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QUIZ: IS YOUR COVER LETTER LIKE A BAD HANDSHAKE?

ALL-AREA BASKETBALL
SPORTS, B2

Green Gala
The Novi Educational Foundation (NEF) is hosting the 7th Annual Green Gala fundraising event at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 23 at the Lyon Oaks County Park on Pontiac Trail in Wixom.

The annual extravaganza has grown in attendance over the years. Approximately 300 people come and enjoy casino games, silent auctions and raffles, dancing, food and drinks. Participants include parents, sponsors, community members, businesses, Novi Board of Education trustees, Novi City Council members, NEF Board members, Novi education staff, Novi alumni and friends of Novi schools.

Tickets (\$90) may be purchased at all Novi public school buildings or on NEF website. www.novieducational-foundation.org

NOVI NEWS

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Off the road again?

Trio of property owners against Novi Road pathway

Eminent domain to be used if settlement not reached

By **Lonnie Huhman**
Staff Writer

The city has begun obtaining easements for properties along Novi Road to complete a path-

way, but not all property owners affected are in favor of the project.

"I'm not sure the path is necessary since there is a sidewalk across the street," said prop-

erty owner Richard Herbel. "But we couldn't fight them or stop it, so we are hoping to reach a settlement."

Novi's Engineering Division reports that a total of four permanent easements and four temporary easements have been identified along the west side of

Novi Road between Nine Mile and 10 Mile to facilitate future construction and maintenance of the pathway.

There are four property owners involved with the easements.

Please see **PATHWAY, A12**



NCAA hoop contest

We are giving away tickets to the men's NCAA basketball tournament at The Palace of Auburn Hills. The tournament is at the Palace on Thursday, March 21 and Saturday, March 23 and we have tickets for both days. To enter, visit our website, HometownLife.com, and click on the Don't Miss module on the right-hand side. This is a Facebook contest so you can share the contest link with a Facebook friend and get an extra five chances to win if they also enter the contest. The drawing is Monday, March 18, and you can enter once every day. Good luck!

Mobile Office

The full-service Secretary of State Mobile Office is setting up shop at the Spring Boating Expo March 14-17 at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi during regular hours:

- Thursday and Friday, March 14-15 - 2-9 p.m.
- Saturday, March 16 - 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Sunday, March 17 - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Bunny hug



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Easton Marsack, 2, gets a friendly greeting from the Easter Bunny at Novi's Twelve Oaks Mall on March 8 as his mom, Katie, looks on. The Easter Bunny will be greeting kids until March 30 in the lower level of the mall.

Redevelopment Ready Community

Novi one of just 8 selected for state program

By **Cal Stone**
Staff Writer

There may not be a lot of areas in Novi that need redeveloping, but the city is getting in a better position to get those properties back in use, thanks to the state's Redevelopment Ready Communities program.

Novi was one of just eight municipalities — and the only city in Oakland County — to pass the first round and earn participation in the program.

And Novi's economic director is elated his city is included.

"To me, it's exciting," said Ara Topouzian. "Overall, this is a pretty good program. They've got a dedicated team in place that's been working on fine tuning and putting this together."

RRC is a certification program promoting effective redevelopment strategies through a set of best practices. The program mea-

sures and then certifies communities that integrate transparency, predictability and efficiency into their daily development practices.

"This is something new," said Ara Topouzian, Novi's economic development director. "It really centers on the redevelopment process."

He said Novi is only about two-thirds built out and still has land to develop.

"As young community, it's good to take a look at this now," he said.

Best practices
The RRC certification is a formal recognition that a community has a vision for the future and the

Please see **READY, A8**

Novi residents generally happy about housing options

By **Lonnie Huhman**
Staff Writer

PART ONE

When Novi residents were asked about housing affordability and options in their community, the majority rated both as excellent and good.

In last year's Citizen Survey, 388 completed surveys were turned into the City of Novi and as part of this the area of housing was examined. This survey is done every two years. For 2012, 70 percent of

respondents said there was an excellent or good availability of affordable, quality housing and 83 percent said the housing options were good as well.

Both are up from 2010 when affordability received a 69 percent approval rating and options had 75 percent rated it as good.

After looking at the numbers, Novi's Community Development

Director Charles Boulard said the city remains upbeat about the current housing situation in Novi and are looking to improve upon it. His takeaway from the survey is, "vigilant optimism."

"Our residents are justifiably proud of their community," Boulard said. "The future is an open book and expectations remain high. I see the results of the survey as very positive, but there is always room for improvement."

According to the survey, 55 percent of respondents said they live in a one-family house that is detached; 37 percent said they live in a building with two or more apartments/con-

dominiums.

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents said they own their home while 33 percent said they rent. The monthly housing cost (which



includes things like rent, mortgage payment, property tax, insurance and homeowner fees) generally ranged from

Please see **HOUSING, A8**

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UPDATES FROM YOUR CITY

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services recognized

It's no secret the Novi is proud of its parks and recreation offerings. This commitment was recently honored by the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) with an Innovative Program Award and a Novi Parks Leader, Scott Pratt, superintendent of Recreation, named the Recreation Leadership Award winner.

The award is presented annually to a MRPA member who has made beneficial contributions and exhibited outstanding leadership in the area of recreation programming for a minimum of 10 years.

Pratt, who joined the City of Novi in January 2012, has diverse recreation experience. He began his career in Marshall, Mich., where he served eight years before spending 18 months as the adult athletic supervisor in the South Pacific's Marshall Islands. Prior to working in Novi, he was employed by Oak Park Recreation. During his tenure in Oak Park, as Recreation and Aquatics coordinator and deputy director of Recreation, he implemented pre-school programs, expanded swimming programs, improved municipal pool operations, enhanced the program brochure, and streamlined facility rentals.

Since arriving in Novi, Pratt has expanded sports and fitness programs, initiated adaptive recreation opportunities and played an instrumental role in organizing the Theatre and Cultural Services Division. His ability to work with a variety of stakeholders, including vendors, employees, colleagues, program participants, and partner organizations, is reason he is successful as a recreation professional.

"Scott is a workaholic tirelessly with relentless enthusiasm and great creativity. As our Superintendent of Recreation, he is responsible for all recreation programs and sports leagues offered through the Department," said Jason Mangum, director of Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services.

The 2012 Parent Child Golf Outing and Outdoor Movie received the Innovative Program award. This is the second consecutive year Novi has received the award. The Parent Child Golf Outing and Outdoor Movie event was designed to introduce the game of golf to the younger generation while at the same time creating the opportunity for quality family time. Nearly 80 families participated in the 2012 event at the Links of Novi. The program will again be offered this September with registration beginning in July.

Noon skate



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Nina Chelka, 6, practices her balance while gliding around the surface at the Novi Ice Arena on March 8. The facility is open for a skate at noon Monday-Friday for \$2.

