

Novi High School student newscasters win state honors - Education, A5



# NOVI NEWS

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Novi's Nicole Blaszczyk competes in Miss America contest, A3.

## NOVI NUTSHELL

### Taxes due

As the result of the Sunday due date, and Monday holiday, 2009 winter property tax payments must be received by the Treasurer's office on or before Tuesday, Feb. 16 to avoid an automatic 4% penalty.

For your convenience, there is a drop box located at the curb behind the Civic Center for tax/water and sewer payments. Payments will be accepted in the drop box until midnight Tuesday, Feb. 16.

Property taxes/water and sewer payments can also be paid on-line at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org) by credit card or electronic check (no fee for electronic check).

Please contact the Treasurer's Office at (248) 347-0440 if you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance.

### Call to artists

The City of Novi's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department (PRCS) is seeking Michigan artists and local art educators to exhibit and teach at the Novi Civic Center.

PRCS provides a wide variety of sports, leisure and creative arts programs, senior and adult activities and services, and family events. PRCS is offering opportunities for emerging and established Michigan artists to exhibit at the Novi Civic Center Atrium Gallery; 100,000 people visit the Novi Civic Center every year. It is the home of The Novi Theatres and is the location for an array of programs and community events. Exhibitions are not limited to any media, and all applicants will be considered for solo and group shows. Specific project requests and site specific works are welcome. Please contact Kathryn Knapp at [kknapp@cityofnovi.org](mailto:kknapp@cityofnovi.org) or (248) 347-0509 for more information and application forms.

PRCS is also accepting submissions for qualified and enthusiastic art educators to teach youth and adult creative arts programs. Please send cover letter and resumé to: Kathryn Knapp, Creative Arts Coordinator, Novi Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, 45175 W. Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375 or email to [kknapp@cityofnovi.org](mailto:kknapp@cityofnovi.org).

### Youth baseball

Novi Youth Baseball League's on-line registration for the 2010 season will conclude on March 15. NYBL services players from the age of 7 to 18 years of age and holds most practices and games at ITC Community Sports Park. You can get more information and register on-line at: [www.noviyouthbaseball.org](http://www.noviyouthbaseball.org); no walk-in registrations will be available. Please contact NYBL Secretary Rob Reilly with questions: [rreilly14@yahoo.com](mailto:rreilly14@yahoo.com).



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Novi's No. 1 fan

Long-time Novi High School football super fan Tom Marcus (second from left) was honored during halftime of the Feb. 5 basketball game with a varsity letter jacket and proclamation from the state Legislature. From left is former head coach Tab Kellepourey, athletic director Curt Ellis and assistant coach John Osborne. Before the game, the school also gave its football program a new inflatable Wildcat entrance tent for the football field. See more in this week's Sports section.

## Property values fall; cities searching for ways to cope

Novi in better shape than most neighboring communities

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

Residential property values throughout the state and county nose-dived once again last year. And while the numbers may look nice to homeowners, as they will see a decrease in property taxes, it is not good for counties and cities that rely on property tax revenue to provide core services and balance budgets.

#### DECLINING VALUES

1. Bloomfield Hills - 7.7 percent
  9. Novi - 12.83 percent
  27. Wixom - 15.53 percent
  32. Farmington Hills - 16.6 percent
  36. Walled Lake - 16.96 percent
  52. Southfield - 28.31 percent
- Rankings in Oakland County according to county assessment reports.

Novi is faring better than most Oakland County communities, as property values are only expected to decrease 12.83 percent. That is the ninth lowest percentage in the county, a far cry from several others that are enduring declines

upward of 20 percent.

"Certainly it's a cause for concern for every city because your revenue is going down," Mayor David Landry said. "You will need to get more efficient and spend less or you have to increase your revenue, and the proper way to do it is to do both."

The city has some economic development lined



JOHN HEIDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Novi real estate agent Gary Reggish chats with seller Carol Yakele about finishing up the sale of her home near Ten Mile and Beck Roads. Yakele's house was built by her father in the early 1970s. Many homeowners in Novi are looking to sell in a down market that has depressed the amount their homes are worth.

up for this year that will help soften the blow, and administration is looking for ways to be more effective with less money.

"(Residents) have to be flexible and keep an open mind because some services may be delivered a bit differently, but that doesn't mean different quality,"

Please see VALUES, A2

## Presentation puts district finances in the spotlight

Teachers union believes Novi is not in dire straits

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

Concessions from the Novi Educational Association appear unlikely following a presentation Monday from the Michigan Education Association about the financial state of the school district.

Arch Lewis, MEA financial analyst, told the group of more than 100 teachers in attendance that the Novi Community Schools District is not broke, and that people need to look at how the district is spending money.

"If you have consistently more revenue than you are spending, that is not the definition of broke," he said. Lewis highlighted the impact teacher salaries, insurance and retirement have on the budget, noting it hovers around 46 percent of district resources. And that the district should not be spending as much on things not directly related to providing educational services for kids in Novi,

such as debt service, capital outlay and athletics. He believes those should not be financed out of the general fund.

Superintendent Peter Dion could not attend the presentation, but said the administration is looking into some of the numbers the MEA provided. He disagreed with Lewis' statements about not financing certain things out of the general fund. "That is all part of educating the whole child and that is why some people move to Novi," he said.

Dion also disagrees with Lewis' idea that the district does not have a financial problem.

"Before the year started we cut nearly \$2 million out of our budget and in the middle of the year we got cut \$2.7 million," he said. "The projections for next year have us looking at \$4.4 million in less revenue. Any person can see this economy is not going to change within a year. The reason why we have a fund equity is that it is a shock absorber so we can do what we wanted to do. We didn't want to cut programs in the middle of the year and many districts had to do that."

Kim Edwards, MEA field staff, said fortunately Novi has enough resources to weather the storm.

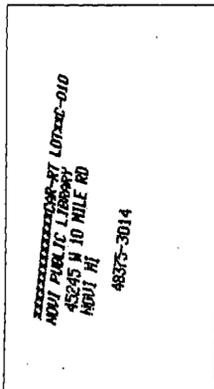
"Obviously, we believe in this district and would be willing to consider cutbacks and concessions if the district finances warrant it, and it doesn't," she said.

Tom Brenner, NEA president, said he cannot say the union would not be willing to take concessions but wants to talk to all his members first.

Please see FINANCES, A2

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## City Council moving forward with development of Landings Property

Grant would make up majority of funding

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

The Novi City Council gave administration the go-ahead on Monday to seek funding via a grant for initial developments of the Landings Property as a park.

Total design, engineering and construction costs are estimated at \$619,329, with \$500,000 of it being funded by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) development grant. The maximum city match would be \$125,000.

Council member David Staudt, who has been a proponent of developing the land as a park,

said he believes there will be "ample opportunities in the next year or two to raise those funds through non-tax means." The city could have a large sum of naming rights money and also will solicit funding from outside donors.

"It would be great to look at the taxpayers two or three or four or five years down the road and say we did this without having to spend virtually any taxpayer dollars to get this done," he said.

Council member Andrew Mutch agreed with Staudt and

Please see LANDINGS, A2

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JOHN HEDER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Homeowners in the Novi area have been trying to sell their properties in a downmarket — some have even had to short sell or give up their homes in foreclosures.

VALUES FROM PAGE A1

Landry said, "They want the same services they have always got and that is what they will still get from the city of Novi." Novi's decrease is much less than surrounding communities such as Wixom (15.53 percent), Farmington Hills (16.6 percent), Walled Lake (16.96 percent) and Lyon Township (17.33 percent).

services. Officials also have done a good job preparing and making adjustments as needed. Gary Reggish, broker for America United Realty in Novi, said despite the numbers, he believes the market is heading toward stabilization. He said Oakland County has the lowest inventory and highest sales in the last five years. Two of the reasons behind that are the homebuyer tax credits and property values are priced where they need to be sold.

School administrators agree to pay cut

BY NATHAN MUELLER STAFF WRITER

Administrators in the Novi Community School District have agreed to a 1.5 percent wage reduction for the 2009-2010 school year. The reduction, which affects 30 administrators, amounts to \$57,000, and is expected to help the district as it tries to combat a \$4.5 to \$6 million budget deficit next school year. "We know the district

has to save money and the administrators stepped up and showed leadership," said Superintendent Peter Dion. "We have to share the pain and responsibility and I applaud them. Many are taking sacrifices so we can keep that quality education people want. Dion started the trend eight months ago when the board of education instituted a pay freeze on his salary, meaning he would not get his 1-percent increase.

Also late last year the board privatized custodial services to save the district nearly \$2 million annually, and the transportation employees agreed to wage and benefit concessions that amounted to a 20-percent salary cut for most employees. "We have custodians who gave up their jobs, bus drivers give up 20 percent of their salaries and a superintendent who took a pay freeze," said Bob Schram, assistant superintendent of human resources.

"I think it's important everyone does their share." The teacher's union also was asked about taking possible concessions, but it appears unlikely. Novi Education Association President Tom Brenner said he still has to talk to his members and wants to meet with Schram. "It seems like it would be difficult to move on this in the current year," he said.

FINANCES FROM PAGE A1

"I think the sky isn't falling and we're not in a financial crisis," he said. The presentation made

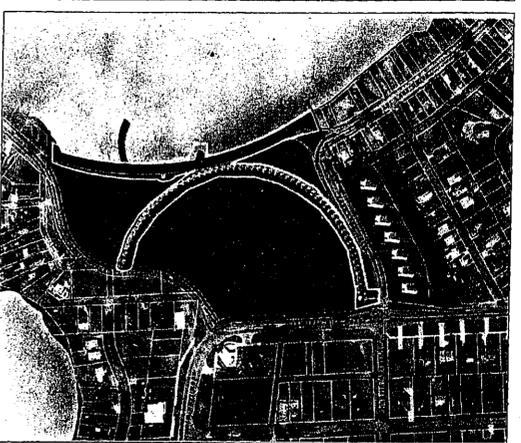
Monday was one the NEA hoped to do before the school board but were unable to do so because they were told the board only wanted to hear from the NEA. Brenner spoke at Thursday's school board meeting, and his main point was that he

wanted to work together with the district on a solution that would be beneficial for everyone. He said he knows some people think labor costs are too high, but he disagrees. "As an educator, I think that is a good thing, and that if

anything, we ought to be looking at ways of increasing the amount of money put into the classrooms," he said. To watch or read Monday's presentation by the MEA, visit www.noviae.com.

LANDINGS FROM PAGE A1

wanted to make it clear to residents that the actual budget impact of the project is likely in fall 2011 at the earliest.



The highlighted parts of the map show the Landings Property park amenity items (promenade walkway, tree lined arc walkway, small fishing pier and historical marker) that would be developed with a successful MNRFT grant award.

The grant application is due April 1, and the city expects the process to evolve over the next year. "I think if we get this, while it means we would have to put some money toward this, the grant would be the majority of the portion of it and it would be a wonderful way to get this location ready," said council member Terry Margolis.

Blaszczyk wins talent competition at Miss America

Miss Michigan represents Novi, state at international event

BY CHRIS JACKETT CORRESPONDENT

Not everyone gets to say they competed in the Miss America pageant during their lifetime, but Novi resident Nicole Blaszczyk can attend the blur of a week she recently spent in Las Vegas.

Blaszczyk, who turns 23 Feb. 16, was crowned Miss Michigan last June, making her one of 53 contestants from the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to compete Jan. 26-30 at the Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino. Arriving in Vegas Jan. 20, Blaszczyk and the other contestants had several rehearsals and Miss America-sponsored events to attend throughout the next week before three days of preliminary competition Jan. 26-28. Following a day made up of a 10-minute interview with the six-person panel of judges, Blaszczyk's preliminaries consisted of a question session Tuesday, gown and bathing suit display Wednesday, and her personal talent performance on Thursday.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MISS AMERICA ORGANIZATION

Miss Michigan Nicole Blaszczyk (right) accepts the award for winning the Miss America preliminary talent competition from Miss America 2009 Katie Stam Jan. 28 in Las Vegas.

"We were getting questions from all across the playing field. Political questions about unemployment here in Michigan, which was my question from Rush Limbaugh," she said, adding that Tiger Woods, the Super Bowl and marketing were also subjects she was asked about.

Blaszczyk estimated 12,000-14,000 women compete for the 53 spots in the Miss America pageant and, being one of the 12 options for the three spots in the top 15 voted on by the American public, she was thrilled with the experience.

"Seeing some of the girls out there and what they've done in their state and bringing those ideas home to Michigan. That and making 53 friends from all across the country," Blaszczyk said of her favorite parts

of the experience. "I can say I've been there." After Blaszczyk and the 37 other contestants were eliminated at the nationally televised show Jan. 30, she said it was just like anyone else watching the event, just from the left side of the stage.

"We do the same thing everyone else does at home. Say we think it'll be this one or hope it's this one," Blaszczyk said, adding that, as contestants were narrowed down, those eliminated were expecting Miss Virginia Caressa Cameron to win the Miss America crown — and she did. "She's a very good contestant. Looks good on stage and she'll do a great

job representing the Miss America organization. It's more than a full-time job. It's a whirlwind, a full-blown tornado."

The contestants had to be ready to go by 4-5 p.m. because of the three-hour time difference between Las Vegas and the east coast, which was a different experience in itself for most of the women because they had to be up at 7 a.m. to get ready for the early start.

