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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2020 ■ HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Two Livonians among dead in Michigan

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

As coronavirus cases in Michigan passed 1,800 Tuesday, Livonia learned of its first two deaths from COVID-19. Livonia is also where Wayne County's first recorded COVID-19 case originated.

The age and sex of the two were not released by the state.

As of Tuesday afternoon, there were 24 COVID-19 deaths across Michigan, 13 of which are in Wayne County, city and state officials stated.

There were 17 confirmed confirmed cases in Livonia and 638 in the county

as of late Monday.

Livonia Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan said she mourns with the families and friends of the two Livonians.

"We're obviously immensely sorry for these families and for their loss," she said. "It's an especially hard time to lose somebody to a disease, a virus, that we

all wish we could have seen earlier and prevented.

"I think what gets even more sad now is people can't go through some of the rituals that they normally would have gone through in celebrating a life."

See **LIVONIANS**, Page 4A



Adam Carver, an employee at Larry's Foodland in Livonia, restocks eggs March 19. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

‘On the front lines’ at a Livonia grocery store

Employees working tirelessly amid coronavirus pandemic

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

With everything closing down to help slow the spread of coronavirus, two major operations are seeing the brunt of the activity: health care providers and grocery stores.

For the employees at Larry's Foodland in Livonia, it's been a trying time, but owner Jeff Torolski said everyone who works there is stepping up.

"They're right there with the doctors and nurses day in and day out helping our customers," he said. "Any grocery store out there is on the front lines. I'll tell anybody that."

Larry's Foodland, 33151 Plymouth Road, has been experiencing the same thing as most grocery stores for the last two weeks: customers buying out products like toilet paper, bread, canned goods and more as they prepare for a possible quarantine.

Located in the Shelden Park Village shopping center east of Farmington Road, the 24-hour, 10-aisle grocery store has worked around the clock to provide for customers in need.

That includes senior citizens, a demographic Larry's Foodland and some other local stores are helping by offering special senior shopping hours to help them avoid contamination.

See **GROCERY**, Page 4A

Mom wins PPO battle in student fight case

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A West Bloomfield mother who went to court to protect her son from a former North Farmington High School classmate won a small battle this month.

Oakland County Circuit Judge Lisa Langton found the 17-year-old North Farmington defendant guilty of civil contempt for violating a personal protection order (PPO) because of a fight that took place after the North Farmington-West Bloomfield basketball game Jan. 10.

Langton ordered a sentencing for later this year and said a personal protection order, already about a year old, would remain in place in an effort to keep the son, Kenede Marion, safe.

The decision came several weeks after Farmington Public Schools

See **FIGHT**, Page 2A

Crow's Nest owner touched by loyalty of customers

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The line of up to 30 vehicles that snaked around the Crow's Nest Bar & Grill - cars spilling onto northbound Canton Center Road - was a testament not only to the quality of food served at the family-owned establishment, but a measure of the unbreakable loyalty customers have for owner Dominic Tassielli and his much-admired staff.

Forced to close the dining room of the restaurant March 16 after Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued an order to all restaurants to do so to help mitigate the spread of coronavirus, Tassielli admitted he wasn't sure what the future holds for his longtime Canton eatery.

See **LOYALTY**, Page 4A



Rats, debris from Pulte project irk Plymouth neighbors

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The combination of a nearby Pulte Group construction project and a persistent wind is making life less than idyllic for residents in a tight-knit Plymouth neighborhood.

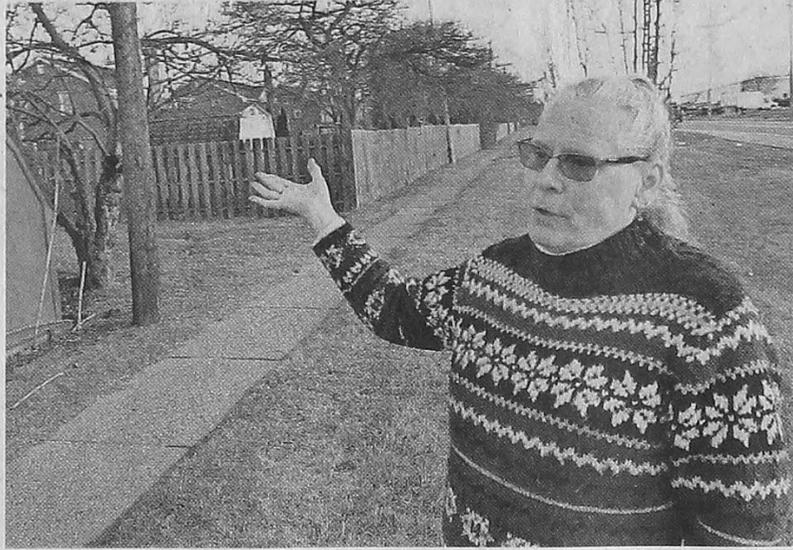
Several rats apparently displaced by Pulte's Townes at Mill Street condominium development project have scampered east across Lilley Road and into the back yards of homes on Parkview Road.

During one weeklong stretch, neighbors trapped 13 decent-sized rodents who were looking for new stomping grounds.

To make matters worse, said Parkview resident Holly Smith, large pieces of insulation and other construction-related debris are being blown into the neighborhood by gusty winds.

"A lot of the debris are these 5-by-8-foot pieces of styrofoam insulation," Smith said. "One day ... myself and some of the other neighbors collected about 10 sheets of the styrofoam and we carried them over to the dumpster by one of the condos they're building. It's been an everyday thing."

"When I asked one of the workers who was in charge, he pointed to a guy



Holly Smith explains how her tight-knit Plymouth neighborhood has been disrupted by rats and large pieces of debris from a nearby construction project.
ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

in a maroon pickup.

"The guy in the pickup watched us as we picked all the debris up and when we carried it across the street to throw it in the dumpster, he drove away."

Smith said she and her neighbors aren't asking for much.

"We know there's not a lot they can do about the rats, but as far as the debris, why can't they put up a snow fence

along the construction site that would stop most of the trash from flying into our neighborhood?" she said. "Is that asking for too much?"

"We have a small neighborhood and most of us have been here for close to 20 years. We take a lot of pride in how it looks and having to walk around every day and pick up trash from the construction site is upsetting."

Hometown Life reached out to representatives of Pulte Group for a comment, but they did not reply.

Smith brought the issue before the Plymouth City Commission during a citizens comments portion of the March 2 meeting.

Plymouth Mayor Oliver Wolcott told Smith that representatives from the city would contact Pulte and make them aware of the residents' concerns.

Two days later, the debris was still blowing in the wind, right down Park Street and into front and back yards, Smith said.

"It's just common sense. They should either put up a temporary fence and when these large pieces of insulation blow over here, they should gather them up, not us," Smith said.

Contact reporter Ed Wright at edwright@hometownlife.com or 517-375-1113.

Livonia police arrest Illinois man on more than 10 felonies

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

An Illinois man, 39, faces more than 10 felony charges of identity theft and illegal use of financial transaction devices after Livonia police took note of his red jacket.

Police officers first heard from a resident March 5 that his vehicle had been broken into overnight and his credit cards stolen, they said in a report.

Officers determined that the cards had been used at eight different store locations, and that two of the transactions happened in Livonia.

They further determined that the victim's credit card was used to buy multiple gift cards at a Walgreens store near

Joy and Newburgh roads.

Video footage showed the suspect, later identified as the Illinois resident, wearing his distinctive red jacket with white sleeves and a patch on the shoulder.

Police were dispatched to a Walgreens about a week later because a male customer matching the suspect's description and wearing the distinct jacket had tried to purchase more gift cards with another credit card believed to have been stolen.

The credit card's owner was contacted and he apparently was unaware that his credit card was missing and had been stolen from his vehicle.

"Somebody wearing the exact same outfit that you're wearing did the same

thing yesterday with a fraudulent credit card that was stolen in an LFA (larceny from an automobile)," an officer said during an arrest video. "That's why we're here."

Police were able to make an arrest. The Illinois suspect's bond has been set at \$250,000, police said.

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susan-vela.

Livonia police recently arrested an Illinois man on more than 10 felonies. They were able to track him because he always wore this distinctive jacket.
COURTESY OF LIVONIA POLICE DEPARTMENT





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Fight

Continued from Page 1A

Superintendent Robert Herrera said Kenede, a West Bloomfield senior, threw the first punch in the fight.

Afterward, Kenede was hospitalized for nearly a week because of a lacerated liver and spleen and fractured vertebrae.

The North student had a bruise on the right side of his face and responded negatively to his mother's questions that night about whether he needed medical attention.

Langton also extended the PPO and the stipulations intended to bar contact between the teens.

According to the PPO, the North Farmington defendant must avoid the Marion family's property and not attempt any third-party contact by mail, telephone or the internet.

