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Livonia Vision 21 aims to change face of city

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When you think of Livonia, what comes to mind?

Is it Livonia City Hall? Bates Burgers? It's probably not a downtown, considering the city doesn't have one.

A city as built-out as Livonia proba-

bly can't create a traditional downtown to give people a sense of place within the community. But, the city thinks it can create micro downtowns throughout the city that, officials hope, people will associate with Livonia.

"We really want it to set a feeling of what Livonia is," Council President Kathleen McIntyre said. "You think

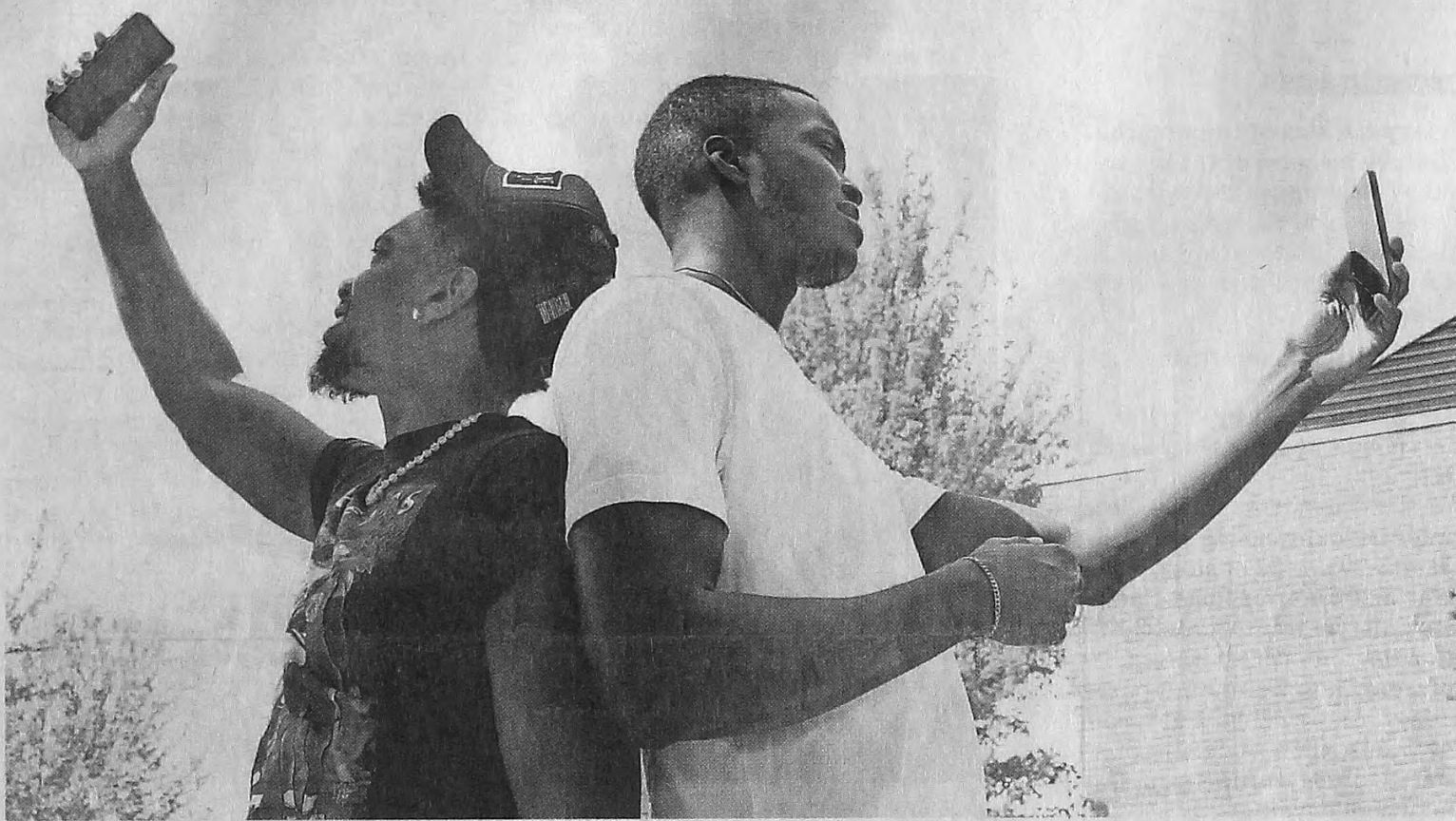
about the Livonia Mall, and that was kind of the iconic Livonia thing. So, whatever is there should give you that same feeling of place."

The Livonia Vision 21 Master Plan targets three areas of town amenable to creating that feel: Civic Center Park at Five Mile and Farmington roads, the old Livonia Mall property at Seven Mile and

Middlebelt roads and the Plymouth Road corridor. Such micro downtowns would combine housing, retail, restaurants and public services like a park or library.

"This goes right to the point of people saying they want a downtown in

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TikTok influencers Jalen Robinson, left, and Julian Savoury have combined to amass nearly 3 million followers for their whimsical video creations on the social media platform. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Local TikTok influencers make millions laugh with short videos

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When the demand for laugh-out-loud moments escalated during the darkest days of the coronavirus pandemic, good friends and social media influencers Julian Savoury and Jalen

Robinson delivered — like clockwork, so to speak.

Utilizing the humor-fueled platform TikTok, 20-year-old Canton resident Savoury and Belleville's Robinson, 24, have used their quick wit and sharp social awareness skills to amass close to 3 million followers — people who sub-

scribe to an individual's account to receive all of that person's social-media updates.

Savoury is approaching 1.7 million followers while Robinson is closing in on 1.2 million dedicated fans.

See TIKTOK, Page 2A

Westland voters expected to show up in force

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Election Day is right around the corner, and Westland Clerk Richard LeBlanc is expecting Aug. 3 to be the city's most engaged local primary election ever.

"I do (expect a lot of turnout), but not necessarily because of the proposals — and by that I mean the candidates and millage — on the ballot," he said. "I suspect it's because of 2020. In my opinion, we are forever changed regarding voter participation."

As of July 21, the city had issued 9,418

absentee ballots and received 4,473 completed ballots back. LeBlanc expects the bulk of ballots to get returned in the week leading up to the election.

Voters will decide a library millage request and narrow the council and

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Farmington mulls allowing enclosures for outdoor dining year-round

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If there's one positive thing that came from the COVID-19 pandemic the last year-and-a-half, it's the rise of outdoor dining across southeast Michigan. One more community is looking to tackle its potential year-round offering future moving forward.

Farmington city officials continue to discuss potential changes to the city's ordinance that would allow for structures to be erected year-round to allow for dining in places like back patios of restaurants.

Current city ordinance allows for outdoor seating from April 15-Oct. 31 each year, though a temporary allowance for some outdoor dining tents was allowed this previous winter due to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the proposed changes, additional structures could remain longer to accommodate outdoor seating if a special land use is approved, Kevin Christiansen, the city's economic and community development director, said.

"Typically, it has included either fencing or plantings or other things to define the area and tables and chairs and umbrellas. Really that's been the extent of it," he said. "What's being requested here is more than that, and that would be the allowance of permanent enclosures, whether it be tents with sides and coverings, whether it be igloo-type structures, whether it be other sorts of enclosures. And that's in this ordinance amendment."

"The interest is to allow this on a more permanent basis."

The issue is one that's been considered by several bodies, including the Downtown Development Authority and the city's planning commission, which discussed the issue during its

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TikTok

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TikTok is a short-form, video-sharing app that allows users to create and share brief videos — generally 30 seconds or shorter — on any topic, according to [influencermarketinghub.com](https://www.influencermarketinghub.com), which explains the app offers users a wide selection of sounds and song snippets, along with the option to add special effects and filters.

As millions of TikTok users have discovered quickly — and Savoury and Robinson learned early in their influencing careers — all the high-tech tools in the world can't build a faithful following if you don't possess a few invaluable intangibles.

"First of all, it helps to have a sense of humor," said Savoury, currently a student and basketball player at Henry Ford College in Dearborn. "Putting together successful content is all about being relatable. My niche is making jokes out of everyday stuff. People gravitate to that. I've learned what people like, what people want to see. Once you find out what works, keep doing it."

Robinson said patience is one of the key ingredients to becoming a TikTok juggernaut.

"A lot of people will make a video that doesn't do well and they'll quit, just like that," Robinson said. "You have to keep posting; don't give up. You're not going to blow up overnight."

"I only had about 2,000 followers the first four months I was doing TikTok," Savoury revealed. "Then one day I post-

"Putting together successful content is all about being relatable. My niche is making jokes out of everyday stuff. ... I've learned what people like, what people want to see. Once you find out what works, keep doing it."

Julian Savoury

ed a video that went viral and before long I was over 1 million (followers). You have to be consistent and keep grinding."

Both young men have managed to carve out styles that make people laugh with less-than-a-minute videos that depict typically mundane sequences.

"One video I made that a lot of people liked was when your mom tells you to clean your room while you're already in the process of cleaning it," Savoury said, flashing a million-dollar smile. "Simple, everyday things like that."

"My favorite is probably the one I made that most people can relate to: You're sitting in a restaurant waiting for your food, you're really hungry, and the waitress is walking toward your table with a tray of food ... and she walks right by you to another table. In the video, I get up and smack her in the back of the head."

Savoury played the roles of the hun-



Julian Savoury is pictured in a restaurant-themed TikTok video that generated close to 5 million views.

ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

gry customer and the waitress, so no unsuspecting servers were injured, he added, smiling.

Approximately 4.6 million people reacted favorably to Savoury's restaurant-experience video while 54,000 commented.

"You know pretty quickly whether or

not a video is going over well with people," Savoury said. "If it's good, you'll know in the first hour after you posted it."

Robinson's forte is creating popular call-you-back prank videos, some of which have piled up as many as several million views.

"And a lot of times I'll make videos that combine two things that don't make sense together," Robinson said. "Whatever comes to my mind I use for content. I've been doing it for seven months now, so I know what works and what doesn't. If I mess one up, I don't worry about it."

Savoury said TikTok flourished during the coronavirus pandemic.

"People were bored at home and needed something to do," he said of the content producers. "And the world needed content that made them laugh."

Individuals who excel at TikTok can make a career out of producing the brief videos, Savoury said.

"I'm making more money with my videos than I did working a part-time job," he said. "There's the advertising part of it, plus TikTok will pay you if a video generates a certain number of views. If you're good at it, people will pay you to make promotional TikTok videos for them. There's definitely money to be made."

The TikTok app is free to download.

Savoury, whose followers include Netflix actress Talia Jackson and a female UFC fighter, is not going to rest on his TikTok laurels.

"My goal is to get to two million followers by the end of the year, so I try to post something every day," he said.

Voters

Continued from Page 1A

mayoral fields.

Four candidates are vying for two spots in November's mayor election: Daniel Beier, Councilwoman Tasha Green, Edward Pruet and Mayor Bill Wild. The 13 people in the council race will get narrowed to eight.

Despite the crowded fields with diverse candidates, the city hasn't received an excess of reports regarding stolen or vandalized campaign signs. People who do face those issues can contact the city's neighborhood services department.

LeBlanc said he's expecting absentee ballots alone to surpass previous local primary voter totals. The clerk said it's a good thing so many residents are participating in local elections.

"Our staff is performing admirably and voter conduct thus far has been very supportive," he said. "There is in-

"I do (expect a lot of turnout), but not necessarily because of the proposals — and by that I mean the candidates and millage — on the ballot. I suspect it's because of 2020. In my opinion, we are forever changed regarding voter participation."

Richard LeBlanc Westland City Clerk

terest in this primary election, and that's a good thing. This city is remaining active."

Westland residents can still get an absentee ballot by calling the clerk's office at 734-793-9432 or stopping by the office at 36300 Warren Road. Completed ballots must be returned before 8 p.m. election day.

Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. election day. Visit michigan.gov/vote for voting information, including if you're registered to vote, to see a sample ballot or find where to vote.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com.



Westland City Clerk Richard LeBlanc checks out the city's gathering parcels of absentee ballots that have been cast for the August primary election.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Enclosures

Continued from Page 1A

July 12 meeting held at Farmington City Hall. The DDA provided its feedback to the planning commission, which included concern regarding the character of downtown, along with the condition of such structures after several years of being out in the elements.

The commission decided to table the changes in the ordinance, delaying a decision on the matter until its Aug. 9 meeting. The issue was one brought up by Farmington Brewing Company co-owner Jason Schlaff, who said he would

have liked to have had such an ordinance in place during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he had made an investment and even brought an awning company in to begin creating such a covering.

"I wanted this last year, badly, because we couldn't have people inside," he said. "I put funding in place, everything was hunky-dory, I thought we were going to go through."

"It's frustrating because we just wanted to stay in business."

There was plenty of discussion from the planning commission surrounding the issue, which deals with many different types of settings, said Steve Majors, the commission's chair.

"When we hear things like 'permanent structures,' we think of things that look the same 365 days a year. And I think that's the item we're considering," he said. "It's an interesting discussion and the question for us is to make sure we are assessing not your particular instance — though you're here kind of representing that — and what is before us today, which is language for structure permanence."

But there was enough discussion and pause to cause the planning commission to delay moving the ordinance forward. The commission decided to table the changes in the ordinance, delaying a decision on the matter until its Aug. 9 meeting.

One issue brought up by Commissioner Kenneth Crutcher was whether such an ordinance could potentially allow a business to essentially construct an addition to its building under the guise of an outdoor dining enclosure.

"We're talking about allowing permanent outdoor seating, and there's an allowance in here for enclosures for outdoor seating. Some are permanent and we're having also removable features," Crutcher said. "We currently have the outdoor seating seasonally... This ordinance amendment is to allow outdoor seating year round. As it's written, is it also limiting the enclosure to seasonal?"

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hometownlife.com

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Vision

Continued from Page 1A

Livonia," Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan said. "We are not a city that is going to be able to totally reinvent itself and make one area a downtown, but we do have an opportunity to create these neighborhood hubs, these smaller downtown areas."

City council recently requested the city's law department draft an ordinance to consolidate the city's zoning districts — cutting them from 31 parts to 14. That consolidation will make development more user-friendly and allow those neighborhood hubs to get built.

Aside from calling for an ordinance change, the master plan also signals to developers what kind of development the city wants.

