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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2021 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Plymouth fountain replacement approved

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Following a painstaking five-year journey, the T's were crossed and the I's were dotted on the paperwork that will lead to the replacement of Plymouth's Kellogg Park fountain.

Plymouth City Commissioners unanimously approved three actions Mon-

day that will launch the demolition of the existing Rotary fountain and the construction of the Wilcox fountain: the adoption of a contract and general conditions with the Anaheim, California-based design firm Outside The Lines; the adoption of a grant agreement with the Wilcox Foundation, which is funding the bulk of the project; and the adoption of a distribution agreement be-

tween the Wilcox Foundation and its escrow agent.

City Manager Paul Sincock said there will be later action related to Shaw Construction, which is being retained to perform site preparation as well as managing overall construction for the project.

The Wilcox Foundation has committed nearly \$1.2 million to the project. The

Plymouth City Commission will chip in \$30,000 and the Plymouth Downtown Development Authority has committed \$20,000.

The existing fountain that has served as the park's centerpiece for more than 50 years will be demolished beginning in spring.

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Floral designer Colette Bielat works on an arrangement at Cardwell Florist on Jan. 20. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Florists say customers should order early for Valentine's Day

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For those who plan to surprise their sweetie with flowers this Valentine's Day, local shops have one piece of advice: order early.

Challenges from suppliers after nearly a year of the coronavirus pandemic have local flower shops doing everything they can to prepare for Feb. 14, one of the biggest days in the business. Retailers are asking those who plan to order a dozen roses or other large bouquets to call or place those orders online to local shops as soon as possible.

Those who wait until the last minute may find nothing but thorns.

"The ones that are going to be tricky are the last-minute guys that walk in," said Colleen Siembor, a co-owner of Cardwell Florist, 32109 Plymouth Road in Livonia.

Uncertainty in stock and purchasing patterns has left local flower shops scratching their heads as to what to expect.

After flower shops closed down last March, many did not reopen until close to Mother's Day, and that was for curbside pickup. Couple that with churches not offering in-person Easter services last spring and a significant decrease in weddings last summer, and flower

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"If they can't be with their families as much as they want to and things aren't normal, flowers are that intermediary. Whether it's a sweetheart or your mom ... flowers say what your heart wants to say."

Larry Podpora
Co-owner, Donna & Larry's Flowers

Autism center in Livonia to open in March

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

About three years after Ladywood High School closed, the building is going to have a new life.

Madonna University is turning the building into its Performing Arts, Athletics and Academic Center. As part of an expansion into the metro Detroit area, Grand Rapids-based Hope Network is opening a center for autism in the building, too.

The center's biggest offering will be applied behavior analysis, or ABA, therapy for people with autism spectrum disorder. Hope Network is also looking to provide speech and occupational therapy at its Livonia location.

"(ABA is) a type of therapy that improves the social communication and learning skills through a lot of positive reinforcement," said Rochelle Sather, Hope Network's executive director of specialty services. "It's also kind of the gold standard for treatment of kids with autism across the spectrum."

Madonna bought the former Ladywood school in October 2018 and announced a partnership with Hope Network in December 2019.

The center was to open last summer, but construction was put on pause because of the coronavirus pandemic. Now, the center is looking to open near March. Some clients are already undergoing assessment, which will help behavior analysts determine treatment plans.

"As long as we're allowed to be open, allowed to do business and construction works with our time lines, we should be moving along as we'd planned," Sather said.

Over time, ABA therapy helps kids and adults in everyday environments, like school or the grocery store. Eventually, the Livonia center will serve up to 100 patients through in-clinic and at-home care.

Because the center is on a college campus, Hope Network and Madonna leaders are looking for ways to get students involved.

"I really would like to see that happen," Sather said.



Farmington Hills police officer sues city, chief

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Black Farmington Hills police officer is suing the law enforcement agency that hired him several years ago, claiming racial bias in a federal lawsuit.

Officer Dwayne Robinson, hired in 2014, sued the police department and Police Chief Jeff King, asserting he was denied promotion, advancement and training opportunities that went to lesser-qualified white officers.

Robinson claims he was "repeatedly passed over" and that Black officers are relegated to road patrol positions without equal opportunities for career enhancement.

"At all times, plaintiff performed his job in an exemplary manner," reads the suit. "Defendant City of Farmington Hills, its police department and Chief King's actions were intentional, with reckless indifference to plaintiff's rights and sensibilities."

"If plaintiff had been white, he would not have been treated in the manner described."

Robinson's 15-page complaint details a year that began in early 2020 and includes demands for a jury trial, lost wages and benefits, damages for the wrongs, an order reinstating him to his position if there had been discrimination or retaliation against him, and an injunction prohibiting any further retaliation or discrimination.

Robinson declined to comment.

He was the unnamed officer in a Hometown Life story about how the po-



King



The Farmington Hills Police Department and Police Chief Jeff King are defendants in a lawsuit brought by officer Dwayne Robinson. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

lice department handles civilian complaints. King confirmed during an October interview that police administrators sat down with Robinson for a discussion about the appearance of impropriety.

A woman had filed a complaint when Robinson called her after she and his sister were involved in a traffic incident. She alleged in her complaint that the

other woman was using her police officer brother as leverage to get the woman to pay for the sister's car repairs.

Robinson's attorney, Joel Sklar, did not respond to requests for comment.

King said the department has not been served with the lawsuit. Either way, he does not comment on pending litigation.

Robinson, who remains with the department, makes no mention of the civilian complaint or how it was handled in his lawsuit.

He documented some appearance problems that began in March between him and his chief. King then "required" Robinson to be clean shaven to wear an N95 respiratory mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

However, "plaintiff was unable to be 'clean shaven' because of a dermatological condition and disability, known as pseudofolliculitis barbae, which afflicts African-American men, like plaintiff," the suit stated.

Sometimes called "razor bumps," pseudofolliculitis barbae is a chronic inflammatory condition caused by ingrown hairs in the beard area.

Robinson's suit noted that he provided notice of his disability in April and suggested as "a reasonable accommodation" alternative personal protection equipment, shaving his facial hair to a quarter-inch or a different assignment that would let him conduct police work without interruption or loss in pay.

He was placed on sick leave without pay. White officers unable to work because of a disability, Robinson said, were given alternate assignments.

Robinson is claiming racial discrimination, violations of the Americans With Disabilities Act and retaliation for expressing his free speech rights under the First Amendment.

He said he has suffered from lost earnings and benefits; mental anguish; physical and emotional distress; humiliation, anger and embarrassment; lost enjoyment of life; and loss of professional reputation.

Parents of 4-year-old who shot sister plead guilty to abuse

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The parents of a young Redford Township girl shot by her younger brother have taken responsibility for playing a role in the July 6 near-tragedy. Jonclaud Norwood and Melissa Kis-

er, both 28, pleaded guilty to one of two counts of second-degree child abuse that each was facing.

A second count of the same charge was dismissed as part of the plea deal.

They will be sentenced in March and could face years in prison.

According to police, officers were dis-

patched to the 26500 block of Plymouth Road shortly after 1:30 a.m. because of reports that a 5-year-old had been accidentally shot.

The bullet apparently grazed the girl's head and police then said she should be OK.

Police said at the time the parents

might get charged because the gun was unsecured when their son, 4, found the gun. The parents apparently cooperated with investigators.

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

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Newsroom Contacts:

Phil Allmen, Content Strategist
Mobile: 248-396-3870
Email: pallmen@hometownlife.com

Follow us on Facebook: @OEHometown

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Fountain

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Construction of the new fountain is expected to be completed in the fall.

Discussions regarding the fountain's replacement were ignited in 2016. Forecasts of a 2018 or 2019 demolition/construction time line were developed, but delayed by a series of obstacles, including projected costs that exceeded donations, legal matters and the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is the best I've felt about this project in five years," Sincock said. "We are finally at the go point and we're pretty excited about that. This has been a very complex deal from a legal standpoint and our attorneys have been able to take all available measures to minimize the risk to the city while allowing us to accept this very generous donation from the Wilcox Foundation."

Plymouth Mayor Oliver Wolcott has been one of the project's staunchest proponents since the outset.

"Personally, I appreciate everyone's patience in the community and on our team for seeing this through," said Wolcott. "And I thank our team internally for putting up with me banging my head against the wall and being stubborn that we keep rolling on this."

"I think it will be a fantastic project that everyone will be very, very proud of."

Not everyone in Plymouth has been on board with the project: speaking at a pre-pandemic city commission meeting, resident Mark Oppat liked the idea of a new fountain, but thought the \$1 million price tag could better serve other city needs.

"A new fountain is a nice idea," Oppat said. "The fountain we have now happens to be pretty well used and is a fountain everyone seems to like. It happens to be exactly the right height because it keeps out very small kids ... and it's in a perfect location so that it's not in the way of the special events that take place at Kellogg Park."

"To me, it's too bad the money can't be directed toward things people really want."

Plymouth resident Ellen Elliott clarified to Oppat that the city did not have an option when it came to how to spend the Wilcox Foundation grant money.

"The grant was presented by the Wilcox Foundation specifically for the fountain," Elliott said. "... Jack Wilcox had (a new fountain) in his mind before he died."

Among three possible locations in Kellogg Park, a spot just west of the current fountain's location was selected.

Plymouth was the hometown of Jack Wilcox and in 1980 he established a charitable trust to benefit the community. Wilcox was involved in just about all facets of the community.

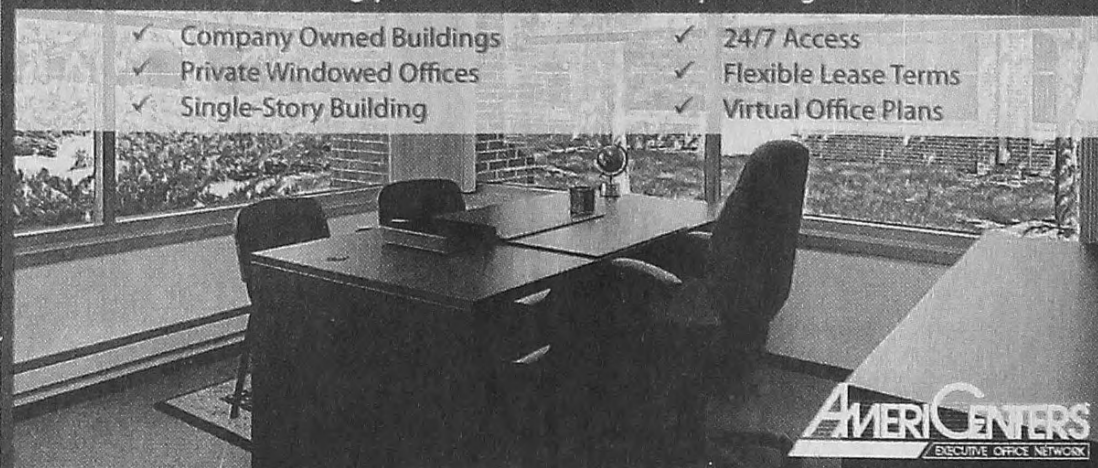
Elliott said the ultimate result of the multi-year fountain project is a glowing example of community involvement.

"The citizen involvement with this project is more than we've ever seen in Plymouth," Elliott said. "Although it was sometimes contentious, we had a goal in mind and we came together to finally achieve that goal."

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

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Florists

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shops were left with surplus stock and no one to sell it to.

That was the case for Bob Kupfer, manager of Tiffany Florist in downtown Birmingham, last spring. While the shop was closed for several weeks, he was left with a cooler full of flowers that couldn't be sold. So he took them outside his shop at 784 S. Old Woodward and left them in a bucket for anyone who passed by.

"When we shut down, every day I would come here and put a bucket of flowers in the street," he said. "There's a ton of people who walk by here every day. We were giving away flowers for a long time."

Unknown factors

That won't be the case in February. Kupfer said he is confident those looking to buy their sweetie some flowers for Valentine's Day will be able to, whether

they order a week early or walk in Feb. 14.

Still, he said, it's best for customers to order ahead to make sure they can get exactly what they're looking for.

"The big unknown is, who's going to be buying for Valentine's Day?" Kupfer said. "Do we need 10,000 of something or 1,000 of something?"