"I support Kenede as what he reported was accurate and true," his mother, Kenya Marion, said in a cell phone text message. "Kenede is doing as well (as) can be expected. He is such a strong and

resilient young man."

Kenya Marion is a Farmington Public Schools social worker and did not return to work until recently. She has filed a civil personal injury suit against her son's adversary in Oakland Circuit Court.

Her son went to North Farmington for 10th grade and most of 11th grade. He switched schools in March 2019, around the same time his mother filed the PPO.

The Marion family was upset when Herrera sent a letter to families about the fight, in which he said the North Farmington student was not at fault.

In the letter, Herrera stated the two boys were known adversaries. Kenede and other West Bloomfield students apparently exited the school building and lingered outside the doors. Kenede approached the PPO defendant when he also left the building, and things eventually turned physical.

"At this point, the North Farmington student was grabbed by a friend and turned to walk away from the West Bloomfield student," Herrera wrote. "The West Bloomfield student then ran in front of the North Farmington student and threw two punches striking the North Farmington student."

Kenya Marion's version of the evening's events included a hostile game where her son was verbally taunted and parents and students being confused by Kenede not getting any game time.

Kenede has said he was warned that he would get jumped by the other student at the game. He said he was attacked while walking toward a vehicle to go home.

Mercy Kern said she became aware her son wasn't getting along with Kenede in December 2018. She said she wanted to address the issue with school officials and the Marions, but that the other family rejected the idea.

She and her son were not aware he would be violating the PPO when he attended the Jan. 10 basketball game.

"We will live with that," she said over the phone. "We learned the hard way. (But) Kenede was the instigator. ... He threw the first punch and (my son) defended himself."

Farmington schools also punished her son because of the fight. He was suspended for 10 days and denied access to after-school activities. The sprinter also was supposed to sit out at least half of his track season.

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Money Matters
Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Stock market decline will continue in short term

It was only a month or so ago that the stock market was reaching record highs and optimism about the future of the economy was everywhere. Now, we have seen a significant decline in world stock markets and optimism has been replaced by fear.

There is no doubt that these are trying and difficult times for investors, and unfortunately, the volatility and uncertainty will continue for the near future.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've spoken to numerous clients about the situation. Generally, clients are concerned and confused. There also are a number of clients looking at this downturn as an opportunity. I thought I'd share with you how I addressed my clients' issues.

For clients who are concerned and confused, I first explained that I have no idea when this crisis will end, nor do I know what stage of the crisis we presently are in. I will leave those issues to the experts.

However, one thing I do know is that we will get out of this crisis like we have every other crisis our economy has faced. Investors tend to have short-term memories and they forget that we've had market meltdowns in the past.

We also shouldn't forget that it was only about a dozen years ago when we were hit by the Great Recession. Even though the crisis we face is unique, we can learn from past meltdowns. Markets will eventually regain their strength; however, it doesn't happen all at once. It takes time and patience.

Because of this I've told my clients that sometimes the best course of action during volatile and uncertain times is to do nothing. For people who have balanced, and diversified portfolios based upon their goals and objectives (as all my clients have), they have time to let the markets rebound.

The question is, do they have the patience? It has been proven time after time that investors who take a long-term approach will be successful.

For as long as I've been in the investment world, I have believed that investors should not let fear or greed dictate their investment decisions. It is important, especially in times like these, and as difficult as it may be, to take a long-term approach.

For clients who are looking at taking advantage of the current situation, the first thing I tell them is it is impossible to predict when the market has hit bottom. Investors who are looking at taking advantage of the current market can either convert an existing IRA into a Roth IRA, make their 2020 IRA contribution now, or invest new money in the market.

These are trying times. However, it is imperative that you take a long-term approach and do not let emotions dictate your actions.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. If you would like Rick to respond to your questions, please email rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.



Swings will be empty in Livonia for a while as Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan and other city leaders decided to close playgrounds and other facilities to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Livonia closes playgrounds, dog parks, and golf courses

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Following the lead of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Oakland County, the City of Livonia closed its playground equipment, dog parks and golf courses Monday to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan announced on Livonia TV that she and other city leaders made the decision together.

"We're going to be closing our city park equipment," she said. "We encourage all of you to get out and exercise and walk and keep safe distances, but for right now we really think it's going to be best if we close out our park equipment."

Until further notice, park equipment will be blocked

off with caution tape. Oakland County made a similar decision March 21.

Whitmer ordered residents to stay at home with the exception of essential outings Monday morning. The decisions come as COVID-19 cases continue to grow in Michigan.

Brosnan said the closure of golf courses and dog parks will help limit large gatherings in the city. Until the pandemic comes to an end, the mayor encouraged Livonians to look out for one another.

"Take care of each other," she said. "Try to find creative ways to entertain yourself, and together we're going to get through this, Livonia."

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tank.

Detroit police warn of COVID-19 scams

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Scam artists are finding inspiration in COVID-19, which has some local law enforcement agencies warning their residents to take caution.

Livonia police said they've heard of people eager for COVID-19 statistics opening emails that infected their computers with viruses and malware.

In a Facebook video, Livonia Police Officer Cameron Koss said the criminal emails contained links to bogus websites fashioned after one managed by John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Although he knew of no local scam victims, he recommended residents remain cautious of anyone who claims to be a representative of the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Koss also recommended caution regarding websites and social media pages that ask for donations to halt the spread of coronavirus.

Koss reminded computer users to rely on websites with .edu and .gov in their web addresses to avoid malware.

Bloomfield Township police also took to Facebook to say Red Cross impersonators have appeared in several states.

The impersonators request donations and try to sell Red Cross services that include performing COVID-19 tests.

"The American Red Cross will NOT be going house to house offering COVID-19 testing, nor soliciting

funds door to door," the post warned. "We have zero reports in the township of this happening, but please be vigilant."

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has reported that an Oakland County resident contacted her office to report being approached over the phone by scammers wanting to provide a COVID-19 test kit. The Oakland County resident was asked to prepay for the kit.

Nessel also has warned of scammers spoofing — or posing with legitimate government phone numbers — and calling residents to offer medications.

The scammers are asking for Medicaid and Medicare numbers for billing purposes. Health departments are concerned about incoming calls then jamming up phone lines and delaying official COVID-19 business.

"Scammers will not hesitate to gain access to your private information, and false promises of medications will not be fulfilled," Nessel warned in a statement. "Never provide any personal information over the phone unless you have first independently confirmed who you are talking to."

Anyone who receives a suspicious phone call should hang up the phone. No personal information should be shared with unsolicited callers.

Those willing to report potential scams, price-gouging and other suspicious COVID-19 activity are asked to call 877-765-8388.

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

Westland man pleads no contest to manslaughter

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Westland man accused of killing Olivia Rossi has accepted the charge of manslaughter.

Anthony Dominic Kesteloot, 26, pleaded no contest on Friday in Third Circuit Court.

Courts have been pushing back proceedings because of the coronavirus pandemic. For now, Kesteloot is scheduled for a March 30 sentencing.

Manslaughter carries a possible sentence of up to 15 years in prison.

Other charges of homicide, obstructing justice, tampering with evidence, failing to report the discovery of a dead body, disinterring and mutilating a dead body, and removing a dead body without medical examination have been dismissed.

Kesteloot and Rossi, 23, knew each other from high school and had gone out with each other a few times before Rossi stopped texting her twin sister Aug. 18.

Her last reports were that she was at a Westland elementary school with Kesteloot and that he was behaving oddly.

Police told family Aug. 23 they found Rossi's body in the Rouge River in Hines Park in Westland.

Wayne County prosecutors didn't charge Kesteloot



Anthony Kesteloot, 25, of Westland pleaded no contest to a charge of manslaughter in the death of Olivia Rossi. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

with homicide until January, when they also dismissed their original case against him.

Kesteloot has waived his preliminary exams. A no contest plea will mean a conviction record.

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

Coronavirus forces downsizing of funeral services, interments

Ed Wright HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The spread of coronavirus is creating a troubling downsizing of funerals and interments, area funeral home and chapel directors revealed.

The three funeral homes under the direction of Jim Vermeulen – he oversees facilities in Plymouth, Westland and Detroit – were using the 50-person maximum per-room protocol issued by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer last week, although he emphasized, “it changes day to day.”

Southfield’s Ira Kaufman Chapel, on the other hand, was limiting its number of visitors to seven, a scenario at least partially offset by the chapel’s use of live-streaming services and burials.

Vermeulen is concerned that limiting the number of on-site mourners could be harmful in the long term for people grieving the loss of a loved one.

“I’m worried that the mental health issues from unresolved grief could far outweigh the risk of exposure (to COVID-19),” Vermeulen said. “We’re going to do the right thing. We’re going to follow the rules.”

