the jobs held by the adults they know, such as parents and other relatives. That is a great start and is actually the beginning of their "career exploration." Once they start school, they have opportunities to explore a variety of careers and gain knowledge and skills for success in a career of their choice. This career preparation is a continuum from elementary through postsecondary education and can be an especially fun and exciting time during the middle school years.

At Novi Middle School, all students have opportunities to explore career options. Teachers help them examine interests and make connections between various careers and what they are learning in the classroom. Teachers, counselors, and parents help them explore their personal talents, likes and dislikes and to answer the ever burning question, "Why do I need to know this?" Perhaps the most enjoyable part of their continuing career exploration is learning to use Career Cruising, an online career guidance and planning system that can help

people of all ages to find a career and explore educational and training options. Kate Soderstrom, career paraprofessional, is also a helpful part of career exploration at Novi Middle School. She can assist students with career planning and preparation, and also is able to help teachers implement career contextual learning experiences into their curriculum. Kate is particularly enthused that Novi Middle School is participating in the roll out of Course Planner, an additional piece of the Career Cruising system. Starting this year, eighth grade students will have Course Planner integrated into Career Cruising to manage courses they need to take to meet the goals of their Educational Development Plan (EDP).

As eighth graders, students develop their first EDP. The EDP identifies both career goals and a plan of action to achieve them. The purpose of the EDP is to provide every student with an ongoing record of career planning that will help guide them toward a career of choice. The EDP includes personal information, career pathway goals, educa-

tional/training goals, career assessment results, and a plan of action. Parents and counselors can use the EDP to help facilitate selection of classes and educational training related to the Career Pathway of choice.

Career Pathways are six broad groupings of careers that share similar characteristics and whose employment requirements call for many common interests and abilities. The six pathways are: 1. Arts and Communication, 2. Business, Management, Marketing, & Technology, 3. Engineering/Manufacturing & Industrial Technology, 4. Health Sciences, 5. Human Services, and 6. Natural Resources and Agriculture. High school courses are aligned into the Career Pathways to reflect which courses are needed for which careers.

With all of this information and exploration during their middle school years, Novi Middle School students will certainly have more answers to the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" when they head off to high school.

Milan Obrenovich, middle school principal, and Marie Pipher, middle school assistant principal.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Stop bullying

Kids Empowered, Boys Empowered and Girls Empowered present two anti-bullying programs to Novi parents, children and the surrounding community on Thursday, Jan. 20 at Providence Park Hospital - Medical Office Building 26850 Providence Parkway, second floor training room.

STOP THINK GOT - For kindergartners and their parents, this workshop uses games and a simple craft to teach our littles ones the do's and don'ts of how to treat other kids -- their friends, classmates, and siblings.

ASSERTIVENESS BOOT CAMP - Age-appropriate breakouts for 1st - 6th graders and their parents. What to say to the meanness and more. Being assertive is a life skill every kid needs to have in dealing with meanness, in negotiating, handling conflict and setting boundaries. For more information including cost, times and registration, go to www.girlsempowered.com or www.boysempowered.com and click on program schedule.

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Daniel Chung as Isaac Newton and Cameron Menendez as Daniel Boone.

Wax Museum

On Jan. 10 and Jan. 12, the fourth-graders at Novi Woods participated in the elementary school's annual Wax Museum. The kids have to research a heroic person and write an informational speech about that person. They also dress as the person.



Trey Mullins as Neil Armstrong and Dylan King as Michael Jackson.



Megan Harding (right) as Sally Ride.



Nandini Koneru (right) as Shirley Temple.



Haarika Karlapati as Cleopatra and Kyle Sabo as Christopher Columbus.



Logan Beyer as Shirley Temple and Kendall Crenshaw as Mae Jemison.

Coyotes spotted; police say take precautions

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
CORRESPONDENT

Novi residents have spotted coyotes, and police are warning owners of small pets to take special precautions. Rob and Kathleen Summers recently saw coyotes in their backyard at 8.5 Mile and Meadowbrook in one of Novi's oldest subdivisions. The first time they saw the coyote was mid-December and the second time was early January. Kathleen took pictures both times.

The Summers have a wooded area, in a triangular shape, abutting their backyard. Kathleen called her husband to a window hoping he would see the coyote, too. Rob spotted a coyote, but in a different location in their backyard.

"At the same time I saw one of them she saw the other, and I realized we were looking at two coyotes," Rob said. "We always heard about sightings, but we never saw them."

A couple of weeks later they spotted two coyotes together again. The couple has two young children, Carly, 7 and Dylan, 9 and while they tell them not to try and pet the coyote, they also tell them not to be frightened.

