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### CANTON

# OBSERVER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2021 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Canton drivers have long holiday wish list

Ed Wright [HometownLife.com](http://HometownLife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The stretch of Saltz Road between Canton Center and Ridge roads is *not* Canton Township's version of the Autobahn — although the absence of even a single speed limit sign on either side of the 2.2-mile roadway might make one think otherwise.

The installation of speed limit markings along this heavily traveled pavement is just one of several upgrades township residents would like to see, at least based on a mini-avalanche of concerns posted on social media following the announcement that a full-functioning traffic light will be built at the intersection of Ridge, Saltz and Denton roads.

Using both safety and waiting times as arguing points, motorists/social media posters argued that selected intersections were in dire need of left turn arrows to make navigating the crossroads more efficient.

Recently-installed turn arrows have proven to be life-enhancers, residents insisted, at two intersections: Warren and Lilley roads; and Cherry Hill and

Lotz roads, both of which have experienced a rise in traffic congestion as Canton's population has steadily ticked upward since 1990.

The minimum cost of installing a left-turn arrow, according to quora.com, is \$50,000. The price could soar to close to \$1 million, depending on if right-of-

See **DRIVERS**, Page 2A



Kindergarten teacher Kim Mitchell listens as student Ameera Jones shares the questions she has for Santa Claus.  
JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Kindergartners get answers to Santa Claus-related questions

Shelby Tankersley [HometownLife.com](http://HometownLife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Hometown Life landed its biggest interview of all time the other day.

Santa Claus — yes, that Santa Claus — and Mrs. Holly Claus happened to stop by Livonia for a pre-Christmas chat as the holiday nears. This holly, jolly

couple with an international impact agreed to an interview on all things Christmas.

Needless to say, the pressure was on. We didn't want to ask them any silly questions. So, we decided to enlist a few Christmas experts to help us come up with some ideas.

Kim Mitchell's kindergarten class at

Randolph Elementary in Livonia graciously opened its door for us to pick their brains on what they'd ask Santa if they could ask him anything.

We talked reindeer, chimneys, cookies, wardrobe choices — you name it.

See **QUESTIONS**, Page 4A

## Northville's Miss America contestant reflects on competition

Ed Wright [HometownLife.com](http://HometownLife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Juggling a 32-credit medical school course load while serving as Miss Michigan and competing in the Miss America pageant was equal parts exhilaration, exhaustion and reward for Northville native graduate Vivian Zhong.

"When I returned home (Friday night), I slept 16 straight hours," Zhong admitted during a Sunday afternoon interview. "Myself and a lot of my 50 sister Miss America contestants have been texting photos of ourselves waking up from our extended sleeps."

"Every day I was there we were up until at least midnight rehearsing and doing other things, and then we'd be up at 6 a.m. the next morning. After a while, you're running on the adrenaline that the excitement of the event creates."

The 100th Miss America Pageant was held at the Mohegan Sun Resort in Uncasville, Connecticut. For the first time in modern-day history, it was livestreamed on the Peacock Network and not televised live on mainstream television.

Although Zhong was not selected as a top-10 contestant during the Dec. 16 finale, she cashed in on her intelligence and wide appeal across America by securing \$24,000 in scholarships.

Zhong, who performed a 90-second version of Frederic Chopin's Minute Waltz in the talent competition, won \$1,000 after being named the best talent of the contestants not in the pageant's top 10. She pocketed another

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# Ex-Menards security guard cleared of assault and battery charge

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

A jury cleared an ex-Menards security guard of assaulting a customer in Livonia's 16th District Court. Jury members acquitted the unemployed man of a misdemeanor assault and battery charge Dec. 13. The defendant, 57, of Walled Lake could not be reached for comment but

his attorney Steven Vitale said his client was relieved with the verdict. The jury reviewed evidence, Vitale said, that showed the customer was physically aggressive and using foul language. Leeway is often given, the attorney said, for people who have the right to defend themselves. The security guard apparently had no prior convictions or contact with the

law. "He's been a law-abiding citizen his whole life," Vitale said. Hometown Life typically does not name misdemeanor defendants. The Pinkerton security guard had incidents with two customers, and he lost the Menards detail and his job after they accused him of assault in August 2020. Another man was charged in a second case that was dismissed months af-

ter an Aug. 3 run-in. Before the trial, the second claimed he was pushed, struck, knocked back a few feet and jumped upon when he tried to leave the Middlebelt Road store on Aug. 27. Greg Rohl, the attorney who represented both men, did not respond to a request for comment. Contact reporter Susan Vela at [svela@hometownlife.com](mailto:svela@hometownlife.com).

## Contestant

Continued from Page 1A

\$10,000 in scholarship money by winning the America's Choice award, which is decided by an online public vote, and a \$10,000 Women in STEM scholarship. Each contestant also received \$3,000 for qualifying for the pageant.

"I think the most difficult part of the entire experience was seeing how disappointed some of my sisters were who didn't make the top 10," Zhong said. "This is a multi-year effort to get here to this stage for many of us, me included, so there is some disappointment when you fall short of your goals."

"Ultimately, though, we have to remember that the opinion of five judges shouldn't make us feel down about ourselves. Just to make it to that stage is an accomplishment we all need to feel proud about."

One of the week's highlights for Zhong was an opportunity to meet Farmington Hills native Kirsten Haglund, who earned the Miss America 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. "Kirsten has lived in Europe since I started competing (for Miss Michigan) so this was the first time I got to talk to her. It was a surreal experience."

Zhong has been an advocate for her social impact initiative "Golden Warriors: Fight Like a Kid" throughout her term as Miss Michigan, which runs through June of 2022.

Now that she's home and break from medical school, Zhong has one goal on her mind.

"I'm going to spend a few days relaxing with my family and chilling a little after a busy few months," she said.



Northville native Vivian Zhong is interviewed during the 100th Miss America Pageant. COURTESY OF VIVIAN ZHONG

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Canton Township-area residents want to see a left-turn arrow installed at the intersection of Beck and Ann Arbor roads. ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Drivers

Continued from Page 1A

way purchases and lengthy construction are required.

The roads affected by intersection-

improvement demands are all managed by Wayne County, with the exception of Ford Road, which is handled by the State of Michigan.

The most aggravating intersection in the township, an informal survey of drivers revealed, is the intersection of Beck and Ford roads — a brake light haven during rush hour given its lack of a turn arrow.

Enhancements at this intersection are problematic due to the presence of Fellows Creek, which runs parallel to the north side of Ford Road.

Left-turn arrows at the Ford Road-Ridge Road intersection are also in high demand, especially since the construction of subdivisions and multi-unit de-

velopments continue to pop up on what was formerly farmland.

In addition to requests for any form of light at the meeting point of Sheldon and Palmer roads — drivers are currently guided at the intersection by four-way stop signs — the installation of turn arrows at the intersection of Beck and Ann Arbor roads would be greatly appreciated by residents of Canton and Plymouth townships.

Lastly, the speed limit on the signless stretch of Saltz is 55 miles per hour, according to Michigan Vehicle Code 257.628.

Contact reporter Ed Wright at [edwright@hometownlife.com](mailto:edwright@hometownlife.com) or 517-375-1113.

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### Plymouth-Canton Community Schools ADVERTISEMENT TO BID

**RFP-USF FORM 470/FY2022** – The Board of Education of the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools will accept bids for Internal Connections services for FY2022 of the Universal Services Fund (USF) E-rate Program. Specifications are available from the following web site: [USAC.org](http://USAC.org). You may also obtain a copy of the RFP at the E.J. McClendon Educational Center 454 S. Harvey St., Plymouth, MI 48170 or on the district's website. All questions regarding this RFP should be emailed to [techrfp@pccsk12.com](mailto:techrfp@pccsk12.com). RFPs will be received by the Technology Department until 11:30 A.M. on January 14, 2022 local time when they will be publicly opened. The Board of Education reserves the right to reject or decline all bids, either in whole or in part.

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# Visits with Santa Claus help a Pawsitive cause

Eric Seals Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As they sit waiting, they'll notice Santa Claus on a couch with his white beard and red suit motioning for them to come see him.

Sometimes they're shaking with nerves, often looking back at Mom or Dad for reassurance, not sure what to make of him.

"I have a treat bag I'll use to make them feel more comfortable," says Santa Claus, played Dan Eleson, 68, of Canton, and of all the ones he'll see, "pugs and dachshunds are perfect, they just always seem to be carefree, very loving dogs."

At the recent Novi Pet Expo at the Suburban Collection Showplace on Dec. 3-5, Pawsitive Impact for Pets, a non-profit founded to keep pets safe and healthy, used its "Photos with Santa" booth to raise funds for its organization.

In 2010, Tonya Whitehead, president and co-founder, and volunteers saw pictures with Santa as a great way to raise money for a great cause.

An emailed picture with Santa costs \$10; a printed one is \$25, and all proceeds go to Pawsitive Impact for Pets.

"Nonprofits like ours, other shelters and rescues focus on animal welfare. We are the last line of defense, and it takes time and money to do that kind of thing," Whitehead said.

During the three-day pet expo, volunteer photographer Joanna Poe photographed all kinds of dogs, 157 of them.

"Every dog is different," said Poe, who admits she's more of a cat person. "They all have different personalities and it's fun to see them react to Santa."

She says patience with the dogs is a must to do her job and that "my favorite moments are when we get a dog that isn't nervous around Santa and just looks happy and we'll get a good picture out of it."

For Santa, three straight days posing for pictures with of all kinds of dogs sitting on his lap or next to him does attract lots of dog hairs and smells.

Santa Eleson said he has to take great care of the six Santa suits he has.

For more info about Pawsitive Impact for Pets visit [pawsitiveimpactforpets.com](http://pawsitiveimpactforpets.com).



Kat and Charlie Kinzel, of Belleville, try to get Buddy, a shiba inu, to cooperate with Santa Claus, played by Dan Eleson, during the Novi Pet Expo at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi on Dec. 4. PHOTOS BY ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS



Dogs Freya, left, and Cooper sit with Santa as their owners try to keep their attention on photographer Joanna Poe.



Poodles Oliver and Henry, both 3, sit with Santa Claus.

