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Westland's library prepares for temporary closure during renovation

Shelby Tankersley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

There are some big changes in store for Westland's library.

The library will spend the winter, spring and summer undergoing a major

renovation that will add roughly 7,000 square feet to the building on Central City Parkway. The library will move to the old Marshall Upper Elementary School on Bayview Street during construction.

The library will close beginning Nov. 21. Staff hope to reopen at Marshall

in late January. The library will offer its normal services and programs at the school until the renovation is complete. Online services will continue.

"It's a little inconvenient, but in the long run it's going to save us time and money," Library Director Jennifer Roth said.

People who want to continue enjoying library services and books during the closure can visit nearby libraries like those in Canton, Garden City and Wayne. Those locations will accept a Westland library card.

See **LIBRARY**, Page 7A

Canton shop aims to have customers smelling lovely

David Veselenak
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If you smell something good on Ford Road, it just might be Canton Township's newest store.

Buff City Soap, a shop specializing in making clothing and bodies smell great, recently opened next to the Planet Fitness at 43555 Ford Road. Products such as laundry detergent, bath bombs, hand soap and other clean-smelling items line the walls of the new store.

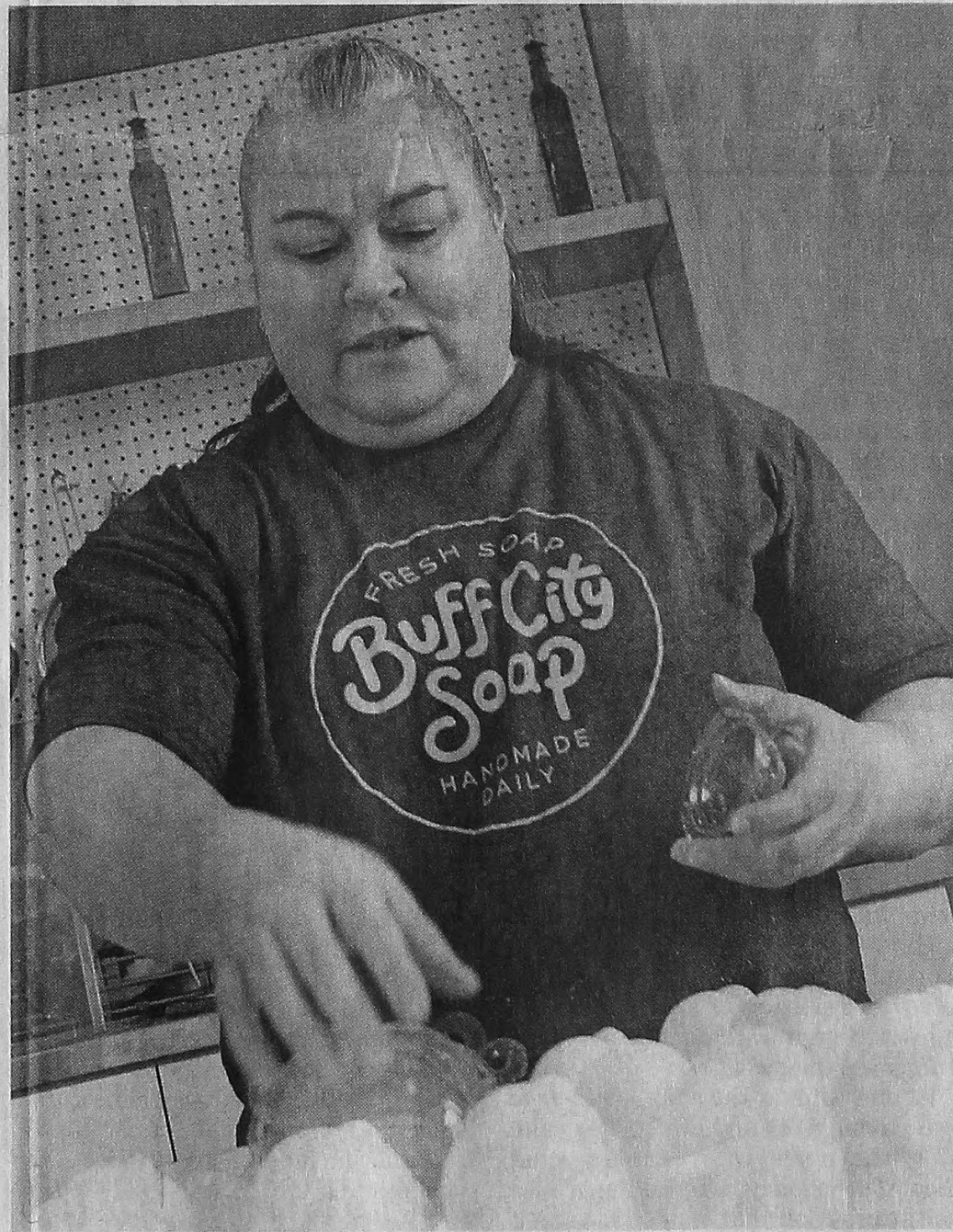
The unique part? Almost all the products sold are made right in-house.

"If you want anything customized, you come over here," said Jessica Hessel, general manager of the store, pointing to the bar on the west side of the shop. "You can do whole bars of soap. You can name it after you."

Buff City Soap originated first outside Memphis, Tennessee back in 2013. It's since grown to many stores across the country. Its Michigan footprint includes locations in Ann Arbor, Rochester Hills and Brighton, which opened last year. The company says its products are plant-based, made with no harsh chemicals and no dyes.

Inside the Canton location, customers can find standard and seasonal products, including bars of hand soap. A special display lists several products only available there, including a soap entitled "Buff Strong" and made using purple and yellow soaps. That product is an homage to the store's next door neighbor, Planet Fitness, which opened late last year.

See **LOVELY**, Page 7A



Maker Chris Orman creates a batch of bath bombs at Buff City Soap in Canton.
DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Green Oak company's products catch Oprah's eye

David Veselenak
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

A local company's products caught the eye of one of the biggest media names this holiday season.

Midnight Kitchen Tools, the Green Oak Township company known for its stainless steel ice cream scoop and pizza cutter, recently saw both its products placed on Oprah Winfrey's Favorite Things list for the 2022 holiday season.

"It's just elation. We're super excited about it," said company founder Michael Chou. "It's kind of like winning the lotto."

The company, which began in 2013 by Chou, a Lyon Township resident, after he searched for a better way to scoop ice cream late one night. An aerospace engineer who works at the University of Michigan, Chou began tinkering with how to better get the ice cream from its container to a bowl. After launching the idea on Kickstarter, he raised enough money and began manufacturing the ice cream scoop.

After selling online only through the company's website, Chou looked to sell on mega e-commerce platform Amazon. They've since worked their way up the rankings, getting solid reviews and moving up the pages.

"At the time, there weren't many scoops that were kind of high end like us," he said. "We're able to kind of go through the rankings a lot quicker that way."

See **PRODUCTS**, Page 6A

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Some hospitals awash in red ink

Rises in staff, supply costs are factors

JC Reindl

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Some nonprofit hospital systems in metro Detroit have emerged from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic to face budgets awash in red ink.

Systems including Henry Ford Health and the legacy Beaumont hospitals within the newly formed Corewell Health show negative operating margins and millions in losses in their latest financial reports.

Other systems with a large local presence, including Ascension Michigan and Livonia-based Trinity Health, have reported significant overall losses.

Hospital industry insiders have several main reasons for the ailing balance sheets:

- Much higher workforce costs since the pandemic arrived in early 2020, including outside staffing agencies that once billed as much as \$180 per hour for a nurse.

- Lower patient volumes that have yet to return to pre-COVID-19 levels.

- Costlier supplies, due primarily to inflation.

Recent financial results from some nonprofit health systems:

- Legacy Beaumont within Corewell Health: A -5% operating margin, or \$96 million loss, in the fiscal year that ended June 30. Since then, Corewell, formerly known as the Beaumont Health Spectrum Health system, laid off 400 people in management and non-patient-facing jobs and has reported an overall positive margin.

- Henry Ford: A -2.2% operating margin, or \$75 million loss, in the six months ending June 30.

- Ascension Health: A -3.1% operating margin, or \$879 million loss, in the fiscal year ending June 30.

- Trinity Health: A -0.7% operating margin, or \$149 million loss, in the fiscal year ending June 30.

- McLaren Health Care: Information not available Friday.

- Michigan Medicine: Does not disclose full financial results.

The federal government provided financial support to hospitals in a variety of forms earlier in the pandemic to help with the initial COVID-19 surges and postponement of nonemergency visits and procedures. But most of that money is now gone.

"In general, the industry has moved from a clinical pandemic to an economic pandemic," Robert Riney, president and CEO of Detroit-based Henry Ford Health, said in an interview.

More recently, Michigan hospitals received about \$225 million for workforce recruitment and retention from a \$1.2

Michigan insurance coverage, by type

55%	Private insurance
16%	Both private and public coverage
17%	Medicaid only
5%	Medicare only
2%	Dual Medicaid/Medicare eligible
5%	No insurance

Source: The Center for Health and Research Transformation at the University of Michigan



Unionized Michigan Medicine nurses last month won a new four-year contract that included a \$5,000 bonus for each nurse and 22.5% in raises during the four years. PROVIDED BY MICHIGAN MEDICINE



Bob Riney, now president and CEO of Henry Ford Health, in June 2020. DETROIT FREE PRESS FILE

billion spending bill approved last February by the state Legislature. But the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, an industry group, notes how that assistance, which was retroactive for expenses as of Dec. 1 of last year, was a one-off.

"We are immensely grateful for that," said Laura Appel, the association's executive vice president of government relations and public policy. "But the \$225 million (is) a one-time payment that really only offsets a small amount of what we're paying in 2022 ... and none of it is designed to help us in 2023."

Nationwide, 53% of hospitals are projected to lose money in 2022, according to a report by consulting firm Kaufman Hall for the American Hospital Association. And while the growth rate for "contract labor" such as staffing agencies has recently slowed, contract labor expenses are still nearly 500% higher than before the pandemic, the report says.

Many Michigan hospitals have yet to fully recover from a surge of early retirements and career changes among nurses and other staffers in the wake of the pandemic's highly stressful initial surges. To help cover for staffing shortages, hospitals turned to outside agencies with "travel" nurses. The agencies often bill hospitals at higher rates, and nurses employed by the agencies get more, too.

At some hospitals, payment rates to agencies for specialized nurses surged above \$150 an hour, compared with roughly \$75 an hour before the pandemic for a staff nurse doing the same work. However, a portion of a \$150 per-hour rate would go toward agency overhead — not all to the nurse.

"At one point at the peak, I know we were paying \$180 an hour," Riney said. "Now, the nurse wasn't making that much. The agency was taking a nice healthy profit off that."

Since then, payment rates for the contract staffing agencies have gone down.

"I think it's fallen back to like \$120," Appel said. "But pre-pandemic, you were paying \$75."

Outside of metro Detroit, a nurse in the Lansing area who left the Sparrow

Health System to join a travel nurse agency saw her standard pay rise to \$107 per hour from \$40, plus additional money for food and lodging, according to a March article in the Lansing State Journal.

In a survey of Michigan Health & Hospital Association hospitals, the members anticipated that their total contract labor and agency staffing costs for 2022 will be about \$1.2 billion, up from just over \$200 million in 2019, according to Appel.

Industry insiders cited Omaha, Nebraska-based Medical Solutions as one of the more active agency staffing firms in Michigan for travel nurses. A Medical Solutions representative declined an interview for this story.

'People got burned out, they got fatigued'

Overall, many Michigan health systems are still struggling with staffing shortages — exacerbated by the pandemic — that will likely take years to fix. Henry Ford recently looked to the Philippines to recruit nearly 250 nurses who could start working here next year.

"At the same time the pandemic went on, we accelerated the transition of health care workers to retirement or other careers in record numbers that we haven't seen in decades," Riney said. "People got burned out, they got fatigued, they felt the risks were just too high. And so your turnover rate was three-fold what you normally see. And it's already high in health care, because of the stress."

Hospitals have been trying to keep their workers happy by giving out bigger raises, including retention bonuses.