"We've seen them twice and both times they run away -- they're real skittish," Rob said. "I think they're beautiful."

The Summers' backyard is a mini-nature preserve full of deer, raccoons and squirrels. Earlier this month they spotted a red fox.

Rob said he's heard stories about a coyote attacking a dog, but he said he wasn't sure if it was true or an urban legend.

Police have gotten a "couple of calls" about coyote sightings in the past four or five months, and on a more regular basis in the last few months, according to Novi Deputy Chief of Police Thomas Lindberg. He said that exact figures weren't available.

"The biggest thing is to protect your small pets and be cautious about any kind of feeding of wildlife that you do because that can be an attractor of coyotes," Lindberg said.

If residents call police about seeing a coyote, he said, typically officers are not sent out "unless there's a unique circumstance, like it got caught in a soccer net."

Coyotes feed on rabbits, mice and other small rodents, as well as bird feed and birds. "Small dogs can be seen as a potential meal for them," Lindberg said.

Police are advising residents not to leave their dogs and cats outside unattended in an unfenced yard. Coyotes are typically not a threat to people, but some wild life experts recommend carrying an air horn to fend them off. Coyotes look like German Shepherds and can be found in packs of as many as eight.

If you do encounter a coyote, keep your eyes on it and don't run, because it could trigger a predatory instinct, Lindberg said. Yell, scream, and wave your arms to make yourself look bigger.



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Teen bluegrass band to play at Novi's Gander Mountain

Free concert starts at 1 p.m. Saturday

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

The Gander Mountain store in Novi is a far cry from some of the major venues the Milford-based teenage bluegrass group The Cats and the Fiddler have played in over the last nine years.

But for lead vocalist James Richardson, he sees doesn't see it as being a bad thing. He is looking at the concert on Saturday as another chance to do something he loves and possibly inspire people along the way.

"We are really looking forward to it," he said Monday night. "The atmosphere will be a lot more comfortable because we are part of the crowd and just get to play songs for them."

The Cats and the Fiddler is a family-based bluegrass band that started when the three 15-year-olds were just 6. Twins James and Shaun Richardson were inspired to play the music after watching videos of their uncle Carmen Acciaoli play in a country western band and asked cousin Carmen Gibes to join them.

The group has played hundreds of shows including stints alongside award-winning bluegrass bands, at the 2009 Detroit Music Awards and at the 2009 IBMA World of Bluegrass Songwriters' Showcase among others.

Cindy Richardson, mother of the twin boys, said they play a more contemporary form of bluegrass music, doing both covers and originals.

James plays the upright bass and sings lead vocals, while Shaun plays the fiddle, mandolin, guitar and banjo and Carmen plays rhythm guitar, banjo and sings lead vocals. Cindy said she is surprised the teens have stuck together this long, and is amazed by their passion.

"It's definitely a mix of a lot of fun with a lot of hard work," she said.

When asked why the group plays bluegrass music as opposed to a genre more popular with their age group, James said "it's a way to be different and help revive something that is diminishing in America today."

The Cats and the Fiddler will take the stage at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Gander Mountain store at 43825 West Oaks Drive, across from Twelve Oaks Mall.

The concert is free and open to the public. James also said the band will stick around after to talk with fans and answer questions.

For more information about the band, visit www.catsandthefiddler.com.

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ZF Group highlights focus on fuel efficiency

Northville-based business touts nine-speed transmission

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

The ZF Group has been a sponsor of the North American International Auto Show for the last 10 years. But for the first time, the German company, with its North American headquarters in Northville Township, decided to come out of its private suite and join the automakers on the main Cobo Center floor. "We wanted to increase the awareness of the company, products and what we are bringing into the market," said Bryan Johnson, Canton resident and manager of market-

ing and communications for the ZF Group. And what the company is bringing into the market is something at the forefront of everyone in the car industry's minds — increased fuel efficiency. At the auto show, ZF unveiled a nine-speed automatic transmission that will improve the fuel efficiency of front-wheel drive cars. The company's first customer is Chrysler, and production is expected to begin in 2012. Johnson said the new transmission will translate into a double-digit increase in fuel efficiency percentage.

According to the company's website, ZF Group develops and produces transmissions, steering systems, axles and chassis components, as well as complete systems for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and off-road machinery. The Northville Township headquarters is also the technical center, and roughly 300 employees work out of that facility. The company also plans on adding 3,000 jobs worldwide in the coming year. Some of the vehicles at the 2011 NAIAS that contained components from ZF include the Audi A6, Audi A7, Audi

A8, Chevrolet Volt, Dodge Durango and several others. Paul Olexa, Northville resident and vice president of driveline sales and marketing, said the industry's continued emphasis on improving gas mileage is not new to ZF. "Fuel efficiency was never out of fashion with us," he said. Olexa, who has attended the NAIAS for several years and is a "car enthusiast," also said he noticed "definite change" in the mood at the auto show this year. "There is a significant improvement," he said.

