



Shorthanded Wayne Memorial girls topple Stevenson at LCA

SPORTS, 1B

CANTON

OBSERVER

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2022 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Lack of oversight led to Westland ballot issue

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When a political candidate in Oakland County is ineligible to run for office because of late or unfiled campaign finance reports, the county clerk's office notifies the municipality where that candidate lives.

Oakland County Clerk Lisa Brown said even though that step isn't technically required of her office, it's important to creating the best possible ballot. Campaign finance reports in Michigan are submitted directly to counties.

"We have to know who belongs on the ballot and who doesn't," Brown said. "It's really about the ballot creation and

know who the certified candidates are or who should not be a certified candidate."

Novi, Pontiac and Birmingham all had candidates disqualified and left off the ballot in the 2021 elections because of campaign finance violations.

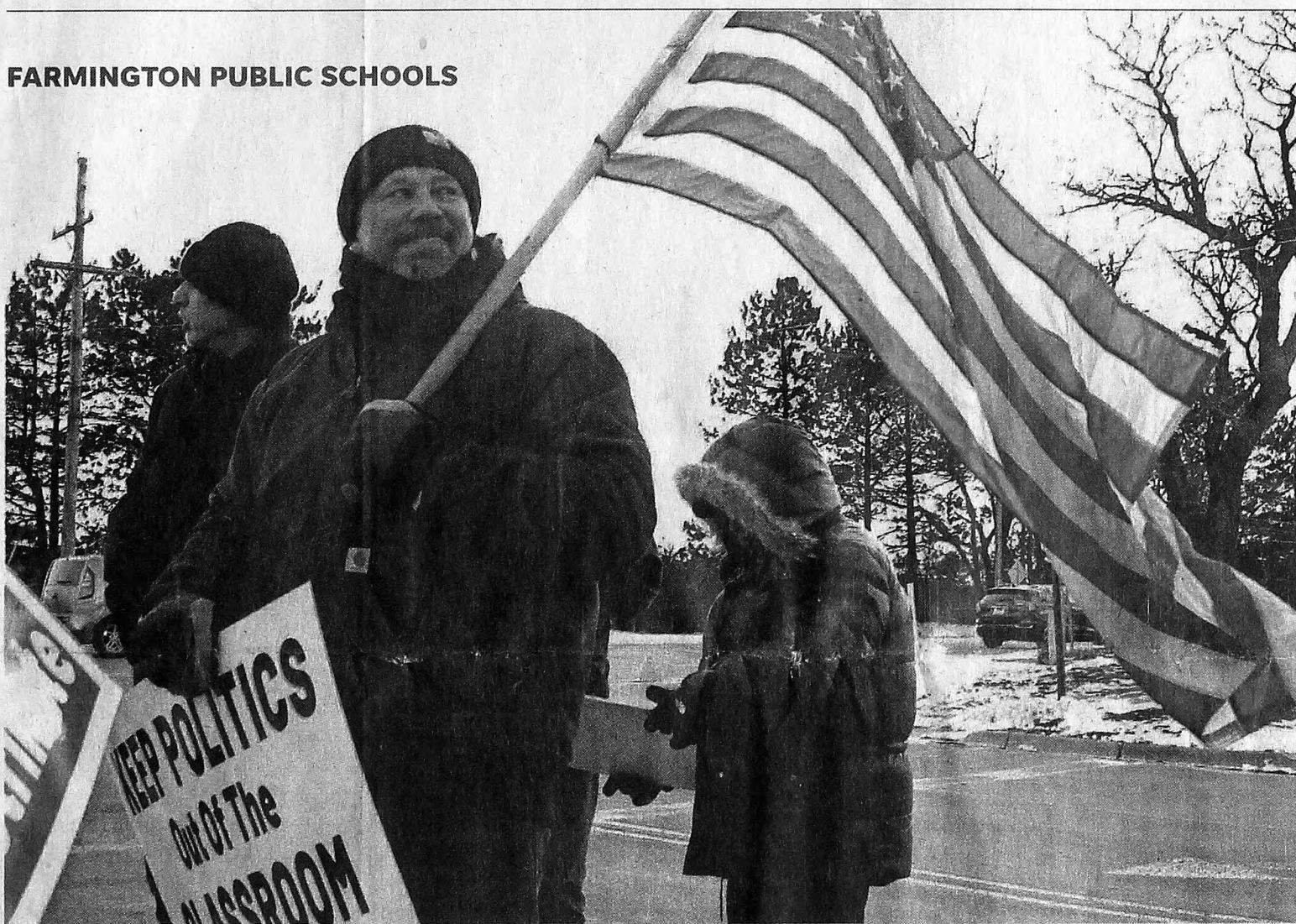
The situation appears much different in neighboring Wayne County, the larg-

est of Michigan's 83 counties. When a candidate in Wayne County fails to pay fees or file reports and then runs for office, the Wayne County Clerk's office apparently doesn't say or do anything because it's not required to.

So when former Westland City

See **BALLOT**, Page 6A

FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Sam Harris of Waterford Township protests in front of North Farmington High on Jan. 11. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

How Livonia schools deal with threats of violence

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

When a year-old video of a Livonia Emerson Middle School student using a racial slur and brandishing a realistic-looking, but fake, firearm recently started circulating on social media in early January, people began wondering how Livonia Public Schools grapples with potential threats to its students.

The student in the video appears to cock a gun — one that law enforcement later determined was incapable of discharging bullets — and says he'd kill Black people, using a racial slur. The video appears to have been filmed in a bedroom home, and a Hank Williams Jr. confederate flag hangs on the wall in the background. The student does not threaten the school or district directly.

People — including district officials — agreed the rhetoric in the video is disturbing and harmful. The student at the center of the video is not in classes for the time being, though district officials declined to say if it's by choice or as discipline.

Stacy Jenkins, the district's communications administrator, said Livonia immediately starts working with police when any concerning situation arises. The video of the Emerson student is roughly a year old, but schools were made aware of it recently during winter break.

"When something of a disturbing or threatening nature does occur, we work directly with the police department whether it's Livonia police or Westland police," Jenkins said. "We turn the investigation over to the police to determine the level of threat. We work closely with local police every step of the way."

Emerson's incident remains under

See **THREATS**, Page 6A

Demonstrators talk diversity

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Demonstrators gathered outside North Farmington High School to protest Farmington Public School's diversity efforts before a school board meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 11.

They included parents living within the Farmington school district, in surrounding communities and from outside the state and took issue with the district's 21-day equity challenge, which was an initiative intended for adults and

happened in November. A media release the district sent in late October describes the November challenge as a way to "more effectively understand and celebrate our differences."

See **DEMONSTRATORS**, Page 6A

New fast food restaurants planned in Canton

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Some new dining options for all three meals a day are in the works along Michigan Avenue in Canton Township.

Two new fast-food restaurants are

planned along the road in southern Canton: Dunkin' plans to construct a new doughnut/coffee shop at the road's intersection with Haggerty, while a new Panda Express is planned for an out lot in the parking lot of the Walmart at near Belleville Road.

Both projects were recently reviewed and recommended for approval by the township's planning commission at its first 2022 meeting held Jan. 3 at the township hall.

See **RESTAURANTS**, Page 6A

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Westland's Inspire Theatre brings 'Rumors' to stage

Courtesy of Inspire Theatre

Reveling in the spotlight of an incredible run of its fall production of Monty Python's "Spamlot," Inspire Theatre lunges into the new year with a redux of master playwright Neil Simon's "Rumors."

Set in an upscale New York suburb, the play is a delightful romp through a farcical evening of mayhem, mischief and mistaken identity.

Ken and Chris Gorman, played by Inspire first-timers Steve Sedore and Leanne Young, arrive first at the home

of New York City Deputy Mayor Charlie Brock and his wife, Myra, to attend their 10th wedding anniversary celebration. They soon discover there is no household staff, the hostess is missing and the deputy mayor has shot himself.

Comic complications arise when they decide to protect their upper-class status at all costs and conceal the evening's events from the local police and media. Also new to Inspire, Shayne Beasley-Young joins veteran Sonya Artman as Lenny and Claire Ganz, whose characters introduce more gossip into the evening's misfortune with their ap-

pearance.

Furthering the shenanigans are Inspire regulars David Zolotarchuk, Pat Rodgers, Courtney Nixon, Mike Whitecher and Bailey Hansen. Rounding out the ensemble is newcomer Mike Stec. It's an evening of continual laughs as the audience journeys back to the late 1980s with all its "glitz, glamour and gossip."

Inspire Theatre first presented "Rumors" in spring 2012. Managing Director Len Fisher has wanted to revive the show for the last few years but the timing didn't seem right. However, coming out of the pandemic shutdown, Fisher

feels now is the "perfect opportunity to start afresh and take an updated look at some of the classics from past seasons."

"I love farces," Fisher said. "It's ridiculous fun to allow actors to push the limits of absurdness. And our audiences enjoy watching the cast enjoying themselves onstage."

"Rumors" opened Jan. 14 and runs for three weekends. Tickets are \$17 and can be purchased online at inspiretheatre.ticketleap.com or by calling the ticket office at 734-751-7057. Inspire Theatre is located inside the Westland Center for the Arts, 33455 Warren Rd., Westland.

Oakland County sheriff tests positive for COVID-19

Christina Hall Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard announced Tuesday that he tested positive for the coronavirus and will be working remotely.

Bouchard, a Republican who won a sixth term in office in November 2020, is fully vaccinated and has received a booster shot.

He said he is experiencing a headache, congestion, exhaustion and other aches with the virus.

"Even though I choose to be fully vaccinated and received the booster shot, the omicron variant was still able to catch up with me," he said in a release.

"I had assumed it was not a question of whether it caught up to me given the duties of a first responder, but when. Per our protocols I will be in quarantine, but I will continue to work remotely."

The virus is in its fourth surge in Michigan, with health officials saying it is fueled by the highly-transmissible omicron variant. The surge is bearing down on the state, driving up cases and hospitalizations and breaking record after record in its wake.

Models suggest the surge could peak in late January or early February.

On Monday, the state health department confirmed 617 cases of omicron in Michigan through genetic sequencing, including 93 cases in Oakland County. More than half of the cases statewide are in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties and the city of Detroit.

But that is estimated to be only a small fraction of the total number of cases.

In November 2020, Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham said he tested positive for COVID-19 and reported having mild symptoms. A month later, Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon died after a month-long battle with the virus. He was 65.

The Oakland County Sheriff's Office said in the release that it has been hit hard by COVID-19, with more than 170 of its 1,400 employees off work because they have the virus or were exposed to it.

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Eric Kokko stands by his portable sauna at Kensington Metropark on Dec. 22. The sauna, which can seat five or six adults, comes supplied with wood for its stove and lava rocks for the creation of steam, if needed. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

New Hudson-based mobile sauna keeping customers cozy in winter

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Eric Kokko's upbringing in northern Michigan led to the creation of his newest side business.

The New Hudson resident and his wife, Katie, recently launched a new business perfect for those looking to heat up during the cold Michigan winters.

Called Michigan Mobile Sauna, it allows users to rent a portable sauna for special events or just for a weekend of relaxation.

Kokko grew up in a Finnish family with roots in Rudyard in the eastern Upper Peninsula, a place where sauna usage is the norm. Kokko grew up using saunas on a regular basis.

Launching such a business gives him a connection back to his family and specifically his grandfather, who had a sauna on their property up north.

"Every time I sit in this thing, it reminds me of him," he said. "And that's just what I love about it."

The idea for the mobile sauna came after he and his wife took a trip up north last summer and saw a similar structure.

"I was just born and raised with saunas, and the wife and I went up to Traverse City this summer and I saw a log cabin on wheels," he said. "I rolled around there and it's a sauna. And I'm like, 'A mobile sauna. I love it.'"

After working with a Minnesota company to construct the portable hot spot, he picked it up and has set it up in a handful of places.

The structure has space for a handful of people to fit. Users can step inside into the changing room area and then change the temperature before entering the sauna space. Powered by a wood burning stove, the sauna can reach temperatures of nearly 200 degrees.

It has wooden benches inside that can be removed for those looking for more active activities like hot yoga. It can fit as many as five adults with the benches installed.

Kokko said he has tried it out and

says it feels just like a sauna one would find in the U.P., though with one small exception.

"With the cedar and everything, it is right on point," he said. "With the smells and the atmosphere — the only thing more traditional is that most saunas don't have windows."

Those windows are high in the sauna, which allows users privacy.

In addition to renting the mobile sauna to individuals and groups, Kokko said he hopes to partner with area gyms and yoga studios potentially to park it outside their facilities.

He also hopes to bring it to charity events, including possibly Polar Plunge events this winter.

They plan to test it out with family and friends first before opening it up for reservations. Once open, the couple plans to try and keep it fairly close to metro Detroit. Exact time frames for how long customers can rent the sauna vary and can be negotiated.

More information, including booking rates, can be found at michiganmobilesauna.com.

Farmington Hills PD sets neighborhood watch meeting

Courtesy of Farmington Hills Police Department

The Farmington Hills Police Department will host a City-Wide Neighborhood Watch Meeting 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 26, in the Council Chambers at City Hall located at 31555 West Eleven Mile Road.

The police department's 2021 annual report will be presented by Chief Jeff King. King will discuss crime levels, talk about the hiring of new police officers, and showcase the past year's accomplishments including the fact that dispatchers handled over 101,000 calls

for service.

King will share information about the Farmington Hills Police Department achieving reaccreditation from the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP).

Only eight Michigan police agencies have achieved reaccreditation status; the Farmington Hills Police Department is currently the largest agency to achieve this prestigious accomplishment.

Farmington Hills residents are welcome to attend and are encouraged to bring spouses, friends, and anyone in-

terested in learning more about the city. The chief and police department personnel look forward to meeting with community members.

Adhering to CDC guidelines, it is recommended that attendees consider wearing a mask and sit six feet apart, regardless of vaccination status. In lieu of refreshments, a raffle will be held, and one lucky winner will receive a crime prevention safety gift.

For further information, contact the Crime Prevention Section at 248-871-2750 or crimeprevention@fhgov.com.

Michigan Capitol dome tours will stay forbidden

Annabel Aguiar Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

There's a story shared among Michigan State Capitol staffers about the building's first dome tour — before the structure was even finished.

