

# CANTON OBSERVER

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SPORTS, B1

## Canton house fire ruled 'suspicious'

No one injured in blaze that completely destroys home

**Darrell Clem**  
hometownlife.com

Investigators probing a fire that destroyed a Canton house in December are calling it "suspicious."

Flames swept through the two-story colonial house and an attached garage about 11:45 p.m. Dec. 19 on Ryegate, near Morton Taylor and Warren roads.

"It's a suspicious fire and it's still under investigation with our detectives and our arson investigators," Deputy Director of Fire Christopher

Stoecklein said. He confirmed the house has been turned over to the family's insurance company for its own investigation.

Fire officials hadn't yet made a formal ruling on the blaze and were continuing their work. It wasn't immediately known how long the investigation might take.

Stoecklein said it appears the fire started on the first floor of the home, which was unoccupied at the time. A mother and her children had gone to the store.

Stoecklein said the home

sustained widespread damage and was "a total loss."

The fire also caused minor damages to two adjacent homes.

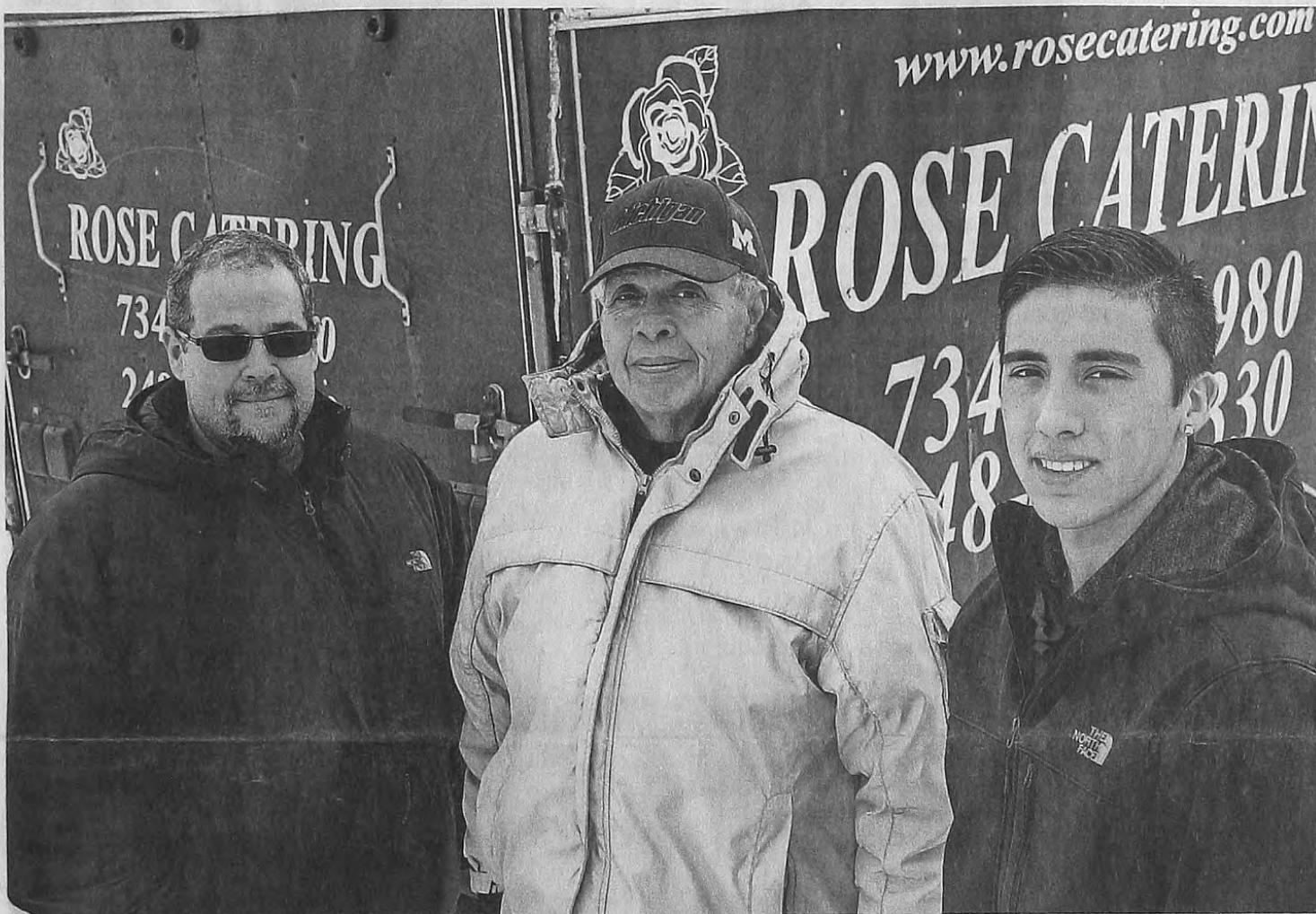
Firefighters from all three Canton fire stations battled the blaze in single-digit temperatures and finally cleared the scene about five hours after the fire was reported. Frigid weather conditions caused ice to build up on the street and sidewalk, but firefighters had no difficulty accessing water from fire hydrants.

**dclm@hometownlife.com**  
Twitter: @CantonObserver  
734-972-0919



ELENA VOYLES

Investigators are calling this fire on Ryegate "suspicious."



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chico Rodriguez is turning over his business to Phil Rodriguez and P.J. Rodriguez.

## New owners take the helm of Plymouth Manor

**Darrell Clem**  
hometownlife.com

Mohammed Nawwas and business partner Samer Saad embody the American dream and success story.

Nawwas, a 55-year-old Plymouth resident and Palestinian American, has established himself as a successful entrepreneur since he came to the United States in 1984. He has owned several businesses and once worked as head chef for what is now Burton Manor in Livonia.

Saad, 29, was only 8 years old when he came with his family to America from Iraq, first living in New Jersey before moving to Michigan in 2001. Saad, an Ann Arbor resident, started a cleaning business when he was a teenager, earned a finance degree from Eastern Michigan University, oversaw family-owned gas stations and worked in real estate.

"I've always been an entrepreneur," Saad said.

Nawwas and Saad are the new faces of the longtime Plymouth Manor, a banquet and catering business at 345 N. Main St. They took over the business Jan. 1 after former owner Nick Ristich decided to retire.

Plymouth Manor becomes the third such business Nawwas owns as his business expertise continues to flourish. His philosophy on the banquet and catering world is simple.

"You have to be humble, provide good customer service and good food at reasonable prices," he said.

He owns Wayne Tree Manor in Wayne and Heritage Manor in Taylor. He sold other businesses he once owned, including a Dearborn banquet center, a Canton market and a food distribution business. He also has a degree in culinary arts and hotel/restaurant management.

Nawwas, a family man with two children and three grand-

See MANOR, Page A2

## Cop turned caterer: Nephew takes over Canton company

**David Veselenak**  
hometownlife.com

Canton resident Chico Rodriguez's catering business has been all over Wayne County the last 25 years. Now with his retirement, he's hoping the growth he's seen will come naturally to his nephew, a Detroit police officer.

Rodriguez is hanging up his manager's hat with Rose Catering, the company he launched about 25 years ago and ran out of locations such as Canton, Livonia, Plymouth and now Taylor. While he's retiring from running the company, he's found another job he wants to pursue that he hopes will allow him to still help out with his nephew, Phil Rodriguez, who's buying the company.

"Then I can still stay with the catering, because eventu-



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Phil Rodriguez is a Detroit police officer.

ally he'll get big enough where he'll need more help," Chico Rodriguez said.

Phil Rodriguez, a Clinton Township resident and current officer with the Detroit Police Department, said he

*"We had talked about ideas and what we should do and what we could do. What would be better than keeping something in the family first that he had built and maintaining his legacy?"*

**PHIL RODRIGUEZ**

was big on helping his uncle with the business when he was younger, washing dishes and clearing tables. He got away from it for a while when he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and later joined the

Detroit police force.

It wasn't until his son P.J. Rodriguez came to him and said he wanted to try his hand at running a business. So at a family party, he was approached by a family member who recommended he speak to his uncle about possibly taking over Rose Catering. The whole process has taken about three months.

"We had talked about ideas and what we should do and what we could do," he said. "What would be better than keeping something in the family first that he had built and maintaining his legacy?"

Phil Rodriguez plans on completing the takeover of the business sometime in January.

The catering company will serve any food a client de-

See CATERER, Page A3



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# The Foster Closet comes up roses for credit union grant

Community Choice Credit Union announced The Foster Closet of Michigan-Western Wayne County as the nonprofit winner of the Community Choice Foundation's third-quarter Give Big Grants program, awarding the organization \$2,793 to use toward cribs, mattresses and car seats for children in foster care. The grant was part of the foundation's new Give Big Grants program, which awards quarterly grants to Michigan nonprofits that are influencing local communities.

"The Foster Closet meets the needs of foster children and families that sometimes even the state can't meet," said Steven Hernandez, foundation development coordinator of the Community Choice Foundation. "We couldn't be more



Community Choice Credit Union presents The Foster Closet with an award.

eager to help them. Our Give Big Grants program allows us to not only build awareness for

and financially support Michigan nonprofits, but to also create meaningful partnerships with them and volunteer at

their organizations, which is in the planning stages with The Foster Closet."

The Foster Closet of

Michigan began in 2012-13 by foster parents who saw a need for providing children in foster care with new and like-new clothing, toys, books, hygiene products and baby equipment. It now has 21 branches throughout the state, all of which are 100-percent volunteer-based and operate solely from donations.

In December 2014, the western Wayne County branch (the location specifically receiving this grant) was opened by Livonia resident Allison Johnson, who says she's always had a heart for foster children, realizing that "children are often placed into foster care with no personal items and in many cases, with only the clothes on their backs."

The Give Big Grants program is made possible through the credit union's voluntary payroll

deduction program, in which more than half of Community Choice's 244 employees have elected to donate a portion of their pay to the Community Choice Foundation and the organizations it supports.

The Community Choice Foundation is currently accepting letters of inquiry for the grant program on a rolling basis. The next winner will be announced in quarter one of 2017. Interested organizations are asked to contact the manager at their nearest Community Choice Credit Union member center to ensure eligibility and begin the application process. Community Choice has 15 locations across Michigan.

For more information on Community Choice Credit Union, go to CommunityChoiceCU.com.

## CANTON OBSERVER

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**Editor:** Joanne Maliszewski  
248-396-6620  
Email: jmaliszewski@hometownlife.com

**Sports:** Tim Smith  
734-469-4128  
Email: tsmith@hometownlife.com

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## MANOR

Continued from Page A1

children, heard through a friend that Plymouth Manor was for sale — and now he has started 2017 with yet another business. It seemed the perfect fit for a man who wanted to expand and invest in the Plymouth community, where he has lived for 16 years.

"We're very excited," Nawwas said. "I live in this community and I want to give back."

Saad will serve as the day-to-day operations manager of Plymouth Manor. He already has ideas to tap into the western Wayne County market and beyond, such as Ann Arbor.

"We have a lot of potential to reach new demographics," Saad said.

Nawwas said he needs room to grow his business. He said Wayne



Samer Saad (left) and Mohammed Nawwas have taken the helm at Plymouth Manor.

Tree Manor has customers who have booked events as far as two years out and he plans to build an addition onto his Taylor facility.

Aside from hosting wedding, corporate and graduation parties, among other events, Nawwas said Plymouth Manor will offer full-service catering.

Plymouth residents Terry and Molly Bixler actually bought the Plymouth Manor building from the Ristich family and brought in Nawwas and Saad.

"They've got a great reputation," Terry Bixler said. "It's going to be more than a business to them. They're the type of people who put serv-

ing the community above chasing the dollar."

Nawwas said he wants to continue the quality business that the Ristich family ran.

"We want to continue it as a family operation," he said.

Saad said renovations are expected at some point as he and Nawwas put their own touch on Plymouth Manor.

"We want to continue the legacy, but we also want to bring in our own ideas," he said.

Before Nick Ristich passed the Plymouth Manor torch to Nawwas and Saad, one of his daughters, Krista Schneider, said, "Every business has a life cycle. It's time for someone else to write their story here."

It seems Nawwas and Saad are ready to do just that.

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# Man is latest accused of trespassing at old hospital

**Ann Zaniewski**  
Detroit Free Press

Urban explorers, beware: A trip to the old Northville Psychiatric Hospital — especially if it's documented on social media — could land you in legal hot water.

About 300 people found that out last year, including Shane Kelley, a 28-year-old New Baltimore man who was charged with trespassing last week after a picture surfaced on social media of him on the roof of a building at the site.