"People are under the mistaken idea that cities decide what gets built," McIntyre said. "You'll see people on Facebook say 'They need to put a Lowes there.' Well, 'they,' the city, don't do



The City of Livonia is considering changing zoning rules in its master plan that could affect the former Sears lot at Seven Mile and Middlebelt.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

anything. That's private developers. What we can do is have zoning ordinances that facilitate that kind of development."

Making that signal to developers will facilitate the micro downtowns and, officials think, ultimately create a community where people want to continue raising their kids.

"We're looking to build a city for the future, and one of those things people

will be looking for are communities that are more walkable and bikeable," Brosnan said. "By creating these multi-use pieces of property, we're going to be creating a more bikeable, walkable community."

Brosnan and McIntyre, who both sat on the steering committee when Livonia Vision 21 was started in 2018, both say they're committed to seeing the plan unfold.

"I think this is the furthest we've ever gotten in a report and in looking at a vision in many, many years," Councilwoman Laura Toy, who has been in and out of local and state government since the 1990s, said.

Brosnan said, though the master plan already received lots of public input when it was made, public input will continue to matter. The first project residents can provide ideas for will likely be the upcoming senior center development, which the city currently is working to get funded.

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Luca Pastry brings sweet treats to Plymouth

David Veselenak HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It was never in the plans to locate a new Luca Pastry shop in downtown Plymouth for Michael Cangialosi. But when opportunity knocks, he said he knew he had to answer.

"It became available and we're like, 'You know what? Why not?'" he said.

The Italian bakery that began operations in 2019 in Canton Township now has a new space to serve hungry pedestrians walking through downtown Plymouth.

The shop recently opened its second location at 470 Forest, Suite 11, the space where Drought juice bar formerly operated. That juice bar closed all its retail shops earlier this year.

The small shop began selling baked goods in mid-July after taking several months to renovate the space tucked off the alley. It's smaller than the shop's Ford Road bakery, and sells a smaller variety of the shop's best-known items, which include cupcakes, macarons, cakes and other treats.

Cangialosi said he and his family always wanted to bring their shop to a downtown area, particularly downtown Plymouth. When they heard about the small space becoming available and decided it was a perfect fit.

"We looked at some spots down here, but we were going to wait," Cangialosi said. "Then we kind of just forgot about it and we saw this spot become available."

"We've always loved downtown Plymouth."

No baking takes place in Plymouth, though decorating does. The shop offers a smaller selection, including cupcakes, macarons and lobster tails, along with some cake options.

In the short time since opening, Cangialosi said they've seen plenty of macarons fly off the shelf. He attributes that success to the name they've made for themselves in the Plymouth/Canton community.

"They definitely started off here a lot busier and a lot bigger than they did in Canton," Cangialosi said. "Building that name in Canton with the macarons has definitely helped with the macarons here."



Emily Penna brings out a tray of chocolate bubble cupcakes from the display case at Luca Pastry.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

The opening of the new space in downtown Plymouth isn't the end of expansion for the Italian bakery. A third location is under construction on Seven Mile west of Middlebelt Road in Livonia, a space they expect to open later this year. That bakery will offer similar goods as the Canton location.

In addition, Cangialosi said they've recently signed a lease to bring a fourth location on board, this time along Washtenaw Avenue in Ann Arbor. That location, he said, could be open by early 2022.

The Plymouth shop is currently open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

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



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6:30 pm - 8:30 pm - The Boa Constrictors

9:00 pm - 11:00 pm - Broken Arrow Blues

Saturday, August 3, 2019

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Family Fun Time

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm - The Joe Stanley Trio

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm - Drew Schultz & The Broken Habits

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Hagenian, a champion of justice for more than 35 years, recognized

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Kathy Hagenian is a true champion of justice.

The Novi resident has been fighting against domestic violence and sexual assault and on behalf of the survivors of these crimes for more than 35 years and was recently recognized for the work that could to some appear to be dark and endless and emotionally exhausting.

Hagenian recalls someone once told her, "There's nothing light about your work."

"It's not light work," she agrees, "but there is light in the work, and hope in the work and strength in the work, and that is because of survivors, who started our movement and continue the work today."

Hagenian, 59, was recently honored with the Champion of Justice award by the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board for her lifetime of advocacy on behalf of those survivors.

When she was studying psychology at the University of Michigan in the early '80s, she couldn't have imagined the path she would soon be on, particularly with the scarcity of classes addressing domestic violence and sexual assault. However, she recalls there was one graduate assistant who had interest in these topics, and Hagenian started

her own research, driven by "many different experiences in my own life."

She came across one particular report that revealed details of women's testimony regarding their domestic assaults.

"I was sitting in the library doing research and I felt outrage and injustice about the experiences that these survivors were brave enough to share, but even as they were reaching out for help, they were blamed and disbelieved."

Hagenian began volunteering for women's domestic violence shelters and interned at a facility for youths who had experienced trauma and assault.

Following graduation, she worked as a state social worker specialist briefly, then launched into her years of advocacy for a succession of non-profit organizations, including the Coalition, which she joined in 1988 and now serves as the executive policy director for the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Debi Cain, executive director of the Division of Victim Services in the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, noted Hagenian's commitment to survivor empowerment.

"Her training and policy focus is centered on honoring the lived experience of survivors, which includes understanding trauma while emphasizing survivors' strength, resilience, and healing," Cain said.



Hagenian

In the span of nearly four decades, Hagenian said she has certainly seen remarkable and dramatic change in the culture surrounding the topics of domestic violence and sexual assault.

One of the biggest changes is women feeling able to speak about their experiences, with the unfair blame placed on victims finally being turned to the perpetrators, where it should have been all along.

"Survivors often feel blame or shame, but it is incumbent on us to take that away," Hagenian said. "This is something that happened to somebody, it is not who they are."

The number of women coming forward to share their stories of being assaulted, including during the past year of pandemic, has certainly increased, but Hagenian clarifies that doesn't mean the number of assaults has necessarily increased.

What the evidence points to is that survivors are trusting that help is available. That they will be believed. That they will be supported.

And, Hagenian adds, as the fear subsides that they will not be blamed or shamed, she expects the numbers to continue to increase and the healing and prevention to mount.

We can all be champions of justice,

she said, by listening.

"What do we do when we see someone being abusive?" Hagenian asked. "What do we do to recognize (signs of abuse) and make a decision to do something, rather than ignore because we don't want it to be true, or turn away because we don't know what to do?"

It's never too early to talk to kids about personal respect and boundaries, Hagenian said.

For any age, there is no one way to be approachable, and much could depend on the nature of the relationship, but key is being approachable and genuine and perhaps just starting with asking a simple question: "are you OK?" while being prepared for a not simple answer and taking cues from the response.

"So many we know continue to suffer in silence, whether the trauma was two hours, two days, two weeks, two months, two years or 20 years ago," Hagenian said. "We hope they reach out to someone, that they have the opportunity to share what has happened and to get support and to know it is not their fault and they deserve the opportunity to heal in whatever way is best... Things will change when we are all advocates."

For more information on how to help or to receive assistance, visit the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence website.

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com.

Farmington Hills man gains citizenship, plans police career

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Blerim Sefa is pursuing an American Dream that he could soon realize thanks to a persevering spirit mixed with smarts and a strong work ethic.

The Albanian immigrant became a U.S. citizen in June, and he's now working as a police cadet for both Milford and Novi police departments so that he can become a full-time police officer.

It's been a long road, especially since the 28-year-old Farmington Hills resident left the Albanian capital of Tirana in 2015 thinking he'd keep striving to become a mechanical engineer.

He was in his early 20s then. A West Bloomfield Township cousin helped him get settled. He found a job. Sefa successfully tested for a driver's license.

Coming from a country that considered America a land of opportunity, he was ready to return to school until a local college rep started talking to him about tuition fees.

"I did not know you have to pay for school here. I'm like, 'What is that for?' I was a little bit shocked. I did not expect that in America," he admitted with a laugh. "That was a little bit of a sad day."

But Sefa focused on the opportunities rather than the setback. He kept working as many jobs as he could handle. He stayed in touch with his family and the Albanian woman who would become his wife.

When he was finally able to enroll in college classes, he kept in mind a metro Detroit police officer who pulled him over for speeding when he was still a new license holder.

Sefa was honest about being confused regarding the speed limit. The officer returned his driver's license, gave him a verbal warning and asked him if he needed help with directions. Sefa's phone with a GPS screen was on the passenger seat.

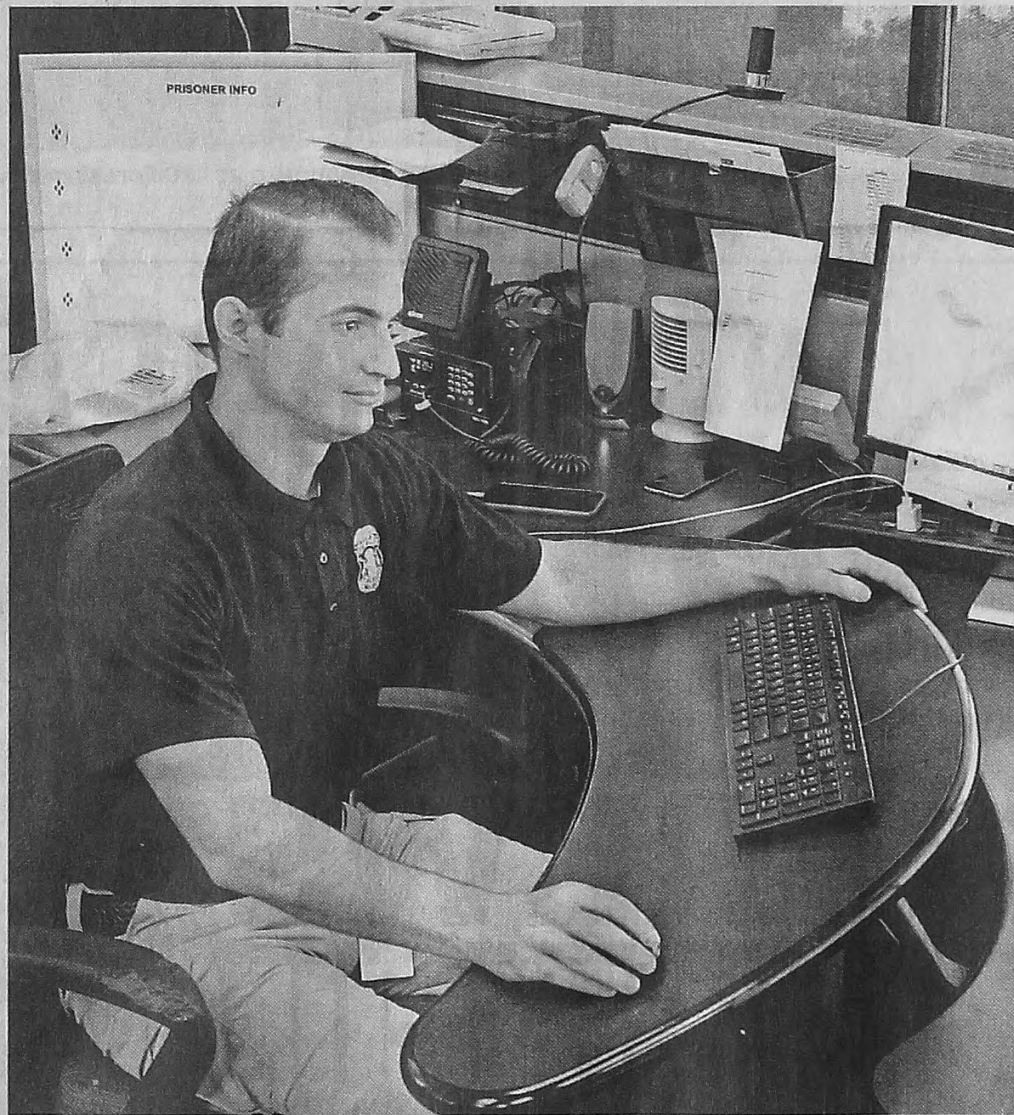
"He was really, really nice," Sefa said. "That left a really good impression in my mind. I was like, I want to be like this gentleman."

Their encounter prompted Sefa to start researching police work as a profession.

Still working as many jobs as he could handle, Sefa began taking classes at Oakland Community College in fall 2016 and soon enrolled in an introduction to criminal justice class. He was a good student in Albania. He continued to be a good student in the United States.

A class exercise led him to a cadet opening with the Milford Police Department. He didn't think he could get it because he wasn't a U.S. citizen yet. But he applied and, after the interview, someone called to say the department was interested in hiring him.

Sefa called his loved ones back in Al-



Blerim Sefa works at a console at the Milford Police Department on July 19.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

bania.

"I freaked out," Sefa said "I was jumping, literally jumping. I was like, 'Oh, my God! I can't believe they just hired me and I'm not even a citizen.'"

Sefa departed from his native Albania, a former Communist country, after winning a coveted diversity visa in an annual opportunity that includes background and medical checks. He also had to pass a drug test and deal with similar checks to become a police cadet.

His first day with the department was in early 2019, just a few months before he received his associate degree. He is one of the department's longest-serving civilian employees.

"I'm really, really happy that we have found him," said Meghan Harp, the department's police services coordinator.

Sefa, she said, is very dependable and always willing to pick up an extra shift. He also helps her train new cadets, who are responsible for tasks like greeting visitors, entering data, and answering non-emergency calls.

She's proud of his accomplishments and excited to see what his future holds.

Sefa has gone from knowing absolutely nothing about Milford to claiming a Milford police department family that will always hold a special place in his heart because of how welcoming and

supportive his colleagues have been. He has worked through language and cultural differences to continue striving with the department's support.

He became a Novi police cadet in January 2020 and received a bachelor's degree from Ferris State University at the end of last year. The pandemic delayed his citizenship but he has that status now.

Sefa hopes to enter the police academy in the fall. He'd like to work for a local police department or a federal agency.

"My mind was the finish line, not where I currently am," said Sefa, who is anticipating his wife's move to the United States this summer. "I would just keep looking ahead, keep working hard, too."

I worked two, three jobs — sometimes four including DoorDash, Uber, my construction job, my restaurant job. I made it. I am a few months away from being finally at my dream job and fairly debt free.

Like so many men and women entering the police field, Sefa likes helping people. He also speaks Spanish.