"They keep us pretty busy. The day of the show was hectic," Blaszczyk said. "They have all the girls packed and ready to go Friday night because the winner has to get on a plane Saturday night."

PRELIMINARY TALENT

Blaszczyk got a surprise earlier in the week when she and three other contestants were chosen at random to speak with Clinton Kelly ("What Not to Wear"), who was hosting an hour-long "Behind the Curtain" television show for the pageant. Sporting University of Michigan sweatpants, Blaszczyk and the other three contestants gave Kelly some inside tips on how to do a successful swimsuit walk, of which the lack of clothing was the least of the girls' concerns.

"We just talked about what to do to get ready and walk. Anyone can put a suit on, but to put heels on and walk across a slippery stage is a whole different game," Blaszczyk said, adding that some contestants slipped or stumbled on the mirrored glass floor, but no one fell during the preliminary competitions. "You think of walking across a straight line, every time."

The highlight of the preliminaries for the 2005 Novi High graduate was the talent competition. The contestants were split into three groups to do the different events on different days and Blaszczyk won the Thursday talent competition with a lyrical dance to "Lifetime," a skill only one other contestant displayed.

"My lyrical dance was an old solo I did a few years ago. I spent the most time on that of the 18 years I've danced," said Blaszczyk, a long-time student at Sheryl's School of Dance in Novi. "It was a little controversial because it wasn't your typical pageant talent, it was more expressive. But that's the kind of dancer I am. I think it was the first lyrical dance to win a preliminary."

"I know that, going in there, my performance wasn't as strong as I wanted it to be. I've been training since I was 3. My talent is the reason I wanted to be there."

Blaszczyk first got into pageants after high school. She heard she could earn scholarships for college, so she entered and used her dancing talent to win the 2008 Miss Dance Michigan and 2008 Miss Wayne County crowns before earning a \$10,000 scholarship by winning the 2009 Miss Michigan title. Winning the \$2,000 talent competition at Miss America earned Blaszczyk more scholarship money, which now totals \$18,000.



Miss Michigan Nicole Blaszczyk, a Novi resident, shows off her bikini during the swimsuit portion of the Miss America preliminaries Jan. 27 in Las Vegas.

fund her last two semesters at Wayne State University to earn a degree in marketing, which she hopes to use in sports marketing.

"I've been able to work with a lot of major Michigan sports teams over the past year. It's opened my eyes as far as what I want to do," Blaszczyk said, adding that she would enjoy working with the Detroit Lions, Tigers or Red Wings organizations. "If something else comes along... You never know. Sometimes life throws curveballs at you. We still have our (movie) tax incentive here in Michigan and I had a lot of fun dipping my toes in that (as an actress)."

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

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Owner Ro Lambert opened State of Mind Art Gallery at Twelve Oaks Mall to display and sell her art and the work of about 40 other local artists.

### Artists show off wide array of talents

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

It's hard to walk into the State of Mind Art Gallery at Twelve Oaks Mall and not get distracted.

The store is filled with a wide array of art, some much more unique than others, and each piece was crafted by a local artist with an interesting story.

Owner Ro Lambert said it is exactly what she envisioned when she opened the store in October, and its success has allowed her to keep it open past the January closing date she thought she was going to have.

"There is something for everyone, and it gives artists an opportunity when they are not in art fair season to showcase their work," she said.

The store has everything from photography, oil and watercolor painting, jewelry and pottery to glass, metal, granite, rock art and more. Novi Meadows students even have their own corner to display their work.

It is a co-op business meaning the artists share the rent and work in the store in exchange for having their work displayed.

Two Novi artists have their work on display: Kim Kozlowski, who is a photographer, and Renee Verklan, who makes jewelry. Kozlowski also is a manager at the store.

OPEN HOUSE  
What: Meet the Artist Night  
Where: State of Mind Art Gallery, inside Twelve Oaks Mall  
When: 5-9 p.m. Friday

"It's a great opportunity for us to be able to sell our work in our own backyard," she said. "It also helps me get my name out in the community."

Verklan just started showing and selling her work at the store in the last week, a big step up from the high school shows she had been doing.

"It's a good way for me to keep my stuff shown every day," she said.

Lambert said one of the best parts about the store is having the different artists on site to answer questions and share tips. An artist also is teaching a watercolor class for anyone in the community.

Also, tomorrow between 5-9 p.m., State of Mind Art Gallery is hosting an open house with all the artists present. There will be live music and art giveaways throughout the night.

For more information, visit State of Mind Art Gallery on the upper level of Twelve Oaks Mall near Macy's or call (248) 773-8988.

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

### Local leaders react to governor's final State of the State address

BY CAL STONE  
EDITOR

Immediately following Jennifer Granholm's final State of the State address from the Capitol in Lansing on Feb. 2, local leaders in Novi and Northville offered their responses.

"Michigan families need jobs. Our state lost more than 235,000 jobs last year alone, and we must reverse that trend," said State Rep. Hugh Crawford (R-Nowi). "I was pleased with the governor's recent calls for reforms, and if she's finally serious about reforming state government before forcing a tax hike, I'm ready and willing to work with her to accomplish these Republican goals."

Although both Peter Dion, Novi schools superintendent, and David Landry, mayor of Novi, were attending a group focus meeting on the Novi Library and did not get to see or hear the governor's speech, Crawford's Novi colleague in the state Senate heard it live and in person.

NANCY CASSIS  
"I have listened to all of her addresses, and I want to thank her for her service and dedication to this state," said State Sen. Nancy Cassis (R-Nowi). "She started out in 2003 on the Capitol steps with good intentions and high expectations; she really heard us with her vision and her promises at that time. But, we did not hear that same vision. We didn't hear a plan on how we would get to Michigan's new economy."

Cassis said Granholm had many missed opportunities and her journey with the Legislature has been very long and difficult.

"The one thing I would applaud this governor for is now she suddenly is focusing on real job creations, not imaginary jobs."

The Novi senator said Michigan, by the end of this year, will have lost 1 million jobs, with 650,000 of those occurring on Granholm's watch.

"I think we have to recognize that it is the small businesses that are the way of the future," said Cassis. "If they are freed up, it will create 70 percent of all the jobs we envision in the next 10 years."

Cassis said it's the small businesses that are suffering the most under the current policies of Granholm's administration.

"Michigan's business tax demands reform," she said. "Government doesn't create jobs. I think the governor's still tends to think it can, but it's the private sector - the entrepreneurial spirit that is allowed to grow and be nourished."

Cassis, a former educator, said it's troubling that Granholm prefers Hollywood producers and subsidizing their productions by "sending refunds to them that will cause this state \$100 million this year and \$120 million next year" while cutting funds to education, seniors on Medicaid and local police and fire.

"I think it's absolutely wrongheaded policy," said Cassis. "Hollywood is not going to save Michigan, and we can't pay more and higher taxes to subsidize this giveaway - the highest in the nation."

Cassis said the mood of legislators during the governor's speech was "pretty somber," with not a lot of clapping and standing up.

"We didn't hear anything new," said Cassis. "I hoped she would've said she really wanted to work with the Legislature but, unfortunately, I don't think she really knows how."

MARC CORRIVEAU  
Across the aisle and in the House of Representatives, Marc Corriveau (D-Northville) said he liked how Granholm "took time to talk about the positive things in Michigan."

He said that the state is diversifying, and although it's not going to happen overnight, "we're moving in the right direction."

Like Cassis, Corriveau noted that this address by Granholm differed from her previous ones in its lack of pomp and circumstance and was much more serious in tone.

"She did end on a high note, bringing in business leaders who decided to stay here and invest," said Corriveau, adding that the governor started on an even keel and grew to a positive feel overall.

"There were no surprises," the Northville representative said. "She's been consistent in investing in things that will bring jobs."

LEONARD REZMIERSKI  
Jobs, or cutting them, is one of the issues facing Leonard Rezmierski as superintendent of Northville's school district, which was hit with the second highest funding cuts in the state this school year.

"I'm delighted to hear and optimistic in the things that would correct funding in schools," Rezmierski said of Granholm's speech. "I was enthused to hear about all of the job creations throughout the state that I had no idea about, and I hope that's a trend that continues so folks are encouraged to stay in our state and move here and bring their families here."

Rezmierski said Granholm hit a perfect chord of balancing a number of issues with the major focus being jobs and education. He was also encouraged that a balanced budget would be approved by July 1.

"Whether I like the results is another matter," he said. "I'll reserve judgment until I see and hear details of her budget next week."

Rezmierski said he was very encouraged to hear that there would be no more additional education cuts, although he said a year ago he could've said the same thing and would've been proven wrong.

"I'm painted by that experience and, hopefully, worse... but I'm encouraged."

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# EDUCATION

## School board approves pair of promotions

Carter to assistant principal, Holly to executive secretary

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

Nicole Carter's career at Novi High School has come full circle.

Carter, who started at the school 11 years ago as a civics, economics and AP government teacher prior to becoming dean of students three years ago, was promoted last Thursday by the Novi Board of Education to assistant principal. She replaces Randy Gawel, who left in November to become principal at Berkley High School.

Coming from a family of educators, the decision to apply for the job was a no-brainer for Carter.

"It's a great feeling to make the transition...and definitely nice to do that in the same district," she said. "I feel like hard work does pay off."

Carter said the reason she is excited about her new role is that she has a chance to affect policy, which is her passion. Also being promoted on Thursday was Sheila Holly from Novi Meadows to executive secretary for curriculum.

All the board members agreed that Carter and Holly were good fits for the positions, but two voted against the hires for financial reasons.

The board was told in November there would be a freeze on the assistant principal and executive secretary positions because of budget cuts from the state. When Gov. Jennifer Granholm decided not to cut an additional \$127 per-pupil, superintendent Peter Dion looked at how the situation was working without those people and decided the district needed to fill the spots.

He said the district still is going to save approximately \$80,000 for the remainder of the year. Carter's salary bumps up to \$107,372 in her new role, and the dean position is not going to be filled. Holly's position at Novi Meadows is going to be filled by a substitute.

Trustee George Kortlandt said his concern was that the district was increasing what they were currently paying by promoting Carter, and he didn't want it to just be compared to this budget but to future ones that show drastic deficits.

"Why we are saying the current budget is the golden number strikes me as odd," he said. Kortlandt also said he felt the move was premature considering the board was still waiting to hear back about possible concessions from the teachers union and because the district was just about to start com-



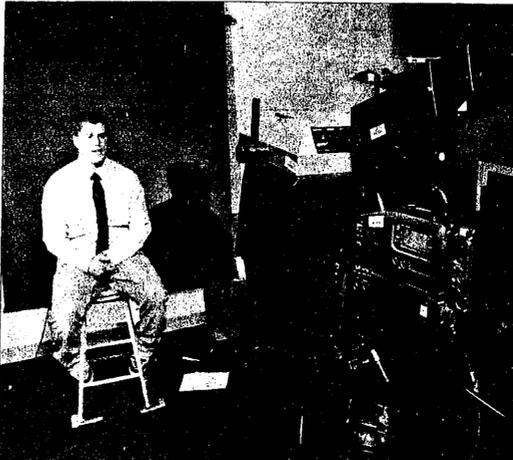
Nicole Carter was recently promoted from dean of students to assistant principal at Novi High School. Here she chats with freshmen Kelsey Shumir, left, and Alyssa Yarrish during a recent lunch hour.

munity forums to gather input from the residents about what they value in the district.

Treasurer Dennis O'Connor sided with Kortlandt, saying these two positions might not even exist in two months and "it's irresponsible to support this recommendation without any corresponding plan."

President Ann Glubzinski supported the moves because it did not exceed the budget that was approved last June and it was "a fiscally responsible decision to make for the betterment of our students."

The administration said all positions are going to be looked at in the future, and O'Connor urged them to have a "comprehensive plan instead of this continued piecemeal." "Business is changing here and we have to get out of this mindset of doing things like we always have been doing,"



Cat's Eye TV sportscaster Brett Jewell recently received honorable mention honors from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Foundation. Here he's photographed during a recent on-air segment broadcast throughout the school and online.

## Novi High's weatherman earns top state honor

News team also best in state

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

Chris Gray's dream as a child was to one day become a television weatherman.

And the senior at Novi High School is well on his way. Gray recently was awarded the Broadcasting Scholarship from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Foundation, and next year he plans on attending Central Michigan University to work in its broadcasting department and get his degree in meteorology.

"Chris is very dedicated and has developed quite an on-air personality," said David Legg, senior manager and faculty advisor for WOVI radio and Cat's Eye TV. "He is always willing to take what he learns and improve, and he is a good role model for all the other students."

Much of the reason for Gray's success is that the weatherman role he plays on television also is who he is in real life. He has visited all the television weathermen in the metro Detroit area, is a severe weather spotter for the National Weather Service and is constantly studying to be better prepared. He has worked for the Cat's Eye News since he was a sophomore and throughout the years has attracted quite a following.

"It's just fun reporting the news and being the voice of the school," he said. As for the scholarship he was awarded, Gray said the best part is that he gets to receive it in front of station managers and other professionals in the business and get his name out there.

He also was part of another honor the Cat's Eye News received from the Foundation. The anchor team of Gray, Kara Ludke, Kelly Conen and Michael Rymiak took first place for Daily Television Newscast. "The fact we were able to take first place shows what kind of commitment the students in this class have," Gray said. "We don't want to be known as afternoon announcements -- we want to be a newscast."

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



Members of the Cat's Eye TV broadcast crew take to the stage during Thursday morning's show.