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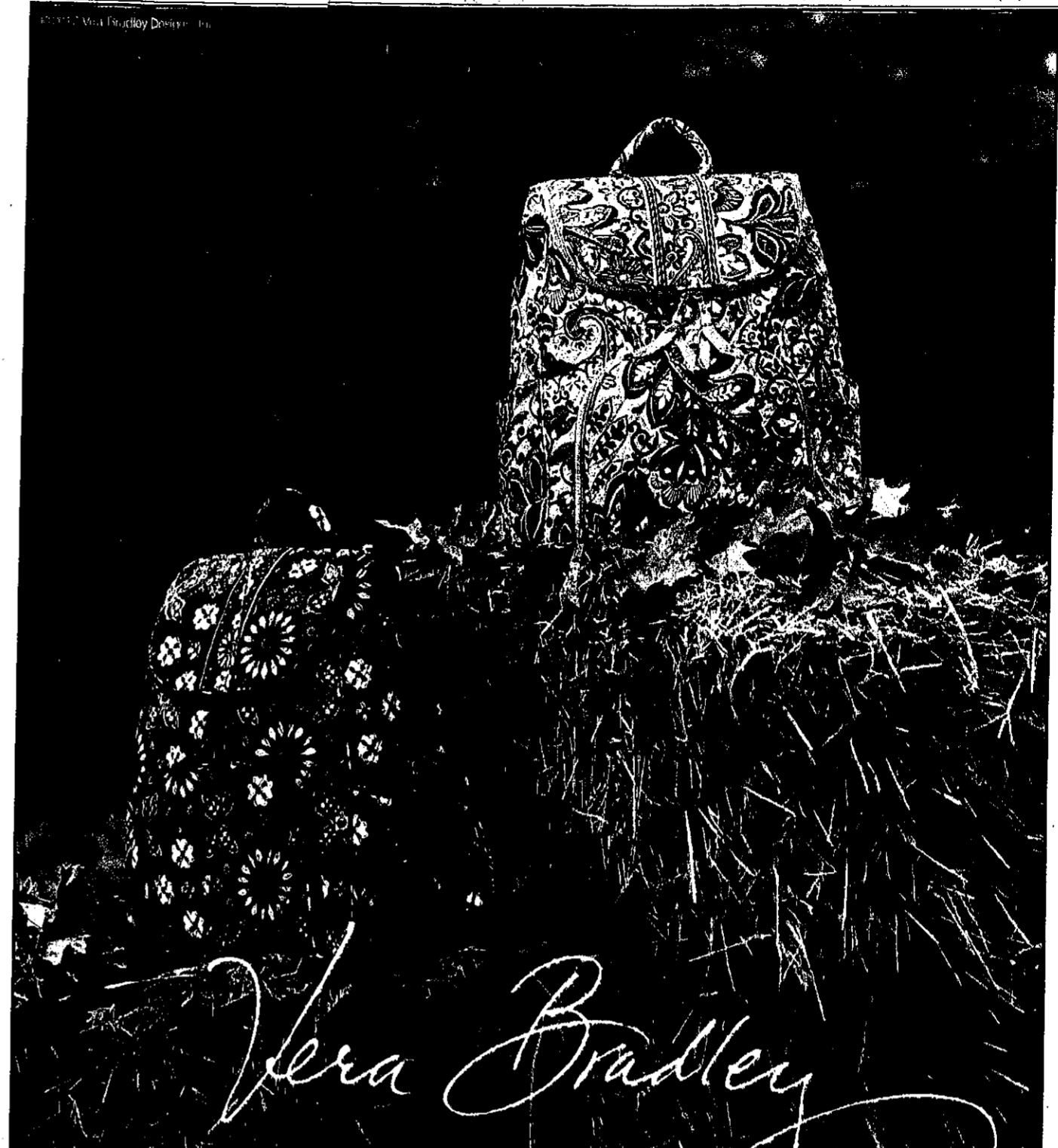
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Opening



Artist Greg Ritenour, right, discusses one of his creations with Novi City Manager Clay Pearson during a March 7 exhibition opening at the Novi Civic Center. Clients of Novi's Cassell and Associates rehabilitation center displayed their art. All of Cassell's clients have suffered some form of traumatic brain injury. The City of Novi has named March as Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month.

JOHN HEIDER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HOUSING

Continued from page A1

\$500 to \$2,499 with 29 percent state they pay \$600-\$999 a month for housing costs. Bouard said what makes Novi special is the variety. "Novi offers residents a wide range of housing options ranging from detached single family homes to condominiums and apartments," he said. "Our community also offers housing tailored to the unique lifestyles of our senior citizens. All of these options are available at a variety of price points."

And he added the outlook is good for Novi.

"Values of existing homes are rising significantly and we continue to see inquiries from developers for the full range of residential options ranging from very nice apartments to multi-family attached homes to individual detached homes on larger lots," he said. In the coming year he expects to see new housing project work commencing on the Valencia Estates development at 10 Mile and Beck Road as well as at a number of other projects currently proposed.

lhuhman@hometownlife.com (248) 437-2611, Ext. 255

READY

Continued from page A1

fundamental practices in place to get there.

Novi was one of 36 municipalities to apply for the program. Now, they're one of eight that will get formal evaluations. The others — including Wixom — will get best practices training and assistance.

"We already have a lot of good practices in place," said Topouzian. Topouzian said Novi has taken measures in evaluating how the city does business, and that was needed to be considered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for the program. And, he added, the city is always open to learning and improving.

"In six years, I'm proud of the changes we've made," said Topouzian. "We take a look at finished projects, retail or industrial, and evaluate how we did. We bring in businesses and the developer, landlord or contractor. We sit down and interview them. There are no repercussions for them. Tell us what you liked about the process and what you didn't like. We're already doing things like that. We've touched on a lot of things they're (MEDC) looking for — how do you involve your stakeholders, and how do you engage the community?"

Process and benefits

Topouzian said the evaluation process should last three to four months, and then

THE LIS

Communities giving a formal RRC evaluation include Allegan; Ann Arbor; Boyne City; East Lansing; Lansing; Lathrup Village; Muskegon; and Novi.

Communities having best practice training and assistance include Algonquin; Almont; Bedford Township; Birch Run; Breckenridge; Burton; Clawson; Dearborn; Dundee; Durand; Eaton Rapids; Farmington Hills; Five Lake; Hamtramck; Inlet; Clinton; Itasca; Marine City; Marshall; Midland; Milledgeville; Port Sanilac; Saginaw Township; St. Louis; Three Rivers; Watervliet; White Lake Township; and Wixom.

For more information on the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program, visit <http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Redevelopment-Ready-Communities/>.

Possible targets

Equally important, the MEDC will take Novi's top three redevelopment sites and market them. "This would be some bigger areas that they would help with," said Topouzian. "I don't know how we go about defining those properties yet, but I think that's big."

Although he said it's premature at this point to name any specific properties in Novi that would be targeted for redevelopment, the obvious examples would be the former Novi Expo Center (southwest corner of Novi Road and I-96) and the former Husky automotive facility (on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, just west of Cabaret Drive).

He expects the timeline to be completed in the fall but said a lot can happen between then and then. Besides, he said, here could be already development of those two properties by then. "There was no fee to apply for the RRC, and Novi did it earlier this year. When they put the word out, we jumped on it," said Topouzian.

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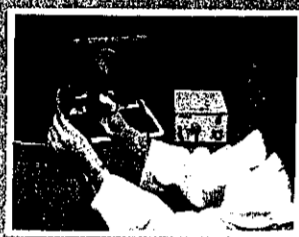
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Picture perfect

Photo club exposes members to new ideas, fun

By Julie Brown
Staff Writer

Len Stein, 63, is an optometrist who still works. He's among members of the new Digital Photography Club at Fox Run retirement community in Novi.

"I've been taking pictures since I was a kid," around 8, Stein recalled of early photos he took with a Brownie camera.

Recently, a divorce relocated him to Fox Run. He attended a Gala for the Benevolent Fund, to help residents, and took some 450 photos. The photos were put on a disc and shown in slide form in-house television.

"I've always enjoyed taking pictures," said Stein. He's looking forward nature photography at Fox Run, and possibly at Tolgate Farm in Novi and Kensington Metropark.

He's attended parties at Fox Run, as well as the "Strut Your Mutt" dog show, with camera in hand.

"It's been a lot of fun," Stein said of the photography club, which began meeting in November. One woman knows quite a bit about printing.

"I'm more into candid," he said. "So it's quite a variety (of skills). But all nice people and a lot of fun."

Matt Humphrey, 39, is on staff as a chaplain in the resident life program. Humphrey, a Novi resident and father of two young girls, explained

Fox Run aims to rally people together and have residents take leadership roles.

"I'm definitely an amateur photographer," Humphrey said. He and his wife got a camera to photograph their daughters. "I have taken thousands of photos, as any proud father would."

There's a newspaper/newsletter for all the Erickson properties in the U.S. "I see so many of our residents also taking pictures of these (Fox Run) events," said Humphrey.

Contributing to the publication was a logical step. One local member was on an iPad, which some members use.

"So they're teaching me

Humphrey said. They learn from pros about lighting, perspective and other key areas. "Oh, definitely," Humphrey said of his enjoyment. "That's one of the joys I get. I am learning so much."

The club has monthly meetings. "They are learners," Humphrey said of the residents. "They want to learn to get out and document this."

It's nice for older people who travel to document trips with photos, he added, rather than trinkets.

The club uses PhotoBucket, a free photo web sharing site. They can make prints or put an app on an iPad, which some members use.

"So they're teaching me

a lot, too, to be creative," Humphrey said.

In May, they'll have a community day of photographing on the grounds, including the butterfly garden. The members photograph many social events, such as the recent "History of Chocolate" for Valentine's Day.

One member used to do camera repair, while others have more basic skills, Humphrey said. The club plans to display its work in the community several times each year.

Members have visited The Parade Company of Detroit on a photo shoot, and in coming months will continue such trips while learning new skills.



