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NOVI NEWS

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NOVI NOW

Novi Road closed this weekend, next

The contractor for the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) is expected to close Novi Road adjacent to the Post Office on Novi Road south of Gen-Mar Road (midway between Grand River Ave. and 10 Mile Road) in Novi during the weekend of April 9 and 10. If construction proceeds as planned during the April 9-10 weekend, the road will then also be closed on the north side of Gen-Mar Drive during the weekend of April 16-17. The closures are needed so that sanitary sewer lines can be installed under the road. The work is part of the ongoing widening and reconstruction of Novi Road between 10 Mile and Grand River. The road is being widened to five lanes and a bridge constructed over the CSX Railroad tracks. During the closures, access will be maintained to all businesses along this section of Novi Road, though, the access will be either from the north (for businesses north of the closures) or from the south (for businesses south of the closures).

The detour route for through traffic during the closures will be 10 Mile Road to Meadowbrook Road to Grand River Ave. and back to Novi Road and vice versa.

Handbell concert

Tickets are on sale now for the Detroit Handbell Ensemble's concert this Sunday, April 10, at 4 p.m. at Meadowbrook Congregational Church in Novi. Fourteen performers will present a variety of music under the direction of Michael Burkhardt. The ensemble will perform on five plus octaves of Malmark handbells and five octaves of Malmark Chorobells. The Detroit Handbell Ensemble is an auditioned concert choir and its members are church musicians, educators, composers, engineers, and business professionals from across southeastern Michigan. An afterglow will follow the 4 p.m. concert.

Tickets are \$9 presale and \$10 at the door for adults. For students over age 10, tickets are \$4 presale and \$5 at the door. Children 10 and under are free. The concert is open to the public. Meadowbrook Church is located at 21355 Meadowbrook Road, between Eight and Nine Mile roads in Novi. For further information, call the church office at (248) 348-7757.



Novi library hosts a spring crafts project on April 5.

'Book It!' to the Novi library for a night out

Fundraiser to benefit children's collection

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Novi Public Library director Julie Parkas said it is going to take "out of the box" thinking to keep growing the collection and improving programs at the library in the future.

And the first event with that idea in mind is a fundraiser to benefit the children's section.

The event dubbed "Book It!" — that will take place from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, April 15 — is the first fundraiser the library will host to raise money.

It's a new avenue the library is going down as it faces decreasing tax revenues. The library received \$200,000 less in tax revenue last year, and expects a decrease again. Tax revenue is where 90 percent of the operating funds come from, Parkas said.

"Knowing that revenues have changed, we are trying to be more creative in finding revenue streams for the library," Parkas said. "This is a way for us to raise funds for the library and reach out to the community and get them involved."

The fundraiser is for adults over 21 years old and costs \$10 to attend. It will feature



Glass apples like these by artist Richard Ritter, seen displayed at the Novi Public Library, will be auctioned off for the library's Book It! fundraiser.

food from Carrabba's, a cash bar, live music, prizes and live and silent auctions. Some of the auction items include glass apples similar to the ones on display in the library, a condo stay at the Grand Traverse Resort and an in-

Please see LIBRARY, A4

Residents upset over pathway

City sticking to plans for Nine Mile project

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Plans for the Nine Mile Road pathway project are not going to change.

Even after a group of residents who live in the area voiced their concerns with the project, city officials are moving forward with the 10-foot wide pathway that will stretch from Meadowbrook to Haggerty roads.

Even residents addressed the Novi City Council on Monday with issues ranging from safety, maintenance, lack of communication and liability to cost and justification. They wanted the council to look at the plans again, which they already did once when deciding between an eight-foot wide pathway and 10-foot wide one, but that will not happen.

Rob Hayes, director of public services, said it was discussed again Tuesday morning with city leadership and "nothing has changed our current course."

"This pathway is the number one priority in our master plan for prioritizing and identifying sidewalk needs," he said. "There is not a denser population in the city than in that area of town, and I would be very surprised if it wasn't heavily used."

The project is being funded by a federal grant through the Michigan Department of Transportation, which is 60 percent of the estimated cost of \$243,700. The city's match is \$97,480.

The Walkable Novi Committee marked this project number one because of its future connection to the I-275 regional pathway, proximity to a dense population, public interest, connection of existing gaps and the access it will provide to other destinations in the city.

One condition of the grant is that the pathway must be 10 feet wide in accordance with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials design standards. There also must be two feet of right-of-way on either side. The width is what has most residents upset.

"This pathway is the number one priority in our master plan for prioritizing and identifying sidewalk needs. There is not a denser population in the city than in that area of town, and I would be very surprised if it wasn't heavily used."

Some residents are upset that it will be destroying too many trees and other landscaping they have in their backyards.

Hayes said the difference in elimination of trees between the 8-foot and 10-foot wide paths is "negligible." The current plans call for the removal of about 28-29 trees that are larger than 6 inches in diameter as well as about 100 saplings, shrubbery and bushes.

Also, in the majority of the cases, it's not really in their backyards but rather on city-owned property, Hayes said they have already secured easements for any work they will be doing on an individual's property.

The city also is going to use money from its tree fund to replace as many trees as it can.

Rebecca Smith, whose backyard is on Nine Mile Road, said she felt the city could have done a better job with communication and worries that the elimination of trees, which once saved her home from getting hit by a car, puts her in danger.

"This is not a sidewalk," she said, using a tape measure to show the council members how wide 14 feet looks.

Other concerns Hayes

Please see PATHWAY, A3

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Novi students measure up on MEAP

Fourth-graders tops in Oakland County in writing

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

The students in the Novi Community Schools district once again posted scores on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program that puts them near the top of the county and among the best in the state.