Sometime between 1872 and 1878, while the Capitol was being built, a construction crew working in the dome climbed down to the lawn for lunch. While they were eating, one looked up in horror to see a group of schoolchildren walking around the cast-iron drum, 200 feet in the air. The boys had slipped a barrier and climbed up the scaffolding.

The story goes that a construction worker ran to the children's nearby school and asked their teacher to ring the lunch bell early, luring them back. In the end, they climbed down safely, according to Capitol tour guide director Matt VanAcker, who told the story in a 2020 video about the structure.

Those who have looked out from that height say the view is spectacular, stretching for miles to far-off trees touching the horizon line. But today, VanAcker's video tour is as close as the public can get to the dome, which remains strictly off-limits to visitors.

"It's an incredible experience, but it's also one that's just not very safe for the general public to be wandering through," said Capitol Commission Vice Chair John Truscott, who has been inside the dome himself. "We have people going through and nobody's been hurt, but it just takes that one."

That hasn't stopped some enthusiasts from lobbying for a rule change.

More than 135 years without injury

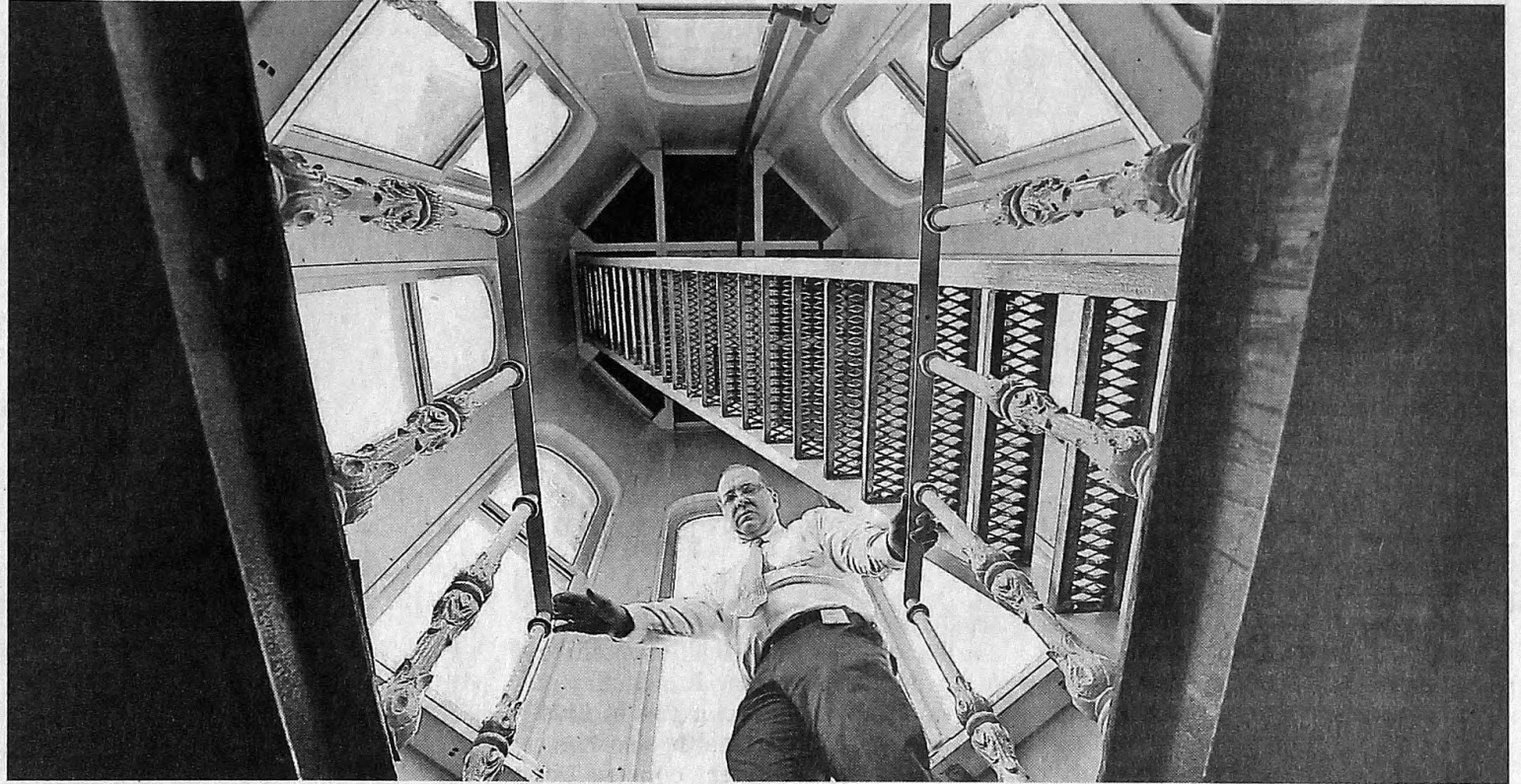
Ryan Kazmirzack remembers his first time touring the dome, an experience he had twice as a legislative staffer and while working in former Gov. Rick Snyder's press office.

Kazmirzack, now a freelance writer, is a vocal advocate for opening the dome to tourists. Last summer, he wrote a proposal that the dome be opened to paid tours to fund historic preservation of the Capitol, a plan he's pitched to several state lawmakers. (He wrote a similar proposal that the tops of the towers of the Mackinac Bridge be opened for tours.)

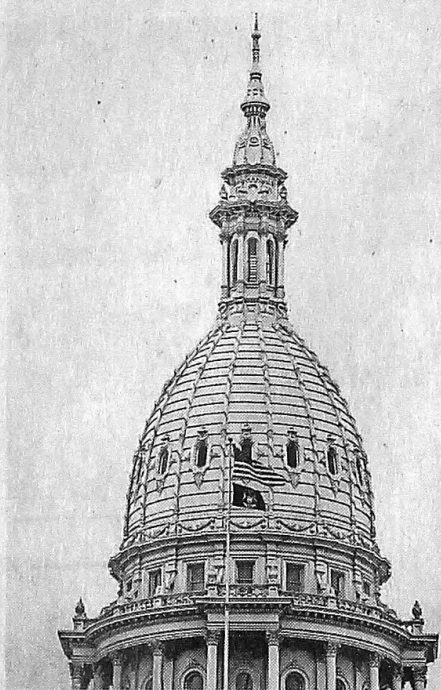
"The math is compelling," Kazmirzack wrote on his blog. "If just 5,000 people take the tour each year at \$60 each, that's \$300,000 to put toward Capitol maintenance and historic preservation."

The dome has been officially off limits since 1951, when a fire at what is now the Elliott-Larsen Building at 320 S. Walnut St. prompted the fire marshal to rethink public building access and emergency safety.

However, the ban was only loosely enforced for decades. Staffers like Kazmirzack were allowed to take the occasional trip up until 2015, when renewal projects underlined the importance of



Matt VanAcker, Michigan Capitol tour guide director, stands in the staffer-only "lantern" near the top of the dome in 2013.
LANSING STATE JOURNAL FILE



The Michigan Capitol dome Dec. 21.
NICK KING/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

maintaining the space.

"We have more than 135 years without a single record of any accident or injury," Kazmirzack said. "How much more proof do you need that tours are safe? It should be a relatively easy thing to accomplish — just a fun, positive thing we can do."

He said he's gotten positive feedback on his plan from multiple legislators, including State Sen. Curtis Hertel and State Rep. Pauline Wendzel.

Inside the dome

The Capitol dome was not designed for public access or with comfort in mind. Its original purpose was for maintenance workers.

The space is actually composed of

two vertically stacked domes: the interior rotunda, which rises 170 feet, and the 267-foot exterior dome.

A steep ship ladder on the Capitol's off-limits sixth floor leads up to the dome. The ladder sends visitors through a narrow passage at a sharp incline between the interior rotunda and exterior dome.

That leads to a platform at the level of the oculus — the starry center of the rotunda — which hangs by cables and rods inside the exterior dome like an upside-down bowl.

A spiral staircase to a higher level takes you to the lantern, where the real views can be had. On a clear day, a visitor can see the Mason water tower about 16 miles from downtown Lansing.

This part of the dome also poses the most hazards.

Maintenance equipment in the lantern could be easily tripped over by a tourist. If someone were to set off the building's fire system, the sprinklers would cause irreparable damage to the paintings in the dome, including eight allegories staring down from the walls of the rotunda.

Additionally, the dome was designed to account for weather by allowing air through the structure. The feeling is almost like vertigo for anyone with balance issues, Truscott said, and he made sure to hang onto something the entire time he visited.

It would also be incredibly difficult to reach someone having a medical emergency inside the dome. Quinn Evans, the architectural firm working on the Capitol's new Heritage Hall welcome center, reviewed the dome in 2015 to see if tours or public access were feasible.

"Permitting access for tours or other uses, apart from authorized maintenance personnel, introduces a number of life-safety concerns," the firm's as-

essment reads.

Specifically, introducing a fire exit to the dome would violate the Michigan Building Code, according to the assessment. The space is too narrow, to say nothing of the ship ladder and spiral staircase. The access stairways don't have a fire-resistant enclosure, which would leave people exposed to smoke collecting in the top of the dome in the event of a fire below.

Since the Capitol Commission has been aware of Quinn Evans' assessment for years, they would never be able to secure insurance coverage for public dome tours. Truscott said the commission could incur liability so significant it would wipe out the Capitol's budget.

Kazmirzack said some lawmakers have advised that he could take a combative approach to getting his plan considered. One avenue is posing the legal question of whether the commission has final say over usage of space within the building, a determination typically thought of when it comes to divvying up office space.

"I think it would make far more sense to work with the Capitol Commission, but if it really comes down to it, there are a lot of different venues," Kazmirzack said. "The highest probability of success would simply be to get enough lawmakers to say, 'Hey, we like this idea for constituents to be able to go up into the Capitol, let's work together.'"

Truscott contends that overruling the determination of the pros would be short-sighted.

"I think everybody would agree the grounds have probably never looked better," Truscott said. "The building is in the best shape it's been in in probably half a century. We believe that as a commission, we've been really good stewards of this building on behalf of the people of Michigan."

Novi battery maker sends Tesla S to UP and back on 1 charge

Carol Cain Special to Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

The race to alleviate range anxiety among electric vehicle owners got a potential boost thanks to a Michigan battery maker that used its cutting edge technology to power a 2021 Tesla Model S 752 miles across the Great Lakes State on a single charge.

That real world test drive of Our Next Energy's (ONE) Gemini battery took place Dec. 17, said Mujeeb Ijaz, founder and CEO of the Novi-based company.

The Tesla drove an average of 55 mph on the trek from ONE's Novi headquarters to the Upper Peninsula and back. The results were validated by a third party using a vehicle dynamometer. Ijaz said he could not name the firm that validated the results due to ONE's agreement with it but said it was a global company in metro Detroit that does EPA certification for automakers.

The retrofitted Tesla is currently parked in Las Vegas, where the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is being held. Ijaz plans to meet with investors there.

A 30-year veteran of auto companies (having worked at Ford and Apple), he left 18 months ago to join the ranks of entrepreneurs when he launched ONE.

He moved his headquarters from Silicon Valley to metro Detroit last year and already gained investments to the tune of millions from Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and BMW to name a few.

Finding a way to allow a vehicle to go 752 miles on a single charge represents

the Holy Grail of EV's future. Right now, the range for a single charge for most EVs on the road is roughly half that.

The global race now among battery makers is to create technology that will resolve the range anxiety issue drivers have and make EVs a practical vehicle for more consumers.

"This is very impressive," said John McElroy, longtime host of "Autoline" and auto analyst at WWJ Newsradio 950, when asked about ONE's test drive results. "It's pretty good for a battery still under development. But, unless they do the EPA driving test, going 55 mph like others under same conditions, it's hard to stack them up."

I asked Ijaz why ONE didn't do the EPA test and he explained: "When reviewing what Tesla did to originally certify range of the Model S, it took six days of testing in a special procedure. We did not have time to run that test and decided a 55 mph run would suffice as a proof that we did not game the real world road test."

Glenn Stevens, executive director of MICHAuto, who has been involved with the industry for decades, said of ONE's test drive results: "This is great news. We are seeing a revolution right now in EV battery technology and it's great to see it taking place in Michigan."

Stevens, who hails from Marquette, test drove a Ford Mach-E across Michigan last summer and said he opted against going to the U.P. as there were



Ijaz

scant charging stations.

"As this revolution unfolds, it will be great to see who leads in this battery space as that really is the Holy Grail of convincing people to buy electric," Stevens added.

I've talked to many in recent months — folks like actor William Shatner, auto icon Bob Lutz and students at Oakland University — about what it will take to encourage people to own EVs as part of a recent TV special for CBS 62 called "Our Electric Future." It talked about EVs and highlighted concerns over range anxiety.

"To reach the full market potential for electric cars, we need to eliminate the barriers holding back the market," Ijaz said. "We want an electric car to become an obvious choice as your only car needed. This demonstration marks the beginning of a new era making that possible."

The solution to range issues currently focuses on adding more charging stations — something municipalities and companies in Michigan and elsewhere have been doing.

Ijaz said relying on charging stations, even fast charging ones, still presents challenges like waiting in lines and not recharging as fast as advertised. The solution is a battery with more firepower that will take a vehicle longer distances on a single charge.

ONE has created two EV batteries. The first, called Aries, uses a material called lithium iron phosphate. Ten years ago, this technology could offer 150 miles of range for an electric vehicle.

What Aries has done is improve upon that and offers 350 miles in the same vehicle without additional costs, Ijaz said. The company has a contract with a commercial truck maker to provide it with the Aries battery later this year.

His second battery, Gemini, uses a dual battery technology that works together as one chemistry, as one is designed to use every day for 150 miles, then the other extends the range another 600 miles in extender architecture that uses no cobalt or nickel and can power an EV 750 miles on a single charge. Lithium iron phosphate is always powering the vehicle.

ONE plans to begin production of Aries later this year, with a goal of producing the Gemini prototype batteries in 2023, as it is still in the research phase.

Ijaz chose a Tesla for his test drive because, "it was easy to convert by having a large battery volume (over 400 liters of space), was readily available on the market, and had a well-engineered efficient electric drive and aerodynamic platform."

He also explained why ONE decided to do its test drive in Michigan versus warmer states.