The sprawling, run-

down psychiatric hospital on Seven Mile Road was open from 1952 until 2003. In the years since it closed, it has become somewhat of a mecca for urban adventurers and ghost hunters.

Northville Township owns the property. "We've come across people from as far away as Grand Rapids or Ohio going on the property," Northville Township Police Lt. Paul Tennes

said. Because of the hospital's popularity, police regularly monitor social



Kelley



ERIC SEALS | DETROIT FREE PRESS  
A view of the back of the Northville Psychiatric Hospital in Northville Township, which has been closed since 2003.

media sites for postings about it. The picture of Kelley on a building roof in Oc-

tober — which appears to be a selfie — surfaced on Facebook, according to police. The picture was captioned "On the roof of Northville."

Authorities issued a warrant for Kelley's arrest. He turned himself in to Northville Township police and was arraigned in 35th District Court in Plymouth.

Trespassing is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine.

Kelley could not immediately be reached for comment.

Tennes said Kelley is

among about 300 people who were arrested in 2016 on charges of trespassing on the property.

The police department has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to trespassers because the site can be dangerous, Tennes said.

"Safety is our primary focus," he said. "Due to the buildings deteriorating in their current condition, it's not an area where people should be traveling or exploring. We're concerned about people's safety. There's also concerns about asbestos in those buildings."

# Take time in new year to get your financial matters straight

**H**appy New Year! First, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very happy, healthy and prosperous new year. I hope that 2017 is the year when all your dreams come true.

The beginning of a new year is a great time to recommit to keeping your financial affairs in order. When it comes to personal finance, there are five main areas you need to focus on: estate planning, investments, taxes, risk management and debt. It is important to make sure that all five areas are taken care of. If one of these areas is deficient, it can cause all sorts of problems. As difficult as it may be, it is important to consider all five areas.

In estate planning, it's important to review all your documents, including your will, trust and power of attorney. You need to make sure they are accurate and up to date. If you do not have any of these documents, now is the time to do them. Remember, estate planning is not just planning for your death; it's also planning for family emergencies. The more you keep judges, courts and lawyers out of family affairs, the easier life is. Having up-to-date estate planning documents can make handling a family crisis easier on your loved ones.

From an investment standpoint, it is always important to make sure your current investments



**Rick Bloom**

MONEY MATTERS

match your individual goals and objectives and risk tolerance level. Investors who do not have a game plan are gambling and we know what happens to most gamblers — they lose. Now is the time to review your portfolio to make sure it reflects your current goals and objectives.

When it comes to taxes, always remember your goal is not to lower your taxes, but to be smart with them. That means different things for different people. For example, for many it may mean converting traditional IRAs into Roth IRAs. For those with children, it may

mean taking advantage of the Michigan Education Savings Plan. Remember, taxes are more than filing your tax returns; it's making sure you handle transactions properly and take advantage of opportunities such as retirement saving accounts or even available flexible spending plans.

When it comes to risk management, the important thing is to identify risks and decide if it is a risk you can assume or need to deal with. Insurance is one way of covering risk, but not all risks need to be insured. Furthermore, when it comes to risk management, for those of you with homes and cars, it's important to review your coverage to make sure it still fits your needs; shop your coverages around. Remember, when review-

*The beginning of a new year is a great time to recommit to keeping your financial affairs in order. When it comes to personal finance, there are five main areas you need to focus on: estate planning, investments, taxes, risk management and debt.*

ing your coverages, don't forget about your deductible. Raising your deductible is a great way to lower your premium.

In addition, when reviewing your risk management needs, don't forget about life insurance. Not everyone needs life insurance and there are many people who continue to pay on policies they do not need. The question is not whether or not we are going to die, because we all know that answer. The question is will anyone

lose financially if you die? If the answer is no, you don't need insurance.

Lastly, it is always important to review your debt situation. Not all debt is the same. For example, some debt is tax-deductible while some is not. The key is to review your debt situation and make sure you're being efficient with it. Even though everyone's debt situation is different, one thing I can tell you is if you have charge card debt, it is a type of debt that needs to

be extinguished as soon as you can.

Getting and keeping your financial house in order is not easy, but it must be done. We live in a time where everything changes at a rapid pace and we have to be able to respond accordingly. The consequences of not keeping your financial house in order can be severe, not only to you, but also to your family. Therefore, as we start the new year, spending time and getting your personal financial affairs in order will help make 2017 a good year for you. Good luck!

*Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. His website is [www.bloomassetmanagement.com](http://www.bloomassetmanagement.com). If you would like him to respond to questions, email [rick@bloomassetmanagement.com](mailto:rick@bloomassetmanagement.com).*

## CATERER

Continued from Page A1

sires, from high-end to ballpark cuisine, a mantra Chico Rodriguez said has been the company's slogan for years, and plans on continuing with his nephew.

"I do anything from hot dogs to caviar," Chico Rodriguez said.

Now his son, a mechanical engineering student at Macomb Community College, is helping with the day-to-day operations of the business, especially when his father is at work. It was a venture, P.J. Rodriguez said, he wanted to try out.

"Basically, I just wanted to get out on my own," the 20-year-old Clinton Township resident said. "I just wanted something to do on my own."

They continue to operate in Wayne County: The business has recently began working out of a VFW Hall in Taylor and they store their trailer at a lot in Westland. More information on the catering company can be found at [rosecatering.com](http://rosecatering.com).

While it has ties all over metro Detroit and comes from nearly an hour away, geography has no bounds for a catering company if the event is big enough.

"When you do the events, there's no distance as long as the clientele is (there)," Chico Rodriguez said. "If there are people there, there's no cost in doing it."

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# Dan Sabo discovers gems in Plymouth history



**Dan Sabo**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

Often interesting is new information that can be gleaned from just one very old photograph and a page in a diary. A photograph and a diary that have been in the Starkweather family since the 1800s recently revealed a new little gem of local history.

More than four years ago, after doing some enlargement work and a little research, I informed the Plymouth Museum folks of an interesting discovery. I am sharing the enlargement work and a page of the diary today, in hopes it will raise awareness and interest in the upcoming Plymouth Museum exhibit celebrating the 150th anniversary of incorporation of Plymouth as a village, which begins Jan. 13, according to an email I recently received from Jan Dersey of the museum.

From the back of the photo, in Karl H. Starkweather's handwriting: "Downtown Plymouth (Mich) scene in 1871." Via enlargement of various areas of the photograph, I believe the photo was shot in July. The photo shows George A. Starkweather's downtown Plymouth store, as one can see in the enlarged store signage.

The relocated store on Liberty Street, after it left the Starkweather-Hillmer family in the early 1900s, has gone through many changes and has been used for several other businesses over the years, including a hardware store and an antique store. At one time in the early 1970s, the entirety of the Starkweather Avenue facade boasted a work of modern graphic art. Presently, it is known as Hermann's Olde Town Grille.



George A. Starkweather's downtown Plymouth store.

A portion of the photo piqued my interest. I could see a sign in the window of the neighboring store, but could not read it. After enlarging the area, it was revealed to be a railroad schedule for the Detroit, Lansing and Lake Michigan Rail Road. In this blow up can barely be seen service to Brighton. The DL&LM was formed April 11, 1871, by a merger and June 30 of that year opened the segment between Detroit and Plymouth; the segment between Plymouth and Brighton opened July 1. If one looks closely, the date appears to be Monday, July 24.

I believe this enlargement is the earliest known city-posted evidence of passenger rail service to and from Plymouth. The date seems to fit, since George A Starkweather relocated his downtown store to Old Village in 1871. I believe

this photo of his former downtown store was shot very shortly after the move to Old Village — shot possibly as a memento, before someone else moved in, while his name was still on the frontage. Men standing in front of the druggist store can be seen, a busy business, and next to it, the general store appears to be completely empty, double doors wide open. Maybe the moving crew just left?

Also revealed in the enlargements is an interesting juxtaposition. In an advertisement posted in front of the druggist store can be seen an ad for "Harvell's Powders." After doing a little research, it was found that "Harvell's Powders" was a horse medicine. It appears to have been a "cure all" for just about any disease a horse might become afflicted of. From the "Illustrated Annual Reg-

ister of Rural Affairs and Cultivator Almanac, 1856": "In fact there is no case of disease among horses and cattle where these valuable powders are not called for, and by their timely administration they will save the lives of many valuable animals." I encourage the reader to draw their own conclusions as to efficacy of that 1870s product.

The interesting juxtaposition: a railroad schedule posted on the window heralds the new age of transportation that has arrived in Plymouth, which will soon replace the horse as the primary mode. And the man next door, just moved across town to relocate his business near a rail head.

From Celestia A. Young's diary, an entry reads: "A lovely showery day. I tried to see instead of working out of doors, Grand "Excursion" to Plymouth by rail — this afternoon — Wayne



An enlarged portion of the photograph showing the Starkweather store.

Brass Band & Star Spangled-Banners." Granddad Karl made a note in pencil on the inside front cover: "See April 27, 1871, for first steam train to pull into Plymouth, K.S."

Young lived in the Starkweather home for a time and was George Starkweather's housekeeper. She was known by grandchildren of George Starkweather as "Aunt Celestia." This is a firsthand account of a Plymouth resident who witnessed the very first steam train pull into Plymouth on April 27, 1871 — 146 years ago. In 1871, it was a significant event for Plymouth residents.

I thought this important to share; after reading the June 12, 2015, Plymouth Observer article titled "Study: Negatives derail quiet zone benefits" by Matt Jachman. I thought this might put into some historical perspective for residents, just how long the

city of Plymouth and the rail lines have been intertwined. One could argue that the rail lines were a major contributing factor in making the city of Plymouth what it is today.

I believe the rail lines, despite the many complaints, have helped the city to retain the small town feel that so many business leaders and residents treasure and has helped to preserve or "hold together" a truly unique city grid and cohesive community, despite the community being amidst a sea of urban sprawl. Were it not for the rail lines, the city grid might very well have ended up a far less unique and cohesive community.

Taylor resident Daniel Sabo grew up in Old Village in the home his great-grandfather G.A. Starkweather built, attended Starkweather School and graduated from Plymouth-Canton Educational Park.

## Livonia man helps animate 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story'

**David Veselenak**  
hometownlife.com

Talk to Keith Sintay about his work and he'll still glow from the excitement.

The former Livonia resident has worked as an animator for more than 20 years, starting his career working with Disney and eventually working his way up to joining the ranks of animators who recently worked on "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." He will return to work this upcoming week to begin work on the unnamed Star Wars Episode VIII movie coming out next December.

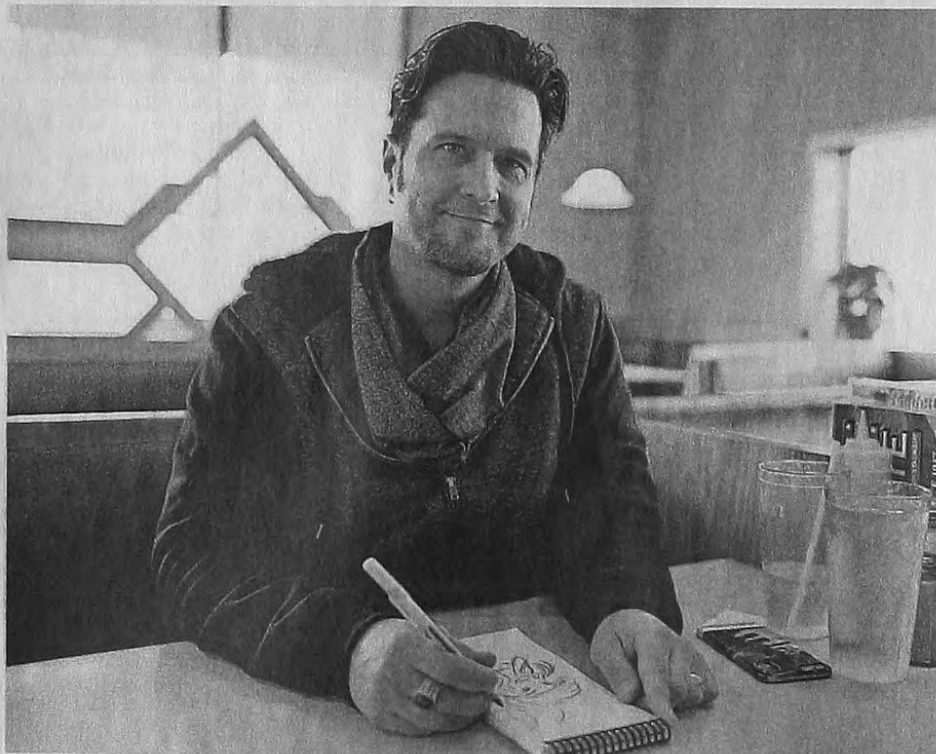
"I've been a Star Wars fan, major fan, since it came out," he said. "I never planned on working on a Star Wars movie. That's just too wild of an idea."