Donna Podpora, who co-owns Donna & Larry's Flowers in Northville with her husband, Larry Podpora, said they are starting to get more clarity about what to expect for Valentine's Day as they got their shop at 1063 Novi Road decorated with hearts and stuffed bears.

"Even the suppliers are saying they don't know where they're going to get the flowers from at this point. They've got the orders placed. They don't know what's going to come in," said Donna Podpora, who's owned the shop for nearly 37 years. "They don't know what to charge us because they don't know what they're going to have to pay, because they don't know what they're going to get."

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PCEA urges district not to rush return

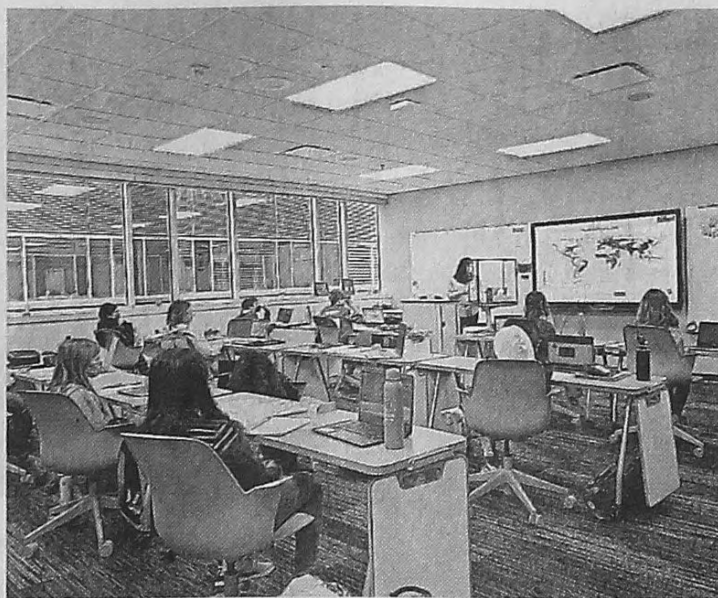
Ed Wright hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In her first public comments since Plymouth-Canton Schools announced its time line for a return to in-person learning, Plymouth-Canton Education Association President Heather Fitchpatrick revealed that many of her union's approximately 1,100 members fear "the district is rushing to a full return without specific details that keep our teachers and students safe."

In a statement read during citizens comments by school board trustee Lauren Christenson, Fitchpatrick raised a series of questions regarding the plan that puts all of the district's students back in classrooms full-time by March 1.

"What will lunch look like?" Fitchpatrick asked. "How do we ensure physical distancing? Will plexiglass barriers be available for all rooms where we can't ensure physical distancing with class sizes over 35? What will specials look like at the elementary level? How do we support quarantined students?"

"Details matter. We need clear and consistent communication with all of our staff. Teachers by nature are planners. We pour our hearts and souls into our lessons and activities. We need time to do this effectively. By rushing to a full return, vital details may be overlooked."



The Plymouth-Canton Education Association is urging Plymouth-Canton Schools to not rush the return to full-time in-person learning.

COURTESY OF SARAH JACOBS

"Mistakes could cause people to get sick or worse."

On Jan. 14, the school board approved a tentative return-to-school time line that looks like this:

• Students in grades six through nine, and those in specialized courses at the high school, were to return to in-person in a hybrid configuration beginning Jan. 25

• All elementary students, sixth-graders, ninth-graders and specialized-course students will return to a full five-day, in-person configuration Feb. 17-19

• Students in grades seven and eight will return to a five-day in-person configuration on Feb. 22

• Students in grades 10-12 will return to in-person learning (either in a hybrid model or full five-day configuration) on March 1

"We want to be back," Fitchpatrick concluded. "We are headed in the right direction, but let's do it right and not rush this very important decision."

District Superintendent Monica Merritt said earlier this month that among the steps taken to reduce the potential for the spread of COVID-19 within the district's buildings are the purchase and placement of air purifiers, intensified cleaning methods and ramped-up ventilation efforts.

As of Jan. 27, Michigan has a total of 554,237 confirmed cases and 14,411 deaths since March. The state has a fatality rate of 2.6% among known cases, according to data from the state health department.

Contact reporter Ed Wright at ewright@hometownlife.com.

Got vaccine questions? We've got some answers

Amy Huschka and Kristen Jordan Shamus

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

A month and a half after the first COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the state, many Michiganders are wondering, "When am I going to get my vaccine?"

We get asked that question a lot. And a host of others. So let us help answer those questions for you.

Question: Who is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine in Michigan?

Answer: Because vaccines are in such short supply, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention created priority groups to help states determine who should get the first injections.

Each state has the authority to tailor vaccine prioritization. Michigan has now opened up vaccine eligibility to:

• **Phase 1A:** Long-term care facility staff and residents as well as health care workers.

• **Phase 1B:** People age 75 and older; front-line state and federal workers;

teachers and school staff; child care workers, law enforcement officers, including jail and prison employees.

• **Some people in Phase 1C:** People ages 65-74.

Q: Where can I go to get a shot?

A It depends on what priority group you're in and where you live.

SENIORS: If you are 65 or older and you get care from a hospital or health system, you can register through that hospital for a vaccine.

HEALTH CARE

WORKERS: If your workplace is affiliated with a hospital or health system, that hospital or health system will schedule your vaccination.

If you are an independent health care provider, vaccinations can be scheduled through your local health department. Some hospitals are also vaccinating independent health care workers.

FIRST RESPONDERS/LAW ENFORCEMENT: Local health departments are scheduling these appointments.

TEACHERS AND

CHILD CARE WORKERS: Public school districts and regional educational service agencies are working through local health departments to schedule vaccinations. If you work for a charter school or private school, contact your employer.

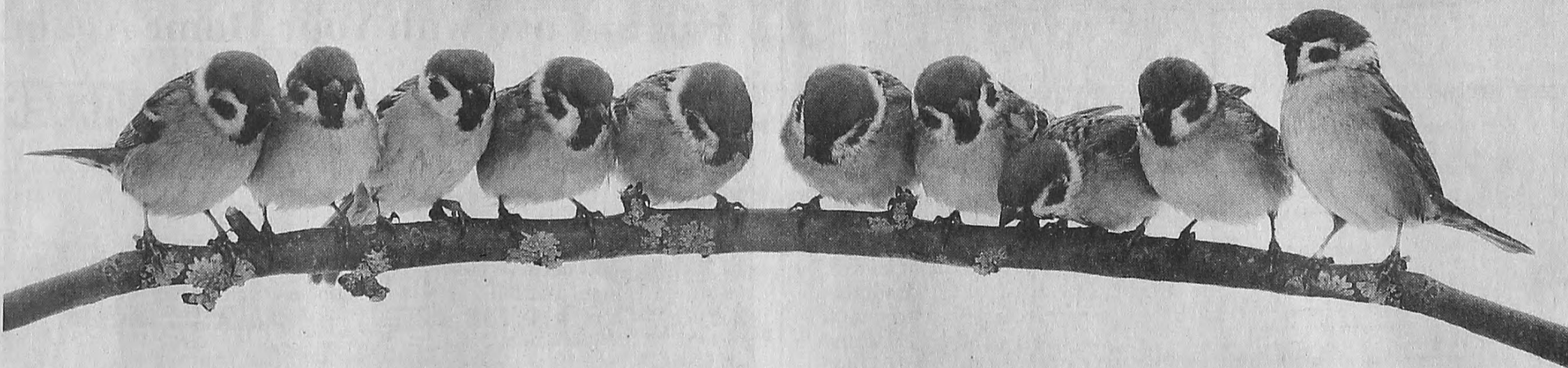
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Above at left, Tiffany Florist manager Bob Kupfer hopes to keep a good supply of red roses in his Birmingham shop for Valentine's Day. Above at right, Donna Podpora, left, stands with Larry Podpora and their shop dog, Joey, at Donna & Larry's Flowers. The couple looks forward to a stronger 2021 for their business.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Florists

Continued from Page 2A

"It's just so different."

Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are widely considered the two biggest days for giving flowers, and flower shops across the region have prepped since before Christmas.

It's a big holiday for deliveries.

One issue with Valentine's Day this year isn't the result of the pandemic, but of the calendar: Feb. 14 is a Sunday, which several florists said is the worst day for the holiday in their industry.

While many shops that would usually be closed on Sundays this year will be open for walk-ins and deliveries, the holiday falling during the weekend will slow business.

"It's great for restaurants, terrible for florists," Kupfer said.

'Flowers say what your heart wants to say'

Given the challenges many business-

es have faced as the pandemic continues, it's more important than ever to support small flower shops, said Rod Crittenden, the president of the Great Lakes Floral Association.

The Haslett-based multi-state trade association works with and advocates for florists.

When customers go looking, it's important they keep local shops in mind, as they can provide a more personalized service than larger services that will outsource flowers.

"If you're ordering from a website, you need to make sure it's your local florist's website. It's easy to do," he said. "You just need to make sure you know who you're ordering from."

Crittenden said 2020 was a good year for most florists, especially considering the logistical challenges early on. He said obtaining shipments of flowers from overseas at the beginning of the pandemic was difficult given travel restrictions.

Flower shops have always made deliveries, but it's become a bigger market since social distancing became the norm last March.

Flower shops across the region have reported increases in deliveries, though they do more home deliveries than office visits.

With many offices closed, employers and others who would normally send flowers are having them delivered to employees' homes.

It's not just limited to businesses. Plenty of people are sending flowers to loved ones at home when they can't travel to see them. When seeking some normalcy, Siembor said, flowers are the perfect go-to option.

"People are wanting to feel better. They want to ease the tension, and flowers are a good way to do it," she said. "They're not able to go visit their families, so they send flowers."

Donna & Larry's Flowers, complete with their shop dog Joey, have offered curbside pickup and delivery since reopening last spring. While Mother's Day last year was the biggest holiday they've seen business-wise, they're hopeful Valentine's Day will continue that trend.

While flowers can be considered a luxury item that will typically get cut from budgets when times are tight,

they're important in that they can send a message that can't always be put into words, Larry Podpora said.

Now more than ever, he said, connecting loved ones is important.

"If they can't be with their families as much as they want to and things aren't normal, flowers are that intermediary," he said. "Whether it's a sweetheart or your mom or whoever, flowers say what your heart wants to say."

Flower shops are unique in that they see people at their highest – proms and weddings and similar celebrations – and their lowest – at funerals. Emotions can run high, and that's been no different amid the pandemic, said Cardwell Florist co-owner and Livonia city council member Laura Toy.

Given everything that's happened since last March, flowers have become a go-to for those looking for cheer others.

"People now, you notice more emotions," Toy said. "And they want something to be happy about. And flowers do that."

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



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Benson offers big voting law changes

Dave Boucher Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson wants lawmakers to approve a series of changes that would have an immediate and lasting impact on elections in the state.

Those changes address some of the logistical concerns clerks and other local leaders raised before the presidential election, but also seek to respond to criticism offered by those who thought procedures prevented a more thorough review of the election results. While several will likely garner bipartisan support, others are far less likely to become law.

Noting again that there was no evidence of widespread fraud or misconduct, Benson said the changes are needed to help Michigan voters perform their civic duty and cast a ballot.

"Here in Michigan, we will not be sidetracked by these deceitful attacks on our democracy, for the will of Michigan voters is clear. They want elections that are strong, secure and accessible," Benson said during an online news conference Monday.

"They want us to build on the successes of our 2020 elections, and advance democracy on the road ahead."

Although Benson's office did not release the specific language of legislation several Democratic state lawmakers are expected to introduce, the overarching goals are sweeping. Those include:

- Requiring mailing applications for absentee ballots to registered voters every federal election cycle
- Allowing clerks an extra two weeks ahead of Election Day to process, but not count, absentee ballots
- Allowing clerks to count absentee ballots postmarked by Election Day and received "shortly after" to be counted. The office did not define how long after those ballots could be received and still be valid.
- Mandating training standards for election challengers and election workers
- Establishing early in-person voting at clerk's offices or satellite locations
- Making Election Day a state holiday
- Requiring a statewide risk-limiting audit of election results before state certification
- Allowing electronic ballot casting for overseas service members and their partners
- Requiring provision of election materials in multiple languages in communities where a significant non-English-speaking population lives
- Providing money to local clerks to ensure voting sites comply with federal disability laws and establish curbside voting
- Prohibiting "deceptive election practices that deter or mislead voters." Benson's office did not define which practices would be banned.
- Banning anyone from openly carrying firearms within 100 feet of a voting location

Election reform is perhaps the most widely shared goal for Republicans and Democrats heading into the new legislative session. Despite no evidence of widespread fraud or malfeasance pertaining to the fall election, both parties agree changes can restore trust in the electoral process.

