

Novi News

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Electronics recycling offered

The Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County and Vintage Tech Recyclers have teamed up to host three e-waste collection events this year. The first one will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 22, at Power Park, 45175 W. 10 Mile, Novi.

Accepted items include televisions, VCRs, DVD players, game consoles, computers, laptops, monitors, printers, copy machines and much more.

Last year, RRRASOC and Vintage Tech collected and processed nearly 83.5 tons of obsolete e-waste. That may sound like just a pile of old broken TVs and printers, but it represents 11,543 gallons of gas conserved; 2,849 trees saved; 109,115 plastic bottles recycled; and 485,650 aluminum cans recycled.

Electronic waste makes up about 2 percent of the materials that are placed in landfills.

For more information, visit www.rrra-soc.org or call 248-208-2270.

Jennifer Smith credits the school community for her success



Novi School District Teacher of the Year Jennifer Smith (left) is congratulated Monday by her Principal Sue Burnham after getting the award in her Village Oaks classroom. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By Lonnie Huhman
Staff Writer

Teacher of the Year is a big individual honor for Village Oaks Elementary School teacher Jennifer Smith, but it's one that she shares with her fellow staff at Novi Community Schools.

"I'm overwhelmed by this honor," said Smith, a first-grade teacher. "Everyone here gives 110 percent each day, so I feel honored to be recognized. One big reason I'm here and enjoy my job so much is because of

the students, parents, teachers and everyone involved with Novi schools."

The Novi Educational Foundation, with the support of The Suburban Collection, presented the award to Smith on Monday. This partnership has been recognizing Novi teachers for excellence for the past 11 years.

"Outstanding educators like Jennifer Smith are so important to our community," said Bob MacKenzie, general manager of a number of The Suburban Collection dealerships, including Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep/Ram of

Novi. "We are pleased to recognize her achievements and reward her with a new vehicle (free lease) for this coming year. It is our way of saying thank you to the top teacher who make so much of a difference to the children in the communities where we do business."

The other nominees were Angie Southworth, a world language teacher at Novi Middle School, and Don Crocket, an advance placement biology teacher at Novi High School. "Novi Community Schools is

blessed with so many wonderful, passionate teachers," said Geoff Wood, NEF chairperson. "Every year it is very challenging to pick just one teacher for the Suburban Collection/Novi Educational Foundation Teacher of the Year. This award allows us to bring recognition to the high-caliber teaching professionals within Novi Community Schools and the leadership they demonstrate each day in the classroom."

What made Smith stand out is

See TEACHER, Page A2

Molnar to challenge Kowall in GOP primary

So far, no one has filed to run against either Crawford

By Philip Allmen
Staff Writer

Republican Mike Kowall faces at least one challenger in the Aug. 5 primary election as Republican Ron Molnar of White Lake filed last week for the state Senate 15th District seat. Kowall, finishing his first term, previously announced his plans seeking re-election.

Molnar has not held political office in the past, although he has run several times. He ran for the state Senate 27th District seat four years ago while living in Genesee County. He also faced Mike Rogers for the U.S. Congress two years ago. He recently moved to White Lake, he said. The 15th District includes western Oakland County.

"We could use some fresh leadership," Molnar said. "I've seen what Gov. (Rick) Snyder has done with the business approach. We can use that. I think



Molnar

I can serve the district well. We have a long ways to go."

Molnar, a self-described "Ron Paul Republican" when he ran against Rogers, said too often politics have gotten in the way of doing what's best for Michigan. He likes Snyder's approach, he said, much better.

"As far as getting things done and getting people to work together, it's a good way of doing it," he said. "The political way is not a good way to do things. We all need to grow a little bit and improve."

Milford resident Mike Maddock issued a press release last month stating he was considering a run as a Republican for Kowall's seat. Responding to an

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Novi firefighters work on tamping down a hot spot as they continue efforts to extinguish a fire that destroyed six units of Olde Orchard condos March 12. The fire, which began in the morning, destroyed all six units and slightly injured one female occupant with minor burns. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fire destroys Novi condo building

By Lonnie Huhman
Staff Writer

A fire March 12 that left one person slightly injured destroyed a Novi condominium building.

"The fire was called in at approximately 9:36 that morning for reported smoke and fire at 24523 Old Orchard Court, Building 15," said Jeff

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TEACHER

Continued from Page A1

her consistency in making every day in the classroom productive and fun. She prides herself on hard work, but said the resources in the school district give her a big boost.

"I try to do my best in everything that I do, but it helps a lot to be in such a great district," she said.

Her work hasn't gone unnoticed by school leaders, either.

"Visit Jenn Smith's classroom and you will see a teacher and students hard at work," said Dr. Steve Matthews, superintendent. "She cares for her students, works hard to help them find success and creates a classroom that helps them develop the skills they need. Teachers like Mrs.

"I try to do my best in everything that I do, but it helps a lot to be in such a great district."

JENNIFER SMITH
Novi teacher of the year

Smith make a tremendous difference in the lives of her students. This recognition is well-deserved."

The process to pick a teacher starts with an application, which is then reviewed by the NEF's Executive Board. It also solicits additional feedback from parents, students and the community and then makes the final decision.

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Students of Village Oaks teacher Jennifer Smith read the good news about her award. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CORRECTION

Last Thursday's editorial headlined "Michigan's lousy roads are just a disgrace" should have stated the amount of revenue derived from the state gasoline tax of 19 cents per gallon levied on each gallon has dropped.

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DTE installing solar panels along I-96

By Diane Gale Andreassi
Staff Writer

Let it shine. Drivers along I-96 east of Milford Road may have noticed some 3,000 solar panels being installed near Old Plank Road in Lyon Township. It is DTE's biggest solar energy project so far, DTE spokesman Scott Simons said. When the project is complete, it will provide 818 kilowatts of electricity, enough to power about 150 homes.

"It's hard to follow an electron, but they generally follow the path of least resistance and will likely be used by area residents and businesses," he said.

The panels are built on property owned by Milford Tree Farm. Simons said DTE has a 20-year contract with the property owner, which includes an up-front payment and annual payments through the contract. He declined to share specifics on the agreement. The property owner wasn't available for comment.

The \$3.5 million investment in Lyon covers



Chris Schear, an electrician for Ranck Electric, helps guide into place one of the 3,000 solar panels that are going up in Lyon Township along I-96 near Old Plank Road. Each panel should be able to generate, at peak wattage, about 700 watts of electricity. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

installation, construction and design. Simons said the project should be completed by May.

Lyon's project is the 19th solar energy plan in southeast Michigan. Others include Ford Assembly in Wayne; Monroe County Community College; Mercy High School in Farmington Hills; and a rooftop installation at Blue Cross Blue Shield in downtown Detroit.

While the location won't produce a tremendous amount of energy compared to traditional

energy producers, like the Fermi nuclear plant that puts off 1,100 megawatts, it is a step in making headway in alternative methods, Simons said, adding that this is DTE Energy's largest solar energy project in the state.

The state Legislature has mandated DTE and other energy companies reach a 10-percent renewable energy goal by 2015. The Lyon solar energy is "eight-tenths of the total needed," Simons said. More solar renewal

projects are on the way and at least one will be bigger than the Lyon solar site, he added.

The Lyon solar project has a lot of visibility on the north side of Interstate 96, west of Old Plank Road. Letting the public know the company is committed to renewable energy production is key, Simons said. DTE started its solar initiative in 2009.

The location is good, because "it gets a lot of sun, we had an interested property owner and it has high visibility, so people know we are involved with renewable energy," he said.

Most DTE solar energy partners are with large organizations.

"Less than a handful are with individuals," Simons said. "We aren't really looking for partners, but if people think they have a rooftop or adequate amount of ground to host a solar energy project, we are more than willing to hear from them."

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UPDATES FROM CITY OF NOVI

Novi recognized for environmental leadership

The city of Novi has been recognized for environmental leadership as part of the Michigan Green Communities Challenge, which measures progress in implementing energy, economic development, and environmental improvements.

Novi achieved silver status for exemplary action in a variety of categories, including:

- » installation of 24 270-watt overhead light fixtures to a new LED fixture to realize a reduction of over 4,000 watts of electricity per use;
- » replacement of Novi Civic Center boiler (20-plus years old) to increase efficiency from 70 percent to 89 percent;
- » installation of water bottle filling stations to divert thousands of plastic water bottles from

landfills;

» investment in motion sensing lighting to reduce the amount of wasted electricity from lights being left on for long unoccupied periods of time; and

» incorporating recycled-content building materials into projects including carpet, furniture, and tile.

The Michigan Green Communities Challenge, launched in 2009, emphasizes energy-efficiency projects in an effort to help local governments prepare for and make the best use of federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds. It is supported by the Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Economic Development Corp. Energy Office, Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Townships Association.

The city of Novi offers

opportunities for citizens to participate in environmentally friendly annual events, including Arbor Day, River Day, Earth Day and more. To learn more about "green" practices, visit www.cityofnovi.org and click on the Novi Goes Green icon.

On the Road

Enjoy taking day trips, but not the planning and driving part? Mark your calendars for Wednesday, April 30, and join tour guides and local experts Kathy Crawford and Margi Karp-Opperer as they lead an informative and enjoyable day trip to Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester - including a special docent tour, luncheon and a play at Meadow Brook Theatre.

This cultural and entertaining day will depart from the Novi Civic Center at 9 a.m. and return approximately 5 p.m.. The cost of the trip is

\$87, which covers deluxe transportation, lunch and admission to *The Andrews Brothers* show. Availability is limited and registration can be done by calling the Novi Library Administration Office at 248-869-7204. No refunds will be accepted after March 24.

The day will start with a guided tour of the historic estate built by one of the automotive aristocracy's most remarkable women. Lunch will follow in the elegant dining room and before traveling to Meadow Brook Theatre to see the play *The Andrews Brothers*.

For more information about the On the Road event, visit www.novi-library.org or call 248-349-0720.

Tech Talk classes

City of Novi Older Adult Services is of-

See UPDATES, Page A3



The Novi Fire Department responds to a blaze at Novi's Olde Orchard Condos. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FIRE

Continued from Page A1

Johnson, Novi's Fire Operations/EMS director.

According to Johnson, a six-unit condo was involved. He said Novi Fire and Police crews evacuated all tenants and began attacking the fire.

"One female was transported with what's believed to be minor

burns to Providence Park Novi," Johnson said.

Emergency crews got the fire under control, but it appears that the building is destroyed.

Johnson said the fire marshal and Oakland County Sheriff Fire Investigation unit will look for a cause, but the preliminary cause looks to be a candle.

The Farmington Hills Fire Department assisted, while the Northville

City Fire Department was called to help cover Novi with other emergency calls.

"At this point, all six units are displaced and we are working with the condo management to relocate them," Johnson said.

Two families required assistance from the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

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PRIMARY

Continued from Page A1

email last week, Maddock didn't indicate if he's made any further plans for the race.

In the state House 38th District campaign, Oakland County Commissioner Kaun Crawford of Novi filed to succeed Hugh Crawford, her husband, who currently serves in the position. No one else has filed for that seat. The district includes Novi, among others.

For the county commission, no one has filed against Hugh Crawford for the Novi seat his wife currently holds.

Candidates must file no later than April 22 to run on the partisan ballot. Locally, the winner of the August primary typically wins the Nov. 4 general election on Nov. 4.

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Library program highlights women's league

By Julie Brown
Staff Writer

Betty Ruth Yahr, who died in 2010 at age 87, played right field for the Rockford Peaches in 1946, part of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

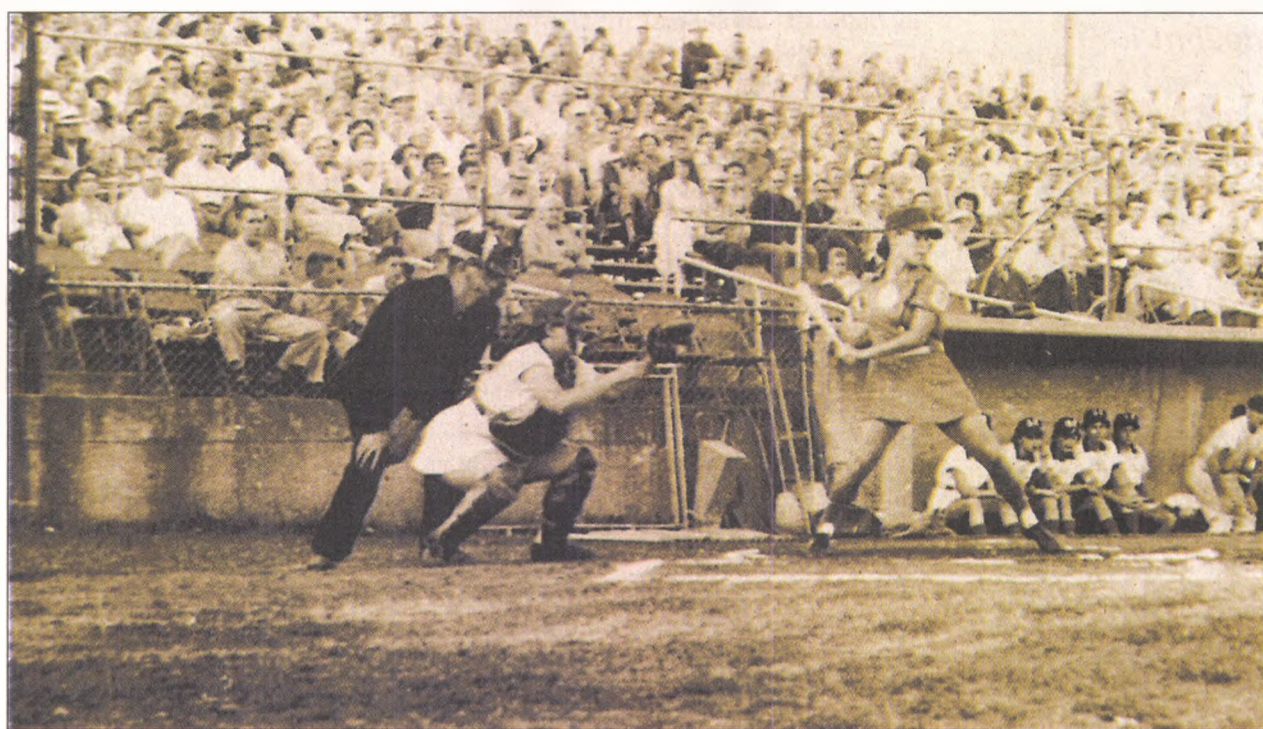
Yahr was interviewed for Canton's Township local access cable channel in the 1990s by historian Virginia Bailey Parker, a Canton resident.