Sintay, who attended both Bentley High School and Churchill High School in Livonia, went to Central Michigan University and discovered his desire to do animation. He was originally going into business, but switched when he discovered his talents could be used as an artist.

"Back then, with no internet, no computers, things like that, it felt isolated," he said. "My thought of becoming an animator never really occurred to me until I got in at Central and I was doing artwork around the campus for sororities and for dorm mascot T-shirts and things like that."

So he began building a portfolio and eventually contacted Disney, which hired him as an intern. He worked on the animation for the 1995 movie "Pocahontas."

After working in hand-drawn animation for several years, the studios began transitioning to more digital animation,



Keith Sintay is a Livonia native who's worked on many films as an animator.

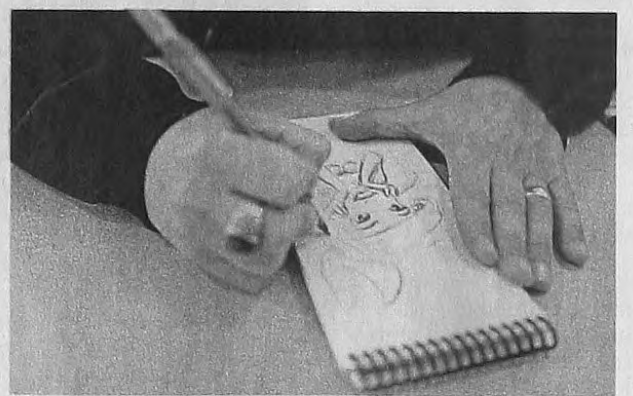


Livonia native Keith Sintay (middle) poses with Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill in 2015.

leading him to a career where Sintay also began

doing plenty of visual effects, with the first

visual effects movie he worked on being "I Am



Keith Sintay makes a drawing during the interview.

Legend," which starred Will Smith. That work led him to doing work on movies in the "Transformers" series, "Avengers: Age of Ultron" and "Rogue One." He now works as a senior character animator for Industrial Light and Magic.

### Star Wars love

Working on a Star Wars movie was a big step for Sintay, who's been a huge fan of the world a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away since he was a child. He's collected dozens of pieces of memorabilia, including a whole wall of Darth Vader helmets at his California home. He even has gone to great lengths to avoid being exposed to trailers and other information to the new movies, including 2015's "Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens."

He said while attending an event several months before the movie opened, he was given the opportunity to see some footage early. He got out of the theater and pretended to feel sick.

That wasn't the case for "Rogue One," as he needed to understand the movie as much as possible to make sure his animation fit.

"I literally had to dive in," he said.

He's met several of the players involved with

the movies, including Carrie Fisher, who died last week after suffering a heart attack.

He said her death has been tough this week. He said she was full of life when he met her last year.

"Being a big Star Wars fan, it was just crazy," he said. "When I met Carrie Fisher, she's just fun. She loves her dog and her personality was ... she seemed very upbeat and magical."

He'll begin working on Episode VIII in January.

He took his parents last week to see "Rogue One" as a family, nudging them whenever a scene he worked on came up. His father, Larry Sintay, said he's quite proud of the work his son has done over the years, but even more proud of how he continues to teach others his craft.

"What really impresses me the most about him is the mentoring," he said. "I've listened in on those conversations and he gets five or six people at one time on his computer and he critiques them and grades them. The stuff that comes out of his mouth, I don't know where he learned it."

dveselenak@hometownlife.com  
734-678-6728  
Twitter: @DavidVeselenak

# Northville High School graduate combines veterinary, army service

**Matt Jachman**  
hometownlife.com

The Schlanser family has a long history of service in the U.S. Army, so it's in keeping with that tradition that Justin R. Schlanser became a veterinarian — in the army.

Lt. Col. Schlanser, who grew up in Northville Township, is one of more than 400 army veterinarians and a specialist in wildlife and zoo animals.

Stationed since July in Vicenza, Italy, as the command veterinarian for U.S. Army Africa, Schlanser is planning several trips to the African continent, where he'll work with military, public health and veterinary experts in host countries on a variety of projects aimed at protecting both wildlife, the health of soldiers and the civilian population.

His 13-year army career has taken Schlanser to posts across the country and the world, including deployments in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, the military mission to Afghanistan that followed the terrorist attack of 9/11.

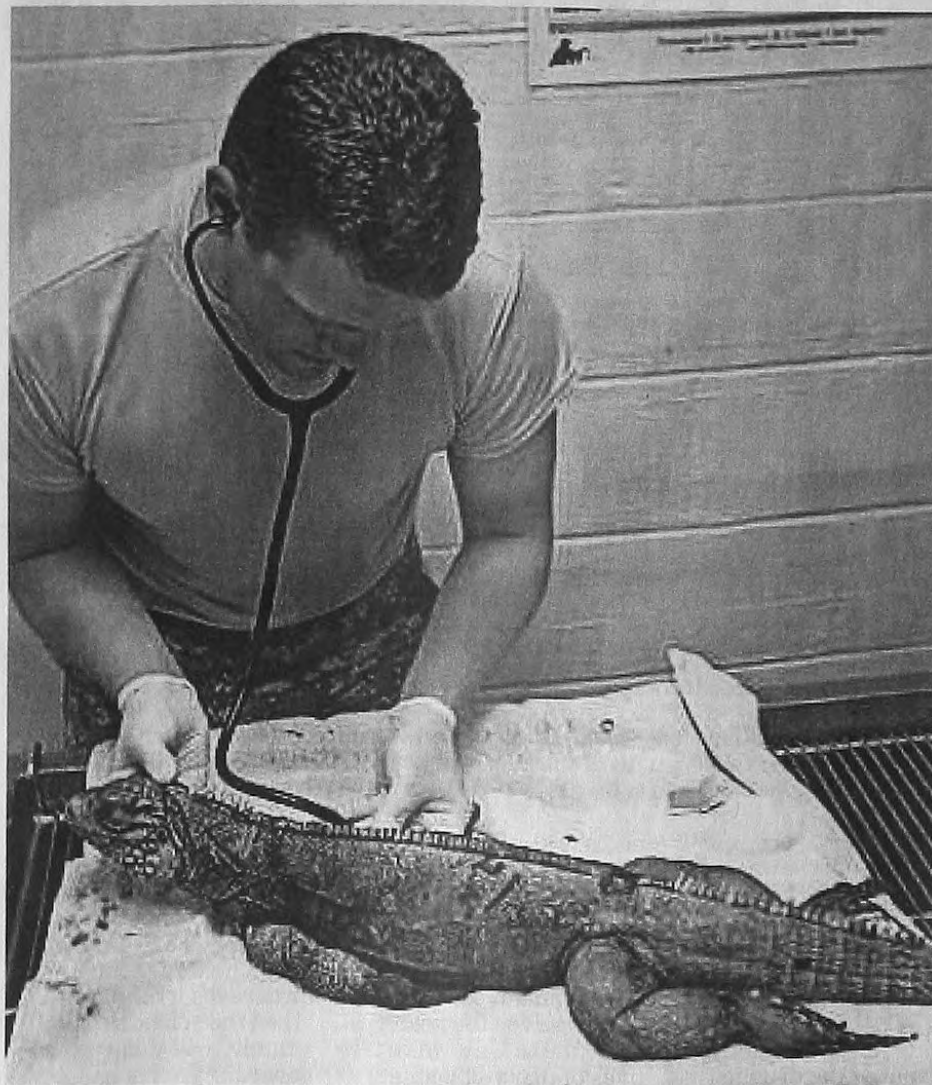
"It's really been a great career. I've had the opportunity to do so many things that I never thought I could do while I was in veterinary school," Schlanser said recently by phone from Vicenza.

Schlanser is a 1996 Northville High School graduate who expected to follow an ordinary career path as a veterinarian. "I thought I was going to be a small-animal practitioner somewhere in Michigan and go from there," he said.

But, as he tells it, his father, Lawrence E. Schlanser Jr., researched different opportunities and suggested the army veterinary corps.

"I had no idea the army had veterinarians," he said.

The government paid for Schlanser's veterinary education at Michigan State University, from which he received his doctorate in 2003. He entered the army as a captain and headed to basic training at Fort Sam Houston (now called Joint Base San Antonio),



Army veterinarian Lt. Col. Justin Schlanser examines a Cuban iguana on the military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



Lt. Col. Justin Schlanser works on a bear in northern Michigan as part of his U.S. Army veterinary duties.

where the army sends its incoming medical personnel.

"We still have to meet the same standards that the rest of the army meets," he said.

For the Schlansers, army service stretches back generations. Lawrence Schlanser Jr.

served during the Vietnam War, while his late father, Lawrence E. Schlanser, had an army career, serving in both World War II (he was wounded by a land mine in Europe) and the Korean War and retiring with the rank of major general.

Maj. Gen. Schlanser's father — Justin Schlanser's great-grandfather — was an army surgeon during the World War I era and a pioneer in facial reconstruction. And Justin Schlanser's brother Matthew is a graduate of West Point; the brothers had Operation Iraqi



Lt. Col. Justin Schlanser in Italy with a military working dog just after his promotion to major last summer. A veterinarian, Schlanser is a wildlife expert assigned to the U.S. Army's Africa command and plans several trips to Africa next year.

Freedom deployments that overlapped.

"The military's always been there and I think that's why it was very easy for me to select the army after veterinary school," Justin Schlanser said.

His parents, who still live in Northville Township, are thrilled with his choice.

"We've been blessed that he's found his niche and enjoys serving the army in that capacity," his mother Nancy said.

His stories have wowed people at family gatherings, she said. "We always told him he needs to write a book," she said.

Lawrence Schlanser Jr. recalled that his son is also a skilled musician, but realized early the struggles musicians face in making a decent living. "He went into science and never looked back, basically," he said.

Lt. Col. Schlanser, who also has a master's degree in public health from MSU, said that while animals are his specialty, his larger focus is protecting the health of soldiers and the public. Because they are trained to care for many different species, he said, veterinarians have a broad medical knowledge and

can contribute to developing strategies that protect human health.

Projects like animal conservation, keeping biodiversity high and understanding emerging diseases, more than 75 percent of which have animal origins, all positively affect human health, Schlanser said.

The army veterinary corps also provides veterinary service to other branches of the military, as well as to the Secret Service, the Border Patrol and other federal agencies.

Schlanser has fond memories of the Northville area, where he likes to visit downtown Northville, dine at the Tuscan Cafe and visit St. Paul Lutheran Church, which he attended while growing up. He plans a late January visit to see his parents and his children, Adam, 11, and Jaclyn, 8, who live in Plymouth.

"I've been very fortunate in my career, to go where I've gone and do what I've done," he said. "The military has sent me all over the place, but I do look forward to coming home."

mjachman@hometownlife.com  
734-678-8432  
Twitter: @mattjachman

## From Birmingham to Brightmoor, a journey of goodwill

**Jay Grossman**  
hometownlife.com

It was a year ago, Jan. 1, 2016, that Janelle Boyce broke her leg from tripping on a stair while carrying a laundry basket.

She needed surgery and was told to rest on a sofa for eight weeks. She could barely move, much less cook, but luckily her Birmingham neighbors helped out by preparing meals for her family. They brought over food ... lots of it.

"Tons of food," Boyce said with a smile. "Three and four times a week ... good food, amazing salads, appetizers, entrees, desserts, wine. I couldn't walk, so I couldn't shop and I couldn't cook and I needed to eat and feed my family. And so I got to thinking ..."

Boyce started researching the relationship between healthy eating and poverty. She read articles about "food deserts" where the closest source for food in some neighborhoods is a liquor store. She then reached out to her neighbors to see if they were interested in contributing to a local food bank.

Within a few weeks, she developed a list of more than 30 volunteers — along with a contact person from the Redford Brightmoor Initiative, a local community center on the west side of De-



JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Betty Euseary picks fruit and vegetables for her family at the Redford Brightmoor Initiative.

troit. "Apples cost a lot more than a can of soup," Boyce said. "The proliferation of fast, easy and cheap food and in struggling communities makes things worse. But can you blame someone when they can feed their family a fast food meal for the same price as a bag of honey crisp apples?"

### The cost of poverty

Karen Plants, executive director of the Redford Brightmoor Initiative, said the community center serves an area where roughly 70 percent of the people are on food stamps.

"Transportation is one of the barriers that prevent growth," Plants said. "The closest grocery store is two or three

miles away ... and the local gas station sells bananas for 50 cents apiece."