Members of the Fox Run Digital Photography Club compare cameras during their March 1 meeting. From left: Len Stein, Jack Kerby, and Matt Humphrey. The group goes on outings in the area to record lots of images and then gathers to critique those efforts.

ers have more basic skills, Humphrey said. The club plans to display its work in the community several times each year.

Members have visited The Parade Company of Detroit on a photo shoot, and in coming months will continue such trips while learning new skills.



PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Members of the Fox Run Digital Photography Club look at some photos on a tablet computer during their March 1 meeting. From left: Len Stein, Matt Humphrey and Jack Kerby.

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Food service mogul Toni Wisne Sabina dies



Sabina

Toni Wisne Sabina, the president and co-owner of Epoch Hospitality Group, passed away March 7 after a recent hospitalization, surrounded by her loving family and close friends. She was 48.

"It was nothing that we thought this would be the end result," Paul Hess, director of operations at Epoch Hospitality Group, told Crain's Detroit Business. "Toni remained hands-on, engaged in the business on a regular basis and, you know, the same as she always had been."

Toni brought an extraordinary allure to the food and beverage industry that spanned decades. She belonged to an elite corps of female restaurateurs heading up an ensemble of hospitality establishments over the years.

Toni grew up in Dearborn where she graduated from Divine Child High School. She quickly began her career in the hospitality industry at the young age of 15 when her father, Anthony, developed and built the Sheraton Oaks Hotel in suburban Novi, and encouraged Toni to get involved. She worked various internships during summers off from college while at Michigan State University and at the University of Central Florida, where she ultimately earned a bachelor of arts degree in hotel and restaurant management. By the

lively, high-energy bistro *Two Chefs*.

In 1996, Toni's experience while having two successful restaurants under her belt led her to open the highly regarded and nationally acclaimed Tribute Restaurant in Farmington Hills. She completely gutted and transformed an existing building, and brought Michigan a Mobil Travel Guide Four-Star and AAA Four-Diamond dining experience.

In 2002, Tribute was honored as one of the top 50 restaurants in America by Gourmet magazine, and the following year, in 2003, was awarded with an induction into the National Restaurant News "Fine Dining Hall of Fame." In 2002, Toni was named one of Crain's Detroit Business' Most Influential Women.

Toni's talents led to more restaurant successes, as Epoch opened Forté Restaurant in downtown Birmingham in late 1996, and Latitude Restaurant in the exclusive Bay Harbor area of Lake Michigan in 1999. Toni founded with her brothers as partners.

With Chez Raphael's quick success, Toni decided she wanted to concentrate her energies primarily on restaurants. She would often say, "The service industry is in my blood. I love watching people enjoy their food and have a good time."

In 1990, Toni oversaw the transition and renovation of Chez Raphael into

the stable of restaurants and their rapidly increasing catering business.

That same year, Epoch Catering was formed to manage catering operations at the newly constructed Diamond Center at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi and in addition, now also provides exclusive management services for the Genesys Conference and Banquet Center in Grand Blanc, and for the Riverfront Banquet Center in downtown Flint. Epoch also provides management services to Orange Tree Golf Club, a private golf club in Orlando, Fla., as well as to other area restaurants owned by outside investment groups.

"I was very saddened by the news of Toni's passing," said Blair Bowman, owner of the Suburban Collection Showplace. "Our relationship dated back to her and her family's support in helping to get the original Novi Expo Center program started and continued through to Toni's wonderful touch and professionalism in the high-level, quality food service in our current banquet center operations at the Suburban Collection Showplace today. She was a friend, and she will be deeply missed."

As a hands-on successful entrepreneur, the staff that worked closest to her appreciated how accessible and down-to-earth she was.

Toni would often express to many, "We're a family-owned business, and our employees respond to that - because they are our family as well," she said. "Many of our managers and chefs started as waiters and line cooks and that family philosophy contributes greatly to our accomplishments because we are all working towards the same goal."

Born Oct. 20, 1964, Toni is survived by husband Steven Sabina, three brothers - Lawrence Wisne, Alan Wisne and Joseph Wisne - and sisters-in-law Judy Piotrowski-Wisne, Kathy Wisne and Debbie Wisne.

Toni also leaves behind her stepmother, Cathie Cranker Wisne, and nieces and nephews that she dearly loved: Lawrence, Michael, Anna, Shannon, Madejyn and Lee Wisne, as well as many, many friends. Toni was preceded in death by her parents Anthony and Hazel, niece Kyla and her nephew AJ.

Visitation was held Monday at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. A funeral mass was held Tuesday at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, Farmington. Memorial gifts suggested to MI Humane Society or Vietnam Veterans of America.

Easter for Kids

Join us on Saturday, March 23 from 9am-11am for Easter for Kids. It is a one-day VBS, where we make crafts, sing songs, and receive goodies and take-home items. We also get to hear about Jesus' death and resurrection and why it matters.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
To register call (248) 349-0565

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday - March 24, 10:00 am
Maundy Thursday - March 28, 7:00 pm
Good Friday - March 29, 7:00 pm
Easter Sunday - March 31, 7:30 am and 10:00 am

Good Shepherd is located at 41415 W. Nine Mile Rd. Corner of 9 Mile & Meadowbrook Rd. in Novi. Check us out at www.GoodShepherdNovi.org.

Milestones

The Keyeses

Jere and Patricia Keyes celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Feb. 14 with a dinner at Rocky's of Northville and a family gathering at their granddaughter's home in Fowlerville. They are proud parents of five children and have 16 grandchildren, as well as 12 great grandchildren with one more due any day. They have been residents of Northville for 43 years. All of their children attended Northville schools. Jere was owner of the Michigan Jewelry Supply Company for many years. After he sold the business he worked for Leo Frank and Son in fine jewelry until retirement in 1995. He continues to do watch repair which was taught to him by his father, Richard Keyes, who also spent his life in the jewelry business. Jere is an avid golfer, and meets with his golf group every Monday morning in winter. Patricia focused her life on raising their large family, though she was a cashier

for Chatham Supermarket in Northville. She has written 10 books on her and Jere's ancestry as well as three biographies. As a member of the Sarah Ann Cochrane Chapter DAR, she does lineage research. She is a member of U.S. Daughters of 1812 and Daughters of the Union. The Keyeses attend the Methodist Church in Northville.



Patricia and Jere Keyes

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This invaluable guide is distributed in the city of Novi. In addition to being delivered to our subscribers, extra copies are sent to county and state government offices, libraries, parks and recreation destinations, religious institutions, medical facilities, and many other nonprofit and community organizations.

You will find that our 2013 Discover Novi Community Directory is an effective resource to help promote business, events, activities and initiatives in the Novi area.

This offer only happens once a year, so don't miss out! To be included in the 2013 Discover Novi Community Directory, please see instructions below...

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Make sure YOUR GROUP IS INCLUDED!

SEND US AN EMAIL BY MARCH 25, 2013 TO BE A PART OF THE 2013 DISCOVER NOVI COMMUNITY DIRECTORY! WE WANT TO HEAR FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS, TEAMS, CLUBS, VENUES, ORGANIZATIONS AND NONPROFIT GROUPS.

Send your email to: dzelazny@hometownlife.com
Use the subject line "Discover Novi!"

Include:

- Name of the organization
- Street address
- Website
- Phone number
- A 20-40 word description of the organization's purpose
- A photo attachment in JPG or TIF format, at 300 dpi resolution, no larger than 4" x 6" (photo is optional).

We reserve the right to accept or decline any submission. Submissions will be verified before publication. Submissions must be received no later than March 25, 2013. The directory publishes on April 18, 2013 in the Novi News, with additional copies delivered to various community organizations.

BUSINESSES — IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO ADVERTISE YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES, OR SIMPLY WANT TO SHOW YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT, ADVERTISING SPACE IS AVAILABLE UNTIL APRIL 1, 2013.

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NOVI POLICE BRIEFS

Theft at the Novi Sports Club

A cellular phone was reportedly stolen from a vehicle parked at the Novi Sports Club on Nick Lidstrom Drive.

Wallet stolen at Hooters

An employee of Novi's Hooters location reported to Novi Police that her wallet went missing from the break room.

Larcenies from autos at local hotels

There were three recent thefts from parked vehicles while parked at two local hotels.

were two incidents at the Sheraton Hotel on Haggerty Road. One involved a rear passenger window being broken so the suspect could gain access to steal a stereo.

The other case happened at the Courtyard Marriott on W. 11 Mile Road on March 5. The unknown suspect broke in the rear passenger window and stole a factory-installed GPS navigation system.