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U-M solar car on display at auto show

BY JAY M. GROSSMAN
ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER

The University of Michigan solar race car leaves behind the gas pump and the battery charger. Weighing about 700 pounds with a driver, the car's motor runs on two kilowatts of power — about the same amount of power a hair dryer uses. "Exactly," team member Cole Wittie said. "And we can go 105 mph." The solar car is part of the Michigan Economic Development Corp.'s "Town Square," a collection of green technology at the North American International Auto Show. Wittie, 20, and Nathan Van Nortwick, 19, are members of the U-M crew helping to prepare the car for the international Australian Outback solar car race in October. "We're in the mechanical division," said Van Nortwick, who lives in Novi. "We work with the engineers to optimize the design of the car." The vehicle, named Infinium, can travel up to 50 mph almost the entire day purely on solar power. During his tour of the auto show, Gov. Rick Snyder praised the car as an important part of the state's entrepreneurial future.

grossman@hometownlife.com | (586) 826-7030



Cole Wittie (left) of Grand Rapids, and Nathan VanNortwick of Novi, both University of Michigan students, stand by the university's Solar Car at the North American International Auto Show last Thursday. Both students have had a hand in designing and upkeeping the award-winning solar car.

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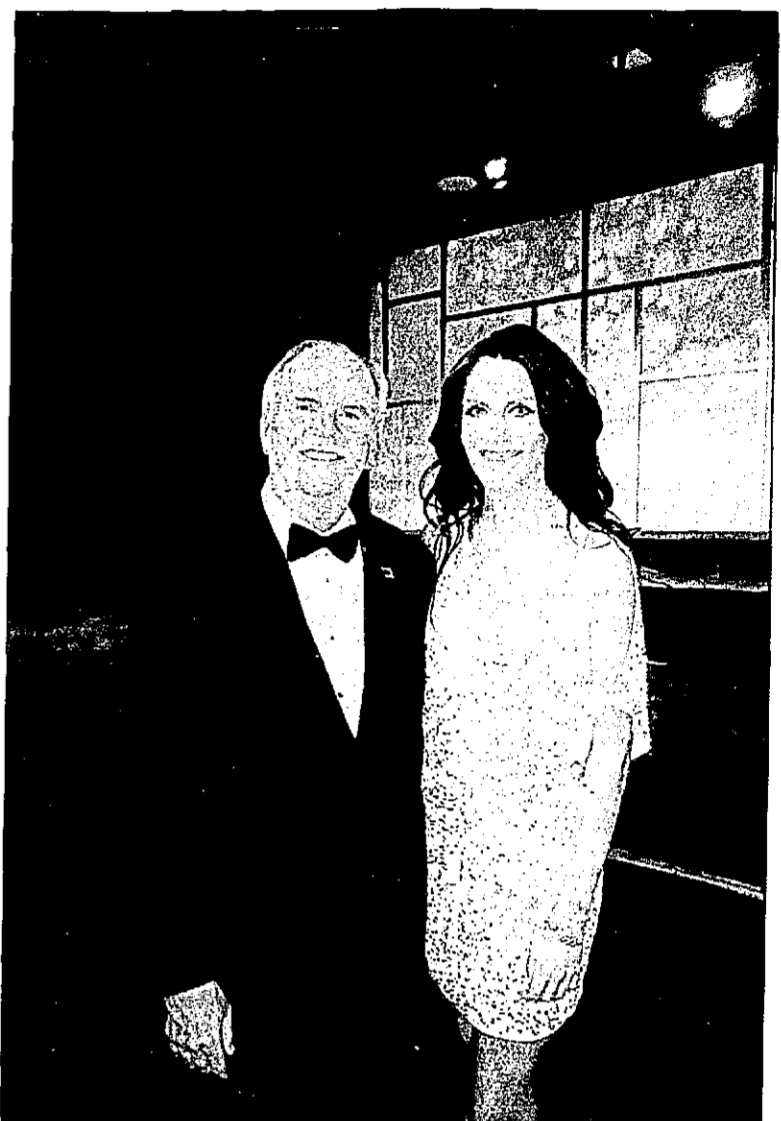
at auto show charity gala

The 35th annual North American International Auto Show Charity Preview black-tie gala brought in \$2.6 million this year. One of the top single-night fund-raising events in the country, the Charity Preview benefits nine local children's charities. In the last seven years alone, the Charity Preview has raised more than \$37 million. Since its inception in 1976, Charity Preview has brought in nearly \$82 million. For the second year, ticket prices remained at \$250, down from \$400 per ticket in previous years. Attendance was also up — 10,500 patrons, all decked out and revvin' to go. "I'm here to tell you that we are back," boasted Paul W. Smith of WJR-AM (760), who emceed the exclusive ribbon-cutting ceremony, just prior to the opening of the Charity Preview and the North American International Auto Show, where 55 new vehicles were launched. "We're proud. We have the best product in the world and we're leading the economy back to health."

