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Students under 12 may mask up in Livonia schools

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Weeks after making a decision to make masks optional in schools, Livonia's school board is considering a mandate for younger students.

During a non-voting meeting Aug. 16, the board directed Superintendent An-

drea Oquist to create a plan mandating masks for students too young to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. None of the three available COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. are approved for use in children under 12 yet.

"The fact that kids under 12 years old don't even have the option of vaccinating is a real issue for me," Secretary Ka-

ren Bradford said. "I think because of that, those students and staff should be in masks."

The board previously joined local districts including Farmington, Wayne-Westland and Plymouth-Canton in making masks optional for all students. Livonia board members said an uptick in cases due to the Delta variant has

them considering a change. Birmingham schools made a similar shift and will require elementary and middle school student to mask.

Oquist's new proposed plan, which she'll likely present to the board at its Aug. 23 voting meeting, will include

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Livonia native Sophia Lynch, center, directs her new short film, "Leaving Michiana." COURTESY OF JACOB MULKA

Stevenson alum highlights small-town life in short film

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Sophia Lynch says there's something in the everyday, the mundane, she wishes people explored more.

She hopes her new short film, "Leaving Michiana," leaves people with that sense of realism. The Livonia native and Stevenson High School grad wrote, di-

rected, co-produced and starred in the film.

"Olivia, a young woman who has always dreamed of escaping her small town, watches as the last of her personal ties keeping her there kind of dissolve before her," Lynch explained. "It finally frees her to leave Michiana."

"Michiana," the region near the Michigan and Indiana border, inspired

Lynch to make the film. Her boyfriend is from the area and the culture there inspired her.

"It's like they just consider themselves a Michigan and Indiana hybrid," she said. "I hadn't heard of that before, and so I was very taken with that."

The film premiered on YouTube

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Fowlkes will remain in Westland council race

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Westland City Clerk Richard LeBlanc says his hands are tied when it comes to Debra Fowlkes' candidacy.

Fowlkes, a candidate for city council who made it through the Aug. 3 primary election, falsified a filing affidavit stating she had paid all outstanding campaign finance fees to Wayne County. In reality, Fowlkes still had \$5,100 in unpaid fees heading into the primary.

In falsifying an affidavit, Fowlkes should not have been eligible to run. The Michigan Bureau of Elections also states someone who falsifies the statement can be guilty of perjury.

LeBlanc said he first learned about the discrepancy three business days before the primary through a complaint from a resident. He contacted advisors from the city attorney's office, Wayne County and the State of Michigan.

Officials in those offices, he said, told him it was too late to do anything in advance of the primary election. At that point ballots had been printed, mailed and thousands of residents had already returned completed absentee ballots.

"At that point in the process, that point being a few days before the election, the only legal remedy could be if somebody wished to initiate action at the circuit court level," he said. "The court could make a decision, but the clerk was not able to make a decision legally."

No plans to withdraw from race

LeBlanc said the close proximity to the election is what made Fowlkes'

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Miss Michigan stood up to racist comments

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Well on her way to becoming a pediatric oncologist, Northville's Vivian Zhong frequently visited the cancer ward at the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, sometimes dressed as Disney's Mulan, other times to entertain the patients with her classical piano skills.

Sometimes Zhong was simply compelled to visit the cancer-stricken kids to talk and offer any comfort and encouragement she could provide.

A dynamic speaker with head-turning looks, it was not surprising when the kind-hearted 2015 graduate of Northville High School was crowned Miss Michigan June 19 in Muskegon.

"The second I won, it was surreal because I knew it was the final time I'd be competing," said Zhong, 24, who will

start medical school in the fall. "When the reigning Miss Michigan told me I'd be competing in the 100th Miss America Pageant, it was almost too much to take in. I looked for my mom in the audience, but couldn't find her right away."

Zhong will be in the running to become Michigan's first Miss America since Farmington Hills native Kirsten Haglund earned the title in 2008.

"I was 10 years old the year Kirsten won and I remember telling my mom, 'I want to do that someday,'" Zhong recounted. "To be in a position to compete for Miss America 14 years later, it's an amazing feeling."

What is somewhat surprising is that Zhong was not immune to the anti-Asian-American hatred that spread throughout the United States during the coronavirus pandemic. During her recent tenure as a student at New

See MISS MICHIGAN, Page 4A



Northville native and Miss Michigan 2021 Vivian Zhong talks about her pursuit of the crown and how she will continue on to the Miss America competition this fall.

JOHN HEIDER/
HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Film

Continued from Page 1A

Aug. 8 and has about 3,000 views. Lynch said she hasn't experienced that level of interest in her work before, and is hoping the short will land in a film festival lineup. Following her graduation from the University of Michigan in 2019, Lynch had a film part of the Traverse City Film Festival.

"It premiered live on YouTube and it was fun to know all my friends and family were out there watching while it was going live," she said of the "Leaving Michiana" premiere.

The film is a drama, but Lynch has a soft spot for comedy and hopes "Leaving Michiana" also gives people some laughs. Now, she remembers production as a coming together of young, Michigan-based artists to make something meaningful with hardly any resources.

Looking back, Lynch said it makes her smile to think her cast went to shoot the film throughout northern Michigan with her even though all she had to offer them was lunch and a place to sleep.

"It was truly so moving to have that kind of showing out from people you respect," she said. "Going to bed after the first day of production I was like, 'We actually shot every shot we said we would get to today. It's happening.'"

Just before the film's release, Lynch got a job offer on the set of "Barry," an Emmy Award-winning HBO comedy starring Bill Hader. So, like her character in "Leaving Michiana," Lynch found herself packing her bags and leaving home with a day's notice.

"I had to hop in my car and move to California the next morning to make it



The cast of "Leaving Michiana," a short film by Stevenson alum Sophia Lynch. COURTESY OF JACOB MULKA

on time," she said. "It was one of those things that when an opportunity knocks, you take it."

Lynch said "every facet of the film-making process" interests her, and she's open to whatever opportunities arise for her in Hollywood.

She works on the set of "Barry" as a COVID-19 production assistant. The hours are long, but Lynch says the experience is invaluable. She's a huge fan of

Hader and enjoys working on project starring an artist she admires.

"Being so close to a piece of art that you have so much respect for, like I do for 'Barry,' really makes the work day just go by," she said. "I'm so excited to be there and be near the action."

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

"Being so close to a piece of art that you have so much respect for ... really makes the work day just go by. I'm so excited to be there and be near the action."

Sophia Lynch

Masks

Continued from Page 1A

details on certain grades or school levels that could be targeted and whether masks may be required for staff who teach lower grade levels. The district will mandate masks for all students while riding the bus.

Oquist said she's looking at the 2021-22 school year as a "bridge year" that

will take steps toward normalcy. But that doesn't mean the year won't have its restrictions.

"Let's remember what worked last year," she said.

Board members were split on what the best step forward may be and know the community is as well. On Monday, parents in favor of masking spoke to the board, and the anti-mask crowd has also come to past meetings.

"Safety looks different to different people and I think we've learned that,"

President Colleen Burton said.

Livonia has roughly 14,000 students and 2,000 staff. Oquist said the "overwhelming majority" of students who chose virtual schooling last year will be back at desks this fall.

Board members said mental health is just as important to them as physical health, and they feel masking may be the best way to keep elementary schools open.

"Especially last year, we saw that in-person learning is so important to our

students," Trustee Dan Centers said. "So, I think we should have students in masks."

The Farmington school board met Aug. 17. Masking was not an agenda item, but community members spoke for and against a mandate. The board did not take action on masking or other pandemic-related restrictions and is currently strongly recommending, but not requiring, masking among students and staff in most instances.

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Observer & Eccentric Newspapers
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Published Sunday and Thursday by
Observer & Eccentric Media

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Subscription Rates:

Newsstand price: \$1.50

\$104 per 12 months home delivery

Home Delivery:

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Fowlkes

Continued from Page 1A

case different than that of William Asper, a would-be mayoral candidate who was removed from ballots after the clerk determined Asper was not a Westland resident. Asper's removal occurred before ballots were printed.

If the courts get involved and removed Fowlkes' from the ballot, it would be up to the court to decide if Candi Halton would be added to November ballots. Halton received the most votes of the candidates who did not make it through the primary.

Action from the court would require someone filing a lawsuit to remove Fowlkes from ballots.

Fowlkes could also withdraw from the race.

But, she has no plans to do so and, according to Wayne County's campaign finance database, paid the \$5,100 owed.

"I made it truthfully and rightfully into the general, and so I'm moving

forward," Fowlkes, who received the fourth most votes among primary candidates, said.

Fowlkes confirmed she was aware of her hefty fee bill before filing, but claims she was unaware of having falsified the affidavit. She says she never paid the fees because she didn't plan to run for office again after losing a 2017 council primary.

Even though she did not conduct any fundraising between 2017 and 2020, she never dissolved her fundraising committee. So, various fees related to the committee piled up.

"I own up to it," she said. "I admit it: I did wrong, and I should have paid them ... I'm thinking to myself, 'I'm not running. I don't have to pay these.' That's stupid. I know it was. That was just such a big error on my part."

How did affidavit go unchecked?

Representatives with the Michigan Secretary of State and Wayne County said it is not the county or state's role to notify cities of campaign finance discrepancies. LeBlanc says it's not in his

job description to investigate every claim on an affidavit, either.

According to the clerk, it's actually not on the books that anyone needs to fact-check those affidavits.

The clerk suggested it would be beneficial for Wayne County to adopt Oakland County's practice of notifying a city when a candidate's affidavit is in conflict with county records. In 2019, for example, a candidate for Farmington Hills City Council was removed from ballots after the county caught a clerical error on her affidavit. Several candidates in Oakland County were removed from the 2021 ballot, including in Novi, for filing to file campaign finance documents and related fees.

If nothing changes, LeBlanc said he plans to ask the county for verification of a candidate's legitimacy in the future.

"There is nothing that says I am empowered to access a system over which I have no control," LeBlanc said. "The Wayne County finance system is administered by Wayne County."

In the meantime, Fowlkes' case is between her and Westland voters this November.

Livonia nonprofit had 'Supernatural' start

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Fandom can be really, really powerful, and Karla Truxall knows that firsthand. It's the reason she founded SPN Survivors, a nonprofit that recently acquired its first office space in Livonia.

She was introduced to a little show called "Supernatural" by her husband, David, and fell in love with it. The popular series follows two brothers, Sam and Dean Winchester, as they fight — you guessed it — supernatural creatures. It ended late last year after running on The CW for 15 seasons.

"I ended up using it as my escape from reality to run away from my problems and spend time with the boys," Truxall said. "The show is all about fighting monsters and demons, and you're watching these characters with their own struggles."

"In a sense, it gives you the strength to fight your own monsters and demons and come out of that a stronger person."

The show also inspired Truxall to seek therapy two years after her late nephew, Mason, died by suicide in 2010 at just 19 years old. A "Supernatural" cast member spoke about the importance of having fun at a 2012 convention and something clicked for Truxall.

