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Merriman Road leads Westland projects

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's road work season and, as Westland Public Services Director Ramzi El-Gharib says, "we have a lot" to get done. The city is planning more than two

dozen road projects this season, most of which will focus on neighborhood roads. In the City of Wayne, local roadways are also the priority this summer.

Here's what the two communities have on tap where road improvements are concerned.

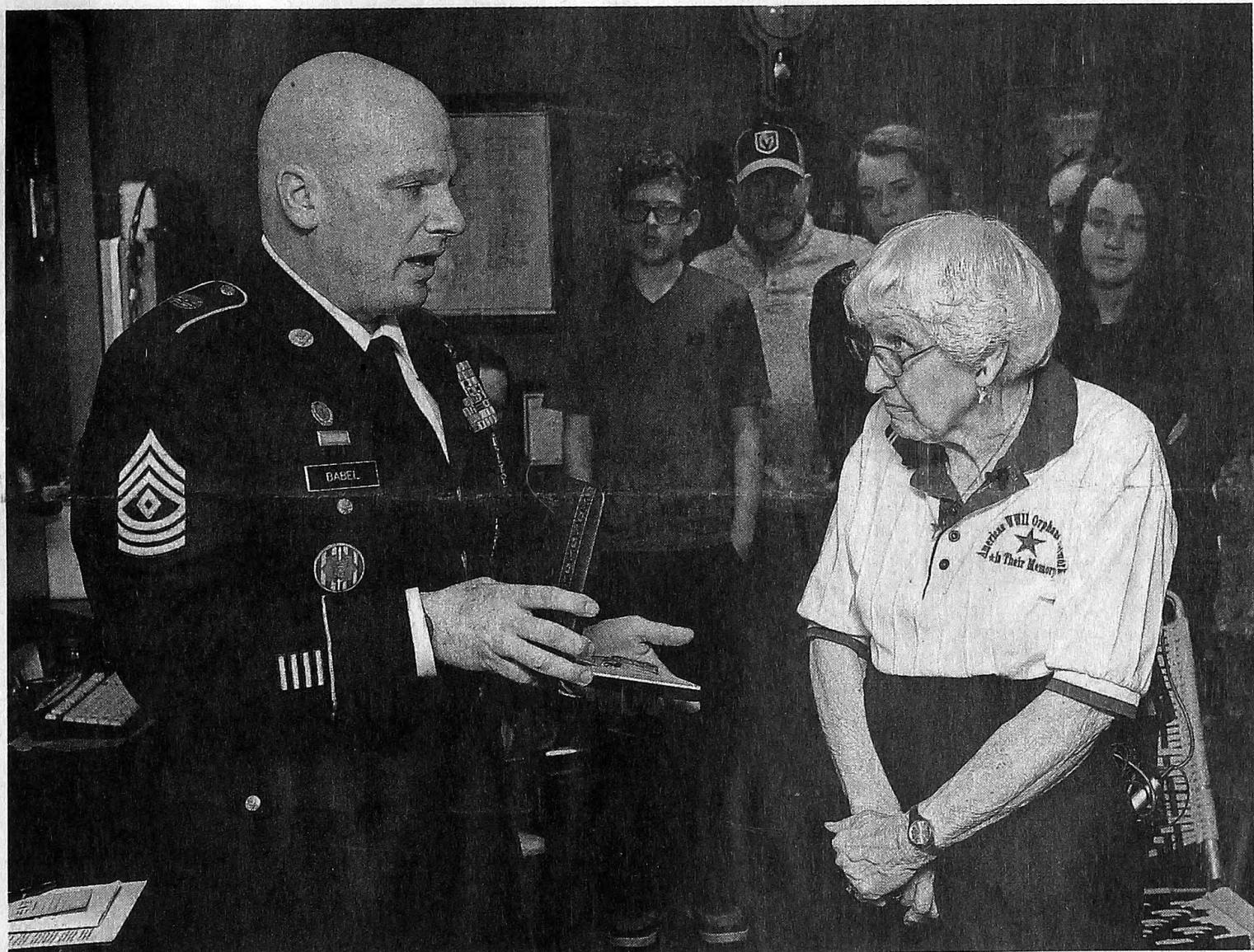
Merriman, Warren roads among major projects in Westland

Wayne County has four projects planned in Westland in 2022, including a stretch of Merriman Road, two projects on Warren Road and some work on

Wayne Road.

El-Gharib said he expects frequent travelers in the city will be most excited about the work on Merriman. The county plans to replace two bridges and do

See **PROJECTS**, Page 3A



National Guard 1st Sgt. Kris Babel presents a Bronze Star medal to Maryalyce Luper in honor of her father, Alfred R. Ricke, who was killed in action Aug. 25, 1944 in France. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

WWII veteran's remains identified, 77 years later

Susan Bromley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Maryalyce Luper has spent a lifetime missing her father.

But 77 years after Alfred R. Ricke was killed in action in World War II, his remains have finally been identified and

his daughter is finding peace as she prepares to lay her father to rest at last.

"I still haven't come quite back down to Earth yet," Luper, 83, said. "After 77 years — to get this kind of news, I still can't believe it's happening."

The Farmington Hills resident took the first step toward closure of a nearly

8-decade mystery April 19 as she accepted seven medals in her father's honor, including the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

"We are providing closure to a bloodline. We are solving the mystery

See **VETERAN**, Page 2A

PCCS to offer free mental health fair

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A free fair set for Plymouth's Kellogg Park April 30 won't offer rollercoasters or tilt-a-whirls, but there will be plenty of mental health-boosting pick-me-ups.

Believed to be the first of its kind event hosted by a school district in Michigan, the inaugural Plymouth-Canton Community Schools Mental Health & Wellness Fair is set to unfold 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 30.

As many as 33 mental health agencies will be represented in addition to local businesses who offer anxiety-relieving demonstrations like zumba, yoga and art therapy.

Although the event is spearheaded by Plymouth-Canton schools employees Kathy Grodus, Julie Woodhams and Frank Ruggirello and endorsed by the district's administration, everyone is welcome to attend, the orchestrators emphasized.

The fair is 100% funded by local businesses and supported by City of Plymouth, Plymouth Township and Canton Township administrators.

"I learned about a similar mental health wellness fair held in Wisconsin and thought we could bring it to our communities because of the need for mental health awareness, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic," said Grodus, a Plymouth-Canton psychologist.

"Since the pandemic, we've seen an uptick of mental health concerns — and research shows they continue to rise — which is why we feel there is a need for an event like this to provide

See **FAIR**, Page 3A

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Livonia urgent care first of its kind in county

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A partnership between Henry Ford Health and GoHealth will result in more than a dozen new urgent care facilities in Michigan. One of the first is in Livonia.

The new facility is near the corner Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads, right across the street from Walmart. Urgent care clinics can provide convenience when a primary doctor's office is closed or, when a situation isn't life threatening, are usually more affordable than a trip to an emergency room.

"It's convenient, on demand access within the Henry Ford Health system," said Bob Kinard, GoHealth's chief operating officer. "If you need a follow up or a primary care physician, we can get you right into the Henry Ford system."

The clinic will be especially convenient for Henry Ford patients. Staff will have access to a Henry Ford patient's medical records and can suggest specialists within Henry Ford Health. If someone is without a primary care physician, staff can help people find a doctor within that health system.

Aside from offering typical urgent care services like X-rays, COVID-19 testing, sports physicals and treatment for non-serious injuries, Henry Ford-GoHealth centers are designed to promote an anxiety-free environment. The facility doesn't look much like an urgent care until you step into an exam room.

"The design is really to create an effortless patient experience," Kinard said. "Our exam rooms are about 25% bigger than the average exam room and have wide entrances, so we can accommodate families or wheelchair access. It's a more open environment for the patient."

The two companies announced the partnership last fall and plan to open a host of urgent care centers together in the next two years. GoHealth is a private ur-



Livonia Chamber of Commerce President Dan West, center right, cuts the ribbon celebrating the new GoHealth Urgent Care's opening alongside representatives from GoHealth and Henry Ford Health.
SHELBY TANKERSLEY/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

gent care operator that partners with health care systems and its partnership with Henry Ford is its only in Michigan. The two have opened three other urgent care facilities in Michigan this year located in Chesterfield, Clinton and Bruce townships, all in Macomb County.

"Henry Ford is a great partner. As far as access for the community goes, they offer care from birth to hospice," said Laurie Dietzel, GoHealth's market vice president. "They have it all covered, so anything that

our patients need at any level of care is at our fingertips."

The urgent care clinic is open between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. Henry Ford Health also has a medical center in Livonia at 29200 Schoolcraft Road. People can visit that facility for primary care, cardiology, rehab, radiology, women's health needs and more.

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Observer & Eccentric Newspapers
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Published Sunday and Thursday by
Observer & Eccentric Media

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Subscription Rates:

Newsstand price: \$1.50

\$104 per 12 months home delivery

Home Delivery:

Customer Service: 866-887-2737

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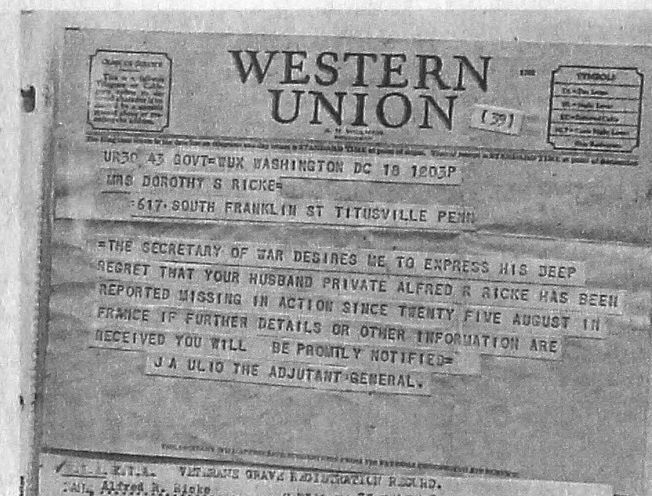
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A telegram informing Alfred Ricke's wife, Dorothy, that Alfred is missing in action as of Aug. 25, 1944.
PHOTOS BY TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



The Purple Heart and Bronze Star awarded posthumously to Alfred R. Ricke, who was killed in action in World War II. His remains were only recently identified.

Veteran

Continued from Page 1A

of what happened to them," said National Guard 1st Sgt. Kris Babel, who presented Lupher with the medals on behalf of the Ft. Knox Casualty Assistance Center in a program run by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. "It's a big deal and I feel honored to be a part of that. It's an honor to bring these people home."

Maryalce was just 5 when she last saw her father, who went missing in action on Aug. 25, 1944, and was declared dead months later.

But resolution to the mystery of what happened to him began last fall when Lupher received a letter from a genealogical society in Pennsylvania that she recalls began: "We believe you are the daughter of Alfred R. Ricke..."