With every CEO from the auto companies gracing the stage, along with Gov. Rick Snyder and Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, 8-year-old Myles Parks was lookin' quite dapper in his tux as he welcomed the Charity Preview patrons. Parks was this year's youth ambassador, representing the Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern Michigan — and all the nine recipient charities. Following the brand new launch of the new "I'm a Believer" advertising campaign, which promotes volunteerism in Detroit, Snyder told the sequined and tuxed crowd: "This is truly a great showcase for our state that we should be proud of. The state of Michigan is the leader of the automotive industry. We are the world's leader in innovation." But for that night, it was all about the children, where all but \$10 of each \$250 ticket was donated to one of the causes. "We've exceeded our goal," 2011 NAIAS Chairman Barron Meade of Birmingham said. "These children are the compass of our future direction." Contact Julie Yolles at jyolles@comcast.net or (248) 642-9465.



Julie Yolles



Northville residents Bill and Jackie Demmer of Jack Demmer Ford in Wayne are all smiles at Friday's auto gala.



(From left) Northville residents Marci and Jason Howes, Christy Thaxton and Colleen Meraffino. The women did a shopping "Girls' Night Out" at Von Maur in Livonia for their Charity Preview ensembles.



Cadillac of Novi General Manager Ed and Kelly Pobur of Milford attended last week's NAIAS Charity Preview. Cadillac of Novi celebrated its one-year anniversary the next day. In 2010, Cadillac of Novi was No. 1 in sales in the Midwest and No. 2 nationally.



Novi residents Tina and Pat Torossian, Ford engineering manager, attended the Cooper Standard Automotive afterglow. Cooper Standard's world headquarters are based in Novi. The organization made significant contributions to several children's charities that evening.



PHOTOS BY JULIE YOLLES
(From left) Mafesa and Jerome Zaramba of Northville, Jim Garippa of Rochester Hills and Lisbeth Murphy of Troy attended last Friday's NAIAS Charity Preview.



(From left) Susan Defano of White Lake, Gloria and Michael Delano of Harrison Township and Judy Malburg of Birmingham were part of the 800-plus patrons who attended the sold-out AutoGlow at the Westin Book Cadillac following Charity Preview at the North American International Auto Show.



(From left) Milford residents Michelle Collins and Vince DeAngelis and South Lyon residents Mike and Michelle Conrad attended AutoGlow following the Charity Preview at the Book Cadillac. Sponsored by Ford Motor Co., AutoGlow raised \$180,000 for The Children's Center of Wayne County.

Livonia firm displays plug-in power at auto show

BY JAY M. GROSSMAN
STAFF WRITER

Imagine filling 'er up for about \$2. That's how little drivers could pay in the near future to charge a Chevy Volt using a PEP Station. Designed by the Livonia-based Blain Group, the electric charging stations

are going into production this year. "2011 is the year of the electric car," said Brady Blain, PEP Stations vice president of Business Development. "In order for electric vehicles to be accepted by the general public, a charging infrastructure will be needed. Now that the vehicles are here, we've

seen demand for commercial charge stations increase dramatically." PEP stands for Plug-in Electric Power. Each unit has a pair of 240-volt chargers, so it can charge two cars at the same time. Charging a Volt would take about three hours, Blain said. They're on display at the Michigan Economic Development Corp. "Town Square" exhibit at the auto show. Ricardo, Inc. engineered the units and Diebold, Inc. will install and service them. Similar in size to a parking meter, PEP units are being targeted for commercial uses, such as hospitals, shopping malls and movie theaters that might require a stay of several hours. Units are expected to cost \$500 to \$1,500 each and the unit owners would determine the exact rate to charge per hour. Customers would buy the electricity using a debit/credit card. The units use an LED touch-screen similar to an ATM machine. The stations are made of stainless steel, with underground wiring connecting