Unionized Michigan Medicine nurses last month won a new four-year contract that included a \$5,000 bonus for each nurse and 22.5% in raises during the four years.

A lower-cost state

Michigan has traditionally been a lower-cost state for hospital care, a circumstance that industry experts attribute to the dominance of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, which can use its large size to extract deeper discounts from hospitals.

The average prices that commercial health insurers paid Michigan hospitals in 2020 was 203% of what Medicare pays for similar services, which was the seventh lowest of the 50 states, according to data from the government-funded Rand Corp. Three years earlier, the Michigan average was 156% of Medicare.

Appel said she doesn't know enough to comment about whether Blue Cross has been increasing reimbursements to hospitals as contracts come up to reflect the higher costs hospitals are experiencing.

Asked whether Blue Cross has been

upping reimbursement levels, a Blues spokeswoman said in a statement that the insurer is in "active engagement with the provider community around quality, efficiency and optimal health."

"Businesses both large and small are facing cost and talent retention pressures due to inflation, interest rate changes and other economic challenges," the statement said. "These pressures are impacting health systems, as well as Blue Cross, and this is putting even more pressure on the affordability of health care and health insurance for our employer customers and members."

"Our priority is to maintain the affordability of health care for the people we serve. As many of our members struggle with higher costs in their family budgets, we need to be especially sensitive to the impact of health care cost increases that inevitably drive up their health insurance premiums."

Medicare rate cut ahead?

Nationwide, Medicare's reimbursement rates are actually scheduled to drop by 4.5% starting Jan. 1. Lawmakers from both parties have been calling for legislation to prevent the cut, saying it doesn't make sense with rising inflation and labor costs, Bloomberg Law reported last week.

Medicaid rates for Michigan hospitals are updated every year in October, although the overall funding level normally stays the same, with some hospitals seeing reimbursement increases and others decreases.

Hospitals did see a 21.4% Medicaid rate increase in October 2020 and "critical access hospitals" in rural areas received a 42.5% Medicaid rate increase that year as well, according to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Volumes trending up

While hospitals have been seeing an increase in patient volumes, they generally aren't back to pre-pandemic levels.

Lately, however, emergency rooms are experiencing a surge in young patients with respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV. Some pediatric hospitals are at or near capacity.

"The first few months of this year were really challenging," said Riney, the Henry Ford CEO. "Out of the whole market, volumes were just incredibly soft and we're still dealing with people putting off care. As we've kind of worked our way through the pandemic and the concern with new variants, et cetera, volumes have returned, but we still have this imbalance of all the escalation of supply chain, pharmaceutical and labor costs."

He added, "So we are doing better each month, and I'm confident that we'll be able to end the year in a break-even or positive state."

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After hours payments may be placed in the 24-hour white drop box located along the circular drive at Township Hall.

Bob Doroshewitz
734-354-3214
Plymouth Township Treasurer

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Saturday rollover crash kills couple from Northville

Jenna Prestinzi
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Northville residents Omar Salamen, 46, and his wife, Manal Kadry, 40, were killed in a rollover crash Saturday night, according to police. The one-vehicle crash occurred in the Steeplechase subdivision near the intersection of Seven Mile and Napier roads in Northville Township.

The vehicle left the road and hit a tree while navigating a curve in the neighborhood, according to a news release Sunday from the Northville Township Police and Fire Departments. The couple was pronounced dead at the scene.

The couple leaves behind four children, according

to his medical practice website. Salamen was an oral surgeon and operated Dexter Oral Surgery and Implant Center in Dexter.

A Michigan native, Salamen attended dental school at the University of Michigan and then completed his oral surgery training at the NOVA Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine in Florida, his website said. After nine years in private practice in Chicago, Salamen returned to Michigan to open Dexter Oral Surgery and Implant Center.

Kadry ran an interior design business. Many loved ones and community members shared condolences on social media.

The Detroit Free Press quoted Kadry in 2016, when she worked as an art teacher in Detroit. The article highlighted her students' work with a local artist.

North Farmington student arrested for posting photos of female peers

Shelby Tankersley
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Farmington Hills police arrested a 17-year-old North Farmington student Nov. 9 for posting photos of female classmates to a pornographic website.

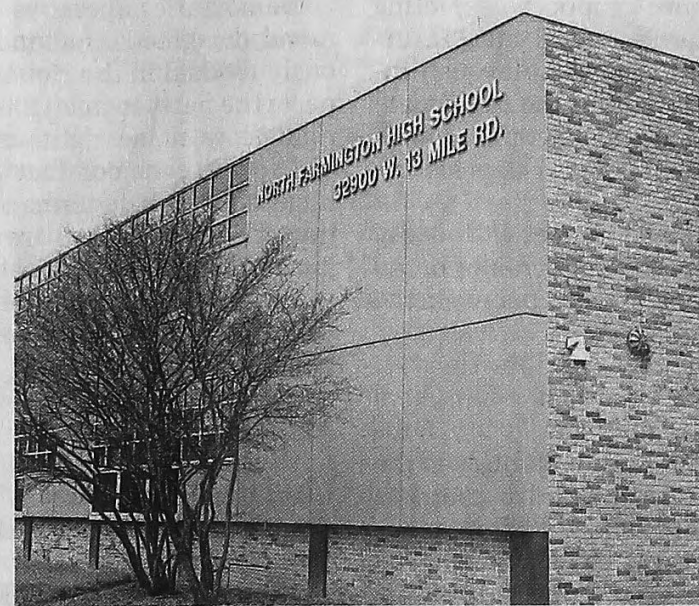
The student, a male, posted photos that police described as "nonsexual" in nature. The teen was later released to his parents' custody and is the subject of an ongoing investigation.

"This violation is beyond disturbing," Superintendent Christopher Delgado wrote to families last week. "Understandably, and justifiably, emotions are running high throughout our school community. We also understand that this incident could trigger other students, as well as adults, who may have experienced a similar violation in their past."

Farmington Hills police, the North Farmington administration and the Oakland County Prosecutor's office are all participating in the investigation.

"The posting of images to websites with the intent to terrorize, frighten, intimidate, harass, or molest is a crime," the police department said in a statement. "Investigators will aggressively pursue these matters to the full extent of the law."

"The Farmington Hills Police Department approaches all issues involving our residents, including our students and youth, with a victim-centered focus,



North Farmington High School. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

providing the highest level of discretion, thoroughness and professionalism."

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Farmington Hills Police Department at 248-871-2610.

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

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Whitmer, Democratic lawmakers to push for these policies next session

Dave Boucher
 Detroit Free Press
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Democrats held on to all three top statewide offices in last week's midterm and scored an even bigger prize on top of it: the ability to enact their agenda, thanks to newly minted legislative majorities in the House and Senate.

Controlling the House, Senate and governor's office opens up new policymaking opportunities for Michigan Democrats, who have been in the Senate minority since 1984.

Democrats said they are not afraid to deliver on the promises they've made to voters for years when they officially take over the Legislature in January, pushing ahead on policies their GOP opponents say go too far.

Republicans controlled the Senate for four decades and the House for the past dozen years. The party used that power to pursue sweeping tax cuts, try to limit access to abortion, restructure the controversial "emergency managers" law and attempt to curtail the authority of the governor.

"Bipartisanship is going to be a priority. But what we've been talking about for the 12 years that we haven't been in the majority is going to be something that will take precedent for us. No secrets or surprises here," said state Rep. Joe Tate, D-Detroit, moments after his colleagues made him the first Black man to serve as state House speaker in Michigan history. "At the end of the day, I mean, we have the gavel. So we'll be controlling the agenda."

The specifics of that agenda will define their legacy as the state heads into a new political chapter.

Whitmer pledged to put the pedal to the metal on Democratic policies. Newly chosen Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, D-Grand Rapids, said her chamber has 40 years of ideas that languished under GOP control.

Outgoing House Democratic leader Donna Lasinski, D-Scio Township, noted Michigan's political system is essen-

tially winner-take-all. But she suggested voters in the state are familiar with the issues Democrats espouse, and the party won't risk immediately losing power if it stays true to its principles while improving the tenor of political discourse.

"We must return to civility, as a Legislature, as a country, as a nation. What I have learned over my six years here is that the voice of leadership matters, that what we do and say matters, that how we treat each other matters," Lasinski said.

There are exceptionally important issues that could be addressed, but potentially not right away. Whitmer, Democrats and some Republicans came out strongly in favor of bills to prevent law enforcement from using chokeholds or conducting no-knock raids in the past, but few made either a centerpiece of their reelection campaigns.

Republicans and Democrats in the statehouse now support exploring changes to the sweeping auto-insurance reform, noting many grievously injured in crashes before the 2019 measure continue to need substantial help, even after a recent Court of Appeals ruling.

While most leaders were a little cagey on details, there are a number of broad initiatives Democrats may pursue in the short term.

Right-to-work

In 2012, Republican majorities in the House and Senate passed a proposal that prevented labor unions from mandating members pay dues or fees, even if they were covered by collective bargaining agreements administered by the union.

This "right-to-work" law prompted fierce pushback from the United Auto Workers, unions representing state employees and teachers and Democrats.

Brinks said Thursday that everything is on the table next session, but didn't specifically commit to repealing right-to-work. But when newly elected House

Majority Floor Leader Abraham Aiyash was asked if the law would be gone, he immediately responded, "Absolutely!"

Tate demurred a bit moments later, saying, "We'll take a look at it."

"We know what right-to-work did to this state," he said.

Jase Bolger, a Marshall Republican who led the House when the law was adopted, said it could be "very difficult" to repeal the right-to-work law and other GOP-led proposals crafted during his time. Even though right-to-work came two years after then-Gov. Rick Snyder and Republicans took control — largely because Snyder was reluctant until then to take up the issue — Bolger noted the GOP had 63 seats in the House at the time. Democrats now only have 56, just two more than the GOP minority.

"They've got a one-vote margin," he said of Michigan Democrats. "Every single seat matters. If they overreach, they will lose their majority."

Democratic operative Adrian Hemond disagreed. Hemond, who previously worked in the House, said he expects the party to push for repealing the right-to-work law right out of the gate.

"I don't consider that necessarily a huge overreach, in terms of public reaction. The Republicans are going to hate it, obviously. And some of the Republican interest groups. I don't know that that's the case with the voting public at large," he said.

Abortion

Whitmer made much of her campaign about a pledge to defend the right to an abortion.

Michigan voters handily approved a new amendment to the Michigan Constitution that guarantees this right. But that measure does not automatically remove from the books the 1931 law that criminalizes performing almost any abortion.

The amendment likely renders that law unenforceable, but Democrats are still likely to strip it from state code as soon as possible. The voters who re-

turned Whitmer to Lansing with majorities in the House and Senate would likely see it as a failed promise if she and the Legislature did not nix this law.

"Voters set a clear mandate on Election Day by passing Proposal 3 and electing pro-abortion rights majorities in the state Legislature. Not only do voters want Michigan's dangerous 1931 criminal abortion ban rendered unenforceable, they want it repealed entirely," said Nicole Wells Stallworth, executive director at Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan. "It's long past time we remove this stain on Michigan's law books. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan looks forward to working with Gov. Whitmer and state legislative leaders to repeal the 1931 ban."

However, there are any number of additional measures related to abortion and the amendment that could arise. Opponents to the measure raised questions about the impact of the amendment on parental consent laws, gender-affirming therapy, health requirements for facilities that provide abortions and other questions.

While legal and medical experts — and voters — clearly disagreed, there will be questions about how the language of the amendment translates to any restrictions on abortion in the future.


Gun laws

When the outgoing, GOP-controlled Legislature returns to Lansing at the end of this month for the start of the so-called lame-duck legislative session, it will be nearly a year since a teen wielding a gun killed four students and injured six others and a teacher at Oxford High School.

In the months following the tragedy, lawmakers allocated money for schools to examine safety improvements. But they did nothing to prevent access to guns or increase penalties for those who don't properly store their weapons.

See **POLICIES**, Page 5A

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Policies

Continued from Page 4A

That's almost assuredly going to change, quickly, under a Democratically-controlled statehouse.