And while scoring high

in math, reading, science and social studies has been the norm for the students in grades three-nine, RJ Webber, assistant superintendent of academic services, was most pleased with the performance in writing.

This was the first year of a new writing exam, and while fewer than half the students in the state who took it

passed, Novi was not part of that group.

The fourth graders posted a 78 percent passing rate — good for tops in Oakland County along with Troy — and the seventh graders a 61 percent passing rate — above the county and state averages.

"We have put a lot of

Please see MEAP, A3



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Novi shows around Swedish executives

Group gets taste of local governments in Michigan

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

The city of Novi has been like a little Sweden over the last couple weeks.

It started March 24 with the city honoring longtime resident and Swedish-born hockey player Nicklas Lidstrom by renaming the street leading to Novi Ice Arena after him. And continued last week with a group of Swedish local government executives staying in Novi and touring the city as the capstone to a yearlong leadership program sponsored by Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Novi City Manager Clay Pearson helped bring the group to Novi, and was one of several city employees who showed them around the metro Detroit area.

"The benefit for them is they

get to see how different forms of government work," he said. "And for us, it got a variety of our staff involved and it's good for them to share our story."

Pearson also said the visit is consistent with the city's mission of trying to diversify.

"One you make a contact like this you always have the resource," he said.

The group arrived in Novi on Sunday and stayed at the Baromette Renaissance the entire week. They toured local municipalities, including a stop at the Farmington Hills City Council meeting last Monday, listened to a presentation by Novi Mayor David Landry and went to a Detroit Red Wings game (they lost 10-3) on Wednesday and attended the International City/County Managers Association's annual Midwest Conference at



PHOTOS BY JOHN WEBER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Swedish city managers visit the Novi City Council chambers on March 30.

the end of the week.

Landry's message to the visitors touched on local government and how it's run, as well as the future of Michigan.

"The next 20 years in Michigan you are going to see a lot of consolidation because simply it needs to happen," he said.

He also talked about the changing times in terms of marketing.

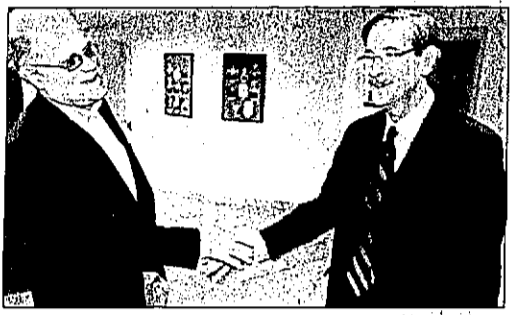
"The market for us is no longer just Michigan, it's the world," he said. "We have to think globally."

Ann-Charlotte Jaernstrom, city manager of Vaalunda,

Sweden, was visiting Michigan for the first time and said everyone was "very friendly" and interested to talk to them.

She also said she has learned a great deal from the trip, and was intrigued by how everyone works together.

"We need to figure out how to get people to contribute to their society," she said. "I will take back from this trip that people were proud of what they do and where they live, and you can better do something together."



Novi Mayor David Landry, right, greets visitor Per Ola Gunnarsson to city council chambers during a March 30 visit by Swedish officials.

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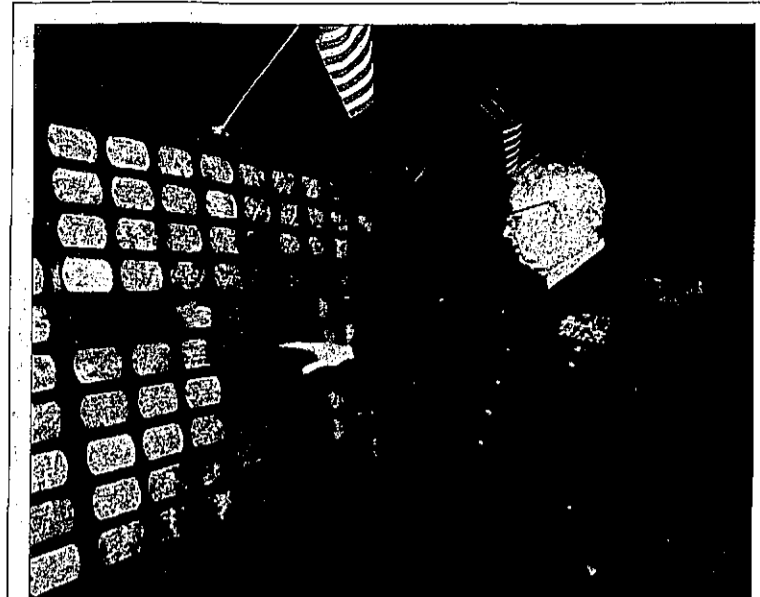
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PHOTOS BY JOHN WEBER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Honoring those who serve

U.S. Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Denny Gillem (above) looks at a memorial wall for soldiers at the March 26 Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund dinner at Novi's Suburban Collection Showcase. The evening was to benefit the fund that looks after veterans and their families and features a number of items donated for silent auction.



PHOTOS BY JOHN WEBER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MEAP

FROM PAGE A1

emphasis on writing over the last few years and our teachers took it very seriously," he said. "Consequently it shows with the results of our students."

"If writing is sound, everything else follows."

The MEAP test was administered in October, about a month after school starts so it is mainly an indication of the prior year and the programs then, Webber said.

The district has seen very little changes in its scores over the last five years. The most noticeable jump since 2006 was in sixth grade math as it improved from 92.8 percent to 97.2 percent. The biggest drop was in seventh grade reading from 95 percent in 2006 to 90.7 percent this year.

All five elementary schools, Novi Meadows and Novi Middle School posted math and reading scores above 90 percent. Novi Woods had 100 percent scores in third and fourth grade math, 99 percent in third grade reading and 95.1 percent in fourth grade reading.

