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# OBSERVER

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2021 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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## Westland sued over marijuana licenses

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It didn't take long for lawsuits to stem from Westland City Council's recent decision to award its first conditional marijuana business licenses.

Several lawsuits against the city were filed in Wayne County Circuit Court challenging the recent awarding of li-

censes to allow for marijuana businesses to operate in the city, a process that's taken some time since the city first decided it would be open to such establishments.

The city council decided March 15 with a 5-2 vote to certify the list of seven businesses to move forward with receiving licenses for marijuana, including several retail operations. Those

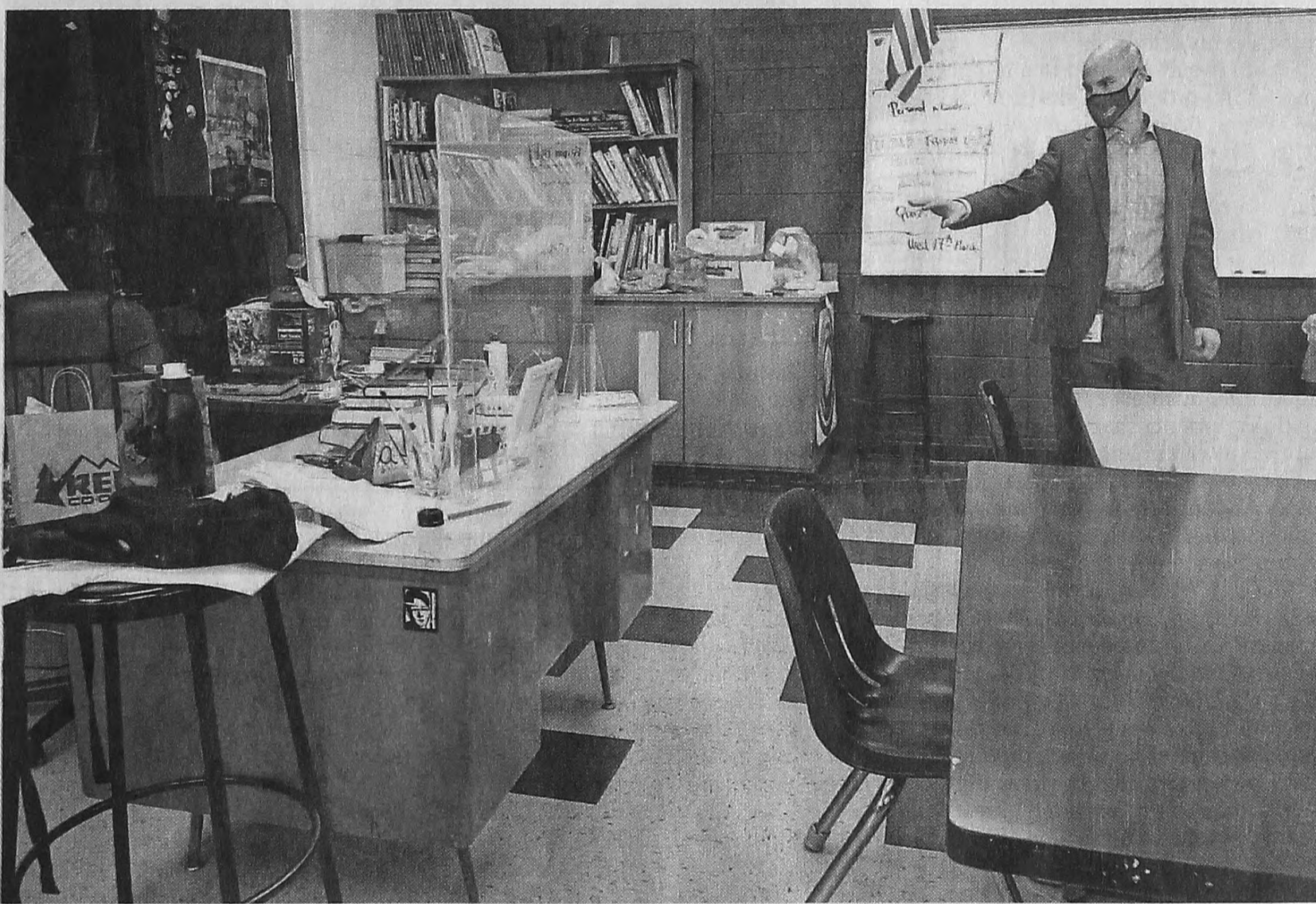
businesses awarded licenses include:

- Karvol, 37435 and 37601 Cherry Hill
- LJA Holdings LLC, 37570 Cherry Hill
- Quality Roots on the northwest corner of Cherry Hill and Newburgh
- Thanos LLC on the southwest corner of Inkster and Ann Arbor Trail
- Common Citizen, 37655 Ford Road
- Belal Elayan, 38400 Abruzzi

• Unique Testing Solutions, 5838 Executive

The lawsuits, filed on behalf of several businesses that applied for the licenses but were not awarded any, argue the city was unfair in its decision process to select the businesses to receive licenses.

See WESTLAND, Page 2A



Livonia School District business operations manager Phil Francis points to an original desk from Franklin High that was added in 1964 when it was opened. Teachers' desks like this would be targeted for update if the bond proposal passes.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## What to know about Livonia schools' proposed \$186M bond

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Livonia Public Schools is responsible for about three million square feet in facilities. Andrea Oquist, the district's superintendent, said those classrooms, hallways, athletic fields and offices cost money to maintain. Oquist also said the district tries to evolve with what the

community needs.

So, Livonia is asking voters to approve a 20-year, \$186 million bond on May 4 that would improve district infrastructure and create new programs.

"We know exactly what we need ... We do not seek to ask for the maximum amount of dollars we could bring in," Oquist said. "Rather, we matched our request with the need that exists."

**How Livonia decided on 20 years, \$186 million**

When Livonia brought a bond proposal to voters in 2013, the district identified \$275 million in needs. Instead, the district asked for a \$195 million through a 30-year bond in an

See BOND, Page 2A

## Police turn to social workers as mental health calls increase

Susan Vela and Shelby Tankersley

Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The coronavirus pandemic's toll of death, grief and isolation means more mental health crises and more leaning on police for help, even though those officers are not necessarily the most qualified to manage the mental aspects.

The predicament of having to navigate an upended mental state for the sake of safety can be scary for even the best police officers.

Novi Officer Samantha Grockau remembers a call in which she encountered a teen who ran away from home. He wanted to harm himself.

"I said to him, 'Tell me what happened, tell me what's going on,' and he said a lot of it had to do with everything that's happened in the last year," she said. "It's all over the board on how it's affecting people."

Mental health issues like substance abuse and attempts at self harm can have a deep, lasting effect on police officers as well.

"I've dealt with my fair share of calls that have gone well and ones that have gone very badly," Grockau said. "I'd be able to speak for any cop when I say if it goes bad, it's going to affect you in every single way that it can."

"Even when it goes well, your adrenaline still goes through the roof." The pandemic and everything it brought with it highlights the growing need for police to do more than just recognize when mental health issues are the underlying problem.

Many officers concur with the critics: At the end of the day, they're not mental health professionals. But as Novi Police Chief David Molloy said, people call police when "things are falling apart."

"We do the best we can with the tools that we have, but we're not (mental health) professionals. We're just not," Livonia Police Chief Curtis Caid said.

See POLICE, Page 5A

## Teen's statements banned from murder trial

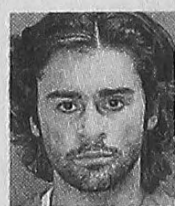
Susan Vela Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Farmington Hills teen spoke to police investigating his mother's death, but those 2017 words, for the most part, cannot be used as jury evidence during his murder trial.

Muhammad Altantawi, now 19, is heading back to Oakland County Circuit Court to face trial since the Michigan

Supreme Court reversed decisions by Oakland Circuit Judge Martha Anderson and the Michigan Court of Appeals.

The reversals are happening because prosecutors submitted a "confession of error" regarding the significant question of whether Altantawi's statements during an interrogation at his



Altantawi

family's Howard Road home be allowed.

On Feb. 26, Supreme Court justices explained their reversals as being "in light of the prosecutor's concession that the juvenile defendant was subjected to a 'custodial interrogation' without being advised of his rights pursuant to *Miranda v Arizona*."

See BANNED, Page 5A



## Bond

Continued from Page 1A

effort to lessen the burden on taxpayers for a while longer. A bond allows the district to borrow a large sum of money and, through tax-collected dollars, pay it off over time.

"We knew going into (2013) there would be projects that would have to be deferred for another turn," Oquist said.

The remaining needs not addressed by the 2013 bond and new needs led the district to request \$186 million from voters this year.

"These aren't just some nice ideas of things we should do," Alison Smith, the district's director of finance. "This is backed up by a needs assessment."

The district chose a 20-year bond to pay less interest in the long run.

Oquist and other district officials have repeatedly stressed an approving choice from voters would not raise taxes. But, if voters say "no," taxes would go down.

An anonymous website calling itself

Lower Your Damn Taxes Livonia advocates for just that. The site references salaries and benefits for district administrators but does not express any specific concerns with the proposal or operations within the district. The group did not respond to an email requesting comment.

"The tax rate would temporarily go down, but our need isn't going to go away," Smith said.

### Aging buildings

In Michigan, schools get funding from a program approved by voters in 1994 commonly referred to as Proposal A. Oquist said the proposal focused on classrooms more than facilities, which, she said, is why many districts need things like bonds and sinking funds to help keep their buildings operational.

"They simply took the pot of money, number of students and assigned an amount per-pupil based on the levy at that time," Oquist said. "Proposal A does not provide any dollars for buildings or facilities. It was simply for the cost of what happens in the classroom."

Now infrastructure like teacher desks, doors and kitchens, which are original to many of the schools, need replacing.

"We have a significant need to update our kitchens and our serving lines in every cafeteria," Oquist said. "They are original to the schools, so they're 50 to 60 years old."

Most buildings are without air conditioning as well. Oquist said adding air conditioning would allow for more summer programs and keep everyone comfortable on warm fall days.

"We do not have air conditioning in the majority of our classrooms," she said. "Many, many districts around us, if not most, do have that. We know that for learning as well as the work environment for our staff, that's really an essential component ... Some of those classrooms get very, very hot. It can become very uncomfortable."

Other items the bond would pay for include improvements to athletic fields, roofs, boilers, pavement, playgrounds and more. The money would also allow Livonia to purchase some new school buses.

### New programs, building expansions

The bond would also give Livonia money to create new programs.

"One of the things I would be really excited about is the ability to redesign and reimagine or library media centers for the 21st century learner," she said. "We'd be infusing more technology, collaborative learning spaces and utilizing so students can work independently, in small groups and in large group settings."

The district would also expand its early childhood programs.

"We have a growing need in our community for childcare, preschool and young fives offerings," Oquist said. "So we want to be able to pull those offerings together and have a place that meets the needs of our community."

Administrators would also like to give the middle and high school robotics program, which is run out of the Dickinson Center on Newburgh Road, a more permanent home as well as expand its career technical training offerings.

stankersle@hometownlife.com

## Westland

Continued from Page 1A

### Concerns over scoring applicants

Anthony Bologna, a Bloomfield Hills attorney representing MHS Westland which seeks to put a retail marijuana facility at the site of The Copper Door bar at Joy and Inkster roads, said his client isn't interested in litigation and wants the city to correct its scoring rubric to determine how to grant the licenses.

"They don't want a long litigation," he said. "They'd like the city to come to the table and realize they made a mistake, redo the process and make it fair."

At issue for Bologna and his client is the issue surrounding the remediation of the property score. The city crafted a scoring rubric that awarded points for various aspects of the projects, which also included whether or not a marijuana business would remediate and clean up properties that have fallen into disrepair.

Bologna said his clients' The Copper Door building discovered plenty of issues inside, including asbestos, and

proposed demolishing the existing building and constructing a new one on site. That demolition and construction, the complaint reads, should count toward the final score on MHS Westland's rubric.

"It should be noted that this scoring criteria states that the applicant will receive 8 points if they 'will develop and remediate property that is environmentally contaminated,'" the complaint reads. "This means even though MHS will be constructing a new building on the property, the necessary remediation and demolition of The Copper Door, environmentally contaminated property, satisfies this criterion."

That lawsuit resulted in a temporary restraining order, Bologna said, issued by Wayne County Circuit Judge John Gillis. That restraining order prohibits any action by the City of Westland to move the licensing process forward until at least June.

Bologna filed a similar lawsuit against the city for another client, Harper Ventures, LLC, which seeks a retail license on the south side of the city.

Another lawsuit, filed on behalf of three other businesses seeking licenses, made arguments that the city's scoring rubric was not in line with standards as set by the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act. The lawsuit claims using criteria used doesn't fall within the scope of the law.