Repeatedly during the campaign, Whitmer said she supports bolstering laws that require safely storing guns and red flag laws — measures that create a system where law enforcement can temporarily take away someone's firearms in the event a family member, friend or loved one reports that person as being a possible threat.

A September opinion poll by Lansing-based firm EPIC-MRA found 90% of respondents favored background checks on all gun sales, including when the weapons are purchased at a gun show or other private sale. Three out of four Republicans polled supported creating a specific law to hold gun owners responsible if children illegally accessed and used a firearm.

A majority of those polled also supported a three-day waiting period on gun purchases, increasing from 18 to 21 the age requirement to purchase an assault-style firearm and other comparable measures.

Advocacy organizations Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action heralded Michigan's election results.

"Our army of grassroots advocates have become the bench and next generation of gun sense lawmakers — and we're eager to get to work helping save lives from gun violence in the coming legislative session," said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action.

Taxes and spending priorities

Whitmer and other Democrats repeatedly pushed to end a specific so-called retirement tax while expanding a tax credit last session and are likely to do so again this year.

Whitmer called for repealing taxes on retirement income in her State of the State address this year. Part of the proposal was to reinstate tax exemptions for public pension income that were removed during the Snyder administration.

Nixing the exemptions costs roughly half a million Michiganders about

\$1,000 a year, Whitmer argues. Legislative Republicans balked at the move this year, instead pushing to increase the amount of yearly income retirees could claim each year as tax-free. The governor reiterated her desire to repeal the tax during a recent television interview.

But there was very little specific opposition to expanding eligibility for the earned income tax credit. The credit, for Michigan families earning a low income, currently sits at 6% of the federal credit. Whitmer proposed expanding that to 20%, which would match the federal rate and increase savings for families who need it the most by about \$350 a year. It's an idea Republicans also included in their own broad legislative tax plan.

Whitmer and legislators failed to agree on a deal — largely because Republicans wanted to roll back the state's personal income tax rate — but a compromise on the EITC appears doable.

State Sen. Erika Geiss, D-Taylor, said expanding the EITC is one of many issues rooted in inequity and injustice that need to be addressed. As one of the few returning leaders of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus, she said lawmakers need to also ensure that record levels of education funding and support for child care are able to continue once federal COVID-19 funding is gone and address environmental issues such as air quality that impact neighborhoods and public health, she said.

Many of these issues "primarily affect Black and brown communities, and lower-income communities," Geiss said. "We know that if you don't have child care, it makes it hard to work in our economy. If you don't have affordable health care, how can you go to work and go to school?"

Republicans pushed hard earlier this year on different plans to cut gas taxes. While Whitmer vetoed some of these, noting they did not take effect until months after the GOP proposed them, over the summer she came out in favor of pausing sales tax collections on gas purchases.

Third-grade reading law

In 2016, Snyder and GOP lawmakers enacted a law that requires third graders to read at a specific level in order to move on to the fourth grade. Advocates argued the measure would put positive pressure on educators and students to

successfully improve reading capacity by the age deemed critical for a child's development.

But in practice, many teachers, students and advocacy organizations say it unfairly targets kids who need the most help.

In 2022, 5,680 Michigan third graders were eligible to be held back due to their low state standardized test reading scores, out of the 97,136 who took the test, about 5.8%, according to data from Michigan State University's Education Policy Innovation Collaborative.

But there are stark disparities in who is flagged under the law: Researchers found that low-income students are 4.5 times as likely to be eligible for retention than third graders from wealthier families. Black third graders were also 4.5 times as likely to be eligible for retention than white third graders.

The Legislature essentially paused the law in 2020. But state Sen. Dayna Polehanki, a Livonia Democrat and former teacher who's potentially in line to lead the Senate Education Committee, clearly articulated the fate of the law in the future.

"I will personally oversee the repeal of the GOP law that flunks 3rd grade students based on one test score. It's gone," she tweeted Wednesday.

Equality under the law

Michigan's major civil rights law, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, does not expressly include the words "gender identity" or "sexual orientation." But earlier this year, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled it would violate the law for an employer to fire someone because that person is gay.

There was bipartisan support to include gender identity and sexual orientation in the law before Democrats took over the Legislature, and chief advocate state Sen. Jeremy Moss, D-Southfield, thinks the bill finally has a chance to come up for a full vote.

"For the last several years that I have been in the Legislature, I can tell you we have had the votes to do this. Most Michiganders support this, and most legislators would vote for it. But it's always been out-of-touch, far-right conservative leadership that has held this up," Moss said.

Moss noted there's nothing in state law that protects the rights of an LGBTQ couple to get a civil union, let alone get

married. Those are currently afforded under a U.S. Supreme Court decision, but at least one justice hinted in an opinion tied to overturning Roe v. Wade that the decision could be reversed.

"We don't want to run people out of the state who are contributing to our economy just because of who they have fallen in love with," said Moss, who is gay. "I certainly believe this is a moral issue, but this is also holding our state back economically, that we have not yet enshrined this into law."

Ethics reform

Voters overwhelmingly approved a new constitutional amendment that requires elected officials file more financial disclosures, but a majority of lawmakers previously supported measures that went much further.

In consecutive sessions, the vast majority of the Michigan House voted on bills to subject more public officials to open records laws, increase financial reporting requirements and any number of other issues. But now, Moss — who's helped lead the effort in the upper chamber with Sen. Ed McBroom, R-Vulcan — thinks the Republican roadblock to progress is gone.

"None of these are novel concepts. We're fighting to be, in many regards, the 49th state to do many of these things," Moss said.

In the House, expect Tate and Democratic leaders to take a more direct approach to ethics. Ex-House Speaker Lee Chatfield, R-Levering, is embroiled in a widespread scandal, including allegations he sexually assaulted his sister-in-law and in some way misspent public money. He's denied wrongdoing, but for months Tate and other Democrats called on Republican House leaders to launch an internal investigation.

They did not. But it would be no surprise to see Tate embark on such an inquiry almost immediately.

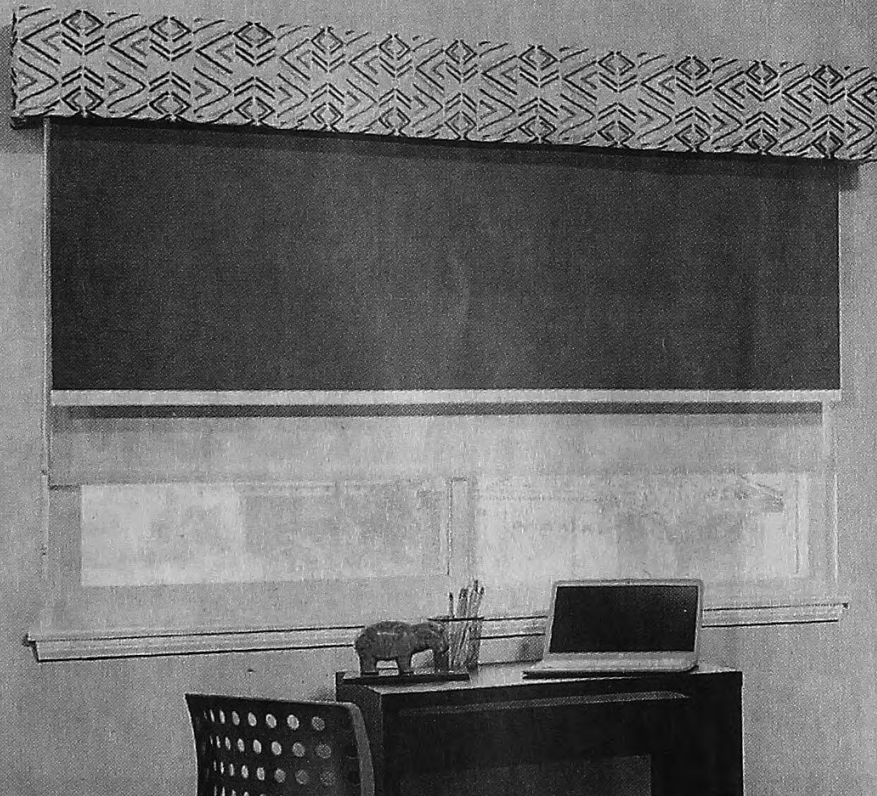
Former Michigan Gov. Jim Blanchard, the last Democratic governor to enjoy majorities in both chambers of the Legislature, said Whitmer's situation today is vastly different from his in 1983. Blanchard inherited a huge deficit and double-digit unemployment. Whitmer has a multibillion-dollar surplus to work with.

"It's a great opportunity," he said. "We really haven't had this kind of situation in modern history."



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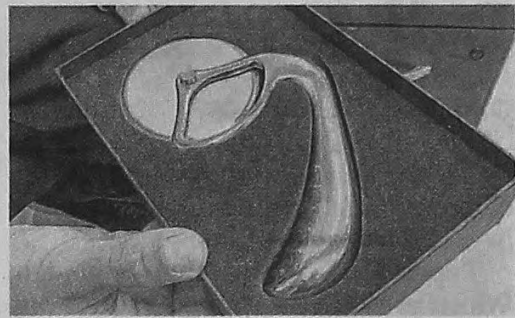
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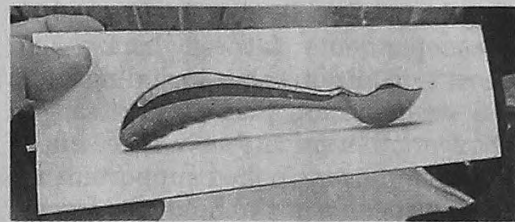
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Michael Chou, of Lyon Township, is the founder of Midnight Kitchen Tools. COURTESY OF MICHAEL CHOU



A pizza cutter made by Midnight Kitchen Tools. The kitchen gadget, along with the company's signature ice cream scoop, was recently listed as one of Oprah Winfrey's favorite things for the holiday season. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



A box containing a Midnight Kitchen Tools ice cream scoop. Made of stainless steel, the ergonomic scoop is designed to better deliver ice cream from the container.

Products

Continued from Page 1A

After years of solid sales and great reviews, it began to get noticed even more. Winfrey put the ice cream scoop on her favorite things list first back in 2016, the first major validation Midnight Kitchen Tools received.

This time, she's placed both the original scoop and the pizza cutter — launched in 2020 — on her list for holiday gift giving.

"No one expects pieces like these to be so fancy-schmancy-looking!" the description on the website states about the two pieces. "This set comes with a pizza cutter and an ice cream scoop that are made from stainless steel and have ergonomic handles."

Both are made to last forever, Chou said, and each piece has plenty of love in it.

"Each one is hand polished after it's formed. Actually, every scoop is a little bit different in that way," he said. "There's a lot of care in it."

While the products are manufac-

tured overseas, they are designed and shipped out of a non-descript warehouse in the Colonial Industrial Park off 10 Mile east of Rushton. There, the 2,500-square-foot warehouse is packed with boxes ready to be shipped directly to customers, as well as to Amazon, which fulfills orders for the products.

While the company currently only has the two products, Chou said he's hopeful another product could launch in the next several years.

The holidays are typically the biggest time of year for the company, Chou said, unsurprising as people look for unique gifts for loved ones or coworkers. Sales continue to grow as word-of-mouth expands on the quality of the items, he said.

"I'd say we do 50% of our sales during this time," he said. "(Customers) buy it, they love it, they tell someone else about it."

To purchase a set or one of the pieces individually, visit Amazon or the company's website, midnightkitchentools.com.

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

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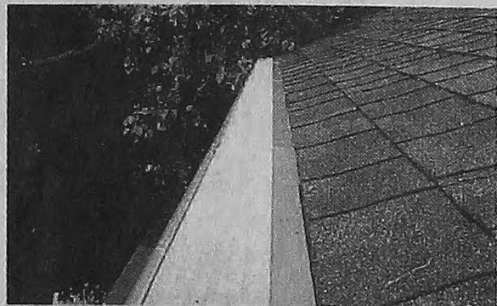
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Buff City Soap recently opened at 43555 Ford Road in Canton. PHOTOS BY DAVID VESELENAK/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



A locally made variety of soap, "The Park" is an homage to the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park that houses three high schools.