"We studied going south where the climate was not freezing but decided that ONE is proud to be a Michigan battery company and what better way to celebrate innovations born in Detroit than to make the destination for our range run the Upper Peninsula," he said. "Also it's a tribute to the clean air and water we seek to protect as we transition away from fossil fuels."

Surgery center opens in Bloomfield Township

David Veselenak HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

After looking around the Bloomfield Township area and discovering there were no surgery centers in the community, Biljana Trujillo wanted to change that.

After searching for a space, the CEO of American Surgical Centers found one in an industrial park off Franklin Road north of Square Lake in Bloomfield Township. After many months of construction, the center finally opened its doors at 359 Enterprise Court this past October.

"Prior to this, there had been no surgical centers in Bloomfield Hills," said Scott Trujillo, a principal with the company and husband to the CEO.

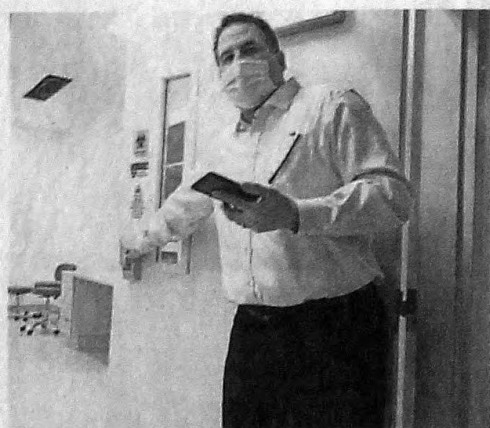
The building — which formerly held Ipsos, a market research company — has been completely transformed. The surgery center boasts four operating rooms, 18 pre- and post-op beds and three private pre- and post-op suites with private bathrooms. The center contracts with area doctors and surgeons to use the space, which is strictly for outpatient surgeries. The center mostly focuses on a handful of specific surgeries, though can be used for any outpatient procedures.

"We are multi-specialty, but we mostly concentrating on pain management, orthopedic surgeries and spine surgeries," said Biljana Trujillo. "That's our primary focus."

The new surgical center is the second for the company: it also operates a smaller center in West Bloomfield Township.

In addition to the surgical center at the 31,000-square-foot building, the facility also houses offices for Neuro Pain Consultants, a partner with American Surgical Centers, as well as relocating the surgical company's headquarters in a newly-built space.

The opening of the center continues a trend of separate facilities serving as places patients can get care that is not a hospital. Many health care providers are opening additional centers, including Henry Ford Health System, which operates a medical center nearby on Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Township and continues to construct a new center on



Scott Trujillo, managing principal for the Bloomfield Hills Surgical Center, opens the door to one of its suites.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth Township. The St. Joseph Mercy Health System recently opened a new medical facility on Schoolcraft College's campus in Livonia, and Beaumont Health also has a medical center under construction along Seven Mile in Livonia as well.

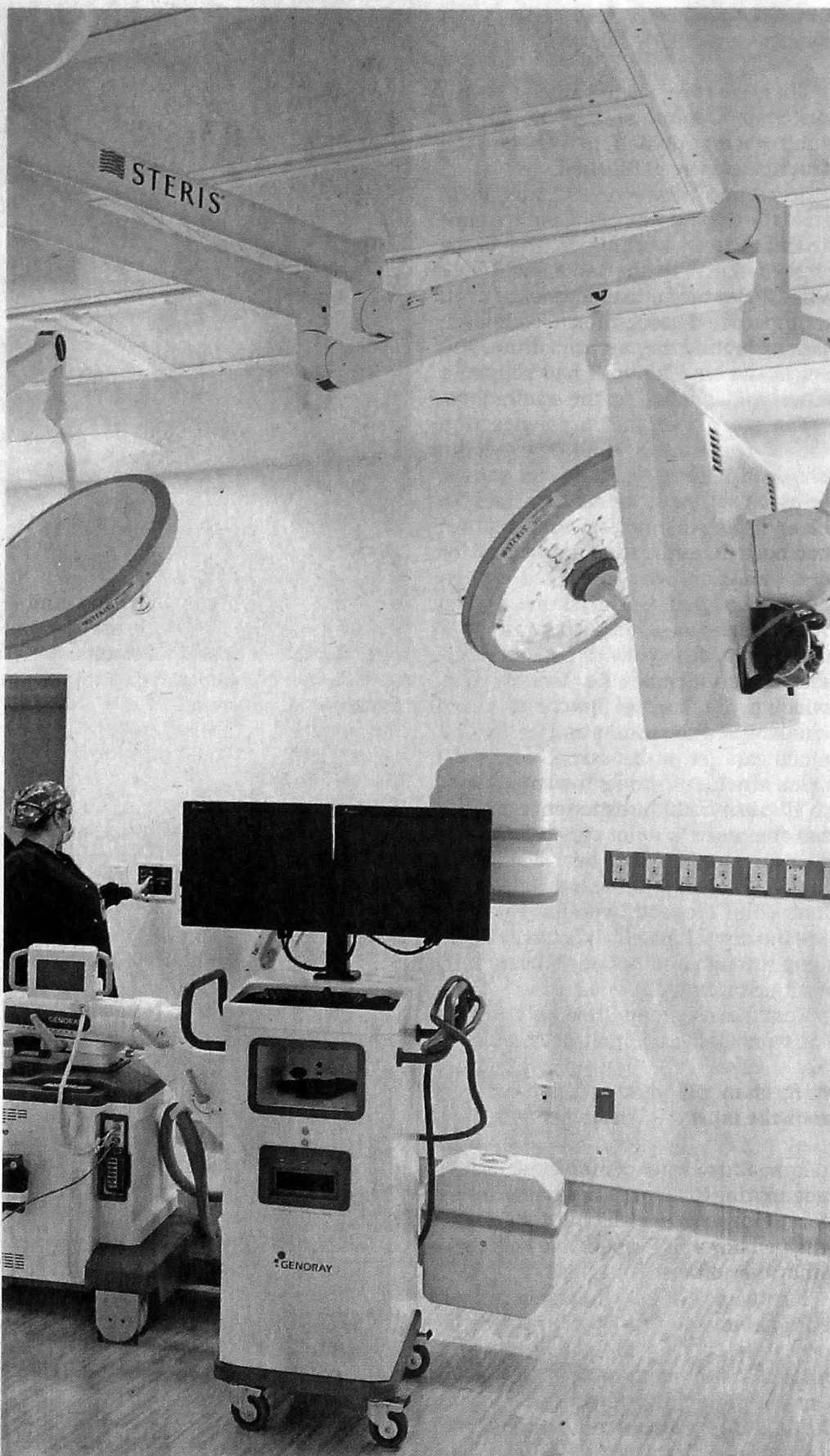
Such facilities could become more useful, especially during times when area hospitals continue to see increases in COVID-19 patients. Such a surgical facility can help provide other options for patients, especially those who may not want to spend time in a hospital.

"Being here, you're not going to be around COVID patients," said Amber Kassouf, the company's director of finance and administration.

Contracting with various doctors and performing surgeries at places like the new center is something Scott Trujillo said benefits patients in the long run. Giving them a space that dedicated to one task, he said, will create a more welcome atmosphere.

"We feel like surgical centers like this one specifically this kind of surgery center, really provides that health care environment that is ideal with this new kind of normal we have with COVID," said Scott Trujillo. "These are highly efficient, safer and we believe more patient-friendly environment for the patient."

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



A surgical suite at Bloomfield Hills Surgical Center, which opened in October.

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How to resolve finances after the death of a parent



Money Matters
Rick Bloom
Guest Columnist

Dear Rick:

My father recently passed due to COVID-19. He did not have a will, and other than personal possessions, he owned a house, 401(k) plan, an account through Vanguard and a checking account.

On his accounts, he had a beneficiary, or on his savings account he had a co-owner. My father had no debts, and at the time of his death he was divorced from my mom, but he had a significant other. They were not married, but they had been living together for the past five or so years.

His significant other claims that he wanted her to own the house upon his death. Unbeknownst to me, my father did a quit-claim deed a few years ago where my brother and I were put on the deed. My brother and I told my father's significant other that our plans were to sell the home; however, we were willing to give her six months to move out. She has threatened to sue us. My first question is, can she sue us, and if yes, what should we do?

Both my brother and I want to know what taxes we will be incurring because of the inheritance. You should know that my brother and I were named equal beneficiaries.

My father retired two years ago and at the time, he had the option to take a lump-sum payment or a pension – he took the pension. The company told me that his pension terminates upon his death, and neither my brother nor I can get anything from it. That doesn't seem fair to me because he only collected on the pension for two years. Is there anything we can do about this?

Thank you, Barb

Dear Barb:

I'm sorry to hear about the loss of your father. The only thing I can tell you from experience is that the pain gradually subsides, and is replaced by loving memories. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your brother.

With regards to your father's significant other, your father was under no obligation to leave her anything. In other words, she basically has no rights to the estate. Therefore, the fact that your father had filed a quit-claim deed that added you and your brother to the title of the property means that upon his death, by operation of law, you and your brother are now the owners of the home; the significant other has no rights to the property. That being said, there is nothing that would stop her from suing you. I am confident that if she does sue you, the law would be in your favor, and you would win.

For those of you in relationships where there is no marriage, it is important that if there are commitments made to each other, they be put in writing. Whether it's in a will or a trust, it is important to reduce those commitments to writing. If they are not in writing, it could lead to lawsuits.

With regards to the taxes that you and your brother will be responsible for, basically, on the inheritance of the money and the home, there are no taxes. You inherit that money tax free. With the 401(k) money, you and your brother should transfer your individual portions into an inherited IRA. Although there are no taxes on inheriting the IRA, there are taxes once the money is distributed to you. Upon distribution, you will have to recognize that as ordinary income on your tax return.

Regarding making distributions, currently we have what is known as the 10-year rule. The 10-year rule basically says that the value you inherited in the IRA needs to be zero by December 31st of the 10th anniversary of the owner's death. What that means is that you must take out the money within 10 years.

With regards to the pension, you are out of luck. Unless there is a surviving spouse upon death, pensions terminate. I agree with you that it is not fair. Good luck.

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. His website is www.bloomadvisors.com. If you would like him to respond to your questions, email rick@bloomadvisors.com.



A snowplow makes its way west on Bagley in southwest Detroit on Monday.
JESSICA J. TREVINO/DETROIT FREE PRESS

MDOT reveals winners of snowplow naming contest

Emma Stein Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Among the winners

Metro region

Even inanimate objects deserve a name. That's why the Michigan Department of Transportation named each and every one of its roughly 330 snowplows this year.

Some are named after movie characters or songs, while others are clever puns. Many Michiganders will likely be able to connect to "I'd Rather Be at the Beach" as they shovel their driveways in 5-degree weather.

MDOT employees sifted through more than 15,400 possible plow monikers, all submitted by the public, to select the 330 winners, according to Nick Schirripa, one of the project organizers.

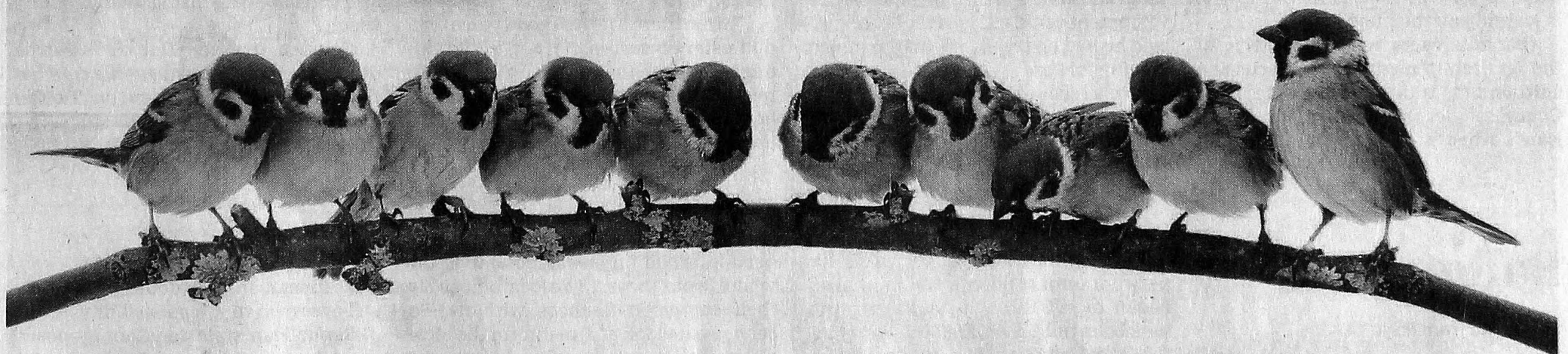
Although the names won't be painted onto the plows themselves, they will appear on the MiDrive website, where residents can check the name and location of each plow in real time. The website only lists the names of the 299 currently active plows — the rest are backup plows in reserve.

"It is a lot of fun," Schirripa said. "But one of the biggest drivers internally for me was that this is a great way to humanize a group of folks in our agency who really don't get enough attention, and who really go unnoticed, and are often taken for granted."

- Blizzard Wizard
- Bringin' Pavement Back
- Drift Master
- Droppin' Salt Like It's Hot
- Ice Ice Baby
- Kid Rock Salt
- Mr. Snow Miser
- PlowMaster
- Salt Life
- Sleety Pie
- Snow Warrior
- SnowJoe
- Trail Blazer
- North Region
- Alice Scooper
- Bluster Buster
- Captain Banks
- Chill Out
- Drift Buster
- Frostin Powers
- Han Snow-Lo
- Ice Buster
- Old Salty
- Optimus Plow
- Orange Blazer
- Orange Slush
- Plowzilla
- Rusty McSaltmeister
- S'no Problem
- Salty Dogg
- Scoop Dogg
- Sno-no-mo
- Snow Slayer
- Snowbegone Kenobi
- The Beast

Find the full list of snowplow names at HometownLife.com.

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Demonstrators

Continued from Page 1A

Many comments focused on the racial aspect of diversity efforts. Diversity initiatives usually cover things like age, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic background and disability, as well.

"These activities are completely optional and you may participate in as many or as few of the activities as you would like," Bobbie Goodrum, Farmington's assistant superintendent of diversity, equity and inclusion, stated in the release.

Protesters called the challenge "political" and "un-American." Fox News and the Daily Mail, a British tabloid, criticized the challenge, as well.