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

Westland's Blues, Brews and BBQ set to return

Courtesy of the City of Westland

Southeast Michigan's top BBQ pitmasters are lining up to participate in Westland's signature event of the year, Blues, Brews and BBQ at Thomas H. Brown Central City Park.

Blues, Brews and BBQ will feature several talented musicians, American barbecue and a selection of Michigan craft beers. The event will take place 5-11 p.m. Aug. 6 and continues all day Aug. 7.

On Saturday, family admission runs 2-4 p.m. for family fun time. General admission is open 4-11 p.m. Free parking will be available at Thomas H. Brown Central City Park, with overflow parking at John Glenn High School, the Friendship Senior Center and William D. Ford Career Technical Center.

Free shuttle buses will be provided from the three overflow parking locations 6-11:30 p.m. Friday and 5-11:30 p.m. Saturday.

Once again, the event will feature professional pitmasters Hill Billy Bone BBQ, Heaven on a Roll, Old Dads BBQ, The Grill Father and Smokehouse 52 BBQ with their professional on-site, slow cooked, authentic BBQ. Some additions outside the traditional BBQ realm will be Harvest Kettle Corn, Detroit Mini Donut, Big Dog Hot Dogs and Redd Ventures. The event will also feature a wide selection of Michigan craft beers.

On Friday night, attendees will be treated to some of the area's most notable blues acts with Monsieur Guillaume and His Zydeco Hepcats kicking it off at 5 p.m. Other acts include the Boa Constrictors, Broken Arrow Blues, the Joe Stanley Trio, Drew Schultz & the Broken Habits and Thornetta Davis.

Westland's Fire Department is also partnering with Kroger in order to distribute COVID-19 vaccines on site during the event.

The event closes on Saturday with an all-American firework celebration you won't want to miss and to a special tribute drone show to honor the city's 55th anniversary.

"It has been truly incredible to watch this event grow for the past 10 years and we are so excited to bring it back to the community just in time to celebrate the city's 55th anniversary," Mayor William Wild said in a release. "In addition to being a perfect way to spend a summer weekend, proceeds benefit a number of Westland charities."

To date, the event has raised nearly \$250,000.

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Obituaries

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Anthony (Tony) Fonseca

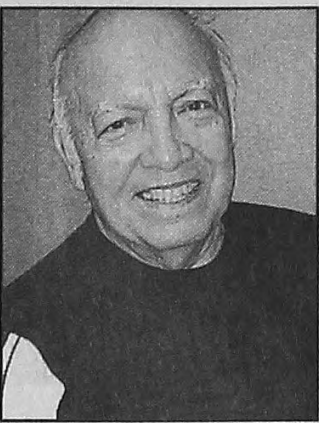
Born December 21, 1932 and raised in Detroit, Michigan, passed away Tuesday June 8, 2021 after enduring a long yet courageous battle with Alzheimer's Dementia.

A proud US Marine, a Korean War Veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart Medal of Honor.

Tony is the son of the late Mark and Louisa Fonseca. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 48 years, Sophia Fonseca, 5 sisters; Caroline Zaleski (Tony), Alvira Moreno (Marcus), Augustine Gonzales (Blackie), Delores Chakur (Willie), Amelia Rodriguez (Richie) and grandson; Thomas Compton. He leaves behind sister; Lucy (the late Joseph) Gomez, brothers; Alfonso (Ester) Fonseca, Mark (MaryJane) Fonseca and Nicolas (Georgette) Fonseca and children; Michael (Pat) Fonseca, Lois (the late Marshall) Field, Nancy (Tom) Smith, Melissa (Tim) McAteer, Melinda (Pete) Brewis, 14 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Tony dedicated his life to working hard and raising a family. After dedicating his working years to one company, Hawthorn Metal Company in Royal Oak Michigan, he retired in 1996. Tony spent his last years in Port Charlotte Florida.

A celebration of life is being planned for Saturday August 21, 2021 in South Lyon Michigan.



Mary Evalee Law Lavins

Mary Evalee Law Lavins, age 85, passed away July 26, 2021. Mary was born on June 9, 1936, in Springfield, Ohio, the only child of Donald and Florence Law. She attended Piqua Central High School and graduated in June of 1954. Shortly after, on August 7, 1955, she married her high school sweetheart Ramon Lavins. Together they shared over 65 years of marriage. They eventually moved from Dayton, Ohio to Michigan and have lived there for over 32 years. They do not have children but have two nieces, Tane Lee Smith and Ashley Lavins-Stillman; and a nephew, Michael Lavins from Ramon's siblings, Garry and Connie. Mary requested there not be visitation or service for herself, as she wished to be remembered as she was when getting together with the many friends that she and her loving husband got to know. Following cremation, she will be interred at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan where her husband, an Army veteran, will one day join her. www.mccabefuneralhome.com



Rosemarie Murphy

Rosemarie "Rosie" Murphy, age 96, died May 26, 2021 in Columbus, MS. She was born on February 8, 1925 in Bellevue, PA. As a resident of Beverly Hills, MI, Rosie was a member of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Church for over fifty years and volunteered at William Beaumont Hospital for over forty years. She was a voracious reader and played a brilliant game of bridge.

She moved to Mississippi in 2016 and enjoyed the sunshine there. It was always "A pretty day." She was a lovely lady who could recite poetry, sing more than one verse of a song, had a dry wit and an underlying devilment.

Rosie was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jack, her siblings and son-in-law, Steven Lee Van Asselt. She is survived by her loving daughter, Catherine Murphy Van Asselt, Columbus, MS; grandsons Scott David Van Asselt, Southaven, MS; Brad Steven Van Asselt, Starkville, MS; Lee John Van Asselt (Angela); great grandsons Ethan Lee Van Asselt; Davis Edward Van Asselt, Birmingham, AL and dear nieces and nephews.

Graveside services with friends and family will be on Friday, August 6th at 11:00am. White Chapel Memorial Cemetery 621 West Long Lake Road, Troy, Michigan 48098



Phyllis Gay McCaffrey

June 9, 1939 – July 21, 2021

Phyllis G. McCaffrey, 82 of Livonia, passed away peacefully with family members by her bedside on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield Hills.

Born June 9, 1939, in Grundy Virginia, she was the daughter of Henry and Myrtle (Stacy) Wolford. She married the love of her life, John McCaffrey in 1957 in Washington D.C. Together they would raise two children and they spent many years traveling around to all fifty states and Canada in their RV. Phyllis was a second mom to Sandy, Steve's wife. They grew very close, having a mother daughter relationship.

When Phyllis was not traveling, she enjoyed sitting on her front porch visiting and drinking coffee with her dear friends. She would always tell them stories from her experiences and her life. She always enjoyed a good card game with family and friends. She had a natural ability for performing Reike and Tapping on her family and close friends. Phyllis was a long-time resident of Livonia as well as a member of Unity of Livonia Church, where she was an interictal part of the healing ministries. Most importantly family was everything for Phyllis. Her primary passion was spending quality time with family.

Phyllis started her career working for the Federal Government in the Mapping department in Washington D.C. Later she went on to work for the Defense Department at Williams International as a secretary to the Chief of the Contracting Department. She would end her career working with the Department of Defense as a Packing Specialist.

Phyllis leaves behind two sons, Steve (Sandy) McCaffrey and Mark McCaffrey; two loving grandchildren, Crystal and Bailey McCaffrey; siblings, Robert (Lucy) Wolford and Betty Smith.

Sadly, Phyllis is preceded in death by her husband, John; an infant daughter, Rhonda; siblings; Hydrith Duaghten, Pauline Goff, Christen Reber, Bill Wolford, Dorothy Runyon, and Scotty Wolford.

A celebration of life to remember Phyllis will be held on Saturday, August 28, 2021, at Unity of Livonia Church, 28660 5 Mile Road Livonia, MI, 48154, at 10am.

In lieu of flowers the family wishes donations would be made to COC, Community Opportunity Center 14147 Farmington Road, Livonia, MI, 48154, and Unity of Livonia Church.

Words of comfort and condolences to the family may be made through www.ruppfuneralhomeinc.com.

Robert Kemp Riley

10-3-37 to 7-5-21

Bob Riley loved his family and his friends and thrived on supporting and celebrating his family's successes. He was a golfer, Life Master in bridge, published author, and talented musician. He enjoyed all music (particularly jazz) and theater, politically incorrect jokes and intense debate. He was smart, funny, and competitive; proud yet self-deprecating and happy to share the things he most enjoyed. Bob was a native Detroit and spent most of his professional life working in the automotive after-market industry in marketing roles and as a director of international licensing for a large corporation. After residing in Detroit, South Bend, IN and Pennnington NJ, he and his wife Susan moved to San Diego in 2009. He is survived by Susan, his wife of 60 years; five children and their spouses: Todd and Nancy Riley, Lauren and Jim Feeney, Jen and Peter Ottinger, Julie and Charles Waugh and Steve and Laura Riley; six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He supported his family with love and pride. "Remember, you're a Riley!"

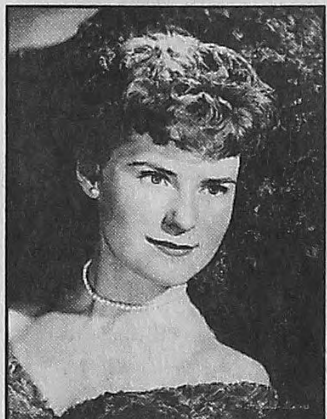
Bob died July 5, 2021 after an extended battle with cancer. We will gather in San Diego in the Fall to celebrate this remarkable man.

Clara M. Simpson

FARMINGTON - 95, retired Farmington Public Schools transportation supervisor, passed away July 22, 2021. Beloved mother of John Simpson and Jane Lavine. No services are planned. Arrangements by Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. (248-474-5200) heeney-sundquist.com

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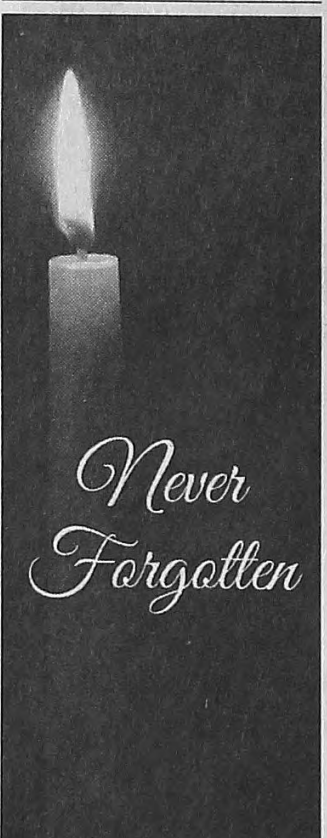
Arlene J. Garver

BRIGHTON - Arlene Garver, beloved wife of Jerry Garver for 61 years, mother of four, and grandmother of twelve, passed away at 81 years young on June 30, 2021. She lived an inspired and exemplary life as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, daughter, caregiver, lifelong student, and adventurer.

We celebrate her life, as her legacy lives on through her husband Jerry, four children, and 12 grandchildren.

There will be a Memorial Gathering on Tuesday, August 3, at the Keehn-Griffin Funeral Home, 706 W. Main St., Brighton, from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. with a Time of Sharing at 5:15 p.m. Read more about Arlene at Keehngriffinfuneralhome.com

KEEHN-GRIFFIN
L.J. GRIFFIN FUNERAL HOME, INC.



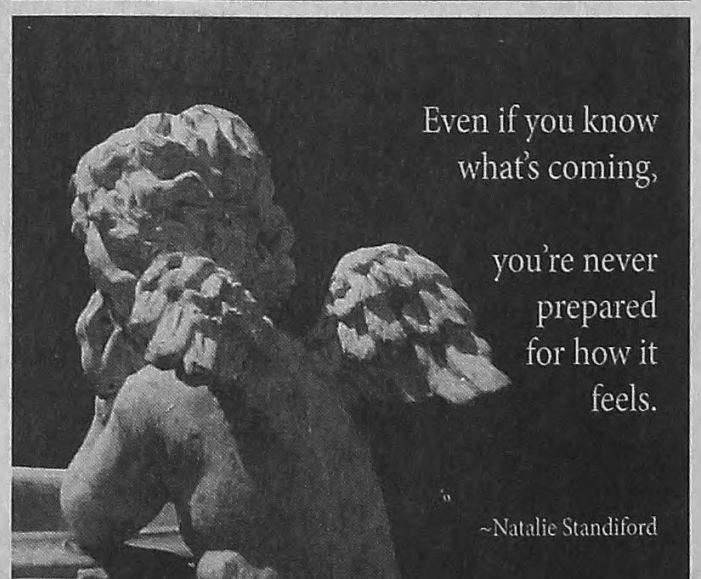
Mary Margaret Rorabacher

Her Legacy... Mary Margaret Rorabacher, 91, passed away July 22, 2021. She was born on October 29, 1929, in Detroit, Michigan to Frank Knittle and Margaret Mary (Kuhn) Knittle. Mary married the love of her life, Robert Rorabacher, on September 13, 1947, at Our Lady Gate of Heaven Catholic Church in Detroit, Michigan. Mary and Bob met while roller skating, where he shook her hand while holding a lit cigarette which burned her hand. It made for a lasting memory and a love story lasting 73 years. Mary was an avid reader, keeping a reading journal for each book she read. She also was a terrific baker who enjoyed baking Christmas cookies with her granddaughters. Mary was the ultimate bargain hunter, a trait she passed on to her daughter, and she loved to share stories about her bargain finds. She was a long-time resident of Plymouth, Michigan, then retired to Pinckney, where she enjoyed her secluded home in the pines for 30 years. Mary will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt.

Her Family... Mary will be missed by her husband, Robert; her daughter, Sheila (David); sister, Kathleen Wright; Granddaughters, Rebecca (Michael) Dworakowski, and Sara Wortmann; nieces Lynn (Bill) Barnes, and Laura (Russ) Waldo. She is preceded in death by her parents Frank and Margaret, and her sister Clara Seeley. The family would like to thank the Hamburg Fire Department lift team and the staff of Arbor Hospice for their compassionate care.