The suit, filed by Howell-based Pollicella, PLLC and Bloomfield Hills-based Bahoura Law, represents three companies seeking licenses: Blue Water Cannabis Company, LLC; H.O.D. Westland, LLC; and Henndogs Holdings, LLC. A message seeking comment on that lawsuit was not returned by press time.

In a statement, Westland Mayor William Wild said lawsuits filed against the city was not a surprise.

"As expected the City has been sued by unsuccessful marijuana license applicants and those suits are now in the Wayne County Circuit Court," he said. "We have to let the legal process play itself out to see what the next steps are in the process for getting marijuana facilities open up in the city as the citizens indicated they wanted and city council have approved."

### Westland's marijuana licensing process

City ordinance allows for up to eight licenses be awarded to businesses across the city with five retailers permit-



Some marijuana flower for sale at Michigan's Finest Cannabis Company.

HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

ted in various parts of the community. Two of those licenses can be just retail locations with one located north of Ford Road and another south of Ford Road in the city. Three other locations in the city may sell marijuana but must be collocated businesses in industrial zoning districts.

Another license can be issued to a stand-alone secure transporter license and its equivalent license in industrial zoning districts; another can be issued to a stand-alone marijuana microbusiness license in industrial zoning districts; and another can be issued to a stand-alone safety compliance facility license and its equivalent license, in commercial, office, or industrial zoning districts. That totals eight businesses.

The businesses are allowed under the passage of the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act, which was approved by Michigan voters in 2018.

The city received 36 applications, which were reviewed by the city's marijuana selection committee and scored. Twenty-seven of the applicant appealed their scores, which were upheld after several public hearings.

Those businesses selected for approval will need to come back to the city for review of site plan before they could begin construction or open their shops.

### Council decision

The two council members who voted no on the seven licenses during the March 15 meeting — Councilman Peter Herzberg and Councilwoman Tasha Green — both expressed concerns over the high concentration of marijuana businesses in one part of the city. Of the seven businesses to move forward in the process, three were located near the in-

tersection of Cherry Hill and Newburgh roads.

"I don't want to see the three facilities altogether there," Herzberg said. "I do have an issue with that."

Councilman Jim Godbout said while he was not completely happy with all the locations selected, there was only a small amount of land eligible for such businesses as the ordinance was written.

He said it was a foregone conclusion once Westland decided to open up to marijuana businesses that there would be complaints.

"We knew when we went into this process there were going to be winners and losers. The winners were going to be happy and the losers weren't going to be happy," he said. "It's the unfortunate part of the whole process. But one thing that did happen was we were consistent with the process. We followed the ordinance as it was laid out."

In addition to the location issues, Green said she was unhappy with the timing on reviewing the final decision. She said she received word regarding documents to be viewed the Friday before the Monday meeting and that those documents were only available on a single computer within city hall.

She said when she arrived at city hall, she had a difficult time finding the computer with the information on it, limiting her time to review the plans.

"I am not confident with how this has happened," Green said. "To expect city council to make such an important decision in a small bracket of time which gives us minimal time to make sure that our city is protected is asinine."

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Amendment to the Text of the Charter Township of Plymouth Zoning Ordinance No. 99 by Amending Article 20.2: Notes to Schedule of Regulations Article 20

**DATE OF HEARING:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021

**TIME OF HEARING:** 7:00 P.M.

**PLACE OF HEARING:** Plymouth Township Hall Offices, 9955 N. Haggerty Road, Plymouth, Michigan 48170

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Plymouth proposes to amend the text of Zoning Ordinance No. 99 by amending Article 20, Schedule of Regulations, Section 20.2: Notes to Schedule of Regulations Article 20, at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on Wednesday, April 21, 2021. The text amendment proposes to remove footnotes bb. 1-3 and bb. 7-9. The proposed amendments will permit the Zoning Board of Appeals to review each variance request subject to the criteria of Section 31.11: Variances of the Zoning Ordinance.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that persons interested may attend the public hearing and/or send correspondence regarding the application to Plymouth Township Hall, attn.: Carol Martin. Pertinent information relative to the application is on file at the Plymouth Township, Public Services Department (second floor counter) and may be viewed during regular business hours from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

The Charter Township of Plymouth will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the public hearing upon one week's advance notice by writing or calling the Supervisor's Office, 9955 N. Haggerty Road, Plymouth, Michigan 48170; (734) 354-3201.

Publish by: On, or before April 5, 2021

Kendra Barberena, Secretary, Planning Commission

Publish: April 1, 2021

LO-0000358830 3x4.5

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877-774-1537

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Publish: March 25 & April 1, 2021

LO-0000358869 3x3

# Where to sign up for COVID-19 vaccination

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The vast majority of Michigan adults are poised to join health care workers, seniors and other groups as eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines in the coming days. But where can you find one?

Michiganders 16 and older become eligible to receive a vaccine April 5. Expect a big demand for the shots, which continue to see supply far below demand.

We've compiled a list of methods to sign up for one of the three approved COVID-19 vaccines. Important to note is all places currently require an appointment.

This list isn't exhaustive, but hopefully it gives you a good start.

## Local government

Both county and local governments are providing access to vaccines across the area, though it does vary depending on which side of Eight Mile you're on.

Oakland County is handling its vaccine allotments directly, opting to give the jabs at designated places. Those looking to register to "save their spot" for an appointment can do so by visiting oaklandcountyvaccine.com.

In Wayne County (outside of Detroit), several local municipalities are handling vaccination efforts, especially for seniors. Clinics for vaccinations have taken place for seniors in Livonia, Northville, Garden City, Plymouth, Canton, Wayne and Westland.

To determine the status of those clinics, it's best to keep tabs on local municipal websites and social media.

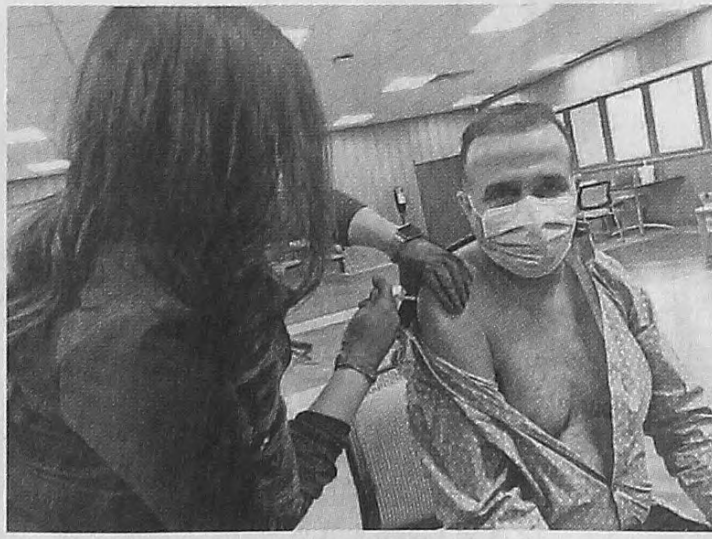
Residents of Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Inkster, Redford Township, Allen Park, Garden City and Melvindale are eligible to receive the vaccine through Dearborn at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center. Those who qualify can register online at cityof-dearborn.org/covid.

Wayne County has conducted vaccinations through clinics held at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, though it asks those seeking a vaccine to go through a health care channel. Visit the county's COVID-19 website to get up-to-date information on upcoming clinics.

Those who work in the City of Detroit may also be eligible through the city. More information can be found on the city's website.

For those who miss heading downtown to the major sporting event sites can get their fix (kind of) by getting a COVID-19 vaccine at Ford Field in Detroit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently launched a mass vaccination clinic at the home of the Detroit Lions that will run for several weeks and vaccinate thousands of people a day. Meijer is handling registration for the clinic, and those looking to sign up can do so at clinic.meijer.com/register/CL0001.

Keep an eye on social media as well in case appoint-



Dr. Ala Shuker, internal medicine physician, right, receives the first COVID-19 vaccination at Ascension Providence Hospital in Novi, administered by Alicia Murrell, RN. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

ments open up later in the day: at least once since opening a call for those seeking the shot came at the end of the day when it was determined there were unused shots and not enough appointments to fill them.

## Local pharmacies

One of the best bets to snag a shot is registering through a local pharmacy.

National chains such as Walgreens and Rite Aid are offering the shots at several pharmacies across the region. These pharmacies will ask for some basic information before signing up and have different protocols when it comes time for a second-dose appointment if one's needed.

If you're unable to find an appointment at the nearest pharmacy to you, open up the geographic radius. It appears more appointments may be available outside of metro Detroit: some people are traveling as far as Toledo, Jackson and Saginaw to get an appointment.

Bigger stores such as Meijer, Kroger and Walmart offer the vaccine as well. Stores require an account to sign up.

Those who feel more comfortable with local options can inquire at the smaller pharmacies in the region. Places such as Ray's Drugs in Livonia have gotten considerable attention for providing the jabs. It's best to inquire with your local pharmacy regarding availability.

## Hospitals, health care systems

The area's hospitals continue their efforts to vaccinate the public as well.

Beaumont Health has opened up registration for shots and will administer them at a few locations, in-

cluding the Beaumont Service Center in Southfield and the Beaumont Learning and Innovation Center in Dearborn. Those looking to sign up, which can be done online, must have an account with the health care system.

The St. Joseph Mercy Health System also requires signing up for an account to register for the shot, which can be done online. The health care system offers appointments at hospitals across the region, including St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia and St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Hospital in Pontiac. Some clinics in Washtenaw County, including St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Superior Township, have rerouted their doses to the Washtenaw County Health Department, which is administering them in Ypsilanti.

Those who are patients in the Ascension Michigan health system, which includes Ascension Providence Hospital in Novi, may be contacted by their health care provider to schedule an appointment. The system is currently not utilizing a registration or wait list for members of the public seeking a COVID-19 vaccine.

Garden City Hospital is currently reaching out to patients who have been treated the last few years to schedule a vaccine appointment. Community members who fall within the current guidelines can also register for an appointment once it becomes available by visiting the hospital's website. Vaccinations take place at the hospital's Medical Office Building at 6255 Inkster in Garden City.

## Elsewhere

While these are some of the local areas, other places to get the COVID-19 vaccine may be available elsewhere.

Several websites have been set up to help connect vaccine-seekers to shots, including vaccinefinder.org. There, visitors can search for places offering shots in a specific geographic area.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at [dveselenak@hometownlife.com](mailto:dveselenak@hometownlife.com) or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.



# RECONNECT



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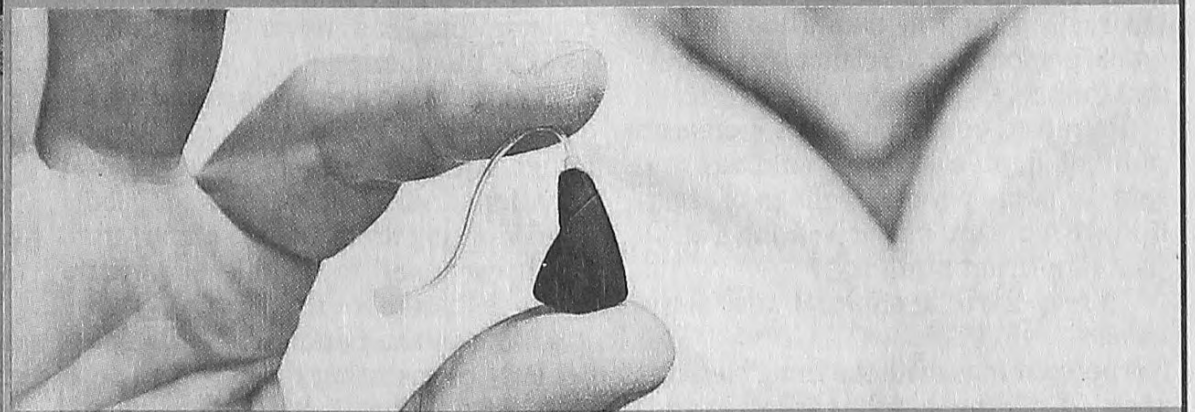
- | YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have ringing in your ears?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do people complain that you turn the TV volume up too high?                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you ask people to repeat what they say or feel like people mumble?           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do family members or coworkers tell you that you are not hearing what they say? |