A larger group of counter-protesters also was also present to support the district. People in that group said they value the community's diversity and the ways it presents itself in the schools. For instance, Farmington's elected school board is majority Black, and its superintendent is Latino.

"We will continue this important work, and I hope and pray that we try to listen to each other," Superintendent Chris Delgado said.

More than 200 people attended the meeting, highlighted by a lengthy public comment period where people expressed varied opinions on the issue. Many requested the district make the challenge publicly available again so people can view or participate in it.

The Jan. 11 demonstration does not appear to have been organized by Farmington-area residents and was promoted by the Oakland County Republican Party, Ohio-based Moms for America and Washington D.C.-based Informing America Foundation.

The meeting was the first for Santoria Shepherd, a Farmington Hills resident with two children in the district. She said she wanted to be there to support the schools and feels the community's diversity is one of its greatest assets.

"I know there are some people who want to make some policy changes that I don't agree with," she said. "As someone



Counter-protestors greet visitors to North Farmington High with their ideas.

JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

with a kindergartner in the district, I believe diversity, equity and inclusion should be taught and shouldn't be treated as some radical race theory. It's not that."

Linda Brandis, a Commerce Township resident and grandparent, said she's concerned the district's equity challenge and other diversity efforts are politically divisive and create an image of the United States she doesn't agree with.

"It's more than just a local problem," Brandis said. "They're going to be teaching 'diversity,' and I think they don't need to be making kids part of this whole political fight."

Oakland County Republican Party Chair Rocky Razekowski of Troy expressed a similar sentiment during a press conference before the meeting and during public comment.

"I'm here to stand in the disgust I felt from reading the 21-day equity challenge," he said. "You can put lipstick on

a pig, but it's still a pig."

Terri Weems, president of the Farmington school board, said the diversity challenge was created using data from an equity audit the district conducted last year. She also asserted students need to be equipped to collaborate with people who are different than them in multiple ways as they prepare to enter the workforce.

"Our community has been very clear that they support our DEI efforts," Weems said. "I, for one, am proud of the work we're doing at FPS ... We have no plans to discontinue our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. It's the right thing to do."

Board member Angie Smith and other trustees spoke similarly.

"In this district, we love to celebrate and not tolerate," Smith said.

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

Threats

Continued from Page 1A

investigation, so district officials and Livonia police declined to comment on that case directly.

Jenkins said the district deals with a "gamut" of incidents and they're all handled on a case-by-case basis. Livonia bases decisions on whether to keep a student in or out of school based on its own and local police's findings. The district's school board decides if a student is to be expelled.

"We take the safety and security of our students very seriously, and each case is a little bit different from the next," she said. "We have our school code that guides us."

Jenkins said the schools consider a student's age, existing disciplinary record, the seriousness of the student's behavior, security risks to the school or a person, what restorative practice can happen and whether the student has a disability when deciding the best course of action.

The district can also require counseling or perform a risk assessment — interviews with school psychologists and social workers — when necessary.

But, Jenkins stressed local police play a significant role.

"We're educators, not law enforcement," she said.

Livonia Police Lieutenant Charles Lister, commander in the department's investigations bureau, said Livonia treats all threats "as valid until proven otherwise." Lister said the department's findings are shared with the school district and, when needed, the city's law department or county prosecutor's office.

"Our patrol bureau responds immediately to conduct an initial assessment of the situation, including home visits and interviews with the parents and the student identified as making the threat, if known," he said in an email. "These visits typically include a detective and a uniformed officer. An incident report is completed, in every instance, and forwarded to the detective bureau for further investigation."

Restaurants

Continued from Page 1A

The Dunkin' would locate on a piece of property between Michigan Avenue and Old Michigan Avenue not far from Interstate 275. The proposed shop — which would bring its coffee, doughnuts and more to the south side of Canton — would be located on a vacant piece of property.

"I think we have a good project here and are pretty excited to bring this to conclusion," said Becky Klein, a project engineer for Troy-based PEA Group who is working on the project.

Commissioners were supportive of the project, though some discussion surrounding traffic issues were held. Commissioner Doug Weber brought up issues when it comes to traffic in that

area, saying the one access planned for the project along Old Michigan Avenue could cause some traffic concerns, especially at busier parts of the day.

"I've experienced going through this intersection at a busy time, and it does get backed up going northbound on Michigan Avenue to turn on Michigan Avenue, so conceivably, you would have a situation where traffic is backed up, blocking Old Michigan Avenue where people are trying to come into make that left off of Haggerty onto Old Michigan Avenue," he said.

Commission Chairman Greg Greene said he's driven by the property over the years and wondered if a commercial development could come to that space. He said he had no problem with the project moving forward.

"Now I see somebody is attempting to do that," he said. "I like that idea."

Panda Express near Walmart

The Asian-inspired fast-casual restaurant hopes to locate another restaurant in Detroit's western suburbs in the parking lot of the Walmart on the south side of Michigan Avenue.

Plans for the restaurant — it opened restaurants in Novi and Livonia in recent years — would locate it in part of the parking lot of the superstore.

Issues surrounding the trash on the property were a bit of sticking point for some commissioners, though Greene said it would be tricky to find the best spot for such a receptacle in an out lot development.

"To me there's no real good place for a dumpster enclosure. As long as the signage works on that one driveway and it remains outbound, I think it's going to be OK. It's going to be a good project otherwise."

Both projects were recommended for approval by the commission at its meeting. They now go to the township board for its review and final decision.

Commissioner Sommer Foster — who is also the township board's representative on the commission — said she was pleased to see development take place in one of the larger parking lots in Canton that doesn't get used to its full capacity.

"I do like that we are putting these type of restaurants in existing parking lots," she said. "I think a number of these buildings do not require the number of parking spots they currently have so I'm glad we're using that property wisely."

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

Ballot

Continued from Page 1A

Council candidate Debra Fowlkes filed to run for office with \$5,100 in outstanding campaign finance fees in the 2021 election, the county clerk's office never contacted or informed the city. Fowlkes signed a filing affidavit stating she had, among other things, paid any outstanding fees.

Fowlkes admitted to the error last August, saying she had not intended on seeking public office again, so she didn't feel a need to pay the outstanding fees.

"I own up to it," she said at the time. "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."

No apparent statute sets campaign oversight

Michigan election laws don't offer much clarity or state who, if anyone, is responsible for investigating claims made on affidavits. Canton Township Clerk Michael Siegrist said some communities aren't even aware of this issue until it's happened to them.

"I believe voters in all 83 counties deserve to have the same system," Siegrist said. "I believe there should be a rule proposed by the secretary of state and it should go to the legislature."

Westland leaders apparently were

unaware of the issues with Fowlkes' paperwork until residents and journalists began to sift through finance reports, which are publicly available, shortly before the August primary. At that point, primary ballots had been printed and it was too late to remove Fowlkes from the race.

Fowlkes' fourth place finish in the summer advanced her to the general election, where she failed to garner enough votes to win several months later. Throughout that time, she retained endorsements from several local elected officials. Lawsuits filed to remove her from the primary and general election ballots were dismissed for being filed too late.

Municipal clerks agree that, ultimately, the blame for submitting a false affidavit is on the candidate. But how government agencies respond to the problem differs greatly. Brown says the county has oversight of the campaign finance system, not cities, and the county should be responsible for its own system.

"I guess everybody has a different attitude about work," she said about campaign finance violations.

The Oakland County Clerk points to the Pontiac mayor's race in 2021, in which the incumbent mayor was deemed ineligible for failing to file six finance reports, as a reason why county clerks should check their own system.

"We make the ballots. We design the ballots. We do the layouts. We do all of that," Brown said. "We receive all that information to make the ballots, so we

need information on someone to know where to put them ... The local offices file their campaign finances with us. So yeah, we do look at it to inform the local clerks if that person owes us money or hasn't filed reports."

A spokesperson for Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett sent a statement regarding the clerk's decision to not check the county's finance database. When Hometown Life pressed for an interview, the spokesperson said she felt a statement was sufficient. Multiple county clerk staffers have expressed disinterest in an interview on the subject.

"Local or county clerks do not have investigative authority," the statement reads. "Thus, the onus is on the candidate to assure that their filing affidavit is accurate. The Wayne County Clerk was not the filing official and the office of the Wayne County Clerk's elections division operated within the guidelines established by Michigan legislation."

State election reform bills ignore campaign finance

Westland Clerk Richard LeBlanc and Siegrist agree it makes sense for the responsibility to lie with the county, and feel the state legislature should amend its election laws to require it.

"This happens regularly across the entire state," LeBlanc said. "It's not just the City of Westland. So, in my opinion, the legislature should be visiting this ... I think what Oakland County does is effective, and I've suggested that to

Wayne County."

Both men are also doubtful the state will ever own that responsibility.

Republican state senators proposed and later approved a slate election reform bills in 2021. None of the laws had to do with affidavits or checking campaign finance databases.

While GOP leaders say the bills will make it easier to vote and harder to cheat, Democrats and other opponents argue the proposals will restrict voting and are premised on lies perpetuated by former president Donald Trump and his supporters. Investigations have repeatedly shown the latter to not have any meaningful effect on American elections, but it remains a talking point for Republican politicians.

"The legislature do not really work with professionals who do the job and ask them what they'd recommend," Siegrist, a Democrat, said. "The package the legislature has put forward is super exciting if you're a partisan ... The problem is, they're not based in reality and don't benefit the system at all. I would love it if the legislature would sit down with us and work with clerks when they're making laws to make the process better. But they don't do that."

LeBlanc plans to start asking the county to verify every Westland candidate is in good standing with the county, but says he shouldn't have to ask.

"The conduct of a candidate can reflect poorly on the administration of the process by the local clerk," he said. "That's unfortunate."

stankersle@hometownlife.com

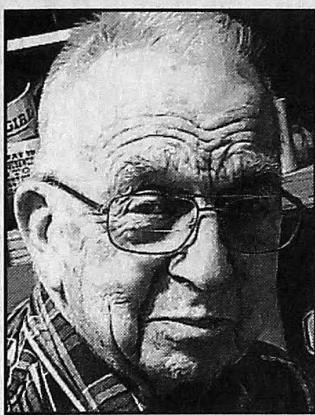
Obituaries

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Edward Pershing Good

FARMINGTON HILLS

- Passed from this life early in the morning of December 23rd, joining his devoted wife of 67 years, Justine Good, who passed away just four months earlier. He is survived by his five children: Thomas (Marcia Giltner), Amy (David Finkel), David, Gretchen (Daniel Nash), and Christopher (Ann Daugherty). He will be missed and fondly remembered as "Grandpa Good" by Jordan, Katie (Alejandro Morales), and Lydia Good, Ann and Justin Finkel, Leo and Tiffany Nash, Jacob and Jeremiah Good, and great-grandsons Nico and Emilio Morales. He will be dearly missed also by 11 nieces and nephews and many loving friends. Edward was predeceased by his sister Jane Good Fazio (Alphonse, d. 1993), and brother Frank (d. 1921). He was a Yale-educated attorney who represented the auto industry and a combat veteran of the Second World War who also served during the Korean War period. Active in his community and at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church and Boy Scout Troop 110, he demonstrated citizen participation and improved life for all who knew him. Visitation Sunday, February 6, 3-8 pm, at the Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, 23720 Farmington Rd., downtown Farmington, (248-474-5200). Memorial Mass Monday, February 7, 10:00 am (gathering after 9:30 am) Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, 23615 Power Rd., Farmington. Mass will be live-streamed and viewed by visiting Ed's obituary at www.heeney-sundquist.com. (Masks requested at both funeral home and church). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Alternatives For Girls, (alternativesforgirls.org.)



Carolyn Sorg Cox

SARASOTA, FL - August 2, 1928-November 15, 2021

It is with sadness that we announce Carolyn Sorg Cox, formerly of Bloomfield Hills, MI died at home in Sarasota, FL in the early hours of November 15th, 2021.

She was born in Massillon, OH 93 years ago to Eleanor and Walter Sorg. She learned her leadership skills as the oldest of 3. Carolyn received her Bachelor of Science degree from Western College for Women in 1949 and taught 2nd grade for a couple of years. During this time she met Edwin Cox at a dance where they both were with other people. Ed tracked her down by calling all the Sorgs in the phone book and the rest is history!

They settled in Shaker Heights, OH and had their two children, David and Eleanor. In 1959 the family moved to Birmingham, MI where Carolyn made a life and home that welcomed all in her orbit. Everything Carolyn undertook, be it dinner parties, bridge, golf, or volunteerism was for the purpose of spending time with others and demonstrating her generous nature. She was a member of Village Club, Orchard Lake Country Club, Sarasota Yacht Club, PEO, charter member of St. Stephen's Church, and a few other religious organizations. With her razzle dazzle smile and bright personality Carolyn made friends easily, young and old alike. We also would be remiss if not mentioning her ability to be quite glamorous. Even on camping trips, she did not forget her lipstick!

She is especially missed by her husband of 71 years, Edwin, who traveled this life and the world with her. Also, her son David, and daughter Ellie Noble (Jim), 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. A private memorial took place in November. In keeping with her love of the arts, memorial contributions can be made to Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota, 1226 N. Tamiami Trail, Suite 300, Sarasota, FL 34236, www.artistseriesconcerts.org.



Patricia Eddy

PLYMOUTH - "Pat" passed away peacefully from this life on January 11, 2022, and into the arms of her Savior, with her devoted husband, Gordon, at her side. Gordon met Pat on a blind date where they enjoyed the live stage production of Oklahoma. Together they shared a love for musicals. Soon after they were married and lived happily together for over 73 years! She leaves behind her children Nancy, Scott and Brook Eddy as well as nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Pat and Gordon moved to Plymouth in 1963 and loved the small town community. Pat worshiped regularly with her family at Risen Christ Lutheran Church. She so enjoyed the friendships she developed with the people there. Her friends all got to know the compassion and sweetness that defined her. She never had a bad word to say. Pat had many interests including sewing, gardening and baking. Her pie crusts were always flakey and made from scratch. Fresh blueberry pie was her forte. Having a little sweet to go with her coffee after dinner brought a smile to her face. Her memorial service will be held Saturday, January 15, at Risen Christ Lutheran Church, 46250 Ann Arbor Road, West, Plymouth with visitation at 10 a.m., service at 11 a.m. and a catered lunch immediately following. Interment Riverside Cemetery, Plymouth. In lieu of flowers Gordon requests donations be made to The Salvation Army www.salvationarmyusa.org, please designate Plymouth Michigan Salvation Army, or Risen Christ Church, admin@risenchrist.info. To share a memory please visit vermeulen.com



Vanetta "Happi" Truan

PLYMOUTH - Truan, Vanetta "Happi" January 7, 2022, age 73 of Plymouth. Loving wife of the late Mark. Former wife of Dale Merritt. Beloved mother of Michelle Merritt. "Happi" was an extraordinary, and remarkable person, who touched many many lives to the fullest, she will be truly missed by all who knew her, including Stella. Funeral Services were handled by the Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home in Plymouth. Interment United Memorial Gardens. To share a memory please visit vermeulenh.com



Carol Ann Berk

Of Livonia, age 59, (died suddenly) January 8, 2022.