“However, if it comes down to limiting funerals to 10 people or less, it will create more anxiety for those people who can’t interact with loved ones during some of the most anxious moments of their lives.”

Mourning in the era of coronavirus

Vermeulen said that once the number of people reaches 50 at a visitation or funeral, a second room will be made available at the funeral homes for visitors to either wait (visitation) or watch on a monitor from the second room (funeral service).

“I’m worried that the mental health issues from unresolved grief could far outweigh the risk of exposure (to COVID-19).”

Jim Vermeulen Funeral home director

“And with technology today, there are always ways for people to connect remotely,” he said. “For instance, we recently had a granddaughter ask if she could livestream a funeral with her phone for a relative who couldn’t make the funeral.”

“That said, there is nothing that replaces the face-to-face healing that actually being there provides.”

Vermeulen said his family’s funeral homes have been stocked with essentials such as hand sanitizer (“It’s everywhere,” he quipped) and toilet paper.

“We’re doing everything we can to help create the best setting for people mourning the loss of a loved one,” he said.

The Ira Kaufman Chapel is following the guidance of the Michigan Board of Rabbis, which met via conference call earlier this week.

“We had a service earlier that, under normal circumstances, would have drawn a couple hundred people, but we had to limit it to seven,” said David Techner, director at the Ira Kaufman Chapel. “Overall, people have been very understanding and cooperative.”

Techner admitted that limiting mourners and fulfilling mourners’ needs is a balancing act.

“Our job now, as I see it, is to be socially responsible to the N’t degree,” he said. “We want to make sure that no one who walks into our chapel is in danger. We have sanitized over and over.”

“At the same time, we want to give families an experience they can look back on with fond memories. The situation we’re in is far from optimal, but we’re doing the best we can.”

Techner said the majority of funerals he oversees are conducted at the grave site as opposed to inside the chapel.

The Southfield chapel’s trend-setting practice of live-streaming burials will help family members who are prevented from attending services.

“It’s nice because family members or close friends who can’t make it to the interment can watch the video and then maybe write a note to the family of the deceased, saying, ‘We couldn’t make it, but we watched online. It was a beautiful service,’ or something along those lines,” Techner said.

Livestream mourning

Techner added that the chapel also emails results of Google Analytics to family members so that they can see how many people watched and where the viewers live.

When asked whether he can envision a day when people will be encouraged to add the names of relatives and close friends who they want to attend services after they die, Techner shook his head.

“From our experience, the family already knows who the deceased would want to attend, so adding it to a will probably won’t become a popular option,” he said.

Livonians

Continued from Page 1A

As the death toll from the virus continues to climb globally, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced Monday that residents were under stay-at-home orders until at least April 13. Officials hope more people staying home and practicing social distancing when doing essential tasks like grocery shopping will help to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Brosnan decided Monday to close playgrounds, golf courses and dog parks until further notice. The mayor also encouraged residents to seek out reliable sources of information.

“Make sure when you are listening to news or you are reading things on the internet, you’re really focused on getting your information from reliable sources: from the CDC, from your local government, from the State of Michigan,” she said.

The city’s March 23 council meeting took place with five of the seven members attending, all of whom sat 6 feet or more apart, and without an audience. Had residents been there, they would have been asked to sit at least 6 feet apart.

While the stay-at-home order remains in effect, Brosnan encouraged residents to stay active to fight cabin fever while also being conscious of social distancing guidelines.

“If we all pull together and stay at home and not go out unless it really is for something essential, then together we really have an amazing opportunity to reduce the significance of this virus. ... Get out and get those walks in, but do it while recognizing we need to keep good social distance,” she said.

Livonia officials are updating residents with a situational report every evening at livonia.gov/1825/COVID-19-Information.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com.

Loyalty

Continued from Page 1A

Judging by last week’s booming business, his expectations have improved.

“The loyalty our customers have shown us has been incredible,” Tassielli said. “Especially a lot of the comments we’ve heard from our customers. Some of them have dropped off dozens of gift cards that we can hand out to employees so they can buy groceries.”

“It’s been nothing short of incredible. It’s brought tears to my eyes.”

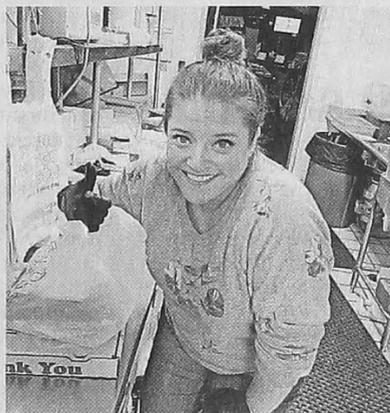
Last week’s revved-up pick-up frenzy at Crow’s Nest is a reflection of the quality of service and food for which the establishment is known, said longtime customer Leander Richmond.

“The food is amazing,” said Richmond, as he waited for his take-out order in the facility’s parking lot. “But what makes people continue to return to the Crow’s Nest is the staff and the vibe inside the restaurant.”

“When I called my order in, they said it would be up to a 40-minute wait, but it’s worth it.”

Tassielli said the feeling is mutual.

“We’ve tried to build a relationship with the community,” he said. “We feel like we’re a part of the community. We’ve actually served different genera-



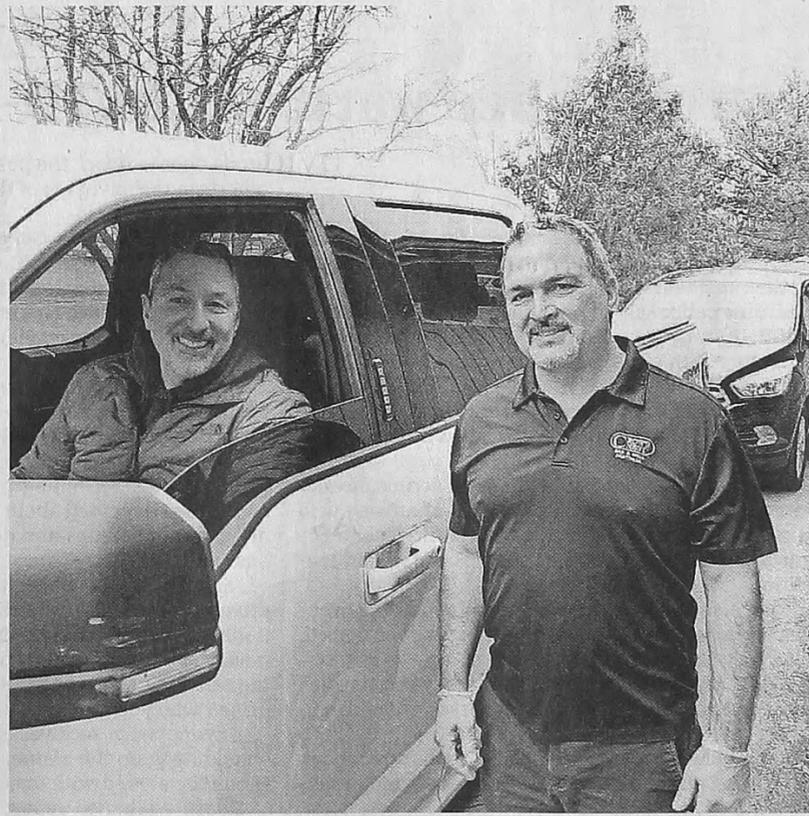
Marlene Pilloto, a Crow’s Nest employee, prepares a take-out order. COURTESY OF CROW’S NEST

tions of families. And our wait staff does an incredible job.”

Tassielli said business overall has been a “little down” compared to a typical week.

“But nights like this will help some of our employees’ anxiety,” he said. “Honestly, I didn’t know what to expect once we were forced to close our doors for dining inside. But if this keeps up, hopefully we can get through this.”

Contact reporter Ed Wright at edwright@hometownlife.com.



Domenic Tassielli, right, owner of the Crow’s Nest Bar & Grill in Canton, thanks customer Tim Garbarino for his loyalty curbside. ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Grocery

Continued from Page 1A

The store offered a time for just seniors to shop March 18, and it was successful enough that Torolski will hold similar events weekly. Seniors can exclusively can shop Larry’s Foodland from 8-11 a.m. every Thursday.

It’s a practice beginning to take hold in other stores across the region as well:

■ Meijer announced it would close overnight to restock and will allow senior citizens and those with chronic illnesses a chance to shop between 7 and 8 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays before the store opens to the general public.

■ Target will close at 9 p.m. each night and allow seniors to shop an hour before the stores open each Wednesday.

■ Larry’s Foodland will remain open for 24 hours as of now, officials said March 17.

Increased demand has taken its toll at all supermarkets, Larry’s Foodland included. Torolski said with customer orders being triple or quadruple the usual amount, he’s had to reorder items more quickly and in larger quantities when he’s able.