Her Farewell... Mary's family and friends will gather on Wednesday, July 28, 2021 from 5:00pm - 8:00pm at Borek Jennings Funeral Home, Hamburg Chapel. Her Community Farewell will be held on Thursday, July 29, 2021, at 11:00am (10:00am gathering) at Borek Jennings Funeral Home, Hamburg Chapel. Deacon Tyler Arns will serve as celebrant. Memorial contributions are suggested to the Hamburg Library. Please leave a message of comfort for Mary's family at 1-877-231-7900, or sign her guestbook at www.borekjennings.com.

Borek Jennings Funeral Home
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-Natalie Standiford

Michigan soldier missing no longer

Emma Stein Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Army Pfc. Philip T. Hoogacker, 23, came home to Livonia, Michigan, in 1950 for his mother's funeral. Shortly after, he was sent to fight in the Korean War.

He never came back. Seventy-one years later, Hoogacker has been accounted for and his family is able to honor him and get the closure they've needed for so long.

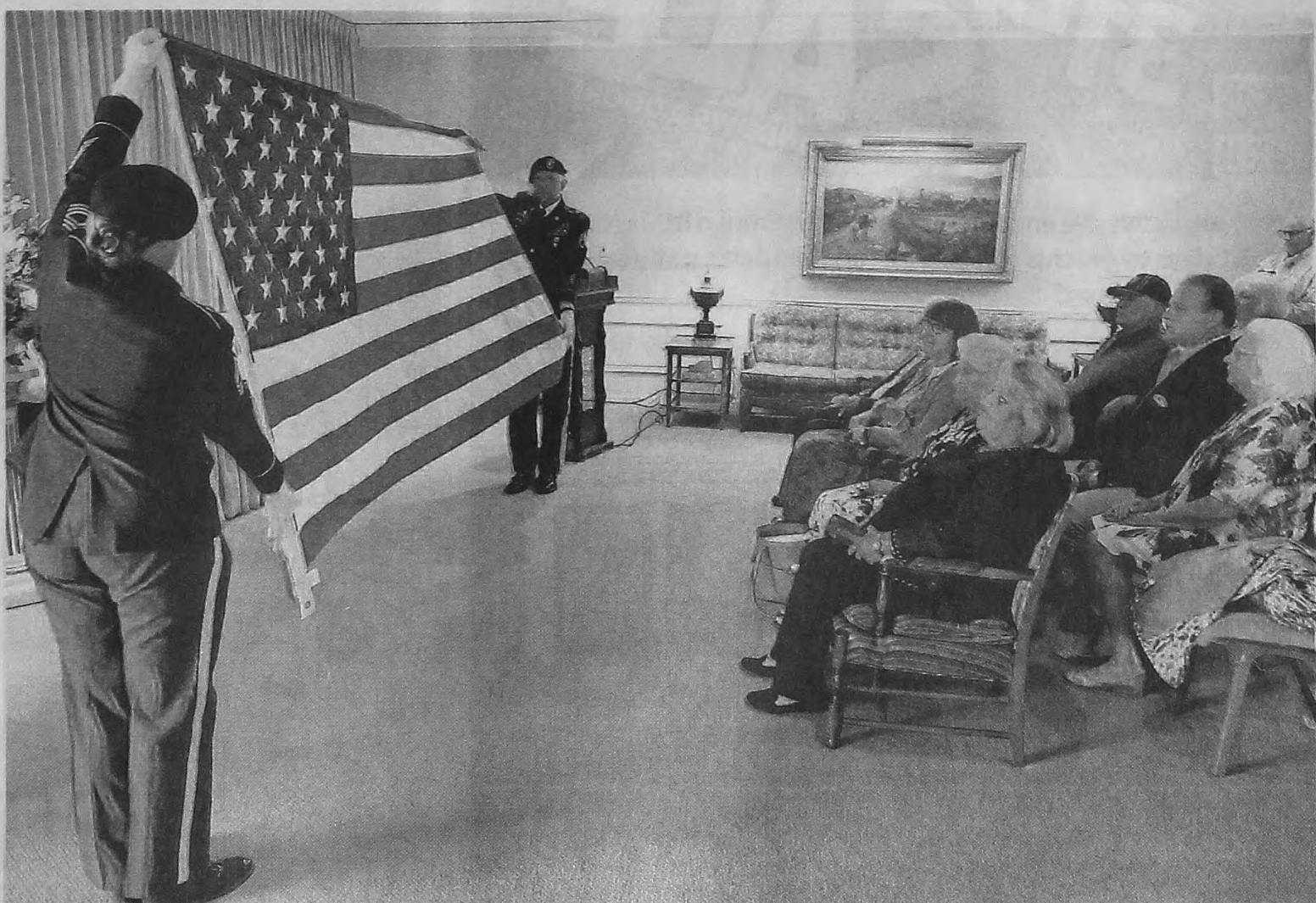
"We always hoped that they would find him, and they did," said Helen Fennel, Hoogacker's sister.

Fennel and her brother, Edgar Hoogacker, submitted DNA in the 1990s to aid with the identification process, and they never gave up. She said she "holered" with joy when the Army informed her that they were able to identify him.

Philip was a member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment when he was reported missing in action in July 1950. His unit was attacked near Anui, South Korea, and historians believe that Hoogacker was taken by the Korean People's Army, according to a news release from the Defense POW Accounting Agency. He was then taken to Seoul, and later Pyongyang, where they believe he died as a prisoner of war.



Hoogacker



Members of the U.S. Army Color Guard start the ceremony of folding the American flag to be presented to the family of U.S. Army Pfc. Phillip Hoogacker at RG & GR Harris Funeral Home in Livonia on July 23. ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Although many decades have passed and the memories are fading, his family remembers him fondly — whether it's for his weird sandwich combinations or the paper airplanes he made with his siblings.

Hoogacker's funeral took place July 23 at RG & GR Harris Funeral Home in Livonia. The Livonia Police Honor Guard and the U.S. Army Color Guard attended the service, giving a 21-gun salute and folding and presenting the flag to his family. He was buried Saturday in Livonia's Parkview Memorial Cemetery at the feet of where his mother was laid to rest in 1950.

"This is a celebration," said Ron Fennel, Hoogacker's nephew. "This is a closure of one family but a recognition of the government's commitment to the men and women who all throughout

history have fought and defended this country. And they did so in service to a bigger cause."

Some are still waiting for their loved ones to be accounted for, including Patricia Ozybko, who wandered into the service after reading about Philip's identification.

Ozybko's brother, John Donovan, was killed in action in 1951 during the Korean War. She's still waiting, hoping that her brother will be brought home.

"When I saw this, I think I wanted to come to support them because, if I'm gone when they find my brother's remains, I would hope that people would still come," Ozybko said through tears.

Ozybko said meeting Helen, Edgar and the rest of Hoogacker's family gave her hope that her brother might still be

accounted for.

"A lot of people have not had this closure," Helen Fennel said. "And that's why I wanted people to know, because they're still searching. And there's still hope out there."

In 1954, the U.S. government was able to get the remains of unidentified soldiers from the Korean War. They were interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, also known as the Punchbowl. About 7,500 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War, the release said.

Helen Fennel said she's hung a picture of her brother on her fridge since the day he disappeared.

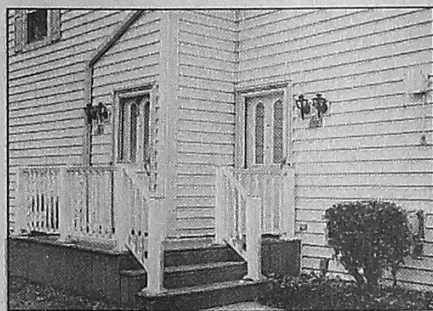
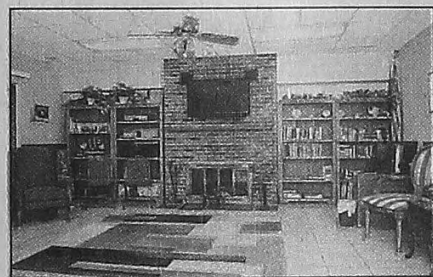
"He died for our country," she said. "And we're so glad he's here, back home again."

"This is a celebration. This is a closure of one family but a recognition of the government's commitment to the men and women who all throughout history have fought and defended this country. And they did so in service to a bigger cause."

Ron Fennel

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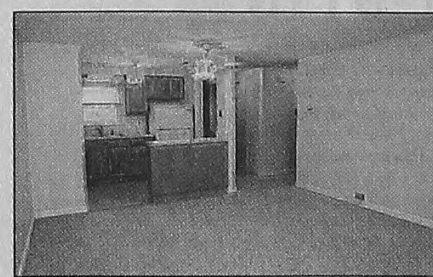
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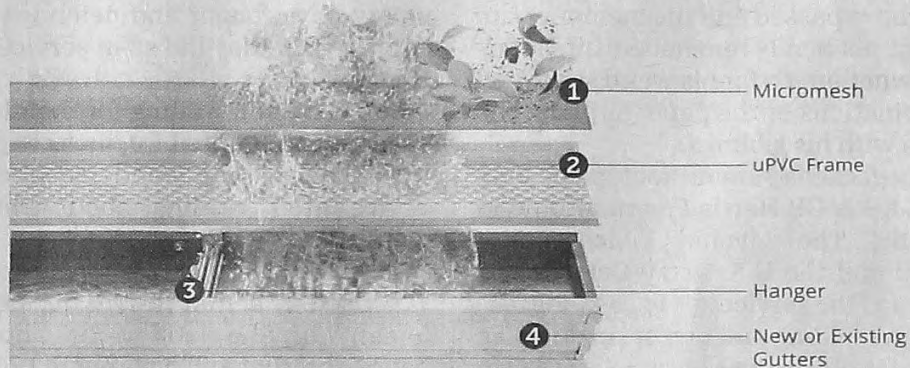
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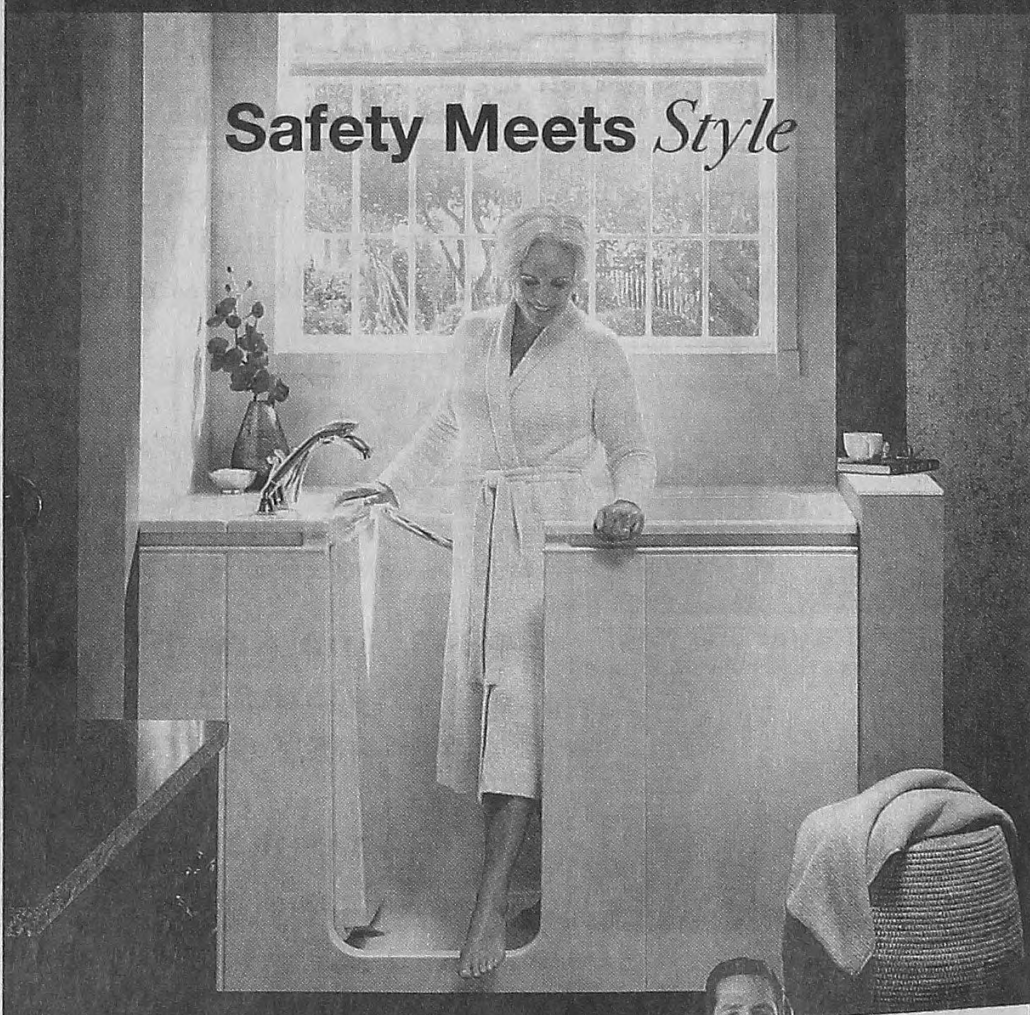
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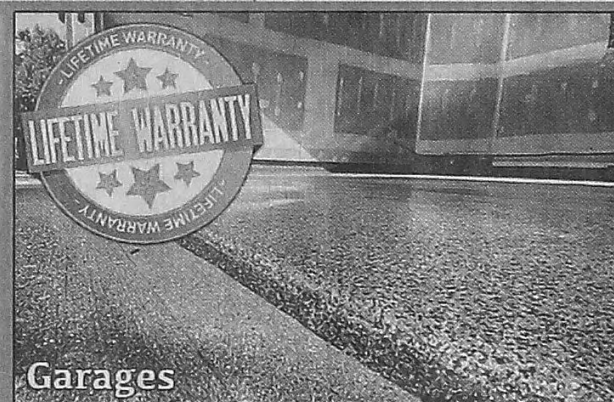
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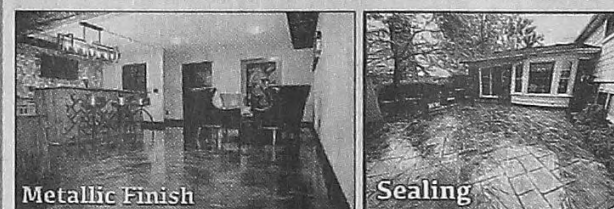
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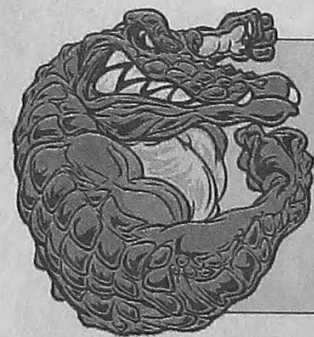
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SPORTS

Groves dismisses Simpkins as coach

Letter cites parent complaints, performance

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Coming off his first season with Groves girls varsity basketball, head coach Ant-Juan Simpkins planned to build for the future.