She was stunned to learn the military was doing an exhaustive search to identify the remains of servicemen who had gone missing in action from various conflicts dating back to World War I and were requesting DNA samples. She and three of her male cousins submitted DNA specimens.

Another wait began, but this one relatively short compared to what the family had already endured.

"After all this time, you come to accept it," Lupher said. "It was like it was getting my hopes up all over again when they said they were doing this search and trying to locate my father. You start going through the emotions all over again."

Lupher still retains some memories of her father. The most vivid one is of him carrying her baby sister, Eileen, on his shoulders down some apartment stairs while he was home on leave in Pennsylvania.

Ricke, who had trained to be a rifleman in the Army, was sent overseas to fight in the war shortly after. His daughters and wife, Dorothy, would never see him again.

It didn't mean Lupher would stop trying. Years



Ricke joined the Army in January 1944.

"I still haven't come quite back down to Earth yet. After 77 years — to get this kind of news, I still can't believe it's happening."

Maryalce Lupher
Alfred R. Ricke's daughter

ago, she recalled watching a documentary on D-Day. "They showed film from the landing, and I told my mother 'I kept watching for a familiar face,'" Lupher recalls.

But that search was in vain as Ricke had not yet left the United States. He arrived in Europe in July 1944 and was killed less than two months later.

Lupher has had opportunity to wonder how her life might have been different without the absence of her father.

Mom Dorothy Ricke remarried and would have five more children, but her second husband died from a heart ailment after only seven years of marriage. A third marriage lasted 25 years.

Lupher herself was luckier in love and has been married for 61 years to husband Bill. They have four sons, who have also missed the presence of their grandfather.

Craig Lupher of Milford called it "nothing short of a miracle" when the call came that his grandfather's remains had been identified.

"I'm so happy for Mom that she finally has the answers and closure," he said. "This is her miracle."

While not all the answers are in from an anticipated military briefing, Maryalce Lupher and her sister Eileen have agreed that the best final resting place for their father will be in the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly.

Lupher anticipates being able to visit him much easier there than at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

"Taps" will be played when Ricke's funeral service is finally held, as it holds a special place in her heart. She heard it at Arlington just as she laid her hand on top of a cenotaph, a marker memorializing Ricke, shortly after it was installed years ago.

"It was like somebody had said, 'Ok, it's time,'" she said. "It was God's hand, I think he knew I needed that."

Contact reporter Susan Bromley at sbromley@hometownlife.com or 517-281-2412. Follow her on Twitter @SusanBromley10.

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Fair

Continued from Page 1A

resources, in a fun environment, for people from ages zero to 99.”

Grodus said the ultimate goal of the fair is let everyone know “it’s okay to not feel okay.”

“We want to decrease the stigma associated with mental health,” she said. “We want to let people know it’s okay to talk about it, and provide resources that can empower and educate.”

Woodhams said Kellogg Park is an ideal setting for the fair given its rich history of hosting uplifting events like fall festivals, ice festivals and Art In The Park.

“Even though mental health is a serious topic, we want to make sure this is a fair-like event in a place where families are used to having fun,” Woodhams explained. “We think holding it in a setting like Kellogg Park will help people feel more comfortable to attend.”

Ruggirello said the fair is just one slice of a large mental health wellness pie the school district is offering to families.

“We’ve hosted a number of events, including mental health townhalls for families,” Ruggirello said. “The model in Wisconsin we’re basing this fair on has proven to be very successful and we’ve reached out to and received report from

several people in the community who know how to set up festivals.

“Mental health is not a school problem; it’s a community problem. It’s not just kids who are having problems these days, everyone is struggling, so an event like this seemed to make a lot of sense.”

In addition to food, beverages and expert advice from mental health professionals, the fair will offer tools attendees can take home from the fair.

“For instance, there will be a booth that will provide journals to people,” Woodhams said. “They will have a chance to decorate the journals, learn how to use them and take them home at the end of the day.”

Woodhams said the district has received an incredibly positive response to the idea of a mental health awareness fair.

“We’ve not only received an overwhelmingly positive response from people who want to attend, but from companies who want to participate,” she said. “We actually had to have a cut-off for the number of businesses who showed interest in participating because we don’t want it to be too crowded; we want people to have space to talk about mental health concerns with the professionals who are present.”

Grodus said the goal is to make the fair an annual event.

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



Plymouth-Canton Community Schools professionals Julie Woodhams (left), Kathy Grodus and Frank Ruggirello (not pictured) have orchestrated a mental health awareness fair for April 30 at Kellogg Park. ED WRIGHT/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Projects

Continued from Page 1A

other repairs to the road between Warren Road and Hines Drive.

“People will love this one because we get a lot of complaints on this,” El-Gharib said. “I don’t know if you’ve driven over there, but it’s miserable.”

Two sections of Warren Road are also scheduled for improvements. The county will start repairs on a bridge just south of Joy Road in December and, pending some state funding, is planning to repair Warren between Wayne and Newburgh roads.

Wayne Road between Cherry Hill and Ford roads is also slated for improvements.

Westland’s local projects — pending

approval of Mayor Bill Wild’s proposed budget by city council — will also include some frequently traveled roadways. The mayor is proposing over \$3 million for local and major roads in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Grand Traverse Street, Darwin Street, Palmer Road and John Hix Road are some of the more recognizable local roads the city plans to repair this year.

“These are the roads that people notice,” El-Gharib said.

Local roads top priority in Wayne

The City of Wayne budgeted \$1.4 million for local roads for the 2021-22 fiscal year, most of which will get spent this summer.

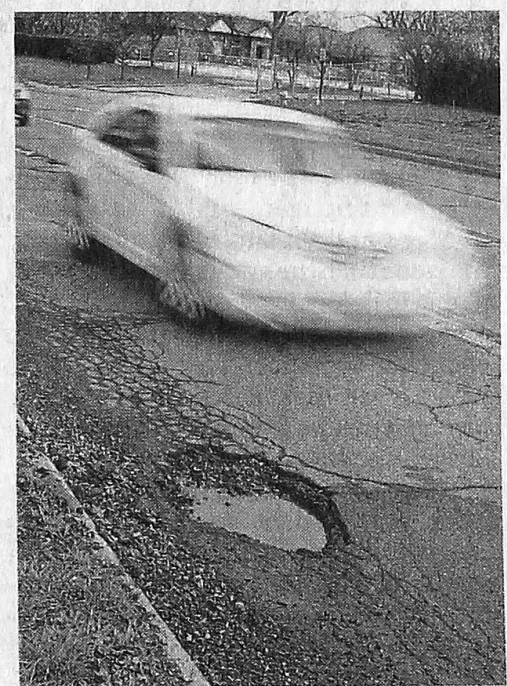
Cranmore Street and Grace Avenue will see gravel replacement and ditch repairs, and Winifred Street between An-

napolis Street and Stellwagen Street will get some sewer work.

“When we move and replace the water main there, we’ll also end up with a new piece of road in that same section,” Mike Buiten, the city’s engineering manager, said of the Winifred project.

Many of the roads in the Gloria Acres Subdivision, which is the neighborhood Taft Galloway Elementary is in, are scheduled to receive resurfacing as well.

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



This section of Merriman Road near Hines Drive will get some much-needed repairs in the coming months. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

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Wayne County COVID-19 cases and deaths tracker

Mike Stucka

USA TODAY NETWORK

New coronavirus cases leaped in Michigan in the week ending Sunday, rising 35.6% as 10,474 cases were reported. The previous week had 7,725 new cases of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Michigan ranked 19th among the states where coronavirus was spreading the fastest on a per-person basis, a USA TODAY Network analysis of Johns Hopkins University data shows. In the latest week coronavirus cases in the United States increased 57.1% from the week before, with 351,599 cases reported. With 3% of the country's population, Michigan had 2.98% of the country's cases in the last week. Across the country, 42 states had more cases in the latest week than they did in the week before.

Wayne County reported 2,237 cases and 10 deaths in the latest week. A week earlier, it had reported 1,653 cases and 17 deaths. Throughout the pandemic it has reported 403,366 cases and 7,922 deaths.

Oakland County reported 2,050 cases and eight deaths in the latest

week. A week earlier, it had reported 1,520 cases and seven deaths. Throughout the pandemic it has reported 289,946 cases and 3,829 deaths.

Within Michigan, the worst weekly outbreaks on a per-person basis were in Washtenaw County with 312 cases per 100,000 per week; Alpena County with 187; and Oakland County with 163. The Centers for Disease Control says high levels of community transmission begin at 100 cases per 100,000 per week.

Adding the most new cases overall were Wayne County, with 2,237 cases; Oakland County, with 2,050 cases; and Macomb County, with 1,279. Weekly case counts rose in 60 counties from the previous week. The worst increases from the prior week's pace were in Wayne, Oakland and Kent counties.

Michigan ranked 35th among states in share of people receiving at least one shot, with 66.9% of its residents at least partially vaccinated. The national rate is 77.5%, a USA TODAY analysis of CDC data shows. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which are the most used in the United States, require two doses administered a few weeks apart.

In the week ending Sunday, Michigan reported administering another 85,485

vaccine doses, including 7,115 first doses. In the previous week, the state administered 104,243 vaccine doses, including 7,900 first doses. In all, Michigan reported it has administered 15,804,230 total doses.

Across Michigan, cases fell in 18 counties, with the best declines in Allegan County, with 39 cases from 53 a week earlier; in Clare County, with 2 cases from 8; and in Luce County, with -3 cases from 2.

In Michigan, 78 people were reported dead of COVID-19 in the week ending Sunday. In the week before that, 81 people were reported dead.

A total of 2,411,464 people in Michigan have tested positive for the coronavirus since the pandemic began, and 35,935 people have died from the disease, Johns Hopkins University data shows. In the United States 80,984,914 people have tested positive and 991,254 people have died.

Note: In the Johns Hopkins University coronavirus data, cases and deaths for the Michigan Department of Corrections and the Federal Correctional Institution separately from Michigan counties.

Michigan's COVID-19 hospital admissions rising

USA TODAY analyzed federal hospital data as of Sunday, April 24.

Likely COVID patients admitted in the state:

- Last week: 686
- The week before that: 628
- Four weeks ago: 614

Likely COVID patients admitted in the nation:

- Last week: 40,571
- The week before that: 37,500
- Four weeks ago: 39,316

Hospitals in 37 states reported more COVID-19 patients than a week earlier, while hospitals in 25 states had more COVID-19 patients in intensive-care beds. Hospitals in 42 states admitted more COVID-19 patients in the latest week than a week prior, the USA TODAY analysis of U.S. Health and Human Services data shows.

The USA TODAY Network is publishing localized versions of this story on its news sites across the country, generated with data from Johns Hopkins University and the Centers for Disease Control. If you have questions, contact Mike Stucka at mstucka@gannett.com.