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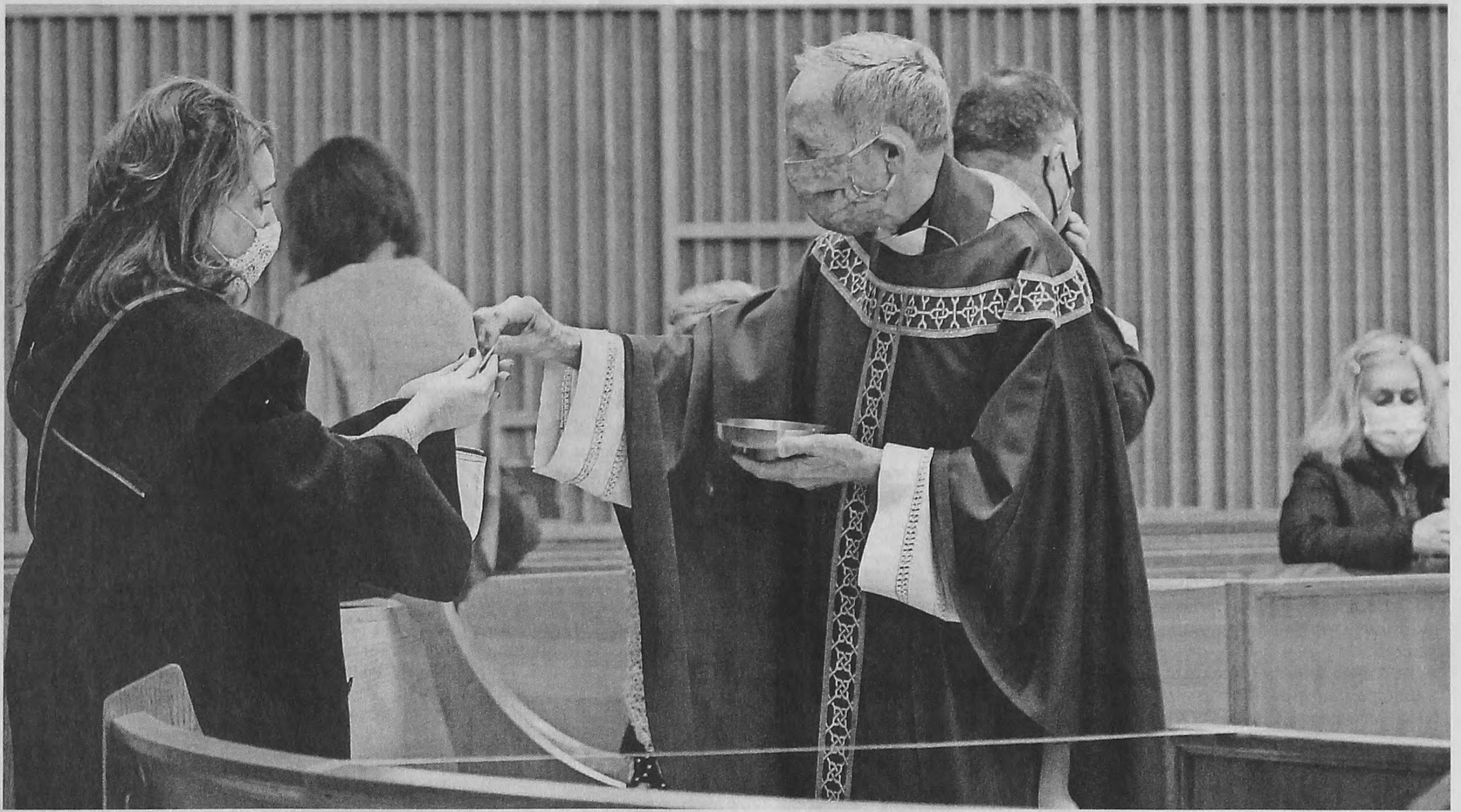
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Monsignor John Zenz, right, offers a communion wafer to a parishioner from a safe distance during service March 17 at Holy Name Church in Birmingham.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

# As Easter approaches, pastors grapple with guiding their flocks

Susan Bromley [HometownLife.com](http://HometownLife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

As the second Easter in a pandemic quickly approaches, churches' doors are open again, but the look and mood inside varies.

At some services, masks are required. At others, masks are optional. It may depend on the area of the church or the time of service. All of this has sown division in congregations gathered for a common purpose: to worship Christ.

At South Lyon's Fellowship Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Pastor Alan Conrow has sought to please everyone with a "grace-based approach," requiring masks be worn in the sanctuary while simultaneously offering the use of a multi-purpose room during service in which masks are optional.

"Trying not to let COVID divide us and masks divide us is very difficult in this time. It's off the charts," Conrow said. "We struggle with that. None of these decisions are made flippantly. There are two narratives and two worlds colliding, and then you throw the politics on top of that ..."

Pastor Paul Jenkinson, leader of Oak Pointe Church's Milford campus where the final service of each Sunday is now mask optional, said church leaders have been put in a "very hard spot."

"We spent oodles of hours trying to figure out best practices for our church and also to be helpful to our community," he said. "Some people could see (the mask-optional service) as unhelpful or irresponsible, but we had to weigh the emotional impact from this year and people's fatigue. We're not acquiescing but really trying to take a look at the whole person and the difficulty and burden for people."

He raised concerns about increased rates of depression and suicides and said for some people, feelings of isolation are more intense or wearing a mask "is a significant burden."

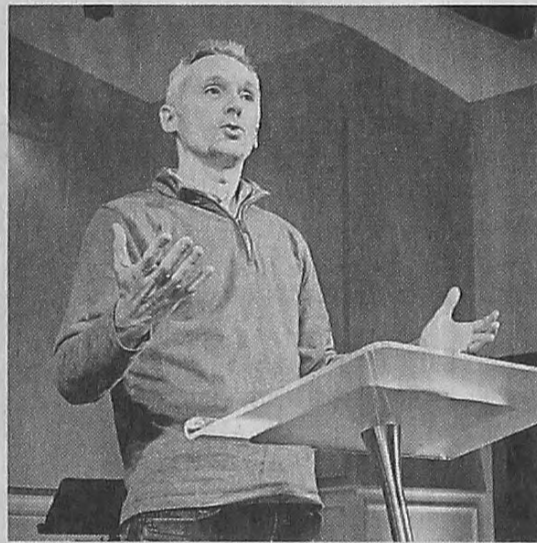
"It's a polarizing choice, but so is the choice for 100 percent masks all the time," Jenkinson said, adding that the earliest service is just that — masks required — while middle services offer a "restaurant-style approach," with masks only required if moving in common areas.

At Holy Name Catholic Church in Birmingham, masks are not a choice. If you want to attend, you are expected to wear a mask at all times with the exception of when you accept communion.

The church, which serves about 2,400 families comprising at least 5,000 individuals, also encourages parishioners to register for services as it seeks to keep 6 feet of distance between people who are not from the same household.

Monsignor John Zenz said that even though the church is large and capable of holding 850 people on the main floor, because of the configuration of seating and makeup of the congregation, only about 110 people can be in the pews for each service while maintaining social distancing.

Zenz said the archdiocese has given



Oak Pointe Pastor Paul Jenkinson is expecting a full house Easter weekend.

general directions to Catholic churches, but allows individual pastors and leaders to determine what is best for their parishes. At Holy Name, he said the congregation is generally accepting of the more strict approach to restrictions.

"Everyone wears masks, myself included," he said. "People know (the rules) and if they don't want to wear a mask, they don't come."

Livestreamed worship services, which was the only option a year ago for all churches, remains an option.

Zenz is grateful that this Easter the church will host in-person services.

"Last year we couldn't and that was very awkward and even painful for a lot of us," he said.

Teri Moore, a Birmingham resident and parishioner, has been attending regularly for 10 years and is grateful she can do so in person. She doesn't always register, but has never been turned away at the door.

"Being able to attend Mass and be in a community with others worshipping brings strength to everyday tasks and situations," she said. "I can see God's hand working in my life in so many different ways and to be able to worship and give thanks for that is vital."

Earlier in the pandemic, it was particularly devastating for her to be separated from the Eucharistic services, but communion has resumed at Holy Name.

## Dealing with COVID-19 cases

Other religious traditions will have to wait, including foot washing, which is a Holy Thursday ritual in the Catholic church. Zenz said this year, that rite will be reserved for three people joining the church who have indicated they are not afraid to have their feet washed in the current situation.

Also missing will be processions for Palm Sunday and the Easter vigil, due to the need for social distancing.

But the safety measures Holy Name has kept in place have had the intended effect. Zenz is aware of only two congregants who have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic began, and neither involved any interactions with the church.

Conrow said a congregant who re-



Pastor Alan Conrow with Fellowship Evangelical Church in South Lyon.

cently tested positive for COVID-19 after attending the early March service is not the only congregant who has tested positive, but the only one who was in church when at risk for passing it on to others.

He notified Fellowship EPC members by email and said only two others had been potentially exposed.

Frank and Jane Severn, 15-year members of Fellowship EPC, opted for services in the sanctuary where masks are required. The couple, both 80 years old, missed attending church earlier in the pandemic.

"It was a grave loss," Frank Severn said. "The Bible describes church as a household of God and if we're all staying in our own room all the time and never gather together, you lose the sense of oneness as a community. We missed seeing and greeting and confessing our faith together and talking together. We missed the whole community aspect."

The couple recognizes the divide there has been in their church. Frank Severn notes some felt strongly about the mask mandate and said they wouldn't go to church if forced to wear one.

Conrow does not anticipate rescinding the mask-optional provision the church offers, unless there is an increase in exposure risk.

Some Oak Pointe Church members have also tested positive for COVID-19.

Jenkinson said there have been a "few deaths, but it's hard to say if they were from COVID."

He said the church has not had to cancel any services, but some individual meetings have been canceled. That includes student ministries after a COVID-19 outbreak at Millford High School on March 23 in which 11 students tested positive, resulting in dozens of quarantines.

The increase in cases again is disheartening, but Jenkinson has no plans to turn back. The attempt to placate a divided church has not come without a cost.

## Dwindling numbers

Prior to the pandemic, Oak Pointe in Milford had an average Sunday attendance of about 750 people. Over the

course of a month, about 1,000 congregants would attend services.

With a shift to virtual services last spring, then outdoor services last summer, then a return to the sanctuary last fall but with some of the congregation wearing masks throughout the service and some removing them for singing or when the sermon was given, to now with separate services, there are fewer in the pews, perhaps 500 on any given Sunday.

Some of that is because people are choosing to watch from home, but Jenkinson said some of the loss is because people have gotten out of the habit of going to church.

Others have left the church because they feel it does not line up with their political values or COVID-19 values, or because "we were too stringent for too long."

"It's a bummer and disappointing on three fronts: on some level people are still not feeling comfortable in public gatherings; it's also hard because you realize some people have just drifted away from the church; and then honestly, it's a bummer when people feel you're not doing it right with politics or COVID and they leave instead of staying and being part of the discussion and correction about an issue."

He acknowledged that those who profess their faith as Christians in church on Sunday are just as fallible outside of church and, even in the best of times, humans are inherently selfish by nature.

He recalled a sermon series over the summer taken from the book of Philipians, which he describes as the most overtly political book in the New Testament. He chose it to talk to the congregation about how they relate to each other as people, and how they live with their neighbor and God in a community.

"Like most things, you hear and agree, and then on Monday morning, you realize it's a pretty challenging thing to live out," Jenkinson said. "Ultimately, the only thing that can unify a congregation is the gospel."

"The only thing that can unify a church, but also a country, is what do you have in common? Of course you have differences. COVID, the next election, the next social justice problem we have — those are opportunities in which to shine the gospel, to make changes where needed and give grace where needed."

He believes the vaccines will bring more people back. In the past month, he is seeing the return of more families and elderly citizens, who bring with them happy smiles, whether hidden by a mask or not.

The arrival of Easter this year, he adds, gives renewed joy.

"Easter gives us an opportunity to focus on where the true hope is, a hope that can overcome challenges in any given year, but especially this year," he said.

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at [sbromley@hometownlife.com](mailto:sbromley@hometownlife.com) or 517-281-2412. Twitter: @SusanBromley10.

## Police

Continued from Page 1A

### Calls up across the board

Police from Hometown Life area communities reported a nearly 30% increase in mental health runs in a month-to-month comparison of January 2020 and January 2021.

Police officials were quick to point out the number of runs needing some sort of mental health strategy is actually higher than the approximately 220 counted this most recent January. Other types of runs — deaths by suicide, attempted suicides, and ones involving paranoia and hallucination — also imply calls for mental health assistance.

South Lyon Sgt. Chris Faught said police in the small community responded to 17 calls in January that included someone suspected of mental health issues. That compares to 10 in January 2020.

While police receive training for such matters, some experts say more training and awareness is needed to minimize criticism over police conduct.

"It really needs to be a partnership and a coordination of community resources ... Officers aren't mental health professionals and they have their own job to do," Jaime White, director of clinical development at Hegira Health, said. "It's about knowing when that handoff is necessary. We both have different things to offer."