However, a Republican key voice on elections re-

form in the House came out against Benson's legislative slate almost immediately after it was announced.

House Elections and Ethics Committee Chairwoman Ann Bollin, R-Brighton, blasted the entire agenda as partisan.

"If her goal is truly to work together in a bipartisan manner, I can't imagine why she would continue to bring up emotionally charged policy proposals that have already been struck down by our courts," Bollin, a former clerk for Brighton Township, said in a news release Monday afternoon.

"Our focus must be on improving transparency, protecting election integrity and restoring the public's trust — not on constitutionally questionable proposals that advance the Secretary of State's own political agenda."

The state was sued several times leading up to the election, specifically around absentee ballots, whether late ballots would be accepted and banning the open carry of firearms near polling places. Courts determined Benson could distribute unsolicited absentee ballot applications, but state law did not allow for the acceptance of ballots received after Election Day, among other rulings.

Lawmakers adopting the proposed changes Benson suggests would likely alleviate many of the constitutional concerns raised in those lawsuits. Benson dismissed Bollin's criticisms.

"I think I'm not going to comment on what are clearly politically driven statements and responses that have no basis in fact or law, other than to invite those seeking to make statements about what is constitutional to perhaps take my course on election law, or any other course on election law to understand further what the law does allow and requires," Benson said in an interview with the Free Press editorial board.

Minutes before Bollin issued her statement, state Rep. Matt Hall, R-Marshall, put out a statement about his own legislative priorities. The former chairman of the House Oversight Committee, which invited Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani among others to testify late last year, agreed with at least one of Benson's ideas but rejected others.

"The 2020 election cycle will be noted as one of the more contentious elections in the history of the United States. The trust in our elections process has been shaken and it must be restored," Hall said.

Many of Benson's suggested reforms are not new ideas. Benson said they were an amalgamation of nationwide best practices, suggestions from local election leaders and the result of analyzing the processes in place for the last several elections.

Most allegations of election misconduct tied to Detroit came from poll watcher or challengers. While many of those making allegations signed affidavits, almost none of them actually leveled charges that would amount to fraud or irregularities. They did, however, acknowledge receiving only minutes of training before charging in to watch election workers at TCF Center.

The idea of requiring uniform training standards for poll watchers and challengers has come up several times at state legislative hearings called to examine the 2020 general election. Hall agreed with Benson on training improvements.

Benson also banged the drum for months leading up to the November election, arguing local officials needed more time to process and count absentee ballots. Given the fear of contracting COVID-19 at polling places and a 2018 constitutional amendment that allowed any registered voter in Michigan to cast a ballot through the mail, she correctly predicted an unprecedented surge in absentee voting.

Michigan lawmakers took no action to help local clerks until a few weeks before the election, when they agreed to allow the largest cities in the state an additional 10 hours to process — but not count — absentee ballots ahead of Election Day.

Lawmakers may find common ground on allowing clerks more processing time. They also will likely find Republican support for allowing audits in "out-of-balance" precincts — a problem experienced in Detroit and many other cities where the number of expected votes did not match the number of counted votes — and allowing for a statewide election audit before results are certified.

Supporters of former President Donald Trump relied on both clerical errors at the precinct level and the certification of results before audits could commence as fodder for conspiracies that the election was stolen. However, the problem with out-of-balance precincts goes back before the most recent election, and the ban on recounting such precincts has been criticized by both parties.

Mandating mailing absentee ballot applications to every voter, allowing votes postmarked by Election Day to be valid and banning the open carry of firearms outside polling places will receive some pushback.

Many Republicans, from Trump to state Sen. Ruth Johnson, R-Holly, a former secretary of state, blasted Benson's office when she mailed millions of applications to voters in 2020. Although the secretary's office mailed only unsolicited applications, many critics incorrectly said she actually sent ballots unsolicited, arguing that process could lead to fraud.

Hall called for a law to ban Benson's office from mailing unsolicited absentee ballots applications. A court ruled in 2020 she already had the authority to send out ballots applications, which are also widely available online and often distributed by advocacy organizations.

Benson also unsuccessfully tried to ban the open carry of firearms near polling places last year. She was almost immediately sued, and neither Benson nor Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel could point to a portion of state law that gave Benson the authority to issue such a ban. Courts sided against Benson, who appealed several rulings but was never successful.

Last year, Michigan's Republican legislative leaders tasked the House and Senate oversight committees with studying the general election. The results have been at times eyebrow-raising: Giuliani interviewed his own witnesses during a lengthy hearing, lawmakers rarely pushed back on allegations of misconduct presented without evidence, and few city-level election officials have actually testified.

These hearings are ongoing. The Senate Oversight Committee recently heard from county canvassing board members.

Detroit Zoo polar bear welcomes twins after 2 failed pregnancies

Slone Terranella Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

After losing her baby cubs in two different pregnancies, the Detroit Zoo's 8-year-old polar bear, Suka, successfully gave birth to two cubs Nov. 17.

The two unnamed cubs are the first polar bears to be born and raised in the Detroit Zoo since 2004, the zoo said in a news release.

In 2018 and 2019, Suka gave birth to cubs. However, none of the cubs survived beyond a few days, the zoo said.

Suka gave birth in a specially designed, private maternity den that's equipped with infrared video cameras. On Nov. 19, zoo staff saw one of the cubs, a female, looking inactive and appearing weak.

The zoo staff quickly transported the cub to the Detroit Zoo's Ruth Roby Glancy Animal Health Complex, zoo officials said. Veterinarians examined the cub while giving her fluids and formula.

The zoo staff's around-the-clock care and bottle feeding schedule helped the female cub gain weight. At two days old, the cub weighed 1.2 pounds. On Thursday she weighed 11.3 pounds, which helped her graduate from the incubator to a "playpen."

However, zoo officials said they're unsure if the female cub can be reunited with her mother and sibling. Eventually, she'll be able to live with other bears in the Arctic Ring of Life habitat.

"The rare occurrence of twin polar bears being raised separately — one by the mother and one by humans — means that much will be learned through this experience," the zoo said in the news release.

Zoo officials said Suka is an attentive mom who's constantly nursing, grooming and cuddling her other cub.

The public can't see the cubs yet because they're in a private, behind-the-scenes area in the zoo.

According to the Detroit Zoo, under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, polar bears are listed as threatened.

"Greenhouse gas emissions causing global climate change have led to loss of sea ice, which threatens polar bears' survival as these marine mammals rely on ice to hunt, breed, and in some cases, den," the zoo said in the news release.

Obituaries

Merle Dorothy (Topham) Goatley

SOUTHFIELD - Merle Dorothy (Topham) Goatley, 93, of Southfield, Michigan, passed away on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at Bickford Senior Living of Lafayette, Indiana.

Born on July 3, 1927, in Moora, Western Australia to George Christopher and Grace (Nettleton) Topham, Merle grew up in a large family on the family farm. She attended boarding school in Perth, Western Australia and then worked at General Motors in Melbourne, Australia where she met her husband, Alfred Goatley (deceased 2005).

Merle and Alfred immigrated to the US in the early 50s where they lived for the remainder of their lives. Living mainly in Southfield, Michigan since 1956 and raising her two children, Peter Goatley and Debbie Kelly, Merle lived a full and happy life. She was a loving mother, grandmother, and friend and was active in her church, St. James Episcopal in Birmingham, Michigan.

Surviving her are her two children, Peter Goatley of Southfield, Michigan and Deborah Anne (husband Jeffery Allen) Kelly of West Lafayette, Indiana; one brother, Leon Topham of Coombdale, Western Australia. Also surviving are her grandchildren Grace (Goatley) VanDyke, Claire Goatley, Ethan Goatley, Sean Kelly, and Erin Kelly and her great-grandchildren Owin VanDyke, Violet Kelly and Ezra Kelly.

A private family service will be held in Birmingham, Michigan. Interment will be at the columbarium at St. James Episcopal Church next to her husband, Alfred.

In lieu of flowers those wishing may contribute in Merle's name to St. James Episcopal Church in Birmingham, Michigan (www.stjamesbirmingham.org).



Emma May Cote

Emma May Cote passed away peacefully January 11, 2021 surrounded by family at the age of 92. She is survived by her daughter, Rebecca (Mike) Follmer. Grandchildren, Parker Follmer and Lauren (Ben) Follmer Szymczak, May was predeceased by her loving husband of 53 years Loren, "Bud" in April of last year. She was born in Detroit and grew up in Livonia where she graduated from Clarenceville High School during WWII. May worked at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak and retired from the Radiology Department in the late 1980s. May and Bud lived in Livonia until their retirement when they moved to the Reed City area of Northern Michigan. She enjoyed playing cards with her girlfriends, golfing and just having fun. May was a talented knitter, crocheter and enjoyed making many gifts for family and friends. She was very involved with the Reed City Moose and the VFW, where she helped fundraise and enjoyed helping out with friends. She will be missed by many. A luncheon and life celebration will be held at the Holly Hotel prior to her inurnment at Great Lakes National Cemetery, where she will be buried next to her husband Loren, on April 2nd @2:30PM. Luncheon Details: 11:30am - 2:30pm Holly Hotel 110 Battle Alley Dr. Holly, Cemetery Details: Great Lakes National Cemetery 4200 Belford Rd. Holly, MI 48442. RSVP to attend by contacting: Lauren Follmer Szymczak LEFollmer@FolcoCom.com 248-476-2442



Obituaries

Lillian May

Lillian May, born Lillian Ruth McLean, was a farm-girl from Harrow, Ontario, Canada turned big-city working girl in Windsor and as far west as British Columbia; then a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and a friend to so many. Lillian passed away on Sunday, January 24, 2021 at the beautiful age of 92.

Lillian was born to Mary Elisabeth Sweet McLean McKenzie and Vern Fenton McLean on August 16, 1928. On November 3, 1951, she married Walter Llewelyn May. Together, they had five children, (Barbara Childress [Charles], Karen May Anastasiow, Karl May [died at birth], James May [Laurie], and W. J. Scott May [Joan]), 10 grandchildren (Zachary Dubs [Nikki], Demetrios Anastasiow, Brandon Childress [Brittany], Amanda Salefske [Sean], Kelsey and Kaitlin May, Justan May [Brooke], and Jordan, Austan, and Makayla May), and six great-grandchildren (Dradyn Ray, Beau Childress, Emily May, Lillian [her namesake] and Daphne Dubs, and Scarlett Salefske).

Lillian grew up in a cement-brick home; a home that never had electricity or running water only wood stoves. Along with her six siblings, she shared in the farming-type chores inherent with the 1930's Depression-era farming. After graduating from Harrow High School in 1945, Lillian moved to Windsor to attend and later graduated business school at W.D. Lowe. She then went on to work for the Union Gas Company. In 1950, she followed Norman, her brother, to British Columbia where she stayed and worked for the Canadian Pacific Airlines on Sea Island. Lillian returned home later that year and worked at Dominion Office Supply. She boarded with Lou and Irene Brown in Windsor where she met Irene's nephew, Walter, and the rest is history!

Walter and Lillian married and moved to Detroit, MI. Lillian obtained her



green card to live and work in the U.S. She worked for Link Belt Company until she became pregnant with her first daughter. As told in her many stories, "you couldn't work after you got pregnant in those days (1954)." In October 1955, the family of three moved to South Redford into a brand-new home where they lived until the early '70s. They owned, operated, and sold the Pepper Tree restaurant in Novi and the Mayflower Book and Card Shoppe in Livonia before moving to Hudson where they bought another restaurant, May's Country House. After some time, they returned to South Redford for a few years prior to Walter's job taking them and their two boys to Findlay, OH for 12 years. Jim and Scott are still Ohioans today.

Lillian and Walter returned to Michigan living in Monroe and Livonia. They traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and Canada. Lillian's favorite locale was the Rocky Mountains in Colorado as well as a once-in-a-life-time trip to England and Switzerland. Together, they were a force and were generous to a fault with their time and expertise in helping their children and families.