The vehicle, a Jeep, was parked in the front row of the lot facing the building, but there are no outside security cameras. The system is valued at \$1,200.

Compiled by staff writer Lonnie Hulman.

Passages

Obituaries, Memorials & Remembrances

ALEKSANDER, THERESA

Age 79, passed away, March 7, 2013. She was born on June 6, 1933 in Detroit, daughter of the late Vincent and Sophie Ribkowski.

KLECAN, ROBERT B.

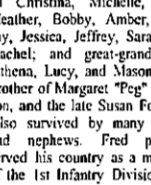
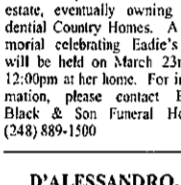
Age 81, passed away March 5, 2013. Memorial service was held March 9, at 2 p.m. PHILLIPS FUNERAL HOME.

CELETTE, EDITH E.

August 11, 1933 to March 2, 2013, at her home after a lengthy illness. Survived by a brother, Edwin Celette, two nieces and their families.

MILLARD, FRED JR.

March 6, 1924 to age 88 of Northville. Beloved husband of Shirley for 59 years.



ALLEN, ROBERT HAROLD

Bob Allen, 76, passed away on Thursday, March 7, 2013 at Memorial HealthCare.

DINSER, MARGARET

Nov 15, 1936-Feb. 19, 2013. Margaret Dinsler passed away on Feb. 19, 2013.

MILLER, MARIE

Age 74, of Novi, passed away March 7, 2013. Condolences at www.casterfuneralhome.com

HECKEMEYER, PHYLLIS JEAN

OF Northville died on Tuesday, March 5, at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

O'CONNELL, FRANCIS

Feb. 9, 1929-Feb. 26, 2013. Francis O'Connell passed away on Feb. 26, 2013.

SCHANZ, MARGARET

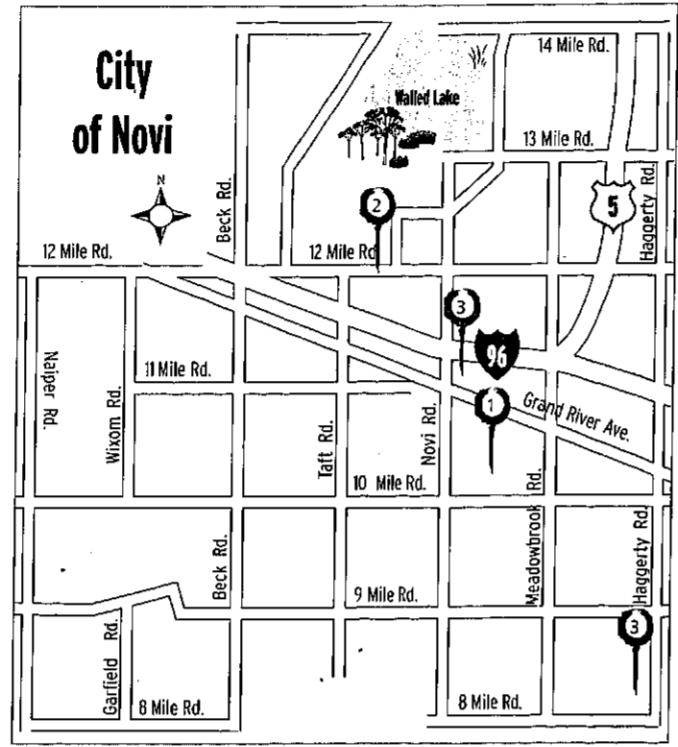
August 21, 1923-Feb. 22, 2013. Margaret Schanz passed away on Feb. 22, 2013.

ERICKSON, AGATHA

A former long time resident of Milford, died on March 11, 2013, at the age of 92. She was preceded in death by her husband, Elmer D. Erickson.

ZISCHERK, TERRY H.

Age 69, passed away March 7, 2013. He was born on February 18, 1953 in Detroit.



PATHWAY

Continued from page A1

Each owner is being asked for a permanent and temporary easement, and these are in various stages of the acquisition process.

necessary for the project. He owns 23675 with Anita and Johann Appel. "I'm not necessarily against this, but things got off on the wrong foot," said Dennis Appel.

The Novi City Council unanimously approved the easement recommendations made by the Public Services Department over the course of the last several meetings.

Orchard Hills Baptist Church donated its easement, and the other purchase easements have a total cost of \$6,510.

Herbel, Jerome and Verda Tolers and Denis Appel — have informed city staff they are not for the project.

"The reality is, I'm just a little person," Appel said. "But I'm not just going to lay down when I feel they are being arrogant about it."

For the property owned by Herbel, the City Council on Feb. 25 approved a threefold motion: (1) a resolution concerning acquisition and approving declaration of necessity and taking and authorization of offer to purchase; (2) a declaration of taking; and, (3) an agreement of sale and offer to purchase easements over real property.

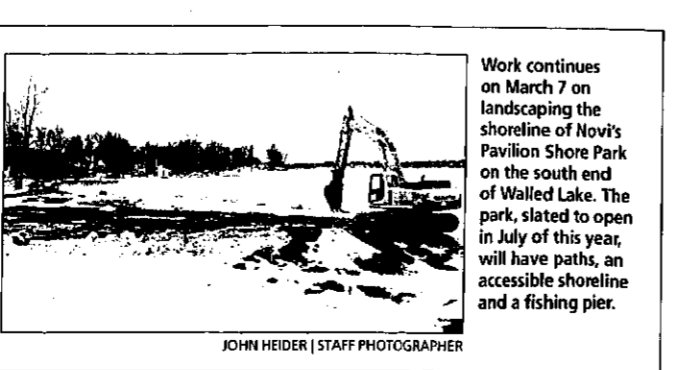
DPS Engineering staff told the council it has had multiple meetings and discussions with Herbel about his property at 23777 Novi Road to acquire a pathway easement and temporary grading permit that is required to construct the pathway.

"Mr. Herbel has indicated he is not in favor of the project, and that he is not willing to provide the easements necessary for the project," according to the report by Novi's Engineering Division.

"If the motion is approved, staff will contact Mr. Herbel and Jerome and Verda Toler with a good faith offer in the amount of \$769 for the permanent and temporary easements."

Herbel said he has rejected that offer and has passed a counter that is currently under review by the city.

"This (pathway) is going in regardless, and I don't want to be too much of a hindrance anymore," said Herbel.



Work continues on March 7 on landscaping the shoreline of Novi's Pavilion Shore Park on the south end of Walled Lake. The park, slated to open in July of this year, will have paths, an accessible shoreline and a fishing pier.

Eggstravaganza: 13,000 egg hunt set for March 30

By Cal Stone Staff Writer

Imagine a giant grassy area filled with 13,000 eggs. Now picture hundreds of children scrambling around to gather them in their baskets and you've got the wildly popular Rock 'N Roll Easter Eggstravaganza at the First Church of the Nazarene.

But it's limited to the first 600 children who pre-register at www.drc-nazarene.org.

"One year we had 1,300 people, so the last four to five years we've had pre-registration," said organizer Sharon Zalewski. "It works out better to help us determine food and prizes, and for safety reasons, too."

The church has funded the event for about 11 or 12 years, she said, and it has grown into a true community event.

"Even though we have a lot of people returning, we actually draw a whole lot of new folks each year," said Zalewski. "They're generally from the neighboring communities, but it always amazes me — we ran the stats last year, and about 85 percent are not from our church. And there are a lot of different ethnic groups represented, which is great."

In addition to the egg hunt, there will be picture-taking with the Easter Bunny, games, prizes and gifts, a juggler, dancers, puppets and hot dogs, chips, cookies and drinks for everyone.

Eggstravaganza will be held rain or shine. And don't forget to bring your Easter basket!



The grounds of the First Church of the Nazarene will be scattered with 13,000 eggs for the annual Eggstravaganza on March 30.

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Your Invitation to Worship

Directory of churches and religious organizations including Brighton, Milford, Novi, Walled Lake, Whitmore Lake, Livonia, Plymouth, New Hudson, Northville, and Highland.

Thornton Creek evacuated after smoke spotted

By Lonnie Huhman
Staff Writer

Smoke and fumes from a faulty restroom fan caused Thornton Creek Elementary School to have after-school program students evacuate from the building last Thursday afternoon.

According to Mike Zopf, Northville Public

School's assistant superintendent for Finance/Operations, electrical wires in an exhaust fan motor burned and created the smoke and fumes. It was located in a girls restroom across from Principal Allison Eppler's office.