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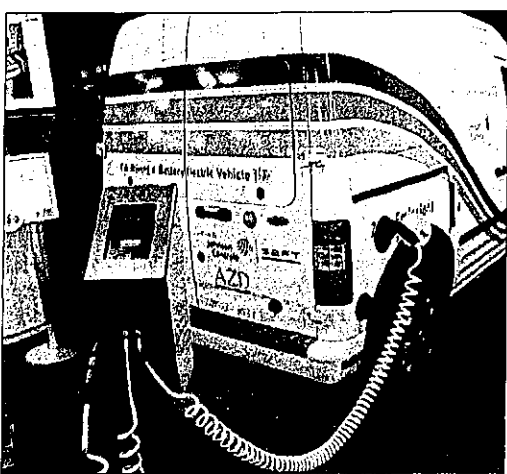
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Livonia-based PEP manufacturer's electric vehicle recharge stations have a display at the MEDC hall inside the auto show.

IN THE SERVICE

Joshua Bridgeman
Navy Seaman Recruit
Joshua D. Bridgeman, son of Gloria E. Bridgeman, of Greer, S.C. and Randolph R. Bridgeman, of Novi, recently graduated from Quartermaster "A" School, and earned honors as a distinguished military graduate in his class at the Center for Surface Combat Systems Unit (CSCS), Great Lakes, Ill.

During the course, students learn to conduct weather observations, determine compass and gyro error, compute times of sunrise and sunset and follow the nautical rules-of-the-road to prevent collisions at sea. Bridgeman is a 2006 graduate of Greer High School of Greer, S.C. and joined the Navy in June 2010.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE A13

of other business professionals in the community and receive training/education on networking more efficiently. Guests are invited to attend free of charge. Continental breakfast provided.

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For those who find all things Chinese a little foreign, never fear. The show is based on Chinese culture, but the values it portrays belong to all of humanity.

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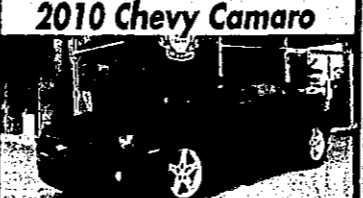


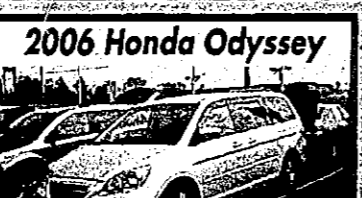



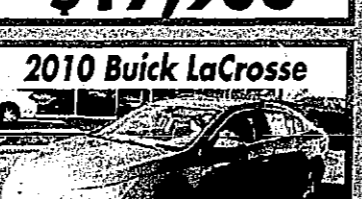

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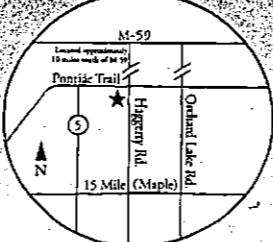
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COOPER STANDARD RETURNS TO AUTO SHOW AFTER HIATUS - BUSINESS, B5

SECTION B (NN)

SPORTS

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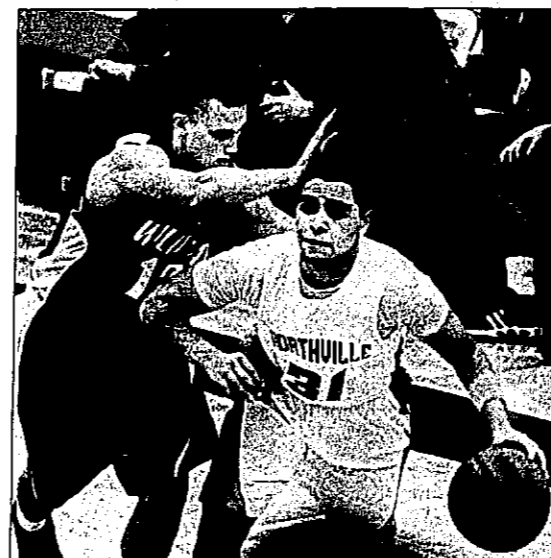
JOBS, B8

AUTOS, B10

PUZZLES, B7

THURSDAY, January 20, 2011

hometownlife.com



Northville's Bryce Groshek, right, tries to get around Novi's Brian Bush during their Jan. 14 game.

Wildcats lead by 30, 33 heading into fourth quarters

Northville, Salem have no answer for Novi cagers

BY CHRIS JACKETT, CORRESPONDENT

Novi's boys cagers have been cruising through their competition on the way to a 3-0 KLA Central Division record.

A pair of solid victories Jan. 11 over Plymouth Salem and last Friday at Northville further indicated the Wildcats' (8-0) chances of finishing atop the division.

"Last week we played at a very high and consistent level," Novi coach Cory Heitsch said. "What was pleasing is that we did it while facing two different styles of play with one at home and one on the road."