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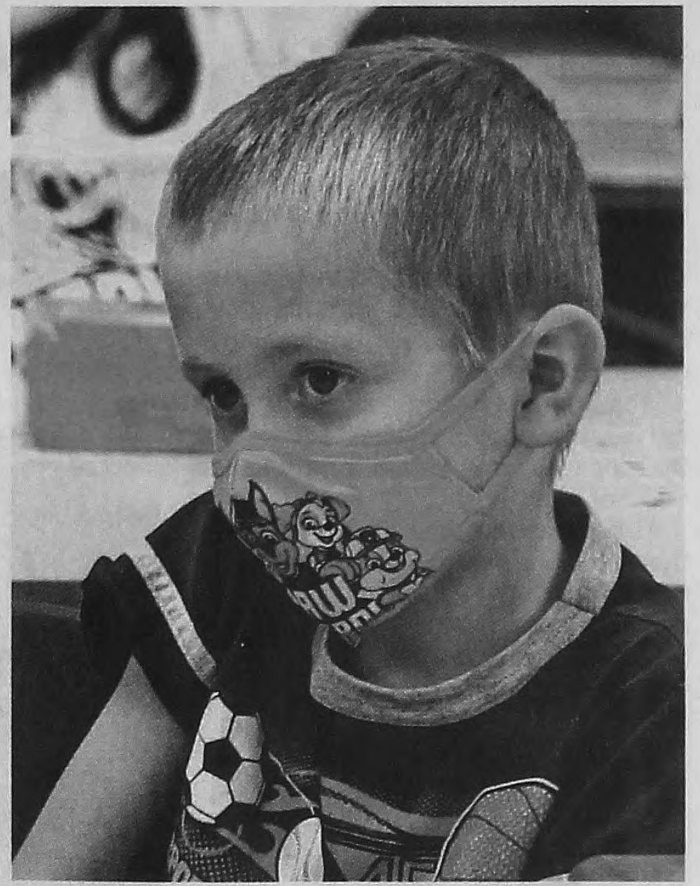
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Santa and Mrs. Claus greet some visitors Dec. 14 in their sled trailer. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Randolph Elementary student Raylen Stiegmeir.

## Questions

Continued from Page 1A

Here's what they wanted to know:

**How, Leo Rojas wants to know, do you get the reindeer to fly?**

It's all from the elven magic that was bestowed upon me back when I was a child after I lost both of my parents.

**How, Jayden Statham and Aryana Smith want to know, did you grow such a big beard?**

I just let it grow year-round. I trim it up, but I don't shave it. I like looking like Santa year-round

— I'll find children who are being good and recognize them for that.

**Why, Alena Lubus wants to know, is your coat red?**

Red happened to be the color my mother had me in when I was found by the elves. The red is to honor my mother and the things she believed about Christmas.

**Why, Bailey Taylor wants to know, do you like cookies and milk?**

And, Mrs. Mitchell wants to know, what's your favorite kind of cookie?

Back in the day, cookies were the easiest thing to make so I've always

stayed with that tradition. Some people didn't like receiving gifts and not giving anything back, so I told them they could leave cookies or carrots as a "thank you."

I like to eat sugar cookies with no frosting. I like to have a little extra butter so they're nice and moist in the middle, too. They're best cooked with a caramel brown on the bottom.

**What do you get asked for the most?**

The three most common ones are world peace, no more COVID and no more school shootings. Those are the three big ones.

What most people don't realize is that Santa gets asked the tough questions.

**The entire class is curious: What you do in your free time in the North Pole?**

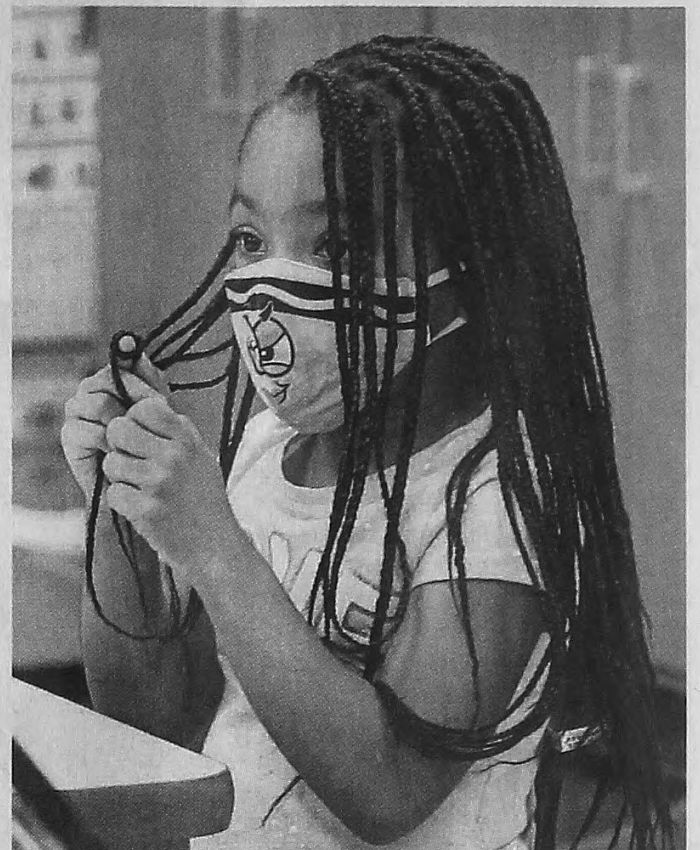
People think we spend our time up at the North Pole, but we don't. We have the elves up there doing their jobs — and we'll stop to visit them — but we're out looking for kids and adults being good. We want to promote a love-based world, not a fear-based world. So, we go out there to find those kids and adults and remind them to keep doing good.

Do you know how you stay on the good list? By being true to who you are.

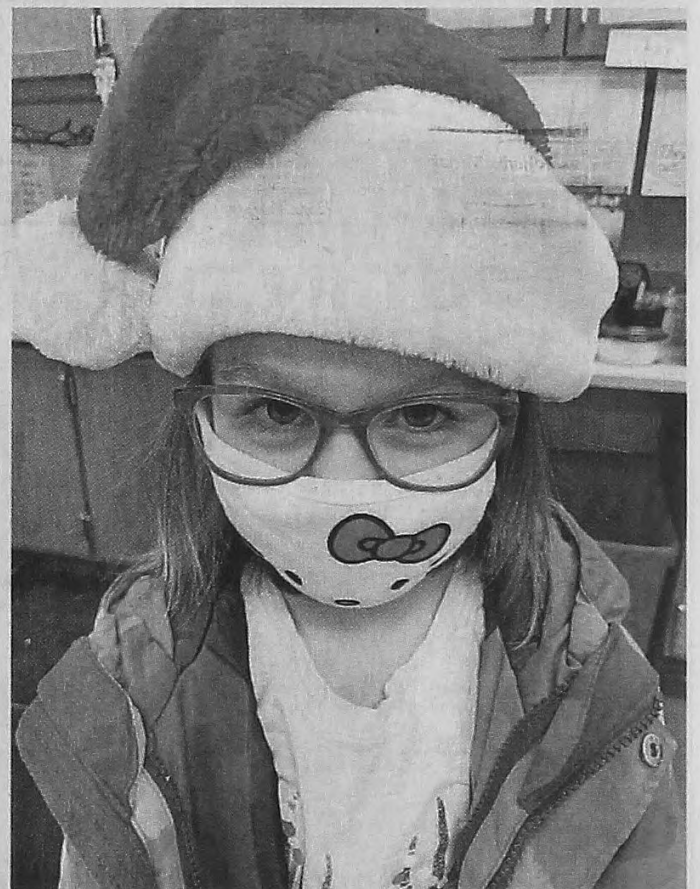
**How, Samantha Kartmann wants to know, do you get down the chimney? And, Farrah Ahmadi wants to know, what do you do at houses without chimneys?**

It's the magic I have from the elves that allows me to do it. If people don't have a chimney, I go through the key hole. All houses have key holes.

Santa will be around Livonia through the Christmas season and is at Greenmead Historical Park on the weekends as part of the park's Night of Lights event. He'll meet for photos or do Zoom calls when preferred. People can learn more at [believesantaed.com](http://believesantaed.com).



Randolph Elementary student Aryana Smith.



Randolph Elementary student Ripley Young.



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Randolph Elementary kindergarten teacher Kim Mitchell talks to her students.

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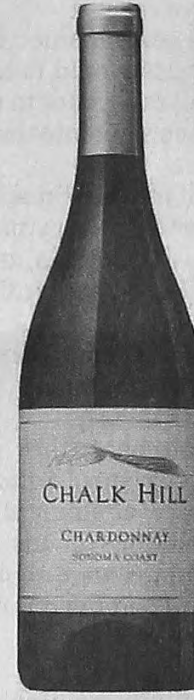
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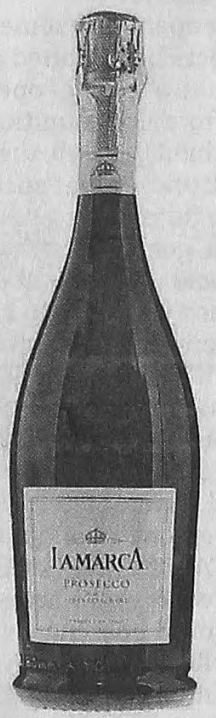
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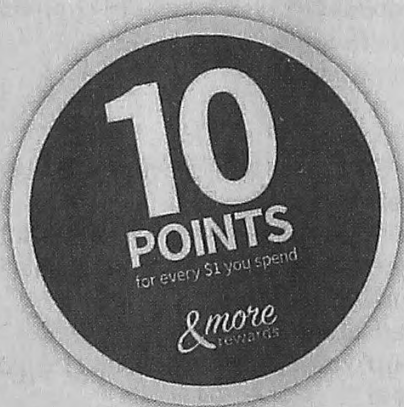
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# Canton Planet Fitness relocates to Ford Road

David Veselenak [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's been a long wait, but the opportunity to work out on Ford Road has finally arrived.

The Planet Fitness that formerly operated on Canton Center Road in Canton Township relocated to the former Canton GDX 7 movie theater at 43555 Ford Road.

Sydney Schultz, the gym's assistant manager, said the move doesn't feel real to her yet.

"To be honest, it's still a little surreal," she said. "I almost feel like I'm helping out at another club, but then we have our own 'Canton, Michigan' sign so it's kind of a nice reminder, like, I'm at my club. This is mine. We did it, we moved."

The theater closed in 2019 accompanied by the announcement that Planet Fitness would take over the space, a process that took several years to complete. The gym relocated in early December into the building, which is about double in size.

Inside the gym are many of the same machines and offerings found at other Planet Fitness gyms. Many of the cardio machines, such as treadmills, are brand-new to the gym, having not been used until the new space opened.

They also have a lot more of them: there's double the number of certain pieces of equipment, as well as some new workouts for guests to use.

"With the brand-new equipment, they did come with a bunch of brand-new programs," Schultz said.

The center also has some new equipment it did not have at its former space, including rowers and hand bikes. Those hand bike machines were requested by guests, Schultz said, who were coming off of physical therapy and still wanted to use them.

"I'm so excited to have these," she said.

The gym also has its functional training room and circuit workout space as well, similar to what was offered at the previous location.