The Falcons finished the 2021 season 9-9 and earned their first district title since 1988 after beating Southfield Arts and Technology and Berkley in the play-offs.

It was a plan that Simpkins and Groves Athletic Director Thomas Flynn,

seemed on board about, or so he thought.

"Tom Flynn had a discussion with me and said, 'I plan on being here another five years, and I want you here,'" Simpkins said. "I don't want you making any decisions to leave here before I leave."

Plans apparently changed rather quickly.

Simpkins received a letter from Flynn

dated April 22, stating his appointment as head coach would not be renewed for the 2021-22 school year.

The letter indicates this came after a meeting between Simpkins, Flynn and Groves High School Principal Susan Smith "to discuss your performance, as well as to allow you an opportunity to

See COACH, Page 2B



Brandon McCullough plays some ball hockey with his daughter Harper, 7, at the Livonia Recreation Center on July 20.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Michigan Ball Hockey brings back childhood staple in Detroit

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Brandon McCullough's lifelong love for hockey sprouted in the streets of Livonia.

Sure, there was traditional ice hockey, playing both in a Triple-A league and for Livonia Franklin before graduating from high school in 2000. But there was also street hockey, turning the parking lot of Larry's Foodland on Plymouth Road into a rink at night and playing against kids from Redford.

Now McCullough is 39. He has a real job: working as a facilities manager for Northville Township, while also serving a part-time role as a council member for the City of Livonia.

However, his love of the game remains the same, putting on shin pads, grabbing his hockey stick and taking the



Michigan Ball Hockey, based at the Livonia Recreation Center, hosts pickup games throughout the state. COURTESY OF BRANDON MCCULLOUGH

See BALL HOCKEY, Page 2B

Craggs commits to Oakland, shifts focus on CC legacy

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Cooper Craggs loves the Bad Boys era Detroit Pistons teams.

The Detroit Catholic Central senior loves the toughness those players exuded each time they took the floor in the late 1980s and early 1990s, helping him discover his own love for the game of basketball.

"They weren't supposed to be there, but they were," Craggs said. "That's what I really love about them, and they take everything even when it's not given."

Starting with his freshman season on a senior-heavy Shamrocks team, Craggs made sure his coaches and teammates knew he was meant to be there, blooming into the player Catholic Central could build around.

Heading into his senior season, Catholic Central is all Craggs has to focus on, securing his Division 1 path by committing to play basketball at Oakland University in 2022.

"I still know that I'm not done developing," Craggs said. "I'm going to get exponentially better in college. When I saw the potential I have, I was like I really should go all in on this and see where it takes me, and I'm really glad that I did."

Catholic Central head coach Brandon Sinawi knew from his first interaction with Craggs that he was someone he could work with and mold into a next-level player.

"Did I know it was going to be Division 1 right from the get-go? No," Sinawi said. "It took a little bit of development, and really his sophomore season early on is where it sort of clicked — at least for me — that he would have the opportunity to play an extremely high level of basketball in college if he just continued to work, which is exactly what he did."

Sinawi's job with a player who aspires to play college basketball is to be specific about his development as a high school player to help his team now, while also balancing personal development to make sure that player is college ready.

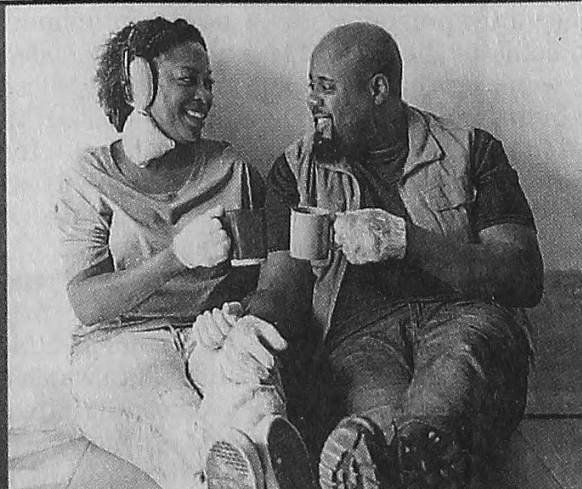
For Craggs, that journey started freshman season, slowly developing from a defensive specialist to more of a scorer — using his 6-foot-8 body to finish more around the basket as a forward — to more of a shooter, developing more of a "position-less" playing style.

See CRAGGS, Page 2B

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Ball hockey

Continued from Page 1B

ball hockey court inside the Livonia Recreation Center each Thursday and Sunday.

"It's kind of reliving our childhood," McCullough, who leads the Michigan Ball Hockey League in goals, said. "For me, this is something I did as a kid... So to kind of get out here at 39 and try and live the dream like an Uncle Rico, it's phenomenal.

"It's almost like an addiction. It makes you feel young again."

McCullough and five other members of the Livonia-based Michigan Ball Hockey League are now preparing to take their love of the game to the next level, enrolling in the Barstool Summer Hockeyfest: a 3-on-3 ball hockey tournament played at the Greektown Casino in Detroit.

"Obviously, this is new. It's evolving," Ryan McCullough, Brandon's brother and the second-leading goal scorer in the league, said. "I think it's more or less representing Michigan (and) winning, definitely winning. We are ultra-competitive, but just being a part of it. Even if this turns out to be some of us being ambassadors and bring people to the game, being the vocal points to get people interested in this."

The game itself is simple enough, and it's seemingly as sparse as it was when players once found an open parking lot to play in.

Players take the court with shin guards and normal gym garb, playing a normal game of hockey, but with the sound of basketball shoes squeaking across the floor.

Kenny Dzwonkowski's uniform doesn't change much between the ice and the ball hockey floor. As a goalkeep-



Brandon McCullough watches as his Michigan Ball Hockey team – Purple Haze – play at the Livonia Recreation Center. COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

er, he still has the chest protector and pads along with the helmet, bracing for impact against the light, orange wiffle-ball sized "puck" shot at him from every which way.

Dzwonkowski has played hockey since he was in kindergarten, playing for Indianapolis' North American Hockey League team as a defenseman until age 20 and later dropping the sport altogether six years later.

But Dzwonkowski returned at 35, finding an opportunity to do something he always wanted to do: play goalkeeper.

"I enjoy the competitiveness. I enjoy the pressure," Dzwonkowski said. "It's a lot of fun."

While ball hockey's not the same as ice hockey, the competitiveness and physicality remain the same.

And in the Michigan Ball Hockey league, rivalries have emerged, especially between Dzwonkowski's team – The Bromley Bunch – and the McCullough brothers' squad – Purple Haze. Both teams sit at the top of the Sunday Summer Draft Blast league, winning a combined 10-of-12 games.

Now Dzwonkowski and both Ryan and Brandon McCullough are teaming up for the 3-on-3 tournament at the beginning of April.

"If you would have said that a year ago, people's minds would have been blown," Dzwonkowski said. "There's a mutual respect out here. We play hard against each other. I can honestly say when we play them, there's definitely physical play, but there's nothing that crosses the line."

To the players, ball hockey is just fun.

It's competitive, sure, but it's a return to their childhood, playing something so simple.

It's a game that's found life around the country. It's a game that Ryan McCullough sees the Barstool Summer Hockeyfest helping ignite, especially in Livonia.

"Now it's starting to really take off. You're starting to get the ice hockey talent and just normal players that played street hockey back in the day that realize they can compete," he said. "It's a different game. They don't have to worry about skating, stopping.

"You need shoes."

The Barstool Summer Hockeyfest will be played at the Greektown Casino in Detroit Aug. 6-7.

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com.

Craggs

Continued from Page 1B

Over the past two seasons, that development has worked, earning Craggs first-team All-Catholic League honors as a sophomore and junior. It's a development that Craggs said Oakland will continue once he arrives, playing as a smaller power forward with the ability to stretch the floor and run, creating a mismatch at his position.

Along with the tradition of the Golden Grizzlies – making three NCAA Tournament appearances since 2005 – and the school being close to home, Craggs is excited for what head coach Greg Kampe and the rest of the Oakland staff will help him do at the college level.

"I do know that they develop really well from what I've seen with other players," Craggs said. "They have a great coaching staff and I really think they are going to help me take that next step to my game."

Now that Craggs knows that his future is in Auburn Hills, the senior forward can focus on what's happening in Novi, leading Catholic Central; a team that's only won 11 games in the past two seasons with first-round playoff exits to Canton and Salem.

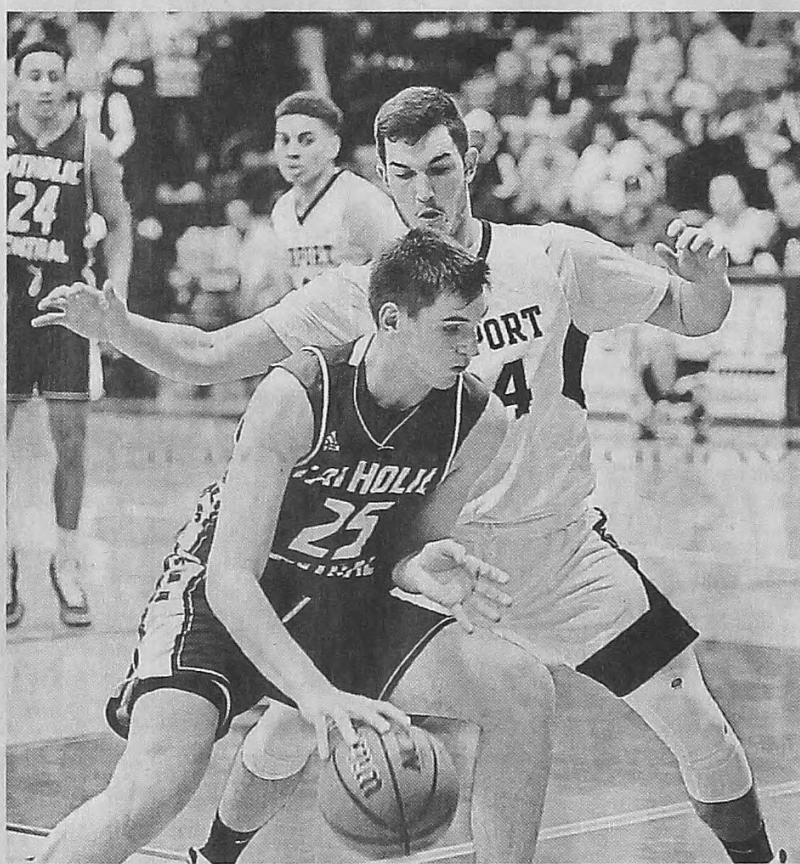
Craggs' focus is now on leaving a legacy with the Shamrocks.

"After the last two years, it's been tough with two first-round exits. I think the seniors and Coach Sinawi, we're just tired of losing like that," the senior said. "We're going to keep our heads down and go to work and then we'll see you guys in the playoffs."

To Sinawi, Craggs' focus is what could define his team in 2021, taking as much as he can out of the senior forward before his time at Catholic Central is complete.

"We've got Cooper 100 percent locked in, and that's a dangerous thing," Sinawi said.

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



Catholic Central's Cooper Craggs earned All-Catholic League honors as both a sophomore and junior. Craggs has committed to play for Oakland University. HOMETOWN LIFE.COM FILE

Coach

Continued from Page 1B

address concerns brought forward from program student-athletes and parents."

Birmingham Public Schools declined to comment for this story, saying it does not comment on personnel matters.

Parent complaints

Parents reached out to Flynn and Groves administration about Simpkins' performance and his behavior toward players on the team during the 2021 season.

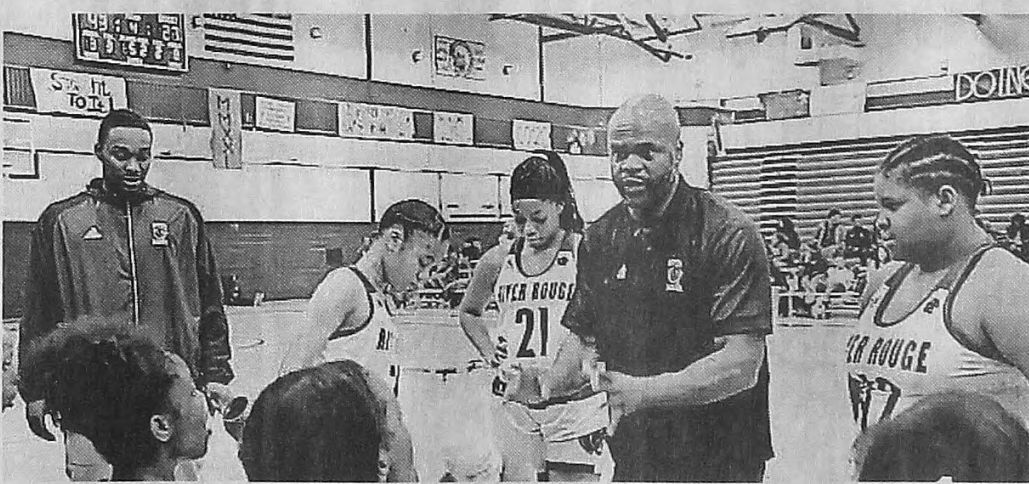
"I'm totally amazed that Groves would hire a 'thug' to run the girls basketball team," a Feb. 28 email, acquired by Hometown Life via the Freedom of Information Act, read.

"I honestly think Groves will not have a girls basketball team next year if you keep him and I know most definitely will not allow my child to play," the email continued, accusing Simpkins of physical, mental and "borderline" physical abuse.

Smith called the allegations "disturbing to read" and encouraged the sender, whose identity was redacted in the FOIA request, to give her a call to discuss it further.

The parent responded, thanking her for the conversation while telling Smith, "if this coach finds out that I spoke with you before the season ends it will be some type of retaliation and my child already comes home in tears" every day.