Chris Gray, weatherman

"We don't want to be known as afternoon announcements -- we want to be a newscast."

The Cat's Eye News is a live newscast that is shown on televisions at the school daily and online at www.novivt.com. It is a student-run operation and every student has to learn more than one job and appear on camera at least once. The students do make mistakes, but the live setting forces them to learn quickly and move on.

Legg also said the product is a great example of when students do hands-on work and can apply the theories they learn in class.

"It says a lot for giving kids the right tools to do the job and says a lot about the community that they are willing to support this program," he said. Brett Jewell, who received an honorable mention nod from the Foundation for Sportscasting, said the staff's honor was well-deserved.

"I'm happy because we put a lot of time and effort into this," he said.

NOVI ON CAMPUS  
Michigan State University  
The following students from Novi were named to the Dean's List for the fall semester: Ryan Adams, Stefan Figurski, Erica Howard, Paige Jaeger, Kelsey Loeffler and Ashley Maderosian.

The following recent graduates are from Novi: Jeremy Bowerman, supply chain management; Anthony Dellicoli, mechanical engineering; Ryan Fantino, advertising; Justin Fischer, integrative management; Kathleen Furman, communication; Keven Gee, marketing; Jacob Haf, mechanical engineering; Amy King, nursing; Christina Maczka, accounting; Michael Mehl, accounting; Paul Montagne, advertising; and Megan Murray, family community services.

Saint Mary's College  
Novi's Megan Flaherty was named to the Dean's List for the fall semester.  
Olivet College  
Novi's Jeremy Adams and Wixom's Alison Rocht were named to the Dean's List for the fall semester.

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**Only 3 Days Left to SAVE!**

**Novi Educational Foundation Invites you to the 2010 Green Gala**

Olympic Celebration  
March 27th at the Rock Financial Showplace  
"Go for the Gold with Novi Schools"

Come join us for an evening of fun and excitement all in support of the Novi Community Schools and its children. The 2010 Green Gala evening includes the following:

- ★ Casino Night Gambling
- ★ Hors d'oeuvres and Desserts
- ★ Live and Silent Auction
- ★ Music, Dancing and Games
- ★ Chances to win raffle prizes donated by local merchants
- ★ Cash Bar

Your participation will help the Novi Educational Foundation, in its 23rd year, to continue providing scholarships and teacher grants throughout the district. Your support will help make a difference in Novi education.

**Event Information**  
When: Saturday, March 27th beginning at 7 PM  
Where: Rock Financial Showplace, Novi, MI  
Price: \$60.00/person

**ONLY 3 DAYS LEFT TO SAVE!**  
\$10 OFF per person. Purchase Tickets before February 14, the price is only \$50.00/person

**Make Your Reservation Now**  
Reserve with your credit card by calling (248) 449-1206  
★ Mail check payable to Novi Educational Foundation to:  
NEF Green Gala  
25345 Taft Road  
Novi, MI 48374-2423

Tickets will also be available at each school office

www.NoviEducationalFoundation.org

ANNOUNCEMENT

Potter & Krupansky
Laurence and Nancy Potter of Waterford, Conn., announce the engagement of their daughter, Lauren Elizabeth Potter...



Northville home to reigning royalty

Northville's own Piazza Dance Company is home to the newly crowned Miss Dance of Michigan, 2010, Briana Bock...



Briana Bock, 18, daughter of Ernie and Nancy Bock of Novi, was crowned Miss Dance of Michigan on Feb. 7.

Sunday's competition was the culmination and highlight of a month-long series of events in which Briana participated...

In July, Briana will travel to San Antonio, Texas to compete for the title of Miss Dance of America.

The Piazza Dance Company, located at 4233 Seven Mile Road...

Beek-Sawyer, 14, of Livonia achieved the second runner-up position in the Teen Miss Dance of Michigan event.

Kalianna Basuukes, 16, of Northville and Lena Drake, 16, of Farmington Hills, were top 12 semi-finalists in the Miss Dance of Michigan.

Other Piazza Dance Company students also put in a strong showing at the event.

Christina Zikas, 12, and Jillian Morikis, 11, both of Northville, were top seven semi-finalists in the Junior competition...

Jillian achieving third runner-up to the title of Junior Miss Dance of Michigan. Hanna

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Passages
Obituaries, Memorials & Remembrances
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MAXINE MARIE (DAVIS) AVERILL
Age 76, of Milford, Jan. 12, 2010. Funeral home, Milford Memorial Home, 1615 W. 10th St., Milford, Mich. 48895.

MARY CHAPMAN "MAMIE" HUGHES
A resident of Milford, MI and former resident of Farmdale, MI and Palm Springs, CA, died at home in the care of her family on February 2, 2010.

EDITH RAYNER BONNO
Age 57, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, February 7, 2010. The family will be receiving friends at Phillips Funeral Home, 122 W. Lake St., (Ten Mile), South Lyon, on Thursday, February 11 and Friday, February 12 from 4 - 8 P.M.

SUZANNE C. (GRABMEYER) FITZPATRICK
February 3, 2010 age 78. Burial at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Saginaw, Michigan. Memorial donations to: St. John Hospice. www.stjohnhospice.org

RICHARD WILLIAM HAUSRATH
Age 87, passed away February 4, 2010. He was born on Dec. 23, 1922, in Cleveland, OH, to the late William and Lucy (Bardwell) Hausrath.

Paying Tribute to the Life of Your Loved One
Obituary notices are published at no cost. Additional lines will be charged at \$9 per line. New may include a photo of your loved one.

JUDITH D. WALZ
Age 65, passed away peacefully at home on February 4, 2010. She was born on August 1, 1944 to William and Georgia (Spearman) Stanton. Judith is survived by her husband, Walter, her son Kurt (Janene) Walz, daughter-in-law Kim Walz; mother Georgia (Jim) Dooley; grandchildren Ashley, Britany, Devin, siblings Bonnie, Ruby and Bill. She was preceded in death by her son Kevin. A funeral service was held on Feb. 8 at PHILLIPS FUNERAL HOME, South Lyon. Online guestbook: www.phillipsfuneral.com

MARJORIE KISH
Age 88, of Highland, died February 5, 2010. She is survived by her children: Barbara, Margaret, Joanna, Juliana, Carolyn, John, grandchildren, Mark, Jesse, Deej, Nina, Dane, Jennifer, Joshua, and grandchildren, Douglas, 13 great-grandchildren. Also leaving her niece, Cheryl, and many loving extended family members and dear friends. Services will be held privately. Memorials may be made to Michigan Humane Society. For further information contact Lynch & Sons Funeral Directors, Milford at 248-684-6045 or visit www.LynchFuneralDirectors.com

EDWARD ANTHONY YURKUNAS
Age 91, passed away on November 9, 2010. He was born on November 9, 1918, in Waterbury, Connecticut, to the late John and Mary Yurkunas. He was a Veteran of WWII, serving in 653rd Air Base Squadron. He served from 1942 until he was wounded in action while serving in Africa and Middle Eastern Europe and was discharged in 1945. He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years Dolores (Votruba) Yurkunas; brothers: John, Benjamin, and Vincent; and his great-granddaughter Ashlea Lee. He is survived by his children, Charles (Brenda) Yurkunas, Barbara (Marie) Dombrowski, Bruce (Lynn) Yurkunas, Brian (Carolyn) Yurkunas; eight grand children and eight great-grandchildren. A celebration of his life was held on Feb. 10 at South Lyon Church of Christ. Burial was held at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, MI. Arrangements entrusted to Phillips Funeral Home, South Lyon. Online guestbook: www.phillipsfuneral.com

KAREN IRENE SCHWARCK
Age 59, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, February 7, 2010. Karen was born on April 24, 1950 in Livonia to Eric and Irene Rayner. Karen married Don Schwarck in July of 1971 and enjoyed 38 years of marriage. She earned her BA from Eastern Michigan University and went on to earn a Master's degree in 1978. Karen was an artist and writer, and loved Mackinac Island, where they moved in 2006. Karen is survived by her beloved husband Don; wonderful sons: Matt Schwarck of Lake Orion and Paul (Kelly) Schwarck of Chicago; loving parents Eric and Irene Rayner of Naples, FL; and her brother Eric (Laura) Rayner of Brighton. Karen's sister Edith Bonno also passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, February 7, 2010. The family will be receiving friends at Phillips Funeral Home, 122 W. Lake St., (Ten Mile), South Lyon, on Thursday, February 11 and Friday, February 12 from 4 - 8 P.M. A memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, February 13, 2010 and will begin receiving friends at 10:15 AM at the First United Methodist Church of South Lyon, 640 S. Lafayette, South Lyon. Memorial contributions may be made to the family of Karen Schwarck c/o Phillips Funeral Home, 122 W. Lake St., South Lyon, MI 48178, or to a charity of your choice. Online guestbook: www.phillipsfuneral.com

STEPHANIE M. ZIELINSKI
Age 99, of South Lyon, passed away peacefully on February 2, 2010. She was born August 28, 1910 in Wadovice, Poland to Thomas and Karolina (Syrek) Karcz. Stephanie was a very accomplished Artist. She was a past member of the Dearborn Art Guild and a current member of the Brighton Art Guild. She was also a member of the Polish Cultural Center and the Polish National Alliance. She was very creative; she enjoyed sculpting, painting, and was a wonderful seamstress. She is survived by her loving daughters, Geraldine Szepka of South Lyon and Germaine Pollard of Virginia; 8 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents, her first husband, Gervase Zielinski, 6 brothers and sisters, and her husband Walter Zielinski. A funeral mass was held Saturday, February 6, 2010 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in South Lyon. Father Timothy Babcock officiated the service. Stephanie was laid to rest in Holy Sepulchre Catholic Cemetery. The family would appreciate any memorial contributions to the Brighton Art Guild P.O. Box 65, Brighton, MI 48116. Arrangements entrusted to Casteline Funeral Home, Inc. of South Lyon.

Relieve, prevent stress
If stress and everyday activities have you reaching for pain pills or a heating pad to relieve back pain, Dr. Tom Neuner of the Michigan Head & Spine Institute has another option. Dr. Neuner will host a free seminar on how to relieve and prevent stress through chiropractic techniques. Join him from 5-7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 18 at the Keystone Medical Center, 46325 W. 12 Mile Road, Suite 100 in Novi. Refreshments will be served and attendees are eligible to win two tickets to a Red Wings game. Register at www.mhisi.us

Andiamo brings late-night laughs
Friday and Saturday nights just got a whole lot funnier. The Andiamo Novi Theatre has announced "Late Night Comedy Series" as part of their on-going entertainment line-up. Featuring national comic stand-up comedians, the "Late Night Comedy Series" kicks off Friday, Feb. 12-Sunday, Feb. 14 (special Valentine's Day performance) with Cec Jay and Josh Phillips. Through Andiamo Novi Theatre's recent partnership with Heffron Talent International, audiences now have the perfect chance to see some of the nation's funniest stand-up comedians on stage at the theater every week.

NORTHVILLE / NOVI CHURCH EVENTS
Submit: Send calendar submissions via e-mail to cstoney@annett.com; by fax to (248) 695-2892; or by mail to Church Events/Novi-Novu, 101 N. Lafayette, South Lyon, MI 48178. Items must be received by noon on Monday to be included in Thursday's newspaper.

Church of the Holy Family
Location: 24505 Meadowbrook Road
Contact: (248) 349-8847 or visit holyfamilynovi.org
Mass Schedule
TIME/DAY: 7:30, 9:10, 10:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Sunday; 9 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday; 6:30 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 7 p.m. Tuesdays; 5 p.m. (English), 6:30 p.m.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
5051 Pleasant Valley Road • Brighton, MI 48114
910-927-9116
9:30 a.m. Communion Worship
10:45 a.m. Sunday School
Rev. Dale Hechtel, Pastor
www.lordoflifelutheran.com

Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Church & School
at the corner of Winans Lake & Mouch Rd.
St. John Roccus, Pastor
910-221-9910
Fr. John Roccus, Pastor
Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.
Please visit our Web Site: www.holyspirit.org

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN, ELCA
Farmington Hills • 2625 6th St. • 248-474-0564
Between Grand River & Freedom
Saturday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship & Sunday School 9:00 a.m. Traditional/Choral
11:15 a.m. Contemporary
Sunday School - All Ages 10:15 a.m.