There's no telling the gym space was formerly a movie theater, though Schultz said there is one projection room that was kept intact that's currently being used for storage.

The space also has many of the amenities found at other clubs for Black Card members, which is the higher-priced membership tier. Those include tanning beds, massage chairs and the Total Body Enhancement machine.

The opening is something the club's employees and members have waited a long time for: Schultz said in less than a week of opening, more than 90 new members from communities like Westland and Belleville had joined the club, the lone Planet Fitness in Canton. She attributes that success to several factors.

"Definitely being on Ford Road has helped with the overall general traffic, but also I've had numerous members, even members from other clubs coming in and they want this to be their home club just because it's been such a long time coming," Schultz said. "I do think it's a combination of being so updated and so new and being on Ford Road."

Doug Fletcher, the gym's manager, said having a larger club is another benefit that new members have looked forward to.

"Everyone's just super thrilled to have it open," he said. "All the new members that have been joining, that's what we've been hearing."

A grand opening celebration is planned for Jan. 6 that will include giveaways, food and other activities. More information can be found at [planetfitness.com](http://planetfitness.com).

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



Planet Fitness has relocated from Canton Center Road to Ford Road, to the former Canton GDX 7 movie theater. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Assistant manager Sydney Shultz said the additional space has allowed the gym to double the number of some of its equipment.



Tom Schlaff lifts weights Dec. 15 at Planet Fitness's new location. A grand opening celebration will be Jan. 6.

## Obituaries

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



**Arline Strane**

Arline Strane age 93 passed away peacefully December 4, 2021. Preceded by husband Richard (Dick) Strane. Survived by her children Jack (Penny) and Scott (Barb). Also grandchildren Andrew (Sasha) and Greg (Morgan) and great grandchildren Logan and Everly.

Arline enjoyed golf, boating on Michigan lakes and was a long time DSO, DIA and Fisher supporter. Family Memorial Service at a later date.

*The  
Memories  
Remain*

## Catholic Central driveway plan to be revised

David Veselenak [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com)  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It appears plans are moving forward with a new driveway connecting Detroit Catholic Central High School to 12 Mile Road.

The proposal, which would connect the high school campus at 27225 Wixom Road in Novi with a stretch of 12 Mile Road to the north, received support from the city's planning commission after being tabled earlier this fall due to issues brought up by surrounding residents.

"We are back after a two-month delay seeking approval for our project," Ed Turek, president of the high school, said during a meeting Dec. 8 at the Novi Civic Center. "We've made major concessions to the project."

Residents of the nearby Berkshire Pointe neighborhood came out en masse at a planning commission meeting earlier this fall when the plans were first publicly discussed. Many of those residents spoke out against the plans, saying it would negatively affect them. After the planning commission tabled the proposal, it gave time for meetings between the school and the neighbors to take place and hammer out issues.

Changes to the plans include keeping the current vegetation to help buffer between the development and the homes, as well as Catholic Central adding additional trees, in addition to other conditions.

If approved and constructed, the plans call for a driveway built from the high school's parking lot that would extend through the currently-vacant field to the north of the buildings and exit onto 12 Mile Road south of Grand River.

While the audience had significantly fewer people in it than during the initial presentation of the project in October, there were some people who spoke out and said they still had issues with the plan.

One of those people was Lori Rich, who lives in



The field north of Detroit Catholic Central High School, where a proposed driveway would connect the school to 12 Mile Road in Novi.

DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

the nearby Leisure Co-Operative just north of 12 Mile in Wixom near where the driveway will connect. She said she's concerned not only about environmental issues with such a development, but with additional traffic through the neighborhood.

"We're concerned about cut-through traffic," she said. "The 50-and-up community should not be a major cut-through street."

The agreement and collaboration between the school and the neighbors nearby was one Commission John Avdoulos said he was pleased with.

"It seems like quite a bit of work has been done to get this in the right direction," he said. "I just want to encourage the continues communication between Catholic Central and the neighbors and the city."

The proposal next goes to the city council for its review and determination.

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





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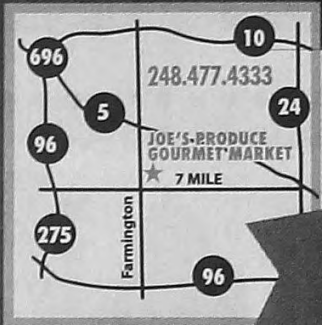
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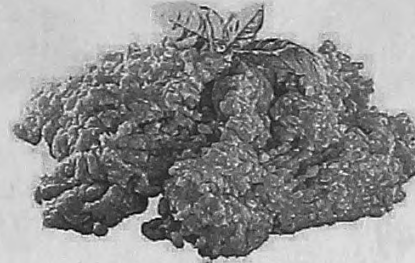
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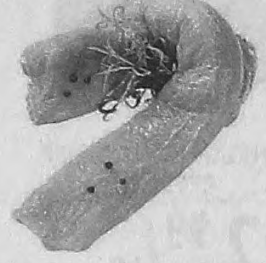
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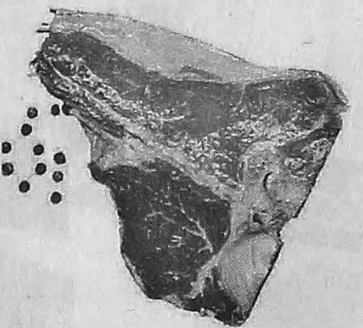
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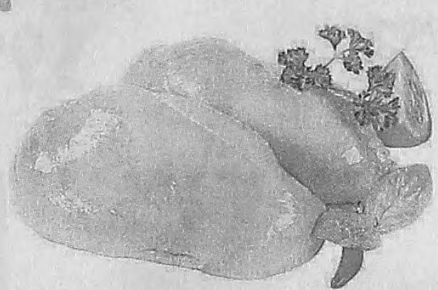
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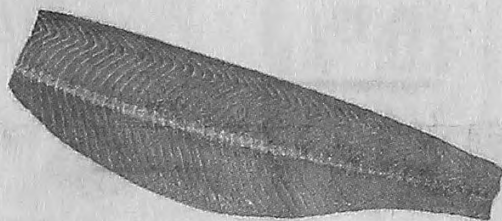
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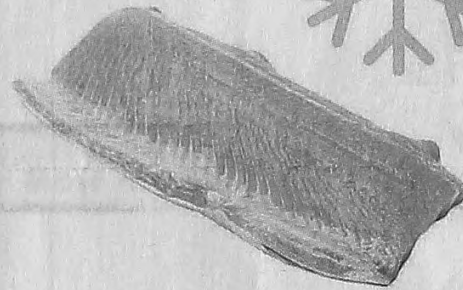
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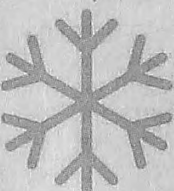
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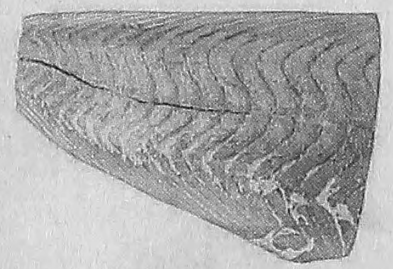
WHOLE CRAWFISH

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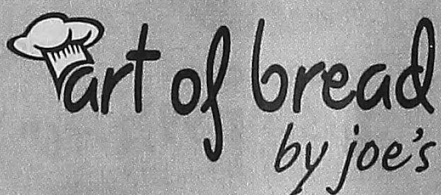
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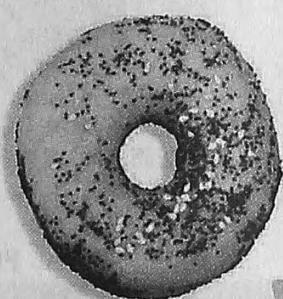
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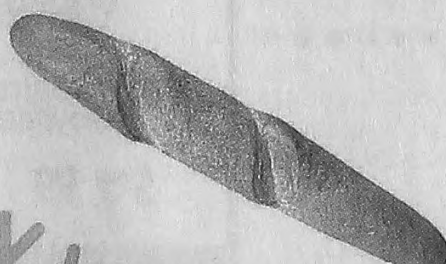
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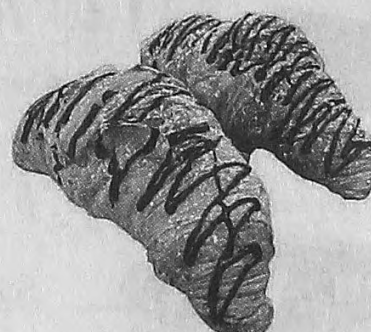
BAGEL

59¢ EA.



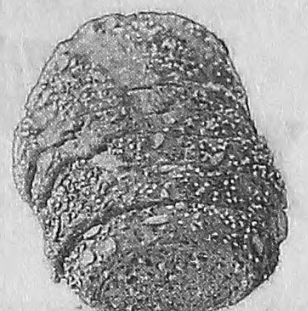
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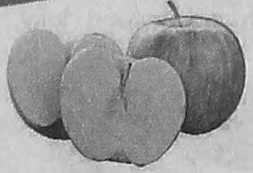


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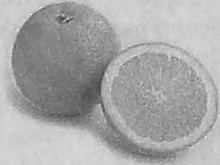
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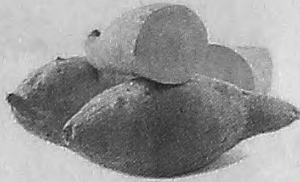
ORGANIC D'ANJOU PEARS  
**\$1.99/LB.**



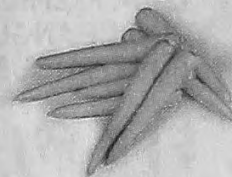
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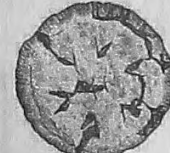
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# SPORTS

## Plymouth Christian senior marks 1K career points

**Brandon Folsom** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The finish wasn't what Plymouth Christian Academy wanted to see during its girls basketball game Friday night.

But the start is something Anna Fernandez will never forget.

Two weeks ago, the senior scored her 1,000th career point, which is a huge accomplishment, especially considering PCA is one of the smallest schools in the state and it plays one of the toughest schedules.

The only problem is she did it during the Ice Breaker tournament against Schoolcraft at Kalamazoo Central. That

meant hardly anyone, outside of a few of the players' parents, was around to witness her achieve such an accolade.

So the Eagles did it right when it got the chance.

Their first game back in their home gym, before the opening tipoff, they celebrated Fernandez by presenting her with a game ball for her achievement.

She took pictures at halfcourt with her family, and most of the student section was waving signs congratulating her. Some were even wearing shirts that depicted the number "1,000."