Simpkins said he was made aware of the allegations and tried to meet with Flynn to address them. The head coach said the athletic director pushed the



Ant-Juan Simpkins turned the River Rouge girls basketball program around in one season. Simpkins has been dismissed from Groves High School due to complaints from parents and student-athletes. COURTESY OF ANT-JUAN SIMPKINS

complaints aside and reassured him "you're the best thing to happen for this program."

Team, player goals

Coming into the Groves job, Simpkins had two goals: change the culture and develop the skills of his players, believing the combination of the two would lead to a winning program.

He expected some pushback as the new philosophy would be a bit of a shell-shock for those in the program, sending players involved in the varsity program to JV or to the bench. But once he broke down to his players what he was trying to do, Simpkins said the team became "very cohesive" and adapted to a winning attitude.

Simpkins, also the head coach of the Michigan Storm AAU 2024 girls basketball team, heard the early complaints. "Hey, you yell at your kids too much." "You were hard on them." "Hey, you run

a college-style practices."

The coach said it should come as no surprise.

"This is what you guys wanted," he said.

"If I have to get tough on a kid I see potential in, that's what I do. But I love them just as tough."

Simpkins said Flynn remained on board with the changes, saying he was never reprimanded or counseled on any allegations made.

Ten days before Simpkins' dismissal, Smith emailed the team's parents seeking feedback after she and Flynn had "spoken briefly with each player about her experience with the season," FOIA emails show.

One email read that while this parent's daughter had a positive experience as a student-athlete on Groves, it was difficult to watch Simpkins' courtside.

"Coach Simpkins holds our daughters accountable from the moment they step on the court, be it game or practice,"

the sender, whose identity was redacted in the FOIA request, said. "As a parent, it's hard to see your student athlete be held to such high standards.

"But I witnessed several of the girl's basketball games the previous year under a different coaching staff and I acknowledge that his level of accountability elevated the entire team."

Simpkins said he "demanded" a meeting with Flynn and Smith, going over the allegations made against him. The head coach said he left that meeting satisfied everything had been resolved until he was dismissed soon after.

"We had a future there, and because parents didn't like the way that their child wasn't getting noticed, they sabotaged everything," Simpkins said. "They sabotaged everything, and I don't like the way that the district did myself and other employees that were there.

"They were trying to establish pride in the program. Just was mistreated for all of it. Never did anything about the emails, never did anything about the hostile environment that they knew I was placed under."

Groves hired its next head coach for the girls basketball program, announcing Allison Hidey – a former Dearborn Divine Child assistant coach who played college basketball at University of Michigan Dearborn – to the post.

Simpkins still remains the head coach of the Michigan Storm said he has "unequivocally" turned down offers to discuss returning to the high school level in Oakland County.

"We gave those kids every opportunity to be successful," he said. "We brought a little bit of life to that program and it was sabotaged by squeaky politics. And that was unfair."

cgay@hometownlife.com

Why mid-majors can now be big-time players in recruiting

Mia Berry Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Arika Tolbert's older sister, Arielle, founded FITnessin', a unisex athletic apparel line, Arika was eager to help establish brand recognition.

As a basketball player at Division III Hope College in Holland, Arika tiptoed around NCAA name, image and likeness policies, posting videos of herself working out and wearing the clothes, though she couldn't directly promote the brand through her social media channels.

She knew she was in the perfect position to boost her sister's business — and her own bank account — using nothing but her face and followers. But she was a year too early.

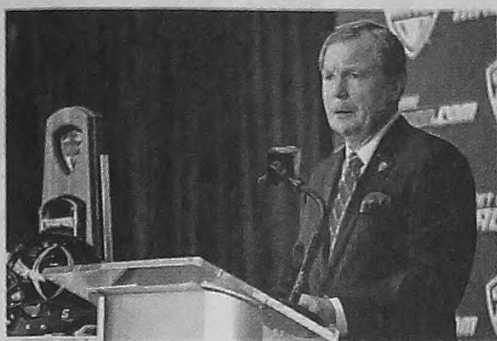
If student-athlete NIL opportunities had existed a season ago, Arika would've joined the ranks of Michigan's Adrien Nunez, Aidan Hutchinson and Dax Hill as athletes to sign brand partnerships or model custom merchandise.

"I definitely would've gone more in-depth with (her brand) in college if I was allowed to. But obviously, the rules are so strict, so you don't even want to risk it," Arika Tolbert said. "If things were different, I definitely would have wanted to be a brand ambassador. It would have been a big presence for the brand as far as for me being a college athlete."

While the NCAA's relaxation of NIL policies has fans and reporters discussing big paydays for Power Five athletes, experts believe Tolbert and thousands of other college athletes in mid-major or non-Division I sports also have a market to make money.

"Some people just don't really want to build (their social media brand and following) it," said Thilo Kunkel, a Temple professor focused on NIL. "That's not their personality, but there's going to be some D-II and D-III athletes that will have some real value, that will be able to monetize that."

Kunkel helped lead a study at Temple's Sports Industry Research Center



MAC commissioner Jon A. Steinbrecher speaks during the MAC football media day at Ford Field on July 20. JUNFU HAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS

analyzing hundreds of student-athletes' potential for NIL revenue and found that those at mid-majors may lack exposure when compared to their large-school counterparts, but the differences in their social media followings are mostly negligible.

That means student-athletes from Western Michigan to Detroit Mercy can reap a hefty harvest from monetizing their accounts or signing local endorsements.

"I think that is really the way to go: to build a solid social media following and that doesn't mean that you need 10, 20, 30,000 followers," Kunkel told the Free Press, "you need a committed audience. So even 2,000 followers on Instagram that are in a specific target area, can be monetized and can provide some value."

But some coaches and leaders at mid-majors have concerns about whether NIL will enhance parity in recruiting — or further polarize large- and small-conference talent pools.

Still, uphill battle for directionals

Michigan is home to seven NCAA Division I schools, with programs ranging in popularity.

"The market in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, is certainly different than the market that you could get in with the

University of Michigan football," said Rachel Blunt, senior associate athletic director at Central Michigan. "They're a national brand, so what they attract is nationally, it's not just regional."

But Kunkel — who has studied the impact of NIL for the past three-plus years — believes NIL could be just as much of a boon for mid-majors, and their students.

Kunkel and his team examined the differences between two large universities (Stanford and Clemson) and two midsize schools (Temple and Jacksonville). Looking at each varsity sport, totaling hundreds of athletes, they found that those who attended larger universities had more followers, but not by much.

His research, which is expanding, found female athletes' frequent content creation and engagement were critical in attracting followers, making them more marketable on social media.

In that same vein, he said smaller schools can devise new ways or market themselves to stand out in the NIL space, too.

"I think any university that is not in a big market is going to be disadvantaged more," Kunkel said. "The way they can overcome that (population) disadvantage is to really get creative in the opportunities that they can provide to these athletes, the education that they provide and in the (NIL) support that's offered."

Institutions across Michigan are creating initiatives to help educate athletes on their brand and marketing power. MSU announced its EverGreen program for its athletes, CMU has its own version named CORE and EMU is partnering with a brand consultant.

'Leveling the playing field'

Coaches and administrators have to consider NIL sponsorship opportunities and ways potential players could market and brand themselves while recruiting high schoolers.

Kunkel said schools would be wise to tell prospective athletes about the NIL, networking and internship opportunities they provide when making their pitches.

"I think the big concern is that schools can use (NIL) as a recruiting inducement because their portfolio — whether it's donors, or sponsorship deals or those types of things — are go-

ing to be greater there," Blunt said. "It's going to be challenging if there's not some consistent way to apply it."

"Certain programs within our athletics department have been thinking and having some of those conversations with student-athletes because of who they were recruiting against. (Coaches) have to be thinking about 'If you come here, you could get a sponsorship deal.' They're certainly telling them those opportunities exist and how they might exist in our community. Name, image, likeness is going to be (an) enhancement to a student-athlete's experience."

Sports economist David Berri hypothesized that NIL expansion gives schools such as CMU or WMU a new advantage in recruiting — not when pursuing prep players, but those already enrolled in college.

"Right now, those (Power Five backup) athletes don't have a lot of NIL opportunities because they're not playing," said Berri, an economics professor at Southern Utah University. "If you come to (a mid-major) school, they'll let you play, you'll develop an audience, and you can make money out of that."

"I think that you now can make a better argument to poach the players who are the backups at the top schools. This will make the game much more competitive than it is now."

Brand-imaging and social media have become important mediums for non-Power Five athletes to capture sponsorship deals.

Haley and Hanna Cavinder, Fresno State women's basketball players, have inked sponsorship deals with Boost Mobile, and Chloe Mitchell, a volleyball player at NAIA Aquinas College (located in Grand Rapids), was able to secure online sponsorship deals after a DIY sheathed conversation bolstered her social media following.

"Social media is really leveling the playing field for lesser-known athletes and those in more niche sports, and sports that don't get national media attention," Kunkel said.

Even in lower divisions?

In addition to the seven Division I colleges in Michigan, the state is also home to over 25 Division II, Division III and NAIA schools that will have to adjust to the effects NIL has on the

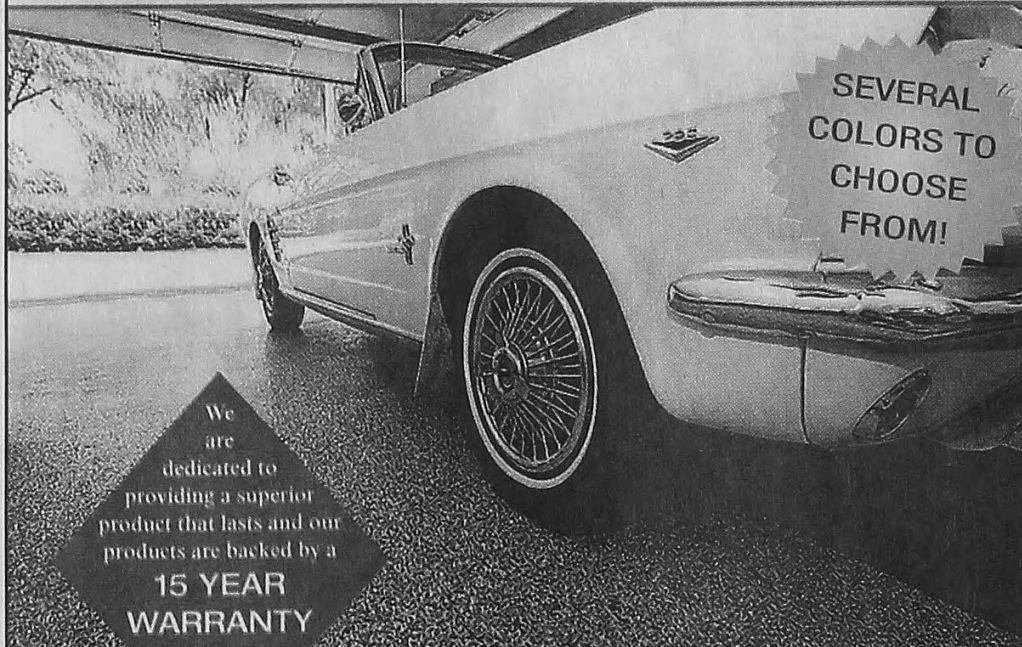
See RECRUITING, Page 4B

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Hockey journey brings former Brighton goalie Neaton closer to home

Bill Khan Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

BRIGHTON — After racking up considerable frequent flyer miles in his hockey journey since graduating from Brighton High School, being four hours from home will feel like playing in his backyard for Logan Neaton.

After backstopping Brighton to the 2017 state championship, Neaton spent the next season in Fairbanks, Alaska, playing in the North American Hockey League. He moved down the Pacific coast the following year to play for Prince George in the British Columbia Hockey League.

His performance earned him a Division I college scholarship in the Lower 48 with UMass-Lowell.

Playing time was scarce with four goaltenders on the roster, so Neaton transferred to Miami (Ohio) after playing only three games each of the last two seasons.

Miami is in Oxford, Ohio, 260 miles south of Brighton.

"This is the first time I'll be within driving distance in probably the last four, five years," Neaton said. "It's going to be good. Alaska to B.C. to Massachusetts, so I've been away from home for some time now. It will be good to be closer to home. My family is really important to me. For them to be able to come out and watch me play is going to be

really good. I'm definitely grateful for them."

Neaton hopes there will be plenty of opportunities for his family to watch him between the pipes for the Red-Hawks.

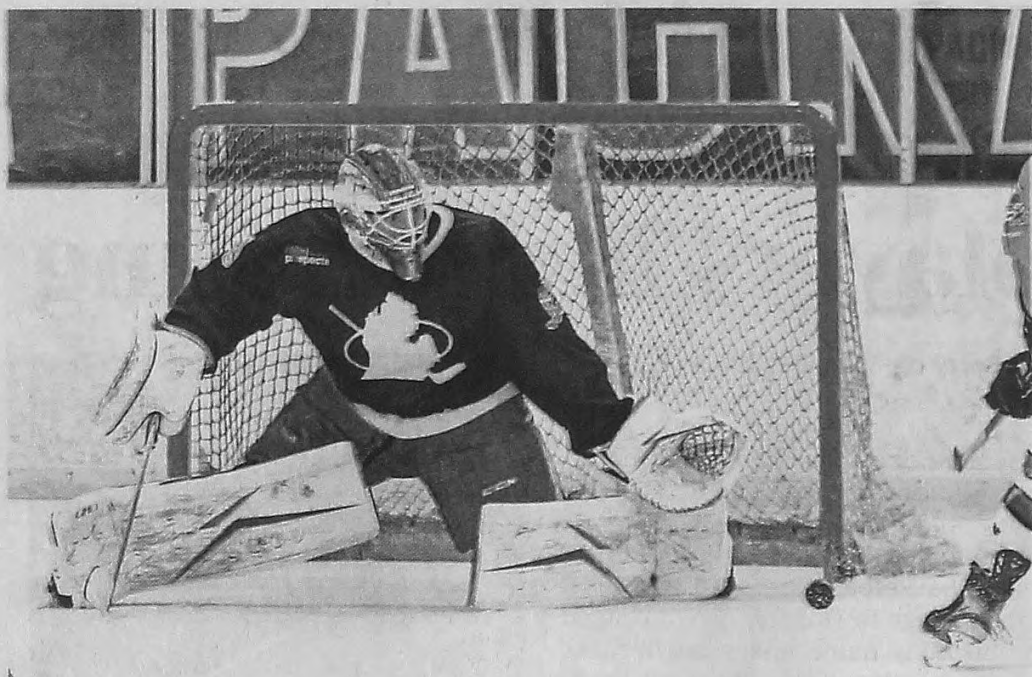
At UMass-Lowell, he had only three starts and three appearances off the bench in his two seasons with the River Hawks.