Her beloved Walter passed in March 2013 and was missed terribly over these last years. Lillian kept active with her church, tending to her garden, bible study, book club, bowling, cards, and bingo as well as driving her beautiful, white Buick Park Avenue until she was 88.

Lillian had an unbelievable memory for names, dates and places and loved recounting stories of her life and family; and what an incredible life she lived. Lillian Ruth McLean May, a proud Canadian citizen until her death, something she insisted be put on their combined headstone, will be missed, but forever loved by so many. A memorial service will be held on a future date at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Livonia. Memorial donations may be made to the church.

The end of an era, Lillian is preceded in death by her entire family – a generation that spanned 126 years from their mother, Mary Elisabeth Sweet McKenzie, born in 1895 to Lillian's death in 2021.

Patricia Mary Hibbard nee Bowyer

HIBBARD, Patricia M. (Horne) age 97, born October 01, 1923, of Northville, formerly from Livonia, January 26, 2021. Beloved wife of the late Donald Horne, Sr. and the late Richard Hibbard. Loving mother of Becky Jo (the late Ronald) Riggs, Donald Austin (Carol) Horne, Marcia Lynn (Jerry) McCarthy, June Marie (Michael) Peters and step-mother of Randy (Cris) Hibbard and Martha Jess. Dearest grandmother of Matthew, Jay, Neil, Austin (Melissa), Rachael, Patrick (Cortni), Jacob (Jessica), Bradford, Andrew, Donald, Kelly (Justin), Katelyn (Keith), Aaron, Nathan and Levi and great-grandmother of Maxwell, James, William, Noah, Vivi, Easton, Michael, Addison, EraBelle and Olivia. She is also survived by her sisters Betsy Springer, Joyce Erickson and her sister-in-law Gert Horne. She is preceded in death by her son-in-law Ronald Riggs, her parents Archibald and Mary Bowyer, her sister June Temple and her brothers Art Bowyer and Jim Bowyer. Her cremation will take place at "The Witness Crematory" located inside of Michigan Memorial Funeral Home.



Marjorie L. Dingman

MUSKEGON - Marjorie L. Dingman, age 95, passed away Saturday, January 30, 2021 in Muskegon, MI. She was born May 23, 1925 in Detroit, MI to Charles and Lucille (Herring) Asch. On June 20, 1943, she married Robert M. Dingman in Allen Park, MI and he preceded her in death on June 7, 1995. Marjorie was a member of Kirk of Our Savior in Westland, MI. SURVIVORS include 2 sons: Bob Dingman and David (Nancy) Dingman; 7 grandchildren; 11 great-children; 2 great-great-grandsons; and a sister, Elaine Chernenkoff. Marjorie was also preceded in death by her daughter-in-law, Teresa Dingman and a sister, Delores Harris. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing, a memorial service will be held at a later date at The Kirk. MEMORIALS to Kirk of Our Savior or the Harbor Hospice Foundation will be appreciated. Share memories with the family at their On-line Guest Book at www.sytsemafh.com Arrangements by The Walburn Chapel of Sytsema Funeral and Cremation Services, 1547 W. Sherman Blvd., Muskegon, MI 49441 (231) 759-8565



Dorothy Bertha Winters

LIVONIA - February 1, 2021 age 100. Beloved wife of the late Arnold. Loving mother of Pam (Ed) Diesch, and Arnold (Kathy Charest) Winters. Proud grandmother of five, great grandmother of 8 and great great-grandmother of two. Visitation Thursday, February 4th 12-4 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Rd. West (between Sheldon & Beck), Plymouth. Interment Glen Eden Memorial Park, Livonia. Memorial contributions may be made to Angela Hospice. To share a memory, visit vermeulenhfh.com



Eva Barany

FARMINGTON HILLS
- May 20, 1927 -
January 28, 2021



The Memories Remain

Donna Jeanne (Schlee) Anderson-Ward

May 26, 1930 – January 16, 2021

Donna, age 90, died of complications from coronavirus on Saturday January 16, 2021.

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Donna was the third daughter of Earl and Eloise Schlee. She attended Cooley High School and then Michigan State University, where she met returning veteran Henry (Hank) J. Anderson. They married in 1949, living first in Flint, Michigan and later Southfield and Birmingham, Michigan.

Donna and Hank raised their three sons (David, Jay and Kent) in Birmingham, where she was a vibrant member of the community and Northbrook Presbyterian Church. A gifted athlete, Donna was always in demand as a tennis partner at the Birmingham Athletic Club. She took up golf in her fifties and maintained an enviable game for the next 30 years. Donna organized many weekend family getaways to ski at Schuss Mountain, and her sons will always remember their magnificent cross-country train adventure as well as a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Canadian Rockies.

Donna's creative talents included sewing, needlework and gardening. She and her sister Audrey assembled museum-worthy doll houses. Her sons remember her as the most determined of souls who had endless energy for the day's work. She and Hank would regularly arrive for a visit and rather than take a moment to relax, would find a project to tackle around the house or the garden.

With Hank's retirement in 1986, they moved to Tallahassee, Florida and built a new community among other Detroit-area snowbirds in the Golden Eagle development and at Westminster Oaks. Donna was an engaged patron of LeMoyné Arts, an active member of Christ Presbyterian Church and an enthusiastic supporter of Florida State Seminoles athletic teams.

After Hank's passing in 2005, Donna moved to Naples, Florida and married Richard G. Ward, whom she had first known at Cooley High School in Detroit. Donna and Dick returned often to Harbor Springs, MI and enjoyed traveling together extensively until Dick's death in 2015.

Later in 2015, Donna joined son Jay and daughter-in-law Pam in Mission Viejo, California. She will be dearly missed by her sons, three daughters-in-law, four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Donations in memory of Donna may be directed to the churches that were her spiritual home: Northbrook Presbyterian in Birmingham, Christ Presbyterian in Tallahassee and Moorings Presbyterian in Naples.



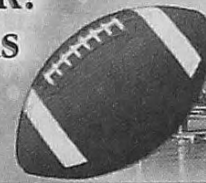
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in this time
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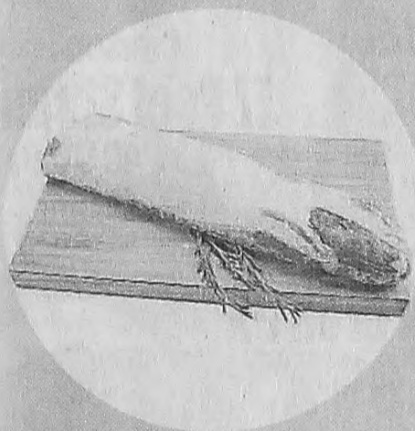
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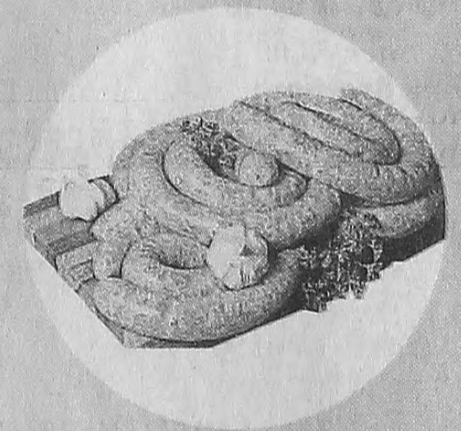
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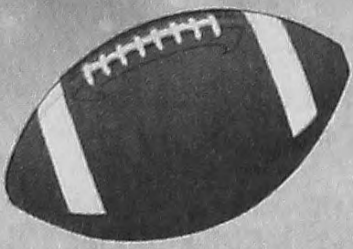
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SPORTS

Back-to-back championships!

Colin Gay
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Samantha and Megan Clifford are both extremely competitive.

When Samantha joined the team in 2019 as a freshman, she and Megan, a junior, butted heads, never really talking to each other much during practice. Samantha said she noticed each time she beat Megan in a race or a set, the elder sister may lose faith, get quiet, shut down.

But as the season progressed, the Clifford sisters started to use these moments as fuel.

"I feel like as the season wore on, it helped her get more confident so she would work harder to beat me next time," Samantha Clifford said.

To Seaholm head coach Karl Hodgson, the Maples' recent success is nothing without the Clifford sisters. In the past five years, Seaholm has won three

Division 2 team state titles, including back-to-back championships in 2019 and 2020.

In those back-to-back team titles, the Maples have won three relays: the 200-yard freestyle relay, twice, and the 400-free relay, each of which included both Clifford sisters.

In those relays, Hodgson said he needs swimmers who love to race and hate losing; attributes, he said, that you can't coach. Those things are just in-bred.

"You can always count on them," Hodgson said. "Without them, there's no state championship without those guys."

Along with the two relay wins in 2020, Seaholm earned 11 individual All-State times by seven swimmers, along with a second-place finish in the 200-yard medley relay, .23 seconds behind Rochester Adams.

See **CLIFFORD**, Page 2B



Samantha and Megan Clifford played a major role in Seaholm's third state title in the past five years. COURTESY OF MEGAN CLIFFORD

Saunders achieves dream of playing Ohio State football

Colin Gay
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Cayden Saunders was always following in his father's footsteps.

He grew up in NFL locker rooms — his father Cedric a former vice president of football operations with the Detroit Lions — interacting with players at games, training camps and practices. He listened to his father's stories of his days playing football at Ohio State.

For Cayden, this was the next step. He knew he wanted to reach that level as a player himself.

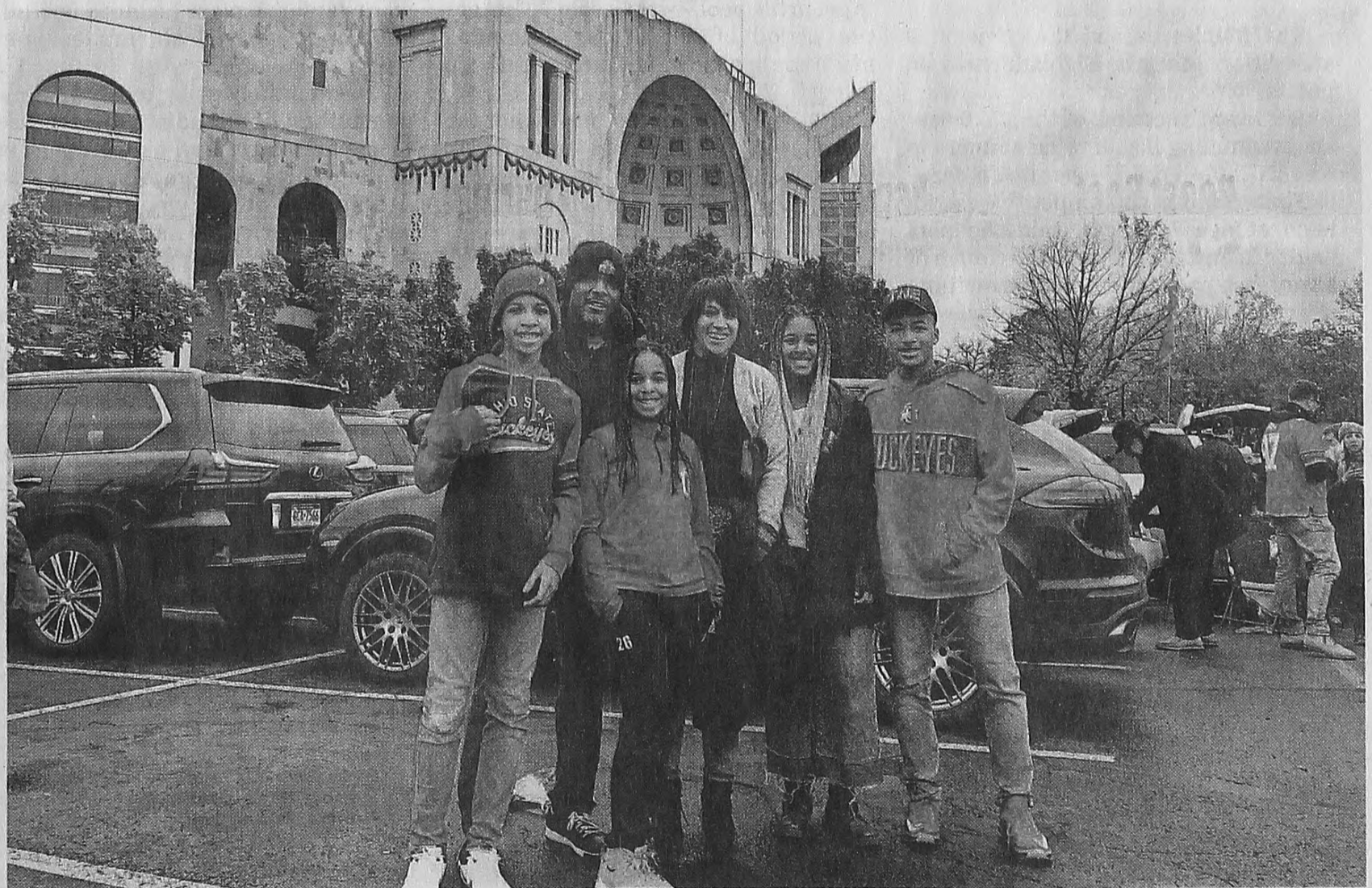
"At that point, he realized he wanted something bigger," Cedric Saunders said. "He started saying, 'Dad, I'm going to go to Ohio State and play ball like you.'"