"She was just delightful," Parker said. Parker had earlier been at the home of Terry Bennett, Canton Township clerk, and discovered Yahr was Bennett's aunt.

"I got all excited because that was one of the teams featured in *A League of Their Own*," Parker said.

Parker will share Yahr's story at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, in a Novi Public Library program, "Summer at the Ball Park: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League."

Yahr grew up in Ann Arbor and played ama-



This photo shows a Grand Rapids home game. CAROL SHELDON COLLECTION

teur ball there. Her sports career began on the sandlots of Ann Arbor and through high school as a member of the Girls Athletic Club. She graduated from high school in 1941.

Her scouting report, contract, pay stubs, baseball glove and team hat, along with other memorabilia, were donated to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. These items are in

the museum and library there.

After professional ball, she played for a local semi-pro team, Dad's Root Beer, and continued coaching and playing recreational ball.

Parker's presentation at the Novi library will cover the AAGPBL and the history of women's baseball in general. "Then I'm going to share some of Betty's stories," she said.

Parker will share oral history suggestions for listeners' own families.

"I did a lot of studying about the baseball league," she said, adding that became easier with Internet advances, including a website for the league.

"These women were pioneers. They carved out a place for women in sports history," Parker said.

The league ran 1943-54 and was strong in the Midwest, with teams in Grand Rapids, Muskegon and Kalamazoo.

Parker is an award-winning author, oral historian, speaker and writing coach. She has written three books, has been a columnist, newsletter editor for professional organizations and a freelance writer. She served on the Michigan Oral History Association Board of Directors for 10 years.

Call 248-349-0720 or visit the library website at www.novilibrary.org for reservations.

jcbrown@hometownlife.com

UPDATES

Continued from Page A2

fering Tech Talk classes for adults 50 years and older who would like to become more tech-savvy by learning how to use tablets, smartphones and applications.

One-day classes are held 6:15-8:15 p.m. each Tuesday at the Novi Civic Center (45175 10 Mile). Each class is \$15 per resident and \$18 per nonresident. Registration is required and available at cityofnovi.org or in person at the Older Adult Services office inside the civic center.

Upcoming topics include:

All about Apps (Applications) and Tablets -

Tuesday, March 25
E-book Readers: Concept, Comparison and How To Operate - Tuesday, April 1

For those who already understand the basics of technology and are looking for new uses and helpful hints, the Bits and Bytes Cafe offers the opportunity to gain valuable information, free of charge. Once a month, on Thursdays, the cafe is open to adults 50 and older to play games, investigate new websites and learn from others. Refreshments are provided. The Bits and Bytes Cafe is located at the Meadowbrook Activity Center, 25075 Meadowbrook Road. The cafe will be open 10-11:30 a.m. Feb. 20 and March 20.

For more information

regarding Tech Talk classes or the Bits and Bytes Cafe, contact Older Adult Services at 248-347-0414. To learn more about other classes for adults 50 and older, visit cityofnovi.org.

To learn more about what's happening in Novi, visit www.cityofnovi.org.

Atrium features artwork

For the second time, the city of Novi is partnering with Cassell and Associates to help bring awareness to survivors of traumatic brain injuries by showcasing their artwork in the Novi Civic Center Atrium through Tuesday, March 25. Proceeds from the artwork sales will be donated to the Brain

Injury Association of Michigan.

The clients of Cassell and Associates, whose work helps brain injury survivors, were inspired by Michigan's many iconic landscapes, architectural landmarks and wildlife species while creating "Made in the Mitten" themed works of art. Twenty-seven artists will be featured in the exhibit, including avid outdoorsman named Donald, who was inspired to create his pieces by his love for his home state and the freedom he feels when he's in Michigan's great outdoors.

For more information about the Cassell and Associates show, call the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services De-

partment at 248-347-0400.

Pistol safety class

The Novi Police Department will be offering a civilian pistol safety class from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 5, at the Novi Police Department Training Center, 45125 10 Mile. The course fulfills both the classroom and shooting requirements to obtain a Michigan Concealed Pistol License.

Registration forms are available online at cityofnovi.org and at the Novi Police Department. Completed registration forms and the \$200 course fee (cash or money order), may be returned to the Novi Police Department. Class size is limited, and all partici-

pants are subject to a criminal background check.

After lunch, participants will move to the Novi Firearms Training Center to complete the course. Students must bring their own equipment, including a personal handgun, 100 rounds of ammunition, safety glasses, shooter's earmuffs or ear plugs, a pen or pencil, a baseball cap, and wear loose comfortable clothing to participate in the course. Participants must be 21 years old and do not have to be a Novi resident to attend.

For more information, visit cityofnovi.org or contact Sgt. Michael Warren at mwarren@cityofnovi.org or 248-921-9843.

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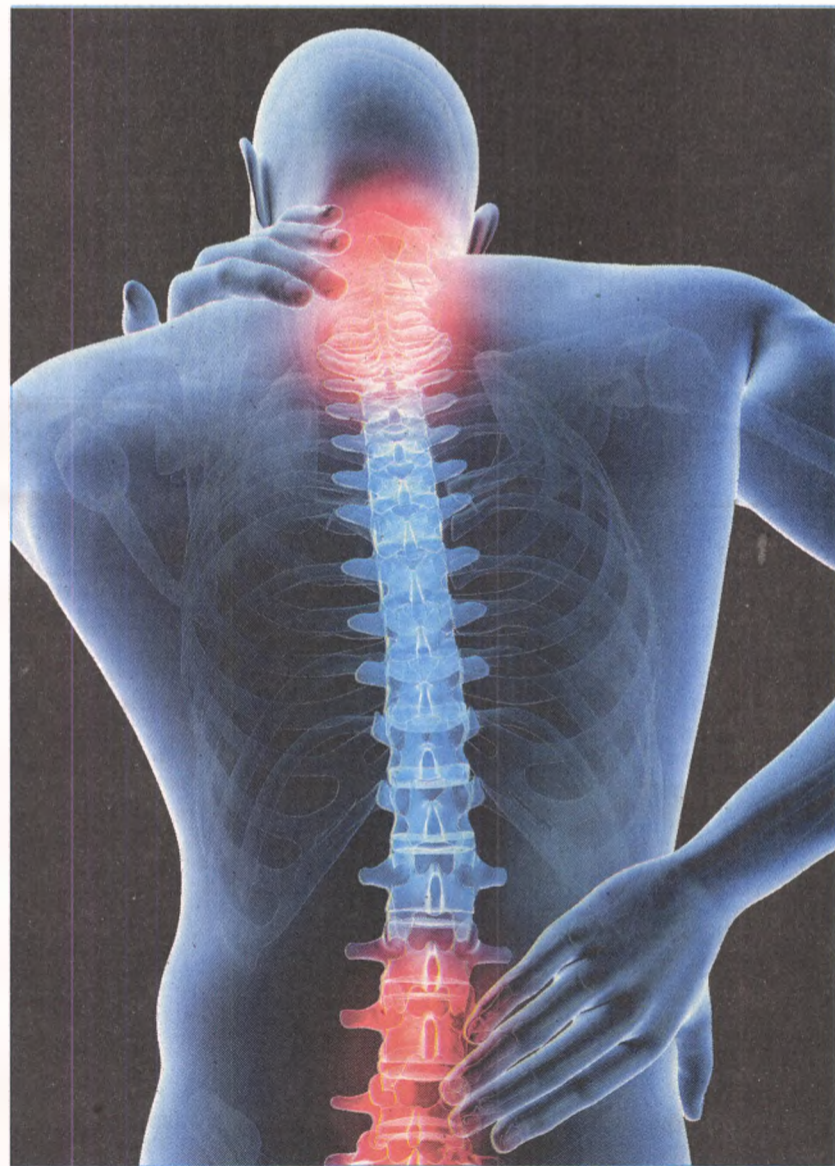


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District's diversity is one of its strengths

What's it like to be different? I have been fortunate my whole life. I am not truly different. I look and sound like a majority of the people around me. The only thing about me that is different is my walk.

When I walk, I limp. It wasn't always this way. Up through fifth grade, I walked just fine - no limp at all.

Between the summer of my fifth grade and my sixth grade years, I developed a pain in my right hip. Initially, I was told it was just growing pains. Then I was diagnosed with a deep bone bruise. I was instructed to take three hot baths a day. So for the next six weeks, I was the cleanest kid on my block.

Still the pain persisted. A visit to a different doctor



Steve Matthews
SUPER TALK

finally identified the problem - Legg Perthes disease. My hip had stopped growing. Instead, it was starting to weaken. The "cure" was to keep all the weight off of my hip until it started growing again.

For two years, I wore a plastic and metal brace. Finally, I was told I was all right - but in truth, I was not.

When I received the OK to ditch the brace, I discovered that my right leg was now smaller than my left; it was shorter and weaker. Consequently, I limped. Oh, there have been attempts to correct my limp. They shortened my other leg. They op-

erated to lengthen my hips. I've replaced my right hip three times. Still, I limp.

This was how I have been different. In truth, it has been such a small thing. I limped. Big deal.

But at various times in my life, it was a big deal. I was different than other people. In middle school, "friends" laughed at me. Instead of being chosen to be on teams, I was now one of the kids who was left out. In high school, my PE teacher pointed out to me that I ran "funny." Being different became something that I didn't want to be.

Yet, through it all, there were those people in my life that helped me gain perspective. They took time to treat me like I mattered. They asked me to participate. They mentored me. They valued me for who I was and

did not discount me because I was the kid who limped.

We are trying to create a district that values people for who they are and does not discount them because of what they look like or what they sound like. We call this our social justice effort. It is a mission in our district to ensure that every individual has a voice and that every individual is valued.

We have been at this work for a long time, but with intensity for the past three years. We have provided training to our administrators and teachers. We have provided training for our secretaries, food service workers and bus drivers.

We want all staff to understand the importance of and have skills in building positive relationships with students and responding to all students' voices. Every

student deserves to be in a place that has adults who value them and treats them like they matter.

There will be times when we fail; when we do or say something that communicates the opposite of what we say we are trying to do.

When that happens, let us know. We want to get better. We want to be a place where all students feel important, valued and recognized.

Our diversity - the way we are different - is a strength in this district. We want it to continue to be so. In order to do that, we are working to help everyone who is a part of our district develop the skills they need listen, advocate, and understand.

Steve Matthews is superintendent of Novi Community Schools. He can be reached at 248-449-1204 or smatthews@novi.k12.mi.us.

Novi inducts 64 into National Honor Society

At total of 64 students from Novi High School were inducted into membership of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held at the school March 10. Members were selected by a Faculty Council for meeting high standards of scholarship, service, leadership and character.

Vidhi Bamzai, a 2008 Novi High School graduate and former member of Novi's National Honor Society, was the keynote speaker. After graduating from U-M, Vidhi starting teaching in a Detroit elementary school with the Teach for America program. Her speech emphasized the importance of social justice and helping those in need.

"National Honor Society members are chosen for and then expected to continue their exemplary contributions to the school and community," said Barbara Clift, chapter adviser. "They are the leaders in the school who display honesty, integrity, compassion and scholarship."

The Novi High School Chapter has been active since 1968.

The National Honor Society ranks as one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations for high school students. Chapters exist in more than 60 percent of the nation's high schools and, since 1921, millions of students have been selected for membership.

Slave or factory worker? Novi district stops asking student essay question

By Cal Stone
Staff Writer

"Explain whether you would have preferred to have been a slave or a factory worker in the pre-Civil War era."

That essay question will no longer be asked of Novi Middle School students after a mother complained to the district that her daughter was upset by her classmates' answers.

In an online story posted by WWJ, Tina James said that her daughter was offended because the "majority of the class felt that they would rather be a slave than to be a factory worker. And she was just extremely confused by that, knowing what

slaves went through, she couldn't understand why anyone would choose that."

The students' rationale, according to James, was that slaves had free housing, food and protection. But she and her daughter argue that those things were not free.

James met with Stephanie Schriener, the school principal, without satisfaction. She then emailed Dr. Steve Matthews, the district's superintendent.

"I spoke to my middle school principal, my assistant superintendent for academics and my director of student growth about this question," Matthews said.

"That is when I discovered that this was part of an Argumentative Writing Assessment."

There were three questions:

1. Explain why Andrew Jackson was a good or a bad president.
2. Explain whether you would have pre-

ferred to have been a slave or a factory worker in the pre-Civil War era.

3. Explain whether the benefits of Manifest Destiny outweighed its negative consequences.

"Question 2 was from the Michigan Content Expectations for eighth-grade social studies, which state students should be able to explain the differences in the lives of free blacks (including those who escaped slavery) with the lives of free whites and enslaved peoples," Matthews said.

After learning that this question was being asked, he made the decision to remove it from this assessment.

"In my opinion, the word 'preferred' is problematic," Matthews said. "No one would prefer to be a slave. No one would prefer to be a factory worker in the pre-Civil War era. However, asking students to compare those two stations in life is not appropriate."

Matthews says the school teachers at the middle school are committed educators who were attempting to get students to think. They understood that slavery was awful and were not making a value judgment, but rather were attempting to help students explore life in pre-Civil War America.

"Slavery is a horrible, degrading institution," Matthews said. "People were owned like cattle or other possessions. We need to help students understand the institution of slavery and its horrible, often life-threatening aspects. Factory workers extremely endured some extremely negative environments, but they were in no way commensurate with or equal to slavery."

Matthews will be reviewing how to address the issue of slavery to make sure to underscore its brutality and its inhumane treatment of African Americans.

School district schedules bond information meetings

The Novi Community School District is asking voters to consider a \$70.9 million bond proposal May 6. The bond proposal results in no increase in the current millage rate. The bond focuses on sustaining the district's capital assets to provide the highest quality educational experience for its students.