ON TAP

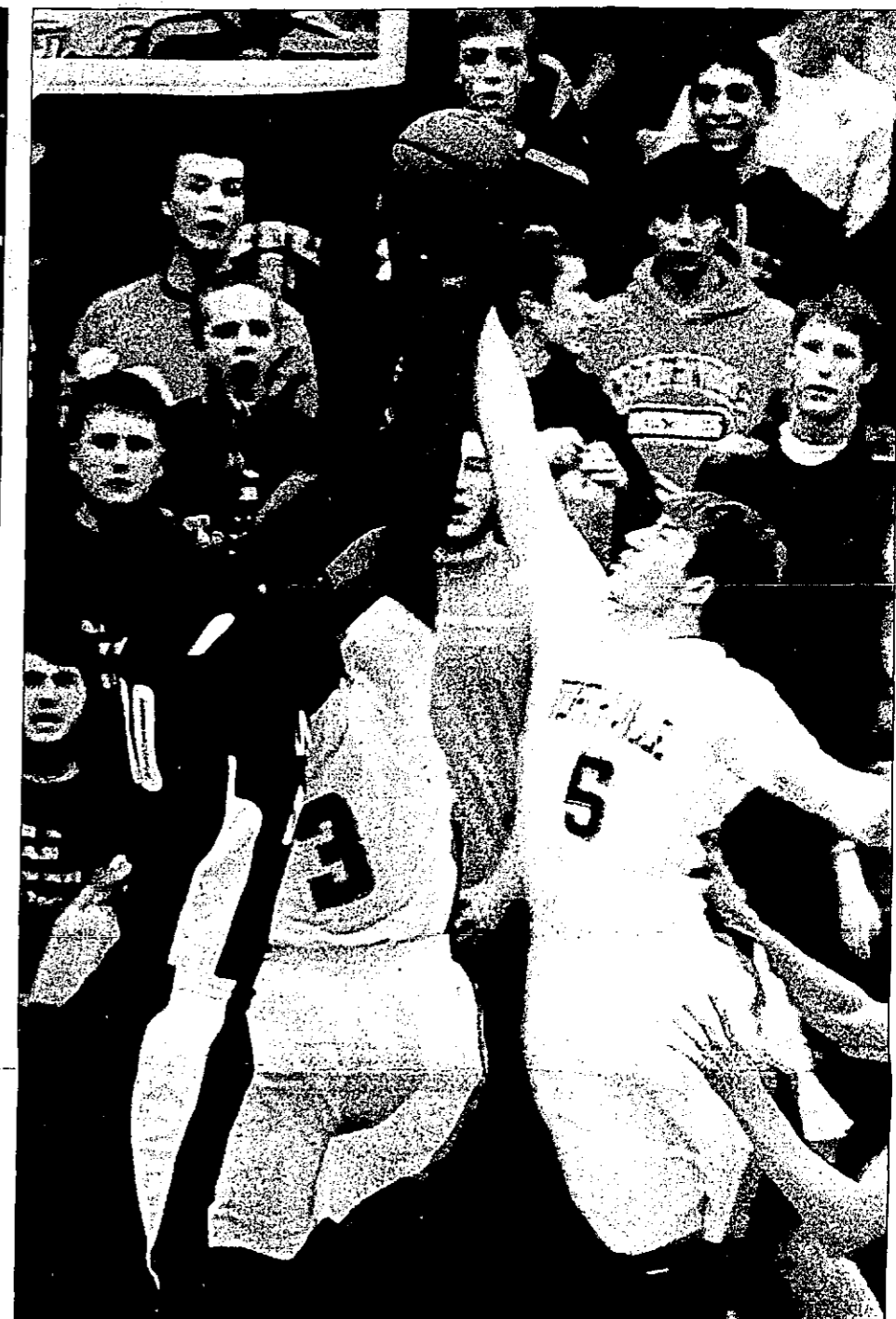
The Wildcats (8-0, 3-0 Central) were scheduled to visit Livonia Stevenson two nights ago before hosting South Lyon East tomorrow and visiting Plymouth Tuesday. All games tip off at 7 p.m.

Against Salem (5-2, 1-2 Central), the Wildcats built a 46-32 halftime lead into a 75-45 lead entering the fourth quarter before sitting back in a 79-63 win.

Four Wildcats scored in double digits, led by senior Sarmer Ozeir (23 points, 13 rebounds). Ozeir shot 9-for-13 overall and 3-for-4 from distance as Novi shot 41.7 percent overall (33-for-79).