"Our scores have been consistently high the last few years and our goal is to keep increasing them," said Principal Pam Quilquitt. "All the credit goes to our staff and teachers because they work very hard to

Grade	Subject	Novi	State	County
Grade 3	Math	100%	84%	84%
	Reading	96%	84%	84%
Grade 4	Math	99%	80%	80%
	Reading	95%	80%	80%
Grade 5	Math	95%	80%	80%
	Reading	95%	80%	80%
Grade 6	Math	95%	80%	80%
	Reading	95%	80%	80%
Grade 7	Math	95%	80%	80%
	Reading	95%	80%	80%
Grade 8	Math	95%	80%	80%
	Reading	95%	80%	80%

keep our scores that way."

Also scoring 100 percent in math were third graders at Deerfield and Village Oaks. This was the fifth consecutive year Deerfield third graders scored 100 percent.

David Ascher, principal at Novi Meadows, said he is pleased with the results but isn't satisfied.

"It's an exciting professional challenge," he said. "We have less resources financially from the state and more students who are struggling for a lot of reasons. As the bar continues to be raised we want all our students to be able to meet it."

"We push and challenge ourselves and want the students to do the same."

Compared to the 44 other districts and academies in Oakland County, third graders were tops in math and fourth in reading; fourth graders were third in reading, first in writing and second in math; fifth graders were sixth in reading, sixth in science and fourth in math; and sixth graders were fifth in reading, ninth in social studies and first in math.

The MEAP is only one of the ways the district assesses its students, Webber said, and the results of all of them help shape future ideas.

Staying content isn't one of them.

"Even if you are No. 1, people are always wondering what you are doing to get better," he said.

PATHWAY

FROM PAGE A1

addressed were that the maintenance of the sidewalk is the city's responsibility, and unless the property owner directly causes an issue on the pathway, they are not liable for accidents.

In terms of traffic controls,

the Nine Mile and Haggerty intersection currently has pedestrian push button controls and flashers. And this project would provide push buttons and flashers for the west leg to allow pedestrians to safely cross from the new pathway on the north to the south side of Nine Mile, Hayes said.

Snow removal is the responsibility of the homeowner, but that is an ordinance the city council members said they are going to review.

The design for the project is nearing completion and will be ready for construction this fall once the final easement is acquired from Pavilion Apartments. The other easements have already been obtained.

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LIBRARY FROM PAGE A1

ing months due to a lack of funding. More than 100 tickets have been sold for the fundraiser...

Novi library ready to celebrate

Author of history on Tigers highlights National Library Week

BY NATHAN MUELLER STAFF WRITER

The Novi Public Library will join libraries across America in celebrating National Library Week starting April 10.

And the party in Novi carries a little more meaning as this is the first time it is being held in the new facility.

Programs for the week will cater to everyone from preschoolers to seniors. And even baseball fans can get in on the fun by attending author Tom Stanton's 'A Journey Through Detroit Tigers History' program.

"It's a whole week to view the library, get an understanding of what it has to offer and give ourselves a pat on the back too," said Laura Liddicott, communication specialist for the library.

One area the library and residents can give themselves pats on the back for is the new library is attracting and serving more users than ever before.

The library was averaging about 800 patrons a day in the old facility, and since opening the new building in June 2010, it has been averaging 1,230 per day -- an increase of more than 50 percent.

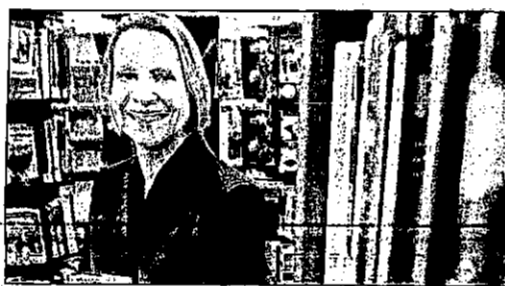
This year's theme for National Library Week in Novi is "Create Your Own Story." Everyone who visits the library is encouraged to do that by filling out a book template with a story, poem, artwork or anything else that touches on their favorite library memory.

"The hope is we can decorate the whole library in these templates," Liddicott said. Some of the programs dur-



Julianna Hanna, 3, works on a crafts project at the Novi Public Library on April 5.

ing the week include Snack Tales, e-mail instruction for seniors, Readers' Theater, Beginning Builders, Spring Story Time and more.



Julie Farkas, Novi Public Library Director.

Stanton's visit is the main program, and the award-winning author will talk about his four baseball books, including 'The Final Season,' a Tiger Stadium memoir.

The Michigan resident will be selling books and signing them. Registration is requested for the event.

For more information about the library and programs taking place, visit www.novilibrary.org.

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Gatt's gaffe

E-mail about fundraiser inaccurately appeared to come from Novi chamber

BY NATHAN MUELLER STAFF WRITER

An e-mail that appeared to be sent by the Novi Chamber of Commerce to its members about a fundraiser for mayoral candidate Bob Gatt was a "mistake."

That is what Gatt is saying after the e-mail with the subject line "Bob Gatt for Novi Mayor" hit people's e-mail boxes Thursday afternoon. The sender portion of the e-mail indicated it was sent from the chamber, but also included Gatt's e-mail address, bob@gobgatt.com.



Gatt

Novi Chamber of Commerce but by a third party.

"The chamber has had a long standing policy of not endorsing political candidates or promoting political fundraisers," Daly wrote. "We have taken action to prevent this problem from occurring in the future."

The problem, Gatt said, was an error made by a company he hired to market his upcoming fundraiser. Gatt would not name the company and said he is no longer using them.