Highland Community Church
2350 Harvey Lake Rd. (248) 887-4558
Contemporary
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.
Men's Bible Study & Breakfast: 8:15-9:45 a.m.
3rd-9th Grade Youth: Wednesdays 7-8 p.m.
Pastor: Nancy Ritter

NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
120 Bishop St., Highland
off Milford Rd., 2.7 miles N of M-59
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Bible Study Wed. 7:00 p.m.
888-723-0757 or 887-4558

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248-887-1311 • www.myhmc.com
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Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Kids Church 8:45 & 10:30 a.m.
Youth Night: Wed. 6:45-8:00 p.m.
Please bring a Bible, Bibles, Bibles & Bibles.
Please bring a Bible, Bibles, Bibles & Bibles.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
15800 Highway 16, Novi, MI 48240
Rev. Leo T. Lullo, Pastor
248-887-1311
Sunday 8 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.
9:00 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

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Living Water
80th Campus of St. Luke Lutheran Church Ann Arbor
Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Children's Church 10:00 a.m.
Child Care Provided
Rev. Dennis Thompson, Pastor
www.livingwater.org

White Lake Presbyterian Church
4000 Ingham St., between Regis & Grand
(248) 887-4554
Children's Church 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Rev. Dennis Thompson, Pastor
www.white-lake.org

NORTHVILLE / NOVI CHURCH EVENTS
Nazarene
Location: 21260 Haggerty Road, north of Eight Mile Road
Contact: (248) 348-7600 or visit dnazarene.org
Sunday Schedule: 9:15 a.m. Worship service with Praise Band, children's Sunday School and Adult Bible Fellowship; 10:15 a.m. Fellowship and refreshments; 11 a.m. Traditional worship service, Children's Church, Youth Sunday School and Adult Bible Fellowship; 6 p.m. Evening Service, Children's program, Youth Worship Service
Tuesday Schedule: Tuesday 9:30-11:15 a.m. Women of the Word Bible Study with childcare available for through age 5; 6:45 p.m. Ladies Evening Bible Study; 7 p.m. Men's Evening Bible Study
Wednesday Schedule: 5:30 p.m. Family Meal, \$4 per person, \$12 per family, 7 p.m. Children's Caravan, Club 56, Bible Study, Quilting, Adult Classes, Youth Blast
Thursday Schedule: 6 a.m. Men of Purpose Prayer Group; 7 p.m. Tae Kwon Do
Women of the Word
Time/Date: 9:25-11:15 a.m.
Details: The W.O.W. Tuesday Ladies Bible Study welcomes you to their study of the Book of Exodus. There is a \$15 registration fee, which includes interdenominational study materials. Childcare will be available in the morning for children through age 5.
Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross
Location: 40700 W. 10 Mile Road
Contact: (248) 427-1175 or churchoftheholycross.com
Sunday Worship: 7:45 a.m., 10 a.m. Sunday School and Nursery Care
10 a.m. Worship Service
Alzheimer's Support Group
Time/Date: 10 a.m. second Saturday of month
Faith Community Presbyterian
Location: 44400 W. 10 Mile Road
Contact: (248) 349-2345 or visit faithcommunity-novi.org
First Baptist Church of Novi
Family Integrated Church
Location: 45301 W. 11 Mile Road
Contact: (248) 349-3647 or firstbaptistchurchofnovi.org
Family Bible Hour: 9:45 a.m.
Family Worship: 11 a.m.
Bible Study: 6 p.m.
Family Movie Night: 5:30 p.m.; fourth Sunday of every month.
First Presbyterian Church of Northville
Location: 217 N. Wing
Contact: (248) 348-1020
Sunday Worship: 10:45 a.m. and 5:45 p.m.
Ladies Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesdays
Men's Bible Study: 9 a.m. first Saturday of every month
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More: For a complete listing of local and regional events, see the Novi Calendar online at www.hometownlife.com.

LOCAL EVENTS

Drew Nelson & Chris Buhalis Concert
Time/Date: 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13
Location: Newport Furnishings, 52504 Grand River Avenue, Wixom

Health supplements seminar
Time/Date: 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20
Location: Better Health at 42875 Grand River, Novi

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LL&S) Fundraiser
Time/Date: 5-7 p.m. Saturday, March 6
Location: Bar Louie in Fountain Walk, 44375 West 12 Mile Road, Novi

American Legion Post 19 Monthly Meeting
Time/Date: 7:30 p.m. on third Tuesdays
Location: Rock Financial Showplace, Grand River Avenue between Taft and Beck roads

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

Novi Community Education
Contact: To register, call (248) 449-1206 or visit us online at www.novi.k12.mi.us/district/communityeducation



Senior surfin'

Bob Hatrick teaches a trio of seniors including Richard O'Donohue, 85, left, how to surf the web at a Wednesday morning class at the Novi Senior Center on Meadowbrook Rd.

An 'Egg' extravaganza
Time/Date: 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, March 11
Location: Novi Middle School

Business to Business Breakfast
Time/Date: 8-9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23
Location: Hagopian World of Rugs, 43223 Twelve Mile Rd., Novi

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

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

NIGHTLIFE
Andiamo Novi / Dirty Martini Lounge / Andiamo Theater
Location: 42705 Grand River Avenue, Novi

Novi Chamber / EWO Networking Luncheon
Time/Date: 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16
Location: Marriott Detroit Livonia, 17100 N. Laurel Park Dr., Livonia

Low Vision Help

Time/Date: 2-3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11
Details: What common eye diseases can lead to needing vision rehabilitation? Hear about low vision aids to help with daily living and what the library has to offer, as well.

Doctor of Optometry. Please register.

Better Investing with Morningstar
Time/Date: 7-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11
Details: BetterInvesting provides investor support and education through a nationwide network of volunteers.

Teen Advisory Board (TAB) Meeting

Time/Date: 3:30-4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12
Details: Join the TAB as we create and plan programs for teens at the library. Also, provide input on the new teen space in the new library.

Kiddie Crafts

Time/Date: 10:30-11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 13
Details: Toddlers and preschoolers will have the opportunity to create a work of art using their imaginations and the supplies that we will provide.

Genology 102

Time/Date: 12:30-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13
Details: Topics covered include: geographic sources, brick-wall busting techniques, genealogy software evaluation and demonstration, GEDCOM files, and creating web pages.

Empower Me 4 Life!

Time/Date: 7-8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 15 and 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23
Details: Walter Powrozek, independent writer manager from SIGMA Financial Corporation, will educate us about the new tax law changes that can affect all of us since every one qualifies in 2010 only. Please register.

Mo Willems Pigeon Party

Time/Date: 10:30-11:15 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16
Details: Pigeon wants a party! He really, really, really please with sugar on top wants a party. So we are celebrating. Preschoolers, come hear pigeon stories, dance like a pigeon and make a pigeon craft.

Spanish Story Time

Time/Date: 10:30-11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17
Details: Spanish-speaking volunteer storytellers read Spanish picture books to preschool aged children.

English Conversation Group

Time/Date: 1-2 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 17 and Feb. 24
Details: Make friends while you practice your English pronunciation and conversation skills. No need to register.

All About E-Mail for Seniors

Time/Date: 1-3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17
Details: Learn the basics of sending and receiving e-mail, and sign up for a free e-mail account. This class includes interactive discussion and hands-on practice.

Library Board Meeting

Time/Date: 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 17
Details: The Library Board meets the third Wednesday of each month at the Novi Civic Center - Council Chambers.

Tamil Story Time

Time/Date: 10:30-11 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 18
Details: Tamil-speaking volunteer storytellers read Tamil picture books to preschool aged children.

Home Decor

Time/Date: 2-3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18
Details: Is your room in need of a little makeover? Come to the library and make some new stuff for your room.

Treasure Hunting

Time/Date: 7-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18
Details: Learn the hobby of treasure hunting from two pros. Tom and Sherry Klisz, members of Michigan Treasure Hunters, will describe equipment, share tips, and entertain with their experiences searching for treasure.

Toy Story Extravaganza for all ages!

Time/Date: 12-4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19
Details: Come join us as we prepare for the release of Toy Story 3 later on the year! We will show both the original Toy Story and Toy Story 2, plus put together a really fun craft!

InkWeavers Young Writers' Group

Time/Date: 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20
Details: A monthly writers' group for tweens in 7th-8th grades. Read a piece of your writing (age appropriate, please) and receive constructive feedback from your peers.

Phyllis Weeks (pweeks@novi.k12.mi.us) or Phyllis Weeks (pweeks@novi.k12.mi.us)

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Police, fire services could undergo changes

BY NATHAN MUELLER STAFF WRITER

Changes to police and fire department services are expected to take place this year as the city of Novi looks for ways to save in a tough economic climate.

The city hired ICMA to conduct a Staffing and Utilization Study for Police and Fire/EMS services last year, and city officials are analyzing if the recommendations make sense, and if so, how to best put them in place.

But while changes may be on the horizon, officials are assuring residents that services will not be hindered as a result.

Clay Pearson, city manager, praised how both departments are currently run. But since police and fire represents roughly 60 percent of the city's budget, he said they are "obligated to look at it because we can always get better."

One of the biggest concerns that has come from the study revolves around the status of Fire Station No. 3 located on the south side of Nine Mile Road, east of Novi Road.

The station is currently only staffed by fire personnel from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and is vacant at night and on the weekends. The city recently approved a contract with CEMS to use the building at night and on weekends, and officials are looking at better ways to use the space.

Mayor David Landry said more than 70 percent of the calls coming out of that station are at night and on weekends, which means a firefighter must be paged when an emergency happens, drive to the station from their home and then head to the point of the call.

"If we can find a way to get better service for that 70 percent, what difference does it make if it is coming out of Fire Station No. 3 or not," Landry said.

One option is to close the station, an idea that does not sit well with former city council member and resident Toni Nagy.

"I think if they close the station due to its location for the area it is a first responder to, it would be a great concern to the people in that area," she said. "This area is so densely populated I think it would be very upsetting to close the station down."

Landry said residents are "not going to see Fire Station No. 3 shuttered in the next few months," and it may never happen.

The city is working with the respective unions to determine the plan, and officials also are looking at mutual aid opportunities with surrounding communities.

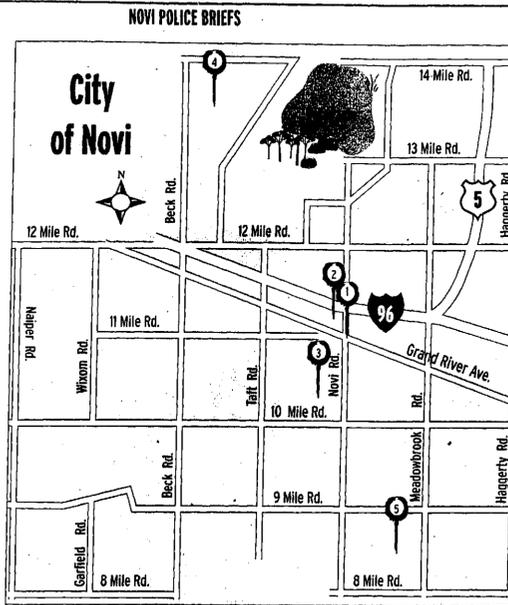
Another issue raised by some residents with regards to the ICMA study is a recommendation to replace the box-type vehicles with SUV-type vehicles to respond to medical calls.

Landry said since the city does not do transports, only 20 in the last year, it doesn't make sense to have the slower vehicles.

"The purpose of fire is to get there as fast as they can," he said. "Wouldn't we want the vehicle that could get the fire department there the fastest?"

City administration has spent time seeing how it is working in places like Grand Rapids and Wyoming, and if implemented, they would not just dump the current vehicles to get SUV's.

"I don't know that we would ever get rid of all of them either," Landry said. "In regards to these two issues, Landry said "nothing is imminent," and everything will be done at the council table. The police and fire town hall forums also will continue so the city has a chance to hear from the residents.



Drunk driver caught after running light

1 Novi police arrested a man at 2:20 a.m. on Feb. 4 for drunk driving after an officer observed the man turn left on a red light onto Grand River Avenue off Novi Road.

When the officer approached the car he could smell the odor of intoxicants coming from inside the vehicle. The driver said he was coming from the bar, where he "had a beer."

The man failed field sobriety tests and a preliminary breath test registered a blood alcohol content of .16 percent. The legal limit for drivers in Michigan is .08 percent.

He was transported to the Novi Police Department where he was issued a citation for operating while intoxicated and released when sober.

Police nab drunk driver

2 A 30-year-old man was arrested on Feb. 3 at 11:43 p.m. for operating while intoxicated after being stopped at Fonda and Novi Road for having a defective brake light.

The driver smelled strongly of alcohol and admitted to drinking four beers over the course of the night.

He failed field sobriety tests and a preliminary breath test registered a BAC of .106 percent. The legal limit for drivers is .08 percent.

He was transported to the Novi Police Department, issued an appearance notice and released when sober.

Watch stolen from home

3 A Novi man had his Invidia watch stolen between Jan. 9 and 10 while his home on Cavendish Avenue was being shown to potential buyers.

The man said there had been about four showings in that time frame and he left his

watch on a desk near the kitchen counter. He said he forgot to put the watch in safe keeping before he left and noticed it was missing on Jan. 11.

Two or three agents were in charge of the showings and the victim plans to get more information from his main agent to provide to the detective assigned to the case.

Items stolen from unlocked vehicle

4 A Novi resident had his GPS and cell phone stolen from his vehicle while it was

warning up on Feb. 2 at 8 p.m. in the parking lot of an apartment complex off Wellington Drive.

According to the report, the man started his car and went inside. When he returned five minutes later, the glove compartment of his vehicle was open and the items were missing.

There did not appear to be any signs of forced entry and the man said he likely left his car unlocked. Police have no suspects at this time.

Thief snags GPS

5 A unknown suspect stole a GPS from a Novi woman's car while it was parked between the hours of 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Feb. 2 on Glen Haven Circle.

The woman said she left her vehicle unlocked and when she returned to the car her GPS was missing and a flashlight was taken from the glove box.

There are no suspects at this time.

Thief snags GPS

5 A unknown suspect stole a GPS from a Novi woman's car while it was parked between the hours of 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Feb. 2 on Glen Haven Circle.

The woman said she left her vehicle unlocked and when she returned to the car her GPS was missing and a flashlight was taken from the glove box.

There are no suspects at this time.