"Samer again against Salem showed that he is just a tough cover with 23 points in a variety of ways, but we also showed as a team that

PLEASE SEE BASKETBALL, B3



Wildcat Chris Milon, left, tries to wrestle a rebound away from Mustangs Levi Perry and Andrew Baldwin.

Novi grapplers win two division duals

Squad no match for Brighton, Linden at Manning Vieau

BY CHRIS JACKETT, CORRESPONDENT

The biggest and smallest of Novi's wrestlers put their talents together to give the Wildcats two KLA Central Division victories last week. During a Jan. 12 quad meet at Plymouth Salem, Novi seniors David Sparling (215 pounds), Alan Mencer (215), Matt Aom (130) and juniors Dan DeNova (103), Jake Dobras (171) and Chris Nally (Heavyweight) all came out of the meet 2-0 in individual efforts that helped propel the 'Cats (10-3, 2-0 Central) to a 53-50 win over Salem (0-3, 0-1 Central) and 57-15 victory against South Lyon East (1-12, 0-1 Central).

DeNova got things rolling with a pinfall win to give Novi an early 6-0 lead over Salem, but the Rocks won three straight to take an 18-6 lead.

The 'Cats won eight of the next 10 matches, with five pins and a technical fall contributing to the victory column in the three-point match win.

In addition to the guys who went undefeated on the day, seniors Derrick Becker (140), Chris Caverly (145) and freshman Carston Cook (125) also picked up wins against Salem.

Energized by the close victory, the Wildcats ripped the Cougars apart with a 42-point margin of victory in their second contest of the night. South Lyon East jumped ahead 15-0 before Novi

ON TAP

Novi's wrestlers (10-3) were scheduled to face South Lyon (7-4) and Northville (9-4) last night at a Livonia Stevenson-hosted a quad meet. A pair of victories would put the Wildcats' division title hopes in their own hands heading into Wednesday's 5:30 p.m. dual contest with Livonia Stevenson. The squad will first compete 10 a.m. Saturday at the Holt Invitational.

scored 57 unanswered points to win the match.

Aom put the 'Cats in the win column with a pin before East voided the next three weight classes to drop behind 24-15. Sophomore Zach Roush (160) added a pin and Dobras won a 3-2 decision leading up to four straight pinfalls by Sparling, Mencer, Nally and DeNova.

Novi's success didn't carry over last Saturday at Brighton's Manning Vieau Memorial tournament. The team found themselves on the losing end of matches against the Bulldogs, a powerful Linden squad and Highland Park.

The Wildcats pulled things together to score victories over Pinckney and Perry.

"Novi took advantage of the team dual format to gain experience for many of the team's younger wrestlers, rotating them into the lineup throughout the day," Novi coach Dan Jig said.

Sophomore Tony Levy (112) and junior Justin Michael (171) both earned their first varsity wins, and Caverly came away with a 4-1 record on the day.

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

Plymouth and Canton edge Novi on the alley

Tiebreakers, late comebacks not enough for Wildcats

BY CHRIS JACKETT, CORRESPONDENT

In the midst of their two busiest weeks of the season, Novi's bowling teams started off their string of matches falling short when it mattered most.

The boys team (1-1-2) lost 18-12 to Plymouth Jan. 11 at Super Bowl in Canton. Novi seniors Nick Kuczajda (211 score) and Brandon Gillespie (207) led the way.

Plymouth needed only two points in the last game to win but Novi battled back, winning four singles points and the game, but fell 20 pins short in totals," Novi coach John Osborne said.

The girls team (1-6-0) suffered a similar fate in a 19-11 loss after falling behind 14-5 early. Freshman Sara Schulz (164) and junior Callie Wright (194) led the comeback attempt.

The very next day, the boys tied Canton 15-15 at Westland Bowl, but lost on the total-pin tiebreaker by 26 pins. The Wildcats had gone up 11-8 after a team-best 1,073 first game, but lost the second game by nine pins.

"Gillespie (212, 234) struck out in the second game to secure two game totals by two pins and force the tie," Osborne said. "The 28-pin two baker games totals loss was the difference."

Senior Brandon Ross (223, 233) and junior Andrew Thorwall (245, 203) also

ON TAP

With a disappointing week behind them, Novi's bowlers were scheduled to face Plymouth Salem last Tuesday and Grand Blanc 3 p.m. today at Airway Lanes in Waterford before competing Saturday and Sunday at the Oakland County Championships.

Next week, the team faces Northville Monday at Novi Aux II and Westland John Glenn Thursday at Super Bowl, with both matches starting at 3:30 p.m. The Jan. 10 Northville matchup, a carryover from a Dec. 13 snow day, was moved to Feb. 17.

had solid outings.