Laundry detergent is a signature product.

Lovely

Continued from Page 1A

The location next to Planet Fitness was a no-brainer when the brand was looking for a home in the Plymouth-Canton area, said Virginia Kamenitzer, marketing manager for the franchise that owns the Canton Buff City Soap.

"We have experience with Planet Fitness in the past, and we realized the (township) of Canton, as well as the adjacent city of Plymouth, just have a great community," she said. "This is just an area that is just filled with great family vibe."

Also on display on the local stand is a soap called "The Park," which beckons to the three high-school campus located off Joy Road. It's made using school colors from Canton, Plymouth and Salem high schools. They also have a display full of seasonal products as well, with the current scents celebrating the upcoming holidays.

In addition to being a retail spot, there's a social aspect to it as well. A bar at the makery in the shop can hold up to 10 people for parties and special events where guests can make their own creations.

"Think about all the opportunities that are out there for kids," said Virginia Kamenitzer, marketing manager for the franchise that owns the Canton Buff City Soap. "This is interacting. They can scent it. Parents can bring in gifts."

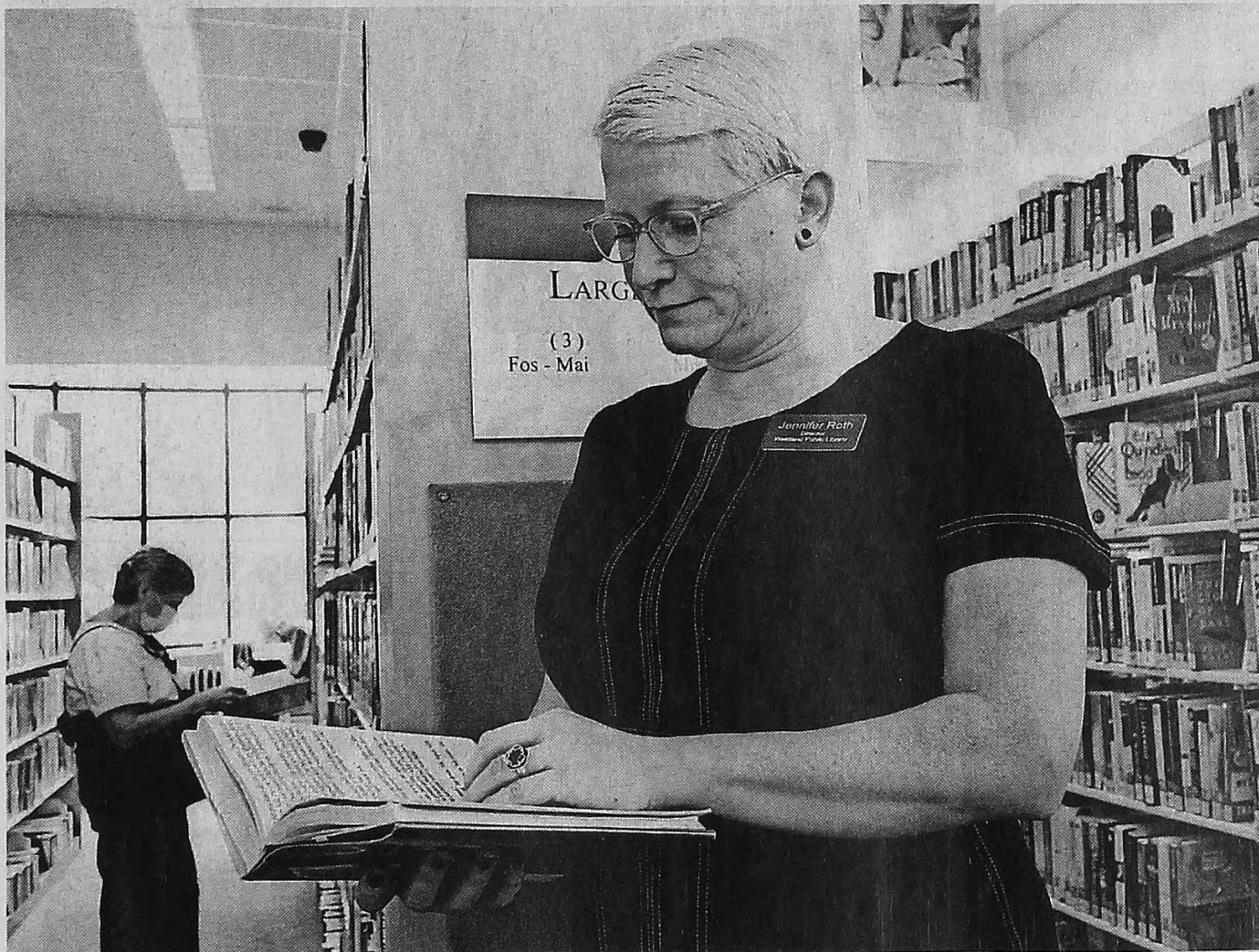
The store is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday.

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Eris Taylor, director of operations for the Buff City Soap franchise in Canton, organizes products in the store.



Westland Library Director Jennifer Roth reads a book. The library will close beginning Nov. 21 to prepare for a major renovation project. Library services and programs will move to the old Marshall Upper Elementary School on Bayview Street during construction. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

Library

Continued from Page 1A

"All of those libraries are aware that we're closing and are ready for Westland patrons," Roth said. "People can check out books and use the internet there."

Renovation to add meeting space, open floor plan

The \$5.3 million renovation and addition will add much-needed gathering space at the library.

"Meeting space is one of our top requests," Roth said. "Right now we have two meeting rooms and now we're going to have 11. Those will be for everyone to use."

Aside from meeting space, updates will include a more open layout at the library, a large programming

room, new carpets and new paint. The new meeting rooms will come equipped with video conference capabilities.

Roth said her staff is excited about the updates and expect the library's temporary relocation will allow the new services to arrive as quickly as possible.

"By closing and moving everything off site, we've shortened the project dramatically," she said. "If we had stayed open at our current location, this could easily be a two-year project. But by moving off site, it'll be done by next summer."

Construction is being paid for with money saved during pandemic-related closures and from past savings for a renovation. The library is not using any money from the operating millage voters approved last summer.

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

Obituaries

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Michael Pucher

LIVONIA - Pucher, Michael age 81 of Livonia. Beloved husband of the late Elaine for over 57 years. Cherished father of Michael (Wendy), Linda (Dave) VanGoethem and Patrick (Sue). Proud grandpa of Amanda, Royce, Drew, Sydney and Grace. Dearest brother of Bernie (Nancy) Pucher and the late Jim Pucher. Also survived by many other loving family and friends. Funeral Services were held last Thursday. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to St. Edith Catholic Church and/or American Cancer Society. Please visit online guestbook fredwoodfuneralhome.com



Jail data dashboard 'a game-changer'

Andrea May Sahouri
 Detroit Free Press
 USA TODAY NETWORK

The public, along with the law enforcement community, can get a daily snapshot of the inmate population at the Wayne County Jail thanks to a new online database.

The launch of the free, online database providing demographic figures, mental health data and other information on the jail population was announced Thursday by the Wayne County Sheriff's Office and the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network.

Its goal is to provide transparency surrounding Wayne County's incarcerated population and to help stakeholders in criminal justice to better understand and visualize how their decisions affect inmates and jail outcomes, the partnership said in a news release.

Transparency leads to change, according to Robert Dunlap, the Wayne County chief of jails.

"We think it's going to be a game-changer here in Wayne County," he told the Free Press. "In the long term, we are hopeful this dashboard will help us better understand the population and its characteristics, and that it will spark dialogue throughout our community about how we can work together to improve what we see."

"In particular, we hope the jail dashboard generates conversations about potential initiatives to reduce the length of stay for specific groups of people, alternatives to incarceration, and the need for additional programs and system-wide changes."

The dashboard shows 396 inmates have been housed in Wayne County jail facilities for more than one year, including 159 inmates who have been in jail for more than two years. County jail stays in Michigan are typically limited to one year, with longer sentences served in state prisons.

It isn't clear what has led to so many extended stays. Jail officials hope the new dashboard brings more attention to that issue and others.

The dashboard offers numerous interactive graphics that allow the public to explore different sets of data, including:

- Inmate demographics, including race, gender, and age.
- Mental health designations and number of available mental health beds.
- Length of incarceration, including pretrial and post conviction.
- Number of individuals in jail versus tethered.
- Types of charges and bookings.
- Originating agencies connected with inmate charges.
- Number of releases.

The dashboard is updated every morning, officials said.

It can be accessed at sheriffconnect.com/dashboard. Some notable statistics revealed in the dashboard:

"In particular, we hope the jail dashboard generates conversations about potential initiatives to reduce the length of stay for specific groups of people, alternatives to incarceration, and the need for additional programs and system-wide changes."

Robert Dunlap Wayne County chief of jails

- 75.3% of jail population is Black.
- 91% of inmates are male.
- 94.6% are in jail for felonies
- 82.25% are in jail awaiting trial, versus 13.61% serving sentences.
- 26.13% of inmates are labeled "mental health consumers."

By making the data easily accessible, the Sheriff's Office and Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network hope the dashboard will help reduce incarceration rates for those experiencing mental illness or substance abuse disorders, and those charged with low-level, non-violent crimes such as traffic offenses or property crimes, according to their news release.


"Across Wayne County, over 40 percent of local jail inmates have been diagnosed with mental health disorders, and many more in the system are likely undiagnosed and require some form of treatment," said Andrea Smith, director of innovation and community engagement at DWIHN. "With the dashboard in place, we're much better equipped to respond to the obvious urgency to improve and target our delivery of services, which not only raises the quality of life for people currently under jail-system supervision, but can also contribute dramatically to the prevention of recidivism, and to improve outcomes for the families and communities of released individuals in the long run."

In 2021, the Wayne County Sheriff's Office and DWIHN received a two-year grant from the Hudson-Webber Foundation to develop the public dashboard with the technology firm WIT Inc. But the analytics work started prior to Hudson-Webber's grant, Dunlap and Smith told the Free Press.

The dashboard was first initiated in 2018, after the Sheriff's Office and DWIHN tracked the mental health status of the Wayne County Jail inmate population and researched how other large cities have created change and transparency surrounding inmate populations.

Looking forward, the Sheriff's Office and DWIHN "intend to expand their collaboration with the court system to influence policy and procedures that can expedite court proceedings, lead to the reduction of cases through diversion and mitigation measures and inform policymakers on the reforms and resources required to more effectively process cases," the partnership said in a news release.

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SPORTS

Novi volleyball's Vellucci, Hoffman have family to thank for success

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For Sarah Vellucci and Kaitlyn Hoffman, it starts with family.

The two Novi volleyball players made it official during a national signing day event Nov. 9 at the high school: Vellucci

joined Long Beach State, while Hoffman is headed to Ohio State.

Not bad for two players ranked in the top 10 of the 2023 class in Michigan, according to PrepDig.com.

But when you unravel the journeys it took to get to this day, it's awe-inspiring that both even made it this far.

Take Vellucci, for example.

It wouldn't have been shocking to see her join the family business.

Her father, Mark, grew up playing in the North American Hockey League and has made a career out of coaching the sport. He most recently spent the past nine seasons coaching Novi's high school varsity.

Her uncle, Mike, bounced around the

minor leagues for years. And he even had a cup of coffee in the NHL with the Hartford Whalers. He went on to become a coach and climbed the ladder. He's currently an assistant with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Plus her cousins and brother have

See SUCCESS, Page 2B



Canton coach Andrew LaFata speaks with the media during the Kensington Lakes Activities Association Football Media Day on Aug. 12. TOM BEAUDOIN/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

How Andy LaFata quit coaching Canton football the right way

Brandon Folsom

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's probably cliché by now that playing high school football is more about the life lessons you learn along the way than anything else.

But here's another lesson we can learn from former Canton coach Andy LaFata.

Yes, former coach.

He let his players know following Week 9's 50-14 victory over Livonia Churchill that he was stepping down. That's a 15-year coaching career at Canton, which includes leading the Chiefs for the past five seasons as the head

coach with a 29-20 record. We can call it 19 years if we include his 4 years as a player there.