Beloved mother of Derek and Brian Berk. Wife of the late Aaron Berk. Dear partner of Kim Madeleine. Daughter of the late Michael and Theresa Kashetsky and sister of Gail Losey.

A Memorial Visitation will take place at the R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home, 15451 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Friday from 4 until 9 PM with a Memorial Service at 7 PM.

Memorial contributions may be directed to the charity of your choice in Carol's name.

Please share a memory at www.rggharris.com

Eugene Gorczyca

LIFE IS GOOD

Eugene Gorczyca, 94, passed away quietly in his sleep at his Livonia, Michigan home on Thursday, December 30th, 2021. "Geno", as he was known to his friends and family, was born on July 28th 1927 to Kazmierz and Helen Gorczyca.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife Delores (Glinski) and sisters Eleanore (Snyder) and Lillian (Sowa). He is survived by daughters Peggy (Doug) Sund, Debbie (Dennis) Gauthier, Cindy (Bill) Schueler, Kathy (Paul) Keyser and sons Eugene (Karla) and Robert (Joanne) Gorczyca. He is also survived by 13 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

A Navy Veteran, Gene served aboard the Sumner-class destroyer USS O'Brien 725 from 1945 through 1947 and was honorably discharged July 15th, 1947.

Following his tour in the US Navy, Gene returned to his childhood home in Detroit where he met his soon to be wife Delores Glinski. After a short courtship the couple married on November 25th, 1950. They soon moved to a new home in Garden City, Michigan where they began raising their loving family. Gene remained a caring and loving husband until Delores's passing in 2005.

A graduate of Lawrence Tech University with a degree in Electrical Engineering, Gene was soon employed at Burroughs Inc. in Plymouth, Michigan. After a decade at Burroughs, Gene found his way to the Ford Motor Company where he worked as an electrical engineer until his retirement in 1982.

Gene and Delores were active members of St. Raphael Parish in Garden City, insisting all 6 of their children attended and graduated from its elementary school.

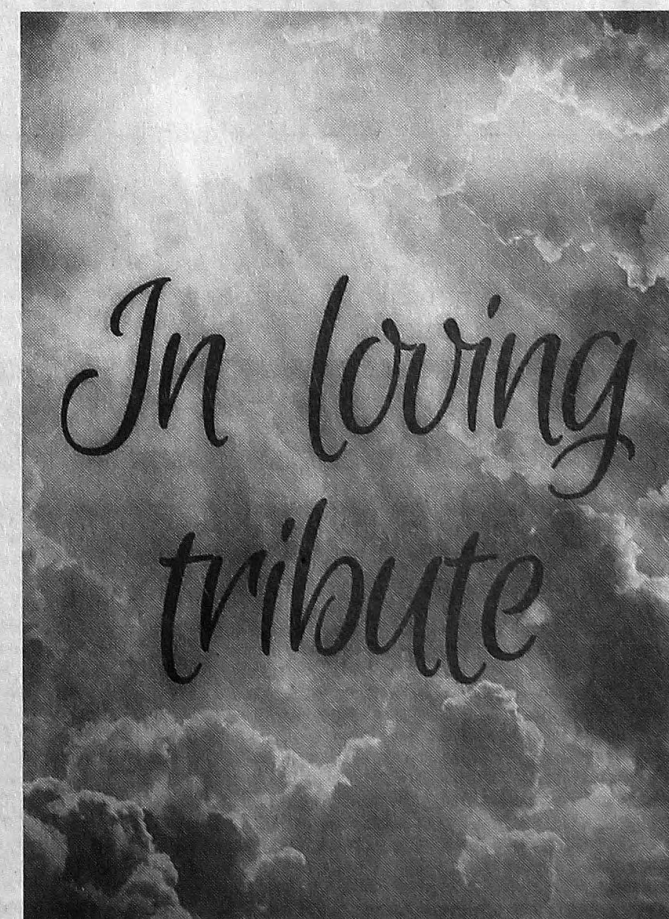
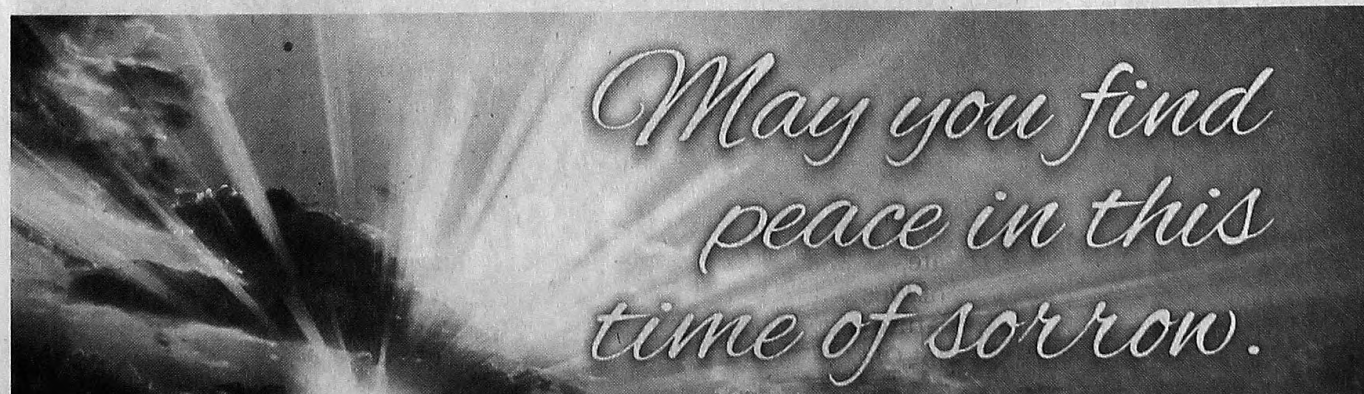
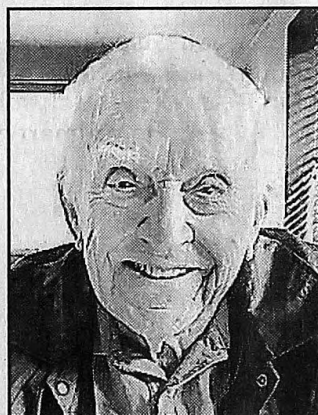
Never one to spend time on idle, Gene was very active in sports, playing softball, hockey and bowling well into his 60's and golf into his 90's. He also coached both sons in hockey and baseball.

Upon retirement Gene and Delores became full time snowbirds spending summers in their Livonia, Michigan home and winters in Beverly Hills, Florida. As in Michigan, Gene soon became an active member of local Beverly Hills softball and golf leagues, remaining active in both for decades.

In his later years Gene began giving back volunteering at local hospices in both Livonia and Beverly Hills and continued service at St. Colette Catholic Church in Livonia.

As family and friends reflect upon the wonderful life Gene led, and the thousands of people whose lives he touched, we ask that you remember the inspirational saying he continuously shared with those who loved him most, "Life Is Good!"

View the obituary in it's entirety and share your memories of Gene at www.rggharris.com



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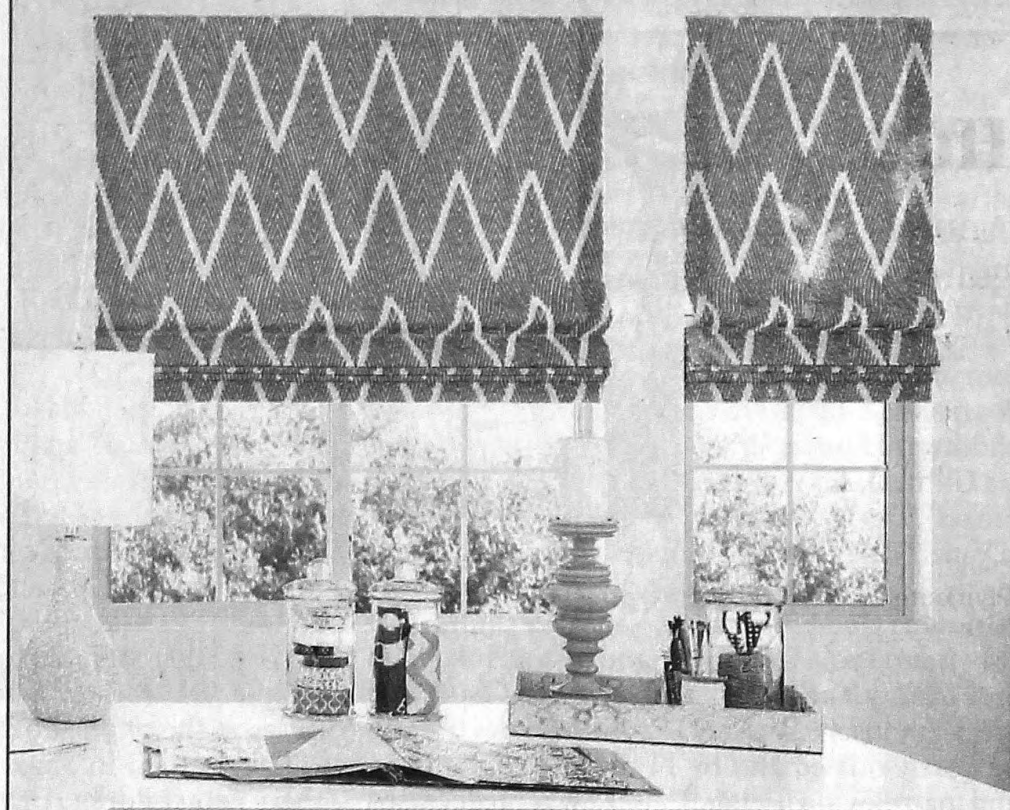
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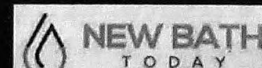
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SPORTS

Huge test: Eagles battle defending state champions at LCA

Anna Fernandez scored a game-high 17 points on the Pistons' home court

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It'd be easy to say that the stage couldn't have been any bigger for the Plymouth Christian Academy girls basketball team.

But there's a chance the stage *WILL* get bigger for the Eagles, who have been punching well above their Division 4

weight.

They opened the year with a win at Detroit Country Day and have just kept on swinging.

They dropped games to Ypsilanti Arbor Prep and Dearborn Divine Child, but that's OK. The Gators are expected to win the D-3 state championship and the Falcons are ranked in the top five and might win the Catholic League-Central, one of the toughest leagues in the state.

And Plymouth Christian got another huge test against Fowler early Monday afternoon at Little Caesars Arena.

That's right. Plymouth Christian took on the defending D-4 state champions. It was No. 3 vs. No. 2, according to Mick

McCabe's latest rankings in the Detroit Free Press, on the same court that the Detroit Pistons call home.

Fowler (6-1) entered the matchup with just one loss, which came against Central Michigan Athletic Conference rival Portland St. Patrick, McCabe's No. 1-ranked team in the division.

Fowler played aggressively on defense early on and made several high-percentage shots in the paint, but it still needed to fend off a late Plymouth Christian comeback in the fourth quarter to preserve its 43-35 victory.

If Fowler gets past St. Patrick in the playoffs, there's a good chance it'll meet Plymouth Christian again in either the

final four or state championship at Michigan State's Breslin Center.

So, yes, the stage could've been bigger for Plymouth Christian. And if it does get bigger, some major hardware could be on the line next time.

"Hopefully, this is a step in the right direction for us to get better," PCA coach Rod Windle said. "That's the mentality we've had in terms of the schedule we've had this year. Work hard, play tough teams, believe in ourselves. I think we believed in ourselves enough to compete tonight."

Fans who made the trek downtown

See TEST, Page 3B

Shorthanded Wayne Memorial girls basketball tops Stevenson at LCA

Mayla Ham score 20 points to lead the Zebras to their second KLAA victory

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Wayne Memorial coach Jarvis Mitchell was asking a lot from Colleena Bryant and Mia Bazzi.

On Jan. 9, the Zebras were playing in just their second Kensington Lakes Activities Association game, looking to defend their league title against a scrappy Livonia Stevenson squad with plenty of talent.

Except they were missing three players going through COVID-19 protocols as well as guard Alexis Halley, who was battling a lingering injury and couldn't dress.

What's more, they were playing at Little Caesars Arena, home of the Detroit Pistons. Very few venues in the state are as prestigious as the state-of-the-art palace downtown.

Of course, they had their big three playing in Division I recruits Paris Bass, Mayla Ham and Davai Matthews, but they had only seven players dressed.

Senior Jaylah Franklin was going to provide help in the post while coming off the bench. But the rest of the minutes were going to be taken by Bryant and Bazzi, two freshmen playing in only their seventh varsity game.

"The thing about it is the kids play," Mitchell said. "This is just basketball."

Well, that's a good point.

Bryant and Bazzi might be freshmen, but they've been playing competitively their whole lives.

That's why it wasn't *SO* surprising to

see the young duo help the Zebras beat Stevenson, 64-33.

Wayne played like it was undermanned in the first half, squeaking out a 30-19 lead entering halftime.

The type of Wayne team everyone has come to expect showed up in the second half.

The Zebras (6-1) opened with a 9-0 run thanks to Ham (20 points) getting to the basket for a pair of layups, Matthews (15) hitting a free throw and scoring a bucket down low and Bazzi (7) scoring at the rim.

Stevenson (3-4) didn't score its first points of the second half until Scarlett Webster (nine points) made a free throw with 3:39 left in the third quarter.

Wayne separated from Stevenson entirely in the fourth. Ham scored 12 points in the period, while Bazzi hit one of her signature 3-pointers and Bryant paced the offense with her guard play.