The community is invited to meetings where information about the proposed bond will be discussed. All meetings listed are open to the community:

- March 19, 10:15 a.m., Novi Public Library, Coffee with the Superintendent
- March 19, 6 p.m.,

- Parkview Elementary School, PTO meeting March 20, 6:30 p.m., Novi Meadows Elementary School, PTO meeting March 21, 9 a.m., Deerfield Elementary School, DCC meeting March 24, 7 p.m., Village Oaks Elementary School, PTO meeting March 25, 10 a.m., Educational Services Building March 25, 7 p.m., Novi Woods Elementary School, PTO meeting March 26, 10 a.m., Orchard Elementary School, PTO meeting April 2, 9 a.m., Novi High School, Parent Council meeting

- April 14, 7 p.m., Novi High School-Fine Arts Wing, Band Boosters meeting April 16, 6:30 p.m., Novi High School-Room 160, Athletic Boosters meeting April 21, 6:30 p.m., Novi Public Library, Coffee with the Superintendent April 22, 7 p.m., Village Oaks Elementary School, Media Center April 23, 10:15 a.m., Novi Public Library, Coffee with the Superintendent April 23, 7 p.m., Novi Middle School, Media Center April 29, time and location to be determined.



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Novi Woods students applaud the start of Milk and Cookies Night as the school held a session of storybook readings to kick off March is Reading Month. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Milk and Cookies Night

Susan LaRue (left) and Mayumi Naruse take turns March 13 reading a story in Japanese and English during the kickoff to March is Reading Month at Novi Woods. On that night, the school had its annual Milk and Cookies Night, featuring lots of story readings in various rooms, kids already in the pajamas and, of course, milk and cookies.

NOVI SCHOOL BRIEFS

Novi High Talent Show

Novi High School's fourth annual International Talent Show will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, March 21, in the school auditorium. All proceeds are donated this year to The International Justice Mission. Last year, more than 300 people attended the event, which raised more than \$2,000 donated to The Hunger Project.

The show will feature Novi High School students performing in acts representing various countries. Some of the many acts include dances, soloists, instrumentals and more. Following the performances, a food court will be set up where attendees can sample international foods.

The production was organized by Novi High School's IB Diploma candidates. This event is part of their CAS (creativity, action, and service) requirement for earning the IB diploma. The students planned all aspects of the show from recruiting to advertising, ticket and program preparation, and emcee duties.

In addition, many of the IB students are performing in the show under the direction of their staff coordinator, Barbara Clift.

Tickets are \$7 per person and can be purchased at the door.

Boosters present wine tasting

Novi Athletic Boosters club invites parents and other interested adults to attend the second annual Wine Tasting event 7:30-10:30 p.m. Saturday, March 22, at the Meadowbrook Country Club (on south side of Eight Mile, west of Haggerty Road).

Guests will enjoy a variety of specially selected wines from around the world, along with hors d'oeuvres. Wine experts will be in attendance to enhance the experience. There will be a silent auction at the event and wine case sales.

For those wishing to catch the second round of the NCAA basketball tournament, there will be a separate cash bar area to watch the games.

All proceeds from the event will be used to support high school and middle school student-athletes.

Tickets are \$40 per person and will be available in Room 160 at the high school. Credit card purchases may be made by calling 248-642-4100 during business hours Monday through Friday (ask for Amy) or calling 248-982-0929 or 248-756-5833 evenings and weekends.

Preschool registration beginning

Novi Community Education Preschool has begun registration for new students for 2014-15.

To register, parents should bring: a completed registration form, a copy of the child's birth certificate and immunization records. The registration fee is \$50 and nonrefundable.

A class schedule along with prices and payment dates may be found on the Novi Community Education website at www.novi.k12.mi, by

looking under Community Education and scrolling to the preschool site.

For more information, contact Novi Community Education Preschool at 248-449-1713.

Calling all 2014-15 kindergartners

It's time for kindergarten registration for children who will have reached age 5 by Oct. 1. Contact your neighborhood Novi elementary school office for more information.

Tuition Expedition 2014

The Walled Lake Consolidated School District Foundation for Excellence, for its ninth consecutive year, has launched Tuition Expedition, a 50/50 raffle for post-secondary education funds. The winner may also choose a 40-percent cash option instead of the scholarship. The grand prize drawing is set for March 24 at the Walled Lake Consolidated School

District Reflections Celebration at Clifford Smart Middle School. The winner need not be present.

No more than 500 tickets will be sold at \$100 each and purchaser must be U.S. resident and at least 18 years of age. Funds will be paid (in the form of scholarship funds) directly to any U.S. "eligible educational institution" as defined by the IRS.

Winner has up to 20 years to assign and split the funds among and up to four students, but once disbursement has begun, must be used within four years.

The winner may also choose cash equal to 40 percent of total ticket proceeds in a lump sum (less 25 percent federal income tax withholding).

Tickets may be purchased online by visiting the Foundation for Excellence website at www.wlcsd.org/foundation.cfm. Official rules and additional raffle details can also be

found on the website. Checks may also be made payable to Foundation for Excellence for ticket purchases and mailed to its office at 850 Ladd Road, Bldg. D, Walled Lake, MI 48390.

"Tuition Expedition 2014 exemplifies the Foundation for Excellence mission to enhance and support the education of Walled Lake Consolidated School District's students," said Michelle Bianco, executive director of the Foundation for Excellence.

For more information, visit www.wlcsd.org/foundation.cfm or contact Bianco at 248-956-2116.

Green Gala on March 29

The Novi Educational Foundation has also adopted the Leader in Me program as its major fundraising initiative and proceeds from the March 29 Green Gala will aid that cause.

The NEF's vision is to

fill the district with students who are responsible, show initiative, are creative, know how to set goals and meet them, get along with people of various backgrounds and cultures and can resolve conflicts and problems.

The Green Gala will be held at Lyon Oaks, 52551 Pontiac Trail, Wixom (248-347-9200). It will be an evening of fun and excitement in support of Novi Community Schools and its children, which includes casino night gambling; strolling dinner and desserts; silent auction and raffle; music and dancing by DJ Don; strolling magician and cash bar. Participation will help the Novi Educational Foundation continue providing the Leader in Me program; instructional enhancements; program grants; and student scholarships.

Tickets are \$110 and \$1,000. New this year, ticket sales are limited, and each ticket provides a reserved seat. Purchase tickets online at <http://www.novi-educationalfoundation.org/2014-green-gala>.

chase tickets online at <http://www.novi-educationalfoundation.org/2014-green-gala>.

Novi company helps families save on college costs

Novi-based Michigan College Funding LLC will host a free workshop on funding college education 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Farmington Community Library.

The speaker will be Robert Hoger, certified college planning specialist with Michigan College Funding LLC, will be discussing such topics as how to send your kids to the school of their dreams without going broke; how to increase your eligibility for aid; how to find scholarships and grants.

Admission is free but seating is limited by the size of the room, so please call 248-662-1300 to reserve your seats now.

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Educators' plan: More dollars in classrooms without raising taxes

By Karen Smith
Staff Writer

A coalition of superintendents, school leaders, parents and other public school advocates is proposing an alternative school funding plan it says will put more money in K-12 classrooms without raising taxes.

The "Classrooms and Kids" budget, as it is called, builds on Gov. Rick Snyder's recent budget proposal by reducing or eliminating \$186.2 million in line-item categorical programs in the School Aid Fund to help provide an additional \$167 per student in base funding.

The categorical items are mostly programs that reward performance and the adoption of cost-effective practices but also include some special programs.

The proposal would also require an extra \$88 million above Snyder's budget, with \$34 million coming from the budget surplus and \$54 million from the general fund.

This is the first time in years a large segment of the educational community has come together to proactively offer an alternative to the governor's proposal.

It is supported by the Michigan Association of School Boards, the Michigan Association of School Administrators, the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Tri-County Alliance for Public Education.

"The 'Classrooms and Kids' budget recognizes that districts have various needs they need to address to support their students," Livonia Public Schools Superintendent Randy Liepa said. "This is a budget for our schools that is supported

NOVI'S CHIEF RESPONDS

Dr. Steve Matthews, superintendent of the Novi Community School District, offered the following response to this initiative.

"This proposal provides districts with flexibility. Instead of giving money with strings attached, it allows districts to make decisions that are best for the students in our district."

"As we review this proposal, it would have very little impact to us financially. However, we would not have to jump through hoops to receive state aid. Some categoricals - money designated for specific purposes that we currently receive - would be rolled into our per-pupil allocation."

"In my opinion, this proposal makes sense. Continue to hold us accountable, but let the districts identify how to wisely invest our state aid to benefit our students."

by virtually everyone in education because it was created by those of us on the frontlines of education who see the needs of our children."

Darryle Buchanan, former president of the Southfield school board, said while the governor's proposal is a step in the right direction, the 'Classrooms and Kids' budget better meets districts' needs. "School boards across the state have a pulse on the needs of our schools and the outcomes expected by our communities and this budget allows us to address those needs," he said.

The plan was announced Feb. 27 during a press conference at the

state capitol. State Rep. John Walsh (R-Livonia), speaker pro tem, said he plans to meet the first week in April with Liepa to learn the details of the plan. He said while he likes the governor's budget proposal, he also likes the concept of using categoricals. "I think we can definitely do something there," he said.

Flexibility, stability

Liepa said the "Classrooms and Kids" budget proposal would provide an infusion of additional dollars into local schools, while also giving districts the flexibility to use the money to best meet their needs and providing stability to maintain programs from year to year.

Here's how it would work: Snyder proposed a per-pupil increase of \$111 for minimum foundation districts and an \$83 increase for districts above the minimum foundation. The "Classrooms and Kids" budget would add and additional \$167 per pupil for all districts, plus an additional \$13 per-pupil equity payment for minimum foundation districts.

That would bring the total per-pupil increase to between \$250 and \$291.

That increase would be off-set in some districts by a loss of revenue in categoricals. For example, Livonia Public Schools would lose about \$52 for each student from the elimination of the best practices grants.

Still, the 'Classrooms and Kids' proposal would put an additional \$1 million into LPS' coffers next school year over and above the \$1.2 million Snyder's budget would provide. That's almost enough to make up for the \$2.4 million projected revenue loss from an expected enrollment decline of 300 students.

Not a 'windfall' for districts

"This isn't a big windfall for school districts across the state; we're just trying to maintain existing programs," Liepa said.

The proposal is not a complete redo of the state's school funding model, he said, which would take a lot more time than the approximate two months left before the state adopts its budget for fiscal year 2015, which begins Oct. 1. "But it's a great start to get back into reinvesting dollars into the educational system," he said.

Over the past five years, LPS' foundation grant has been reduced by about \$500, Liepa said. "The 'Classrooms and Kids' proposal really does provide an infusion of funds into the schools that we haven't seen in quite some time."

The foundation grants provide more funding stability and flexibility than categoricals, he said.

Categoricals that would be reduced or eliminated include grants for best practices in management, \$80 million; grants for high academic achievement, \$46.4 million; and the Michigan Virtual University, \$9.38 million.

Liepa, who's vice president of the Tri-County Alliance for Public Education and on the legislative council of the Michigan Association of School Administrators representing metro Detroit districts, said the categoricals are those that "either restrict school districts or don't touch a lot of students." Left intact would be categoricals affecting special education and at-risk students, for example.

He said most districts are already following best practices in management in order to balance their budgets, and that categorical has been reduced over the years, minimizing the incentive.

He said the requested \$34 million is about 3 percent of the state's nearly \$1 billion budget surplus and the \$54 million is what the Legislature approved over and above the governor's budget proposal last year.

The reception to the plan has been good so far, he said. A recent EPIC-MRA poll showed 38 percent of 600 Michigan residents supports having the state budget surplus go to K-12 schools, compared with 36 percent for roads and 11 percent for an income tax cut.

Assessment: 'Classrooms and Kids' proposal 'simple' and 'doable'

Livonia Public Schools Superintendent Randy Liepa, who is vice president of the Tri-County Alliance for Public Education and on the legislative council of the Michigan Association of School Administrators representing metro Detroit districts, answered the following questions about the "Classrooms and Kids" school funding proposal:

How can taxpayers be assured the additional money translates into more learning?

One key point, we are not asking for additional funding from taxpayers or new revenue streams. The proposal is based on the governor's budget and available state funds. Second, as most school districts have experienced declining revenues in recent years, they have implemented tough budget reductions. This proposed increase in the foundation allowance will allow them to maintain and return staff positions and provide other direct resources that will go directly to students, which impacts student learning.

What kind of things can the additional money be spent on?

One of the benefits of the proposal is that it provides flexibility for local districts to utilize the funds as they see their highest priorities, leaving these important decisions to local school decision makers. In one district, they may need to upgrade their science curriculum, while another district may want to reduce class size. Every district has different needs and this proposal keeps the decisions where they need to be, at the local level so these specific needs can be met.

Does the \$250 to \$291 per-pupil increase bring districts back up to where they were before the state instituted cuts with the new administration?

No, but it is a move in the right direction. School leaders appreciate the governor's budget proposal, which begins to move in the direction of restoring this funding, and our proposal takes it one step further.

Is this a band-aid solution to help get districts through the next year or the basis for a more comprehensive school funding plan for the future?

It is an improvement on the current funding system for next year, based on the governor's

proposed budget. There is not time for a comprehensive overhaul of the school funding system prior to this year's budget being finalized. It is based on the governor's budget as the starting point, utilizing existing available funding to provide the first significant improvement in school funding in some time.

Does the MEA support this plan? If not, why not?

The MEA would rather see a comprehensive school reform plan. While we respect their thoughts, this will not occur by May when the state budgets are typically finalized. Our plan can be accomplished by then as it is based on the governor's budget proposal and it provides the first real increase in discretionary funding in some time, which we believe teachers across the state will welcome.

What are the chances this proposal will be approved?

We believe it makes great sense, so we feel there is a very good chance it will be successful. It provides lawmakers with an opportunity to increase funding for local schools for the first time in a significant way in several years. It does so without increasing taxes or finding an alternative revenue stream. It provides local school districts with more flexibility in utilizing their funds and more stability by reallocating funds from categorical funding areas, which aren't always stable. It meets the request of Michigan citizens, who have said K-12 funding is a priority (EPIC-MRA poll within last month says Michigan citizens want to see state budget surplus utilized for schools No. 1, well ahead of tax cuts). It is simple and doable. It is a win-win on many fronts.

What kind of response have you gotten from local legislators?

It is just being laid out for them, but there are so many positive aspects to the plan, we expect that it will be well-received. We also believe that legislators will appreciate a proactive proposal from the school community and it will have even more credibility based on the wide range of school organizations that support the proposal from across the entire state, a coalition not seen for a school funding proposal directly related to an upcoming budget.