Wayne police recently received mental health first aid training, which teaches them how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Northville Township police completed the International Association of Chiefs of Police One Mind cam-

See POLICE, Page 6A



Novi Police Officer Samantha Grockau has been doing what she can during the pandemic to understand how mental health issues affect the citizens with whom she works in the community. Grockau has also been working with management to create a peer support group for fellow officers. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Banned

Continued from Page 1A

That historic court case hovers over police interrogations. Defendants in custodial interrogations must be made aware of their right to remain silent, consult with an attorney and have an attorney present during questioning.

Appellate attorney Carole Stanyar said the Supreme Court's decision was rare because it reversed a significant decision before trial. The prosecutors' admission of error also was different.

At the heart of Stanyar's appeal was Altantawi's encounter with police having classic earmarks of a false confession wrought by aggressive detectives.

"It all speaks to how outrageous this police interrogation was," Stanyar said. "He's a juvenile. He's surrounded by detectives who have basically taken over his home. He's isolated from family (with) no Miranda warnings."

"The detectives feed him facts, saying that they know this and they know that already. The detectives repeatedly suggest to Muhammad how it happened. He repeatedly says, 'But I don't know what happened.' He finally breaks down crying and says 'Tell me what you want me to say and I'll say it.' That interrogation explains the decisions in this case."

She said Altantawi ultimately told the detectives a version of the story they fed him.

Farmington Hills Police Chief Jeff King did not respond to requests for comment, and government officials typically do not speak about pending litigation. The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office also ignored a request for comment.

Nada Huranieh was found dead Aug. 21, 2017, at the age of 35. She was the mother of three: Muhammad, a top student at the International Academy in White Lake, and daughters aged 9 and 14 years.

"Sergeant Wehby encouraged defendant to be honest and suggested that defendant had been in the bedroom with Hu-

ranieh when she fell," one appellate court summary stated. "Defendant eventually told the police officers that he held the ladder for Huranieh while she was cleaning a window, but failed to pay attention, which somehow caused her to fall."

Autopsy results indicated Huranieh's cause of death was asphyxia and smothering. A certified fitness instructor, she and Muhammad's father had been going through a difficult divorce.

Both the Michigan Court of Appeals and

Michigan Supreme Court have closed their files on Altantawi's appeals while he and another attorney David Steingold prepare for the next court battle in Oakland County Circuit Court.

Steingold reports that Altantawi is depressed, anxious and wanting to get home. Still, the attorney considers his client in the right state of mind considering their circumstances. Steingold plans to request a bond hearing once the Oakland Circuit Court case starts moving again.

Altantawi originally was at a juvenile jail. He was transferred to Oakland County Jail after turning 19.

"Mr. Altantawi has now been growing up in jail," Steingold said. "He's not having any kind of mental health issues while he's at the jail. It's just not an appropriate place for a person of that age."

Steingold said there are a few exceptions under which Altantawi's statements to Farmington Hills police can still become jury evidence.

"(However), it certainly isn't going to happen under my watch," said the attorney who is ultimately expecting an acquittal of the first-degree premeditated murder charge.

He has a theory as to why the Oakland County prosecutors admit there was a mistake made regarding the police officers' interrogation of Muhammad.

"My theory, which may very well be wrong, is that they knew from the briefs that we were likely to prevail," Steingold said.

"They perhaps did not want a far-reaching opinion that would have statewide effect and may have wanted to limit this ruling to this case."

"We're happy they came to the conclusion that they did. I attribute nothing but the proper motives and making certain that justice is done and that there is no taint on whatever happens in this case."

Contact reporter Susan Vela at [svela@hometownlife.com](mailto:svela@hometownlife.com) or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

## Obituaries

To place an ad, call 586-826-7171 or visit [mideathnotices.com/place.php](http://mideathnotices.com/place.php)

### Joe McMahon

-- William Joseph McMahon - Loving husband, father, Pop Pop, friend, and certified insurance counselor

Joe McMahon was happiest with family, watching sunsets, doting on his little dog, reading, playing chess, and telling tales of his cloak-and-dagger days. Joe died peacefully of natural causes after a series of illnesses.

Joe was born to William Joseph McMahon Sr. and Gladys (née Kernaghan) on December 24, 1940, in Detroit. He grew up in Highland Park, MI, studied engineering, then joined the U.S. Army in 1961. He served in the 76th USASA Special Operations Unit in Taiwan as part of a mutual security agreement to defend the island and Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist government in exile from Mao Zedong's Communists during the Chinese Civil War. He earned decorations for good conduct, marksmanship, and as a sharpshooter while amassing material for many family legends. After his honorable discharge, Joe returned to Detroit. Three days later, he met and fell in love with Dorothy Marie Zelenak. They were married a year later.

During their 56 years of marriage, Joe and Dorothy briefly lived in Chicago, where eldest son Christopher Sean was born, before settling in Troy, MI, the birthplace of Timothy Craig, and later Bloomfield Hills. During his nearly 60 years in the insurance industry, Joe established and grew several successful businesses, including Benchmark Financial Inc. in Bingham Farms. He provided a bountiful life for his family that included coaching both sons at hockey, private school educations, ski trips, university degrees, lazy days on Beaver Island, as well as family adventures to exotic locations, and more.

Joe was honored as best man at both of his sons' weddings and was known as a wise and patient counselor on all matters, personal and professional. He was generous of spirit and quickly earned the love and respect of Vivienne Bettina Gertrud Jones, Chris' wife, and the adoration of Francesca Marie, their daughter. Dorothy, Chris, Tim, Vivienne, and Francesca are eternally grateful for the love and effort he invested in his family and home life.

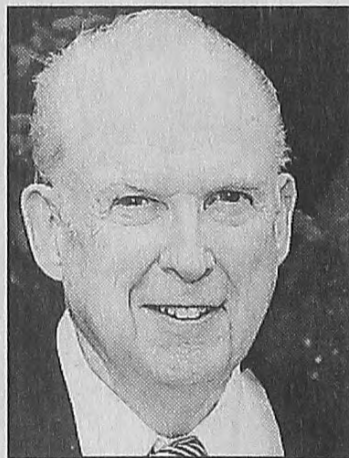
Joe also is survived by Patricia and Janice, daughters of his sister Marion Hazeldine, who preceded him in death, as did his parents and sister Blanche Kawagly.

The family will receive family and friends at a private Mass and reception this summer.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org).

A.J. Desmond & Sons, 248-362-2500.

View obituary and sign tribute wall at [AJDesmond.com](http://AJDesmond.com)



### Max Nicol

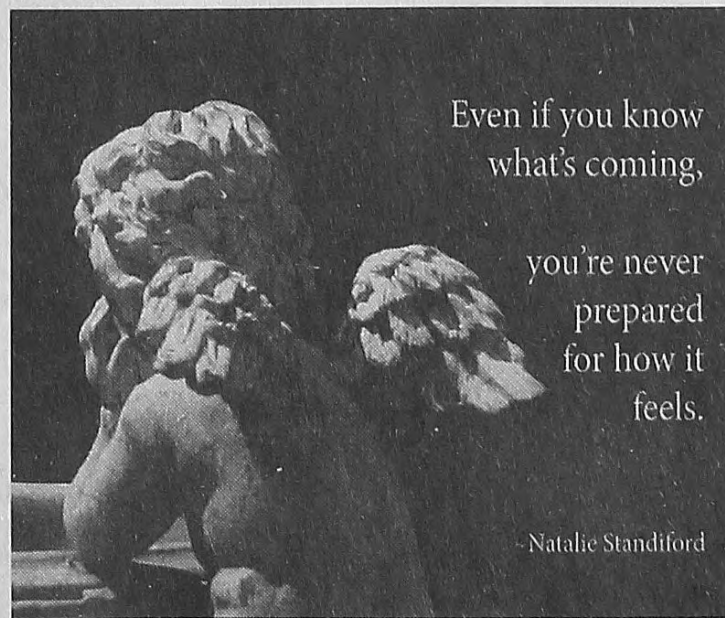
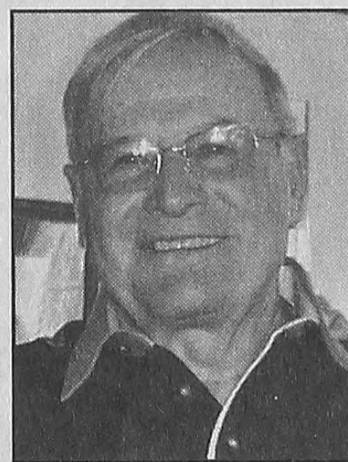
NORTHVILLE, MI - Max Eugene Nicol, of Northville, MI, died peacefully on March 22, 2021.

Max was born April 10, 1924 and spent his childhood in the Metro Detroit area. He attended Cass Tech High School then served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. After graduating from Lawrence Tech in 1949 with an engineering degree, Max worked for the Ford Motor Company for 38 years, first in Product Development at the Design Center and then in Corporate Strategy Staff. Max lived in Plymouth, MI for many years, as well as Northville after his retirement.

Max had many happy memories of time spent at Lake Columbia. He was an avid competitive sailor with many wins, and he liked to play golf and traveled extensively. He was a member of the Plymouth Elks Club for many years.

Max was a loving father to Lisa June Nicol (Bill Pryor), Steve Nicol (Lisa), Martha Nicol Hejka (Tony), and proud grandfather of four and great-grandfather of four.

Remembrances can be shared at [fraserfunerals.com](http://fraserfunerals.com).



Even if you know what's coming,

you're never prepared for how it feels.

Natalie Standiford

# Police

Continued from Page 5A

paign, which aims to unite communities, public safety agencies and mental health organizations so they become “of one mind.” It also promotes mental health first aid training.

Similarly, police in Novi are required to undergo annual training on intervention and de-escalation, and Molloy said many of his officers seek further training on their own.

There are more intense endeavors happening.

## Bring in the professionals

Among Hometown Life communities, Livonia had the highest number of mental health runs for January. In early March, its city council agreed to partner with the Livonia-based Hegira Health to embed two social workers in the department.

“I am so excited we’re trying this program out with social workers who will actually be responding from our police department,” Sgt. Stacy Hayne, who oversees the department’s office of professional standards, said.

A larger community, Livonia will pay \$190,000 annually for the crisis support team. The department plans to add one social worker in April and, if all goes well, add another a few months later.

Canton police recently completed a bid process and were approved to embed one social worker in that department, which Police Chief Chad Baugh said he’s been working on for over two years.

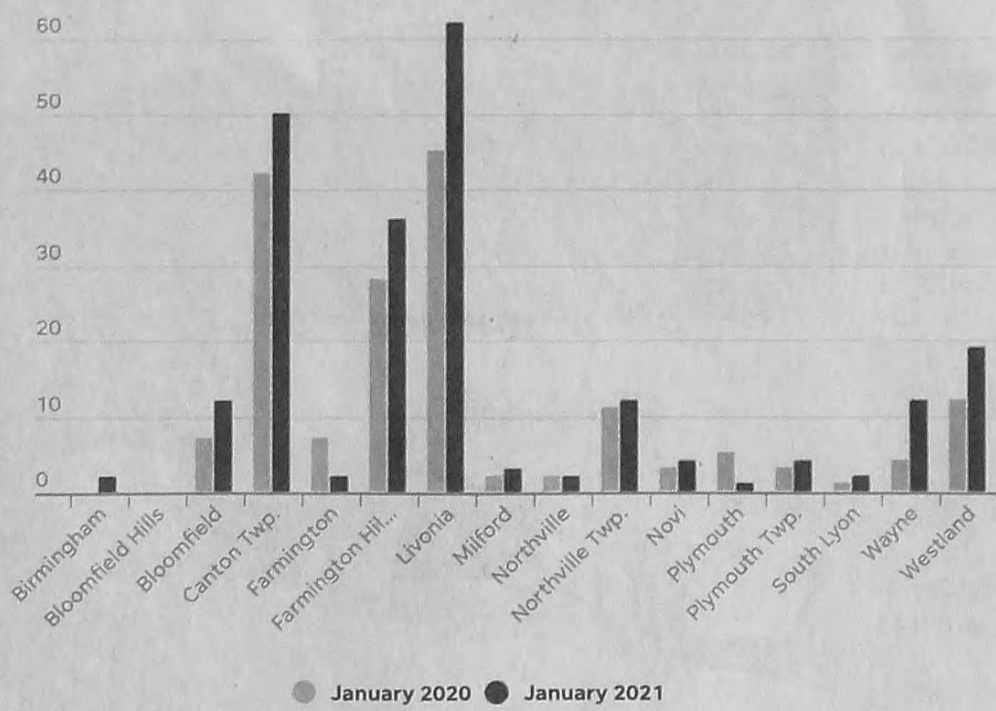
“A social worker in our department, as we see it, will not only be able to help in the moment but also help navigate the day after and the week after,” Baugh said.