Canton man who attacked family with saw found guilty

Susan Vela Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A Wayne County judge found a Canton Township man guilty of assaulting, torturing and abusing his family around the same time the state shifted into pandemic lockdown.

Oswald Tallent's attorney Brent Jaffe could not convince Third Circuit Judge Paul Cusick that his client was legally insane when he began drinking and attacked his wife and daughter.

When issuing his April 20 verdict, the judge redirected the attorneys to the day police rushed to the family's home on a domestic violence call. Prosecutors accused him of bringing a large gas-powered circular saw down on his wife and hurting his daughter when she tried to

escape.

Tallent was a contractor and self-employed mason worker whose wife had threatened to divorce him and to take custody of their children if he didn't start contributing more to their household.

To which, the judge reminded attorneys, Cusick had apparently turned on his wife and accused her of thinking she was better than him.

"That sounds to me like he's angry," Cusick said, also noting that middle-aged men aren't known for onsets of schizophrenia.

Before announcing his verdict, the judge went over mental health reports and evidence that Tallent talked about hearing voices, spaceships and the illuminati after his March 30, 2020, attack

and arrest.

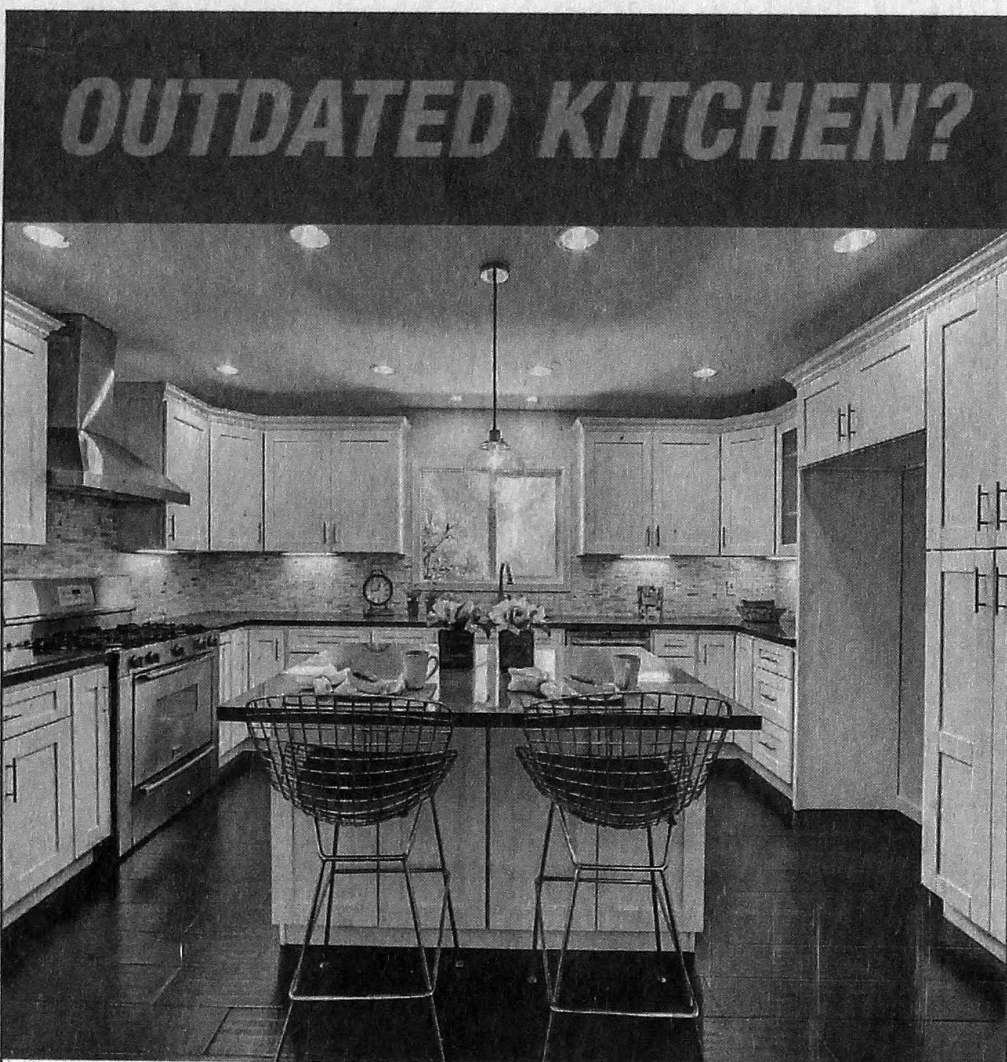
However, in order to consider Tallent not guilty by reason of insanity, Cusick had to be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that Tallent was mentally ill during the heat of his crime and that he did not understand the wrongfulness of his criminal actions.

Tallent is scheduled for a late May sentencing. He could spend the rest of his life in prison on an assault with intent to murder charge, and he also faces sentencing for charges of torture, third-degree child abuse and assault with intent to do great bodily harm.

His attorney was not available for comment.

The judge - not a jury - listened to the bench trial that lasted about a week. svela@hometownlife.com

Oswald Tallent is scheduled for a late May sentencing. He could spend the rest of his life in prison on an assault with intent to murder charge, and he also faces sentencing for charges of torture, third-degree child abuse and assault with intent to do great bodily harm.



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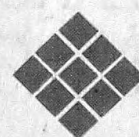
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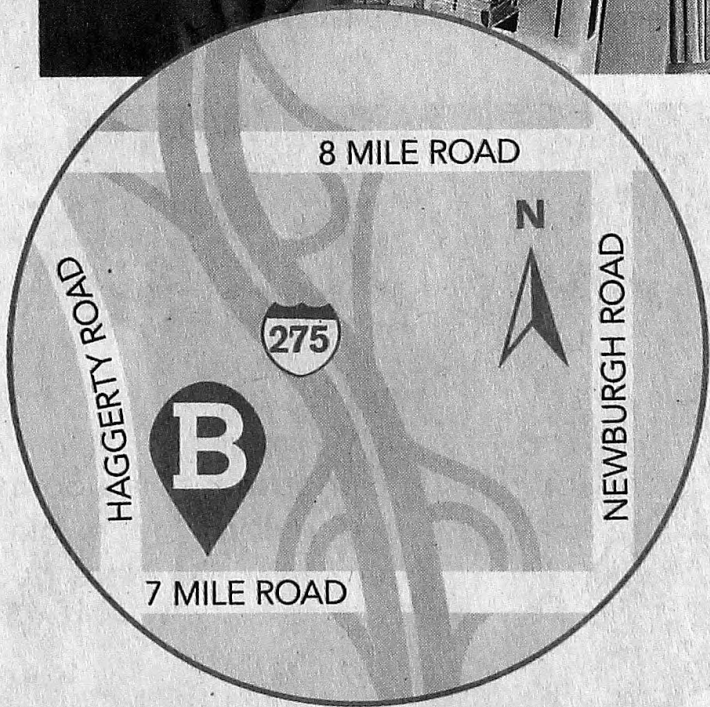
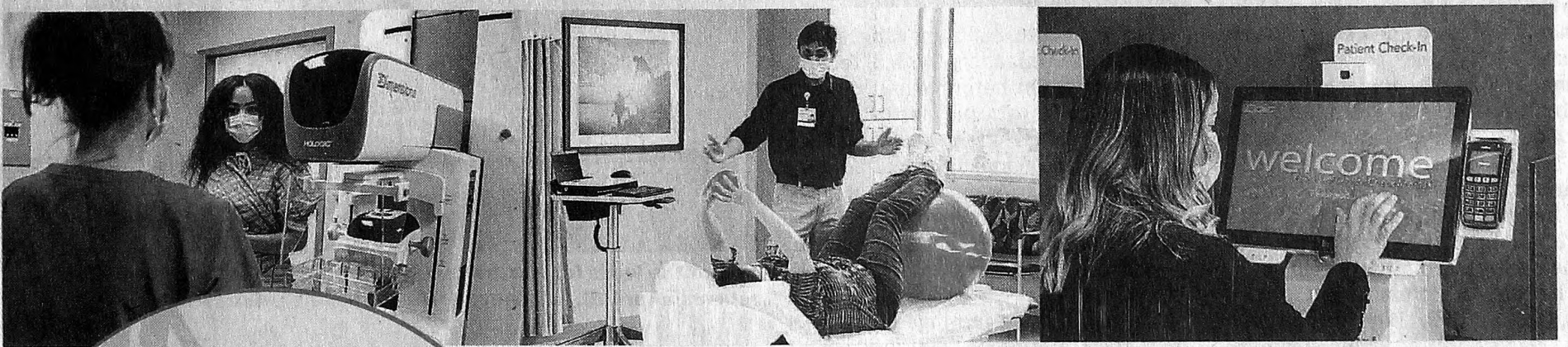


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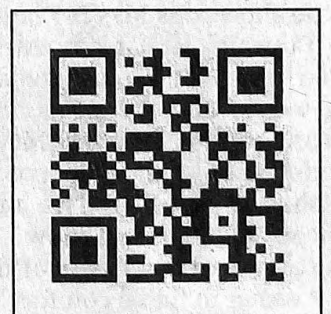
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Browndog Barlor returns to downtown Farmington

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Don't call it a comeback.

After originally closing the Browndog Barlor in 2020 due to COVID-19 shut-downs and a lack of staff, the popular ice cream and restaurant spot at 33314 Grand River in downtown Farmington returned for business this past week.

Serving up ice cream, burgers and other classic items, the restaurant is back with a new look on life, said Paul Gabriel, one of the owners.

"People are happy we're back and they really enjoy the food and the cocktails," he said. "They're happy."

The decision to return was a long one, Gabriel said. After closing, he eventually marketed the space and had a tentative agreement for a buyer to purchase the storefront and transform it into something else. Combine the fact that the deal fell through and the restaurant received a grant from the Restaurant Revitalization Fund and that made Gabriel begin looking at the possibility of returning to downtown Farmington.