Check us out on the Web every day at hometownlife.com

Advertisement for 'Hey, Novi! It's Time to Pick Your PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS'. The ad features a large trophy image and lists various categories for awards, including Best Food Outlets, Best Service Providers & Retail Stores, and Best Family Restaurant. It also includes a deadline for ballot submission: 'All Entries Must Be Received By February 19th'.

Advertisement for 'CANTON' located at 8121 Lilley between Joy & Warren Roads. It lists services such as 24-hour professional staffing, private/semi-private barrier-free care, and home-cooked meals. Contact information: (734) 453-3203.

Advertisement for 'Free Live Band Concert to Benefit Northville Civic Concern'. The concert is on Tuesday evening, February 16th, 7-8 PM at Northville United Methodist Church. It features Kirsten Anderson performing songs from her latest album.

Advertisement for 'Save Money!!!' by Bright Side Inc. offering interior and exterior painting services. Contact: 248-391-6990.

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

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### OUR VIEWS

## Threads: A perfect way to give back

Mother Nature's impending snowstorm forced the Novi Chamber of Commerce to play it safe and postpone its annual Threads of Power breakfast from yesterday to tomorrow.

That gives you two extra days to dig through your closet and find "gently used" clothing to help folks re-enter the business world.

This philanthropic event, now in its 11th year, is co-sponsored by Telcom Credit Union, and it truly typifies what kind of community Novi is known as -- one that gives back.

The clothing, which will be delivered to the Women's Center of Southeastern Michigan in Ann Arbor and Church of the Holy Family in Novi, gives individuals a boost of confidence -- something which is welcome and needed in today's economy. Counseling and coach is also provided to those looking to get back into the workforce.

The event takes place at 7-8:45 a.m. on Friday at Nordstrom's north entrance at Twelve Oaks Mall. Pre-register online at [www.novichamber.com](http://www.novichamber.com) for \$20. Registration at the door is \$30.

There will be a presentation by Nordstrom's staff on current trends in men's and women's clothing. Regular clothing items for men, women and children also will be accepted. For more information, visit [www.novichamber.com](http://www.novichamber.com).

Everyone must bring at least one item. That's a small fee for a big reward.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

What do you think of the job that President Obama's done in his first year in office?



I support Obama ... I think it would be great if he got support from Congress, but now believe it was foolish for him to believe he could. I think it's a shame that some members of Congress aren't supporting their constituents' needs.  
Patty Sheeran  
Novi



I don't feel he's fulfilling his promises. I think he's following public opinion rather than seeing results through.  
Dawn Deornellus  
Novi



I don't support President Obama's policies. Government's too big and spending is out of control.  
Kristen Jamison  
Novi



I think he's doing very well, considering the mess he inherited.  
Karen Sovel  
Novi

## What do the residents of Michigan want?

### COMMENTARY

What do people in Michigan want? Overwhelmingly, jobs -- good ones and lots of them. A thriving, diversified, growing economy, attractive enough to keep talented people here and bring in others from elsewhere.

In short, a prosperous Michigan. Whether we'll get there again remains to be seen.

Obviously, the biggest factors are the dynamism and imagination of the private sector -- whether the Michigan-based domestic auto industry pulls itself together, for example. But public policy can have an impact, too.

There are two basic ways to look at this:

One might be called "hunting and gathering," in which state agencies like the Michigan Economic Development Corp. feverishly work to put together packages to attract or retain companies with big plants and lots of jobs. (Full disclosure: I'm the unpaid vice chairman of the MEDC board.)

The upside of this strategy is that when you get a hit, it's likely to be a big one. The downside is that chasing smokestacks these days may not

### COMMENTARY

result in lots of new jobs, even when you successfully keep or lure a major installation.

Take autos, for example. Certainly, the industry will remain at the core of Michigan's economy. But motor vehicle manufacturers themselves are unlikely to produce many new jobs. Even if they once again thrive, they will do so by making enormous productivity gains that mean more vehicles will be built with fewer workers.

Another way to look at economic development policy is as "gardening," that is, doing what you can to encourage, nurture and help smaller home-grown companies, whether they are outright startups or ones that have been around for several years.

The downside of this strategy is that one little company obviously won't produce lots of jobs. However, taken together, small companies provide at least half of all jobs in Michigan. And, most importantly, experts agree that smaller firms will produce the vast majority of future new jobs.

Lots of attention has been paid in recent years to efforts to help startup companies, by accelerating the transfer of inventions from university laboratories into the market, or by finding venture capital firms willing

to invest. This is anything but trivial for our economy.

Michigan's three major universities -- Michigan State University, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University -- have founded something called the University Research Corridor, which is meant to help and nurture such companies. The URC calculates that its work has a \$14.5 billion annual impact on the Michigan economy. So far, it has also led to the birth of 102 startup companies.

Unfortunately, venture capital firms often jerk newly started companies to their headquarters in places like California or Massachusetts in order to keep a close eye on how they're doing.

So let's focus on "second-stage" companies, those that have evolved past the startup phase, but have not yet grown to maturity. A business typically enters its second stage when it approaches \$1 million in sales and continues until it reaches around \$50 million.

By that time, a company should have developed the professional management of a mature firm.

Second-stage companies have been in a sense the neglected stepchildren of our economic development strategy. Yet they are the ones that will provide lots of jobs if they succeed. They are the ones with roots firmly

planted in Michigan soil, and far less likely to be uprooted by a venture capitalist.

Yet the needs of second-stage firms are much different from those of either startups or mature large companies, according to Dan Wyant, president of the Edward Lowe Foundation, an operating foundation that focuses on new and growing businesses.

Bob Fowler, CEO of the Small Business Association of Michigan, based in Lansing, agrees: "Typically, second-stage firms need access to capital and to management experience. Most public economic development programs don't really focus on the particular needs of second-stage companies."

To test their ideas, I talked with Yan Ness, CEO of On Line Tech, Inc., an Ann Arbor firm started in 2003. His firm is a classic second-stage company, with sales of around \$20 million and 20 employees. Ness says he needs three things: executive and management training; access to skilled and experienced candidates for jobs; and capital.

"Capital structured for the growth stage we're in is crucial," he said. "We're beyond the interest of the VC's (venture capital firms) and too risky for a bank, but we absolutely must have access to capital in order to grow."

Phil Power is a longtime observer of Michigan politics and economics and the founder and president of The Center for Michigan, a bipartisan centrist think tank. Write to him at [ppower@thecenterformichigan.net](mailto:ppower@thecenterformichigan.net).

Another second-stage firm is SPACE, Inc., an office infrastructure company based in Midland. Founded in 1995, the firm now has 34 employees and \$10-\$15 million in sales.

"We've got to concentrate on our management team," says Kathie Fuce-Hobohm, SPACE's dealer principal. "We grew very rapidly, maybe too much so, and that stressed the entire firm. And I needed extra training in financial literacy, for example. If I had known about the kind of help available to second-stage companies like mine, I would have avoided lots of mistakes."

The lesson couldn't be more clear. Michigan needs an economic development strategy that wastes less time on unproductive "hunting and gathering," or smokestack chasing.

Instead, we need to concentrate on "gardening," on nurturing and sustaining our homegrown companies. The sooner our economic development policies reflect this focus, the better.

Note: The Edward Lowe Foundation can be reached at (269) 445-4200 or [www.lowe.org](http://www.lowe.org). SBAM is at (517) 267-2203 or [www.sbam.org](http://www.sbam.org).

## Local coffee shops become 21st century unemployment offices

### COMMENTARY

National chains and local coffee shops have become the Michigan (doesn't) work gathering places for the new and long-term unemployed. Take a look around the local Starbucks, Tuscany Cafe, Panera Bread, Biggby, Tim Horton's, McDonald's and Caribou Coffee and you will see the faces of Michigan's unemployment statistics. The numbers are measured by real people, fathers, mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers out of work.

Affluent suburb or inner city coffee shop -- they have become the 21st century watering hole for the unemployed and underemployed.

With the nation's highest unemployment rate officially at near 15 percent (but much higher if you include the long-term unemployed and those who have fallen off the stats government keeps on the pain and misery), these watering holes are attracting many of the historically unemployed. Yet, also warming their hands with a cup of black coffee, like the vision of the down and out of the Great Depression around an oil barrel fire, are the new statistics that this decade's long economic decline have snagged -- the college-educated 40-50-year-old, recent college grads and those who never

stood in an unemployment line.

No, they are not soot covered, disheveled or unshaven. Most are in professional attire, be it white or blue collar. Their tools are laptops and notebooks tapping into the free WiFi seeking new job leads, sending out resumes and typing out thank you letters after receiving a job rejection.

"RETREAT TO ESCAPE"

"Coffee houses are the retreat to escape the isolation of sitting at home when the unemployment and sub-paychecks stop coming and the family and friend networking make you feel as welcome as a Jehovah's Witness making a third stop at your house in one evening," explained Fred at a Plymouth Caribou Coffee.

"Look around," he continued, "it is the middle of the day and this place is packed with 50-year-old men and twentysomethings busy tapping on their computer keys desperately seeking work."

Fred motions for Susan to join us and she sheepishly, with a matter of fact tone, explains she lost her high paying logistics job with an auto supplier two years ago and has yet to find meaningful work.

"Sure, I have worked at temporary, low-

paying jobs without benefits to try to survive, but I am college-educated, I have skills," she continued, her voice falling off. "I am losing my savings along with hope."

Since my encounter with Fred and Susan I have made it a point to pay attention to people in coffee shops as I travel the state. No, these unemployed are not as visible as the person at the freeway entrance and exit ramps with signs reading, "Will work for food," or the day laborers congregating in city centers. But many are becoming desperate and are hurting just the same.

I suspect it was the same type of people who vented their anger and frustration in electing the first Republican to the U.S. Senate in the bluest of blue Democratic states, Massachusetts.

OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

People with needs are all around us. No, Michigan is not Haiti where the pain and need is great, where roughly half of the country's 10 million citizens live on the edge, without work, perched precariously on hillsides. Yet, Michigan and its 10 million citizens, where nearly a quarter million people lost jobs last year and close to a million over the last decade, are perched precariously, yet, less visibly along economic fault lines as well.

While there has been some faint glimmer of good news of late, University of Michigan

economists predict continued job losses in 2010. Michigan loses jobs and employers in roaring tsunamis and replaces them in teardrops.

It can be argued that much of Michigan's economic troubles have their origins at the international and national level or failed state policies over which a few have control. Here are a few things that could be done to help:

• The state should post job information from Michigan Works and the Talent Bank at all coffee shops across the state including education and training programs through the "No Worker Left Behind" program.

• In collaboration with the private coffee shops, install computer terminals/ kiosks linked to job and training opportunities to be available to those without computer access.

• If you are an employer, stop by any coffee shop and post or announce your employment opportunities. People like Fred and Susan would be most appreciative.

If you are a politician seeking votes, stop by any local coffee shop, there are many voters there that will give you an earful.

Tom Watkins is the former state superintendent of schools (2001-05) and state mental health director (1986-90). He is currently a business consultant. He can be reached at [tdwatkins@aol.com](mailto:tdwatkins@aol.com).



### Taxing time

Jack Carter gets help filing his 2009 federal taxes from AARP volunteer Jim Lane, right, during a Thursday morning session at the Novi Senior Center. Volunteers from AARP will be at the center on Thursdays until tax filing time. For reservation slots, call the center at 248-347-0414.

### NOVI SCHOOL BRIEFS

#### Scholarships

Community Financial, in collaboration with the Community Foundation of Plymouth (CFP) and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF), will be awarding 11 \$1,000 scholarships in April. Applications can only be made online by going to <http://http://scholarships.aaacf.org>, creating an account and logging in. Read the guidelines for our "Community Financial Margaret Dunning and George Lawton Scholarships." Deadline to submit four copies of your application is March 5.

#### Star Teacher awards

As the new year is underway, Bright House Networks (BHN) is urging all educators to shoot for the stars by entering the 2010 National Star Teacher Awards program. For over 20 years, the program has been recognizing the most innovative teachers throughout the country who use valuable resources and cable program-

ming available through Cable in the Classroom.

In light of today's economic climate, Bright House Networks has increased the prize money by guaranteeing each winning teacher no less than \$1,000 in prize money. In year's past, winning teachers would be guaranteed at least a \$500 cash prize. For 2010, every winning teacher will receive at least \$1,000 and up to \$3,000 if their project is selected as a winner.

In addition to the \$1,000 or more, teachers also can register for a special gift online. Winning teachers and/or teams will be invited to attend a special Education Celebration and will receive a Tiffany Crystal Star.

"We are looking forward to this year's competition and honoring our best and brightest teachers throughout our community," said Bob McCann, president Michigan Region, "Bright House Networks is proud of its partnership with

Cable in the Classroom and invites all educators to participate in this great competition."

A maximum of 10 projects will be selected as winning entries. Teachers may enter projects as individuals or as teams of up to three teachers. To be eligible to enter projects for consideration in the Bright House Networks National Star Teacher Awards, teachers must be in a state accredited public or private school (K-12) located within a Bright House Networks service area. Classroom projects should have occurred between September 2009 and March 2010.

For more information and updated program guidelines, contact Leigh Byrd or click on the Star Teacher Award link on the Bright House Networks web site at [www.mybrighthouse.com/teachers](http://www.mybrighthouse.com/teachers). Deadline for submissions is April 2.