This happened following the regular dismissal. However, there were 60

students from Kids' Club, Early Childhood and other after-school activities who were inside when it occurred.

"Students were safely escorted out of the building as the Novi Fire Department personnel inspected the area," said Zopf. "And fire officials recommended that students remain outside for

approximately 45 minutes to allow the air-handlers and fans to dissipate the fumes."

The district requested that buses be sent to Thornton Creek to assist in comfortably sheltering students.

According to Jeff Johnson, Novi's director of Emergency Medical Services and Fire Operations, the Novi Fire and Police departments responded to a 911 call received by the Novi Communication Center just after 4 p.m. Fire and police arrived to find the school was evacuated.

"Upon entering the building the fire crews

detected an odor and light smoke near the front entrance. The fire crew found an overheated exhaust fan," Johnson said. "School maintenance and fire crews disconnected the electricity and removed the burned motor and insulation. Exhaust fans in the building were used to evacuate the smoke."

Zopf said parents were then notified to pick up their students early from the after-school programs. An 'all-clear' was given by the incident commander from Novi at 6 p.m. Aside from the exhaust fan and motor, no facility damage was incurred due to this

incident.

Fire officials later gave clearance for the adults to retrieve items left in the building. School staff was on hand until 6 p.m. to assist with this process.

School was able to be held on Friday. "The district is responding to this event by changing all similar exhaust motors at Thornton Creek during the upcoming Easter break," said Zopf. "Exhaust fans at other buildings will also be evaluated for needed replacement, as well."

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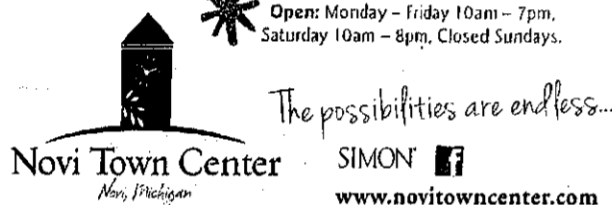
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"The coordination between all services involved — police, fire, EMS and the school staff — was fantastic," said Tim Sargent, who lives across from the school's soccer fields and took this picture. "Dealing with the elements, and the challenge of where to put that many youngsters while the investigation went on was handled wonderfully."

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1) Real Estate One in South Lyon is well-recognized as an historic landmark in the community. 2) Gayle Henderson, left, and Lisa Prochazka, right, are SOLD on Real Estate One's strong presence in Michigan as the state's #1 broker and its family ownership. - Photo by Sally Rummel

REAL ESTATE ONE IN SOUTH LYON LEADS NEW MARKET TRENDS

Now it's more important than ever to have a qualified agent, whether you're buying or selling

By Sally Rummel,
Contributing Writer

If you've been waiting to jump into the real estate market until the time was "just right," your time has come. Buyers are back, home values are up and interest rates are still at low, low rates.

That's the good news from Lisa Prochazka and Gayle Henderson, both Realtors for Real Estate One's South Lyon office—which also covers Milford, New Hudson, Wixom, Novi, Northville, Brighton and surrounding areas. "We're a local agency with numerous satellite offices, giving us the edge in market analysis and a local presence in these communities," said Lisa and Gayle.

They are pleased to be a part of the local success of Real Estate One—the #1 broker in Michigan and a Michigan-based, family-owned company. "We are so fortunate to be a part of this financially strong and stable company, which had another record year in 2012," they added. "Real Estate One has emerged from the recession stronger and more capable than ever before."

Homeowners who may be interested in selling in the next three to five years may want to take a good, close look at giving the market a try in 2013. They'll find that their home values have gone up in some areas as much as 10 to 20 percent in the last year. "There are lots of buyers out there right now, and the future of low interest rates past 2013 will be a little more uncertain," said Gayle.

They both add that people are feeling more confident in their employment and the economy in general. "There is also pent-up interest now that the real estate

market has stabilized," added Lisa.

However, sellers still need to price their homes at a fair market value and offer them in pristine condition, to get the best money for the transaction. "Today's buyers are looking for homes in move-in condition with low maintenance features," said Gayle. "Most buyers are ready and willing to pay for that."

Because of buyer demand and smaller inventories this year, it's more important than ever that homeowners on both sides of the real estate transaction select a knowledgeable, experienced agent. "In a changing market like we're experiencing today, this is more important than ever," said Gayle. Together, she and Lisa have more than 25 years of experience to bring to the closing table. They also handle their own transactions, from start to finish.

For people interested in buying a home in 2013, they will need to be both patient and aggressive in their search for just the right property. Patience will come into play as competition for homes is greater now than in any recent year. They'll have to move quickly with a strong offer when they find the perfect or near-perfect home. They may even have to overbid, with strong pre-approval from a reputable lender.

"It's a completely different market than it was a few years ago," said Gayle.

"We're a local agency with numerous satellite offices, giving us the edge in market analysis and knowledge about all these unique markets."

Lisa Prochazka and Gayle Henderson,
Real Estate One in South Lyon

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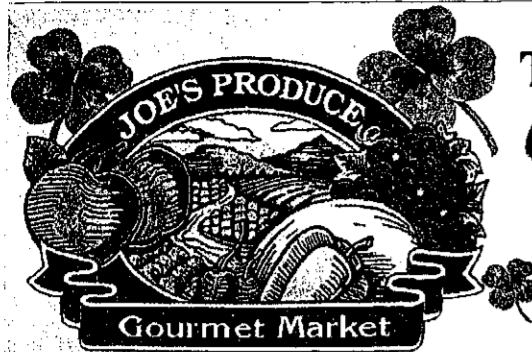
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SPORTS

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23-0 run ends Novi cagers' season

Chiefs pick off Wildcats 49-24 in district semifinal

By Chris Jackett
Correspondent

The season came to a quick end in a district semifinal for Novi's cagers last week.

In a March 6 contest with Canton (17-7, 9-1 South), Wildcats (8-13, 5-5 Central) jumped ahead to an 11-5 lead in the first quarter before being shut out 18-0 in the second quarter and not scoring a field goal for a 16-minute stretch in a 32-minute game, which led to a 35-18 deficit after three quarters.

The reserves traded baskets in the fourth quarter as the Chiefs won 49-24.

"You've got to get out and play better offensively, other than turning it over every possession and not getting a second chance," Novi coach Brian Tass said.

After struggling to connect all night, only eight successful field goal attempts and more than a dozen turnovers combined to put an end to Novi's season despite a strong effort by senior Tre Cadwell on both sides of the ball. He led his team with seven points and two steals, plus a half-court three-pointer that the referees deemed was released and drained after the buzzer.

"When your best players

Please see HOOPS, B2



Charles McKinney gets a shot off as he splits two Canton High defenders during conference play-off action on March 6.

Ao breaks two school swimming records

Wildcat tankers finish 11th in Division I

By Chris Jackett
Correspondent

The boys swim and dive season came to a close March 9 with the Division I meet wrapping up in Holland.

Novi's team finished 11th of 32 schools, earning 69 points. Saline won the state title with 313 points to edge out Bloomfield Hills Brother Rice's 309. Livonia Stevenson was the only KLA team to place higher than Novi, taking third with 191 points. Other notables include Detroit Catholic Central at fifth with 156, Northville 21st with 26, Plymouth Salem 24th with 18 and South Lyon Unified 25th with 16.

The Hornets were dominant en route to their state title, winning nine of 12 events against the best in the state.

Although Novi was unable to pick up victories in the other three events, they did pick up points among the top 16 in eight different events.

Senior Andrew Ao, who had the two highest placements for Novi, saw the most success. Ao earned All-State honors in both the 200 freestyle and 100 freestyle. He took sixth in the 200 free in 1:42.75 after Saline won it in 1:38.31, and then took seventh in the 100 free in 47.08 seconds after Saline won that race in 44.65 seconds. His 200 free performance broke the 1988 school record of 1:43.49 and his 100 free performance breaking his own school record of 47.58 seconds from earlier this season.

RESULTS

For full meet results, visit www.mhsaa.com.

Also earning All-State honors was junior Tanner Vincent, who was eighth in the 200 individual medley in 1:58.49 after Saline won it in 1:47.86. Vincent was also 11th in the 10 butterfly in 52.87 seconds, behind Saline's winning time of 48.59 seconds, but breaking Vincent's previous record of 53.01 seconds.