"I'm like, 'All right, it's going to take a lot of hard work to get there. It's only for a chosen few.'"

Next season, Cayden Saunders will play for Ohio State, committing to the Buckeyes as a preferred walk-on running back in the 2021 class.

But based on his father's experience, based on what he has seen in college football and the NFL, his path to Columbus was not the same as many in his position.

See **SAUNDERS**, Page 3B



The Saunders family stands in front of Ohio Stadium ahead of an Ohio State game. COURTESY OF CAYDEN SAUNDERS

Franklin volleyball's Murray signs with Defiance

Colin Gay
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Livonia Franklin head coach Kelsey Potson usually doesn't like taking on freshmen for her varsity team. But four years ago on the advice of members of the class of 2018, she made an exception.

Jamia Murray was surprised when she received the invitation to try out,

unaware of the impression she made at the Patriots' eighth grade volleyball camp. But ahead of the drills, Potson made it clear that she didn't need another weapon near the net; the area Murray had been used to coming in.

"(Potson) basically told me... I'm not looking for any more hitters. I'm looking for a setter," Murray recalled.

"I told her, 'I'll do anything you need me to do.'"

Murray made the Franklin varsity

team her freshman season, becoming a four-year starter for the Patriots, becoming comfortable at every position on the court because she just wanted the opportunity to play. The Franklin senior plans to bring that same versatility to the next level, signing to play at Defiance College starting next season.


"She has raw athletic ability," Potson said. "Any time she steps onto a court, she's probably the most athletic person on the court. It was just so obvious, just

the amount of work she puts in outside the court, but just with this natural ability, she was this really great player."

Switching back and forth between setting and hitting was nothing that Murray could not handle. Each position on the court, she said, came naturally to her.


But it also allowed her to get into the minds of her teammates, to understand

See **MURRAY**, Page 2B



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Let Them Play seeks injunction on order against winter sports

Kirkland Crawford

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Let Them Play Michigan, along with several parents across the state, have filed a lawsuit in state court against the Michigan Department of Health of Human Services for their role in banning contact sports in the winter sports season.

The advocacy group filed paperwork with the Michigan Court of Claims on Tuesday against Elizabeth Hertel, claiming the MDHHS has provided “no evidence” citing that high school athletes are at an increased risk for contracting COVID-19.

The plaintiffs ask the court to intervene on the department’s decision to allow nothing more than what amounts to individual drill work for these sports.

“Unfortunately, there is no other place for citizens to appeal a decision that restricts the parents’ and the student-athletes’ ability to pursue a key component of their public education,” said lawyer Peter Ruddell. “The ban on athletic practice and competitions has restricted the ability of these and many other student-athletes from achieving their career pathway – competing, practicing and potentially gaining a college scholarship.”

Other plaintiffs in the lawsuit include the Michigan Amateur Youth Hockey League and the parents of five high school athletes.

The state has put full practices and competition on pause until at least Feb. 21, further delaying the MHSAA’s boys and girls basketball, wrestling, hockey and competitive cheer seasons.

Hertel was appointed the new head of the MDHHS late last month after Robert Gordon’s abrupt resignation.



Student athletes, coaches and family participate in the “Let Them Play” rally on Saturday at the Capitol in Lansing. The rally was aimed at getting high school athletes back in action for winter sports. NICK KING/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

Last week, MHSAA executive director Mark Uyl said there has been better communication between he and the MDHHS with Hertel in charge. Still there has been no change in the state’s stance on the winter sports in question.

On Saturday, protestors from across the state marched in the state Capitol in Lansing.

There has been no official change to the schedule for these sports by the MHSAA, which had been scheduled to

begin competition this week before the state’s announcement Jan. 22.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. Contact Kirkland Crawford: kcrawford@freepress.com. Follow him on Twitter @HiKirkHere.

Clifford

Continued from Page 1B

The Maples earned the Division 2 state title beating the Highlanders by 46 points.

But over the course of the 2020 season, swimming began to mean more to Megan Clifford than it ever had before.

First joining a competitive swim team at age 7, Megan said the pool helped keep her calm over the course of a very fast-paced life. It was something she could do during the day that was repetitive, that was dependable.

Whenever Seaholm had practiced her senior season, Megan Clifford would tell her teammates it was her favorite part of her day: it was a sense of normalcy during the uncertain time that the COVID-19 pandemic brought, giving her a chance for in-person interaction.

And when the state meet was pushed back from mid-November to, eventually, Jan. 16, she realized that the sport that led to her happiness, her calmness,

was something she took for granted.

“I think, especially after quarantine, toward the end especially, there were times that I would literally do anything to get in the pool,” Megan said. “That entire period of not having swimming made me realize how much I really do love it.”

But Seaholm did not know what the output would be like when it returned to the pool. Hodgson was in uncharted territory, never having dealt with anything like this before.

On the day of the meet, his message to his team was just to do the best it could do.

“Don’t necessarily worry about the times so much as far as at the state meet,” Hodgson told his team. “Just give your best performance and with that, since everybody is in the same boat throughout the state, maybe we have a shot at a championship.”

During the pause, Samantha and Megan Clifford knew where each other were at, training together ahead of the possible state meet.

Samantha, watching Megan prepare

for her final high school meet prior to starting her college career at Hillsdale, saw how she was able to compete, egging her on to be more competitive, to work harder, to place higher; something she won’t have on Seaholm’s team next year.

“It’s definitely going to be different,” Samantha Clifford admitted. “I’m used to having someone who pushes me, especially in sets in practice. There will definitely be people who still push me, but... she pushes me more.”

In their last two races together, the Clifford sisters made the most of it.

During the 200-yard freestyle relay, along with juniors Eliza Dixon and Carly Burry, Seaholm finished more than two seconds ahead of second place Jenison. Samantha Clifford recording the fastest time in the No. 2 spot in the relay by nearly a second. Megan, the anchor, was the only swimmer to finish in that spot in under 24 seconds.

And in the 400-yard freestyle relay, with Samantha at the start and Megan at the anchor, the success continued for the Maples, improving their time by

nearly two seconds from a year ago with a 3:31.84 for the second state championship of the day.

“Closing out my last race ever with her there, knowing that she did amazing... it was very special,” Megan Clifford said. “After we were just hugging and like, it was a really cool experience.”

When she jumped into the pool, celebrating with her teammates after securing their second-straight team state title, Megan Clifford thought back to her freshman year. She joined the team the season after the Maples won a Division 2 state title in 2016. She wished to have been on that team.

But celebrating her second, her last state title, Megan Clifford realized the work put into this one in particular. She realized it had been all worth it.

“I know Karl said he’s never going to forget this specific state team for that,” Megan Clifford said. “He knows what we went through to get this title.”

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

Murray

Continued from Page 1B

what they needed from her and what she needed from them. It helped her overcome the height differential she saw near the net, asking for a faster set to beat a middle blocker, or improvising her hits to catch those defenders up front off guard.

“It makes it easier to talk to the setters and hitters about stuff because you know how hard it is to be both of them,” Murray said.

Murray learned how to form relationships on and off the volleyball court based on how she was treated from her freshman year with Franklin: helping other players when they needed help, answering questions and being that example.

“They were like big sisters to me, so that’s what I have to be to the other girls when I become older,” Murray said. “Even if I’m not older, I still have to act like a big-sister type role to them.”

Potson said she saw this transformation from Potson too, watching “this kind of immature ninth grader” be named captain her senior season, helping younger players on the junior varsity and freshman teams during practice.

The Franklin head coach said the evolution showed especially during the uncertainty of having a fall season during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Her coming in really set the tone of how our practices would be run, be-

cause the girls didn’t play club for months,” Potson said. “Everyone was a bit sluggish, but she really steps onto a court, through conditioning or whatever it is, and really raises the level that everyone else has to meet.”

But over the course of her high school career, one thing Murray has learned about herself is that she is really hard on herself when she plays. She wants to be as good as she can be while on the court. She wants to be the best.

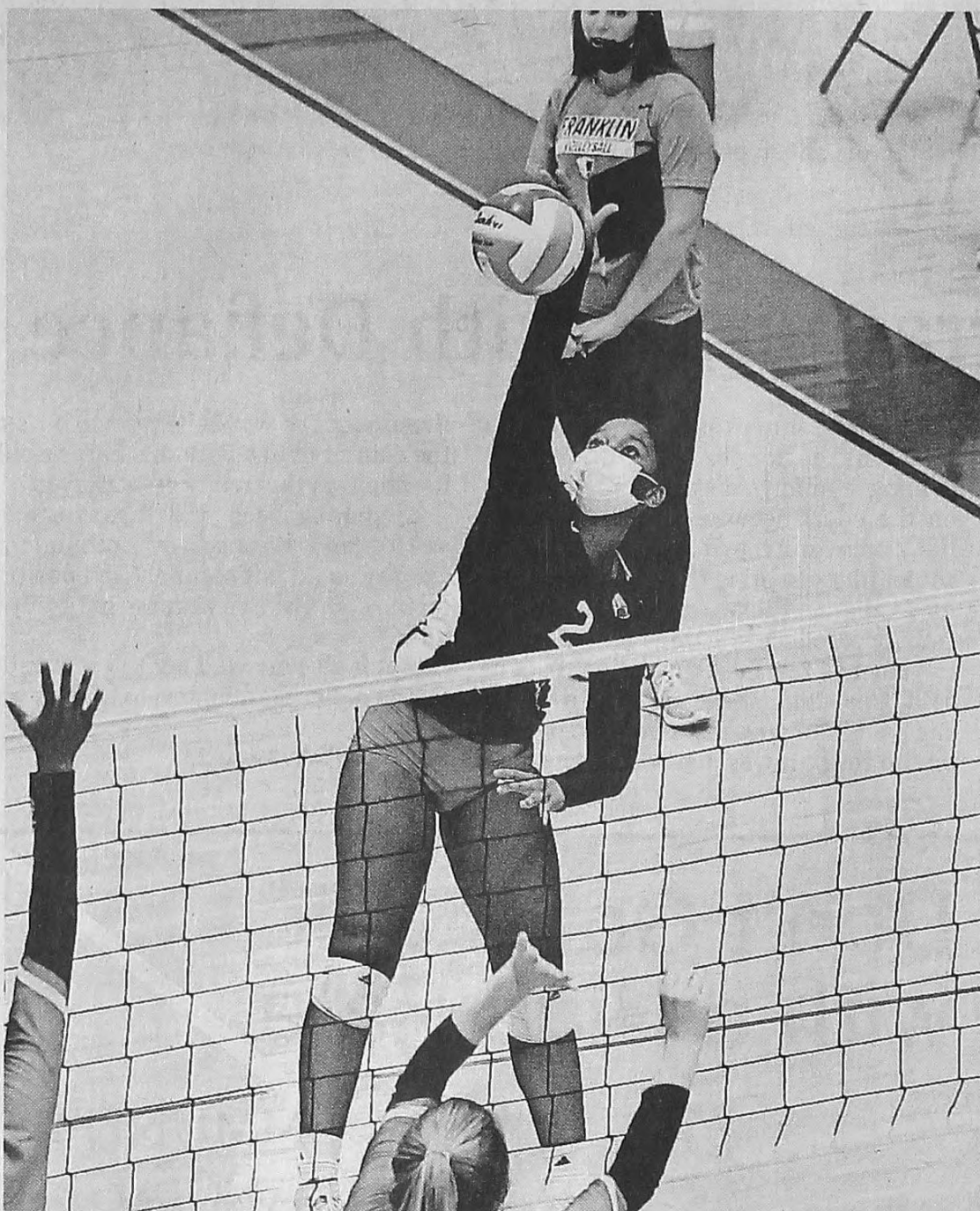
When her high school career came to a close in the first round of the playoffs against Dearborn Divine Child — something, she said, that did not become real until she watched the Franklin football team lose to Livonia Churchill in the regional final — new insecurities came up, as she faced leaving Michigan to head 120 miles south for college.