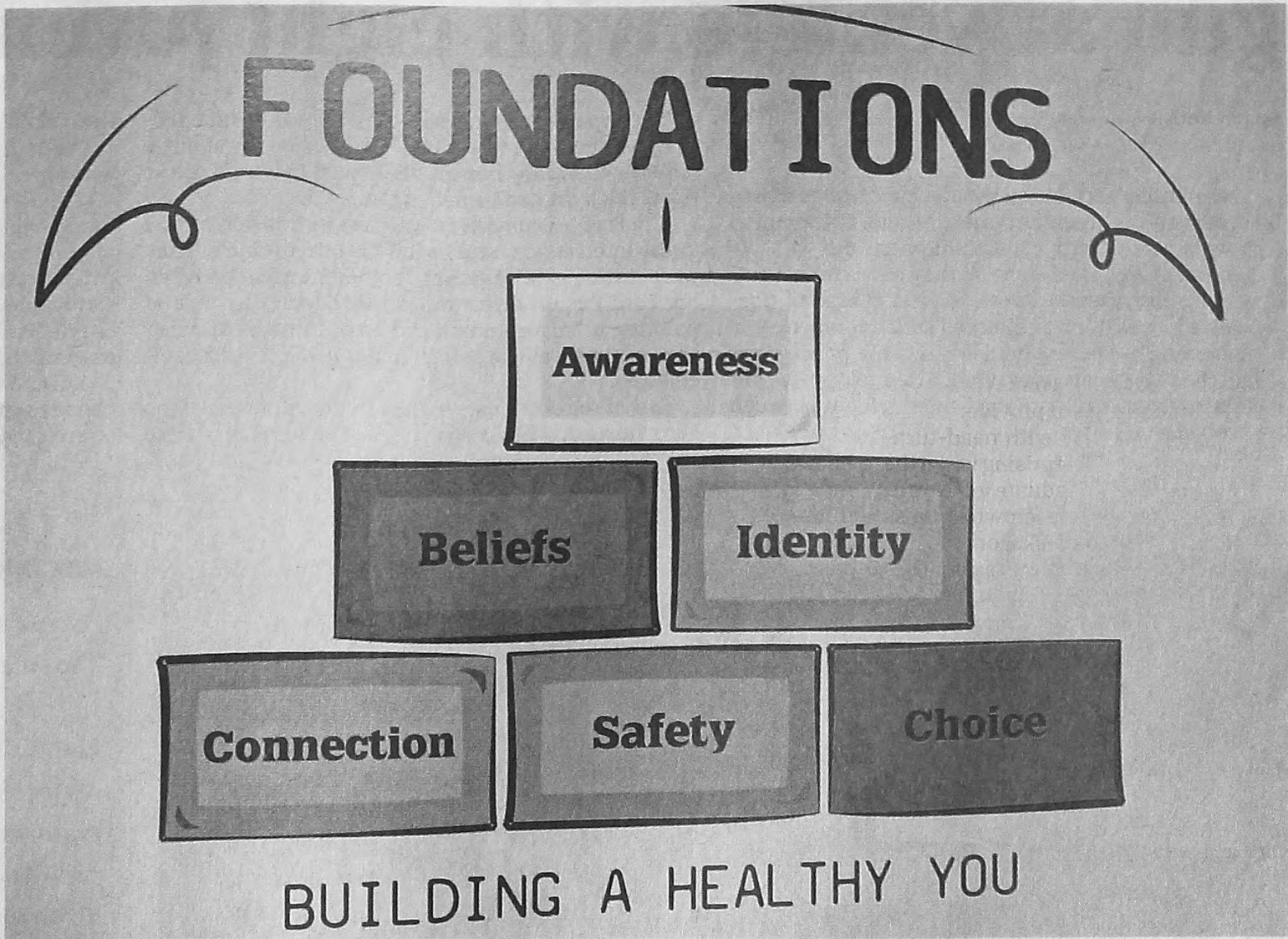
The convention led to therapy, and that led to SPN's creation.

So, SPN has two meanings. It's an abbreviation for "Supernatural" and stands for Suicide Prevention Network.

Ultimately, it would not exist without fandom.

"We wouldn't be here without fandom ... People are so desperate to talk," Truxall said. "They want to talk about their challenges and their problems. To feel seen, heard and validated is huge. The fandom for 'Supernatural' in particular attracts people who feel unseen, who feel other and like they don't fit in."

Truxall uses SPN Survivors to connect people with mental health resources, some of which are unique to the nonprofit, at spnsurvivors.org. The nonprofit has a newsletter, links to mental health services across the country, stuffed "Battle Buddy" animals inspired by the show, "Comfort Kits" that go to hospitals and schools, and an original educational program surrounding men-



The Suicide Prevention Network has six foundations for "building a healthy you" printed on the wall. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Suicide Prevention Network founder Karla Truxall talks about the importance of the Livonia nonprofit.

tal health used in classes and seminars. SPN also has a presence at "Supernatural" conventions and local community events to be a place where people can feel "seen and heard." Truxall said she was shocked by how starved fans were for a "safe space."

"Our table was a safe space," Truxall said. "It was a place people could talk about things they would normally talk about, and what a huge gift that was. People weren't suffering in silence anymore."

Though its main audience will always be the "Supernatural" fanbase, the nonprofit hopes to have more of an impact on the Livonia community. Truxall hopes office space, at 38099 Schoolcraft

Road, will get SPN more involved in the community and help it grow its volunteer base.

"We're primarily in the fandom and the 'Supernatural' world, but the last couple of years we've been trying to make more of a difference here in our backyard," she said.

Truxall said she doesn't understand why her nephew's death needed to be what prompted her work, but she is thankful something that serves others came out of it. At every event SPN does, Mason's picture is with Truxall to remind her what she does all this for.

Contact reporter Shelby Tankersley at stankersle@hometownlife.com or 248-305-0448.

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Westland man charged with pointing gun at vehicle with eight juveniles inside

Susan Vela hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Law enforcers arrested a Westland man soon after a Livonia road-rage incident where he allegedly pointed a gun at a vehicle with eight children inside.

Federal prosecutors contend they have enough evidence against Tiwuan Edwards for a charge of possessing a gun with an obliterated serial number.

According to their complaint, Livonia police were dispatched the night of a July 27 to a felony assault stemming from an alleged road-rage incident between two vehicles.

The apparent victims said they were at an intersection, waiting behind a silver Ford Fusion for about a minute when they honked their horn to let the driver know the light had turned green.

The Ford Fusion driver, who was by himself, turned in the intersection, and so did the other vehicle. They were resting side by side at another intersection when the Ford Fusion driver reportedly began waving and pointing a "silver and black handgun with extended clip" at their vehicle, which had two adults and eight children.

One of the occupants in the van took a picture of the Ford Fusion and its license plate, which police used to

track down the suspect.

Westland and Livonia police visited Edwards' apartment about an hour later and made their arrest.

The Ford Fusion was parked outside, and an officer found a loaded silver and black 9 mm pistol in plain view on top of some clothing. The pistol contained an extended magazine and several of its serial numbers were removed.

A federal agent also discovered that Edwards pleaded guilty to a felony weapons charge years ago.

Edwards' defense attorney Stacey Studnicki declined to comment.
svela@hometownlife.com



The Detroit Selfie Museum has dozens of different scenarios and settings for its visitors to take their selfies in. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Take your best shot at selfie museum in Novi

David Veselenak hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

In the region's newest museum, you are the attraction.

That's at least the goal Tahira Hannah has for one of the newest businesses to open at Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi.

Hannah recently opened the Detroit Selfie Museum at the mall located at 12 Mile and Novi roads. The space, which occupies the former American Girl shop near Nordstrom, is laid out with dozens of displays with different themes to help capture the perfect selfie.

Current options include a money throne, a Barbie theme, a lifeguard station and a giant bucket of movie popcorn, among others.

"The concept of this is this: you come in and you are your own photographer," Hannah said. "All you need is your phone and/or a camera and we have all of the cool scenes set up for you."

"The point is make you feel part of the scene, not just standing in front of a backdrop."

Hannah, a Lathrup Village resident, has worked in photo booths with a company called Snap Station for several years. Especially as the COVID-19 pandemic went on with fewer events taking place, she began looking for a new way to have people get fun photos.

"Now I have a creative space where people can come to me," she said.

Several of the scenes could change as the seasons change, Hannah said, including fall and perhaps Christmas-themed displays.

She said she always envisioned Twelve Oaks Mall as the host for her idea. She said she reached out last fall to the mall to inquire about a space and had everything fall into place over the last few months. She opened in early July and has seen plenty of shoppers stop by an inquire about what the space is about.

Hannah said that was always the goal.

"I wanted it to be a destination space but also benefit from the mall traffic at the same time," she said. "I just liked the vibe of the mall."

That vibe has kept up: Hannah said she's seen plenty of guests pay for time in the space, capturing images of all kinds. She said several of the booths are featured in some prominent social media posts on sites such as TikTok and Instagram.

Customers can pay for a half-hour or hour of time to take as many shots as they'd like with as many booths as they like. Guests can also bring in their own photographer, though there is a separate charge for them. If guests see just one display that catches their eye, they can pay for a "money shot" and just have photos from that one scene.

The museum provides a ring light that adds additional lighting as well as acts as a stand to hold a



Tahira Hannah poses in a selfie room that, when photographed normally and rotated 45 degrees, shows its fun intention.

phone.

"They are able to be hands-free snapping pictures," Hannah said. "They do not have to actually hold the phone."

Some of the current scenes are available to view on the Detroit Selfie Museum's Instagram page at [instagram.com/thedetroitselfiemuseum/](https://www.instagram.com/thedetroitselfiemuseum/)

Customers range in age from teenagers and young adults to older adults just looking to try something different. Hannah said she's had makeup artists and professional photographers stop by the space and use the scenes for their work. It's also available to rent for private parties or corporate events.

It's a space that's perfect, Hannah said, for an evening out that's unique to Novi.

"Outside of going to a movie or getting something to eat, name something (to do)," she said. "This is a fun date night. Kids love it."

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

"I was shocked when I first heard those comments, but I realized that I just had to stand strong and show them I was not afraid and that I am an American citizen and deserve every right every other person in this country deserves."

Vivian Zhong

Miss Michigan

Continued from Page 2A

Orleans-based Tulane University, where she recently secured a master's degree in pharmacology (Zhong earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan), Zhong was frequently taunted by remarks like, "Go back to China!" and "You're not welcome here!"

"I was shocked when I first heard those comments, but I realized that I just had to stand strong and show them I was not afraid and that I am an American citizen and deserve every right every other person in this country deserves," Zhong said.

"I was less worried for myself than I was for my mom and grandparents. When the videos of the violence against Asian-Americans first started to surface, I called my mom to make sure they were OK. It's a very sad situation, but at the same time I'm proud to be an Asian-American and in a leadership position where I can speak out against those acts of violence."