It was a huge deal. The only thing that sullied the evening was PCA host-

See POINTS, Page 2B



Plymouth's Jace Petree passes against Berkley on Dec. 16. The Wildcats won, 72-62. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Plymouth freshman from familiar family

**Brandon Folsom** Hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The chatter about Jace Petree was non-stop among the support staff at the scorer's table after Thursday's game.

"How about the freshman tonight, huh?" one person from the athletic department said. "He had 25 points? It looks like he's going to have a pretty good career here."

What Petree did in the Wildcats' 72-62 victory over Berkley as a first-year player was almost unthinkable.

But then you realize he's one of THOSE Petrees, and it all just makes sense.

Plymouth (3-0) got its first true test against a scrappy Bears squad that punches well above its weight in the Oakland Activities Association-Blue. They're not on the same level as Clark-

ston, Ferndale or North Farmington in the tougher Red division, but they have some talented kids who can play.

Namely, Tamir Runinkevich, who sat most of the opening half in foul trouble. His absence allowed the Wildcats to get ahead by as many as 18 points before halftime.

The junior came back after the break and proceeded to score 15 of his 20 points, including leading Berkley on a

10-0 run that trimmed its deficit to just 46-42 with 2:45 left in the third quarter.

Berkley's Ben Maurice (16 points) buried a pair of 3-pointers early in the fourth, and then Runinkevich nailed a fadeaway to make it a 57-54 score.

On the verge of giving up a complete comeback, Plymouth needed some answers.

See FRESHMAN, Page 3B

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Plymouth Christian's Anna Fernandez attacks the basket against Ypsilanti Arbor Prep on Dec. 17. The Gators won, 72-55. PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## Points

Continued from Page 1B

ing Ypsilanti Arbor Prep, an early favorite to win the Division 3 state championship.

Led by four-star Texas A&M commit Mya Petticord (23 points), the Gators had no trouble outmuscling the Eagles to a 72-55 win.

"It was a really cool experience," the fourth-year starter said. "My family got to come to the (Schoolcraft) game, which was really cool. My friends, it was nice to have them here celebrating at our home game. After I practiced here for so many years, to be celebrated here, it was really cool. I really appreciate them. It was super nice of them to come out and watch me. I really appreciate them."

Fernandez scored 10 of her team-best 19 points in the opening quarter, and the Eagles (3-1) played the Gators tough during certain spurts throughout the night. But they just didn't have enough to keep up with Arbor Prep, which made 11 3-pointers.

"They have great talent over there," longtime coach Rod Windle said. "Basketball is a physical game, and our kids need to learn what that's like in terms of that level of play. I thought we rose to that a few times ourselves in terms of our physical play, but it was more reactionary than initiation. I felt like we felt it out more in the first half more than the second half when we just came harder, I think. We learned a lot about tough defense tonight."

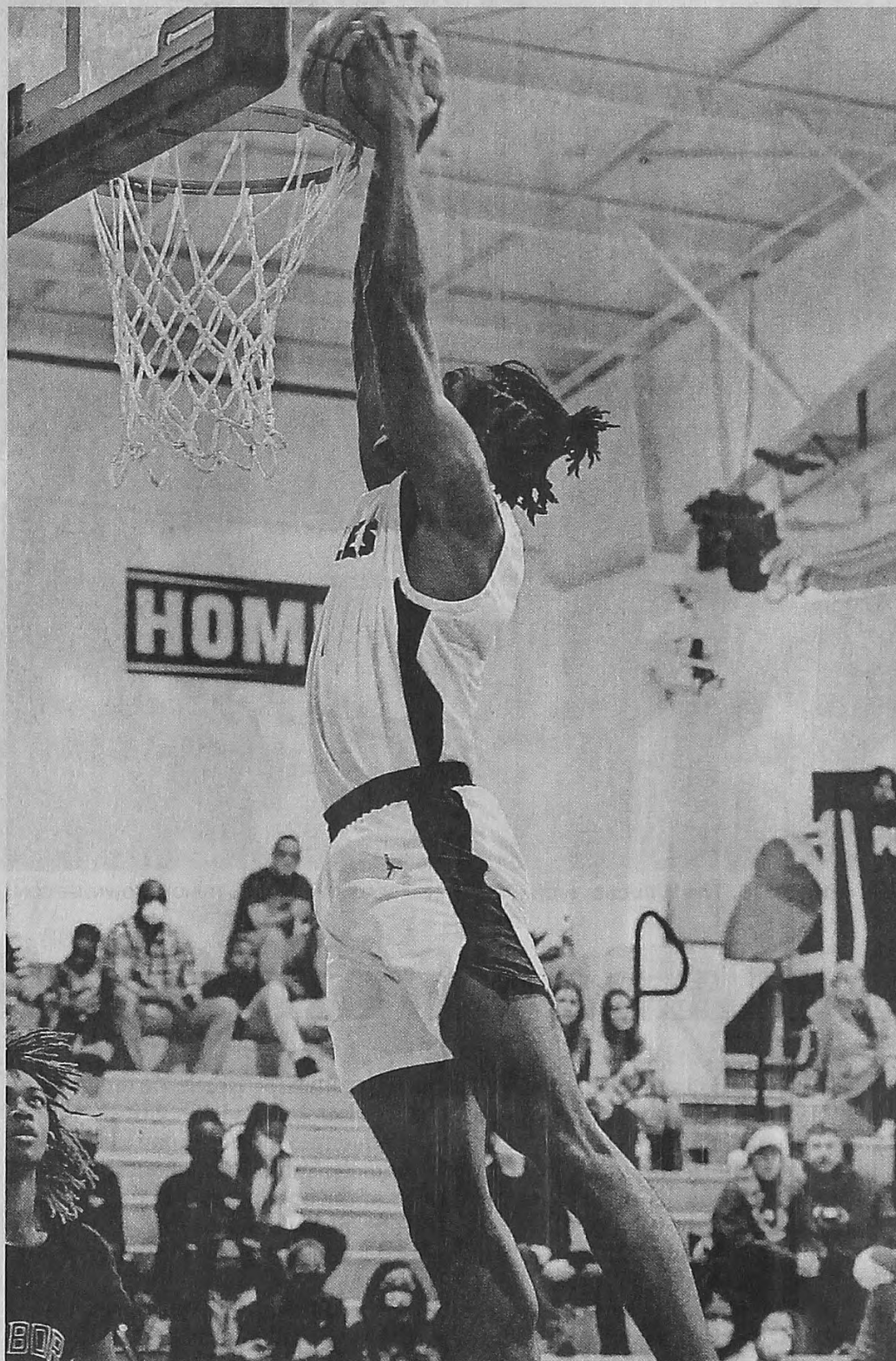
Also contributing for the Eagles were Hailey Maulbetsch with 17 points and Morganne Houk with 11.

Arbor Prep kept Fernandez scoreless in the the fourth quarter.

Nevertheless, the loss will be looked at as a tool to get the Eagles ready for postseason play. It won't overshadow Fernandez's big pre-game moment.

"Anna has just been a shining star for our team," Windle said. "Her personality is outgoing and infectious, and she invites others to work alongside of her in ways that make others work better, too. She has a work ethic that's really hard, and somehow she wants others to come along with her, and she does it without wearing them out. It's a fine line for captains to do that, but she's like, 'Hey, let's go! Let's get after it!' Her positive attitude and her own work ethic rubs off on other kids."

When Windle tabbed Fernandez as a varsity player in ninth grade, he was unsure where she'd fit in the rotation. It



Plymouth Christian's Chibi Anwunah dunks against Ypsilanti Arbor Prep.

took no time for him to realize she needed to be a starter.

"As a coach, you kind of push freshmen down a little bit," Windle added. "Then she stepped up defensively and did some things in practice that were eye-opening. Then I was like, 'I guess she needs to be starting out there right away,' because she was a true starter as a freshman."

"As a varsity coach, having a freshman, I kind of didn't let it be Day 1 and kind of pushed her off a little bit, but she showed me her tenacity and toughness. She has a gentle spirit. Sometimes

that's deceptive because she has a gentle spirit about her. She's tenacious. She showed her mettle early in the practice sessions as a freshman."

### Eagles benefit from playing tough competition early on

If boys basketball used the new football playoff points system to determine postseason seeding, PCA would be well on its way to hosting every game in March.

The Eagles (1-3) allowed Arbor Prep to make 15 3-pointers and run away with

an easy 75-59 win.

But that doesn't matter. PCA scheduled the game because the Gators are a talented Division 3 program, one that's only going to make the Eagles improve at a quicker rate.

And that's been the theme for PCA. It's already split with D-1 programs South Lyon East and Livonia Churchill. It'll face two more in Plymouth and Livonia Franklin before winter break.

For a D-4 squad with an enrollment of only 178 students, it certainly has been punching above its weight.

In football, the bigger your schedule, the more you're rewarded. The Eagles are hoping these tougher tests prepare them for a deep playoff run.

"Our December schedule has already been Class A, Class A and Class C," coach Matt Windle said. "We finish out December with Plymouth and Livonia Franklin. So we build that schedule on purpose in December. December is meant for us to really break down what we're trying to work on so we can prepare for a really tough conference and a long stretch in March. As much as we misstepped on some things tonight, we learned some things and got better, which is why we schedule those games in the first place."

Jordan Scott led with 17 points, Chibi Anwunah added 14, which included a pair of two-handed dunks, Nate Pierson nailed two 3s and finished with 10 points and Cam Weller had eight points as well as a dunk himself.

The issue for the Eagles, though, was not trusting their defensive assignments.

The Gators (5-0) kickstarted many of their possessions with drives to the basket. PCA would suck in on defense and leave Arbor Prep's shooters wide open on the outside.

That must change going forward.

"Tonight we specifically talked about trusting our rim protectors and not getting sucked in on attacks," Windle added. "We got sucked in way too many times. They probably had 12 3s wide open because our guys got sucked in because that's just a natural reaction. Our job is to trust our teammates, Chibi Anwunah and Cam Weller, whose job is to protect that rim and make them shoot (inside) with two over the top vs. an easy kick outside for a 3."

"That was the big thing for us tonight: They just shot way too many 3s because we weren't playing our rules that we talked about before the game."

Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsom-brandonj.



# Meet the season's top 100 girls basketball players

**Mick McCabe** Special to Detroit Free Press  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Free Press high school sports guru Mick McCabe gives his list of the top 100 girls basketball players in Michigan for the 2021-22 season.