These programs are moves other departments can’t fathom because of their comparative lack of funds. And so they rely on groups like Hegira, Common Ground and other mental health endeavors.

## Connecting people with resources

Elizabeth Kjar, Common Ground’s project director, noted that responding to mental health crises takes up a lot of time and resources and aren’t what po-

## Mental health calls for local police departments



lice are most qualified to do.

Common Ground received a \$1 million grant last May to help Oakland County hospitals, emergency rooms and law enforcement agencies address mental health issues in a long-term fashion.

Around the start of the year, Common Ground officially began a program with the White Lake Township Police Department, resulting in about 50 people agreeing so far to rely on Common Ground’s referrals for various types of assistance, which includes suicide prevention.

Both Kjar and White Lake Police Sgt. Jeff Way said the program works to prevent frequent police runs to the same residences for the same basic reasons.

Arriving officers are screened for mental health problems by asking five basic questions that help determine whether a person has received mental health assistance, is suicidal or wants to be dead, or is experiencing interrupted or controlled thoughts or suicidal thinking.

They may call for Common Ground’s crisis mobilization team. Or they may want to know if a seemingly troubled

person would like a call from Common Ground, which aims to make contact within 24 hours.

Police officers stay in contact with Common Ground. They also continue to check on those agreeable to Common Ground’s approach.

“They go out of their way, above and beyond,” Kjar said of White Lake police. “They’re doing things that perhaps other police officers maybe have not done in the past. They’re going back to visit them just to make sure they’re OK. There’s a great amount of kindness and empathy that seems to be happening. It’s real admirable.”

Way said he’s heard from other police administrators that such a program is long overdue, Kjar is of the mind that such endeavors could decrease complaints about police conduct.

“The program really kind of filled a big gap,” Way said. “There’s all this middle ground where we come across people who are going through a crisis. They’re suicidal. They’re abusing narcotics, and they’re not getting the assistance.”

“This kind of program is kind of like a net. It’s a bridge. In law enforcement,

we’re the ones in contact with the people on the street. We’re problem solvers and we’re obligated to provide people with assistance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community.”

Kjar said she started working with Walled Lake, Clawson and Auburn Hills police to discuss partnerships that might help their communities. She’d like to work with all of Oakland County’s law enforcement agencies.

Other agencies, like Hegira, offer mental health treatment for police officers and other first responders to work through the trauma they encounter at work.

“Police have historically had a stigmatizing view of receiving help,” White said. “There’s a fear of, ‘You’re going to take my gun away, my badge away, pull me off the road.’ It’s very closely tied to their ability to do their work and to their identity.”

In Novi, Grockau is working with administrators to create a peer support group for staff that can connect officers with resources should they need them.

“Just like how we help civilians with resources, we need resources too,” she said.

## Challenges still exist

Birmingham Police Chief Mark Clemence hopes to propose a partnership with Auburn Hills and Bloomfield Township police later this year that would create a mental health co-responder program with a fulltime county social worker working exclusively for those communities.

That kind of program still seems far-fetched for Farmington because of the time and money required, Public Safety Director Ted Warthman said.

“I don’t think it’s going to be feasible without some type of funding to bring a social worker on,” he said. “If we have one here from 8 (a.m.) to 4 (p.m.), guess when our incident is going to happen: at 11 o’clock at night or 3 in the morning.”

“So you really need to have them on call or on staff 24-7. I think it would be great but again funding and availability 24-7 to get one to the scene would be the biggest challenge.”

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432; contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448.

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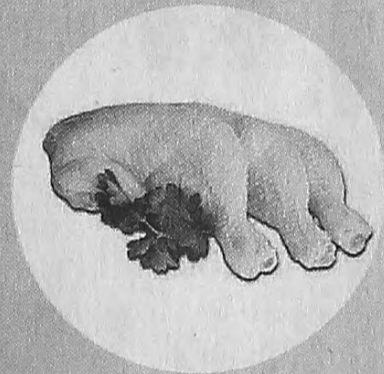
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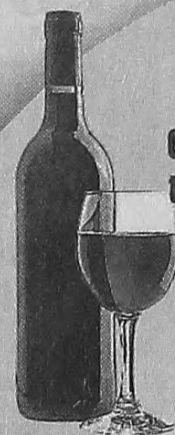
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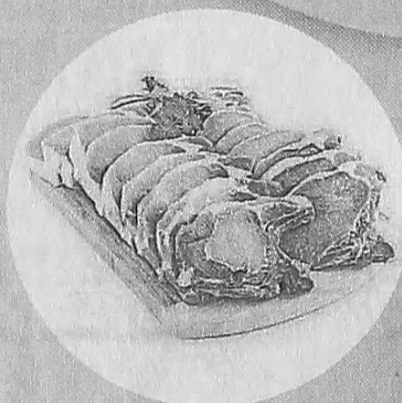
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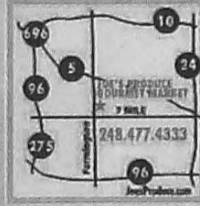
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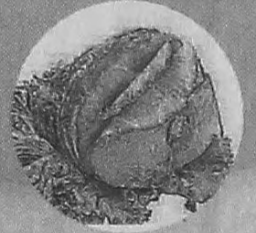
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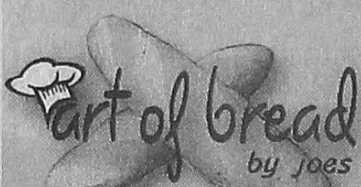
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# SPORTS

## GIRLS SOCCER

# Novi preps for 2021 with target on its back

Colin Gay [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Novi head girls soccer coach Todd Pheiffer was the first one at Total Sports Wixom March 15 for the team's tryout, 1,034 days since the team lost a game.

As he walked in, the indoor practice field was dark. It gave him a chance to remember.

"I'm just looking around taking it all in like, 'I'm so glad to be back,'" Pheiffer said, awed by the fact it had been over a year since he coached this team. "I missed this. I missed the girls."

The 2021 Novi girls soccer team trickled into the indoor practice field, one different than 2020 after losing 13 seniors from the group that had its season canceled due to COVID-19, but holding

onto the same expectations as the teams of years past. Pheiffer circled up his players, urging them to take it in, to enjoy the moment.

"Everyone uses the cliché of, 'You never know when it's going to be gone,'" Pheiffer said. "But last year, you got to experience it. You know what happened when it was gone."

But Pheiffer also made it clear: this is

a new group. Novi has only three returning players from its state championship teams in 2018 and 2019.

The Wildcats head coach relayed the same message he gave to the 2019 prior to the start of its season after winning a state title the year before.

"It's not about defending your

See **NOVI**, Page 3B



Detroit Catholic Central varsity hockey team members celebrate their Division 1 trophy with the JV Blue team, which helped them through the regional round.  
COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

# CC hockey uses past and future to fuel Division 1 state title win

Colin Gay [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Brandon Kaleniecki didn't have to picture what it would be like. He had been there before.

Since taking over as Detroit Catholic Central hockey's head coach six seasons ago, the Shamrocks won two Division 1

state championships, hoisting the "wooden mitten" trophy at USA Hockey Arena's center ice.

But for the hockey program as a whole, the 2021 Division 1 state title trophy, Kaleniecki's third, was heavy.

It felt the weight of the 2020 Shamrocks varsity team: a group which ended its season due to an emerging virus. It

felt the weight of the junior varsity team: a group which took over when the virus nearly ended the varsity team's 2021 season in the regional round.

But when he watched a group of seniors take the trophy from Catholic Central Athletic Director Aaron Babicz, it was hoisted as if it weighed nothing, watching his players enjoy the moment

of bliss, of pure ecstasy.


To Catholic Central, this was not just another wooden mitten to add to its collection. It's a tangible example of how the Shamrocks used the past and the future of its program to achieve what they aimed for in the present.


See **TITLE**, Page 2B

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# CC hockey earns D1 state title

Colin Gay [hometownlife.com](http://hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Detroit Catholic Central took the ice with something to prove, someone — some people — to play for. And when the Shamrocks were given a chance to do that, they did not disappoint.

Catholic Central (18-1) outshot Rockford (15-6-1), 41-10, beating the Rams, 5-1, in the Michigan High School Athletic Association Division 1 hockey final Saturday night at USA Hockey Arena.

The Shamrocks earned their 15th state title in school history and their sixth since 2010. Catholic Central is the only team to regain its title from 2019 after the 2020 semifinal and final was canceled due to the emergence of COVID-19.

“We were playing for each other,” Catholic Central senior Brenden Cwiek said. “We just had everyone around us. There’s no reason why we should have allowed anything. We knew what we had.”

“We just did what we had to do.” Catholic Central took advantage of Rockford’s mistakes early.

After the Rams killed their first power play of the game, the Shamrocks stepped up in the second, as forward Brennan Sass turned a rebound off a missed shot by Kaden Hemme into the first goal of the game.

Two minutes later, Catholic Central senior forward Billy Shields, with Rockford on a power play, forced a turnover, finishing on a filthy fast-break goal.

The Shamrocks outshot the Rams, 10-4, in the first 17 minutes.

The offensive drubbing continued as the Shamrocks put 20 shots on goal, adding two goals on a put back by Bret Beale and a free-for-all at the Rockford goal that Ryan Wantuck connected on.

While the Shamrocks offense continued its relentless barrage, Rockford’s offense was in a stand still. The Rams

recorded only two shots on goal in the second period.

“I think that’s a lot of our depth as a team,” senior Tommy Shea said. “We have four lines banging. We know one shift after another, we’re going to wear teams down. Everyone’s pulling weight, everybody’s shutting the other team down. They are never going to catch a break all the way through.”

After the Shamrocks allowed Rockford to score early in the third period — a beautiful feed from Braeden Fouchea off a turnover to set up Carson Korte for the score — Catholic Central secured the four-goal victory with a score by Hemme, assisted by Shields.

Catholic Central beat Rockford in the regular season, 5-0, March 6.

As the Shamrocks celebrated on the ice with its junior varsity team — one that earned wins for the team in the regional round when the majority of its players were out with COVID-19 — out flooded a sense of relief.

Of closure: something many of the players out there had not experienced from 2020.

With this came motivation that carried Catholic Central through the condensed 2021 season and to the point they didn’t have a chance to make it to a season ago.

But as Catholic Central sang their fight song after its resounding victory, Shea knew this win was not only for the members of the current varsity roster.

“We knew we were playing for (the junior varsity team),” Shea said. “We were playing for the seniors last year that didn’t get a chance to finish out. That was for those guys.”

Three Michigan Independent Hockey League teams — Catholic Central, Brother Rice and Cranbrook Kingswood — won each division of the MHSAA state finals, the first time this has happened since 2015.

## HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PLAYOFF SCOREBOARD

### State finals

#### Division 2 — USA Hockey Arena

Brother Rice (15-4) 2, Byron Center (18-1) 1

#### Division 3 — USA Hockey Arena

Cranbrook Kingswood (14-4) 4, Calumet (18-1-1) 1

#### Division 1 — USA Hockey Arena

Detroit Catholic Central (18-1) 5, Rockford (15-6-1) 1

### State semifinals

#### Division 1 — USA Hockey Arena

Detroit Catholic Central (17-1) 3, Brighton (10-5-3) 0

#### Division 2 — USA Hockey Arena

Brother Rice (14-4) 4, Trenton (13-8) 2

#### Division 3 — USA Hockey Arena

Cranbrook Kingswood (13-4) 4, Flint Powers Catholic (14-4) 1

### State quarterfinals

#### Division 1

Detroit Catholic Central (16-1) 3, Salem (8-6) 1

#### Division 2

Brother Rice (13-4) 6, Port Huron Northern (11-6) 0

Trenton (13-7) 3, Novi (12-3-2) 1

#### Division 3

Cranbrook Kingswood (13-4) 1, U-D Jesuit (12-4-1) 0

### Regionals

#### Division 1

##### Region 7 — USA Hockey Arena

###### First round

Troy (7-10) 9, Farmington (0-6) 1

###### Regional semifinal

Troy (8-10) 2, Birmingham (10-5-1) 1

Detroit Catholic Central (14-1) 7, Berkley (10-7-1) 1

###### Regional final

Detroit Catholic Central (15-1) 2, Troy (8-11) 1

#### Region 8 — Dearborn Ice Skating Center

###### First round

Northville (5-6) 5, Adrian (2-10) 2

Salem (6-5) 5, Dearborn Unified (5-4) 1

###### Regional semifinal

Plymouth (6-6-2) vs. Southgate Anderson

(1-11) — Canceled

Salem (7-5) 1, Northville (5-7) 0

### Regional final

Salem (8-5) 2, Plymouth (7-7-2) 1; OT

### Division 2

#### Region 12 — Hartland Sports Arena

##### Regional semifinal

Lakeland (15-2-1) 2 Fenton (8-8) 1

##### Regional final

Lakeland (15-2-1) vs. Hartland (13-2-1) — cancelled, COVID-19

#### Region 14 — Oak Park Ice Arena

##### Regional semifinal

Bloomfield Hills (7-7) 3, Utica Eisenhower (4-13-1) 2

Brother Rice (11-4) 8, Chippewa Valley (2-11) 0

##### Regional final

Brother Rice (12-4) 11, Bloomfield Hills (7-8) 4

#### Region 15 — Novi Ice Arena

##### First round

South Lyon (8-7) 4, Canton (8-8) 0

##### Regional semifinal

Novi (11-2-2) 3, South Lyon (9-8) 1

Livonia Stevenson (9-3) vs. Allen Park Cabrini (3-6); Canceled — COVID-19

##### Regional final

Novi (12-2-2) 2, Livonia Stevenson (9-4) 1; OT

### Division 3

#### Region 21 — Wallace Ice Arena

##### First round

Rochester Hills Stoney Creek (8-6-1) 7, Milford (11-4) 4

##### Regional semifinal

Cranbrook Kingswood (11-4) 8, Rochester Hills Stoney Creek (8-7-1) 0

Detroit Country Day (9-2-1) vs. Pontiac Notre Dame Prep (0-11-1); Canceled — COVID-19