Senior Gucci Onimura was Novi's only other individual top finisher, squeaking in at 16th in the 100 backstroke in 55.17 seconds, behind Saline's winning time of 49.75 seconds.

The other four individual events shut out the Wildcats, as Saline won the 50 free in 20.96 seconds, Saline won the 100 breaststroke in 55.32 seconds, Livonia Stevenson won the 500 freestyle in 4:27.75 and Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern won the 1-meter dive with 442.50 points.

However, the Wildcats did continue to see some success in all three relay events.

The 200 free relay team of Onimura, seniors Vinny Rosanali, Dennis Kim and Ao combined to finish 11th in 1:28.77 as Saline won in 1:23.92.

Vincent, junior Jake Robbins, Kim and Ao combined to take 13th in the 400 free relay in 3:15.89 as Brother Rice won in 3:03.78.

The 200 medley relay squad of Onimura, Kim, Vincent and Rosanali wrapped things up in 14th at 1:40.11 as Saline won in 1:30.01.

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

CC cagers bow out to Plymouth Wildcats

Shamrocks fail to Plymouth's slow-paced attack

By Sam Eggleston
Correspondent

The Plymouth Wildcats didn't bring anything fancy to the hardwood last Wednesday when they took on the Detroit Catholic Central Shamrocks basketball team in District tournament action. In fact, they relied on a very fundamentally-sound approach to the game.

The results of Plymouth's slow-paced offense didn't favor the Shamrocks at all, and Catholic Central's season came to a close with a 59-36 loss at Northville High School.

The victory was just Plymouth's second playoff win since the school opened.

Neither the Shamrocks nor the Wildcats looked to be the dominant force throughout the game, but late in the third the Plymouth squad made a run and led, 31-24, heading into the final stanza. It was then that the game began to unravel for Catholic Central as

senior Garret Moores went up for an defensive board and could only watch as the ball bounced away from his hand and back into the Plymouth hoop to give the Wildcats a nine-point advantage.

From that point on, the game just slipped further away from the Shamrocks as the Wildcats more than doubled up their point total in comparison to Catholic Central's, 28-12, in the fourth quarter.

The Shamrocks led midway through the second quarter, but a quick burst of points from Plymouth left them trailing, 18-13, at the half.

Plymouth's Josh Priebe led all scorers with 17 points while Catholic Central's Austin Beyer and Noah Lee each scored seven and Moores chipped in six in the losing effort.

Catholic Central ended their season with a 5-16 record.

Sam Eggleston is a freelance writer and former staff sports writer for the Northville Record and Novi News.



Catholic Central Shamrock Garrett Moores tries to get a shot off against Plymouth on March 6 at Northville High.

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CC bows in state title tilt

Bulldogs prove to be best Division I team in front of packed arena

By Sam Eggleston
Correspondent

If you wanted to move around Compuware Arena last Saturday evening, you were out of luck. Approximately 4,000 fans packed into the arena and it didn't take long for the drone of buzz-like chatter to fill the air as fans began to talk about the upcoming match-up between defending state champion Brighton and favored Detroit Catholic Central.

When all was said and done, it was the Bulldogs of Brighton who skated away with the 2-1 victory and the Division I title for back-to-back state championships. The last team to do so was Catholic Central when they won the championship in 2009 and 2010.

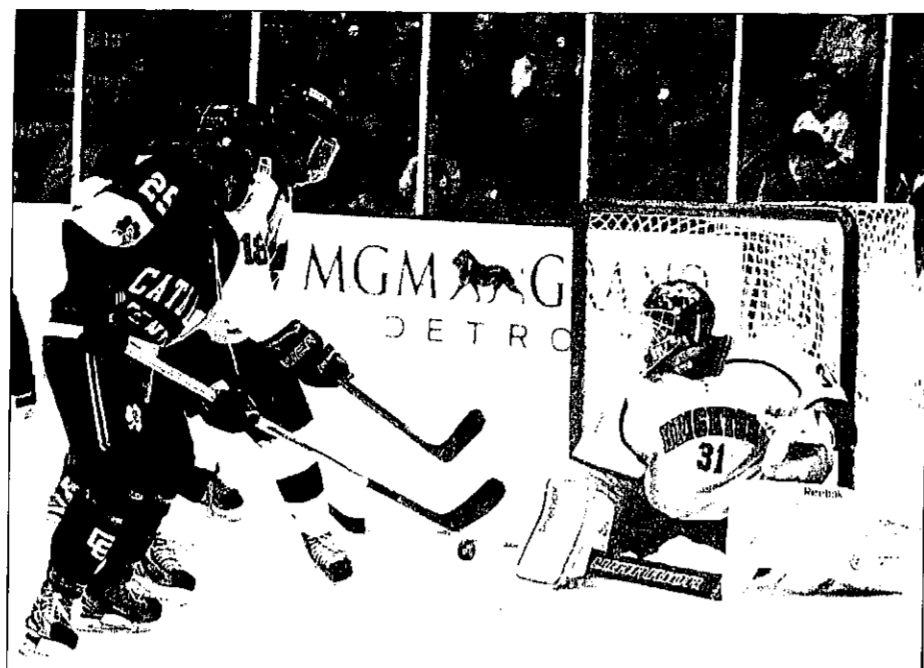
The state finals victory was Brighton's third. Trailing by one point with time quickly expiring, the Catholic Central skaters did make a strong bid for overtime. Michael Babcock almost made it happen, too, with 6.8 seconds left in the game as he wound up right in

front of the goal and fired a hard shot that looked like it would get past Brighton's goalie, James Milletics.

Milletics, somehow, got his leg in front of the shot, preserving the game and the state championship. It was just one of 37 saves he made on the night.

"We've been working for this day since summer," Milletics said to the Detroit Free Press. "At the end, he (Babcock) got a shot off and I just sprawled my leg out hoping I could get it. It worked pretty well."

Catholic Central coach Todd Johnson was impressed with the play from Brighton, who led 2-0 at one point. He credited the play of Milletics as a deciding factor. "James had a great game, and they blocked a ton of shots," Johnson said. "They had a pretty darn good formula for success. We didn't like being in the position of being down, 2-0, which felt like an eternity. We made it 2-1... and we felt the next one would happen. We took an untimely



PHOTOS BY DENNIS BARNES

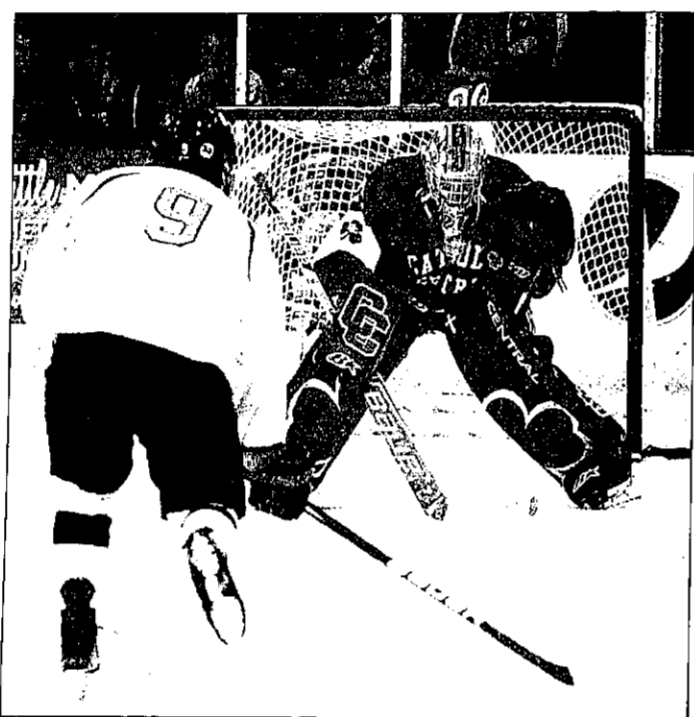
CC senior Michael Babcock pressures Brighton's goalie.

penalty, and two of those last seven minutes we had to kill. In the final eight seconds, we hoped to win the face-off and get something to the net and pray."

Catholic Central's lone goal came in the third period when junior Carson Gatt scored on a power play at 9:58 to make it a 2-1 game. He was assisted by Babcock and Nick Daigneau.

Brighton was the first team to score in the contest, finding the back of the net at the 15:07 mark as the puck slid past Catholic Central goalie Derek Moore off a shot by senior Michael Yuhasz, assisted by Daniel Bosio and Lucas Morgan. The game-winning goal came at 8:03 in the second period when Morgan scored off an assist from Yuhasz.