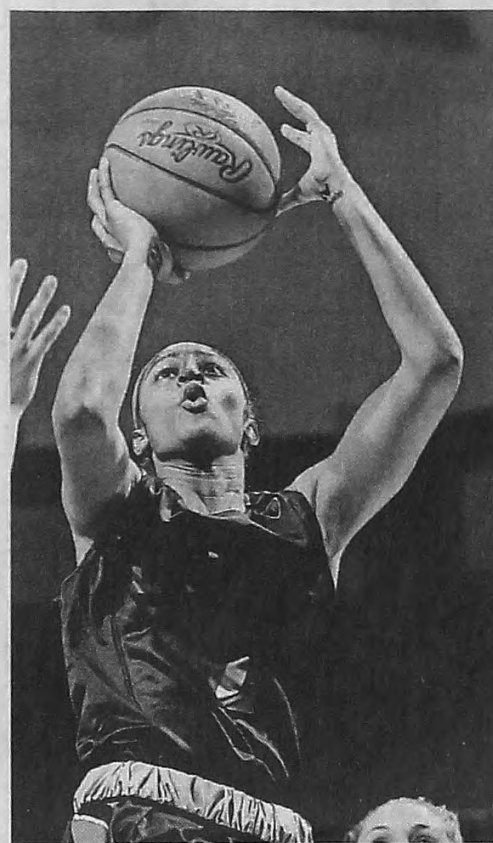
## Top 25

1. Ruby Whitehorn, 6-0, senior, Detroit Edison
2. Abbey Kimball, 5-10, senior, Grand Rapids West Catholic
3. Mya Petticord, 5-9, senior, Arbor Prep
4. Theryn Hallock, 5-9, senior, Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central
5. Brooke Daniels, 5-6, senior, L'Anse Creuse North
6. Jaci Tubergen, 6-0, senior, Hudsonville
7. Madisen Wardell, 6-0, senior, Detroit Edison
8. Alaina Diaz, 5-7, senior, Hudsonville
9. Christian Sanders, 5-9, senior, Detroit Renaissance
10. Cadence Dykstra, 5-9, junior, Grand Rapids West Catholic
11. Lily Zeinstra, 6-0, sophomore, Byron Center
12. Faith Carson, 6-4, junior, Buchanan
13. Macey Fegan, 5-11, junior, Standish-Sterling
14. Sarah Rambus, 6-4, junior, Flushing
15. Macy Brown, 5-11, junior, East Grand Rapids
16. Kennedy Blair, 5-10, junior, Dearborn Divine Child
17. Lexi Boyke, 6-1, junior, Frankenmuth
18. Tadassa Brown, 6-3, senior, Brooklyn Columbia Central
19. Zoe Spoelman, 6-2, senior, Grand Haven
20. Lexie Bowers, 5-7, junior, Kent City
21. Brook Simpson, 5-9, sophomore, Belding
22. Taylor Anderson, 5-10, senior, South Lyon East
23. Ellie Toney, 6-0, senior, Corunna
24. MacKenzie Bisballe, 6-2, sophomore, Lake City
25. Alecsis Smith, 6-2, senior Bay

City Central

## The next 75

- (in alphabetical order)
- Maya Anderson, 5-9, sophomore, Detroit Cass Tech
- Emma Arico, 5-6, sophomore, Birmingham Detroit Country Day
- Annabel Ayrault, 5-11, junior, Grosse Pointe North
- Paris Bass, 5-11, junior, Wayne
- Rakiyah Beal, 5-10, senior, Hamtramck
- Mackenzie Bell, 5-8, junior, Sault Ste. Marie
- Jaden Benschoter, 6-1, senior, Tecumseh
- Ashley Bower, 5-10, senior, Portland
- Grace Bradford, 5-11, senior, Maple City Glen Lake
- Ella Burger, 5-7, senior, Macomb Dakota
- Kaitlyn Cain, 5-8, senior, Marysville
- Klaire Caldwell, 5-7, sophomore, Midland Dow
- Asia Cochran, 5-7, Redford Westfield Prep
- Mary Copple, 5-7, junior, Brighton
- Indya Davis, 5-9, sophomore, West Bloomfield
- Summer Davis, 5-9, sophomore, West Bloomfield
- Jade Dawson, 5-9, senior, Midland
- Tayla Dillard, 5-8, sophomore, Kalamazoo Central
- Olivia Dirkse, 5-7, senior, Davison
- Evie Doezeza, 6-2, senior, Grand Rapids Christian
- Kaley Douglass, 5-7, senior, Williamston
- Jaidyn Elam, 5-10, sophomore, Birmingham Detroit Country Day
- McKenna Ferguson, 5-6, junior, Byron Center
- Anna Fernandez, 5-7, senior, Plymouth Christian
- Regan Finkbeiner, 5-6, junior, Hemlock
- Madelyn Geers, 5-9, sophomore, Kent City
- Julia Gilbert, 5-10, senior, Port Huron
- Sophie Gray, 6-2, senior, Temperance Bedford
- Hillary Griffin, 5-9, senior, Parma Western
- Lauren Gunn, 5-4, senior, Saginaw Heritage



**Detroit Edison guard Ruby Whitehorn (2) makes a jump shot against Freeland during the MHSAA girls Division 2 final at Van Noord Arena in 2019.** JUNFU HAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS

- Marybeth Halonen, 5-8, senior, Calumet
- Anna Herberholz, 5-5, senior, Birmingham Marian
- Alyssa Hill, 6-1, senior, Negaunee
- Elyssa Kincaid, 5-10, junior, Riverview
- Alexa Kolnitys, 5-7, senior, Midland Dow
- Desrae Kyles, 6-5, junior, Benton Harbor
- Gabrielle Lutchka, 5-11, senior, Grass Lake
- Alyna Lewis, 5-7, senior, Parma Western
- Davai Matthews, 6-2, senior, Wayne
- Gracey Metz, 6-1, senior, Hartland
- Lydia Meredith, 5-7, senior, Portland St. Patrick
- Maria Millado, 5-10, senior, Marquette
- Ella Miller, 6-2, senior, East Lansing
- Adelyn Moore, 5-10, junior, Caro
- Maddi Osantowski, 5-9, senior,

Reese

- Abby Parkinson, 5-9, senior, Hale
- Sydney Pnacek, 6-0, senior, Dexter
- Natalie Prophet, 5-8, senior, Ishpeming Westwood
- Abby Rey, 5-10, senior, Midland Dow
- Gabby Reynolds, 5-9, sophomore, Holland West Ottawa
- Kamryn Richards, 5-6, senior, Grosse Pointe South
- Mia Riley, 5-7, senior, Fowler
- Amanda Roach, 5-6, senior, Hartland
- Quinn Robak, 6-0, junior, Waterford Our Lady
- Diamond Sawyer, 6-0, senior, Muskegon
- Hannah Schroeder, 5-8, senior, Allendale
- Ally Schultz, 5-8, senior, St. Ignace
- Madison Skorupski, 5-9, senior, Clarkston
- Paige Sleeman, 5-8, senior, Houghton
- Lauren Sollom, 6-3, senior, Hartland
- Maeve St. John, 5-7, senior, Howell
- McKenzie Swanson, 6-2, sophomore, Birmingham Marian
- Breanna Thomas, 6-0, junior, Redford Westfield Prep
- Taylor Thompson, 5-10, senior, Grand Blanc
- Soraya Timms, 5-8, senior, East Lansing
- Tara Townsend, 5-7, senior, Frankfort
- Janae Tyler, 6-0, junior, Holt
- Alaila Walker, 5-7, senior, Kalamazoo Central
- Leila Wells, 5-9, sophomore, Chelsea
- Maya White, 6-1, junior, Farmington Hills Mercy
- Lauren Wilder, 5-9, sophomore, Manton
- Nevaeh Williams, 5-5, senior, Mt. Clemens
- Kari Woods, 5-8, senior, Ypsilanti Arbor Prep
- Avery Zeinstra, 5-7, senior, Byron Center
- Kendal Zeiter, 6-2, senior, Troy

**Note:** Lexi Bargesser, 5-8, senior from defending Division 3 state champ Grass Lake tore her ACL and meniscus in the season opener and is out for the year. She signed with Indiana and would have been one of the top three players in the state.

## Freshman

Continued from Page 1B

It got two.

First, Bilal Hajjoul (nine points) sank a 3 in front of his bench. The senior celebrated by hanging his goose-neck follow through in the air as he backpedaled back on defense with a six-point lead.

One possession later, the Wildcats swung the ball around until it landed in Petree's hands. He sank a Steph Curry-lengthed 3 to put them up by nine which all but ended the Bears' chances of stealing the road victory.

Berkley resorted to fouling in the bonus to regain possessions, but Plymouth made nine freebies. That included Petree going 4-of-4 down the stretch from the foul line.

In only his third varsity game, the freshman led all scorers with 25 points and made five triples in all. That included the one that gave the Wildcats their biggest lead of the night in the second quarter as well as the dagger in the fourth.

"He's been playing ball since he was a little fella," Plymouth coach Mike Soukup said. "His dad works with him all the time. He's got sisters who play Division I basketball, so he's gotten beaten up by older guys a lot and his sisters.