Some shelves at Larry’s Foodland were empty the morning of March 19, but store leadership said they work to restock as often as possible to meet high demand. DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

“Eventually, when you look at warehousing to truck, they’re backed up,” he said. “We get it as quick as we can. But they’re all pushed back 3-4 days, so it makes it difficult.”

The store, a Livonia staple, has operated for several decades along Plymouth Road. Torolski said the community should strive to buy local in these trying times.

“We’re that big, hometown grocery store. We give the old-fashioned customer service,” he said. “We take care of the community and support local businesses, especially at a time like this.”

Torolski is paying it forward: he said he’s made it a point to buy lunch for employees from several local businesses, including the Jimmy John’s in the same plaza, Buddy’s Pizza in Livonia and Mr. Chicken in Redford Township.

The employees all are still coming in and stocking the shelves on a regular basis.

“They have gone over and above what’s expected of them,” said Jane Fabian, a point-of-service manager.

In addition to stocking and selling food, employees are working to keep the store as clean as possible, wiping down belts and registers to limit contact with germs.

Torolski said he’s never seen anything like this in his career. But he’s determined that society will get through this crisis.

“We’re all in this together,” he said. “We’ll get through it.”

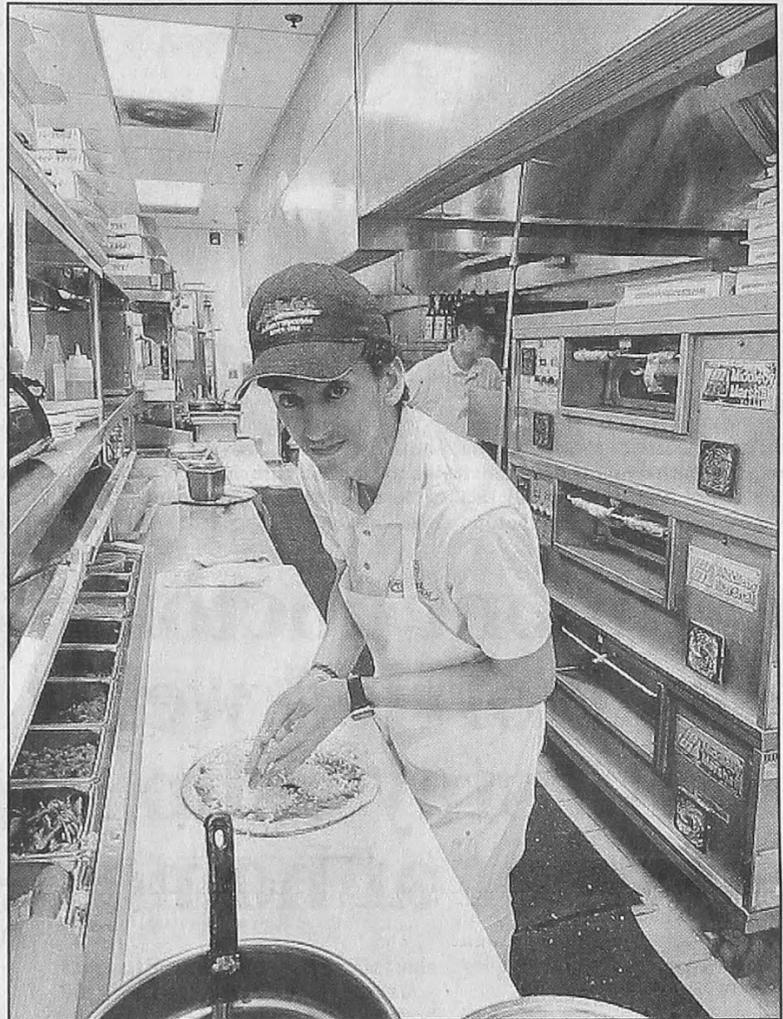
Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

Antonio's **Roman Village** **Antonio's**
CUCINA ITALIANA CUCINA ITALIANA PICCOLO RISTORANTE

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

During these uncertain times, your family's safety and ours is most important. We understand that many people do not want to leave their homes. To meet the needs of the hungry families who support us, Antonio's and Roman Village are preparing our authentic Italian food continuing to offer carry out and temporarily offering delivery service during these difficult times. We are also preparing take and bake products such as lasagna and other stuffed pasta dishes that you can cook in your own home or save for a later date. Please be assured, your family's safety and ours is most important and we are committed as always to prepare your food in a clean and safe environment.

We are all in this together. We must stay positive and focused on helping each other as we get through these difficult times. A kind and generous customer purchased \$6,000 in gift cards to pass out to his staff and families that are in need and cannot afford to purchase food at this time. The Rugiero family have matched this contribution to provide meals for families in need through surrounding schools in our community to provide meals for the children and their families.



Antonio Jr. making pizza along side his family members working together.

We know your family has to eat and we have a job to do. As the Rugiero's always say, "Tiriamo Avanti!" which means, to always pull forward even during tough times and these are some of the toughest.

The Rugiero Family Prays that everyone is doing well and keeping safe during these challenging times.

Antonio's **Antonio's** **Antonio's** **Roman Village** **Antonio's**
CUCINA ITALIANA CUCINA ITALIANA CUCINA ITALIANA CUCINA ITALIANA PICCOLO RISTORANTE

37646 W.12 Mile Rd. Farmington Hills (Corner of Halste) (248) 994-4000	2220 N. Canton Ctr. Rd. Canton (Corner of Ford Road) (734) 981-9800	26356 Ford Rd. Dearborn Heights Shopping Center (313) 278-6000	9924 Dix Ave. Dearborn (Between Miller and Lonyo) (313) 842-2100	31735 Plymouth Rd. Livonia, MI 48150 (West of Merriman) (734) 513-8000
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During these uncertain times, our hours of operation my change, please check our website for a current list of hours.

www.antoniosrestaurants.com

Gannett launches website to help small businesses

Brett Molina
USA TODAY

Gannett, the owner of USA TODAY and more than 260 daily local media properties, is launching a nationwide effort to help communities support local small businesses during the coronavirus crisis.

The media company announced Monday a new website, supportlocal.usatoday.com, that will allow users to select local businesses in their community to support by buying gift cards for use at a later time. Visitors and business owners can also add local businesses to the platform.

"We feel that local businesses are

such a core part of the fabric of the country and the communities we all live in," said Kevin Gentzel, Gannett's chief revenue officer. "They really are a reflection of the heartbeat of America."

Last Wednesday, Gentzel and Maribel Perez Wadsworth, president of Gannett's news division and publisher of USA TODAY, wrote a joint op-ed in USA TODAY urging local communities to support small businesses during the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ground everyday life in the U.S. and other parts of the world to a halt. More than 33,000 cases of illness have been reported in the U.S. and more than 400 people have died.

Small businesses have been hit hard. Many shut down to help curb the spread of the virus, though essential businesses have largely remained open, including grocery stores, gas stations and pharmacies, some with shortened hours to clean and restock. Many restaurants are also open but only offer takeout or delivery orders.

Dinner reservation app OpenTable released new data showing just how severe the situation is for restaurants throughout the country.

Sit-down dining at U.S. restaurants that participate in the company's reservation system have screeched to a halt. Reservations and walk-ins on Saturday, March 21, were down 100% from the

same day in 2019, according to OpenTable.

Lawmakers are working on emergency packages to help small businesses cover expenses as they remain shut down while consumers shelter at home and practice social distancing.

On Saturday during a White House coronavirus task force briefing, President Donald Trump said he talked with thousands of small-business owners about the crisis in a conference call. He also has spoken with restaurant industry representatives.

"I assured them my administration is doing everything within its very considerable power to support them and their employees," Trump said.



A Beaumont Health employee demonstrates the limited curbside COVID-19 screening available at its Royal Oak facility March 16. Several Beaumont hospitals have similar screening setups available. SUSAN VELA/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Beaumont doctor says 'Worried well' should stay calm and treat at home

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Not everyone who gets COVID-19 will end up in a hospital bed.

"The vast majority we're able to send home," said Dr. Sanford Vieder, chair of emergency medicine and director of the emergency and trauma center for Beaumont Hospital Farmington Hills. "We've had a very low percentage thus far of patients that require hospitalization and an even lower percentage that require intensive care unit kind of intervention."

Vieder said most people can manage COVID-19 in their own homes and everyone should focus on practicing social distancing and staying home whenever possible. He did note, though, that the coronavirus pandemic is still in the early stages in Michigan.

Vieder emphasized the coronavirus is nothing to downplay and presents serious risk to some people, but the "worried well" can do their part by leaving emergency waiting rooms, hot line calls and test kits to those most at risk.