Zhong's strong attachment to pediatric cancer started when one of her childhood friends was diagnosed with leukemia.

"My close friend ultimately beat her cancer with chemotherapy and radiation, but passed away just before her 21st birthday because of complications created by the treatments," Zhong said. "Ever since I've been advocating for more non-invasive treatment options and I fundraise for more dollars for this cause because there's such a lack of funding for pediatric cancer research."

Zhong, who competed against 21 contestants in June, said serving as Miss Michigan is the equivalent of a full-time job, but one that she embraces with all her heart and soul.

"There will be a lot of speaking engagements and volunteering for my social impact initiative, which is helping kids battling cancer," she said. "The most important legacy I want to leave when my year is over is to have raised as much money as possible for childhood-cancer research."

"The first big event that I participated in was Northville's Fourth of July Parade. Getting an opportunity to ride in the parade was such a special homecoming, seeing the community so supportive of me."

Zhong said the support she has received from Northvillians who she has cultivated lifelong friendships with has been priceless.

"I loved growing up in Northville, attending the downtown concerts and going out to eat at downtown restaurants with my parents," Zhong said. "It's such a special community. So many people have helped me along the way. My first-grade teacher (Ms. Beck) at Moraine Elementary School has been super supportive. She's invited me to speak about leadership and read books to her class. Friendships like that are so heart-warming."

Zhong said the exhilaration she feels when she looks ahead to the upcoming year filled with volunteering and guest speaking is off the charts.

"As Miss Michigan, I will continue my work with state and national programs including the Miss America organization's national platform, the Children's Miracle Network, to advocate for children suffering from cancer."

The 2021 Miss America Pageant will be held at Mohogan Sun resort in Connecticut, but that a date has yet to be cemented due in part to fluid pandemic restrictions.

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

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**Karen Werner
Connolly**

August 11, 2021, age 71. Karen will be dearly missed by her loving partner Lyndon Lattie, daughter Chrissi Alessi (Phil), three grandchildren Preston Philip, Emerson Eileen, Eden Cecelia, brother David (Susan) Werner and Andy (Toni) Werner, sister Florence Foster, and many nieces and nephews. Services were held at A.J. Desmond & Sons, (248) 549-0500. Please consider a donation in Karen's name to ASPCA (aspca.org).

View obituary and sign tribute wall at AJDesmond.com

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Dispatcher with 31-year career urges patience

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

There was a time Birmingham dispatcher Terez Willis concluded her most wretched shifts with a highway finale.

The Redford resident worked afternoon shifts then, talking to emotional 911 callers and trying to gather details for fellow first responders until the clock struck midnight.

With her first responder mind easing from the tenaciousness that goes into a shift, she would drive the Lodge Freeway – sunroof open, windows down and music playing – until she was at downtown Detroit's Jefferson Avenue.

"To just exhale," she confessed. "I didn't do that very often. But I did. Then I would go home."

Willis remains devoted to an industry known for its turnover rate and burnout challenges, which are compounded by weekend and holiday shifts since the dispatch center has to pick up the phone every second of every day.

With plenty of schooling behind her, she applied because she was bored with a marketing job. She'll reach her 31st work anniversary in late August and still loves dispatching.

It's not the adrenaline rush that keeps her going. She likes helping people, a skill she honed with family and friends before further developing the skill while working as a dispatcher.

Willis, now in her 50s, has seen dispatchers, especially the part-time ones, say their goodbyes. But she's still taking calls at the Birmingham Police Department for some special, outstanding reasons that include her patient personality.

"Make sure you have the patience for this job," she advised. "Make sure you have the patience, because you will need it, whether it's a call that really upsets you and you have to push through it or there's someone on the phone yelling at you because they don't quite understand your part of the job and they're just angry."

"You have to be patient. You have to have patience for it. I hate to say it and people always do. But, honestly, everybody can't do this job. Not that I'm doing something that's impossible. You have to have the patience for it."

'Know this city'

Willis started her dispatching career with Joya Davis, another Birmingham dispatcher who became her best friend.

Police Chief Mark Clemence said technology cannot replace their experience and historical knowledge.

"Dispatchers like Terez and Joya know this city," he said. "They know the streets, the downtown, the neighborhoods. They understand and embrace the professionalism that must occur and the level of customer service that must be maintained."

"They also know each and every officer. As chief, I am always comforted knowing that I have two 30-plus year veteran dispatchers working the desk. They know what they are doing, address (ing) crisis situations and ensur(ing) that the appropriate resources go to where they are needed."

Clemence said the center has come a long way. About 35 years ago, before Willis and Davis came on board, dispatchers hand punched "D-cards," or



Birmingham Police Department employee Terez Willis is preparing to retire from dispatch work after 31 years on the job. She monitors multiple computer screens at the department's Martin Street location. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



"You have to have the patience for it," Willis says of dispatch work.

dispatch cards, and wrote out calls for service. The department log was done on a typewriter, and the dispatcher worked one radio counsel and four phone lines.

"Today, the entire dispatch center is completely computerized, and every officer can be dispatched electronically," Clemence said. "Information is shared and all logs are automatically electronically created and maintained."

Birmingham has 12 dispatchers that include four part-timers fielding calls

from Birmingham and Beverly Hills. Full-time dispatchers now work 12-hour shifts, manning four 911 lines and 10 other emergency and non-emergency phone lines that flow into the dispatch center.

At any given time, there could be three dispatchers working the center, which also controls the citywide camera system.

Come a long way

Willis has seen the center evolve. She began her career with training that included mock phone calls at City Hall.

"It helped me to be comfortable," Willis said. "When I first walked into the dispatch center, ... even then, I looked and I thought, 'Oh, I don't know if I'm going to be able to do this.' But I did. I did."

"You're only going to learn so much in training. You are going to get a call that you've never heard of. You're going to get some things you've never done. Your training just isn't enough. A lot of it is on the job."

She doesn't remember her first call or the first "big one." The oldest memory that sticks with her happened about five years into her time with Birmingham.

A child called because her mom passed out and apparently hit her head on marble floors.

"She's screaming and dad's in the background trying to do CPR. She's trying to tell him what to do, and she's crying. I just wanted to hug her. I felt so

bad," Willis said. "To this day, I don't know how mom was. That's kind of hard. We never know the end result for most of them."

Willis used to get teased for listening to and trying to help people who seemed to just want to vent. But she has always enjoyed her job, which gave her personal and professional touchstones regarding some historical moments like 9/11 and the 2003 blackout.

"I don't know how I got to 31 (years). It just went," she said. "You just keep working. You almost have to because you can have one (call) right after the other. You gotta be on your game to get through that one. You want to help. You just keep plugging away."

Saying goodbye

To ease her mind, Willis now crafts. She's starting to consider a fall retirement to spend more time with her family. Until then, the Redford Township woman will keep commuting to Birmingham to take calls from people in need.

Retirement, when it happens, is bound to be bittersweet.

"I learned and gathered a lot of things here that I didn't know (before) doing this job," Willis said. "I will never forget it. It worked for me. It was good for me because I liked what I was doing. I always liked it."

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

What to do if you receive an unexpected inheritance



Money Matters

Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Dear Rick:

My wife and I recently received an unexpected inheritance of \$150,000 and I'd like to get your thoughts. We are in our late 40s and we both plan to work for at least another 15 years. Currently, my wife and I each have 401(k)s and roughly \$20,000 in savings. For the last number of years, we have been supporting our son; however, now he is financially stable and on his own.

Our house in the current market is worth about \$400,000. We owe a little over \$300,000 and our mortgage rate is 3% percent. We have some credit card debt, roughly \$50,000, with interest rates that range from 11 percent to 20 percent. Our only other debt is a home improvement loan of about \$45,000 at 8% percent.

My wife would like to take the inheritance and pay down our mortgage. That way, by the time we retire we would

have no mortgage debt. I would like to invest the money for our retirement. What do you think?

Ron

Dear Ron:

I like the idea of using the money to invest; however, I also believe one of the best investments you can make is to pay off debt. For example, if you pay off a credit card that has 18% percent interest, you're actually earning an 18% percent return on your money. I can assure you there's no investment that I know of that will give you a guaranteed 18% percent return. Therefore, to me it is a slam dunk to use the inheritance to first pay off your credit card debt. In addition, I also recommend that you pay off your home improvement loan. Similarly, this will give you a guaranteed 8% percent return on your money, which is also a very good rate of return.

Next, make sure that you have an emergency fund of money available. I believe that everyone needs three to six months of living expenses that they keep liquid as an emergency fund. This helps protect your other investments.

For example, at the very beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, markets were in

freefall. If for some reason you needed money at that time and you had to sell your investments, you would have taken a significant hit. However, if you had an emergency fund, you would have been able to use that thus, allowing your investments time to recover.

Based on your situation, I would not recommend paying down your mortgage with the inheritance. I agree with your wife that it would be nice to be mortgage free upon retirement, but I don't think it makes sense for you. Your mortgage rate is low, and I believe over the long run, by investing your money in a well-balanced and diversified growth portfolio, you would receive a much better return than your mortgage after tax is costing you. Therefore, after establishing an emergency fund, I would recommend investing the money in a long-term growth portfolio.

In addition, you should consider re-allocating the money that you were paying on your credit card debt and home improvement loans to your investment portfolio on a regular basis. You and your wife should also max out your 401(k) contributions, and potentially make a Roth IRA contribution, if you are

eligible. Having the discipline to invest the money you are saving by paying down your debts will go a long way in accomplishing your goal of having more money saved for your retirement.

I know there are all sorts of different strategies about paying down debt. To me, it is rather simple. I like to first pay down debt that is costing me the most, in other words, the ones that have highest interest rate.

All too often when people receive an inheritance, they look at it as found money that they can spend in any way as opposed to looking at it as an opportunity to improve their financial health.

I look at inheritances sort of like an unexpected bonus from work. I believe the best use for this money is to improve your financial wellbeing, which means paying down debt and investing the money. Especially today, where we still are in very uncertain times, getting your financial house in order will give you greater flexibility to manage your way through these times.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. His website is www.bloom-advisors.com.