"Things just didn't go my way," Neaton said. "That's hockey and that's life. It was a good learning experience for me. I felt like I definitely got a lot better. I still improved, even if I didn't get that much game experience. I think it's going to bode well for me moving forward."

Neaton heads to a Miami program which returns Ludvig Persson, who played 18 games as a freshman, and Benjamin Kraws, who played eight games as a sophomore.

"They've got a freshman who had a really good year coming back," Neaton said. "He's obviously going to get a lot of opportunity. But it's just one of those things where I've got to come in and compete and do what I can every day to get better and hopefully get an opportunity. I guess that's all you can ask for is a little bit of opportunity."

Because COVID restrictions cut short the 2019-20 season, Neaton has three seasons of eligibility remaining. He hopes he doesn't need the third year to impress the Winnipeg Jets, who own his



Logan Neaton of Brighton is playing in the Made in Michigan Elite League to prepare for his first season at Miami of Ohio. TIMOTHY ARRICK/FOR THE LIVINGSTON DAILY

NHL rights after drafting him in the fifth round in 2019.

"Obviously, right now my focus is trying to help Miami win," Neaton said. "That's my goal right now. I'm just trying to improve every day. Hopefully things will go my way when I get there and I'll take care of business and worry about (the NHL) in the future."

Neaton said the Jets were supportive while he went through the transfer process. Winnipeg had two other prospects transfer colleges in the spring.

"I've got a good relationship with them," Neaton said. "They've helped me with this process, as well, helping me find a new place to play. I'm really grateful for all their guidance and all their support through all of this. They've

done a great job. They're a good organization full of good people. I'm incredibly grateful to be part of it."

Neaton is playing hockey this summer in familiar surroundings in the Made in Michigan Elite League at his former home rink, the Kensington Valley Ice House in Brighton. The league includes major college and pro players, as well as some top junior and high school talent.

"There's definitely a little bit of nostalgia," Neaton said. "Obviously, I have some great memories here. This is definitely where my hockey career started to take off. Once again, full of great people who do the right things every day to help me develop, help me improve, more importantly help me grow as a person, which was big for me."

Recruiting

Continued from Page 3B

NCAA. (Although the NAIA has allowed students, in accordance with state or federal law, to profit from their likeness or image since 2019, according to its website).

Now D-II and D-III students can be compensated for endorsing a product,

signing an autograph or sending a fan a shoutout. Kunkel and others (such as the makers of online video greeting site Cameo) have developed different platforms that help students connect with fans, providing the latter with experiences and the former with a way to get paid for their time.

Head coaches, from MSU's Tom Izzo to EMU's Chris Creighton, have advised student-athletes to still put their primary focus on the team while exploring

NIL.

Some MAC athletes — such as CMU wide receiver Kalil Pimpleton (Moneyball) and Northern Illinois running back Clint Ratkovich (Barstool) — have already entered NIL deals, while others, such as CMU defensive lineman Troy Hairston II, remain leery of the new frontier of college athletics.

"I told them 'Guys with this opportunity, I totally support you, if you have a chance to earn some money...'" said

Creighton, EMU's football coach. "I just cautioned (everyone) myself, let's not let anything come before the team. It's always been that way.

"Hey, if they want to put your mug on a billboard and pay for it, we're going to be so excited for you. The reality of it is, everybody on the team will be excited for you if everybody knows that you still care more about the team, right then than making a buck. I think with that mindset, it'll be good."

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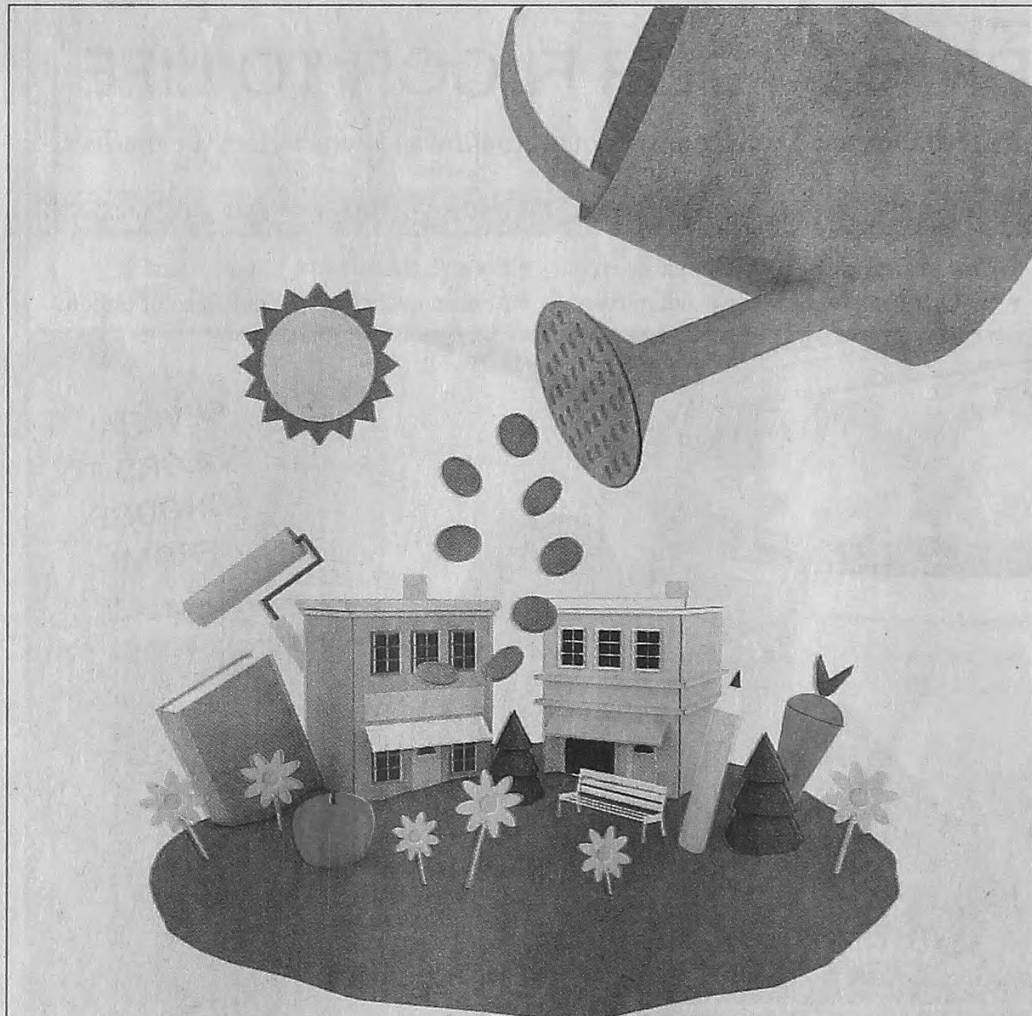
August 17, 2021
7:30 P.M.

TO BE HELD IN PERSON FOR BOARD MEMBERS
AND ELECTRONICALLY FOR GUESTS

The Plymouth District Library Board will hold its Regular Meeting and Preliminary Approval of 2022 Budget and Millage Rates on August 17, 2021. The meeting will be offered electronically. Interested persons may access the Zoom and Conference Call as follows +1 312 626 6799 or 1 646 518 9805, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84949591404>. Meeting ID: 849 4959 1404, Passcode: 99536543. Please see agenda on website www.plymouthlibrary.org. The agenda will be posted by August 13, 2021.

The District Library Board will provide auxiliary aids and services of materials being considered at the meeting, to individuals with disabilities upon reasonable notice. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Sandra Young, Plymouth District Library, 223 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI 48170 at 734 453-0750 x 217.

Publish: August 1, 2021



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The Best Commencement Speeches to the Class of 2021

By ZipRecruiter.com

As graduation season comes to an end, many graduates are preparing to enter the working world for the first time in their lives. At ZipRecruiter, we spend a lot of time helping job seekers find their next great opportunity and sharing tips and how-tos on how to find jobs.

While resumes, networking, and interviews are a big part of the job search, so are words of motivation and inspiration. One area we've found those words are in this year's college commencement speeches. Sure, they're meant for graduates, but according to NBA legend and activist Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, "graduate" is a title that can apply to anyone:

"Life is an endless series of graduations, during which you feel the same anxious uncertainty, that roiling feeling in your stomach that you experience as the roller coaster goes up, up, up, anticipating curling over the top and the sudden, face-yanking plummet. Graduation is both thrilling and nerve-wracking."

As new graduates, and everyone else, looks to the future, we hope these words stick with you.

Words of Boldness

One common theme this year was the importance of being bold and facing adversity head-on. Some might think that means not being afraid,



but Carolina Contreras, an entrepreneur dedicated to social change and the Founder/CEO Miss Rizos Salon, disagreed:

"You don't have to be fearless, you just have to learn to do it afraid."

Vina Venkataraman, Director of Global Policy Initiatives at the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, elaborated on that idea:

"Look for heroes not on the silver screen or the pedestal or even at this podium — but at eye level and within reach: the people in your life who have been afraid but done the right thing anyway, who have shown you by example how to be bold."

SpaceX President and COO Gwynne Shotwell added that she has learned that boldness is the antidote to living with regret:

"Try that risky thing, be a part of something exciting. I don't want to

imagine what my life and career would be like had I said no."

Words of Love

While being bold is important, many graduation speakers admitted that practicing boldness is easier said than done, especially when you aren't sure what the "right" course of action might be. A common response: Love.

Singer-songwriter and philanthropist, John Legend, told seniors:

"When you feel lost in this tangled web of problems, know that in truth, the way out of it is simple. Instinctual, really. It's love. Love should be your North Star. Let it guide you."

Dr. Marie Lynn Miranda, Professor at Notre Dame, echoed that sentiment:

"As much as I want to highlight the importance of the expertise you have developed, I also want to make the point that you will face situations in

the years ahead where you will have no relevant expertise; you will have no evidence base to rely upon; your intellect will not be able to supply a needed answer. In those situations, I would like to suggest that you respond with love."

Words of Hope

Speakers reflected on the unique challenges faced by the Class of '21, who spent a significant amount of their college years facing a pandemic, political turmoil, and more. But in all the challenges they faced, they also learned the importance of hope.

Civil rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson saw hope as more than just a feeling, as he told MIT graduates:

"I believe that hopelessness is the enemy of justice. Injustice prevails where hopelessness persists...hope is our superpower."

And social justice activist D'Artagnan Scorza let the class of 2021 know that they were the embodiment of that superpower:

"You're not just the class of transformation, 2021. You're not just the class of justice. You are also the class of hope."

To wrap things up we'll leave you with the order that the United States Coast Guard—and everywhere else—were given from the President and Commander in Chief, Joe Biden:

"Class of 2021: It's time for you to go out and be the future, to make the future."

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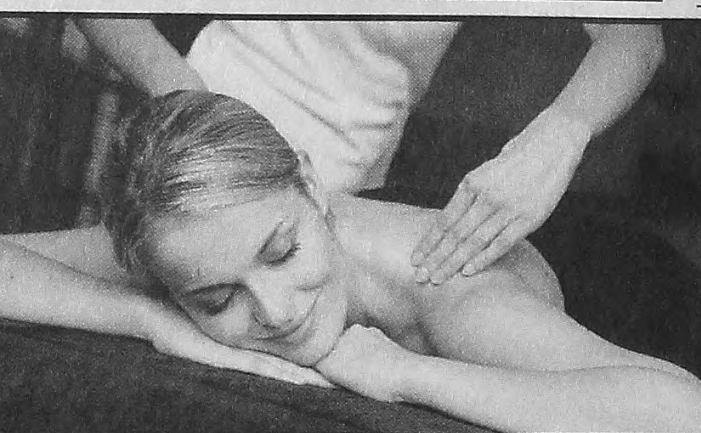
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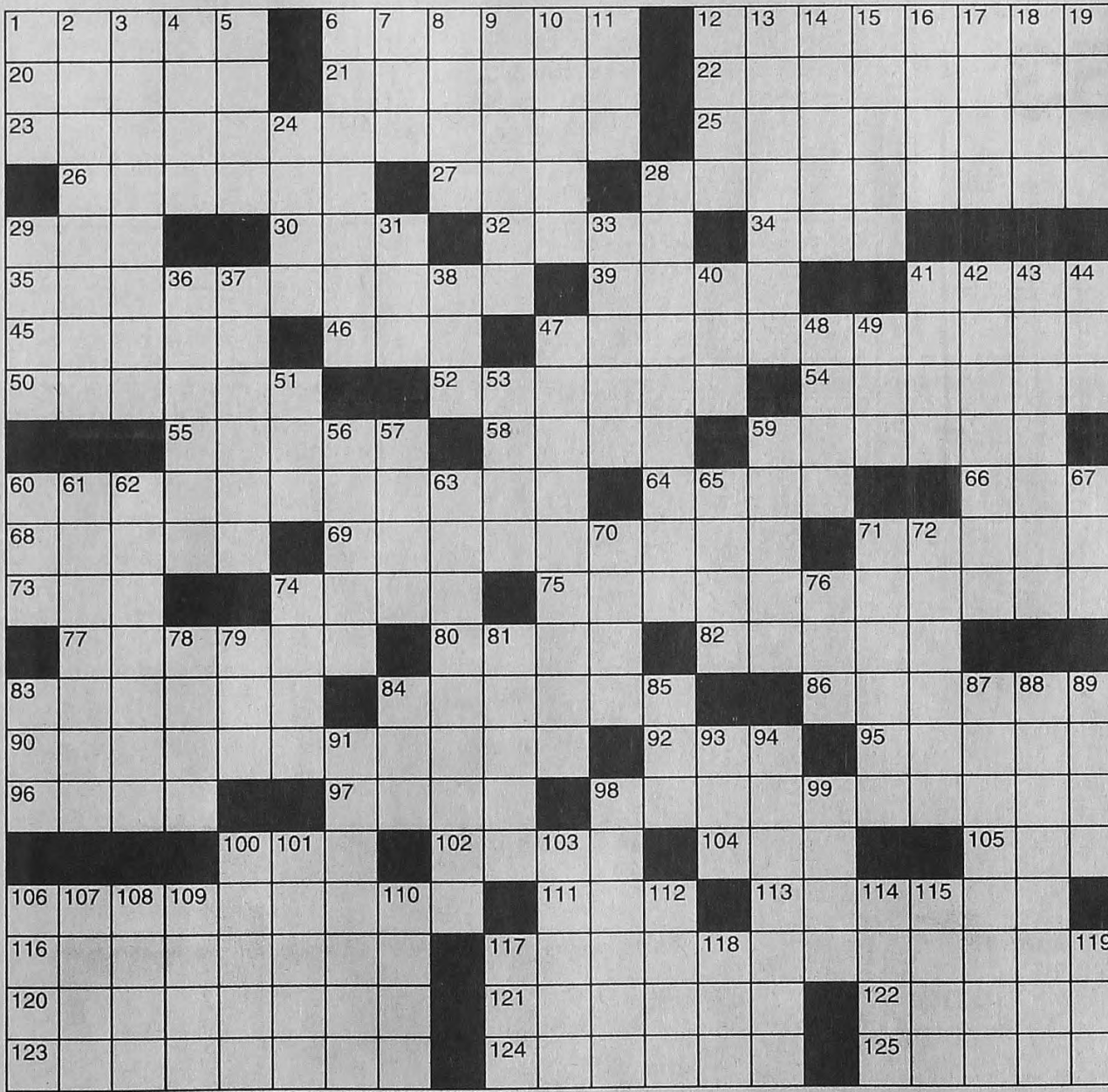
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SUNDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Super Crossword I WILL GO ON