"We were working with dozens of different lists and

the chamber list was part of it," he said. "The mistake was not removing that sentence saying it was from the chamber."

Gatt said the moment he found out that the e-mail appeared to be coming from the chamber and not him, he "stopped it immediately" and called Daly to apologize.

"This was no plot or ploy to do anything wrong," he said.

When reached by phone on Monday, Daly did not want to discuss the issue further. "I'd rather not elaborate," she said.

Gatt, currently the mayor pro tem, is running for mayor against council member Justin Fischer.

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Japanese relief

On March 19, three Ringu Kai Japanese School of Detroit locations - including Novi Meadows - raised money and collected donations for disaster tsunami/earthquake relief in Japan.

'Guys and Dolls' hits the stage April 11

Four students, along with a full cast, crew, and pit, have been kept busy with illegal gambling, drunken behavior and a love story that goes the 1950s and now.

Novi Creative Arts Collaborative presents "Guys and Dolls" in the high school's Furst Auditorium at 7 p.m. April 14-16. Tickets are available beginning April 11 at the Novi High School Attendance Office (7 a.m.-3 p.m.) or at the door.

The cost is \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors 65 and over and children under 12.

"This year the musical has a lot of comedy that is surprisingly funny for being sort of old. It has a lot to offer - romance, action, drama and humor," said senior Joey Leppik who plays Sky Masterson, the smooth-talking dice gambler who finds himself in love with the proper mission leader.

"Guys and Dolls" is set in 1950s New York City with the guys wearing bright pin-

striped suits and the girls wearing heels and dresses. Wardrobe isn't the only thing demonstrating the differences between the 1950s and now.

"I definitely would have wanted to live back then," said senior Annisa McElheny who plays Sarah Brown, the leader of the Save a Soul Mission who devotes her time to saving sinners.

Being a lead means more memorizing and rehearsals to attend compared to past musicals McElheny has participated in. She had a small role in "Beauty and the Beast" and a supporting one in "FAME" the musical "the past couple of years."

Throughout the show, Sarah becomes involved with Sky. Sky is also a lead character, but that's nothing new to Leppik, who has participated in all four high school musicals. During his sophomore year, Leppik took the lead playing the Beast in "Beauty and the Beast," so he said he trusts his experience and doesn't get stage fright.

Nathan Detroit, played by

senior Dan Inglesse, is another gambler in the show. Inglesse has less musical experience at the high school than his co-stars, with "Guys and Dolls" being his first musical at Novi High.

"I've always liked the theater, so I finally tried out and it's been a blast," Inglesse said. Senior Alison Anolick said some of her favorite parts of rehearsal are when she's working with Inglesse.

Anolick performed with McElheny and Leppik in "Beauty and the Beast." This year, Anolick is playing the fun and outgoing Adelaide, Nathan's longtime fiancée.

While the show's drama and humor is entertaining to an audience, the cast enjoys performing the show as well. "Incredible; it's really incredible to be up there presenting your character. I'd recommend it to anyone who's willing to put themselves out there," McElheny said.

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Novi students share their love for reading

March is Reading Month celebration ends at Detroit elementary school

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

Novi High School senior Derek Kim hated reading when he was younger.

But as the current senior class president got older, he found books that interested him ... and he got hooked.

Now he is using his own personal experiences to influence others, as Kim and his fellow classmates from the high school shared their message on March 25 with students at Logan Elementary in Detroit.

"When I started to read things I cared about, it helped me grow not just as a student but as a person as well," he said. "I hope what they take from our visit is a love for reading."

Kim and students from Novi Meadows, Novi Middle School and the high school visited Logan as part of a March is Reading Month program organized by the Northville-based nonprofit organization Bridgepointe.

The organization works with six other Detroit schools for various programs throughout the year, including a year-end Christmas party.

The students from Novi played games, created crafts and ate ice cream with the students from Logan. The high school students delivered books to each classroom and also read to the students.

Kim, who said he has "always had a heart for the city of Detroit" and has done mission work in the city, said the visit makes him realize how fortunate he and his classmates are and that they need to always look to help others.

"Living in a community like Novi we are so blessed and get used to living in our bubble," he said. "It's impor-



Novi student Andrew Jamison reads to a group of students at Logan Elementary in Detroit last week as part of March is Reading Month.

tant to maintain that broad viewpoint."

Rose Maylen, an eighth grader at the middle school, made her fourth trip to a Detroit elementary with Bridgepointe and was glad to be able to make a difference in the student's lives.

"I think they realized there are a lot of good people in the world and they were grateful for us being there," she said. "It's really important for us to do this because we have such great things in Novi we should give back."

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



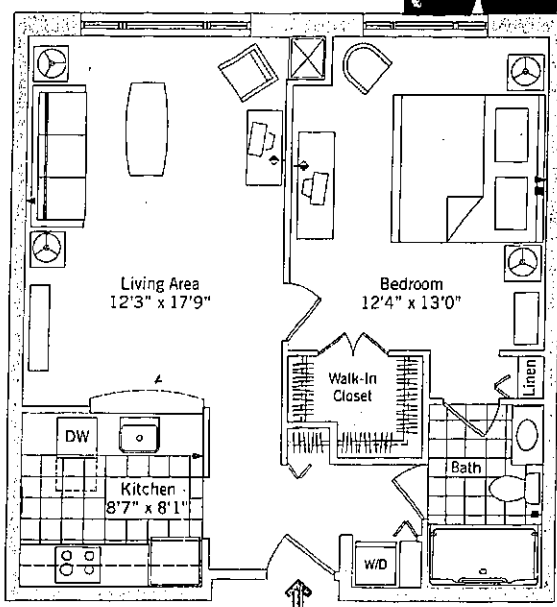
Students from Novi schools and Logan Elementary in Detroit play a game during the Novi students' visit to the school as part of March is Reading Month.