Please see BRIEFS, A13

## Take Skywarn class in Novi

Skywarn is an effort to save lives during severe weather emergencies by expanding networks of spotters and by encouraging the widest possible participation in tornado warning programs. There is no way to stop tornadoes, and not all tornadoes show up on radar, but they can be seen. Lives can be saved. Only one instrument can detect a tornado or funnel with complete certainty, the human eye.

Skywarn training gives an individual the basic tools needed to be a severe weather spotter. Starting with a blue sky, individuals are taught the basics of thunderstorm development, storm structure, what features to look for and where to find them. The class covers what information to report and how to report it. Basic severe weather safety is also covered. Classes are FREE and typically last 2 hours.

While new technological and scientific tools have advanced the National Weather Service (NWS) capability to predict severe weather, the trained spotter remains essential to the NWS warning process. It goes without saying that the more trained "eyes" we have in the field during severe weather, the better our service to you and the public will be. More concern, more spotters, more eyes are needed. Lend us yours

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 3, 7-9 p.m.  
Oakland County Homeland Security Division  
Tuesday, March 16, 6-8 p.m.  
Southfield Civic Center Library  
Monday, March 22, 7-9 p.m.  
Grovefield Township Fire Department, Station #1  
Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m.-noon  
Oakland County Homeland Security Division  
Saturday, April 17, 1-3 p.m.  
Oakland County Homeland Security Division  
Tuesday, April 20, 6-8 p.m.  
Bloomfield Twp Fire Station  
Monday, May 3, 7-9 p.m.  
Novi PD Training Center

### Learn SKYWARN!

Seven opportunities to attend training classes are offered (see info box). All interested parties (i.e. fire, police, EMS, security, volunteers, and citizens) are encouraged to attend.

The Oakland County Homeland Security Division coordinates this program.

Limited space is available, so make your reservations now.

Please call (248) 858-5300 to register or send an email to [ocem@oakgov.com](mailto:ocem@oakgov.com).

Please include your name, address and phone number.

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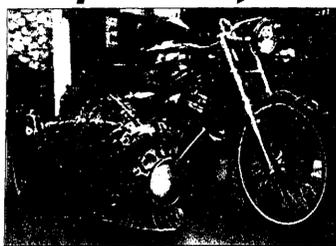
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# Giant Motorcycle Swap Meet rolls into Rock on Feb. 21

The Midwest's largest collection of motorcycle vendors under one roof will converge with thousands of bikers on Sunday, Feb. 21 at the Rock Financial Showplace to buy, sell, swap motorcycles, parts, accessories and experiences.

Spring is around the corner and bikers with cabin fever turning to spring fever will arrive in droves clad from head-to-toe in leather and sporting bandanas, vests cluttered with pins collected from 'rides' or events from across the country, T-shirts that make a statement or prove "I've been there and seen that," says event director Chad Dutmers.

Michigan's own Ron Finch, also known as The Motorcycle Artist, will be displaying his newest creation called "The Outsider." It's Finch's first ever bike with a sidecar. It has a 100 cubic inch Crazy Horse engine with round cylinders and heads and a Michigan-



Michigan's own Ron Finch, also known as The Motorcycle Artist, will be displaying his newest creation called "The Outsider." It's Finch's first ever bike with a sidecar.

built Evil Belt Drive.

"Ron used gears, wrenches, chains and rod work for the frame," said Dutmers. "It has spoked wheels with rubber powder coat. It looks like the spokes are coming right out of the tire itself. The exhausts are a powder coated silver color. It's pretty cool. Ron Finch is considered one of the premiere custom motorcycle builders of all time, we are truly privileged to have this work of fine craftsmanship here. It's a must see."

The Outsider is making its Michigan public debut at the Giant Motorcycle Swap Meet. When riding season begins, bikers begin the process of replacing worn, damaged or obsolete chrome, paint, seats, parts, tires and apparel -- items found at the Giant

Motorcycle Swap Meet.

"With nearly one out of every four bikers in the U.S. living in Michigan and its four border states, the nine swap meets we sponsor give bikers the chance to be around other bikers and to support the economic interests that are vital to keeping the industry strong," said Dutmers. "We love to showcase Michigan made bike builders and suppliers as much as possible. Our bread and butter is the Michigan Biker."

The swap meet will feature the largest collection of motorcycle vendors under one roof in the Midwest. Cyclists attending will see new 2010 bikes as well as used bikes -- street, dirt, metric, touring, cruising, trikes, choppers, custom bikes and trailers.

**DETAILS**

Thousands of motorcycle buyers are expected to pack the 95,000-plus square foot exhibition area from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 21. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$3 for ages 6-12. Car Parking is \$5. People who want to skip the lines and get in 30 minutes earlier can buy tickets in advance online at [www.motorcycleswap.com](http://www.motorcycleswap.com). The Rock Financial Showplace is located at 46100 Grand River Avenue, Novi. For information on the swap meet call 800-968-4242 or visit [www.motorcycleswap.com](http://www.motorcycleswap.com).

## BRIEFS

Novi, WLCentral honored for top scoring ACT students

The Michigan ACT State Organization and ACT<sup>®</sup> recognized 30 Michigan high schools -- including Novi and Walled Lake Central -- with one or more students in the graduating class of 2009 who earned a top composite score of 36 on the ACT college admissions and placement exam.

"The schools recognized today have provided outstanding educational opportunities, and these students are well prepared for college," said Dale Kuiper, director of admissions and financial aid at Calvin College, and ACT state representative. "Earning a top composite score on the ACT is an honor for the student, but also for the school where the student has learned. The Michigan ACT State Organization and ACT commend these schools for the work they've done."

Only 638 of the more than 1.4 million 2009 graduates nationally who took the ACT earned a top score. In Michigan, 39 high school graduates out of more than 121,000 tested in the graduating class of 2009 earned a top score on the ACT.

The ACT, a curriculum-based achievement test, consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Each test is scored on a scale of 1-36, and a student's composite score is the average of the four test scores. The average composite score for the national high school graduating class of 2009 was 21.1. Some students also take ACT's optional Writing Test, but the score for that test is reported separately and is not included in the ACT composite score. ACT scores are accepted by all major U.S. colleges and universities.

The Michigan ACT State Organization is composed of secondary and postsecondary educators, agency personnel and leaders of statewide associations. The State Organization provides advice to ACT and support for ACT programs and services in Michigan.

## Taxable value and SEV - what does it mean?



Bob Langan

All of us know that property values have plummeted over the last few years. Have your property taxes gone down accordingly? All owners of real property will receive a notice from the city, village or township in which the property is located called notice of assessment, taxable valuation and property classification. This notice is typically sent in the second or third week of February. As indicated on the notice, it is not a tax bill. However, it does provide important information regarding the value of the property for tax purposes. In about the middle of the page there is a numbered list. This article will help you understand item 1, state equalized value, and item 4, taxable value.

The state equalized value (or SEV) is defined by law as 50 percent of a property's true cash value (or fair market value). Although property taxes are not ultimately based on SEV, it is useful to understand the concept. Two

times a property's SEV is the assessor's opinion of the fair market value of a property. For example, if a property currently has a fair market value of \$30,000, then the 2010 SEV should be \$15,000. If the 2010 SEV is \$20,000, then the property is over assessed, and the owner should consider appealing the assessment.

In 1994, Michigan passed a law (Proposal A) that "capped" tax increases on real property. The 'cap' means that each year, property taxes can only go up by the lesser of 5 percent or the Consumer Price Index for that year, rather than going up along with the value of the property. Taxable value can never be higher than SEV, but it can be lower. Historically, property values have risen faster than the 'cap'.

since Proposal A was passed, the yearly 'capped' increase has been lower than the actual increase in value of most properties. When that happens, SEV (50 percent of true cash value) increases faster than taxable value ('capped' value). This year the 'cap' number is 0.997, meaning that taxable value will go down by 0.3 percent. The cap applies every year until a property is sold or transferred. The taxable value will automatically re-set to equal the SEV any time a property is sold or transferred.

To expand on the above example, let's say the current owner bought the property for \$20,000 in the year 2000 and has continuously owned it since then. The 2010 taxable value would be approximately \$12,000, which is the 'capped' tax increase for each of the 10 years of ownership. In this instance, the taxable value (\$12,000) is not only less than the SEV (\$20,000) but also less than the 'hypothetical' SEV

(\$15,000). In this case, a successful appeal would likely result in any immediate savings. Remember, you pay taxes based on the taxable value of your property. If you think that your SEV and taxable value is too high you can appeal only if you make it to the Board of Review on time. The Board of Review is appointed to hear property tax appeals at the local municipal level. The notice explains how to start your appeal to the Board of Review. You can appeal in writing or in person. The assessment notice also indicates the deadline for making an appeal. Local Boards of Review typically start meeting in the second week in March.

Bob Langan, an attorney with the firm of Bagley & Langan, P.L.L.C., specializes in real estate law, including property tax appeals. He can be reached at his Novi location by calling (248) 344-1880 or via email at [blangan@bagley-langan.com](mailto:blangan@bagley-langan.com).

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FROM PAGE A7

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Walking in the Park  
Time/Date: 10-11 a.m. every Saturday  
Location: Meet at the Visitor's Center of Heritage Park (Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile roads)  
Details: Group meets for lunch afterwards.  
Contact: Sue (734) 459-0016

Single Place Ministries  
Time/Date: 7:30 p.m. social time; 7:45 p.m. opening; 8-9 p.m. program, every Thursday.  
Details: Informative and entertaining programs of interest to singles; \$5 per person. Check Web site for details [singleplace.org](http://singleplace.org).

First United Methodist Church of Northville  
A Stephen Ministry Church  
Location: 777 W. 8 Mile Road at Taft Rd.  
Contact: (248) 349-1144 or [www.funccnorthville.org](http://www.funccnorthville.org)  
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Healing Service: 4 p.m. First Monday of every month  
Logo Youth Club: 5 p.m. Wednesday (for fourth-12th grades)  
Radical Joy: 6-9 p.m. first and third Thursday for all women  
Men's Club: 8 a.m. the second Saturday  
Career Ministry: 7 p.m. first and third Monday

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
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Contact: (248) 349-0565  
Sundays  
Time: 8:45 a.m. Sunday School and Bible Study; 10 a.m. Worship  
Livonia Church of Christ  
Location: 15431 Merriman Road, Livonia  
Contact: For further information, please contact NSO Douglas K. Wells at (313) 964-6595.  
Meadowbrook Congregational  
Location: 21355 Meadowbrook Road, between Eight and Nine Mile roads  
Contact: Rev. Arthur P. Ritter, Senior Minister (248) 348-7757, visit [mbccc.org](http://mbccc.org) or e-mail to [office@mbccc.org](mailto:office@mbccc.org).  
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m.  
Sermon: Having & Plan Church School: 10-11 a.m.  
Fellowship Hour: 11 a.m.  
Merry Widows Luncheon  
Time/Date: 11:30 a.m. fourth Thursday of each month  
Pilgrim Fellowship  
Time/Date: 6 p.m. Sundays  
Answer Questions adult education class  
Time/Date: 10 a.m. Tuesdays  
Ash Wednesday potluck dinner  
Time/Date: 6:15 p.m. Feb. 17  
Northville Christian Assembly  
Location: 41355 Six Mile Road  
Contact: (248) 348-9030  
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9-10 a.m. Sunday School for Adults / Youth / Children  
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**Do you think you pay too much in property taxes?**

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THURSDAY February 11, 2010 SECTION B (NN) online at hometownlife.com

**LOCAL SPORTS**

Resale shops caters to parents' needs, B5 Grapplers fight through KLAAs tournaments Page, B3

**Deep sixed**  
 Pair of six-point wins keeps Wildcats on top of division

BY CHRIS JACKETT CORRESPONDENT

The boys basketball team has the KLAAs Central Division within reach after two six-point victories last week improved the Wildcats to 7-1 in the division (12-2 overall).

Novi started the week at home Feb. 2, where the Cats defeated Plymouth Salem 65-59. It was Novi's second win of the season over the Rocks, but both games combined for just a point differential of nine.

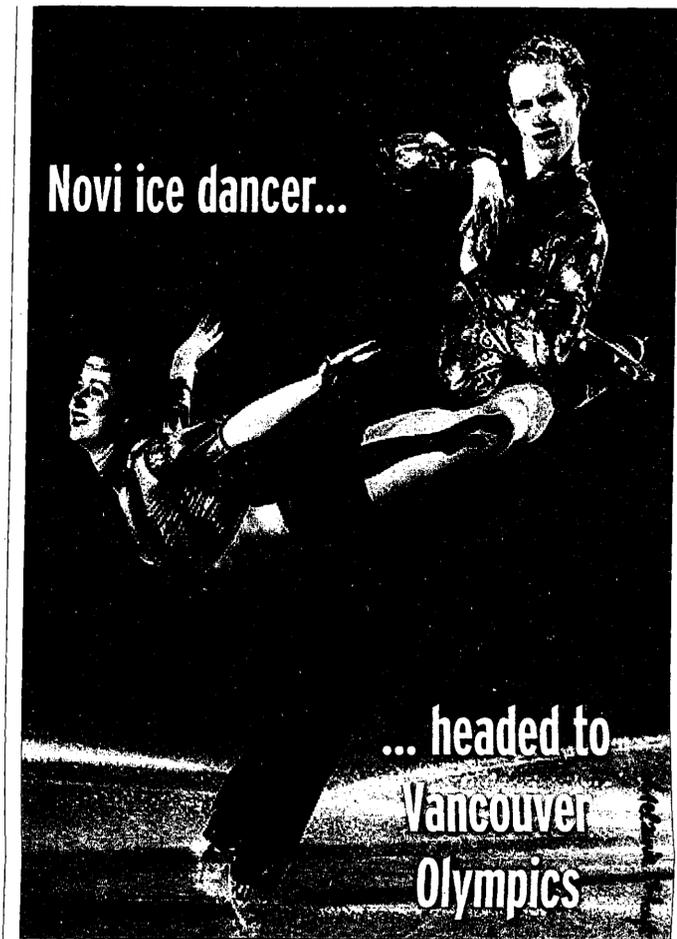
"We didn't compete defensively as well as we would have liked last Tuesday versus Salem. We had them down double digits most of the second half and it just felt like it should have been more," Novi coach Cory Heitsch said. "But, to Salem's credit, they began to make some plays and put us in position where we needed to continue to respond with scores and we did."