“It was like, ‘Oh my God, you are about to move out, be on your own,’” Murray said. “Like what do I do if I fail?”

But Potson knows what Defiance is getting. She knows, despite her size, what Murray is capable of on the volleyball court.

“As soon as you see her step onto a court, you are immediately blown away by her athleticism,” Potson said. “When she gets to Defiance, I think not only is she going to surprise a lot of people on her team — raise the level, I would assume — she is going to make a lot of coaches jealous they didn’t pick her up.”

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @ColinGay17. Send game results and stats to LivSports@hometownlife.com.



Franklin senior Jamia Murray proved to be huge for the Patriots in the third set.

TOM BEAUDOIN | SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Alabama coach Nick Saban gets dunked with Gatorade after defeating Ohio State in the 2021 national championship game on Jan. 11 in Miami Gardens, Florida. DOUGLAS DEFELICE/USA TODAY SPORTS

Michigan gets DT Rayshaun Benny, a longtime MSU commit

Michigan State football lost another top recruit, this time from in the state. And this time, to their in-state rival

Oak Park defensive tackle Rayshaun Benny announced Wednesday he signed with Michigan instead of the Spartans. He joins New Jersey running back Audric Estime, who signed in December with Notre Dame, as four-star prospects to back out of commitments to Mel Tucker.

Minutes after Benny announced his flip on social media, the Michigan football Twitter account announced that Benny had signed with U-M.

Benny picked MSU on Nov. 9 over Michigan, Penn State and Kentucky, his other finalists. He had offers from a number of Big Ten and Power Five conference schools. But Benny — a two-way lineman for his high school team — opted to not sign during the early period, telling the Free Press in December he wanted to remain focused on Oak Park's delayed MHSAA Division 2 state finals run. The Knights lost in the semifinals to Warren De La Salle, 26-20 in overtime, on Jan. 16.

"I'm the type person, if I got my mind set on something, that's what I'm going to do," Benny said in December. "And there ain't no changing my mind."

The 6-foot-5, 275-pound Benny is rated the state's sixth-best prospect, the nation's No. 16 defensive tackle and No. 195 overall by 247Sports.com's composite rankings.

Benny suffered meniscus tears to his left knee in a mid-July car accident and underwent surgery, followed by an accelerated rehab that allowed him to play for Oak Park this season after the MHSAA reversed a decision about a week after his surgery to play football this fall.

Oak Park teammate Davion Primm, a three-star running back signed with MSU on Dec. 16. MSU signed 18 players during the early signing period to build Tucker's first signing class. That included four players who enrolled in January — tight end Kameron Allen, offensive lineman Ethan Boyd, quarterback Hampton Fay and cornerback Michael Gravely Jr.

The high school football signing period runs through April 1.

Contact Chris Solari: csolari@freepress.com. Follow him on Twitter @chrissolari. Read more on the Michigan State Spartans and sign up for our Spartans newsletter.

EA Sports will reboot its college football video game franchise

In a move that's already lighting up the gaming world, EA Sports announced it would be rebooting its popular college football video game that had been discontinued since 2013.

According to ESPN, a return date hasn't been set. The game will not be available for the 2021 season.

"As we look for the momentum that we're building on in sports, it all starts with the passion of our fans and the opportunities of what they are interested in," EA Sports vice president and general manager Daryl Holt told ESPN. "I don't think a visit where I go outside wearing a piece of EA Sports branded apparel, that someone doesn't go, 'Hey,

when is college football coming back?'"

EA Sports has partnered with CLC, a collegiate licensing company, so that it could include the Football Bowl Sub-division programs, uniforms, traditions and playbooks, according to ESPN. More than 100 teams will be available.

The series was discontinued as the debate over student-athletes being compensated for their names, images and likenesses (NIL) continued across the country and in legislative bodies. The old video game franchise did not use college football player names, but the roster closely mirrored the actual ones with player numbers and positions tied to general physical appearances of

those playing on fields on Saturdays.

Holt told ESPN that EA Sports would monitor changes to the NIL rules but that the game would proceed either way.

"We make sure we deliver what our college football game players would want in a game. And that starts with just a very immersive experience and there's lots of things we can do to bring the true college game play and game day to the virtual world."

ESPN said the franchise will be branded as "EA Sports College Football." ESPN also reported that the game is in its very early developmental stages.

Saunders

Continued from Page 1B

Focus on the mental game

Growing up, the Saunders family had a rule: Cayden had to be at least 14 years old and 100 pounds before he could start playing tackle football. In his times in scouting and personnel departments in the NFL, Cedric Saunders felt his son did not need the physical aspect of the game before he mastered the mental part.

So Cedric opened up the playbook, showing him different positions and what they meant to the other positions on the field, using flag football as a training tool to experience playing the offense he saw on paper.

When Cayden Saunders joined the freshman team at Northville, he was relatively inexperienced with full-contact football and needed time to find his place.

"I was actually a wide receiver at the time," he said. "I came in... and through the games and the practices and the types of adversity that we faced, it taught me to push through and push myself harder into something that I never knew I had."

When Northville head football coach Matt Ladach first met Saunders, he knew the athlete could be successful at any position he played. Ladach moved him from wide receiver to running back to the other side of the ball: playing outside linebacker and cornerback, giving

Saunders a different way to develop his offensive game.

Ladach saw a smart, quick and explosive football player at his disposal. And he had a football player who knew where he wanted to be when he graduated.

"Cayden knew that his goal was to go to a Division 1 school," Ladach said. "From day one, Cayden wanted to go to a big school, even if it meant that he was going to turn down financial assistance to go to a school where he wanted to go."

Even with the goal of big-time football, Saunders focused on the Mustangs, wanting to change the trajectory of the team that won only a third of its games 2017-19.

Northville finished the 2020 season at 5-3: its best record since 2016, finishing in second place behind Canton in the KLA West.

"We knew we had to make a change this year," Saunders said. "Just me being a senior this year, I wanted to be a part of that leadership group that would lead this group to where we ended up this year, so I'm very proud of that."

Challenges await

All Saunders wanted was a chance. He wanted a chance to shine at a high-level Division 1 program, accumulating preferred walk-on offers from Michigan, Michigan State, Cincinnati and Vanderbilt.

As for Ohio State, the coaching staff liked his speed and agility, his explosive tendencies in the backfield for Northville — the same message Ladach got

from Ohio State defensive coordinator Kerry Coombs, who was in charge of Saunders' recruitment.

In the end, Ohio State had a spot, Saunders had the talent and the scholarship that paid for his college for four years.

Saunders had his shot. He had his dream.

"I was in shock," Saunders said. "I was excited because I realized everything I had worked for, it was finally being realized. I was finally going to get an opportunity at the next level to continue."

Having coached Saunders for the past two years, Ladach knows the Northville senior will be successful based on the teammate, the friend and the athlete he has been for the Mustangs.

"I'm not going to tell you he's going to be the starting tailback at Ohio State, I'm not going to tell you he's never going to see the field," Ladach said. "Cayden will be a meaningful contributor for that program, and he will be happy doing it. That's why he's been such a pleasure to coach."

Cedric Saunders knows what lies ahead for his son. He knows the running back room Cayden is joining: Master Teague, Miyan Williams and Demario McCall return to the offense along with five-star recruit TreVeyon Henderson from the 2021 recruiting class.

But Cayden's father is confident, thinking he could have fresher legs based on the path to football he led his son on.

"He hasn't taken as much of a pound-

ing as he would have if he started a little bit earlier," Cedric Saunders said. "I think his growth within the game is still to come as far as that physical part."

"I think over the next year or two we're really going to see who Cayden is going to be as a football player, both physically and mentally. He's going to be challenged when he gets there, which I like about it."

Cayden Saunders knows he will be challenged. But even though his dream has been achieved, he is not satisfied.

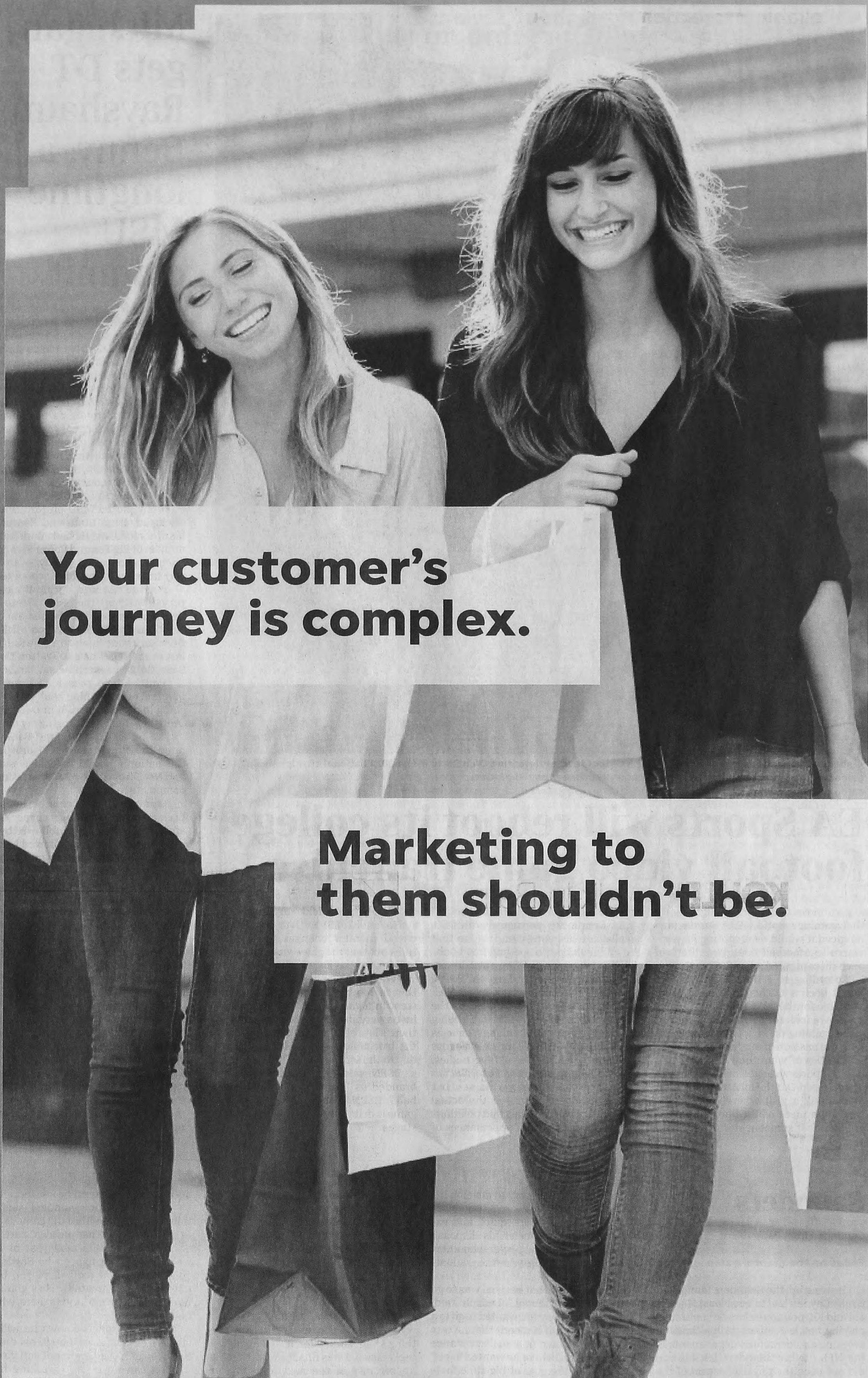
"You can never stop working hard and you can never be satisfied with where you are at," the senior running back said. "That way you always have something motivating you, keep pushing, be better than you already are. Even if you already think you're good, you can always be better."

