



Hometown Life's Top 10 high school teams of 2020

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2021 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Madonna to add animal studies major

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In an effort to meet what Madonna University believes is a demand among its students and southeast Michigan, the college plans to launch an animal studies major in the fall semester of 2021.

Madonna has offered a popular course called "Do animals matter?" for years and started a master's program for humane leadership in 2011, so some staff are already well-equipped to teach for the program, college administrators said.

"We've done things before toward this field, and this was just the right

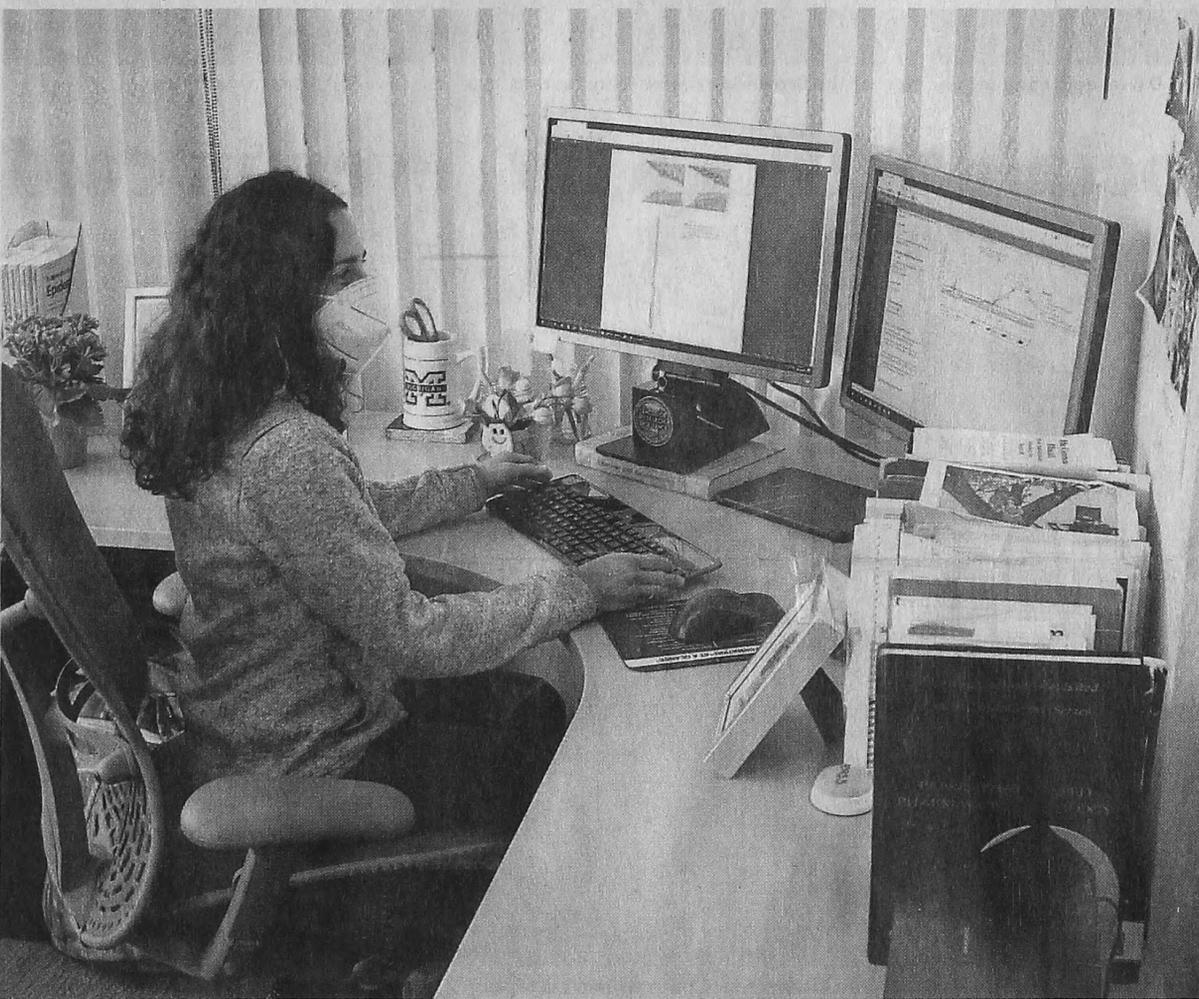
time," said Andrew Domzalski, a professor and chair of the college's humanities department. "The administration and president thought it would be a really good program to start."

The Livonia university has a long-standing relationship with the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak, which Domzalski believes will be a benefit to students, espe-

cially when it comes time to look for an internship. Domzalski also thinks local animal shelters and rescues could be potential partners for the college.

Students in the program will be required to have a minor, like business, graphic design, criminal justice or

See MAJOR, Page 4A



Dr. Emily Somers, an epidemiologist, works in her office at the University of Michigan's North Campus Research Center.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Plymouth epidemiologist a rock star in pandemic

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Dr. Emily Somers released a good-natured chuckle as she described how her sometimes misunderstood profession has gained a well-deserved uptick in recognition during 2020.

"Prior to the pandemic, I think most people thought epidemiologists were skin doctors," quipped Somers, a University of Michigan-based epidemiologist who has lived in Plymouth for close to 20 years. "A lot more people understand what we actually do now."

Affectionately referred to by many as "disease detectives," epidemiologists have become behind-the-scenes rock stars of sorts during COVID-19's horrendous spread across the globe — at least for people in the science community who understand the role Somers and her peers are playing.

See PANDEMIC, Page 4A

Which Masks Are Best for COVID-19?

Best	Good	Not recommended
 Multi-layered cloth mask	 Surgical mask	 Single-layered cloth mask
 Good fit Can be secured over nose, behind ears or around head, and under chin	 Tightly woven or high thread count cotton or cotton blend	 Lower thread count cotton, silk, linen, polyester
 Knitted mask	 Mask with vents	 Folded bandana
 Poor fit Noticeable gaps, holes or vents	 Unbreathable material such as plastic or leather	 Overly porous material such as nylon or fleece

COVID-19 RESOLVE Edition Vital Strategies More info at PreventEpidemics.org

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"Epidemiology is a method-heavy field. A lot of it is conducting clinical trials and evaluating how treatments or intervention may affect the adverse effects of chronic diseases."

Dr. Emily Somers Epidemiologist, University of Michigan

Westland leaders set goals for new year

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

2020 was unique in a lot of ways, and Westland government officials expect 2021 to be a different kind of year, as well.

In the final year of his current term, Mayor Bill Wild expects recreation, infrastructure and development will be among the areas he focuses on. He also expects Westland will feel the pandemic in a different way during 2021.

Continuing to navigate COVID-19

With a vaccine's arrival, Wild said he wants to work with the state to ensure Westland residents who want to be vaccinated have ample access to it.

Also related to the pandemic, the city is anticipating to lose as much as \$2 million from its fund balance in 2021. Officials will have a clearer picture of the city's financial situation in January once the annual audit takes place.

"What I'm a little concerned about is if we go into a prolonged shutdown after the first of the year," Wild said. "Our businesses are getting their tax bills this month, and the summer tax bill is a big bill. So, my fear is businesses will have a hard time paying taxes. That's something we'll be working with city council on."

The mayor said state and federal aid helped Westland financially in 2020, but the city will feel the economic effects of the pandemic in different ways next year.

"What financial impact is the city going to have from this COVID thing?" Council President Jim Hart said. "Usually, it takes a little while for cities to start feeling the ripple effect and economic impacts."

As the city continues to navigate COVID-19, Hart added he hopes to be able to have more in-person functions next year. City council has met virtually for most of the year.