Plants then paused for a second. "It's really expensive to be poor," she said. "Costco is a wonderful thing, but you need a membership and transportation to get there and buy things in bulk. I don't know of too many people in this area who have Costco cards."

Plants has watched the Redford Brightmoor Initiative grow steadily over the past several years. The center provides families with food and basic goods, such as deodorant and toothpaste. There are furniture and appliance giveaways once a month. Winter clothing is available for those who need it.

"We just bought a vacant lot off our parking lot and we planted apple and pear trees to bring the fresh produce to our neighborhood," she said. "That isn't going to rebuild the neighborhood, but it will help the people who are there."

There's not a lot of hope in the Brightmoor area. Some streets have one or two houses that are occupied, with the rest of the properties left abandoned and boarded up. Crime is a constant problem, along with litter and rodents.

Plants said the center is a sanctuary of hope for many of the residents in Brightmoor. It's a place to celebrate anniversaries and birthdays and place to find comfort in times of trouble.

"We're like an extend-

ed family," she said. "People aren't recovering as fast as they like, so we're here for them. I know a woman who comes in from Novi every week ... we've grown and grown over the past few years."

And now, there's a group of volunteers from the Birmingham area that drops in each Saturday with bushels of fresh produce.

### Counting carrots

Each week, a different volunteer delivers the food to the center. Tables are filled with fresh produce by the time the center opens at 8:30 a.m. Tina Yancey, owner of the Great Harvest Bread Co. in Birmingham, donates dozens of loaves of bread every weekend.

"Everyone gets a loaf of bread and some produce," Boyce said. "I hope we're helping some people — they're excited to see us and they're incredibly thankful. One mom told me she feels like a showoff because she packs fruit for her son's lunch."

Staci Chambers was one of the first volunteers to help Boyce. The Birmingham resident would like to see the initiative expand to other parts of southeast Michigan.

"It could be brutally cold and we'll still get tons of people," Chambers said. "It's kind of

gut-wrenching because there's never enough food, no matter how much you bring with you. It's sad when you have to divvy up a bag of carrots."

At the same time, Chambers said she's happy she can help make a difference. The outings also serve as lessons for her children to understand the daily struggles some families face.

Boyce said many of the volunteers take their children shopping so they can take part in the experience. A local Girl Scout troop also signed up to help.

"Some people donate two bags, others donate four bags," Boyce said. "It's not a huge time commitment, but I think it's making a pretty awesome impact on people's lives."

Boyce said anyone in the Birmingham area interested in volunteering can reach her at jlwboyce@hotmail.com. The Redford Brightmoor Initiative (www.redfordbrightmoorinitiative.org) has campuses at 10000 Beech Daly Road in Redford and 12065 W. Outer Drive in Detroit. Plants said the center always needs gently used clothing, along with appliances that are still in good working condition.

jgrossman@hometownlife.com  
586-826-7030  
Twitter: @BhmEccentric

# On the trail of Bigfoot in the U.P.

Group determined to find conclusive proof that creature exists

**John Carlisle**  
Detroit Free Press

Maybe Bigfoot did this. Maybe.

Rich Meyer stood in an Upper Peninsula forest, calling his friend over to a spot along a trail. He'd found something.

A tall, thin sapling had been bent into an arch over the path, high above everyone's heads. Its tip was wedged in the underbrush, holding it down. This, Meyer said, might be a sign. Bigfoots, he explained, often leave signals to each other using sticks or trees. Arches are common.

"It can be a marker of some kind, almost like a road map," the 39-year-old said.

Meyer is founder of the Upper Peninsula Bigfoot/Sasquatch Research Organization, dedicated to finding proof that Bigfoot is real and living in the U.P.

On that fall afternoon, he and Shawn Mullins, a fellow Bigfoot investigator, were scouting the woods at the edge of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, 95,000 dense acres of unspoiled wilderness in the central Upper Peninsula. If Sasquatch is real, the investigators thought, this would be a great place to hide — and a likely place to find proof that he exists.

"Look at this," Mullins said, walking over to a spot where about a dozen long sticks leaned upright on one another to form a vague 'X' shape. This, too, is said to be common in Bigfoot stick language.

"It's interesting because of how it's kind of interweaved like that," Mullins said. The 36-year-old looked it over carefully. "A lot of these branches were probably laying down right here, and it's almost like they were deliberately put up and weaved into an 'X' like this."



RYAN GARZA | DETROIT FREE PRESS

Upper Peninsula Bigfoot/Sasquatch Research Organization founder Rich Meyer (center) of Hermansville and Bigfoot investigators Shawn Mullins (left) of Marquette and Caroline Curtis of Munising pose for a photo in the light of a night vision scope while on the search for a Sasquatch under the moonlight in Germfask, at the edge of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.



RYAN GARZA | DETROIT FREE PRESS

A large Bigfoot statue stands outside Muldoon's Pasties in Munising. A lot of people in the U.P. have stories about Bigfoot encounters.

He wasn't convinced, though. "Could be something, could be nothing," he said.

It has been a busy year for the group. Bigfoot has been all over the news. First, there was a sighting in May of a possible Bigfoot seen on a camera mounted above an eagle's nest in a tree in Beulah, near the Platte River State Fish Hatch-

ery in the northern Lower Peninsula. It made news all over the world.

Then there was the photo of a Bigfoot-looking something, taken by a trail cam mounted on a tree in the western Upper Peninsula this fall, as the mystery creature was combing through a campsite.

And the first-ever Upper Peninsula Bigfoot

convention in August drew a hundred or so Yoopers to share their own Sasquatch stories, which many had kept to themselves for years.

"In the U.P., we're all pretty tight-lipped up here. We don't like to share a lot anyway," Meyer said. "And with the stigma that's been with Bigfoot over the years, you got a lot of older people who think, 'People are going to call me crazy,' so they don't like to share unless they see a bunch of other people sharing."

It's not for nothing his group's motto is "Bigfoot research and counseling without ridicule."

Mullins and Meyer were in the forest that afternoon because the wildlife refuge is known as a hot spot for Bigfoot encounters. The investigators had been here before, hoping to have a Bigfoot interaction of their own. Later that night, in these woods, they'd get that interaction. Maybe.

"It would be one of the best things that happened to me, other than meeting my wife and having my son," Meyer said of encountering Bigfoot. "It would validate all the time and effort we've all put in."

## Born to be wild

There are legends about a Bigfoot-type wild man in the folklore of just about every culture in the world. In North America, it's part of the mythology of several Indian tribes and the name "Sasquatch" is derived from the term for "wild men" used by tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

The myth spread through popular culture after the 1967 appearance of the Patterson-Gimlin film, the most famous Bigfoot evidence so far, which shows a hairy creature on a leisurely stroll through the California woods. Ever since, there has been an explosion in reported sightings all over the country, including in most Michigan counties.

In general, Bigfoot is described as covered in fur, standing 8 feet tall or more, walking upright, making only fleeting appearances in eyewitness accounts, blurry photos and a lot of shaky videos. Some people believe it's a close relative of humans, something between man and ape with peculiar characteristics, like sometimes leaving woven stick gifts for homeowners near its habitat in exchange for things like marbles. He's said to communicate by howling or banging sticks on trees. And he reportedly stinks.

Concrete proof, though, has been elusive. "We don't have a body yet," Meyer said, summing up the plight of the Bigfoot believers community in general. "Once there's a body or evi-

dence where it shows someone being somewhere and a Bigfoot is right next to them — where it's irrefutable — then the scientific community will jump on board."

Until then, modern science generally regards the Bigfoot phenomenon as little more than a scam, hoax and mistaken identity by overexcited observers — like that Bigfoot supposedly spotted on a trail cam this summer. A frame taken seconds later showed it was just a bear bending over awkwardly. And that Bigfoot seen on the eagle cam this year? The truth turned out to be even more absurd. More on that later.

In general, scientists say there's no way a giant ape-man could survive this long without a huge breeding population to sustain it. That if Bigfoots were real, one of them should have been killed or captured by now. And, they ask: Why are all the photos and videos of Bigfoot so blurry and inconclusive?

But a few outspoken dissenters point to recent discoveries showing that different species of hominid, like the Neanderthal, have coexisted with humans more recently than previously believed, suggesting Bigfoot's parallel existence is not so unlikely.

"Some of these branches of this now-bushy family tree have existed alongside us until the recent past," said professor Jeffrey Meldrum, an anthropologist with Idaho State University and the closest thing to a national Bigfoot expert. "Why not into the present? Why presume they're all extinct in the face of all the evidence?"

The 58-year-old professor has spent years studying Bigfoot lore, collecting evidence, following up on eyewitness accounts and presenting his findings at conferences. He's determined to approach Bigfoot using scientific methods, but the lack of scientific validation so far is disappointing.

"Of course it's frustrating, having to deal with the skeptics and critics in the absence of definitive proof," he said. "My goal is not to convince people that Bigfoot exists. I would like to demonstrate that Bigfoot exists with that evidence."

The evidence so far consists of plaster castings of supposed Sasquatch footprints, supposed Sasquatch hair samples that are often traced back to common wildlife and so-called stick structures in the woods, said to be deliberately created by Bigfoot.

The problem with those, Meldrum admitted, is that, as with much Bigfoot evidence, these stick creations could have been caused by

something else — like the weather or the chance arrangement of fallen timber or kids just making a fort. When it comes to Bigfoot, the evidence is often just a "maybe," never a "for sure."

"I've been out with people for whom every overturned log or upturned tree is immediately attributed to Sasquatch," Meldrum said. "If you find what you think is a tree structure, you need to have some associative evidence; that is, a scat pile next to footprints, for example, that points to Sasquatch."

As if this pursuit wasn't already difficult, Bigfoot seekers have to deal with outright hoaxes. For some reason, a lot of people like to pretend they've seen Bigfoot and provide faked evidence, like some guy named Rick Dyer who announced to much publicity a few years ago that he had a dead Bigfoot. It turned out to be made of rubber and camel hair.

"I don't know if they do it to muddy the waters or they do it just to get some attention," Meyer said, noting the time he once wasted on a two-week investigation in the U.P. woods that ended when the witnesses admitted they just made it up.

And with Bigfoot hunting more popular than ever, there's always the possibility of two groups of Bigfoot hunters unwittingly directing knocks and howls to each other in the woods.

"That's always the danger these days, with people going out broadcasting vocalizations or making wood knocks, is there might be another enthusiast doing the same thing on the other side of the ridge," Meldrum said with a laugh.

## Seeking answers

Yet they persevere. Most Bigfoot hunters say they're compelled by their own Sasquatch sighting at some point in their past, driven ever since to find an explanation.

Mullins wants an explanation for the thing he saw several years ago, standing on two legs and looking back at him from the woods with glowing eyes.

"I froze," he said. "I just couldn't believe it. And it just casually turned to the left, walked into the woods and it met up with like three others, 'cause we could hear three different locations a little bit further in, converging. And at that point I was, like, OK, that solidified the belief in me that they're really real and they're out here."

Meyer has been a Bigfoot hunter all his life, without knowing. After his dad died, his mom told him his father had a secret, lifelong belief in Sasquatch.

"She said, 'That's part of the reason the entire time you were growing up, you guys were out in the woods all the time,'" Meyer said. "I said, 'I thought we were just out hunting and fishing, 'cause I grew up out in the woods.' She's like, 'No, he always knew there was something else out there, but he really didn't say anything about it to anyone.'"

Since then, he has taken up his dad's cause. He, too, has seen their eyes glowing from the woods, he said.

Since founding the UPBSRO four years ago, the auto parts store manager has become a magnet for people's Bigfoot stories.

As he sat enjoying a snack of fried mushrooms at Tovey's Jolly Inn in Germfask, located at the edge of the wildlife refuge, waitress Glenda Bowler overheard him talking and came over to tell him that she, too, had possibly encountered Bigfoot, while hunting. One time, it was a wild

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### BIR



**CHRISTOPHER DAVID** passed away in his parent's home in California on December 28, 2016 after a 4 month battle with colon cancer. He was 20 years old. A 2013 graduate of Plymouth High School, Christopher was active in the PCEP - Choir. Music was a big part of his life. After spending one year performing with The Young Americans in California, he returned to Michigan to continue his education at Eastern Michigan University majoring in Music Therapy. He is survived by his parents, David and Cynthia, his brother Alexander, his two sisters - Rebecca and Rachel, his grandmother - Marjorie Carr and several aunts, uncles, and cousins. A memorial mass will be held at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth, MI at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 7th. A Celebration of Life will follow at the Plymouth Manor and Banquet Hall from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family has established a memorial fund for the PCEP - Choir program. Donations can be made at <https://www.youcaring.com/plymouthcantoneducationalparkchoir-726024> or by mailing a check to Salem High School - Attn: Jennifer Neumann.