"We're looking for a specific set of symptoms to make a determination whether somebody should be admitted to the hospital," Vieder said. "They likely would have a fever, they likely would have a pretty bad cough and then the big differentiating factor is if they're short of breath. Are they having trouble breathing?"

COVID-19 test kits and personal protective equipment for medical professionals are either in short supply or approaching that limit. So, Beaumont is turning its resources to those who are most seriously ill.

"We are now reserving the test exclusively for those ... sick enough to be admitted to the hospital because we need to know whether they do or do not have COVID-19," Vieder said.

Because of that, people with mild cases are encouraged to quarantine themselves and treat at home with rest, increased fluid intake and taking an acetaminophen tablet like Tylenol.

"If you're doing all of that and you feel like your symptoms are getting worse and, most importantly, (you're) really having a hard time breathing, really struggling to breathe, can't even walk to the bathroom without being markedly

short of breath, that's your red flag that you should be seen and screened at the hospital," Vieder said.

Even if you feel fine, Vieder said, it's in everyone's interest to stay home as much as possible.

"It could go up or it could go down, and to be honest a lot of that depends on people heeding the warnings of staying home, not going out if you don't need to, so that we can limit the spread," he said.

While people fighting cancer or an underlying issue like heart or lung disease and the elderly have increased risk, Vieder thinks most people, as much as 98 percent of the population, will be just fine.

"It's true that the vast majority of individuals who are otherwise healthy, and the younger you are the better, do just fine," he said. "This turns out to be nothing more than the case of the flu or a flu-like illness and they do fine. They don't need hospitalization."

And in the name of mental health, he said, people need not dwell on bad news.

"A lot of people are focused on the bad," Vieder said. "People are focused on what they're seeing on TV and the pictures of the ICUs and people in 'moonsuits' taking care of patients that are really super sick."

"There's no question that that's really going on, I don't think we should ignore that. But what we're really kind of ignoring is that 98 percent."

Vieder said medical professionals, namely his staff in Farmington Hills, prepare for times like this and are up to the task.

As of last week, no staff members at Beaumont Hospital Farmington Hills have tested positive for COVID-19.

"We're all working long hours but we're happy to be there, we're here for the community and I would say that our morale is excellent so far, at least at Farmington Hills Beaumont," he said.

Beaumont Health is operating drive-through COVID-19 symptom screenings at some of its hospitals, including Farmington Hills, by appointment, and has a free online risk assessment test healthy people are encouraged to use instead of getting screened or calling the COVID-19 hot line.

Support our small businesses through coronavirus pandemic



Philip Allmen
Content strategist
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

From the one-of-a-kind boutiques in Milford or Plymouth to the variety of lip-smacking restaurants in Livonia, Canton or Birmingham - and countless places in between - the northwest suburbs of Detroit are a special place.

Where would metro Detroit be without its small businesses?

We don't want to find out.

These businesses are the lifeblood of our community - employing thousands and providing spaces for us to connect with one another. They reflect the best of what we are: entrepreneurial, resilient, compassionate, protective.

It's these local businesses we've turned to for help on myriad programs and fundraisers for schools, churches or someone in need.

It's our turn.

We all have the chance to support these local businesses during the coronavirus pandemic; to thank them by helping them stay in business.

To make it easier, Hometown Life's parent company launched a platform at supportlocal.usatoday.com to connect those who want to help with the businesses that need it.

Both individuals and businesses can add to the listing already started there. All a business needs is a website link and a way to purchase gift cards or take-out food.

We've heard from so many people wanting to help. Here is a way to do it from the safety of our homes.

Obituaries

To place an ad, call 586-826-7171 or visit mideathnotices.com/place.php

Michael "Mickey" G. Edgar

SOUTH LYON - Michael (Mickey) G. Edgar, passed away March 18, 2020. Born October 15, 1946 in Pontiac Michigan, he was the son of Inez (Burk) Edgar and Gar (Ruby) Edgar. He is survived by nieces Candace (Brad) Koester and Jennifer (Sam) Runkle, 7 great-nephews and a great-niece. Mickey grew up in Alma and graduated from Alma High School in 1964. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard where he was stationed in Jacksonville, FL and in Alaska. Mickey loved riding his bike all over the suburbs of Detroit. He enjoyed reading, sewing, and wood crafts. His favorite TV show was Jeopardy, hardly ever missing a night. He also enjoyed time with his nieces. He was preceded in death by his father, mother, brother, Lawrence R. Edgar, and nieces Samantha and Heather Edgar. Burial has taken place at Lakeview Cemetery in Howell. There will be a celebration of "Mickey's life held at a later date. Please sign the family's online guestbook at macdonaldsfuneralhome.com

MacDonald's Funeral Home

Anne Burner Hommes

FARMINGTON HILLS - Age 78, passed away Wednesday, March 11, 2020. For visitation and funeral information, please visit heeneysundquist.com

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Rest
be
Granted
Upon
Them



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Cordon Bleu or
Bacon Cheddar
\$5.99 lb

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\$14.99 lb
Save \$2.00

Fresh Housemade
Italian
Chicken Cutlet
\$4.49 lb
Save 50¢

Marinated
Chicken Breast
Italian, Herb &
Garlic, Mesquite or
Teriyaki
\$5.99 lb

Premium Fresh
All Natural
Baby Back Rib
\$4.49 lb
Save \$1.00



WINE CELLAR

Check the New Additions
to the 90 Point
Under \$20 Display

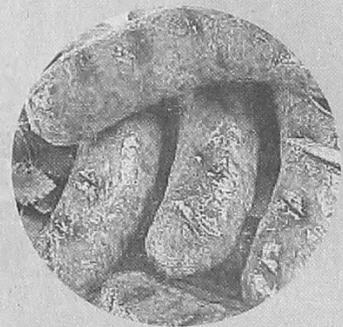
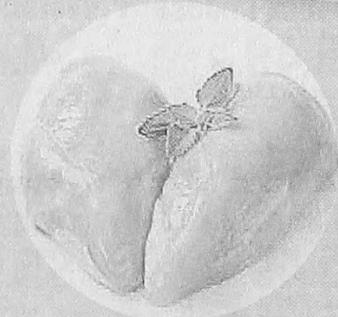
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\$9.99

The Pinot Project
91 Points
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Apothic
All Varietals
\$1 Off Reg Price

Cambria
Chardonnay
91 Points
\$19.99

Pietra Nera
Pinot Grigio
\$5.99



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EZ Peel Shrimp
16/20 Count
\$10.99 ea
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CenSea
Cooked Shrimp
16/20 Count
\$12.99 ea
Save \$2.00

Ocean
Perch Fillet
\$5.99 ea
Save \$2.00



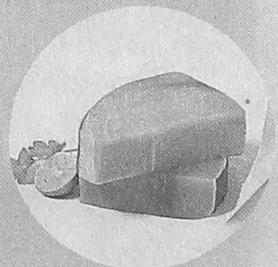
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Organic Bunched Carrots
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Organic Collard & Dandelion Greens
2/4

Organic Navel Orange
\$1.59 lb

Organic Red or Golden Delicious Apples
\$1.99 lb

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Dearborn Honey Ham
\$5.49 lb
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OldTyme Hard Salami
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Dearborn Homestyle Chicken
\$6.49 lb
Save \$1.50

Homemade Sausage Hot or Sweet Italian
\$3.99 lb

Fresh Housemade Italian Chicken Cutlet
\$4.49 lb
Save 50¢

Boar's Head Pepper Jack Cheese
\$6.49 lb
Save \$3.50

OldTyme Provolone Cheese
\$4.49 lb
Save \$2.50

Boar's Head Mesquite Turkey
\$8.49 lb
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\$5.99 lb

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Save \$1.50

Dearborn Oven Roasted Turkey
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CenSea EZ Peel Shrimp 16/20 Count
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CenSea Cooked Shrimp 16/20 Count
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Save \$2.00

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Beemster XO 26 Month Aged Gouda
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Pasture Pride Juusto Baked Cheese Original & Italian
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Gia Russa Culinary Stock
2/5

Bonne Maman Jams & Preserves
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Pacific Broth 32 oz
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Cucina Antica Pasta Sauces 32 oz
\$6.99 ea

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2/5

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Seasoned Pretzels 4 oz
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Save 50¢

Sonoma Jacks Swiss or Pepper Jack 4 oz
\$2.99 ea
Save \$1.00

Very Berry Pie
\$12.99 ea
Save \$2.00

Magic Bar
\$3.49 ea
Save 50¢

Two Bite Coconut Macaroon
\$4.49 ea
Save 50¢

PASTRY

Strawberry Shortcake
\$16.99 6" **\$26.99 8"**
Save \$3.00 Save \$3.00

Lemon Danish
\$2.49
Save 50¢

Demi Baguette
99¢
Save 50¢

Multigrain
\$5.49
Save 50¢



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2/8

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Banfi Centine 90 Points
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The Pinot Project 91 Points
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Check out Joe's specials on back page.