"Zoom is allowing us to get the job done and keep people safe, but we're losing that personal interaction," he said.

Looking at a new recreation center, promoting the parks

The two officials agreed they'd like to see more done with the city's parks and recreation department as many

See GOALS, Page 4A





The Jezowski family, from left, Dan, Rachel and Dawn, enjoy an outdoor meal at the Browndog Barlor & Restaurant. PHOTOS BY ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Northville Social District a hit, even in cold

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Possibly the most-embraced "Road Closed" signs in southeast Michigan are the ones that stop traffic from entering Northville's downtown Social District near the intersection of Center and Main streets.

The proof was in the smiles of the diners — joyfully consuming their meals in 30-something-degree weather, warmed by propane-fed flames — as they sat smack-dab in the middle of Main Street on one recent late-December evening.

"This is great; we're able to eat outdoors in December *and* help the restaurants," said Dawn Jezowski, who drove from Linwood, Michigan, with her husband Dan and daughter Rachel to shop and dine in downtown Northville on Dec. 21. "We heard about the streets being closed (for dining and retail) and decided to stop and see what's going on. I'm glad we did."

"I'm getting heat from the flame and these (Browndog Barlor & Restaurant) tacos," Dan Jezowski added, smiling between bites.

Spurred by guidelines brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic (yes, there is at least one silver lining to 2020), Northville's downtown street closures have added more than a spoonful of big-city hipness to the already quaint city, business owners agreed.

The Social District, approved in June by the Northville City Council, allows guests to carry their beverages purchased from participating restaurants to a commons area, streets, sidewalks and plaza that are in a designated seat-



Browndog Director of Operations Greg Richards said patrons and his fellow business owners have raved about the closure of Main Street for outdoor dining.

ing area encompassed by East Main from Center to Hutton streets; and North Center from Main to Dunlap streets.

"Cities like Chicago and New York have been doing this for years," Browndog Director of Operations Greg Richards said. "We're getting consistent business every day, not just on week-

ends or when there's a festival.

"People are re-engaging with Northville because of the atmosphere this creates. We're getting people coming to downtown for the first time ever, or for the first time in a long time. I hope it continues, even beyond the pandemic."

As friends Jim Azzouz, Rema Nasif and Sameer Desai engaged in conversa-

tion while finishing their meals under a canopy on Main Street, just east of Center Street, on Dec. 21, they shared the same sentiments regarding Northville's new dining set-up.

"I love the experience; it brings the community together," said Azzouz. "I hope it continues as long as possible."

Nasif said she'd be willing to eat outdoors even if the temperature neared single digits.

"If there's a heater nearby, we're good," she said. "This area should be shut down (to traffic) year-round, if you ask me. It's phenomenal. I come down here as often as I can."

Desai said the Social District has been so popular that one local restaurant was sold out of food one night earlier in December.

"It's a great experience," Desai added. "It should be like this all the time, not just during the pandemic."

Table 5's Mishelle Lussier said the closure of downtown streets has been, "so far, so good."

"The weather has been agreeable, which has helped," said Lussier. "Obviously, we have less customers than usual, but, that said, it's been very popular."

Northville's city council will take another look at the Social District plan in March and decide as to whether it is extended for another several-month duration.

"Obviously, (an extension) will depend on people letting the city know how much they love it," Richards said. "The town is buzzing now, so hopefully it's extended."

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hometownlife.com

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Published Sunday and Thursday by
Observer & Eccentric Media

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Subscription Rates:

Newsstand price: \$1.50

\$104 per 12 months home delivery

Home Delivery:

Customer Service: 866-887-2737

Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday 7:30 a.m. to noon

Afterhours, leave voicemail

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Ruling: State can reimburse private schools

Dave Boucher Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

A divided Michigan Supreme Court ruled Monday the state may reimburse private schools for the cost of complying with state-mandated tasks, like employee background checks and immunizations.

The high court ruled 3-3 on the case. The split ruling results in a ruling from the state Court of Appeals being "affirmed by equal division."

The ruling upholds the lower court's 2018 decision that says Michigan law allowing reimbursement of private schools is constitutional as long as the money is for state-mandated requirements and not the actual education.

Three members of the Michigan Supreme Court agreed.

"It seems self-evident that any 'health, safety, or welfare' mandate, including any of those specifically listed in (the law), exists to provide for the health, safety, or welfare of such indi-

viduals as nonpublic-school students, and we struggle to conceive of any 'health, safety, or welfare' mandate concerning nonpublic schools that is not genuinely and in good faith incidental to the instruction of nonpublic-school children," wrote Justice Stephen J. Markman.

Justices Brian Zahra and David Viviano joined Markman in upholding the lower court ruling. Chief Justice Bridget McCormack, along with Justices Megan Cavanaugh and Richard Bernstein, would have ruled the lower court was wrong and the state law is unconstitutional.

They argued the three justices incorrectly interpreted previous decisions on state funding for public schools.

"For a nonpublic school, or any other organization in Michigan, complying with general health, safety, and welfare laws is just a cost of doing business," Cavanaugh wrote, on behalf of herself, McCormack and Bernstein.

The seventh member of the court, Justice Elizabeth Clement, recused her-

self, citing her previous work as chief legal counsel for former Gov. Rick Snyder. The question at the heart of the case originated in 2016 with an item in a budget signed by Snyder.

That year, the budget included up to \$2.5 million in public funds for private schools to cover the cost of state-mandated tasks. The proposal garnered immediate pushback from public school organizations, which argued the idea violated the state constitution.

"Time after time, the voters of Michigan have made it clear that public dollars should remain in public classrooms. This ruling, which flies in the face of that intent, is disappointing and we are exploring further legal options," said Peter Spadafore, deputy executive director of external relations for the Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators.

The ruling sends the case back to the Michigan Court of Claims, which must review how the state has disbursed funds under this law.

Kroger to offer COVID-19 vaccine at all of its 103 Michigan pharmacies

Susan Selasky Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Kroger Health, the health care division of the Kroger Co., is preparing to provide the COVID-19 vaccine at its pharmacies nationwide, including all 103 Kroger Michigan pharmacies.

Nationwide, Kroger has 2,200 pharmacies and 220 clinics under its umbrella of stores.

The Cincinnati-based grocer said it's worked with the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense and pharmaceutical companies to gear up for administering the vaccine.

Two vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, have been authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Kroger Health began distribution Christmas week in Alaska working with the state, according to a news release.

The company was to administer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to health care workers in Anchorage and Juneau.

To prepare for the vaccine rollout, which will be in phases and different areas, Kroger also announced the hiring of nearly 1,000 health care personnel.

"Kroger Health is a COVID-19 response leader that has provided our patients, associates and other businesses with diagnostic testing tools and supporting resources since the onset of this public health crisis," said Colleen Lindholz, Kroger Health's president. "Kroger Health's experienced health care providers remain committed to helping our patients and associates live healthier lives."

Once vaccines are available, Lindholz noted, the grocery giant's large-scale operations provide it with the ability to "immunize a large portion of the U.S. population."

While the vaccines will be adminis-



Kroger Health has announced that it plans to provide the COVID-19 vaccine nationwide across its 2,200 pharmacies and 220 clinics.

COURTESY OF KROGER

tered in priority phases as defined by federal and state governments, Kroger is advocating for its associates, deemed essential workers, to have priority access to the vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Sunday recommended that front-line essential workers, along with those 75 and older, be next in line for the COVID-19 vaccines after health care workers.

"As one of the most accessible health care partners in the U.S., Kroger Health is prepared and ready to play an active role in helping distribute the vaccine in collaboration with public health officials and community partners," said Dr. Marc Watkins, Kroger Health's chief medical officer.