With a 33-23 Novi lead at the half, Salem battled back, but it wasn't enough. Junior Samer Ozeir led the Wildcats with 19 points and 11 rebounds, followed by senior Justin Hopton, who had 16 points, including his first career dunk. Seniors Brandon Rydzewski (nine points, six assists, six rebounds) and Jeremy Mims (10 points, six assists) provided an all-around strong backcourt presence for Novi.

"Hopton made a nice defensive play midway through the first quarter and just went for it. He attempted a dunk earlier in the year at a scrimmage and just tried to throw it down, so he didn't convert. He kept telling me he was a great athlete. I guess now I have to take him at his word," Heitsch said. "Mims and Rydzewski have been incredible, I would put them up against anyone and feel confident going into the game. Rydzewski can dominate a game without taking a shot and Jeremy is getting to the point where kids can't guard him. They have been exceptional in division play."

Senior Jake Peterson had 23 points, 5-foot-7 junior Devonta Riley had 13 points and sophomore Tyler Stewart and junior Zinovy Pelek had nine points apiece in Salem's comeback attempt, which fell short as the Rocks are now on a five-game losing streak.

The Wildcats had to make a comeback of their own last Friday at Northville to push their seven-game winning streak to eight games. Down 22-9 after the first quarter, Novi outscored the Mustangs 14-5 in the second quarter to narrow the margin to 27-23. With three huge three pointers by Rydzewski (nine points) in the second half, the



Emily Samuelson and Evan Bates skate a disco routine during an exhibition last year. The Michigan duo will be in Vancouver for the Winter Olympics next week.

**Samuelson joins U.S. figure skating team**

BY CHRIS JACKETT CORRESPONDENT

A 5-year-old girl from Manchester, England, was vacationing in Switzerland and saw another girl practicing figure skating maneuvers at an ice rink. Fifteen years later, that little girl is now representing both Novi and the United States at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

"When we were Switzerland, I saw a girl skating and told my parents I wanted to do it. I started in October 1995, once my family moved to the U.S.," said Emily Samuelson, 19.

A 2008 Novi High School alum, Samuelson has spent much of her life at the ice rink, leading up to her participation in the Winter Olympics Feb. 12-28.

"We leave for Vancouver on Feb. 11. We'll get there in time for the opening ceremonies," Samuelson said. "It's such an honor. It's hard to think about what it's going to be like to be an Olympian. (On TV) I see these athletes train so hard and are great role models. It's just hard to imagine. It's a great honor."

Samuelson and her ice dance partner, 20-year-old Evan Bates (Ann Arbor Huron), have both been training hard with the Ann Arbor Ice Skating Club at the Ann Arbor Ice Cube rink for nearly a decade.

"My freestyle coach suggested I come to Ann Arbor and skate with Evan. I had a May 2000 tryout," Samuelson said. "For a while, it was just coming in and skating on a daily basis just because we liked it."

In late 2003, the pair narrowly

Please see OLYMPICS, B4

**Swimming 'Cats finish fifth at county meet**



Freshman Andrew Ao, senior John Lu, junior Travis Vincent and junior Joon Chung celebrate after finishing fourth in the 400-yard freestyle relay in 3:21.84 at the Oakland County Championships Feb. 6.

Birmingham trio too much for rest of county

BY CHRIS JACKETT CORRESPONDENT

Following a disappointing 120-66 loss at Livonia Stevenson last Thursday, the Wildcats' swim and dive team had an impressive performance at last Saturday's Oakland County Championships.

The Wildcats finished fifth of 29 teams behind a pair of first-place performances from junior Joon Chung at Waterford Mott.

Chung won the 200-yard individual medley in 1:57.85, beating Troy Athens' Darwin Hsu (2:00.01) and setting a pool record. He followed the individual feat by setting both a pool record and a county meet record with a first-place finish in the 100-yard breaststroke in 58.86 seconds, edging out South Lyon's Adam Oxner (58.89 seconds).

Novi accumulated their points with a team effort from several Wildcats through a variety of events.

Sophomore Kim Jong Min was the only other individual to place alone in the single digits for Novi, following a few spots behind Chung in the 100-yard breaststroke and tying Birmingham Seaholm's Alex Wood for seventh in 1:03.00.

Junior Travis Vincent racked up valuable points for the Wildcats with two of his individual races. Vincent finished 11th in the 200-yard freestyle in 1:50.49, just 4.83 seconds behind first-place Rob McGowan (Birmingham Groves). He followed the performance with a 10th-place finish in the 500-yard freestyle in 4:58.26, falling short of Auburn Hills Avondale's Bryan Williams (4:36.74).

Also earning individual success for Novi were freshman Andrew Ao and senior John Lu. Facing more than 40 other swimmers from the best schools in Oakland County, Ao finished 10th in the 100-yard freestyle in 51.06 seconds, 3.34 seconds behind Groves' first-place Nick McGowan (47.72 seconds). Lu finished 12th

Please see SWIM, B2



# Catholic Central falls for first time this season

BY SAM EGLESTON  
CORRESPONDENT

They say only one team gets to leave a game with a "W" on their schedule and when the Trenton Trojans and the Catholic Central Shamrocks match up it's always a coin toss as to who it's going to go to.

Last week, it was the Trojans who earned the victory, notching a 1-0 score to stun the Shamrocks with their first loss of the season. The Shamrocks bounced back three nights later, however, and downed the DeLaSalle Pilots, 4-1.

Against Trenton, the first and only goal came in the opening period of play when Kody Polin snuck a shot past Shamrock goalie Zack Cisek at the 10:09 mark to take an early lead. That early lead ended up turning into the game-winning shot as the teams fought in a defensive struggle that found neither squad scoring again.

Cisek stopped 18 other shots on the night as the Shamrocks defense worked hard at keeping the Trojans away from the net. The offense, on the other hand, worked their sticks hard but couldn't get a break as all 45 of their shots on goal were stonewalled by Trenton's Blake Wojtala.

The game wasn't without its excitement with 12 penalties being called throughout the three periods of intense play. Catholic Central and Trenton split the calls down the middle

with each team getting six called against them.

Three days later, it was DeLaSalle that had to take the punishment doled out by the Shamrocks as Catholic Central skated to a 4-1 victory.

The game's first score came in the waning minutes of the second period when Shamrock Eric Winkler took a pass from Ryan Obuchowski and found the back of the net for the 1-0 lead. Just 30 seconds later, DeLaSalle knotted the game, 1-1, on a shot by Austin Hibner.

The frustrated Shamrocks rebounded on the Pilots from that point on, scoring three unanswered goals off the sticks of Jacob Downing, Eric Frago and Brad Wilhelm for the 4-1 final. Assists were earned by Frago, Chris Waterstreet, Sean Gaffney and Obuchowski on the first two goals of the period. Wilhelm scored unassisted on the final tally, scored on an open net.

A 2008 Novi High alum, the 19-year-old Samuelson will compete in the pairs ice dancing competition Feb. 19-22 with her partner, Evan Bates of Ann Arbor. It's the first trip for both skaters.

At 26, Rzepka, a 2001 Novi High alum, will participate at the primary push position (called a brakeman) on the United States' top two-crew women's bobsled team Feb. 23-24 with Shauna Rohbock of Utah. Rzepka won the silver medal in 2006 with Valerie Fleming as her partner.

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

## CATHOLIC CENTRAL WRAPUP

BY SAM EGLESTON  
CORRESPONDENT

### Bowling team takes lead in division

The Catholic Central Shamrocks bowling team made it clear that they're the best in the Catholic High School League Central Division this year with two big wins last week.

The squad earned wins over Bishop Foley, 24-6, and DeLaSalle, 22.5-7.5, to secure the top spot in their division. The Shamrocks knew that if they wanted sole possession of first place, they had to defeat the Pilots of DeLaSalle. The team didn't appear to even notice the competition, winning both Baker games, 214-210 and 265-222, to take an early lead in the showdown.

The Pilots fought back though, winning the first individual game, 938-928, to make a game of it. From that point on, however, it was all Catholic Central as the Shamrocks blasted out a 1077-985 win in the second game.

The team's lead in the division is leading the way for the Shamrocks were Jeff Conflitt (202 and 233), Eric Pavlov (225), Nick Carvalho (257) and Scott Kujawa (200).

Catholic Central is now 6-2 in their division standings.

In addition to beating DeLaSalle, the Shamrocks also topped Bishop Foley, 25-6. Catholic Central won the first Baker game and both individual games to secure the victory.

Conflitt shot a 211 and Carvalho had a 231 and a 201 to lead the Shamrocks.

### Shamrocks earn two wrestling wins

The Catholic Central wrestling team pounded out two wins last week in dual-meet action.

The team defeated Southgate Anderson, 52-13, and Allen Park, 63-3. Both matches were at Allen Park High School last week.

Alec Mooradian unsurprisingly led the team and earned a huge victory in the 125-pound division by defeating Allen Park's James Cusin in a 7-4 decision. Cusin is currently ranked as the top grappler in his weight class for Division II schools.

The competition marks the leading the way for the Shamrocks were Jeff Conflitt (202 and 233), Eric Pavlov (225), Nick Carvalho (257) and Scott Kujawa (200).

## CITY OF NOVI NOTICE OF MEETING OF BOARD OF REVIEW

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Review shall convene in its first session at 9:00 a.m. EST, Monday, March 2nd, 2010 in the Novi Assessing Department at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road for the purpose of reviewing and correcting the assessment roll.

Notice is further given that the second session of the Board of Review will meet for the purpose of hearing and considering assessment appeals in the Novi City Council Chambers at 45175 W. Ten Mile Road on March 8, 9 & 10, 2010. All appearances before the Board will be by appointment only. If you or your representative want to appear in person, the appointment must be made on or before 6:00 p.m. EST, Friday, March 5, 2010. Appearances before the Board of Review are limited to five (5) minutes or less. Petitions are available at the Assessor's Office or at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org). NO APPOINTMENTS WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL A PETITION IS RECEIVED BY THE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT.

Letters of protest will be accepted on or before 6:00 p.m. EST, Tuesday, March 9, 2010. Postmarks will not be considered. When submitting a letter of protest for the Board of Review consideration, you must attach a completed petition along with any supporting information.

All agents protesting values on property other than their own must have written authorization from each property owner who is representing.

Persons on fixed or limited income may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes due to poverty. Applications are available at the Assessing Department, or at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org)

### BOARD OF REVIEW SCHEDULE

Monday, March 8, 2010 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 9, 2010 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday, March 10, 2010 - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Any questions should be directed to the Assessing Department at (248) 347-0485.

MARYANNE CORNELIUS  
CITY CLERK



Assistant coach Kathleen Ader (left) and head coach Emily Parker Pohonski stand with the competitive cheer squad, who tied for first in the KLA Central Division and finished third in the Kensington Conference Tournament last week.

## NOVI SPORTS WRAP UP

BY CHRIS JACKETT  
CORRESPONDENT

### NOVI IN THE OLYMPICS

Check out the Olympic opening ceremonies 7:30 p.m. today on NBC (Channel 4) and see if you can catch Novi residents Emily Samuelson or Mickie Rzepka in Vancouver.

A 2008 Novi High alum, the 19-year-old Samuelson will compete in the pairs ice dancing competition Feb. 19-22 with her partner, Evan Bates of Ann Arbor. It's the first trip for both skaters.

At 26, Rzepka, a 2001 Novi High alum, will participate at the primary push position (called a brakeman) on the United States' top two-crew women's bobsled team Feb. 23-24 with Shauna Rohbock of Utah. Rzepka won the silver medal in 2006 with Valerie Fleming as her partner.



Novi High Athletic Director Curt Ellis (left) stands with (left to right) Tom and Thelma Marcus and their children, Tom, Jr. and Mary, during the unveiling of the football team's new pre-game tunnel, "Tom's Tunnel," during Tom Marcus Night on Feb. 5.



Novi senior Jeremy Mims (seated) was joined by (left to right) his sister Jasmine and parents, Steve and Pamela, last Wednesday morning to sign a national letter of intent to play football at Michigan Technological University next fall. A three-year starter at defensive back for the Wildcats, Mims is projected to play free safety for the Huskies.

### COLLEGIATE FOOTBALL SIGNING

Novi senior Jeremy Mims was joined by his family. Novi coaches Todd Pennyuff, Jeff Burnside, Ron Kane and former head coach Tab Kellepourey early Wednesday morning to sign a national letter of intent to play football at Michigan Technological University next fall. A three-year starter at defensive back for the Wildcats, Mims is projected to play free safety for the Huskies.