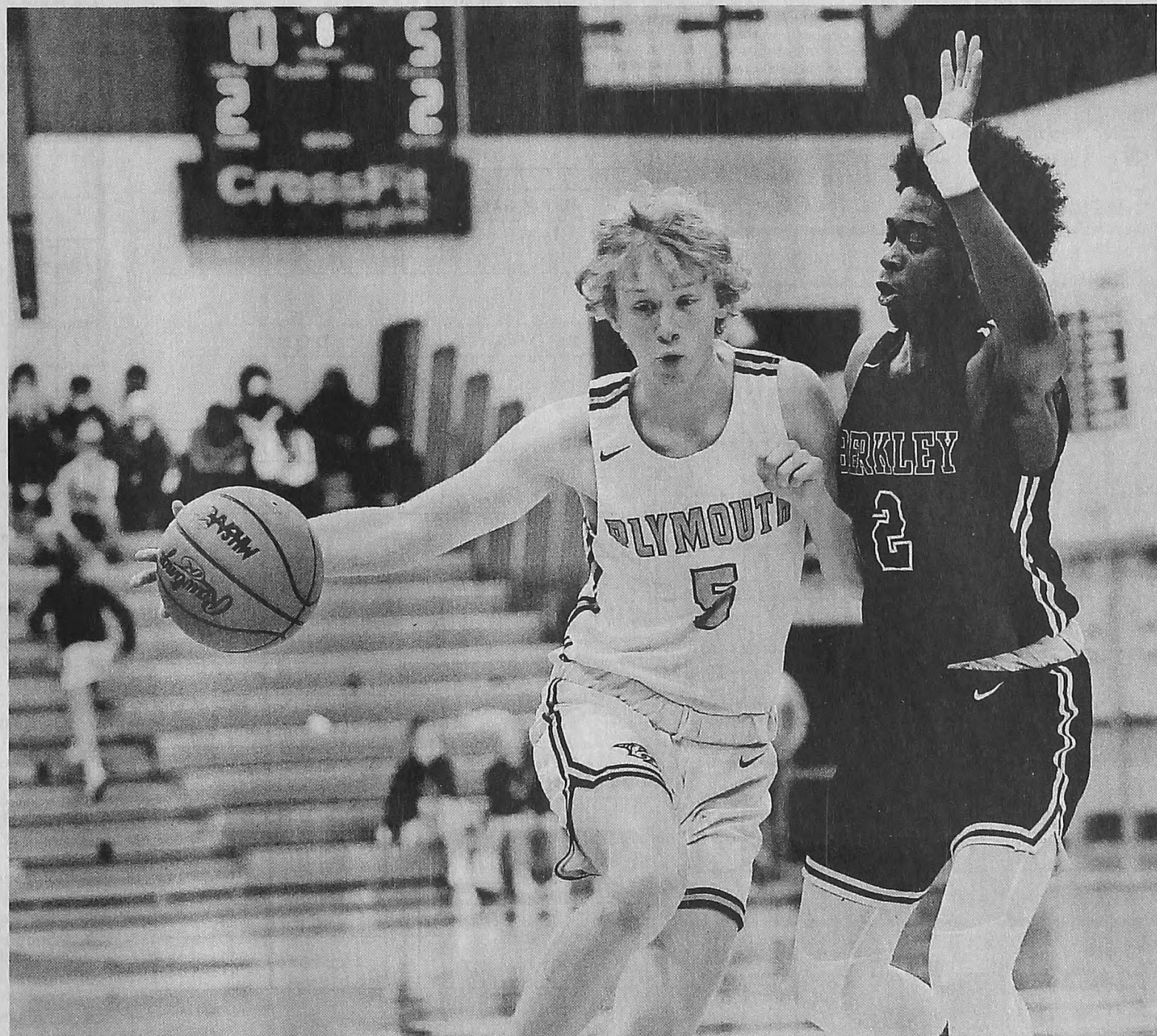
"So that's where he comes from. I'm glad he's on our side. I'm glad he's on our team. More than anything else, he's a good kid. He's a coachable kid. That's what I like the most about him. If you ask him to do something, he's going to try and to do it to the best of his ability, and he can definitely shoot the basketball. There's no question about it."

If you're a high school basketball fan in Michigan, a bell should have just rung in your head.

Yes, Petree's older sisters are *those* Petrees from Ypsilanti Arbor Prep.

Lasha, a Michigan Miss Basketball finalist in 2018, and Mahri pushed the Gators to three state finals appearances 2016-2019. That included their winning the school's first championship in 2016 under then-coach Rod Wells, who, coincidentally, now coaches across the Plymouth-Canton campus at Salem.

The sisters were hard to miss on the court back then. Like Jace, they both have smooth shooting motions, but they can also attack the hoop and score in traffic. The only thing more noticeable



**Plymouth's Bryce Garbacz dribbles past Berkley's Jacob Sheriff on Dec. 16.** TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

than their ability to score was their big hair that often filled the frame of the photos they appeared in.

They both played together at Bradley University in Illinois but have since transferred to other programs. Lasha plays at Rutgers, while Mahri is at UTEP.

"I've been playing basketball since I could remember," Jace said of being around a basketball family. "Getting in the gym every single day that I can, doing what I need to do. I've been playing with older guys ever since I was little. I've never played with my age group before. So it's given me that toughness and

giving me that older skill set in my own game, and that's what makes me better."

So that's why Jace has the confidence, in just his third varsity appearance, to step up in crunch time and take game-deciding 3-pointers.

Soukup said Jace never gets timid, something he realized early on during a summer league game against Romulus this past off-season.

"He was just not afraid," Soukup said. "Some of the (newer) guys were a little intimidated by the athleticism and some of the other stuff, and he was just not afraid. He's still not afraid. He's a

big-game guy. We're glad he's here on our side. He's a coachable kid, and his parents did a good job with him in that regard. He's very humble."

So humble, in fact, that he had few words to say about burying the game-winner.

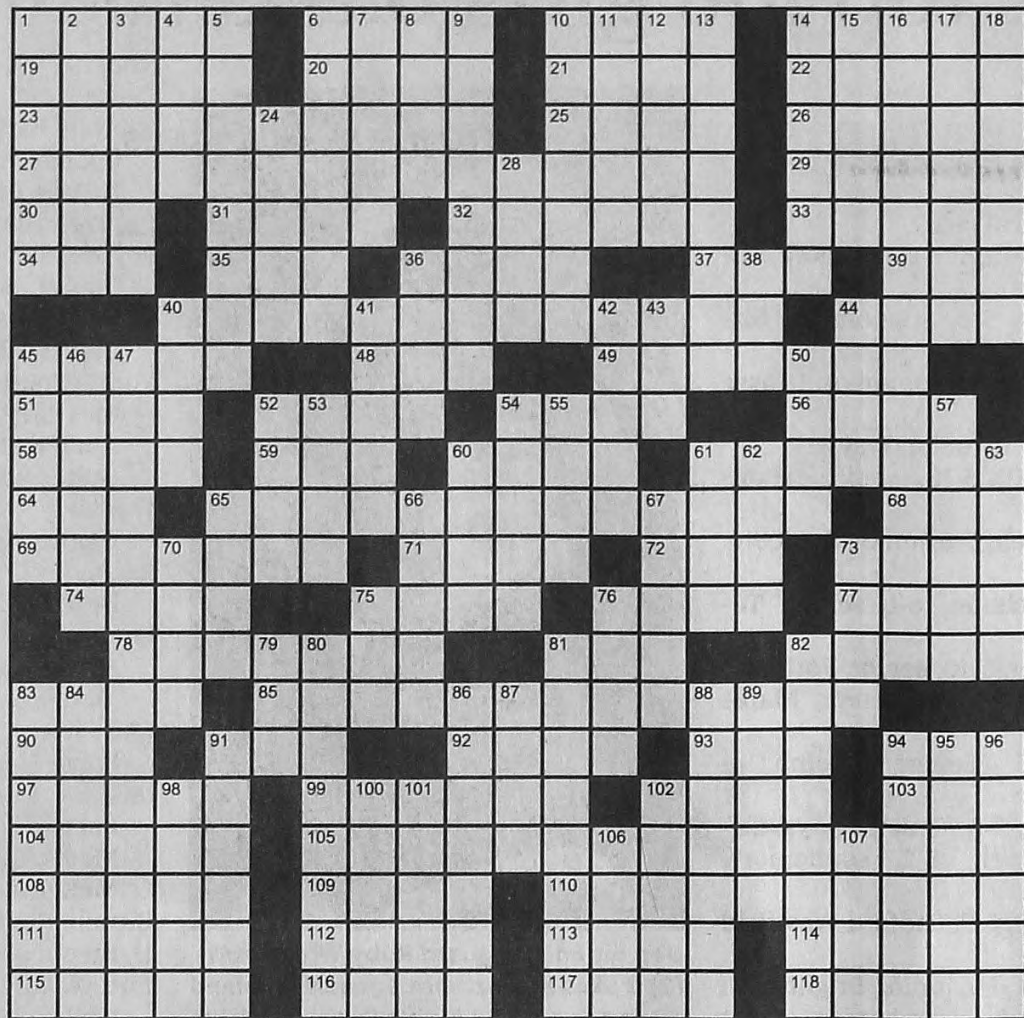
Once the ball swished in, the entire student section behind the basket erupted as did his teammates and coaches on his bench. It was a huge moment.

"It just feels good to please my team and get us the win," Jace said modestly. "It just feels good."



# Puzzle Games

## LET'S JOIN HANDS BY BONNIE L. GENTRY



### Across

- On-the-green golf strokes
- Soothing salve
- Sashes in "The Mikado"
- Wasn't apathetic
- Square, in the '60s
- Opposite of aweather, to a sailor
- Name in a da Vinci masterpiece
- Olympic speed skater Anton Ohno
- Bohemian New York retreat
- \_\_\_-bitty
- White-flag waver's desire
- Reason to call off the kicker
- Weary exhales
- Cdr.'s underling
- Twitter punishments
- Military aviators, collectively
- Somali-born representative Omar
- What Ariz. and Hawaii are the only two states not to have
- Rainbow's shape
- There \_\_\_ fool like an old fool
- Mo. when many buy candy
- Where mail for a sgt.

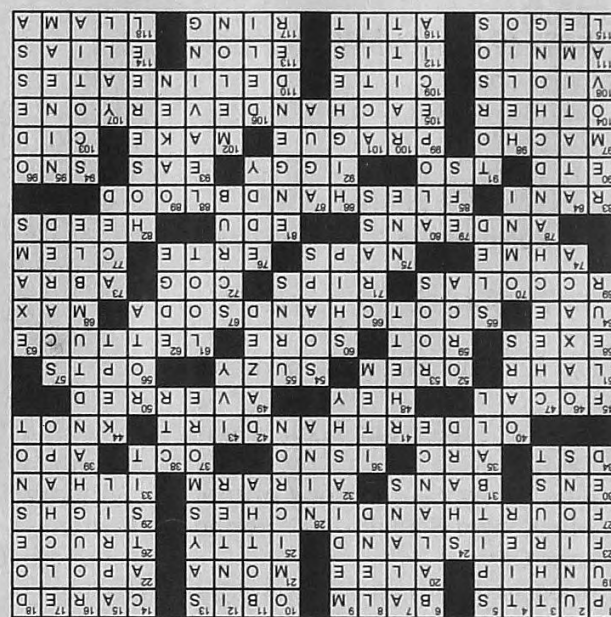
- might go
- Ancient, in slang
- Unit of speed at sea
- \_\_\_ point (center of attention)
- Willie Mays, the Say \_\_\_ Kid
- Confidently claimed
- Bert who played a cowardly lion
- Utah's "Family City U.S.A."
- \_\_\_ Q (Hostess snack cake)
- Makes a choice
- Yesterday's flames
- Go bad, as vegetables
- Sensitive to the touch
- Caesar salad ingredient
- Dubai's place, for short
- Two-ingredient cocktail
- Upper limit, for short
- First soft drinks sold in cans
- Features of some trendy jeans
- Torque-transmitting tooth
- Start of a magician's incantation
- World-weary sigh
- Dozes off for a bit
- Single-named Art Deco designer
- \_\_\_ Kadiddlehopper, Red Skelton character

- People of La Paz
- Web address ending for a college
- Takes, as a lawyer's advice
- Wife of an Indian prince
- Siblings, sons, daughters, etc.
- When you think you'll leave, briefly
- Spicy General on a menu
- Rapper \_\_\_ Azalea
- \_\_\_ in "elephant"
- \_\_\_-cone (summer treat)
- Rambo-esque
- European capital on the Vltava River
- Cook, as dinner
- Spanish military hero El \_\_\_
- (None of these choices)
- The whole shebang
- Stringed Renaissance instruments
- Write up, as a speeder
- Portrays precisely
- Test that discovers the sex of the fetus, for short
- Reply to "Can this be true?"
- Tesla head Musk
- Sewing machine pioneer Howe
- Young builder's collection