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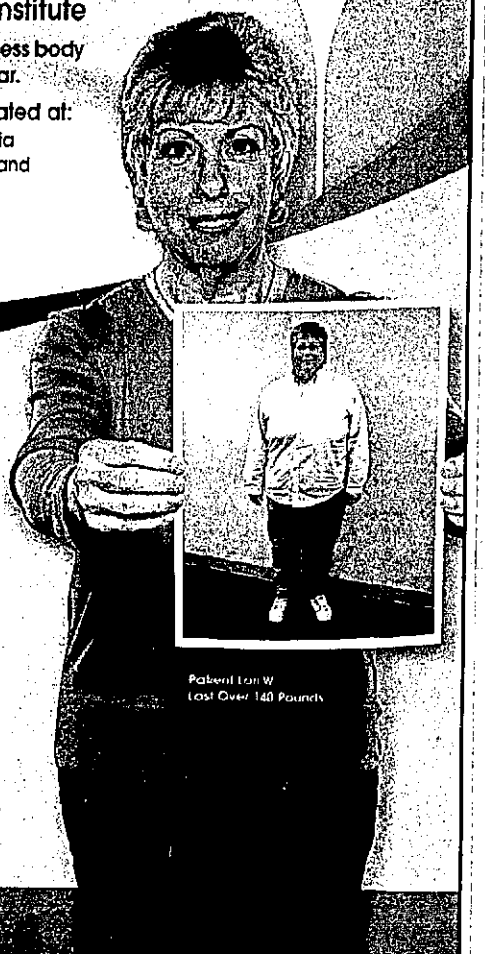
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Two Novi principals to change schools

Quitquit moves to Orchard Hills, Ascher to Novi Woods

BY NATHAN MUELLER
STAFF WRITER

A pair of familiar faces in the Novi Community School District will be in new buildings next school year.

Novi Woods Principal Pam Quitquit and Novi Meadows Principal David Ascher are moving schools, with Quitquit heading to Orchard Hills to replace the retiring Paul LaPlae and Ascher taking Quitquit's spot at Novi Woods.

Ascher, who has been with the district since 1995 and worked in Meadows for all but one year, said it was not an easy decision to make but saw it as an exciting opportunity for change.

"This is where I have spent all of my time," he said. "The

relationships I have formed here are special to me, but I also got to say hello to some new relationships as well.

"Another good thing is I will be able to maintain my relationship at Meadows because every student goes through there.

Ascher has been the principal in the fifth grade house at Meadows for the last four years, and also is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher who served as a result of Stephanie Schriener becoming the principal at Novi Middle School.

He will be replacing Quitquit who has been the principal at Novi Woods the last 11 years, and served as an elementary school principal for 26 of her 32 years in education.

Novi Woods was ranked in the top 1 percent of high

achieving schools in Michigan during the 2009-2010 school year.

Quitquit said she put a lot of thought into the decision and felt it was a good opportunity for her to head to Orchard Hills.

"It's a new adventure for me and one I am excited about," she said.

Both principals will start in their new buildings on July 1. Supt. Pete Dion said they are in the process of filling the vacancies at Meadows and Deerfield Elementary, as well as the assistant principal position at Novi High School that opened as a result of Stephanie Schriener becoming the principal at Novi Middle School.

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Tech Showcase

Deerfield Elementary fourth graders presented at the conference 'Student Technology Showcase' at Coburn. The showcase is part of the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) Conference. Over 4000 teachers, media specialists and administrators attended the conference on March 17. Deerfield Elementary presented 'Discovering the World of Economics with Integrated Technology' through its Mini-Society. It's a third and fourth grade economic unit in which practical real-world connections are made regarding supply, demand, opportunity costs, marketing, and other economics concepts. As media specialist, Janis Canady, facilitates a multi-media project in which students create and video tape commercials for their Mini-Society businesses. Throughout this process, 21st century skills of problem solving, integration of writing and social studies, communication skills, and technology are utilized in student learning. Shown (l to r) are Kate Wiecek, Lexi Whalen, Media Specialist Janis Canady, Nitin Kinra and Ryland Bennett.

SCHOOL BRIEFS

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. 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.

The SANP Donations Committee is seeking raffle prize 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.



PHOTOS BY JOHN HEDDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Reading parade

Village Oaks Elementary School teacher Kathy Siarta (above) holds a "Skippyjon Jones" book character doll as she and her classroom parade outside the school on March 31 to celebrate the end of "March is Reading Month."



Village Oaks Elementary student Lilly Kaiser hoists up one of her favorite books during her school's reading parade on March 31.



Village Oaks 1st grade student Nathan Chabot is one of many students who dressed up as a character or scene from a favorite book during the parade.



Village Oaks students march to show their support for reading on March 31.