##### Regional final

Cranbrook Kingswood (12-4) 11, Pontiac Notre Dame Prep (0-12-1) 0

#### Region 23 — Arctic Coliseum

##### First round

Livonia Churchill (4-11) 4, Allen Park (6-10) 2

Chelsea (14-1-1) 4, Livonia Franklin (7-10) 1

##### Regional semifinal

Livonia Churchill (5-11) 5, Dexter (8-8) 2

##### Regional final

Chelsea (16-1-1) 5, Livonia Churchill (5-12) 0

## Title

Continued from Page 1B

### Remembering the past

Heading into the 2021 season, Nich Borchardt was one of two players on the roster who knew what it was like to win a state title.

Borchardt, a senior forward and captain, and Collin Scheuher, a senior forward and assistant captain, are the only two holdovers from the Shamrocks’ 2019 state championship run. Both used that experience to calm their teammates down, serving as living proof of what it took to achieve that peak goal.

“It was almost showing the guys like, ‘Hey, we’ve been here before,’” Borchardt said. “It’s just another hockey game. We just have to play how we played all year long and we’ll have success.”

It was a mentality Borchardt and Scheuher brought into the 2020 season, aiming for another Division 1 state title with a group of 15 seniors.

Former Shamrocks defenseman Brendan Miles remembers chasing that championship feeling, winning one as a junior and wanting a chance at another as a senior in 2020, until it was cut short prematurely.

Now, a defenseman with the Fairbanks Ice Dogs, a junior hockey team in the North American Hockey League, Miles wanted Catholic Central to experience that championship feeling again, despite not having the chance at that closure himself.

“It’s been two years in the making and it’s finally come to where it’s give all or give up,” Miles said. “That’s where the younger guys, they really want this. It’s not just for them. It’s for a lot of other people as well.”

After earning the program’s 15th state title, Kaleniecki emphasized the importance of including the 2020 class in the Shamrocks’ latest championship, knowing their foundation helped this team through.

“I hope they know that we carried them with us,” Kaleniecki said.

### Picturing the future

While his team played both regional games as Catholic Central, the Shamrocks’ JV Blue head coach Jamey Masters did not get a chance to join them.

Instead, he watched in the top corner of the stands, gazing down at them in a way a coach never really has the opportunity to do: viewing his players the way a nervous parent would during the regional semifinals and finals.

“You can’t really contradict the varsity coach, Brandon Kaleniecki. He’s got state championships,” Masters remem-



The CC varsity hockey team poses with the JV Blue team after its Division 1 state title win against Rockford.

BEN SZILAGY/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

bers thinking while watching his team play against Berkley and Troy. “And we’re up here, ‘Oh, you’re doing it wrong.’”

But Masters let Kaleniecki take charge, knowing what was at stake: a regional title, the fate of the 2021 season in the hands of one of the program’s two junior varsity teams after the varsity team was forced to quarantine due to a few positive COVID-19 cases.

For the JV Blue head coach and his roster, the performance was not about putting forward a hidden agenda, proving a point by the team’s play.

“The boys just knew they were stepping up for their brothers,” Masters said.

It allowed another set of players a chance at the spotlight. Anthony Dickow and Nick Tullio rose to the occasion.

Dickow, a first-year JV Blue team member, who spent his first two seasons on the Catholic Central prep team, and Tullio, a third-year JV Blue player, who overcame multiple injuries to make it back in time for regionals, each scored the Shamrocks’ two goals in the regional finals.

“It was very special,” Dickow said. “We wouldn’t have imagined this like a week ago that we were going to be winning a regional title for varsity.”

Tullio could sense the difference taking the rink in those games. Even

though he was playing with many of the same players, he knew he was playing for more.

“You had the weight on your back, supporting the seniors, trying to win it for the seniors,” he said.

With the performance of the JV Blue team in the regional round, Kaleniecki now has an idea of who he has in his pipeline, an idea of what his future could look like.

But even more so, it made the program even larger, representing what high school sports can do as a whole.

“It’s bigger than just a team, high school sports,” Kaleniecki said. “That’s what makes it so much fun. That’s what makes it mean so much.”

### Celebrating the present

When the buzzer sounded, indicating the end of the Division 1 state finals, both the Catholic Central varsity team and JV Blue team started to run.

The varsity team rushed toward its goal. Players threw up their gloves in celebration, mobbing each other in jubilation for something all but two on the roster had ever experienced.

The JV Blue team rushed from the stands and into the basement of the arena, surrounding the gate to the ice, waiting for its chance to celebrate with the

team it fought for one week ago.

After medals were handed out and the trophy was presented, Catholic Central skated toward the JV Blue team, lifting the wooden mitten trophy toward their teammates, their brothers, hoisting it together.

Embraces continued, the smiles sweeping across each person on the ice in celebration. The Shamrocks were flooded with relief, with closure, with remembrance of what they had gone through.

“I just marvel at their commitment to this cause,” Kaleniecki said. “They wanted this bad and we knew it meant a lot to them and for all of us, begging for an opportunity to play. This is why we wanted to play because it means a lot to these kids and they worked so hard to be in these situations. They deserved that opportunity.”

All of this proved to be motivation for the Shamrocks in 2021: the perfect combination, leading to a Division 1 state title two years in the making.

“To be able to do that two years later, especially after what happened last year, it’s almost like the end of a perfect story,” Borchardt said.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at [cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com) or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @Colin-Gay17.

# Novi

Continued from Page 1B

title," Pheiffer said. "It's about you going (and) getting yours."

## Target on its back

Abbey Pheiffer knows Novi goes into each game with a target on its back.

The senior goalkeeper has been with the Wildcats through its streak, not losing a game since May 21, 2018, against Grand Blanc. She knows each additional game, each additional win makes the target larger and larger.

"Every game I go out there ready to play, but there's also part of me that's nervous about it," Abbey Pheiffer said. "It's always a fun nerve."

Pheiffer, Eva Burns and Taylor Nichol森 have each experienced this level of pressure. Through the first tryouts and practices, it's something they need to instill to the rest of the team.

Pheiffer knows it will take a lot of patience and leadership, making sure they understand the expectation of what Novi soccer is about.

"You got out there and you played 110% every minute you were on the field," she said. "No matter if you are on the bench or on the field, you are always a part of the program. You always matter, no matter what you are doing on the team. We are all one. We all work together. We win this stuff together and we all push through everything together."

To Burns, it's about dedication on the practice field, saying if you don't practice how you are going to play in game action, the outcome is not going to be as good as it would have been.

But the change is that each game, when completed, is like starting from scratch.

"If we lose, then we have to do better next time. If we win, that's amazing and we have to keep going, keep building off of it," Burns said. Each game is like a reset, and I hope we instill that in the younger players."

Todd Pheiffer knows what other teams are going to say and do against Novi soccer. To him, it's a sign of respect, an example of imitation being the greatest form of flattery.

He knows that with each win, the tradition of Novi soccer continues to build. To Nichol森, that pressure is daunt-



Novi High School's varsity girls soccer team kicked off its 2021 campaign March 22 with a practice at Wixom's Total Soccer. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

ing. But it's worth it.

"I think it's hard, but it makes us work harder," she said. "It gives us a motive to give it our all."

## Facing COVID-19

Abbey Pheiffer, Burns and Nichol森 know this is their last chance, having been on a team together since the 2018-19 season.

So as the team began to gather for its preseason captain-led workouts, they were not going to take any chances.

"They were big on, when they were running their things, everyone had their masks, make sure you have multiple

masks if something were to happen," Todd Pheiffer said. "And just be smart when you are not here. That's the one thing that people keep talking about. It's not spread throughout the school. It's kids are socializing outside of school and it's coming here."

Heading into the 2021 season, Novi is forced to think about things the players have never thought about before. Todd Pheiffer knows the virus has taken a toll on Novi athletics as a whole, stopping his boys team in the fall for a two-week quarantine.

In her senior season, Abbey Pheiffer does not really know what to expect. She returns to the field for the first time

after her sophomore season was cut short with a torn ACL. The senior goalkeeper wants a chance to end it on her terms, win or loss, and not have it defined by COVID-19.

"If we can get to winning games and we can get to where we have been in the past, that would be great," Abbey Pheiffer said. "But really for me, it's about having fun with my teammates that I've been with for the past four years."

Novi opens its season against Hartland April 6.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at [cgay@hometownlife.com](mailto:cgay@hometownlife.com) or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @ColinGay17.

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# CC hockey beats Salem at full strength

Colin Gay [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The past two weeks for the Detroit Catholic Central hockey team have been deja vu of the end of the 2020 season.

After having the season cut short in the final four due to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the virus reared its head again at the start of the playoffs for the Shamrocks, sidelining the majority of the varsity roster.

"I was just upset because I know all the seniors this year have worked very hard and gave everything they got," Catholic Central senior Brett Beale said. "It would have been a shame to go out like that."

Catholic Central did not have to. After its junior varsity program led the team to the team's two regional wins, the full varsity roster returned to the ice, beating Salem, 3-1, in the Division 1 state quarterfinal.

With his full group returning to the ice, Catholic Central head coach Brandon Kaleniecki expected some rust knowing it would be hard for the group to simulate game experience in practice sessions.

"We had moments where we looked like ourselves and moments where we didn't," Kaleniecki said. "Salem did a good job and took us out of our sync for a little while. Ultimately, going into the third period 1-1 in the playoffs is what you expect. You are going to have to win some ugly ones, and we were able to find a way in the third."

After the Shamrocks took control early in the second period — with Beale taking passes from JC Garbacik and Jackson Ewald, resetting in front of the net and firing for the first score of the game — Salem seized a rare chance its opponent gave.

With the Shamrocks already down a man after a roughing penalty by forward Jackson Ewald, Kaleniecki's group was called for a too-many-men penalty, giving the Rocks 37 seconds of a three-on-five power play.

Passing around the outside of the zone, Salem forward Peter Manigen, from the left side, shot the puck past Catholic Central goalkeeper Bobby Masters to tie the game at one, a score that lasted through the end of the second period.

But just over two minutes into the third period, the Shamrocks took the lead for good as Tommy Shea took a pass from Jimmy Mordeau for the score, secured later in the period after Beale's second score of the day.

"He has raised his game to another level in the last month," Kaleniecki said of Beale. "You saw it in the second and third period: He was really our best play-

er. That's great to see from the senior captain, the assistant captain. We needed it. We needed someone to kind of take the reins a little bit

Catholic Central put 37 shots on net against Salem, 34 of which were saved by goalkeeper Andre Genereaux. Salem attempted only 17 shots on goal against the Shamrocks.

As Salem head coach Ryan Ossennmacher watched his team battle against Catholic Central, a team that had outscored the Rocks, 15-1, in their past three meetings, he saw the character his players had been exuding all season long: buying in and blocking shots.

"They did everything they needed to do to win the hockey game, and they just didn't. That's a credit to Catholic Central," Ossennmacher said. "They're a program where you have to do everything right to beat."

"We did as much as we could."

# Mercy basketball wins third-straight district title

Colin Gay [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Alexis Roberts knows how deep Mercy's basketball team is.

As the team's senior point guard, leading a roster with six other seniors, her job is to get the ball to the hot hand, which, she said, can change from night to night.

"Anybody can get hot at any given moment," Roberts said. "It's finding the open player and trusting them with the ball."