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NOVI COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT RENOVATIONS TO INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER
BID PACK #7-SUMMER 2014 141546

SECTION 00020 - ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Novi Community School District (NCS) will receive bids for:

Renovations to Instructional Technology Center
Bid Pack #7 - Summer 2014

Until 2:00 p.m., local time, Thursday, April 17, 2014 in the NCS Administration Building, 25345 Taft Road, Novi, MI 48374 at which time, and place, all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud in the Board room. Bids received after the above stipulated date and time will not be opened, considered or accepted.

Bid documents can be purchased at the offices of Dunn Blue, 1009 W. Maple Road, Clawson, MI 48107 beginning March 24, 2014.

Bid documents will be available to view from the PlanWell Enterprise System on-line by accessing the website at www.dunnblue.com. clicking on "Enter Planroom" then clicking on "Public Planroom".

Prospective bidders are strongly encouraged to attend a Pre-Bid Meeting scheduled for Friday, April 4, 2014 at 2:00 pm at the site located at 25299 Taft Road, Novi, MI 48374.

Prospective bidders must meet the following minimum requirements in order to submit a proposal:

- Must be an established Contractor in Michigan for a minimum of five (5) years
- Have successfully completed a minimum of 3 similar projects within the past five (5) years.
- Must be technically and financially capable to execute a project of size and complexity
- Must be able to provide business and liability insurance, performance and payment bond for work required by the Bid Documents

All bids must be submitted on forms furnished in the Contract Documents and be accompanied by a bidder's bond or a certified or cashier's check payable to Novi Community School District for the sum of not less than five (5%) of the bid amount. All bids must be accompanied by a sworn and notarized statement disclosing any familial relationship that exists between the Owner (bidder) or any employee of the bidder and any member of the NCS School Board, Administration or Staff. Bids received without a bidder's bond, certified or cashier's check, and a sworn and notarized statement of disclosure **WILL BE GROUNDS FOR REJECTION.**

Novi Community School District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, to waive any irregularities therein and accept that bid, which best serves Novi Community School District interest.

Publish: March 20, 2014 LC 00018606 3/8

How to do your federal taxes for free

Looking to save money and time when it comes to your taxes? There's a simple way to do your federal taxes and it's all free. The program, called "Free File," does the hard work for you, either through brand-name software or online forms. And it's available only at IRS.gov.

A simple way to cut fees

Free File is offered through the Internal Revenue Service by 14 of the nation's leading tax software manufacturers. Nearly 40 million people have used this helpful program and, using the most conservative estimate, they've saved \$1.2 billion in fees.

It's available 24/7, giving you the freedom to decide when and how to do your federal taxes. Plus, the software is user-friendly, offering a

familiar Q&A format and the freedom to complete your return at your own pace.

How to sign up

Here's how you start:

- » Go to www.irs.gov/freefile.

- » If your income was \$58,000 or less, select the "Start Free File Now" button.

- » Each of the 14 participating companies has a special offer.

- » Review the company offers or use the "help me find Free File software" tool.

- » Select your tax software that matches your situation.

- » Leave IRS.gov and go to the company's site to begin your taxes.

If your income was more than \$58,000, you can use Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms. Just select the "Free File Fillable Forms" button at

www.irs.gov/freefile. This version is best if you are comfortable preparing your own tax return with more limited help.

Remember to always use e-file to file your returns electronically. You'll get your refund faster when you combine e-file and direct deposit.

Use self-help options on IRS.gov

Free File is just one of many self-help options available at IRS.gov. Wondering about your refund? Just select "Where's My Refund" to track the status of your refund and get a personalized refund date.

Have a tax law question? Visit the Interactive Tax Assistant, IRS Tax Map or Tax Trails. You also can find payment options and request an installment payment agreement online. You can even

order a summary of a previous tax return. When you have questions, make IRS.gov your first stop.

Materials needed to get started

Keep this as a checklist of the items you will need to file your return. The IRS recommends keeping all tax-related documents for three years, in case of an audit. Tracking income-related documents can help you take full advantage of deductions available to you.

- » A copy of last year's tax return

- » Valid Social Security numbers for yourself, spouse and children

- » All income statements, i.e. W-2 forms from all employers

- » Interest/dividend statements, i.e. 1099 forms

- » Form 1099-G showing any state refunds

- » Unemployment compensation amount

- » Social Security benefits

- » Expense receipts for deductions

- » Day care provider's identifying number

Volunteer income tax assistance

There are 13,000 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites nationwide that offer free help to people earning \$52,000 or less. Search "VITA" on IRS.gov for a nearby site.

Tax Counseling for the Elderly, which is operated by AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, offers free help all with priority assistance to people who are age 60 and older. Find a Tax-Aide site at AARP.org or call 888-227-7660. Some VITA/TCE sites even offer Free File.

— Courtesy of Family Features

NOVI POLICE BRIEFS

Drunken driving

A Southgate woman was arrested for drunken driving after Novi Police stopped her for erratic driving.

The Novi Police reported March 2 the woman was driving along Grand River Avenue when she was spotted swerving and making a right-hand turn from the middle lane without using her signal. The police reported smelling intoxicants on the woman and asked her to perform field sobriety tests, which she had trouble doing while losing her balance several times.

She was cited for OWI after registering 0.14 percent blood-alcohol content on the breathalyzer test.

Cellphone stolen

An employee of Bar Louie in Novi reported her iPhone 5s stolen from the bar by an unknown person.

The reported theft happened March 16. The woman wasn't 100-percent sure as to where she set it on the bar, but after looking for it she could not locate it and suspected it was stolen. The phone was turned off and it did not have a tracking application on it, so it is still missing.

Drunken swerving

West Bloomfield woman was arrested for OWI or drunken driving March 15 after she was observed swerving in her lane of traffic.

According to the police report, Novi Police stopped the woman at 12 Mile and Novi roads after they spotted her driving erratically. The woman said she had two drinks and was trying to program her GPS when she swerved. She reportedly nearly fell over twice during the field sobriety tests.

Her blood-alcohol content was a 0.131 percent.

— By Lonnie Huhman

Driver flees police at 100 mph

By Lonnie Huhman
Staff Writer

The chase for a drunken driver started in Novi and ended in Ypsilanti early Monday morning with a 38-year-old man being arrested for OWI, fleeing and eluding and a suspended license.

According to Novi Detective Sgt. Scott Baetens, around 2:40 a.m. the driver was clocked going 87 mph along westbound I-96 when Novi Police spotted him. He was then pulled over and during the stop the police asked the man, the lone occupant, to exit his vehicle.

"He then rolled up his window and fled," Baetens said.

Initially, the driver got up to a 100 mph, but as the chase ensued he slowed down to as low as 30 mph. However, he wouldn't stop. The pursuit crossed jurisdictional lines and Novi called for assis-

tance from the Michigan State Police, as well as the Livingston County and Washtenaw County Sheriff departments.

The driver took southbound US-23 toward Ann Arbor as he was being pursued by MSP. Police were able to set up stop sticks, which blew out a tire or two; however, he continued to flee even while driving on the vehicle's rims.

He eventually made it to the Michigan Avenue exit and to his home on Wingate Boulevard in Ypsilanti.

It was there the nearly 30-mile chase ended with police detaining him.

Not only was the man reportedly drunk, but he was driving on a two-time suspended license. He has been arraigned on those charges, as well as for the fleeing and eluding.

lhuhman@hometownlife.com

Spring road restrictions applied

The Road Commission for Oakland County began applying seasonal spring weight restrictions Wednesday to its non-all-weather roads. 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.

Normal roads (35-percent reduction in load required) in the Novi area include 14 Mile (east of Decker to Haggerty) and Napier (south of 12 Mile to Eight Mile). Designated roads (25-percent weight restriction) in the Novi area include Eight Mile (Napier east to Taft Road); 10 Mile (Napier Road east to Haggerty); and Haggerty (Eight Mile north to 14 Mile).

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.

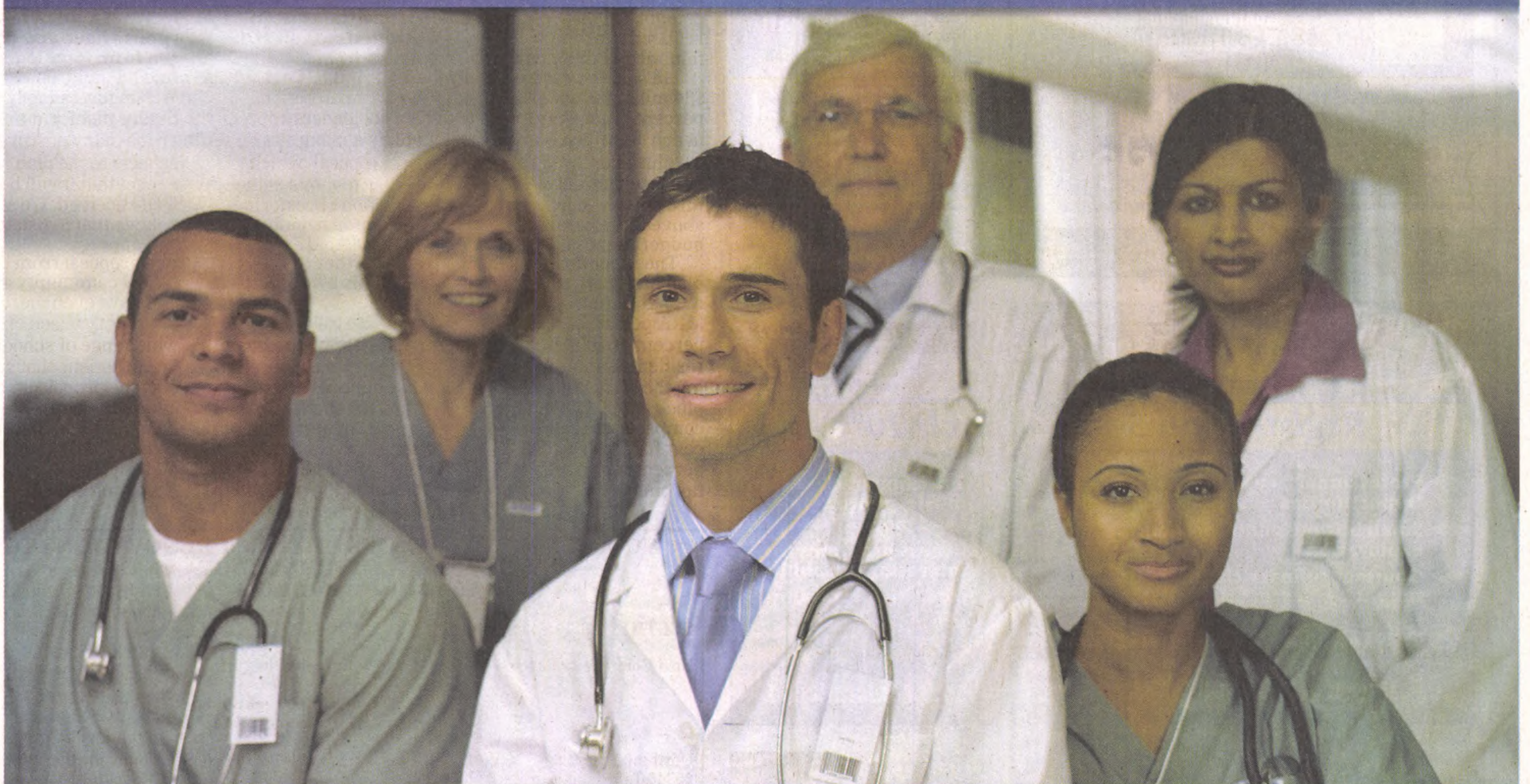
The restrictions do not affect passenger vehicles, but apply to commercial trucks.

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.

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 Department at 248-858-4835 or by visiting the department's offices at the RCOC facility at 2420 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford Township.

The map is also available on RCOC's web page at www.rcocweb.org, and listings of roads are posted on the website.

Providence and Providence Park Hospitals



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For the sixth time, Providence and Providence Park are ranked as a 100 Top Hospital - and one of the nation's top 15 Major Teaching Hospitals - by Truven Health Analytics™. We're also proud to be the only hospital in Michigan to receive Truven's 2014 Everest Award, which honors the 14 U.S. hospitals achieving the highest current performance and the fastest long-term improvement over five years.



Believe in better



Novi director's film finished and off to festivals

Michigan feature film *Papou* was, after almost a year and a half of production, completed March 14. A recipient of Michigan's Film and Digital Media Incentive, *Papou* has been entirely produced in Michigan by state natives Michael Angelo Zervos, Christos Sinanis and Michael Sinanis.

Papou stars Greek actor Yorgo Voyagis (*Zorba the Greek*, *Borne Identity*) and local Michigan actor Evan Kole (*Avengers, Misled*) as the leads alongside dozens of other Michigan supporting talent. The first feature from 25-year-old director Zervos of Novi, the film tells the tale of a wildly imaginative young boy (Kole) and his dying grandfather's (Voyagis) attempts to

escape the clutches of death.

"The journey getting to this point has been full of struggles and the fact that I can hold in my hand a Blu-ray of what was originally an idea is awe-striking," Zervos said. "Ours was not the smooth production of a multimillion-dollar picture that moves along with a single handshake, but the work and sacrifice of many people believing in the story I had to share."

Zervos does not overstate the obstacles. His journey began almost a year and a half ago, when he raised \$51,000 on Kickstarter alone for the project. Eventually, he found private financiers for the rest of the film's \$200,000 budget and fought his way to

signing Voyagis as the star.

"Yorgo believed in the story just as others had, but he was willing to make unnecessary sacrifices to take on this role. There might not be a *Papou* without his dedication," Zervos said.

A strong advocate of the recent surge of Michigan-made films, Zervos is in the process of applying for approval through the Michigan Film and Digital Video Incentive program.

He believes that if the incentive hadn't been reinstated in its latest form, he wouldn't have made the film at all.

"The common perception is that Michigan doesn't have a competitive incentive for filmmakers to film in state anymore," he said. "On

the contrary, Michigan remains in the top 10 best states to film in for monetary savings."

Papou has been submitted to a host of national and international film festivals and expects to premiere at one of the top festivals accepted.

"Of course, I'll not forget a premiere back in my beloved home state," Zervos said.

Even as the director of *Papou* is busy promoting the film, his editors are hard at work churning out the first trailer for the film. Release of this is expected in the next two weeks.

Visit <http://MotherandMidwife.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/MotherAndMidwife> to find out more about the film.