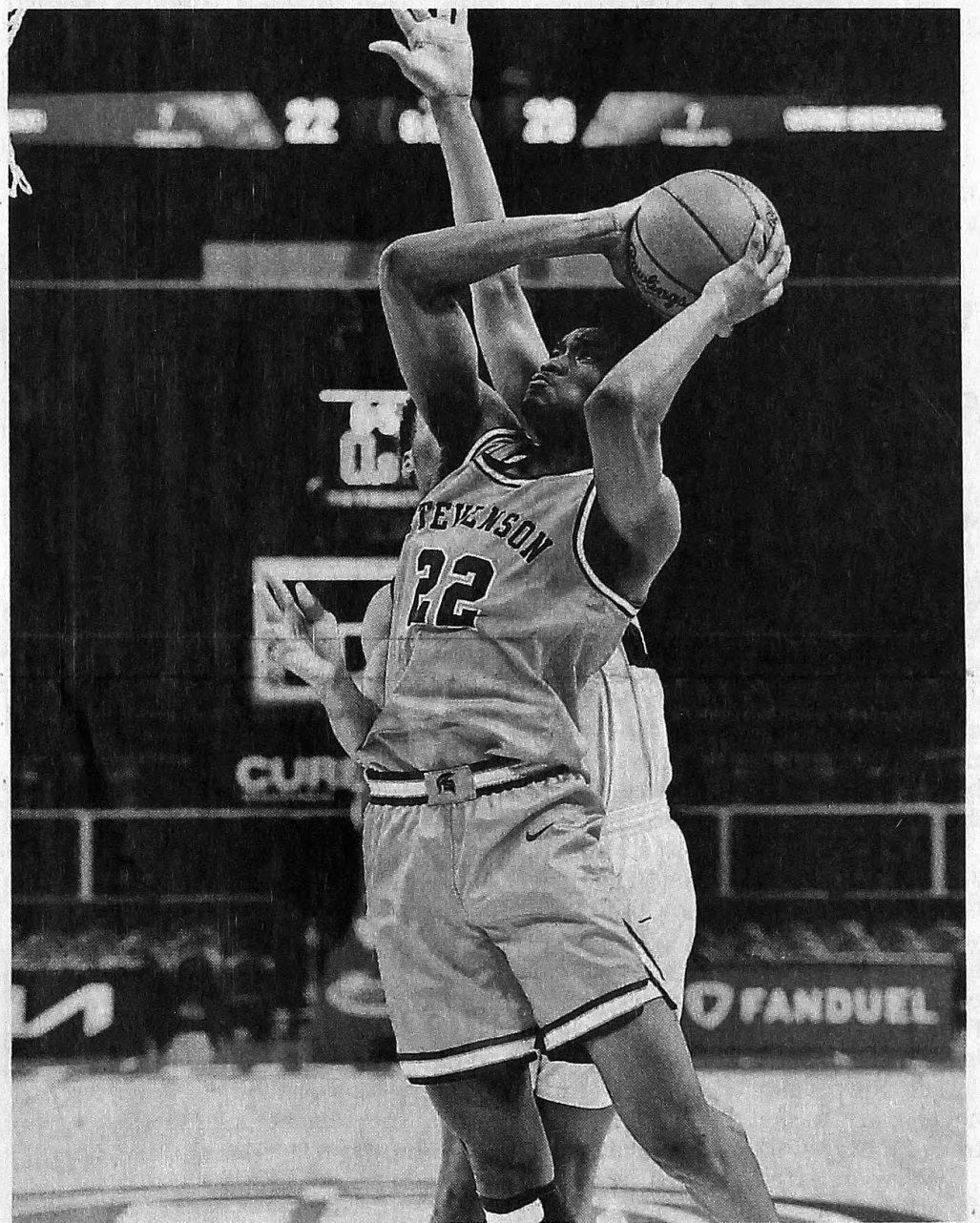
"I'm very impressed," Mitchell said of his freshmen. "Colleena Bryant is as rare as I've seen at the point guard spot. Oooh, that child, man! She knows how to play. She has something that I don't have to coach."

"Mia Bazzi, in my eyes, is the best 25 shooter (3-point scorer) in the state. She really works her tail off shooting the basketball. I was really proud with how they played today."

Bryant's got one of the toughest jobs. She's a shorter point guard in a tough league.

Yes, she has scorers such as Ham,

See BASKETBALL, Page 3B



Livonia Stevenson's Charles Asamoah shoots against Wayne Memorial in Kensington Lakes Activities Association boys basketball action on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, at Little Caesars Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Warriors prep for CHSL with game against Carman-Ainsworth

For the second-straight year, Curtis Williams was named MVP at the Gotta Get It Classic at Grand Blanc

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Curtis Williams drove to the hoop for a layup that gave Brother Rice an 11-point lead to open the fourth quarter of the third annual Gotta Get It Showcase boys basketball game Jan. 8 at Grand Blanc.

And then the Warriors almost crumbled entirely.

The keyword here is almost.

Flint Carman-Ainsworth scored 11 of the next 14 points. That included crowd-favorite Chris McLavish burying two of his showcase-record six 3-pointers, as well as Mehki Ellison, who's averaging almost 30 points per game, sinking a free throw that trimmed the Cavaliers' deficit to just 51-50 with 2:56 left.

How Brother Rice finished the game was going to be important. Everyone who cares about basketball in Michigan would be talking about the outcome of this matchup. Everyone wanted to know

how for-real the Warriors were.

Catholic League-Central play started this week. All five teams in the division are ranked in the top 10. It's going to be an absolute meat-grinder to see who escapes with the league championship. If Brother Rice wanted to be taken seriously by saying, "Hey, we've got a chance at this thing, too," it was going to need to halt C-A's late comeback.

So the Warriors let their play do the talking.

On the very next possession, Johnathan Blackwell drove through the paint and sucked in the Cavaliers' defense. The junior then kicked out a pass to Keithan Gilmore in the corner. Gilmore

then pushed the ball up to Williams, who buried a Jon Brantley-lengthed 3-pointer to put Brother Rice back ahead by four points.

As Williams backpedaled on defense, he let out a loud, "WHOOO!" And that's what the Warriors needed to preserve their mojo and inspire them to close out the 63-56 victory.

The win marked Brother Rice's third-straight at the Gotta Get It Showcase, which was a who's who event of the best teams in the state competing. Even former Michigan State star Mateen Cleaves was sitting in the crowd.

See WARRIORS, Page 2B

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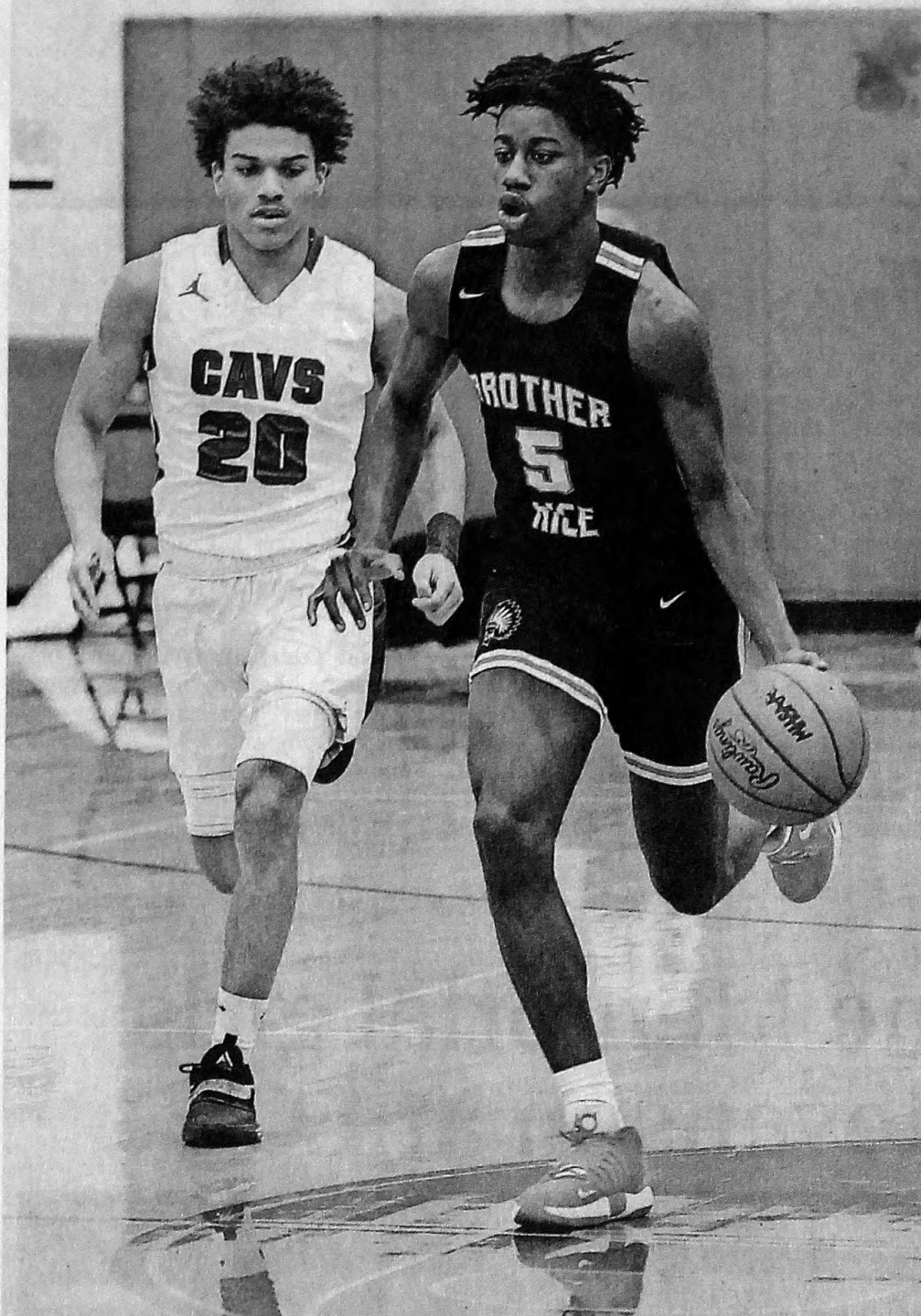
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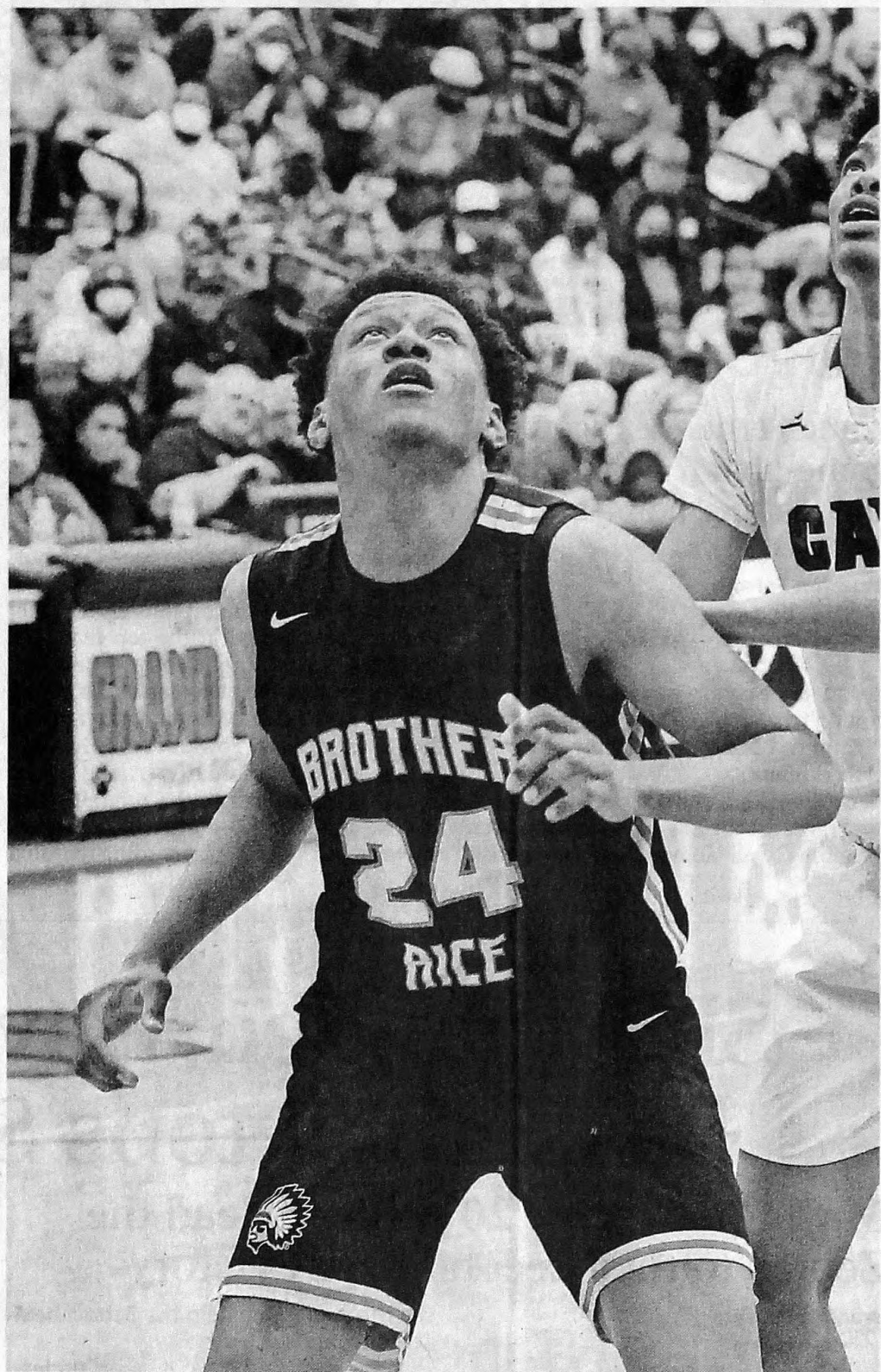
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Brother Rice's Johnathan Blackwell dribbles up the floor against Flint Carman-Ainsworth in the Gotta Get It Classic boys basketball showcase on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at Grand Blanc. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Brother Rice's Keithan Gilmore looks to rebound against Flint Carman-Ainsworth in the Gotta Get It Classic boys basketball showcase on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at Grand Blanc. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Warriors

Continued from Page 1B

The environment was electric. The stands were packed. The competition was exactly what the Warriors wanted.