Cedric Saunders — still active in football as the vice president of football operations at Goal Line Football, representing coaches and players including former Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins — is satisfied. He is content. He has already started visualizing those tailgates outside Ohio Stadium, going to games consistently, cheering on his son where they cheered on his alma mater before he even started tackle football.

Cedric Saunders can't wait to be a part of Cayden Saunders', his son's journey at Ohio State.

"I've had my journey," Cedric Saunders said. "Now it's his journey."

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



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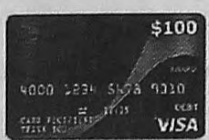
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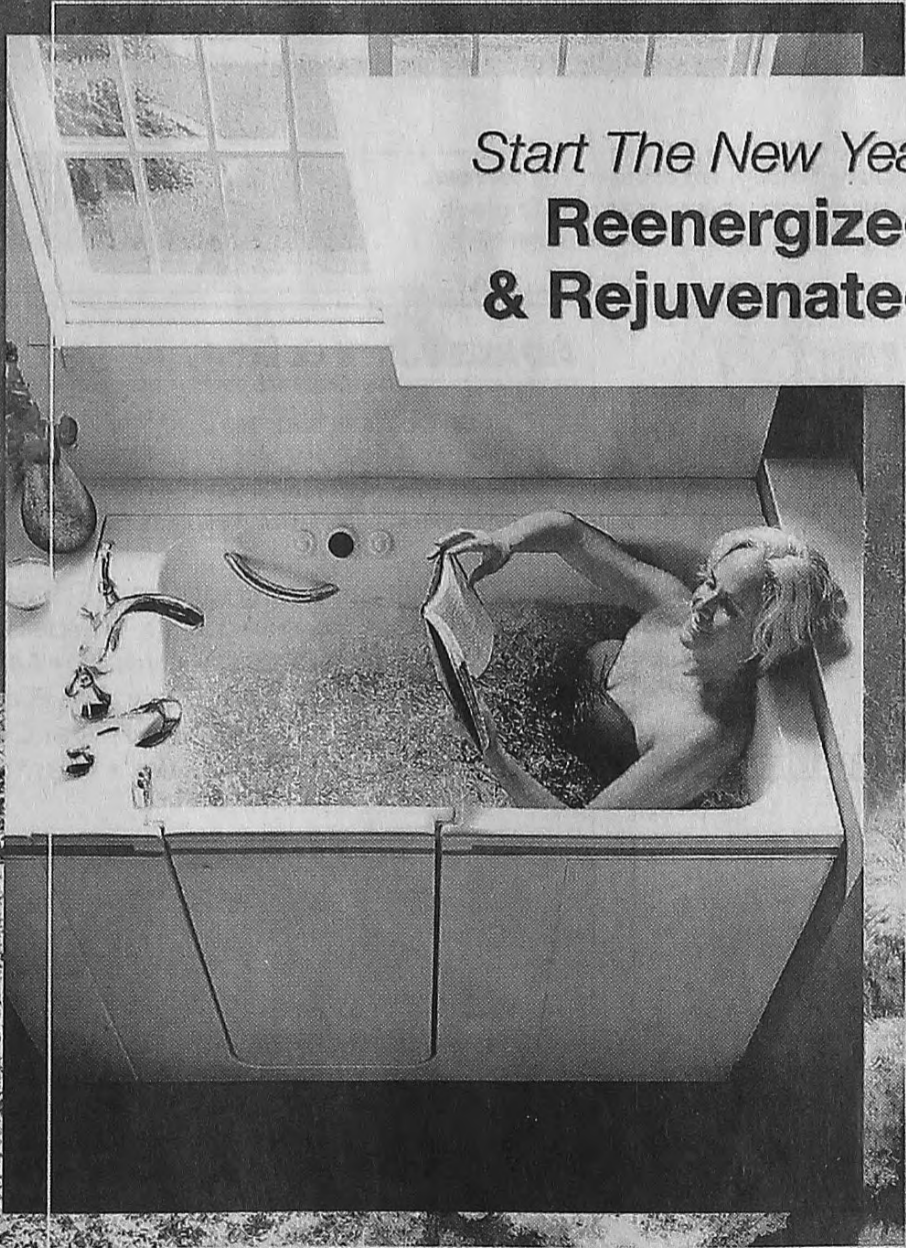
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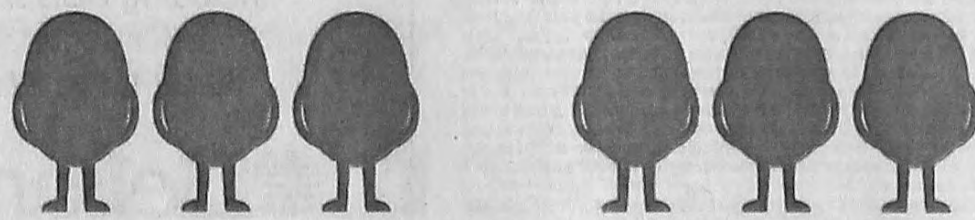
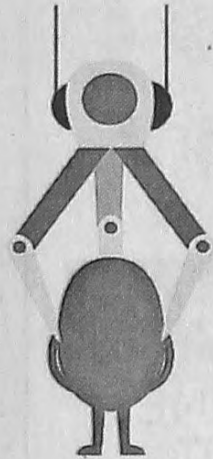
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FREEPIK

Kat Boogaard
 ZipRecruiter.com

When you're applying for a job, standing out from the crowd is always a challenge. But this tough task can suddenly seem insurmountable when you're applying for an extremely competitive position. Here are five tips to help you stand out from that pile of other applicants.

1. Get personal

Feeling like you're submitting your materials into cyberspace is always frustrating, especially when you put so much time and effort into them. This is when making a personal connection can make a huge

difference. Start by seeing whether you know anyone who currently works for that employer. Whether it's an old friend or an acquaintance on LinkedIn, having someone who can hand-deliver your resume or put in a good word for you can really help to put your name at the top of the interview list.

If you can't track down someone who can refer or recommend you, you should still make an effort to be as personal as possible in your application materials. Skip that generic "To Whom It May Concern" and see if you can find the name of the person you'd be working directly for, or even the hiring manager.

2. Improve your documents

It seems basic, but going through your resume and cover letter for

typos and errors is absolutely necessary. Now's also a great time to polish your materials and make sure that they're memorable and impactful. Ensure that you include quantifiable achievements in your resume. Start your cover letter off with an engaging and captivating story.

3. Go above and beyond

You should never hesitate to go the extra mile, show some initiative and share other materials that a potential employer might care about. Send them a link to your portfolio or personal blog. Complete a sample specifically for that employer. Applying for a social media management position? Pull together a brief example of a social media strategy that you think could work for them. Want to be a data analyst?

Share that amazing Excel spreadsheet you built – complicated macros and all.

4. Polish your social media presence

Your work examples and official career documents will only take you so far. More than likely, hiring managers will look you up on social media. Before even submitting your stuff, ensure you've taken the time to clean up your profiles.

5. Follow up

You know all of that intense competition we talked about? It's also pretty overwhelming to the hiring manager. Don't be surprised if you don't hear back immediately about that job you're so excited about. This is why following up is so important.

If you haven't heard anything (whether that's a "yes," "thanks, but no thanks" or "we've received your submission" email) in about a week or two, feel free to reach out personally and check in on a timeline for a hiring decision. Make an attempt to use the most personalized email address you can find. If you can't hunt one of those down, a general "info" or "careers" address will suffice.

Craft a friendly message just asking for an update on the hiring process for that specific position, reiterate your excitement about the opportunity, and thank them for their time. Still radio silence? You're free to follow up once more. But after that, it's time to let it go. We all know there's a fine line between being persistent and being a pest.

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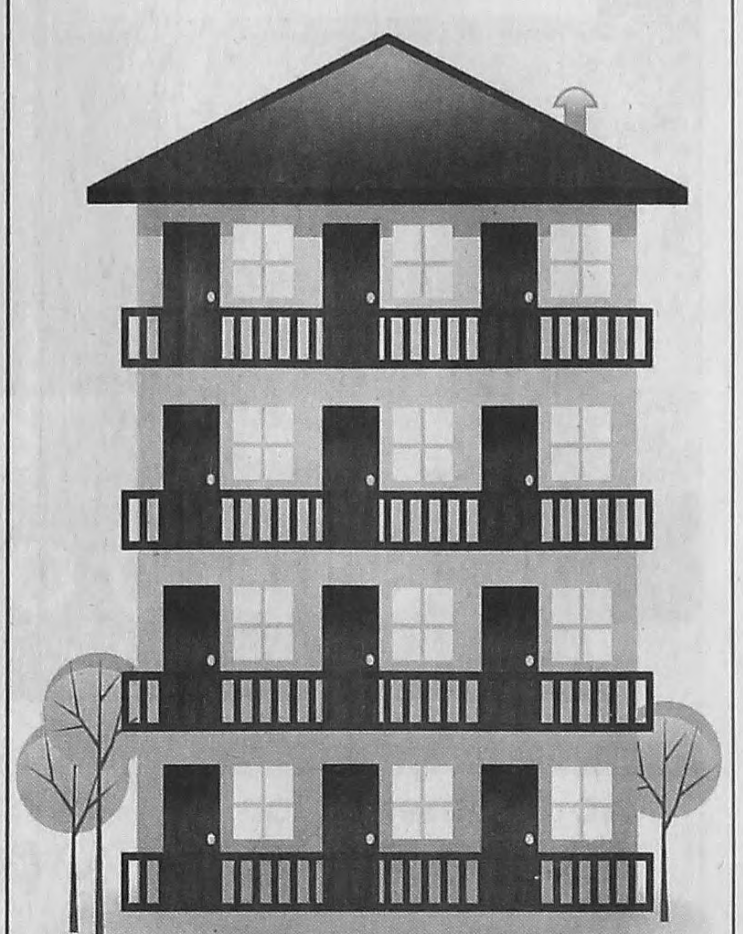
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SUNDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Super Crossword

WEIRD WARDROBE

ACROSS

- 1 Ill will
- 7 Accepted blame humbly
- 14 Creatures
- 20 Mafia code of silence
- 21 Person of the hour
- 22 Bill Clinton's #2
- 23 Formalwear imparting a pleasantly optimistic feeling?
- 25 Flier Earhart
- 26 Tricky rascal
- 27 Some pipe shapes
- 28 Model of iPod
- 30 Weasel's kin
- 31 Room, in Spanish
- 32 G-men, e.g.
- 33 Appropriate underwear in a law court?
- 35 Gemini, e.g.
- 37 Unwanted plant growth
- 38 "Oh, sure!"
- 39 Neckwear making people unable to move?
- 44 ICU tubes
- 45 Burnt residue
- 48 Yellow hue