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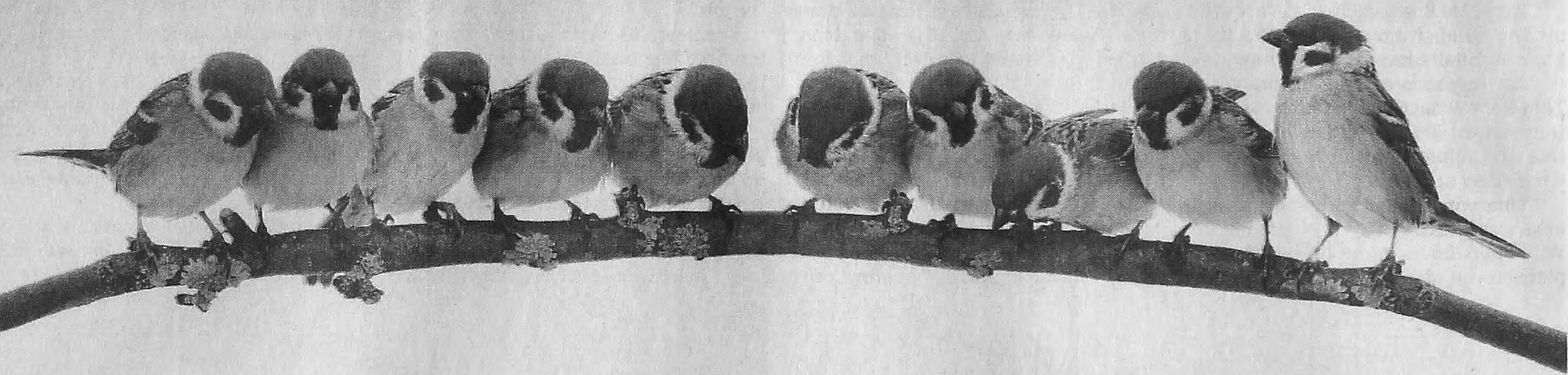
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SPORTS

Seaholm introduces new team to established system

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Seaholm football is team football. It's a system that has brought the Maples back from mediocrity, following up four-straight losing seasons from 2014-17 to winning 21 of their next 31 games, making the playoffs in each of the past

three seasons.

Everyone in football program is familiar with the team's system: the Veer, a "keep-away, ground-and-pound" offense that excels in long drives and taking advantage of mistakes against exhausted defenses.

It's not one player doing the work, it's a collective unit.

As head coach Jim DeWald watches his players stretch, a week of fall camp already complete, he admits he's feeling much better than he did at the start. The Maples will only have two offensive starters and four defensive starters from the 2020 team returning.

But the growth is there, the most he's seen in any other season donning the

maroon and white. And, really, that's all he can ask for.

"There are so many young kids that have never stepped on this field," DeWald said. "At first it was scary, super scary; oh my gosh it's not going to be good. But they've improved drastically."

See SEAHOLM, Page 3B



Wayne Memorial head coach Michael Ryan speaks to his team at the start of practice. PHOTOS BY COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Wayne Memorial football building preseason pride

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Omari Rush knows what it's like to win a football game at Wayne Memorial.

The senior slot receiver and cornerback looked back to his sophomore year, to a team that had not scored a point until the final game of the season: a six-point win against Salem to close 2019.

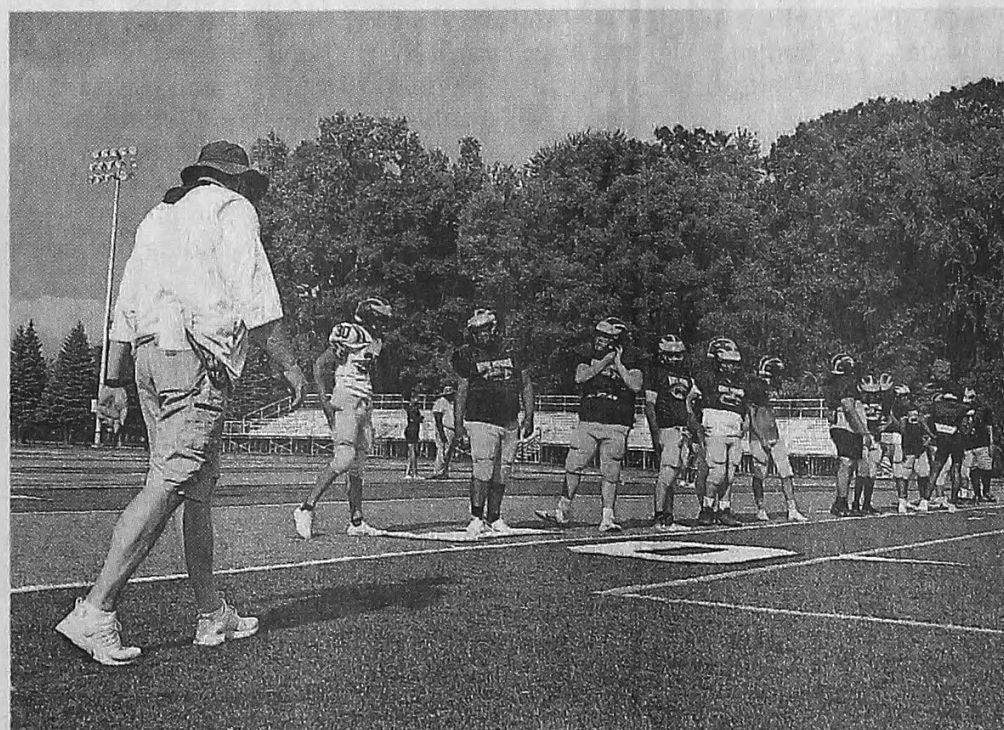
One win compared to 24 losses in three seasons.

"That experience of seeing everyone happy and smile and laugh. We can actually smile after a football game, you know?" Rush said. "There hasn't been a lot of winning here over the past couple of years."

When head coach Michael Ryan took over as the Zebras' head football coach, he knew what he was getting into. It's a situation he's been through before in his 32 years as a football coach, including stints as the head coach at Howell and Swartz Creek.

It was familiar: he saw a group tired of losing, but it's all they knew. Ryan knew what he had to do to change it.

"There's not a sense of pride here with these kids at Wayne," Ryan said. "They are like, 'It's Wayne.' And I say, 'I don't want to hear you talk about Wayne negatively. You need to be proud of where you're from and what you stand for.'"



Ryan has 32 years of coaching experience.

Starting the turnaround

Ryan remembers what that first practice was like, where that mindset started to shift.

"If we challenged the kids, they would literally walk off the field," Ryan said. "They came at their own time when they wanted to come at their own

time.

"When 75% of the team is ready to go, you would have 25% (in the stands). You'd yell to them and they wouldn't move."

It was really all Amarus Callaway was used to.

See PRIDE, Page 2B

Circle these HS football games on the calendar

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A high school football season is not defined by one win or one loss. But one game can tell you a lot about a group and what it will do for the rest of the season.

As practices rage on and the regular season schedule comes closer, here's a look at a few definitive games ahead for Hometown Life area teams in 2021.

Detroit Catholic Central vs. Davison

Detroit Catholic Central's last meeting with Davison is one of the Shamrocks' driving forces heading into the 2021 season.

Coming into the 2020 regional final undefeated, Catholic Central could not find a way to move the ball against a Cardinals defense that allowed three touchdowns only once before the Division 1 state finals. The overall view among the Shamrocks is that only a few correctable mistakes separated them and a regional title.

In the second game of the 2021 season, Catholic Central will have a chance at revenge, bringing back many of its offensive skill players

See GAMES, Page 2B

New-look Novi football unites over changes in playbook

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Jim Sparks entered his first fall camp as Novi football's head coach as the new guy, the one trying to fit in.

But he's also the one completely changing everything, throwing a new offensive and defensive playbook at the players after spending 19 years as the head coach at Clawson. While the outcome remains the same - the simple goal of scoring more points than an opponent - Sparks chooses a different way to do it.

In his first practices at Novi, that change hasn't been stressful. It's actually been refreshing.

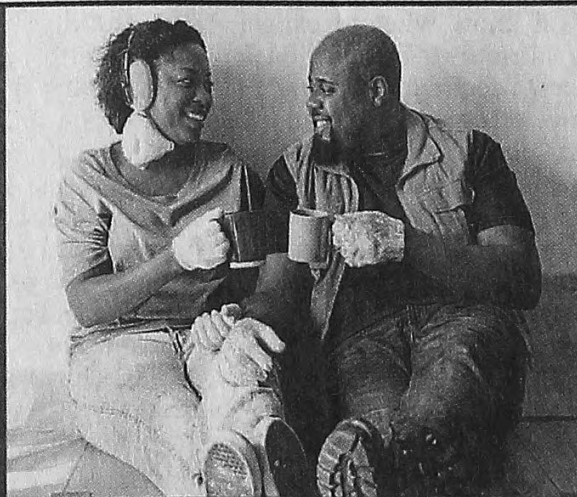
"For 20 years, we ran the same offense where I was at. The kids would show up each year with the same bad habit they ended with the year before,"

See NOVI, Page 4B

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Brother Rice football narrows focus

Colin Gay HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Adam Korzeniewski knows what each practice is going to look like from the moment his Brother Rice football players step onto the field to the time they each leave. All the players have to do is bring the energy and be coachable and the Warriors will get work done.

The fifth-year head coach keeps that day-to-day mentality on the practice field and in the film room. There's no free time to focus on what's coming up. Korzeniewski wants his players to focus solely on the task at hand.

If they broaden their gaze just a bit, it can be a bit overwhelming.

Outside of the normal Catholic High School League schedule, in which all but one team is either Division 1 or 2, Brother Rice will face a brutal non-conference schedule: Macomb Dakota and East Kentwood - both Division 1 programs; Division 2 state semifinalist Traverse City Central; and if the Warriors fail to make the CHSL Prep Bowl, Division 4 state champion Detroit Country Day.

Korzeniewski said he'll put up his schedule against anyone else's in the entire state.