"That's why we come here. We come here for a big environment," coach Rick Palmer said. "It's not a true road game, but it was a road crowd, too. I think our parents were rooting for us, and that's about it. And we found a way. We're not going to win every game in the Catholic League pretty. Most of them are going to be uglier than they are pretty, and we found a way tonight. We held on.

"You come to Flint, and Carman-Ainsworth is a good team. They beat Grand Blanc last year, and Grand Blanc won a state championship. We're 6-0 heading into the Catholic League, and oof, here we go. We know what's next. Here it comes now. Every game we play is against a top-10 team now."

The game couldn't have looked much uglier early on for the Warriors, who trailed 17-9 after the first quarter.

McLavish, a freshman with a smooth shooting motion but not much height, checked in off the bench and scored five points quickly to ensure the Cavaliers' a 12-0 run to end the period.

But 3-pointers from the Warriors helped them back in the game, especially midway through the period. First, it was Xavier Bowman, and then it was Gilmore and Warren Marshall hitting back-to-back shots from downtown to give them a brief 27-26 lead.

However, a half-court buzzer-beater from McLavish ensured a 30-30 tie as both teams entered the locker room.

Williams, a four-star with seven Division I offers, including interest from Alabama and Maryland, willed Brother Rice to a 47-38 lead in the third thanks to a big 15-5 run.

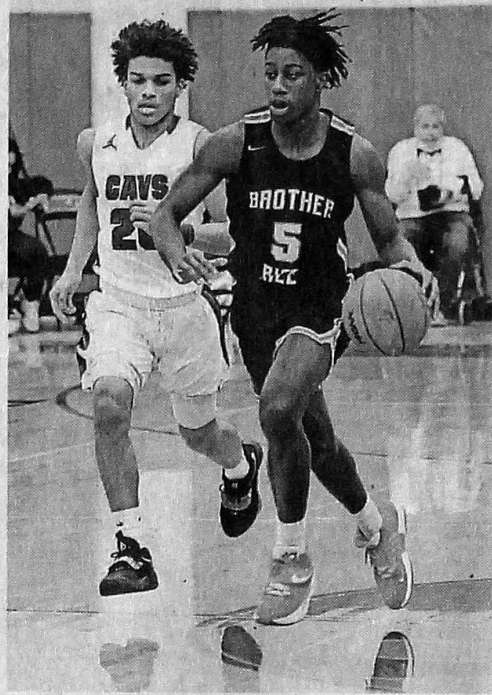
The junior scored twice on layups, knocked down a 3 in transition and slammed home a dunk in front of a handful of college scouts sitting along the south baseline. That included an assistant from Toledo, a team Williams holds an offer from.

"It was only the first half (when we were trailing), so we knew we were fine," said Williams, who scored 21 points and picked up his second Gotta Get It MVP trophy of his career. "The first half, we were still getting our feet wet. We came back and started hitting open shots and finding open men. We weren't really trying to play one-on-one ball."

After Williams' big "WHOOO!" in the waning moments, Brother Rice still needed to keep C-A off the scoreboard.

McLavish, who finished with a game-high 29 points, scored on a drive to the hoop with 1:45 remaining, and then, shortly afterward, he made a trio of free throws.

But Blackwell did the rest in the final minute.



Brother Rice's Johnathan Blackwell dribbles up the floor against Flint Carman-Ainsworth in the Gotta Get It Classic boys basketball showcase on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at Grand Blanc. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

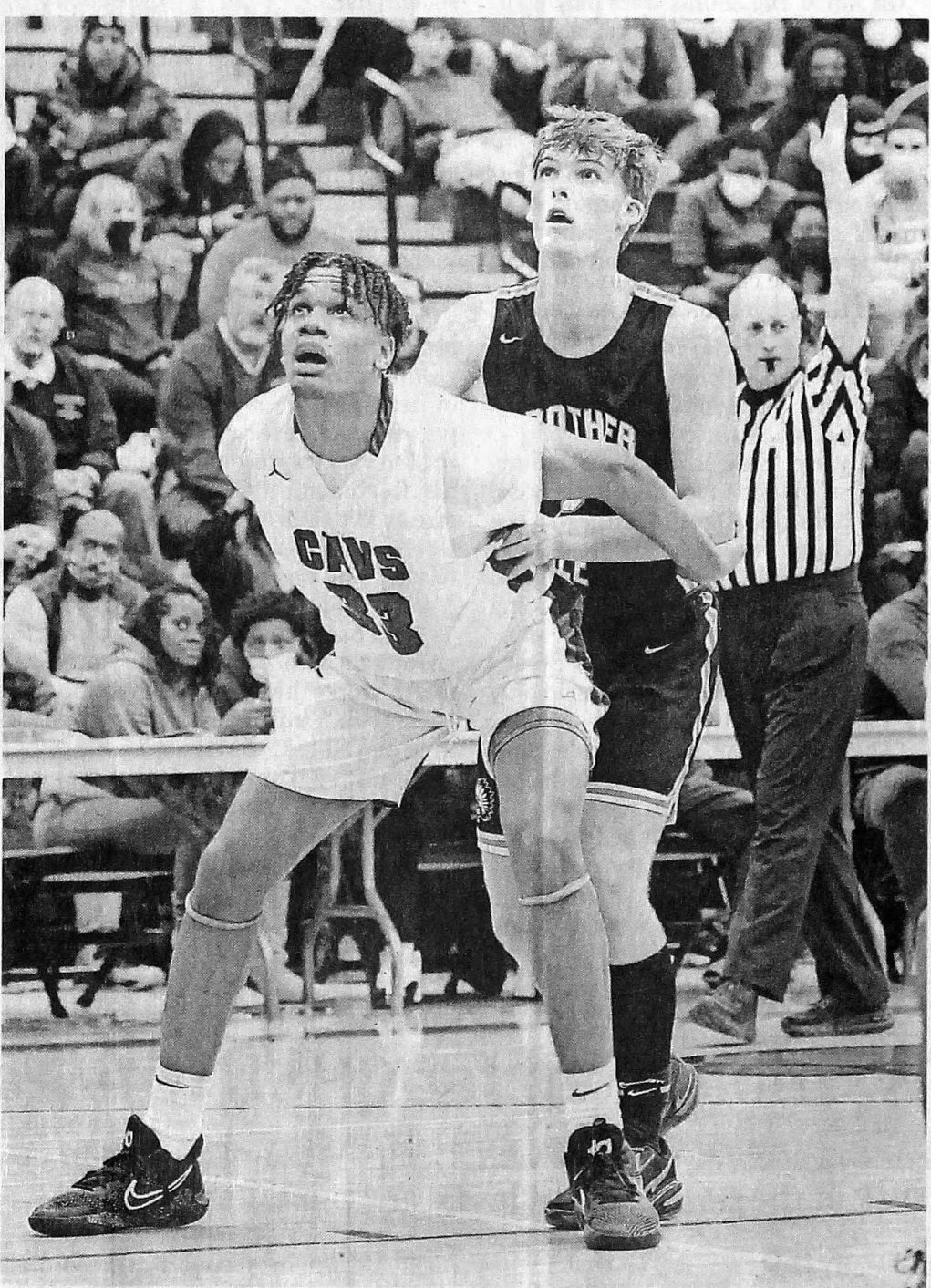


Brother Rice's Xavier Thomas shoots against Flint Carman-Ainsworth in the Gotta Get It Classic boys basketball showcase on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at Grand Blanc. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

While trying to kill the clock and avoid getting fouled, the junior guard dribbled through the paint, splitting C-A defenders Kylan Davis and Ellison, and somehow found Marshall down low for a wide-open backside bunny.

On the ensuing possession, Ellison drove to the hoop, but Blackwell stood in there and took a charge that ultimately ensured the win.

"I knew he had it in his hands. He was going to try and get a bucket," the three-star recruit said. "He was their best player. So I knew he was going to go down hill to his left. So I just stood there



Flint Carman-Ainsworth's Elijah Hennings (left) boxes out Brother Rice's Henry Garity in the Gotta Get It Classic boys basketball showcase on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at Grand Blanc. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

and took a charge, and the ref called it."

Some of the Warriors lost their cool throughout the evening, especially playing in front of so many fans from the greater Flint area. It was a hectic atmosphere.

But Blackwell helped his teammates stay level-headed in the second half.

"The game kind of got wild because the crowd was on their side," Blackwell said. "But my dad always tells me, 'Don't go too high, don't go too low. Just keep a poised pace.' I just told the guys, 'We've got this. Relax. We'll get back in it. The game is about runs. They're going to have runs. We're going to have runs.' And I just kept a calm attitude to finish strong for my team."

Blackwell and Xavier Thomas finished with nine points apiece, while Bowman had eight and Henry Garity made a pair of second-quarter 3-pointers to finish with six.

Brother Rice held Ellison to just eight points.

Now the Warriors turn their attention to CHSL play.

"We're ready to go into league play, I think," Williams said. "It's not going to be just a walk in the park. Everybody's got to come to play. Everybody's got to stay positive on the bench and on the court for us to come out with the win."

Added Blackwell: "We're just ready to shock the league and show that we're the best team in the league. Just keep it rolling. If we lose a game, let's keep it in the past and just keep going. Every game gets tougher. The crowds are getting bigger. Our confidence is at a high. We're going in 6-0, playing good basketball and having good practices."

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

Basketball

Continued from Page 1B

Bass and Long Beach State commit Matthews to pass to, but she's still got to bring the ball up the court and make safe passes.

She has no doubt she's going to be a great player come the time she graduates from Wayne.

"It's good. I just push myself. I take every game personally," said Bryant, who scored nine points. "I feel like I'm the best point guard in Michigan. It's just personal to me. Freshman year, it's just worth it."

"I've been doing this. I started playing basketball since I was 2, so it's really nothing. I've been playing with my brothers and having my brothers pushing me. Just come out and work hard every game (is my mentality)."

It looked as if it'd be a close game early on.

In the opening quarter, Wayne and Stevenson traded leads. It was 15-13 entering the second quarter.

Stevenson coach Kareem Smartt said fast starts have been an emphasis for the Spartans. He's just unhappy they could score only six and four points in the second and third quarters, respectfully.

Webster finished with nine points, while Aubrey Ickes added nine.

"That was our main focus to start the year: Come out with energy and perform well from the get-go," Smartt said. "I think we started off really well. Once our point guard went down, I think our energy dissipated. So I think we've got to find a way to keep that going when one person is down, the next person is up."

"Wayne Memorial's a great team. I wish we would've played a little bit better so the game could've been a little bit closer, but I think we did good in spurts. We just couldn't sustain anything that we were doing."

The Spartans' key to success? Excelling in the 2nd half

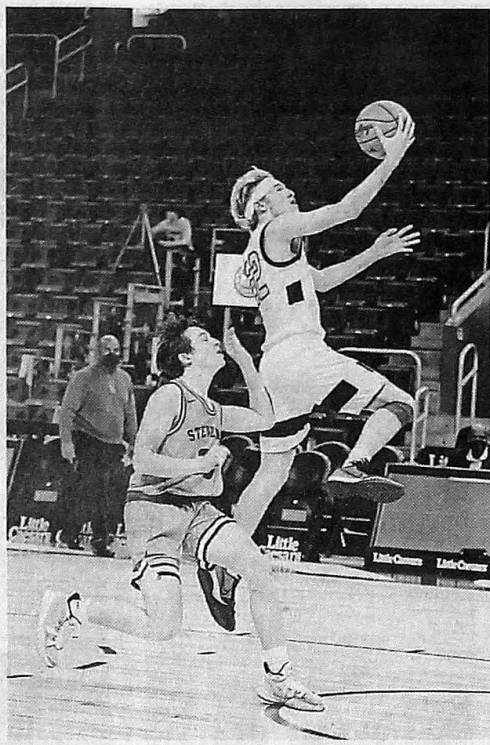
So far, it doesn't matter where the game is.

It could be in Livonia Stevenson's gymnasium. It could be a neutral-site game at Novi. It could even be in downtown Detroit.

Wherever the Spartans are, they're going to play their best basketball in the second half.

That was the case yet again Jan. 9 at LCA, as the Stevenson boys basketball team turned a hard-fought three-point halftime lead into a commanding 54-40 victory over Wayne Memorial.

"We're just a second-half team," Spartans coach Eoghann Stephens said.