Michael Angelo Zervos' feature film "Papou" was finalized March 14.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Backyard, pool, spa show this weekend

The 19th annual Novi Backyard, Pool & Spa Show will run Friday through Sunday at the Suburban Collection Showplace (Grand River Avenue, east of Beck Road, in Novi).

"Homeowners will be able to swim, exercise, relax or just have fun in their backyard this summer with the wide selection on display to fit any space or budget," said Christopher Ferriss, president of Association of Pool & Spa Professionals, Michigan Chapter. "Many of our exhibitors provide design, construc-

tion, servicing and refurbishing for inground and above ground pools, hot tubs, spas and backyard environments."

Hundreds of ideas, products and services are available from the major outdoor living environment categories including inground and above ground pools, hot tubs, spas, swim spas, decks, patios, outdoor living spaces, landscaping, fencing, brick paving, decorative concrete, patio furniture and accessories.

Show hours are 3-9 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$8; \$4 for children

6-14, and free for children 5 and under. On site parking is available for a fee. For more information, visit www.NoviPoolShow.com or call 734-398-9700.

Novi writer hosting workshop

Stanley D. Williams, Ph.D. will present his daylong workshop titled *The 18+ Secrets of Successful Story Structure Workshop for Screenwriters, Novelists, and other Writers of shorter works* from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 5 at Oakland University in Rochester. The spring writers' workshop, which cost \$100, is a new event, presented by Rochester Writers.

Williams, who lives in Novi, is a Hollywood and novelist story consultant, and is the author of the classic story structure guide, *The Moral Premise: Harnessing Virtue and Vice for Box Office Success*.

Workshop sessions will include Critical Story Elements, Successful Structural Elements, Analysis & Examples, and Plots, Goals & Irony. Breaks and lunch will allow attendees the chance to meet, network and have conversation. A Q&A will wrap-up the day.

Secure payment op-

tions are available to purchase online or by mail. A complete description of the workshop is available at www.RochesterWriters.com. Contact Michael Dwyer at 248-651-6869 for more information.

Friends of the Novi Library Kaleidoscope Series

Virginia Bailey Parker will present a program on the All-American Girls Baseball League – a group of women athletes who played professional baseball from 1943-54, including on teams that competed in Michigan – at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, at the Novi Public Library. She will incorporate vintage photos and excerpts from video interviews she did with Michigan women who played in the league. The movie *A League of Their Own*, with Tom Hanks, Geena Davis and Rosie O'Donnell, was based on the true story of AAGPBL.

Park and ride free buses from Oakland County locations

The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) is providing free bus transportation to and from the museum on Saturday, March

29, for Oakland County residents. A bus will depart from the Novi Civic Center (45175 W. 10 Mile Road) at 9:30 a.m., and will leave the DIA at 2 p.m.

Visitors can browse the collection, take part in an art-making activity, view two free exhibitions, or see the *Samurai: Beyond the Sword* exhibition at the discounted group rate of \$12 per person.

The special Oakland County Day is provided thanks to Oakland County residents, who voted to support the DIA through last year's millage. The museum recently held a Macomb County Day and will host Wayne County residents on April 5.

Reservations for free bus transportation are required. For more information and to reserve a spot, call 313-833-4005 or go to <http://www.dia.org/calendar/event.aspx?id=4406>

Novi recognized for fitness

Gov. Rick Snyder announced that 62 Michiganders, organizations and events have been named finalists for the 2014 Governor's Fitness Awards. Novi earned a Promoting Active Communities Award.

The finalists were selected by a committee

of judges for their commitment to personal health, dedication to their communities, and the unique definition of what fitness means to them.

The group, which includes a second-grader with Tae Kwon Do dreams, a team of nurses, and Fortune 500 companies, will be honored during the 2014 Governor's Fitness Award Gala Celebration at Ford Field in Detroit on April 24.

Easter Bunny hops into Twelve Oaks

A sure sign of spring is the arrival of the Easter Bunny, and those on the bunny trail will soon find him hopfully settled in his new home at Twelve Oaks Mall, in Center Court. Beginning March 24, the Easter Bunny eggcitedly awaits visitors in Bunnyville, a three-dimensional bunny town featuring RUUM American Kid's Wear, Sanders and the 24 Carrot Bank. The last stop in Bunnyville is a professional photo with the Easter Bunny in front of his Bunny House. Customers will receive a certificate for a free 11 oz. photo mug from Snapfish with the purchase of any photo package (\$22-44), and all children receive a small gift from the Bunny just for visiting.

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Irish for a day

Kathy Retich smiles as she hands out chocolate treats at the March 17 St. Patrick's Day luncheon at the Novi Senior Center Meadowbrook Commons complex. Fans of the Irish day gathered to enjoy a traditional corned beef and cabbage lunch, trivia games and live music from the Emerald Isle. Retich mentioned that even though she's not Irish, for the day, she can be referred to as Kathy O'Retich. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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Lawmakers approve \$215M bill to repair Michigan roads

By Kathleen Gray
Gannett Michigan

Michigan drivers will get some sorely needed relief from the state's winter-ravaged roads via \$215 million in repair funding approved by wide margins in the state Legislature on March 12.

The bill, which passed 30-5 in the Senate and 106-2 in the House, includes \$100 million for maintenance of Michigan's teeth-rattling, tire-busting roads and another \$115 million for pet road projects identified by various legislators as part of the state's mid-fiscal year supplemental budget. The priority list for the special projects will be determined by the leadership of the Republican-controlled House and Senate.

Lawmakers have submitted individual projects totaling about \$800 million from House members and \$800 million from senators, with very little overlap, said Jeff Cranson, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Transportation. A final list for \$115 million worth of road projects won't be determined until legislators meet with local officials and MDOT to cull projects into a master list.

Oakland County, for example, has submitted a list of projects worth \$31 million to the county's delegation in Lansing for consideration. Ingham County has a dozen or so projects worth \$14 million it would like to see on the list, said Bill Conklin, Ingham County Road

Department managing director.

And those pet projects are a bone of contention for Democrats.

State Sen. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, called it a "slush fund" that could be drained for Republican-proposed projects.

"It would be my hope that projects are more evenly distributed on both sides of the aisle, rather than how previous projects were determined," he said. "That's the most fair way to distribute across the state."

The first \$100 million for winter road issues, though, was welcome news to local road agencies. Wayne County expects it will get about \$3.7 million from the pot, while Oakland County is expecting between \$3.4 million and \$3.8 million.

"Overtime is the biggest expense we have right now. We budgeted \$2.7 million and we've spent \$2.4 million before last night," said Terry Spryszak, director of Public Services and Environment for Wayne County. "So we only have \$300,000 for the rest of fiscal year," which ends Sept. 30.

The money will also help pay for an upcoming \$600,000 pothole blitz, which will pay for 60 additional seasonal workers to fill the prolific potholes in the county.

In Oakland, the county has already blown through its \$12-million winter maintenance budget and is using money earmarked for summer projects, said Craig Bry-



The Michigan State Capitol in Lansing THOMAS GENNARA

son, spokesman for the Road Commission for Oakland County.

"If we didn't get this extra money, we would have had to do some significant cutting of spring and summer activities," he said. "But this sounds good; we'll certainly take it."

And as of the end of February, Ingham County had already spent 80 percent of its winter maintenance budget, which has to last through the end of 2014. The county's cut from the \$100 million in state money is \$795,000, Conklin said.

"This helps us restore our winter maintenance budget and will get us through November and December," he said.

If the \$115 million isn't committed to specific projects by July 1, however, it will go back into the traditional funding formula — 39.1 percent for the state, 39.1 percent for the counties and the rest for local communities.

The extra money for roads may come at the expense of tax cuts proposed for Michigan residents in the House and Senate and by Gov. Rick Snyder. Those cuts would come in the form of ei-

ther an income tax cut or a resumption of the homestead property tax credit for residents who make less than \$60,000.

"I would prefer to see

the money spent on roads. I think it's a better bang for the buck for taxpayers," said state Rep. Joe Haveman, R-Holland. "Our constitu-

ents have told us overwhelmingly that 'my flat tire is going to cost me more than my tax rebate.' So put the money into roads."

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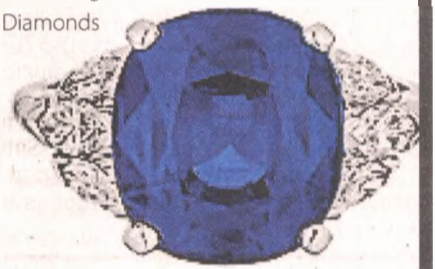
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Local Scouts attain Eagle rank

The local young men from Troop 755 in Northville were awarded the rank of Eagle Scout during a Court of Honor on March 8 at Mill Race Village. Below are descriptions of their projects.

Hamilton Wilson constructed raised gardens for senior citizens that were interested in gardening, but could not physically perform all of the responsibilities necessary to maintain and preserve a garden on their own. He built a total of six gardens, all of which are in use at Thayer's Corner. Two of

the raised gardens had armrests for individuals who were physically disabled while the rest were at a height comfortable for an elderly citizen.

Wilson's project was helpful to the community because the raised gardens give senior citizens a way to enjoy a garden as well as the happiness that comes from maintaining a garden, without it taking a physical toll on them like a normal garden would. He was glad to see people who usually wouldn't be able to enjoy the outdoors were using the gardens.

Mark Leja's Eagle Scout Project involved constructing a brick pathway to a historical building located within Mill Race Village in downtown Northville. Most historical buildings on the grounds had a brick pathway leading to its entrance except for one. Leja's project corrected that issue, insuring visitors of all ages and disabilities are able to safely tour the historical building.

The grounds had to be raised, leveled, and contoured for water drainage before he was able to construct the pathway

which is about six feet wide and 28 feet long. With the help of a few hardworking volunteers, Leja was able to construct a solid brick walkway that will last for many years.

Michael Higgins worked with an organization called Soldiers' Angels. This group is a volunteer-led, nonprofit with thousands of volunteers providing aid and comfort to the men and women of the United States Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, veterans and their families.

Higgins' project consisted of putting together



Pictured (from left) are Michael Higgins, Northville High School; Hamilton Wilson, Detroit Catholic Central; and Mark Leja, Detroit Catholic Central, members of Troop 755 of Northville recently awarded the Eagle rank.

care packages of new and unused clothing, DVDs, snacks and toiletries. Michael distributed collection bags in area neighborhoods to solicit donations. The items were then sorted and mailed to a number of locations including a military hospital in Germany and bases in Kanda-

har, Afghanistan. There was a huge response to this project, with much support from the people of Novi, Northville, and Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church in Northville. Many hours were spent in the planning phase of the project. The project was a lot of work but an overall success.

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OUR VIEWS

Prepare an emergency kit in case of widespread flooding, severe weather

There is a springtime ritual the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division is hoping you complete — building or restocking your emergency preparedness kit.

This week is Flood Safety Awareness Week in Michigan, closely followed April 6-12 by Severe Weather Awareness Week.

Michigan may see widespread flooding in the next couple of months because of, according to Capt. Chris A. Kelenske, deputy state director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and commander of the MSP/EMHSD. An emergency preparedness



kit will better prepare you in the event of an emergency or disaster.

When a disaster strikes, you may have to evacuate, take shelter or go without basic services

may not be able to reach you right away.

Knowing you may have to survive on your own, you will need a supply of essential items — like food and water — to last at least three days, or 72 hours, per person. Using five-gallon buckets or similar containers, assemble a preparedness kit with the items you and your family will need during an emergency.

Essential items to include in an emergency preparedness kit are:

- » Water, at least three gallons of water per person for 72 hours
- » Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food per person

- » Medications
 - » Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
 - » Flashlight and extra batteries
 - » First aid kit
 - » Whistle to signal for help
 - » A complete change of clothing and footwear for each person
 - » Bedding
 - » Important family documents
 - » Pet supplies (if necessary)
- For more information about what to do before, during and after an emergency, visit the MSP/EMHSD's website at www.michigan.gov/beprepared or follow it on Twitter at @MichEMHS.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Make Carter the principal

Enough!!! This has been going on for more than a year. Ms. Nicole Carter must be appointed as the permanent, full-time principal of Novi High School.

The superintendent and the Board of Education are sending a very bad signal to the community, the teachers, the staff, the students and the citizens of southeast Michigan. The teacher survey illustrates overwhelming support for Ms. Carter based on her outstanding performance as the current interim principal. With all this said, could there be another ugly, and unacceptable, reason for denying Ms. Carter the opportunity to be appointed to the post of principal? Please prove my suspicion as unfounded by appointing Ms. Carter as permanent principal without any further delay, machinations, or manipulations.

Frank R. Cadicamo
Novi

The Burger King philosophy

In March 2012, Institute for Justice attorneys Elizabeth Foley and Steve Simpson argued that Obamacare's individual mandate was incompatible with centuries of contract law since a compulsory contract is an oxymoron. Citing South Carolina's highest court in 1799, they argued that a contract in order to be binding must be voluntary and made without "fear to their persons." Obamacare was described as a law "from which there is no escape." Nancy Pelosi, who argued that it must be passed in order to discover what is in it, received a letter in July 2013 about its contents. Obama's loyal union supporters led by James Hoffa not only discovered they have "fear," but join with Sen. Max Baucus, a Democrat who helped design the law, in describing it as a "train

wreck." Seeking "to escape" its provisions union president Kinsey Robinson called for the repeal of Obamacare if necessary since it will "destroy the foundation of the 40-hour work week."

I can only hope that the Democratic politicians that are now re-examining their commitment to Obamacare look to the common sense approach described by Dr. Ben Carson at last February's prayer breakfast. He's a native Detroit resident who actually understands both health care and poverty, having been raised in Detroit's housing projects and led the department of neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

The president's response to the resistance and backlash to Obamacare further reveals his addiction to "executive orders" and selective enforcement of the Constitution which he has sworn to uphold and defend. He dislikes DOMA, border protection laws, and workfare so he overrules the existing law of the land and imposes his will. Now we see unions and businesses favorable to Obama are being granted exemptions and waivers from its provisions. With elections looming, timelines with painful consequences are revised in hopes of not adding to already 6.2 million people who have had their insurance policies canceled. This eviscerates the tripartite system of government on which this nation was founded. The president is sworn in to enforce the laws of the nation as written not per his whim and fancy or to further build a constituency.