Last fall, Mims had 50 tackles (31 unassisted) in nine games with the Wildcats. Showing his versatility, he also had three interceptions for a total of 60 yards and two kick returns for a total of 29 yards.

### COLLEGIATE TRACK AND FIELD SIGNINGS

Two recent Novi graduates joined Albion College men's track and field team last Thursday. Britons coach Dave Egnatuk announced Dan Coleman and Aaron Croad have joined the 42-man squad this spring, with the first meet taking place last Saturday at Anderson University (Ind.). Coleman is a 2006 alum who competed in the pole vault and 110 hurdles at Novi. Croad is a 2008 alum who competed in the 800-, 1600-, 3200-meter and 4x800- and 4x400-meter relays at Novi.

The pair will next be in competition Feb. 27 at Angola, Ind., for the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association league relays.

### CHEER

Finishing off a spirited week, Novi's competitive cheer squad finished third at the 11-team KLA Kensington Conference Tournament last Saturday.

Behind three solid rounds of performances, Novi finished with 704.1724 points, less than five points shy of host and

## CITY OF NOVI VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO SERVE ON CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Notice is given that the Novi City Council will be interviewing applicants for appointment to the Beautification Commission, Building Authority, Historical Commission, Library Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate Member).

If you are a registered voter and interested in volunteering to serve on a City Board or Commission, information about the various Boards and Commissions is available at [www.cityofnovi.org](http://www.cityofnovi.org) or at the office of the City Clerk, 45175 West Ten Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375, 248-347-0456.

The deadline for filing an application (available on the website or at the City Clerk's office) is Wednesday, February 17, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. All applicants will be required to be present at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 22, 2010 in the Council Chambers to be interviewed by City Council. All City Council meetings are televised.

Maryanne Cornelius, City Clerk  
Published: February 4 @ 11, 2010



## OLYMPICS

FROM PAGE A1

missed the cut for the 2004 novice U.S. Nationals.

"I sat down and evaluated and figured out we were good and could go somewhere," Samuelson said.

She was right. Samuelson and Bates won the 2008 Junior World Championship. After moving up to senior-level competition, the pair finished second at the 2009 U.S. Figure Skating Championships and third at the same competition Jan. 23 in Spokane, Wash., qualifying them for the Olympics.

"It was crazy. I was probably more nervous for this competition, more than any other year, mainly because it was an Olympic year," Samuelson said. "But I didn't think about it on the ice at all. When we were on the ice, everything came together perfectly."

In March 2009, they finished 11th at the World Championships against much of the same competition they will see at the Olympics.

"I'm expecting us and hoping we skate as well at the Olympics as we did at Nationals," Samuelson said. "I'm hoping for top 10, so we can take that experience and, in four years, we can be medal contenders."

Samuelson and Bates will compete in three dance routines Feb. 19, 21 and 22. Their first routine, the compulsory dance on Feb. 19, will be either their golden Waltz or tango romantica performance, but the Olympic committee won't tell them which until two days prior. On Feb. 21, they will perform their original dance - a crowd-pleaser featuring the pair dressed in cowboy garb and dancing to a Dixie Chicks tune - before performing their free dance routine on Feb. 22 to wrap up the experience.

Samuelson and Bates are coached by Yaroslava Netecheva and Iouri Tchesnitchenko, a former Soviet Union/Russian pairs team that competed together in the early 1990s before settling down in Ann Arbor in 1998.

"They help us a lot with everything we can't see for ourselves, which is the majority of it. They see it from the judge's perspective and used to be partners together," Samuelson said. "Russia picks their skaters very young. People in Russia (make) figure skating very popular and support it a lot. I'd attribute the success a lot to the (fun and disciplined) style of coaching they have. Its great, its fun."

Five of the top six coaches in the area, which produced several of the top pairs teams at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships last month, are of Russian descent.

Although the training is sometimes grueling, Samuelson said she and Bates have a "we're only young once" approach. Both are part-time students at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, but are usually at the rink from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. six days a week.

"Education is still important to us. I couldn't do it without the support of my family, friends and Novi High School, letting me leave school halfway through the day to train and doing my other classes online," said Samuelson, who skated on Novi's figure skating team in 2005-06.

After the Olympic trip, Samuelson and Bates will get back to training, as they want to make the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia, as well.

"I definitely want to go to, at least, the 2014 Olympics. I could see us going 'til the 2018 Olympics because I would only be 28, which isn't so old for ice dancing," Samuelson said. "My parents said, when I was a kid, I said I wanted to be in the Olympics, but I think that was one of those childhood thoughts like 'I'm going to be president.'"

Watch Samuelson and Bates compete at the Olympics Feb. 12-28 on NBC-TV. Check out YouTube for videos of their performances or visit <http://emily-evan-ice-dance.com> for more information.

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

# Novi Strictly Business

## Resale shops caters to parents' needs

Customers can get cash on the spot

BY NATHAN MUELLER  
STAFF WRITER

Rob and Angie Michalak can sympathize with parents everywhere whose children seem to outgrow their clothes on a monthly basis.

They have three children, including a pair of twins, and buying clothes and toys for them is not cheap. So when Angie stumbled upon a children's consignment store several years ago, it only made sense, with all the items they had, to start their own.

In 2002, they became franchisees of Once Upon A Child in Ann Arbor. The store caters to parents who not only are looking for new clothes for their children but also those looking to unload all those clothes that do not fit anymore and make some money.

And last Saturday they expanded their operation to Novi, opening a store on the corner of Ten Mile and Novi roads in the Pine Ridge Center.

"We had three of everything so that is how we started, with our own stuff," Angie said. "I grew up going to different resale shops as a child, and this place is the best of the best."

Once Upon A Child is unique because customers can get cash for the items they turn in, unlike some shops which only give back store credit. Items can be brought in all year long, regardless of the season.

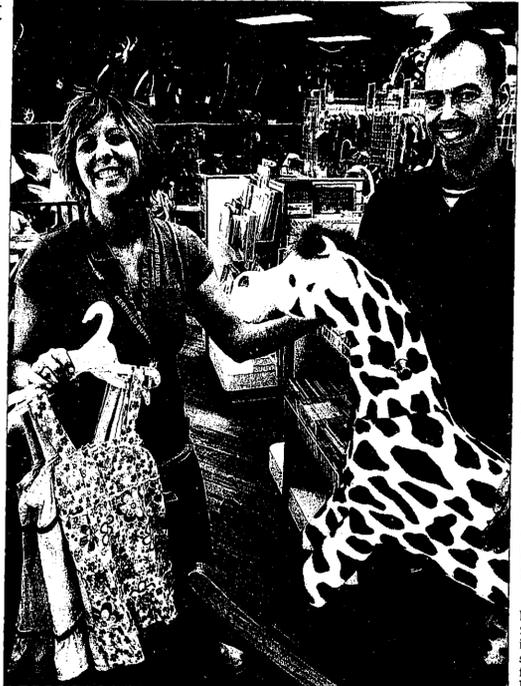
The store features brand-name clothing and accessories, books, movies and more, and everything is checked for safety.

Rob said safety is the most important part of the operation, and recalled items will not be sold.

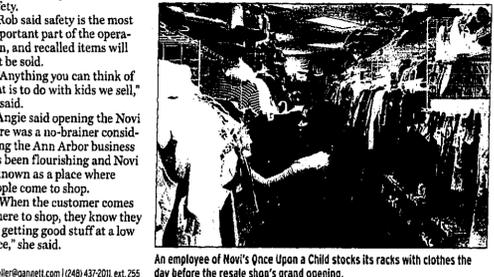
"Anything you can think of that is to do with kids we sell," he said.

Angie said opening the Novi store was a no-brainer considering the Ann Arbor business is flourishing and Novi is known as a place where people come to shop.

"When the customer comes in here to shop, they know they are getting good stuff at a low price," she said.



Angie and Rob Michalak opened their "Once Upon A Child" re-sale shop in Novi's Pine Ridge Center at the northwestern corner of Ten Mile and Novi Roads last Saturday.



An employee of Novi's Once Upon A Child stocks its racks with clothes the day before the resale shop's grand opening.

## Networking the old-fashioned way

Although social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn offer great opportunities to connect with friends, colleagues, and customers from the past or a distance, there is something to be said about old-fashioned relationship maintenance.

The now thought to be somewhat antiquated forms of communication - a simple handwritten note, a phone call, or even a face-to-face visit with a handshake - can be more a powerful way to forge business relationships and show that you care about the other person and his or her business. Those old-fashioned ways to communicate and conduct business indicate that the relationship with the other person is one of value.

Despite this sounding like a greeting card company promotion, there is truth in this message.

When was the last time you received a hand-written note? You probably remember it, and, if like most people, you probably have it tucked away somewhere for your future memoir book.

A hand-written note of thanks, congratulations, or sympathy received via U.S. mail with a few heartfelt words and an actual first-name signature can say that you are significant to that person and you matter. It signifies that the social or business

relationship between you and the sender is important.

It also shows the sender has good manners; or what my mother used to say, "A lot of class."

Another old-fashioned technique is instead of e-mailing, Twittering, or texting someone, try picking up the phone and conversing verbally. Even if you leave a voice message saying you are just checking in, it reminds the listener of your relationship in a more personal - and positive - manner.

An additional approach to network the old-fashioned way is to get out and actually visit with people. In the "old days," businesspeople actually dined with clients and met on a more social basis, forging bonds, building client networks, and making deals that led to business profit. We can blame the economy for the cutback in face-to-face visits, but the ease of technology has almost eliminated any need for personal contact.

Some may view this as an advantage rather than a disadvantage to endure the expense and a 15-hour flight to China to call on a client, for example. Yet, especially in high-context cultures, meeting face-to-face on a more social level actually helps business deals and leads



Linda Hagan

to a positive on the balance sheet rather than an expense.

Even for more local visits, which may be across town, to another building, down the hall, or around the cubicle, the power of a smile, a favorable nod, or a handshake can create new business or look in the deal. Although Swine Flu and other germ-related illnesses will always be a concern (although it seems there is always sterile hand lotion always nearby today), there is nothing more powerful in business as that of the handshake.

Continue networking using social media and new technologies, but do not forget how to communicate human-to-human, the old-fashioned way. In today's over-texted / hyper-technology world, you just might find this a way to distinguish yourself and build stronger relationships in your personal and professional life.

Linda Hagan, Ph.D., is a Professor of Business Communication and the Director of the Doctor of Management in Executive Leadership program at Walsh College. She teaches courses in the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, and consults on management/organizational communication issues. Dr. Hagan is an accredited member of the Public Relations Society of America and a member of the Board of Directors of the PRSA Detroit Chapter. She can be reached at [lhagan@walshcollege.edu](mailto:lhagan@walshcollege.edu).

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Network, learn about BAT

The Novi Business Assistance Team is presenting a free networking event with information on the Business Administration Team (BAT) on Tuesday, March 2 at Walsh College in Novi.

The mission of the BAT is to identify small and medium size businesses within the Novi community that would benefit from the business and planning experience the team is able to offer.

The goal is to provide knowledge, guidance and useful tools for these businesses to utilize in order to maintain and grow their business in an efficient and cost-effective way. There are no sales involved in this assistance.

The specific types of assistance the team can offer, include:

- Sounding board for potential ideas
- Review existing business plans
- Marketing, advertising, public relation advice
- Networking within the community
- SBA financing/loan options

To reserve your spot and for more information, please contact Sarah Marchioni at [smarchioni@cityofnovi.org](mailto:smarchioni@cityofnovi.org) or (248) 347-0580 by Feb. 26.

### Michigan retailers see better start to 2010

Michigan retailers' outlook for the 1st Quarter of 2010 rose to its highest level in three years, following a stronger December sales performance, according to the latest Michigan Retail Index survey. The survey is a joint project of Michigan Retailers Association (MRA) and the

### Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

The entire holiday shopping season also was an improvement over the previous year, although a weaker November kept overall holiday gains in check.

"December lived up to our expectations and boosted retailers' outlook for the start of 2010," said MRA President and CEO James P. Hallan. "For the first time in several years, more retailers reported holiday gains than declines."

The Index survey of MRA members showed that 43 percent reported holiday sales increases from the previous year, while 17 percent reported no change and 39 percent reported declines. For 2008, 45 percent reported gains and 48 percent reported declines.

The Michigan Retail Index survey for December alone found that 40 percent of retailers increased sales over the same month last year, while 44 percent recorded declines and 16 percent saw no change. The results create a seasonally adjusted performance index of 47.5, up from 39.7 in November; and 41.4 in October. A year ago, the index had dropped to 30.4 in December and 28.8 in November.

Index values above 50 generally indicate an increase in positive activity, while values below 50 indicate a decrease.

Looking ahead, 42 percent of retailers expect sales during the 1st Quarter of 2010 to improve over the same period last year, while 28 percent project a decrease and 30 percent no change. That puts the seasonally adjusted outlook index at 57.1, up from 56.7 in November and 48.9 in October. A year ago the index had fallen to 35.6 in December and 34.1 in November.

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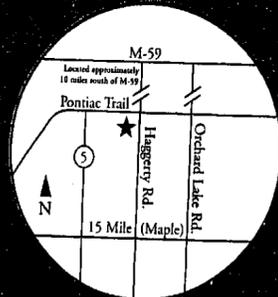
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