Sam Eggleston is a freelance writer and former staff sports writer for the Northville Record and Novi News.



Shamrock goalie Derek Moore stops a breakaway by Brighton.



CC junior Brady Jones battles a Brighton defender for the puck.

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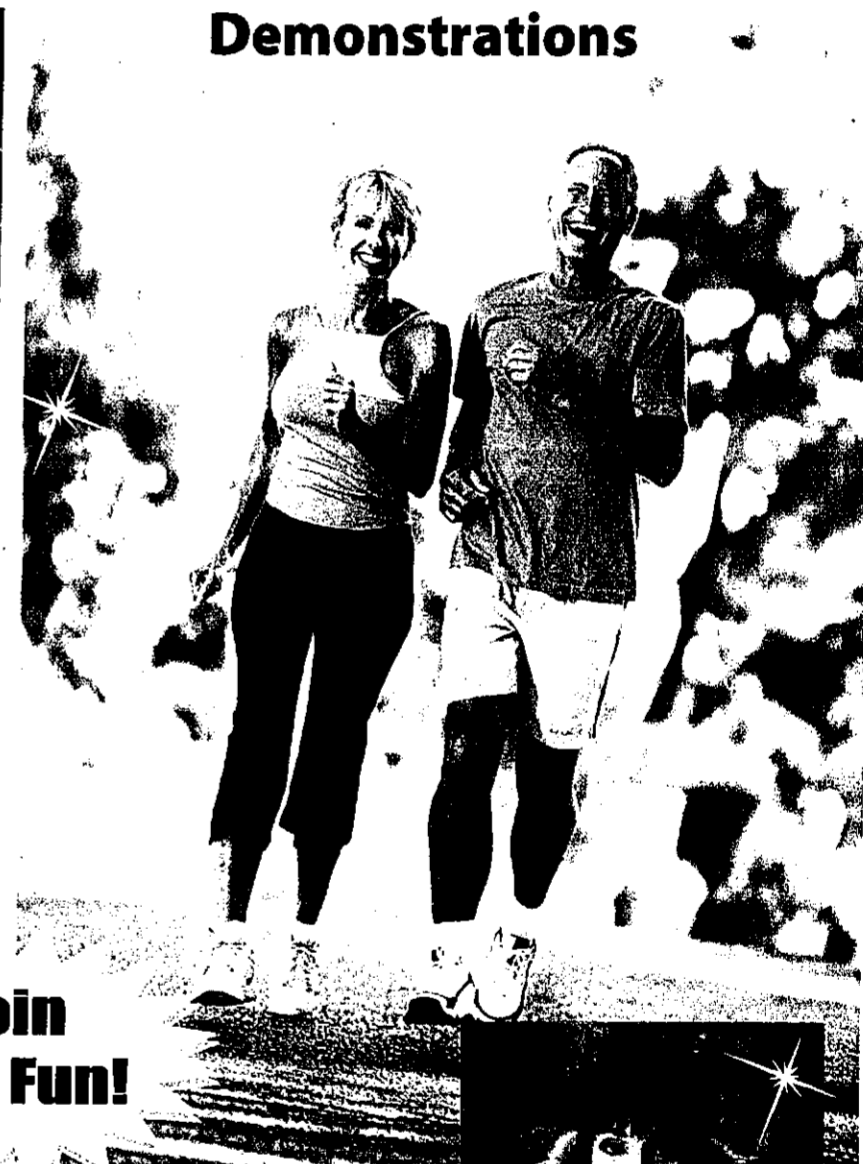
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A philosophy is the true measure of what a winning strategy entails

By Lee Meadows
Guest Columnist

One of my four favorite times of the year starts this week. If any one guessed daylight saving time, then there is a warped sense of reality that has found its way back into cognitive reasoning.

The Big Ten Basketball Tournament (men and women) as a prelude to the NCAA Basketball Tournament, affectionately known as 'March Madness' and the 'bracketological' arguments and 'alleged' sick days, will consume the next three weeks with no leftovers for the misinformed. We will see college basketball at its finest and highest level and ravish in the unpredictability of a structured event.

As a fan, I revel in the pure combative give-and-take of two opposing forces.

As a professor, I look for the "teachable" moments that can be translated back into the classroom. As a columnist, I look for the angle that allows me to think about an event in a broader context.

There have been many who have talked about the link between business and sports, typically focusing on the leadership and/or team performance outcomes. So, what else can be said about this connection that has not already been stated? Let's start with this question.

What do Mike Krzyzewski (Duke University), Jim Boheim (Syracuse University), Tom Izzo (Michigan State University, GO SPARTANS) and Pat Summitt (University of Tennessee) have in common with John Calipari (University of Kentucky), Rick Pitino (University of Louisville), Bill Self (University of Kansas) and Roy Williams (University of North Carolina)?

The eight names mentioned have all led their programs to, at least one, NCAA championship. As most fans, writers and casual observers of the game would agree, winning just one NCAA championship is a lifetime accomplishment worthy of an elite status that many pursuers will never claim. So, what is it that separates this small

group from the rest of the crowd? Let's start by further defining this group of eight.

In the case of coaches Krzyzewski, Boheim, Izzo and Summitt, they have been mainstays at the head of their programs for 15 years or longer. During that time, they have managed to keep their basketball programs among the elite with a consistent philosophy about talent utilization, teamwork and winning. When we analyze the success of these four coaches, it would be hard to dispute the value of longevity as a standard for building and maintaining a successful winning program.

Except in the case of coaches Calipari, Pitino, Self and Williams, longevity is not the key element, because each has achieved success based on their ability to quickly build or takeover a successful program. These four coaches have carried success with them across two or more programs, thus making it hard to dispute the value of a 'formulaic' approach that is successful and transportable. It is clear that the attraction of this approach lies in the ability to turn a non-winning program into a winner or sustain a winning program that needs a boost.

Obviously, these four coaches have the core emphasis on talent utilization, teamwork and winning. So, individual style aside, we're left with this question: How can two distinct styles be so equally effective? As much as I am inclined to believe that it's just in the way they look at things, I am more compelled by the idea that leaders DO formulate and embrace a philosophy about how to achieve success. The philosophy drives the methods used and refinement comes through practice and a strict adherence to a set of rules. They recognize that no structure is perfect and adjustments are made to reinforce the philosophy.

While I don't want to oversimplify the process they use to achieve their success, I don't want to underestimate the importance of knowing, philosophically, what it is you are trying to achieve. Winning, clearly, is the ultimate measure of success, but a philosophy is the true measure of what a winning strategy entails.

Lee E. Meadows, Ph.D., is a professor of management at Walsh College working at the Novi Campus. He can be contacted at leameadows@walshcollege.edu.

Spring weight restrictions begin in Oakland County

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) began applying seasonal spring weight restrictions to its non-all-weather roads at 6 a.m. Monday. The restrictions limit the amount of weight trucks can carry on the roads and are intended to minimize damage to the roads while the ground under the roads is thawing.

Roads in the Novi area affected include 14 Mile Road (east of Decker to Haggerty Road) and Napier Road (south of 12 Mile Road to Eight Mile Road) - both with 35 percent reduction in load required. Three roads have 25-percent weight restriction: Eight Mile Road (Napier Road east to Taft Road); 10 Mile Road (Napier Road east to Haggerty Road); and Haggerty Road (Eight Mile Road north to 14 Mile Road).

Anyone wanting an update on the status of the weight restrictions can call RCOC's weight restrictions hotline at (248) 858-4765.

Each spring, in accordance with state law, RCOC reduces the weight limits on its non-all-weather roads as temperatures begin to rise and the ground begins to thaw. "As the road subsurface thaws, the road's ability to carry weight is reduced," explained RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar. "That means that a weight that wouldn't affect the road under normal conditions, might now damage the road. These restrictions help to ensure that our roads last as long as possible, with as few potholes as possible."

The restrictions do not affect passenger vehicles, but apply to commercial trucks.

Weight restrictions are enforced by weighmasters employed by the Road Commission, the state, local

communities or the Sheriff's Department. Violation of the weight restrictions can result in a citation and fine.

David Czerniakowski, director of RCOC's Customer Services Department, said the timing of this year's weight restrictions is typical. "It is usually in February or March that the ground is thawing and we must apply the restrictions," he noted. Czerniakowski will recommend that the restrictions be removed when he determines that the soil is no longer saturated and the frost has thawed. He noted that the weight restrictions have an impact on several industries including building construction, because it restricts companies' ability to move heavy equipment.