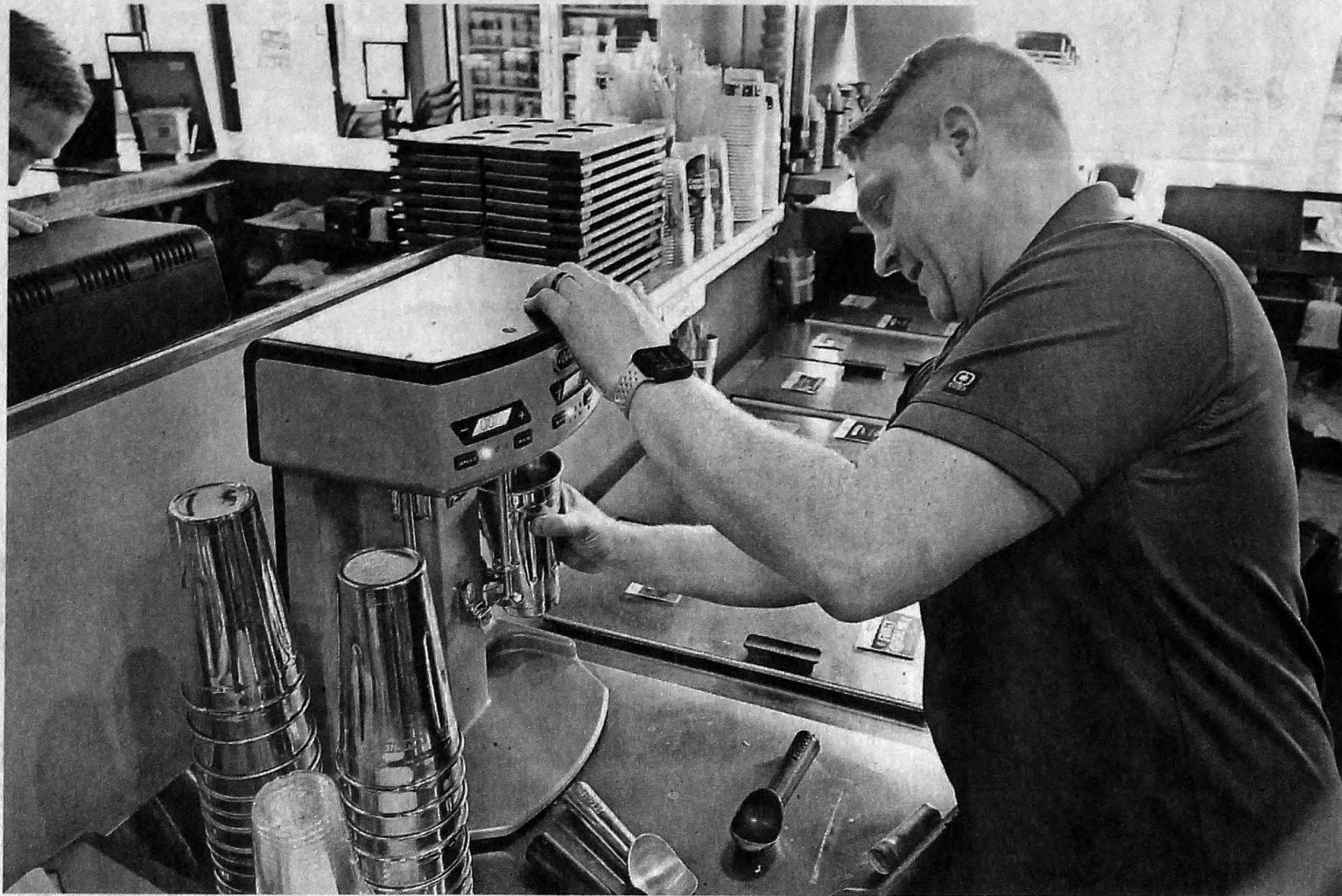
The plan was to originally open last fall, though they delayed that move until the spring. In the meantime, they leased out the building to the city's Downtown Development Authority, who in turned allowed a pop-up shop, Lekker Chóćó Treats, to open for a three-month span beginning last December.

Inside, the space has not changed much: the bar and booths remain, and a cooler full of Browndog ice cream pints remains near the front door. Some cosmetic changes have or will happened, but it will look fairly similar to when it did before it closed.

"We changed up the lights and have some artwork that's being commissioned right now," he said. "Pretty much the same."

The Farmington location was the first restaurant Browndog opened: it began in downtown Northville serving its own ice cream and later expanded to Farmington, where it pioneered its "barlor" concept: a bar with an ice cream parlor.

Similarities between the two downtowns where Browndog has restaurants will also benefit the Farmington location's opening. Being both towns have a



Browndog Barlor owner Paul Gabriel preps a Cookie Monster milkshake at the restaurant's location in Farmington.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

social district, the restaurant will be able to serve up cocktails-to-go as well as its line of "boozy milkshakes."

"We brought back a throwback menu of some of our top cocktails that are available in both places as well," he said. "They were old favorites and we decided to bring them back this season."

Since beginning, Browndog has grown across the region. It's now available in more than 80 locations in both Michigan and northern Indiana, Gabriel said, and recently landed a big account: several dozen Meijer stores now sell pints of ice cream, manufactured in the company's production facility it opened in 2020 in Oak Park.

Having Browndog return is a big move for downtown Farmington, said Kate Knight, executive director of the

city's DDA.

She said seeing the restaurant come back is a feather in the downtown's cap, especially as Browndog continues massive growth around the state.

"They're a big fish in an appreciative pond," she said. "They have a pretty loyal team and they're just a highly professional group. They view themselves as a big piece of the downtown community."

Browndog Barlor in downtown Farmington is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. More information can be found on its website, browndogbarlor.com.

Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728.



Gabriel finishes prepping a milkshake.

Northville High 'jocks' save the day for first play since 2019

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A heavy dose of unscripted, Broadway-level drama unfolded during the early stages of auditions for the Northville High School Drama Club's production of Disney's "High School Musical," the club's first performance since spring 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seconds after senior Braeden Courtney — an accomplished football player and complete stranger to the world of theater — entered the auditorium for his audition, he pivoted and headed toward the exit.

"Once I saw all the dancing on stage, the sign-up table, everything that was involved, I was intimidated," Courtney said. "I was like, 'This is not for me.'"

With the survival of the play potentially hanging in the balance, director Christina Johnson spotted Courtney before he disappeared into the hallway.

"I heard Ms. Johnson say, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa, curly boy, get back in here,'" said Courtney, who has almost-shoulder-length curly hair.

He not only followed the director's directions, but earned the male lead role, Troy Bolton (played by Zac Efron in the 2006 movie), saved the day and, quite possibly, the play.

Sorely lacking male actors for a play that tells the story of a group of high school athletes who join theater to meet girls, the show runs May 5-7 largely because Courtney and teammates Ryan Reynolds and Zane Yamin agreed to give acting a shot after being recruited by friend and castmate Aubrey McCurdy.

"Had these young men not shown up," Johnson revealed, "we may not have been able to have a show."

Courtney said the theme of the play made it easier to find a comfort zone.

"I'm a jock who's never been in a musical before playing a jock who's never been in a musical before," he said. "... I'm playing me."

Yamin, who plays a self-described "basketball player/closeted baker," said his first-time dive into theater has provided unexpected joy.

"I don't think I ever could have imagined walking out of rehearsal with Braeden and Ryan and thinking, 'Wow, that was extremely fun,'" Yamin said. "When we'd leave football practice in the fall, we were so beat up we just

Spring performances

- South Lyon East Drama performs "Grease is the Word" April 28-May 1. Tickets at southlyoneastdrama.com.

- Northville High School performs "High School Musical" May 5-7. Tickets available at nhstheater.ludus.com.

needed to sleep. Now, when I leave rehearsals, I feel better than when I went in."

Reynolds, homecoming king and a Wayne State University football recruit, acknowledged he harbored a few apprehensions going into auditions.

"I'll admit it: I wasn't real confident singing and dancing in front of people," he said. "It wasn't something I usually do. Looking back, I'm incredibly happy I auditioned. I've met a lot of people, gained a lot of new friends, and grown as a person."

The athletes are earning rave reviews from their castmates, many of whom are veterans in theater.

"I was a little nervous at first when I found out guys who had never acted before were going to play lead roles, but I was excited, too, because I knew they were all pretty popular and cool," said Brooklyn Blaskay, who plays female lead Gabriella Montez. "They definitely bring a lot of fun to the show."

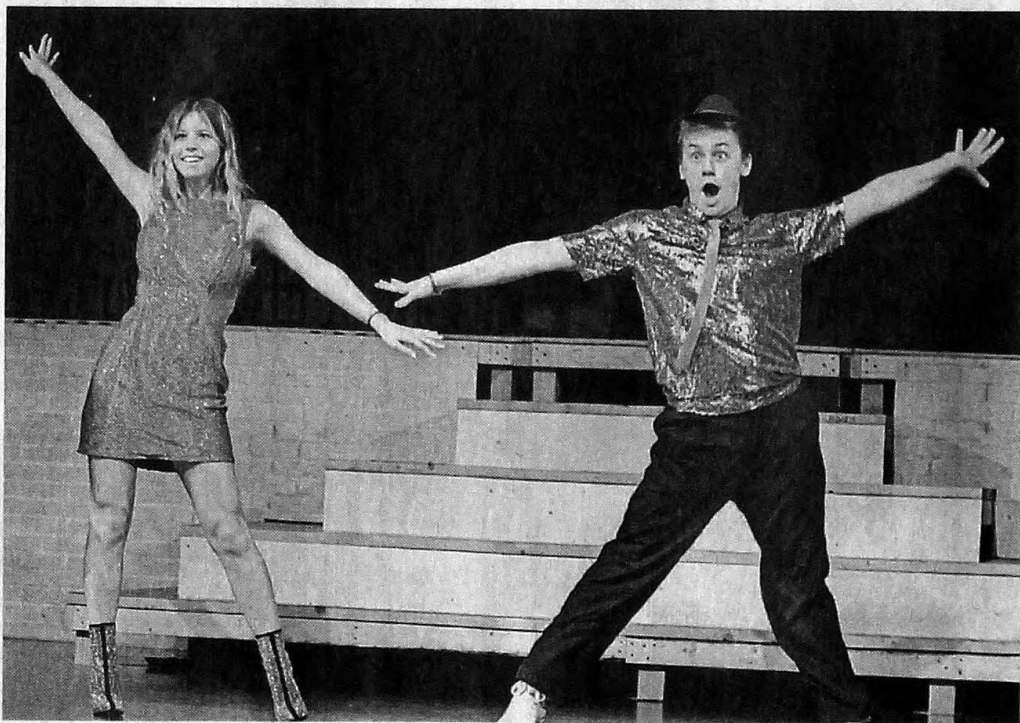
Lauren Baligian, who portrays pianist Kelsi Nielsen, revealed she had never met the athletes/actors prior to auditions.

"I knew they were popular and, truthfully, I was a little intimidated," she said. "But I also thought they'd be really good for the play because they were dedicated to what they do. For people who have never done theater before, they've caught on to everything so well."