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- IWC
- Jaeger
- LeCoultre
- Longines
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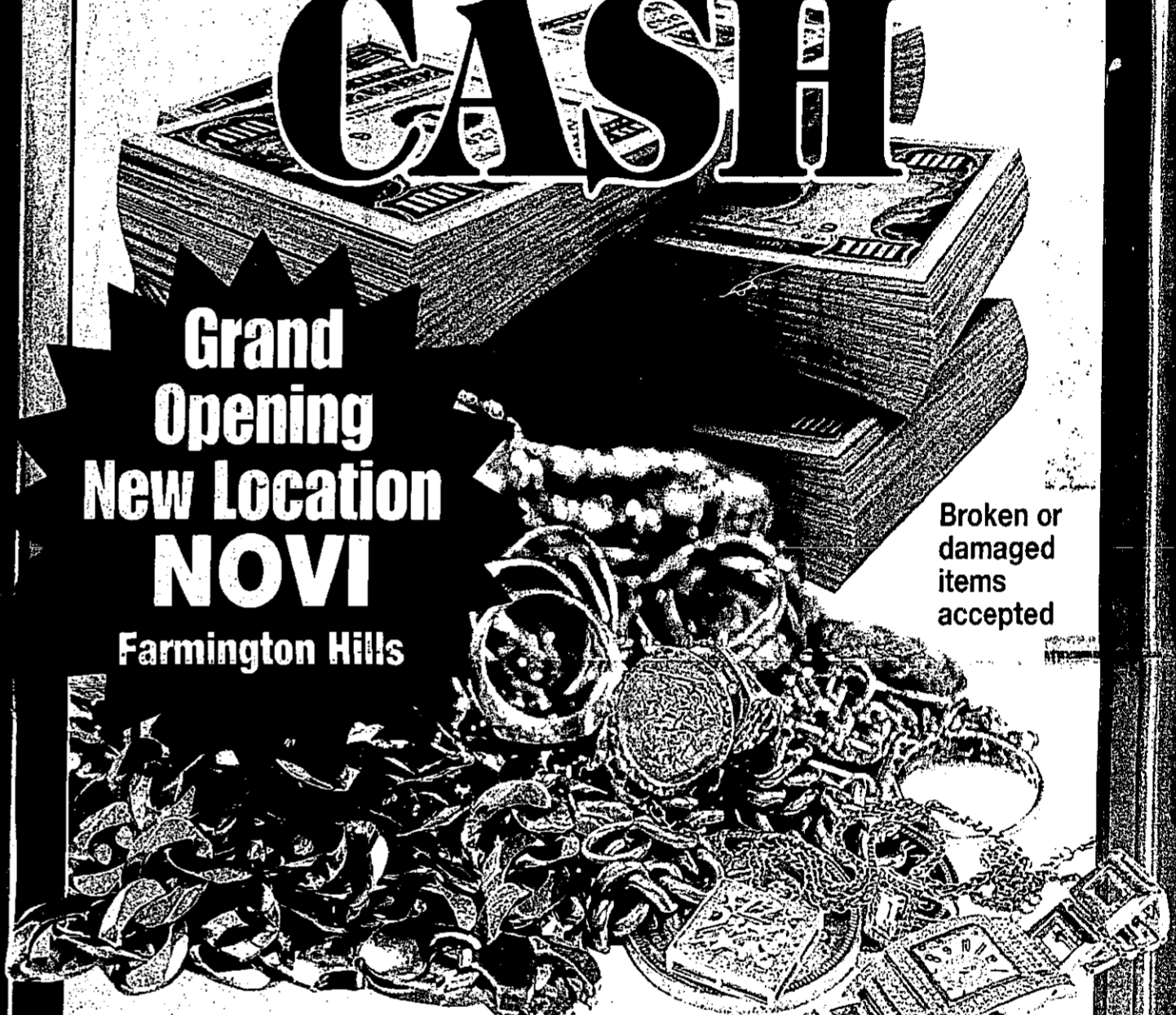
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Go Green!

The Novi Cats sixth grade green team won the 2011 Brighton Invitational Boys Basketball Tournament on March 19...

NOVI SPORTS BRIEFS

Novi Youth Baseball registration
The Novi Youth Baseball League has opened up online registration through April 15 at www.noviyouthbaseball.org...

Soccer drive
There will be a soccer equipment drive from 7 a.m.-3 p.m. on both Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8...

Youth archery shoot
Detroit Archers is once again hosting their annual Youth Shoot. This is an indoor target event for youth archers up to age 16...

TENNIS
The kids like their partners and chemistry is very important, Hanson said. Sopomore Caitlin O'Brien and junior Emily Sheeran battled through a tough first set...

Confusion caused by regulation changes in Little League bats
The upcoming youth baseball season holds the promise of both excitement and confusion. Parents headed out to buy their Little League new bat will have new rules to follow...

Novi High track team hurdlers: Lance Lilla, Derek Cingel, Derek Kim, and Davanta Greer.

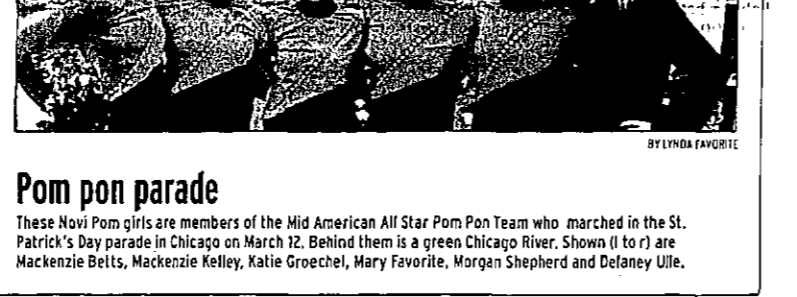
HURDLERS
was hard to deal with, but I got through it. The four Wildcats attribute their success as a group to both their experience and familiarity with one another...

RECORD-SETTING PACE
All four hurdlers will look to have success in the 110-meter hurdles this spring, and all but Kim will also compete in the 300-meter hurdles...

Catholic Central starts season off undefeated
Baseball team has wins over three foes

BY SAM EGGLESTON
CORRESPONDENT
If a coach could pick any way to start their season, it would be with victories against league opponents. Thankfully for coach Bill Lis, that's exactly how the Detroit Catholic Central baseball team has hammered out the opening weeks of their season...