"Our most urgent priority throughout this pandemic has been to protect and provide a safe environment for our associates and patients while meeting our societal obligation to provide open stores, e-commerce solutions and an efficiently operating supply chain so that our communities have access to fresh, affordable food, essentials and health care."

Unemployment benefits extended

Delays on tap after bills finally pass

Adrienne Roberts Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

The more than half a million Michigan residents who saw their unemployment benefits expire at the end of last week were offered some relief with eleventh-hour stimulus packages at both the federal and state levels.

In the waning days of 2020, Michigan Republican and Democratic lawmakers from both legislative chambers approved a \$465 million relief package, extending state unemployment benefits to 26 weeks, six months, through March. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is expected to sign the bill into law.

At nearly the same time, the U.S. Congress passed a \$900 billion relief package that would provide a federal supplement to unemployment insurance of \$300 through mid-March, and extend Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) programs.

President Donald Trump last Tuesday called the bill a "disgrace," but he ultimately signed it Sunday evening after about 386,000 PUA claimants and the 234,000 PEUC filers in Michigan saw their benefits expire Saturday, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Expect delays

The federal legislation would extend the PUA and PEUC programs until March 14. No new applicants will be accepted after this time, and all benefits will end April 5, Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency said Monday. Beginning at the end of January, new and active claimants must provide documentation as opposed to self-certification, as is currently the case, to substantiate employment status, the agency said.

PEUC will work similarly as PUA, extending benefits to a total of 24 weeks for those who have exhausted their benefits, up from 13. Those benefits will also end on April 5, the agency said.

All claimants would also get a \$300 supplemental benefit that would last through that same time period. With the maximum of \$362 offered by the state, filers could get up to \$662 weekly.

The two stimulus packages represent yet another change to unemployment benefits since the early days of the pandemic in March. That month, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act, cre-

ating the PUA program, along with granting an extra 13 benefit weeks for regular claimants, PEUC. It also added a \$600 federal supplemental benefit.

That federal benefit expired at the end of July with Congress unable to reach another deal. Trump stepped in then, signing an executive order that added \$300 weekly in federal funds. That benefit lasted six weeks.

Since September, when those funds expired, claimants in Michigan have received a maximum of \$362 per week.

In October, another program kicked in, called Extended Benefits, or EB, a mostly federally funded program. The program starts when a state's jobless rate averages more than 8% for three consecutive months, and it offers an additional 20 weeks of benefits. To be eligible, claimants had to exhaust the 26 weeks of state benefits and the 13 weeks of PEUC.

That program is still available in Michigan, said Lynda Robinson, a spokesperson for Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency, and will end when the 13-week average of the Insured Unemployment rate drops below 5%. That hasn't happened yet.

"The agency is closely monitoring the activity and will notify claimants when EB is no longer available," she said.

While the EB program will continue, claimants of the PEUC and PUA programs should expect a delay in receiving their benefits, which are backdated to Dec. 27.

There's no estimate available yet for when benefits could resume, Robinson said, but she confirmed there will be a delay and the agency will work "as quickly as possible to implement the changes."

Uncertainty remains

It's still unclear who exactly will be eligible for the new set of benefits and how these various state and federal programs will interconnect with each other.

Kathy Shelton, a 59-year-old Auburn Hills resident, is worried because she's exhausted the 39 weeks of available PUA benefits, and doesn't know whether she'll be eligible for the extension.

Shelton's career has been in flux ever since a contract under which she provided organic hot lunches to a local private school expired two years ago. She took that time to focus on her writing, working at a community newspaper, but Shelton was laid off because of budget constraints.

"I found that at this age, it's really



Michigan Republican and Democratic lawmakers from both legislative chambers recently approved a \$465 million relief package. GETTY IMAGES

hard to reinvent yourself," she said. "So I've struggled with my jobs and I have done a bunch of different things."

That only became more difficult in the pandemic. Finding a career was nearly impossible, she said, and even some temporary jobs she had dried up, such as driving a Kona shaved ice truck, senior care and nannying.

"When you're a floater who depends on a lot of different streams of income and they all stop, it's really, really hard to figure out how to make ends meet," Shelton said.

Shelton was able to receive PUA benefits early on in the pandemic, but after the \$600 federal supplement expired, sometimes she was receiving just \$20 a week in benefits on top of a part-time job at a call center that pays \$11 an hour.

When the state's moratorium on evictions expired, she and her daughter were evicted from their apartment. Now, they're living in an extended-stay hotel and Shelton's car is about to get repossessed, she said.

"I'm out of my PUA — my weeks have expired — and I don't have any job prospects on the horizon," said Shelton. "They're saying the pandemic is going to get worse. And I'm in a really, really bad situation."

Shelton should be eligible for an additional 11 weeks of benefits if she's unemployed due to COVID-19, Robinson said, as the maximum amount of weeks

have been extended to 50. However, she said there will be a delay in the extension.

Temporary relief

Despite the fact that COVID-19 cases are rising around the country and businesses are permanently closing their doors, the action taken at the federal and state level will only provide temporary relief, economists and unemployment experts say.

The left-leaning Economic Policy Institute called the 11-week extension of PUA and PEUC benefits in a recent news release "wholly insufficient and guarantees millions will exhaust benefits by the middle of March, when the virus will still be surging and job openings will still be scarce relative to the number of job seekers."

Meanwhile, Democratic state lawmakers and claimant advocates have been calling for a permanent extension of unemployment benefits to 26 weeks, up from 20, along with an increase in the weekly benefit amount.

"This is a crisis for the Michigan worker," said Rep. Donna Lasinski, D-Scio Township, on a call with reporters last month. "We are behind other states."

She called the permanent addition of six extra benefit weeks "the difference between staying at home while looking for work and losing their home."

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Farmington Hills adds 10 officers to police force

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Farmington Hills Police Department has added 10 new faces to its force. The city's police chief, Jeff King, held a swearing-in ceremony for the new officers Dec. 18. All 10 officers are currently assigned to the department's patrol division in the operations bureau, where they will continue to be trained. Though the ceremony was held out-

doors to keep in line with local health guidelines, the new officers' family and friends were invited to celebrate with them. All 10 officers graduated from Michigan police academies, and local high schools like North Farmington, Livonia Franklin, Catholic Central and South Lyon East are among their alma maters. Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.



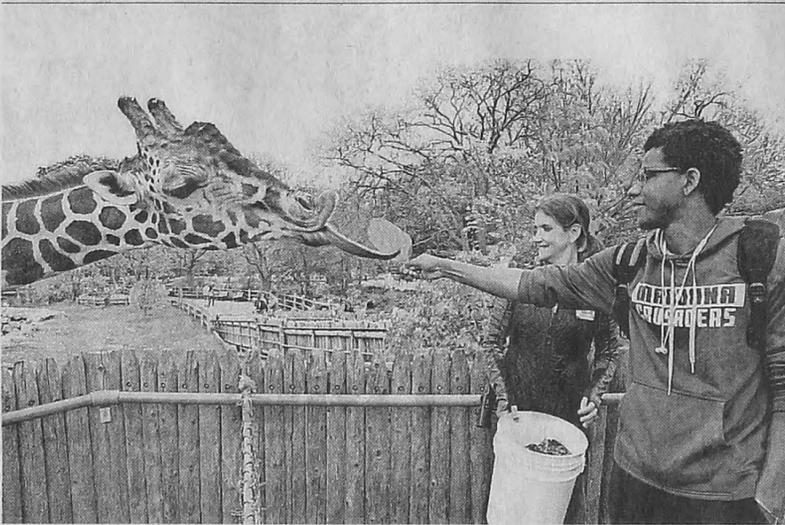
Farmington Hills swore in 10 new police officers in December. COURTESY OF THE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS.