For a long time, he's been driving from his home in the Lake Orion area to teach and coach at Canton. And if those 1 hour-plus drives (both to and from) sound exhausting to you, imagine the toll it's taken on him over the years.

That's why he interviewed for an opening at Lake Orion Community Schools 3 months ago. The interview actually took place the same day as Canton's pre-season scrimmage in August.

And Lake Orion let him know that it wanted to hire him mere hours before the Chiefs' Week 1 game kicked off.

Yes, that's quite a dilemma.

Should he stay or should he go?

"It was definitely the elephant in the room," LaFata told Hometown Life this week. "There was no way I could've said no to their offer. But I couldn't just leave the team and all of the good people that depended on me. But then they said, 'Hang on. We can work this out.' They subbed-out the job until the end of the football season. That right there told me everything I needed to know about the people there. It's tough leaving the good people at Canton, but I think I'm finding another group of really good people to work with here at Lake Orion."

See LAFATA, Page 3B

Why Cass Tech-Belleville's Div. 1 football semifinal will be historic

Mick McCabe

Special to Detroit Free Press

USA TODAY NETWORK

There he was, Steve Kossak — who learned he would be Clarkston's starting quarterback about 3 p.m. Friday when his mother told him — taking the second down snap at the 3-yard line and backing away from center with 18 seconds left and the Wolves trailing, 33-28.

This was the biggest play of his life, and suddenly he found himself on the ground.

"When I rolled out," he said, "I tripped over my left guard's foot."

Kossak's body language was terrible. It was as if he had just lost the game for his team.

"That's what I thought," he said. "Then it occurred to me that I needed to spike the ball."

Quickly, Kossak snapped out of his funk, took another snap from center and clocked the ball, stopping the clock with 6 seconds left and the ball at the 8-yard line.

Clarkston coach Justin Pintar had called for a pass play when Kossak tripped.

"We went from hopefully having three plays to try to win the game," Pintar said, "to having only one shot to win it."

Adams had called a timeout after the spike and it gave the Wolves a chance to be certain which play to run.

Parker Picot, Adam's all-everything quarterback/defensive back, had been switched to defend 6-foot-6 Brody Kossin, who had earlier caught a 14-yard TD pass from Kossak on a fourth-and-9 play.

That is when junior sensation Desman Stephens realized he better be ready to become a local hero (if he hadn't already accomplished that, but more on that later).

"We knew Parker would be on Brody, who we usually throw the fade to," Stephens said. "So Stevie locked in and threw a great ball to the outside, and I caught it."

There were only 1.8 seconds left when Stephens caught the ball and gave Clarkston a 36-33 victory over Adams, sending the Wolves into Saturday's 1 p.m. Division 1 semifinal against Caledonia.

Pintar was quite surprised that Kossak was the starter, even though he took all of the snaps in Thursday's practice after starter Mike Hein's hip began giving him trouble.

See SEMIFINAL, Page 2B

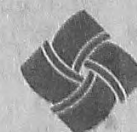
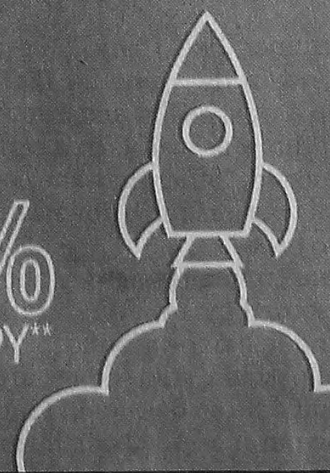
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Success

Continued from Page 1B

played or are still playing the sport. Surely, she would've been a natural given how much time she's spent in hockey rinks watching her family over the years, right?

"I do love hockey — I really do love hockey," Sarah said. "Part of me actually wishes I grew up playing it. But I can't actually skate, which is kind of crazy with my family."

Or is it?

Several of the Vellucci girls have actually grown up playing volleyball. Most notably, Sarah's cousin, Kelly Vellucci, garnered all-state honors after helping Livonia Stevenson make it to the elite eight in 2011. She later went on to play four seasons at Saginaw Valley State.

"All of my cousins played volleyball growing up," Sarah added. "So I went and watched them, and I was like, 'Oh my gosh. This is so cool!' So I kind of took after them, and I have them to credit with me wanting to play volleyball."

That led to Sarah signing up, and here we are.

She was one of 10 girls nominated for Michigan's Miss Volleyball award earlier this fall.

She's been one of the top liberos in the state for Legacy Volleyball Club over the years, though she was asked to play outside hitter for Novi because she's 6-foot tall.

The Wildcats saw their season end with a 3-0 loss to rival Northville in the Division 1 district championship. So she'll likely never hit again.

And as far as starting a last-minute hockey career, that's out of the question as well. She's graduating early from Novi so she can join LBSU's team next semester.

"I do love hockey. It's probably my favorite sport to watch, which is bad to say because I play volleyball," she joked.

Hoffman has her older sister, Molly, to thank for her success in the sport.

Growing up, whatever Molly was doing, that's what Kaitlyn wanted to do as well.

That's what led Kaitlyn to gymnastics at a young age. And when Molly gave up tumbling to try volleyball in middle school, Kaitlyn was right behind her.



Sarah Vellucci and Kaitlyn Hoffman with Novi volleyball coach Kacy Byron during a National Signing Day event Nov. 9.

PHOTOS BY BRANDON FOLSOM/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Ohio State volleyball signee Hoffman with her family.

"I actually played basketball for 6 months, too, but it was not going well, so I just switched to volleyball after that," the defensive specialist said. "I had literally no idea that I'd get to this point. I think I always knew after my 13s year (in travel) that I wanted to play at the highest level I could, and it was always a dream of mine to go to a D-I school."

Kaitlyn's first foray into volleyball was at clinics. One clinic at Legacy Volleyball Club is what got her noticed.

She wasn't the best player on the floor. But she showed athleticism. And Legacy's coaches took note of that. She was asked to join one of their travel teams not long after that training session.

She got to play alongside some of the best players in Michigan. And being around players such as Ann Arbor Skyline's Harper Murray, the No. 1-ranked player in the country, was an eye-opener for Kaitlyn. Not only did playing with those types of athletes help elevate her game but it showed her what it took to be a Big Ten-caliber of player.

She ended her career as the eighth-best recruit in the state in the 2023 class.

"I think I was a little scared going into that, but I think I adjusted pretty well to the level of play," she said. "I think going onto the 13s team, I was surprised at the level it took to get up the level where everyone else was at. Like, Harper was so good. But I feel like I've always been pretty athletic. I've always had a really good work ethic. I've just always had that drive and motivation to get better and the want to spend the extra hours in the gym."

Of course, Kaitlyn's excited about joining Ohio State because of how much she enjoys being around the coaching staff. And she's excited to study at one of the best universities in the country.

But would it shock you to find out that's where Molly attends college as well?

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

Semifinal

Continued from Page 1B

Hein has a hip problem that flares up from time to time. Kossak actually had started three games before this, but Hein assured him he would be fine by Friday.

"Thursday is when it happened, but we're still kind of hopeful," Pintar said. "Our trainer didn't think it was very serious. He went home, but the next day he couldn't move it and couldn't do this and that."

Kossak got the news of his starting assignment from his mother because, well, moms know everything.

"His mom texted my mom," he said. "Well, I was just in shock. She told me, and I was like: 'OK, here we go. I guess I gotta get ready for the game.'"

Kossak started off like he was still in shock; not playing as well as he had earlier in the season.

"It was kind of slow at first, I thought it was nervousness," Stephens said. "Everybody was like: 'Oh, crap, this is going to be a long game.' But eventually he locked in and it was up from there."

That is when Stephens began to write his story in Clarkston lore.

After Adams had taken a 14-7 lead, Stephens returned the ensuing kickoff 83 yards to tie the game.

"They were kicking it left and they kept sending a bunch of pressure so we set up a return to the right side," Stephens said. "I followed my blocks and I got to the end zone."

Stephens, who has offers from Purdue and a slew of Mid-American Conference schools, is one of those guys who is as fast as he has to be in any particular situation.

Trailing 21-14, Stephens was handed the ball, but threw a 38-yard TD pass to Cole Church to tie the game.

"We kept running that end around sweep to me and we knew they might get a little greedy and try to come up on the run," Stephens explained. "But he actually guarded him pretty well. So I told him to keep going upfield because he kind of stopped. Then he wiggled by and got open."

That Stephens had the wherewithal to actually wave the receiver deeper was amazing.

"He kind of kept answering with big plays," Pintar said. "He's a really talent-

Semifinals schedule

Here are the 11-player matchups, with games Saturday at 1 p.m. unless noted.

Division 1

Caledonia (11-1) vs. Clarkston (10-2) at East Lansing.

Belleville (12-0) vs. Detroit Cass Tech (9-3) at Novi, Friday, 7 p.m.

Division 2

Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central (12-0) vs. Dexter (12-0) at Portage Northern.

Birmingham Groves (9-3) at Warren De La Salle (11-1) at Troy Athens.

Division 3

DeWitt (9-3) vs. Muskegon (10-2) at Greenville.

Detroit King (8-3) vs. Mason (12-0) at Westland Glenn.

Division 4

Edwardsburg (11-1) vs. Grand Rapids South Christian (12-0) at Battle Creek Harper Creek.

ed kid and his football IQ is really excellent. A lot of kids would have panicked and just thrown it."

It seems sacrilegious to be this deep into the story without having mentioned Clarkston sensation Ethan Clark, who has run for over 2,500 yards this season and over 5,000 for his career.

He gained 212 yards and on the final drive, it was Clark who led the charge to get into position for Kossak's TD pass.

"He tends to kind of heat up as games go on," Pintar said. "It was weird because it was a game he had over 200 yards and it didn't even feel like it was that good."

With a runner like Clark, Kossak didn't have to win the game for Clarkston — but in a way, he did just that.

"He didn't throw as well as he's capable of," Pintar said, "other than the couple of touchdowns on fourth downs that we needed to have."

But the most impressive thing about Kossak was something he didn't do after he tripped and fell to the ground.

"Most kids would shut down after that, they would be so dejected," Pintar said. "And he put it on the back burner

and moved on to the next play."

Division 5

Gladwin (12-0) vs. Grand Rapids Catholic Central (11-1) at Ithaca.

Birmingham Detroit Country Day (8-3) vs. Frankenmuth (12-0) at Lapeer.

Division 6

Negaunee (12-0) vs. Reed City (11-1) at Gaylord.

Clinton (12-0) vs. Grand Rapids West Catholic (11-1) at Coldwater.

Division 7

Traverse City St. Francis (12-0) vs. New Lothrop (10-2) at Clare.

Napoleon (12-0) vs. Jackson Lumen Christi (9-3) at Chelsea.

Division 8

Iron Mountain (11-1) vs. Ubyly (12-0) at Petoskey.

Clarkston Everest (9-3) vs. Ottawa Lake Whiteford (12-0) at Woodhaven.

And the play after the play after is the one Kossak will remember for the rest of his life.

"My friends texted me the play," he said. "I've probably watched it 30 times."

Historic semifinal in Division 1

For the first time since 1989, we will have a Friday night semifinal when Detroit Cass Tech and defending Division 1 state champ Belleville meet at Novi. The 7 p.m. game will be televised by Bally Sports.

The last semifinal played on a Friday night was the infamous "Ice Bowl Game" between Farmington Hills Harrison and East Grand Rapids at Flint Atwood Stadium.

When Harrison coach John Herrington gave his starting lineup to the P.A. announcer he asked: "Do you want our goalie?"

Before the start of the second quarter, referee Joe Kavulich stopped the game, saying it was unsafe to continue. But former Michigan High School Ath-

letic Association executive director Jack Roberts ordered the game to continue.

Harrison won, 3-2, and the next week defeated DeWitt in a thriller, 28-27, in the final game of Mill (The Thrill) Coleman's illustrious career.

Clinton pulls off stunner in Division 6

With 10:06 left to play in the third quarter, Clinton trailed Warren Michigan Collegiate, 24-6, and coach Casey Randolph could have been forgiven if he began to think about where he was going to spend this week deer hunting.