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 46 Pea keeper | 86 Least vicious | DOWN | 36 Go hungry | 74 WWII battle site |
| 1 Pagan belief | 47 Shiny gray wrist bones? | 90 Beautiful woman in the Muslim paradise | 1 Crib outburst | 37 Justice Alito | 76 Unit of bricks |
| 6 Shortly | 50 Bagel option | 92 During each | 2 "Except after C" lead-in | 38 Raiders' stats | 78 "Climb — Mountain" |
| 12 Refuses to comply with | 52 Non-paper money | 95 Actress — Grace Moretz | 3 Roughens | 40 Lead-in to a holiday | 79 Six, in Sicily |
| 20 Bubbling over | 54 Defeated in a footrace | 96 Really tiny | 4 — Field (Mets' stadium) | 41 Delayed | 81 Forebodings |
| 21 Not end on schedule | 55 Countrified | 97 Be worthy of | 5 "Put — on it!" | 42 Call into a court of law | 83 Yellowfin tuna, in Hawaii |
| 22 She played Natalia Boa Vista on "CSI: Miami" | 58 "Right on!" | 98 Chariot in which the Bible's three wise men traveled? | 6 The so-called "Godfather of Punk" | 43 Cornered | 84 Santa — |
| 23 Warming up a 24-ounce Starbucks drink? | 59 Echo | 100 Fast escape | 7 Fall mo. | 44 Big racket | 85 Wrap offerer |
| 25 Corded phone connection | 60 "That South Asian yogurt drink is my favorite!" | 102 1952 Winter Olympics city | 8 Malted drinks | 47 Between solid and liquid | 87 Deciding (to) |
| 26 See 11-Down | 64 Strip race | 104 Egg: Prefix | 9 Potted dwarf | 48 Filmmaker Nicolas | 88 One-man bands, e.g. |
| 27 Beijing-to-Taipei dir. | 66 Anger | 105 Foldable bed | 10 Spy's info | 49 Tea holder | 89 Examine |
| 28 Indian-language word meaning "lower limbs?" | 68 Defiant type | 106 Pool lengths completed by Hindu masters? | 11 Start of an end-of-week cry that's followed by | 51 Time stretch | 91 Doe and hen |
| 29 Greek dawn goddess | 69 Scan for typos and such | 111 "... bug — feature?" | 12 Wrap offerer | 53 Old El — (salsa brand) | 93 Vainglory |
| 30 Car ad abbr. | 71 "Me and Bobby —" (1971 hit) | 113 Typos and such | 13 Sir Walter Scott hero | 56 Top dog | 94 Construction bolt installer |
| 32 Edison's middle name | 73 Off-roader, in brief | 116 Geometric plane curve | 14 Christian music singer — Patty | 57 Tomb raider | 98 Many a Utah churchgoer |
| 34 Go quickly, old-style | 74 Counterfeit | 117 Fight a ruling family of old Florence? | 15 Classic song | 59 Sirius XM medium | 99 Fish lurer |
| 35 Put clothes on a raccoon relative? | 75 Spatula on a Hawaiian porch? | 120 Stopped sleeping | 16 Umpire's call | 60 Lyric writer Gershwin | 100 Vilify in print |
| 39 Margarine, old-style | 77 Noontime nap | 121 Tristan's lady | 17 Lake that abuts Ohio | 61 "We'd better skip that" | 101 By itself |
| 41 Praise highly | 80 Ring match | 122 Tendencies | 18 Egg foo — | 62 Apparent | 103 Untethered |
| 45 Gossipy sort | 82 Singer Debby | 123 Anonymous titles | 19 Gets the idea | 63 Mexican hats | 106 Time stretch |
| | 83 Words after many fiction book titles | 124 Wood finish | 24 DEA figure | 65 Broccoli —: Var. | 107 Tot's H2O |
| | 84 Legions | 125 Inner tension | 28 "Barney Miller" star | 67 Perpetually, to poets | 108 Composer Khachaturian |
| | | | 29 Ben & Jerry's rival | 70 Be worthy of | 109 Create |
| | | | 31 "Red Book" Chinese chairman | 71 1972 Summer Olympics city | 110 Hip hangouts |
| | | | 33 Put in words | 72 Christmas Nativity display | 112 Showing skill |
| | | | | | 114 Country's McEntire |
| | | | | | 115 Yemeni port |
| | | | | | 117 Part of ACLU: Abbr. |
| | | | | | 118 Fruity drink |
| | | | | | 119 Suffix with 31-Down or 93-Down |



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

SUDOKU

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

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!

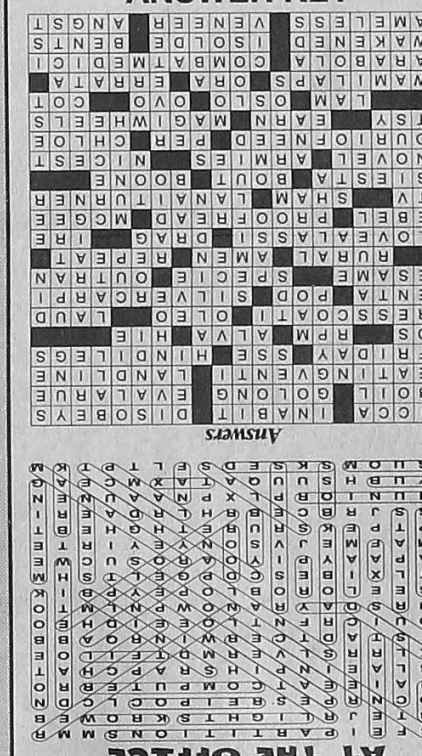
AT THE OFFICE

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.

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

ANSWER KEY

- AGENDA
- BLINDS
- BOSS
- BREAK
- BUSY
- BUY
- CALLS
- CAREER
- CHAIR
- CLIENTS
- CLOCK
- COFFEE
- COMPUTER
- CONTRACT
- COPIER
- DAY
- DESKS
- DISK
- DOOR
- DUE
- EMAIL
- EMPLOYER
- ENVELOPES
- FAN
- FAX
- HIRE
- JOB
- JUNIOR
- KEYBOARD
- LAMP
- LIFT
- LIGHTS
- MANAGER
- MEETING
- MOUSE
- NOTEBOOK
- PAPER
- PARTITIONS
- PLANTS
- RECEPTION
- REP
- SALES
- SCREEN
- STAMPS
- STAPLER
- SUIT
- SUPERVISOR
- TAX
- TRAINEE
- TYPEWRITER
- WHITEBOARD
- WORK



AT THE OFFICE

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

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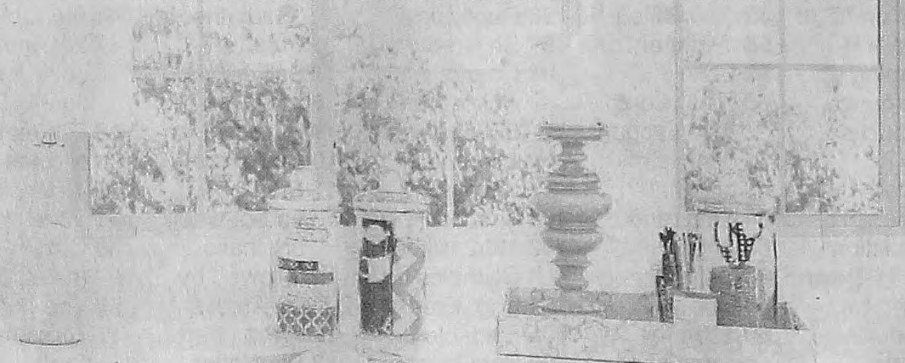
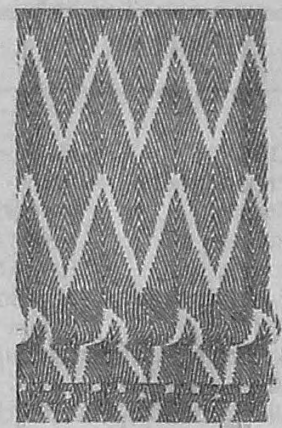
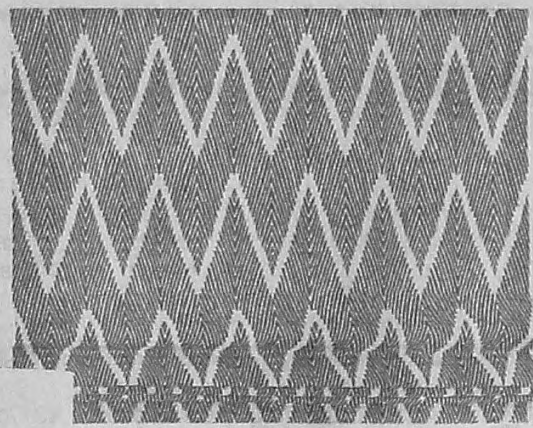
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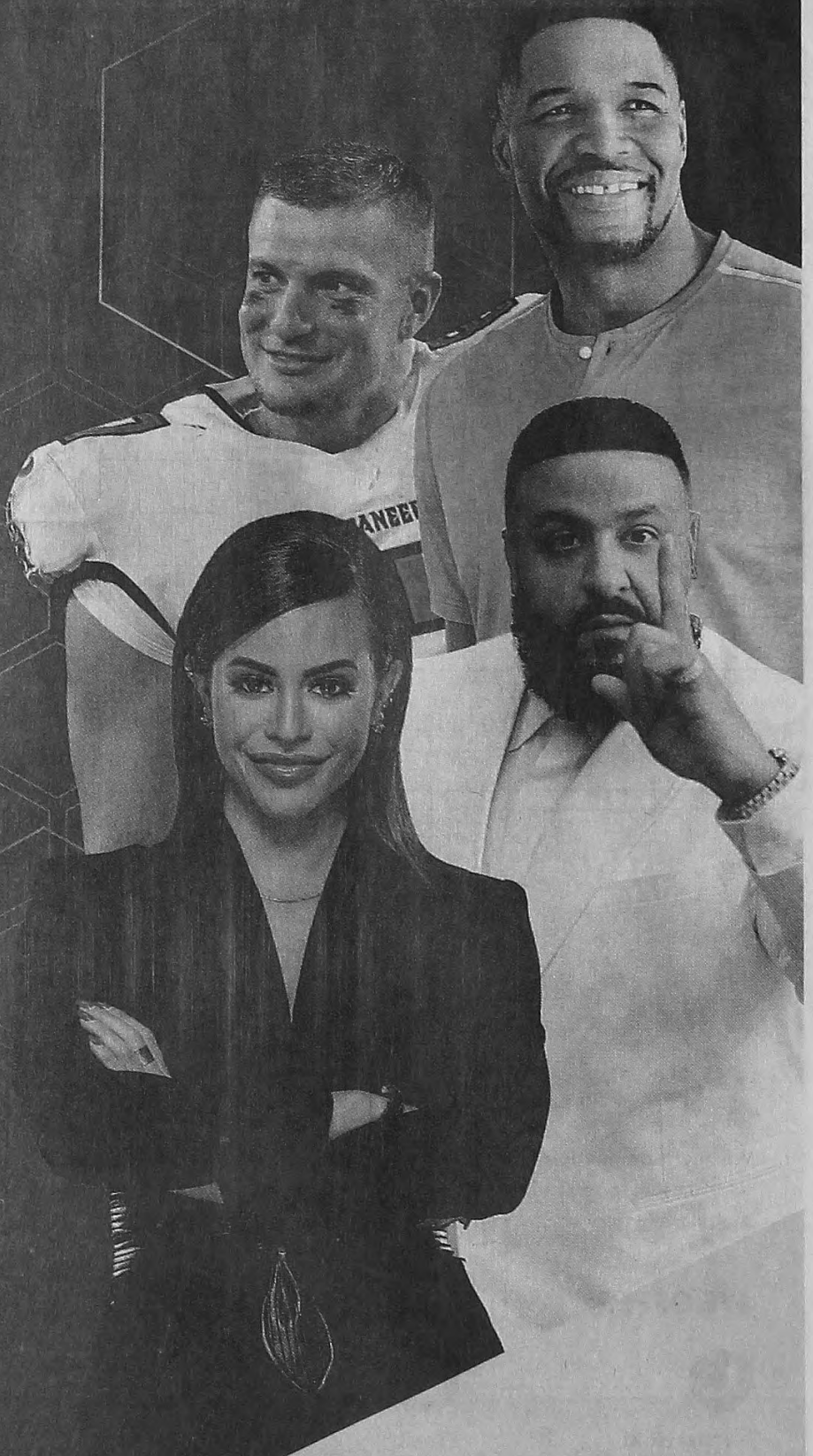
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