Additionally, the concept of equal protection under the law is undermined by a president who chooses to selectively enforce a law or uses executive orders to nullify the enforcement of existing laws. I'm willing to believe that at some point President Barack Obama walked into Burger King, where you get to have it "your way." I'm not willing to believe that the American people are

COMMUNITY VOICE

Novi schools have dropped this essay question after a parent complained: "Which would you rather be: A slave or a factory worker during the Industrial Revolution?" Do you agree with the district or is that a fair question to ask a middle school student?

This question was asked at the Novi Public Library.



"I don't know the reason as to why they dropped it, but I hope they thought of something equally thought provoking to ask instead."

Michelle Hollman
Novi



"I don't they should have had the question. Those two things are not on the same level."

Debbie Banks
Novi



"I think it was appropriate to drop it. It takes a lot of knowledge anyways to handle that question and I'm not sure middle schoolers are prepared yet for that question."

Richard Blake
Novi



"My gut reaction is that it's not fair to ask that of them."

Brian Wagner
Novi

going to accept the Burger King philosophy taking up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

Michael C. Boucher
Novi

Employ Michigan residents

I was surprised to learn about Michigan requesting visas to lure immigrants to Detroit. I thought this idea to lure immigrants to Detroit can help our struggling economy and create more jobs was interesting. However, I could not help but ask myself, "Why not employ Michigan residents?"

Currently, we have numerous unemployed individuals here in the state and Gov. Snyder wants to bring immigrants in to take the work opportunities away from them? It is disheartening to me that the companies that lay off all of these qualified employees contradict themselves by claiming that they do not have enough "skilled workers"?

Clearly, there are plenty of qualified workers, many of whom are overqualified, that reside in Michigan. Nevertheless, companies are not willing to pay such qualified individuals a fair wage. I can see the advantages of welcoming im-

migrants into this depressed economy that are already established business owners who want to relocate or open branch facilities here. Yes, this can create more job opportunities for those who are unemployed. Nonetheless, I believe that we should make it our No. 1 priority to assist and employ Michiganders.

Lindsey Compo
Novi

GUEST COLUMN

Access to information should be a common goal for common good

If you've been watching what goes on in Washington and some statehouses across the country, you might wonder if there's any issue that everyone should be able to agree on whether they are conservative or liberal or libertarian, Democrat or Republican, prothis or anti-that.

There is: It's the need for transparency in all levels of government.

As we observe Sunshine Week in Michigan and around the country to encourage openness in government, the Michi-



Charles Hill
GUEST COLUMNIST

gan Coalition for Open Government is urging citizens and public officials to seek transparency in the operations of their local and state governments, their schools and universities, their federal government and their courts.

You can do this by supporting Michigan legislation that would

amend the Michigan Freedom of Information Act to make government information more accessible by limiting fees and discouraging delays.

Or by supporting a bill that a Republican lawmaker proposed to create an Open Government Commission to hear FOIA appeals. Or by supporting a bill that two Democratic lawmakers proposed to expand FOIA coverage for the legislative branch so it is more in line with the broader coverage that applies to the executive branch.

MiCOG, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization open to citizens, journalists and associations concerned with open government and freedom of information, urges passage of that pending legislation.

Make a difference

You also can make a difference by letting

your local officials — from the mayor to school board members — know that it's important how your tax dollars are being spent and how they are making decisions about classrooms or parks or snow removal or trash collection.

It's important for you to know this so you can independently judge the soundness of those decisions; so you can suggest your ideas for improvements in programs or government actions; so you can evaluate government officials' performance; and so you can guard against corruption and conflicts of interest.

You can help by asking questions of your government officials and by encouraging openness. Politicians and government officials are more likely to take the trouble to create open systems and practices if they know it is important

to their constituents.

Tell them that your assessment of their performance includes their record on open government.

Non-partisan

Let them know this should not be a partisan issue and that you want information regardless of which party or group is in power. If you're in New Jersey, you don't have to be a Democrat to want to know more about a big bridge closure in that state. In Michigan and Louisiana, you don't have to be a Republican to want information surrounding the corruption charges that resulted in convictions of mayors in New Orleans and Detroit.

Michigan has plenty of tough transparency and accountability challenges ahead, including how courts handle public access and fees for electronic records, whether

juvenile criminal records should be public or secret and how much secrecy should be allowed in new mental health courts, including convict records and data revealing rates of recidivism for the program.

Remember that you have a stake in Michigan's freedom of information laws. How much you are permitted to know about your government directly affects the quality of your government, your schools, your courts, your job, your freedom and your life.

Charles Hill is a member of the board of directors of the Michigan Coalition for Open Government and a former Michigan bureau chief for the Associated Press. To join or find out more about MiCOG, go to <http://www.micog.org> or follow MiCOG on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MiOpenGov> or Twitter: @miopengov.

NOVI NEWS

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Legislation could impact FOIA requests

By Sandra Armbruster
Gannett Michigan

From business owners, to politicians, the media and special interest groups, the state's Freedom of Information Act has gotten a lot of use since it was passed in 1976.

Now there is a move in the state Legislature to change some provisions of it, and that is not sitting well with Berkley City Clerk Cheryl Printz.

"I think that some of the changes being proposed I would consider burdensome to me," she said.

Among the bills under consideration is legislation being proposed by state Rep. Tom McMillan, R-Rochester, that would establish an open government commission that would hear FOIA appeals on requests made.

But what concerns Printz is a bill introduced by state Rep. Mike Shirley, R-Clark Lake, that would establish a fee structure that is expected, if signed into law, would lower the cost paid by those making FOIA requests.

Creating sunshine

Both McMillan and Shirley were honored last week by the Michigan Press Association for their support of "sunshine" and transparency in government. March 16-22 is nationally celebrated as Sunshine Week by groups including the media that seek open government and free access to information.

When Printz talks about a burden, she isn't referring to having to fulfill FOIA requests, but to the cost involved.

"It has to be fair," she said, adding that there

are costs involved.

Area clerks say that cost varies according to the type of request, meaning what information is requested. Some requests involve special printing costs for large items like drawings that require the information to be printed.

Printz, who says she gets an average of 20 FOIA requests each year, gave an example of one of three requests she received in just the last week.

The request was for the city's 1996 zoning ordinance. She had five days, by law, to fulfill the request. Each request is permitted one 10-day extension for special circumstances, such as sending out the information to be printed.

In this case, Printz had to dig out the old ordinance. Also by law, any entity fulfilling a FOIA request is allowed to charge a per page fee, as well as for the time of the lowest paid hourly employee who can copy the material requested.

The cost

She said the maker of the request was charged for a quarter of an hour for copying, "but it took longer than that." Printz did not charge for her own time.

The more significant cost was for copying each page. The 1996 zoning ordinance is 284 pages, and the city charges 25 cents to print each page, making the per page cost in this case \$71.

Printz said that when she has an estimate of the cost, she contacts the person requesting the information, and does require a deposit for costly projects.

But not all requests

FILING AN FOIA IN NOVI

Last year, the city of Novi fulfilled 189 FOIA requests, not counting those that go directly to Public Safety.



Cornelius

"It's important for the public to have the ability to obtain

information in a timely manner," said Maryanne Cornelius, city clerk. "Many of our requests consist of applicants performing due diligence before a property is purchased or refinanced. In any event, when large blueprints need to be copied or larger volume requests are received, we try to work with the applicant to narrow down the request if it is too broad or non-specific."

"We also note on our form that if a request will be more than \$50, we may request a deposit. We also clarify on the form that the search costs will include the hourly rate of the lowest paid person capable of retrieving the information."

Cornelius added that when someone files a FOIA and requests copies and any internal department can readily access the information, copies are made so that they can leave with the information the same day.

are the same. Printz said that she gets many requests during election time from those who are

seeking a list of people who vote by absentee ballot.

Printz said that, while some communities experience "abuses" of the FOIA, with requests by the same person each week, she doesn't get that in Berkley.

Other requests

The other two FOIA requests made last week involved buildings, floor plans and an architect's drawings. But Printz said that governments are not required to compile reports that don't already exist for those seeking information.

But you don't have to be a business or a politician to make a FOIA request, anyone can - from school districts and other public bodies as well. Sample requests are available on the internet, and each community has a FOIA officer, someone who is responsible for keeping track of and making certain requests are met or the person making the request notified why it won't be.

There are few exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act, but the thing to remember is that your request must be in writing and it must be specific. And if your request is denied, you have the right to appeal.

For its part, the Michigan Press Association sees the work of McMillan and Shirley in a positive light. As MPA Executive Director Mike MacLaren said, they have an understanding that "government of the people, by the people and for the people doesn't work unless taxpayers have unfettered access to information compiled by government."

Sunshine Week offers chance to open government

Welcome to Michigan's Freedom of Information Week. It's a great week to let folks know about how accountable and responsible their governments are at the state, county and local level.

It's also the first official birthday of the Michigan Coalition for Open Government, a tax-exempt nonprofit group that keeps a sharp eye on the accountability, transparency and responsibility of public officials, governments, public universities and the courts.

Back when the state's freedom of information and open meetings laws went into effect in 1977, the Michigan Supreme Court exempted all Michigan courts from being covered by those laws.

In subsequent decisions, the court has exempted all 15 public university boards from the Open Meetings Act when it comes to presidential searches. The universities say that decision also applies to their retreats, pre-meetings and other discussions that occur outside of the public meetings mandated by the state constitution. That's extremely relevant now as a presidential search was just completed for the University of Michigan, and as searches are underway at Oakland University and Saginaw Valley State University. Public universities are annually given hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, yet because of the court's ruling, information about applicants who want to become president can remain secret until a new president is selected.

Court decisions have consistently expanded



Jane Briggs-Bunting
GUEST COLUMNIST

the interpretations of exemptions despite the public policy language of the Freedom of Information Act itself. Last year, the Michigan Supreme Court through the State Court Administrative Office helped draft legislation that exempts disclosure of any information on:

» Mental health courts (even data on the number of cases these courts handle, the success, failures and rates of recidivism on individuals involved)

» Hidden criminal juvenile records (including violent felonies and keeping potential employers from finding out about sex offenders)

Most recently, the Michigan Supreme Court through the SCAO has approved phasing in mandatory electronic filing of court documents without any mention of public access to the records and what that access should cost.

The people have a right to full access to their courts. As we head into Sunshine Week, MICOG urges the courts to maintain an attitude of public accountability to engender confidence and belief in the fairness of the legal system. It's what's best for the courts and for our citizens.

Jane Briggs-Bunting is the president of the Michigan Coalition for Open Government. She is former director of the Michigan State University School of Journalism and Oakland University journalism program.

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ALL-AREA HONORS



Northville's Andrew Meacham is the 2014 boys basketball All-Area Player of the Year. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Novi's Kerri McMahan goes to the rim. She is the 2014 All-Area Player of the Year. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Northville's Meachem nets top boys honors

By Jeff Theisen
Sports Writer

Averaging a double-double in high school means a player is getting it done on defense and with the rock. Coming close to 20 and 10 is downright impressive.

Northville senior forward Andrew Meacham averaged 19.0 points and 11.3 rebounds per game. He also dished out 3.0 assists, snagged 2.1 steals and swatted 3.5 blocks in being named All-Area Player of the Year.

"Andrew has been a tremendous asset to our program the past three seasons on the varsity," Northville coach Todd Sander said. "He has been our leading scorer and rebounder each of the past two years and his skill set is so dynamic that he can punish the opposition in the paint and behind the arc.

"He finishes his career with 988 points scored, which is a huge number. It ranks near the top in Northville history."

Meachem hit 45 percent of his shots, including 35 percent from beyond the arc. He also shot free throws at a 78-percent clip.

Meachem was voted team MVP as well as first team all-conference in the KLA.

"Andrew has been a pleasure to coach during his career. In addition to his physical skills, he understands and thinks the game extremely well," said Sander. "I have really enjoyed watching him mature both as a person and player these past few seasons. We will miss him immensely."

First team

Charlie Ryan, C
Catholic Central senior

The 6-7 Ryan averaged a double-double with 13 points and more than 10 rebounds a night. He earned first team all-league honors and will continue his career with at Northwood University.

"Charlie has worked hard over the past two seasons to make himself a college basketball player," coach Bill Dyer said. "He improved his play around the basket and he made a lot

BOYS BASKETBALL ALL-AREA TEAM

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Andrew Meachem, Northville

FIRST TEAM

Charlie Ryan, Catholic Central
Nick Troxell, Lakeland
Carter Drazga, South Lyon
Jason Hugan, Milford
Trent Willenborg, South Lyon East

SECOND TEAM

Malik Bazzi, Northville
Noah Lee, Catholic Central
Connor Young, Milford
Brad Govan, Lakeland
Nick Zugaro, Novi
Tommy Averill, South Lyon

HONORABLE MENTION

South Lyon East - Derek Blunden (sr.), Jack Leckner (sr.)
South Lyon - Will Sanders (sr.)
Milford - Kyle Valden (jr.), Sam Jaklic (jr.)
Lakeland - Timmy Brotherton (jr.), Grant Osborne (jr.), Jake Menzel (sr.)
Northville - Joey Hewlett (sr.), Andrew Stevens (sr.)
Novi - Erik Biberstein (sr.)

of big shots for us. Charlie had a season-high 27 points at Brother Rice. His best days are still ahead of him."

Nick Troxell, G/F
Lakeland senior

Troxell played four years on varsity and it paid off with a division and KLA Lakes Conference titles. He averaged 10 points and six rebounds while shooting 47 percent from the floor.

"Nick is one of the very few high school athletes that plays above the rim," coach Bob Brugger said. "He easily has the most dunks of any player in Lakeland history. Nick did a little bit of everything for us this season. He is a versatile player capable of guarding all five positions and able to score both in the post and on the perimeter."

See BOYS, Page B2

Novi's McMahan leads girls basketball team

By Chris Jackett
Correspondent

Competing against Novi senior Kerri McMahan is tough. The four-year starting point guard and University of Akron commit led the Wildcats to title after title in the KLA Central Division while burning opponents, earning her All-Area Player of the Year honors.

"Led us in all statistical categories," Novi coach Bill Kelp said. "True leader on the court who does make everyone better around her."

While some stars were focused on points, rebounds or assists, McMahan did it all for Novi while keeping her teammates involved. She averaged 17.6 points, 3.1 assists, 4.8 rebounds and 3.5 steals per game this season, while shooting 53 percent from the field, 72 percent from the free-throw line and setting a single-game school record with 32 points Feb. 7 against Livonia Stevenson.