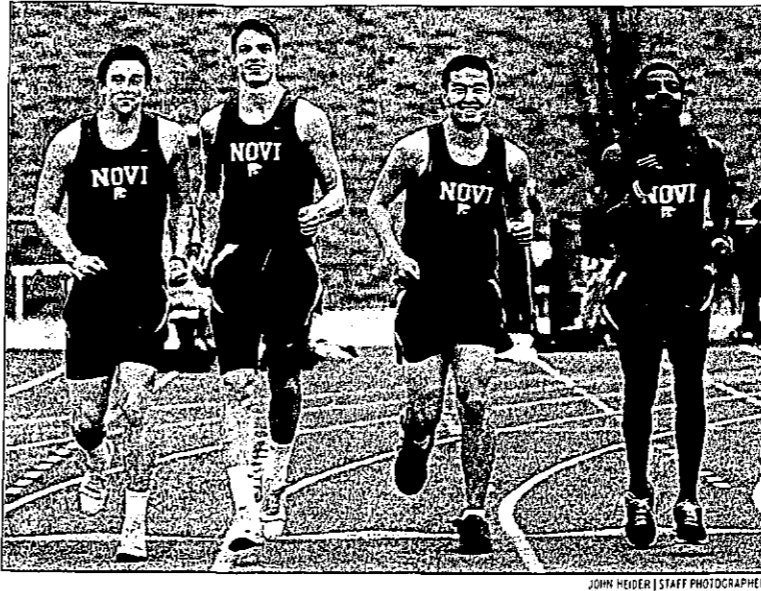
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Pom pon parade

These Novi Pom girls are members of the Mid American All Star Pom Pom Team who marched in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Chicago on March 12...

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Novi High track team hurdlers: Lance Lilla, Derek Cingel, Derek Kim, and Davanta Greer.

HURDLERS
was hard to deal with, but I got through it. The four Wildcats attribute their success as a group to both their experience and familiarity with one another... RECORD-SETTING PACE
All four hurdlers will look to have success in the 110-meter hurdles this spring...

McMAHAN
spot on the basketball squad, helping the team win the division with a 17-5 record. She averaged 9.8 points, three assists, 2.5 steals and three rebounds per game. Not only led team in scoring, assists, steals and free throws attempted, but, as all true point guards and great players, she made everyone around her better...

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Owning a home usually a boon come tax time

BY JULIE BROWN
DEPT. STAFF WRITER

The possibility of eliminating the mortgage interest deduction from Americans' tax returns has caused a stir in real estate circles.

Kathy Coon, broker/owner of Real Living Great Lakes Real Estate with offices in Rochester Hills, Clarkston and West Bloomfield, is president of the Metropolitan Consolidated Association of Realtors, which is merging with the Western Wayne Oakland County Association of Realtors. She'll be president of the new merged group, the name of which will soon be announced.

She's been in real estate since 1990 and sees tax benefits to owning a home.

"There's a significant benefit at the federal level. There is a lot you can deduct in terms of your closing costs," she said. "And there are tax benefits at the state level too."

Mortgage interest deduction is important. "You're building equity," she said. "History has shown over the last 100 years there's a benefit in home ownership."

The last few years have been difficult, she acknowledged, "and challenging. It's an interesting market here in Michigan."

She's seen a bottoming out of prices in the past several months. "Listings are down. We're seeing a lot of buyers in the market." Her office and other agents she knows are seeing multiple offers on properties in good shape, well-priced.

"Then we're going to start seeing an upswing in the value of these properties."

"It would be a terrible thing, I think, if the government removed the benefit," Coon said of the mortgage interest deduction. "Our industry certainly fights to keep that deduction in place."

"It's for the consumers' best interest. They keep chipping away at the consumer. They're the ones who are ultimately hurt," she said. "Coon doesn't see taxes as a big factor for new buyers."

"I think first-time buyers are just so



excited about home ownership," Taxes are less important, she said, but a side benefit.

Offering a different perspective is Dan Smith, a Northville resident and vice president/mortgage banking for First Place Bank of Livonia. "So many people buy houses for all the wrong reasons," said Smith, who believes you should buy to put a roof over your head.

Smith said it's always a mistake to take on a lot of debt. "Somehow people perceive it as more affordable because of the deduction, and it is," said Smith, who favors capping property tax and other deductions.

In the past, he's seen some people run up credit card balances and put them on a home equity loan. "They're giving it all away. You've got to live somewhere. They'd be living in the street."

"I don't think it should be even in the

home can be a welcome relief."

A number of tax deductions and credits are still available for homeowners; these include deductions — with specific limits — for mortgage interest and capital gains on home sales, and credits for certain energy-efficient home improvements. Even with these benefits, homeowners pay 80-90 percent of all U.S. federal income taxes.

"It's been suggested that many of today's tax incentives for home ownership primarily benefit wealthy individuals, but that's simply not true," said Phipps. "As today's public debate continues about what home ownership means for families, communities, and the nation's economy, there's no question that for many, owning a home is still the best way to begin building wealth."

Ninety-one percent of homeowners who claim the mortgage interest deduction earn less than \$200,000 a year, and the ability to deduct the interest paid on a mortgage can mean significant savings at tax time. For example, a family who bought a home in 2010 with a \$200,000, 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage, assuming an interest rate of 4.5 percent, could save nearly \$3,500 in federal taxes when they file this year, according to the NAR.

"Realtors see the very real positive impact of home ownership every day with our clients," said Phipps. "Recent proposals to reduce or eliminate the mortgage interest deduction and remove government support of the housing finance market could have disastrous consequences for the economy, not to mention making it harder or nearly impossible for millions of families to own their own homes."

We believe America must continue to invest in home ownership, for the future of our families and our nation."

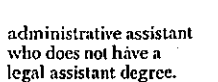
For homeowner tax season tips, visit www.HouseLogic.com. HouseLogic is a free source of information from NAR that helps homeowners maintain and enhance the value of their homes and engage in issues that affect their local communities.