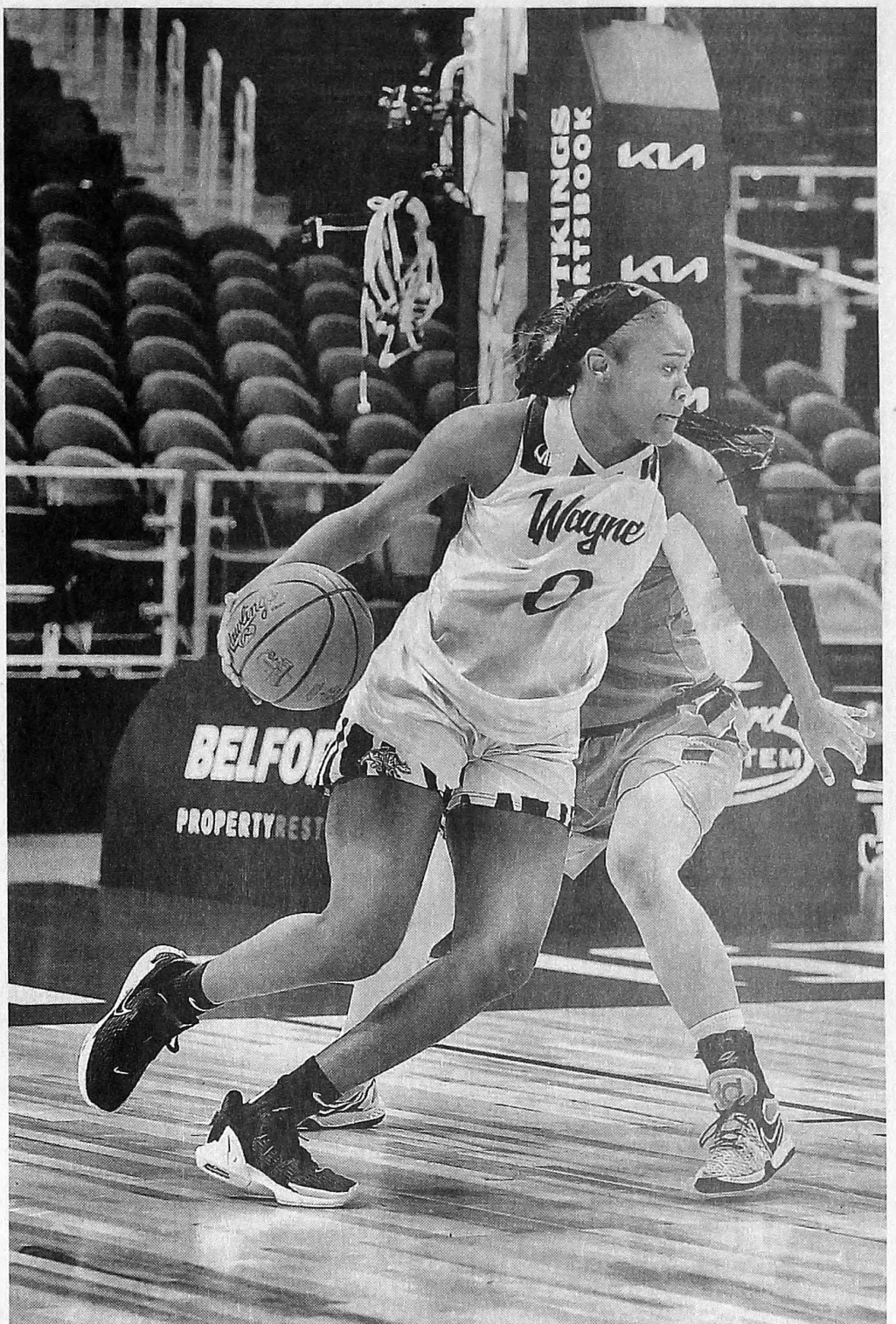


Wayne Memorial's Brendan Hefner attempts a layup against Livonia Stevenson in Kensington Lakes Activities Association boys basketball action on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, at Little Caesars Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



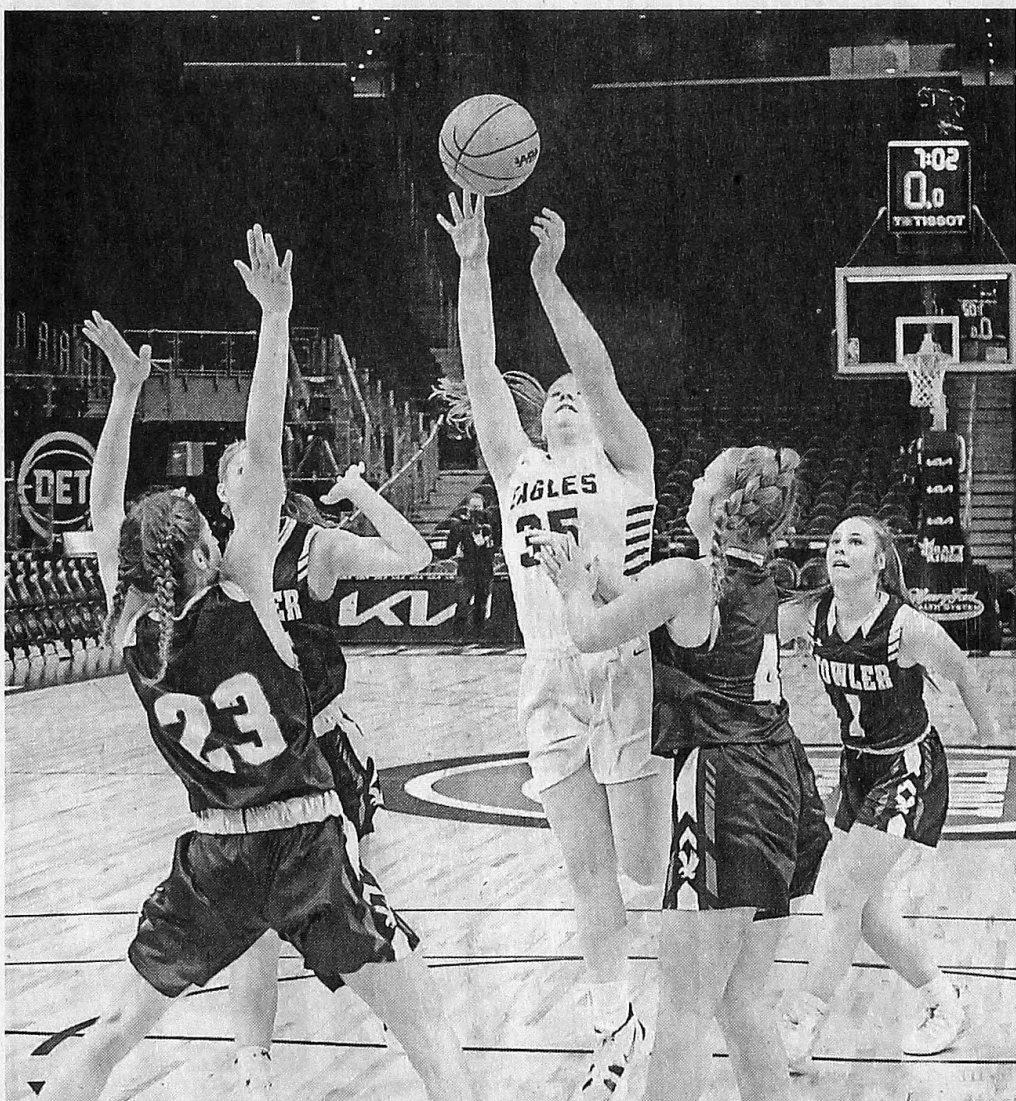
Wayne Memorial's Colleena Bryant dribbles up the floor against Livonia Stevenson in Kensington Lakes Activities Association girls basketball action on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, at Little Caesars Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

They certainly are. They went on an 8-0 run early in the third quarter and never looked back. That included Kenoly Jones (20 points) scoring six-straight on a drive to the hoop, a pair of free throws and a put-



Wayne Memorial's Paris Bass dribbles up the floor against Livonia Stevenson in Kensington Lakes Activities Association girls basketball action on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, at Little Caesars Arena. TOM BEAUDOIN, SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

back attempt under the rim. In the fourth, Radu Iacoban took a charge that led to two more free throws for Jones. Once the senior sank both, Stephens subbed in his bench, ensuring every Spartan got to play on the professional floor. "The second half, they got comfortable and played their game," Stephens said. "When they play their game, they're great. They can compete with anyone." Stevenson (3-3) got six points apiece from Mark Stein and Joey Harper. Breandan Hefner led Wayne (0-2) with 10 points, followed by DaJuan Miller and Travon Stevenson with eight apiece and Shauntez Cain with seven. "This is fun. This is what high school basketball is all about," Stephens said about playing at LCA. "It's not about wins and losses. It's not about me or any of these coaches. It's about them having these experiences on this floor. They get to have their photos with their friends and have their moments. This is why we do the job. I love it, and it's amazing to bring my team here, my family here and my kids here. It's just a fun experience for everybody." Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsombrandonj.



With no other teammates in sight, Plymouth Christian's Hailey Maulbetsch puts up a shot surrounded by four Fowler High Eagles on Jan. 10, 2022. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Test

Continued from Page 1B

got quite the treat in seeing Plymouth Christian's Anna Fernandez take on Fowler's Mia Riley, two of the best players in the division.

Riley got her team going quickly, though. She scored 12 of her team-high 16 points in the opening half. That included her scoring two big buckets down low during a 9-0 run Fowler used

to close out the first half. Fowler carried a 27-14 lead into halftime as its defense swarmed Plymouth Christian's ball handlers up and down the floor. Plymouth Christian bounced back in the second half, however. Its defense held Fowler to just eight points in each of the third and fourth quarters. And then it went on an 8-0 run of its own midway through the final period to make it close. Fernandez, who finished with 17



Plymouth Christian Academy head coach Rod Windle looks up at the scoreboard early in the third quarter with his Eagles trailing Fowler High by double digits. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

points, 13 of which came in the second half, made a pair of free throws to make it 41-33 with 2:13 remaining. Plymouth Christian missed three free throws down the stretch that could've made it just a five-point deficit. Time after time, Plymouth Christian forced Fowler's offense into turnovers late in the game. It just couldn't convert most of those takeaways into the points it needed to force overtime or win it outright. "Yeah, it was a great experience getting to play against a quality team like Fowler," Windle said. "They just do a great job of sharing the basketball and putting pressure on the defense. They forced us into some mistakes today because of their aggressiveness. They just have a great team." Hailey Maulbetsch scored seven points for Plymouth Christian, followed by Madison Yeager with six and Morganne Houk with five. Emma Riley helped Folwer with 11 points. Plymouth Christian will use the loss as a measuring stick going forward. It now knows how much catch-up it has before it enters the playoffs and attempts to make a deep run. Perhaps it'll get a rematch with Fowler. "We are a gritty team ourselves," Windle added. "We're really willing to fight and work toward getting better." Brandon Folsom covers high school sports in metro Detroit for Hometown Life. Follow him on Twitter @folsombrandonj.

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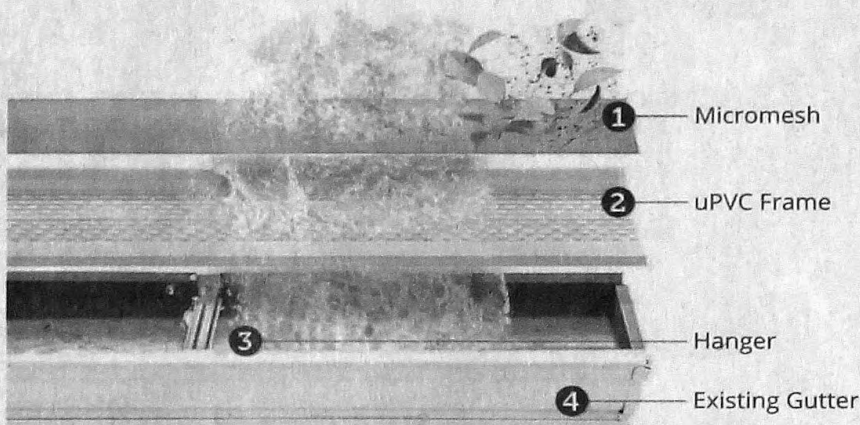
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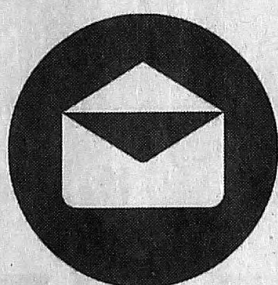
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2022 Labor Market Outlook

Why 2022 Could Be a Goldilocks Year in the Labor Market

By ZipRecruiter.com

The labor market in 2022 could reprise the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears: where 2020 was “too cold,” and 2021 was “too hot,” 2022 could be “just right.”

The economy began 2020 in a strong position, as a years-long recovery continued into the first months of the year. But the coronavirus pandemic shut down trade and travel, closed restaurants and schools, and forced hundreds of millions of workers to quarantine. The labor market fallout included 20 million extra layoffs, 200,000 extra business closures, and widespread hiring freezes.

Thankfully, the U.S. contraction was the shortest in history, lasting only two months from March to April, 2020. But despite a rapid recovery, fear and uncertainty lingered, driven by the coronavirus pandemic, even after the emergence of vaccines. The economy recovered about 70% of the lost over the following months. But by the end of the year, job growth had turned negative again amid surging Covid cases, and President Joe Biden was warning of a “very dark winter.”

The following year looked more hopeful. Not only did 2021 begin amid a roll-out of vaccines, but it also brought a font of new federal spending, including unspent coronavirus relief funds from 2020 and various forms of stimulus to households. Retail spending, home construction, and new business starts surged past pre-pandemic trends. Equity markets reached new highs.

Employer demand for labor boomed. But very few of the workers who had been sidelined by the pandemic returned to the labor force, causing labor markets to become tighter than ever before. Even when Covid cases fell, schools re-opened, and expanded unem-

ployment benefits expired, workers were reluctant to return.

Employers’ efforts to compete for talent became a veritable cage match. To quote Federal Reserve Board’s December 2021 Beige Book:

“While wage increases were most notable for entry-level positions, contacts suggested that pay was increasing across the wage scale. Moreover, firms were reportedly enhancing other benefits, such as hiring and retention bonuses and flexible work arrangements to attract and retain workers.”

According to one Beige Book entry: “An airline reported offering flight attendants triple pay to work during peak periods over the coming holiday season.”

Running the economy hot had large benefits for job seekers and workers, especially disadvantaged groups. But supply chains could not keep up with unexpectedly high consumer demand. The result was the steepest rise in inflation in three decades, the classic sign of an overheated economy. By year end, the Federal Reserve was promising to double the speed with which it would taper asset purchases and eyeing three interest rate hikes in 2022.

Some observers worry that the Fed’s “hawkish pivot” could send the economy right back into a frost, especially with cases of the new Omi-

cron variant of coronavirus spreading rapidly, and various forms of Covid relief expired. There is a risk it could cut the recovery short prematurely, with millions still missing from the labor force.

But we believe there is a good chance that the Fed will strike the right balance, taking some froth out of the market and causing inflation to moderate without job growth stalling.

If the Fed is able to strike the right balance, then in other matters, too, the country is likely to find the golden mean between two extremes. Workers will return to the labor force gradually, but not so fast as to push unemployment up, increase labor market friction, or erode their newfound leverage.

Finding the right balance from a policy perspective will increase the chances that people will take Covid seriously, but not panic. Lockdowns likely won’t need to be repeated on a wide scale, now that more targeted alternatives are available: N95 masks, vaccines and booster shots, rapid home tests (which will be mailed free of charge to people who want them in the new year), and two oral antivirals (which have just been authorized).

If we find the desirable middle ground, the likely result will be a year in which the U.S. controls Covid and inflation without drastic measures that could damage growth or limit our future potential. As supply chains recover, and workers ease back into the labor market, there is every reason to believe we can find ourselves in a milder and more sustainable economic climate.



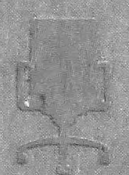
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