Two dead, one injured after incident at Garden City home

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Garden City police say two people are dead and another is critically injured after they received 911 calls from a home in the city Dec. 23. In a press release shared via social media, the Garden City Police Department said they received a 911 call just before 11 a.m. from an unidentified man. The caller told dispatchers he was contemplating suicide and that officials should track his location. After he hung up, officials used his phone number to determine he was calling from a home in the 32500 block of Rosslyn, southeast of the Marquette/Venoy intersection. Police were dispatched to the home

and discovered two people were dead when they entered the house, with a third critically injured. The injured individual was taken to a local hospital for treatment. After police conducted an initial investigation, it appeared all three were related, with one of the deceased being the original 911 caller. Police did not release any other information regarding the people found in the home, including ages or places of residence. Police did not say how the two deceased individuals died. The incident remains under investigation by both the Garden City Police Department with the assistance of the Michigan State Police crime scene technicians.



Madonna University will have its first animal studies students in the fall. COURTESY OF MADONNA UNIVERSITY

Major

Continued from Page 1A

communications. Faculty expect having a minor study will benefit students when they enter the job market. "The jobs that are animal-related are really growing," Domzalski said. "This is a field that people are more and more interested. While it's not a biology major or zoology major, it adds social science, knowledge of animals and humanities. So, the students will be very marketable." As a professor, Domzalski said he's

most excited to teach students to be ethical, humane stewards of the animal kingdom. "I'm really excited that we will be training people who will work at animal-related organizations like zoos, the DNR and conservation organizations," he said. "Our goal is for the animals to be treated fairly and, at the same time, for humans to be able to enjoy them as much as we can. I'm excited to train students to achieve that balance." Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.

Goals

Continued from Page 1A

people have been cooped up for most of the year. "I think that's going to be even more important now since everybody has been locked up for a year," Hart said. "We really need to come up with programming and encourage people to come out of their houses and get active and get back to this path we were on to create a vibrant community." In the mayor's office, Wild is looking at the former Marshall Middle School on Venoy as a potential new recreation and senior center. Wild said the school, which has two basketball courts, a track and a baseball field, could be a similar development to what the Farmington Hills government is currently redeveloping with the former Harrison High School building. "It's really got a lot of recreational opportunities," he said.

Other developments

In the beginning of 2021, Westland will award out its first recreational marijuana licenses. The newly-seated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission and the Ethics Commission, which Wild said he plans to fill by the year's end, will start meeting early in the new year, as well. In the first quarter, the city will also know if it's moving forward with a water authority under consideration between Westland, Livonia, Canton and Northville Township. The water-buy-

ing consortium could, in the long run, save residents of the four cities money on their water bills. "We'll be spending a lot of time looking at the potential water authority that we're studying with Livonia, Canton and Northville Township," Wild said. "I expect we'll have a pretty good idea in the first quarter of 2021 if that's going to move forward." Wild and Hart would both like to see the old city hall facility on Ford Road get a new purpose in 2021, as well. Westland's current city hall was built in 2015. "That's just sitting there and we're putting in efforts to market that," Hart said. "Really, we want to develop that property."

Local government shakeups

Wild isn't completely sure if he's going to try for a third term as mayor, but said he's leaning toward another reelection campaign. "I'm going to make a decision during the holidays, and I'll make an announcement in January," he said. City council may see new faces, as well. The seats currently held by Hart, Jim Godbout, Peter Herzberg and Tasha Green will all be on the election ballot in fall 2021. In Westland, council members do not have term limits, so those members could all run to retain those seats. "I really like how our elections happen here in the City of Westland," Hart said. "I like that it's every two years and four seats so we never have a flush of institutional knowledge." Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448. Follow her on Twitter @shelby_tankk.



Westland Mayor Bill Wild hopes to turn the former Marshall Upper Elementary school into a recreation center in the coming years. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Pandemic

Continued from Page 1A

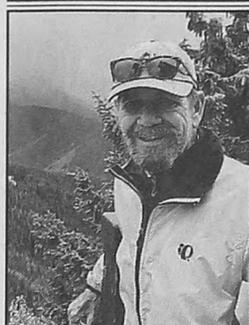
Using data, research and a dogged determination to uncover evidence that will help contain the spread of COVID-19, Somers has been a difference-maker in her field, leading studies that have led to widespread protocol changes for schools, hospitals and, well, everyday life. "Epidemiology is a method-heavy field," said Somers. "A lot of it is conducting clinical trials and evaluating how treatments or intervention may affect the adverse effects of chronic diseases." Somers said she started seeing figurative red flags related to COVID-19 popping up early in 2020. "I started getting fairly concerned (about COVID-19) in late January, but there are a lot of evolving viruses and diseases that happen in the world, so it's hard to pick which one will truly become a pandemic type of outbreak," she said. "It wasn't until mid-February, based on what I was hearing from my respected colleagues, that it was looking more inevitable that (COVID-19) was going to be serious because there was too much travel taking place and not enough shut-

downs. It got to the point where containing it was going to be difficult, I thought." As the world started learning the true meaning of the words quarantine, pandemic and isolation in early spring, Somers, who specializes in autoimmune diseases, particularly lupus, and her colleagues shifted their data-collecting energies toward COVID-19. Maria Van Kerkhove, with whom Somers shared an Ann Arbor office, joined the World Health Organization's coronavirus team, a move that gave Somers a sense of reassurance. "When Maria started showing up on the news a lot," Somers recounted, "I was so grateful that someone I knew, someone who had tons of integrity and had been studying coronaviruses for several years, was at the helm." Although most of Somers' game-changing work is accomplished in a sterile Ann Arbor office, she has played a significant role in helping the medical community and schools grow safer, one slice of data at a time. One study she guided determined that critically ill COVID-19 patients who received a single dose of the drug tocilizumab were 45% less likely to die overall, compared with those who didn't receive the drug; and they were more likely to be out of the hospital or off a ventilator one month after treatment, the

research showed. Somers also volunteered to serve as a consultant for the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools in its quest to secure the safest return-to-school protocols. "The return-to-school situation is a tough one," Somers said. "I see myself not as someone who can make a binary recommendation — whether it's safe for kids to go back to in-person learning or not — rather someone who can provide information to the school board and administration as to how and when we can mostly safely return to school." Somers had words of wisdom for people who may be hesitant to get vaccinated: Don't be. "The vaccines that have been approved have gone through rigorous safety processes," she said. "I'll be absolutely getting the vaccine when I'm eligible." "Clinical trials demonstrate that vaccines significantly reduce risk of symptomatic and severe COVID-19 illness. Translating this monumental scientific achievement into public health benefit will rely on as many people as possible participating in vaccination programs. We are still learning about the extent to which vaccines reduce risk of transmission of the virus. Therefore, continuing precautions such as wearing masks and physical distancing will remain an important part of our multi-pronged strat-

egy until rates of disease in the population drop to very low levels." While encouraged by the potential of the vaccines that have been approved, Somers urged caution regarding the prospect of issuing vaccine passports like cell-phone QR codes or vaccination certificates would allow people to attend mass gatherings like sporting events or concerts. "Rather than 'vaccine passports,' as have been proposed by some, I believe getting the case numbers in our community down is the primary goal before we can safely go back to large, crowded events," Somers said. "For example, in New Zealand things like restaurants and sporting events have safely reopened without a vaccine." During her limited, social-distanced excursions into the Plymouth community, Somers had been encouraged overall by the precautions taken by residents. "I feel like people are taking this very seriously," she said. "I would say that perhaps a little more education as to how to wear a mask would help. I see a lot of people wearing masks over their mouth only and not their nose. I see folks wearing face shields without a mask under the shield. I think it's important for people to know that face shields are fine for protection, but only if they're worn over a mask."