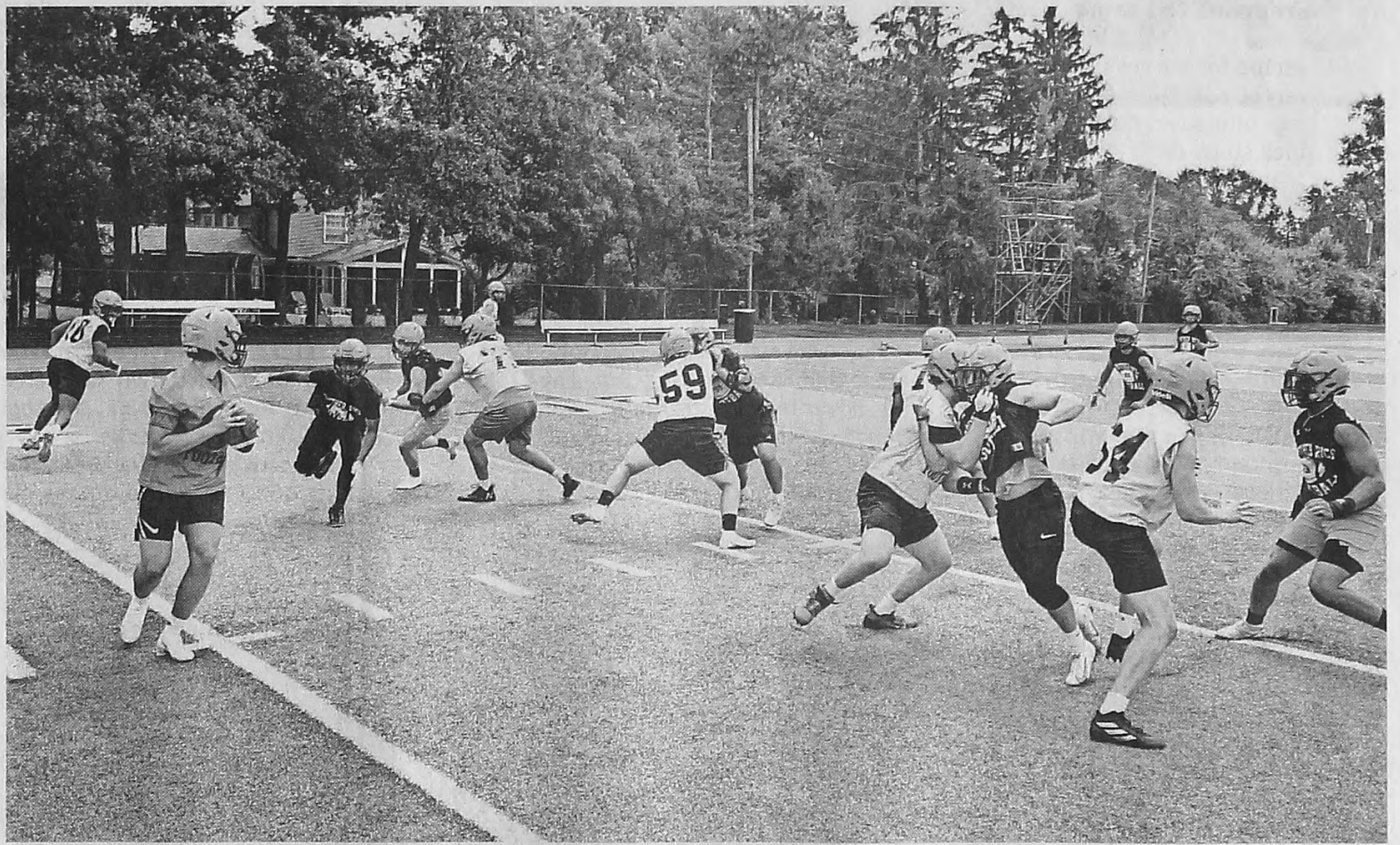
"There's not a game on this schedule that's a 'gimme.' Not even close," Korzeniewski said. "We could lose a lot of them if we don't play well."

But that's not even the whole slate.

Brother Rice is also still looking for a Week 7 opponent after a contest against Dohn Community out of Cincinnati was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Scheduling is something the head coach said the Michigan High School Athletic Association could have supported his program more on.

The Warriors' 2021 schedule is a product of what the head coach wishes the MHSAA incentivized more programs across the state to do: schedule up against tough opponents.

"I don't," Korzeniewski said when asked why he wanted a schedule like the one Brother Rice is set to face in 2021. "In fact... it's not about them. You've got to play good teams. Coach Fracassa used to say, 'You're always going to play a tough team game one because it forces



The Brother Rice football team hits the practice field Aug. 10. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

you to practice hard.' It creates urgency, right, to get that much better as you move through the season. You are not catching up. You have already caught up.

"I didn't choose to play that schedule. I was very, very vocal about getting other coaches in the state to actually schedule up."

To senior linebacker Jackson Minelli, the schedule doesn't change the way the team works.

It's one game at a time. One team at a time.

"We prepare every week like no one else," Minelli said. "We know everyone else's game plan going into the game; we know what they want to run, where they want to attack us. We just focus on that all week, so by the time we get into games, there really isn't anything we haven't seen."

Brother Rice will have some weapons

to work with in 2021.

On offense, the Warriors will return eight starters including junior running back Nolan Ray, senior wide receiver Cole Lacanaria and four-out-of-five offensive linemen, working with senior quarterback and first-year starter Mark Gojcaj.

On defense, Brother Rice will return six players to a unit that allowed no more than 25 points in a single game once, recording its best defensive performance since 2016. Minelli will lead the group at linebacker along with senior safety and captain Josh Filar and senior defensive end Luke Sands.

Ray knows the potential of this group, especially after coming close in 2020 to breaking the streak of failing to get out of the district round of the post-season. The junior running back feels that Brother Rice has the ability to compete with each team on its schedule.

"I'm just excited because we are going against good competition every week," Ray said. "I know we can handle it. I'm ready to put our team to the test and really see what we can do."

Brother Rice definitely has the history on its side: the 10 state titles, the 15 players who made it to the NFL.

Even though the Warriors don't have a state title since 2013, Korzeniewski still feels his team has a target on its back, something the head coach hopes rallies the team each week, one game at a time.

"What you hope is that fuels the guys with motivation during the week to do what you ask them to do and to play like you're going to get a really big test," Korzeniewski said. "Because the other team, you make their season by being able to come there."

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com.

Pride

Continued from Page 1B

The senior running back and linebacker said the previous two coaching staffs weren't too strict on rules, leading a group of undisciplined and unmotivated players who put on their pads for a team that had not recorded a winning season since 2006.

"Before at Wayne, we would kind of just play around and have fun, not really care what the coaches are saying," Callaway said. "Now it's like new. It's different."

It was a program Ryan was set to be a part of anyway, joining the team initially as a defensive coordinator under Jari Brown before the head coach left for a coordinator job Muskegon Reeths-Puffer.

The turnaround for Ryan started from the moment he was hired as a

coach, coming in with the goal of developing trust through actions and relationships instead of solely words.

When the retired special education teacher was promoted to head coach, he began to see the buy in, the accountability, the sense that these practices were different from what they used to be, something his players made clear.

"It just feels that everybody actually wants to be here and play," senior quarterback Julian Shelby said. "We are going harder, everybody's going 100... You can just feel that everybody wants to play football."

Building from the core

Wayne Memorial does not come into 2021 with a lot to work with, carrying 32 players on its varsity roster heading into its season opener against Novi.

While the group may be small, Ryan knows he has some athletes to utilize, from Shelby, a senior quarterback with

4.4 speed, to senior three-star safety Travon Steverson, who holds an offer from Butler.

"There's about six or seven of this core group. And they have been playing together for a while. Now their buddies broke off... these guys stuck around," Ryan said. "They said two days ago... 'There's finally a coaching staff that has an idea.' They are buying in."

"Our core group is going to be as good as what others put on the field. And you'll see that, too."

While Wayne Memorial will have plenty of speed at its skill positions, the Zebras' strength will be on the line. Ryan views his offensive line as a potential gamechanger, using five players over 6 feet, 250 pounds, including two above 6-foot-5, 300 pounds.

As the Zebras prepare to open their season, Ryan's focus is on developing the entire roster instead of just the core, giving him the ability to rotate players in and out to keep them fresh. Even more

important, he wants the entire roster to buy into what he's teaching.

"Livonia Churchill, they have their core group and the rest of them are bought in. They want to do what's right for Livonia Churchill," Ryan said. "We got to get that other group to do what's right, to own Wayne, not just put a helmet on and play for Wayne, but ownership of Wayne football."

Steverson sees that potential. He knows the talent better than anyone, growing up with Shelby and Callaway.

Heading into his final set of preseason practices with Wayne Memorial, he can sense the difference: people believe in this program. The school thinks that this football team is heading in the right direction.

All Steverson and the rest of his teammates have to do is build off that preseason momentum.

"We're going to try and start something and have them finish it," Steverson said.

Games

Continued from Page 1B

along with the majority of its defensive front seven to face the Cardinals, which have made the state finals in each of the past two seasons.

Catholic Central will host Davison at 7 p.m., Sept. 3.

Seaholm vs. Groves

Over the past two seasons, this rivalry between Birmingham's two public schools has really heated up.

It was a rivalry Groves once dominated, beating Seaholm all six times between 2014-18. But after the Falcons won their seventh straight against the Maples in 2019, Seaholm woke up, blasting Groves, 42-7 in the district final.

The two schools split its matchups again in 2020 with Groves taking the nine-point victory in the second round of the postseason.

As Groves looks to continue the consistency it's had over the past eight seasons - other than an ineligibility issue prematurely ending the Falcons season and leading to forfeited games in 2020 - and Seaholm continues its rise to being competitive in the OAA over the past

three seasons, this rivalry game usually shows where each team is at overall.

Seaholm will host Groves 7 p.m., Sept. 17.

Livonia Franklin vs. Westland John Glenn

John Glenn showed up against Livonia Franklin in 2020.

Holding onto a 31-13 third-quarter lead, the Rockets' offense came alive, scoring three touchdowns in the final quarter-and-a-half to earn its first win of the season. With a pass-first head coach Calvin Griggs at the helm, John Glenn threw for 248 yards with four touchdown passes against the Patriots offense.

Franklin will know what to expect Sept. 24. The Patriots are bringing back an experienced secondary, hoping to improve the overall defense after allowing 30.7 points per game a season ago: the worst in program history.

John Glenn will also know what to expect. Despite losing senior quarterback Aaron Rieskamp, sophomore quarterback Nick Wetmore stepped up against Stevenson in the playoffs, throwing a pair of touchdowns and an interception with 153 yards. But whoever is at quarterback against the Patriots is expected to be the go-to guy, especial-

ly in Griggs' offense.

Like in 2020, this matchup will be a prime opportunity for John Glenn and Franklin to see where their strengths are and how they adapt to game planning against their weaknesses.

Livonia Franklin will take on John Glenn at home 7 p.m., Sept. 24.

South Lyon East vs. Lakeland

Both Lakeland and South Lyon East are on a quest to get over the hump, but in different ways.

For Lakeland, that goal doesn't come until the playoffs where the team has advanced to the district finals in three of the last four years. The Eagles, however, have not won a district championship since 2008.

For South Lyon East, it's competing with the big dogs in the Lakes Valley Conference, finishing third a season ago but posting a combined record of 1-24 against Lakeland, South Lyon and Walled Lake Western since the football program was established.

Both LVC programs are in new eras with Jacob Topp taking over the Cougars and James Calloun taking over the Eagles. This Week 7 matchup could give people a clear picture at where each of these teams are going heading into the playoffs.

South Lyon East will take on Lakeland at home 7 p.m., Oct. 8.

Livonia Stevenson vs. Livonia Churchill

Last year, the Livonia city title was as close as close can be. Each of the games were decided by 11 or less points, with Churchill, Franklin and Stevenson finishing second, fourth and fifth, respectively, in the KLAA East.

In the final game prior to the KLAA Crossover to end the regular season, Churchill's matchup with Stevenson could very well decide who gets the city trophy.

Stevenson's not going to look the same, bringing three starters from each side of the ball back for 2021, but the Spartans will have an idea of what it can do with the talent it has by the time it faces Churchill: a roster filled with third-year starters, who are hoping to get past the regional final for the first time in school history.

Since 2010, 10 of Stevenson and Churchill's matchups have been decided by two touchdowns or less.