Offensively, Roberts herself was the hot hand, leading Mercy (14-3) to its third-straight district title — the team's ninth in the past 10 years — beating North Farmington (6-10), 56-32, Friday night at Novi High School.

Roberts led the team with 14 points, two rebounds and four steals, distributing the ball from the half court to players like senior Ellie Tisko, who tied Roberts' lead with 14 points, adding two steals and a rebound; and Madeline Kenney, who recorded eight points, three re-

bounds and two steals.

That depth came in handy early. North Farmington came out firing, as Heaven Rogers and Sela Lefler ignited a quick 5-0 run to start the game. But one made basket from Kenney turned the tides, starting a 17-2 run to take a 10-point first-quarter lead.

The Marlins offense continued to build momentum from there, using a 6-0 lead at the end of the first half to keep an 11-point lead going into halftime.

North Farmington head coach Jeff Simpson knew his team was the underdogs coming into the district final, facing "one of the top teams in the state." Despite the deficit, he felt the Raiders were in as good of a position as they had been all season.

"That first half might have been our best half all season. We were playing, we were executing our game plan, shooting the ball, we were defending them well and then it got away right at the tail end of the first half," he said.

That six-point swing by the Marlins



Mercy basketball won its third-straight district title over North Farmington.  
COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Holding onto a 20-point lead heading into the fourth quarter, Mercy capped off its district title with a 7-2 run led by Kenzie Williamson, who scored five points and added two steals in the final quarter.

Rogers led North Farmington with 14 points and 12 rebounds, while Lefler added 10 points and four assists.

As Mercy celebrated a district title, along with its 12-game win streak, Roberts continued to have her goals. She wants this veteran group to continue to play together, to continue to prove to the rest of the state that the Marlins can play with anybody.

But 17 games into a season that has been affected by COVID-19 in every way possible — something that Mercy was not immune too, Morris said — Roberts is still thankful for the opportunity to still play.

"It's really a blessing because not everybody has the same opportunity," she said. "We have to take advantage of every opportunity we have and just take it one game at a time and just keep going."

continued into the second half, starting the third quarter on a 12-2 run, helped by five points and a steal by Roberts.

"She's really good at knowing when to push and when to go slow," Mercy head coach Gary Morris said of his senior point guard. "She's also very aware, if we have a hot shooter, trying to get her touches or try and take advantage of a situation where we maybe feel we have an advantage, whatever position that might be. She's just been very smart, a very experienced player."

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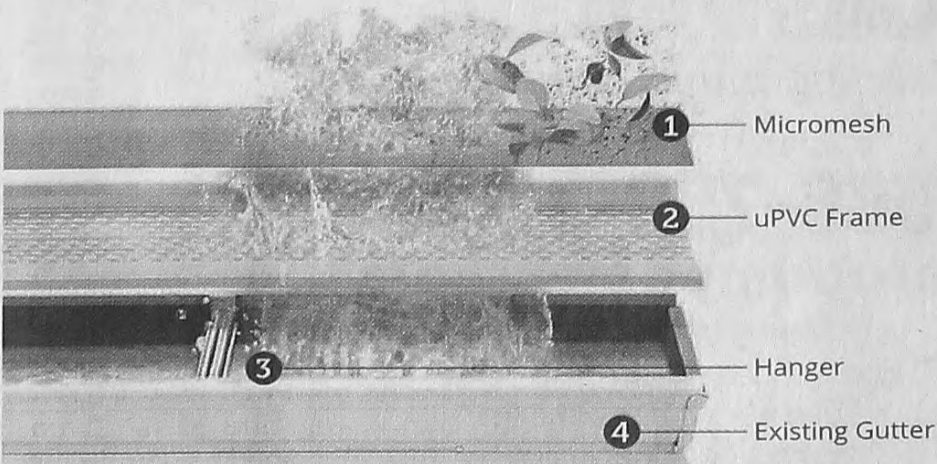
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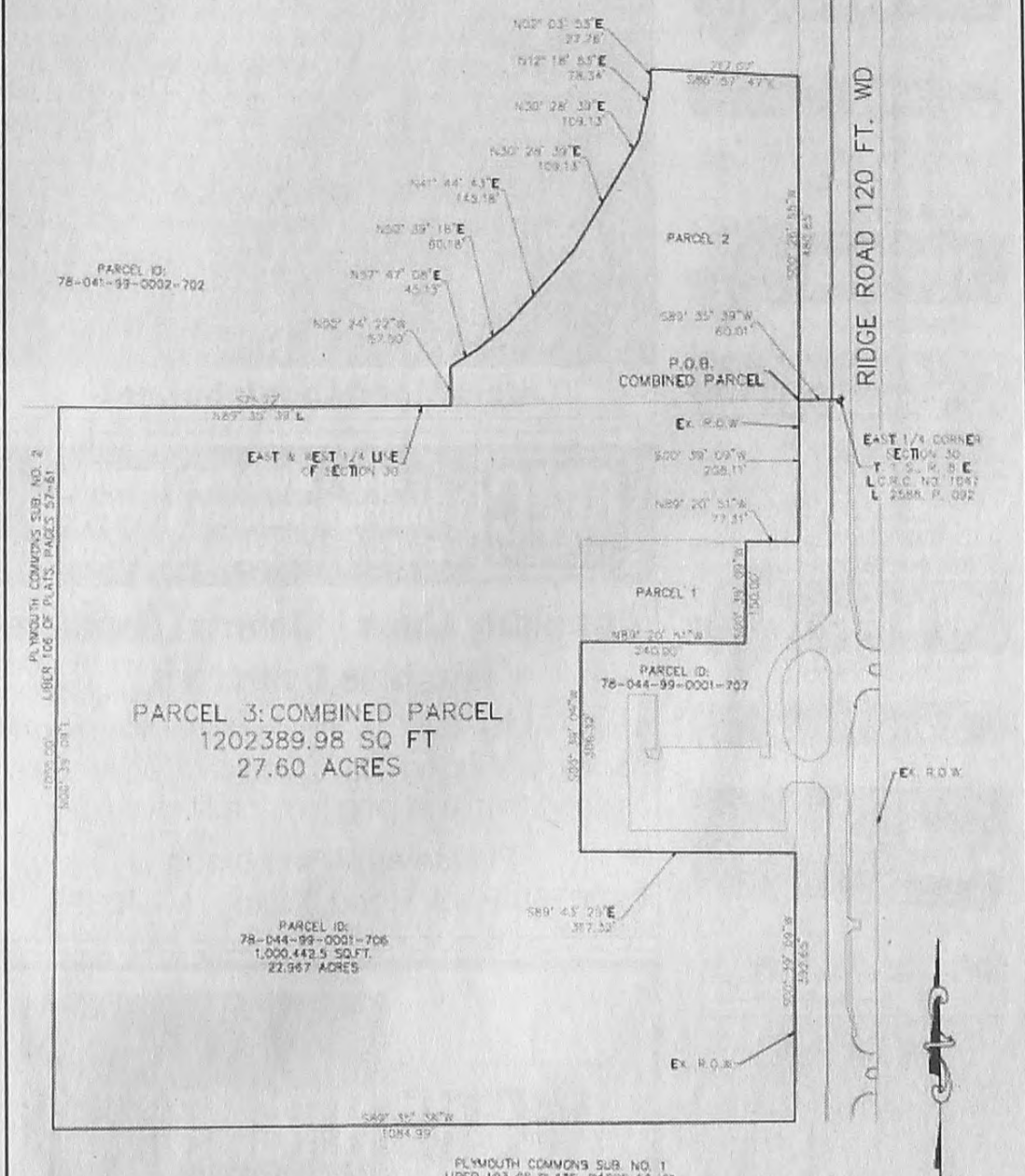
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**Notice of Public Hearing**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Request for Approval of a Rezoning Application  
**DATE OF HEARING:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021  
**TIME OF HEARING:** 7:00 P.M.  
**PLACE OF HEARING:** Plymouth Township Hall Offices, 9955 N. Haggerty Road, Plymouth, Michigan 48170

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Plymouth has received an application to rezone Tax ID No. R-78-044-99-0001-706, R-78-044-99-0001-707, and R-78-041-99-0002-702 from the R-1-E, One Family Residential District, to the R-1-H, One Family Residential District, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance No. 99 and the adopted Zoning Map. The property is proposed to be developed as single family, detached residences, which would require further review and approval by the Township. The subject application is for a rezoning to the Township's adopted Zoning Map. Generally, the subject site is located south of North Territorial Road, west of Ridge Road, north of Powell Road, and east of Napier Road. Access to the site is currently provided from Ridge Road.



**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that persons interested may attend the public hearing and/or send correspondence regarding the application to Plymouth Township Hall, attn.: Carol Martin. Pertinent information relative to the application is on file at the Plymouth Township, Public Services Department (second floor counter) and may be viewed during regular business hours from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

The Charter Township of Plymouth will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the public hearing upon one week's advance notice by writing or calling the Supervisor's Office, 9955 N. Haggerty Road, Plymouth, Michigan 48170; (734) 354-3201.

Publish by: On, or before April 5, 2021  
Kendra Barberena, Secretary, Planning Commission

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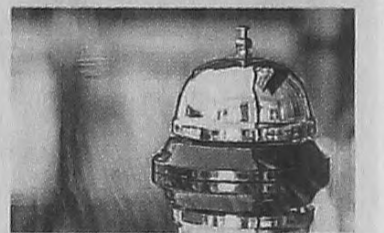
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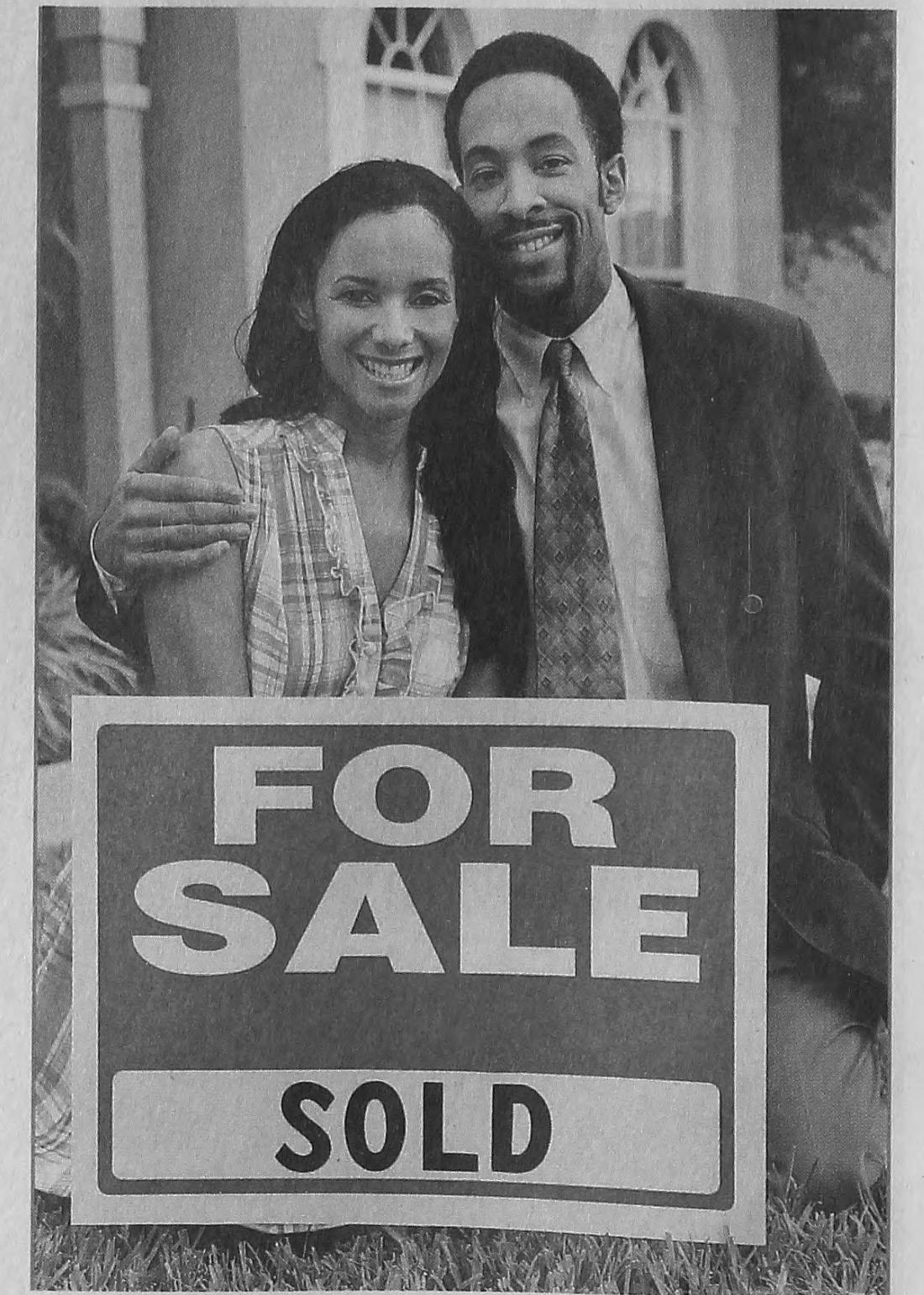