### MARTINELLI

**GUIDO** Age 96. January 1, 2017. Beloved husband of the late Amelia. A proud US Army Veteran who served in World War II. Survived by seven nieces and nephews here and abroad. Services are private. Arrangements by Weise Funeral Home, 7210 Park, Allen Park (313-382-1150). Sign online guestbook at [www.weisefuneralhome.com](http://www.weisefuneralhome.com).

### MORROW

**LEE** 85, passed away peacefully, January 1, 2017. Preceded in death by his wife Adele. Loving father of Carolyn Sharpe (Rick), Jelane Ciranna (Bob) and Bob Morrow. Beloved grandfather of Lauren (Matt), Ryan (Mallory), Brandon and Steve. Lee has dedicated many decades of service to the City of Livonia, including Past President of the Planning Commission, Livonia Spree and Hearts of Livonia. Family will receive friends Friday 2-9 p.m. at Neely-Turowski Funeral Home 30200 Five Mile (Between Middlebelt and Merriman), where a funeral service will be held on Saturday at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers family suggests donations be made to Homes for Our Troops or Operation Homefront. To sign the online guestbook, please visit [www.TurowskiLifeStory.com](http://www.TurowskiLifeStory.com)

### SMITH



**BONNY S.** age 86 of Plymouth, passed away on December 30, 2016. Born on March 19, 1930 in Smithville, Arkansas to James and Blanche Spotts. Bonny married Earl Smith on December 30, 1967 and together they would establish themselves in the Plymouth Community as owners of multiple businesses and properties. She is survived by her husband Earl and loving daughter Lauren (John) Falcusan. She is the proud grandmother of Jansan (Chandler) Rhoads, Jordan (Valterri) Filippula and Kimberly (Ed) Moder and great-grandmother of Easton, Jaxson, Jaelyn, Eddie and Logan. Bonny is also the dear sister of Beau Neely. The family will receive friends on Saturday, January 7th from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Schrader-Howell Funeral Home, 280 South Main Street, Plymouth. Burial will take place at Riverside Cemetery in Plymouth with a private family service. Memorials may be made to the American Heart Association, Attn: Tribute Processing Center, 3816 Paysphere Circle, Chicago, IL 60674 or to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-9959.

### WORTMANN

**ROBERT G.** Age 67, of Taylorsville, N. Carolina mercifully passed away December 31, 2016. He is survived by his wife, Sheila, son, Eric both of Taylorsville and brother Michael Wortmann of Dearborn, Michigan.

May peace be with you in this time of sorrow.



Paying tribute to the life of your loved one.

# BIGFOOT

Continued from Page A6

howl from the forest. Another time, something tried talking to her using wood knocks.

"Something would go 'crack! crack! crack!' like they were hitting something with a stick. Like a signal," the 64-year-old said. But she admitted that in isolated spaces like the U.P., Bigfoot can become a catch-all for anything unexplained. "We never did figure it out, so it became Bigfoot," she said. "Like, 'It must be Bigfoot then.'"

Amateur Bigfoot hunting groups like the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization, or BFRO, which has 200 volunteer investigators nationwide, or Meyer's U.P. group, which collects these kinds of small-town eyewitness accounts, can be helpful if they approach their hunt scientifically, Meldrum said.

"The only harm that I think comes of it is if people are too enthusiastic, too eager and too quick to attribute questionable evidence to Sasquatch, because that dilutes the good, solid evidence we have and that can be a distraction," he said.

"My goal is to try to raise the bar, to get them to cultivate skills as citizen-scientists rather than simply amateur investigators and enthusiasts, and, as citizen-scientists, learn how to analyze and collect and report data in a reliable fashion. Something as simple as placing a scale by a footprint so we can have an actual record of its size. Sometimes, it's a big hurdle."

## Back to nature

Some people think Bigfoot is more than just a missing link. Some think he deserves to be worshipped.

Not long ago, Gawain MacGregor stitched some animal skins together, made a full body suit, put it on and went for a walk in a Michigan forest — looking a whole lot like Bigfoot.

That Bigfoot seen on the eagle cam earlier this year? That was him, he said sheepishly.

"I was up fishing with a friend at Crystal Lake and, as I often do, I performed a shamanistic ceremony where I walk in the woods dressed as an animal," he said. "This may seem unusual, but it's actually a practice rooted in ancient tradition."

MacGregor, a 36-year-old fur trapper from Minnesota, does this as part of his spiritual tradition. It's a way to reconnect with nature, he said. It's also a way to throw another curve ball into the Bigfoot hunters' quest to gather evidence.

He unknowingly passed the eagle cam. Someone watching it spotted this bumbling, hairy figure struggling to get past a log in the woods. The video went viral. And suddenly, MacGregor and his fur suit



were international news. "Pretty quickly, I knew that was me," said MacGregor, who was reluctant to come forward. "I thought that I was going to get arrested and be on the news and people would say I was crazy. And I didn't even want to get into explaining why I was doing that. I don't know if it's a protected site, so when I first saw the video, I was pretty nervous."

To him, Bigfoot is neither man nor ape. He's an angel. That's why nobody's ever caught one or found a body or gotten a clear photo, he said. He's not the only one. There's a strain of believers who think Bigfoot is not a physical being.

"People have been reporting seeing these things forever and they never find a body, they never catch it, they never get good photos or anything," he said. "So either thousands of people are lying or there's an aspect of this they don't understand. To me, it's incredibly obvious it's not an animal. We're looking at an angel of the forest."

MacGregor has a website — [enkiduium.blogspot.com](http://enkiduium.blogspot.com) — where he expounds at length on his theory, offers a sample prayer to Sasquatch and shows how to make an edible Bigfoot effigy out of gingerbread. All of this under a fake first name, though. He's not eager for personal recognition. "I just worry about, I guess for lack of a better term, religious persecution," he said. "A lot of my friends have told me I'm crazy — even my own mother. She still loves me, but she just thinks I'm crazy. She says I'm in a Sasquatch cult."

MacGregor has been spotted by hikers while walking in the woods covered in fur — "People kind of get into a frenzy" — he admitted, and is concerned about getting killed by a startled hunter.

"Absolutely, I worry about that," he said. "The last thing I need is to get shot and try to explain to this person what I'm doing."

## Knock, knock

Midnight in the forest. The full moon cast everything in a sleepy glow. It was dead silent. And very eerie.

The middle of the night is prime time for Bigfoot. And this spot by a riverbank was reportedly a prime location.

"Every time we come here, something hap-

pens," Meyer said.

He and Mullins were back at the edge of the wildlife refuge. And they were joined by Caroline Curtis, a 47-year-old investigator with the BFRO who fields an average of one Bigfoot report every day from somewhere in North America. She has spent years chasing the same evidence as the other Bigfoot hunters, trying to finally quiet the same skeptics.

"How can you discount all of these people that are seeing something similar?" Curtis asked, making her case. "They're not all mountain hillbillies. There's some intelligent people involved in this."

She, too, is motivated by her own Bigfoot encounter. She once saw a Sasquatch up on a ridge while walking through the woods. "It changed me," she said. "I've been on more expeditions than I can count because of that. I wanted more. It wasn't a real clear sighting and I wasn't scared. It just encouraged me to want to go out on more expeditions."

The crew was loaded with equipment — a parabolic microphone, a military-grade night-vision scope, infrared lights, recording devices and walkie-talkies.

Everything except a weapon. There's a split between those who aim to kill a Bigfoot to produce a corpse and those who, like the Upper Peninsula group, have a no-kill policy — though with no assurance that Bigfoot follows the same thinking.

They stood on a moonlit bridge over a river. Mullins held two thin logs in his hands. Bigfoot, they say, is smart enough to communicate; sometimes with howls, other times by banging sticks on trees in a sort of Sasquatch Morse Code. When Bigfoot investigators go into the woods, they'll send a message by banging the logs together a few times and wait for a reply. Sometimes, the investigators will howl into the woods — a bone-jarring moan — hoping for a similar response, while likely scaring any unsuspecting campers or hunters in the area.

Mullins banged the sticks together three times, each one sending a loud echo deep into the quiet woods. Then they all stood still and listened.

A few seconds later, in the distance, there were what sounded like two knocks back. Maybe. "Did you hear that?"

Curtis asked excitedly. "Yep, two to my left," Meyer whispered.

Now this could have been a coincidental, random forest noise. It could have been a hunter or camper screwing around with them. It could have even been a guy dressed as Bigfoot for spiritual reasons, wandering the woods. Or it could have been fellow Bigfoot enthusiasts thinking they were replying to a Sasquatch and banging sticks in reply.

And, of course, it could have even been Bigfoot. Maybe.

This was what they came for and it gave hope that this would be another fruitful night of possible interactions with Bigfoot.

But the excitement faded as the night unfolded because, try as they might, all the whoops and hollers and stick knocks they did after that brought no response — other than the flashing lights of a state police vehicle swooping down a dirt road as the group was leaving, investigating why a group of people would be wandering the woods in the middle of the night, banging on things.

"You're not going to believe me, but we're out here looking for Bigfoot," Meyer said.

This has happened before. The last time, the cop who stopped them spent 45 minutes sharing his own Bigfoot stories. This time, the officer just chuckled, almost knowingly. "This is definitely a place where you're going to find something," he told Meyer.

Not that night, though. They weren't discouraged, though. They never are. They're convinced Bigfoot is real. And they say one day they'll prove it.

"I know it's out there," Meyer said. "I know the proof is there. We just have to find it. We just haven't yet. But I'm not frustrated. It's just part of the challenge."



Robin Gibson's "Acadia."

## Printmaking: Robin Gibson exhibit at Northville Art House

The Northville Art House will present "Unsettled: The Printmaking of Robin Gibson," featuring lithographs, intaglios and relief prints by Gibson, an associate professor of art at Penn State University.

"I am interested in images that suggest rather than define; a landscape view that remains anonymous, devoid of identifying details that might reveal any particular place or viewpoint," Gibson said.

Though specific places may be hidden and recognizable only by their title, such as "Acadia" and "Yosemite," Gibson's multi-layered prints, on closer look, reveal fluid lines, subtle coloring and rich texture to

capture the natural world.

Gibson received a master's of fine arts in printmaking from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her prints have been exhibited widely in solo, group and juried exhibitions and are in numerous corporate, museum and university collections, including the Achenbach Foundation, San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

The exhibit opens with a reception 6-9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 6. The exhibition runs through Jan. 28 during Art House hours, noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and noon to 4 p.m. Saturday.



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# Tower research throughout Michigan helping save threatened songbirds

Lighting changes are reducing fatal collisions

**Jennifer Dixon**  
Detroit Free Press

More than a decade ago, 100 researchers fanned out across Michigan to count the number of injured and dead songbirds at the base of 24 communications towers during the peak of the birds' spring and fall migrations.

They concluded that the towers with steady, burning lights were more deadly to the birds than towers with flashing lights — and that by simply turning off the steady lights, they could reduce deadly bird-tower collisions by 70 percent. An estimated 7 million birds are killed annually in tower collisions in the U.S. — and most are songbirds that migrate at night.

It took years, plus the coordination of three federal agencies, to respond to the research coordinated by the East Lansing field office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But now, the Federal Aviation Administration has changed its lighting standards for new communication towers, while the Fish and Wildlife Service recently began working to persuade owners and operators of existing towers across Michigan to turn off the burning lights or switch to flashing lights.

The lights are meant to protect aircraft of all kinds from striking these towers.

There are thousands of towers across the



The Kirtland's warbler is a rare bird that nests only in certain areas of northern Michigan.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

country, used by broadcasters and communications and telecommunications providers. Only newly built towers are affected; replacing or turning off the burning lights is voluntary for existing tower owners. Owners of towers that have both steady and sufficient flashing lights can simply extinguish the steady lights. Experts say that could save owners money on maintenance and power costs.

Audubon Great Lakes, the Chicago-based office of the National Audubon Society that manages conservation work throughout the region to protect and improve habitat critical for birds during migration and nesting cycles, said it's also willing to use its chapter network across the Great Lakes to reach out to tower owners and operators about switching or turning off lights. Work could begin in 2017.

"We're really proud of the work of the office, done in collaboration

with the state of Michigan and the Federal Communications Commission. We're really pleased we had an opportunity to do something that has nationwide implications for migratory birds," said Jack Dingledine, deputy field supervisor at the wildlife service's East Lansing field office.

It all started in 1998, when the Fish and Wildlife Service learned Michigan had plans to build a telecommunications network of 179 towers.