First team

Gabi Bird, G/F
South Lyon East junior

She was a big reason South Lyon East competed with the best in the tough KLA Central Division. She led the area in scoring with 18.7 points per game and was second in rebounding with 10.4 per game. She also averaged 3.0 steals and 1.7 assists. Her points, rebounds and steals were all single-season school records for the young program, as was her single-game performance of 28 points.

"Gabi is a great all-around player," East coach Rob Leadley said. "She has a strong post presence, but is also comfortable handling the ball and shooting from the perimeter. Gabi is extremely consistent in game situations. She had 14 double-doubles this season, despite being closely guarded every night. She works hard on her game and sets the tone for our team's work ethic."

Elise Gustafson, C
Milford junior

Averaging both 12 points and 12 rebounds per game, Gustafson was one of the toughest players to guard

GIRLS BASKETBALL ALL-AREA TEAM

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kerri McMahan, Novi

FIRST TEAM

Gabi Bird, South Lyon East
Elise Gustafson, Milford
Heather Randall, Northville
Taylor Pavlika, Novi
Dominique Zigo, Lakeland

SECOND TEAM

Jessica Mehr, South Lyon
Gabby Mencotti, Northville
Kristen Schubring, Novi
Sydney Jones, South Lyon East
Emily Maresh, Northville

HONORABLE MENTION

Milford - Maddy Kurtz (Sr. G), Brenna Lovera (Jr. G)
Lakeland - Lena Tiedeman (Jr. G), Molly Stec (So. G), Alana Weyer (Jr. F), Kari Jurewicz (Sr. G)
Northville - Jessica Moorman (Fr. G)
Novi - Alexandra Felice (Jr. G/F)
South Lyon - Emily Heinrich (Jr. G/F), Breanna Bias (Sr. G)
South Lyon East - Rachel Janowiak (Sr. G)

in the KLA, earning her all-conference honors.

"Elise's presence on-court earned the respect of the opposing team," Milford coach Jennifer VanGoethem said. "Oftentimes, she was double- or triple-teamed, but that never phased her. Elise's inside presence is dominant and she keeps improving each year. Freshman year she averaged three points, five rebounds a game. Sophomore year, she averaged 10 points, 10 rebounds a game. This year, she averaged 12 points and 12 rebounds a game. Those stats speak loudly as to her work ethic and determination to become the best player possible."

Heather Randall, F
Northville senior

On a balanced squad, Randall led the team with 10.8 points and aver-

See GIRLS, Page B2

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BOYS

Continued from Page B1

Carter Drazga, G South Lyon senior

He was almost always the smallest player on the floor, but Drazga would often make the biggest difference. He averaged 15 points and made 39 3-pointers. He also shot 82 percent from the line.

"Carter is a fierce competitor - a guy who wants to take the big shot, a guy who sees the floor really well and a point guard who provided our team with a lot of emotionally charged moments this year," coach Doug Host said.

Jason Hugen, C Milford senior

The Mavericks came on strong late and Hugen was a big reason. He averaged 10 points, 5.7 rebounds and 1.5 blocks while hitting 50 percent of his shots.

Hugen earned first team all-conference honors.

"Jason was a presence in the middle that teams had to account for night in and night out," coach



South Lyon's Carter Drazga made the All-Area team. LAURA COLVIN

David Gilbert said. "When Jason played well, we were a different team."

Trent Willenborg, F South Lyon East junior

Teams focused their defenses around stopping Willenborg, but he still averaged 13 points and 9.0 rebounds per game. He scored a season-high 28 points against Novi and tallied 25 against Milford. He

earned all-conference honors.

"A top-level athlete, Trent has the ability to dominate a game from the paint or perimeter," coach Ron Levin said.

Second team Malik Bazzi, F Northville senior

He was force for the Mustangs, putting up 11.0 points, 5.5 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 3.5 steals per

game. Bazzi was a big reason the Mustangs made a charge in the KLAA Central, finishing just one game behind Salem.

Noah Lee, G Catholic Central senior

He finished his three-year varsity career with 13.0 points and 3.0 steals per game. He earned first team all-league honors.

Connor Young, G

Milford junior

He led the Mavericks with 10.7 points and with 34 3-pointers and also hit 62-of-84 free throws (72 percent). He had a season-high 28 points against Mott and put up 26 against Brighton.

Brad Govan, F/C Lakeland senior

He played hard under the rim at both ends. Govan tallied eight points and six rebounds while hitting 54 percent of his shots. He was voted first team all-KLAA.

Nick Zugaro, G Novi senior

He was second on the team with 10.6 points, but filled the stat sheet in other ways. Zugaro dished out 4.4 assists, grabbed 3.5 rebounds and had 2.2 steals while hitting 75 percent of his free throws. He scored 18 and 20 points in the two district games.

Tommy Averill, F South Lyon senior

He averaged 10 points and five rebounds per game and sank 34 3-pointers while hitting 70 percent of his free throws.

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248-437-2011, ext. 228

SPORTS BRIEFS

Register for spring, summer sports leagues

The city of Novi, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is preparing for spring and summer sport seasons. Registration is going on now via cityofnovi.org for the following leagues: Adult Softball Double Header League; Adult Tennis League; Adult Sand Volleyball League; Adult Soccer League; Youth Tee Ball, Baseball and Softball Leagues; Golf League 55+; and Softball League 55+.

To learn about additional sport programs offered by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, including a wide variety of summer camps and clinics, visit cityofnovi.org or call 248-347-0400 or 248-347-0414 for 55-and-over programs.

Boosters present wine-tasting event

Novi Athletic Boosters club invites parents and other interested adults to attend the second annual wine-tasting event 7:30-10:30 p.m. Saturday, March 22, at the Meadowbrook Country Club (on south side of Eight Mile, west of Haggerty Road).

Guests will enjoy a variety of specially selected wines from around the world, along with hors d'oeuvres. Wine experts will be in attendance to enhance the experience. There will be a silent auction at the event and wine case sales.

For those wishing to catch the second round of the NCAA basketball tournament, there will be a separate cash bar area to watch the games.

All proceeds from the event will be used to support high school and middle school student-athletes.

Tickets are \$40 per person. Credit card purchases may be made by calling 248-642-4100 during business hours Monday through Friday (ask for Amy) or calling 248-982-0929 or 248-756-5833 evenings and weekends.

GIRLS

Continued from Page B1

aged 4.0 rebounds, 1.6 assists and 1.7 steals per game while shooting 43 percent from the field and earning all-conference honors. She has committed to play with Hope College next year.

"(She's the) best shooter on the team," Northville coach Todd Gudith said. "Led (the) team in scoring. A gym rat who is consistently working on her game."

Taylor Pavlika, G Novi senior

Although opponents had to be wary of McMa-

han, Pavlika was the glue and picked up the slack when McMahan had an off-night. With averages of 8.0 points, 2.5 assists, 3.5 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game, Pavlika earned all-conference honors. She'll attend Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne where, alongside her older sister, she will play soccer.

"Truly great competitor," Novi coach Bill Kelp said. "Leads team with 23 3-pointers. Natural leadership abilities and one of the hardest working kids."

Dominique Zigo, G Lakeland senior

Averaging 14.2 points per game, Zigo kept the

Eagles as a threat to the two Waterford powerhouses in the KLAA North Division. She also averaged 2.1 rebounds and 1.0 steals, shot 72.7 percent from the line and 32.5 percent from the field and tallied 26 3-pointers.

"Dom is a scoring guard who can score from the arc or at the rim off the dribble," Lakeland coach Michael Head said. "She's carried the burden of being the team's primary scorer game in and game out. She is a competitor to the bone."

Second team Jessica Mehr, G

South Lyon senior

Although her season ended a few weeks early due to shoulder surgery and her Lions couldn't buy a win in the tough KLAA Central Division, Mehr made a strong argument for All-Area honors while averaging 12.6 points, 5.5 rebounds and 2.2 steals through the first 14 games. She also shot 82.2 percent from the free-throw line, a single-season school record, which led to the corresponding career school record at 72.5 percent. She will play softball at Virginia Tech.

Gabby Mencotti, G Northville senior

A speedy threat that meshed well with her teammates' abilities, Mencotti averaged 8.0 points, 5.3 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 4.2 steals per game. An all-conference honorable mention pick who was dubbed the "best athlete on the team" by coach Todd Gudith, Mencotti's speed broke down defensive presses. She will play soccer at Grand Valley State University.

Kristen Schubring, F Novi senior

A defensive force on a

team often heralded for its offense, Novi coach Bill Kelp said Schubring is one of the best help-side defenders the Wildcats have ever had and referred to her as "the backbone of the team." The all-conference stand-out averaged 5.0 points, 5.0 rebounds and 2.0 steals per game.

Sydney Jones, G South Lyon East senior

A four-year starter for the Cougars, Jones is a big reason for her program's upward trend in recent years. She averaged 10.2 points, 3.6 rebounds, 1.7 assists and 1.6 steals and shot 31 percent from beyond the arc.

Emily Maresh, C Northville junior

As a physical presence in the paint, Maresh averaged 6.5 points, 5.7 rebounds, 1.8 assists and 1.9 steals per game while often battling taller opponents. She was the team leader in rebounds, third in scoring and will join Mencotti at Grand Valley to play soccer this fall.

Chris Jackett is a freelance writer and former staff writer covering Novi High School sports for the Novi News.

CITY OF NOVI NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND GRANT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Novi will hold a Public Hearing on the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Grant Application Proposal for land acquisition of parcel 50-22-18-100-004, for 10 acres of property located on 12 Mile Road east of Napier Road. The hearing will be held on Monday, March 24, 2014, at 7:00 p.m., at the Novi Civic Center, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375, for the purpose of hearing public comments on land acquisition of parcel 50-22-18-100-004, for 10 acres of property located on 12 Mile Road east of Napier Road.

All interested citizens are requested to attend these Hearings

Comments will also be received in writing or in person at the City Clerks Office - City of Novi, 45175 Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan 48375 until 5:00 p.m. March 24, 2014.

Arrangements to reasonably accommodate special needs, including handicap accessibility or interpreter, will be made upon receiving 72-hour advance. Contact Maryanne Cornelius at 248-347-0456 for special services.

MARYANNE CORNELIUS CITY CLERK

Publish: 3/20/2014

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City of Novi Public Hearing Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers Novi Civic Center 45175 Ten Mile Road to consider:

CASE NO. PZ14-0003 49251 GRAND RIVER AVE & PARCEL 5022-17-101-029 - VARSITY LINCOLN

Zoning District: B3, General Business District

The applicant is requesting a variance from CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 28-5(5)b to allow a changeable copy ground sign of 28 square feet located on the south (Wixom Rd) existing access drive of display lot. The property is located on the south side of Grand River and east of Wixom Rd.

CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 28-5(5)b changeable copy signs shall be permitted only for places of worship; schools; movie theatres and similar entertainment venues; restaurants; and recreational facilities at which events change on a regular basis.

CASE NO. PZ14-0004 24151 CORTLAND BLVD

Zoning District: R-4, One-Family Residential District

The applicant is requesting a variance from CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 2513 allowing an entrance monument sign within the corner clearance zone area. The applicant is also requesting variances from 28-5(2)d.3 to allow placement of the entrance monument sign within a required street right of way setback. The property is located on the south side of 10 Mile Rd and west of Novi Rd.

CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Sign Ordinance Section 2513 which requires a 25-foot corner clearance (clear view) zone and section 28-5(2)d.3 which requires entrance way signs be located at least 10 feet from any street right of way.

CASE NO. PZ14-0005 1171 EAST LAKE DR

Zoning District: R-4, One-Family Residential District

The applicant is requesting variances from the CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 2400 to allow construction of a one-story addition and a second floor addition over existing footprint on an existing nonconforming lot with a reduced side setback of 3 ft, a reduced aggregate side setback of 5 ft. The property is located east of Novi Rd and south of 14 Mile Rd. CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 2400 requires that a structure within an R-4 zoning district have a minimum side setback of 10 ft., a minimum aggregate side setback of 25 ft. and maximum 25% lot coverage.

CASE NO. PZ14-0006 BUDDY'S PIZZA 44225 TWELVE MILE RD C103

Zoning District: RC, Regional Center District

The applicant is requesting variances from Section 28-5(1)d, 28-5(2)b.1.(a).i.a. and 28-5(3) of the Novi Sign Ordinance to allow additional signs as follows:

- (1) Projecting wall signs of 87 sq. ft.
- (1) Wall sign of 81 sq. ft. at north elevation
- (1) Wall sign of 95.6 sq. ft. at west elevation.

The property is located on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, and east of Cabaret Drive. CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCE, Section 28-5(1)d permits only one ground sign, wall sign, or canopy sign per parcel of property and 28-5(2)b.1.(a).i.a. permits a wall sign of maximum 65 square feet in area. Section 28-5(3) permits a single wall sign for each business storefront in the RC district.

CASE NO. PZ14-0007 APPLEBEE'S RESTAURANT 47900 GRAND RIVER AVE

Zoning District: B-2, Community Business District

The applicant is requesting a variance from Section 28-5(2)a.2.ii of the Novi Sign Ordinance to allow a revision of a previous variance to allow an increased sign height from 7 feet to 8 feet. The property is located on the north side of Grand River, and west of Beck Rd. CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCE, Section 28-5(2)a.2.ii allows signage to a maximum height of 6 feet.

CASE NO. PZ14-0008 (FELDMAN AUTOMOTIVE) 42355 GRAND RIVER AVE

Zoning District: B-3, Business District

The applicant is requesting a variance from CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 28-5(3) to allow an oversize ground directional sign of 15 square feet for an existing automotive dealership. The property is located south of Grand River and east of Novi Road. Previous variance 08-014 approved a sign of this size and location specifically for Hertz car rentals.