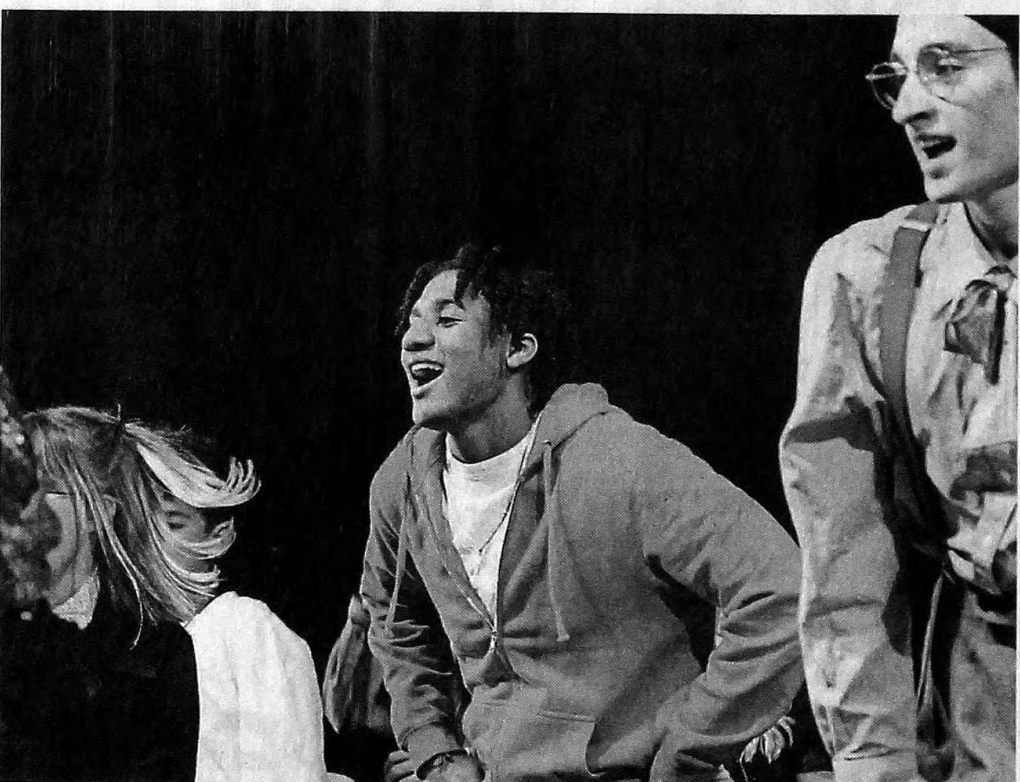
McCurdy, who plays villain Sharpay Evans, said the novice actors have exceeded her expectations.

"A lot of people underestimate how much time and work it takes to be an actor," McCurdy said. "But these guys have worked incredibly hard, often staying after rehearsals."

Playing Troy Bolton gives Courtney an opportunity to end his senior year on a much higher note than it started. His final season of football ended after he tore an anterior cruciate ligament dur-



Two of the leads for Northville High's production of "High School Musical" rehearse April 20. PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Ryan Reynolds, center, rehearses with other Northville High students.

ing a non-padded pre-season practice.

"I didn't get to play my sport my senior year, so this will give me something to take home and remember," he said.

The show will run with single perfor-

mances at the Northville High School theater 7 p.m. May 5-6, and 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. May 8.

Tickets are available online at nhstheater.ludus.com or at the door.



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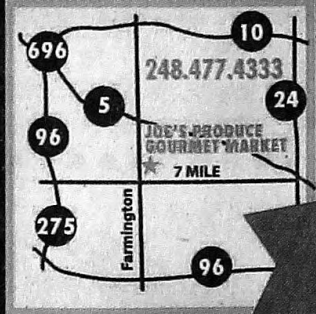
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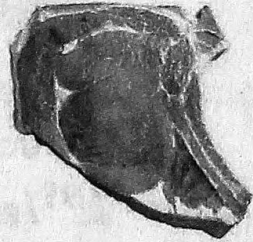
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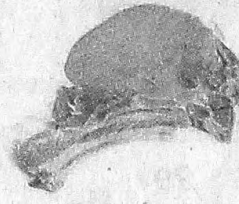
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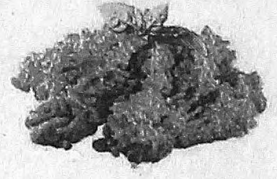
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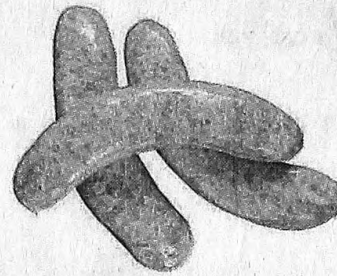
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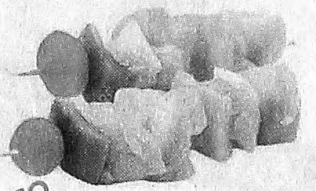
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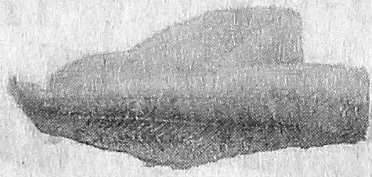
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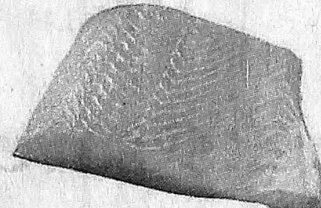
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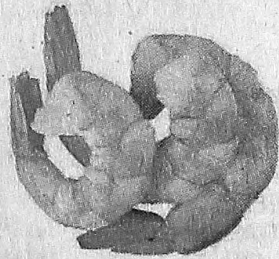
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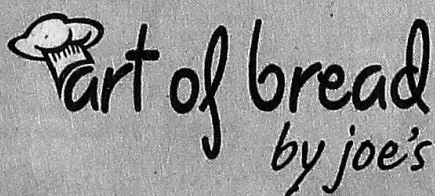
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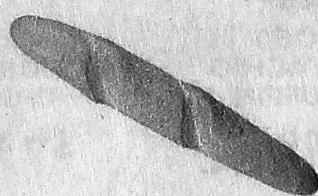
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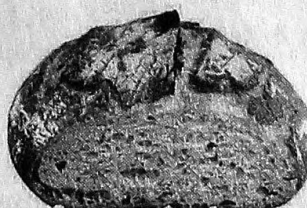
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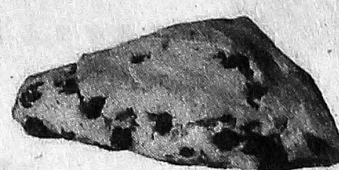
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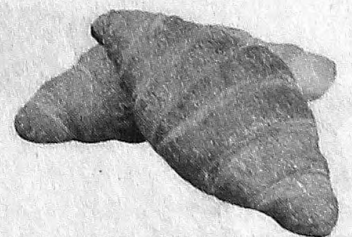
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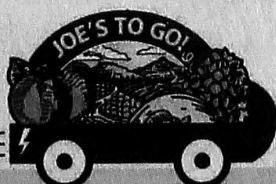
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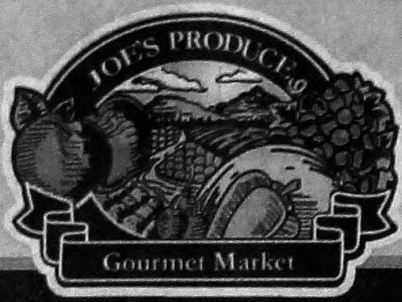
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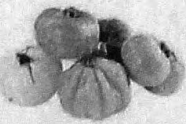
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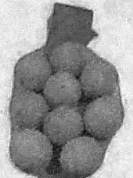
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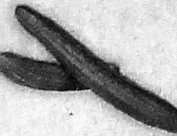

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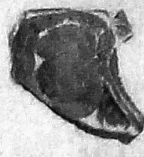
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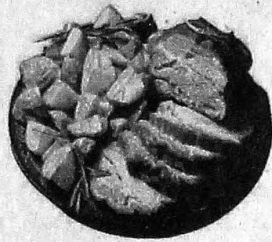

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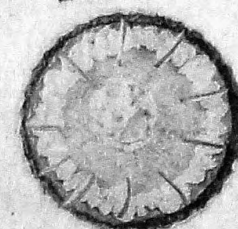

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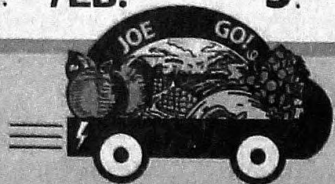

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SPORTS

XENITH GRANT

Brother Rice, Novi football need votes

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

One of the most prestigious showcases a football team can participate in is the annual Xenith Prep Kickoff Classic each August at Wayne State University.

This year, two of Hometown Life area teams, Brother Rice and Novi, will head to Tom Adams Field with the chance to play in front of sell-out crowds.

What's more, both teams are eligible to win some grant money for being Kick-off Classic participants.

The Xenith Product Grant Program is awarding \$5,000 to three of the 12 teams playing in the showcase Aug. 25-27.

Here's how it works: From now until noon on Monday, May 9, fans can vote for their favorite teams by heading to xenith.com/pages/xpkcgrant.

The team with the most votes will receive \$2,500 to spend on Xenith football equipment, while the second-place finisher gets \$1,500 and the third-place finisher gets \$1,000.

See VOTES, Page 2B

Marian volleyball player donates \$12K to Special Olympics Michigan

Brandon Folsom Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For the past two years, Ava Brizard has been the best volleyball player in Michigan.

That's indisputable.

The Bloomfield Hills Marian senior has the trophies to back that up.

Twice, she's been named the state's Gatorade Player of the Year. And this past fall, the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association awarded her its Miss Volleyball honor.

But being the best has come at a price. That's long nights practicing in the gym and weekends traveling to club tournaments.

Many days she's had to give up her free time with family and friends to work on her game.

That also included missing opportunities to watch her younger brother play basketball.

Because of her schedule, she got to watch him in action only two times.

And Drew Brizard was definitely can't-miss for the Northville Unified basketball team this past winter.

Autism didn't get in the way of the sophomore from averaging close to 30 points per game, including him scoring 32 in the season finale. At 6-foot-8, the power forward can almost out-rebound everybody, and he's absolutely money when he's shooting near the rim.