- Working diligently
- One of several on a raccoon's tail
- Andean beast of burden
- The "Big Bad Wolf" did it
- They sometimes call strikes
- Rocket booster's push
- Wedding cake feature, often
- Outlawed baseball pitch
- Tightrope-walker's asset
- Arkin and Rickman
- What creditors do
- Avoiding the press
- 15th letter of the Greek alphabet
- South Africa's first prime minister
- "\_\_\_ alia" (among other things)
- Continues speaking
- Watch the neighbor's feline
- When to celebrate National Poetry Month
- Like lion cubs at play
- Nickname of the Mexican drug lord Joaquin Guzman
- Neglects to
- Pottery fragment
- Two-time Atlantic crosser of 1493
- Bag of chips at checkout, say
- Tallest b-ball player, usually
- Whaleboat propellers
- Scarlett's sweetheart
- Spaced-out, say
- Wife of an Indian prince
- Siblings, sons, daughters, etc.
- When you think you'll leave, briefly
- Spicy General on a menu
- Rapper \_\_\_ Azalea
- \_\_\_ in "elephant"
- \_\_\_-cone (summer treat)
- Rambo-esque
- European capital on the Vltava River
- Cook, as dinner
- Spanish military hero El \_\_\_
- (None of these choices)
- The whole shebang
- Stringed Renaissance instruments
- Write up, as a speeder
- Portrays precisely
- Test that discovers the sex of the fetus, for short
- Reply to "Can this be true?"
- Tesla head Musk
- Sewing machine pioneer Howe
- Young builder's collection

- Roster with assignments
- Sea creature with no natural predators
- Wallaby relatives, for short
- Telenovelas, in English
- Vessels for caterers
- Shaking in one's boots
- Use UPS, perhaps
- Robber's haul
- What a slight favorite has
- They're conducted by docs and profs
- Yukon Quest transport
- Without refinement
- Wash before surgery
- Upscale hotel chain name
- The opposite of failed miserably
- Tuscaloosa-to-Huntsville dir.
- Whirling water
- They're worth 0 toward G.P.A.s
- Baldness, to physicians
- Give rise to
- Storage item near an outdoor faucet
- Dismissal, as from office
- Per instance
- Peaking above all
- Water, in Ju-rez
- Going out the door
- Wine barrel descriptor
- Sculptures without limbs
- Word on the Canadian province list
- Workday start, for some
- Ukrainian seaport
- Sun-related prefix
- You Got It" singer Bonnie
- When to hear "O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?"
- You might thump it to see if it's fresh
- Place to buy pastrami
- You people, down south

## LET'S JOIN HANDS SOLUTION

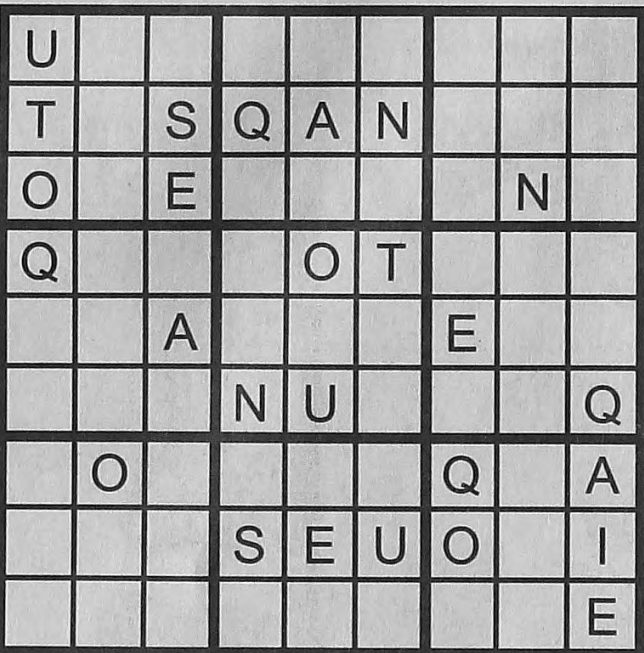


## WORDOKU BY BONNIE L. GENTRY

### INSTRUCTIONS TO WORDOKU CROSSWORD

Each will be titled with the word that is used in the puzzle. They are solved just like a Sudoku with the letters taking the place of the numbers 1-9.

### EQUATIONS EASY

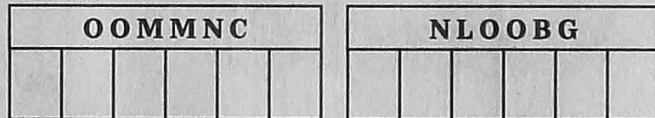
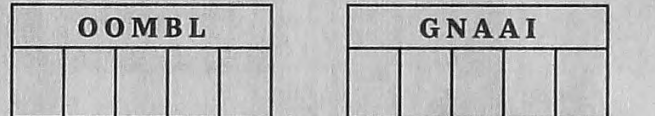


### PACHYDERM EASY

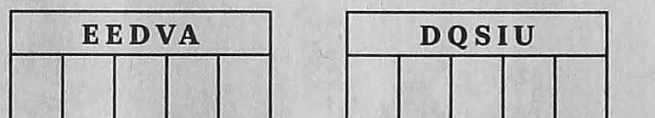


## SCRAMBLERS BY ALAN OLSCHWANG

### #1



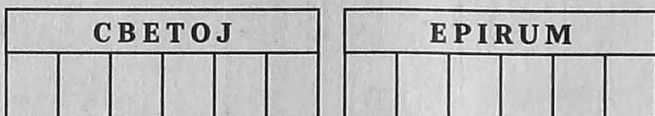
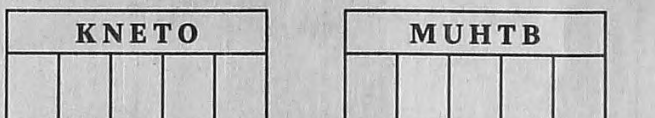
### #2



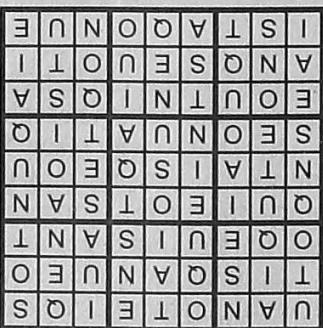
### #3



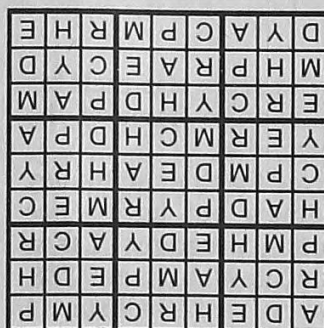
### #4



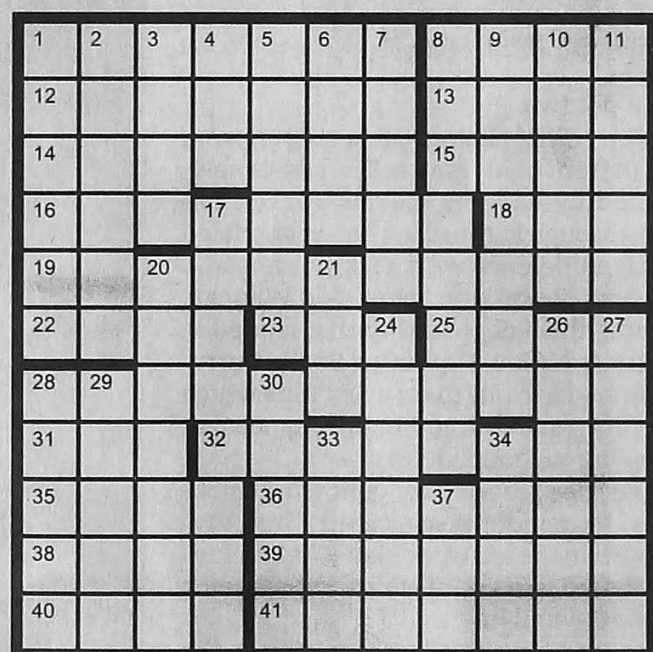
### WORDOKU SOLUTION EQUATIONS



### PACHYDERM



## BARRED CROSSWORD BY BONNIE L. GENTRY



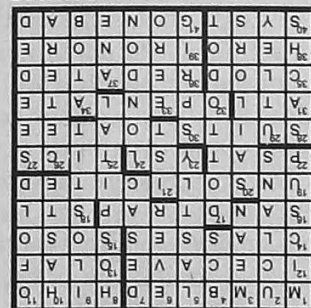
### Across

- Spoke indistinctly (7)
- What the Lone Ranger shouted to Silver (4)
- Spelunking site that requires very warm clothing (7)
- "Frozen 2" snowman (4)
- Curriculum components (7)
- Passable, but that's it (4)
- It's also called a bunker, in golf (8)
- Home of the NHL's Blues (3)
- Not asked for (11)
- Warmup for college hopefuls, briefly (4)
- Monogram on some high-end scarves (3)
- Uncontrollable movements (4)
- Is perfect for (11)
- Georgia airport, on luggage tags (3)
- Store sign welcomed by night owls (8)
- Wad of earth (4)
- Corrected a chronological error (7)
- War-time medal recipient (4)
- Underground rock source (7)
- GPS section (4)
- Turned to a life of crime (7)
- "As a final note ..." (6)
- Next-to-last fairytale word (4)
- Cul-\_\_\_ (deadend street) (5)
- Delivery room site (8)
- Dubious excuse for not turning in homework (7)
- \_\_\_ makes waste (5)
- From ages past (5)
- Kid's pencil puzzle (8)
- Shore-leave takers (7)
- Suffix meaning "practitioner" (3)
- Site of the world's first subway (6)
- "Glory of Love" singer Peter (6)
- Rated, at Flushing Meadows (6)
- Goldman \_\_\_ (investment firm) (5)
- Newsman Garrick or slugger Chase (5)
- Unit of mistletoe (5)
- St. Louis Arch architect (4)
- Volume 1 of an encyclopedia, maybe (4)
- The last thing a Yale cheerleader wants (3)

### Down

- Outfits with a wire (6)
- Bruins fans, briefly (6)
- Not very nice (4)
- System for determining the top NCAA football team (3)