Sports

GYMNASTICS



Plymouth gymnastics assistant coach Adrian Hartford, left, joined the staff a year after graduating from high school.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF VINCE PULTORAK

Coaches bring youth to Plymouth's regional title

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

All Adrian Hartford wanted was remain a part of the team.

As her four years with Plymouth gymnastics came to an end, Hartford approached then-head coach Alyssa Burke, asking to help in any way she could during her freshman year at Schoolcraft College.

Burke agreed, but ended up leaving for another teaching job over the summer, leaving the Wildcats after one season.

But Hartford remained, helping first-year head coach Joe Wolfram coach Plymouth to its first regional title March 7, beating Northville and Livonia Blue for the top spot in Region 3.

"I was in shock," Hartford said. "I was like, 'Oh my gosh, these girls really stepped up and showed that they have the top spot.' I was crying, I was like, 'Oh



Hartford celebrates a Plymouth gymnast's successful routine.

my gosh, they actually did it."

One year removed from high school, Hartford provided an atmosphere for Plymouth gymnastics that many of the girls on the team were not used to. As a

recent graduate, Hartford had to find the balance between relatable friend and coach relatively quickly.

And at the beginning of the year, this proved to be a challenge.

"Sometimes, the girls didn't take me seriously because I used to be a teammate," Hartford said. "I was still friends with them, but at the same time I was like, 'OK, you have to listen to me, too, because now I'm your coach.'"

For Ella Seale, a junior captain, knowing Hartford was only part of her reluctance.

Coming into a season with Hartford, an 18-year-old assistant coach, and Wolfram, a 23-year-old head coach, Seale, along with the rest of the team, was a bit worried about the level of experience the Wildcats' coaching staff had.

See YOUTH, Page 2B

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Canton senior's 11 points in one game seal deal

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Facing a team with more size in the opening round of the playoffs, Canton senior Sean Mullen was called on to start for just the third time of the season — and it was a good thing he was.

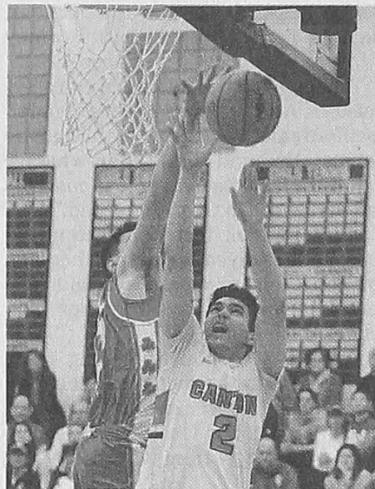
Mullen was on fire to start Canton's first round game against Detroit Catholic Central and scored a career high 11 points to lead the Chiefs to victory. His performance was enough to earn him Hometown Life Athlete of the Week honors.

The outing was extra special for Mullen, who has several family members who attended CC. Safe to say he'll have bragging rights.

Mullen received 11,700 votes in our poll (71.54 percent) to win the award. Milford skier Madeline Melody finished second with 2,167 votes (13.25 percent), Farmington gymnast Sydney Schultz placed third with 1,870 votes (11.43 percent), John Glenn basketball's Jalen Johnson came in fourth. Northville basketball's Grant Mathiesen and South Lyon East's Nick Branton placed fifth and sixth.

We caught up with Mullen and asked him some questions:

See ATHLETE, Page 2B



Canton's Sean Mullen goes up for a rebound against CC. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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KLAA BOYS BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

The KLAA basketball season is in the rear-view mirror and with the state playoffs suspended until further notice, it's time to turn our attention to some of the honors earned by area athletes. Quite a few Hometown Life area student-athletes have been named to the KLAA boys basketball all-conference team, led by Northville, Canton, John Glenn and Livonia Stevenson which each have three honorees. Howell won the conference championship, defeating Canton in the title game. Belleville won the East division. Here is the full list, broken down by division:

KLAA East

- Connor Bush, Belleville, Senior, Guard
- Lorenzo Wright, Belleville, Senior, Guard
- DaJon Johnson, Belleville, Sophomore, Guard
- Mario Johnson, Belleville, Sophomore, Guard
- Kyle Holt, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
- Jalen Johnson, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
- Deonta Pearson, John Glenn, Senior, Forward
- Evan Bradford, Stevenson, Senior, Forward
- Evan Asante, Stevenson, Junior, Guard
- Steven Shimko, Stevenson, Senior, Guard
- Niemer Hamood, Dearborn, Senior, Guard
- Jack Melton, Dearborn, Senior, Guard
- Donte Foreman, Wayne, Junior, Forward
- Ty Fournety, Wayne, Senior, Forward
- Zak Maisari, Fordson, Senior, Guard
- Dom Ufferman, Franklin, Junior, Guard
- Jordan Garcia, Churchill, Junior, Guard

Honorable Mention:

- Jalen Williams, Belleville, Senior, Center
- Asonta Hargrove, John Glenn, Senior, Guard
- Luke Merchant, Stevenson, Junior, Forward
- Brandon Bacon, Dearborn, Senior,

- Guard
- Riccardo Covin, Wayne, Senior, Center
- Ali Farhat, Fordson, Senior, Center
- JJ Carpenter, Franklin, Senior, Guard
- Chase Loving, Churchill, Junior, Guard

KLAA West

- Bobby Samples, Howell, Senior, Guard
- Tony Honkala, Howell, Senior, Guard
- Peyton Ward, Howell, Senior, Guard
- Jake Vickers, Canton, Senior, Forward
- Ben Stesiak, Canton, Senior, Guard
- Cole Vickers, Canton, Sophomore, Guard
- Zach Shoemaker, Northville, Senior, Forward
- Grant Mathiesen, Northville, Senior, Guard
- Domenic Rodriguez, Northville, Senior, Guard
- Kyle Hamlin, Hartland, Junior, Guard
- Trevor Lewis, Hartland, Senior, Guard
- Owen Ehman, Brighton, Junior, Guard
- Jake Edwards, Brighton, Senior, Forward
- Matt MacLellan, Plymouth, Senior, Forward
- Bruce Turner III, Novi, Senior, Forward
- Ryan Len, Salem, Senior, Guard

Honorable Mention:

- Griffin Smith, Howell, Senior, Guard
- Lake McIntosh, Canton, Sophomore, Guard
- Brady Withey, Northville, Senior, Forward
- Lucas Batten, Hartland, Senior, Forward
- Jacob Klonowski, Brighton, Senior, Forward
- Jacob Smith, Plymouth, Senior, Forward
- Varun Reddy, Novi, Senior, Guard
- Garrett Smith, Salem, Senior, Forward

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com.

KLAA GIRLS BASKETBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAMS

The KLAA has long been one of the best girls basketball leagues around with the success in recent years by Hartland, Brighton and Wayne Memorial. The conference was strong again this year and saw Hartland come out on top as conference champions. Wayne won the East division. The league has released its all-conference selections for the 2019-20 school-year. Wayne leads all Hometown Life area teams with four selections. Here are the full all-conferences teams broken down by division:

KLAA East

- Alana Micheaux, Wayne, Junior, Forward
- Jordan Wright, Wayne, Sophomore, Guard
- Lachelle Austin, Wayne, Junior, Guard
- Mayla Ham, Wayne, Freshman, Forward
- Justina Szalkowski, Dearborn, Senior, Forward
- Erin Moran, Dearborn, Junior, Forward
- Malak Alhaji, Dearborn, Junior, Guard
- Kayla Osen, Churchill, Senior, Guard
- Nasya Thomas, Churchill, Junior, Forward
- Keke Buggs, Churchill, Senior, Forward
- Kerry Donehue, Stevenson, Sophomore, Guard
- Josie Piergentili, Stevenson, Senior, Guard
- Tara Bourdage, Stevenson, Senior, Forward
- Emily Esker, Franklin, Senior, Guard
- Erin Young, Franklin, Sophomore, Forward
- Diana Saleh, Fordson, Senior, Forward
- Taylor Watkins-Johnson, John Glenn, Junior, Guard
- Hunter Conway, Belleville, Junior, Guard

Honorable Mention:

- Amina Ferris, Dearborn, Sophomore, Guard
- Molly Behan, Churchill, Sophomore, Guard
- Julia Nowak, Stevenson, Junior, Guard
- Kalin Bates, Franklin, Sophomore, Guard
- Batoul Reda, Fordson, Sophomore, Guard
- India Grissom, John Glenn, Guard

KLAA West

- Whitney Sollom, Hartland, Senior, Center
- Madi Moyer, Hartland, Senior, Forward
- Nikki Dompierre, Hartland, Senior, Guard
- Amanda Roach, Hartland, Sophomore, Guard
- Sophie Dziekan, Brighton, Senior, Center
- Sydney Hetherington, Brighton, Senior, Forward
- Elaine Halonen, Brighton, Senior, Guard
- Maeve St. John, Howell, Sophomore, Guard
- Kaylee Wendel, Howell, Sophomore, Guard
- Evelyn Pennala, Howell, Junior, Forward
- Sophie Zelek, Plymouth, Senior, Guard
- Kyra Brandon, Plymouth, Junior, Guard
- Morgan Thompson, Northville, Senior, Center
- Ellie Thallman, Northville, Senior, Guard
- Jenna Daschke, Novi, Senior, Guard
- Mattison Joyner, Salem, Junior, Guard
- Katie Currie, Canton, Senior, Forward

Honorable Mention:

- Isabella Vogt, Brighton
- Bryta Mathes, Howell, Sophomore
- Ella Riley, Plymouth, Junior
- Avery Tolstyka, Northville, Junior
- Madison Diton, Salem, Senior
- Nina Pacheco, Canton, Senior

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

Youth

Continued from Page 1B

"I think we were all kind of hesitating, like, 'Do they know what they are doing?'" Seale asked. "Will it be OK?"