The NAR website contributed to this report.

'Specialist' may not be all that claims say

Q: I have seen on the statements from an attorney that a so-called "collection specialist" is handling our matters. I have inquired as to what a collection specialist is and got a response that is somewhat vague. Do you have any idea what a collection specialist is?

A: Frankly, I doubt if the collection specialist is an attorney or, for that matter, a certified legal assistant. It is probably someone who is assisting administratively in the collection of assessments. That doesn't make that person a "specialist" in the sense of obtaining a degree or reaching a certain plateau of expertise in that particular area. It is probably a euphemism for an



Robert Meisner

administrative assistant who does not have a legal assistant degree. You are best advised to request a full explanation as to what is meant by a "collection specialist" from your attorney and absent receiving same, find an attorney that utilizes legal assistants and attorneys to collect assessments.

Q: I live in a condominium where they have halted to clean my sidewalk and/or my driveway on two separate occasions. I have complained to the management company but they refuse to respond in a timely fashion. I am thinking about finding them for having me hire a snow removal contractor to take away the snow from my driveway and walk. Do you think that is a good idea?

A: Probably not, your condominium documents, as do most, do not allow a co-owner to deduct from his or her assessment obligation the cost of work which they had to undertake which allegedly is the responsibility of the association. What will probably happen is that the Association will consider your assessment to be delinquent and seek collection activities. You in turn have a right to sue for mismanagement, but you do not have a right to withhold assessments because of mismanagement or deprivation of services. Indeed, this writer would think that section of the Michigan Condominium Act 25 years ago. You are best advised to consult with an attorney to write the association and the management company a letter indicating that you will seek recourse against them for all damages incurred by you because of their failure collectively and individually to properly maintain the condominium in accordance with the condominium documents.

Robert M. Meisner is a lawyer and the author of Condominium Operation Getting Started & Slaying on the Right Track, second edition. It is available for \$99.95 plus \$10 shipping and handling. He also wrote Condo Living: A Survival Guide to Buying, Owning and Selling a Condominium, available for \$24.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling. Call (248) 644-4433 or visit meisnerassociates.com. This column shouldn't be construed as legal advice.

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Real Estate Briefs

Registration fees are \$69 for PMC members, \$79 for AAM or Building Industry Association members and \$89 for guests. For registration information, call (248) 862-1002 or register online at www.builders.org/events.php.

Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan (BIA) NABHR Professional Remodelers Council will hold a three-part seminar series called "Your Master Planned Building" on April 19, June 15 and Oct. 19.

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS: 4 School, 6 Sahara, 12 Crestfallen, 15 Dorian, 16 Current, 17 Genesis, 20 In your laces, 21 Director, 22 Asby, 23 Side line, 27 Externally, 28 Nurse's helper, 30 East end, 31 Composer, 32 Rocky's, 36 Author, 41 Foe, 43 Turn of, 44 Stryker, 45 Stryker, 46 Stryker, 47 Stryker, 48 Stryker, 49 Stryker, 50 Stryker, 51 Stryker, 52 Stryker, 53 Stryker, 54 Stryker, 55 Stryker, 56 Stryker, 57 Stryker, 58 Stryker, 59 Stryker, 60 Stryker.

DOWN: 1 Yacht, 2 Yacht, 3 Yacht, 4 Yacht, 5 Yacht, 6 Yacht, 7 Yacht, 8 Yacht, 9 Yacht, 10 Yacht, 11 Yacht, 12 Yacht, 13 Yacht, 14 Yacht, 15 Yacht, 16 Yacht, 17 Yacht, 18 Yacht, 19 Yacht, 20 Yacht, 21 Yacht, 22 Yacht, 23 Yacht, 24 Yacht, 25 Yacht, 26 Yacht, 27 Yacht, 28 Yacht, 29 Yacht, 30 Yacht, 31 Yacht, 32 Yacht, 33 Yacht, 34 Yacht, 35 Yacht, 36 Yacht, 37 Yacht, 38 Yacht, 39 Yacht, 40 Yacht, 41 Yacht, 42 Yacht, 43 Yacht, 44 Yacht, 45 Yacht, 46 Yacht, 47 Yacht, 48 Yacht, 49 Yacht, 50 Yacht, 51 Yacht, 52 Yacht, 53 Yacht, 54 Yacht, 55 Yacht, 56 Yacht, 57 Yacht, 58 Yacht, 59 Yacht, 60 Yacht.

Answer to Last Week's Puzzle

Answers to last week's crossword puzzle. 1. Yacht, 2. Yacht, 3. Yacht, 4. Yacht, 5. Yacht, 6. Yacht, 7. Yacht, 8. Yacht, 9. Yacht, 10. Yacht, 11. Yacht, 12. Yacht, 13. Yacht, 14. Yacht, 15. Yacht, 16. Yacht, 17. Yacht, 18. Yacht, 19. Yacht, 20. Yacht, 21. Yacht, 22. Yacht, 23. Yacht, 24. Yacht, 25. Yacht, 26. Yacht, 27. Yacht, 28. Yacht, 29. Yacht, 30. Yacht, 31. Yacht, 32. Yacht, 33. Yacht, 34. Yacht, 35. Yacht, 36. Yacht, 37. Yacht, 38. Yacht, 39. Yacht, 40. Yacht, 41. Yacht, 42. Yacht, 43. Yacht, 44. Yacht, 45. Yacht, 46. Yacht, 47. Yacht, 48. Yacht, 49. Yacht, 50. Yacht, 51. Yacht, 52. Yacht, 53. Yacht, 54. Yacht, 55. Yacht, 56. Yacht, 57. Yacht, 58. Yacht, 59. Yacht, 60. Yacht.

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