Livonia Stevenson will host Livonia Churchill 7 p.m., Oct. 15.

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

Seaholm

Continued from Page 1B

Recipe remains the same

The recipe for success has been the same over the past three seasons: maximize long offensive possessions and make quick stops defensively to get the ball back and to keep the clock running.

After two straight seasons of averaging over 35 points per game, the Seaholm offense came back to earth in 2020, averaging 25.6 points per game with only two games of more than 40 points.

Even with a lot of the familiar pieces – quarterback Caleb Knoer, running back William McBride and running back Jackson Vance – graduated, the Maples' offensive system is viewed as something that can be learned, that anyone can find success in no matter the experience.

To senior offensive guard and line-backer Jacob Vance, coming into his fourth year on varsity, it's all about the buy in.

"I know people are like, 'Oh we run Veer and don't pass that much.' People don't really understand that yet. It's more of a team thing," Vance said. "You buy in, everybody does their job, everybody does what they are supposed to do, it works out and everybody loves it. Nobody regrets it."

Vance said the seniors on the roster have done a great job setting the expectations early, from summer lifts to the first workouts, knowing there still would be a learning curve for the juniors and sophomores that had never played varsity football before, but beginning that transition earlier.

Now, during fall camp, everyone seems to have an idea of what it takes to be successful at Seaholm.

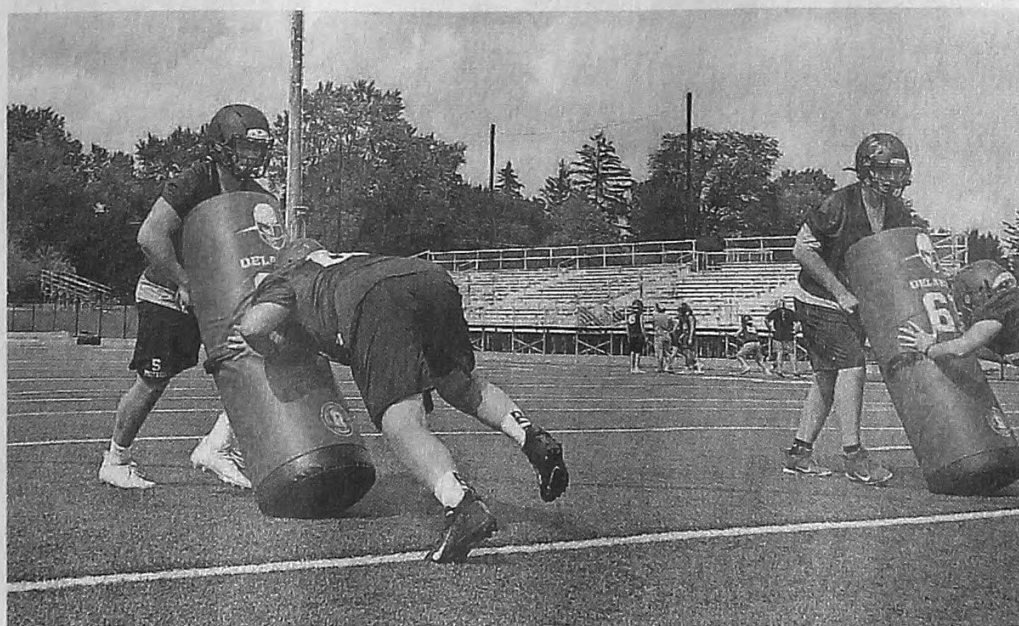
"Seaholm football in general comes with a lot of toughness and hard work," senior running back, slot receiver and cornerback Jack Trinch said. "We're a program where we care a lot about all the small details: showing up on time every day, working as hard as you can, a lot of players coaching other players."

Quick lessons necessary

While Seaholm stepped up last year defensively, allowing 22.1 points per



Seaholm football team members run quarterback and running back handoff drills as head coach Jim DeWald looks on. PHOTOS BY COLIN GAY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Seaholm's offensive line will play a big role in the Maples' success this season.

game and only three games of 30 points or more, DeWald feels the unit is the one that needs the most work.

It's not because the players don't understand what's going on systematically. It's the uncertainty about how that head knowledge will translate when the lights are on.

"It's just different when you have a guy that's going to tattoo you and you

haven't been on the field," DeWald said. "I think that's going to be the biggest eye-opener for our kids."

Along with Vance and Trinch, middle linebacker and center Luke Weismeyer, DeWald said, has stepped up as one of the main leaders of the group, along with senior defensive back and wide receiver Grant Wanecek.

But the X-factor for Seaholm could

come from its sophomore class, led by safety and A-back Kyle Robbins, who DeWald said will play big minutes for the Maples in 2021.

The first-time varsity players are going to be forced to learn quickly, facing a packed OAA White schedule along with crossover battles against Clarkston, Lake Orion and Rochester Hills Stoney Creek.

But with Seaholm, it's always been about the effort given, something Weismeyer is focusing on heading into his final season.

"It's not about how talented you are," he said. "If you are giving the effort each play, you're eventually going to be successful."

That's why DeWald's encouraged by the development he's seen, masking any sense of fear that may come with the lack of experience his team has. If they follow the system, good things will come.

"I would say don't expect anything different than what you've seen from the past couple years," Vance said. "We have enough guys that have seen how to do it. We know what to do, we just have to execute."

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

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'Slowest person' on HS team wins Howell Melon Run

Bill Khan Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

HOWELL — High school distance running is difficult enough, even more so for someone who can't stay healthy and gets progressively slower.

Those people are usually never to be heard from again, because who wants to stick with something that has given them nothing but pain and frustration?

Lauren Gores, a 2020 Howell High School graduate, wasn't ready to give up running, even if the sport hadn't treated her kindly while running for the Highlanders.

Her dedication to running is paying off in a remarkable way.

Gores was the women's winner in the Howell Melon Run five-kilometer race with a time of 20 minutes, 16.8 seconds on a hot Friday evening in downtown Howell. She was seventh overall.

In high school, she would have been considered the least likely runner to win her hometown race.

"I actually was the slowest person on the team," she said.

There was a valid reason.

"I was anemic," she said. "I had three blood transfusions. It helped me run faster."

When Gores came out for cross coun-



Gores

try as a sophomore in 2017, she got off to a promising start. She ran what turned out to be her fastest time in high school in her third career race, posting a time of 22:58. But she was running in the 28s by the end of her junior year and had to shut it down because of injuries after opening her senior year with a time of 31:42.

"I always just had a passion for running, so I never gave up until I actually had to go to the hospital," Gores said. "I didn't start getting faster until I got my blood up more. It was still low."

Howell cross country coach Clay Woll recalls the battle Gores had staying healthy in high school.

"It was always something," Woll said.

"It was a stress fracture at one point. She had a thing with her calves that was constantly having something happen. We always attributed it to form. We tried to remedy that, and it didn't work out the way we wanted. There's a million running forms out there. She's learned to mold hers into something that produces good times."

Woll said it's rare for a runner who wasn't successful in high school to stick with the sport after graduating.

"It's really a testimonial of putting your nose to the grindstone," he said. "Hard work pays off. Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard. She's certainly putting in the work to prove that age-old adage."

Novi

Continued from Page 1B

Sparks said. "Here, everybody started with a clean slate.

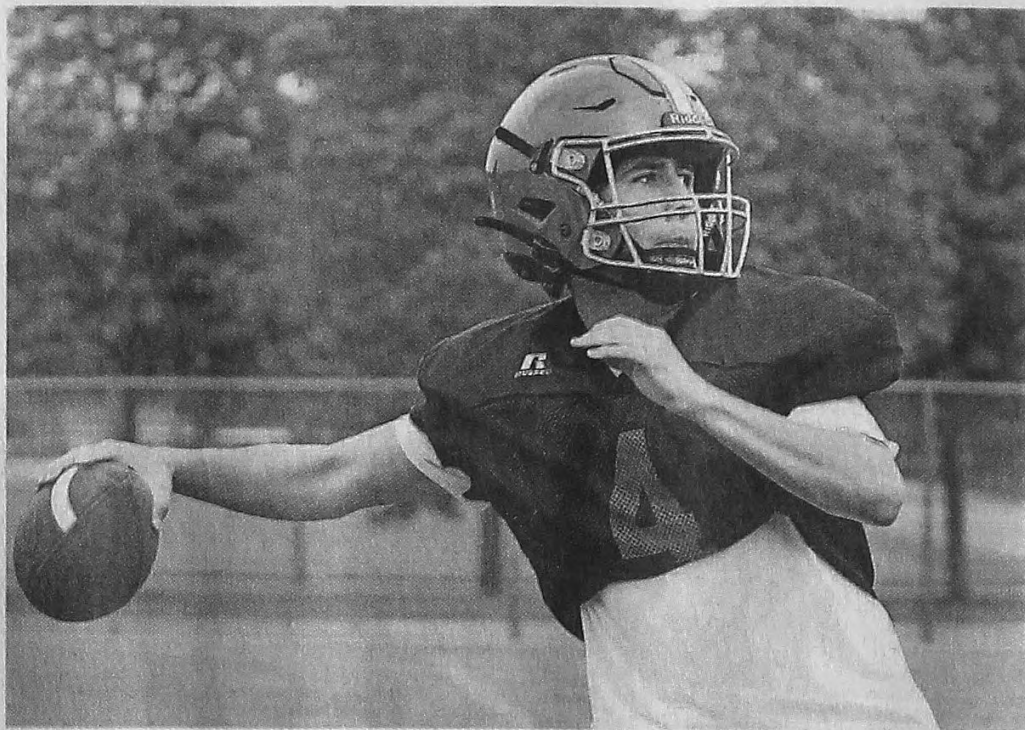
"The first time I teach Tommy Phimister, the first time I teach Noah Fitzgerald, even if they are on different ends of the spectrum in terms of size and the position they play, they both start from ground zero. Neither one of them knew the terminology, neither one of them knew the footwork. It's been great to start with a whole new group of dudes with no knowledge of what we are doing."

Sparks plans for the offense to be a clear shift in 2021, moving from the midline, triple option look — focusing the run-based offensive look between the quarterback, full back and running back — to more of a traditional spread offense. It's an offense that's in need of a spark, having averaged 25 points or less in each of its past four seasons.

It's an offense senior offensive and defensive lineman Tommy Phimister said quarterback Luke Aurelia is responding well to, saying that his understanding is vital for the whole unit clicking on all cylinders.

But it's been more of an individual process.

Junior running back and outside linebacker Cole Shires said the shift has



Novi quarterback Luke Aurelia winds up for a pass. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

taken a lot of time, spending time with individual position groups, learning routes, blocking schemes and footwork, later seeing how it all fits together.

These are the intricate details Sparks feasts on: focusing on stance and where to place your hands, to the angle of your spine.

"You never master it, and that's what's so great about this game," Sparks said.

Even with six returners on a defense that allowed just over 24 points per game in 2020, Sparks said the difficulty is getting players comfortable with his terminology and philosophy.