"We had some concerns about the potential impact of those towers on migratory birds, including the endangered Kirtland's warbler," which nests almost exclusively in northern Michigan, Dingledine said.

The agency approached the state, asking for access to the base of the towers so that researchers could measure the number of dead birds as they migrated between Michigan and

the southern U.S., Central America and South America in the fall and spring.

The state also provided more than \$100,000 in funding for the research.

Led by Joelle Gehring, who was working on a post-doctorate at Central Michigan University at the time, researchers did their pilot work at six towers in fall 2003. In fall and spring of 2004 and 2005, for three weeks at a time, they counted dead birds at 24 towers from southwest Michigan to the Upper Peninsula.

And they found that towers that had flashing and non-flashing lights were significantly more dangerous than those with only flashing lights.

Gehring and two colleagues published their study in a scientific journal in 2009, then the Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates tower lighting, did its own research to ensure aircraft would still be safe if the non-flashing lights were turned off or

replaced.

» In December 2015, the FAA changed its standards for tower lighting to eliminate the steady lights on new towers. Now, Dingledine says his office is working with existing tower owners across Michigan to persuade them to update their lighting.

He said the changes can actually save tower owners money, with reduced power and maintenance costs.

» While the Federal Communications Commission licenses communications towers, it requires owners and operators to comply with standards set by the FAA.

Dingledine said there is some evidence the birds may be attracted to lights on the tower, especially in foggy weather, and then they collide with the tower or the wires that support the structure.

"The light can confuse them when they migrate," he said.

» But scientists aren't exactly sure why the steady lights are more dangerous than blinking lights.

Protecting these migrating songbirds is important because "birds are a harbinger of the health of your ecosystem. They are some of the most diverse species on earth, occur in every region of the planet and a good, healthy bird population means you have a good, healthy natural environment," Dingle-dine said.

» Caleb Putnam, Michigan bird conservation coordinator for Audubon Great Lakes and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, said the Michi-

gan research is "one of the most important bird-mortality-reducing research done in recent memory."

He said bird experts have tried for years to address the issue, and Gehring was able to "make a difference over thousands of towers. It's such a common sense solution to a huge problem."

» Putnam was one of the technicians who got up at dawn for three weeks straight to count dead birds at the base of a 1,100-foot-tall communications tower in southwest Michigan. The workers had to get to the site before day break, so they could find the birds before the raccoons and other scavengers got them.

"We found birds alive, with their beaks broken off," Putnam said. On some days, he'd find 10-20 dead or injured warblers. But if the birds hadn't migrated the night before, he wouldn't find any. And it wasn't easy spotting them in the tall grass that surrounded much of the tower.

» Saving those birds from tower collisions is part of the effort to "prevent future extinctions," Putnam said. "The challenge is that most of our songbird populations are in decline. Many of these species are lacking habitat in breeding areas, and as they get into the tropics, there is deforestation, coffee plantations, climate issues, all these other pressures on them."

"To not allow these species to migrate successfully twice a year, especially with this level of mortality, it starts to become a population-changing pressure."

# DuMouchelles

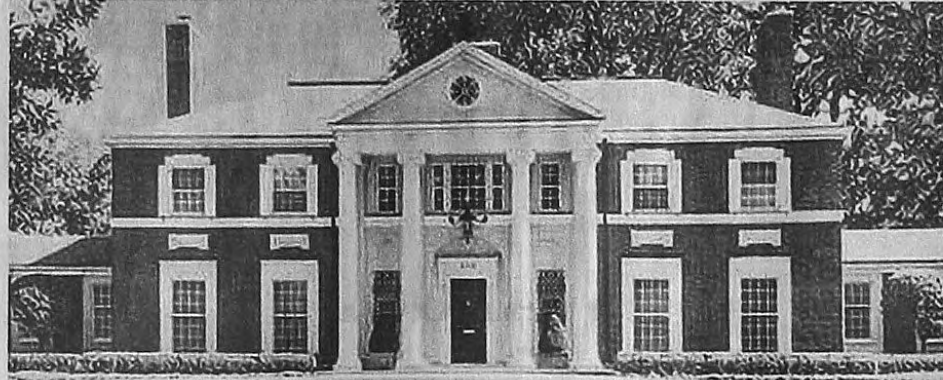
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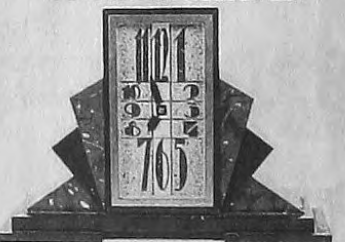
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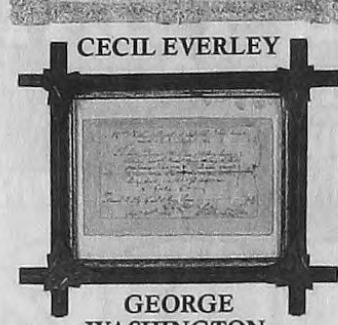
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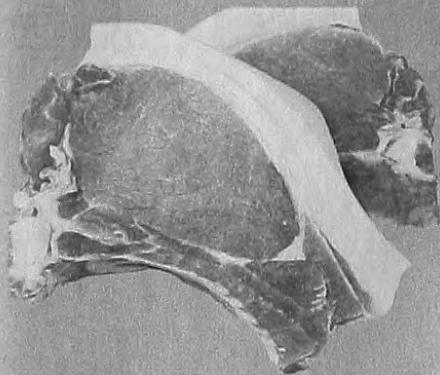
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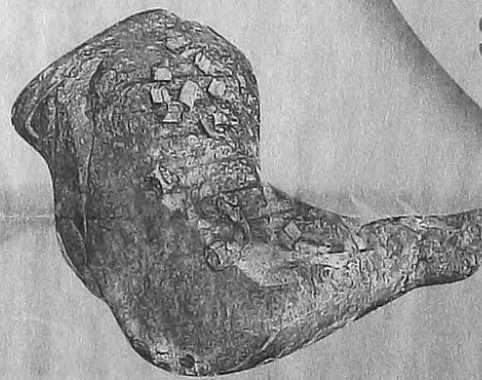
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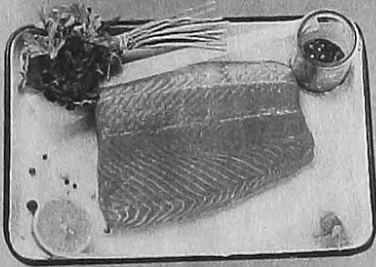
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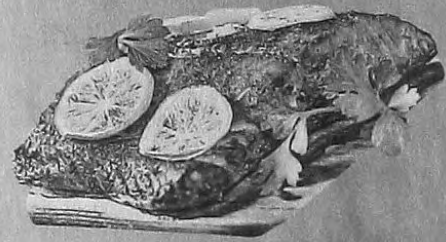
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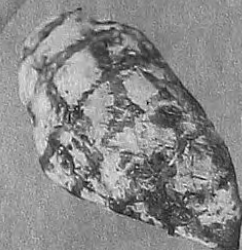


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USA HOCKEY

## NTDP U18s bounce back for 6-3 victory

Four-goal surge in final period lifts U.S. to matinee triumph over Trinity College

Tim Smith  
hometownlife.com

The first shot of Friday's matinee hockey game eluded goaltender Dylan St. Cyr to put the U.S. National Team Development Program Under-18 team into a quick hole.

Although the U.S. team quickly responded to go up 2-1, Trinity College did not quit —

scoring twice within 42 seconds late in the second period to go up 3-2 entering the third.

But grinding to overcome adversity is something the 5-foot-8 St. Cyr and teammates have been able to do quite well in recent weeks.

Such was the case in the holiday week match-up against the Bantams, with the U.S. twice rallying from deficits to post a 6-3 win.

"It's about being able to bounce back from goals," St. Cyr, of Northville, said about the way the team persevered Friday. "It's being able to pick each other up when others aren't playing so well — as myself on the first goal. I think

I could have had that one back.

"But my team was there to bail me out and get six goals tonight, which was huge."

The U.S. scored four times in the third period to erase the 3-2 deficit and post a fifth consecutive win. Tying the game just seven seconds into a power play was forward Michael Pastujov (Michigan), who tipped in a blue line blast by defenseman Quinn Hughes at 1:01.

"The power play's got to be a catalyst for our team, especially in a game that can go either way," U.S. head coach John Wroblewski said. "It's a confidence-builder."

See USA, Page B2



U.S. goalie Dylan St. Cyr of Northville gets some defensive support from Grant Mismash, blocking a shot taken by Trinity's Liam Feeney during Friday's matinee.

RENA LAVERTY

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



TIM BUSCH

Canton native Rosanna Reynolds recently moved into seventh place on the University of Detroit Mercy's all-time scoring list.

## BORN TO PLAY BASKETBALL



U-D MERCY

Senior guard Rosanna Reynolds of Canton looks for an open University of Detroit Mercy teammate.

Canton native Reynolds is among Titans' all-time leaders in scoring and assists

Mike Rosenbaum  
Correspondent

If anyone was ever born and raised to be a basketball player, it's Canton native Rosanna Reynolds. Her mother, two aunts and three uncles all played college basketball at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, so she's been around the game her entire life.

"From when I was 6 years

old, I was attending basketball games," Reynolds said. "I've enjoyed watching basketball all of my life."

She's also enjoyed, and excelled, at playing the game herself. She played in a variety of school and AAU programs and was a two-time all-state selection at Dearborn Divine Child, helping the Falcons claim the 2011 Class B

See REYNOLDS, Page B3

BOYS BASKETBALL

## Plymouth splits pair at tourney

Wildcats go 1-1 at Stoney Creek holiday invite

Tim Smith  
hometownlife.com

Plymouth's varsity boys basketball team split a pair of games during last week's Stoney Creek Christmas Tournament.

The Wildcats were bounced Dec. 27 by Birmingham Brother Rice, 50-32, but came back Dec. 29 to post a 50-48 win over Stoney Creek.

In the win, a 19-point second quarter lifted Plymouth out of an early 10-point deficit and put the Wildcats up 32-28 at halftime.

Scoring 14 points each were Tariq Woody and Zach Beadle, with point guard Anthony Crump chipping in 10 points.

Against the Warriors, Woody led Plymouth with 10 points, while Beadle connected on two treys for six points.

Next for the Wildcats is Friday's KLAA South Division match-up at Wayne Memorial.

**STEVENSON 76, TROY ATHENS 72:** Senior guard Ian Knoph finished with 20 points and grabbed six rebounds to propel Livonia Stevenson (6-0) to a Motor City Roundball Classic victory Dec. 28 over Troy Athens (4-2) at Detroit Renaissance.

Jacob Brantley and Taylor McCaskill led the Redhawks with 19 and 17 points, respectively, while Clark Josin added 10.

**LUTHERAN NORTHWEST 75, CLARENCEVILLE 34:** Isaiah Jackson pumped in 17 points Dec. 28 to lead Rochester Hills Lutheran Northwest (4-1) to a consolation victory over Livonia Clarenceville (0-6) in the Metro Conference Reunion Tournament hosted by Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook.

The Crusaders led 38-24 at halftime and 49-26 after three quarters before outscoring the Trojans 25-8 in the fourth.

Torre Bowen paced Clar-

See BASKETBALL, Page B2

BOYS HOCKEY ROUNDUP

## Wildcats heat up, blank Chiefs

Plymouth overcomes slow start to earn 6-0 victory

Tim Smith  
hometownlife.com

Shaking off some holiday rust took a little bit of time for Gerry Vento's Plymouth Wildcats in a Dec. 28 game against Canton.

Following a scoreless first period at Arctic Edge Arena in Canton, the Wildcats opened the scoring just 27 seconds into the middle period when Josh Weber buried a shot past Chiefs goalie Bailey Dugan.

Plymouth tacked on a short-

handed goal by Jack VanDen-Bourgeury at 6:04 of the period and went on to post a 6-0 victory.

"I thought we got off to a slow start. Not sure if that was from the holiday break, but give Canton credit," Vento said. "They took away a lot of our time and space in the first period. Combine that with us not moving our feet and setting a faster pace, we got we deserved."

Helping light the fuse was Weber, who finished a play started by Luke Kaledas and Adam Rebecca.

"Weber's goal early in the second seemed to give us

some jump and I think we slowly took over the game from that point," Vento said.

Another key moment for the Wildcats was VanDen-Bourgeury's shorthanded goal, from Nathan Stoneburg and Zach Gallaher.

"Bergy's shorthanded goal was huge as well," Vento said. "And that being his second shorthanded goal of the season says a lot about the way he is playing."