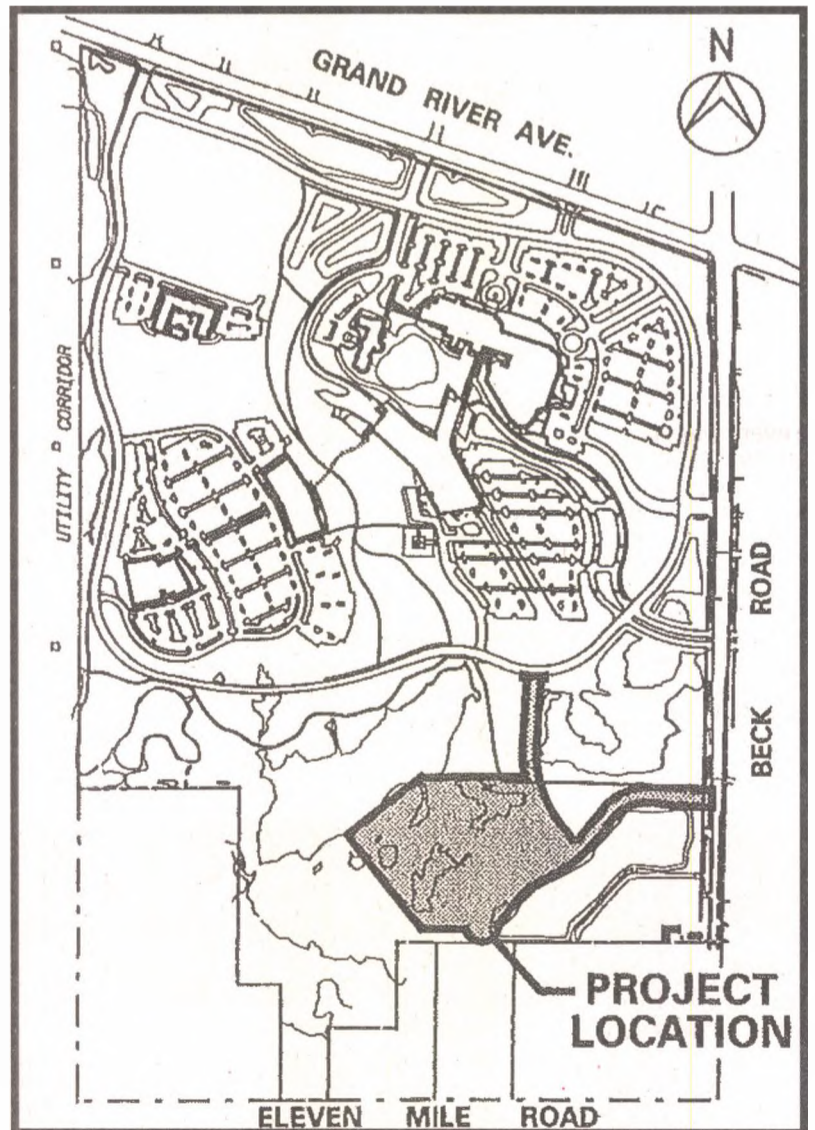
CITY OF NOVI, CODE OF ORDINANCES, Section 28-5(3) number of on-premises advertising signs permitted states: "No building or parcel of land shall be allowed more than one (1) sign..."

Publish: March 20, 2014

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CITY OF NOVI PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission for the City of Novi will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, April 9, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. in the Novi Civic Center, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI to consider **ROSE SENIOR LIVING AT PROVIDENCE SITE PLAN NUMBER 13-81. LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE OF BECK ROAD NORTH OF ELEVEN MILE ROAD FOR CONCEPT PLAN APPROVAL UNDER THE PLANNED SUBURBAN LOW RISE OVERLAY DISTRICT.** The applicant is proposing a 182 unit senior living facility with both congregate care and assisted living accommodations. Plans are available for review at the Community Development Department in the Novi Civic Cent.



All interested persons are invited to attend. Verbal comments may be heard at the hearing and any written comments may be made to the Community Development Department, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 during the City's regular business hours, Monday thru Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and must be received by 4:00 P.M., Wednesday, April 9, 2014.

Novi Planning Commission Michael Lynch, Secretary

Published March 20, 2014

LO-0000186734 3x3

NOVI BUSINESS BRIEFS

Cooper-Standard launches proposed refinancing

Novi-based Cooper-Standard Holdings Inc., the parent company of Cooper-Standard Automotive Inc., a global supplier of systems and components for the automotive industry, intends to launch a refinancing of existing indebtedness outstanding under its Senior PIK Toggle Notes due 2018 and Cooper-Standard's 8½ percent Senior Notes due 2018.

In connection with the proposed refinancing, Cooper-Standard intends to enter into a \$725 million senior secured term loan facility and use borrowings thereunder to refinance \$200 million in aggregate principal amount of HoldCo Notes and \$450 million in aggregate principal amount of OpCo Notes. Holdings indicated that the proposed refinancing is expected to materially reduce its annual interest expense.

Town Center lighting project

The city of Novi is overseeing construction services, provided through DTE Energy, to replace street lights in the Town Center Area. The project will replace 88 existing lights with 69 new poles and energy efficient LED luminaries.

Impact to traffic will be minimal as road closures will be limited to one lane at a time. To complete each phase safely, DTE Energy will shut off power to the impacted street lighting circuits for 30 to 40 days. As each circuit is completed, street lights will be restored as quickly as possible.

Yoga's up the wall at Sports Club of Novi

By Lonnie Huhman
Staff Writer

The Great Yoga Wall at the Sports Club of Novi is the first of its kind in the Detroit area, if not in Michigan.

This new and dynamic way of practicing yoga was introduced at the club two months ago and has increased in popularity ever since, among all ages.

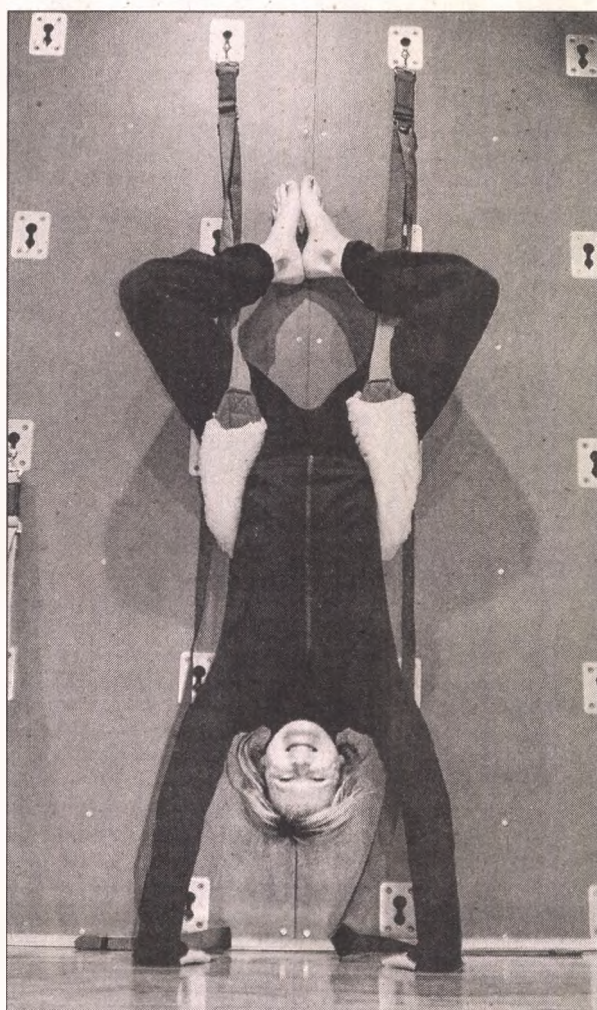
"I have a client who is 83 and another who is 10 years old," Yoga Wall instructor Tameka Gallien said.

She said the Yoga Wall will help take a participant to the next level at a pace and comfort level that fits. It's great for healing injuries and for traction of the spine. Gallien knows because it helped her with a nagging hip injury.

Her classes are small, with up to three people using the wall at one time. This allows her to give special attention to each client. With the use of straps connected to the wall, a person can find stability in every pose while improving flexibility, strength and rehabbing a variety of physical ailments.

Yoga Wall participant Kim Krygier said her first time using the wall was a welcome challenge.

"Anytime you can challenge yourself and take something you enjoy doing to the next level, it's a great thing," she said. "Wall Yoga incorporates all the core strength training from the regular floor classes



Tameka Gallien, instructor at the Sports Club of Novi, demonstrates the gym's new Great Yoga Wall. Gallien instructs yoga practitioners on the wall using its straps to gently introduce the body to more flexible positions. It's the only such yoga wall in southeast Michigan. JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

and adds the difficulty of the wall, harness and gravity."

She added, "It's a really fantastic concept and I am always amazed at Tameka's ability to constantly challenge us to be better."

Gallien is joined by Belinda Kabodian and Suzanna Ran on the Yoga Wall instructor

team. They provide private wall training, as well as semi-private and triple wall training.

To learn more, go to www.tsnovi.com or call 248-735-8850. The sports club is located on 42500 Nick Lidstrom Drive.

lhuhman@hometownlife.com
248-437-2011, ext. 255
Twitter: @lhuhman

EMU to host Michigan Collegiate Job Fair

With the Michigan job market heating up, college seniors and alumni from Michigan's two- or four-year colleges can meet with prospective employers from a variety of fields at the biannual Michigan Collegiate Job Fair.

The event, sponsored by Eastern Michigan University and supported by the Michigan Career Educator and Employer Alliance, is scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, March 21, at Burton Manor, 27777 Schoolcraft, in Livonia.

The event is one of the state's largest career fairs, with more than 100 employers registered.

Employers include Coca-Cola, DTE Energy, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Quicken Loans, Siemens PLM Software, Thomson Reuters and various state of Michigan and U.S. govern-

ment departments and agencies.

"Many of the employers are seeking to hire entry-level candidates with degrees in business, liberal arts, technology, engineering, human services and allied health," said Ebony Jones, senior corporate relations manager at Eastern Michigan University.

Candidates can view a list of participating employers online at www.mcjf.org.

The fee is \$15 with walk-in registration.

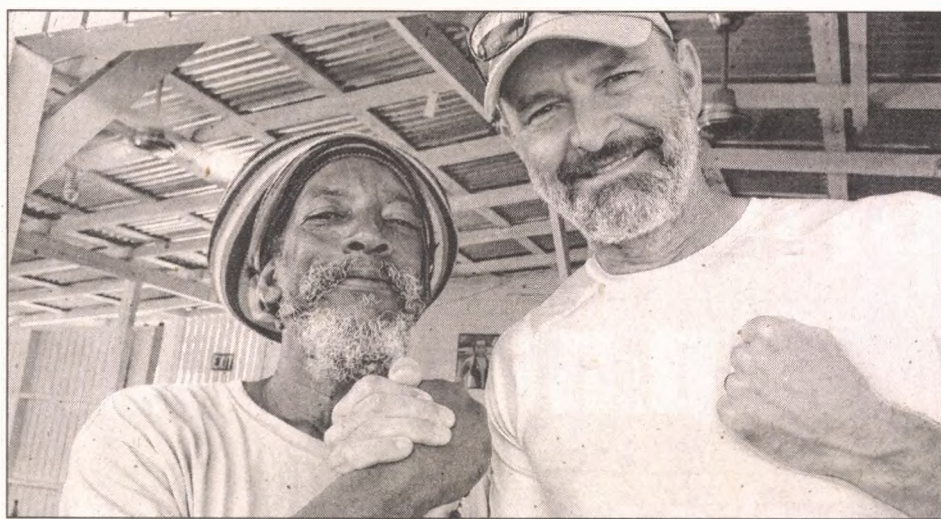
Last November's event attracted 130 employers and 600 candidates.

Jones recommends that candidates dress in professional business attire, bring several copies of their resume and research the employers that they are interested in speaking with prior to the event.

20th anniversary



It has been 20 years since Dr. Tim Kirk and his family opened an optometry practice. The original location, in the Oakpointe Plaza shopping mall, opened in February 1994. Now a partner, Dr. Amy Crissman Head joined the practice in 2002. In 2004, Town & Country Eyecare moved to its present location in the free-standing building on the corner of Novi Road at Nine Mile. In 2010, Dr. Jared Most joined the growing practice as an associate. They attribute their success to the wonderful community of patients they serve and their skilled staff, led by manager Pam Lego. Visit www.tceyecare.com for more information.



Dr. Scott Tyler, whose practice was recently lauded by the Novi Chamber of Commerce, visits with a man during a Belize trip.

Chamber honors civic leaders

By Julie Brown
Staff Writer

The Novi Chamber of Commerce lauded civic-minded business people and community leaders Feb. 28 at the annual Toast of the Town at the newly-remodeled Baronne Renaissance.

The event was sponsored by Walsh College, Varsity Lincoln and Lotus Bank.

"This is an event to give recognition to the business award winners," said Sheryl Romzek, chamber executive director. The winners are lauded that evening and in the media, including the city's quarterly *Novi Today*.

The event drew 160 people, she said, and was emceed by broadcaster Bob Hynes, now working with the Yankee Air Museum.

"It's a dressy occasion," she said. The band this year was the Jesse Palter Trio, with Palter hailing from West Bloomfield.

A Community Builder Award went to Tyler Dumas Reyes Specialists in Orthodontics, which is marking its 25th anniversary this year. The practice serves Novi, Northville, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Milford, Walled Lake and Wixom from its Novi office.

The orthodontic practice also has offices in Birmingham and Rochester Hills that serve many communities in southeast Michigan. Its website is www.tdrortho.com.

Orthodontist Scott Tyler, a Birmingham resident, went to Belize with his church group out of Birmingham, joining other Lutheran churches throughout the country to share his skills and training.

The awards, given by the Novi Chamber of Commerce, Novi Rotary and the city of Novi, were in two divisions - small (50 or fewer employees) and large (more than 50 employees) - with three categories in each. The winners are:

Community Builder: Tyler Dumas Reyes Specialists in Orthodontics (small) and Michigan CAT (large). Businesses which partner with others to enhance the Novi community. Partnerships could include involvement with nonprofit organizations, schools, service clubs, the city of Novi or other organizations and associations that further business interests.

Best Place To Work: Red Level Networks (small) and Sidock Group Inc. (large). Businesses which create an optimal working environment for

their employees. Examples could include businesses that have taken efforts to create a pleasant work environment, innovation or career advancement.

Customer Service Excellence: Yarmak & Co. CPA (small) and Varsity Lincoln (large). Businesses which demonstrate a commitment to excel in all areas of customer service to ensure customer satisfaction. Company attributes could include the ability to interact effectively with customers and exceed expectations on a continuous basis or a passion that runs through the company to address customer service.

Aaron Quimby was the Ambassador Honoree, chosen by Novi Mayor Bob Gatt.

Red Level Networks was recognized as the Best Place To Work for the small category. Red Level Networks is a full service advanced infrastructure solutions company which designs, installs and provides ongoing network support for small, mid-sized and enterprise businesses and the educational markets.

The Toast of the Town honorees were recognized by Gatt and state Sen. Mike Kowall at the gala.

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