"It didn't look good, for sure," Randolph said. "We would stop them and stop them and then they would rip off third-and-long runs of 65 and 57 yards. We felt we had things adjusted, but kids would make simple mistakes and they took it house."

Collegiate was about to add another touchdown when Nik Shadley managed to come up with the play of the season and wound up with the ball at the Clinton 7-yard line.

"Honestly, he had the tackle, ripped the ball and was able to jump on," Randolph said. "I don't know how he kept ahold of it because he's all of 140 pounds. He's a tough nut. I think that was the backbreaker for them and springboarded us into having a chance to make the comeback."

That led to a 93-yard drive with Andy Fair passing to Bradyn Lehman.

Clinton looked to be in serious trouble again when Collegiate scored with 8:21 left in the fourth quarter for a 30-18 lead. Then Shadley caught a 20-yard TD pass.

"We never stopped playing the game, we never hung our heads," Randolph said. "We kept playing defense, kept grinding towards some different things offensively that allowed us to move the ball quicker."

A high snap from the center forced the Collegiate punter to run, but he went nowhere, leading to a 5-yard Lehman run for a 31-30 victory.

Making the comeback more impressive: neither team runs a spread offense that features quick-strike touchdowns and it occurred in a Division 6 regional final.

"Especially in that high caliber of a game and the type of offenses both teams run, we're both dominantly power run offenses," Randolph said.

S'more Pumpkin Cookies combine variety of fall spices

Angelina Larue

Special to the Avalanche-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - TEXAS

November is ushering in some cooler temps and I'm ready for the cozy, warm taste of fall. Pumpkin spice lattes are nice, and all, but I'm geared up for baking.

The aroma alone when we start to bake with cinnamon, nutmeg and other warm spices is intoxicating. Pumpkin pies, pumpkin bread, and in this case, pumpkin cookies, all provide that depth of flavor I crave this time of year.

This particular cookie combines pumpkin with another nostalgic treat. I add mini marshmallows and chocolate to the top of each mound of pumpkin to take me back to days of summertime camping.

You can use gluten-free flour, or even almond flour, if you prefer. And if you are eating plant-based, vegan marshmallows are available in many markets now.

I love the nuttiness of the pecans. And the toasted marshmallows and smooth dark chocolate create that familiar s'mores combo.

S'more Pumpkin Cookies make a go-to snack this fall, and will also be a good option for holiday cookie exchanges.

Enjoy the warm scents and inviting flavors of autumn.

Angelina Larue is a food writer, recipe developer and author of "The Whole Enchilada Fresh and Nutritious Southwestern Cuisine."



This particular cookie combines pumpkin with another nostalgic treat. By adding mini marshmallows and chocolate to the top of each mound of pumpkin, it can take you back to days of summertime camping. ANGELINA LARUE

S'more pumpkin cookies

Makes 1 dozen.

- 1 ½ cups flour
- ½ cup brown sugar, or coconut sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup pure pumpkin puree

½ cup creamy almond butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ cup chopped pecans

48 mini marshmallows

12 small squares dark chocolate

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt into a large mixing bowl. Stir to mix.

Add pumpkin, almond butter, and

vanilla to the dry ingredients. Stir until all the flour is incorporated. Add pecans and stir until evenly distributed.

Divide dough into 12 equal balls. Place them 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheet. Top each cookie dough ball with 4 mini marshmallows. Bake for 19 to 21 minutes in preheated oven. As soon as they come out of the oven, top each one with a square of chocolate. Serve warm or room temperature.

Store in an airtight container for up to one week.

MEET THE 2022 ALL-KLAA FOOTBALL TEAM

Bryce Underwood, Belleville, QB, Soph.
Jeremiah Beasley, Belleville, LB/RB, Jr.
Dennis Crawford, Belleville, DB/WR, Sr.
Jeremiah Warren, Belleville, DL/OL, Sr.
Camden Weaver, Belleville, DL/OL, Sr.
Nathaniel Johnson, Belleville, OL, Jr.
Julian Johnson, Belleville, WR, Jr.
Kevin Simes, Belleville, WR, Jr.
Ronald Jackson, Belleville, DL/OL, Jr.
Brayden Lane, Belleville, K, Soph.
Mychal Yharbrough, Belleville, DB/WR, Sr.
Hunter Harding, Brighton, LB, Sr.
Griffin Bell, Brighton, LB, Sr.
Ryan Velarde, Brighton, DB, Sr.
Nick Thalacker, Brighton, DL, Sr.
Andrew Stewart, Brighton, DB, Sr.
Jack Gregorich, Brighton, DB, Sr.
Mason Millhouse, Brighton, WR, Sr.
Ashton Tomassi, Brighton, WR, Sr.
Colin McKernan, Brighton, QB, Sr.
Carson Shrader, Brighton, RB, Sr.
Jack Storey, Brighton, OL, Sr.
Antonio Correa, Canton, LB, Sr.
Andon Locke, Canton, LB, Sr.
Devon Pettus, Canton, RB, Jr.
Caleb Williams, Canton, QB, Jr.
Adam Saleh, Dearborn, QB/DB, Sr.
Noah Dobert, Dearborn, RB/DB, Sr.
Cameron Smalley, Dearborn, OL/DL, Sr.
Hassan Sareini, Dearborn, LB/RB, Jr.
Evin Fencil, Dearborn, DE/TE, Jr.
Ali Homayed, Dearborn, OL/DL, Jr.
Brady Isaacson, Dearborn, DE/TE, Jr.
Hussein Beydoun, Dearborn Fordson, RB/DB, Sr.
Mohamed Traboulsi, Dearborn Fordson, DE, Sr.
Mstafa Aljanaby, Dearborn Fordson, WR, Soph.
Joey Mattord, Hartland, OLB/RB, Sr.
Chase Kern, Hartland, LB, Sr.
Vincent Cox, Hartland, OL/DL, Sr.
Mitch Cavanaugh, Hartland, WR/LB, Sr.
Luke Dibert, Hartland, DT, Sr.
Jaxson Wilson, Hartland, DE/TE, Sr.
Bobby Kanka, Howell, DE/TE, Soph.
Nolan Nelson, Howell, OL/DL, Sr.
Carter Kraft, Howell, LB, Sr.
John Lovich, Howell, DB, Sr.
Jayden Allen, Livonia Churchill, WR, Sr.
Justin Lynch, Livonia Churchill, OL, Sr.
JD Bates, Livonia Franklin, QB, Sr.
Tyler Garrett, Livonia Franklin, WR/DB, Sr.

Jacob Gorla, Livonia Franklin, DL, Jr.
Owen Hawley, Livonia Franklin, OL, Sr.
Jon Jasionowski, Livonia Franklin, DB, Jr.
Drew Kelbert, Livonia Franklin, TE, Jr.
Cordel Mabins, Livonia Franklin, RB, Sr.
Dominic Simpson, Livonia Franklin, DB/RB, Sr.
Sam White, Livonia Franklin, LB, Sr.
Charlie Davidek, Livonia Stevenson, DL/OL, Sr.
ArJon Thompson, Livonia Stevenson, QB/DB, Jr.
Aiden Nolan, Livonia Stevenson, WR/DB, Jr.
Owen Reed, Livonia Stevenson, LB/TE, Sr.
Nihad Ajdarpasic, Livonia Stevenson, DL, Sr.
Bryce Cunningham, Livonia Stevenson, OL/DL, Jr.
Max Anderson, Northville, S, Sr.
Evan Deak, Northville, OLB, Jr.
Graham Gilmartin, Northville, OL, Jr.
Zach Groot, Northville, CB, Sr.
Ferris Jordan, Northville, DL, Jr.
Hunter Ladach, Northville, OLB, Sr.
Caleb Moore, Northville, RB, Jr.
Luca Prior, Northville, QB, Sr.
Angelo Rodriguez, Northville, WR, Sr.
Niko Krall, Novi, LB, Sr.
Luke Aurillia, Novi, WR/DB, Sr.
Preston Phimister, Novi, OL/DL, Sr.
Caleb Walker, Novi, QB, Jr.
Boden Fernsler, Novi, WR, Jr.
Cole Shires, Novi, RB/LB, Sr.
Martez Langford, Novi, RB/DB, Sr.
Jaxson McCaig, Plymouth, RB/LB/DB, Jr.
Luc Damiani, Plymouth, WR/DB/K/P, Jr.
Orlando Daniels, Plymouth, TE/DE, Sr.
Evan Cosgrove, Plymouth, RB/LB, Sr.
Robert Jones Jr, Salem, RB, Sr.
Dwayne Jones, Wayne Memorial, WR/RB, Jr.
Xavier Spadacini, Westland John Glenn, RB/LB/DB, Sr.
Damon Powers, Westland John Glenn, RB/LB/DB, Jr.
Connor LeCourt, Westland, John Glenn, TE/DE, Sr.
Mike Boyd, Westland, John Glenn, OT/DT, Sr.

LaFata

Continued from Page 1B

LaFata's final day teaching at Plymouth-Canton Community Schools is in early November.

So, yes, he stuck it out.

But he told virtually nobody about his new job.

Not his 3-6 team, which was enduring quite the rebuild with 19 new juniors and sophomores starting for the first time. It would've been easy to walk away from that situation, especially when the injuries started piling up.

Not former Canton coach Tim Baechler, a Michigan High School Football Coaches Association Hall of Famer who mentored LaFata over the years.

Not even his assistants.

"We were shocked when he actually told the coaching staff after Week 8," eighth-year Canton assistant Steve Robb said. "I don't even know if his mom knew, and she's one of our biggest fans and comes to all the games. I don't think anybody knew. We expected Andy to tell the kids leading up to Week 9 against Churchill. He didn't. His focus was on preparing for the game. He didn't want any distractions for the players. We played well, and he told them after the game. That's the kind of guy Andy is. He's a players-first coach, and that was the way he handled it with our team."

LaFata hasn't had a fall Friday night off since 2007. By the time he was a junior at Eastern Michigan University, he was making the drives from Ypsilanti to the Chiefs' practices and working as an assistant under Baechler.

And those drives could've been a lot worse had Robb gotten his way.

Twice, Robb tried luring LaFata away from Canton to work on his staff when he was a head coach elsewhere.

"I first met him in about 2010 when he was about 22 years old," said Robb, who just finished his 44th year coaching. "I was impressed. Even back then, he was one of the best offensive line coaches I've ever been around. I thought that right away when he was 22 years old. I tried to steal him and get him to come to Milan with me. And then I tried to get him to come to (Dearborn) Divine Child with me. He's just a great teacher of technique, and he real-

ly knows his Xs and Os."

While LaFata hasn't ruled out getting back into coaching in the future, he has no immediate plans to coach. He hasn't been asked to join Lake Orion's football staff, nor has any of the other nearby teams asked him to come aboard.

"There's no athletics involved with this decision," he added. "It was just a career decision."

LaFata said being done with football has been a surreal feeling as this was his first week not game-planning for an upcoming opponent. The Chiefs missed qualifying for the postseason for the first time since 2007.

And that, right there, speaks to why leaving Canton was such a hard decision.

There will always be talent within the program. Competing for a state championship is always a possibility.

"If this was a football decision, I never would have left," LaFata said. "But with the opportunity to work at Lake Orion, I had to do what was best for myself and my family. I drove to Canton every day for the past 6 or 7 years. When you add my young kids into the mix, it was just how many years can you keep on doing this? Without kids, I can do it. With two young kids, it's getting to be a little much. Sometimes I couldn't get to our JV games because that meant missing another night with them."

"I had to ask myself: What do you want your next 15 years to look like? That's how I looked at it. I had been there for 15 years and got everything I could have ever asked out of it. What more is out there? It's time to try and find that. I didn't want to leave the kids I know there. But had I stayed, there would've been the next group of kids that I wouldn't have wanted to leave, too."

Quitting a job is never easy.

But LaFata, gracefully, stuck the landing.

Even though life would've been easier for him had he quit coaching in Week 1, he grit through the rebuilding process. He showed up to practices. He game-planned with his assistants. He gave the Chiefs everything he had. And he kept the distractions away from them until after the season.