Obituaries



Michael M. Bookmyer

Bookmyer, Michael M., age 68, December 20, 2020.

Known to many as Bookie. Beloved husband of Allison. Loving father of Sarah Carlson (Scott) and Peter Bookmyer. Proud grandfather of Evelyn and Weston Carlson. Dear brother of Kelly Sallee, Brad Bookmyer (Becky), Julie Murphy (Dan), Thad Bookmyer, Robert Bookmyer (Janet), and the late Peter Bookmyer. Memorial Service Summer 2021. Memorials appreciated to Brother Rice High School.

Obituary and condolences at lynchfuneral-directors.com

Joan Keller

ANN ARBOR - Joan Keller passed away peacefully in Ann Arbor, MI on December 9, 2020, with family by her side. She was born in Detroit on June 13, 1931, to Rosabel (nee Rivett) and George Frederick Brush. After graduating from Southeastern High School in Detroit, Joan attended the University of Michigan, where she received her BA in education in 1953 and was a member of Alpha Chi Omega. While teaching elementary school in Ann Arbor she met Charles 'Charlie' Keller who was attending the University of Michigan Law School. They were married at Eastminster Presbyterian Church on August 11, 1956.

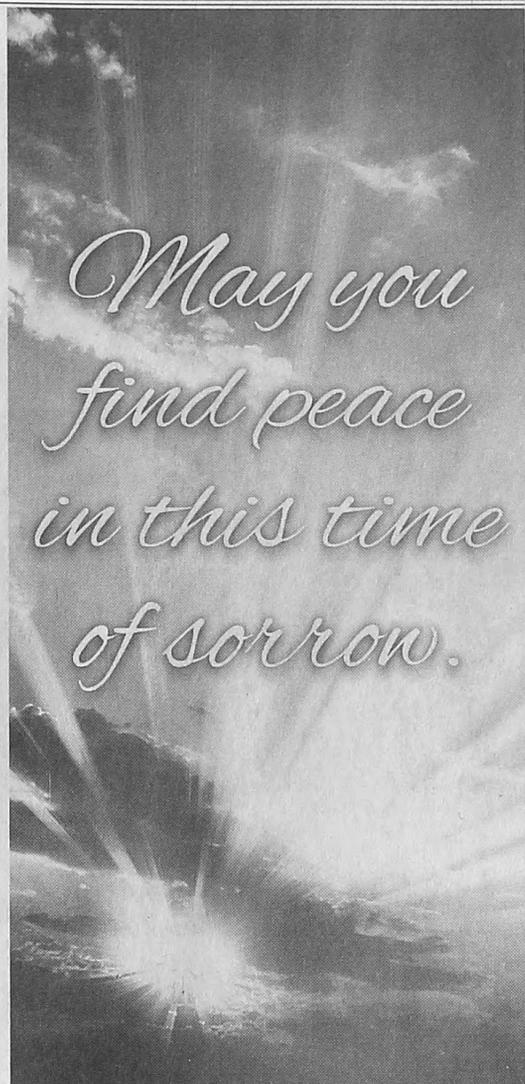
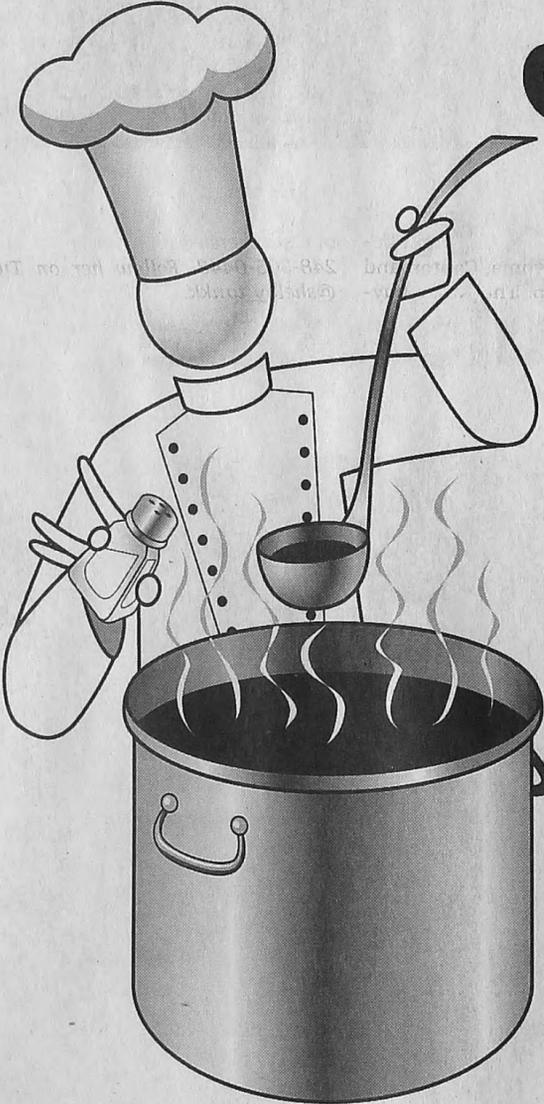


A long time resident of Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills, Joan was very active in her community. She was heavily involved in the St. James Church, a Board Member of the Rehabilitation Institute of MI and Detroit Country Day Board of Trustees, and Director of Development at Sacred Heart Academy. Joan was an active member of the Village Women's Club and Orchard Lake Country Club, PEO, Nomads, a patron of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and a passionate advocate for her local libraries in Bloomfield Hills and Sault Ste. Marie. Joan thoroughly enjoyed traveling, gardening, playing bridge, reading, cooking, and most of all, spending time with family and close friends at her summer cabin on Neebish Island.

Joan was predeceased by her husband, Charles, and longterm friend, Edward McCallum. She is survived by her three children, Katherine and husband David, Matthew and wife Joy, and Charles Jr.; her beloved grandchildren, Zachary, Samuel, and Micaela; her brother Tom (Sally) Brush, sister Judy (Joan Roarke) Mann; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

We are grateful to the staff of Brecon Village, Saline for their care and love of Joan, and to Arbor Hospice for their kindness and caring until the end of her life.

A celebration of life will be held in the future when all can gather in a safe and healthy manner. In memory of Joan please consider a donation to one of the following public libraries which held a special place in her heart and life. Bloomfield Township Public Library (248-642-5800) or the Bayliss Public Library in Sault Ste. Marie (906-632-9331).

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A black and white photograph of two young women walking together, smiling and looking at each other. They are both carrying large, light-colored paper shopping bags. The woman on the left has long, light-colored hair and is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and dark pants. The woman on the right has long, dark hair and is wearing a dark-colored top and jeans. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a shopping mall or a street.

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SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Hometown Life's Top 10 teams of 2020

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In a year that defined the word unprecedented, high school athletics proved to be no match for 2020.

From the highest of highs — the wins, the state championships — to the unreal — the postponements, the uncertainty because of the COVID-19 pandemic — teams throughout the Hometown Life coverage area found a way to shine in the midst of everything that was going on this year.

Here are the top 10 teams that we covered in 2020.

Honorable mentions Mercy volleyball

Coming off a Division 1 state title in 2019, Mercy came out firing again in 2020. Led by senior setter Julia Bishop and senior middle blocker Charli Atiemo — both first-team All-State — the Marlins only lost 11 sets in 35 games all year, earning sweeps in 29 games, including all seven regular season Catholic League games. However, after falling to rival Marian in five sets in the Catholic League final, the Marlins lost to the Mustangs in the regional final in five sets to end their season.