The Wildcats directed 35 shots at Dugan, including 13 in the second and 14 in the third. At the other end of the rink,

See HOCKEY, Page B2



MICHAEL VASILNEK

Canton's Daniel Bourgeois (front) tries to stay a step ahead of Plymouth's Tim Baldwin (right) during the Dec. 28 campus clash at Arctic Edge. At left for the Wildcats is Nathan Stoneburg.



RENA LAVERTY

Scoring the final goal Friday at USA Hockey Arena is U.S. forward Randy Hernandez (right), slipping the puck into the Trinity goal. Unable to stop Hernandez are Bantams goalie Alex Morin and defenseman Bryce Eviston.

## USA

Continued from Page B1

After St. Cyr made a couple of timely stops on an ensuing Trinity power play, the U.S. took the lead for good at 7:30 on a one-timer from the left circle by Grant Mismash, wiring a centering pass from linemate Brady Tkachuk.

Scoring later in the period were forwards Sean Dhooghe and Randy Hernandez. Making Dhooghe's insurance goal happen was assistant captain Scott Reedy, who won a puck battle near the Trinity blue line and threaded a nice pass.

Dhooghe's shot from below the left circle sailed over Trinity goalie Alex Morin's trapper.

"(Reedy) does a lot of good things for us," said forward Josh Norris, who scored his team's first-period goal and finished with four points. "He does a lot of little things not everyone recognizes. He's huge for our team."

### Group effort

Norris concurred with St. Cyr about the never-say-die makeup of the team, evident throughout the winning streak.

"Over the past five games we've won, we've come together better, we've trusted each other," said Norris, a Michigan commit from Oxford. "When you're able to work as a group of five, it makes it a lot easier on everyone on the ice. It's more fun to play like that, too."

For Wroblewski and his squad, the first home game in three weeks provided an opportunity to show home fans the kind of product on display during the recent hot streak — including 5-2 and 7-5 United States Hockey League wins Dec. 16-17 at Madison.

And St. Cyr (21 saves), in goal for three of those four victories, showed the moxie that has helped him lower his goals-against average to less than 3.00 entering the Trinity game.

With about four minutes remaining in the first, he held firm to turn aside a backhand taken from the right circle by Ryan Cole and stopped the



RENA LAVERTY

U.S. NTDP Under-18 players celebrate a goal Friday against Trinity.

final nine shots he saw in the opening period.

In the second period, St. Cyr did not see much rubber as his teammates turned up the offensive heat, peppering Morin and finally breaking the deadlock with 9:28 remaining. Norris sent a crisp cross-ice pass to linemate Graham Slagert, who slid the puck past Morin (31 saves).

The U.S. enjoyed a 17-7 edge in shots in the period.

But the Bantams tied and went ahead 3-2 on back-to-back goals a half-minute apart. The equalizer, with 3:18 to go, was an unassisted goal by Charlie Zuccarini. He cut in from the left half-wall, deked St. Cyr and flipped the puck high into the net.

### Firing back

At 17:14, Trinity — a team in the New England Small College Athletic Conference — took advantage of an odd-man rush and a carom off the back boards, with Ethan Holdaway cashing in.

That seemingly lit a fire under the U.S., which came out shooting and scoring early in the final period, with the Bantams unable to respond.

"It's definitely a good characteristic to have," Wroblewski said about his team's ability to turn the page. "The resiliency and wherewithal to know you can persevere through a tough game. It's hockey, it's tough to predict what's going to happen."

Getting the Bantams off to

a promising start in their first-ever game against the NTDP was Connor Hegarty, who ripped a shot from the right point past St. Cyr less than a minute into the contest.

The U.S. needed only two minutes to respond, as Norris set up shop in front of Morin and found the mark with 17:05 to go in the first. Drawing assists were defenseman Tommy Miller (West Bloomfield/MSU) and Pastujov.

The U18 squad is now 13-5-0 since Nov. 1 and is back in action Friday at the University of Maine and Saturday at the University of New England.

The team returns to USA Hockey Arena for games at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Jan. 13-14, against USHL opponent Green Bay.

**STOEVER SUITS UP:** Another goalie from Northville, Christian Stoever, was St. Cyr's backup against Trinity, with Adam Scheel temporarily with the U.S. NTDP Under-17 team.

**BACK HOME:** Meanwhile the U17s play home games for the first time in a month, facing Chicago (7 p.m. Friday) and Youngstown (7 p.m. Saturday).

The U17 team, coached by Danton Cole, plays an additional four home games before the end of January, beginning with a 2 p.m. tilt on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Monday, Jan. 16) against Muskegon.

tsmith@hometownlife.com  
Twitter: @TimSmith\_Sports

## COLLEGE WRESTLING

# Atienza thrilled about Michigan State future

Franklin state champion to wrestle for Spartans

Tim Smith  
hometownlife.com

Nathan Atienza enjoyed a season of perfection on the wrestling mat in 2015-16 for Livonia Franklin and already is off to a head-turning start this year.

Atienza — coming off a 58-0 record and Division 1 individual state championship at 145 pounds — reeled off 10 straight wins to open 2016-17.

The early surge featured two wins in the 160-pound division at the Livonia City Wrestling Meet, good for tourney MVP honors. The run finally ended Dec. 17 in the 152 final at the Wayne County Championships.

Even better for the Patriots' senior stalwart was inking a national letter of intent to wrestle at Division I Michigan State University beginning in 2017-18. On hand for the signing early last month were parents Armand and

Susan Atienza. "I'm real excited," Atienza said about his future with the Spartans. "It's D-I, the Big Ten. It's a lot, but I'm really excited about it."

Atienza also considered signing at Central Michigan University, "because that's where my older brother (Jordan) goes, but in the end I had to do what was best for me and I felt Michigan State was the best fit."

Obviously thrilled about becoming a Spartan, he remains pumped up to have another year for the record books at Franklin. He gives big assists for his continuing development to Patriots coaches, including head coach David Chiola.

"I've had a lot of really good coaches that have helped me mature and better myself as a person and a wrestler," Atienza said. "And I have a great support group with all the community of the team, the kids on the team."

tsmith@hometownlife.com  
Twitter: @TimSmith\_Sports



Livonia Franklin senior Nathan Atienza (center) celebrates signing to wrestle at Michigan State University with parents Susan and Armand.

## BASKETBALL

Continued from Page B1

enceville with 10 points.

The Trojans were 5-of-8 from the foul line, while Northwest was 11-of-22.

**CRANBROOK 45, CLARENCEVILLE 26:** Tim Hauxwell scored a game-high 15 points Dec. 27 to lead host Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook (4-2) to an opening-round victory over Livonia Clarenceville (0-5) in the Metro Conference Reunion Tournament.

The Cranes, who led 28-11 at halftime and 36-20 after three quarters, connected on

21-of-37 free throws (56.7 percent).

Rickey Scott scored a team-high 12 points for the Trojans, who went 4-of-7 from the foul line (57.1 percent).

**STEVENSON 78, PONTIAC 51:** Ian Knoph led the way with 19 points Dec. 26 as Livonia Stevenson (5-0) stopped the Phoenix (3-2) in the Motor City Roundball Classic at Detroit Renaissance.

Cleontal Brown scored 14 points and Deshawn Jackson added nine points for Pontiac.

Staff writer Brad Emons contributed to this report.

## HOCKEY

Continued from Page B1

Plymouth goaltender Brendan Olepa held the fort when needed. He turned aside 19 Canton shots, including nine in the middle period.

"Olepa didn't have a ton of work but, as usual, he came up with timely saves," Vento said.

Tacking on a goal at the 37-second mark of the third period was Joe Fontana (from Keaton Courtney and Jack Chumley) and Plymouth's edge grew to 4-0 at 9:20 when Jacob Back scored. Earning assists on Back's goal were VanDenBeurgery and Courtney.

Plymouth closed out the scoring on goals two minutes apart by Chumley (from Tim Baldwin and Stoneburg) and Scott Deal (from Fontana and Tommy Casari).

Vento's team (7-0-0 overall, 6-0-0 in the KLAAs South Division according to the KLAAs website) was scheduled to return to action Wednesday at Arctic Edge, against Livonia Stevenson.

"Now we will get into the meat of our schedule and quickly find out what kind of hockey team we have," Vento said.

Canton dropped to 2-6-0 overall and 1-4-0 in the conference. The Chiefs will host Livonia Franklin on Saturday, also at Arctic Edge.



MICHAEL VASILNEK

Canton's Emerson Taylor (left) and Plymouth's Luke Kaledas fight for a loose puck Dec. 28 at Arctic Edge.

### Salem 2-1 in T.C.

Salem's annual trip to the Traverse City Central Holiday Tournament was successful, with the Rocks posting a 2-1 record.

» On Dec. 28, the Rocks defeated the Bay Area Reps, 5-1. Scoring two goals for Salem was Matthew Schaumburger, who added two assists.

Chipping in single goals were Alex Schaumburger, Tyler German (two assists) and Jake Saunders.

Goalie Austin Goleniak made 13 saves for the victory.

» The next day, also at Centre Ice Arena, Salem fell 4-2 to Saginaw Heritage despite goals from Martino Zaia and Shawn Weldon. Saunders, Marty Mills and Austin Marthaler picked up one assist each. Tristan Rehling made 20 saves, with the fourth Saginaw Heritage goal being scored into an empty net.

» But Salem capped off the three-game excursion on a high note Dec. 30, prevailing



MICHAEL VASILNEK

Plymouth's C.J. Mullenax (right) delivers a check against Canton's Michael Testani.

4-3 against Midland.

Saunders and Matt Schaumburger both registered a goal and an assist in the victory. The other Salem goals were scored by Mills and Joey Driscoll.

Helping the cause were Weldon (two assists) and Matthew Homrich, Tyler German and Matthew Davis (one assist each).

Making 19 saves and collecting the victory was goalie Matt Visel.

Next up for the Rocks (2-2-1 in the KLAAs, according to the conference website) is a Saturday match-up with Livonia Stevenson at Bowling Green State University. At 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, the Rocks will square off against Canton at Arctic Edge.

tsmith@hometownlife.com  
Twitter: @TimSmith\_Sports

# CC places second at Medina Invitational

Shamrocks finish only two points behind top school

**Brad Emons**  
hometownlife.com

Novi Detroit Catholic Central took runner-up honors as only four points separated the top three teams in last week's Medina (Ohio) Invitational wrestling tournament.

Wadsworth (Ohio) took the team title, edging the Shamrocks, 213-211, while Massillon (Ohio) Perry was a close third with 209. Ohio schools Oak Harbor and Genoa rounded out the top five in the 44-school field with 156 and 133, respectively. Catholic Central got individual titles from Kevin Davenport (132 pounds) and Nick Jenkins (285), as both wres-

tlers went 6-0 during the two-day tournament Dec. 27-28. Davenport ran his record to 18-0 with a 10-1 major decision over Wadsworth's Luke Baughman in the finals, while Jenkins improved to 18-1 with a 1-0 decision against Moe Debyan of Hilliard (Ohio) Darby. The Shamrocks' Ben Kamali reached the finals at 120 pounds before falling to Graham Shore of Casstown (Ohio)

Miami East, 10-4. Kamali is 14-2 overall. Among CC's third-place finishers were Cameron Amine (145) and Jackson Ross (220). Amine, 17-3 on the year, lost his semifinal match to Massillon Perry's Gary Define, 4-3, in overtime, before bouncing back to win by major decision over Dylan Mansour of Oak Harbor, 9-0. Ross, 10-3 overall, fell in the

consolation final to Richmond's Tyler Marino, 4-3. Other top finishers for CC included Aiden Wagh, fourth (152); Rhett Newton, seventh (113); and Dane Flynn (195), eighth. The Shamrocks will host the CC Invitational beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 7.

bemons@hometownlife.com  
bemons1@twitter.com



Canton's Rosanna Reynolds runs the floor against Michigan.