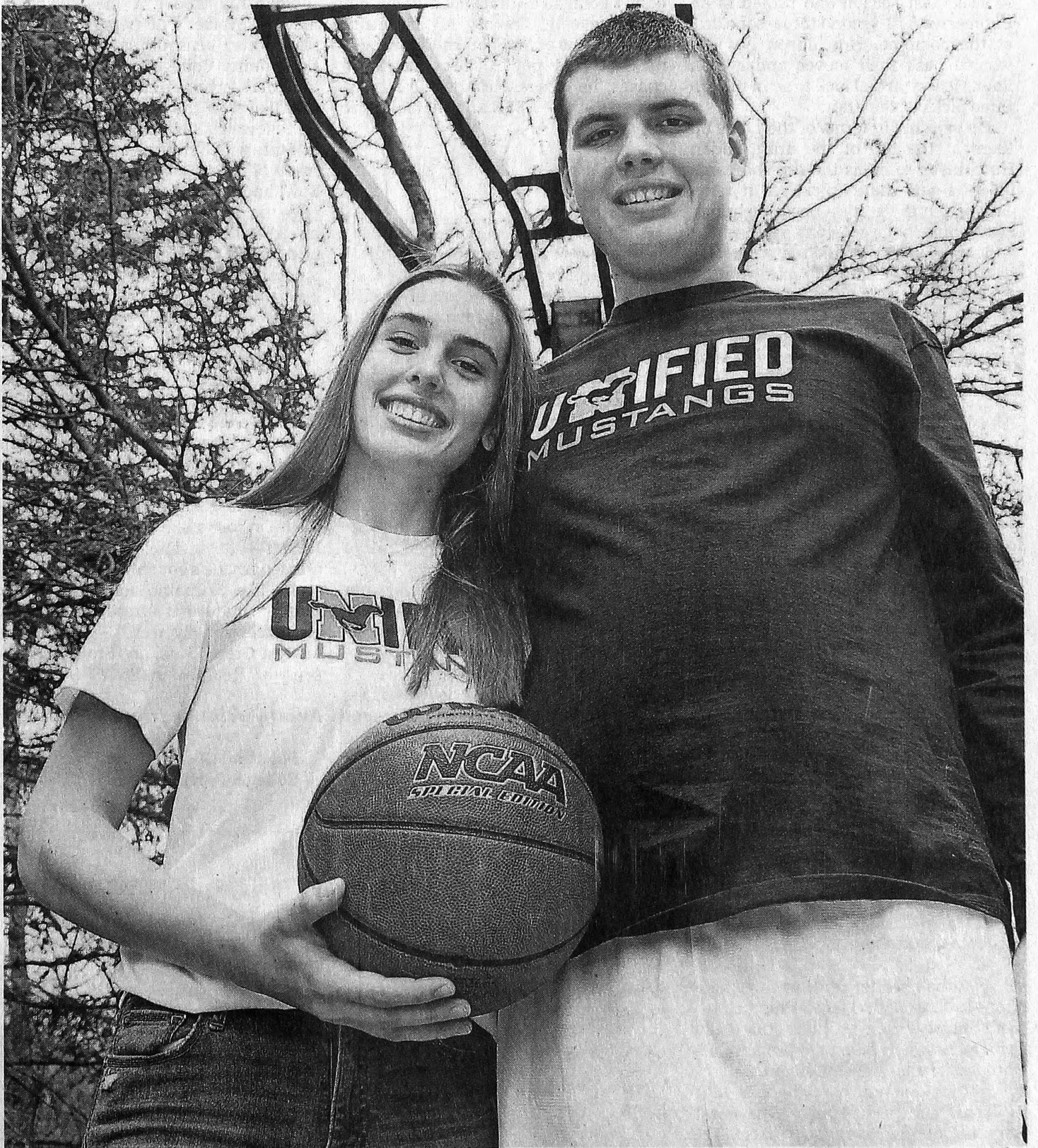
He even made Hometown Life's All-Area team.

He's got two years left to continue shining on the court, and that's great news for fans of the Mustangs. He's been practicing dunking on a trampoline. It's only a matter of time until Drew throws one down in an actual game.

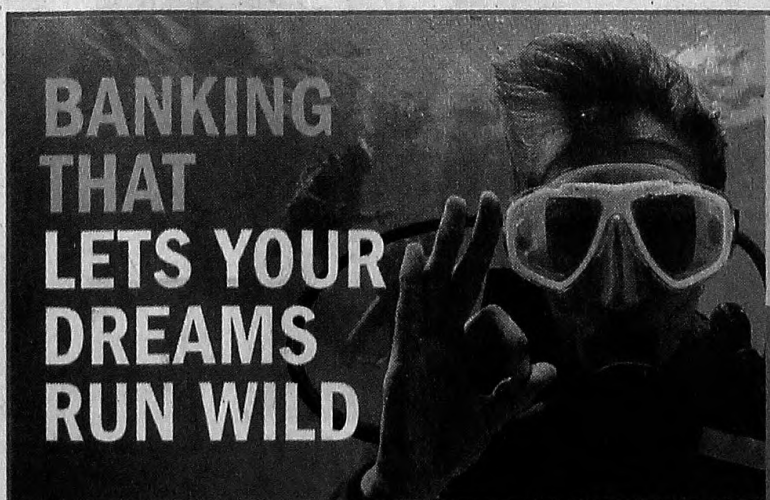
Ava couldn't always be there in person to support her sibling she often refers to as her best friend. So she did the next best thing: She won Unified Champions Sports Special Olympics Michigan some money.

Being named a Player of the Year by Gatorade enters you into its Play It Forward program where you're awarded \$1,000 to donate to a charity of your choice.

See DONATION, Page 3B



Ava and Drew Brizard at their Novi home April 15. Ava Brizard, after being named a Gatorade Athlete of the Year, received a \$12,000 grant for her brother's special-needs athletic programs at Northville High School. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



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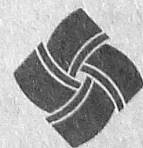
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Super 6: Most likely selections by Lions at No. 2

Dave Birkett Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Trent Baalke and Brad Holmes sounded like they were speaking from the same script when they addressed reporters at their respective pre-draft news conferences this week. Owners of the Nos. 1 and 2 picks in Thursday's NFL draft, Baalke and Holmes both said they had a bunch of similarly graded players atop their boards.

"The cluster of players that we're looking at are very, very evenly rated and graded," Holmes said. "And I've always said it's just what fits your team the best."

For the Lions, that fit is about need, positional value, upside and much more. Holmes said football character, which he defined as "being a good teammate, being accountable, (having a) passion for football, perseverance, leadership, work ethic (and) preparation," is an important part of fit. So, too, is dynamic playmaking ability, which the Lions are seeking on both sides of the ball.

The Jaguars are believed to be considering a quartet of players at No. 1 that includes offensive tackles Ikem Ekwonu and Evan Neal and defensive linemen Aidan Hutchinson and Travon Walker.

Ekwonu and Neal are two of the best players in this year's draft, but are unlikely choices for the Lions at two given their depth on the offensive line. These six players, however, could be fits.

Aidan Hutchinson

Position: Edge

College: Michigan

Vitals: 6-7, 260 pounds

Scouting report: Hutchinson earns high marks in the football character department as a mile-a-minute player who oozes leadership, but it would be wrong to characterize him as just a try-hard guy. He set a Michigan record with 14 sacks last season and turned in an impressive 6.73-second three-cone drill at the combine. Hutchinson has advanced pass rush moves and a high floor. He is a virtual lock to go in the top three picks of the draft.

He said it: "In terms of the Lions up there at the top of the draft, Aidan Hutchinson to me is the run-the-card-up-if-he-gets-there (pick). ... It's too easy of a fit there. It's a need. He brings everything that you want on the field and then you kind of add that other element with the leadership and what he could bring to a team that's trying to get the corner turned here. I think he's somebody that has the experience of getting that done." — NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah

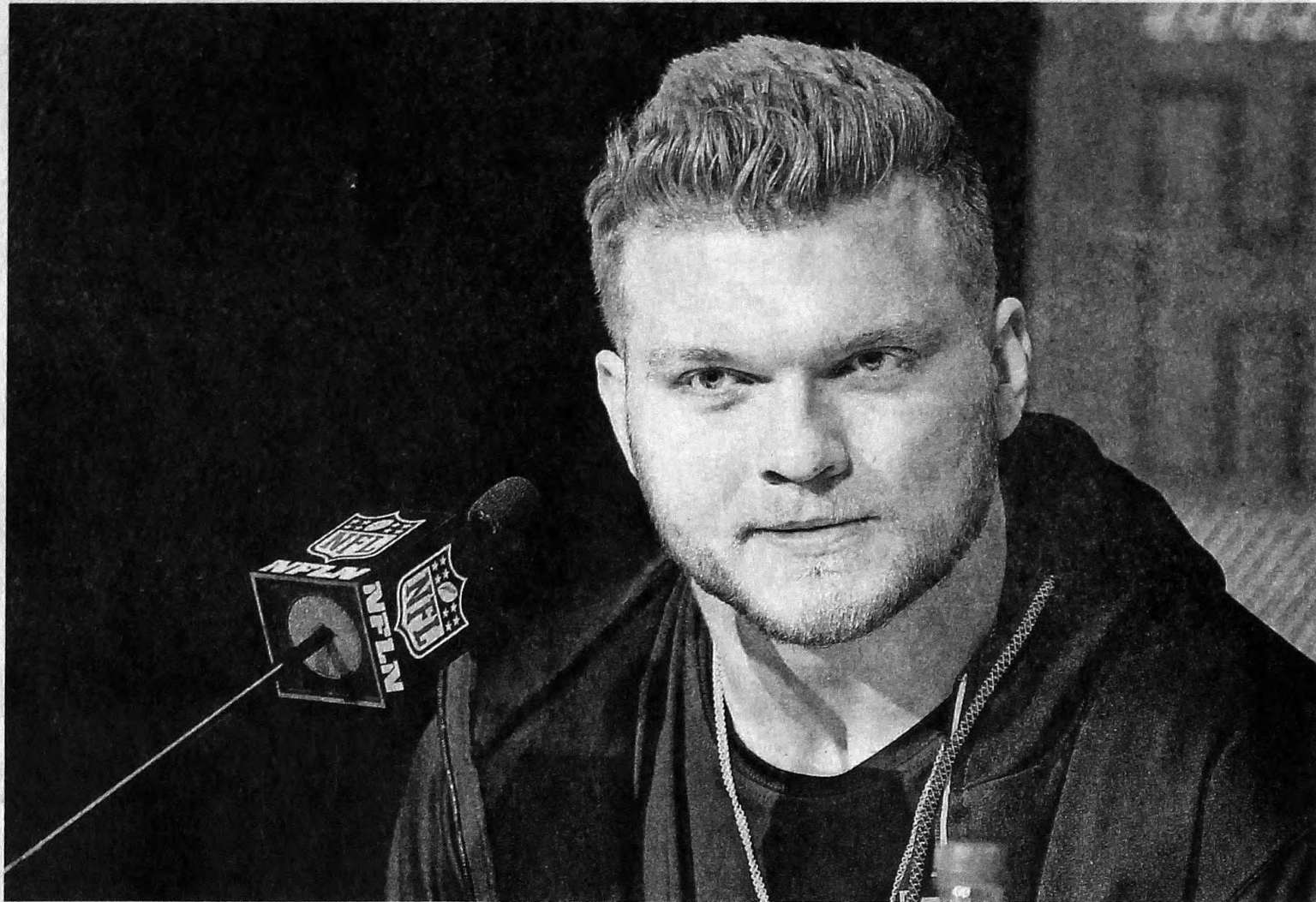
Kayvon Thibodeaux

Position: Edge

College: Oregon

Vitals: 6-4, 254 pounds

Scouting report: A college teammate of the Lions' first pick in last year's draft, Penei Sewell, Thibodeaux has been tabbed as the potential No. 1 overall pick since high school. He was dominant as a freshman but was less effective in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season and again last year, when he played through a high-ankle sprain. Thibodeaux is a blur off the edge and a game-wrecker inside, but his personality has been a turnoff for some in the pre-draft process. If the Lions are comfortable with



Michigan defensive lineman Aidan Hutchinson speaks during a news conference at the NFL combine in Indianapolis.

TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI/USA TODAY SPORTS

how he'll mix in their locker room, he makes sense at No. 2.

He said it: "Inside with his power, he's tough to deal with. Outside, when you watch him, his get-off is as good as you'll find at the defensive end/outside linebacker spot. He doesn't have the pass rush moves. He doesn't have the bend right now. A little stiff, doesn't have great body — you talk about just overall, say a Myles Garrett type. Nobody's going to be that way, but he's not the (Jadeveon) Clowney, Myles Garrett type in terms of that bend and that agility. But he's power, he's speed, he chases, he closes. He's got, like I say, great get-off." — ESPN analyst Mel Kiper Jr.

Travon Walker

Position: DL

College: Georgia

Vitals: 6-5, 272 pounds

Scouting report: Walker is the fastest-rising player in this year's draft after a standout combine in which he ran a 4.51-second 40-yard dash and jumped 35 1/2 inches. A key cog in Georgia's national championship defense, Walker earns high marks in the football character department for being all about ball. He has offensive tackle-length arms (35 1/2 inches) but did not put up big pass rush numbers (six sacks, 7.5 tackles for loss) in his lone season as a starter and might fit best as a three- or five-technique interior lineman or 3-4 defensive end in the NFL.

He said it: "He played in a system where it was just everything was about do your job. Gap discipline. Let our linebackers go make the plays. Clog everything up, up front, and so he wasn't asked to do that a lot. And he was dropping in coverage at times. They were reducing him inside as a defensive tackle in some passing downs. I think, and when you line him up as a pure edge and

let him get after the quarterback, that his production numbers are going to be a lot better in the NFL than they were in college, and that's saying a lot." — ESPN analyst Todd McShay

Jermaine Johnson

Position: Edge

College: Florida State

Vitals: 6-5, 254 pounds

Scouting report: A one-time teammate of Walker's at Georgia, Johnson played two seasons at Independence Community College and two more for the Bulldogs before earning ACC Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2021. He followed his 12-sack season at Florida State with a standout performance in front of Lions coaches at the Senior Bowl and is considered one of the best edge run defenders in the class. There is mixed opinion on whether Johnson is best suited to play in a 3-4 or 4-3 defense, and his age — he'll turn 24 on the final weekend of the 2022 NFL regular season — has caused some to wonder how close he is to being maxed out.

He said it: "I really like Jermaine Johnson's tape a lot and it wouldn't surprise me if down the road he becomes the best edge rusher in this group. He's long, he's wiry. I think that he has some work to do. He's not a true bender, but he can bend. There's a power element to his game. He plays stronger than what his build looks like since he is so wiry. He has what you look for. He's got great arm length, he's got natural quickness. I really like Jermaine Johnson's game, plus for whatever it's worth, he plays the run exceptionally well." — NFL Films analyst Greg Cosell, on "Stoney & Jansen with Heather" on WXYT-97.1 FM

Ahmad Gardner

Position: CB

College: Cincinnati

Vitals: 6-3, 190 pounds

Scouting report: A Detroit native, Gardner is the most complete cornerback in this year's draft. He has the requisite size, strength and play speed (a 4.41 40) to be a star in the NFL, and his long arms — 33 1/2 inches, best of any cornerback at the combine — make him lethal in press coverage. Nicknamed "Sauce," Gardner oozes confidence for good reason: He did not allow a touchdown during his college career.

He said it: "I truly believe I'm the best cornerback (in this draft). I'll put the work in ... I make sure I'm leading by example. I'm not a smoker, not a drinker. I never have, never will, to make sure I do the little things right." — Gardner, at the NFL combine

Kyle Hamilton

Position: S

College: Notre Dame

Vitals: 6-4, 220 pounds

Scouting report: The term "unicorn" gets thrown around too much with top draft prospects, but Hamilton is a rare player at the position given his size and ball skills. He had eight interceptions in three seasons as a starter and was widely projected as a top-five pick before he turned in disappointing 40 times at the combine (4.59 seconds) and his pro day. Still, Hamilton is considered far and away the best safety in this year's draft.

He said it: "I think this kid's pretty unique. He's so tall and long and rangy. The ability to make plays from the deep middle as well as to drop down and play down low and be a physical player. He can erase tight ends. The interception he had against Florida State's as good as it gets, and I think from a makeup standpoint, I haven't got all of the background information on him, but when you watch him cover punts as a gunner and see how hard he plays, I think this guy checks all those boxes." — Jeremiah

Votes

Continued from Page 1B

A football helmet can cost anywhere from \$200 to \$1,200, according to a recent Google search, so this money could go a long way in helping a program afford top-of-the-line equipment.

Brother Rice returns to the field with a roster jam-packed with Division I recruits, hoping to rebound from last year's heartbreaking last-second 20-17 loss to Mason in the Division 3 regional. The Warriors posted an 8-4 overall record and went 1-2 in the Catholic League-Central, which included a 35-21 win in the season opener against Macomb Dakota, the team it'll rematch Aug. 25 in the Kickoff Classic.

Novi looks to qualify for the postseason for a second straight year under coach Jim Sparks, who guided the Wildcats to a 5-5 overall record and a 4-3 record in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association-West during his first season leading the team. They'll open the season on Aug. 26 against KLAA-East foe Belleville.

Xenith is a Detroit-based company that manufactures football equipment and offers helmet reconditioning at an

Kickoff Classic schedule

Thursday, Aug. 25

Brother Rice vs. Macomb Dakota, 4 p.m.

Sterling Heights Stevenson vs. West Bloomfield, 7 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 26

Allen Park vs. Wyandotte Roosevelt, 4 p.m.

Belleville vs. Novi, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 27

Dexter vs. Grosse Pointe South, 1 p.m.

River Rouge vs. Cedar Springs, 4 p.m.

Ticket information

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affordable price. This is the sixth season it has been the title sponsor of the Kickoff Classic.

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



Brother Rice's Xavier Bowman rushes against Chicago Christ the King Jesuit back in October at Wisner Stadium in Pontiac. BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Marian High athlete Ava Brizard, right, shoots some hoops in the driveway with brother Drew. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Donation

Continued from Page 1B

Since Ava has won it twice, she's been able to donate \$2,000 to the organization that directly supports her brother's teams.

What's more, Gatorade Players of the Year can also enter a video essay contest to win an additional \$10,000 through Play it Forward. Ava didn't win the contest as a junior. But this past school year, she did. That's \$12,000 she's been able to donate to a cause so special to Drew over the past two years.

"Obviously, I wanted to help out Drew and his team, and after meeting the kids on his team and seeing the parents' faces and seeing them cheer them on during the games, it was special — it was exciting to see them compete and play a sport they love," the senior re-

cently told Hometown Life. "Even though some of them may struggle to speak like my brother, or they're struggling with their own challenges, they deserve to have the chance to play on that big stage. It was very easy to pick Unified."

Unified Champions Sports isn't just basketball.

There are teams for soccer, volleyball and even robotics, among other sports and extracurricular activities.

In fact, not only does Drew play on Northville's Unified basketball team, he also participated in its robotics program. And, of course, the robot his team recently built was called a "Basketbot," which was able to shoot and score baskets. Drew said he couldn't decide what was more fun about the project: Actually building the robot or making it play basketball with a remote control.

"I just love tossing the ball," he said. Those were some of the things Ava

highlighted in her video essay to Gatorade, a short film that featured Drew and his teammates.

"I actually had a lot of fun making that video," Ava added. "When I saw that it was a video submission in order to apply for the fundraiser, I knew I had to show my connections to the Unified program with pictures and videos of Drew's teams. I knew that could help my case to win."

"I even had a clip of Drew's robotics team. It was really super awesome and showed that personal connection I have to his program. I wanted to win for Unified so badly, so I'm really happy it worked out. I could never have dreamed about this happening. Winning \$10,000? That's mind-boggling."

Ava, who guided Marian to back-to-back Division 1 state championships in 2020 and 2021, is off to play at North Carolina State next school year. That means she won't be able to watch Drew

play in person in the winter, but she said she'll "be glued to my phone waiting for updates after every game."

But that's OK. One of Drew's favorite things to wear at school is his NC State shirt, and he's already mastered the Wolfpack hand signal that fans display at games. He's excited about watching his sister play in the ACC, even though his favorite college team is Michigan.

So the siblings will continue to support each other, even if they can't physically be there for one another.

"I didn't get many opportunities, but when I did get that chance to finally see him be on the court, it was just so special," Ava said. "For once, I got to be the spectator and see him succeed, and it made me happy. He's always been the one watching and supporting me. So it makes me a proud sister. I have all these accolades for working hard in volleyball, but nothing makes me more proud than seeing Drew get to play."

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Carrots have salty affinity for peanuts in simple salads

Laura Gutschke
Abilene Reporter-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

All these years, I thought peas and carrots were exclusive culinary soul mates, a match better than two peas in a pod.

Carrots and peas are fine when cooked together, but turns out raw carrots have a salty affinity for peanuts.

I discovered this less familiar pairing in an old cookbook recently gifted to me by an aunt. The directly named recipe Carrot and Peanut Salad is in "The Modern Family Cook Book" (1942) by nutritionist Meta Given (1888-1981).

My aunt gave me the 1964, 632-page hardback edition, which states "over 1,837,500 copies in print."

The more than 1,100 recipes in the cookbook are designed to help the home cook plan and prepare nutritious meals that are not only "filling empty stomachs, but building health for your whole family," Given wrote in the introduction.

One recipe not in the cookbook: peas and carrots.

Food combinations of old that have since fallen out of favor intrigue me. It usually is more of a mental exercise, not one that inspires me to actually make the dish. (I'm thinking of those molded gelatin salads with suspended bits of meat and prunes.)

But I had to try Given's simple Carrot and Peanut Salad. I have eaten plenty of Thai and other Asian dishes, so I know peanuts and carrots are a compatible pairing.