LaFata did it the right way, and his players will only benefit from having watched how he handled such a challenging experience.

Twitter: @folsombrandonj.

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS SCORES FROM REGIONAL FINALS

Saturday

Division 1

Belleville 33, Novi Detroit Catholic Central 10
Caledonia 42, Grand Ledge 14

Division 3

Muskegon 27, Zeeland West 20

Division 5

Gladwin 26, Oakridge High School 8

Division 6

Negaunee 18, Gladstone 12
Reed City 6, Millington 0

Division 7

Traverse City St. Francis 63, Ithaca 0

Division 8

Iron Mountain 34, Ewart 33

Ubyly 49, Fowler 7

8-Player semifinals

Division 1

Martin 42, Brown City 8

Division 2

Mendon 30, Morrice 14

Friday

Division 1

Clarkston 36, Rochester Adams 33
Detroit Cass Tech 35, Macomb Dakota 21

Division 2

Birmingham Groves 32, Livonia Franklin 25
Dexter 42, Midland 7
Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central 21, East Lansing 17
Warren De La Salle 55, Harrison Township L'Anse Creuse 7

Division 3

DeWitt 29, Linden 16
Detroit King 22, Birmingham Brother Rice 12

Mason 42, Trenton 24

Division 4

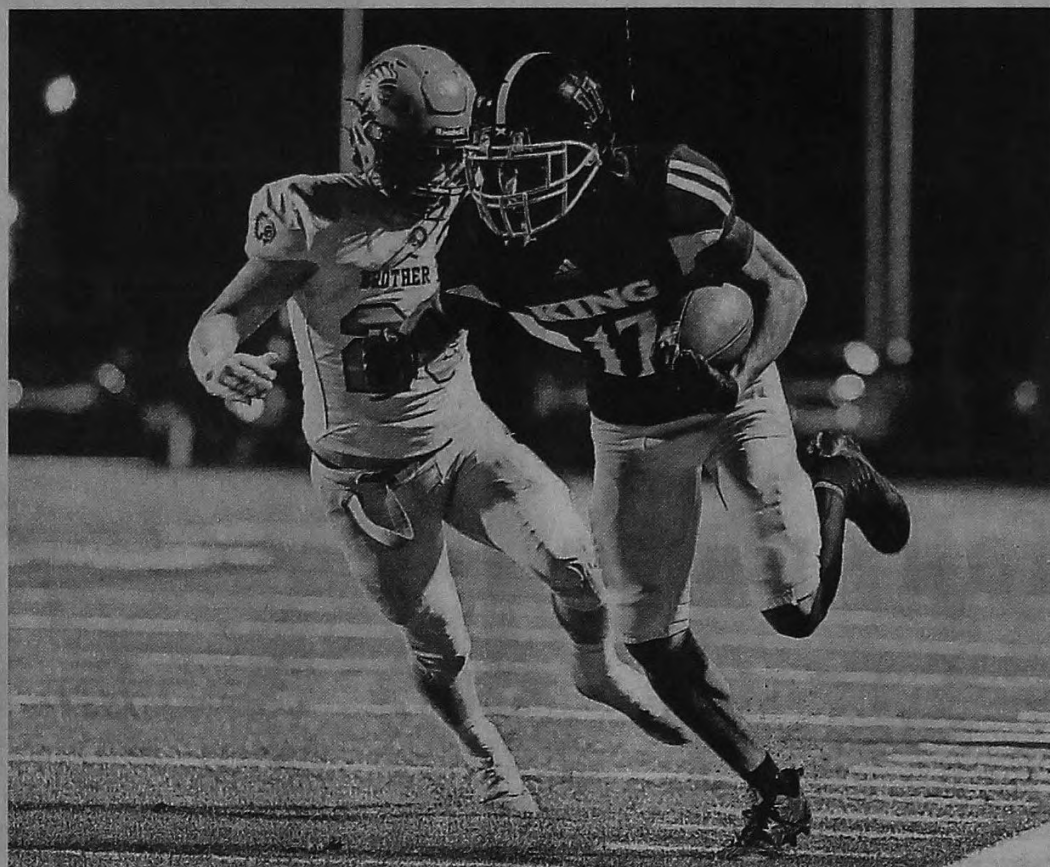
Eddies Edwardsburg Michigan 24, Hastings 14

Goodrich 40, Orchard Lake St. Mary's Prep 20
Grand Rapids South Christian 28, Whitehall 21
Riverview 45, Dearborn Divine Child 35

Division 5

Birmingham Detroit Country Day 44, Flat Rock 7
Frankenmuth 49, Flint Hamady 7
Grand Rapids Catholic

See SCORES, Page 5B



Detroit King wide receiver Damon Stennis (17) runs against Birmingham Brother Rice during the second half of a Division 3 regional championship game at Detroit King on Nov. 11. JUNFU HAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS

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Scores

Continued from Page 4B

Central 42, Portland 19

Division 6

Clinton 31, Warren Michigan Collegiate 30
Grand Rapids West Catholic 37, Lansing Catholic 7

Division 7

Jackson Lumen Christi 7, Lawton 6
Napoleon 14, Monroe St. Mary Catholic Central 7
New Lothrop 29, Elkton-Pigeon Bay Port Laker 20

Division 8

Clarkston Everest Collegiate 30, Sterling Heights Parkway Christian 6
Whiteford 38, White Pigeon 26

State semifinal schedule

11-player

All games Saturday at 1 p.m. unless noted.

Division 1

Caledonia (11-1) vs. Clarkston (10-2) at East Lansing.
Belleville (12-0) vs. Detroit Cass Tech (9-3) at Novi, Friday, 7 p.m.

Division 2

Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central (12-0) vs. Dexter (12-0) at Portage Northern.
Birmingham Groves (9-3) at Warren De La Salle (11-1) at Troy Athens.

Division 3

DeWitt (9-3) vs. Muskegon (10-2) at Greenville.
Detroit King (8-3) vs. Mason (12-0) at Westland Glenn.

Division 4

Edwardsburg (11-1) vs. Grand Rapids South Christian (12-0) at Battle Creek Harper Creek.
Goodrich (11-1) vs. Riverview (12-0) at Rochester.

Division 5

Gladwin (12-0) vs. Grand Rapids Catholic Central (11-1) at Ithaca.
Birmingham Detroit Country Day (8-3) vs. Frankenmuth (12-0) at Lapeer.

Division 6

Negaunee (12-0) vs. Reed City (11-1) at Gaylord.
Clinton (12-0) vs. Grand Rapids West Catholic (11-1) at Coldwater.

Division 7

Traverse City St. Francis (12-0) vs. New Lothrop (10-2) at Clare.
Napoleon (12-0) vs. Jackson Lumen Christi (9-3) at Chelsea.

Division 8

Iron Mountain (11-1) vs. Ubly (12-0) at Petoskey.
Clarkston Everest (9-3) vs. Ottawa Lake Whiteford (12-0) at Woodhaven.

8-player

Division 1

Merrill (12-0) vs. Martin (12-0) at Superior Dome, Marquette, Saturday, 11 a.m.

Division 2

Mendon (10-2) vs. Powers North Central (12-0) at Superior Dome, Marquette, Saturday, 2 p.m.

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FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated at right. Find the listed words in the grid. They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once. Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 25 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

- | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|------------|
| Barton | Family | Kerr | Raper |
| BBOs | Flynn | Lang | Rosewall |
| Bond | Games | Matlock | Ships |
| Calwell | Gould | Police | Silides |
| Camps | Gran | Melba | Songs |
| Cerutti | Grundy | Moore | Summers |
| Crash | Hawke | MS DOS | Television |
| Cyclone | Hoad | O'Keefe | Twist |
| Tracy | Holt | Page | Vietnam |
| Davey | Hopman | Pets | Whittam |
| Face | Hume | Photos | Zacs |

TODAY'S ANSWER
Remembering the good old days

Lifetime of memories

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

NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

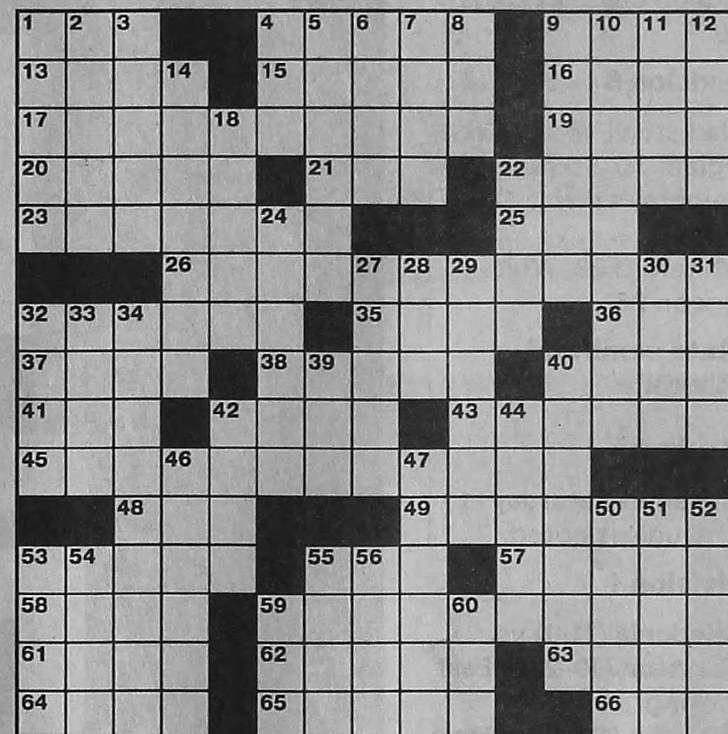
ACROSS

- 1 Imaginative pursuit
- 4 Snapshot setting
- 9 Freight carrier
- 13 Needing a battery charge
- 15 Furlough
- 16 Quick stick
- 17 Handywoman's special
- 19 Maraud
- 20 Novelist Zola
- 21 Common coffee-break time
- 22 Magnet ends
- 23 Basic nature
- 25 French affirmation
- 26 Playground staple
- 32 Scattered about
- 35 Vane venue
- 36 Big little name in WWII headlines
- 37 Low digits
- 38 Possum habitat
- 40 Did some weeding
- 41 Poetic preposition
- 42 Flue stuff
- 43 Rids of errors
- 45 Maker of miracles
- 48 Lob's path
- 49 Breakfast bar ingredient
- 53 Fancy neckwear
- 55 Picnic discard
- 57 Eat into
- 58 In ___ (fully)
- 59 Totally awesome
- 61 German auto
- 62 180
- 63 Circular highway
- 64 High degrees

- 65 "Personal" records
- 66 Paris' Avenue ___ Champs-Élysées

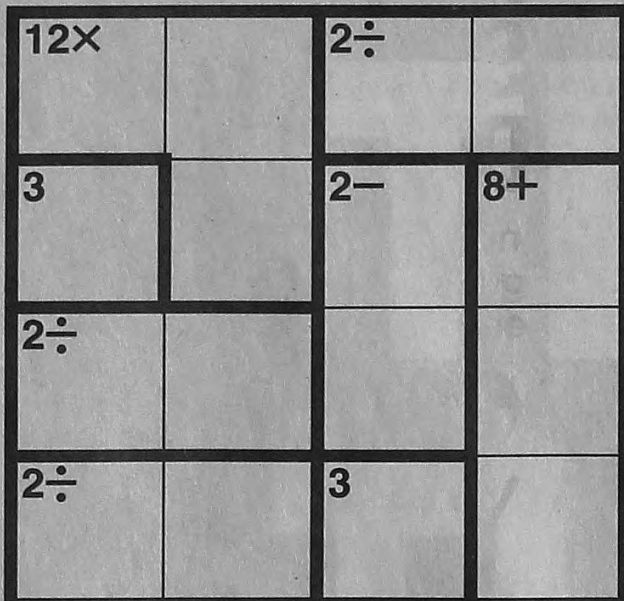
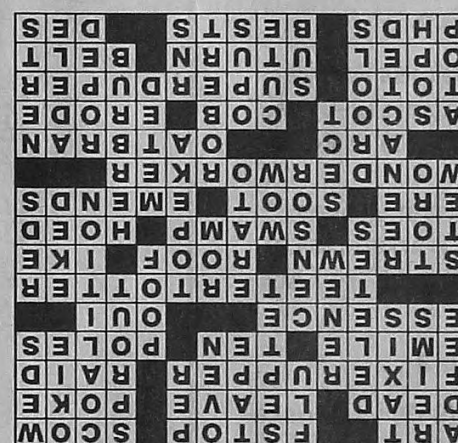
DOWN