North Farmington football

After an inconsistent start to the 2020 season — beating Rochester Adams by one in overtime and losing big to Rochester Hills Stoney Creek — North Farmington began to find its groove. The Raiders scored 44 points in each of its first two playoff appearances, finding momentum both offensively and defensively despite having three forfeit games during the season: two wins and one loss. Junior split end Aaron Rice and senior running back Justin Whitehorn

See TOP 10, Page 3B



Mercy senior Julia Bishop sets up a teammate against Marian.
TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



The Chargers run a play during practice Dec. 21 after a lengthy delay brought on by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Three area football teams return to practice after pause

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

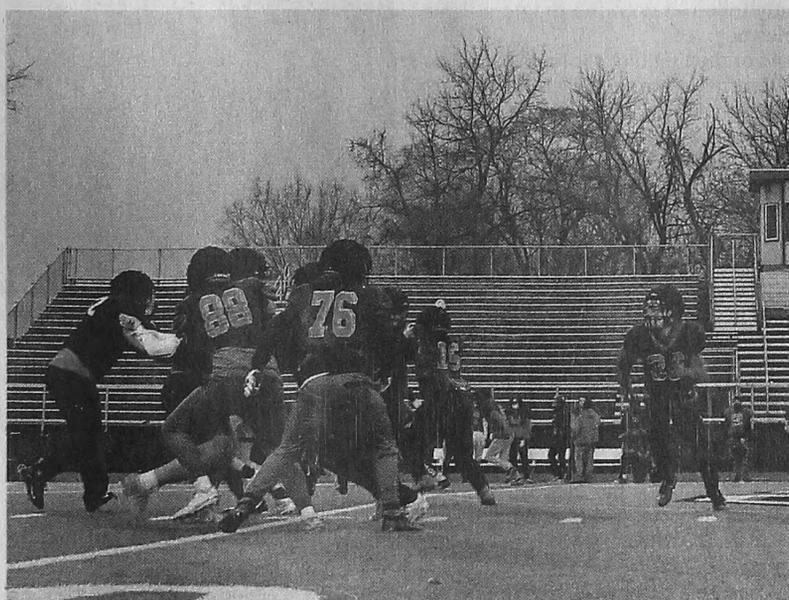
At the end of each practice, Detroit Catholic Central football lines its players up on the sideline. Position group by position group, each takes its turn, running to the other sideline and back as fast as possible.

Each group had four turns, and with each one, the rain/snow mix of a mid-December evening began to fall heavier and heavier.

This was not a time meant for football. But the Shamrocks would not have it any other way.

"They have been through more than any group I have ever seen," Catholic Central head coach Dan Anderson said. "They are not going to let anything get them down. They are going to keep pushing and fighting and clawing and scratching."

See FOOTBALL, Page 2B



Under falling rain and in temperatures near freezing, Churchill players practice.

MHSFCA releases 2020 All State football teams

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

While those teams still in the play-off race wait to see if they will get a shot at a state title, the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association released its 2020 All State teams.

Here's a look at the members of the team who made it from our coverage area.

Division 1 First team defense

- Canton senior linebacker Aran Patrick

Division 2 First team offense

- Seaholm offensive lineman Caden DeWald
- Livonia Franklin offensive lineman Kyle Fugedi
- North Farmington junior tight end Aaron Rice
- North Farmington senior running back Justin Whitehorn

First team defense

- South Lyon senior defensive lineman Gus Taylor

Division 3 First team offense

- Garden City senior offensive lineman Hunter Ohman

First team defense

- Brother Rice senior defensive back Rocco Milia

Division 4 First team offense

- Detroit Country Day senior offensive lineman Caleb Tiernan

First team defense

- Cranbrook Kingswood senior defensive lineman Bryce Hall
- Detroit Country Day senior defensive back Danny Maclean

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @Colin-Gay17. Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

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The Dallas Stars and Tampa Bay Lightning, the Stanley Cup finalists, will meet Jan. 17 in Tampa, Florida.

PERRY NELSON/USA TODAY SPORTS

NHL season promises big games

Mike Brehm
USA TODAY

The NHL is starting a 56-game season on Jan. 13 with five games, including the Tampa Bay Lightning raising their Stanley Cup banner in a game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

The season is scheduled to end on May 8, with 30 of the 31 teams in action. The playoffs will begin on May 11.

To minimize travel amid the coronavirus pandemic, teams at points will play an opponent for two to three consecutive games in a city before moving on to the next opponent. Game times weren't announced in Wednesday's release.

Here are some of the biggest games ahead in the new season:

New York Islanders at New York Rangers, Jan. 14: Forward Alexis Lafreniere, the 2020 No. 1 overall pick, will make his NHL debut with the Rangers. He'll face the 2019 No. 1 pick, New Jersey Devils forward Jack Hughes, on Jan. 19.

Dallas Stars at Lightning, Jan. 17:

The Lightning won an entertaining six-game Final against the Stars. Usually they would face each other two times in the following season, but this season, they'll face each other eight times. Tampa Bay will be without leading scorer Nikita Kucherov, who will have hip surgery and miss the regular season.

Lightning at Columbus Blue Jackets, Jan. 21: This is turning into a nice rivalry. The Blue Jackets shocked the Lightning in 2019 with a first-round sweep, and Tampa Bay beat Columbus last season on the way to its Stanley Cup title. Because of realignment, they're in the same division this year.

Boston Bruins at Washington Capitals, Jan. 30: The Capitals have won their division the past five seasons, but realignment moved in the Bruins. Boston had the top regular-season record last season, with 10 more points than the Capitals, before March.

Vegas Golden Knights at San Jose Sharks, Feb. 1: Current Santa Clara

County rules make it impossible for the Sharks to play now at SAP Center. The Sharks, who are holding training camp in Arizona, will open the season with an eight-game road trip.

Calgary Flames at Vancouver Canucks, Feb. 11: Calgary's Jacob Markstrom, who led the Canucks' playoff upset of the Blues, landed the biggest free agent goalie contract with a six-year, \$36 million deal. Former Washington Capitals goalie Braden Holtby is the new Canucks goalie.

Flames at Ottawa Senators, Feb. 25: All-Star brothers Matthew (Calgary) and Brady Tkachuk (Ottawa) will face each other in four consecutive games, three in Ottawa and one in Calgary.

Golden Knights at St. Louis Blues, March 12: Defenseman Alex Pietrangolo lifted the Stanley Cup in 2019 as Blues captain. But he signed a seven-year, \$61.6 million contract with the Golden Knights in the fall in the biggest signing of the offseason.

MHSAA releases winter sports schedule

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Michigan High School Athletic Association approved its regular season calendar for indoor winter sports to begin Jan. 16.

Indoor practices for boys and girls basketball, bowling, competitive cheer, gymnastics, boys swim and dive, hockey and wrestling may begin Jan. 16. Basketball, bowling, hockey, and swimming and diving may begin competitions Jan. 22, while competitive cheer, gymnastics and wrestling will start Jan. 25.

The MHSAA is permitting hockey teams to play two games on one school day twice — with four games total during that two-week period. Wrestling teams are allowed two dates of competition per week with competitions limited to four teams per site.

Winter postseason schedule

- Basketball**
- Girls districts - March 8, 10 and 12; boys districts - March 9, 11 and 13
 - Girls regionals - March 16 and 18; boys regionals - March 17 and 19
 - Girls quarterfinals, semifinals and finals - March 22 (QF), March 24 (semifinals - two sites) and March 26 (finals); boys quarterfinals, semifinals and finals - March 23 (QF), March 25 (semifinals - two sites) and March 27 (finals)

Bowling

- Regionals - March 19-20
- Finals - March 26-27

Competitive Cheer

- Districts - March 5-6
- Regionals - March 13
- Finals - March 19-20

Gymnastics

- Regionals - March 20
- Finals - March 26-27

Hockey

- Regionals - March 15-20
- Finals - March 25-27

Boys swimming and diving

- Boys Dive Regionals - March 18
- Boys Finals - March 26-27

Wrestling

- District week - March 1
- Regional week - March 8
- Team finals - March 19-20
- Individual finals - March 26-27

Football

Continued from Page 1B

"They have done it throughout the roller coaster ride of COVID and I think they are doing it out on the football field too."