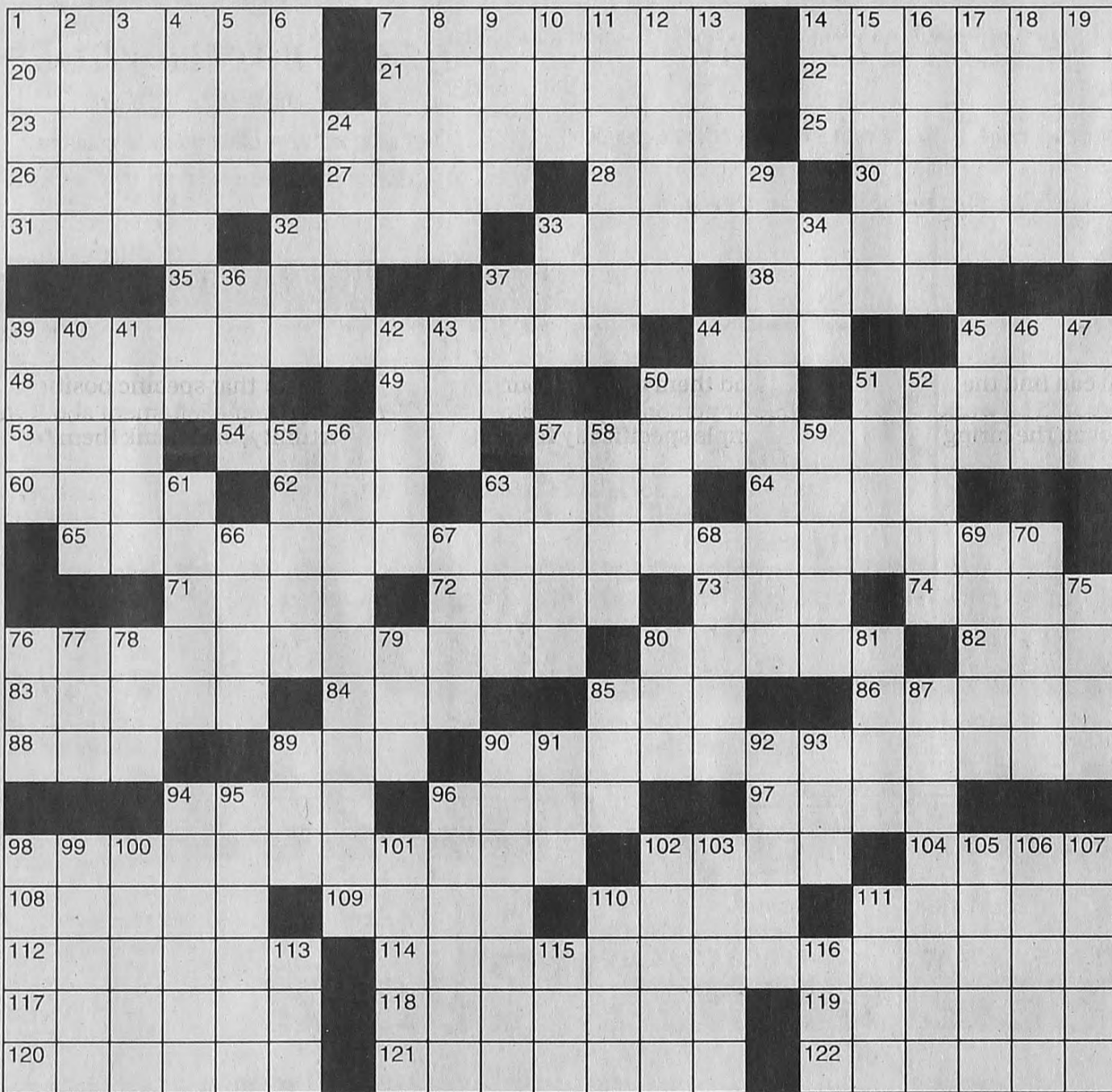
- 49 With 72-Across, 1920s-'30s design style
- 50 Royal flush card
- 51 A Marx brother
- 53 — Zedong
- 54 Ukraine city
- 57 Toadstool-shaped headwear?
- 60 Kilt wearer
- 62 Stew sphere
- 63 Moral errors
- 64 Actress Perlman
- 65 Women's wear encircling a magazine?
- 71 Tooth filler
- 72 See 49-Across
- 73 Abbr. of fair hiring
- 74 Go bonkers
- 76 Beach where everyone dons athletic wear?
- 80 Do a tally of
- 82 Abbr. in. personal ads
- 83 Sir Andrew — Webber
- 84 "— Day Will Come"
- 85 Be in debt to
- 86 Writer Joyce Carol —

- 88 Frequently, to a poet
- 89 Pull sharply
- 90 Waist wear inscribed with images of sun-orbiting bodies?
- 94 Castle trench
- 96 ERA or RBI
- 97 Sit as a model
- 98 Outerwear with huge pockets to hold LPs?
- 102 Verbal gems
- 104 9-to-5er's relieved cry
- 108 Telegraphic code creator
- 109 Slave away
- 110 Inside info
- 111 Pro at taking dictation
- 112 Frozen spike
- 114 Summer wear depicting cartoon scenes?
- 117 Weasels' kin
- 118 Looked scornfully
- 119 Messenger of the gods
- 120 Rains cold pellets
- 121 Mean rulers
- 122 Big bother

- DOWN**
- 1 Boulders
- 2 Oven brand
- 3 Sherpa land
- 4 Deep fissure
- 5 An Amerind
- 6 Brit. mil. fliers
- 7 Get — of (obtain)
- 8 Implements
- 9 Closing parts
- 10 Homer Simpson cry
- 11 Rusty color
- 12 Avenged
- 13 Singer — Marie
- 14 Sheep's call
- 15 "Rum Punch" novelist Leonard
- 16 "Yeah, makes sense"
- 17 Nick of film
- 18 Heartache
- 19 Scorches
- 24 "Angie" star Davis
- 29 "Tommy" actor
- 32 E-I linkup
- 33 Royal flush card
- 34 They're shot from air rifles
- 36 Modest reply to kudos
- 37 Comical sort
- 39 Scots' toppers
- 40 Many Apples

- 41 Paperless novel, e.g.
- 42 Turcic language
- 43 Bit of lifting lingerie
- 44 I, to Freud
- 45 Curved line
- 46 Mani offerer
- 47 Quick trip
- 50 Helper: Abbr.
- 51 Gardening implements
- 52 Stock up on
- 55 As is fitting
- 56 Grabs the attention of suddenly
- 57 Cut to bits
- 58 Counteract
- 59 Buckeye State sch.
- 61 A bit drunk
- 63 Plaintiff
- 66 Regretted deeply
- 67 Lysol target
- 68 Jon who played Napoleon Dynamite
- 69 Join together
- 70 Studio prop
- 75 Earring part
- 76 "I'm Real" singer's nickname
- 77 Pixie
- 78 Deteriorate
- 79 Kiss go-with, often

- 80 Stupefy
- 81 Seal schools
- 85 Mel who wore #4
- 87 Helpers in crime
- 89 — Mahal
- 90 Painter's studio
- 91 Used a sofa
- 92 Elected (to)
- 93 Platform for Apple devices
- 94 Biceps, e.g.
- 95 Brunch dish
- 96 Thin
- 98 Slightly off
- 99 Regional
- 100 Hush money
- 101 Slide on a sled, say
- 102 Polyphonic choral piece
- 103 Opinion pieces
- 105 Lysol target
- 106 It's gathered in recon
- 107 "Pippin" director Bob
- 110 Mend, as socks
- 111 Mets' former stadium
- 113 Ending for lion or seer
- 115 — culpa
- 116 "Zip it!"



For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at (517) 702-4247 or smcclellan@michigan.com.

SUDOKU

		9	7	6		4		
2		1	3				8	
	7				2	1		3
	1			5		8		2
7		5				9		4
9			2	3				7
	5			7	4	6		
	9	3			8			7
4			6					5
								1

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

SUMMER GARDEN

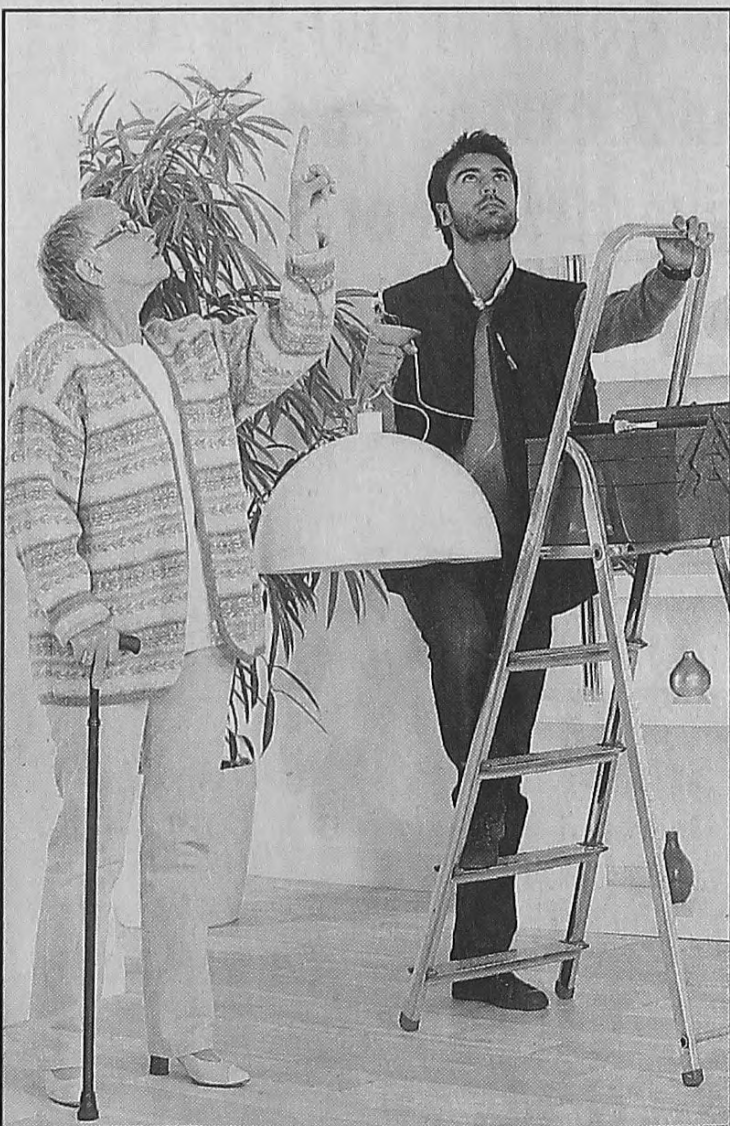
Can you find all the words hidden in the grid? Read backwards or forwards, up or down, even diagonally. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

M	S	S	E	V	A	E	L	T	S	S	A	R	G	A	D	Y
A	H	U	H	Q	W	S	H	R	U	B	B	E	R	Y	W	R
E	E	N	C	T	L	E	M	O	N	A	D	E	H	G	E	E
R	D	G	N	S	A	D	R	I	B	Y	D	A	L	K	E	K
C	I	L	E	O	P	P	T	L	K	E	Z	O	D	O	D	C
E	S	A	B	F	X	U	O	A	E	D	A	P	S	O	S	O
C	E	S	H	A	S	S	C	Y	H	K	A	S	E	B	W	R
I	S	S	L	C	S	N	L	R	Z	W	U	I	A	S	S	P
L	O	E	S	O	K	F	O	I	E	N	A	R	S	R	O	O
E	R	S	M	U	R	C	D	I	S	T	E	R	E	I	B	N
W	B	S	H	E	N	R	E	C	L	F	T	W	T	G	E	D
O	G	I	T	I	A	S	R	D	E	E	O	U	N	S	Z	S
R	B	T	R	Y	U	E	H	E	Q	L	D	I	B	P	A	E
T	U	O	A	D	E	L	T	I	F	N	W	N	C	L	G	S
B	S	T	E	N	S	T	N	A	N	S	P	L	A	N	T	S
A	H	E	E	R	T	U	B	E	E	E	Y	W	V	D	G	I
E	K	A	R	K	C	O	M	M	A	H	N	H	E	R	B	S

ANSWER KEY

- ANTS
- BARE FEET
- BEE
- BENCH
- BIRDS
- BLOSSOMS
- BOOK
- BUSH
- BUTTERCUPS
- BUTTERFLY
- DAISIES
- DANDELIONS
- DECKCHAIR
- DOZE
- EARTH
- FLOWERS
- GAZEBO
- GRASS
- HAMMOCK
- HERBS
- ICE CREAM
- LADYBIRD
- LAWN
- LEAVES
- LEMONADE
- PATH
- PLANTS
- POND
- RAKE
- RELAX
- ROCKERY
- ROSES
- SHED
- SHRUBBERY
- SPADE
- STRAW HAT
- SUNGLASSES
- SUNSCREEN
- SUNSHINE
- SWING
- TREE
- TROWEL
- WEEDS
- YARD

4	8	7	6	3	9	5	1
6	9	5	1	8	2	7	4
1	5	2	9	7	4	6	3
6	4	8	2	3	8	5	1
7	2	5	1	6	8	3	4
3	1	4	5	7	4	9	1
5	7	4	8	6	8	2	1
2	9	1	3	4	5	7	6
8	6	8	7	4	5	1	4
5	2	7	6	3	9	5	1



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