- 1 Cost of a commercial
- 2 Champagne region city
- 3 Prepares for takeoff
- 4 Seasonal bug
- 5 Swans, in a Christmas song
- 6 First-aid kit item
- 7 Place for pizza
- 8 According to
- 9 Pop out of the ground
- 10 Short-term alliance
- 11 Sooner
- 12 Gets hitched
- 14 Gets rid of
- 18 Freshen up
- 22 "Just like that!"
- 24 Bleep out
- 27 Muse of poetry
- 28 ___-com (film genre)
- 29 Midwestern capital
- 30 Scratched (out)
- 31 Some house wines
- 32 Hearty dinner
- 33 Rancho beast
- 34 Staged an historic battle
- 39 "That's amazing!"
- 40 Flavor added to a roast
- 42 Faction of a faith
- 44 Doled (out)
- 46 Displays overeagerness
- 47 Parliamentary procedure pro
- 50 Enticed, with "in"
- 51 One-named British singing star
- 52 Old-fashioned oath
- 53 Perched on
- 54 New sorority member, perhaps
- 55 Overly clever
- 56 Sonata designation
- 59 Temp
- 60 Temp monitors

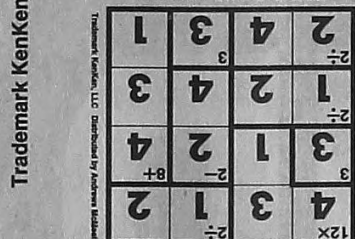


CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 11/17/22

TODAY'S ANSWER



KENKEN
1. Each row and column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating.
2. The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.
3. Freebies: fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

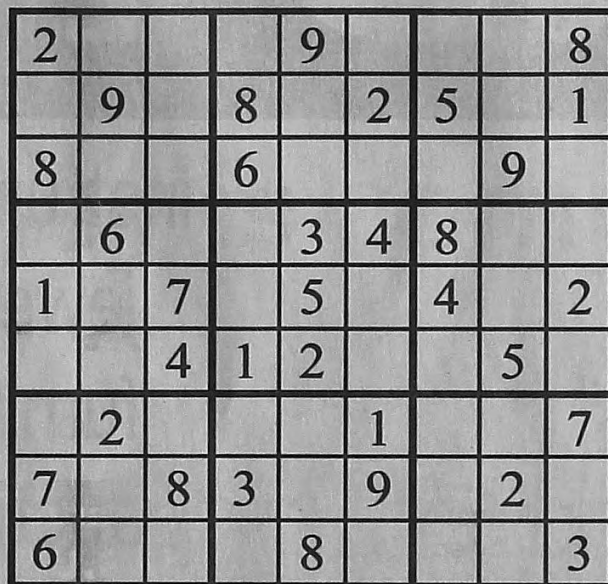
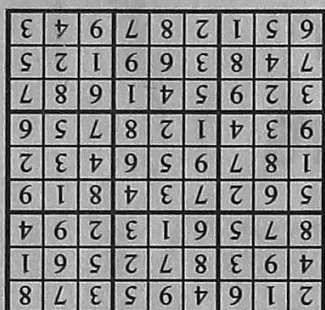


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SUDOKU | CREATORS

Insert numbers 1-9 in each box with every row, column and 3x3 box containing the digits just once. Difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest) **RATING: BRONZE**

TODAY'S ANSWER



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4.8 AVG. RATING 4.8 AVG. RATING A+ AVG. RATING

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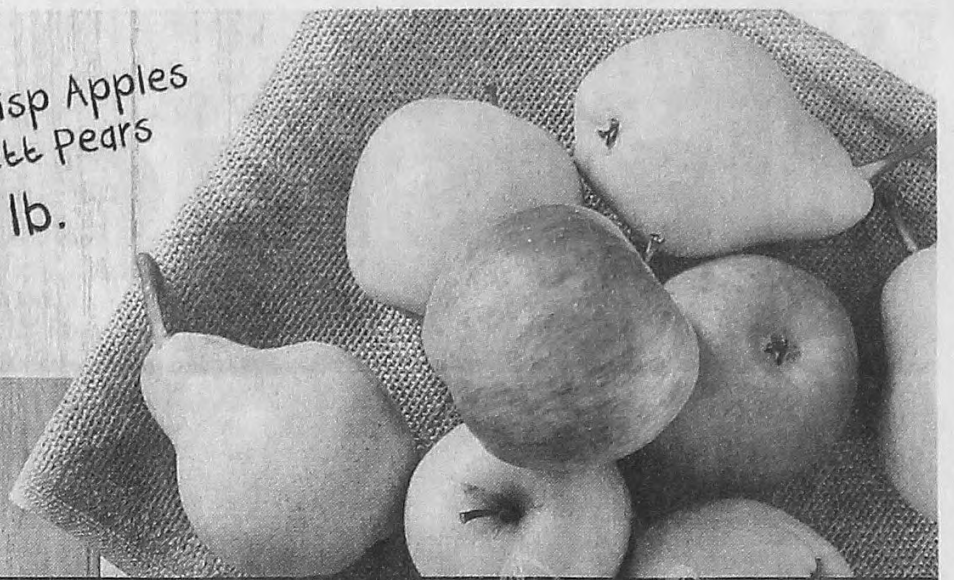
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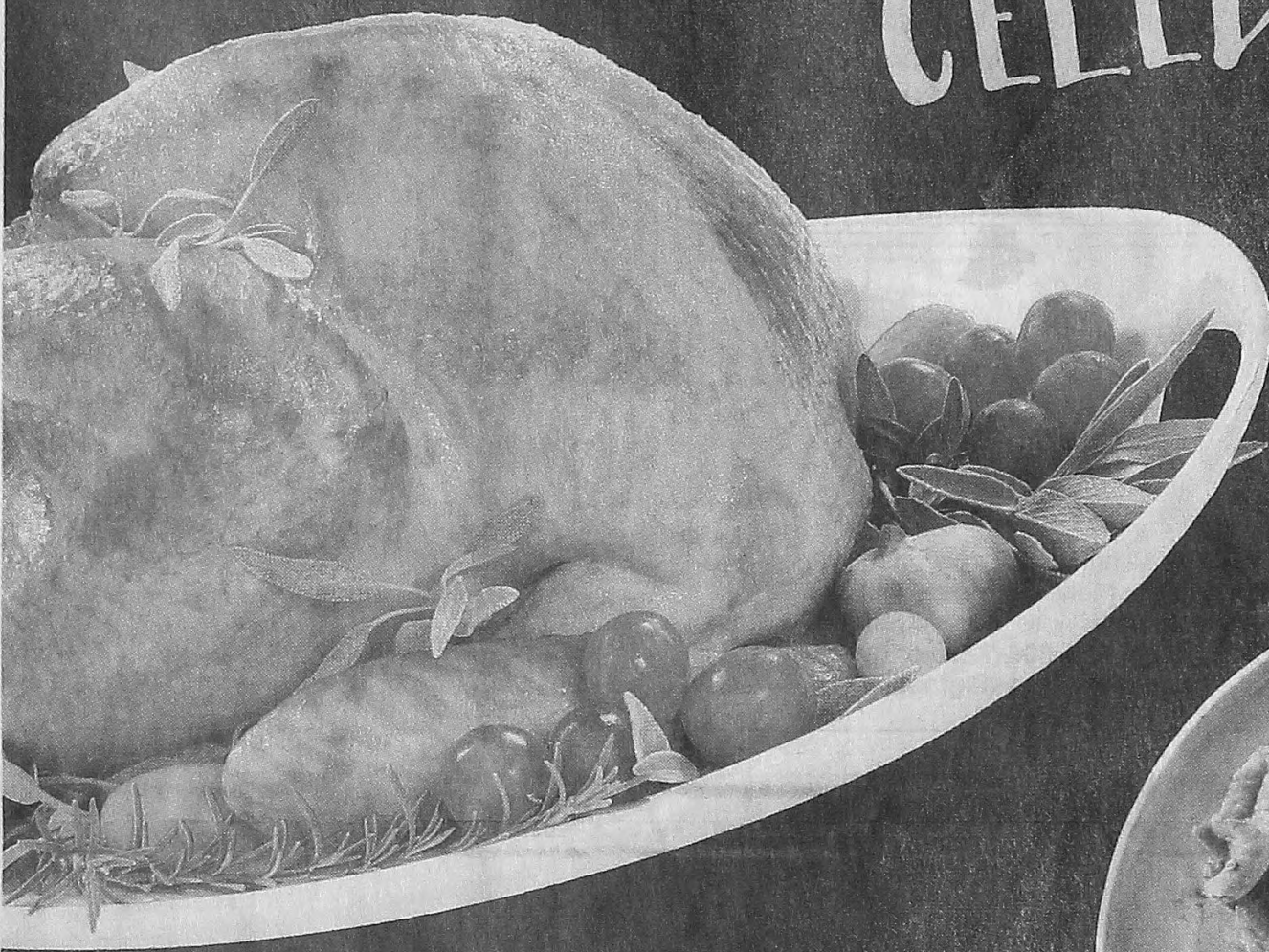
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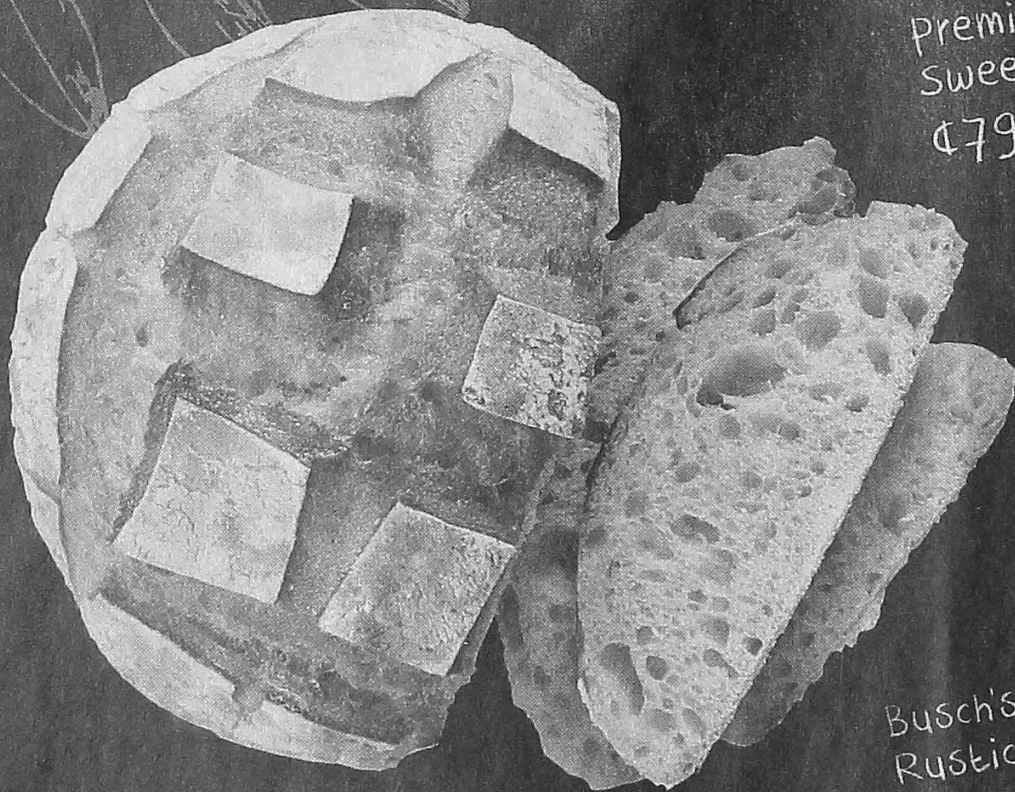


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