"Weight restrictions do not prevent trucks from operating," Czerniakowski said. "They may still operate on affected roads, they simply have to operate with a reduced load on those roads."

A "truck operators' map" is available from the Road Commission that shows which roads have weight restrictions. The map is available by calling RCOC's Customer Services Dept. at (248) 858-4835 or by visiting the department's offices at the RCOC facility at 2420 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford Township (office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.).

The map is also available on RCOC's Web page at www.rcocweb.org, and listings of the affected roads are posted on the Web site as well.

For a statewide listing of which counties have imposed spring weight restrictions, visit the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM) Web site, www.micountyroads.org.

NOVI BUSINESS BRIEFS

Telcom changing name

Telcom Credit Union will officially become Vibe Credit Union on March 18.

"We chose a unique and distinct name which incorporates a modern version of our historical roots in telecommunications," said Tyler Ross. "Vibe represents a new energy within our credit union, and with our new advancements in technology we will become a major player among all Metro Detroit financial institutions."

St. Mary Mercy receives honor

Two national organizations have honored St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia for delivering high-quality clinical and stroke care.

St. Mary Mercy Hospital ranks among the top 5 percent of hospitals nationwide, according to Healthgrades, receiving the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence 2013 among only 262 U.S. hospitals. The recognition is given to hospitals that deliver high-quality care with better than expected clinical outcomes across clinical specialties. This is St. Mary Mercy's ninth consecutive year winning the award.

In addition, St. Mary Mercy is among the top 1 percent of the recipients to also receive Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals 2013 among

America's 50 Best Hospitals for demonstrating consistency of care.

Hospitals become eligible for this award after receiving the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence a minimum of seven consecutive years. This year is the hospital's third year winning the Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals award. St. Mary Mercy received the recognition as America's 50 Best Hospitals in 2011 and 2012.

"Our consistency of providing quality patient care is a key characteristic of our excellent teams of physicians, nurses and clinical staff," said Dave Spivey, President and CEO, St. Mary Mercy Hospital, speaking to the number of years recognized for these honors.

Manor of Novi recognized

The Manor of Novi, a Ciena Healthcare skilled nursing facility in Novi, has been listed as one of the best nursing homes in the state, according to the latest rankings published by U.S. News & World Report. The facility received an overall five-star rating - the highest possible - and is one of nine Ciena Healthcare facilities to be included on the list.

The U.S. News rankings are built on data from Nursing Home Compare, a website run by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS sets and

enforces standards for all nursing homes enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid.

"All of us at the Manor of Novi are honored to be recognized by U.S. News & World Report for the exemplary care we provide our residents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," said Lisa Berthold, administrator, The Manor of Novi. "Our exceptional staff, combined with the latest rehabilitation therapies keep us at the forefront of both short-term and long-term care in the Novi area."

Premier Relocations earns award

Mayflower Transit recently honored the individuals with the annual Heart of Quality award, which was created to recognize move coordinators throughout the van line who provide customers with exceptional service.

Stacey Cain, of Premier Relocations LLC in Novi, earned an honorable mention. The recognition acknowledges excellent individual performance as measured by Mayflower's customers on its post-move survey. Winners and honorable mention recipients were chosen within agency size categories in the Mayflower system for their performance during 2012. The award and honorable mention recipients were chosen from the move coordinators at more than 300 domestic Mayflower agencies.

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Ryan Finley	Livonia	March 28

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Winners from February 2013 Photo Contest


Kristina Kahn, 11 years old of Millford with foster dog Coco.

Briana Karalis, 11 years old, of Livonia with dog, Maggie.

Sarah Walrath, 12 years old of South Lyon, with bunny Buggsy.

Cary Ruten, 13 years old, of Westland with cat Bell.

Deadline for submissions: Mail all entry forms to: Scoop The Newshound, 41304 Concept Drive Plymouth, MI 48170. All entries need to be received at the Observer & Eccentric Media by close of the business day on March 29 or email your form to: cbjordan@hometownlife.com. Winners to be announced in a future Scoop's Hound Dog Highlights.



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Car Report

C-Max is achieving Ford's goal: Taking big bite out of hybrids



By Dale Buss

Ford's new C-Max hybrids are achieving the corporate aim of eating into the dominance of Toyota Prius in the segment, so Ford is doubling down with an extension of the popular TV-advertising campaign that launched the vehicle.

Ford's share of the U.S. hybrid market grew by nearly 9 percentage points between December 2011 and December 2012, mostly from the October launch of C-Max, the company said, while Toyota's share of hybrids dropped by 8 percentage points even though last year was the first complete year on the market for the company's expanded line of Prius models.

Additionally, initial sales data show that C-Max is stealing hybrid sales away from other brands at an impressive clip: Its conquest rate is about 64 percent, with Prius and the Honda CR-V ranking as the top nameplates abandoned by customers in favor of C-Max.

"We clearly sought to go head-to-head with Prius" in introducing C-Max, Ford's first nameplate reserved only for electrified vehicles, C.J. O'Donnell, marketing and strategy manager for Ford Electrified Vehicles, told me. "C-Max is, all around, just a better car."

To that end, of course, Ford's first ads for C-Max last fall made direct comparisons in fuel economy, passenger roominess and other areas with Prius V, the slightly larger version of Prius that Toyota introduced last year.

Soon, C-Max advertising — retaining the "La Linea" character introduced in

its first spot — will pivot to some playful poetry readings designed to highlight C-Max features. C-Max pops up in the new ABC reality cooking show The Taste and will be a key part of challenges on the March 8 episode. The car also will be visible this season in the course of Ford's regular sponsorship of American Idol on Fox.

"Unlike typical launches, we're going to continue to invest in 2013 in C-Max to extend the launch," O'Donnell said. "Spending in media and creative and on grass-roots efforts will remain strong for nine to 12 months since the introduction rather than the typical three to six months."

O'Donnell said that Ford is encouraged by the fact that the C-Max Hybrid and the C-Max Energi plug-in hybrid, launched at the same time, have been helping the company exceed its usual market share in important electrified-vehicle markets such as California.

At the same time, about one-third of C-Max sales are occurring in the Midwest, typically among the worst markets for hybrids — but, of course, the historical

strength of the Ford franchise.

"Leading with this technology is a great entree to markets where we're striving to improve share, on the East and West coasts, but it's great to be able to use it to retain our strength in the Midwest also," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell said that one of the most gratifying aspects of the sales patterns for C-Max so far is that the car has been able to steal significant numbers of customers who owned CR-V, Honda's compact SUV. "It's packaged with enough versatility to compete with that segment," he noted.

In fact, within the Ford brand, many C-Max buyers migrate down in size from previous versions of Escape and Escape Hybrid — even though there's a significantly refreshed new Escape SUV available now — as well as move from the Ford Focus compact sedan.

While Toyota has focused its electrified-vehicle efforts on conventional hybrids, and General Motors has emphasized its Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid, after a long and unspectacular record of offering conventional-hybrid versions of some of its most popular conventional models Ford has begun determinedly fielding a wide variety of new electrified vehicles. At



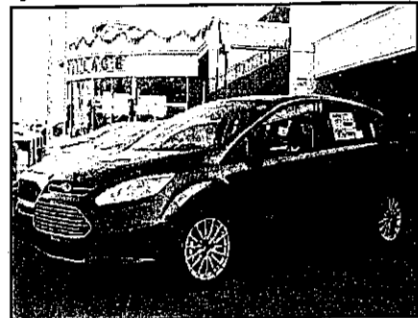
Battery packs for C-Max come together at Ford's plant in Rawsonville.

this point they include not only the two C-Max models but also the Focus Electric.

"As a company, we're now second [in electrified vehicles] and pecking at Toyota because of the range of our products," O'Donnell said. "We don't have a single entry that we're trying to put all our weight behind. We provide choices to customers in what electrified product best suits their driving styles and personal needs."

Still, about 70 percent of electrified vehicles sold by Ford this year will be conventional hybrids, he said; about 25 percent will be C-Max or Focus Energi plug-in hybrids; and the remaining 5 percent will be Focus Electric.

Ford accelerated its plans for C-Max as it reported that its U.S. February sales grew nine percent with 195,822 vehicles sold. That marked Ford's best February sales in six years — with cars up six percent, utilities up 21 percent and trucks up four percent.



Ford's C-Max is taking a bite out of Prius sales in the hybrid market.

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