"There's some techniques that are different that are taught. That's difficult for them and difficult for us too because we're trying to un-coach them to re-coach them," Sparks said. "It's not what they were doing before was wrong. It

was just different.

"The outcome is what we all want. We just choose a different way to do it."

This is something Phimister's had to do before.

The senior offensive and defensive lineman remembers joining the Wildcats three years ago and learn the triple option under former head coach Jeff Burnside. This time, as one of the seniors on a roster that has not seen a winning season since 2016, he's seen his teammates respond well to the change.

"I think everybody comes out here with the work ethic of just trying to get better every day, and I think it's paying off," Phimister said. "Compared to the first day to where we are at now, I think it's a whole world's difference."

Sparks knows it's not perfect. He also won't have an idea of where his team is at until its first scrimmage one week before the season officially starts Aug. 26.

But it's something challenging that's uniting the team.

"It's inspiring because every guy's coming out working, trying their best, trying to get a starting spot, working their hardest, making everyone else better," Novi junior offensive tackle and defensive end Preston Phimister said. "We're coming out here united, making a little community."

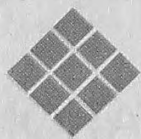
Novi opens the 2021 season at home against Wayne Memorial. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m., Aug. 26.

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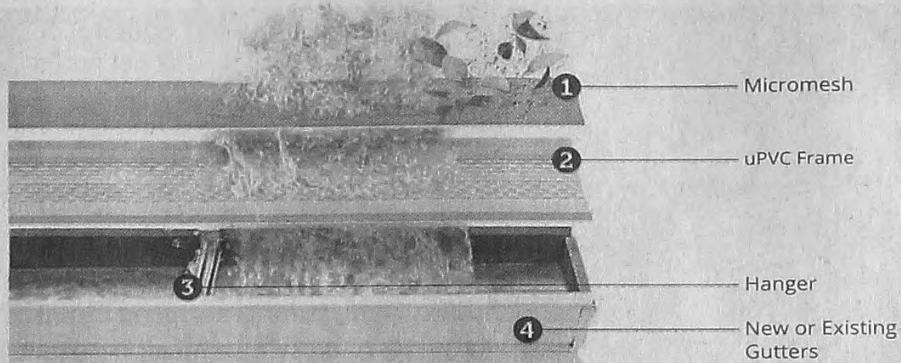
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OFFICE OF THE WAYNE COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONER
TONQUISH CREEK DRAIN
NOTICE OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DETERMINATION

DATE: Thursday, September 2, 2021

TIME: 5:30 P.M.

LOCATION: REMOTE ELECTRONIC ACCESS
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86142684218>
Call-in: (888) 475-4499
Meeting ID: 861 4268 4218
Passcode: 934811

QUESTIONS: (313) 482-9465

A Board of Determination will be convened through remote electronic access as provided in this Notice. Proceedings at this hearing are being conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Michigan Open Meetings Act and other applicable laws, orders, and regulations. The Board of Determination is being held via remote electronic access due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related federal and state agency rules and recommendations.

A Board of Determination is meeting electronically to hear all interested persons, receive evidence and determine whether the maintenance and improvement, as set forth in a petition that was properly filed with the Wayne County Drain Commissioner's Office, is necessary and conducive to the public health, convenience, or welfare, pursuant to Chapter 8 of Public Act 40 of 1956, as amended.

A presentation will be made to the Board of Determination, which outlines a brief history of the Drainage District, and describes the roles, responsibilities and decisions made by a Board of Determination. The presentation is to provide background for landowners and municipalities in the Drainage District and to facilitate the dissemination of information and the receipt of testimony of landowners in the Drainage District. The Board of Determination will make its decision at the end of the meeting.

Electronic participation will be conducted through Zoom. The Board of Determination may be accessed through any device supporting the Zoom app, which includes many computers, laptops, and smartphones. Users on a computer or laptop will be given the option to join the meeting through a web browser without downloading the Zoom app. Additionally, individuals may call into the Board of Determination by telephone

Prior to the Board of Determination

- **Telephone.** Questions may be asked prior to the meeting by calling (313) 482-9465.
- **Written Comments.** All written public comments received prior to the day of the Board of Determination will be made part of the public record for the Board of Determination.
- **Zoom.** Download the Zoom app to your device to ensure there is time to obtain technical advice prior to the Board of Determination.
- **Special Access.** Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the Board of Determination should contact the Drain Commissioner's Office at (313) 482-9465 (voice) or through the Michigan Relay Center at 7-1-1 (TDD) at least 24 hours in advance of the Board of Determination to request mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

On the Day of the Board of Determination:

- **Meeting Link.** To participate electronically through Zoom, you can access the Board of Determination through the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86142684218>. When prompted, the Zoom Meeting Passcode is: 934811.
- **Telephone Participation.** For participation on Zoom via telephone, please call: (888) 475-4499. When prompted, the Zoom Meeting ID is: 861 4268 4218. The Zoom Meeting Passcode is: 934811.
- **Participation.** Once individuals have joined the Board of Determination, the Chairperson will provide further information about procedures for participation.

After the Board of Determination

Anyone aggrieved by the decision of the Board of Determination may seek judicial review pursuant to MCL 280.72a

Elmeke N. Steele, Esq.
Wayne County Drain Commissioner

Publish: August 22, 2021

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SUNDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Super Crossword

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

ACROSS

- 1 Puck surface
4 Transparent
9 Nick of "Weeds"
14 Urged (on)
19 Source of bean curd
20 Figure skater Sonja
21 Luau "hello"
22 Thousand: Prefix
23 Soft leather sewn over fabric tears?
26 Poker entry fee
27 Elevate
28 USMC rank
29 Tabby that's a national government's mascot?
31 Peace Nobel
32 Sounded like a cow
34 Antarctic penguin
35 Enticingly beautiful mugs?
40 Braininess
43 How distant stars shine
44 White-rayed flower
47 Trevor of "The Daily Show"

- 48 Port on the Gulf of Mexico
52 Poet Doolittle who did all of her writing in her boudoir?
55 Caspian Sea feeder
56 "Don't leave!"
59 Easily spread cheese
60 Put decorations on your phone, then dial someone's number?
66 Ticked by
71 Warrant
72 Wearing a fancy crown
74 Verdi opera
75 Maker of Galaxy phones
77 Crustacean that's most active just before sunup?
79 "Exile" New Age artist
81 Falco with four Emmys
82 Notion, in Nantes
83 Black hole sucking in everything around it?

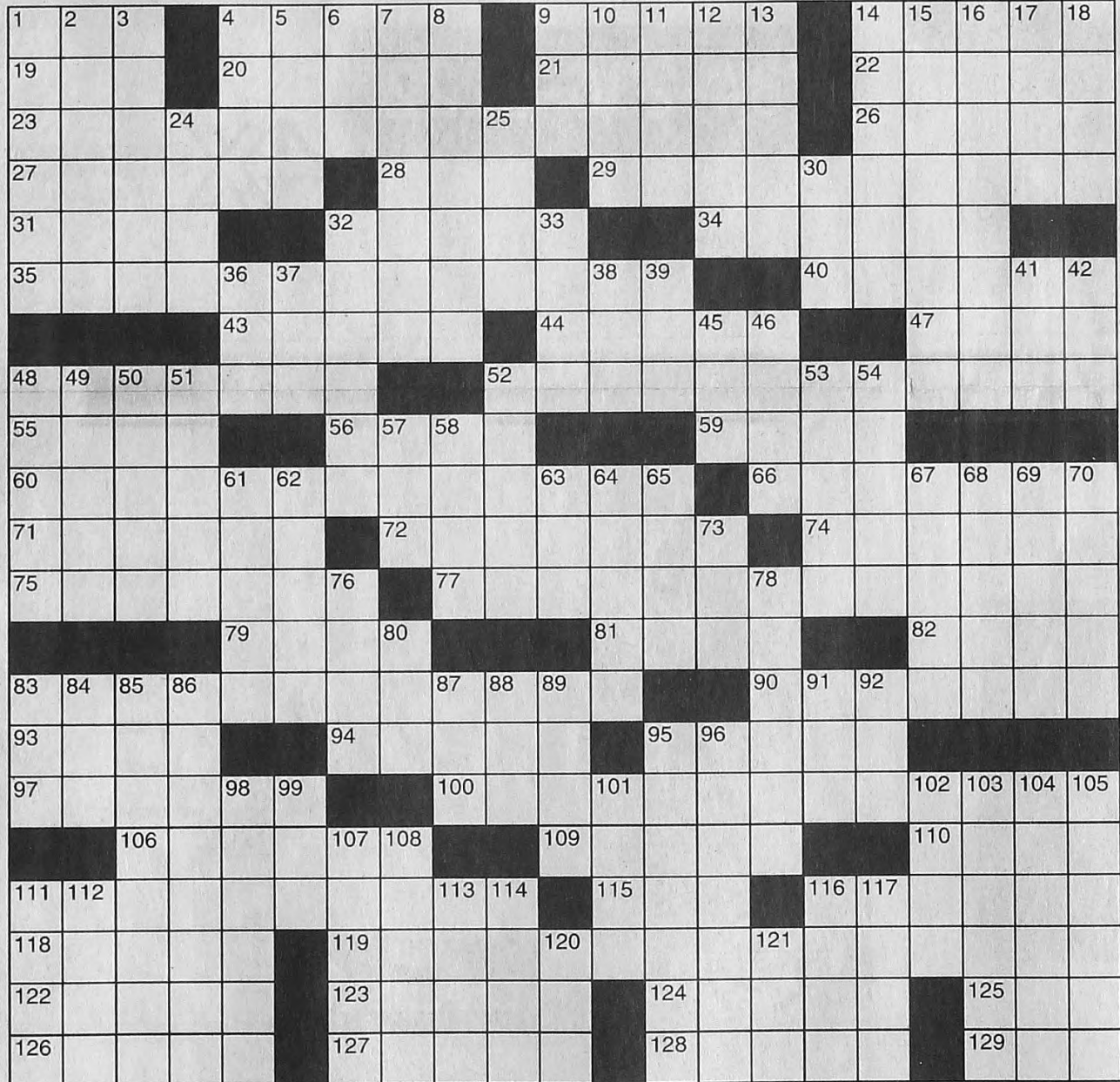
- 90 People lamenting
93 \$\$\$ spitter-outers
94 Like clipped sheep
95 Consumers
97 Tooted
100 Smug know-it-alls shoplift?
106 Having its petroleum imported, as a nation
109 Cosmic path
110 "My treat!"
111 Subtract the cost of an adhesive roll?
115 Bruin Bobby
116 Red-eyed songbirds
118 Actress Donovan of "Clueless"
119 Shopping containers holding more sinful items?
122 Salk of the Salk vaccine
123 Modify
124 Cliff nest
125 Luau gift
126 Viewpoint
127 Insolent
128 Norwegian money
129 Reno-to-L.A. dir.