Coming into his first season as a head coach, Wolfram knew the ages of two members of the coaching staff were not typical, saying that assistant and head coaches are usually in their late 30s.

But Hartford knew the answer. Instead of being the older authority figure — like former Plymouth head coach Pam Yockey — to which she was accustomed, Hartford and Wolfram created more of what she calls a "friend-on-friend environment," interacting and relating with the athletes in a way that people 15 to 20 years older could not.

Instead of standing away from the team during meets, watching a player compete, Hartford was in the middle of the Wildcats bench, cheering on her team. She ate lunch with her players, creating a level of open communication that junior captain Maisie Swafford may not have been used to, but needed.

"There wasn't much superiority because of Adrian being our teammate," Swafford said. "It was that we all had the same goal in mind. We all knew what we wanted and Adrian was able to coach us and be the coach that we needed."

Hartford took techniques from old coaches she played for, putting her own spin on them to create a brand new coaching voice one year out of high school.

But she was honest, saying there were bumps in the road along the way, from helping Wolfram adjust to the high school gymnastics level as opposed to club gymnastics from which he had

come, to getting used to each of their coaching styles.

"It was frustrating through the first couple weeks," Hartford said. "We figured things out, the girls figured things out. They started working together a lot more. By the end of the season, we just had a lot of fun together and a lot of fun doing the sport."

Ideal ending

When regionals came around, Wolfram had a work conflict at his job at Gym America in Ann Arbor, Hartford took Plymouth to the Region 3 final by herself.

She expected her team to finish in the top three, securing a bid in the state final, but did not expect to compete for the top spot with a team like Livonia Blue.

As the meet neared its conclusion, Hartford began to tally up their scores. She saw Plymouth at the top.

Hartford immediately texted Wolfram.

"I almost cried when I found out they got first," Wolfram said. "I was so overwhelmed and just proud of all the effort they put in and the hard work throughout the season. It really did pay off."

Seale remembers sitting in a circle with her teammates, waiting to be crowned regional champions. When Plymouth's name was called, everyone burst into tears, hugging each other and their assistant coach.

Hartford remembers the reaction of the other coaches who were there competing with their teams, watching opposing coaches look at their bench in an awestruck manner, saying, "Oh my gosh, they just won. They have an 18-year-old coach."

"We kind of snuck up behind them and were like, 'Hey, we're regional

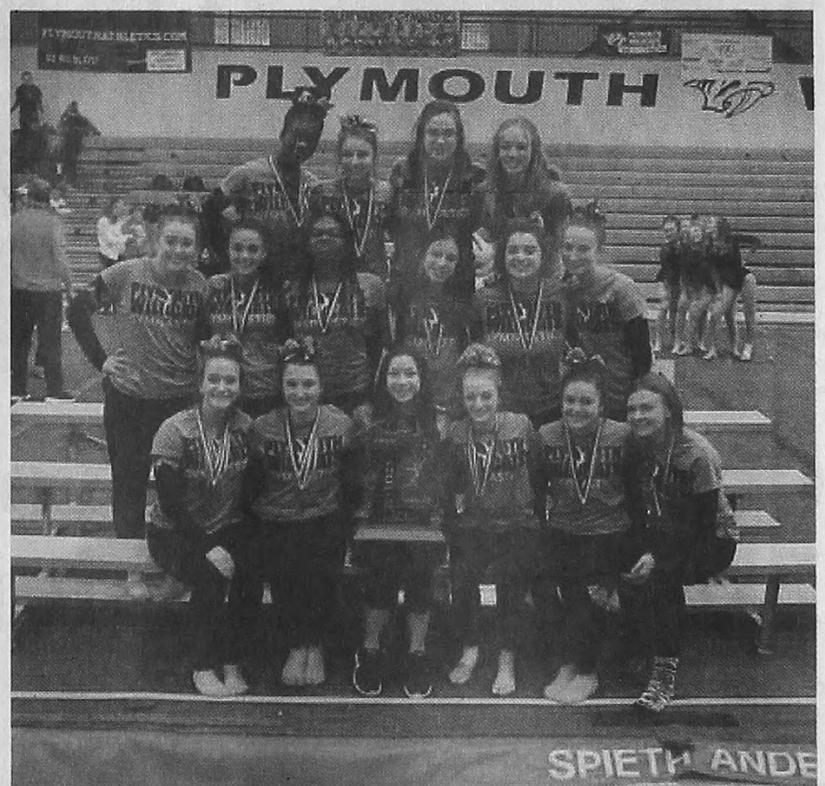
against them was awesome."

How difficult is it to have your senior season cut short due to the ongoing coronavirus situation? How has the team handled the situation?

"Having the coronavirus situation effect my senior season has been really tough. Especially one game shy of a possible district trophy coming back to Canton.

"It's been a while since we were able to raise one at Canton and that's been all of ours main goal since the start. Our team's been remaining optimistic on the fact we can play again.

"We'd love that chance to play in the championship game against Northville."



Plymouth gymnastics celebrates its first regional title in program history.

COURTESY OF ROB SEALE

champs," Hartford said.

Plymouth likely will not have an opportunity to show what it can do with the momentum of a regional championship in the state finals because of the winter postseason suspension by the Michigan High School Athletics Association.

Hartford and Wolfram will not have an opportunity to cap off their first year of coaching together with a state title.

However, for both coaches — both said they will return next season — this regional title showcases an increased expectation for the years ahead.

For Hartford, Plymouth ended her first season in the best way possible.

"At least we ended the season with a bang," Hartford said.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Twitter: @ColinGay17.

Athlete

Continued from Page 1B

After coming off the bench most of the season, you started Canton's first playoff game against CC and had your best outing of the year. Describe your feelings on knowing you played a huge role in advancing past the Shamrocks?

"It was truly an amazing feeling. Our team really fought hard and dug in when needed against CC. That's a team whose record doesn't reflect who they are and we knew that heading in. To have one of my better high school career games

Who's your favorite athlete and why?

"My favorite athlete is Derrick Rose. I've always been a fan of his since I was real young. I used to love all his flashy dunks and the way he dominated the game when in Chicago. But as I've grown older, I've also admired his determination to bounce back from injuries and downfall. He's had that never give up mentality that I try and instill in myself."

What do you like to do for fun outside of basketball?

"Outside of basketball, I enjoy hanging out with family and friends. I also enjoy playing video games on the PS4."

What's your favorite movie or TV

show and why?

"My favorite movie of all-time is Ruddy. It's one my dad and I have watched numerous times and it never gets old. The determination he showed in the story is truly amazing. It's an awesome story of a walk-on."

What are you plans after high school? Headed to college?

"My plans after high school are to attend Michigan State University in the fall. I plan to study either law or business. Still currently deciding on that aspect."

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt.

Benton Harbor's 'Scooby' Johnson named Mr. Basketball

Mick McCabe Special to Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Carlos "Scooby" Johnson became the 40th winner of the Hall Schram Mr. Basketball award Monday.

The award, named for the former Free Press sports writer who covered high school athletics for over 40 years, is given to the state's top senior by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan.

Johnson, 6-foot-6 and signed with Butler, accumulated 2,949 points in the vote and Flint Beecher's Jalen Terry was second (2,760 points), Orchard Lake St. Mary's Lorne Bowman II was third (2,312), Matt Nicholson of Clarkston was fourth (1,678) and Tyson Acuff of Detroit Cass Tech was fifth (1,497).

Only BCAM members are permitted to vote. Johnson had 413 first-place votes and Terry had 306.