The girls fell behind early for the second day in a row, but battled back in a 17-13 losing effort. Wright (209) and junior Bridgett Porras (189) were Novi's top scorers.

The team had a tough time at last Saturday's Plymouth Community Schools Tournament, where only junior Shelby Limpert's second high game of 201 earned a medal for either gender's varsity squad.

Freshman Megan Engler's third high series of 426 medaled at the junior varsity level.

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

REAL ESTATE
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Julie Myers, Editor
jmyers@hometownlife.com

Upgrades can boost home's curb appeal

BY JULIE BROWN
DESK STAFF WRITER
Exterior replacement projects continue to be the most cost-effective home improvement projects...



'It always seems to narrow down to kitchens, bathrooms, windows. Window replacement's big. People don't want to deal with those old aluminum windows.'

Improvements to a home's exterior, according to information from the National Association of Realtors. A steel entry door took the top spot with an estimated 102.1 percent of cost recouped upon resale...

Both projects are relatively small, costing around \$1,000 each, on average. The report also found that replacement projects usually outperform remodel and addition projects in resale value...

The third project listed was siding replacement, followed by No. 4, minor kitchen remodeling, and No. 5, deck addition (wood). Local pros have thoughts on what projects are most useful when selling in this market.

Realtor Nancy Austin of Keller Williams Realty, Ann Arbor, serves western Wayne and south Oakland counties. She focuses on Canton, Plymouth, Northville, Novi, Livonia, Westland, Garden City, Redford, Farmington Hills and Belleville.

'It always seems to narrow down to kitchens, bathrooms, windows,' said Austin, a Canton resident. 'Window replacement's big. People don't want to deal with those old aluminum windows.'

Some of those finished basement areas are complete with kitchens. 'They're just whole habitable places on their own. They'll often choose a theme for that area.' One she recalled

had a 1950s theme with chrome, neon, and jukebox. 'It was fun,' she said. 'There's always things you can do even if you have no money to spend. There's always cleanup.' She tries to be sensitive to that when working with sellers.

'Decluttering and soap and water doesn't cost anything,' Austin said. 'Keeping spaces open, that's part of staging. Keeping spaces open, airy is also important. She says to take down heavy draperies.'

'They're heavy looking. There's a more light and airy appeal to a window that isn't loaded down with heavy material.' Updated window treatments are good, if possible, Austin said, along with light fixtures.

Nicki Wilson of Decorating Den Interiors, which serves Plymouth, Canton and other surrounding areas, also has some thoughts on curb appeal indoors and out.

'The key things would be to declutter and to neutralize it color-wise,' said Wilson, a Pittsfield Township resident who formerly lived in Canton. 'If you had a purple room you might want to change it to a beige.'

Wilson also recommends a good cleaning 'so it shines. You get used to your own dirt, I guess, so you don't notice little things other people would notice. That makes a huge difference too.'

'Cobwebs in corner or spots on faucets or burners for home sellers. If showing for the house, you can bake cookies or put a scented candle, especially if you have a pet. You want something to kind of hide that,' Wilson said of odors.

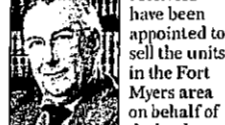
Robert M. Meisner is a lawyer and the author of Condominium Operation: Getting Started & Slaying on the Night Track, second edition. It is available for \$9.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. He also wrote Condo Living: A Survival Guide to Buying, Owning and Selling a Condominium, available for \$24.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling.

Call (248) 644-4433 or visit rmeisner@meisnerassociates.com. This column shouldn't be construed as legal advice.

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Robert Meisner

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Q: The owner of the property next to me decided to add a strip as a dirt road, which later improved with a layer of gravel. The neighbor next to me acquired some property and began using the strip for access to their tract. They are now claiming a prescriptive easement. As the owner's attorney, I am concerned that the neighbor had used the road in an open and continuous way, but their use, in our opinion, was not adverse for the entire prescriptive period of 10 years.

Do we have any argument? A: In a similar case out of Oregon, the court explained that normally use of a road over a neighbor's property is presumed to be adverse to the owner's use, but a different rule applies when the servient owners constructed the road for their own use.

In that case, then there is an inference, if not a presumption, that the neighbor's use was with permission. This meant that the neighbors could demonstrate adverse use only by showing that their use significantly interfered with the owner's use.

Robert M. Meisner is a lawyer and the author of Condominium Operation: Getting Started & Slaying on the Night Track, second edition. It is available for \$9.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. He also wrote Condo Living: A Survival Guide to Buying, Owning and Selling a Condominium, available for \$24.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling.

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