DOWN

- 1 Emanates
2 Duo
3 Lashes' base
4 See 87-Down
5 Shoved off
6 Rocker Brian
7 Use a fan on
8 Steinbeck novella, with "The"
9 "Platoon" war zone, in brief
10 Snowman in "Frozen"
11 Box in an opera house
12 Silents star Bara
13 Mollified
14 Mummify
15 Former New York City mayor Rudy
16 Antifreeze compound
17 Kazan of filmdom
18 By — of (owing to)
24 God, to Henri
25 Baldwin of "Still Alice"
30 Apt., e.g.
32 Brunch quaff
33 "My man!"
36 Roman 401
37 Quirky habit
38 Brake part
39 Male title of respect

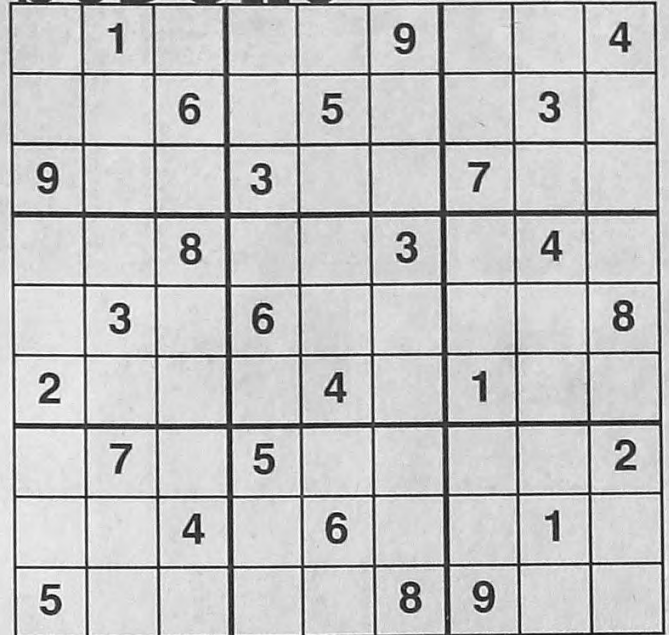
- 41 Smidgen
42 "— Na Na"
45 Bawl
46 Days of old
48 Lipstick units
49 Action venue
50 Female title of respect
51 Ancient Roman lower class
52 Via automobile
53 Director Forman
54 Moor shrub
57 It blasts
58 Take — (swim or bathe)
61 Given a hint
62 Singer Loggins
63 "Rules — rules"
64 Worker filling a cargo hold, say
65 Spearhead
67 Great risk
68 Begin to fail
69 Bugs bugger Fudd
70 Ninnies
73 Imbiber's hwy. offense
76 P.E. places
78 Most recent
80 "Makes sense now"
83 Chitchat
84 Map no.

- 85 Editing
86 Adoption of a cause
87 With 4-Down, cooking reality series
88 Uno tripled
89 Prefix with spore
91 Dadaist Jean
92 Prefix with thermal
95 Toni Braxton's "— My Heart"
96 Swizzle stick
98 Totally cover
99 Speck
101 Yank who wore #13
102 Wine stopper
103 Genuflects
104 Overplays it
105 Actress O'Shea
107 "— the best of times ..."
108 Boxer Ali
111 — vu
112 University in North Carolina
113 Agts.' cuts
114 Just makes, with "out"
116 Narcissistic
117 "Makes sense now"
120 Suffix with cook or mock
121 "My man!"



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

SUDOKU



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!

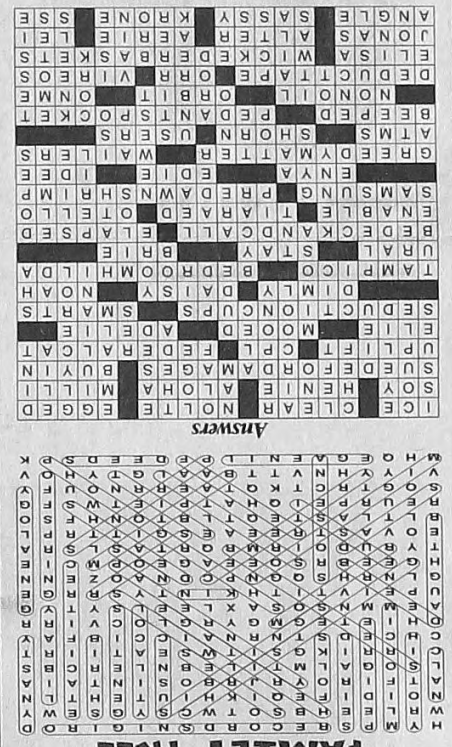
FAMILY TREE

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.



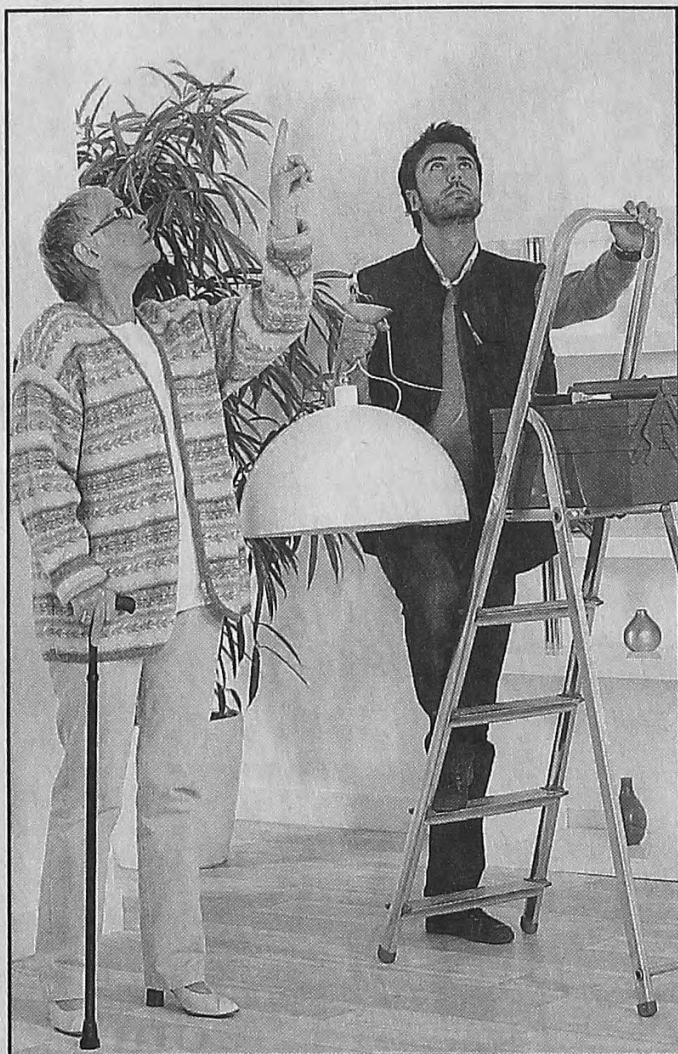
- ANCESTORS
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BIRTHS
BREED
CEMETERY
CENSUS
CERTIFICATE
CHRISTENING
CLAN
DATES
DAUGHTER
DEATHS
DEEDS
DIARIES
DYNASTY
FATHER
FOLKS
GENEALOGY
GENETICS
HERITAGE
HISTORY
ISSUE
KIN
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WILLS

ANSWER KEY



FAMILY TREE

Grid of numbers for the Family Tree puzzle.



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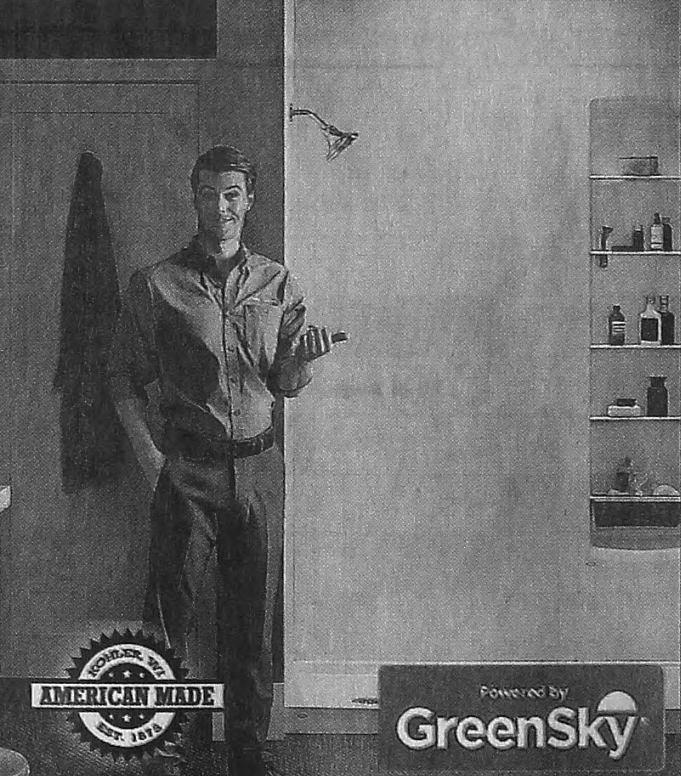
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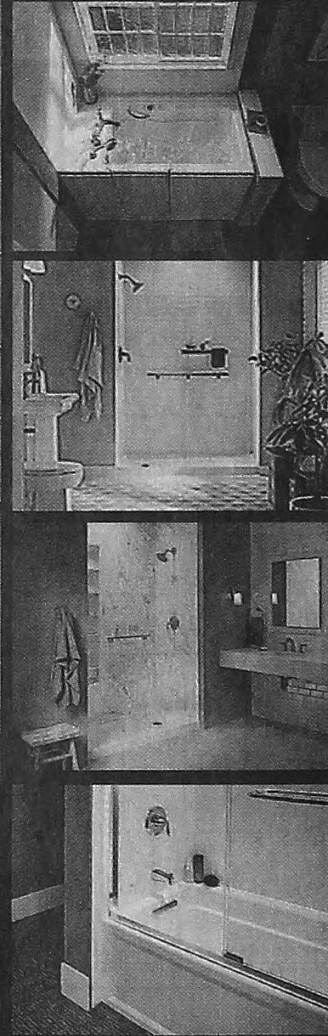

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*Offer valid on residential base installation of 3 Day Blinds brand products only, excluding shutters and special orders. Minimum purchase of \$750 required, excluding sales tax, shipping and handling. Not valid with any other offer or discount. Offer Code CEPC. Expires 12/31/21. 3 Day Blinds LLC has the following licenses: AZ ROC 321056, CA #1005986, CT HIC.0644950, NJ #13VH09390200, OR #209181, PA #PA107656, WA #3DAYBDB842KS, Nassau County, NY Home Improvement License H01073101, Rockland County, NY #H-12401-34-00-00, VA #2705172678 (Licensed through Great Windows Services, LLC). © 2021 3 Day Blinds LLC.



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