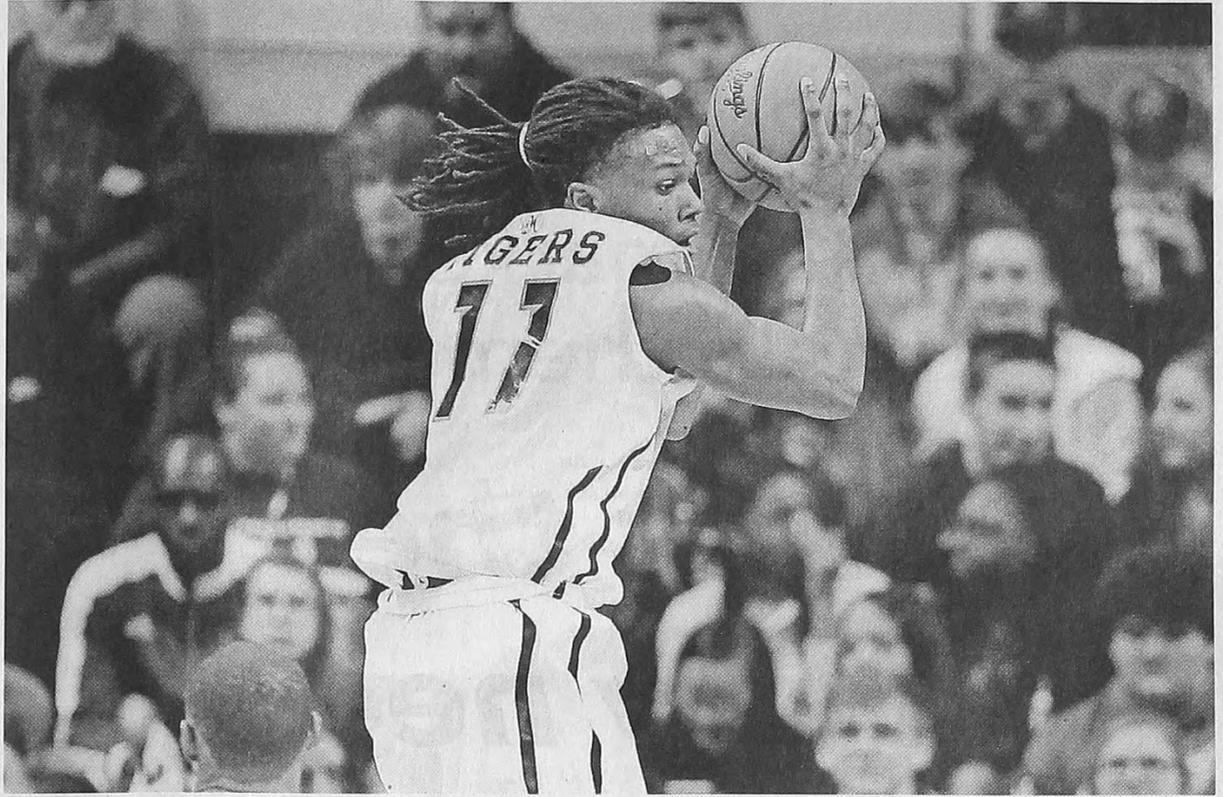
This is the third time a Benton Harbor player is Mr. Basketball and each of them have come 15 years apart; Anthony (Pig) Miller won it in 1990 and Wilson Chandler in 2005.

"Before I got to high school, I knew Wilson and Pig had won this," Johnson said. "I think it's a blessing for me and a big accomplishment as a high school player to look forward to."

Johnson, who averaged 25 points, 11 rebounds, six blocks and three steals a game this season, is known as Scooby by people in Benton Harbor and it is from the TV show "Scooby-Doo."

"I've been called that as long as I can remember," he said. "It came from my dad; it was his name, too, because he liked the show. After a while I became a fan of "Scooby-Doo," too."

Benton Harbor coach Cory Sterling first saw Johnson play when he was in



Benton Harbor's Carlos Johnson during the third quarter against River Rouge in the Class B MHSAA semifinals in 2018. DETROIT FREE PRESS FILE

the fourth grade and playing alongside Sterling's fifth-grade son.

"I knew Carlos was something special then," he said. "I just kept my eye on him. I knew he'd do great things, not just for the basketball program, but for the city. He's involved in a lot of stuff."

Johnson turned down offers from

Michigan and Michigan State and signed to play in college at Butler.

"Butler, it kind of made me feel like I was back at home," he said. "And then there were the relationships I built with the people there and the coaches."

This season, the Tigers were ranked No. 1 in Division 2 and had advanced to

the district final before the state tournament was put on hold.

Johnson is hoping that it can be resumed so he and his teammates might experience another state title.

"It's every high school team's goal to be holding that trophy at the end of March Madness," he said.



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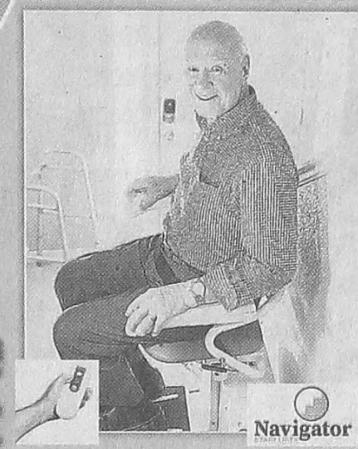
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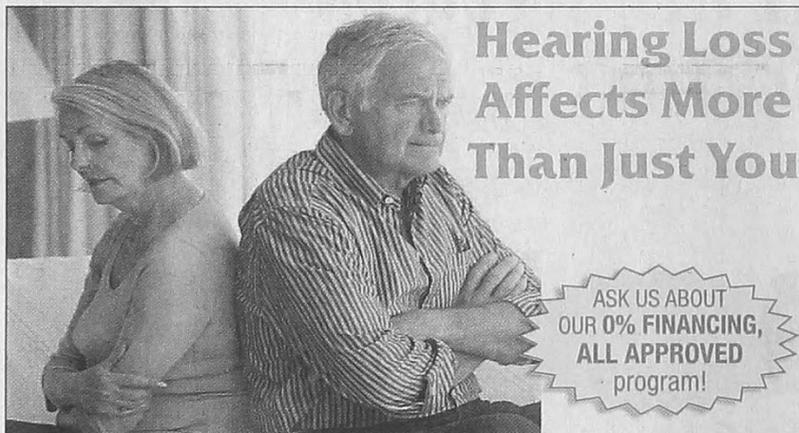
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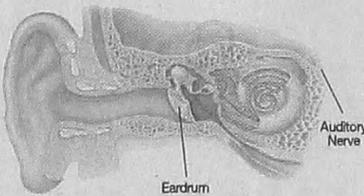


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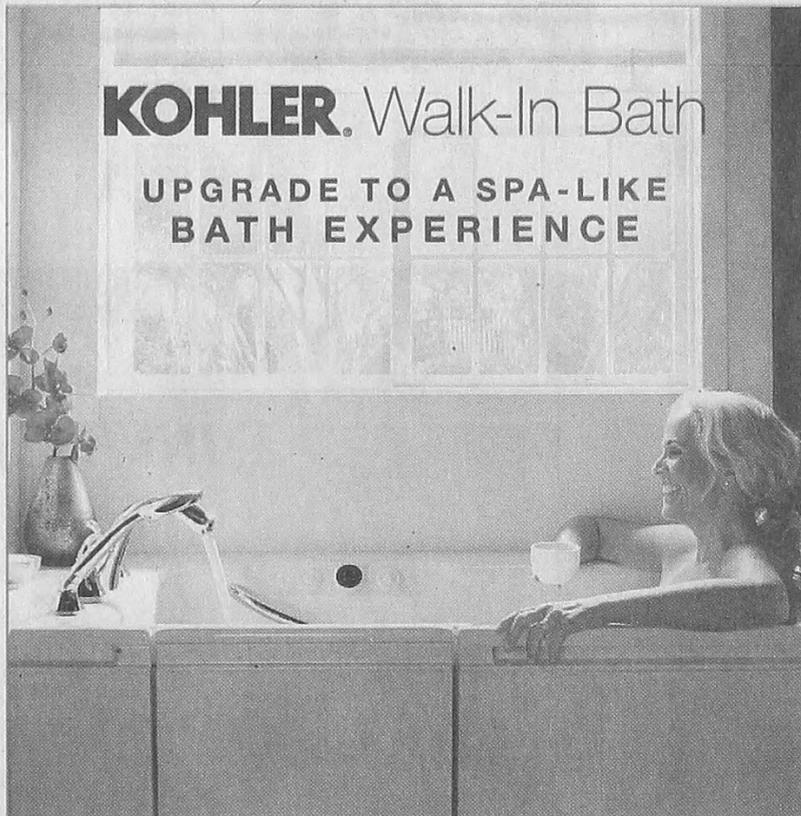


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