### BARRED SOLUTION



### SCRAMBLERS SOLUTION

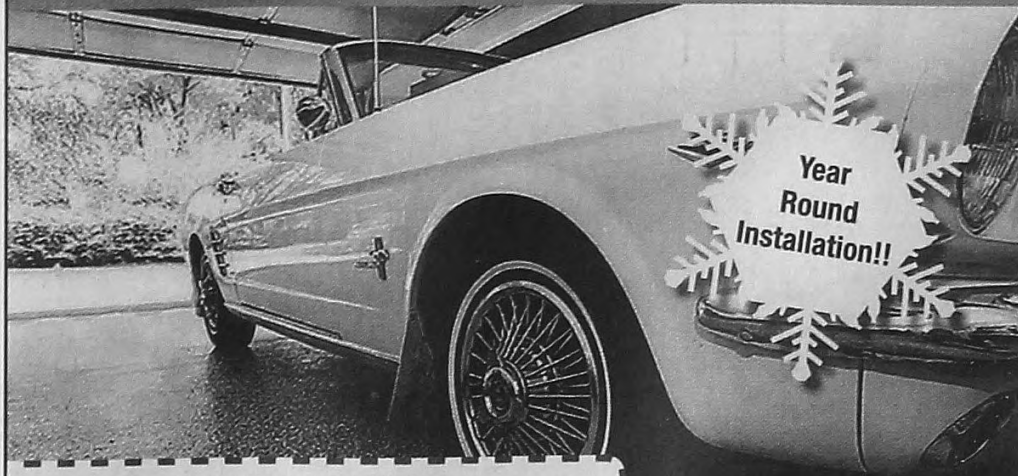
- |                     |                     |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| #1                  | #2                  | #3                  | #4                  |
| O O M B L: BLOOM    | E E D V A: EVADE    | U L N H C: LUNCH    | K N E T O: TOKEN    |
| G N A A I: AGAIN    | D Q S I U: SQUID    | K H C E E: CHEEK    | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| O O M M N C: COMMON | F A A E C D: FACADE | L I G N A E: GENIAL | C B E T O J: OBJECT |
| N L O O B G: BLOOM  | R P I T E A: PIRATE | R C A C S E: SCARCE | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| E E D V A: EVADE    | D Q S I U: SQUID    | K H C E E: CHEEK    | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| F A A E C D: FACADE | R P I T E A: PIRATE | L I G N A E: GENIAL | C B E T O J: OBJECT |
| N L O O B G: BLOOM  | R P I T E A: PIRATE | R C A C S E: SCARCE | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| U L N H C: LUNCH    | K H C E E: CHEEK    | L I G N A E: GENIAL | C B E T O J: OBJECT |
| K N E T O: TOKEN    | M U H T B: THUMB    | R C A C S E: SCARCE | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| C B E T O J: OBJECT | E P I R U M: UMPIRE | R C A C S E: SCARCE | M U H T B: THUMB    |
| E P I R U M: UMPIRE |                     | R C A C S E: SCARCE | M U H T B: THUMB    |



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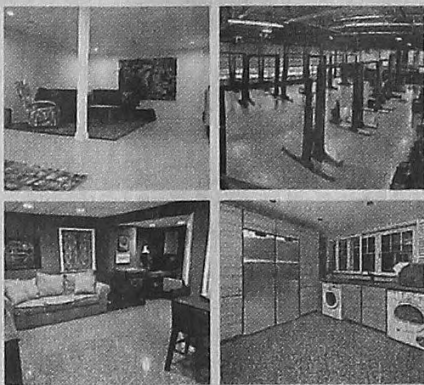
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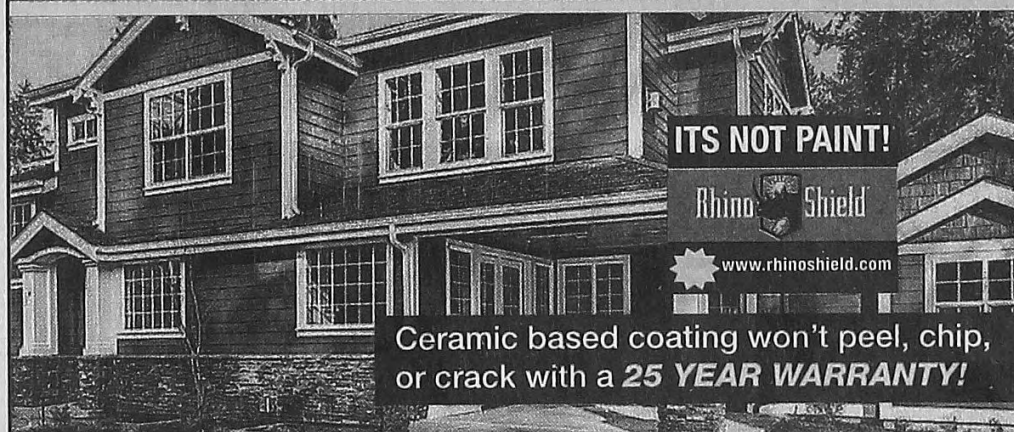
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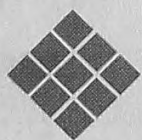


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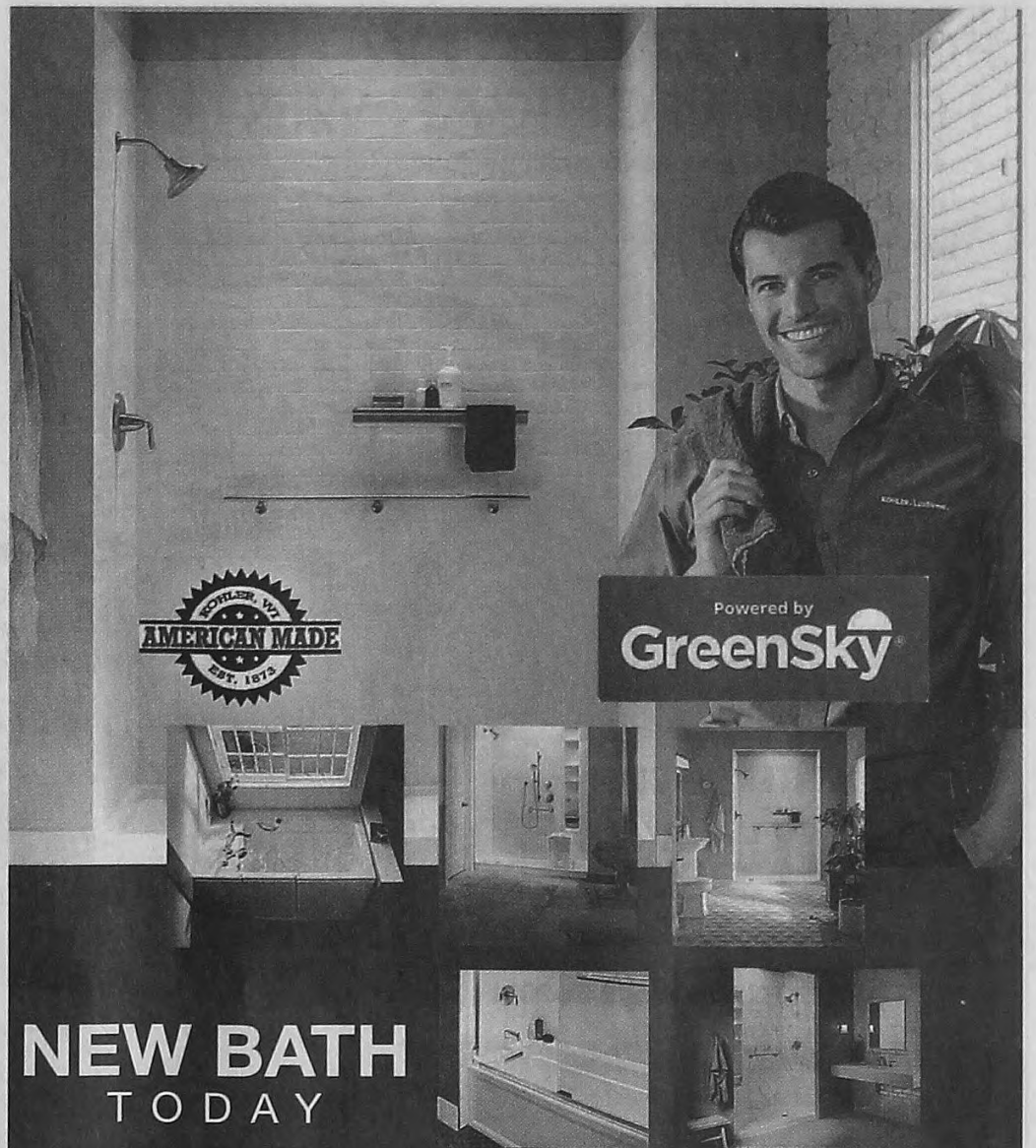
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We place your contents in an onsite locked storage unit so you can rest assured your things are dry and safe.

**3 We Floor**

Watch the transformation as we liven up your space with our lifetime warranted coating system called GatorGuard! Then we return and safely place your items where we found them.



Indiana · Michigan · Kentucky · Ohio

Call Today!

**248-372-9926**

Cannot be combined with any other offer. Ask Estimator for details. Expires 12/31/2021

LO-GC10775937-01

**WINTER WEATHER IS HERE!**

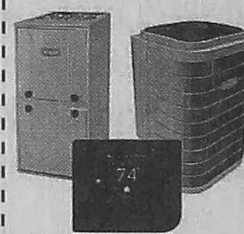


- Flat Rate Pricing
- FREE Safety Inspection on Every Service Call
- Service Call Charge Waived with Work Performed
- Same Day Service
- All Our Technicians are Licensed and Background Checked
- 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

**In-Season Furnace Safety Check**

**\$59**

With Coupon, Expires 11/30/2021



**18 Months No Interest on New Furnace & AC System**

Whatever it takes. \*Restrictions apply

Experts Since 1980  
**HOOVER**  
Electric · Plumbing · Heating · Cooling

**248-372-9929**

\*Select Systems Apply, with approved credit. See Hoover for details.

LO-GC10775450-01







# Silvio's

Trattoria e Pizzeria

225 S. Canton Center Rd. in Canton  
(inside Busch's Fresh Food Market)  
734-214-6666



*Authentic  
handmade  
Italian  
cuisine.*

**Appetizers**

**Small Plates & Sides**

**Soups & Salads**

**Calzones & Paninis**

**Pizza & Pasta**

**Dessert**

Gluten free, whole wheat and  
vegan options. We prioritize  
organic and locally sourced  
ingredients.



*Our goal is to make guests feel like  
they're eating in Abruzzo Italy.*

Dine in or order online

[silviostrattoriapizzeria.com](http://silviostrattoriapizzeria.com)



*Happy Hour:*

**Tuesday-Friday 4-7pm**

**\$2 off wine & beer**

**Beer & a one topping  
pizza for \$15**