DAVID FRECHETTE

## REYNOLDS

Continued from Page B1

state championship. But when it was time to choose a college, she veered off of the family path. Instead, the 5-foot-10 guard left Dearborn and selected the University of Detroit Mercy. Reynolds was a starter from day one for the Titans and hasn't left the starting lineup since. She made the Horizon League's all-newcomer team in 2012-13 while averaging 7.8 points, 4.0 assists and 3.3 rebounds per game. A knee injury ended her next season after three games, but she bounced back in 2014-15, earning second team all-Horizon honors. She led the Titans with 15.7 points and 3.4 assists per contest, adding 5.2 rebounds per game. As a U-D co-captain last season, Reynolds was a first team all-Horizon selection. She averaged 15.6 points and 5.9 rebounds per game and led the Titans with 5.0 assists per contest. She also set the school's single-game assists record, dishing out 15 against Wright State. The 2015-16 season was unusual for the Titans, as

attrition whittled the roster to just eight regular players. With a limited lineup, new coach Bernard Scott was thrilled to inherit a strong floor leader in Reynolds. "It was very important," Scott said. "Rosanna's such a great person, but also a great teammate and someone that really understands the game, someone who can lead a team. To come in as a first-time head coach, it was great to have a player like her." Despite their challenges, the Titans were 15-15 overall and a surprising 11-7 in Horizon League play last season. This year, through a New Year's Eve victory over Illinois-Chicago, U-D is 6-7 overall and 2-0 in league action. Although the Titans endured a few early setbacks, Reynolds started strongly. She leads the team with 15.9 points, 5.4 assists and 2.0 steals per contest, adding 5.2 rebounds per game.

### Among all-time leaders

Reynolds' strong start has propelled her further up the lists of Detroit's all-time scorers and playmakers. The fifth-year senior has 1,432 points through Saturday's contest, good for sixth in school history. She's just eight points behind fifth-place Lisa

Blackburn. Reynolds is third all-time with 470 assists, behind only Mary Lillie (486) and Jalesa Jones (515). At her current pace, Reynolds will become U-D's all-time assists leader this season. "She's going to finish being one of the top players to ever play here," Scott said. "She just attacks the game in so many ways, not to mention what she's done off the floor as far as being a great student as well." As her statistics indicate, Reynolds plays a versatile game, so if she has an off-night in one area, she can still contribute in other ways. "I'd rather have an all-around game," she said, "maybe five points and five assists and five rebounds, rather than just being called a 3-point specialist or a driver or anything like that." You can also add leadership to her list of skills, as you'd expect from a two-year captain. Reynolds noted she tries to be "a role model" for her teammates, both on and off the court, and shares "tips and tricks that I've learned over the past few years." Scott added that Reynolds' teammates respect her, "because of what she's done in the league already. They see the type of career she's had

and the work she's put in to have that type of career. So they tend to want to follow her because they've seen her success and how hard work pays off." Reynolds says it's "starting to hit now" that she's in her last season of college basketball. Typically for her, she wants to channel that feeling into her game, hoping that it "gives me a whole new mentality" to help motivate her for the remainder of the season. Afterward, she's hoping to realize a long-term goal to play professional basketball, whether in the U.S. or overseas. "It's kind of been a dream of mine," she said. "So if the opportunity happens and comes along in the next few months, after my college schedule (ends), then I would be really happy to explore those options." For now, though, she's focused on trying to lead the Titans to the top of the Horizon League. She doesn't believe she'll be remembered for the outstanding stats she's accumulated for U-D, but for her team's success. "They're going to remember the team that either won a championship or had a really good record," she said. "This is go-time."

## BOYS BASKETBALL

# Shamrocks earn 71-70 Roundball Classic victory

**Brad Emons**  
hometownlife.com

Senior guard Gio Genrich made a pair of free throws with only four seconds left as Novi Detroit Catholic Central held off a late Southfield A&T rally for a 71-70 boys basketball win Friday at the Motor City Roundball Classic at Detroit Renaissance. Senior forward C.J. Baird had 20 points, five rebounds and three assists to lead the Shamrocks (4-1), who led 39-23 at halftime and 51-41 after three quarters. Brandon Recto and Davis Lukomski chipped in 16 and 10 points, respectively, for CC, which made 26-of-54 from the field (48.1 percent) and 46.2 percent from the foul line. Western Michigan signee Michael Flowers led Southfield A&T (1-4) and all scorers with 29 points, including 11-of-15 from the field. His basket with 10 seconds left cut the deficit to 69-67 before Genrich answered with a pair of free throws. Flowers, who went 4-of-5 from 3-point range, hit a triple at the buzzer to make it a one-point differential. The Warriors outscored CC in the final quarter, 29-20. Reme Tolbert and Cameron McEvans added 17 and nine points, respectively, for the Warriors, who went 27-of-54 from the field (50 percent) and 10-of-13 from the foul line (76.9 percent).

**NORTHVILLE 66, LINCOLN PARK 23:** Time after time it was steal and layup, steal and layup. And it all added up to a resounding win Dec. 27 for the host Mustangs (3-3) against the Railsplitters (1-4) during the opening round of their own holiday tournament. Senior guard Jake Justice, who led all scorers, scored all 17 of his game-high points in the opening half as the Mustangs jumped out to a commanding 52-8 lead and broke a three-game losing skid. Also getting into the act for the Mustangs during the lopsided first half was 6-foot-5 Swedish exchange student Gustaf Tjernberg (11 points), senior guard Kevin Morrissey (nine) and senior guard Colin Latta (eight). Northville, which shot 22-of-38 from the field during the first half (57.8 percent), took advantage of 14 Lincoln Park turnovers, converting several steals into layups. With a 44-point lead at intermission, the second half went by quickly thanks to a running clock. Lincoln Park, which shot only 9-of-38 from the floor (23.6 percent), got 11 points from senior forward Nijuan Jefferson. **TOLEDO ST. JOHN'S 67, NOVI 39:** Four players scored in double figures Dec. 28 as Toledo St. John's (6-2) used a big third quarter to take down the Wildcats (3-4) in the Motor City Roundball Classic at Detroit Renaissance. Vincent William Jr. and Joey Fretti both scored 14 points for the Titans, who exploded in the third quarter with six 3-pointers. Houston King and Harrison Riggs added 12 and 10, respectively. Sophomore guard Giovanni Miles scored 11 points and had seven rebounds, four steals and a block, while junior guard Traveon Maddox Jr. added 10 points, six rebounds, three assists and three blocks for Novi.

bemons@hometownlife.com  
bemons1@twitter.com

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

# Northville upends defending Class A state champs

**Brad Emons**  
hometownlife.com

The Northville girls basketball team may not have been on Santa's radar screen during Christmas, but it is now. The Mustangs pulled off a stocking stuffer Dec. 28 by stunning defending Class A champion Warren Cousino, 62-51, in the finals of the Northville Holiday Tournament. Northville (6-1) put a drag-net around Georgia Tech signee and Miss Basketball favorite Kierra Fletcher, limiting the senior guard to 10 points on 4-of-13 shooting while avenging last year's 41-29 state quarterfi-

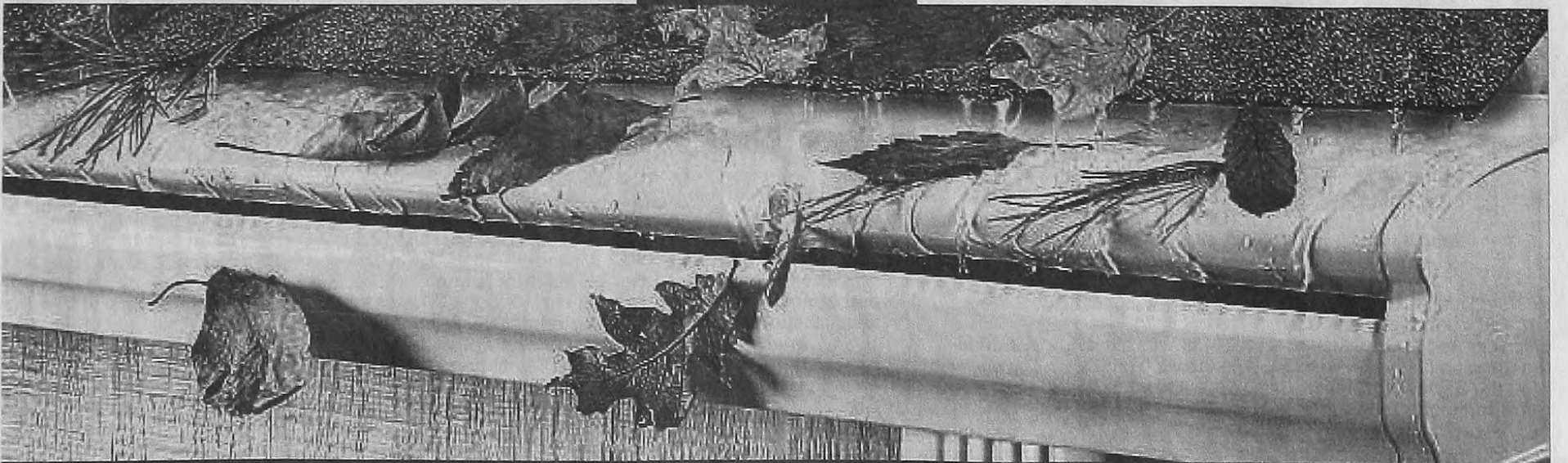
nal loss to the Patriots (5-2). The Mustangs overcame an early 8-1 deficit and led wire-to-wire in the final three quarters, thanks to sterling efforts from a host of players, led by 6-foot senior forward-guard Jessica Moorman, who scored a game-high 19 points. "Our defense was really strong tonight," said Moorman, who was all over the floor. "After the loss last year, we wanted to get back this year and I think our defense tied everything together." Although Cousino got 18 points from sophomore guard Kate McArthur and 13 from sophomore guard Mackenzie

Cook, the Mustangs made sure Fletcher was contained. "We were just trying to keep a kid in front of her, get her to give the ball up and make sure she didn't get the ball back," Northville coach Todd Gudith said. "When she did, we wanted to have two or three kids running at her to keep her from getting to the rim. She's not an outside shooter, she's a slasher and attacker at the rim. We wanted to keep her as far away from the rim as possible." After taking a 14-12 lead after one quarter on a basket by Brianna Drummond, Northville increased its edge to 32-23 at halftime thanks to a long

3-pointer at the buzzer by junior point guard Kendall Dillon, who finished with 13 points. Cousino cut the deficit to 45-40 after three quarters, but the Mustangs didn't flinch even when Dillon was carried off the floor after her ankle buckled on a drive to the basket. Drummond, who added seven points off the bench, came on to make two free throws and the Patriots never got closer than five points the rest of the way. "Kendall was having a really good game, so it was a bit scary for a couple of seconds,"

said Moorman, who went 8-of-11 from the field. "But then we composed ourselves and decided to finish out that quarter for Kendall. It ended up pretty well." Northville also got contributions offensively from senior center Brook Adams (12 points) and junior guard Roan Haines (nine). Haines moved into the backcourt with Moorman after Dillon went down. Northville was 11-of-24 (45.8 percent) from the free-throw line and 24-of-48 from (50 percent) from the field.

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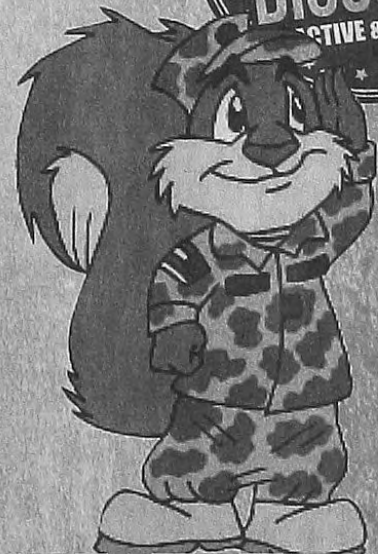
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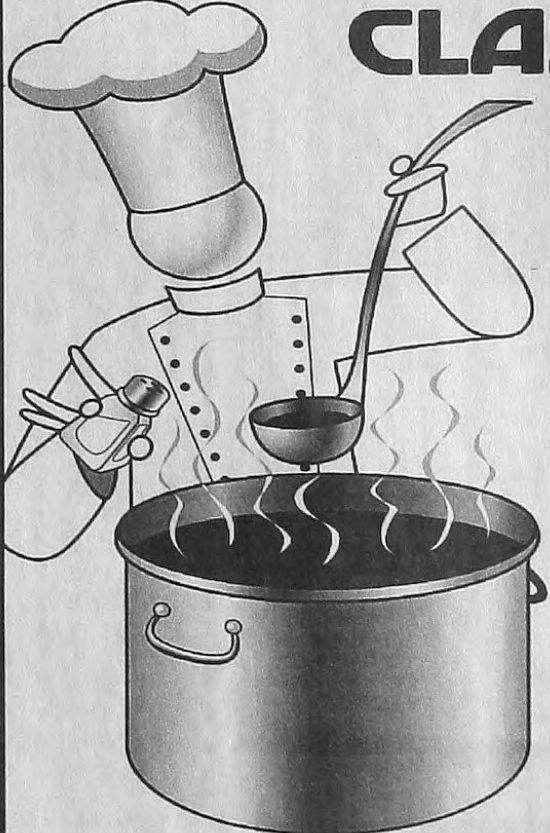
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