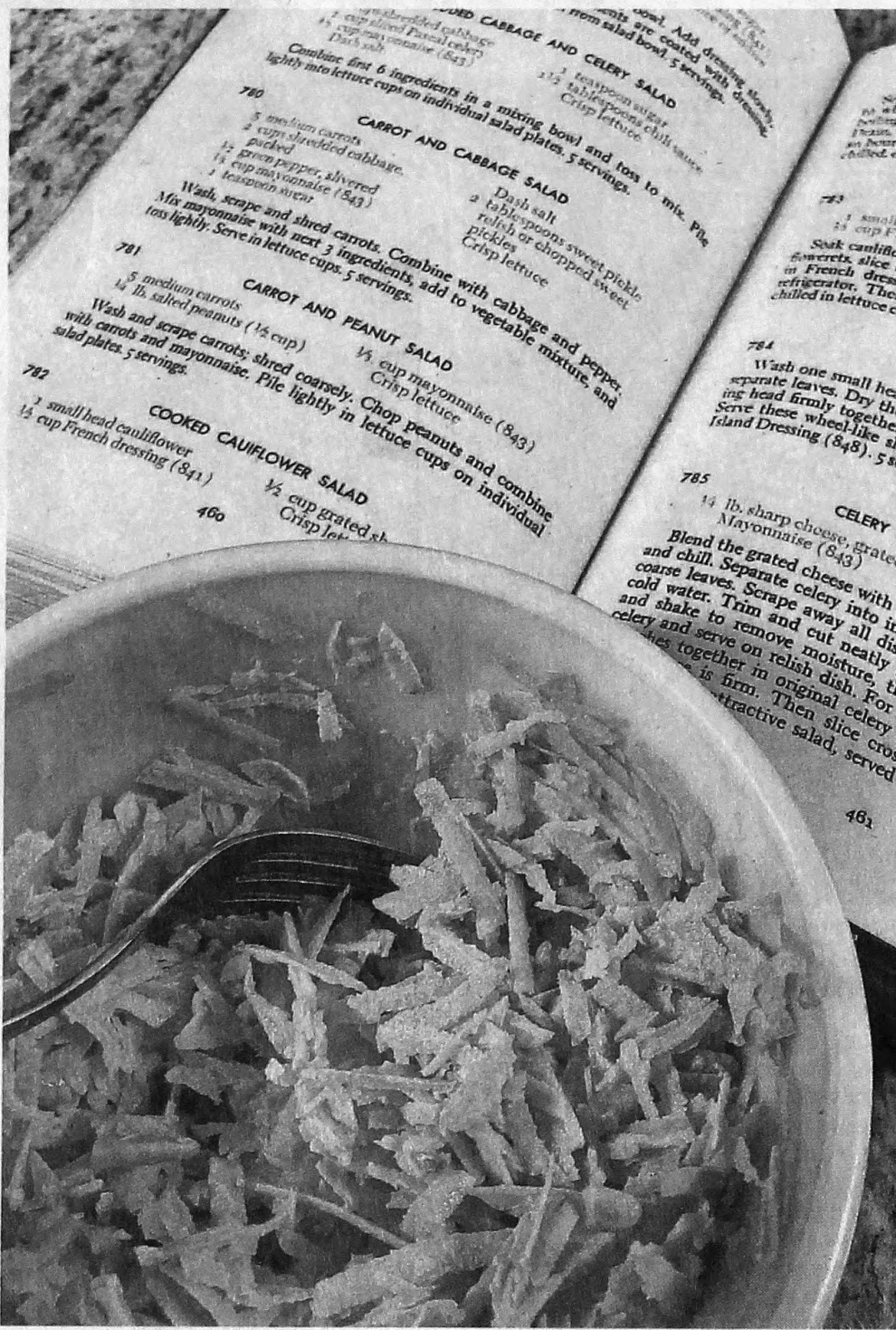
But, the head-scratcher on the ingredient list was mayonnaise. The thick dressing held the mixture together when it was served "in lettuce cups."

The recipe was simple, and I had the ingredients on hand, so I gave it a try. If it was a what-were-they-thinking disaster, tossing out the blend of inexpensive ingredients would be low on the guilt meter.

Turns out the trio of carrots, peanuts and mayo is so good that it will be a regular side dish for summer barbecues and outdoor grilling – skipping the lettuce cups. That's just for presentation.

Below is the recipe for a small batch with about four servings. The beauty of the dish is that it is easily scalable.

I have since experimented with other



This carrot and peanut salad recipe is inspired by the vintage cookbook "The Modern Family Cook Book" (1964, originally published 1942) by Meta Given.

LAURA GUTSCHKE/REPORTER-NEWS

carrot and peanut salad recipes that are more on the Asian flavor meter.

If the idea of mayonnaise with peanuts is unimaginable, try the second recipe for Carrot and Peanut Asian Salad, inspired by the recipe Peanut, Carrot and Cabbage Slaw at thekitchn.com. The dressing base is peanut butter, not

mayonnaise.

I stripped the original slaw recipe of the Napa cabbage, radishes and green onions to focus on just the carrots and peanuts. I also added ground ginger and salt for extra seasoning and replaced the lemon juice with lime juice.

The recipes below check off a lot of

Carrot and peanut salad

Yields 4 servings.

2 cups grated carrots (about 2 big carrots, peeled)

½ cup salted peanuts, rough chopped

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

Optional: salt

In a medium bowl, combine the carrots, peanuts and mayonnaise. Taste. If needed, add salt.

Chill at least 30 minutes before serving. Also can be made hours in advance of serving.

Carrot and peanut Asian salad

Yields about 6 servings.

1½ tablespoons smooth peanut butter

1½ tablespoons rice wine vinegar

½ tablespoon soy sauce

½ tablespoon sesame oil

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon freshly-squeezed lime juice

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

4 large carrots, grated (about ½ pound of carrots, peeled)

½ cup peanuts, rough chopped

Optional: salt

In a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, whisk together the peanut butter, rice wine vinegar, soy sauce, sesame oil, olive oil, lime juice and ginger. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the carrots and peanuts. Pour the dressing over and stir until combined. Taste. If needed, add salt. Chill at least 30 minutes before serving. Also can be made hours in advance of serving.

desirable boxes for me: crunchy, filling, nutritionally dense, easy to make and inexpensive.

Share your favorite recipes or food-related historical recollections by emailing Laura Gutschke at laura.gutschke@reporternews.com.



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Doug Brooks

Publish: April 28 & May 1, 2022

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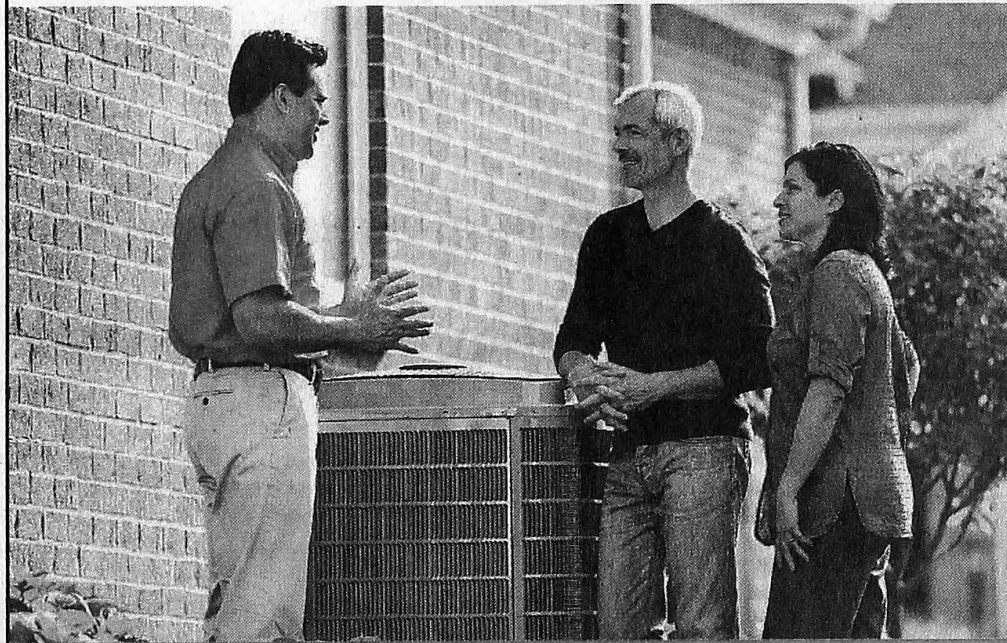
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THURSDAY PUZZLE CORNER

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

- ACROSS
1 Wearing nightclothes, for short
6 Meanie's look
11 In addition
15 Eyelid hair
19 Steel, e.g.
20 Ancient Greek region
21 Empty spaces
22 World's fair
23 Illegal detention
25 Columbus is its capital
26 British actor Guinness
27 "Mind your business!"
28 High, round collar not folding over on itself
31 Without any variety
35 Ingest
36 Boston NBAer, for short
37 Paint job made to look like marble, wood, etc.
41 New Nintendo console of 2012
43 Big antlered beast
47 Opposite of dep., in an airport

- 48 Thin porridge
50 Saw against the main grain, as wood
52 Bit of money seized by a Secret Service agent
58 Ecol. monitor
59 Middays
60 Tiny arachnid
61 J. — Hoover
64 Like overdue birthday wishes
67 Bill & Ted went on one in a 1991 film
70 Wombs
71 Bible book after Prov.
74 Q-V linkup
75 "Spider-Man" director Sam
76 Wedlock not based on love
79 Cheer up
81 Burros, e.g.
82 — occasion (never)
83 Paris' river
84 Toronto-to-Montreal dir.
85 Prada or Fendi replica, maybe
91 "Beloved" novelist Toni
94 Buc, Bronco or Niner
95 Beatty of film

- PHONY-BALONEY
5 Whole lotta
6 Knightly title
7 Bulblike base of a stem
8 — cat (two-base game)
9 Neighbor of Minn. and Ill.
10 Jewish potato pancake
11 Relative of a guinea pig
12 Lion portrayer
13 Feature of Betty Boop's hair
14 "— Mio"
15 Crude sheds
16 Car shaft
17 Project detail, for short
18 Sell at a pawnshop
19 Opponent
29 "I taut I — a puddy tat!"
30 Shade trees
31 Flip — coin
32 DEA worker
33 Irish money
34 Bring about
38 Some flawed garments: Abbr.
39 Add-on to the end of a wd.
40 Bit of a bray
42 Most polar
44 Sea nymph
45 Sovereign
46 Letter two before iota

PHONY-BALONEY

Grid for the crossword puzzle with numbered starting points for each clue.

#2,088 Average time of solution: 67 minutes

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

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with pre-filled numbers.

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box.

ROBIN HOOD

Can you find all the words hidden in the grid? Read backwards or forwards, up or down, even diagonally. The words will always be in a straight line. Cross them off the list as you find them.

Word search grid for the Robin Hood puzzle.

- ALLEN-A-DALE
AMBUSH
BAND
BOW
CAMP
CASTLE
DEER
ENGLAND
FIRE
FOREST
PRIAR TUCK
GIVE
GLEN
HEROES
HORSES
KIDNAP
KING RICHARD
LEGEND
LINCOLN
MAID MARIAN
MEDIEVAL
MEN
MERRY
MOAT
MUCH
MYTH
NOBLEMEN
NOTTINGHAM
OAK
OUTLAW
PEASANTS
POOR
PRISONER
RICH
RIGHT
ROB
SHERIFF
SHERWOOD
SPEAR
STAFF
STEAL
TAKE
TAXES
THIEVES
TOWER
TUNIC
TYRANT
WILL SCARLET

Word search grid for the Robin Hood puzzle.

Difficulty level indicator and a small grid.

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