More than a month removed from the district finals, Michigan high school football teams returned to the practice field Dec. 21, taking advantage of a brief opportunity the Michigan High School Athletic Association and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to get ready to finish the season.

A few days earlier, the MDHHS announced that schools would receive rapid COVID-19 testing to use when students return to the classroom in January. Working with the MHSAA, MDHHS Director Robert Gordon felt that the remaining teams left in the fall athletics postseason — football, volleyball, and girls swim and dive — would be a perfect sample size to see how testing would work in schools.

With this, Livonia Churchill, Catholic Central and North Farmington, after the season was paused after earning a district title, have a chance to finish what it started.

Each of these teams had their season paused in the regional rounds, which is now scheduled to be played Jan. 9. The Chargers will take on Oak Park, the Shamrocks will take on Davison and North Farmington will face Traverse City Central.

After the announcement, Churchill head football coach Bill DeFillippo immediately scheduled a Zoom call with his coaching staff, scheduled one for his team the next day to give them the schedule, including a return to the field Monday, which lasted two days.

But coaching staffs and players alike were caught extremely off guard by the announcement of a return to play.

"Honestly I think whether you are a coach or a player, I think you shake your head a little bit and go do what you are going to do," DeFillippo said. "No one, from talking to the kids and the coach-

es... even when they did the conference the other day, at the beginning they said it was going to be canceled. Then towards the end, it was "Looks like we are playing again."

Whatever it takes

With the rapid antigen COVID-19 testing being available, football teams, along with the other fall teams, will have to test players, coaches and those directly involved with the program three times per week.

As of the first day of practice, Catholic Central, Churchill and North Farmington were expected to receive their tests Wednesday.

The Raiders, until that point, will be holding non-contact practices until they have the ability to test, according to head coach Jon Herstein, focusing on acclimation and conditioning as his team returns to the field.

"I'll do whatever it takes," North Farmington senior quarterback Jacob Bousamra said of the testing. "I just want to get back out here. I just wish we could have done it sooner."

Churchill quarterback Gavin Brooks had spent much of the time off continuing to work with his receivers at the Chargers football field, staying loose and in shape ahead of what they were hoping to come.

While he said players were still a bit out of shape, Brooks feels the Chargers are not all the way back at square one.

"It feels like we have been on a bye week," Brooks said. "When we got back in the locker room and everyone was there, it felt like it was normal again."

Bousamra did the same with the Raiders offense, saying that with the work put in during the pause, he expects for the North Farmington offense to pick up where it left off.

Anderson, watching as his team restarted its process of preparing for reigning Division 1 state champion Davison was impressed, but not surprised, having been in close contact with his team throughout the pause via Zoom, Hudl and other platforms.

"They seem to pick up stuff pretty



North Farmington football players arrive to practice Monday afternoon.

COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

quick, this group. They are a really smart group of guys and they were pretty sharp today," Anderson said. "Obviously you got some stuff you have to do, but I was really, I told some of the coaches, especially offensively, I thought 'Wow, they were telling each other what to do.' It was good."

'It doesn't feel real'

North Farmington junior split end Aaron Rice spent his pause using weight and speed training to remain in shape, but admitted he was mentally preparing for the Raiders basketball season.

When he took the field Monday afternoon, he was still in a level of disbelief.

"It doesn't feel real," he said. "This year, we have a special team and we were really doing something special. We just have to get back in our groove now, get back to where we started."

Each team has a different path to where they want to get at the end: Churchill has Oak Park, Catholic Central has Davison and North Farmington has Tra-

verse City Central.

All three of these teams have something in common: all three have been sitting on film of their respective opponent for over a month, dissecting what that matchup would look like, even when many felt it would not happen until March.

But the fire remained, that desire of a state title. And while teams may look different — with players absent due to family obligations or prior commitments — the want is still there.

That's why each team showed up in late December, a time that was not meant for high school football.

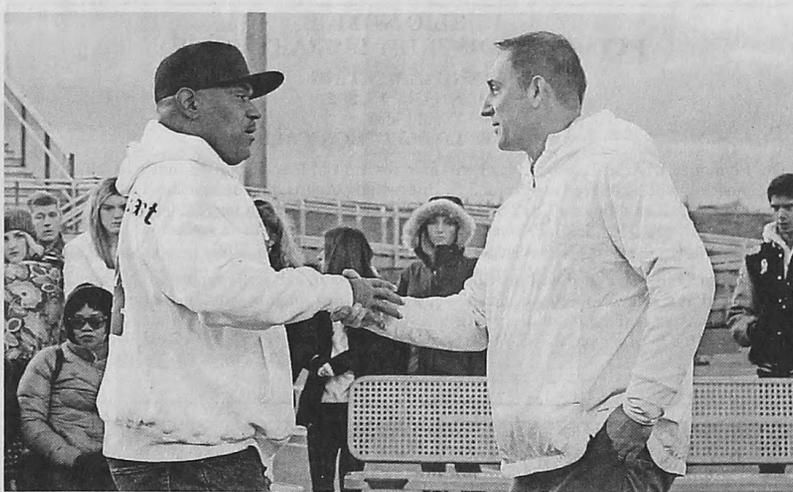
But they would not have it any other way.

"If you don't have a goal of winning a state championship, there's no point in being out here at this point," Bousamra said. "If we are out here, then you have the expectation of winning it all."

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



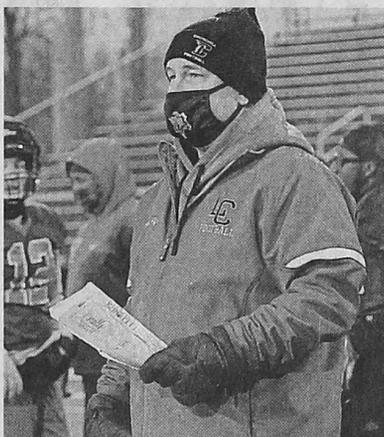
Justin Whitehorn has made his presence known in the backfield in his first season with North Farmington. COURTESY OF JUSTIN WHITEHORN



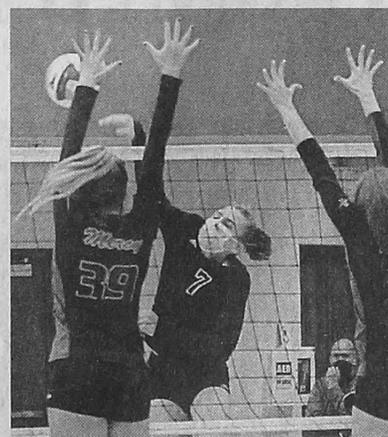
South Lyon East football coach Joe Pesci, right, greets Trevon Tyler's father Victor Tyler Sr. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



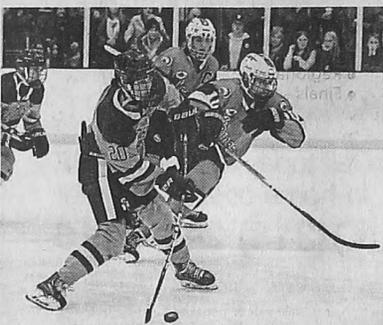
Novi's varsity volleyball team hits the gym Dec. 21 to prepare for the resumption of the state playoffs.