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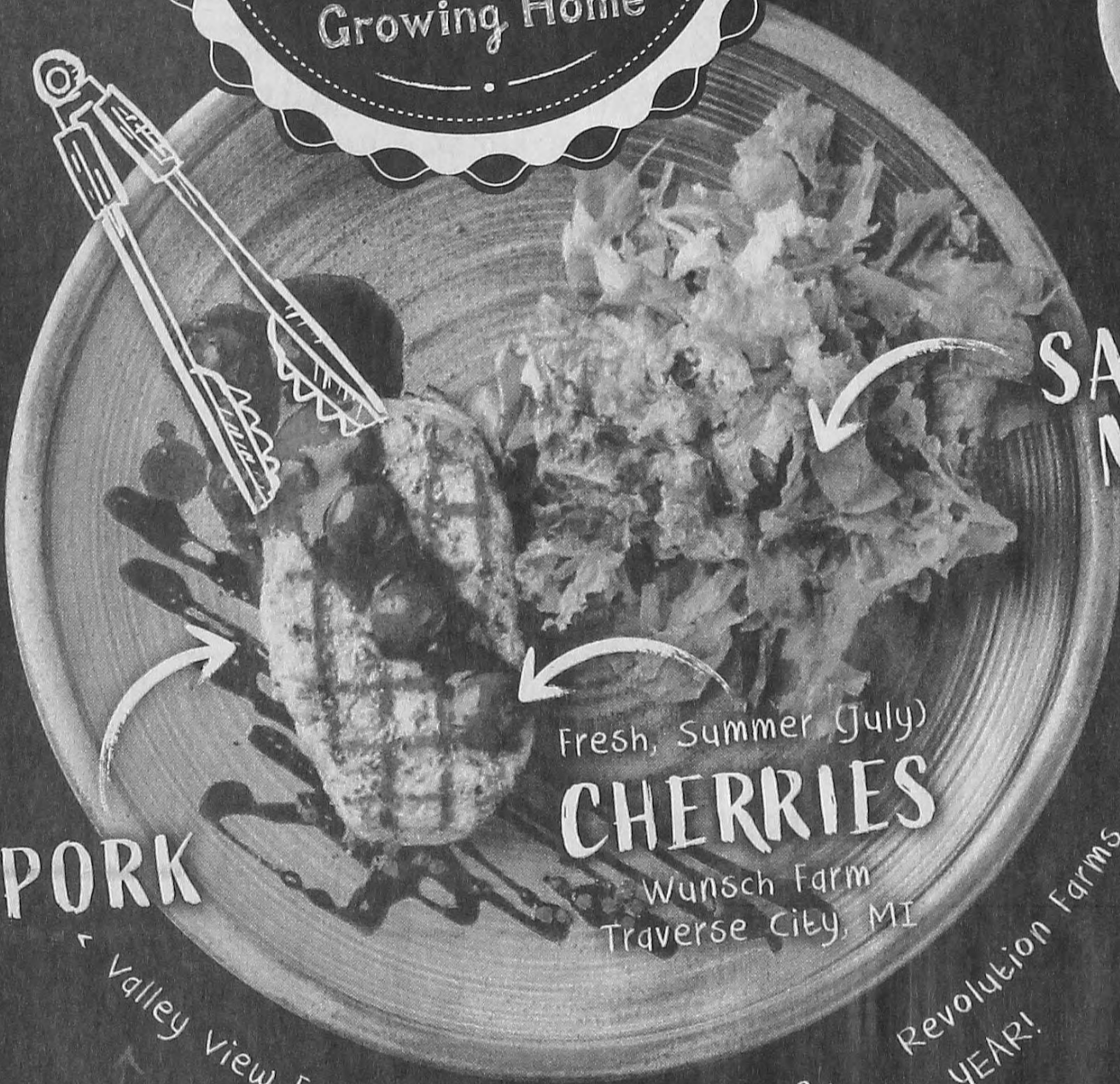
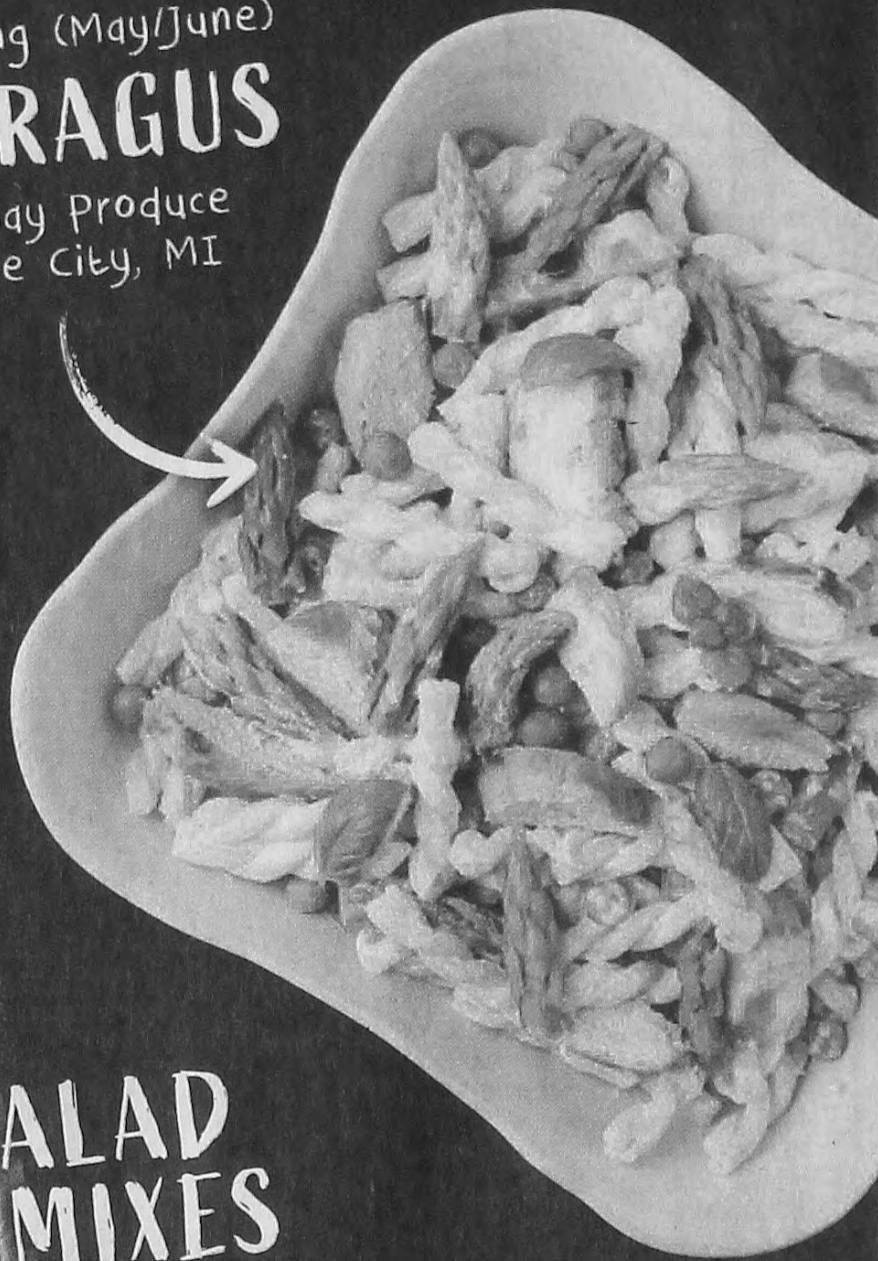


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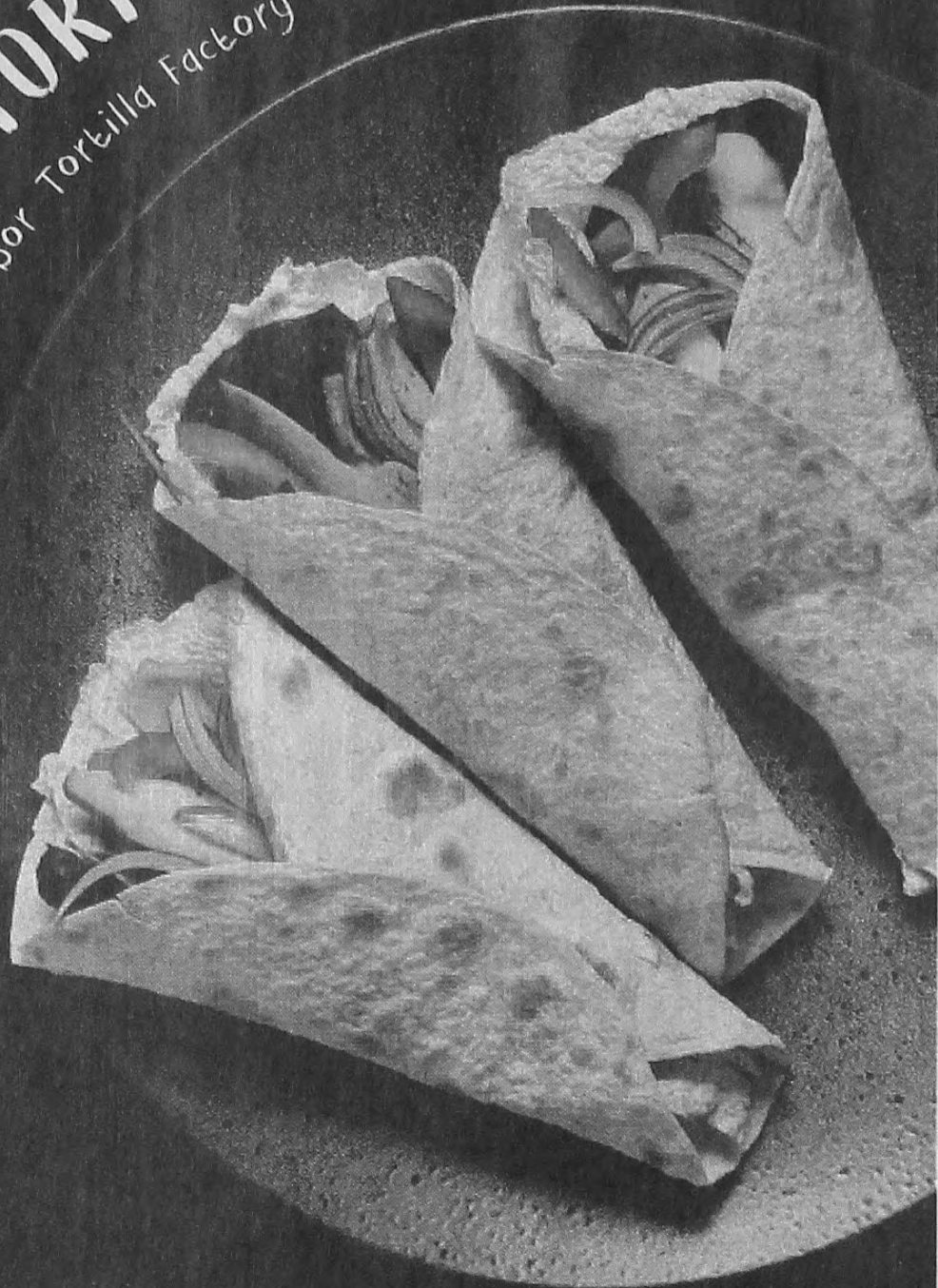
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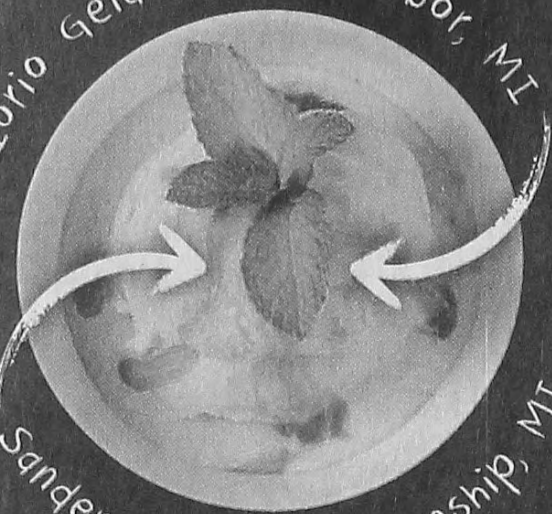
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