Livonia Churchill coach Bill DeFillippo watches his team practice Dec. 21.



Marian's Ava Brizard spikes the ball toward Mercy players.



The stick of Catholic Central's JC Garbaci visibly flexes as he takes a slap shot at the Brother Rice goal



South Lyon girls golf capture the program's first-ever state title after 12 consecutive state final appearances. COURTESY OF DAN SKATZKA



Detroit Catholic Central football players gather after their first practice since the season was delayed. COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Detroit Catholic Central players celebrate their state soccer title over Traverse City West on Nov. 7.



Northville golfer Samantha Coleman led the Mustangs to their third-straight state title. COURTESY OF DEBBIE STEIN



Catholic Central won its fourth straight Division 1 team state title. COURTESY OF SCOTT CONFER

Top 10

Continued from Page 1B

— both first-team All-State — will try and start 2021 with that same groove: facing Traverse City Central in the regional final.

Top 10 10. South Lyon East football

While South Lyon East football is not still in the playoff hunt, the team had to overcome a lot during its 2020 season. Former South Lyon East offensive lineman Trevon Tyler died after complications he had from a surgery in November 2019. Led by senior quarterback Zander Desentz and a defense that allowed three touchdowns or less in all but one game this season, South Lyon East recorded its best season in school history in memory of Tyler, winning five-of-eight games. The Cougars lost its three games by an average of 7.7 points, including one-score losses to rival South Lyon and Chelsea in the district semifinal.

9. Novi volleyball

After starting the postseason with a dramatic five-set win against KLAAs rival Northville, Novi has had a dominant path to the state quarterfinal. The Wildcats have swept each of its past four playoff opponents — adding to its total of 23 during the 2020 season, including all but three of their regular-season league games. Led by second-team All State senior libero Rachel Jennings, along with All-Region honorees Sarah Vellucci and Gaby Cummings, Novi will

open 2021 with a state quarterfinal match against Ann Arbor Skyline.

8. Livonia Churchill football

Heading into 2020, hopes were high for Livonia Churchill football. One season after advancing to the regional final — losing by a touchdown to Walled Lake Western — the Chargers came out on fire again, averaging 32.5 points per game, including four games of 35 points or more. Coming out on top of close regular season games against area rivals Stevenson and Franklin to earn a city title, senior quarterback Gavin Brooks and senior safety Jimmy Targosz will lead Churchill to a regional final matchup with Oak Park to start 2021.

7. Detroit Catholic Central football

One season removed from missing the playoffs for only the third time since 2006, the Shamrocks were back to its old ways in 2020, winning each of its nine games with a high-octane offense — junior quarterback Declan Byle leading Catholic Central to 29.8 points per game, its highest total since 2016 — and a shut down defense that allowed 81 total points with the help of high pressure on the defensive line. The Shamrocks seem to be on a path that rivals its 2016 state final run, which will continue against Davison in the regional final.

6. Marian volleyball

After being swept by Catholic League rival Mercy twice in the regular season, Marian, without a senior on its roster, regrouped and showed up when it counted. The Mustangs beat the Mar- lins in five sets in both the Catholic

League final and the regional final to give Marian a state quarterfinal bid against Macomb Dakota. With first-team All-State outside hitter Ava Brizard, second-team All-State middle blocker Sarah Sylvester, second-team All-State setter Ava Sarafa and All State honorable mention outside hitter Sophia Treder, the Mustangs look like they are in prime position heading into 2021, taking on Macomb Dakota in the state quarterfinal.

5. Brother Rice/Detroit Catholic Central hockey

Both Brother Rice and Detroit Catholic Central hockey seemed do be in the driver's seat heading into the state semifinals. The Warriors, carrying a first-place Catholic League finish, out-scored playoff opponents, 37-3, in four games heading into its state semifinal against Marquette, while the Shamrocks recorded two shutouts — adding to its total of 12 on the season — and were coming off a 6-1 win against Salem. The two Catholic League rivals seemed as prime contenders for Division 1 and Division 2 state titles prior to the season's cancellation due to COVID-19.

4. South Lyon girls golf

While South Lyon ended its 2019 season with freshman Gabriella Tapp winning the Division 2 individual state title, the Lions took another step forward in 2020, earning their first team state title in school history. Senior Katie Potter, who will golf at Marshall, finished second overall at the state tournament. Prior to their win, South Lyon had been to the state meet 12- straight times and finished in second place twice.

3. Detroit Catholic Central soccer

Three seasons after the Detroit Catholic Central soccer freshman class watched the Shamrocks win a state title, the program's first. that same class had a chance to hang a banner of its own. The Shamrocks won the Division 1 state title with a 2-1 overtime with against Traverse City West due to two penalty kicks by senior defender Jack Leuker. Catholic Central finished the season with a record of 13-0-3, outscoring opponents 39-15.

2. Northville girls golf

The Northville girls golf team did it again, winning its third-straight state title, beating Rochester Adams by nine strokes off key performances by sophomores Samantha Coleman and Avneet Gill, along with junior Haesol Park and senior Katelyn Tokarz. Of Northville's five scorers in its latest state final win, four will return for the Mustangs in 2021.

1. Detroit Catholic Central wrestling

Catholic Central wrestling dominance in 2020 was just another normal year for the group. The Shamrocks took home its fourth-straight Division 1 team state title, beating Davison in the final, 34-23, while six members of the team earned Division 1 state championships: Dylan Gilcher (112), Josh Edmond (140), Derek Gilcher (160), Manuel Rojas (189), Brendin Yatooma (215) and Steven Kolchiff (heavyweight).

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

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PLYMOUTH DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD**

**ANNUAL MEETING
JANUARY 19, 2021
7:30 P.M.**

TO BE HELD ELECTRONICALLY

The Plymouth District Library Board will hold its Annual Meeting on January 19, 2021. The meeting will be offered electronically. Interested persons may access the Zoom and Conference Call as follows +1 312 626 6799, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81904898826> - Meeting ID: 819 0489 8826, Passcode: 638069. Please see agenda on website www.plymouthlibrary.org. The agenda will be posted January 16, 2021.

The District Library Board will provide auxiliary aids and services of materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon reasonable notice. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Carol Souchock, Director, Plymouth District Library, 223 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI 48170 at 734 453-0750 x 218.

Publish: January 3, 2021

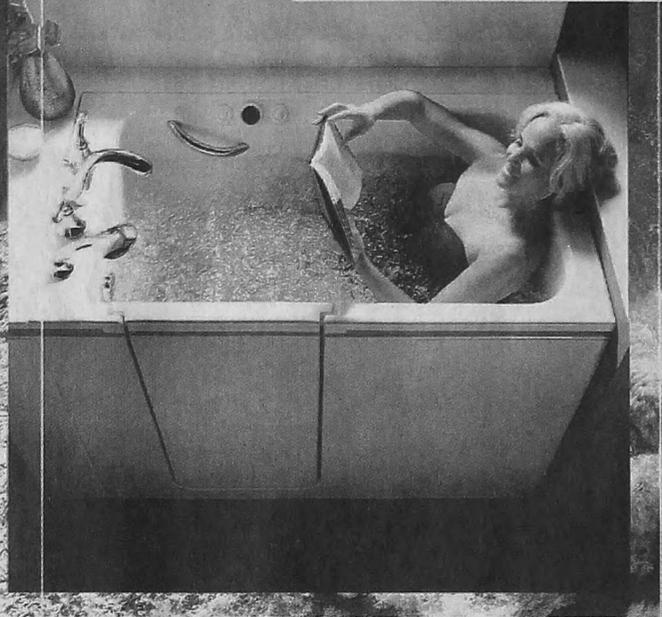
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